



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

I Timothy 4:15

**Journal
of
Theology**

Church of the Lutheran Confession

VOLUME 25

MARCH 1985

NUMBER 1

ISSN 0361-1906

THE JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY

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CONTENTS

FOREWORD	2
C. M. Gullerud	
VOLUME TWENTY-FIVE	5
John Lau	
CHURCH AND STATE--AN EPILOGUE	19
C. M. Gullerud	
EXEGETICAL STUDY OF COLOSSIANS 1	22
Paul Schaller	
CHAPEL ADDRESS	36
Gordon Radtke	
A NEW PERICOPIC SYSTEM	39
Paul F. Nolting	
BOOK NOTICE:	
<i>Sermon Texts</i> , edited by Ernst H. Wendland	44

The JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY is published at Immanuel Lutheran College, 501 Grover Road, Eau Claire, Wisconsin 54701, by authorization of the Church of the Lutheran Confession. Subscriptions: \$5.00 per year, \$9.00 for two years, payable in advance. Issues are dated: March, June, September, and December.

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FOREWORD

In this year of our Lord 1985, the Church of the Lutheran Confession observes its 25th anniversary. It is not a mere coincidence that this year marks also the opening of the 25th volume of the *Journal of Theology*. For at the very outset the constituency of the CLC recognized that the Lord's commission to His Church embraces a call to use every God-pleasing means to disseminate the glad tidings of the Evangel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Even as Luther recognized the blessings which may proceed from the use of the printed page when it serves the cause of bearing witness to the Christian faith, so the CLC in its constituting convention provided for the publishing of the *Journal of Theology*.

From the early and modest format of its first mimeographed issues to the present day with its more modern printing, the age-old and yet up-to-date message of God's grace has been set forth by the *Journal* in articles and essays--historical, doctrinal, exegetical, educational, homiletical, and pastoral in nature. From the very first issue until the present, the cover page has carried the exhortation recorded in 1 Timothy 4:15: "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear unto all." A well chosen passage from Scripture it is indeed. For it sets before our readers the need of taking to heart the precious truth of God's Word for our individual benefit and reminds us that it requires nothing short of a total commitment to all its words and parts. In the words preceding the appointed passage, the young Timothy was not only besought to be an example of the believers "in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity" but also implored "to give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine." He was asked not to neglect the gift given to him by prophecy with the laying on of hands. Upon these things he was to meditate and to these things he was to give himself completely and entirely. That our readers might be encouraged and motivated in the fulfillment and exercise of these

gifts, the editors of the *Journal* have sought to be of service. We are well aware that the course that has been pursued these 25 years has not followed on the same track with the modern, more sophisticated and philosophical traffic of theological thought. But we make no apologies for this. We follow the old maxim: "Quod non est biblicum, non est theologicum."

Here it may not be amiss to reiterate our aim and purpose as expressed in the foreword of our initial issue by our first editor, Prof. E. Reim:

So we launch our modest little venture, fully conscious of the responsibilities we are thereby assuming. We are aware of the delicate sense of balance that will be required to keep our *Journal* from on the one hand becoming an ivory tower of lofty discussion into which one takes refuge in order to escape the stark realities of life, or on the other of falling into the habit of controversy for controversy's sake and so descending to the level of querulous complaint, of unbridled criticism, of intemperate invective, of vindictive retaliation. We know of the danger of both of these extremes. We know that it is not even possible to show just where the exact line of demarcation is to be drawn, where moderation ceases and the immoderate begins. But our readers shall know that we will be trying to avoid these ever present pitfalls, saying what must be said in the face of existing conditions, doing what can be done by way of constructive suggestion, praying that our friends will understand and opponents not misunderstand us, knowing all the while that humanly speaking the extent of our influence must be small indeed, but committing ourselves and our cause to the Lord of the Church.

The words which we commit to the printed page of the *Journal* are set down in the spirit of the exhortations which immediately follow upon the text printed on our cover page: "Take heed to yourself and to the doc-

trine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you" (1 Tim. 4:16, NKJV). The doctrine which we are privileged to present is not just a matter of academic concern or of organizational polity but a teaching which involves the eternal salvation of the soul, not just that of our readers but of our own as well. Self-examination is an important ingredient in every shepherd's care of the flock. If we overlook our own need in the process of addressing others then we suffer shipwreck and become puffed up and our message appears as a sounding brass and a clanging cymbal. May God in His mercy keep us humble as well as faithful in the stewardship the Lord has entrusted to us. This is our prayer as we open up the 25th volume of the *Journal of Theology*.

C. M. Gullerud

VOLUME TWENTY-FIVE

As many of the readers of this *Journal* are aware, the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC) is celebrating its 25th anniversary in special observances this year. The first of these synod-wide observances was held in January of this year, and the last is planned for January, 1986. Since 1984 was the 25th anniversary year of CLC's Immanuel Lutheran College, we had the opportunity during last summer's convention to hear essays that considered much of our church body's history (chiefly in connection with our college) and also looked forward confidently to the present and future tasks that our Lord may graciously call us to perform in His name. During this present year a special anniversary committee is preparing and furnishing bulletin inserts for our congregations' use, in which the theme, "Ye Are the Light of the World," is expressed with the same two considerations: looking both backward ("Reflections") and forward ("Projections").

This is also the 25th volume of our *Journal of Theology*, which was established by the CLC as its official theological publication in its constituting convention held at Trinity Church, Watertown, South Dakota, August 9-12, 1960. It seems fitting, therefore, that some comments should be made concerning the founding of our publication, with emphasis on its purpose, aims, and goals. To do this, we shall let our early writers and editors speak once again in these pages and trust that this may be of interest especially to those readers who do not have earlier issues of our *Journal* available to them.

There is no official record of the planning that self-evidently went into the founding of a theological journal, modest though its hopes undoubtedly were. In the minutes of the Interim Conference held at Mankato, Minnesota, under the date of January 21, 1960, appears the following brief notation: "A report on a Theological Journal will be made at the next convention. The expla-

nation by the Chairman, relative to the delay in this matter, was adopted." It would be interesting, but probably futile, to attempt to ferret out, at this late date, just what the reason for delay may have been.

At the Watertown convention, in August, the floor committee assigned the task of reviewing the work of our other publication, the *Lutheran Spokesman*, also made the following recommendations:

We recommend that a Theological Journal be started as soon as possible.

We further recommend that the editorial responsibility of such a Theological Journal be placed into the hands of the Immanuel Lutheran Seminary Faculty.

We further recommend that all other responsibilities, such as printing and issuing of said Theological Journal, be placed into the hand of a managing editor.

The minutes of August 11 reveal that this report was amended by dropping the last paragraph and by altering the second paragraph to read: "We further recommend that the editorial staff of said Theological Journal consist of the Immanuel Seminary Faculty and such other members as they may appoint." And thus it came about that the CLC had an official theological journal, for the report was then adopted in that form.

It would be impossible, no doubt, to find someone present at that convention who would, at this late date, recall why the idea of having a managing editor was deleted from the resolution. After ten years of publication, upon the recommendation of the then editor, Prof. E. Schaller, the convention approved the appointment of one of the current staff members of the *Journal* to the position of Managing Editor. The present writer was thereupon appointed to the position in May, 1971, and served in that capacity until relieved by the present Managing Editor, Prof. C. Kuehne, in July, 1984.

The first issue of the first volume was dated February, 1961. It contained a Foreword written by its first editor, Prof. Edmund Reim, in which the *Journal's* aims and purposes are clearly enunciated, together with its *raison d'être*.

The launching of a new professional journal, particularly in the category of theology, certainly calls for some explanation. Those of our prospective readers to whom we are relative strangers are entitled to know something about our history and background. Those who have known us in the past, but are members of synods with which we no longer are in fellowship, may wonder about our intentions. We invite their scrutiny. But particularly the members of our immediate group are entitled to a discussion of our policies as well as an indication of what we conceive our function to be. In short, we must state our reason for being--or for our coming into being. Also we should state a number of things for the record.

Our Journal of Theology emanates from a very young Seminary, Immanuel Lutheran, with an admittedly small faculty of two members. [In its first year of operation, 1959-60, Immanuel Seminary had just one full-time instructor, Prof. E. Reim; a second instructor, Prof. C. M. Gullerud, was called in July, 1960.-J.L.] Together with the other departments of Immanuel Lutheran College, this school was founded some eighteen months ago, not as a haven for unemployed pastors and professors, but to meet a serious need that was pressing even at that time, the need of providing for an increasing number of young people who had been studying at established synodical schools, but now found themselves orphaned, scholastically speaking, by their or their parents' withdrawal from their previous synodical affiliation. The substantial growth of our school since its founding has demonstrated that this was not a mere imaginary need.

After reviewing the facts involved in the withdrawals from former affiliations, as well as in the formation of the "Interim Conference," and a mention of the results of much study in the publishing of our confessional documents (*Concerning Church Fellowship* and *Concerning Church and Ministry*) and, finally, our organization into the Church of the Lutheran Confession, the Foreword continues:

That brings the history down to date. The issues remain to be discussed. For, it must be granted, our infant Church was born out of controversy--even as this was true also of that first Lutheran Church, in the days of the Reformation. But this is nothing of which to be ashamed, if only the issues are valid ones, valid by the standards of Holy Scripture. We are fully aware that our actions are something for which we owe an account, above all to God. But we are perfectly ready to explain ourselves also to those who will be taking time to read our efforts. This will be part of the function of our Journal.

To define at least the main issues is no simple matter since it involves the actions and present position of the two synods from which most of us have come--ELS and Wisconsin, both mentioned above. As we see it, two questions are involved in either case. First: When a church body in one way or another has clearly recognized and publicly declared a sister synod to be guilty of causing divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine that they have learned, may it (even if only within the framework of a larger federation like the Synodical Conference) still continue in the active practice of church fellowship with such a synod in spite of the clear warnings of a passage like Romans 16:17-18? Second: May the arguments that are advanced in official support of such continued practice of fellowship be isolated from the doctrinal position of such a church, or do they become part of the public doctrine for which the entire

body must be held responsible? It lies far beyond the scope of a Foreword to answer these questions here and now. They will help, however, to show what we have in mind when we shall touch on these issues from time to time. For touch on them we shall. There are things that need to be said. And the forum of this Journal may perhaps be the best place to say them.

It is our earnest hope, however, that we shall also find other things to discuss, other interests that will command our attention. For to live on controversy alone can become a monotonous diet. Or, to change the metaphor a bit, it would prove to be a sorry luxury, one that we simply cannot afford. By such a purely negative policy we would be depriving ourselves of the blessed benefits that come only through the positive study of Scripture and its saving doctrines. For it is this that serves so wonderfully for the edification, not only of the individual Bible student, but as we read in Ephesians 4, of the entire body of Christ--in our case, of those souls that are entrusted to our particular care. We shall try to do this to the extent of our time and ability by widening the range of interest, by deepening the measure of understanding, by enriching the store of knowledge, by cultivating the practical skills of all of us who serve in the ministry of the Word, be it by teaching or preaching,--editors as well as readers.

The next section of Prof. Reim's Foreword discusses the content and departments he plans to use in making up the *Journal's* format. In this connection, he makes the careful observation: "But regardless of the source of our material, one rule needs to be kept constantly in mind in connection with our eventual selections, that is the old principle that whatever is not Biblical is not theological--*quod non est biblicum non est theologium.*" We invoke this rule not so much for the sake of keeping out a type of material which is appearing with increasing frequency in so many modern religious publi-

cations--articles on psychology, sociology, economics--as for the need of checking on ourselves, lest we let our publication become an instrument for giving expression to our personal feelings (either of individuals or the group), our own pet ideas, our particular wishes and desires. The *'biblicum'* must always remain our clear point of orientation, lest this present project cease to be truly *'theologicum.'*"

The Foreword concludes:

So we launch our modest little venture, fully conscious of the responsibilities we are thereby assuming. We are aware of the delicate sense of balance that will be required to keep our Journal from on the one hand becoming an ivory tower of lofty discussion into which one takes refuge in order to escape the stark realities of life, or on the other of falling into the habit of controversy for controversy's sake and so descending to the level of querulous complaint, of unbridled criticism, of intemperate invective, of vindictive retaliation. We know of the danger of both of these extremes. We know that it is not even possible to show just where the exact line of demarcation is to be drawn, where moderation ceases and the immoderate begins. But our readers shall know that we will be trying to avoid these ever present pitfalls, saying what must be said in the face of existing conditions, doing what can be done by way of constructive suggestion, praying that our friends will understand and opponents not misunderstand us, knowing all the while that humanly speaking the extent of our influence must be small indeed, but committing ourselves and our cause to the Lord of the Church.

We trust that our readers will have sensed that neither we of the editorial board, nor our new church body which has requested this project are suffering from delusions of grandeur, that we are not launching this Journal for the sake of acquir-

ing a status symbol, but that we are simply trying to do what we can, where we can, in a day when there is so much that needs to be done--doing this for the sake of preserving the truths that we once held jointly with so many brethren, and in the hope of serving, if God will grant His grace, toward a restoration of the wider fellowship that once we enjoyed.

To this end we dedicate our efforts and this Journal.

That first issue of our *Journal* contained articles by men who, in one capacity or another, were to serve for a number of years to come. Prof. E. Schaller, who served as editor from October, 1966, until his death on July 29, 1971, contributed two articles to it. The shorter of these, entitled "The Form of Sound Words," speaks out against the frequent practice, in modern theology, of using historic theological terms with new meanings not hitherto ascribed to them, thus creating confusion at the least, but more often using the practice to disguise false teaching. Having stated the problem, Prof. Schaller continues:

The question then arises: *Must* the orthodox church of today, in restating the message of Scripture and its doctrinal tenets, do so by employing the terminology of the modernist? To borrow a few occult phrases: Is theology existential only when it speaks of the divine encounter through the self-revelation of God in concrete action in history? As matters stand, one is never quite sure that superb obscurities such as these make any sense, or convey to others the sense intended by the author. For modern terminology issues from the womb of evasiveness and is *per se* ambiguous. To understand it, one needs a glossary, not merely of words, but of contexts in which the words are employed. The verbiage of liberal theology is by design a tool of the Schleiermacher school. It is a robust handmaiden of those who have spearheaded the develop-

ment of a doctrinal theology rooted in Christian self-consciousness rather than in Scripture.

Prof. Schaller characterized modern theological terminology as serving "to disguise a virulent and uncompromising attack upon verbal inspiration and the authority of Holy Writ. . . . They are rationalistic in intent, and subjectivistic in content. Their use creates an illusion of depth that conceals a tragic theological superficiality. . . . The traditional expressions are clearer." In declaring, then, (or, rather, restating) the approach that our *Journal* has taken, Prof. Schaller forthrightly stated:

Doubtless these observations will occasion contemptuous shoulder-shrugging in some quarters; and for the dissenters such unscientific blasphemy against the word-gods of the modern theological Babel will betray the reactionary nature of this *Journal*. We are confident, nevertheless, that our strictures against the overtly irreverent terminology of Modernism will stand in the judgment of God; and, except for the necessity of adverting to them in occasional critical evaluation of the modern scene and thought, these pages will scrupulously avoid the use of the abstractions of liberalism in favor of words that reflect the spiritual health of a twentieth-century Theology of Repristination. As the Formula of Concord declares: ". . . it is safest of all, according to the admonition of St. Paul, 2 Tim. 1:13, to hold fast as well to the form of sound words as to the pure doctrine itself, whereby much unnecessary wrangling may be cut off and the Church preserved from many scandals." (Trig. 949:36)

In volume 6, number 3 (July, 1966) Prof. E. Reim took the opportunity to write a brief article entitled "Valedictory of an Editor." In it he commented that in a previous issue he had based his thoughts on 1 Timothy 4:12, "Let no man despise thy youth," using these words as a warning, "lest we give men *occasion* to despise our

youth." Thus he had based a review of his editorial policies and procedures on that text. Now, however, in a valedictory message, he wished to base his thoughts on Romans 1:16: "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." Thus he wrote:

This passage should serve our purpose well. For an editorial policy is not the policy of one man only. It is the consensus of an entire staff. More than that, it is the policy of the church body which has asked for this publication, our CLC. For even though, as was once the case with the Philadelphians in the Book of Revelation, ours may be only a little strength, yet He who then set an open door before that church, giving them the assurance that no man can shut it, has set open doors also before us. What we do with them depends on what use we make of that *power* of which the Romans text speaks so vividly, both as to what this power is and what it does. For it is the gospel of *Christ*, not only because it speaks of Him, tells about Him, proclaims Him as the Savior of all men from sin and all its dread consequences but particularly because He is Himself the very Author of that gospel. It is His word. It is His very creation. For it was He who fulfilled the promise. It was He who brought the sacrifice of the atonement. This is that power that can never fail.

If in reviewing the work of the last five years we took to heart the words to Timothy, to let no man despise our youth, even so may these words of the apostle, calling on us not to be *ashamed* of the gospel of Christ, this *power* of God, give us the confidence that in all our further tasks we have that same power at our side and in our hands and that, using it, we cannot fail. For then we are truly serving *His* cause.

When Prof. E. Schaller took over the editorship from Prof. Reim in 1966, he began his work with a brief

article entitled simply: "A Message to Our Readers" (vol. 6, no. 4 - October). He expressed his gratitude for the response which our *Journal* has received among an admittedly small readership. This is certainly not due to the *Journal's* tendency to set forth something new and to say what nobody has said before. It is not experimental or novel. "But it does indeed profess to proclaim the old truths in an apostolic spirit of love." He continued:

In this pursuit it has found its way to the hearts of readers geographically widespread and diverse in their origins. These look to it for instruction and inspiration, hoping always to hear men speaking as the oracles of God. In this we trust they have had no cause for disappointment, though sometimes perhaps the contents have been a bit meager in quantity or lacking in the polish of professional quality. Such failings, in any case, have not caused the journal to be rejected by those who understand its message with the heart as well as the mind.

That the journal has been permitted so to serve is, under God, due in no small measure to the devoted efforts of its former editor, who held it in his hands at birth and nurtured it until he found it necessary to retire from such labors. May the journal keep faith with him and with its readers by retaining a spirit both evangelical and firm in its Scripture-centered message.

Another of the men whose articles appeared in that very first issue of our *Journal* was Prof. C. M. Gullerud, who took over the editorship after Prof. Schaller and, although he retired from the active ministry of teaching in May, 1984, is still serving as editor. In that first issue, Prof. Gullerud introduced a department of our publication which has continued to appear from time to time until the present. The department was called "Panorama" and Prof. Gullerud described it as follows:

As the curtain is being raised on this department of our Journal of Theology, it may not be amiss to make a statement on our purpose, our policies, and our aims with respect to the reporting of the doings and sayings of men. *Panorama*--as the word implies, is a comprehensive presentation of a subject, with due regard for all that comes to view in every direction. While the picture can be seen only a section at a time, it is not separated from the scroll which is being continually unrolled and of which it is a part. A panoramic view reveals not only those things which appear in the foreground but also the details of the background which give to the picture its dimension as well as its perspective. All of these things are involved in a proper reporting and evaluating of the news. For instance, one does not rush into print with an accusation of "heretic" as soon as a man makes a wrong statement of doctrine, nor does one cover up and call a man "a weak brother" when he causes divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which we have learned.

It shall be our aim to report historical events not for the mere purpose of disseminating information after the fashion of a news magazine but for the purpose of discovering and evaluating the temper of our age, that we might be forewarned and forearmed. And if, by the grace of God, those who have fallen into unspiritual and unionistic ways are awakened and aroused by what they find on these pages, it will be in fulfillment of a hope and prayer which shall follow along with the penning of these lines.

It is our intention to report facts without prejudice and to guard against distortion. We pray for grace to see and recognize good when it comes to view and to give it its due; and for grace to recognize evil when it raises its head, to label it, and to warn against it without fear or favor. When we find that our opponents publicly criticize

what we have publicly written, we shall not run to Matthew 18 for cover. Concerning matters which have come to public attention we shall by the same token feel free to write after the manner described in Gal. 2:11-14 and I Tim. 5:20-25, and for the same reasons.

It is not our wish to engage in a battle of wits with those who love to cross swords for the pleasure of it or to bother with those who use smear tactics, for nothing is gained in either case. Vindication of personal honor and the advancement of a false synodical loyalty shall be eschewed. We have seen enough of these road-blocks to last for a lifetime.

Prof. Gullerud concluded his introductory statement with a brief outline of the kinds of material to be presented in this department and an expression of the desire to remember in this new endeavor the words of Paul to Timothy (2 Tim. 1:13-14).

Prof. Gullerud is the only individual who has been privileged to serve on the staff of the *Journal of Theology* from its beginning to the present. He was appointed as editor in 1971. In the first issue following that appointment (October, 1971), he wrote the following as an Editor's Note. These words serve very well as a restatement of the policies initiated by Prof. Reim and continued by Prof. Schaller.

. . . On July 29 Professor Schaller entered into the perpetual joy of heaven which is the ultimate goal of all true theology. Before this joy all other joys and aspirations sink into utter insignificance. The true religion indeed is a "*Jenseits Religion*" and not a "*Diesseits Religion*," the now-group of theologians notwithstanding. It is only when theology is regarded in this light that it will make its legitimate contribution also to the solution of the ills that are convulsing the world in the declining years of the 20th century. The

life and activity of our two predecessors, Professors E. Reim and E. Schaller, made this abundantly clear as is attested by their writings in the *Journal of Theology*. Only as one bows to Scripture will his footsteps be directed into the pathways of God. Under the divine guidance which the Holy Bible provides, it is our intention to carry on the work of editing the *Journal* with the same "*Leitmotiv*" as was so plainly in evidence throughout the writings of the former editors.

If a personal note may be injected here, the present writer wishes to express his own gratitude to the Lord for having permitted him to serve the *Journal* under all three of its editors. His "apprenticeship" began in 1965 when he began to assist Prof. Reim in the work of preparing the material for print; he was appointed to the staff in 1970 and became Managing Editor in 1971. It was a privilege to serve, because the direction of the *Journal* in those years was a reflection of the spirit expressed so well by its editors.

In an article entitled "An Editorial Posture Examined" (May, 1971), the writer was discussing, rather critically, it is feared, the editorial position of the *Lutheran Quarterly* as it was presented in a February, 1971, editorial. What was criticized was the express desire of the *Lutheran Quarterly* to serve as a forum in which all shades of theological opinion would find equal opportunity for expression. In our response, it was made clear that "true theology teaches only what Holy Scripture teaches, no more and no less."

Thus theology cannot and dare not claim as its due the privilege of adding or detracting from Scriptural doctrine. If this were to be done (as is done by many theologians of today, who seek new approaches and new symbols and systems), it is obvious that nothing could be added or detracted except what human opinions (profound though they may be) have to offer. When the true theologian considers the problems of the day, with their at-

tendant philosophies, he is satisfied with what the Scriptures have to say on the matter (not resting until he has thoroughly learned *all* that Scripture has to offer), and goes no farther, for if Scripture offers no answer in particular, he still has its central teaching.

The task of the theologian is not so much to philosophize about the Word of God, but rather to proclaim it, since theology is actually a science prepared by God and presented to men in a form that is perfect and altogether adequate. . . . There is a true theology and a false theology. The false has forum enough and to spare in this world; its opinions and ideas throng about us on every hand. If a journal of theology had as its real purpose to be scholarly as well as to be "faithful to the Reformation tradition," then its pages would be used to present only the revealed truth of sacred Scriptures, applying that truth to point out errors that arise. When it comes to theology, scholarship is genuine only in direct proportion to its being scriptural.

In our 25th volume and in all the volumes which our gracious Lord may permit us to publish, may our *Journal* serve no other purpose than to be a humble spokesman for the Lord, yes, the oracles of God.

John Lau

CHURCH AND STATE--AN EPILOGUE

The judgment of the Lord rests upon all those who are guilty of social injustice. His anger over the perpetrators of crimes in society is not to be trifled with. He has something to say about all these things: "Woe to those who decree unrighteous decrees, who write misfortune, which they have prescribed to rob the needy of justice, and to take what is right from the poor of My people, that widows may be their prey, and that they may rob the fatherless" (Isa. 10:1-2, NKJV). This is God's Word and it is the duty of every Christian to proclaim it. It does belong in the pulpit and in the Christian schools to transmit God's message on these matters. However, when it comes to the carrying out of social judgments in the state by legislation and enforcement, there God has made it clear that He has instituted an order which is to prevail. Also the Christian, as citizen, is to function within the framework which has been patterned by the Lord who controls all things. However, the Church, the community of believers gathered about God's Word and sacrament and functioning in Christian faith as moved by the Holy Spirit, is to function in things spiritual and eternal. This is not something which can be forced upon the body politic or imposed upon others by legislation. When our Savior gave the assignment to His disciples He said: "Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. . . . Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained" (John 20:21-23). "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15-16). When men came to Jesus asking Him to function as a secular judge, He said: "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" (Luke 12:14) But He didn't hesitate to proclaim the *principles* which are unchangeable and not subject to amendment when He said: "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the

things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15). When it comes to the carrying out of judgment in the body politic the Lord has laid this out clearly in Romans 13: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. . . . he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake" (Rom. 13:1, 4-5). Here rests the power of the sword and the right of legislation. The government is the institution established for this purpose and it deals with believers and unbelievers alike whether they believe in God's Word or not. Here is the division and where this is observed there should be no problem with tension or collision between Church and State.

The Church's assignment does not call for demonstrations, strikes, violence, or threats. It does not countenance stone throwing, burning down of buildings, the prostration of bodies in the roadways to stop nuclear traffic, etc. But it goes its appointed way in serving its members with the eternal truths and bears witness of the Savior for the conversion of the unbeliever. This is its assigned task and when it deviates, the result will be a toning down of its spiritual ministry. The Church does not make pronouncements on nuclear power, the nation's economy, voting rights, environmental control, capitalism, labor unions, and the like--such as has been done, for example, by the followers of Roth, the Roman Catholic bishops, the World Council of Churches, etc. It is in the hands of God to bring judgment upon social injustices in His own appointed way. The Church lets it rest there. It does not preempt the workings of God as though it were within its power as church to enter this field of activity.

It has been said that when Christians join in promoting legislation against abortions, for instance, then they are forcing their religious beliefs upon oth-

ers. But this is not so. The issue in this case is not one of asking for the exercise of religious belief, although the Scriptures indeed speak on the issues of life and death and on conception and the viability of the unborn. But the issue here is one of protecting the life of the unborn which lies within the proper sphere of the state. There should be no question of whether or not life exists in the womb, since it is certainly a fact that the fetus is human and that it develops and grows. To take a public stand against abortion is therefore not a mixing of Church and State. It is not and should not be a case of the Church trying to be the conscience of the State. On the other hand, when and if the State, for instance, introduces the exercise of religion into the public domain by means of prayer in the public schools, when it provides chaplaincies, etc., then the intrusion of the State into the sphere of the Church is patent and unmistakable.

When the State then stays within the bounds of the secular and temporal with reference to the physical well-being of its constituency, and the Church carries on its work with reference to the spiritual and eternal, then there will be no conflict, no collision between Church and State.

C. M. Gullerud

EXEGETICAL STUDY OF COLOSSIANS 1

1 - PAUL, APOSTLE OF CHRIST JESUS BY THE WILL OF GOD, AND BROTHER TIMOTHY

To the Corinthians, to the Ephesians, and to the Colossians Paul identifies himself as an apostle of Jesus the Christ, not by his own volition, but by the will of God. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself said, "I have come . . . not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 6:38). Now the apostle, sent from Christ (outside Damascus), is content to be "as his Master," sent by the will of God. This is the will with which Paul wants the Colossians to be filled in all wisdom and spiritual understanding (1:9). This is the will of God that would cause the Colossians to stand perfect and complete (4:12) in the riches of the glory hidden from the ages, now revealed to the saints (1:26).

2 - TO THE SAINTS AND FAITHFUL BROTHERS IN CHRIST IN COLOSSAE, GRACE TO YOU AND PEACE FROM GOD OUR FATHER

"Saints," or "holy," (ἁγίους) is a favorite description of Paul for believers. The term is intimately connected with the forensic nature of justification. Well did Paul know the words of God to Moses (Lev. 19:2): "Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: 'Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy.'" Those words introduced the laws which God gave Israel, laws which Christ kept to the satisfaction of Holy God.

The term "holy" also describes God's own family, where the dearly loved children are "imitators of God" (Eph. 5:1).

The thought of being "set aside for" or "devoted to" the service of God was not new with the Greek word ἅγιος. Already in Leviticus the Lord said, "You are to be *holy to me* because I, the LORD, am holy, and I have set you apart from the nations to be my own" (Lev. 20:26). Thus God does not merely demand that we be set

apart. He has set us apart--namely, in Christ Jesus who is our Sanctification, ἁγιασμός (1 Cor. 1:30).

So the term "saints" brings to mind not so much a code they have kept, as a resemblance they bear. In Romans 12:13 the New International Version translates ταῖς χρείαις τῶν ἁγίων as "God's people who are in need."

While the family concept may be thought of in connection with the term "saints," it is stated outright in the words πιστοῖς ἀδελφοῖς ἐν Χριστῷ. Not only does the apostle call them children of the same womb (ἀ copulative + δελφύς, womb) and having the same Father (ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν), but he even adds the adjective πιστοῖς--trusty, faithful. This would be amazing for someone to say who had not yet met the Colossian Christians, were it not for those two key words ἐν Χριστῷ. If it is "in Christ" that we are made brothers, we will be "faithful" brothers, for He has done all things well. The only thing that can detract from that relationship is to depart in some way from Christ.

Note: As is the case with the other apostles, there is also no condescension toward or patronizing of the Colossian Christians by Paul.

"Grace to you and peace from God our Father" - Concerning this greeting so customary with Paul, just one observation: While it is Paul writing to the Colossians, and the format is common among Greek letters of that period, the greeting is not from Paul. The grace and peace are from God. Thus a form (epistolary salutation) as common as bread, wine, and water has an uncommon power.

3 - WE ARE THANKFUL TO GOD THE FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, PRAYING ABOUT YOU ALWAYS

εὐχαριστέω (I give thanks) is another term habitually used by Paul (cf. Rom. 1:8; 1 Cor. 1:4; Eph. 1:16; Phil. 1:3; 1 Thess. 1:2; 2 Thess. 1:3; Philem. 4). It is worthy of note, especially in our "evangelical" age, that Paul does not praise the Colossians for their faith, for their "decision for Christ," etc. Rather in his continual (πάντοτε, at all times) prayers about

them, he thanks God who persuaded them to believe. Nor is this a general God, such as natural religions love, but the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

4 - HAVING HEARD YOUR FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS AND THE LOVE WHICH YOU HAVE UNTO ALL THE SAINTS

Thanks to God were prompted, as we already noticed, by the faith of the Colossians. It was not the size of their faith, but the object of their faith ("in Christ Jesus") that caused Paul's rejoicing. And although faith is in the heart, the Colossians had apparently "joined with the whole Christian Church on earth in confessing the faith," for it had been heard about (ἀκούσαντες) as far away as Rome.

But the faith of the Colossians was not all that Paul had heard about. Also the love which they had toward all the saints had reached Paul. This love was, like their faith, apparent to observers, as Christ Himself had said it would be: "All men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another" (John 13:35). Even the heathen show love toward those whom they like (φιλέω) or those from whom they think they can derive a benefit. ("For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?" Matt. 5:46) But the Colossians had shown brotherly love "unto *all* the saints," God's family.

5 - BECAUSE OF THE HOPE LAID AWAY FOR YOU IN THE HEAVENS (OF) WHICH YOU HEARD BEFORE IN THE WORD OF TRUTH, THE GOSPEL

In the famous thirteenth chapter of I Corinthians, Paul also uses "faith, love, and hope" to summarize the Christian life. In that passage he concludes: "But the greatest of these is love."

Here the apostle focuses on "hope" as the source of love and an object of faith. Can "hope" bear all this weight? Christian hope can. This is not so much a hope that something might happen ("I hope it rains." "I hope he will not be angry with me.") as it is an expectation

of something certain and secure "laid away in the heavens for you." As surely as there was a pound laid away in the napkin of the unfaithful servant (Luke 19:20), so surely is there "laid up for me a crown of righteousness" (2 Tim. 4:8). It is as certain as death and judgment (as it has been "laid away" for man once to die and after that the judgment, Heb. 9:27). The hope of which Paul speaks is "in the heavens," not in "philosophy which depends on human tradition" (2:8), nor in what you eat or drink, religious festivals, Sabbath days, or circumcision (cf. 2:11, 16).

The hope of which Paul speaks is not one the Colossians have seen, but one they have heard about before in the Word of Truth, the Gospel. Through the message of that hope God chose to give birth to them (Jas. 1:18), and the life of faith was begun. In view of the great expectations that awaited them, they could well afford to give themselves to one another in love, even as Christ had given Himself to them.

6 - HAVING COME TO YOU JUST AS ALSO IN ALL THE WORLD IT IS BEARING FRUIT AND GROWING, JUST AS ALSO AMONG YOU, FROM THAT DAY YOU HEARD AND ACKNOWLEDGED THE GRACE OF GOD IN TRUTH

Faith, love, hope--this Christian life is engendered through the "present truth" (παρούση ἀληθεία, 2 Pet. 1:12). This is not a freak of Colossae, but the Word of Truth has also come into all the world, bearing fruit and growing. Where the truth comes, goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love also come, unless one forgets that he has been cleansed from his sins (2 Pet. 1:9). When Paul says "bearing fruit" and "growing" he is not just piling up words. It is bearing fruit in good works and a growing in the knowledge of God (cf. 1:10) that the Gospel has accomplished in all the world and among the Colossians.

No wonder Paul is thankful, remembering how God's Spirit did not depend on the Colossians' maturity, but bore fruit from the very day they heard and acknowledged (ἐπέγνωτε) the grace of God in truth. The very hearing

carried in it the fruits of obedience, and it was not a hearing of how to live the Christian life, but a hearing of the grace of God. It is not with flaming thunderbolts that God will guard us, either, but with peace that passes all understanding.

7 - JUST AS YOU LEARNED FROM EPAPHRAS, OUR BELOVED FELLOW-SLAVE, WHO IS A FAITHFUL SERVANT OF CHRIST FOR YOU,

8 - WHO ALSO REVEALED TO US YOUR LOVE IN THE SPIRIT.

Paul is not out to get a following for himself. Epaphras, the beloved fellow-slave, appears to have been a bishop at Colossae. He was a faithful messenger of Christ, Paul adds, causing us to wonder if Epaphras was under fire at Colossae and needed some support. The praise Paul gives is high indeed, for he gives Epaphras the lowest position: δίακονος (servant).

Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant (δίακονος) of all" (Mark 9:35). "Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant (δίακονος), and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all" (Mark 10:43).

δίακονος, like δῶκω, comes from a root that signifies "running," and thus the term stresses the service performed. δούλος, on the other hand, emphasizes the relationship between the slave and his master.

Finally, Paul adds, not only do I think that Epaphras is a great servant of Christ, but he speaks well of you also, revealing to us your love in the Spirit.

9 - BECAUSE OF THIS WE ALSO, FROM WHAT DAY WE HEARD, WE DO NOT MAKE AN END OF PRAYING FOR YOU AND BEGGING THAT YOU BE FILLED WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIS WILL IN ALL WISDOM AND SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING

Because of all this--the faith, love, hope, the fruits of the Gospel in all the world and among them--

the apostle and Timothy have not given up praying for them. This is not just a form prayer, or mechanically ticking them off from a "prayer list." It is a fervent praying, a "begging" (αἰτέω) in their behalf, "that you be filled with the knowledge of God's will." This is not the knowledge that Gnostic philosophies had to offer, but a full knowledge (ἐπί + γνῶσις) that only God can give. It is a knowledge that comes from looking upon the face of God in Christ (who is the image of God, 1:15).

Paul prays for the Colossians just as he would pray for himself, looking forward to exchanging his γινώσκω ἐκ μέρους for an ἐπιγνώσσομαι ("Now I know in part; then I shall know fully" 1 Cor. 13:12). How different from the corrupted human nature:

I think of the admission we all make. "Everyone has his own faults and I have mine." On close inspection, however, each of us says, "I really can't list my faults. I am not violently short-tempered nor particularly selfish, nor am I malicious or a gossip." I suspect the reason we confess to nameless faults is because we know the fellow to whom we confess is laden with faults. (Harry Golden, *So What Else Is New?* [New York: Fawcett, c1964] 36)

Paul prays that they may know the will of God in all wisdom. σοφία (skill in handicraft and art; then, sound judgment, intelligence, practical wisdom) suggests that this knowledge of His will is a practical thing. There is no need to rush after other wisdom philosophies, or incorporate them into Christianity. The spiritual understanding (σύνεσις) indicates a "getting it together" (from συνίημι), a quick comprehension, or mother-wit, which is also a very practical thing in day-to-day decisions of living as God's holy people.

10 - TO LIVE WORTHILY OF THE LORD UNTO ALL PLEASING, BEARING FRUIT IN EVERY GOOD WORK AND GROWING IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD,

That the wisdom and spiritual understanding for which Paul prays are "practical" or effectual matters is

shown further in this verse: "to live worthily of the Lord." πατέω (from πάτος, a trodden or beaten path) suggests not only walking, but a habitual walking (so as to make a beaten way) and thus comes to mean, in a metaphorical sense, "to frequent, use, misuse," like the Latin *terere*. περιπατέω intensifies this aspect: to walk up and down (pace?), to walk about, and so, metaphorically, to live.

This living (behaving) for which Paul pleads to God, is nothing more than acting like children of God which the Gospel declared the Colossians to be (ἀξίως τοῦ κυρίου). It comes from the heart with a disposition to please God (ἀρεσκείαν) and produces all kinds of good works, something which cults strive to imitate, and something in which they even claim to be superior.

Again comes the growing (αὐξάνω, cf. also 2:19) in the knowledge of God, even after just praying that they be filled with it (1:9). But it is not strange that a knowledge of His will should involve a growing knowledge of Him. That *is* His will.

11 - IN EVERY CAPACITY CAPABLE ACCORDING TO THE MIGHT OF HIS GLORY UNTO ALL ENDURANCE AND LONG-SUFFERING, WITH JOY

The ability (δύναμις) to walk in this manner becomes abundant (emphasized by the cognates) according to the open force (κράτος) which is glorious in its appearing. The κατά suggests, as elsewhere, not an ability doled out in small amount, but proportionately--according to His great power. This is the ability to remain after all is said and suffered (ὑπομονή) and not to be winded (long-suffering). This kind of endurance is not a Stoic resignation, but accomplished with joy!

12 - THANKING THE FATHER, HE HAVING QUALIFIED YOU FOR THE SHARE OF THE LOT OF THE SAINTS IN THE LIGHT,

Having thanked the Father Himself, Paul now prays that the Colossians might also be led to give thanks to the Father. Not that the Father needs it, but this too is in the Colossians' own best interests. "It is truly

meet, right, and salutary (i.e., beneficial) that we should at all times and in all places give thanks . . ."

It is when we acknowledge the Father's grace in qualifying us to a share of the lot of the saints in light that we are strengthened to endure the brief path we tread, and the briefness of it. Looking to Jesus, we see that "in Him was life and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4).

13 - WHO RESCUED US FROM THE POWER OF DARKNESS AND TRANSFERRED (US) INTO THE KINGDOM OF HIS BELOVED SON

Thanking the Father means remembering who we are, for it was He who rescued us (pulled us out of danger) from the authority of darkness (such as Adam and Eve obeyed when they followed the serpent's word). Authority, or power over others, is often what is sought in entering the dark world of the occult (and sometimes even in a Christian's approach to God). But the Father has placed us into another way--into the Kingdom of His beloved Son. The cults which beckoned to the Colossians practiced secret rites of initiation, much like present-day lodges. Through these rites they were promised freedom from the darkness, the dangers, and the ignorance of a world dominated by evil.

14 - IN WHOM WE HAVE THE REDEMPTION, THE DISMISSAL OF SINS.

The beloved Son is He who took His place with mankind for baptism in the Jordan, and again for baptism on Calvary. This is the beloved Son who paid the ransom to bring back Adam and all his children from following Satan. This is the beloved Son who gained for us the dismissal of our sins, sending them off like eager steeds in a race (or prisoners from a dungeon, cf. Luke 4:18), and Paul never tires of reminding us of this Good News. May we never tire of hearing it.

ἁμαρτία, missing the mark, unlike ἁμαρτήμα, is sin in the abstract (sinfulness; the act of sinning) as well as in the concrete sense (the deed when 'tis done). Compare Matthew 1:21: "For He shall save His people from

their sins (ἁμαρτιῶν)." It applies not only to an occasional (or frequent) miss, now and again, but also to the vista view, namely, missing the true end and scope of our lives. "I go to the Father." Recognizing all that sin involves, of course, magnifies our appreciation of the redemption, the dismissal of our sins.

Looking back over the last few verses, we notice also the *fulness* of God's grace. Five times in verses 9-11 the word πᾶς (all, every) is used to help describe the blessing of our lot in the Kingdom of His beloved Son. Who would choose the authority of darkness in place of that?

15 - WHO IS THE IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD, FIRST-BORN OF EVERY CREATURE,

"You are what God looks like to Him," crooned someone that sounded like Steve Lawrence as I woke up to "easy-listening" FM. No wonder I had a headache. Such a sickly picture of God is enough to cause the Colossians to turn back to the rituals of darkness for power to survive in this life. How much more glorious is the picture of God that Paul paints! In a word: Christ.

But a Christ whose glory fills the skies! Not only is Christ a king (1:13), but He is the very image of the invisible God. Here is the heart of the epistle, which beats throughout: the deity of Christ. It is because Christ is the divine creator of all things that His blood has redeeming power (1:14). Here is one with authority to forgive sins (Matt. 9:6). It is because of His deity that He is the head of the Church (1:18), the sustainer of all things (1:17). This is what guards against the syllogisms, philosophies, inanities, etc., that are found down along the elements of this world and not down along Christ (2:8, 9).

When Paul uses the term "image of God" it points us back to the first chapter of the Bible. That Paul had this in mind is confirmed by the references to creation that follow.

In the beginning, God created man in His own image (בְּצַלְמֵי אֱלֹהִים , κατ' εἰκόνα ἡμετέρων), after His likeness (כְּדֹמְיוֹ , καθ' ὁμοίωσιν). But the Christ of God is not κατ' εἰκόνα. He *is* the image. He is the one after whom

the crown of God's creation was fashioned and patterned. If you want to know what the image of God is, look to Christ.

The term εἰκών is used of everything from pictures of Chaldeans painted on the wall (Ezek. 23:14) to the phantom, or "shade," of a man (Ps. 39:7[6]; 38:7 LXX), to carved, or molten images. Apart from Christ and creation, εἰκών almost always represents something relatively lowly, but in Hebrews 10:1 it is also used in opposition to the root meaning ("shadow") of σκιά (Gen. 1:26). "The law is only a shadow (σκιά) of the good things that are coming--not the realities themselves" (οὐκ αὐτὴν τὴν εἰκόνα τῶν πραγμάτων).

Here in Colossians the context suggests that the emphasis should be on the *visibility* of the image of the invisible God. What's important about seeing God? It means blessing. Jesus said to His disciples: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matt. 5:8). To Martha, at the tomb of her brother: "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?" (John 11:40) That meant life! To Thomas: "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). This has always been so, for "by faith he [Moses] forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible" (Heb. 11:27).

That Christ is the first-born of every created thing does not indicate that the Son of God was Himself created at the beginning, for Paul explains it differently:

16 - BECAUSE IN HIM WERE CREATED ALL THINGS IN THE HEAVENS AND UPON THE EARTH, THE VISIBLE AND THE INVISIBLE, WHETHER THRONES OR DOMINIONS OR MAGISTRATES OR AUTHORITIES, ALL THINGS HAVE BEEN CREATED BY HIM AND FOR HIM,

John once heard the twenty-four elders say, "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being" (Rev. 4:11). Paul applies this to Christ when he says that He is the

first-born of every creature because (ὅτι) in Him were created the all, no matter what, no matter where, no matter how much. The all have been created through Him, and unto Him.

Jesus Christ is the first-born because all things (not "all other things," New World Translation) were made by Him (διὰ of secondary agent). All those things which the Colossians were being invited to worship and rely on for power and strength, even Satan himself, were creatures, and were created by the agency of the Word of the Lord (Ps. 33:6), His beloved Son.

What's more, everything was made εἰς αὐτόν, for Him, for His pleasure and His possession. Here is yet another identification of our Lord Jesus Christ with the LORD who is God alone. For it was of God that Paul wrote when he exclaimed:

Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor? Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him? For from him and through him (δι' αὐτοῦ) and to him (εἰς αὐτόν) are all things (τὰ πάντα). To him be the glory forever! Amen. (Rom. 11:33-36)

Thrones, dominions, magistrates, authorities--everything in creation that is above us is below Him. Why should we ever turn elsewhere for security, assurance, or help?

17 - AND HE IS BEFORE ALL AND THE ALL HOLDS TOGETHER IN HIM,

πρό with the genitive (before) is used of place, time, and preference. I would venture to take it in the sense of time: He existed before anything did. Normally, of course, πάντα, all things, would not indicate time, but for the last two verses the apostle has used τὰ πάντα to point us back to the time of the creation of the world. Besides this, the indication of preference is still coming in verse 18, and may also be seen in verse 15 (πρωτότοκος).

Not only did the Son of God precede all of creation, but all things still hold together (endure) in connection with Him.

Who being the brightness of his [God's] glory, and the express image of his person, and *upholding all things by the word of his power*, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. (Heb. 1:3)

What reason could there ever be for the Colossians to turn elsewhere? What problem or difficulty, what word or deed, what person, place, or thing could be unrelated to Him in whom the all holds together? Yes, what law of God, what prophecy or psalm could wander around without touching such a Christ? What a blasphemy to suggest that there could be a prayer that may or may not be related to Jesus Christ, depending on the option of the listening participants!

It is said that relating Christ to all things led Luther and his followers not only to study Scripture, but also to study creation.

We are beginning to regain a knowledge of the creation, a knowledge we had forfeited by the fall of Adam. Now we have a correct view of created reality, more so, I suppose, than they have in the papacy. Erasmus does not concern himself with this; it interests him little how the fetus is made, formed, and developed in the womb. Thus he also fails to prize the excellency of the state of marriage. But by God's mercy we can begin to recognize His wonderful works and wonders also in the flowers when we ponder His might and His goodness. Therefore we laud, magnify, and thank Him. In His creation we recognize the power of His Word. By His Word everything came into being. This power is evident even in a peach stone. No matter how hard its shell, in due season it is forced open by a very soft kernel inside it. All this is ignored by Erasmus. He looks at the creation as a cow stares at a new gate. (Martin Luther, quoted by

John Warwick Montgomery, *In Defense of Martin Luther* [Milwaukee: Northwestern, c1970] 93)

18 - AND HE IS THE HEAD OF THE BODY, THE CHURCH, WHO IS THE BEGINNING, FIRST-BORN FROM THE DEAD, THAT IN EVERYTHING HE HIMSELF MIGHT BE IN FIRST PLACE,

Not only is the beloved Son of God the king of creation, not only is He exalted above all powers, visible and invisible, but He is also the head, ruler, and source of life for that body called out to be His own. Yes, He is even above pious folk and theologians, that they may not manipulate Him to their own will.

The President of the United States might have to admit that there are things he cannot control, but not so Jesus Christ. The power of darkness is limited, and the devil drags a chain, but the Kingdom of His dear Son finds nothing outside of His jurisdiction.

In all this, whether powerful or pious, natural or numinous or νεκρός (dead), the beloved Son holds first place. As though to emphasize at this climactic point the unique preeminence of the Christ, Paul here uses a verb used nowhere else in the New Testament (πρωτεύω).

HE is number one, any way you slice it,

19 - FOR IN HIM IT PLEASSED (THE FATHER) FOR ALL THE FULNESS TO DWELL

Here again is the deity of Christ held up. Here is the reason He can be number one in everything (including exegesis, homiletics, and propaedeutics). In Him is all fulness, the fulness of time, the fulness of the Church, the fulness of God (cf. Eph. 1:10, 23; 3:19), for in Him is all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and you are complete in Him (2:9). "The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live (κατοικεῖ) in shrines made by man" (Acts 17:24). But He was happy (εὐδόκησεν) to have all the fulness live in Christ! This is the death of every rival.

Lord, I come to Thee for rest,
Take possession of my breast;
There Thy blood-bought right maintain
And without a rival reign.

20 - AND THROUGH HIM TO RECONCILE AGAIN ALL THINGS UNTO HIM, HAVING MADE PEACE THROUGH THE BLOOD OF HIS CROSS, THROUGH HIM, WHETHER THE THINGS UPON THE EARTH OR THE THINGS IN THE HEAVENS.

In Him lives all fulness and perfection. Through Him the Father was pleased to reconcile all things unto Himself. "Through Him," the apostle repeats twice as though to add a "soli" in the margin. Through Him, not through philosophy and vain deceit, not through ordinances or angel worship or ceremonies or other rudiments of the world--and certainly not through mixing them all together--the peace has been made. ALL things are brought into harmony with the creator once again through Him. And how was this task accomplished? With trance and mantra? Through the blood of His cross! Paul will not let us think of His blood as some abstract "life force" in this passage. It is the blood of the cross, His physical dying on the tree, that filled the terms of the peace treaty, for it was the death of Him in whom all the fulness lived.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God" (Matt. 5:9). And well they should be so called, for they are being built up unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ (Eph. 4:13).

Paul Schaller

(To Be Continued)

CHAPEL ADDRESS

(The following address was given at Immanuel Lutheran College on March 21, 1985.)

We pray: Lord, teach us to appreciate your gifts to the Church.

Fellow students of the Word:

Today we give thanks and praise to God for His gift given to us three hundred years ago, Johann Sebastian Bach. He was born in the family of the Eisenach town trumpeter, Johann Ambrosius Bach, and his wife Elizabeth on March 21, 1685.

Johann Sebastian grew up in the Bach household in the land of the Reformation. He received instruction in the Word from God, in Luther's *Small Catechism*, and in Bible History. Three basic forces lay in the background of Johann Sebastian's special gifts in music: 1. His home life in East Central Germany (Heimatswelt); 2. His religion and faith, as professed by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany (Glaubenswelt); and 3. His professional activity as a Christian musician (Berufswelt). And these forces rested upon the essential gift from God--a child-like faith in Jesus, a love of the Gospel, and a profound reverence for the Word of God. This gift from God, common to many believers, was blessed with the uncommon gift of musical genius. That gift Johann Sebastian used always "in the name of Jesus" and to the glory of God. He was God's servant to serve Him with songs and melodies and musical expressions which, like David's Psalms, became a treasury of worship.

In taking note of the anniversary of this very special musical gift to the Church, we turn to the Word recorded by the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Roman Christians, 12:6-8, 11:

We have gifts that are different according to what His love gave us. If you can speak God's Word, do it according to the faith you have. If you can serve, then serve. If you can teach, teach. If you can encourage, encourage. If you share, be generous. If you manage anything, do it eagerly. If you help people in need, do it cheerfully. . . . Don't be backward in zeal. Glow with the Spirit. Serve the Lord. (Beck)

Paul proclaimed the great Gift of God in all of his written and spoken words. He set forth the truth of the eternal Father who so loved the world, that He gave His only Son to be the ransom for all lost souls, He gave us the word of reconciliation, He gave us Christ's righteousness, He gave us life in Christ, He gave us His home as our eternal mansions where we will live with Him forevermore.

But the love of God keeps giving. He gives His children on earth many gifts for their faith-life, all gifts of pure unmerited grace. Of such gifts the apostle speaks in our text. Paul reminds us that the gifts of God to His Church are many and varied, even as our needs are many and varied. He knows all our needs and His love provides. We have from Him the gift of those who speak the Word to us, who serve us, who teach us, who encourage and admonish us, who support us and help us, who supervise us, and much more!

In view of these differing gifts, the believers are reminded not to lack zeal, become discouraged, or be poky about their calling in life. Rather, let the children of light glow with the Spirit, be lively, alert, fresh, and charged-up to serve the Lord. His children will avoid expending vast energies to serve self, self-interests, or the material world--they will be serving the Lord!

As we ponder the diversity of gifts which the love of God has given us, we are mindful of Johann Sebastian Bach. We could with ease run short of time even if we

used the entire day and night to recite some of the major musical works of Johann Sebastian, and some of the praises men have showered upon him for his works. However, we are not here to honor the man, but to honor the love of our God who gave to His Church (among so many other gifts) the precious gift of sacred music from His believing child, Johann Sebastian.

Indeed, if our gratitude to God for giving us the music of Johann Sebastian is to be sincere and with knowledge, we will be in need of singing, hearing, and performing some of his fine works. For, neglect of such sacred gifts among us is a neglect of some of the products of our Father's goodness to us.

Would that we had the time right now to hear a few strains from Bach's *Passion according to St. Matthew* or his *Passion according to St. John*; from his complete church service in sacred sound, the *Mass in B Minor*; from his musical sacred history beginning with the creation and moving through the Fall, the promises, the fulfillment, to the resurrection on the last day, the *Art of the Fugue*. Oh, to hear the beauty and strength of the chorales, such as *From Heaven Above*; *Lord Jesus Christ, With Us Abide*; *O Sacred Head*; *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring*--and these are but a few of the sacred songs written for the Sundays of the church year. Perhaps some day our ILC library will have a collection of the recorded works of Johann Sebastian. We do need to become familiar with such gifts.

Lord, teach us to appreciate your gifts! Amen.

Prof. Gordon Radtke

A NEW PERICOPIC SYSTEM

The 25th Anniversary Committee has solicited input from all segments of the CLC for the celebration of her twenty-fifth anniversary. The editor of the Ministry by Mail is responding by attempting to develop a new set of pericopes for the anniversary year. The sermons based on these pericopes will appear on a weekly basis in the Ministry by Mail. Due to a production time lapse between preparation and printing, the church year began with the new year.

The development of a new pericopic system is admittedly a rather presumptuous undertaking by an individual, although it has been done by others as Thomasius, Lenski, Ranke, and Soll. The ground has been well and repeatedly covered. There are only so many texts available. A completely new selection for each Sunday of the church year would probably prove more incongruous than novel. Such is not the objective of the present attempt.

The aim is rather to develop a series of texts with a common theme within the parameters of the traditional church year. The theme is "The Kingdom of God." The Kingdom of God is the great theme of all Scripture, nationalistic and prophetic in form in the Old Testament, realized and universal in the New Testament.

The need for such a new study of the Kingdom of God has arisen from the ever-widening influence of dispensational preachers and teachers, especially in the electronic ministries. The concept of the Kingdom has been usurped by them for the nation of Israel. According to their hermeneutic the prophets saw in vivid, realistic pictures the glory of the future Kingdom of Christ, the Son of David, over Israel on the literal throne of David in the literal city of Jerusalem in the soon and eagerly awaited Millennium, the Church having been previously removed from the earth by the Rapture. The Church allegedly does not come into focus in prophecy; it is,

as it were, a parenthetical development, a second option, a secondary receiver in football parlance, that came into existence because Israel refused the offer of its earthly Kingdom in the days when both the Baptizer and Jesus preached the Kingdom. God allegedly has three distinct programs--one for the nation of Israel, another for the Church, and a third for the nations. According to this view we are currently in the Church era, God's fall-back plan because Israel failed to perceive that Jesus was offering them the restoration of the Davidic Kingdom. There has been a power outage on the prophetic clock since that time. Power will be turned on and the prophetic clock will start ticking again as soon as the Church has been raptured. Then will come the seven-year "Great Tribulation," followed by the millennial rule of Christ on earth. One cannot escape the impression that the Millennium is the key to the understanding of Scripture and the goal of all of God's designs. The cross became necessary because of the blindness of Israel that manifested itself in Israel's failing to perceive that Jesus was offering Himself to them as their political king. Thus the future Millennium replaces the past Cross as the central event in the history of mankind's salvation. The ramifications are truly disturbing: The Psalms belong to Israel, as well as the Sermon on the Mount. The third petition of the Lord's Prayer becomes a prayer for the exaltation of the nation of Israel through the return of Christ to establish His Jewish Kingdom during the Millennium. The Seventieth Week of Daniel, the Olivet Discourse of our Lord, and the Revelation of Jesus become the foundation for an elaborate eschatological religious fiction that distorts the Christian's hope while supporting a new multi-million dollar "end time" business. The movement also has serious political implications since any criticism of, lack of support of, or vote against modern Israel is judged to be real or intended violence to God's chosen people, thereby invoking upon the doer God's curse (Gen. 12:3).

There has been a continuing, effective polemic against Dispensationalism within the Reformed ranks, e.g., the classic by Oswald T. Allis *Prophecy and the*

Church (c1947). But there has been a dearth of effort on the part of conservative Lutheranism. In the past generation August Pieper of WELS and Theodore Laetsch of LC-MS defended the traditional hermeneutic--that Israel of old developed into the Israel of God or the Church in the New Testament era, that the glorious prophecies of the Kingdom in the Old Testament have been, are being, and shall continue to be realized in the Church with the consummation lying in the future at the second coming of the King, not to establish an earthly Jewish Kingdom with a rod of iron, but to conduct His present Kingdom to everlasting glory.

The background for the present new Kingdom of God pericopic system is the distorting hermeneutic of the Dispensationalists. The effort is to be considered but mildly polemical, predominantly instructive. Our generation must earn what it has inherited from the fathers if we are to possess it spiritually. To achieve this texts will be selected from both the Old and New Testaments, the Gospels and Epistles, especially from the three larger groupings of our Lord's parables, and from His Revelation. Trinity season may well feature the study of one of the prophets, probably Zechariah. The texts and the weekly sermons in the Ministry by Mail will stress the organic relationship of the Old and New Testaments, the development of the Kingdom from its Old Testament nationalistic mold into its New Testament universal unfolding, the spiritual nature of the Kingdom from Genesis to Revelation, and the ultimate truth that the CROSS is the climactic event in the history of the Kingdom with the full unfolding of the blessings of the CROSS to occur at the second coming of the King.

The Advent-Christmas series is herewith presented. Advent I--the Protevangel, the very first announcement of the coming King and His Kingdom. The spiritual nature of the Kingdom is immediately apparent, namely, reconciliation of an alienated Humanity through Humanity's bruising the head of Satan. Advent II--the very last Old Testament Messianic prophecy, revealing the dual nature of the Kingdom: the "Day burning as an oven"

and the "Sun of righteousness arising with healing." Advent III--the familiar Isaianic prophecy of the "Voice" in its fourfold manifestation. Advent IV and Christmas are taken from the Assyrian era of Isaiah's prophetic work, during which he saw present and future deliverance in the person of "Immanuel," who is ever "Light" for all in the darkness of sin and all its consequences. The Sunday after Christmas brings the Benedictus of Zacharias, the last prophecy before the coming of the Lord, with its backward and forward purview of the history of salvation.

Paul F. Nolting

THE TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY SERIES: THE KINGDOM OF GOD

1. First Sunday in Advent

Text: Genesis 3:14-15

THE COMING OF THE KING WAS FIRST ANNOUNCED!

- I. He would come to combat Satan and sin.
- II. He would come to save Humanity.
- III. He would come as sure and certain Victor.

Lections: OT - Psalm 45

Epistle - Hebrews 2:14-18

Gospel - Luke 1:68-79

2. Second Sunday in Advent

Text: Malachi 3:13-4:6

"THE DAY IS COMING!"

- I. That Day has come, continues to come, and shall come.
- II. That Day is a day of burning for the wicked, healing for those who fear the Lord's Name.
- III. Therefore: "Remember the Law of Moses, My Servant."

Lections: OT - Malachi 2:17-3:7

Epistle - 2 Thessalonians 1:3-17

Gospel - Matthew 25:31-46

3. Third Sunday in Advent

Text: Isaiah 40:1-11

THE LORD ANNOUNCES HIS OWN ADVENT -

- I. Through the Voice of Your God: COMFORT!
- II. Through the Voice of One in the Wilderness: REPENT!
- III. Through the Voice of the Prophet: REST ASSURED!
- IV. Through the Voice of Zion: HE IS VICTOR; YOU ARE GLORIFIED!

Lections: OT - Psalm 24:7-10

Epistle - Acts 3:12-19

Gospel - Luke 3:7-17

4. Fourth Sunday in Advent

Text: Isaiah 7:7-17

THE SIGN OF THE VIRGIN-BORN SON--EVER
"IMMANUEL" FOR HIS PEOPLE!

- I. King Ahaz rejected that SIGN and brought judgment upon his kingdom.
- II. Faith or unbelief in the SIGN brings either judgment or blessing.

The Lections: OT - Isaiah 7:1-6

Epistle - Titus 3:1-7

Gospel - Luke 2:25-35

5. Festival of Christmas

Text: Isaiah 9:1-6

LIGHT FOR THOSE IN DARKNESS -

- I. Through the Child born, the Son given!
- II. Through the eternal Kingdom He established!

Lections: OT - Isaiah 11:1-9

Epistle - 1 John 1:5-10

Gospel - John 1:6-13

6. Sunday after Christmas

Text: Luke 1:68-79

THE HORN OF SALVATION--EVER SALVATION FOR HIS PEOPLE!

- I. Salvation meant rescue from all enemies with the goal of raising up the "Horn of Salvation" according to the covenant sworn to Abraham.
- II. Salvation meant rescue from all enemies so that we can serve the "Horn of Salva-

tion" in holiness and righteousness in the gracious power of the remission of sins.

Lections: OT - Isaiah 12:1-6

Epistle - Galatians 4:4-7

Gospel - Luke 2:21-24

(To Be Continued)

BOOK NOTICE

Sermon Texts, edited by Ernst H. Wendland. Milwaukee: Northwestern, 1984. 179 pages, hardcover, \$9.95.

To those who do not have Paul W. Nesper's *Biblical Texts* or Frederic H. K. Soll's *Pericopes and Selections*, which are both out of print, this handbook of sermon texts will come as a welcome addition to any pastor's library. Each text carries with it a brief summary statement of the thought of the text. The pericopic series for the church year listed are the following: Historic Pericopes (of the 16th century, with Old Testament pericopes of more recent date); Eisenach Selections; Thomasius Selections; Synodical Conference Selections; Soll Selections; and Series A, B, and C of the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship (ILCW). In addition the book contains free texts for festivals and seasons and for special occasions. Very helpful are the two indexes which are provided. The first lists the Bible references from Genesis through Revelation. The second is organized according to the church year, with a listing of the pericopic systems and their text selections for each Sunday and festival.

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