

**CONTENTS**

**EXEGESIS OF PAUL'S FIRST LETTER TO TIMOTHY**  
(Continuation)

**Joh. Ylvisaker**  
(Trans. by C. M. Gullerud)

**PANORAMA: MEETING OF WELS/ELS AND CLC – AN INTERIM REPORT**

**John Lau**

**"LEARN OF JESUS CHRIST TO PRAY": A SERMON STUDY**  
**ON JESUS' SACERDOTAL PRAYER IN JOHN 17**

**Paul Fleischer**

**PAIDEIA: FROM A PASTOR'S AND PROFESSOR'S NOTEBOOK (continuation)**

**Roland A. Gurgel**

---

## Exegesis Of Paul's First Letter To Timothy\*

Prof. Dr. Joh. Ylvisaker

(Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota, 1906.)

(Continuation)

### Chapter 3

In the preceding chapter the apostle has given instructions regarding congregational prayer, the persons praying, and in this connection the relation between man and woman in the church assembly and otherwise. Now he passes on to give instructions regarding the church offices in the congregation and the qualifications required in those who are invested with these offices (1-13): (1) bishops and presbyters (1-7); (2) deacons and deaconesses (8-13).

V. 1. ΠΙΣΤΟΣ ὁ λόγος, "This is a faithful saying." This formula of affirmation, which was used also in 1:15, here, as there, points forward to what follows. ἘΠΙΣΚΟΠῆ, which really means "oversight," is used in Luke 19:44 and 1 Pet. 2:12 with the meaning of "visitation." In Acts 1:20 it is used with the meaning of an office. Thus also here: "overseer, the office of bishop." That this office was, in the apostolic era, identical with the pastoral office, this we shall soon see when we turn to a discussion of the relation of bishops and presbyters to each other. ὉΡΕΓΕΙΝ, "desire," really means "reach out," "stretch out for something with the purpose of obtaining it." The word has the same connotation as "reach." It calls for a genitive, as do the verbs which mean "to want," "to have desire for." Here the word most closely indicates the inner desire, but when Paul in the following speaks of the qualifications of a bishop, he presupposes that the individual also makes his desire known. "He desires a good work." The word ἔΡΓΟΝ, "work," fits here very well. It refers to ἘΠΙΣΚΟΠῆ and is used to show that the office of a bishop involves work and is not for pleasure or enjoyment, even though Huther has his reservations on this interpretation. Jerome says: *opus, non dignitatem, non delicias*.<sup>1</sup>

---

\* translated by C. M. Gullerud

Augustine: *Episcopatus nomen est operis non honoris.*<sup>2</sup> J. Gerhard: *Non honorem desiderat, sed opus, qui desiderat episcopatum; significat enim episcopae superintendentiam, non eminentiam otiosam.*<sup>3</sup> And it is so true that *sacerdotium non est otium, sed magnum negotium.*<sup>4</sup> Although the office of bishop is an office involving work, it is nevertheless a beautiful, a good work. Nothing can be more glorious on earth than to be God's co-worker, to be a keeper in His garden, to be a builder of that temple in which God dwells, to be shepherd of His fold, to feed both lambs and sheep. He who minimizes this work, minimizes Christendom.

V. 2. In v. 1 Paul speaks of the office, in v. 2 of the incumbent of the office and the necessary qualifications for it. οὖν, "therefore" [NKJV, "then"], indicates the connection. The incumbent's fitness should correspond to the greatness of the office. It is true, as Wiesinger says, *die Schoenheit und Herrlichkeit des Amtes vertraegt sich nicht mit sittlicher Haeslichkeit seines Traegers.*<sup>5</sup> All experience teaches how important it is that the right kind of a person occupies the office. The word ἐπίσκοπος, "bishop," referring to man, is found here and in Acts 20:28; Phil. 1:1; Tit. 1:7 and, referring to Christ, in 1 Pet. 2:25. As far as the office and its work in the apostolic times is concerned, the word "bishop" corresponds to the words "presbyter" and "elder." The whole difference between them is as follows: "presbyter," according to its root meaning, refers to the person's dignity, whether because of age or because of maturity and experience or because of the high office involved. The term "bishop" points to the work of the office, its activity. That the office of bishop and the office of presbyter are one and the same in the apostolic era, this is shown in Acts 20:17,28; Tit. 1:5,7; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:2, together with 1 Tim. 5:17; 1 Pet. 5:1,2. Ignatius (d. AD 107 or 115) was the first one to differentiate between bishops and presbyters, placing the first ones over the latter. Church history teaches us how this came about. It is true, as Jerome says: "Elder is the same as bishop and, before the devil brought many parties into the churches, these were directed according to the advice of the elders." With the exception of the pastoral letters, the word "presbyter" is not found in the Pauline writings, in which he speaks less often of the office. The reason for this is that he is writing to congregations, and there the attention is directed to other things.

When Paul begins to speak of the necessary qualifications for the office, then he first of all points to the moral character and then to the fitness required. At the top of the list, he places the common expression "blameless." ἀνεπίληπτον is formed from ἀνά and ἐπιλαμβάνω and means one who cannot be seized, one who cannot be apprehended, one who cannot be shouldered with blame (Cf. v. 7). His past and present life should be unblamable. The first word indicates what the apostle especially wants to point to. It involves the charges which might be raised against the candidate in the sphere of morality. He who is to be called to be pastor should be of good report. In the OT it was required that the minister should be free of any bodily defect (Lev. 21:17ff). This was to picture the holiness of the place where he was to work. If one is to work in the office with blessing, then he must strive to keep himself pure. The minister who does not strive to be an example for his flock becomes a barrier between God's word and the human heart. He who corrupts himself by open sins cannot with fearlessness or with blessing punish the wicked and exhort them to holiness and good works. It is self-evident that the reference is not to evil report which flows from the gossip and lies of others. For in such a case one must, with the apostle, be ready to work under bad report as well as the good.

"The husband of one wife." What does this mean? Most modern interpreters do not take this to be a prohibition of polygamy, (1) because, according to their view, this hardly existed any more; therefore, such a prohibition would not be necessary, since no trace of polygamy among Christians can be found at that time; (2) because this expression must be interpreted in harmony with the expression in 5:9, "wife of one man," which cannot possibly refer to polyandry, since this did not occur. It has therefore been assumed that Paul is here speaking about deutergamy (a second marriage), which some church fathers have practically regarded as a sin for a presbyter, thus, e.g., Athenagoras, M. Felix, Tertullian. Though Paul, they say, does not right out make it a sin in general to enter a second marriage, he does nevertheless forbid it to bishops, since to refrain from it would be regarded as a proof of superior moral seriousness and strength even among the heathen. They look for support for this interpretation in Luke 2:36-37 and 1 Cor. 7:9. But these passages do not provide such proof. And the word "one" can only refer to the present and not to the future.

Nor can Paul in this instance require more of a bishop than of any others. Ministers should not form a caste for themselves which excludes other Christians. Whether or not a pastor should enter into a second marriage depends on the gift of continence. In addition, the care of children is another consideration. It is certainly true that many in the early Christian era considered it a mark of special holiness not to enter into a second marriage, but one must not attribute such a view to Paul. This found its way into the church with asceticism.

The Greek church has understood the passage as requiring the bishop to be married, to have a wife, this in accordance with the apostle's will. But then Paul should have set a good example. The apostles, too, were ministers (Cf. 1 Pet. 5:1). At any rate, then Paul should have made it clear to us here why he did not marry. In such case as the above, one would also have to understand v. 4 as requiring the pastor to have children. No, there is no commandment here requiring marriage. Neither is there a prohibition forbidding a second marriage. Such an interpretation would also conflict with other clear passages of Scripture. If death has severed the marriage bond, then it is as true of the surviving spouse as of one who has never married that it is not good that man should be alone (Gen. 2:18). We think also of what Paul says in 1 Cor. 7:2, and Scripture gives no indication that it is forbidden or is unseemly for a surviving spouse to enter into a new marriage. On the contrary, it is stated that in such a case one is entirely free (Cf. Rom. 7:23; 1 Cor. 7:39; and in v. 8, where the widows and virgins are placed on the same plane with reference to marriage).

Huther (in Meyer's *Commentary*) and several modern exegetes with him reject both the interpretation which contends that the passage forbids deuterogamy and that which holds that it forbids polygamy, as they affirm the following: *Der Bischof soll ein Mann sein, der mit keiner anderen Frau auser der ihm ehelich Verbundener in geschlechtlicher Gemeinschaft lebt oder gelebt hat.*<sup>6</sup> This is certainly a misunderstanding. It is likely true that fornication was common in those days, and that Gentile Christian congregations then, as now, found it difficult to consider unchastity as a sin, and that, on that account, there could be good reason for the apostle to require strict marriage faithfulness on the part of the pastor. But if it was the intention of the apostle to state here that the bishop

should not be a fornicator either now or earlier, then it is difficult to understand why he uses the present expression and not another which in a straight-forward way would say that his marriage should be honorable and his bed undefiled (Heb. 13:4). When it is said that Paul had no reason here to prohibit polygamy, since it was certainly known to Timothy and Titus that this was unacceptable and since polygamy was not a problem among the Christians, yet it must be admitted that polygamy did exist among Jews and Gentiles and among the higher classes. It could not, therefore, be considered superfluous if a definite order was issued prohibiting bishops from becoming guilty of polygamy. But this does not wipe out the view which one may share with Mathies, who stresses the textually emphasized  $\mu\epsilon\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$  "one," so that *mit Leib und Seele in der Tat und Wahrheit nur einer Frau Mann sein sollte*,<sup>7</sup> namely, that he should have one proper wife without any forbidden attachments to other women. Paul certainly would allow whatever the words permit. Calvin takes the passage as referring to a polygamous relation in which he lived before he became a Christian. When such a person became a Christian the apostle would hardly force him to separate himself from one or more wives. What was depraved in itself, the apostle bore with that, since he could not at once correct it. But of the bishop it should be required. But this interpretation involves many dangerous assertions.

Next the bishop is to be  $\nu\eta\phi\acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\omicron\varsigma$ , "watchful" [NKJV, "temperate"]. The proper meaning of the word  $\nu\eta\phi\acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\omicron\varsigma$  is *sobrius*, "sober," and can refer both to physical and spiritual sobriety. Calov says: *Hoc de corporis, non de mentis sobrietate accipi potest*<sup>8</sup> and supports this view with the argument that  $\sigma\acute{\omega}\phi\rho\omega\nu$ , *sobrietas mentis*, follows immediately thereafter. With Calov's interpretation it would be better to point to the preceding; because, if we look at the foregoing, it would be most natural to understand sobriety as referring here to the physical, since fornication and drunkenness are vices synonymous to it. But if we look forward in the text, then the word points rather to spiritual sobriety; for in v. 3 drunkenness is specifically forbidden. What is here required, therefore, is that the pastor be a spiritually sober person, one who does not go to extremes either on account of sensuous desires or spiritual pride and fanaticism.

σώφρων, "temperate" [NKJV, "sober-minded"]. σώφρων is σώς + φρήν, *mentis compos*, "sound of mind," and this as well in contrast to μαίνεσθαι ("rave"—in an intellectual sense), as in contrast to covetousness and passions which are depravities in a moral sense. A temperate man is one who can control his passions.

"Decent" [NKJV, "of good behavior"], κόσμιος points to a worthy disposition inasmuch as it reveals itself in an outward dignity, a decent behavior. To this belongs a good, tactful conduct toward all and not least toward those of the other gender. To this also belongs modest dress, not showy, not careless, or soiled. He who is sloppily and indecently dressed and of a careless behavior invariably gives the impression that the performance of his office is similarly characterized.

"Hospitable." Regarding the attitude of his mind, the φιλόξενος stands in contrast to ἀφιλόργυρος and ἀίσχροκέρδης in v. 8 (Cf. also 1 Pet. 4:9). Hospitality is recommended to all Christians (Rom. 12:13; Heb. 13:2). But for pastors it applies in a special sense. In this, too, they are to be an example to the flock. And not only in that age but in every age a pastor's hospitality has a drawing power. In that age there was rich opportunity to show hospitality, for there were not then such accommodations, hotels, etc., as we have now. In addition, the time was at hand when persecutions were encountered.

"Qualified to teach others" [NKJV, "able to teach"]. διδακτικὸς is not one who wishes to teach others but one who is able. For such activity a number of things are necessary, as Pastoral Theology will make apparent to us. He must be a true Christian, for otherwise he would not be able to divide law and gospel in a proper manner nor apply God's word as he should. He must have a sound and clear mind. He must be able to organize his thoughts and have a clear voice. He must be well-grounded in the truth of God's word. διδακτικὸς is not a classical Greek word and appears only here in the NT and in 2 Tim. 2:24.

V. 3. Now the negative instructions follow. One might think that these negatives were so self-evident that they did not need to be mentioned, but one must remember that such sins

which were commonly not considered sinful among the heathen could not at once be removed from the Christian congregations. One must remember that conditions are such also in many places in our day that such prohibitions are timely and necessary. The individual negative parts are not difficult to understand. μὴ πάροινος, "not given to wine." πάροινος (from παρά and οἶνος) is essentially one who steadily sits by the wine, a *vinosus*, *vinolentus*, a "wino." Drunkenness was hardly considered a sin among the heathen. From Eph. 5:18 we see that not even the Christians considered drunkenness with the right moral seriousness. Asia Minor was a land of vineyards. There it was common to drink much and strong wine. μὴ πλήκτης, "not a fighter" [NKJV, "not violent"]. This is placed in connection with the foregoing as a result of it, for the word πλήκτης, according to the context, means "one who is brutal, fiery"; drinking and brutality often go together. μὴ αἰσχροκερδής, "not (given) to evil profit" [NKJV, "not greedy for money"]. This prohibition contained in Textus Receptus and found in some manuscripts is omitted by Tischendorf and not included in the recent Norwegian translation. It would seem to be very much in place here. Many congregations, then as now, were poor mission congregations. The pastor could therefore easily be tempted to seek after easy profits to make a living. Besides, we know that the search for material gain is not a lust which pastors find it easy to avoid. There is a proverb which says: "The pastor's sack is never full." Let this not be true of any of us! ἐπιεικής, "a just, a reasonable man" [NKJV, "gentle"]; not one who stubbornly sticks to his point, but rather yields if this can be done without injury to the truth. He is to be one who has regard for others even though others do not show regard for him. Gerhard says: ἐπιεικής *est aequus, humanus, mansuetus, qui aliorum moribus et affectibus se accomodat.*<sup>9</sup> ἄμαχος, one who does not cause strife, even though he readily contends for the truth, a peaceful man. ἀφιλάργυρος, "not covetous." The Lord's servant is not to be one who seeks after the wool of the sheep but their souls for God (Cf. Ezek. 34:2,3,8,10). Love of money is a root of all evil and therefore it is warned against so often (Cf. Eph. 4:19; 5:5; Col. 3:5).

V. 4. Besides the basic qualities which should be required of one who is to occupy the office of bishop, attention is also to be directed to his conduct toward his own family, specifi-

█

cally his conduct as house-father. His conduct in his own home should serve as a standard for judging his ability to serve in God's congregation. His Christian influence in his family should indicate what could be expected of him as responsible leader in God's congregation. Daechsel says correctly: "From the ruling of his house one can judge how the pastor would carry out his official duties. A careless and disorderly home life in the parsonage gives an unfavorable presentation of what one might expect in the performance of the pastor's office." ἰδίος, "his own," in contrast to the church of God (v. 5), which is the house of God (v. 15). With οἶκος, "house," the apostle indicates the whole family, therefore also the wife and those under authority, servants and especially the children. From the manner in which the pastor rules his own house one has the right to judge the manner in which he would rule as leader in the congregation. This is what the apostle teaches us here. τέκνα ἔχοντα ἐν ὑποταγῇ . . . , "having his children in submission" with all reverence. This is the obvious translation. The meaning, therefore, is not this, that the pastor **must** have children; but if he has children, they are to be obedient. Paul, therefore, is saying that the pastor should know how to carry out the fourth commandment in his own house. ἐν indicates the atmosphere in which the children are to live and breathe. And ὑποταγῇ, which has the emphasis, shows that the children are to be such who have learned to bow to the God-given order of things, namely, be willing to submit to the will of the parents. μετὰ πάσης σεμνότητος, "with all reverence." This does not say that the bishop should carry out his activity as educator in the home with reverence, for the reference is to the children. That they should submit to the parents with willing obedience is to be carried out with "reverence," with a mind, therefore, that observes a reverent attitude, a mind which is ready to stay within the limits set by God and man (Cf. 2:2). The children are to be well-behaved children. But that the pastor has obedient children should establish the fact that he has been a Christian house-father. The following shows that this is what Paul has in mind. But even though this is so, it does not follow that a bishop is under all circumstances to be judged unfit for his office as soon as it can be shown that he has an ungodly son or daughter. The best Christian father or educator may experience the sorrow of having a child who falls into manifest sin.

V. 5. This verse presents a parenthetical addition. The thought of verse 4 is continued in verse 6. Here it is shown that it was necessary for the apostle to set forth the quality for a bishop as expressed in verse 4. If children are bad as a result of the upbringing, if the conduct of the children is bad because of the stamp placed on them by the father's training, then this question is in place: if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God; if he is not able to do the lesser, how shall he be able to do the greater? The apostle places the fitness for both areas on the same basis. What makes one fit to rule his own house makes him also fit to rule the house of God. Therefore we have a conclusion drawn from the one to another. The office, of course, presents a wider area of activity. However, the same characteristics of a Christian, moral personality are as necessary in the office as in the narrower circle of the home. Self-evidently there are more aspects and other conditions involved in the office of the bishop of a congregation than in the home. Paul knows this and lets this be known, in a way, when alongside the similarity between home and congregation he points to a great difference by use of the words ἰδίος and θεοῦ, "his own house" and "the church of God." In the one case it is the human sphere, and in the other it is God's congregation. ἐπιμελέομαι is the Latin *curam alicujus gero*, "I exercise care for something" (Luke 10:34ff). The future sets forth the ethical question: how can this be possible? How will he be able to do this? A person may put forth great efforts, but objectively the result will be bad. He lacks the necessary fitness.

V. 6. μὴ νεόφυτος, "not a new convert." Linguistically the presentation is dependent on δεῦ in v. 2. νεόφυτος (from νέος and φύω) is really "a new transplant," namely, in God's vineyard or a grafting on Christ who is the true vine. From this the word gets the meaning, "a new convert," one who recently has become a Christian. The word appears only here in the NT but often in the LXX. The apostle accordingly requires that he who would be a pastor should not be a child in Christ. The required stability, insight, and Christian experience would be lacking. But here the apostle has special reference to the danger to the person himself—he will so easily be muddled by spiritual pride. To this the young Christian may be more susceptible than the mature one. He has not been sufficiently trained in the school of experience. If he is successful in the

pastoral office, this may so easily go to his head and cause him to fall into the same condemnation as the devil. This is not to be understood as a falling into the devil's net or power, for the word κρῖμα does not have this meaning. It does not mean a "charge" or "accusation" but "doom," *sententia damnatoria* ("condemning sentence"). The genitive τοῦ διαβόλου cannot be a subjective genitive, signifying a sentence passed by the devil through the agency of men, for the devil has no condemning power. The sentence will be one he has brought upon himself and cannot, therefore, be called the devil's condemnation. *Diabolus non iudicat, sed iudicatur.*<sup>10</sup> In v. 7 we do indeed have a subjective genitive (τοῦ διαβόλου), but not here. Here the genitive must be an objective genitive. He who is puffed up with pride will be condemned as the devil was condemned. The same judgment will befall him, and it will befall him for the same reason, *dasselbe Gericht in Folge desselben Falls* (Wiesinger).<sup>11</sup> Truly it is not specifically stated in other passages of Scripture that the devil's sin was the sin of pride, but it seems to be stated clearly enough here, and one cannot well conceive of any other original sin among spirits. It was by this sin that the devil deceived Eve; to this sin the devil tempted Jesus. In the church it has commonly been held that pride was the sin into which the devil fell. The interpretation, then, becomes the following: God will condemn him for his pride in the same manner as he condemned the devil. Those who follow the devil in pride will also follow him in condemnation (Cf. 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6).

One may wonder at this, that Paul sets up such a requirement which says that the pastor is not to be a neophyte. He could not always follow this standard himself. When, in his missionary journeys, he established one congregation after another, then surely more than one neophyte became bishop. But one must remember to whom it is that the apostle is writing. Timothy was left behind in Ephesus. There Christendom had held sway for a number of years, and the churchly rites had been established. It is hardly accidental that this same requirement is missing in the letter to Titus. He was left in Crete, where the congregations had just recently been established. In such circles this requirement could not be made that a bishop should not be newly converted, for where, then, would they find bishops to serve? In Crete it is very likely true that all the Christians were recent converts. By comparing the letters on

this matter the result will be that where churchly rites are well established, there no neophyte should be chosen as pastor, and that only in the case where churchly needs require it is it permissible to deviate from this rule. In the final analysis it is true, as Daechsel says: "The church has suffered much damage when untried and untested people have been called to occupy important offices in the church."

V. 7. δεῦ, the "must" of v. 2 is repeated at this point because the first δεῦ is somewhat far away. δέ, "moreover," does not introduce a contrast to v. 6, but provides a transition to something else. The δέ is the so called metabastic δέ. καί, "and," serves to set off the new qualification which is to be added to those already listed. The apostle here proceeds to the pastor's past. The people on the outside, the non-Christians, are to have no opportunity to find fault with his past life. Among those involved in his past he is to have a good report. It is not enough that he is without reproach now; he must have been so before, naturally in a relative sense, according to which it could be said of an unconverted person that he was without reproach. His life among the Gentiles and the Jews who know his past must be such that he is judged to be an honorable person. It was of greater importance for the spread of the church in the early years that the pastor be blameless and be able to command esteem and respect (Cf. Lev. 21:17ff). Carelessness in this matter could stifle the growth of God's kingdom. Yes, God's kingdom could become the butt of ridicule. The same is the case also now. Here the reference directs the attention particularly to the pastor himself, "lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil." The language does not determine whether ὀνειδισμός, "reproach," is to be understood in an absolute sense, as our translation has it, or if it is to be combined with διαβόλου, "of the devil," in the same manner as with παγίδα, "snare." As Huther says, there are arguments for both sides. That ὀνειδισμός is separated from παγίδα by the following ἐμπέση seems to prove that it stands as an absolute, while the absence of εἰς before παγίδα seems to point more in the other direction. But the meaning would then be more difficult to comprehend. The natural view would be to understand it as our translations, both old and new, have taken it. The logical subject would then be those who are on the outside. If the pastor was a depraved person in his earlier life, this would now be made known and it could result in his falling into the

abyss awaiting to swallow him, as it were. If he does not have a good name and reputation, this will cast a shadow over his activity. He would then easily surrender, lose heart in the work of his calling, and cease to fight the good fight. Satan will ensnare him who was freed but now again falls back into his power (2 Tim. 2:26). It is also true, as Plitt says: "It is a sad occasion when people on the outside have a pastor in their power through secrets which they know of him, with the result that he must deal with them and satisfy them in many ways to silence them. He thereby involves himself in untruth and hypocrisy and is crippled in his entire activity."

Vv. 8-13 contain qualifications for deacons and deaconesses. The early church in the beginning retained such regulations in the synagogue as did not violate the evangelical spirit. These were carried over in an evangelical meaning. In the mother church the apostles filled the positions of leadership. But besides them more servants were needed, as was the case in the synagogue (Cf. Luke 4:20; Chasanim, ὑπηρέται). The poor and the sick in the congregation had to be cared for and provided for from the common treasury, the Christian's common property (Acts 4:34f). Then complaints were raised that the distributions were not equitably administered. It then became necessary to install men of good report and full of wisdom to oversee the distribution. In keeping with the apostles' direction and advice, the congregation chose seven men for this service. The apostles installed them with the laying on of hands (Acts 6:1-6). Later on, the men who were chosen for this office were called deacons, δακονοι. Their chief activity, designated in the book of Acts, was the serving of tables (Acts 6:2). These were the tables from which the distributions were made. Another branch of the deacons' activity was the service provided at the common meals, the *agapes*, and at communion, which was connected to them. Although it cannot be fully established what this activity involved exactly in the apostolic era, since the NT gives only a meager account of it, nevertheless it is presumed that they assisted the bishops or pastors in the service of the poor and the sick. This seems also to be indicated by the qualifications required of those who were to serve in this capacity. From the information given here and in the letter to the Philippians it is clearly shown that they served under the supervision of the bishop. Nothing is stated regarding the deacons in the letter to Titus. We conclude from this that

deacons were not active in the newly founded churches in Crete. From this we have the right to conclude that this office is not as necessary as the office of pastor, but that well-established congregations ought to have deacons because they need them. It is likely that the diaconate in Jerusalem was duplicated in other congregations. Thus we find that Phoebe served as deaconess in the church in Cenchrea (Rom. 16:1). If the congregation in Cenchrea had deaconesses, it is fair to assume that they also had deacons. Phil. 1:1 shows that the congregation in Philippi had its deacons. Later in the history of the church the diaconate was greatly altered from what it had been in the apostolic era. Already in the beginning of the second century Ignatius wrote: *Diaconi non ciborum et potium ministri*<sup>12</sup> (Cf. ad Trall. c. 2), and he requires that they be honored as commanded by Christ. In the third century they are required to induce the rich to share their goods with the needy and to warn, admonish and discipline those who walk unseemly. They are to dismiss the despisers of the faith, to support the disadvantaged, etc., and chiefly to be active in every field of service - ἐν πάσῃ διακονίᾳ. According to the apostolic constitutions, the deacons were not only to care for the poor but were also to maintain peace and order in the divine services, to dismiss those who did not partake of the holy meal, to take care of the holy vessels, and overall to assist the bishops and presbyters in the worship service. Later it was customary to compare the deacons to the Levites in the temple. Isidorus (d. 636) says: *Levitae ex nomine auctoris vocati. De Levi enim Levitae exorti sunt, a quibus in Templo Dei mystici sacramenti ministeria explebantur. Hi graece diakoni, latina ministri dicuntur, quia sicut in sacerdote consecratis ita in diacono ministerii dispensatio habetur.*<sup>13</sup> From this comparison with the Levites in the temple many conclusions were drawn. Thus the age of 25 years and over was required for this service (Num. 8:24). Clement V at the Synod in Vienna in 1311 set the age at 20 in accordance with the later Jewish ordinance (1 Chron. 23:24,27; 2 Chron. 31:17). The Tridentine Council set the age at 23. According to the papistic false doctrine, the deacons belonged to the hierarchy, *hierarchia ordinis*. Luther worked hard to restore the original apostolic diaconate into the church and says: *dass er nicht in Dienst sei das Evangelium oder die Epistel zu lesen, wie heutzutage gebräuchliche, sondern die Kirchen Gueter den Armen auszutheilen. . . . denn mit diesen Rath, wie wir Act. 6 lesen, sind die Diakonen gestiftet wor-*

den . . . Nach dem Predigtamt ist in der Kirche kein hoher Amt, denn diese Verwaltung, dass man mit dem Kirchengut recht und aufrichtig umgehe, auf dass den armen Christen, die ihre Nahrung nicht selbst schaffen oder gewinnen moegen geholfen werde, dass sie nicht Noth leiden (Walch XIII, 2464).<sup>14</sup> In some Lutheran church constitutions we find such ordinances regarding deacons. But it must be said that the Reformed church lays more emphasis on the diaconate than do the Lutheran (Cf. Meyer in *Herzogs Realencyclopedia*).

V. 8. ὡσαύτως, "likewise," provides the transition to the new class of functionaries and their qualifications. The accusatives are dependent on the δεῦ εἶναι to be supplied from the foregoing (Cf. v. 2). σέμνος, "reverent," indicates the worthiness, the graciousness and harmoniousness in their appearance which is an expression of their mental balance. It was important that the deacons step forward with the right tact. δολόγος (from δύς and λέγω), "double-tongued." To be double-tongued is a serious fault in many people and especially so in the case of deacons. The deacons were the middlemen between the pastor, from whom they had to receive their instructions, and so many of the members of the congregation. Their work carried them from house to house. How much damage could be wrought if they brought one message when they were with the pastor and another when they were with the congregation members; if they spoke one way in one place and another when they were elsewhere? They certainly needed a reminder to guard themselves against being double-tongued. μὴ οἴνω πολλῷ προσέχοντάς, "not given to much wine" (Cf. v. 3). It would be a bad thing to be intoxicated when they went about to visit the sick and to care for the poor. ἀσχροκερδής (Cf. v. 3 and Tit. 1:7) from ἀσχρος and τό κερδός, *lucrum*. Here the apostle is pointing to a shameful covetousness in the office. Deacons had funds in their care which they were to administer. There was a temptation for embezzlement.

V. 9. Paul now goes from the fruit in the foregoing to the tree, even to the root; from the brook to the spring. "The mystery of faith" is the mystery which faith possesses, genitive of possession. And faith is here *fides qua*, the subjective faith, which grasps and clings to the objective truth. "Mystery" then is the mystery of God's saving will in the gospel. Gerhard rightly says: *Per mysterium intelligitur doctrina evangelii*,

*qua non est natura nota, sed divinitus per Christum revelata* (Matt. 16:17; Rom. 16:25; Col. 1:26-27).<sup>15</sup> The teaching of the gospel was concealed from eternity. But also after its revelation it remains a mystery to all except the believers. The others do not possess it, nor do they understand it. But even for them (the believers) there are unsolved riddles as long as they are in the world; for we understand merely in part. ἐν καθαρῷ συνελδήσει, "with a pure conscience." This carries weight. It is a thing which concerns all Christians, but in a special sense those who occupy an office in the church. They should not involve themselves in anything untruthful. They should in honorable obedience submit themselves to the truth in all things. This requirement stands in opposition to the hypocrisy of the false teachers, says Huther. They have infected their conscience by mixing truth with error.

V. 10. καὶ οὗτοι δέ opens the verse and is rendered "and these." καί, however, is not a pure conjunction but is closer to being the adverbial "also." δέ is here the particle which indicates the connection (Cf. Winer 57). This verse is usually used by Lutherans as a proof text to show that under normal conditions no one should be entrusted with the office (of bishop) without first being proved. But how does one here find the proof for this matter from a passage which deals exclusively with deacons who are not called to the office of the Word? Yes (it is said), it is an argument *a minori ad majus*. If deacons are not to be received into a minor office in the church without first being proved, then it is so much more the case when one speaks of entrusting a person with the highest and most important office in the church, the office of the Word. This may be true enough, but this explanation overlooks what, in the text, essentially proves the point. Our older translations are here not very fortunate. This is true also of the German translation: *und dieselbigen lasse man zuvor versuchen*. The English translation has the correct meaning: "and let these also first be proved" (KJV). ["But let these also first be proved" NKJV.] The new Norwegian has: *ogsaa disse skal foerst proeves*. καί serves to emphasize οὗτοι and places them [the persons here spoken of] alongside the persons who are named in the foregoing with reference to the subject matter indicated in the verb. As much of a difference as there may be between them, in this respect they are the same. The meaning, then, becomes as follows: But also these who are now named, the deacons, not

only the earlier mentioned bishops, must first be proved; deacons as well as the bishops. It is not stated in so many words that bishops are to be proved, but that is implied in the requirement that bishops are to be blameless and able to teach. If this is to be determined, then a testing must first have taken place. Here nothing is said about a deacon's ability to teach, for the simple reason that he is not called to be a teacher, but the requirement is that the deacons are to be blameless (v. 10), corresponding to the blamelessness mentioned in verse 2. Here nothing is said about who should do the testing. But that is settled by the very nature of the case. If the congregation possesses the office and has the right to call, then it has not only the right but the duty to prove. But as surely as the congregation can delegate its right to call to others, so also it can, through others, exercise its right and duty to prove. When the matter concerns the bishop's or pastor's ability to teach, the testing ordinarily will be delegated to others, since the congregation will hardly be competent to do so. Later, according to the apostolic constitutions, the proving was carried out by the presbytery. It is not stated here what the substance of the proving should be. But it is only natural that the testing should determine the candidates' qualifications to fulfill the duties of the specified office. Since the deacons were not to be preachers, their testing would center upon their morality. This is shown also by the ἀνέγκλητος ὄντες, "being found blameless." If this is found to be the case, then they can serve (διακονεῖν) as deacons. One easily understands, then, that the meaning is not this that they shall be placed on trial; for they indeed also serve under a period of probation.

V. 11. Which women is the apostle pointing to in this verse? That it is women in general may without any doubt be ruled out; for to speak of them here would have no connection. Neither can the reference be to the bishops' wives; for Paul has spoken about bishops in the foregoing, and here there is nothing to lead the thought back to them. The common understanding of the ancient Lutheran church is that the reference is to the deacons' wives. Thus it has been expounded in early translations. This conclusion is based (1) on the contention that the admonition in the foregoing and in the following centers on the deacons and that it would be very unlikely for Paul to speak of another matter in the midst of his presentation; (2) on the contention that we have the common designation γυναῖκες;

and (3) that it can be expected that Paul in this connection would speak about the wives of the deacons, since he speaks of their children. These reasons do carry some weight and when it is asked why Paul does not speak of the bishops' wives, it is answered, on the one hand, that since the office of deacon involved the care of the sick and the needy, therefore their wives more than those of the bishops would assist their husbands, especially with the women who, in the East and among the Greeks, were more shy than among us; or, on the other hand, the omission of bishops' wives is due to the fact that they are included since Timothy must understand that if the deacons, whose office was subordinate, should have wives with the designated qualifications, then so much the more it should be true of the bishops. Other interpreters understand γυναῖκες as designating a special class of women serving in the congregation with or without the title of deaconess. Thus Chrysostom (γυναῖκας διακόνους φήσιν), Theophylact, Oekumenius, later Grotius, and later Wiesinger, von Hofmann, Kuebel, Daehsel, Bugge, *et alii*. The reasons are given as follows: (1) ὡσαύτως. This word marks a transition to another class of functionaries in v. 8. This, then, must also be true here (Cf. usage in 2:9; Tit. 2:3,6). (2) These women are not by any means designated as the deacons' wives. Paul has in the foregoing spoken of the deacons. If these women were their wives, then we would expect either the word αὐτῶν or τὰς γυναῖκας. But since these words are missing, the women spoken of here are only loosely mentioned alongside the deacons, and, therefore, the verse has an independent position. (3) Since verse 12 speaks of the deacons' home life, it would be more fitting to speak there of the wives, provided the apostle wanted to speak of them. (4) There is reason to believe that there were serving women in the Ephesian congregations where everything was so well established. But if there were deaconesses or serving women, one would expect that Paul would speak here of what was required of them, since he here speaks of the chief functionaries of the church. But if he doesn't speak of them here, there is nothing mentioned of this matter elsewhere in the letter. (5) If Paul wanted to list requirements for a deacon's wife as for a bishop's wife, then one would expect that he would have mentioned these in his letter to Titus, at least in connection with the section on the bishops, since the deacons are spoken of. (6) The qualifications' similarity.

But if we are to understand that this verse speaks of the serving women or deaconesses, how can it be explained that the apostle in the very next verse returns to a discussion of the deacons? Indeed thus: after Paul has spoken of the essential attributes which the deacons are to possess, he speaks along the same lines of the deaconesses. The deaconesses are considered here because of the similarity of the essential qualities. In v. 12 the consideration of the deacons embraces their home life. Up to v. 12, we have a development along two parallel lines: the attribute which the deacons and deaconesses have in common. But then in v. 12 comes a special requirement for deacons which could not be made of deaconesses. One cannot remove a woman from family life unless she be a widow, virgin, or single. But why doesn't Paul use the designation διάκονος, as he does in Rom. 16:1? Answer: Paul would not use ἡ διάκονος here because he has used διάκονος of men and perhaps also, because he has in mind serving women other than those who were called deaconesses, women, then, in a broader sense. To indicate that he now goes over to these new functionaries he uses the word γυνή. He could not indicate what he wants in a better way. The deaconesses here spoken of were not deaconesses in the modern sense. They, no doubt, performed somewhat the same tasks in behalf of women as deacons performed in behalf of men. It was modesty that determined this. It is rather difficult to tell what their work was in the apostolic era, since the NT does not give any information regarding it. More is known of it in later times. Ignatius writes: "I greet the guards at the holy doors, deaconesses, who are in the Lord." In his day, they served, among other things, as keepers of the doors, the entrance doors for the women during the congregational gatherings. In the apostolic constitutions we read: "If a poor, a lowly, a strange, an elderly or young person comes in, and there is no empty place, then the deacon shall politely find a place for them. If it be women, whether poor or rich, the deaconesses shall do the same for them." For the sake of propriety they are also to be present when women seek counsel with the bishop or deacon. Thus we read: "Even as the Holy Ghost is mediator between Christ and the church so also are the deaconesses between women and the bishop and the deacon." And again: "No one can approach the deacon and the bishop without the deaconesses." Therefore they were of service also at the baptism of women in order that all might be done decently and in order.

The apostle requires of the deaconesses, as he does of the deacons, that they are to perform their functions with utmost seriousness. Their work was often fraught with danger, since they often had to move from house to house. They are to be reverent (Cf. v. 8); but instead of the expression "double-tongued" (Cf. v. 8), the word used here is "not slanderers," since the apostle takes into account a weakness among women. Of the deacons the apostle required that they be not given to wine; of these women he requires that they be "temperate." The meaning is practically the same. Drunkenness was also widespread among the women. And particularly was this sin quite common in Ephesus. The land, as Strabo says, produced rich vineyards. Corresponding to the requirement not to be greedy for money (Cf. v. 8) we have here "faithful in all things." These women also had many possessions in their keeping; therefore there could be a temptation to be unfaithful in administering the same.

V. 12. See notes on verses 2 and 4.

V. 13. It is evident that when the apostle speaks of the servants of the congregation he is not speaking of Christians in general. This verse is often explained as pointing to the way to promotion. And the diaconate could in reality be, for many, a preparation for the office of bishop. And little by little it became a custom to take the most capable and most faithful of the deacons and place them as pastors of congregations. The expression, "a good standing," must have a religious connotation. Bugge refers it to the last judgment. Through good service in the congregation one is to obtain a good standing in the day of judgment, but the second half of the verse does not respond to this interpretation. On the day of judgment there may be mention of boldness which the faithful servant obtains for himself; this must surely mean the sureness of faith, the courage and freshness of confession which comes as a result of conscientiousness in the performance of duty and faithfulness in relationships with people of all kinds. The expression, "in the faith," emphasizes the boldness such as the Christian boldness with its roots in the faith. The good standing which these servants obtain for themselves cannot mean "a great place of honor in the church"; but it points to the good access which they obtain for themselves into the hearts of the people so that rich fruit is born to the glory of God and the salvation of souls: a rich and

blessed activity.

It is evident that Paul has now come to the end of a section. What he has written up to this point is to serve as a guide for Timothy in the position into which the apostle had placed him, namely, to be his representative in the event that it should take some time before he could return to Ephesus. He has now given a number of directions. What he will be writing hereafter will be of a more general nature. It will be of another character.

V. 14. ταῦτά σου γράφω, "these things I write to you," namely, what Paul has written in the foregoing. We might expect that the usual custom in Greek letter-writing style would be shown here; but the present tense is used and especially so in later Greek style. The participle ἐλπίζων must here be rendered: "though I hope" (Cf. Winer 36). τάχιστα is comparative; therefore: "sooner than you think," right soon, not sooner than this letter, neither sooner than I had thought. He hopes that he will soon return, but time is allowed for a delay and therefore he adds:

V. 15. ἔάν με βραδύνω, "if I am delayed." This is here plainly referring to an involuntary delay while in 2 Pet. 3:9 it is used in a voluntary sense. ἵνα εἰδῆς, "so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself"; that is to say, so that, for your part, you may know what the proper conduct is. It is therefore not necessary to supply anything after δεῖ. ἀναστρέφεισθαι, "how one should move about," manage things. Here the reference is not to the Christian's conduct in general. Here the consideration is directed to Timothy's conduct as director in the house of God, the congregation. The reference is, therefore, to his official, professional behavior as the leader in the church. And since he uses the general "you" (Norw. *man*) and not the individual "you" (Norw. *du*), it is shown that the apostle has in mind more persons than just Timothy, but all to whom the ministry of the Word has been entrusted. οἶκος θεοῦ cannot be limited to the Ephesian congregations. What the apostle means by the expression "God's house" is shown by the following ἥτις, which is not just a simple relative clause but carries a meaning of its own. The expression has a basic connection with the foregoing. The apostle now wishes to give a proper emphasis to what he has just said. ἥτις is the

Latin *quippe quae* ("inasmuch as"). If God's house is such that it is the church of the living God, then one must conduct himself within it in a manner proper to its character. The ministers of the Word should always have in mind whose house it is and whose properties they are involved with. The congregation is God's house because (1) it is built by Him through the Spirit; (2) it is the place where God has His abode, even as in former times He dwelt in Israel's sanctuary. The congregation is the NT temple of God, the habitation of God (Cf. Eph. 2:22; 1 Pet. 2:5). God lives in the heart of the individual Christian (John 14:23); He lives in the congregation, as such, through the means of grace; (3) the congregation, furthermore, is God's house, because the congregation is the household where God is the house-father and the believers its members; the servants in office are the stewards who have the call to have the oversight in distributing the good things of the house to the members of the household according to their individual needs. But in one respect also the servants belong to the members of the household, and "this is an important truth," says Sailer, "that the pastor is both God's steward and fellow lodger with the others. As steward he is to be faithful and alert; as fellow lodger (member) he is to be loving and mild."

The designation οἶκος θεοῦ is used only here by Paul. In a parallel passage (Eph. 2:22) we have κατοικητήριον. The word νόσος is used often by Paul (Cf. 1 Cor. 3:16-17; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:21; 2 Thess. 2:4). The letter to the Hebrews has the designation οἶκος θεοῦ in several places. ἐκκλησία is the Hebrew קָהָל (Cf. Matt. 16:18). God is presented here as the living God (1) in opposition to the dead gods, the idols; (2) because He as the living One has possession of the right energy and power, which is a fact that should be remembered by all who are involved in this house of God.

Now comes the concluding section, which is special because of its importance and its difficulty. This is already noticed in connection with its punctuation. Tischendorf has a period after ἀληθείας and so refers "the pillar and ground of truth" to the church. So also the new Norwegian translation. The old revised (Norw.) translation has a period after church. It is true, as several modern interpreters state, that this punctuation is not the one commonly found in the church, not even in the Lutheran church. The word order generally accepted is: "pillar

and ground of the truth" as an apposition to congregation. But there has been some difficulty in explaining this. In addition to the common acceptance of it the following reasons have been advanced in its support: (1) the style demands it. If these words are combined with the following, then the new section begins too abruptly; (2) the syntax demands it: τὸ τῆς εὐσεβείας μυστήριον, "mystery of godliness," would in that case have three predicates, two substantives and one adjectival; but Schleiermacher and others after him say that, with two substantive expressions standing as predicates to the following, grammatically you cannot proceed with an adjective, since such an adjectival statement cannot grammatically be placed alongside the two substantives. It has also been said that, according to this punctuation, the following statements would first be called the pillar and ground of the truth and then the mystery of godliness, two characteristics which cannot properly stand side by side.

But in answer to this it may be said that the argument from syntax carries no weight when we remember that καὶ here, as is often the case, corresponds to the Latin *et quidem*, "and that"; with the same meaning the complete expression καὶ τοῦτο is used. As far as the stylistic argument is concerned, this, too, is untenable, since the present connection here made does not result in any more abrupt transition than is found in other Pauline passages. He can at times begin another development of thought quite abruptly (Cf. Gal. 2:13). With reference to the stylistic argument, one can make the point that, if you combine these words with the following, then the congregation would first be pictured as God's house and then again be pictured as the pillar and ground of truth. But Paul cannot thus proceed from one figurative expression to another. Furthermore, when in v. 16 we come to another καὶ, "and," then it is much more reasonable to see this as a continuation than that it begins a new train of thought or, with other words, that it rather adds something to the foregoing than that it introduces something new. It is true, as V. Osterzie says, the καὶ, "and," with a preceding period would stand unmotivated and would constitute a *sonderbares Anfang eines Satzes* ("a peculiar beginning of a sentence").

A telling argument against the punctuation is also this: In v. 15 Paul, in order to lay it on Timothy's conscience, wants him to deal properly with his association in the congregation.

But to attain this goal it would seem to be enough when the congregation is called "the house of God" and "the church of the living God." In the meantime the most important consideration is this: Does the congregation let itself be known as στύλος καὶ ἑδραίωμα τῆς ἀληθείας, "the pillar and ground of the truth"? Is it Biblically correct to say this of the congregation? The papists have clung to this passage and claimed it as a proof for the teaching of the infallibility of the church, and the Lutherans felt at a loss just how they should answer. The common way of explaining this passage is the one found in the writings of J. Gerhard and A. Calov. Gerhard says: *Dicitur ἐκκλησία στύλος καὶ ἑδραίωμα veritatis (1) quia, quatenus . . . verbi non discedit; (2) quia suo ministerio veritatem tuetur, praedicat et propagat; (3) quia non alibi quam in ecclesia veritas Dei repellitur.*<sup>16</sup> Calov says: *Ecclesia non consideratur ratione officii quod praestat veritati, sed ratione aedificationis per ministerium ecclesiasticum, adeaque passive, ut ex aedificanda in columnam et firmamentum veritatis ut per veritatem extracta firmiter teneat veritatem. Fundamentum unicum est Christus (Eph. 2:20).*<sup>17</sup>

The church, then, is called "the pillar and ground of the truth" not with reference to the truth in and by itself but with reference to the historical subsistence of the truth, its historical presence as the Christian truth. This depends upon the fact that there is a church which is bearer and protector of the word of truth. Without the church the truth could not continue on the earth. In its midst is the truth, without it there is only false doctrine and lies. *Ubi veritas ibi est ecclesia, et ubi est ecclesia ibi veritas* ("Where the truth is, there is the church; and where the church is, there is the truth"). He who belongs to the truth belongs *eo ipso* to the church. He who rejects the truth shuts himself out of the church. It is said that one need not here admit a contradiction to the Scriptural teaching that Christ is the foundation upon which the church is built. When it is remarked that the church is supported by the truth, then, e.g., Baumgarten answers that the truth as such is mistaken for the truth which is acknowledged in the world. In the first instance it needs no support, since it supports itself; in the final instance it needs the church as its supporter, bearer, and protector. The church has the call to protect it for the world and to assure its continued existence. This call the church has had and has

practiced from the beginning, and this it shall continue to have and practice as the church of the living God against which the gates of hell shall not prevail. The church has and practices this call, not insofar as, but because of and in view of the fact that it rests upon the eternal foundation which is Christ Jesus (1 Cor. 3:11). The church is the bearer of the truth because the church itself is of the truth and is born by it (Cf. also Wiesinger). It is maintained that Paul has borrowed the picture of the church as the pillar and ground of truth from the two magnificent pillars which stood at the entrance of the church in Jerusalem (Cf. 1 Kings 7:15ff).

It cannot be denied that in this manner one's thoughts in the matter can be satisfied. But neither can it be denied that Paul here uses strong figurative language, and these would not appear to be the most fitting pictures if one chiefly wants to stress the fact that the church is to be the bearer of the truth to the world, a light (as indeed it has been compared to), or a pillar to which messages were fastened. Nowhere in Scripture do we find a picture of the church similar to the one here presented if we refer the word to the foregoing. *στύλος*, like its parallel word *στήλη*, goes back to the root of *ἵστημι*, *στάω*, *στύω* and designates something solid which can support whatever rests upon it. *στύλος*, then, is a pillar which supports whatever rests upon it in such a way that, without it, whatever it bears would be destroyed. The expression *στύλος ἀλήθειας* denotes, therefore, that upon which the whole truth rests, in such a way that, without it, the truth would fall.

*ἑδραίωμα* (formed from *ἑδραῖος*, "solid") is from *ἑδραῖω*, "to make fast, make firm." *ἑδραῖω* again is formed from *ἕδρα*, "seat," which is derived from *ἕδομαι*, "to sit." *ἑδραίωμα*, accordingly, means "fundament," a solid underlayer upon which *στύλος* rests. Can this be said of the church? Though one might apply the first word ("pillar") to the congregation, it would be very difficult to apply the second word ("ground of the truth") to it. Therefore we also find that the interpreters who follow the old punctuation pass over this word quickly and take little account of its meaning. It is, of course, true: the divinely revealed truth of the Word would remain the truth even if nobody believed it. But in the same instance that the revealed truth is gone, so also is the church. From the standpoint of content, an easy explanation and more in agree-

ment with the Scripture's way of speaking it is, when, with Bengel *et alii*, we begin the new section with *στύλος*. Thus it was rendered already in the Baseler edition of the NT, 1540-1545. That which then becomes the pillar and ground of the truth is the content of the following statements which constitute the gospel *in nuce* ("in a nutshell").

V. 16. καὶ ὁμολογουμένως, *omnium consensu, sine controversia*, commonly acknowledged, namely, within the Christian Church. This mode of expression is not unknown in profane literature. μέγα is "great," "exalted," "glorious" (Heb. 4:14). τὸ τῆς εὐσεβείας μυστήριον, this is the mystery which piety possesses (genitive of possession), since this mystery is only revealed to the God-fearing. Two things are now said concerning it: (1) that it is the pillar and ground of the truth because the truth in revelation is thought of as a building (we often speak of a structure of doctrine) which has these fundamental truths as pillar and foundation upon which it rests; (2) that these truths are among Christians a commonly accepted great mystery of godliness. Therewith the objection falls which stated that the two things could not appropriately be placed side by side. There is no reason, either linguistically or logically, why this is not possible.

The textual reading of the following statements is very diverse. We find θεός, ὃς and ὁ (see Scrivener's *Introduction* and J. Belsheim's *In Defense of some disputed passages in the NT*). The reading with θεός, "God," is unquestionably the most natural and the simplest. Since it is well documented we will follow it. Regardless of how one understands the reading with ὃς, it poses some difficulty, and those who support it are quite disagreed as to its meaning. Some claim that the relative ὃς refers back to μυστήριον, which points to Christ, and that the difference in gender does not alter the matter - *constructio ad sensum* ("a construction according to the sense"). As a support for this explanation, reference is made to Col. 1:27. But this passage is much different from ours. But if ὃς cannot have μυστήριον as its antecedent, then the relative ὃς doesn't have an antecedent, since it doesn't seem possible that it reaches way back to θεός. Others maintain that the relative ὃς stands completely isolated with no antecedent. The whole, then, stands without a syntactical connection. One would then have six relative statements without any principal clause as point of reference.

Luther, who favors this view, calls it a strange phenomenon which is taken from a confessional formula. Still other exegetes understand ὅς as standing in an absolute position meaning, "he who." The statement, ὅς . . . σαρκί is understood, then, rather as a substantive relative clause and ἐδικαλώθη ἔν, etc., as the predicate. And if we are to accept ὅς as the correct reading, then surely this would be the simplest explanation. It is true that objection has been raised against it, to wit, that then one must regard some of the statements as relative and others as demonstrative, which seems improper. And then, if one ceases to consider all the statements as subordinate, one can at pleasure take as many of the statements as independent clauses as one wants to, or with other words take as many of the five first statements as one wants to as relative subordinate statements. These objections undeniably carry some weight, and they must have influenced the translators of the new Norwegian edition which accepts the reading, ὅς, letting all the statements stand immediately alongside each other. All artificial explanations fall when we accept the reading, θεός. We could, of course, get along without this passage as a proof text for the deity of Christ, since this truth is so abundantly taught in Scripture. But even with the reading, ὅς, the passage would be a proof text for Christ's deity, though not so direct.

The first statement reads: "God was manifested in the flesh." ἐφανερώθη, referring to Christ, says two things: (1) that He existed before this manifestation, and (2) that His pre-existence was a veiled presence. It was a presence in the bosom of the Father in His δόξα. It was from this veiled presence that He stepped forth in this manifestation. σάρξ, "flesh," has the same meaning as in John 1:14; 1 John 4:2. This points not only to the substance, the body, but also to the soul, the entire human nature consisting of a rational soul and a true body. But σάρξ, "flesh," does not express the same as "man." σάρξ has an attendant conception of weakness and fragility. He took upon Him the human nature as it was after the fall with its frailty as the result of sin, yet without sin. The true God became true man. But "manifested in the flesh" is not entirely the same as "became flesh" in John 1:14. Paul expresses himself as he does to point not only to the act of taking upon Him the flesh but to Christ's whole presence on the earth in the flesh. The pre-existing Son of God steps out of His invisible glory into the human existence, so that "flesh" became His form of manifesta-

tion on the earth.

"Justified in the spirit." "Spirit" stands here as a direct contrast to "flesh." If we understood "flesh" as denoting Christ's entire and true human nature, then we must understand "spirit" as denoting His true divine nature. And we must dismiss as contrary to the context the explanation which here understands "spirit" as denoting the Spirit which descended upon Him in His baptism, or the Spirit which he gave to the disciples at Pentecost, or the Spirit which He constantly sends to the believers. Neither can we accept the view of Bugge who says that by "spirit" is meant Jesus' true "human nature in the new higher form of existence in which He stepped forth in the resurrection"; for then the contrast here would be between the frailty of human nature and no frailty, while the contrast here is clearly between the human nature and the divine, and the passages referred to by Bugge (1 Pet. 3:18; 1 Cor. 15:44,48) do not prove what he claims they prove. In 1 Pet. 3:18 the contrast is the same as here, and in 1 Cor. 15 the reference is indeed to "the spiritual body" after the resurrection; but it in no way says that the body has become spirit. Jesus Himself lets His disciples know that His human nature has not become spirit after the resurrection when He says in Luke 24:39: "Behold my hands . . . a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have." But what does it mean, then, when it is stated that God was justified in the spirit? The word "justify" is always used in Scripture to denote an *actus forensis*, a judicial declaration, and is commonly used in opposition to guilt and punishment. But the word is also used in opposition (contrast) to misjudgment and must then be substantiated with proofs . . . getting a declaration from another that one has the right to be received for what he is or for who he really is (Cf. Matt. 11:19; Luke 7:35; Rom. 3:4). The word must have this meaning here. The apostle uses it here in contrast to the condition which he has defined with the expression "manifested in the flesh." In contrast to this humiliation, which exposed Him to misjudgment (Cf. John 6:41ff; 7:27, et al.), he was "justified in the spirit." But of what did this justification consist? This is the correct answer: It consisted of the manifestation of His exalted lineage and particularly of His resurrection from the dead (Cf. Rom. 1:4; Acts 2:30ff). The meaning, therefore, is this: Christ came as a true man in great lowliness "in the likeness of sinful flesh";



as such there was in Him "no form or comeliness." He was a man of sorrows "despised and rejected by men," "numbered with the transgressors," condemned as a sinner. But when He arose from the dead He displayed Himself from another side, as the Roman centurion testified when he said: "Certainly this was a righteous man" (Luke 23:47). Note should also be taken of what Huther says in Meyer's *Commentary*: *Obgleich die bei πνεύμα stehende Praeposition ἐν ihre eigentliche Bedeutung nicht gaenzlich verloren hat, so spielt dieselbe doch hier in der Begriff der instrumentalen Vermittelung hinein, sofern dass sich in ihm offenbarende πνεύμα es ist, wodurch er in seinem wahren Wesen bewiesen worden ist.*<sup>18</sup>

"Seen by angels." According to the context, "angels," ἄγγελου, must here be understood as the heavenly spirits, not men, apostles or others, or devils. ἄγγελου is never used of evil spirits in the NT. Therefore we may at once reject the explanation which points this passage to the descent into hell as in 1 Pet. 3:19. Some exegetes hold that Paul here points to different occasions in Jesus' life from birth to ascension when He was seen by angels. Others refer it to the resurrection. We follow the best exegetes, who refer it to the ascension. The word ὤφθη points in this direction as well. The word appears in the NT often with the dative and, as Huther says, it does not only have the meaning "was seen" but also "showed Himself," revealed Himself, and so it always involves an activity on the part of the one who sees. "He revealed Himself to them, so they saw Him," says V. Hofmann. When He departed this world with His visible presence and sat down on God's right hand, then He showed Himself to the angels and became a worthy object for their viewing.

"Preached among the Gentiles." ἔθνη, which in older, revised translations is rendered "Gentiles," does not point to them in a restricted sense, but to all people as in Matt. 25:32. The proclamation of the gospel went out among the nations and still goes out. As all the nations hear the message of Jesus, how much does this not testify to His greatness and importance?

"Believed on in the world." κόσμος, "the world," responds here to ἔθνη. πιστεύειν must here be taken in its regular sense. Christ is preached among the people, and by means of this message some will be brought to faith in Him as

Savior. And that Christ is accepted in faith is also a glorious justification for Him who was met with such opposition and scorn.

"Received up in glory." This can only be understood as designating the ascension into heaven (Cf. Mark 16:19; Acts 1:2,11,22). Also the expression, "seen by angels," refers to the ascension but in another connection. There it was pointed out that He revealed Himself to the angels as a worthy object of their viewing. Here it is brought out that He Himself was received into the glory which He shared with the Father before the creation of the world. Here, then, the ascension is considered from another side than in the former statement. Here it is considered merely as an introduction to His condition in glory. As there, so here there is no break in the chronological sequence. All that Christ is, as the heavenly Christ, is included in the word, "glory," δόξα. We might expect εἰς δόξην and not ἐν δόξῃ, but we have here another *constructio praegnans* as in 2:14. ἐν with the dative followed\* by an action verb expresses not only the direction toward a place, but also a continuation in that place, and here it expresses the truth that Jesus did not only enter into glory but also continues in glory.

In the six sentences (or lines) of this verse Paul has presented the great mystery of godliness. These constitute three paragraphs. The last two pairs are placed in chiasmic relation to each other. We have here an indirect chiasmus in that the sentences in a manner cross each other. Even as His *glorificatio* constitutes a presupposition for His proclamation, so also is His *gloria* the goal of it. The first and the last lines stand as outer frames. His being viewed by the angels belongs to His glory even as the preaching belongs to faith.

Some interpreters express the thought that these six sentences are a summary, or stanzas, of a hymn of the church. And there is much to be said for this view. The form of the sentences, their brevity, the unconnected parts, argue for this. If you add to this the grand content which has the high flight of hymnology, you may conclude that the idea seems very likely. From Eph. 5:19 and Col. 3:16 it is shown that there were such hymns in the church in the apostolic era. We have also a testimony supporting this in the writings of Pliny the Younger, who says in a letter to emperor Trajan that the Christians in

Asia Minor have such hymns which they sing to the glory of Christ as to a God.

(To be continued)

### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Jerome: "A work, not an honor, nor a pleasure."

<sup>2</sup> Augustine: "The name of the office of overseer is of work, not of honor."

<sup>3</sup> Gerhard: "He who desires the office of overseer does not desire honor, but work; for the office of bishop signifies supervision, not idle honor."

<sup>4</sup> "The sacerdotal office is not idleness, but great labor."

<sup>5</sup> Wiesinger: "The beauty and glory of the office cannot be reconciled with the moral ugliness of the incumbent."

<sup>6</sup> Huther: "The bishop should be a man who does not live or has not lived in sexual relationship with any other woman than the one bound to him in marriage."

<sup>7</sup> "He should be, in body and soul, in fact and in truth, the husband of only one wife."

<sup>8</sup> Calov: "This can be understood as sobriety of the body, not of the mind."

<sup>9</sup> Gerhard: ". . . is equable, kind, quiet, one who accommodates himself to the customs and likes of others."

<sup>10</sup> "The devil does not judge, but is judged."

<sup>11</sup> Wiesinger: "The same judgment in consequence of the same fall."

<sup>12</sup> Ignatius: "Deacons are ministers not of food and drink" . . . but of the church of God.

13 Isidorus: "Levites are so named from the name of their father. For the Levites sprang from Levi, and by them the services of the mystic sacrament were administered in the temple of God. These were called 'deacons' in Greek and 'ministers' in Latin, because they had the management of serving in the diaconate, just as priests had the management of sacred things in the priesthood."

14 Luther: ". . . that the deacon is not to serve as one who reads the Gospel or Epistle, as is customary today, but is to distribute the church-goods to the poor, for it was with this in mind that the deacons were first appointed, as we read in Acts 6. Next to the pastoral office there is no higher office in the church than this management of the church-goods, that it be done properly and honestly, so that the poor Christians, who cannot provide for or earn their own living, may be helped so as not to suffer want."

15 Gerhard: "By the mystery is understood the teaching of the gospel which is not known by nature, but is divinely revealed through Christ."

16 Gerhard: "The church is called the pillar and ground of truth (1) because it does not depart from the simple word, insofar as it is and remains the church of Christ and the house of God; (2) because it by its ministry guards, preaches, and propagates the truth; (3) because nowhere else than in the church is the truth of God rejected." [There must be an omission here. Perhaps what is meant is that only in the church is a denial of the truth of God rejected. -JL]

17 Calov: "The church is considered not with relation to the office by which it vouches for the truth, but with reference to its being built up through the ecclesiastical ministry; hence, passively, as being built up into a pillar and ground of truth, since, being built up by the truth, it holds firmly to the truth. The only foundation is Christ."

18 Huther: "Although the preposition ἐν with πνεῦμα has not entirely lost its proper meaning ["in"], yet it here has mingled with it the concept of instrumental mediation, insofar as it is the Spirit which is revealed in Him, through which He is manifested in His true nature."

# PANORAMA

## Meeting of WELS/ELS and CLC: An Interim Report . . .

John Lau

Two meetings have now been held between representatives of the WELS and the CLC for the purpose of discussing the doctrinal differences that have separated the two church bodies since the 1950s. The first of these meetings was held at Immanuel Lutheran College, Eau Claire, Wisconsin, on January 13 and 14, 1988. The second meeting was held at the WELS synodical administration building in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on February 1 and 2, 1989. This second meeting was also attended by representatives of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS). In this last meeting statements were to be drawn up by each of the three groups, to sum up the doctrinal position held by each of the three separate church bodies on the role of admonition in relation to termination of church fellowship. It was agreed by all that it would be necessary to follow up the discussions with theses and antitheses to be drawn up by the three separate groups for presentation at a subsequent meeting. This third meeting has not yet taken place.

The Reports and Memorials of the Fiftieth Biennial Convention of the WELS, assembled at Martin Luther Preparatory School, Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, August 7 to 11, 1989, presented the following as part of its report of the February 1989 meeting:

In the discussions it became apparent that the issue should be addressed by means of theses and antitheses; these will help show whether there is agreement on this doctrine. Should there be agreement on this doctrine, other areas would no doubt have to be considered later. Accordingly it was decided that both WELS-ELS and CLC draw up pertinent theses and antitheses as soon as possible and that these two documents be studied at a third meeting, the time and place to be determined by the three synodical presidents.

We implore the Savior's blessing on these future efforts by the representatives of the three synods, all of whom want to be faithful to the inerrant, authoritative word of God.

Subsequently the following resolution was adopted by the WELS convention (WELS Proceedings , p. 99):

- |           |    |   |
|-----------|----|---|
| WHEREAS   | 1) | We now have the opportunity to discuss pertinent issues between the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod and the Church of the Lutheran Confession; and |
| WHEREAS   | 2) | Several issues remain for study and resolution; therefore be it   |
| Resolved, | a) | That we encourage representatives of the WELS, the CLC and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod to continue to meet; and be it further                        |
| Resolved, | b) | That we implore the Savior's blessing as representatives of the three synods seek a scriptural resolution of the issues.                                |

A report on this matter was also presented by the ELS representatives to the convention of the ELS held in Mankato, Minnesota, June 18-22, 1989. Their report follows (ELS Convention Report , pp. 74-75):

As reported to the last convention, representatives of the WELS and the CLC (Church of the Lutheran Confession) had met together in 1988 to explore the possibility of coming to a satisfactory agreement on issues that had divided them, particularly in the area of fellowship. (See 1988 SR. p. 67) Because the first joint meeting had given promise of progress in this area, another meeting was held in Milwaukee in February of this year, to which also representatives of the ELS were invited. The two-day meeting was devoted to discussion of two essays that addressed the topic of the role of admonition in termination of church fellowship. Near the conclusion of the meeting each synodical representative group produced a brief statement summarizing its reaction to the meeting. Your ELS representatives' statement follows:

We note with approval that the several bodies here in discussion all confess the Scriptures to be God's inspired and inerrant word and that they turn to those Scriptures to determine their doctrine and practice.

As we study the doctrine of church fellowship together, we have seemingly come to a better understanding of the position of the CLC on the basis of which they separated from us.

We have come to understand that for the CLC admonition is primarily—if not entirely—a prelude to the task of identification of the doctrinal disturbers of the church.

The question remains, however, whether the task embraced by *skopein* in Romans 17 [sic] does not itself provide for use of all scripturally sound directives for arriving at the ultimate identification. Is the *skopein* of Romans 16, 17 a somewhat rather punctiliar [sic] identification, or is it a durative action which allows for admonition of a church body in fellowship until it has been clearly identified as one causing divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which we have learned?

By resolution of the joint assembly another such meeting is to be scheduled by the three synodical presidents. For this meeting two sets of theses and antitheses are to be drawn up, one by the WELS-ELS representatives, the other by the CLC representatives, setting forth "The Role of Admonition in Relation to Termination of Fellowship." Though in such matters we do not anticipate the outcome, we continue humbly to pray that the Lord may bless such efforts with the eventual restoration of unity.

It seems to the present writer that it would at this point be helpful to recall prior statements that have been made by the WELS and the ELS, respectively, on the matter to be discussed among representatives of the three synods by means of theses and antitheses in a forthcoming meeting.

In 1959 the WELS adopted the following: "Termination of fellowship is called for when you have reached the conviction that admonition is of no further avail and that the erring brother or church body demands recognition for their error." Later, the WELS described this as the conviction that "an impasse has been reached." These doctrinal statements make it eminently clear that the WELS has in the past interpreted Romans 16:17- 18 in such a way that one cannot, on the basis of that passage, avoid the causer of divisions and offenses until and unless one has reached the conviction that "admonition is of no further avail."

The *Lutheran Synod Quarterly* of the ELS, June 1962, page 21, gives the following statement of the position the ELS held at that time: "When a person or church body with whom we are in fellowship causes divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which we have learned, we mark them immediately, then admonish, and if this proves fruitless, avoid them." This statement has been identified as having been previously made by Dr. Theo. Laetsch in the *Concordia Theological Monthly* (Volume VI, Number 1, January 1935, pp. 1-11). We observe that the ELS statement is a near duplicate of that made by Dr. Laetsch, but not an exact one. ELS: ". . . we mark them . . . then admonish . . ." Dr. Laetsch's statement does not contain the adverb "then" and thereby does not lay the stress on the sequence of events that the ELS statement gives. This is not, however, to deny that the statement of Dr. Laetsch is doubtful. For the present purpose let it suffice to point out that the ELS has also inserted into Romans 16:17-18 the notion that admonition is a sine qua non for the avoidance that the passage calls for.

However, the ELS has added an understanding of termination of fellowship that has, to my knowledge, not been heard from the WELS in an official way. It is my understanding that the WELS has contended that once an individual or church body has been observed (*skopein*) as being a causer of divisions and offenses (although according to their view this is done only by coming to the conviction that admonition is of no further avail), then there must be no delay in avoiding. The ELS, on the other hand, has declared its belief that after the marking (*skopein*) the causer of divisions and offenses is not thus to be immediately avoided, but that then he is first to be admonished.

It is our prayer that the presentation of theses and antitheses on the role of admonition in relation to termination of fellowship will lead to this, that the WELS and the ELS will be shown to have reconsidered their former doctrinal statements on the termination of fellowship, and that they no longer defend them as scriptural. We cannot hope for a better outcome than that, for it would involve a humble acceptance of the truth by all concerned, without any false recourse to past incorrect formulations or to present unacceptable exegetical principles. We pray for that among us of the CLC, as well as among those of the WELS-ELS.

---

## "LEARN OF JESUS CHRIST TO PRAY"

A Sermon Study on Jesus' Sacerdotal (High-Priestly) Prayer in John 17  
(Continued)

Paul Fleischer

**SERMON STUDY #6: John 17:17-19\***

---

\* With this issue we are continuing a series of sermon studies on John 17 last presented in Vol. 27, No. 1 (March 1987)

*"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.*

*"As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.*

*"And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth." (NKJV)*

## JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION

In a past issue of the *Lutheran Spokesman* (28:9:6f, March 1986) this writer wrote something about what he called "scriptureze." The word was coined for the purpose of impressing upon the readers that, just like computer language or "computereze" as it has been called, so God in His Word has a distinct divine vocabulary. Even as one must understand "computereze" to readily and/or properly operate a computer, so one who would understand the holy message of the Bible must study to know its language. The benefits of understanding God's divine vocabulary are many, not the least of which will mean one can more readily and properly apply the Word to one's life.

The word "sanctification" is a big and important one in the divine vocabulary. It is a concept of God's Word that we should strive to grasp for our spiritual benefit. For indeed, to have a wrong understanding of it can result in eternally disastrous consequences. The term is almost exclusively a Christian one. Literally, sanctification means "set apart from common use, consecrated to religious service, cleansed for such consecration." The verb form refers to "the act of making holy." The noun refers to the standing or status of one who has been sanctified.

To begin with, let it be said that it is our justification and not our sanctification which saves us before God. In other words, we are saved by God's declaring us righteous in and through Jesus Christ (justification) and not by our own righteousness or good works (which lie in the area of our sanctification). The justification of the sinner is the work of God totally outside of man. It is what God undertook to accomplish through the substitutionary work of His Son for us. On the other hand, our sanctification refers most often to the effect this gospel message of our justification has within the person. At the time of the sinner's being brought to saving faith in Jesus, at that moment the Holy Ghost begins the process of sanctification within the heart. And so it has been said that justification and sanctification go together, and belong together: "Each is for the other, but each is not the same as the other. Each without the other is meaningless. Each without the other is powerless; and each without the other is valueless."

With the aid of God the Holy Ghost (and we don't say that as just a pious platitude!) let us through this study strive to understand better the Christian concept of sanctification. Our great High Priest speaks of it in the portion of the sacerdotal prayer before us. He stresses the importance of the disciples' giving outward evidence of the fact that they have been chosen out of the world. And when we recall how, on the basis of Jesus' prayer, it has been stressed that it is all God's work that a sinner is called to faith in Jesus and is guarded and kept therein, then we have a good beginning at properly understanding the concept of our sanctification. The act of sanctifying sinners is specifically the work of God the Holy Ghost, of whom it is said in the Third Article that He has "called . . . enlightened . . . sanctified, and kept [believers] in the true faith."

### "SANCTIFY THEM . . ."

We sinners have a need for sanctification, for "being holy." That is the way God originally created our first parents, and that is how He expected them to live on this earth. But with the fall into sin (Gen. 3) man lost the state of perfect righteousness and holiness. The offended Creator gave clear testimony that He could not countenance unholiness by pronouncing the sentence of death upon man, the sinner, casting him out of the Garden of Eden. That act of God was His visible declaration that man, by his sinning, had erected a wall between himself and his God. It was so then, and it has been true to this present day and hour, that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). But God also provided the means whereby the sinner could regain the state of holiness lost to him. God had His only-begotten Son step into this world. His Son lived a perfectly holy and sinless life. His Son willingly offered His innocent life into death in the sinner's stead. His Son thereby satisfied the holiness and justice of God with respect to sinners.

Now, it is God's will that the holiness of Jesus become the sinner's own through Spirit-wrought faith. By simple faith God credits His Son's holiness to the account of the believer, thus both justifying and sanctifying the sinner. This is the basis for the writer to the Hebrews stating: "We have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (10:10), and "by one offering He [Jesus] has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (10:14). Also on this basis the Apostle Paul addresses the Corinthian believers, for example, as "those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints . . ." (1 Cor. 1:2).

All of Holy Scripture supports the blessed fact that the sanctification or holiness which avails before God is totally His work in and for the sinner. This is why Jesus here prays: "Sanctify them . . ." Notice that the Savior does not pray that his disciples might, in some form or fashion, sanctify themselves. There is no such thing as self-sanctification.

No human being can ever arrive at a point in life when he can say: "I have sanctified myself. I have set myself apart from other sinners." No! All believing sinners are saints, and they are that (only) by virtue of faith in God's holy Son, Jesus Christ, and His holy doing and innocent suffering and substitutionary death for them.

Let us not miss the wonder of how the Scriptures teach that all believers in Jesus are saints. Listen as Dr. Luther comments on our text: "They (believers) are not called saints because they are without sin or have become saintly through works. On the contrary, they themselves, with all their works, are nothing but condemned sinners. But they become holy through a foreign holiness, namely, through that of Christ Jesus, which is given them by faith and thus becomes their own. This faith is so strong and powerful that it covers and wipes away all sins and shortcomings that remain in flesh and blood. I have often said that the kingdom of Christ is nothing but pure forgiveness, a kingdom that deals only with sins, that always wipes them away, covers them, and cleanses us of them as long we live here below."

That was the position which Luther defended in the Lutheran Reformation over against the teaching of self-sanctification which at that time, and still today, was being embraced by the Roman Catholic Church. This teaching of Rome lies at the heart of all heathen religions, yea, of all man-originated religions of whatever stripe and color. Much of so-called "evangelical protestantism" today teaches that man is able, at least to some degree, to "make himself right with God." Over against this St. Paul teaches: "Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:26f). It is only the sacrifice of our great High Priest, the Lamb of God without blemish and without spot, which can purify and cleanse—sanctify!—otherwise sinful hearts!

Therefore we do not, for example, prescribe acts of penance as does Rome, whereby sinners are said to assist somehow in mollifying God's wrath. But as the Scriptures teach, sinners are called to contrite, penitent hearts whereby, by faith, they embrace the forgiveness won for them by Christ. The writer to the Hebrews explains: "For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself" (7:26f).

". . . BY YOUR TRUTH"

From the King James Version of the Bible we are accustomed to hearing the next words of the Savior's prayer put this way: "Sanctify them through Thy truth . . ." (Cf. Note). But literally Jesus said: ". . . in (connection with) the truth." The use of "through" or even "by" may give the impression that it is our upholding of the truth(s) of God's Word which will have the effect of sanctifying sinners. If this, in fact, were the case, it could be assumed that anyone who holds active membership in a truth-teaching church body might on that account be holy.

What does Jesus here pray for? That His disciples might be sanctified in connection with the truth. The disciples had been learning the holy truth of God from the Master. The moment Jesus called them out of—lifted them away from—the world and brought them to Himself, from that moment they came into the possession of the truth. Thus the Savior prays that they might more and more appreciate Him as the Truth (John 14:6), and live in the truths which He had taught. He prays that His believers might remain "set apart" unto Him as "a holy nation, His own special people" (1 Pet. 2:9) until they come to the full and final realization of their goal, eternal life in heaven.

"YOUR WORD IS TRUTH"

Our great High Priest hastens to add words which many are accustomed to hearing their pastor speak after he has read the sermon text for the day. Jesus equates the Word of God with Truth! The Word of God in the Bible is like a seamless garment. It has no rents or tears, no mistakes or slips, no contradictions or errors of any kind. As it was pieced together, word by word, verse by verse, chapter by chapter, book by book, it resulted in a perfect work. So it had to be because "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Tim. 3:16).

Since the Word of God in the Bible is identical with Truth, it excludes every other book from being a fountainhead or source of living, divine truth. All other writings must take a back seat to the Word, and must be judged as to their reliability on the basis of how they compare with the Word. Mankind dare not rely upon human reason, human wisdom or logic, for spiritual truth, but these are to be judged and evaluated by the Word. Pilate and all his modern-day heirs who ask "What is truth?" will find their answer in the written and revealed Word of God. That Word—of which Jesus Christ is the perfect embodiment (Cf. John 1:1; Heb. 1:1-2)—is absolute truth.

And since "Your Word is truth," it is effective—effective in accomplishing its purpose of preserving believers in true Christian faith and thereby also in true Christian sanctification. The Word of truth is the means whereby the Spirit of truth (John 14:17) sanctifies sinners unto God. That Word of truth, as it is read and as it is preached, is effective in calling

sinners to repentance and faith in Christ Jesus Who is its center. The Word of truth convicts of sin and again and again sends sinners fleeing to the protective shield of Jesus' holiness won for them on Calvary's cross.

The Word of truth is also "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). While human philosophies of all kinds have their place, these cannot take the place of the Word of truth for determining what is divine (scriptural) teaching (doctrine) or for determining what is divine (scriptural) instruction in righteousness. One who believes in Jesus is "complete in Him" (Col. 2:10) and by virtue of that faith is "thoroughly equipped for every good work"(2 Tim. 3:17).

Every Christian believer has been sanctified by faith in Jesus Christ and His (foreign) holiness (objective sanctification). Jesus "is made unto us . . . sanctification" (1 Cor. 1:30). And yet there is another side to sanctification. While the believing sinner is complete, yea, holy, by virtue of his faith in Christ, he nevertheless has a daily, continuous struggle with his old Adam. That old nature, with him to the grave, ceaselessly endeavors to lead into misbelief, despair, and other great shame and vice. Thus, according to his personal or "subjective sanctification" the Christian daily falls short of the glory of God. He sins daily, contrary to the nature of the new creation that he is in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). St. Paul describes this on-going, daily struggle of the believer in Romans, chapter seven. Aware of his daily sins (and his sinfulness by nature), the Christian daily repents and flees for forgiveness to the perfect robe of His Savior's blood and righteousness. As Paul writes: "O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God - through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Rom. 7:24f).

It has been said of the Christian condition: "Positionally you are holy with God, but practically you are not." What a glorious and blessed truth this is that believers are "complete in Christ" and thereby sanctified by faith in Him! Yet knowing his flesh, the believer will beware. He will daily, yea, moment by moment, strive against the flesh in the power of the Spirit. He will daily look to the Word of truth for "instruction in righteousness." In the law he will see his sin. In the gospel he will find forgiveness and renewed strength for the faith-life. Lest Satan lead him to rely upon self-chosen works for a God-pleasing life, the believer will look to the Word of truth for instruction as to what truly constitutes faith's fruits.

And faith has fruits! It can't help but bear fruit, even as a good tree bears good fruit (Matt. 7:17). What is referred to as "good works" done by believers is nothing else than, nothing other than, fruits of a living faith in Jesus Christ! If this is understood, good works will never be counted as the cause of salvation!

"AS YOU SENT ME . . ."

The great High Priest of our confession once more stresses that He was sent into the world to perform a mission. That mission was to accomplish the redemption of sinners. Jesus accomplished this in two ways: (1) by His active obedience , namely, fulfilling the law for us; and (2) by His passive obedience , namely His voluntary sacrificing of Himself for the sins of the world.

Even as Jesus had a mission to perform, so also He has sent His followers on a mission. That mission is to "proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (2 Pet. 2:9). Note carefully how Jesus links this mission of believers with their sanctification, saying: "And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth." As believers live the sanctified (holy) Christian life, the people of the world will see them for those whom God has called them to be. The world of men has a crying need to observe the witness of the sanctified faith-life of Christian people. Let us then live and walk by faith as befits those who have been called out of darkness into the light of the gospel!

SANCTIFY MYSELF . . ."

Jesus here uses the word "sanctify" in the sense of consecrating or dedicating Himself to His earthly mission. He indicates that, as our great High Priest, He is determined to carry to conclusion the work, the mission, on which the Father had sent Him. He and He alone could perform that mission! And He would perform it in order that His believers might be sanctified in the truth.

So long as we go on living in this fallen world, may the Spirit of God preserve us in true faith, enabling us to live sanctified Christian lives to the Savior's honor and glory until we reach the final and ultimate reward of faith, eternal life in heaven. Amen.

OVERALL THEME: LEARN OF JESUS CHRIST TO PRAY

Theme for 17:17-19: "Jesus Prays For His Disciples' Sanctification"

- I. This sanctification is totally God's doing (there is no self-sanctification)
- II. It is the Word of Truth which the Spirit uses to bring about and sustain the believer's sanctified living

Liturgical suggestions: Antiphonal reading: Psalm 119, part XVIII; Hymns 151, 420, 405, 159:1

### NOTE

John 17:17 reads as follows in the Greek:

ἀγίασον αὐτοὺς ἐν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ· ὁ λόγος ὁ σὸς ἀλήθειά ἐστι.

Here is the rendering in various translations:

KJV: "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth."

NKJV: "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth."

NIV: "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth."

NASB: "Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth."

AAT: "Make them holy by the truth; Your Word is truth."

---

## P A I D E I A

### From a Pastor's and Professor's Notebook

Roland A. Gurgel

### VIII

#### Joel 3 - God's Harvest of Blessings

Joel 2:18 through 3:21 deals with God's answer to the prayer of His people, "Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him . . ." (2:14) and ". . . Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God?" (2:17b)

God's answer is that He is amongst His people and that He will grant them temporal blessings in great abundance (2:18- 27); temporal blessings that also become symbolical of a spiritual harvest for the Lord's eternal granaries (2:28-3:8); blessings the Almighty dares the heathen to try and take away (3:9-21).

The Lord begins with the showering of temporal blessings upon a "devastated" people (2:19). His army of locusts will be removed and destroyed—they had served their purpose and with their removal comes the restoration.

#### NOTE:

We spoke earlier (first article on Joel; *Journal of Theology*, June 1989.) of Joel's developing his thoughts point and counter point. In chapter 1, he let us see how all-inclusive was the devastation wrought by the locusts. He began with people, moved to cattle, and ended with the land. Now, in reverse order, Joel begins with land (2:21), turns to the cattle (2:22), and concludes with the people (2:23). This is one of those literary niceties of Joel's style that pleases the ear and catches the eye.

Not only does He grant a harvest but such a harvest that picks up the lost disastrous years (2:25) so that "the floors shall be full of wheat and the vats shall overflow with wine and oil" (2:24). "And ye shall eat in plenty . . ." (2:26). The Lord would much rather bless in abundance than withhold—to use a word in a somewhat other sense—"Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Rom. 5:20). When the heathen would say, "Where is their God?" (2:17d), the Lord's reply, "And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the Lord your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed" (2:27).

But the blessings of God are for more than those which fill earthly barns and human stomachs. On this picture of tremendous abundance of grain, wine and oil, Joel leaps to the thoughts of spiritual seed being planted and harvested. Full

barns of grain—but God's barns (mansions) need filling, too. Joel, quickly, in 2:28, without so much as a by-your-leave, develops the picture of spiritual sowing and reaping.

We are familiar with the words of Joel found in 2:28-32 from Peter's sermon on Pentecost (Acts 2:16-21). The sowers of God's spiritual seed (the Word - the gospel) are all of God's children, young and old, man and maid, free and slave; all those on whom the Lord has showered His Spirit, has brought to faith in His Son. That rich harvest of souls, sprung from the powerful gospel, will be brought into God's eternal granary at the "terrible day of the Lord"—a terrible day for the unbelievers—a great day of the Lord for His people (Cf. 2:31b; see also the article on Obadiah concerning "the day of the Lord").

God's blessings upon His people in time and for eternity are absolutely secure unto His people, secure because they are predicated on the blood and righteousness of the Lamb of God. "But Judah (the Lord's people) shall dwell forever, and Jerusalem (God's city) from generation to generation. For I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed: for the Lord dwelleth in Zion" (3:20-21).

Oh, the world of the Old and New Testament times belittles God's promises and His ability to keep them. They would point to the days of tribulation the people of God have seen, the times of captivity of various kinds God's children have endured; the world would point to these things as an indication of either God's weakness or non-existence (3:2b-6). But listen carefully to the invitation that God issues to the Gentiles—to His detractors of all time: "Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles: Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning-hooks into spears . . ." (3:9-12). The Al mighty invites them—all heathen of all time—to bring every weapon available to do battle with Him—to stop Him from keeping His promise to His people. Can you picture the scene—from the time of Cain with whatever weapon he used to kill Abel—down to the sophisticated nuclear weapons of the armies of our day—"multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision" (3:14). They are all invited to see if they can stop the Lord from reaping His spiritual harvest for eternity.

What a formidable foe! What chance of victory do they have? Listen, as the Lord says in verses 16-21, "The Lord shall roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the Lord will be the hope of his people, and the strength of Israel . . . But Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation . . ." Think of Psalm 2: "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision . . ."

God's blessings stand absolutely secure (3:17-18). What a message of comfort and hope. As one ponders the words of Joel, chapter 2:27 through 3:21, the words of Paul found in Romans 8:38-39 come to mind: "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

---

(To be continued)

---