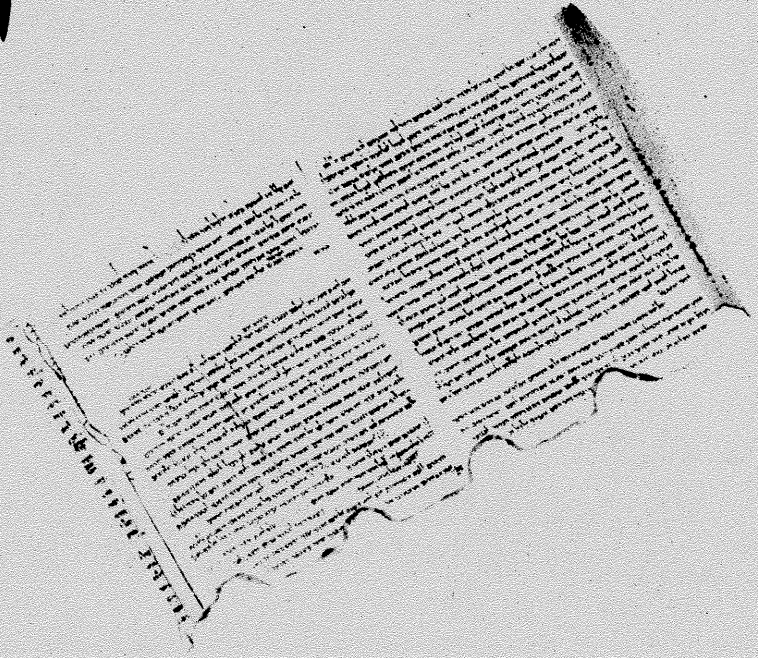




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The  
Lutheran  
Synod  
Quarterly

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

SERMON OUTLINES II  
(Non-Festival Half of Church Year)

ELS Pastors

### BOOK REVIEWS:

THE MINISTRY AND THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN IN THE  
CHURCH, PETER BRUNNER.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE CLASS STRUGGLE, BY HAROLD  
O. J. BROWN.

LUTHER: RIGHT OR WRONG? BY HARRY J. McSORLEY,  
C.S.P.

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## S E R M O N   O U T L I N E S   I I

(Non-Festival Half of Church-year)

These outlines are prepared by pastors of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod on the Second Series of texts listed in the LUTHERAN HYMNARY, the hymnal of the former Norwegian Synod.

### TRINITY SUNDAY

John 15:12-17

Nils C. Oesleby

Observance of Trinity Sunday ordered by Pope John xxiii (died 1334 A. D.) Three persons, one God. God is love. I John 4:8. 16.

### THE MEASURE OF LOVE

I. Love commanded. Popular song, "Love, Love, Love." Human need: Love and be loved. Failure to love: divorce, crime, war. Human failure in original sin. Ps. 51. Eph. 2:3.

II. Christianity: Faith working by love. Not mere ritualism but action springing from conviction and emotion. Ten commandments, Golden rule, Love God with all your heart, your neighbor as yourself. Some stop here. Law religion. Results in pride and despair.

III. The revelation of God's love: "I have loved you." Activity: miracles, teaching, active and passive obedience. Love of Trinity: John 3:16. Internal love of Trinity. Bible is God's letter of love to us.

IV. Ultimate measure of love: "As I have loved you." "Grow in grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ." How do you drive your car? Woodenly, impulsively,

hurry, bad humor? Imitation of experts? Christ's love the highest demonstration of love.

V. The purpose of His love is to free us, not enslave us, to be our friend.

VI. Sequence of His love. He takes initiative. v. 16. I have chosen you. I John 4:19.

VII. Consequence of His love. Fruit - our love to God and our neighbor manifested in our lives.

#### FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

Luke 12:13-21

Ahlert H. Strand

Let us ask ourselves seven questions about

#### OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD OUR POSSESSIONS

I. Are we more concerned about things than about people? v. 13-14. Man more concerned about his inheritance than about his brother.

II. Do we look for meaning in life through our material possessions? v. 15. Identity may be confused with the things we have. May identify ourselves primarily as rich or poor in relationship to our material possessions.

III. Is our chief purpose in life to accumulate and preserve our material possessions? v. 16-18. Property values may supercede God and fellowmen in our estimation.

IV. Do we look for our sense of security in the amount of earthly goods we have accumulated? v. 19.

V. Do we regard material things as more important than spiritual values? v. 20a. This we can determine by looking at our priorities on Sunday



morning, our budgeting of time for daily Bible reading and prayer.

VI. Have we provided for God's kingdom in designating "Whose shall those things be, which Thou hast provided?"

VII. Does our attitude toward our possessions indicate that we are self-centered? or God-centered?

## SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

Luke 14:26-28

Ahlert H. Strand

Jesus made a provocative statement: Luke 14:26-28. Astonishing. Stimulates fundamental thinking about

### GENUINE DISCIPLESHIP

I. Jesus not willing to play second fiddle. Drastic terms about hate. Relatives and one's own life. No contradiction between this and His teaching about love. Not hate person but those tendencies which discourage total commitment. Cf. Matt. 10:37. Jesus requests "agape" and "philew." His love is the motivation. "Misein" traits discouraging to genuine discipleship. As "mathetes" we follow the teachings and example of our teacher.

II. Take up cross. Christian cross indicates the involvement of our total being in the life of faith based upon His redemptive work. Our assets as believers. Our liabilities as genuine human beings. Impulses which stimulate our behavioral pattern often unknowingly ignored to avoid uncomfortable self-confrontation.

III. Our teacher does not suggest self-control by will power. Strength from Him. Wisdom and recognition of our limitations comes from Him through His teachings.

Discipleship is not adjustment to religious atmosphere of congregation or synod. That type of conformity creates inner emptiness. Discipleship produced by Holy Spirit. He opens the center of our being to Christ. He causes us to "come" to and to "follow" our Savior. Community, national and international issues to be evaluate by His teachings, not by community standards.

### THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

Luke 15:11-14

George M. Orvick

A subject which receives a great deal of attention in magazines and courses of study is success. Success is a basic need. eg., students, ball players, business people, wives and parents. A subject which also ought to receive a lot of attention is failure. Not much written about failure. Yet, failure, with its accompaniment of regrets, torments us.

#### WHAT SHALL I DO WITH THE REGRETS WHICH ACCOMPANY MY FAILURES?

I. Regrets involved with his failures must have weighed heavily on the prodigal son.

A. Regretted his failure to treat his father with consideration. knew his father loved him. Had responded with a profligate life.

B. Probably regretted his failure to avoid hurting his brother by walking out on him.

C. May have regretted failure to utilize his opportunities. Might have been loving husband and considerate father.

D. Regretted failure to live so as to avoid

offending God. "saddest words of tongue and pen are those which say, It might have been."

II. Regrets which weigh heavily on us because of our failures.

A. Regret failures to avoid harsh words which can no longer be recalled and failure to love fully in marriage.

B. Regret failure to avoid hurting feelings of relatives and friends.

C. Regret our failures in faithfulness to our Lord.

III. Prodigal knew what to do about regrets over his failures.

A. Not hopeless despondency of Judas.

B. Returned to father for love, mercy and forgiveness.

IV. We also have learned what to do with regrets over our failures.

A. Take them to our heavenly Father through faith in our Savior.

B. Like Peter, Paul and David, we find in God's gracious forgiveness the encouragement to renew our determination to live for Christ.

#### FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

Matt. 5:38-42

Paul Petersen

Relate story of Good Samaritan. Priest and Levite, expected to show compassion, failed miserably. Counterparts today. Samaritan was kind and helpful.

No revenge or indifference. He did the unusual thing.

### A MOST UNUSUAL PERSON

I. One who does not render evil for evil. Text misapplied. "Eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth", legislation was part of civil law. A judge's rule of thumb, Ex. 21:25. Necessity of dealing with evil doers. Government ordained of God, Rom. 13. Punishment fit crime. Lenient and permissive courts cause society to suffer. Scribes and Pharisees regarded revenge as their personal right. Christ sets them straight and shows how individual should deal with individual. He says, "Resist not evil." Turn other cheek. Christian will suffer wrong rather than retaliate. Christ before Caiaphus, John 18. "If any man sue". Rather than make an issue, give him cloke also. Go the extra mile, Christ says. However, such passive behavior must end as soon as it conflicts with the law of love. A Christian has a duty to his family, country, boss and community.

II. A most unusual person is one who is charitable and benevolent. Not only will he refrain from retaliation, but he will do all the good he can. "Give to him that asketh" etc. Give and lend as able when asked. Again, law of love will not conflict. Duty to family, etc. Love shown by refusing money to a drunk or dope addict, or for an unsound investment. A Christian is a good steward.

What will self-examination reveal? At times a hard line toward others? Or Cruel? "Not to me you don't" attitude. Insist on getting even? Some will say, "Pastor, what you say is all true, but people aren't like that any more." By nature all are unwilling. Only the spirit of Christ dwelling in us will make us different. Christ, our example. I Pet. 2:23. He left no stone unturned. Went to the Cross. Finished His work. May this encourage and strengthen us. Forgive us for our failings.

## FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

John 1:35-52

Wilhelm Petersen

You are a Christian because God in His grace called you into the saving faith. John 15:16. II Timothy 1:9. God uses human instruments to bring Gospel to mankind. David Livingstone: "The salvation of men ought to be the chief desire and aim of every Christian." Text teaches us

### HOW TO BECOME INSTRUMENTAL IN BRINGING OTHERS TO CHRIST

I. Motive: John believed Jesus to be "Lamb of God," promised Messiah. Motivation for John, Simon, Philip, Nathanael was faith in Christ. Our conviction motivates us to bring others to Christ.

II. Method. Personal evangelism. Business men and politicians know importance of personal contact. We do not argue, "bug," or force people. We invite and tell what we believe. Effective for disciples and for us. "Come and see." We leave results to Holy Spirit. Our conduct must not contradict our invitation. "Be careful how you live; you may be the only Bible some people read." Woman in Scotland walked four miles to church. Neighbor remarked: "She preaches a sermon four miles long every Sunday." Family in Ohio won by the living testimony of their next door neighbors.

III. Blessing. Gellert: "What a joyful blessing this must be, To lead a soul, my God, to Thee!" Theodore Roosevelt: "I consider it my greatest joy and glory to hold up Christ as the Hope and Savior of the world." W. J. Bryan: "There is more happiness in bringing souls back to God than in presidential nominations." Proverbs 11:30. Daniel 12:3. God, grant us grace to be alert to opportunities to be effective witnesses for Christ.



## SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

Matthew 5:17-19

Herman A. Preus

This is a part of the Sermon on the Mount. It is Law. Jesus wanted people to get a clear understanding of the Law. Then as now, some people wanted to make the Law of non-effect. The result is lawlessness. We need to give thought to

### THE IMMUTABLE LAW OF GOD

I. It shall not be destroyed. II. It shall be fulfilled.

I. The Law of God is everlasting like God is.

Because God is unchangeable, His Law is unchangeable. God does not change His holy will. How dare man, God's creature, presume to change God's Law? He who tries to destroy the indestructible and eternal Law of God is actually outside the kingdom of God and needs to have his thinking changed so he respects God's Law.

God alone can bring about this change. God changes man's thinking by His divine grace through the Gospel. After God has changed man's thinking, the believing person seeks to model his conduct in accordance with the Law of God.

II. Mere man cannot fulfill the Law, our Lord Jesus has fulfilled it. Jesus kept God's Law perfectly. He came into this world in "the fulness of time," made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Galatians 4:4-5).

Jesus accomplished what we are unable to do. As we hear this Good News of what Christ has done for us, the Holy Ghost persuades us to believe it and preserves us in our Christian faith.

As believers in Christ, we do not discard the Law, we respect it and use it to discern how God wants us to behave ourselves. Because He first loved us, we love Him and seek to please Him by doing His will. Thus we praise Him through the merits of Christ. Amen.

## SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

Matthew 15:5-12

David J. Nelson

Knew how to bake bread in Jesus' day. Jesus spoke of leaven used in making bread. He said:

### BEWARE OF EVEN A LITTLE LEAVEN

I. Warned against leaven of Pharisees and Saducees. Only a small package of leaven, yeast, is needed to make a whole loaf of bread rise in a short time. Disciples did not think about spiritual lesson Jesus intended. Thought only about having forgotten to take food on the trip.

Jesus perceiving their concern for food, reprimanded them for their lack of understanding and reminded them of two miracles performed by Him for providing food for thousands. The leaven of which Jesus was speaking was the false teachings and hypocrisy of the Pharisees and Saducees. A little false doctrine can corrupt the whole church. I Cor. 5:6.

II. Same today. Leaven affects bread. False doctrine affects church. Cf. Romans 16:17. Stay away from yeast of false teaching to avoid liberal, anti-Scriptural teachings. Many yielding. God's word still clear.

Concerned Christians must let God's word guide them in spiritual matters. The faithful must speak Christ's words to the confused, wavering and unsure:

"O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves...do ye not understand?" Beware of small differences, contrary to God's word. They are false, no matter how small. Beware. Be wise. The heaven will rise. To be changed not much, be sure not to touch.

## EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

Matthew 7:12-14

Ahlert H. Strand

Much publicity for good roads these days.  
Shocking to hear Jesus describe

### THE ROAD THAT LEADS TO ETERNAL LIFE

I. Narrow gate. Wide gate and broad road lead to hell. Many people take that route. So narrow the gate and the road to eternal life that few people find them.

II. Road to life mapped out in Bible. Map directs to narrow road of faith in Christ. Markers are posted. John 14:6. John 3:16. Substantial road. Roadbed imperishable rock of God's promises. Road is Christ. Unique. I Timothy 2:6. I John 1:7. II Cor. 5:14. Heb. 7:25.

III. How get on this road? Through narrow, free gate. John 10:9. "Door" comparable to "gate."

IV. Why few find it. Natural inclination toward eye-appeal of wide gate and broad highway. Reason agrees: Follow the crowd. Pay your own toll. Oasis convenient. Don't bother with God's map.

V. We're God's publicity agents to persuade people to switch from broad to narrow way. Basic problem - rejection of Gospel. Popular pastime - denouncing crime, vice and immorality. Only Gospel of Christ can convert souls. Our project: Issue invitations like Matthew 11:28.

God, make us faithful. In Jesus' name. Amen.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

Luke 12:39-46

Ahlert H. Strand

God has brought us to believe in Christ alone as our Savior. He has also given us the privilege of serving Him with conduct and words expressing the consequence of our faith: Love to God and to all our fellowmen. God has interested us in

BEING FAITHFUL SERVANTS OF OUR SAVIOR

Suggest reading text from William Beck's translation.

I. Love subdues tendencies to abuse, take advantage of those below us in rank. Although "tuptein" means to beat, the idea of abuse, take advantage of, is no violation of word. Seems to fit better into the customs and practices of middle class U. S. citizens.

Employers, army officers, pastors and other authority figures may emphasize "Talmud and Torah" in preference to Gospel. Cannon law, synodical resolutions may overshadow the Gospel. Matt. 5:7. Matt. 18:23-35. Luke 10:23-37. James 2:1-9.

II. Text portrays master, lord, as being concerned about welfare of all his servants. Illustrates God's attitude. God's attitude, revealed in Gospel, disposes us to be evangelical, loving. Gal. 5:22. "Fruit of Spirit is love." I Cor. 13:13. James 2:18.

III. Unkind servant classified with those who do not have faith. "Meta twm apistwn." Matt. 25:41. James 2:13. Matt. 9:13. Heb. 11:6.

## TENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

Matthew 11:16-19

Ahlert H. Strand

Perhaps we may gain an interesting insight into Christ's comparison of "this generation" by reading, Games People Play, by Eric Berne, M.D. Jesus is comparing this generation with

### CHILDREN PLAYING GAMES

I. One group takes the initiative and seeks to direct the rest of the group. The leadership group tries to get the entire group to play wedding. Music for dancing. Being unsuccessful, the leadership group tries to play funeral. Mourned to create lamentation. The leadership becomes pouty. Results are not satisfactory. Here it is important to recognize that Jesus is not comparing Himself and John the Baptist to the children in the leadership group. Lenski makes some pointed remarks about this.

II. Jesus refers to John and Himself not as being represented by children trying to get their desired response but as being greeted by a generation of pouting and critical people, not willing to make an adult evaluation of the evidence presented but responding with clichés developed in their environment. "He hath a devil." "Gluttonous, winebibber, friend of publicans and sinners." Prejudice, generalizations, insinuations. Emotional subjectivism. No attempt at sound exegetical treatment of Messianic promises. Cf. Lenski for interesting treatment of "wisdom is justified of her children."

## ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

Matthew 21:28-32

Ahlert H. Strand

Our Lord encourages us never to give up in our efforts to win people for the kingdom of God.



I. Even the most unlikely prospect may become a believer.

One son said: "I will not." After a while he changed his mind and went to work. The tax collectors were a bunch of sharpies. Some were brought to faith. Harlots put money above self-respect. Many of them were brought to faith. The preaching of John the Baptist bore fruit on some very unlikely characters. Christ came to call sinners to repentance, to seek the lost. His example is intended for our emulation.

II. Even the son who promised but did not go to work would be a prospect for us because we cannot read the hearts. God's Word performs miracles continually according to His will. Chief priests and elders of people did not believe John. Publicans and harlots went into kingdom ahead of them. That did not indicate that there was no chance that anyone from among the chief priests and elders could ever become a believer, have his mind changed by the Holy Ghost.

III. Outward respectability is not the mark we must look for in order to think of people as mission prospects. Rightists and leftists, rich and poor, Republicans and Democrats, Communists and Socialists, all are prospects for the kingdom of God as far as we are concerned.

## TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

Matthew 12:33-37

H. A. Theiste

Words form the bridge by which man conveys knowledge and ideas. Words can convey detrimental ideas. Political candidate makes a careless and inconsiderate statement. Most serious in spiritual matters. Jesus teaches us to

### WATCH THOSE WORDS

I. Words reveal what is in the heart. v. 34b.

Note circumstances. Pharisees slandered Jesus. vv. 22-24. Jesus indicated that their accusation was illogical. vv. 25-28. Revealed the evil of their hearts. v. 34. Greeks said: "The word is the revelation of the soul." Jesus said: "Tree known by his fruit" and compared heart to a treasure chest from which one brings out good or evil things.

Watch those words. Cursing, lying, slander, gossip, all reveal lack of love. Second Commandment - Luther. Job 16:3. 2 Peter 2:18. Malachi 3:13. 3 John 10.

II. Words indicate saving faith or unbelief. Our words express our confession or rejection of Christ. Therefore they condemn or justify. vv. 36-37. No small matter. Job 6:25. Malachi 3:16.

Our relationship to Christ makes tree good. Pharisees rejected Christ - hearts evil. "Every man lives either with Christ against the devil, or he lives with the devil against Christ." Luther.

Our words reveal the place Christ has in our hearts. Galatians 5:22-26. Lutheran Hymnal 295:3.

### THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

Matthew 5:43-48

Victor Theiste

We're careful about our manners. Rudeness upsets us. Often remind selves and children: "Mind our manners." Jesus says in effect:

### CHRISTIANS, MIND YOUR MANNERS!

I. Motivation for Christian manners is different from that of non-Christians. Conversion, regeneration, renewing gives them a unique motivation for minding their manners. Love is basic to Christian manners. Christians respond to God's love.

Christian motivation distinguishes Christian love from that of the heathen. Jesus is our example. He loved even His critics with an untiring love.

II. The model for Christian manners is the perfect love of Father in heaven. v. 48. Puzzling? Is Jesus asking the impossible? He is requesting that we follow the example of our model. He is telling us to strive for perfection, not telling us we will reach the perfection of our Father in heaven. "You shall continually endeavor to be like your Father in heaven." Future tense of verb "be."

Sermon on Mount is law. Convicts. Also guides us in the God-pleasing direction. We can't mind our manners successfully unless we take time to think about what God wants us to will and to do. Christians should not be satisfied to be "the same as others." Should always be striving to reach a higher degree of conformity with the will of God.

"Christians, mind your manners!" An exhortation that ought to be ringing in our ears continually.

#### FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

John 5:1-4

Milton E. Tweit

We can never stress too much that forgiveness of sin, life and salvation are the work of God and not the work of man. God alone heals us in physical disease and sickness. We have an example of this in our text.

#### CHRIST HEALS THE HELPLESS MAN AT BETHESDA

I. What was the cause of his sickness?

A. Jesus' question and Verse 14 show that it was sin which had caused his illness. It may not have been a specific sin, but at least sin was the cause of his sickness.

B. All sickness is in general the result of sin.

C. It may be the result of a particular kind of sin, - drunkenness, drugs etc.

D. God may send sickness for various reasons: 10 plagues - Ex. Chapters 7-12; Deut. 28:15ff. Punishment - 2 Sam. 12:14ff; Test - Job.

II. The manner in which the man was healed.

A. Completely helpless V. 4-7.

B. Jesus healed him just as the man desired.

C. There are various kinds of diseases but only one healer - God. V. 8-9.

D. God may use means - Doctors, medicine etc. but it still remains true, God heals: 2 Chron. 16: 11-14; Exodus 15:26; Psalm 103:3.

III. What was the reaction of the man when healed.

A. Thankfulness - This is evident from V. 9-11, especially V. 11. Later in the temple, very likely there for worship and thanks - V. 14.

B. He accepted without murmuring the warning of Jesus V. 14-15.

C. Let us learn to thank God for recovery - Example of man in our text. Also Ps. 103:1-3; Ps. 50: 14-15 and 23.

D. We ought to be all the more faithful in attending Worship Services, using our health to serve God by worship and praise. We ought also to be all the more on guard against sin, that in all things God may be glorified - V. 14. Cf. Hom. Mag. 34-246.

## FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

Luke 10:38-42

E. G. Unseth

Newspapers and magazines are literally loaded with attractive pages showing forth the latest fashions or comforts or conveniences in which they would like to have us become interested. Television is capable of creating in the minds of many people an insatiable desire for the products they are currently promoting. Yes, its easy to become so engrossed with the crabgrass on our lawn, or the peeling paint on our house, or the lack of luster on our car, that we're willing to engage in these outward affairs even though it means doing them on a Sunday morning when our proper place is in the House of God. With all this continual clamoring for attention there is a great danger that we lose sight of what is important and what is most important (improper priority) and therefore fail to put:

### FIRST THINGS FIRST

I. The Bethany home. Jesus was always welcome at the home of Martha and Mary--an excellent example for all Christian households. Wish we could see more of that old wall motto: "Christ is the Head of this house" etc. Family devotions, prayers before and after meals, in the morning and evening. "Blest such a house, it prospers well, In peace and joy the parents dwell, And in the children's lot is shown How richly God can bless His own." (HYMNAL 625)

II. The occupants of that home: Martha. Often misunderstood. Jesus' commendation of Mary not to be construed as a condemnation of Martha. We need the Marthas too. Not a contrast here, but rather a comparison between the choice that was good and the choice that was the best. Martha's work important too. Martha has perhaps been much maligned. She is often pictured as the "embodiment of worldly-mindedness in contrast with Mary an embodiment of spiritual



mindfulness." "Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus."

Mary: As P. E. Kretzmann points out, "We have here two forms of service, each done to the Lord, each with the best of intentions, the one with the work of the hands, the other in listening to the words of eternal wisdom." Mary had also been helping with the housework. "Mary also sat at Jesus' feet and hears His Word." Some have also criticized Mary for being lazy etc., but that word "also" is there to silence her critics. "One thing's needful; Lord, this treasure Teach me highly to regard." (HYMNAL 366) "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness." Matt. 6:33.

#### SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

John 11:19-29

Luther Vangen

In order to instruct us as to His person and work, Jesus calls Himself: the Bread of Life, John 6; the Vine, John 15; the Door, John 10; the Good Shepherd, John 10; the Way, the Truth, and the Life, John 14. Explain each briefly. Here Jesus calls Himself the Resurrection and the Life.

#### I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

I. The setting in which these words were spoken.

The illness of Lazarus.....the prayer of the sisters, v. 3, (in keeping with Ps. 50:15; note that their prayer did not prescribe manner or time of answer and that its appeal was based on Jesus' love for Lazarus, not Lazarus' love for Jesus).....Jesus' delay in coming.....Lazarus' death and the sorrow it brought.....The varied reactions of the disciples to Jesus' announcement that He would go and wake Lazarus from sleep (discuss the sense in which we speak of death as "sleep". The soul of the believer is im-

mediately conveyed "on angels wings into Abraham's bosom" while the dead body remains to "sleep" in the dust until Judgment Day).....Jesus' arrival at Bethany and conversation with Martha.....Her expression of faith in the resurrection at the last day.....No doubt she remembered Job 19:26 (use free translation such as suggested by Prof. Honsey in 1970 Gen. Past. Conf.) and Dan. 12:2.....Jesus' wonderful words of comfort, vv. 25 and 26.

## II. The unspeakable comfort these words convey.

A. Temporal death has been transformed into an entrance into life.

1. Death is the result of sin. Gen. 2:17; Gen. 3:19; Gen. 5:5.

2. Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life. I believe "the resurrection of the body." John 5: 28-29; I Cor. 15; 1 Thess. 4; Phil. 3:21.

B. Eternal death has been abolished.

1. All have sinned. Born in sin. All deserve eternal death.

2. In Christ we all have eternal life. "He that liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." 2 Tim. 1:10.

## III. The comfort these words convey rests alone on the Savior.

Our bodily resurrection on the last day, our glorification, and our life eternal in heaven is

A. Not in any way dependent upon our doing or merit, but

B. Is God's free gift in Christ. This gift we receive in faith, a faith worked in us by the Holy

Spirit thru the Gospel. Verse 27.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

Mark 2:18-28

W. Werling

God's directions for O. T. Formal temple worship. Informal N. T. type - Open-air services of Jesus, John Baptist, Apostles. Not dead formalism.

OUR JOYFUL WORSHIP IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH

I. Not consist in outward rite, but in joy in Jesus. Levi (Matthew) made a great feast for Jesus. (Lk. 5: 39) Many publicans, sinners. Pharisees: "Why eat with publ. and s.?" v. 17 Jesus rebukes: "Whole not need phys." v. 18: Fasting. Christ called "winebibber, friend of publicans and sinners." v. 19. No fasting while Bridegroom, Christ, present. Immanuel. Happy day! Fasting useless in pacifying God. Pharisee "fasted twice a week. Despised others." Beware! After living faith, dead ritual; after dead orthodoxy, false doctrine. v. 20: "Bridegroom taken - then fast." At death of Jesus "weep and lament." Jn. 16:20. But now a living Savior. "Then were disciples glad." Hallelujah, Jesus lives! We not under Law but under Gospel. Paul not fast in prison (Phil. 4:40): "Rejoice!"

II. Joyful worship not self-chosen piety, but rejoicing in Gospel of forgiveness. v. 21: "New cloth on old garment." "Not agree" (Lk. 5:36. Tears old cloth.

Trusting in own merit never agrees with faith on mercies of Christ. Not Christ and works. Nor patch up sins with a few Gospel scraps. Needed: whole new garment of Jesus' blood and righteousness.

v. 22. New wine fermenting will burst old leathern bottles. The Gospel of forgiveness never reconciled with self-chosen works for self-glory.

Proud hearts will not be satisfied: Lk. 5:39: "The old is better."

Fresh skins for new wine! Christ's obedience for our disobedience; His death our life. So we rejoice in His love for us. The price is paid. Gal. 2:16a; 3:10. 13; Rom. 5:10.

III. Joyful worship worships the Lord of the Sabbath, - not sabbath rites. v. 23: Disciples plucking grain accused of breaking Sabbath Law.

But David and his men ate bread 'offered to God,' when hungered. 1 S. 21:6.

Abiathar the priest (Ahimelech). "Love is fulfilling of the Law." Priests worked on Sabbath and did not profane it (Matt. 12:5).

V. 28: "Son of Man is Lord of the sabbath." Matt. 12:6: "Greater than temple." So, Col. 2:16: "Let no man judge you." "Shadow of things to come." Christ is Founder of New Covenant. Rom. 5:5: "Love shed abroad." "O love the Lord" - Ps. 31:23. Amen!

#### EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

John 10:23-38

F. R. Weyland

Feast of Dedication. Cf. "The Gospels," Joh. Ylvisaker, p. 459. Festival of Lights. In archway of Solomon, there stood Christ the Light of the world. John 1:11. 10, 24.

#### IN THE MIDST OF DARKNESS CHRIST SHINES AS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

I. On the Jews, His own people. They refused to believe. His works shone forth as testimony. Refused to follow His light into sheepfold. v. 25-26.

II. Offended at the light of the world because of His divine Sonship. v. 33. Jesus cast His light from the lesser to the greater evidence of His deity. Quoted Ps. 82:6. V. 34-36. Then cast His light upon His works as evidence of His unique relationship to His Father. V. 37-38. If not works of Father, need not believe. But if words testify that He and Father are one, then believe.

III. Still Light of the world. Still shines as true light. Shines in His grace through the Gospel message of His voice. Hear His voice! Holy Spirit persuades us to follow the light. Lights the way to the gift of eternal life. In the brilliance of His light, prowlers and thieves are reluctant to try to snatch us out of His and His Father's hand.

Don't be blinded by the neon lights of the city during the Festival of Lights! Look to the Day Star from on high! 2 Peter 1:19. Then you shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever (Ps. 23:6) to enjoy living where there is no darkness.

#### NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

John 9:1-11

Carl Wosje

Native Chinese blinded by cataracts came to Medical Missionary, Dr. Gillson. Successful operation. On his 200 mile trip home, he told all he met that Jesus had opened eyes. At his village he gathered 16 blind men, tied them together, brought them to Dr. Gillson. Missionary proportion? Not reach one but 16 or more. "...work the works of him that sent me..."

#### HELP OF THE HELPLESS

I. Christ defends them. Speaks for those who can't defend themselves. Those who can't be present to defend selves, those upon whose conduct worst construc-



tion has been placed. Proverbs 31, 8.

Gives self willingly to save them from themselves and their enemies. Romans 5:5. Criticised for breaking Sabbath, still continued His healing.

II. Healing them. Basic need: Ps. 14:3. Ps. 143:2. "Sense of guilt" often present. May be especially evident in time of sickness and distress. Many reject His healing. Matt. 15:14. "Blind leaders..." I Cor. 2:14. Matt. 23:16-24. Sin actually responsible for all illness. "...poor, blind..." Rev. 3:17.

Healing of soul through forgiveness is the special help Jesus gives to the helpless. Peace of mind. Thankfulness. Motivation to tell others about Helper. "Show forth praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."

#### TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

Matthew 13:44

Paul Ylvisaker

In ancient times people of wealth sometimes hid their wealth in obscure places. The field with treasure in it became valuable. Our Savior compares

#### THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN AS A TREASURE

I. Jesus is the treasure of the kingdom of heaven. "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:3). All else is vain. Jeremiah 51:13.

II. This treasure, Jesus Christ, is hidden to natural man. I Cor. 2:14. The braggart Pharisee in the temple did not see it. The bankrupt publican saw this treasure before the Mercy Seat. The Holy Ghost had opened his eyes to see the redemption that is in the Messiah. "Jesus, Priceless Treasure."

III. This treasure, Jesus Christ, is hidden in a field. Not in a brightly lighted chest, but in a field, the field of the Gospel of Christ. As Christ was born in a stable which housed the cattle of the field so Christ is found in the Gospel which houses the wisdom and the love of God. The glory of this field is revealed to him who sought it not by the gracious light of God's word and sacraments. Matt. 10:20. John 15:16.

Clear title to this treasure is given freely by God, its owner, through the faith which the Holy Ghost creates in the souls of His people by means of the Gospel. With joy we search the Scriptures. Cf. Catechism question and answer #247.

#### TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

Matthew 16:1-4

Paul Haugen

Signs and wonders interest us. People pay much to see signs and wonders of science and nature.

#### GOD HAS GIVEN US A SIGN

I. We need this. Escape from God's wrath over sin. Peace for our conscience. Sign revealed to us by God.

II. Has revealed sign of Jonah, Savior's death and resurrection, in the Bible. Death for our sins. Resurrection for our justification. Instrument by which Holy Ghost works to create and maintain faith in us. Evidenced by first century church, Luther and present day church.

III. Sign necessary to overcome our unbelief. Pharisees rejected promises of God's word so also rejected the possibility of Christ's sacrificial death and justifying resurrection. Having rejected the promises, they wanted a different sign. Contemporary attitude

similar. Want signs from heaven. Want evidence not drawn from Bible.

IV. God-given faith clings to sign of Jonah, death and resurrection of Christ, revealed from heaven through Bible. Written by God through men chosen and inspired by Him. All signs must be evaluated on the basis of the sign revealed in Bible. We test all signs by God's word.

May God through His grace strengthen our faith in the redeeming death and justifying resurrection of our Savior. This we ask in His name. Amen.

#### TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

Matthew 18:15-22

John K. Schmidt

Some people are difficult to live with. We find this situation in the church too. What do we do when we see unlovable, spiteful, quarrelsome, and unkind people? What can we do to live harmoniously with them? We could -- ignore them, tell them "off", seek an "eye for an eye". How do we handle it in our church, in our town? Jesus tells us.

I. GO AND TELL (Matt. 18:15-18) Go and tell personally, talk between you and them. Don't nurse a peeve. Don't let the sun go down upon your wrath. Don't let their offending conduct "turn you off" so that you no longer care for them. ---What happened to your love? (I John 2:9-11) ---Go and tell with witness. After (time) if he will not listen to your loving plea take someone along. Someone who knows (I Cor. 13, I John 2:9-11) and let them talk to the erring brother or sister. ---But with (time) if this does not work--go tell the church. The last resort! Remember, the purpose is still to forgive and bring back to the fold (lost sheep). The binding of the impenitent is serious business. That is why we must--

II. BE READY TO FORGIVE (Matt. 18:21-22) No matter how often he sins, if he repents, we should forgive him. We have a good precedent set--OURSELVES. How many times does God forgive us??? But maybe we like to or feel we have to play the part of the unmerciful servant (Matt. 18:23-35.---Rather seek peace (I Peter 3:11) Forgive!

## TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

Mark 12:41-44

Ahlert H. Strand

Worth while to think about -

### OUR LORD'S EVALUATION OF GOOD CONTRIBUTORS

I. Rich, obviously, cast in much. That is to be expected. They should contribute as God has prospered them. Their contribution ought to be a generous proportion of their income. When God gives much prosperity, He expects much return to His kingdom. He gives it all.

II. But the poor? Should they also have the privilege of giving? Our Lord thought so. He commended the poor widow who put all she had into the collection box. She apparently was convinced that God would provide her with her daily bread.

We ought not to discriminate against the poor by depriving them of the opportunity and the dignity of bringing their gifts to the Lord. A parochial school in one of the most decrepit areas of our town insists that all children, no matter how poor, give something, if not money - then work, toward their tuition. That dignity should be accorded them.

III. Where do the middle-income people stand in this evaluation? As far as statistics available are able to present a valid report, it appears that the bulk of the financial support of church-work comes from the

middle-income people.

No matter what our income, God gives us the privilege of bringing our offering to His treasury.

#### TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

John 6:37-40

Ahlert H. Strand

Is this world a better place in which to live as a result of the individual impact we have exerted upon our environment? Depends upon the extent our faith has been operative within the arena of our environment. Consider:

#### THE IMPACT OF OUR FAITH UPON OUR ENVIRONMENT

On the basis of John 6:37-40. Suggest using only verse 38 for text.

I. Faith we put into action is founded on Christ's active obedience: Hebrew 10:7; Matthew 5:17; Luke 2:51; Romans 5:19; Gal. 4:4-5; John 13:1; John 14:31. Also on His passive obedience: Phil. 2:8; Luke 18:32 and 35-39; Matthew 27:27-30; Hebrew 2:9; Romans 5:6-8.

II. Christ our example and inspiration for doing the will of God in our relationship to our environment. Luke 22:42: "Not my will, but thine, be done."

III. God sent us into this world by giving us physical and spiritual life. Has given us special commission to preach the Gospel by bringing us to believe it.

Unique privilege. Danger of losing our effectiveness by yielding to temptation to join clamor for law and order.

Heathen equipped to proclaim law and order. Rom. 2:15: "Gentiles show work of law written in their hearts."

Only Christians equipped to proclaim Gospel. Paul knew his specialty. Rom. 1:16: Gospel... power of God. I Cor. 2:2: know...him crucified. Challenge of today: "Preach the Gospel." Dare to trust God to bless faithful Gospel proclamation.

--Rev. A. H. Strand,  
Outline Editor

## B O O K R E V I E W S

Brunner, Peter, The Ministry and the Ministry of Women in the Church, Concordia Publishing House, 1971, 39 pages, \$1.25.

Originally published in 1959, "Das Hirtenamt und die Frau," in Lutherische Rundblick Vol. IX, No. 3, and in Lutheran World. Vol. VI, No. 3.

The word 'subordination' in describing the relationship of the woman to the man in the structure of the Christian congregation will certainly not receive a favorable hearing during the age of the woman's liberation movement. (p. 38, Discussion Questions)

That may be a naive understatement. Yet, the question has been asked before the age of Women's Lib and will continue.

This little booklet in the Contemporary Theology series of Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, is in good company, having been published along with Dr. J. A. O. Preus's treatise, It Is Written. The Brunner booklet, though the writing is 13 years old, is an excellent and provocative contribution to the current discussion in Lutheranism concerning women's suffrage and the ordination of women. The treatise does not repeat traditional pieties, but makes an effort to

deal with the subject in an orthodox way, and does so with a clear pre-disposition to the divine authority and inerrancy of the Scriptures.

For that reason, we recommend it highly as good source material and guidance in our own current study of the topic.

Brunner divides his study into five sections: 1) Historic Lutheran Position, 2) Biblical Analysis of Ministry, 3) Place of Women in the Church, 4) Place of Women in Creation, and 5) Application to Church and Ministry.

In chapter one, Brunner demonstrates that though the question did not have the present burning intensity to it, it was an issue both in the Reformation years and during the age of Orthodoxy. Luther had to deal with the question, as for example in the tract, "Von Schleichern und Winkel-Predigern" 1532, (American Edition, Vol. 40). Likewise the dogmaticians. In 1549, the Wittenberg faculty was asked by the ministerium of Hamberg to clarify the question. In the ensuing debate, Flacius upheld the opinion of Hamurg in "De Veris et falsis adiaphoris," and claimed that the fact that women are not allowed to preach cannot be supported by divine command. Gerhard, in Locus XXIII, No. 186, according to Brunner, saw Paul's command as necessary, in order to combat the matri-archal tendency of the time, an assertion which, with whatever conclusion it might be coupled, would probably not be used today as a line of doctrinal argument.

Brunner concludes that at the date of writing, 1959, the question has not been adequately dealt with. He recognizes that the problem is going to continue to be difficult, "because the question with which we are concerned involves many other problems about which there is no general consensus of opinion in the Lutheran Churches today," namely, "the hermeneutic problem, which today includes the question of the

authority of scripture." (p. 13)

Brunner sees the key to finding the meaning of 1 Corinthians 14:34-40 and 1 Timothy 2:9-15, in the place of woman in creation. "The really significant basis for the apostolic command to silence is the reference to the "subordination" (unterordnung), that is demanded of the woman." (p.23) It is in this section that Brunner makes his most valuable contribution to the current discussion. His basis is Genesis 2 and 3 and Ephesians 5:22-23. In what he terms "the kephale-structure, (Ephesians 5) Brunner finds the root of the divine command to silence and subordination in 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2. He observes that the subordination of the woman is a theological, not a sociological relationship (p.24) and concludes,

The subordination demanded of the woman reveals a structure that is projected into the Christological depths of the saving history of God. Therefore, the preservation of the kephale-structure for the relationship between the man and the Christian woman is nothing strange, as though it contradicted her being a Christian, her being in Christ! Instead, the maintaining of this structure on the level of relationships between man and woman actually corresponds to that which exists between the church and Christ, yes, even to that between Christ and the Father. . . . What is subordination for the Lord Jesus Christ is reflected in the subordination demanded of the woman, and she may see it in the light of the relationship between the church and Christ and between the Father and the Son. The Christian woman could not mistake or belie the dignity that is hers in a more basic manner than by attempting to step out of the kephale-structure that governs her relationship with the man and by trying to usurp and assume the place accorded to him either in the church or



in marriage. (page 30)

The crucial issue remains, however, in the application to church and ministry. It is in the last chapter that some will perhaps find some disagreement with Brunner. First of all, it should be made clear that for one reason or another, Brunner does not deal at all with the matter of suffrage. He makes no mention, nor does he even allude to the subject of the woman exercising the voting franchise in the congregation. However, his final conclusion seems to lead directly to a statement, and a pretty orthodox one too, on that matter.

Brunner does deal thoroughly with the matter of women and the pastoral office. He states his thesis in the form of a question, "Can this spiritual authority (of the ministry of the word) be exercised by a woman in the assembled ecclesia without repudiating the kephale-structure of the order in which the woman stands eo ipso, that is by the very act of exercising such authority and thereby also damaging a concrete ethical consummation of the subordination implied in this order and its corresponding command?" (p. 32.) And his answer is that "the combination of being 'woman' and being 'pastor' contradict each other in a manner that involves the woman and the depths of her created being in a conflict that attacks her very being." (p. 35). In other words, Brunner appears to be saying that "woman" and "pastor" as entities and as functions are mutually contradictory and mutually exclusive.

Brunner concludes that it is therefore improper and against the clear command of God for a woman to exercise the function of the pastoral office, specifically,

1. preaching in the worship services of the congregation;
2. leading the services of worship;
3. the administration of the sacraments in the

- worship services;
4. the decision as to who is to be admitted to the Lord's supper; the imposing of the degree of excommunication and its revocation;
  5. the granting of absolution in the confessional;
  6. the acts of confirmation and ordination;
  7. jurisdiction over the supporting ministries and the assistants in the local church, the episkope;
  8. the exercise of the office of diocesan bishop.

(page 37)

Included in those acts which can be performed by women is the administration of the cup in the administration of the sacrament. Brunner follows a rather suspicious and specious argument here. The reception of the bread, he says, indicates admission to the sacrament. But the administration of the cup does not have that governmental character of the office attached to it. What Brunner seems to forget, apparently, is that the administration of the WHOLE sacrament is the declaration of forgiveness--in the very body and blood of Christ, we have the forgiveness of sins. And therefore, his allowance of the woman's participation here contradicts his firm repudiation of the woman's administration of the sacraments in the public service.

It is interesting to note one other item which Brunner includes as permissible--"cooperating in the maintenance of correct doctrine through theological research." We are reminded of personal experiences in which the theological awareness of a wife and mother has led a family to associate with and help establish an orthodox Lutheran Church. And should a woman be so inclined, it is indefensible to deny her the pursuit of a scholarly interest in theological research. But one will also have to deal here with

the question whether or not such a work, or to what extent, is included in the ministry. Theological research can hardly be forbidden. But the matter of teaching theology is a different matter. Compare Luther's attitude toward his teaching at Wittenberg. (Am Ed. Vol. 40, p. 387).

As we have already observed, Brunner does not deal with the matter of women exercising the vote in the congregation. It seems, however, that his final conclusion does lead to a statement on that matter. Brunner very strongly and clearly repudiates the participation of women in the public (representational) ministry of the Word and all that that implies. He also clearly repudiates the woman's exercise of any jurisdiction over the episcopate in the local church.

It appears, however, that Brunner arrives at his conclusion via a somewhat different avenue than is customary. Rather than basing his case simply on the term "usurp,"--"The woman shall not usurp the authority over the man," and proceeding with the argument that this indicates that the woman is not to participate in the governing of the congregation because of that command, Brunner appears to take the other tack and argues that the prohibition here, in Ephesians 5 and in Genesis 2 and 3 is against the woman's jurisdiction over the man spiritually and morally.

It is here that one is led to wonder if the traditional line of reasoning and application of 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2 has been altogether clear. If Brunner's emphasis on the place of the woman in creation is correct, then the traditional argument is a case of wrong reasoning but right conclusion.

If one takes the traditional approach on this question, then it becomes rather difficult, it seems to me, to argue for any sort of women's suffrage or participation in government, business, teaching or anything else. If we are to understand 1 Corinthians

14 and 1 Timothy 2 to say that the woman cannot exercise any jurisdiction in the temporal affairs of the congregation per se, then it seems unjustifiable to grant them the franchise in the other areas of life, in the political vote, in the right to teach, or in fact, in the general right to work and hold positions in business, industry and in the intellectual and professional fields.

If, however, one takes Brunner's case and applies these passages to the public exercise of the Office of the Keys--the proclamation of the Word, public absolution, and the administration of the sacraments, then it seems to me that the problem of the exercise by women of the voting franchise in the congregation is not insurmountable.

If we have granted women the right to exercise the voting franchise in all other areas of life, and if in fact, we allow Christian women to exercise the authority over the man in the secular sphere, on what grounds are women still not granted the franchise in governing the temporal affairs of a congregation? The traditional argument does not appear to be adequate at this point. Brunner asserts that "no preacher of the Gospel and no theology professor would in our present European situation find himself in a position to flatly refuse a Christian woman the right to participate in the governmental activity of both city and state on the basis of the Word of God. The exercise of such activity does not contradict the 'subordination' demanded of women," (p.32) and he cites Gerhard, Locus XX, No. 42, as corroboration.

So the question remains, "on what basis is the exercise of the voting franchise in the congregation withheld from the woman?" And according to Brunner's argument, the answer would have to be "only on the basis of the fact that the primary work of the public ministry is the public exercise of the office of the keys." And although the woman is not an inferior member of the congregation in any respect, though she

has the office of the keys, the priesthood of all believers just as any Christian does, the public, representational, exercise of the keys is militated against by divine mandate and by the very order of creation, and by the very nature of the woman.

The command to silence does not extend to the woman's participation in temporal affairs per se, including the temporal affairs--if there be such--of the local congregation. Women could conceivably exercise the voting franchise in the temporal affairs of the congregation.

However, the problem of practicality rears its ugly head. The very form that the ministry takes in our churches today, along with its governance and jurisdiction makes such a franchise impossible. Were it possible to separate the functions of administration of the temporal and administrative jurisdiction over the pastoral office, as we have it in the church today, the suffrage of women would at least be conceivable. However, that is not possible. As we have it in our church governments, in all of its varieties, the participation of the laity in the governing of the local congregation exercises control over the ministry at just about every juncture. And for that reason, the franchise cannot be practically, or scripturally, exercised by the woman. Were one to attempt to separate the temporal and spiritual functions of a congregation so that the women could exercise the franchise in the temporal affairs of the congregation, one would finally be bound by an organization so unwieldy, that the best it could do would be to hinder the work of the pastor and all involved from carrying out their God given command.

It appears to me that this line of argumentation is demanded by Brunner's approach. It will have to be examined in the light of good and honest exegetical study of 1 Timothy 2:12 and 1 Corinthians 14:34, 35, and especially Ephesians 5:21-33.

If this is the day of Women's Lib and one has to live in "fear" of being branded a male chauvinist, perhaps this statement of Brunner is a fitting one with which to close:

In Christ, the kephale-relationship can be described by the paradoxical formula, 'be subject one to another.' (Eph. 5:21) But this in no way means that the kephale-structure is cancelled out. On the contrary! In Christ, this structure is seen again in its original sense; it is released from the hardness that entered in at the fall, and it receives a content that first came into the world through Christ's reconciling act on the cross and can be summarized in one word--agape, love. (p.28)

We highly commend this little treatise to the brethren for further study, as we struggle also with this issue that faces us today.

Erling Teigen

Christianity and the Class Struggle, by Harold O. J. Brown. Grand Rapids: ZonderVan, 1971, \$1.25.

"If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" asks St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 14:8. Harold Brown's blunt answer today is that "so much of official Christendom and of Christian officialdom gives forth uncertain sounds that very few prepare themselves for the battle."

Dr. Brown explores each form of class struggle today: economic, racial, sexual, generational. He exposes the internal fallacies of each, and their evil. An evangelical Protestant (Congregationalist), his arguments command the attention of serious Christians of every denomination.

Dr. Brown speaks out eloquently for traditional Christianity. He is as thorough as Dr. Francis Schaeffer, but not as difficult to read. Definitely for those who want a simple, clear, concise analysis of the urgent issues of the day.

Roger W. Falk

LUTHER: STILL RIGHT; McSORLEY: STILL WRONG

Introductory Note: Sometime ago the Doctrinal Committee of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, with the encouragement of President Orvick, inaugurated a program to involve pastors throughout the Synod in a systematic theological study. To date many of the pastors have agreed to participate in this work, and the Doctrinal Committee herewith presents as one of the results of this program the Rev. Paul G. Madson's review of Harry J. McSorley's important study of Luther's Bondage of the Will: Luther: Right or Wrong?

Confessional Lutheranism faces some critical issues at the present time. Many of these deal with the doctrines of Inspiration and Revelation. Not a few, however, have to do with the great truths that set off Lutheranism as distinctive from some of the other Evangelical churches: the Doctrine of Sin, Grace, Justification, the Election of Grace, and the Sacraments. As is well known, some Lutherans and Reformed seem close to having solved, at least to their satisfaction, the doctrinal differences with regard to the Lord's Supper; see, for example, Marburg Revisited, the Arnoldshain Theses. More specifically, representatives of Lutheran and Reformed churches of Europe on last September 24 drew up at Leuenberg, Switzerland a set of theses to which they hope that all the churches will give their approval by May 1, 1973. With regard to the opposing doctrines from the time of the Reformation which made church fellowship impossible between the Lutheran and Reformed churches, the Leuenberg Theses state that

there is now general agreement on the doctrines of the Lord's Supper, Christology, and Predestination (paragraphs 17-26).

Some Roman Catholics and Lutherans have also been dialoguing in the ecumenical arena on the Doctrines of Sin, Grace, and Justification. In this area the McSorley book has become a milestone. Not only was it simultaneously issued by Catholic and Lutheran publishing houses, but, as Pastor Madson points out in his discussion of McSorley, one here finds the thesis that Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Luther, and the Council of Trent were one in their doctrine of the enslaved will. One also finds McSorley making such startling statements as, "No Pope or Council ever approved an understanding of free will that would make it responsible for the beginning of salvation" (p. 272), and that in the concept of the enslaved will "there is no difference which is capable of justifying the separation of the Churches" (p. 369). Theses such as these should drive every confessional Lutheran to return to the Scriptures, to Luther, and the Confessions, for deep and thorough study.

Besides this, one must admit that McSorley is right in this one instance when he several times calls attention to the fact that Bultmann and neo-orthodox existential theologians put great emphasis on "free decision apart from faith ('relative freedom') and in the event of faith itself." (pp. 36, 365, etc.). This influence permeating so much of modern Lutheranism is bound to produce a synergistic emphasis in much current Lutheran preaching. Eight years ago Dr. Merton Strommen in his study of Lutheran youth found their theology generally conservative along the lines of the Ecumenical Creeds, but definitely Arminian in the Doctrine of Justification (See his Profiles to Church Youth, p. 243). According to recent reports, Dr. Strommen, together with three co-researchers, has just completed a two-year study of the beliefs of 5,000 Lutherans between the ages of 15



and 65 from the three large Lutheran bodies (LCA, ALC, and LC-MS). He reports that two out of five Lutherans believe in salvation by works, confirming for the whole age spectrum of Lutherans what he several years previously had found among Lutheran youth.

These facts make it imperative that we really know "Was heisst Lutherisch." May Pastor Madson's review and succeeding articles stimulate and aid in such a study.

B. W. Teigen, Secretary  
The ELS Doctrinal Committee

A REVIEW OF "LUTHER: RIGHT OR WRONG?"  
by Harry J. McSorley, C.S.P.

The author, considered the leading Catholic authority on Luther and the Reformation, has written a formidable book in "Luther: Right or Wrong?" This work, replete with references and footnotes, bears evidence in its near 400 pages that this Jesuit scholar has done some extensive research in Luther, the Scholastics, and the church fathers. Considering the subject matter, we acknowledge that he has also made his work quite readable.

It is McSorley's intention in this book to show that the concept of servum arbitrium as presented in the Lutheran Confessions is not really any different from the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church. In order to do this he has also tried to show that the Lutheran Confessions are not in complete agreement with Luther's "Bondage of The Will," which he feels goes too far.

The author rightly recognizes the fact that Luther's protest was not directed against the abuses and laxity in the medieval Church, but against what Luther judged to be the false doctrine taught by that

Church and by the Pope.

(Note: Parentheses will be used throughout this review when referring to page numbers in the book.)

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McSorley's view about the Luther-Erasmus controversy (p. 29) is that an inadequate definition of terms caused confusion and hampered a true meeting of minds. However, it appears that they understood each other's terms well enough, and that the author is only doing some wishful thinking to aid and abet the thesis of his book.

### The Biblical Understanding of Terms

After a preliminary clarification of concepts the author begins with a discussion of the Biblical understanding of freedom and bondage. He divides freedom into three categories which, he says, the Bible recognizes. These three are Natural, Circumstantial, and Acquired freedom. In this section (p. 51) the term "justice" is used in his discussion where we would rather use the term "righteousness." In a summary of this investigation on the Bible's use of "freedom" McSorley writes: "Although Scripture applies the name freedom only to the last two types of freedom, there is no question that the reality we have called natural freedom is also recognized and presupposed throughout the Bible" (p. 54). Then he concludes: "Scripture speaks neither of 'liberum arbitrium' nor 'servum arbitrium.' 'Liberum arbitrium' in the sense in which we have defined it (natural freedom), is presupposed by the Bible. 'Servum arbitrium' can only be accepted as a legitimate expression of the biblical doctrine of man's enslavement to sin if we take it to mean that the sinner, apart from grace and faith in Christ, can in no way free himself from his miserable condition. To understand by it any kind of necessitarianism that excludes natural freedom is seriously to misunderstand the

biblical anthropolgy as well as the biblical doctrines of faith and justification" (p. 55). It is noteworthy that he says, "the sinner, apart from grace and faith in Christ, can in no way free himself, etc." The implication is that he can free himself if only he has the help of God's grace (synergism).

### Pre-Augustinian Fathers

The book very briefly treats the teaching of "the freedom of the will" as found in the pre-Augustinian fathers. McSorley concludes by stating: "The doctrine of man's bondage or enslavement to sin is never absent in the pre-Augustinian Fathers. However, it was only in the struggle of Augustine against the Pelagians that the doctrine of fallen man's total powerlessness to do anything truly good without grace - the doctrine of servum arbitrium - fully emerged" (p. 61).

### Augustine

What about "free will" and "unfree will" in Augustine? The author claims that, "To speak of Augustine's doctrine of the unfree or enslaved will is one-sided and misleading. For Augustine's doctrine was a doctrine of grace and free will. He did use the term 'servum arbitrium' once, in the midst of a controversy with his Pelagian opponent, Julian of Eclanum, and it was this phrase which Luther appropriated as the title of his reply to Erasmus" (p. 63).

McSorley correctly points out that the early Augustine held the same error that he later was to combat - the error of Semipelagianism, which attributed the beginning of salvation to man's free will. Later, Augustine in his "De Praedestinatione Sanctorum" simply and humbly admitted that he now understood the doctrine of grace, faith and works better and had to correct his early works, especially his

exposition on Romans.

It is a question as to whether the author believes in objective justification, when he speaks of the "unjustified": "Here Augustine frankly calls even the good works of the unjustified - objectively good, that is - sins" (p. 69). (*Italics ours*) God justified the ungodly, too, (Rom. 4,5) If the author doesn't have this concept, it could well color his whole approach to "servum arbitrium."

The great anti-Pelagian work of Augustine is "De Spiritu et Littera." Of this work Luther said he was pleased to find it a confirmation of his interpretation of "iustitia Dei" as the "justice by which we are justified." In a footnote McSorley adds: "Luther does not say that he found all his doctrine in this work of Augustine. On the contrary, he says Augustine still speaks 'imperfecte' on this matter, and is unclear on the question 'de imputatione'" (p. 82).

Regarding Augustine's position on man's merit the author contends: "Authors such as Packer and Johnston...who think that 'the Augustinian position...denies all merit,' betray an inadequate understanding of Augustine" (p. 89). (cf. Translation of "Bondage of The Will" by Packer and Johnston) This seems an unfair charge, and we might rather lay the cause of inadequate understanding at the feet of Augustine, who apparently did not make his "no merit" position as clear as it might be made.

In an excursus on "The Meaning of 'Servum Arbitrium' in Augustine" McSorley has this to say: "As Augustine's thought developed in his controversy with the Pelagians, we see him emphasizing more and more the lack of true freedom in sinners. The more the Pelagians extolled the power of the free will in the practice of asceticism and Christian morality, the more Augustine insisted that man was not truly free, and that he had lost his true freedom as a result of

original sin and was actually a slave of sin. Man could only be made truly free, Augustine argued, by the grace of God which comes to man totally gratuitously, not as the result of any merits of the free will preceding grace" (p. 90).

McSorley claims that Augustine conceived of at least two types of freedom: free will (natural freedom) and liberated free will (acquired freedom). He calls the expression "servum arbitrium" radical language which Augustine used in the heat of battle against the Pelagians. This he did, McSorley states, "to indicate the powerlessness of the 'liberum arbitrium' to will that which is truly good and just. In his work 'Contra Iulianum' of 421 we find him for the first, and as far as we have been able to determine, the only time saying that the 'liberum arbitrium' is so powerless for willing that which is truly good that it is not simply a 'liberum arbitrium captivatum,' as he had said in 'Contra duas epist. Pelag.,' but a 'servum arbitrium.'"

McSorley considers Augustine's book "De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio," written only three years before his death, as his "effort to set the record straight once and for all as to the meaning of his doctrine on the necessity of liberating grace and the powerlessness of fallen man's will" (p. 93).

We find it of interest and somewhat revealing to give the author's viewpoint on synergism as expressed in an excursus on the subject: "If synergism is taken to mean a view of the relationship between God's grace and man's free will in which God and man are each partial causes of man's salvation, then synergism is rightly to be rejected as a misunderstanding of God's sovereign working in us (his transcendental causality) of both the willing and the accomplishing of the salutary act (Phil. 2:13). But if synergism is understood simply as a co-working or cooperation of God and man in the work of salvation (without suggesting that they work on the same or on

an equal plane), if it is taken to mean simply that man does something essential in the work of salvation, or that grace and free will are both involved in justification and salvation, then this is not only not a Semipelagian viewpoint - as some suppose - but a viewpoint that is central to Augustine's doctrine of grace" (p. 102). From this it would appear that McSorley subscribes to the idea that man has, to a degree, free will in his justification and salvation. It may be that Augustine doesn't make his position clear, but neither does McSorley.

In summarizing his investigation of the use of "liberum arbitrium" and "servum arbitrium" in Augustine he says in point #8: "Justification involves a 'consensus' by man's will; belief (credere) involves an 'electio' by the 'arbitrium voluntatis humanae'" (p. 110). And in point #10 he says, "Augustine means by 'servum arbitrium' nothing more than that the free will of fallen man is a slave to sin and can be liberated from this condition of bondage only by the grace of God. His doctrine of 'servum arbitrium' is, therefore, a doctrine of grace and free will." So, presumably, if one understands Augustine in the way McSorley does, he will find grist for his mill to teach man's free will for salvation. Augustine's teaching had some unclarities which Luther saw, and the latter made improvements on the former. But he still is much indebted to Augustine for his teaching in "Servum Arbitrium."

### Early Conciliar and Papal Teaching

The Jesuit theologian now takes up the doctrine of free will and unfree will as evidenced in the early church councils and in papal teaching. Of particular interest in this brief section is his reference to the Synod of Orange, to which he refers again later. It is also interesting to note that F. Pieper (CTM, March, 1930) has some good words about the Council of Orange. He remarked that the right road which avoids depreciating "gratia universalis"

and "sola gratia" is extensively described thetically and antithetically in the Formula of Concord. Then he says: "As far as we can see, the Scriptural cause has been set forth only three times in the history of the Church in public ecclesiastical documents: in the resolutions of the Council of Orange (529), in the 11th Art. of F.C. (1580) and in the 13 Theses of the Missouri Synod, Ft. Wayne (1881)." McSorley claims that though Orange II does not represent a total endorsement of Augustine's anti-Pelagian teaching on sin, grace, free will and predestination, "it nevertheless is an unmistakable, official acceptance by the Church of the decisive theses that constitute 'moderate' Augustinianism" (p. 121).

### Scholasticism and Aquinas

The book gives us a look into the teaching of the early scholastics and Thomas Aquinas on the subject of free will. McSorley thinks a strong case could be made to support the view that Luther did not know Aquinas' teaching very well (p. 139). One reason for saying this is that Luther seldom made a direct quotation from Aquinas. But there is more reason to believe that Luther has a very good understanding of this leading Scholastic, and therefore could not buy all his views on free will. In fact, McSorley admits later on in a footnote that "the text of the 'Sentences' which Luther used during his bachelor year at Erfurt was accompanied by a Thomistic commentary," and that "at the University of Wittenberg...in 1505...there were four Thomists and four Scotists on the theological faculty" (p. 219). Ecumenical theology, of course, is highly interested in bringing Thomas and Martin into dialogue. Part of Thomas's trouble in his mistaken view of man's will is his reliance on passages from the Apocrypha as "biblical evidence."

Critical comments on this section: That God can do something does not mean He has to do it. It sounds as though God overpowers a person with His

omnipotence rather than drawing him by His grace (p. 155, top). The author seems to think that Luther denied free will to sin (p. 164). It appears that Aquinas (and McSorley?) did not quite understand the Scriptural doctrine on works and their relation to faith (p. 165). At best, Aquinas is unclear on Grace and seems to contradict himself (p. 169). The author seems to want to grant that man "merits" something (p. 171, bottom). This is echoing the Roman Catholic idea of "infused" grace (p. 173, top). It is confusing when the term "merit" is used where it does not apply (p. 177, Par. 3). On p. 178 (bottom) the author discusses this further.

Chapter 5 in the Council of Trent on the Decree of Justification states that "they who by sin had been cut off from God, may be disposed through His quickening and helping grace to convert themselves to their own justification by freely assenting to and cooperating with that grace." Pure synergism! Yet McSorley seems to approve.

### Late Scholasticism

There were anti-Pelagian protests in late Scholasticism by such men as Thomas Bradwardine (d. 1349) and Gregory d' Rimini (d. 1358). Luther's Augustinian teacher, Usingen, is also mentioned in this group. They seem to have left the door open for the accusation of "Semipelagianism." There were a couple of influential neo-Semipelagians in William of Ockham and Gabriel Biel. We note the author's statement, top of p. 208: "The Reformer is likewise in error in implying that 'the Scholastics' taught that 'heaven is attained without grace.' Not even Ockham or Biel held such a crass doctrine." However, we can say that in the last analysis Luther's judgment of the Scholastics is a correct one.

It is obvious from the authors discussion on Trent (ex., p. 205) that "Justification" in the Catholic sense is something that becomes a cooperative effort.



## Luther's Early Reaction

The book now traces Luther's reaction "from liberum arbitrium to servum arbitrium." There are quotes from Luther's notes as a student and from his early writings to show that he had not always taught the doctrine of "servum arbitrium." This does not surprise us, for we realize that this came as a later development from his deeper understanding of Scripture. And this does not invalidate the doctrine at all. The apostle Paul (as Saul) had not always taught justification by grace through faith either, but once he knew what it was he couldn't emphasize it enough.

It was in his lectures on Romans, McSorley asserts, that Luther for the first time explicitly spoke of "servum arbitrium," and that he was at that time entirely in conformity with Augustine's concept and with the Catholic tradition. Thomas Aquinas taught the "contingency" of man's will in the matter of election. When Luther taught that there is no such "contingency," McSorley uses a bit of sophistry in trying to explain Luther's attitude: "More probably, it seems, Luther has failed to understand the nature of the Scholastic Distinction between necessity of the thing consequent and necessity of consequence" (P. 231). On the contrary, might it not be that McSorley has failed to understand the spirit of Luther. He does understand this much, however, which he correctly states: "Luther never denied that man has a will, but that he has a free will" (p. 237).

In an interesting paragraph it is acknowledged that Luther has put his finger on a widespread problem even today, which the author calls a "Pelagian tendency." He says: "The Pelagian tendency is present in many Christians which inclines them to think that the effectiveness of God's grace depends ultimately on our free acceptance of it or that our response to the Gospel is mainly a matter of free resolutions" (p. 267).

McSorley objects to the term which Luther used for countering "liberum arbitrium," namely "servum arbitrium." He therefore made this suggestion, which indicates his trend of thought: "The Catholic-Evangelical preacher should therefore try to correct the Pelagian tendency present in all of us not by denying that man has free will or by saying that political freedom is not worthy to be called freedom. He should rather proclaim constantly that genuine freedom belongs only to the sons of God" (p. 269).

It is hard to understand how this Jesuit scholar, who makes an effort to look at the facts, can say: "No pope or council ever approved an understanding of free will that would make it responsible for the beginning of salvation. But Luther thought that the pope had done precisely this. That is why he thought the pope was Antichrist. And this was his greatest mistake. Even as late as 1535 Luther showed a tragic misunderstanding of the authentic Catholic doctrine when he said that he would not only carry the pope on his shoulder but would also kiss his feet, if the pope would teach that we are justified solely by the grace of Christ. Even at such a late date Luther did not realize that this is what the pope does teach" (p. 272)! To this assertion we reply, "But what are the facts? What is it that the average Catholic believes about salvation? It certainly is not 'by grace alone.' And their doctrine of synergism they have learned from their church, per papal blessing. It is the motivating force in their church. 'By their fruits ye shall know them.'" Centuries of enslaved consciences in the papal fold have been ample testimony to the fact that Luther did indeed realize what the pope teaches.

### Erasmian Doctrine

In his treatment of the Erasmian doctrine of Free Will as set forth in Erasmus's "De Libero Arbitrio" (1524) McSorley does not look upon Erasmus as a sceptic uncommitted to the Christian faith (as some

have claimed), but he looks upon his "De Libero Arbitrio" as a reflection of the theological unclarity of the late Middle Ages. He also feels that Erasmus did not grasp the extent of the Pelagian and Semipelagian errors. (pp. 291 and 292)

### De Servo Arbitrio

In the final chapter the author considers Luther's "De Servo Arbitrio" with reference to his later teaching and the development of Lutheran theology. He does not seem to recognize Luther's concept of good works as the fruits, or evidence, of faith when he exclaims, "He (Luther) even goes so far as to say that works are 'necessary' for salvation(!) even though they do not 'effect' salvation" (p. 303). McSorley also thinks that Luther teaches "almost precisely what Catholic theology understands" by "ex opere operato," because in his Large Catechism he says, "When the word accompanies the water, baptism is valid, even though faith be lacking. For my faith does not constitute baptism but receives it." However, this statement is made simply to safeguard anyone from having a synergistic attitude toward baptism, but is not declaring Baptism to work "ex opere operato."

The author makes a good point when he says: "how seldom are the Christian people told that if they are saved it is only because God has chosen them to be saved... Often a preacher will say that he does not preach about these mysteries because he does not want to frighten his people. But this is an indication that the preacher has not taught them of the certitude and hope that are ours as a result of our hope in Jesus Christ" (p. 307). In that statement McSorley hardly sounds like a Catholic.

Considerable space is given to a discussion of Luther's "Necessitarian" argument, namely that all things happen necessarily as a result of God's infallible foreknowledge and immutable will. Scholas-

tics affirmed that some things happen contingently and not necessarily. Luther says that even though the things we do seem to us to be done contingently, they really happen necessarily: "It is, then, fundamentally necessary and wholesome for Christians to know that God foreknows nothing contingently, but that He foresees, purposes, and does all things according to His own immutable, eternal, and infallible will. This bombshell knocks 'free will' flat, and utterly shatters it; so that those who want to assert it must either deny my bombshell, or pretend not to notice it, or find some other way of dodging it." (Bondage of The Will, p. 80).

When the author says (p. 353) that Luther's doctrine of *Servum Arbitrium* "is fully in conformity with the Catholic tradition of Augustine...as well as with the teaching of the Second Council of Orange and of the Council of Trent," we can not agree. Trent goes farther than Orange. In its Session VI, Ch. I (p. 30, footnote) it reads: "free will...was by no means extinguished in them."

McSorley implies (p. 360) that De Servo Arbitrio taught a different doctrine of predestination than does the Formula of Concord, and that the F.C. is "in fundamental agreement with that of the Catholic tradition." He finds the F.C. more palatable to his way of thinking than De Servo Arbitrio because, as he claims, there is there "the element of a personal involvement or decision of free will in man's rebirth in Christ." But this is only because he does not read the *Solida Declaratio* rightly. His preconceived synergism causes him to misunderstand Art. II, 18 of S.D. (of Free Will) in thinking that the phrase "unless it be enlightened and controlled by God's Spirit" is referring to the will before conversion. He tries to make the S.D. teach cooperation in man's conversion. (cf. p. 361, McSorley) Again, the author shows his particular bent when on the next page he states: "The Holy Spirit begins the work of conversion in us; we are able to cooperate with him because

of the new powers and the gifts he gives us" (p. 362).

It is asserted that "Historically, the main stream of Lutheran theology, as distinct from Luther's theology, has avoided Luther's necessitarianism and has consistently affirmed, along with the Catholic tradition, that faith involves a free decision on the part of man" (p. 364). We would be willing to acknowledge the truth of that assertion (with sadness), but at the same time point out that the "main stream" has become polluted. They do not follow Luther's teaching, which teaching we contend is Scriptural. Even a Jesuit has seen this difference. Our contention that the "main stream" does not deserve the name "Lutheran" is inadvertently substantiated by McSorley when he describes the main stream of Lutheran theology as "distinct from Luther's theology."

Referring to the Faith and Order Conference at Edinburgh (1937) the author shows that modern Protestant thought concerning the free will is not really any different in the final analysis from that of the Council of Trent and that it "need not be seen as a factor which separates the Catholic Church from the other Christian confession." (p. 366) We have always maintained that synergism and Semipelagianism can walk together quite harmoniously.

The book ends with some final conclusions, and we shall here quote the concluding paragraph, bearing in mind that the purpose of the book is to promote an ecumenical rapport between Protestantism and Rome. "The biblical concept of man's slavery to sin, as found in Luther's main work, has been accepted by the Lutheran Confessional writings as well as by most contemporary Protestant theologians, to the exclusion of the necessitarian argument. Between this concept of servum arbitrium and the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church there is no difference which is capable of justifying the separation of the Churches."

There is more truth than fiction in this statement, if we leave out the reference to the Lutheran Confessional writings. The difference which the author seeks to make between the teaching of Luther on Free Will and that of the Lutheran Confessions is an imaginary one, and truly does not exist. However, he is more right than wrong in his assessment of the main stream of "Lutheranism" and of contemporary Protestantism. As for Luther being right or wrong, it still remains to be shown from Scripture that he was wrong. Until that happens we will continue to believe he was right, though that may not bring us into the main stream of "Lutheranism" and the modern ecumenical deluge.

We believe that, much as the author makes a noble attempt to understand Luther's teaching of the *Servum Arbitrium*, his view is conditioned by his Catholic notion of "*gratia infusa*." Once a person has had that in his system he does not easily get rid of the vestiges of it. And, as we have pointed out earlier, he does not seem to accept objective justification. These two things alone are enough to give anyone an unscriptural view concerning man's "free" will. So if we were to make a reply to this book's ecumenical endeavor at Luther's expense, we might entitle it, "Luther: Still Right; McSorley: Still Wrong."

Paul Madson