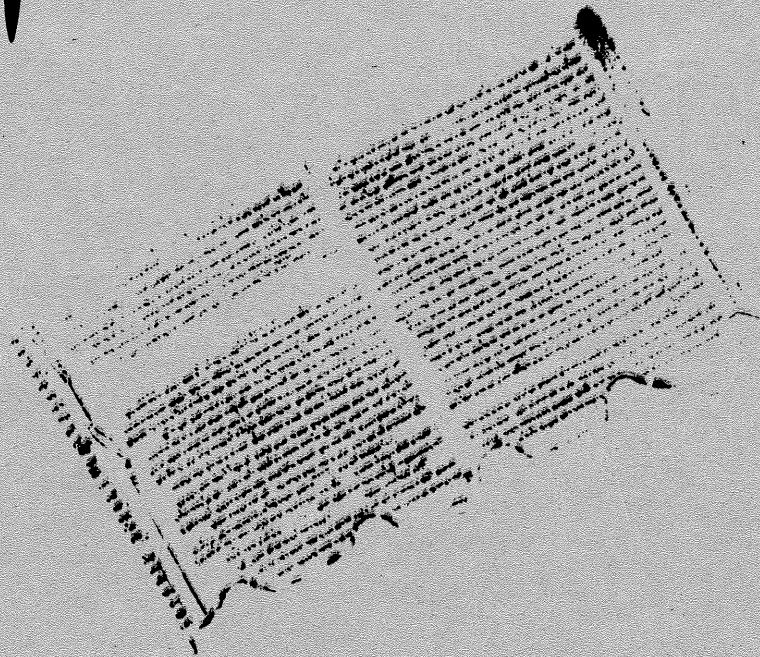


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FOREWORD

This issue of the Quarterly contains a variety of articles. It begins with a comforting and encouraging devotion by Pastor Hugo Handberg, which was delivered at the General Pastoral Conference of the ELS last June.

Two edifying papers, which were presented at the same Conference, also appear in this issue. The one is an exegetical study of Romans 3:21-31 by Pastor Paul Haugen and the other an article on Christology by Pastor Gary Faleide. The latter is an elaboration of an article that appeared in the December 1981 issue of the Quarterly.

Included is a reprint of an article on The Power of the Word by Dr. Norman A. Madson, Sr. which was delivered to the Pastoral Conference in 1952. This paper which sets forth the inherent and creative power of the Word in effecting spiritual life is as timely today as it was thirty years ago when it was written.

The brethren in the Lake Michigan Circuit sent a sermon critique by Pastor James Olsen which was presented to that conference. It contains some welcome homiletical helps and breathes a truly evangelical spirit.

Finally, there is an answer from former President Theodore A. Aaberg to a young pastor who had some concerns with our practice of close communion. This was written in long hand shortly before his death, but his wife found it in his belongings and sent it to the pastor who, in turn, gave it to the editor. We are pleased to share this with our readers.

Perhaps not all of our readers know that Professor Milton Otto died rather unexpectedly on August 20th. Though he had been in failing health for several years, yet he continued to be active in a limited way. He spent the last day of his life proof reading an article "A Lutheran Understanding of the Will and Providence of God in Human Life" which will appear in the next issue.

--WWP

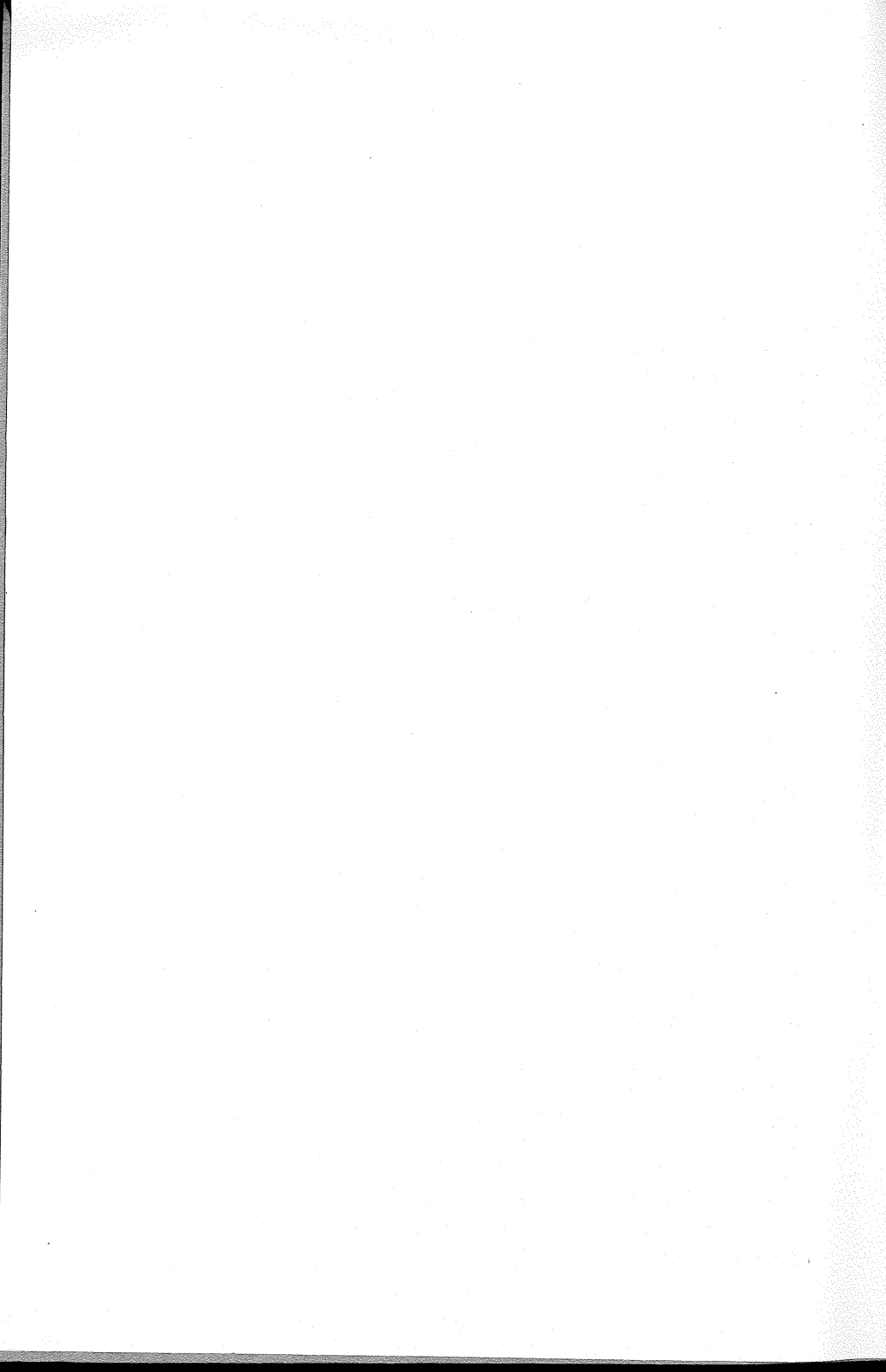


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DEVOTION AT ELS PASTORAL CONFERENCE
MANKATO, MINNESOTA

June 18, 1982

1 Thess. 4.13-18

Dear Brethren:

There are obvious differences between older and younger pastors. We recognize it among ourselves, but we seldom address the matter directly. A typical difference is experience. To a man only a year or two out of the seminary conducting a funeral is a novelty. He finds it difficult--and a very lonely work--to bring words of comfort to a grieving family. A young pastor, presiding over a casket or a fresh grave, may find an involuntary thought flashing through his head: "How did I get into this work? What am I, of all people, doing in this strange situation?"

An older minister, on the other hand, who has walked the grass of countless cemeteries, who has led the way to graves of small children, fathers and mothers cut down in the prime of life, and of the elderly, has left the novelty of it all years behind him.

No longer are Isaiah's words, "All flesh is grass" (40:6), simply a part of his seminary lecture notes. He has experienced the truth of Paul's "so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned," Rom. 5:12, and even sees his people sitting in the pews on a Sunday morning in terms of their own mortality. He preaches a New Year's sermon wondering which faces will pass from the scene before twelve months have gone by and at whose grave he will have to stand in the new year.

But add to this the disappointments of the average, hard-working minister--experienced and not-so-experienced. Some of his most promising confirmands grow up and leave the congregation. Members who ought to be diligent church-goers are chronic absentees. The unmarried daughter of a prominent family comes to him pregnant. One or two trouble-makers keep up their under-the-surface criticisms of him. Or he sees neighboring Lutheran churches tripping over themselves to make common cause with the Reformed or even Catholics, so he feels the isolation of his doctrinal position. On top of this are his own personal weaknesses, his daily sins, family sins, ministerial sins.

But, lest we paint a dismal picture of a pastor's duties, lest we portray his work as all sorrows and no joys, as only unbroken disappointments and seldom a success, let's hurry over to our theme for these conference devotions, "While We Await His Day," and to this text in particular, and draw from it the encouragement and strength it contains. Its last words are: "Wherefore comfort one another with these words."

You probably know that it's from these words in particular that the Baptists and Pentecostals draw their peculiar teaching of the "rapture," the snatching away from the earth of all Christians just before a time of utter chaos called "the Tribulation," which, in turn, will precede the millennium.

Here is a sample of what the rapture means from a little book called "After the Rapture" (Raymond Schafer, Vision House, Santa Ana, CA 92705, 1977, pbk.).

"Banks, finance companies, and other lending institutions will be lost in a nightmare of red

tape because of the disappearance of millions of borrowers and lenders. Employment throughout the nation and the world will be severely disrupted as some of the most strategic employers and employees in the business world disappear without a trace. Government legislatures at the local, state, and Federal level will be severely crippled by the sudden absence of some of their most respected members. Thousands of patients will disappear from hospitals and hundreds of inmates will disappear from jails and prisons. The Rapture will truly become the mystery of the century." (Page 53)

But is that all these words are--a dismal scenario of Christ's coming, of "business as usual" on earth but with a few empty bankers' chairs and hospital beds thrown in? Is our text portraying a world that continues on in greater sin than ever except that it must do without some strategic leaders who "disappeared without a trace" because they were Christians?

Unfortunately, this "cloth" is spun out of the man-made synthetics of reason and imagination. It's a fabric of lies and is diverting untold Christians from the true coming of Jesus and the ineffable joys of His heavenly Kingdom.

Brethren in the ministry, while we await Christ's Day, let us encourage one another with the knowledge of our resurrection! This text is brimming over with encouragement, with antidotes to self-pity, to a spirit of defeatism. What Paul says he says "unto you by the Word of the Lord," and when Jesus said it (probably repeatedly), it was meant to encourage. He whose Word could majestically call light out of darkness, who could

call into the foulness of a tomb, "Lazarus, come forth," who could say "Talitha cumi" to dead ears and make them hear--that Christ has recorded these words of our text for our encouragement!

"Don't be like others who have no hope," like unbelievers who bury their dead with no sure hope of reunion, no certainty that a resurrection will mean joy and peace.

To the Thessalonians, who mistakenly believed that they would have advantages over their cemetery-sleeping brethren at the coming of Christ, Paul said it's a mistake to think like that.

On the day of Jesus' coming great events will transpire, but those events will not be only the recycling of Christians in their bodies so that they will become a kind of glorified commuters between heaven and earth for a thousand years!

No, this day of Jesus' coming will be the end of the world. The great, royal Conqueror of sin, death and hell will cry out with a voice that will penetrate all graves, will make every man a Lazarus, will assemble the Christian dead like an archangel calling together cherubim! Those who lived without hope in Jesus Christ, who died with hopes fixed on their own deeds, on luck, or on a sentimental God who winked at sin will be terrified.

But the Jesus who died for the sins of the world, the Christ who tasted death for every man, who was outfitted in the trappings of death and then sealed into a tomb, but who threw it all off on Easter morning with a grand display of power and majesty--that Christ will come soon to raise up all the dead and gather His believers unto

Himself forever! Our text says that very thing: "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." If the Shepherd died and rose again, even so will the sheep! If the Lord died and rose again, even so will His servants!

The point is, don't get your eyes so full of grave, shovel, and dirt that you can't see the big things that are just ahead! We shall be caught up in the clouds "to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." Ever be with the Lord! Perfection apart from all mistakes and sins! Peace that never ends! Joy that transcends everything pleasant, everything satisfying that you ever knew here on earth. Preach these things! Teach these things! Above all, believe these things!

Discouraged are you? Disappointed are you? My brethren, let your poor heart dwell on the great day of Jesus' coming! It's not far away. Ponder the great, finished Church of Jesus Christ, and consider that you played a part in putting it together! Then think of that celebration in the clouds! Think of the implications of "so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Wherefore, weak and frail brethren, comfort one another with these magnificent words! Amen.

-- H. S. Handberg

ROMANS 3:21-31 AND OBJECTIVE JUSTIFICATION

1. The verses of our pericope follow upon a detailed discussion by Paul of the "righteousness" of man. There is none, he says. There is no one righteous. And so he summarizes 1:18-3:20 with "no flesh shall be justified out of works of law."
2. Now that Paul has by the Law destroyed all human righteousness, i.e. righteousness by man, he turns to a righteousness created by God for man.
3. v.21: "Furthermore, NOW, apart from law, righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets."
4. "Now" can imply temporal or logical sequence. It could be both here. For "now" is used later in a temporal sense. (v. 26) Yet in this verse a perfect verb is used, "manifested," indicating completion in past time. Paul also contrasts the righteousness of man and the righteousness of God. So the temporal element doesn't seem as significant as the logical sequence.
5. "Apart from law" God's righteousness has been manifested. "Apart from" emphasizes separation. There is a definite separation between law and God's righteousness. This was something strange to the Jewish ear. How could God's righteousness be seen without the law? This is also something strange to the human ear. Righteousness and law, it is thought, must go hand in hand. You can't have one without the other.

6. Paul says, "Oh yes, you can. In fact, God's righteousness is manifested apart from--separated from--law."

7. Paul doesn't use any article with "law" in this phrase. Apart from anything that has the quality of law, God's righteousness is manifested. The Jews expect God to manifest His righteousness through His law. The religious Gentile expects God to manifest His righteousness through law and order. God has manifested His righteousness apart from any law. It was manifested somewhere else.

8. Now that does NOT mean that God's law of the Old Testament had nothing to do with His righteousness as it was manifested. For that righteousness is witnessed by the law and the prophets.

9. Here the article is used with "law." At first appearance, it would seem, grammatically, that this article is referring back to the first use of "law" in the verse. "The righteousness of God was manifested apart from any law being witnessed by that law (any law)." I do not take it that way, for this reason. The phrase, "the law and the prophets" was an idiom of the Jews to designate the Old Testament, the Scriptures of that day. So the "law" here does not refer to just "any law" mentioned previously in the verse, but to a specific and well-known law, the law of the Old Testament. As opposed to just any law, "THE law and THE prophets" witness to the righteousness of God.

10. Yet even in this law of the Old Testament, the righteousness of God was not manifested. This law bears witness to that righteousness, but if we want clearly to see first-hand that righteousness of God we must look elsewhere. It has been manifested apart from ANY law, even the law

of the Old Testament. The Old Testament law bears witness to God's righteousness, but God has manifested, clearly displayed that righteousness for us somewhere else.

11. The verb "manifested" is in the perfect.

This indicates that the actual activity of manifestation is completed. The righteousness has been manifested. The effects, the fruits and results remain, but the activity is complete. The action took place sometime in the past. That action stands as a historical fact for us to gaze upon. It is a historical fact which cannot be changed by what men do today. The righteousness of God has been manifested and there is nothing anyone can do to change that.

12. v.22: But what is so exciting about this manifestation? Paul goes on to explain: "furthermore, righteousness of God through faith of Jesus Christ for all the ones believing."

13. This is a grammatically difficult verse.

"Righteousness of God" is repeated but no verb is supplied. Does that mean we are to carry one of the verbs from v. 21 ("manifested" or "being witnessed") or to include the verb "to be"? The three ways it could be read are: God's righteousness 1.) is manifested, 2.) is being witnessed, or 3.) is through faith of Jesus Christ for all the ones believing.

14. #1 does not seem to fit very well with the perfect of "manifested." I suppose it could be rightly understood: it is through the faith of (in) Jesus Christ that that righteousness is manifested. We would then emphasize the uniqueness not of faith but of Jesus Christ. This righteousness has been manifested in the one-time event of Jesus Christ in whom we place our faith. But this seems to be stretching the point.

15. #2 has more weight. The verb "being witnessed" is closer to the phrase "through faith of Jesus Christ" than the verb "manifested." The tense of the verb, present, also fits better with the context. This righteousness of God is being witnessed by the law and the prophets and even today through faith of Jesus Christ for all the ones believing. It is being witnessed today even by those who trust in Christ. That witness is for all who believe. It is "to" them, so they may benefit from it by faith.

16. Yet #2 seems a little clumsy and unnecessary. For if "being witnessed" was to be modified by this verse, then why the repetition of "righteousness of God"? It is not strange for Greek to tack on several different propositional clauses after one verb. So the repetition of "righteousness of God" seems to signal the third choice.

17. With #3 Paul is simply defining for us the phrase "righteousness of God." He first makes a statement about that righteousness and then he carefully defines it. As we would say in English "that is, God's righteousness (which is) through Jesus Christ's faith for all the ones believing."

18. Now we begin to see of what kind of righteousness of God Paul is speaking. It is a righteousness of God which is through faith of Jesus Christ. Notice, before Paul speaks of anyone believing he very carefully defines faith. It is NOT faith which mediates (transfers, conveys) this righteousness of God. It is faith of Jesus Christ. It is not faith that saves, for all men believe, have faith. It is faith in Jesus Christ.

19. What kind of genitive is the phrase "Jesus Christ"? I don't think we need get caught up in that question. The genitive defines its noun. God's righteousness is not transmitted through just any faith. It is transmitted through faith that belongs to Jesus Christ. That faith belongs to Him because He is its Source, Object and Content.

20. This righteousness is "for all the ones believing." Let us stress one point that may seem unnecessary to stress. That is, this righteousness is for all who believe in Christ. Now we orthodox Lutherans may think we all know that. And we may very well know it. But let us remember that the word "faith" is used outside our circles also. So let us be clear for ourselves and for others that the essence of the faith we talk about is not positive thinking or belief in whatever we please. It is faith in Christ. Every man has faith, but not every man has faith in Christ.

21. This righteousness comes to all who trust in Christ. These are the recipients of God's righteousness. That does NOT mean it was intended ONLY for them. It was intended and prepared for all men. The ones who benefit from it are all those who believe.

22. Now of what kind of righteousness of God is Paul speaking here? Is it God's personal, judicial righteousness or is it the righteousness God "gives" or imputes to us in Christ? I deliberately left this question for this place because I think Paul answers it for us in v.22. Can there be any question that Paul means the righteousness that benefits us who believe, the righteousness of God that in Jesus Christ covers our blemishes?

23. Kittel in his TDNT (II;203) speaks of a "lively appreciation of the twofold character of the concept as embracing both saving action and judicial rule." I think he is right. We must show an appreciation of the twofold aspect of this "righteousness of God." Kittel also states that this righteousness "is God's righteousness as a conjunction of judgment and grace which He enjoys and demonstrates by showing righteousness, by imparting it as His pardoning sentence....." He also states that the Jews had a constant struggle to relate God's goodness to His justice. All they could say was that His clemency was greater than His strict equity. (203, 204)

24. Not only do the Jews have that problem. The whole world is faced with the same problem. "No flesh shall be justified by works of law." (Rm. 3:20) How can that be related to the God who takes "no pleasure in the death of the wicked but rather that they turn from their wicked ways and live"? (Ezek. 18) Those who build their hopes upon works of law must either magnify the goodness of God at the expense of His justice or downplay His justice to the glory of His goodness.

25. Those who trust in Christ need do neither. God's justice can be told in all its glory. And right alongside of that justice, God's grace and goodness can be shown in all its glory. God's justice demanded full payment for sin and so Christ died. But Christ died because God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked.

26. So "God's righteousness" even in this text does have a twofold aspect. We will see it later, too, in this pericope "for Him to be just and one justifying."

27. Now this righteousness of God is transmitted to ALL who believe--Not to all who believe

AND do this or that, but to ALL who believe.
v.23: "For there is no difference; for all sinned
and are coming short of the glory of God."

28. It is a shame to take this verse by verse,
because v. 23 begins one neat sentence that
flows until the end of v. 26. But if we are going
to handle the bulk of this material, we must take
it bit by bit.

29. Paul now tells us why God's righteousness is
for the benefit of ALL who believe. He tells
us why we cannot set down any other requirements
than simple faith in Christ. All have sinned.
All have missed the mark set up by God. It makes
no difference what other "marks" are set up. All
have missed the mark God has set up.

30. All are falling short of God's glory. This
is a present middle verb. The use of the
middle voice is interesting. By the use of the
middle Paul allows for the influence of outside
forces on our behavior. Sin, in the world as
well as in us, and Satan certainly do lead us
astray.

31. Yet the middle leaves the responsibility with
us. It almost carries the thought of allow-
ing these forces to act upon us. Sure, there are
outside influences on our behavior. But in the
end we shall be held responsible.

32. This second verb is also present tense. This
is a continual falling short. The aorist
"sinned" just states a simple fact that exists.
It is a fact complete in its own right. We have
sinned. Yet the present shows us it goes on con-
tinually. We are falling short even now.

33. We are falling short of the glory God expects of us. Again, I do not take this glory to be God's personal glory, although this cannot be separated from the glory God expects of us. God has made us a glorious creation. He expects certain glorious things from us, like holiness and righteousness. But we keep falling short. We have sinned. We ALL have sinned. There is NO difference from one person to another. Paul is calling to mind everything he has written up to this point. "There is no one righteous, not even one." (v. 10)
34. That's why ALL who believe in Christ have the righteousness of God Himself. We cannot make any distinctions.
35. v. 24: "Being justified giftwise by his grace through the redemption, the one in Christ Jesus."
36. Paul simply continues his sentence from v. 23. "Being justified" is a plural nominative participle, which means that it modifies the subject of the sentence found in v. 23. "All have sinned, being justified."
37. Now that sounds like an obvious statement from Scripture of universal justification. All who have sinned are being justified. Certainly that must include everyone. For no one can escape the statement "all have sinned."
38. But where does that "all" come from? Who are the "all" who have sinned?
39. They are all who live in this world, we are tempted to say. But does Paul say that in this text?

40. Well, we might say, perhaps he does not say it in so many words, but certainly that is what he means.

41. Let's be careful that we don't fall into the same trap we accuse others of falling into, the trap of assuming that the text says something without showing from the text itself that it actually does say that. Let's find what we say in the text instead of in "that's certainly what he means."

42. And what do we find in the text? Paul is using the "all" in v. 23 to support his "all" in v. 22: "All the ones believing."

43. But that sounds too much like limited atonement. All who believe have God's righteousness because they all have sinned and are justified. But Paul does NOT say that there either. He does not say that only those who believe have sinned and are justified.

44. Where do we go then to find the definition of "all"? As I mentioned earlier in v. 23, Paul is drawing on everything he wrote beforehand. And that includes 3:9, 10, & 20, where he makes all flesh sinful. There is no one righteous. All have sinned. So the "all" of v. 23 does refer to more than all who believe. The "all" in v. 23 is used as a foundation for the "all" in v. 22. But the "all" in v. 23 is much larger. Logically the two "alls" could be equal, but they need not be. V. 23 need only be as large as or larger than v. 22. And from what Paul has said earlier we can conclude that v. 23 is larger than v. 22. It includes the whole human race, all that is flesh. But verse 22 includes only all flesh that believe.

45. Now, all who have sinned are being justified. What does the term "justify" mean? Is it to make righteous or to declare righteous?
46. We have to be very cautious about our terminology here. The more reading I did on this term the more confused I became as to what the various writers really meant. Wm. Arndt in his article in The Abiding Word (II:245) says "justify means to make just or righteous...But it may mean too, to declare just and righteous...The judge in such a case has made the defendant righteous or just in a legal sense; from the point of view of the law the accused is just....God justifies the whole world. He makes the whole world righteous; that can only mean: He declares the whole world righteous." It could appear from this that "make righteous" and "declare righteous" are equal terms.
47. E. W. A. Koehler seems to do much the same in the Concordia Theological Monthly (XVI, 4:221): "Here (in Rm. 3:24 and 5:9) man is made and declared just not because of what he has done, but because of the vicarious atonement of Christ. What Christ, his Substitute, has done for him is reckoned to him for righteousness, and thus he is made and becomes righteous by imputation." Again (224): "For though thereby all men are freely justified through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, still not one sinner is, so far, personally benefited thereby in the sense that he has and enjoys what this justification implies." "With the believer the objective justification becomes effective, God declares him a recipient of the forgiveness offered to all." (232)
48. Now why do I quote men in this way? To show that they were wrong? No! Rather to show that we must always be cautious how we use this term and, if we can, clearly define its use at all times.

49. Well, what does "justify" mean here? It can only mean "declare just or righteous." For all who have sinned are being justified. That includes the whole human race, even Judas Iscariot. Now we know from God's Word itself that Judas was not saved. Yet Paul says here that Judas, with everyone else, is justified.

50. Granted, the word itself from etymology could be construed to mean "made just." But why even mention that definition unless the text warrants it?

51. In this text justification, as far as "flesh" is concerned, is totally objective. It is all done to or for man without his participation. The participle, being justified, is passive, which makes someone else the actor. It is done "freely" without any demands upon the subject. It is done by God's grace. It is accomplished through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. The justification spoken of here is totally objective in the sense that man contributes nothing to its process. It is done for him by someone else.

52. We must also be careful that we don't think that by defining "justify" as "declare just" we have won the cause. The judge can declare someone just because of what that individual has done or because there is no evidence that he has done wrong.

53. That is NOT what God's justification is. God has declared just all who sinned, all who are falling short of His glory. This justification has come about through someone else's actions. It has come through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. The word for redemption means simply to work someone's release by paying a ransom. It means to set free, to free from something. God justifies

us by working our release from our sin, its guilt and punishment through the payment made by His Son Jesus Christ.

54. It is interesting how Paul phrases this. This release is IN Christ Jesus. It is not in us. It is IN Christ. And our justification from God comes through that release IN Christ Jesus.

55. This justification is also done "by His grace." I take this dative to be a dative of cause or motive. What caused this justification of all who sin? Nothing else than God's grace.

56. Now why should Paul employ the present participle, "being justified"? Why not an aorist? Well, maybe because the aorist participle usually refers to an event that occurs before the main verb. But God's justifying, God declaring us just through the redemption in Christ, occurred (occurs) while men sin. The redemption took place in a sinful world, not before and not afterwards.

57. But why not, then, a perfect participle? That would seem to fit this context very well. The justification would have been a completed act of which we enjoy the results or fruits.

58. Yet this does not fit what God accomplished for us in Christ. That justification through the redemption in Christ as an action took place in the sinful world, not before it and not after it. Indeed, the declaration of righteousness is made daily as God's Word and Sacraments are offered. The Absolution as it is pronounced is nothing else than God's declaration of righteousness through Christ's redemption. The formal declaration took place in the resurrection of Christ, but that

declaration has been, is and will be continually recited and repeated as long as men sin and fall short of God's glory. God is continually declaring us just in Christ Jesus.

59. v. 25: "Whom God set forth a propitiation through faith in his blood for a proof of his righteousness on account of the remission of previously having occurred sins."

60. God set forth Jesus Christ as a propitiatory article--an article we can cling to in faith, in which we can find hope of reconciliation and appeasement with God.

61. Adolf Deissmann in his Bible Studies states that the word for propitiation does not mean "mercy seat." In the LXX the Greek term, he maintains, used for mercy seat is hilastērion epithēma. So, he says, hilastērion in and of itself did not mean mercy seat, but simply anything that was used as a sign of appeasement and propitiation. In the Old Testament the article that was a sign of appeasement was the mercy seat. But in the New Testament the "article" of appeasement is Christ. God set Christ forth as the sign of His appeasement with us. (124ff)

62. Before whom did God set Christ as a sign of appeasement? Paul does not explicitly say. That is not important. What is important is that God set this propitiatory article forth. Therefore, at least to God Christ is a sign of appeasement. And so, then, should He be for us, also.

63. God set Christ forth as a propitiation through faith. Lenski maintains that "through faith" must apply to the noun "propitiation" and not to the verb "set forth." He says that God would not use our faith to set forth Christ. (255)

64. I do not see how it is any easier to say that Christ is a propitiatory offering through our faith. It seems very fitting that Paul should use "through faith" to modify "set forth." For "set forth" is the middle voice indicating that for (to) God Himself God sets forth Christ as a propitiatory offering. And He could use our faith as the means. God through our faith causes us to hold up Christ as our appeasement before God.
65. The appeasement takes place in Christ's blood. This is the locale of the appeasement, not in Christ as Example or Teacher but as Sacrifice.
66. The purpose is to give proof of His righteousness. Christ is held up as the Sign of appeasement as evidence of God's righteousness even though He forgave and forgives sins. God can be appeased and still be righteous, for Christ has appeased the Father by His blood.
67. Here we have the phrase "His (God's) righteousness" again. This time we have the article with it. The article directs us back to that righteousness of God referred to earlier. It is really a twofold righteousness. It is a righteousness for all who believe. Yet it is truly a righteousness. It is not leniency. It is a just, a perfect righteousness. It is God's righteousness, given to us through Jesus Christ's faith.
68. The appeasement earned by Christ is proof that the righteousness we receive is truly God's righteousness, perfection in every respect.
69. Christ is so set forth on account of the remission of previous sins. That remission looked like a leniency, a bending of the rules, an imperfect righteousness. Now in Christ we see that that is not true. God was, is and will always be

perfectly just. All sin must be punished. Now it is punished in Christ. But since all sin is punished, God then can be forgiving and yet perfectly just in His own personal righteousness. Mercy does not win out over justice. Mercy and justice work together in Christ to bring us a perfect righteousness.

70. v. 26: "in the longsuffering of God towards the proof of his righteousness in the present time, for him to be just and one justifying the one out of faith of Jesus."

71. And so God was longsuffering, but NOT because He was lenient to or tolerant of sin. No, He was longsuffering, He held back His wrath and punishment for sin, because He looked forward to the sign or proof Christ would give of His righteousness. That proof would come in the present time, in the life, death and resurrection of Christ. And so God was longsuffering. He remitted the previous sins because He knew Christ was coming, who would give evidence to God's righteousness. Christ would give evidence that God's righteousness is true righteousness and not just something which is claimed to be righteousness only because of the leniency of God.

72. God is shown to be both that Just One and the One justifying out of faith of Jesus. He is the Just One, the One declared just because of what He has accomplished. Everything He does is just.

73. He is the Just One even while He is justifying the one who has faith in Jesus. The preposition "out of" is taken by A. T. Robertson in his large grammar as a partitive. (599) God is the One who justifies the one who is part of that group who have Jesus' faith.

74. That does not mean He justifies no one else.

We saw that God justifies all who sin. (v.24) Since, then, He justifies all who have sinned, He most certainly justifies those who are part of that group who trust in Christ. For they also are sinners.

75. v. 27: "Where then (is) the boasting? It is excluded. Through what kind of law? Of works? Never, but through law of faith."

76. And so none of us can boast that we stand in better with God than anyone else. For outside of Christ we have all sinned. In Christ we all stand justified. Before God, boasting is excluded.

77. And it is not excluded through the law of works. Indeed, it is the law of works that can lead to boasting. Boasting is rather excluded through the law of faith.

78. The law that commands our works just leads to boasting. For it causes us to compare our works with the works of others. It compares people on the basis of what they have accomplished.

79. But the law that commands faith in Christ excludes all boasting. For it does not compare people on the basis of what they accomplished, but on the basis of what Christ has accomplished for them. And that is the same for us all. We all are justified through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

80. The use of "law" by Paul here may seem strange, since earlier he said that God's righteousness has been manifested apart from law (any law). And yet that is not so strange. For God's righteousness is manifested as something even distinct from the law of faith. Our faith is not the basis for

God's righteousness for us. Christ is the basis of that righteousness and justification. And so God's righteousness for us is manifested even separate from our faith. It is received by that faith, but that faith is not a part of God's righteousness.

81. v. 28: "For we reckon a man to be justified by faith apart from works of law."

82. This verse describes our justification in a different way from either v. 22 or v. 24.

In v. 22, we have the noun and genitive, God's righteousness with a prepositional phrase, through Jesus Christ's faith. In v. 24 we have the passive verb, but no mention of faith. Here we have the passive verb with the dative of faith. What kind of dative is this? What does Paul mean when he says a man is justified by or in faith? Isn't Paul confusing us by speaking of a law of faith and then saying that a man is justified by faith from works of law?

83. Also, if "faith" is a dative of means are we making the work of God in us a prerequisite for justification? (Lenski, 270 & 250)

84. It seems to me best to make this dative a dative of reference (Greenlee, 32) or a locative. As far as faith is concerned, a man is justified apart from works of law, even law of faith. Man's justification rests upon Christ and Christ alone. It does not rest upon even his faith.

85. Now faith is the end result sought by God through His justification. Without faith a man is justified, but he has gained nothing by that justification without faith. God justifies us for the purpose of working faith in us--faith in His justification in Christ. Without the promise faith

gains us nothing, but without faith the promise avails us nothing.

86. The term "faith" here could also be locative.

In the sphere of faith, a man is justified apart from works of law. If we want to be in that sphere of faith, then we must seek our justification in places other than works of law. And that other place is the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

87. v. 29 & 30: "Or (is He) God of Jews only?

Not at least also of Gentiles? Yes, also of Gentiles, if at any rate God is one, who will justify circumcision out of faith and uncircumcision through that faith."

88. Paul is talking to the Roman Gentiles. If a man were justified by works of law, that would mean that He is God of the Jews only. All would have to become Jews (workers of law) to have Him as God.

89. But even the Jew did not believe God was God of the Jew only. He is God also of the Gentile.

90. And He is one God. But He justifies in faith both the Jew and the Gentile. The article with the second use of "faith" indicates that Paul is referring to the same faith in which a Jew is justified.

91. But what is meant by "out of faith" and "through faith"? What does Paul mean when he says that God will justify out of faith and through faith?

92. There are a couple of ways this verse can be understood. 1.) The prepositional phrases could be taken to modify the nouns and not the

verb. It would then read that God will justify the circumcised (circumcision) who are a part of faith and the uncircumcised (uncircumcision) who come through faith. This fits well with v. 26 where the prepositional phrase "out of Jesus' faith" is made an accusative clause by the article. In this way faith is not the cause or motive of justification, but simply a quality of those justified. That also means that Paul is saying nothing here about those who are not "out of faith" or "through faith." He is simply stating a fact about those who have this faith. God will justify them whether they're circumcised or not.

93. 2.) These prepositional phrases could also modify the verb. It would then read that God will justify out of faith the circumcision and through that faith the uncircumcision. In this case the emphasis would be upon the objective content of the faith. God justifies not because of faith, but because of faith in Christ. And so God will justify circumcision out of faith in Christ and uncircumcision through faith in Christ. The justification would rest not in faith per se, but in faith in Christ.

94. Both the objective and subjective sides of justification are seen in v. 26, 28 & 30. The objective side is seen especially in the way "justify" is used in v. 26 & 30. God is plainly stated as the subject. God does the justifying, the declaring just. It may not be so evident in v. 28, since the passive is used there without any explicit agent. Yet the context certainly indicates that God is the agent there too.

95. And the subjective side is very clear in these verses, for they all include faith. When a man believes in God's justification (declaration) in Christ, that faith is actually a subjective declaration of righteousness.

96. Is the future "will justify" of any special meaning here? I can see none, other than that Paul is assuring us that God's justification, His declaration of righteousness, goes on into the future. It is not something that affects only our past or the present. It is something we can trust in for the future.
97. Why does Paul use two different prepositions here, "out of" and "through?" Are there two different ways of justification, one for Jew and one for Gentile?
98. Hardly. Paul emphasizes the unity of the faith. He uses the article with the second use of "faith" emphasizing that it is the same faith as the first one mentioned in the verse. Jew and Gentile are saved by the same faith.
99. v. 31: "Are we therefore making law useless through this faith? May that never be. Rather, we establish law."
100. Paul is meeting an objective or an extreme conclusion some may draw from what he has written. No flesh is justified, declared righteous, out of works of law. A man is justified in faith apart from works of law. Therefore law is useless for justification. This teaching of justification makes all law useless.
101. "May that never be." Paul uses the optative mood with a negative. Paul is stating a desire of his and of all those who trust in Christ. May God's law never be declared useless. Some laws may be useless, but certainly not God's laws, especially His law of faith. (v. 27)
102. And God's law is not made useless either. For by this teaching of faith and justification we

establish the law. This teaching shows people how law, especially the law of God, can be fulfilled in all its demands. There is only one way. The law can be established only by Christ. Any other teaching makes law void and useless, because no one can fulfill that law. No matter how much preaching law does, man cannot fulfill it. "No flesh shall be justified by works of law."

103. But Christ has fulfilled it for us and when we cling to that we are confessing that the law must be fulfilled and we also confess the only way that law is and can be fulfilled, which is through Christ. By teaching justification in Christ, law is given its proper due and respect. For it is only then fulfilled as it deserves and as it demands to be fulfilled--perfectly. It is only fulfilled in any real sense of the word when Christ fulfills it for us.

104. A few closing comments. In the debate over the meaning of justify, let us not think that we have solved the problem by defining "justify" as "declare righteous or just." After that question is answered, we must still ask: declared just upon what basis? Upon what we do? Paul very clearly denies that. Upon what God does in us? This passage clearly denies that. We are justified not on the basis that we trust in Christ (God has worked in us faith in Christ), but on the basis of the Christ in whom we trust. And so we are justified freely through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

105. We must also carefully define objective justification and subjective justification. The two concepts may often be found in the same phrase, e.g. v. 26: "the one justifying the one out of Jesus' faith." The objective is found in "justify"; the subjective in "faith." The objective comes in

Christ and Christ alone. The objective is performed by God Himself. In Christ He declares all men, believers and unbelievers, just. Christ has fulfilled the demands of the law for them. The subjective comes in faith and in faith alone. But the subjective is found in man as a work of God. Man believes by God's grace. Man believes that he is justified. By faith he stands before God and in Christ declares himself just.

106. Then when we use the phrase "faith alone" let us make sure it is clearly understood as "faith alone in Christ." There are two reasons for that. 1.) "Faith alone" can be understood by those outside Christian circles (and sometimes even inside) to mean that any faith brings and should bring subjective justification before God. We know that is not true. It is only faith in Christ that accomplishes this.

107. 2.) Even in our circles, I sometimes wonder if we understand "faith alone" to mean that God justifies us because of His work in us--- His work of faith. It is so easy to make the faith we have in Christ the cause and source of God's justification of us, rather than making the Christ in whom we believe the cause and source of that justification.

-- Paul G. Haugen
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ARTICLE VIII OF THE FORMULA OF CONCORD AND MODERN CHRISTOLOGY

I. INTRODUCTION:

The Purpose and Outline of the Paper

1. One of the more disconcerting features of much of contemporary theology, whether it be traditional¹ or modern,² is its superficiality. Theology is superficial whenever it remains on the surface or periphery. Instead, theology is to be radical (understood in its etymological sense). The English word "radical" comes, by way of Middle English, from the Latin word "radix" which means "root." Therefore, theology is radical whenever it drives to the root or center.

2. Theology is to be radical with respect to both its object and method. Radical theology has its basis, content, and goal (i.e., its object) in Christ alone. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). Superficial theology has its basis, content, and goal either to the left or to the right of Christ, but not in Christ alone. "He that is not with me is against me" (Matthew 12:30).

3. Theology is also to be radical with respect to its method. Radical theology has as its method the critical inquiry into the condition of the possibility. "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Superficial theology remains content with what is said without asking why it is said. "Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24).

4. An example of superficial theological method is much of what passes for the traditional critique of modern theology. It is superficial because it remains content with simply cataloging theological differences. As important as it is for traditional theology to be cognizant of these differences, it is even more important for it to know why there are these differences. Traditional theology must be radical in its critique of modern theology. It must inquire into the condition of modern theology's possibility. If it fails to do this, modern theology has not been challenged, let alone refuted, and remains as vital as ever.

5. An analogy drawn from the natural world may prove instructive on this point. If a gardener is to eliminate successfully a dandelion problem, he must destroy the dandelion at its root. If he does not, his solution is only cosmetic because with a healthy root the dandelion will only grow back again. The same is true for the traditional critique of modern theology.

6. In light of the foregoing remarks, the purpose of this paper is to engage in a radical critique of modern Christology³ from the perspective of traditional Christology (i.e., Article VIII of the Formula of Concord⁴ 1577). It will not remain content with merely cataloging the differences between traditional and modern Christology. Although it will do that, it will inquire also into the condition of the possibility of modern Christology. The condition of the possibility of modern Christology is its starting-point.⁵ It is here, then, where it must be critiqued from the perspective of traditional Christology.

7. The condition of the possibility of traditional Christology is likewise its starting-point. The starting-point of traditional Christology can be expressed in the following question: Given the

divinity of Christ, how can one then predicate of this subject humanity?⁶ The answer given by traditional Christology is the doctrine of the hypostatic union. The condition of the possibility of this question and its answer is a particular view of Scripture as the Word of God.

8. Modern Christology reverses the starting-point of traditional Christology. Its starting-point can be expressed as follows: Given the humanity of Christ, how can one then predicate of this subject divinity? The condition of the possibility for this reversal is the rise of historical-criticism and the altered view of Scripture it presupposes. David Friedrich Strauss (1808-1874) is the first theologian to ask this question in his The Life of Jesus Critically Examined⁷ (1835). A recent answer to this question is given by Wolfhart Pannenberg (1928-) in his Jesus-God and Man⁸ (1964).

9. Traditional and modern Christology differ significantly with regard to the starting-point of Christology. This difference will be expanded upon in the remainder of the paper. It is hoped that in this way the following critique of modern Christology from the perspective of traditional Christology will prove to be radical and not superficial.

II. PART ONE:

The Starting-Point of Traditional Christology

10. The starting-point of traditional Christology is "καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο," and the word became flesh" (John 1:14). As stated earlier, this starting-point can be expressed in the following question: Given the divinity of Christ (i.e., the Word), how can one then predicate of this subject humanity (i.e., flesh)? The answer given by traditional Christology to this question is the doctrine of the hypostatic or personal union.⁹

11. The Formula of Concord defines the hypostatic union as follows: "We also believe, teach, and confess that after the incarnation neither nature in Christ henceforth subsists for itself so as to be or constitute a distinct person, but that the two natures are united in such a way that they constitute a single person in which there are and subsist at the same time both the divine and the assumed human nature, so that after the incarnation not only his divine nature but also his assumed human nature belong to the total person of Christ (SD VIII 11). According to this definition, Christ is one person who subsists or exists from all eternity in the divine nature. At the incarnation, this one person unites or assumes to himself human nature. Henceforth, the one person of Christ subsists not only in the divine nature, but also in the assumed human nature.

12. The person in question in this definition of the hypostatic union is identified by John 1:14 as the Word, the second person of the Trinity. "The person of Christ" is "the Son of God who has assumed flesh" (SD VIII 11). A "person" is defined

"not as a part or a property of another but as that which exists of itself" (AC I 4). This means that the Word or Son of God has an existence independent of the Father and the Holy Spirit in their relations to each other. However, all three persons have in common the one divine nature or essence and its properties. Nature is assumed to mean whatever makes something what it is and not something else. The Logos, then, shares in all the properties of the Godhead, three of which are "to be almighty" (omnipotence), "to be everywhere at the same time naturally" (omnipresence), and "to know everything" (omniscience) (SD VIII 9).

13. At the incarnation, the Son of God, who exists from eternity in the divine nature, unites or assumes to himself human nature. He now shares, in addition to all the properties of the divine nature, all the essential properties of the human nature. These include "flesh and blood" and the ability to "suffer and die" (SD VIII 10). The Son became like us in everything except sin (see SD I 43). This, however, in no way compromises Christ's true humanity because sin is not of the "substance" of humanity, but an "accident" (see SD I 54-62).

14. The human nature assumed by the Word came into existence at the time of the incarnation (see SD XII 25). At no time did Christ's human nature have an existence independent of the assuming Word. The human nature of Christ did not have its own "person." This is the doctrine of the anhypostasia. Rather, the human nature of Christ has always existed in the person of the Word. This is the doctrine of the enhypostasia. To deny Christ a human "person" in this technical sense is not to deny him a human personality in the modern sense (i.e., a human psychology). On account of the assumed human nature, Christ has both a body and a soul. However, this body and soul do not exist by themselves apart from the Word.

15. The incarnation results in the union between the divine nature, in which the Word subsists from eternity, and the human nature, in which he subsists from the time of the incarnation. This union between the two natures takes place not at the level of the nature themselves, but at the level of the person. The union is achieved by the fact that the person of the Word exists in both the divine and human natures. Hence, the union is "personal." This personal union has two important implications for the relationship between the two natures themselves.

16. First, as a result of the personal union, the two natures are inseparable. They are inseparable because the Word subsists in them both. Wherever the divinity of Christ is, there is his humanity as well. If this is not the case, then the union is not real, but apparent. This is true of Nestorians. They "taught that the two natures have no communion whatsoever with each other. This would separate the two natures from each other and thus make two Christs, so that Christ is one person and God the Word who dwells in Christ is another (SD VIII 15). However, Luther is quite adamant in affirming the inseparableness of the two natures. "Wherever you put God down for me, you must also put the humanity down for me. They simply will not let themselves be separated and divided from each other. He has become one person and never separates the assumed humanity from himself" (SD VIII 84).

17. The second result of the personal union is that the two natures are not confused. The union of the two natures is not to be understood in such a way that as a result of the union of the divine and human natures there comes into existence a third divine-human nature. If this is the case (as is true of Monophysitism), then the union is again not real, but apparent. Rather, each of the

two natures retain their essential properties. Neither nature is converted into the other. "In their nature and essence the two natures referred to remain unmingled and unabolished, so that each retains its natural properties and throughout all eternity does not lay them aside, nor do the essential properties of the one nature ever become the essential properties of the other" (SD VIII 8).

18. As a result of this personal union, in which the two natures are neither separated nor confused, there is a communication or exchange of the properties of the natures. This is the doctrine of the communicatis idiomatum. There are three types of exchange. (1) According to the genus idiomaticum, "any property, though it belongs only to one of the natures, is ascribed not only to the respective nature as something separate but to the entire person who is simultaneously God and man (whether he is called God or whether he is called man)" (SD VIII 36). For example, it is inappropriate to say "Divinity dies" because death is not an essential property of divinity. However, it is appropriate to say "God dies" because God refers to the entire person of Christ who subsists in both natures and therefore suffers what is characteristic of both.

19. (2) According to the genus apotelesmaticum, "as far as the discharge of Christ's office is concerned, the person does not act in, with, through, or according to one nature only, but in, according to, with, and through both natures" (SD VIII 46). The work of Christ is theanthropic. He always acts according to both natures.

20. (3) According to the genus maiestaticum, the attributes of the divine nature have been communicated to the human nature of Christ so that it shares in them. These divine attributes include omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience. These

divine attributes do not become essential attributes of the human nature of Christ. If they did, the two natures would be confused. Rather, it is the case that the divine properties manifest themselves "in, with, and through" (SD VIII 66) the assumed human nature of Christ and never apart from it.

21. Although Christ possessed the divine attributes according to his human nature from the time of the incarnation, he refrained from their full use until after his death and burial. This is the time of his humiliation (see SD VIII 65). However, beginning with his descent into Hell, he begins to fully exercise his divine attributes according to his human nature. This is the time of his exaltation.

22. As we have stated, the starting-point of traditional Christology is John 1:14 ("The Word became flesh."). Given the divinity of Christ, how can one then predicate of this subject humanity? The doctrine of the hypostatic union is the answer of traditional Christology to this question. Christ is the one person of the Word who subsists not only in the divine nature which he has from eternity, but also in the human nature which he unites to his person at the incarnation.

23. The doctrine of the hypostatic union, which is the Christology of Article VIII of the Formula of Concord, is an exegesis of John 1:14. It is an exegesis in which the entire testimony of Scripture concerning the person of Christ is brought to bear. John 1:14 provides both the object and the methodological framework within which a scriptural reflection on the person of Christ takes place. Why? Why does traditional Christology begin at John 1:14? Why does it not begin at some other point.

24. According to the Lutheran confessions themselves, Christological reflection can begin at one

of two significantly different starting-points. One can begin Christological reflection at the point of reason (see Luther's "Dame Reason" in SD VIII 41). Reason determines what can and cannot be said about Christ, his person, and his natures. If what is said does not contradict what has been established by reason, then it can be predicated of Christ. However, if it does contradict what has been established by reason, then it cannot be predicated of Christ.

25. The second starting-point at which Christological reflection can begin is Christ himself. "But the best, safest, and most certain way in this controversy is to realize that no one can know better and more thoroughly than the Lord Christ himself what Christ has received through the personal union, glorification, or exaltation according to his assumed human nature and of what his assumed human nature is capable over and above its natural properties without being destroyed. In his Word he has revealed to us as much as we need to know in this life, and wherever the Scriptures in this case give us clear, certain testimony, we shall simply believe it and not argue that the human nature in Christ is not capable of it" (SD VIII 53).

26. The immediate context of this statement is the controversy over the genus maiestaticum. However, it is equally true of Christology as a whole. Christological reflection on the person of Christ and his natures is to begin with Christ himself. Christ has revealed himself to us in his Word. His Word is unequivocally identified with the Scriptures.¹⁰ Since the Scriptures are the Word of Christ, they are clear (i.e., they can be understood) and certain (i.e., they are true). The theologian begins his Christological reflection at the place where Christ reveals himself to him-- the Scriptures.

27. It should be noted that it is not the theologian himself who determines the starting-point of Christology. It is not within his power to choose either reason or Christ as his starting-point for Christological reflection. Rather, the starting-point is determined for him by Christ in his Word to which he is held captive by faith. In this way, the starting-point of Christology is given to the theologian.

III. PART TWO:

The Starting-Point of Modern Christology

28. Modern Christology reverses the starting-point of traditional Christology. It begins with the humanity, rather than the divinity of Christ. The condition of the possibility for the reversal is the rise of historical-criticism in the eighteenth century. Johann Salomo Semler is "the founder of the historical study of the New Testament."¹¹ The New Testament is able to be an object of historical-critical investigation because Semler made a distinction between Holy Scripture and the Word of God. Holy Scripture is the collection of the sixty-six canonical books of the Old and New Testaments. The Word of God, which is not identical with Scripture, is that which, in Semler's own words, "at all times makes all men wise unto salvation."¹²

29. The implication of this distinction for the study of Scripture is obvious. The Bible as a book is no longer inspired. It is a product of human culture undeserving of any preferential treatment in comparison to other products of human culture. In fact, the historian can approach Scripture critically with complete impartiality as to its inspiration.

30. To properly interpret Scripture, the historian must apply the same canons of critical scholarship (e.g., homogeneity and the interconnectedness of all events) to it as to any other human work. This critical use of reason determines both the meaning and veracity of Scripture. It is the standard by which Scripture is judged. The final word spoken is a human word and not the Word of God. What is the implication of this changed view of Scripture for Christology?

31. David Friedrich Strauss is the first theologian to draw the implications from the historical-critical method of biblical inquiry to Christology. Strauss argued that one must approach Scripture, including the Gospels, critically, that is, without the presupposition that Scripture is the Word of God. He likewise distinguished between Scripture and the Word of God. This is the enduring legacy of Semler for modern theology.

32. Since Scripture is not the Word of God, there veracity is not established. It is the historian who must determine its truth. He does this by applying the above mentioned canons of critical scholarship to Scripture. If the accounts recorded of Jesus in Scripture do not meet these standards, they are not historical, but mythical. According to Strauss, a myth is defined as "a narrative relating directly or indirectly to Jesus, which may be considered not as the expression of a fact, but as the product of an idea of his earliest followers."¹³

33. Strauss then drew out the Christological implication. Not only must the Gospels be approached critically, but also the one of whom the Gospels speak must be so approached. One must examine the Gospels without the Christological presupposition that Jesus is God. One must distinguish between the Jesus who stands behind the Gospels and can be

brought to the foreground by historical-criticism and the Christ of faith portrayed by the Church in the Gospels. Strauss did for Jesus what Semler had done earlier in the Bible. This is the enduring legacy of Strauss for modern Christology.

34. Investigating the Gospels in this manner, Strauss concluded that the historical Jesus was a human being and no more. If Christ is pictured as more than man, if he is pictured as God as well, as the Gospels do, then he is understood mythologically. The mythological picture of Christ in the New Testament is the expression of the "Idea" in the form of an historical account. The production of this account is an unconscious activity on the part of the Church. The "Idea" which comes to expression in this myth of Jesus as God is the unity of the infinite and the finite, a unity which applies to the whole human race and not just one man. In Strauss' own words, "humanity is the union of the two natures, the incarnate God: the infinite spirit divested to finitude and the finite spirit recalling its infinitude."¹⁴

35. What is the implication of this for the starting-point of Christology? Strauss emphasizes the humanity of Christ. So much so that this, rather than the divinity of Christ, becomes the starting-point for Christological reflection. This reverses the traditional order. Traditional Christology presupposed the divinity of Christ. The problem for traditional Christology was how humanity could be predicated of this subject. The solution was the doctrine of the hypostatic union. With Strauss and subsequent modern Christology, it is not the divinity, but the humanity of Christ which is presupposed. The problem for modern Christology becomes how divinity can be predicated of this subject.

36. The solution proposed by Strauss, that the New Testament picture of Jesus as God is a mythological expression of the "Idea" that it is the entire human race which is united with the divine, was not historically significant for modern Christology. Therefore, this part of the paper will conclude with a recent solution to the problem, a solution proposed by Wolfhart Pannenberg.

37. In Jesus-God and Man, Pannenberg suggests that one can answer the Christological question "Who is Jesus Christ?" along one of two different lines. One can proceed either "from above" or "From below."¹⁵ If one begins from above, one begins with the divinity of Christ. This is the starting-point of traditional Christology. If one begins from below, one begins with the humanity of Christ or, in Pannenberg's words, with the historical Jesus. This is the starting-point of modern Christology.

38. Pannenberg rejects a Christology from above. He does so for three reasons, (1) a Christology from above presupposes that which it is the task of Christology to prove--the divinity of Christ. (2) The problem for a Christology from above is the union of God and man in Jesus. The life of Jesus is not of determinative significance for this. (3) A Christology from above presupposes that one stands in the position of God himself and then proceeds with him into the world. Rather, one must begin where God has revealed himself--the humanity of Christ. Therefore, "Christology deals with Jesus as the basis of the confession and the faith that he is the Christ of God."¹⁶

39. Does the humanity of Christ, which is ascertained by a historical-critical investigation of the Gospels, establish the claim that he is God? Unlike Strauss, Pannenberg affirms that "this man Jesus is God."¹⁷ He does so on the basis of a

critical defense of the historicity of the resurrection.¹⁸ This man Jesus is God because God has raised him from the dead. The resurrection identifies Jesus with God because by it God vindicates the pre-Easter claim of Jesus that in his person the Kingdom of God, which is inseparable from God himself, makes its appearance.

40. Although Pannenberg is able to affirm that Jesus is God, it must be noted how he does this. Pannenberg determines the divinity of Christ by the exercises of his reason alone to which Scripture is held captive until it yields its conclusion. This is in marked contrast to the authors of Article VIII of the Formula of Concord who were held captive by the Word of God which itself determined the divinity of Christ for the theologian.

IV. CONCLUSIONS:

A Redemptive Critique

41. Modern Christology reverses the starting-point of traditional Christology. Unlike traditional Christology, which presupposes the divinity of Christ, modern Christology presupposes the humanity of Christ. The question with which this conclusion is concerned is as follows: What is objectionable with the starting-point of modern Christology?

42. Is it the fact that it begins with the humanity of Christ itself which is objectionable? No, because in time, that is, in the time of the disciples, this was the starting-point of Christology. Recall the confession of Peter as recorded in Matthew 16:15-16. "He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said,

Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Therefore, beginning with the humanity of Christ is not in itself objectionable.

43. However, what is objectionable with the starting-point of modern Christology is the reason why it begins where it does. The condition of the possibility for the starting-point of modern Christology is the historical-critical method. Scripture is approached without the presupposition that it is the Word of God. The Christological implication is that Jesus must be approached without the presupposition that he is God. But is such a presuppositionless Christology theologically legitimate?

44. Although it is true that the starting-point of Christology for the disciples was the humanity of Jesus, for those of us who follow the disciples in time, it cannot be. Unlike the disciples, we live after the earthly life of Jesus and the inspiration of the New Testament writings and their canonization. Scripture declares that the Word became flesh (John 1:14). We can never think of Christ except as God. The possibility of a presuppositionless Christology is forever excluded. This is the starting-point of traditional Christology. This is the radical critique of modern Christology.

V. ENDNOTES

1. Traditional theology is defined as what the Church believes, teaches, and confesses on the basis of the Word of God (i.e., the Bible). For the purposes of this paper, this is synonymous with Lutheran confessional theology.

2. Modern theology is defined as the confrontation of traditional theology with modernity (i.e.,

the contemporary understanding of reality) such that the former is reinterpreted in terms of the latter.

3. Christology has both a narrower and a wider sense. In the narrower sense, Christology is the study of the person of Christ. In the wider sense, Christology also includes the study of the work of Christ. In this paper, Christology is understood in the narrower sense.

4. The Tappert edition (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959) of the Book of Concord is the one employed in this paper. All future references to this work will be given internally and will employ the standard abbreviations.

5. What follows is a re-working of a paper originally read before the 1981 Lake Michigan Pastoral Conference and subsequently published in The Lutheran Synod Quarterly, XXI, pp. 35-43, under the title "Towards an Understanding of Modern Christology."

6. This phrasing of the starting-point of traditional Christology, as well as that for modern Christology, is suggested by Claude Welch in his God and Incarnation in Mid-Nineteenth Century German Theology (New York: Oxford, 1965).

7. David Friedrich Strauss, The Life of Jesus Critically Examined (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972). Henceforth, all future reference to this work will be by author and page number.

8. Wolfhart Pannenberg, Jesus-God and Man (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1977²). Henceforth, all future reference to this book will be by author and page number.

9. What follows is admittedly a brief sketch of the Christology of Article VIII of the Formula of

Concord. However, this is sufficient for our purposes. For a more complete discussion, the reader is asked to consult "The Person of Christ" by Bjarne W. Teigen in A Contemporary Look at the Formula of Concord, edited by Robert D. Preus and Wilbert H. Rosin (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1978), pp. 232-59.

10. Ralph Bohlmann has clearly shown that the Lutheran confessions regard Scripture as the Word of God. See his Principles of Biblical Interpretation in the Lutheran Confessions (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968), pp. 30-37.

11. Werner Georg Kummel, The New Testament: The History of the Investigation of Its Problems (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972), p. 68. Henceforth, all future reference to this work will be by author and page number.

12. Quoted in Kummel, p. 63.

13. Strauss, p. 86.

14. Strauss, p. 780.

15. See Pannenberg, pp. 33-37.

16. Pannenberg, p. 21.

17. Pannenberg, p. 283.

18. See Pannenberg, pp. 53-107.

-- G. M. Faleide
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THE POWER OF THE WORD

When this topic was assigned me, I took it for granted that you were not particularly interested in entering into the more or less academic question which agitated the Lutheran Church in the days of an Hermann Rathman (1585-1628, pastor at Danzig, where he in 1621 published his book, "Jesu Christi Gnadenreich"). It was in this work that he maintained that the Word of God did not have any inherent power to instruct man, and make him better, but must be supported and supplemented by the activity of the Holy Spirit. It was, of course, a false interpretation of Heb. 4:2 which Rathman made use of in defending his position. --"For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." (Here read the Greek text and explain SUGKERANNUMI - mix, mingle, blend together.) Rathman's contention is a denial of what our sound Lutheran dogmatists have always held, from Luther down: "Habet scriptura inseparabilem comitem Spiritum Sanctum." Or that equally definite statement by the Wittenberg theologians of Luther's day: "Spiritus semper conjungitur cum verbo." (Both quotations found in Baier's "Compendium," I, p. 157.)

Since our Saviour identifies Himself with all of God's word, then it may of a truth be applied to every word of Scripture (His final sermon in the Capernaum synagog): "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." John 6:63.

Now this word of God, since it is God's word, naturally has certain divine attributes. And what are they? In our dogmatics we usually recognize these four general divisions when speaking of the "Properties of Holy Scripture": 1. Its divine authority; 2. Its divine power; 3. Its divine perfection; 4. Its divine clarity; each claim of "property" being, of course, substantiated by pertinent germane Bible passages as sedes doctrinae.

Since it is the second of these general divisions, namely the POWER of the WORD, we are to discuss in this brief paper, we naturally first of all look for our seats of doctrine. What does the word have to testify in its own behalf so far as divine power is concerned? Here we have an array of passages of which we can, in this brief study, consider but a few. And they will, of necessity, have to point to the divine power both to condemn as well as to save. "To condemn?" you ask. Yes, we must assign to the written word also the power to shut out of the kingdom. It is the faithful word which becomes the final arbiter also in the matter of convicting of sin. (ELEGXEIN - Titus 1: 9) While it be true that the natural man's conscience offers testimony, so that Paul can say, as he does in Rom. 2:14, 15, "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another," he is not thereby claiming for that inner voice within us such a conviction of sin that it will cause one completely to despair of self. Paul, like all other humans, was possessed of a conscience also as a self-righteous Pharisee. But that voice within him did not really cause him to know sin in all its hideousness. In fact, it permitted him to commit the sin

of persecuting the Church of God, thinking that he was thereby doing God a service. It is this to which he gives expression in that heart-searching 7th chapter of Romans, when he says: "For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." Rom. 7: 8, 9. The conscience may not always be spiritual, but God's law is. Does not Paul say, Rom. 7:14 "For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin"? That is why Paul states in this same chapter: "What shall I say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." Rom. 7:7. It is the damning efficacy of the LAW of God to which Paul refers when he says in Rom. 3:19 "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." It is the terrible destructive power of the LAW to which a Jeremiah refers when he says, Jer. 23:29, "Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" Natural man is so wont to imagine that so long as his thoughts and imaginations are hidden in the secret chambers of that heart of his (which God has told him is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked) he is safe. But then the LAW of God rouses him from his sweet dream with the warning voice: "The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Heb. 4:12.

The efficacy which is proper to the LAW, therefore, is the power to lay bare the innate wickedness of the carnal mind, whose very nature is enmity against God (Rom. 8:7). This is of course a destructive force. Even as the house which is to have

a firm foundation must have all rubble and debris cleared away before the construction can profitably be begun, so our building of faith must have all thought of self-righteousness destroyed before an holy temple of the Lord can be reared on the stone which God himself has laid in Zion.

The LAW of God, then, serves its blessed purpose of destruction. God has no other purpose in mind when He proclaims the LAW than when He proclaims the GOSPEL. He wants to save. The Saviour Himself preached more LAW than GOSPEL during His earthly sojourn. But to what purpose? Our Formula of Concord answers it thus: "Although the preaching of the suffering and death of Christ, the Son of God, is an earnest and terrible proclamation and declaration of God's wrath, whereby men are first led into the LAW aright, after the veil of Moses has been removed from them, so that they first know aright how great things God in His Law requires of us, none of which we can observe, and therefore are to seek all our righteousness in Christ:

"Yet as long as this (namely Christ's suffering and death) proclaims God's wrath and terrifies man, it is still nor properly the preaching of the Gospel, but the preaching of Moses and the Law, and therefore a foreign work of Christ, by which He arrives at His proper office, that is, to preach grace, console, and quicken, which is properly the preaching of the Gospel." Epitome V, 7.8. And in its Thorough Declaration the Formula has this to add: "Yea, what more forcible, more terrible declaration and preaching of God's wrath against sin is there than just the suffering and death of Christ, His Son?" F. of C., Thor. Decl. V, 12.

But that the LAW can of itself work only anger, the wrath of frustration, and finally death, is plainly taught us in passages like these: "Moreover

the law entered, that the offence might abound." Rom. 5: 20. Again: "Sin, taking occasion by the concupiscence." Rom. 7:8. And again: "The Law worketh wrath." Rom. 4:15. And yet again: "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." II Cor. 3:6. The law then makes us guilty before God. Its sphere is the working of contrition, terrors of conscience, which will not permit us to come to rest until we have found Him who "is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" -- namely, Christ. Rom. 10:4. That is the sum and substance of that statement in Galatians, where Paul speaks of the law as our schoolmaster. "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." Gal. 3:24. Which means that we by the law are brought to Christ by the very hopelessness of our condition, even as Peter had to ask in that synagog scene at Capernaum, when Christ had asked His disciples: "Will ye also go away?" -- "Lord, to whom shall we go?" John 6:8. Their condition was such that if they did not have Christ to whom they might flee, they would be hopelessly lost.

But now to the creative power of the word.

1. It can create spiritual life where there before was spiritual death. I Pet. 1:23. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." Again, James 1:18, "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures." Again, I Cor. 4:15, "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." Its divine efficacy is nothing else than God's power in the word. And it is the Gospel word which has life-giving power. That is why Paul states in Rom. 1:16. 17, "For I am not

ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein (namely, in the Gospel) is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith." Again in I Cor. 1:18, "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." And yet again, in II Tim. 3:14, 15, "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou has known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." (It is this passage of Holy Writ against which Rome so shamefully sins when it teaches that: "The Scriptures alone cannot be a sufficient guide and rule of faith because they cannot, at any time, be within the reach of every inquirer; because they are not of themselves clear and intelligible even in matters of the highest importance, and because they do not contain all the truths necessary for salvation." (Cardinal Gibbons' "Faith of Our Fathers," chapter VIII, re The Church and the Bible.)

2. It has divine power, through the Gospel, to write the Law into the heart of man, so that he will now love that which he before hated. By nature man hated not only God, but the law of God as well. Says Paul, Rom. 8:7, "The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." But when the Gospel of Christ has come into its own, and made of our unwilling hearts willing hearts, as our Confessions put it (F. of C., Epitome II, 8), that believing heart will confess with David: "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." Ps. 40:8. What man under the threat of the Law would do grudgingly and unwillingly, he now does gladly and with all his heart, as David again

testifies in Ps. 119:12, "I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart." (Luther's classroom notes: "denn du hast mein Herz ausgebreitet." The Norwegian translation puts it in the present tense: "thi du frier mit hjerte fra angst.") It was this enlarging of the heart through the blessed tidings of the Gospel to which a Jeremiah pointed forward when he prophesied (Jer. 31:33), "But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days (the days referred to were the days of plucking up, and breaking down, and throwing down, and destroying, and afflicting, spoken of earlier in this 31st chapter - the dispensation of the Law), saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people."

The fact that a believer at times may not feel that he is as truly an obedient child of God as he ought to be is due to the fact that he is not quite free from the old Adam. It is this problem of which Paul speaks in the 7th chapter of Romans, saying: "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." When the Saviour says: "If ye love me, keep my commandments," (John 14:15, many a poor sinner might be tempted to doubt his love of Christ, since he has never been able to avoid breaking those commandments. But here we must bear in mind what that keeping is. It does not mean that you have never broken God's law, but that you TREASURE God's commandments; they are your KEEPSAKE, yea, even when they condemn you for what you have done. That is

the meaning of that word TEREIN, used here and so many other places in the New Testament. For example: God's law tells me that I shall not speak evil of my neighbor. If, at the end of the day, when I think back upon what I may have said about my neighbor in anything but a spirit of love for him, what do I do, if I am a true believer? Do I say: "I wish there were no 8th commandment"? Or, do I say: "I don't care what God wants me to do in this matter"? By no means. I will rather say: "Thank God also for the 8th commandment. The commandment is holy, and just, and good. The commandment shall stand, though I must fall. It has shown me again how much I stand in need of one who can save me also from this sin." I ask God to forgive me that sin and to grant me grace to struggle against it in the future. It is thus that the Psalmist can truthfully confess: "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." Ps. 119:11. And a Paul, who is earnestly struggling against sin, can likewise comfort himself with the thought: "Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." Rom. 7: 17. It is the Gospel of Christ which changes your dread fear of God into a filial fear. The slave is made a freedman. For, as we have learned in our catechetical instruction, Q. 29: "We fear God above all things, when we love Him so dearly that we dread nothing more than to offend Him." Or, as Solomon puts it in Prov. 8:12, "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil."

3. But even as the Gospel has creative power in itself to make me a believer and to inscribe the Law of God upon my heart, so it also has divine power to sustain me in that new life of faith, yea, even unto the end. There would be no comfort in the fact that I for a time believed, but in time of temptation fell away. For the Saviour has said (in that rugged 10th chapter of Matthew, where He warns us that we shall be hated of all men for His

name's sake): "But he that endureth unto the end shall be saved." Matt. 10:22. What, then, are some of the sedes doctrinae which give me this blessed assurance as a true believer? Oh, there are scores of them. But let us here point to a few of those with which we perhaps are most familiar.

Every time we come to the service of Absolution, before partaking of the Lord's Supper, we are dismissed with these comforting words: "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Phil. 1:6. In that well-known good shepherd passage of John 10 the Saviour says of all who are His in spirit and in truth: "My sheep hear by voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life: and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all: and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." John 10: 27-29. In His high-priestly prayer (John 17) the Saviour pleading with His heavenly Father for every true disciple, speaks these exceedingly comforting words: "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are." John 17:9-11. And unless we want to make a liar out of Him who Himself is the truth, it is well that we keep in mind His prayer at the grave of Lazarus: "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always." John 11:41.42. Can I have any more comforting assurance than this, that my Saviour is my PARACLETE at the throne of grace? (I John 2:1). And that very word which we speak at the grave of our departed fellow believers, from the 1st chapter

of I Peter: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead," is immediately followed by that relative clause which tells us who these are: "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." I Peter 1: 3-5.

4. But God's word does not operate in a natural way, which would mean that it appeals to man's reason; nor does it operate through what we call rhetorical eloquence, appealing to men's emotions. No, it operates in a supernatural way. Or, as Quenstedt puts it: "Verbum Dei virtutem exercet per contactum hyperphysicum."

But right here it may be well that we make clear what is meant by the use of reason. Luther tells us: "He who would be a Christian had better poke out the eyes of his reason, and listen alone to what God says." St. L. Walch V, 452. This does not mean that we as believers must despise reason. For also our reason is a wonderful gift of God. But it is meant to be used in matters below us, not in matters above us. Reason is never more unreasonable than when it insists on reasoning in things above reason. And the Gospel of Christ is far and above all reason. That is why Luther says again: "The forgiveness of sins for the sake of another's merits, likewise another's righteousness (as one's own) reason simply cannot grasp." St. L. Walch VI, 733. And it is, of course, the SATISFACTIO VICARIA which is the very heart and center of Christ's saving Gospel. It is natural man's reason which is ever objecting to God's plan of salvation. So far from satisfying the demands of his reason, the Gospel becomes the sheerest foolishness. It is this divine truth Paul expresses in I Cor. 2:14, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are

foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." That is why he had told the Corinthians from the very start: "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power." I Cor. 2:4.

5. That the infinite, almighty attributes which belong to the very essence of God also inhere in His divine word, by way of divine communication, is also a Scriptural truth. And what sedes doctrinae would we point to in establishing this truth? As already cited, there is Rom. 1:16. 17, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein (namely in the Gospel) is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith." Again we have Eph. 1: 19. 20, "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places." And that this is omnipotence is evident from Christ's own words in Matt. 28: 18, "All power (PASA EXOUSIA) is given unto me in heaven and in earth." And in II Cor. 4:6 Paul testifies: "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." In Heb. 1:3, we read concerning Christ that "he upholdeth all things by the word of his power." (It is an omnipotent word.)

In full agreement with these Scripture passages, Baier, in his Doctrinal Theology, p. 505, writes: "The same infinite virtue which is essentially per se and independently in God and by which he enlightens

and converts men is communicated to the word." And Luther adds his bit of testimony on this score in the following words: "The Holy Ghost does not operate without the word or before the word, but comes with and through the word, and does not go farther than the word goes."

But we must never grant that the divine power of the Holy Spirit is separated from the word. It is this false claim which is made by Enthusiasts, Calvinists, Rathmanists, Quakers, and others. It will ever be true in the words of Paul (Rom. 10:17), "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." It was one of Zwingli's fundamental tenets that "the Holy Spirit requires no leader or vehicle." And says a more modern Calvinist (Hodge of Princeton): "Efficacious grace acts immediately." To the Enthusiasts the Bible becomes merely a NORMA NORMATA, a rule of faith subject to the "inner word," their so-called ILLUMINATIO DIRECTA. But whatever comes to us by way of spiritual enlightenment, whether we are aware of it or no, has had its source in the revealed word of God. We may have read it, have heard it from another who has read or heard, and when it chances to come again to our recollection, we may be tempted to think that the Spirit spoke to us without means. But He always makes use of the word as His VEHICULUM. Whenever we in our prayers ask God to grant "His Spirit and power to the word," we do not thereby mean to separate the two, but rather would we thereby confess that our own efforts will be of no avail unless we recognize as did a Paul (I Cor. 3: 6), "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase." It might be less subject to misinterpretation if we in uttering such a prayer would phrase it thus: "Grant us Thy Holy Spirit, ever present in Thy word." And here Luther has a word of counsel: "We must put off the foolish confidence that we ourselves can effect anything through the word in the hearts of our hearers; rather should we diligently continue in the prayer

that God alone, without us, would render mighty and active in the hearers the Word which He proclaims through his preachers and teachers."
St. L. Walch, IV, 626.

6. But while the word is God's omnipotent power, it can be resisted. "Omnipotent, and still be resisted?" you ask. Yes. But here we are face to face with one of the INSOLUBLES of Holy Writ. Even as we cannot reconcile God's universal will of grace with His decree of particular election, but simply believe both doctrines, since both are taught in God's word, so we cannot explain how the almighty word of God's power can be resisted by weak men. But we believe it because Scripture plainly teaches it. There are scores of passages which teach that men resist the Holy Ghost. The SIN of sins of which Christ says that the Comforter will reprove the world when He comes is this: "Of sin, because they believe not on me." John 16: 8. But the CUR ALII, non ALII? we must leave in the inscrutable counsel of God until that day when we shall know even as we are known.

While it does not entirely clear away the mystery, Luther has this to say re the resistability of the word: "When God works through means, He can be resisted." Therefore spiritual resurrection can be resisted, as is seen from passages like these: Acts 3: 46 (Paul and Barnabas in antioch of Pisida), "And Paul and Barnabas waxed bold and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you (Jews): but seeing ye put it away from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles." And in Stephen's martyr speech he charges his accusers with these words: "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye." Acts 7: 51.

7. While the word itself has the inherent power to accomplish that whereunto it is sent, whether that be convicting of sin or of working the new life of faith and sustaining it to the end, and whether that be through the spoken or read word, we do know that it appears to be more effective in the employ of one than of another. What does this mean? Does it mean that one man's voice is more persuasive than that of another? If that were the cause of the different results, then it would be the voice of man, rather than the inherent power of God's word which would determine it.

But while we cannot add to the word a whit of power, it is possible for us to so indifferently minister of that word that we may become an hindrance to its effective power. It is the word which is fitly spoken that is by Solomon spoken of as "apples of gold in pictures of silver." Prov. 25: 11. It is the mishandling of the word of life against which Paul warns in his last epistle, telling his younger co-worker Timothy, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." II Tim. 2: 15. Which does not only mean that you must know how to divide between Law and Gospel, but also know when and how to make use of them properly. Dr. Walther, in his Law and Gospel, speaks of pastors who are so careless about the reading of Scripture that they often rob it of its meaning. As an example he speaks of those who, speaking the words of absolution, place a wrong emphasis on the word not, and so rob it of its true meaning: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." There is more Gospel in the second of that compound sentence. But then it will have to be read with the emphasis on the word believeth. The only thing which can condemn us is UNBELIEF. Dr. Samuel Johnson, was discussing with

David Garrick, the great tragedian of that day, the stage people's purpose in life. When David Garrick argued that it was their great objective to teach people to speak the language correctly, Johnson challenged that statement by telling the actor: "I haven't heard the actor who could read the ten commandments correctly." When Garrick asked to be tested out on our 8th commandment, and recited it thus: "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor," Johnson retorted: "I knew you couldn't. It does not say that. It says, 'Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor."

But as to the effect of the word which we have ministered, we should not be too anxious to determine the results. On this score our Formula of Concord comes with this counsel, "Concerning the presense, operation, and gift of the Holy Ghost we should not and cannot always judge ex sensu, as to how and when they are experienced in the heart; but because they are often covered and occur in great weakness, we should be certain from, and according to, the promise that the Word of God preached and heard is truly an office and work of the Holy Ghost, by which He is certainly efficacious and works in our hearts." Then is given as sedes doctrinae: II Cor. 2: 14ff, "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life." And also II Cor. 3: 5ff, "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our succifiency is of God; Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."

While we do not want to encourage anyone to be lazy, indifferent, or careless about his proclaiming the word of God, but would remind ourselves as well as fellow labourers of the tremendous responsibility which rests upon us whenever we appear as ministers of God, we want to pose this question in closing: As for the effect of the word spoken by a pleasing voice and getting a ready hearing, so far as we can judge, are we so sure that it is the message of the word itself which grips the heart and conscience of our hearers or the pleasantness of the voice proclaiming it? Here it is interesting to know that an Augustine, who was drawn to the service of bishop Ambrosius in Milan mainly because of the melodious strains of the chant which had been perfected by the bishop and sung by trained choirs, later on began questioning his own spiritual interest at that period of life. He confesses that he now feared it was the sweetness of the music which had drawn him, rather than the message which the hymns conveyed from the word itself. It's worth pondering, brethren.

-- Norman A. Madson

A SERMON CRITIQUE*

Chrysostom, the "golden mouthed" of Antioch, showed little patience with lazy preachers. He wrote: "How great the skill required for the teacher in contending earnestly for the truth has been sufficiently set forth by us. But I have to mention one more matter . . . The expenditure of great labor upon the preparation of discourses to be delivered in public . . . For though the preacher may have great ability (and this one would find only in a few), not even in this case is he delivered from perpetual toil. For since preaching does not come by nature but by study, suppose a man to reach a high standard of it, this will then forsake him if he does not cultivate his power by constant application and exercise."¹

We are here to engage in such study. More specifically, let it be said that as brothers in the faith and of one confession, let us be secure enough in our one hope and calling to give fair encouragement and praise where that is due and fair criticism where that is due. Thus together the one builds the other up, while the other can feel secure at the same time to say, "Brother, the common cause of Christ that we share calls for improvement in this or that."

Let it be said, in keeping with Chrysostom's words, also, that our brother shows no lack of labor in the preparation of this sermon.

*This critique was presented by Pastor James Olsen at the Lake Michigan Pastoral Conference, October 6-7, 1981. The sermon was based on Matthew 5:13-16.

The Sermon's Merits

The sermon is textual. The tertium comparationis regarding both the word "light" and the word "salt" is made well. The meaning of the text and textual concepts are understood by the preacher. In terms of thought structure, theme and parts capture the meaning. Divisions of the sermon carry the thought forward in logical development.

You will recall that the three parts, "How we acquire this light," "How we let this light shine," "Why we should let our light shine," develop the theme, "Let your light shine!" Under part I, the "how," the Scriptural truth is brought out that it is by the power of the Word. In part II, "How we let it shine," the thought centers on the idea that it is by our good works, beginning with confessing Christ in word and deed ourselves and then on to supporting the spread of the Gospel elsewhere. The negative side, how we do not let it shine is illustrated well by a story. An apt exhortation in a quotation from a Ukrainian Christian is added. The positive side was brought out in several solid statements. Part III, "Why let it shine," was especially well-written, in my opinion, with excellently balanced, rounded paragraphs.

Riveting attention was brought about by phrasing each part in the form of a question as the part came up in the sermon, though the theme was in the form of exhortation. Originally the parts were phrased at the beginning of the sermon proper as declaratory statements. With a question always implied in the words "how" and "why" it is natural to structure statements with these words into questions. This approach is generally termed the "synthetic" method; development of the text seemed to lend itself well to this method.

Regarding the use of Law and Gospel, the thrust in the text is toward growth in sanctification in terms of our confession of Christ. The first division (how we let the light shine), enabled the preacher ample opportunity to bring in Law and Gospel. He did so in that order, correctly getting at the need for grace, then applying the Gospel subsequently in terms of Christ's substitutionary work. The Law was developed well; it therefore made the ample dosages of the Gospel all the more sweet! With this base established, points 2 and 3 could be constructed well and as they should be constructed, because in these points we hear of the very important matters of how and why we let Christ's light shine. The right operational base led easily to application in our lives.

Furthermore, the sermon is straightforward and simple. I did not say "simplistic." Luther said a lot on this subject and we take one quotation from Table Talk: "We ought to direct ourselves in preaching according to the condition of the hearers, but most preachers commonly fail herein; they preach that which little edifies the poor simple people. To preach plain and simply is a great art: Christ himself talks of tilling the ground, of mustard-seed, etc.; he used altogether homely and simple similitudes."²

Regarding the sermon's assets we conclude by saying the following: 1) The sermon displays evidence of labor, not of slovenliness or a lazy approach. 2) The truths of Scripture are brought out with textual preaching and correct uses of other Scriptures from God's Word. Law and Gospel are correctly divided. 3) Logic flows on the basis of a structure. And this is enhanced by a clear, straightforward development.

The Sermon's Weaknesses

We fear to burden our brother unduly, yet we do not fear, because we are brothers and because so much good can be said about the sermon in terms already which should encourage him. And just as we have the great Law-Gospel principle of learning, handed down from on high, so we have a principle to follow regarding learning to improve our sermons. Behind the Law of God, even though it is stern and condemning in its countenance, there is the love of God; for what else could explain His willingness to show us our wrong, sinful, helpless condition. So also there stands love behind the criticisms of your sermon that I share with you. To start with, there is no weakness in the sermon that cannot be dealt with and that can't be eliminated with time and effort and prayer. And just as the Gospel is our motivation and strength for "letting our light shine," in a general way as Christians, so it is our strength and power for the specific tasks of improving ourselves in our ministries, whatever area of improvement we seek. And to the end that mere criticism not be our goal but that constructive criticism be true of this critique, I will suggest specific ways of improving, solutions if you will, to specific problems or weaknesses. At least I will try to reach that goal.

St. Augustine once said something that leads us into the matter at hand: "It is one of the distinctive features of good intellects not to love words but the truth in words. For of what service is a golden key if it cannot open what we want it to open?"³

Regarding delivery, the cadence and rhythm gave overly strict emphasis to each word in a regular pattern. In the very nature of things, each word cannot be the entire sermon in microcosm. The demand upon the speaker to turn each word out as a

polished gem in and of itself asks more than homiletics demands. The demand upon the hearer therefore to weigh, "take in" and analyze words separately asks more of him than he can give, finally leading to the feeling, "I'm not getting it any more, even though I know the words themselves are simple and straightforward."

A Problem With Voice Rhythm

By cadence or, if you wish, rhythm, we mean the emphasis of voice placed in regular pattern. Rhythm is basic to all speech. The problem with the preacher's voice delivery was not lack of rhythm but holding the same rhythm all the time, almost in an unvaried manner.

Solution. The approach I'd suggest is, 1) Try associating the central thought of each paragraph with a raised inflection of the voice. More specifically, attempt gradually to inflect the voice pitch toward the central point. Once that pattern is established in the hearer's ear, then, for further attention on his part, vary the cadence with a pause, right before the paragraph's main point. On occasion, even spell out with words, after the pause, that this is what you want the hearer to get by saying, "And here is the point!" or words to that effect. 2) Vary the cadence after several paragraphs (4 or 5) by slowing down. 3) Hold something back in vocal expression for the high points of the sermon. Why hold something in the voice in reserve? If you've used up the reserve by the time you come to the high points, they may come across as no different from subdivision matters or more minor things. Let greatest voice inflection come either in the main divisions or in the conclusion or both. 4) Increase speed of delivery as you are coming to something you're sure you want the hearer to remember.

Though I couldn't watch the delivery, it is appropriate to add this: Use gestures when you've exhausted resources for voice variation or in order to give further emphasis to points already being given vocal emphasis.

Advantages of vocal rhythm pleasing to the hearer's ear are: This appeals to the natural music of all hearers, whether they are gifted musicians or not. Again, pleasing rhythm in the preacher's voice helps get the preacher out of the way so the words can speak their intended meaning.

A Related Problem - Reading The Sermon

I suspect a preoccupation with each word lends itself to the feeling, "I cannot possibly preach this sermon without reading it. There are literally hundreds of words. Each must be in proper order. It's an overwhelming task!" Perhaps this is the most common reason why sermons are read rather than presented in free delivery. Here, I believe, if we sense the problem correctly there is a corresponding solution.

Let it be said, first of all, that individual words are important. We cannot do without them. Precision depends upon them as do phrases, concepts, paragraphs, and main points. Whole concepts even, can be developed from some weighty words such as "grace," "justification," "Jesus Christ," etc..

Yet the thought does not serve the words. Truth of a given word in a sermon flows out of it and onto and into the next word. Accumulative impact is not lost on the hearer. Words do not dawn on him--he knows the words already--but truth does! Here is where phrasing and thought formation are meaningful, the phrase being much easier to remember

than the word, the idea more easily retained than the phrase, etc. . . . And so, the hearer receives more when we make the words serve the thought.

Again, in delivery, emphasis can be given much easier to phrases and thoughts than to individual words. Why? There are thousands of words, many fewer phrases, and still fewer main points. Smooth, flowing preaching starts with this evaluation or one similar to it.

Solution. Memorizing the sermon is now reduced to something manageable. We're out from under the ton of words--psychologically a real and necessary lift! We're on the ground of thinking in terms of concepts first. As we rehearse the concepts and ideas, then also phrases start to come out of our memory, and many of the same words we wrote. No, not all the individual words will come, but we're not so interested in the words as in the truth they convey, truth which our hearer may remember in words other than our own anyway. He may remember the phrases of his Catechism, the thought of a hymn, or synonyms. Did our words thereby suffer violence? Not at all, for they suggested and prompted. They conveyed truth. The Holy Spirit was at work!

Is a read sermon always ineffective? Not necessarily. If the relationships between the words are expressed in a conversational way, if there is excellent non-verbal communication such as gestures and smiles, and if voice inflection is appropriate to thought meaning and generally done well, then a read sermon may be effective. However, these things are all too easily avoided without a free delivery, for writing tends to have its own brand of syntax, emphases, and general expression. Thus the sermon prepared for the eyes is not the same as the one prepared for the ear and the eye. The

preacher who consistently reads his sermons with some effective input into his audience is aware of this. At the same time he has generally developed some traits or characteristics, or pattern of the same, which takes his sermon out of the realm of the dry and dusty and monotonous. Most of us perhaps cannot afford to experiment with the luxury of searching for such a pattern in our style in order to return to reading the sermon.

But chiefly, with the sermon at hand, we seek an improvement with the style which comes across as a sermon that would be well done if it were intended only for the eye of a reader. And we believe that improvement can be made in the ways mentioned.

By way of conclusion, we summarize thoughts regarding the sermon at hand and then add a few thoughts, by way of postscript, more generally addressed to all present. In Summary: We find orthodox, confessional, Christian content in the sermon before us. It is a sermon that is uplifting to read. We feel the preacher can improve on delivery and have suggested some thoughts for doing so which we hope are concrete and helpful. We thank him for his efforts, and I personally thank him for getting the manuscript and tape to me well in advance of the conference for my own preparation.

It seems in order to add a thought or two by way of encouraging our younger pastors. On one occasion some years ago, I had the opportunity to hear four different preachers on four successive Sundays. It was just after my arrival home from Peru. I was truly hungry for some good dosages of the Gospel, having not had opportunity to hear sermons in Peru except thru the occasional tapes sent by brethren here. After three of those four services, I left church feeling as hungry as when

I went into church; why? It was not that the sermon was entirely devoid of any Gospel at all. Rather, it was that the Gospel was handed out so sparingly. After properly dividing and applying Law and Gospel in every way we must still allow the Gospel to have general predominance in our teaching. Hence, C.F.W. Walther winds up his set of theses with this thought: "The very finest form of confounding both (Law & Gospel) occurs when the Gospel is preached along with the Law, but is not the predominating element in the sermon."⁴ Walther adduces his proof from many scripture passages and scriptural examples. Speaking of the angel's announcement on the plains of Bethlehem, Walther adds: "This heavenly preacher gave us an illustration of how we are to preach. True, we have to preach the Law, only, however, as a preparation for the Gospel. The ultimate aim in our preaching of the Law must be to preach the Gospel."⁵

Such predominance of the Gospel may come in actual space in the written manuscript devoted to Gospel thoughts and application. However, it need not be that way either, because there are certain verbal and non-verbalized "handles" we may attach to the Gospel to permit the people to grasp it the more easily. By such "handles" I refer to verbalized expressions such as these "How comforting!" "How warm the Gospel is!" "How Beautiful the promise of our Savior!" "How wonderful it is to know that God has established peace between us and Him because of what Jesus did!" and similar interjections, expressions which get to the heart.

There are also handles to grasp which are not expressed with words. A negative example of this is the preacher we may have seen on TV or heard in a church who gets excited, inflects his voice, and gestures only when he gets around to the Law!

Or there is the preacher who shouts the Gospel in an angry voice; his grim look while doing so leaves us with downcast eyes. Here we have a wrong handle on things, the practical effect of which may be a co-mingling of Law and Gospel in the hearer's heart, though the words of the preacher's manuscript are all orthodox. The opposite or positive example is the preacher who places the Gospel in the expressive context of vocal pleasantness such as joy or invitation.

In J. C. Fritz's, The Preacher's Manual, we are given seven valuable principles for guidance in our great task of preaching: 1. "Preach the Word of God." No amount of preaching man's wisdom will place the precious souls of our people in heaven. 2. "Let love be your prompting motive." Think that if only our people remain in the faith thru the Means of Grace then, all their sorrows and burdens, their imperfections and weaknesses will all be gone. How wonderfully perfect they will be! How wonderful to be there with them. They are redeemed already. Now we must see to it that they keep the conviction that they are! But how sad should they lose this conviction. 3. "Let your presentation be vivid and picturesque." Bear in mind the sermons of Jesus, Peter, and Paul. Keep in mind a vivid and picturesque sermon you have personally heard, such as that presented by Pastor Al Wagner at our Synod Convention this year. 4. "Do your own mining and minting." Here is where sermon depth, clear distinctions, and Law-Gospel distinction all begin. 5. "Keep your own originality." Don't imagine you are someone else, even though you may do well if you gather ideas from them either on delivery or on content. 6. "Study the peculiar conditions of your time and the needs of your hearers." For example, surely today we must reckon with our hearer's economic pressures as did our forefathers in the 30's. 7. "Above all, let the purpose of your preaching

be the eternal salvation of souls." To that end, let Christ and His salvation shine forth in every sermon.⁶

References

1. Preacher's Manual. (Ch., History of Preaching); J. C. Fritz; 1941; CPH; p. 134.
2. A Compend of Luther's Theology, (Ch., The Preaching of The Church); H. T. Kerr, ed.; 1953; Westminster; p. 148. Quoted from Table-Talk, No. CCCVII.
3. Preacher's Manual; p. 136. Quoted from Works of St. Augustine, Clark, ed.
4. The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel; C.F.W. Walther; p. 406.
5. Op. cit., p. 404.
6. Preacher's Manual, p. 143. Originally from A. Lowentraut's Sieben Geheimnisse der Predigkunst, of 1899.

A Young Pastor's Concern Over Close Communion

A young pastor, a recent graduate of our seminary, writes of a disconcerting experience he recently had in seeking to carry out our synod's practice regarding close communion. He asks if the Quarterly might not carry an article on the subject offering some encouragement and practical suggestions especially for our young pastors.

We sympathize with the young man because we know from experience how agonizing such experiences can be. And while we are glad to put down in writing some thoughts on the subject we are at the same time constrained to say that we believe carrying out the practice of close communion will always be one of the most difficult and vexing duties in the ministry for faithful pastors.

We do not propose to discuss here the Scriptural basis as such for close communion, nor to attempt to set up and then seek to answer hypothetical questions of casuistry - nor do we believe this is what the young pastor had in mind in making his request. But we will attempt to offer a few practical suggestions regarding carrying out the procedures of close communion.

An orthodox Christian pastor must remember that the Lord's Supper is Gospel, a most special and comforting form of the Gospel at that, and therefore something to be celebrated with joy by both pastor and people. This does not mean he should discard the exercise of close communion. Far from it, for close communion is Scriptural. What it does mean is that the pastor must keep the blessing

and joy of the Lord's Supper before his eyes and let nothing detract from or spoil the celebration of it for his people and himself. If the pastor then has an unpleasant experience in the sacristy before the service in dealing with visitors to whom he has had to deny the Lord's Supper, his agony and distress over that fact should be left at the sacristy door when he enters the chancel for the service. We simply must not let difficulties encountered with close communion rob us of the joy of the Lord's Supper nor must we come to dread celebrating the Lord's Supper for fear we are going to give it to someone we shouldn't.

Our pastors also do well to remember that close communion may be a new experience for many of those outside our fellowship who seek to commune with us. Open communion has been practiced so freely and for so long, e.g., by the church bodies now constituted as the LCA and ALC, that many Lutherans innocently assume they are welcome to commune openly and freely at any Lutheran altar. If our pastors will put themselves in these people's shoes, so to speak, it will certainly help to deal sympathetically with them. One can only look for this situation to get worse in the decades to come as Lutheran-Reformed-Roman Catholic talks continue, and the practice of open communion extends also to these church members more generally.

There are different reasons for denying someone the privilege of communing with one's congregation. There is, for example, the person under excommunication, and therefore to be treated as an heathen man and a publican. The excommunication of an individual from another congregation, be it orthodox or heterodox, is likewise to be honored, unless there is valid reason to investigate it and the excommunication is found to be unjustified. Closely akin to this is the suspension of a member from

communion who is guilty of gross sin and offense until such time as the matter is taken care of in a proper manner. But a pastor should be able to deal with such cases in privacy during the week and have time to do it thoroughly, even though it may still be an unpleasant duty.

When it comes to the matter of Reformed people seeking to commune at our altars, a pastor will have to deal with it on the basis of Jesus' plain words of institution: "This is my body . . . this is my blood" and the Reformed Church's forthright rejection of the Real Presence. Here where there is no discerning of the Lord's body, a pastor in holy awe and fear as a faithful steward of the mysteries of God, will simply have to deny participation to someone who holds to such a denial of the Real Presence.

It may be that some Reformed people do believe in the Real Presence on the basis of Christ's words of institution in spite of Reformed doctrine, and it may also be true that some not holding to the Real Presence will accept it when it is explained to them, but this is well nigh impossible to determine or accomplish in a few minutes in the sacristy before the service.

When Lutherans from heterodox Lutheran churches present themselves for communion in our churches, it is generally assumed there is agreement concerning the doctrine of the Lord's Supper itself, but differences regarding the doctrines regarding Holy Scripture, church fellowship, etc. The doctrine of church fellowship comes into consideration here, for there is a horizontal as well as a vertical aspect of participation in the Lord's Supper. That is, partaking of the Lord's Supper involves the communicant not only in a relationship with God, but also with the others communing.

By participation in the Lord's Supper one is confessing a common faith with the others communing at the same altar.

Honesty requires that there actually be such a common confession of faith. When this fact is brought out, some visitors may not want to commune at our altars for the obvious reason they do not want to be along in a joint confession of what we stand for. Perhaps most vexing, in this connection, is the case of a conservative Lutheran, who still holds membership in his old church which has become increasingly liberal. Privately and informally he may stand with us confessionally, but one has to consider his formal church membership too, and the danger of giving offense to others by his participation at the Lord's Table with us.

We would plead for this that our pastors do not simply lump all would-be communion participants from outside our fellowship into one category and give one stock answer to all, namely, only members of our own church or sister churches can commune with us. That does not do justice to our position. Nor is it fair to the people in question. We owe these would-be guests an explanation of what we confess by our church membership, and by our joint participation at the Lord's Table.

We would also urge our pastors to seek to anticipate problems in this area and to head them off as much as possible in order to eliminate as much hard feelings as one can by a confrontation just before the service. An alert, well-instructed ushering staff can be of big help. A well-worded paragraph in the church bulletin, placed in a prominent place, perhaps even on the Sunday before, as well as on communion Sunday itself, can do much good. We were especially impressed with the following example found in the Bulletin in Parkland

Lutheran Church, Rev. Hugo J. Handberg, pastor,
which we are quoting here with his permission:

All communicants today are those who have notified the pastor of their intentions to commune prior to today's service. If you desire to commune with us, please speak to the pastor about it before our next communion service. Thank you.

If one can talk about it during the week in the quiet of a home or office, one has a much better chance of dealing properly and peacefully with the matter.

What about guests who come to the altar rail itself during the distribution without first receiving permission? Except for those few cases where someone who has been specifically told beforehand not to come, but comes anyway, I do not think anyone should be passed by at the altar in the distribution of the elements. When you as a pastor have done what you can to permit only worthy guests to commune, that really is out of your hands.

Here is where the exhortation found in the so-called "Bugenhagen" order of service is of special importance and comfort to the pastor because it sets forth for the communicants just before communing what they should believe and do, stressing the Real Presence, repentance and faith, and a desire to lead a godly life. Here it is:

Dear Friends in Christ! In order that you may receive this holy Sacrament worthily it becomes you diligently to consider what you must now believe and do. From the words of Christ: "This is my Body, which is given for you"; "This is my Blood, which is shed for you for the remission of sins"; you

should believe that Jesus Christ is Himself present with His Body and Blood, as the words declare. From Christ's words, "For the remission of sins," you should, in the next place, believe that Jesus Christ bestows upon you His Body and Blood to confirm unto you the remission of all your sins. And, finally, you should do as Christ commands you when He says: "Take, eat"; "Drink ye all of it"; and, "This do in remembrance of me." If you believe these words of Christ, and do as He therein has commanded, then have you rightly examined yourselves and may worthily eat Christ's Body and drink His Blood for the remission of your sins. You should, also, unite in giving thanks to Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for so great a gift, and should love one another with pure heart, and thus, with the whole Christian Church, have comfort and joy in Christ our Lord. To this end may God the Father grant you His grace; through the same, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

We do not favor lifting part of one liturgy and putting it into another, but here is one instance where we feel if a pastor using the Common Order could find a place for the Exhortation, it would be justified.

Then if someone "from the outside" comes unannounced to the Lord's Table, the pastor can at least have this comfort that he has told him what he should believe and do, and if he does eat and drink unworthily, it at least is not the pastor's fault, for he did speak a word of warning beforehand.

So let a pastor ask God for wisdom and tact in dealing with these often difficult situations, and then let him apply the principles as best he

can with a good conscience, in the fear of God,
and then go forth to celebrate the Lord's Supper
with great joy!

Transcribed from a handwritten paper by

-- Theodore A. Aaberg

We remind our readers of the Reformation lectures which will be delivered at the Bethany gymnasium on October 28-29. The lecturer will be Dr. Raymond Surburg of Fort Wayne, Indiana and his topic will be: "Luther and the Christology of the Old Testament." The reactors will be Professor John Brug of DMLC, New Ulm, Minnesota and Professor Rudolph Honsey of Bethany. We hope to see many of you there.