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Foreword

In this Christmastide we are filled with awe and wonder beholding the mystery of the holy incarnation. God's Son became a man so that we could live with Him forever in heaven's fair home. He became poor and lowly to raise us to His divine glory, eternal life in Heaven. The first two articles in this *Quarterly* are a study of this great mystery. The second article is an essay entitled, *The Incarnation in Luther's Hymns*, which was presented at the 1997 ELS General Pastoral Conference. The author is the Rev. Paul Madson who is pastor of East Paint Creek Lutheran Church in Waterville, Iowa, and West Paint Creek Lutheran Church in Waukon, Iowa.

The three predominant fathers of the Norwegian Synod were Herman Amberg Preus, Jakob Aall Ottesen, and Ulrik Vilhelm Koren. Ottesen served in Manitowoc and Koshkonong, Wisconsin, and Decorah, Iowa. He was known as a man with a true pastor's heart. Included in this volume is a sermon for the Third Sunday after Epiphany written by Ottesen. This sermon was translated by the Rev. Herbert Larson of Cape Girardeau, Missouri. Pastor Larson has translated a considerable amount of material from these fathers.

In this *Quarterly* there are several book reviews, as well as one exegetical note on I Corinthians 13:10, by Professor John Moldstad, Jr. Professor Adolph Harstad provides a study of the word *Yahweh*, the Old Testament name for the Lord. In addition, he gives an update on the organization LIBRA, and information concerning the Tel Yafo excavations.

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Our Incarnational Theology

by *Gaylin Schmeling*

The Lord God in His blazing holiness and awesome wonder fills sinful man with horror. Before Him none may even dare to stand. The "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not" of the Law must fill everyone of us with dread and terror. When Adam and Eve heard the sound of the Lord God in the garden they were filled with fear and tried to hide themselves among the trees of the garden. Moses on Mt. Sinai had to hide himself in a crevasse of a rock while the beneficent glory of the Lord passed, and only then did he have a glimpse of the Lord's hind parts, but God's face he could not see lest he be consumed. (Exodus 33:12-33) In the Law, God hides Himself behind the fire, smoke, thunder, and lightning of Mt. Sinai so that sinful man does not dare to approach. We know that we have broken every commandment in the book and deserve nothing but punishment. There can be only dread and terror of the *deus absconditus*.

But in the miracle of the incarnation, the mystery of God made flesh (John 1:14), Jesus took our form to show us His love. The Almighty God who sits enthroned between the cherubim (Psalm 99:1), who rides the thunder clouds of heaven, became flesh, our human brother, so that we could behold His loving countenance. We can know God and His love only by beholding the Christ-Child, as Luther wrote, "I know of no God or Son of God but the one of whom the Christian Creed tells. If He is not man born of Mary, I will have none of Him." (WA 30:154) "Hence a Christian is to know no other seeking and finding of God than in the bosom of the Virgin and

on the cross, or as Christ reveals Himself in the Word.” (WA 28:136) To meet God outside of the flesh will utterly destroy us, but in the manger and at the cross He is made known to us. Thus St. Paul writes, “I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” (I Corinthians 2:2; LW 31:53) The *deus incarnatus* is the *deus revelatus*. This is the great miracle of Christmas, incarnational theology.

Jesus became poor and lowly to raise us to His divine glory, eternal life in heaven. (II Corinthians 8:9) In the incarnation Christ took upon Himself our dying flesh so that, through unity with His divinity, He might conquer sin, death, and all our foes in that flesh and make us partakers in his divine nature as the sons of God with an eternal existence. (Galatians 4:5; II Peter 1:4) All that the first Adam lost in the fall, the second Adam, Jesus Christ, restored for us in Himself - paradise regained and more divine life in heaven. (Romans 5:19) He partook in our suffering, death, and hell so that we may partake in His glory, life, and heaven - a wonderful exchange. (*Der fröhliche Wechsel*) Luther can even say, “Through faith we become gods and partake in the divine nature and name.” (*Ja, durch den Glauben werden wir Götter, und theilhaftig göttlicher Natur und Namen.* [Erlangen 11:54]) Here Luther seemingly alludes to the *theosis* theme of the Ancient Church. This is the great purpose of the Incarnation - He took our flesh so that we might share in His divine life.

The miracle of the incarnation, however, does not end here; it has continual significance for the Christian in the here and now. The all-powerful Word, who on the first Christmas came from heaven and became flesh in the Virgin Mary’s womb, is now incarnate for us in Holy Word and Blessed Sacraments. Whenever the Word is proclaimed and the Sacraments administered, the miracle of

the incarnation, God with us, is present for us.

In Baptism He comes to us personally, causing us to participate in the divine. Christ was born of woman so that we could be reborn as the sons of God through water and the Spirit. (John 3:5, Titus 3:5) We were brought into fellowship and communion with the Triune God by being incorporated into the body of Christ. (Matthew 28:19) Here faith in the Savior was worked in our hearts, and in Christ we are the sons of God (Galatians 3:26-27) who are partakers in the divine, prepared to live in the new heaven and the new earth. This baptismal life and union with Christ, which is daily renewed through true repentance and faith and nourished through the Word and the blessed Supper, will reach its full consummation in the resurrection of the body on the last day.

The All-powerful Word, which once leaped from heaven and lay in swaddling clothes in a manger so that the shepherds could approach, is present for us in the swaddling clothes (LW 52:171) and manger of His Word, the Scripture. Here He is present with His comfort, counsel, and aid. (Psalm 19:8-10; Psalm 119:92) As we read, study and meditate on the Word, He is present for us just as certainly as He was for the shepherds.

The Word, who became flesh, is now present with that flesh in a most special way in the Holy Supper. Here the altar becomes His manger (LS 155) and we receive His flesh permeated with divinity which transforms us into Itself and prepares us for eternity. (LW 37:101) As a result of the communication of attributes in the person of Christ (*Genus Maiestaticum*) Christ's flesh is life-giving (TNC 474) or, as Luther says, is filled with God or permeated with divinity. (. . . *sondern es ist ein Leib und Blut, der voll Gottes ist, oder das durchgöttert ist.* [St. L. VII, 2353; LW 23:143]) Because Christ's body and blood are permeated with divinity, they are certainly life-giving

as they are received in the Blessed Sacrament. Our Lord says, "Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me and I in him . . . so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me." (John 6:54-57) While this passage does not specifically refer to the Lord's Supper, its promise certainly applies to all places where He is present for us with His blessings and, therefore, applies to worthy participation in His body and blood in the Holy Sacrament. Thus, there is no end to the benefits which the Lutheran fathers ascribe to this vivifying flesh and blood. It is a heavenly and spiritual nourishment for both the body and soul of the believers unto eternal life. (LS 61) It is "a medicine of immortality, an antidote, that we may not die but live in God through Jesus Christ, a cleansing remedy through warding off and driving out evils." (Ex. 2, 234) With such an incarnational doctrine of the Supper, Chemnitz, at times, alludes to II Peter 1:4 and I Corinthians 10:16, expressing the benefits of the Supper as a partaking in the divine nature. Participation in Christ's body and blood in the Supper results in communion and union with the deity itself.

Therefore, in order that we might be able to lay hold on Christ more intimately and retain Him more firmly, not only did He Himself assume our nature but He also restored it again for us by distributing His body and blood to us in the Supper, so that by this connection with His humanity, which has been assumed from us and is again communicated back to us, He might draw us into communion and union with the deity itself. (LS 188; see

also LS 143; TNC 55)

The Hymnist says "Come from on high to me, I cannot rise to thee." Yes, we cannot rise to you, O Christ-Child, but thanks be to God that at the fullness of time upon a midnight clear the Word became flesh, born of Mary, to save a world that was doomed. And even more, He is present for you and me today, in the means of grace, the true gift of Christmas, so that we may live with him forever in heaven's fair home.

Ah, dearest Jesus, Holy Child, make thee a bed, soft, undefiled, within my heart, that it may be a quiet chamber kept for thee.

Abbreviations

Luther's Works:

- LW - American Edition
- St. L. - St. Louis Edition
- WA - Weimar Edition

Writings of Chemnitz:

- MWS - Ministry, Word, and Sacrament
- TNC - Two Natures in Christ
- Ex - Examination of the Council of Trent
- LS - Lord's Supper

The Incarnation in Luther's Hymns

by *Paul G. Madson*

Introduction

1. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (Jn. 1: 1&14) In these divinely inspired words of St. John is revealed the profoundest truth in all of Holy Writ. Dr. Martin Luther, in his treatise on Mary's Magnificat, calls this "the very greatest of all God's works—the Incarnation of the Son of God." If anyone should question that statement, let him consider whether there can be anything more incomprehensible to the human mind than that the infinite God should become finite man. Let him also consider whether any act of God holds greater significance for that which is man's greatest need - forgiveness of sin and eternal salvation.

2. There are some who regard the doctrine concerning the person of Christ as being of slight importance. "What difference does it make that this is the Son of God incarnate," they say. "The chief thing is to believe in Christ." But how can I truly believe in Christ if I do not know who He is, since His person (who He is) is inseparably connected with His atoning work. We cannot retain the Scriptural doctrine of atonement if the Scriptural doctrine concerning the person of Christ be abandoned. Scripture itself attaches the greatest importance to the person of Christ, both as to His deity and to His humanity. We are

told that there is no salvation in any other than Christ, the incarnate Son of God, that there is no other name under heaven, given among men, by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12); that blessed are they who believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matt. 16: 13-17); and that only he who confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God. (I Jn.4: 2&3)

3. The phrase “in the flesh” is so important. In the Church’s effort to maintain the deity of Christ on the one hand, it may unintentionally withhold due attention to His humanity. This is perhaps explained by the fact that most false teaching regarding Christ’s person is denial of His deity, and we feel less need to defend or emphasize His humanity. But we dare not forget that by His birth Jesus became man in the full sense of the word. He took part in the very flesh and blood of the children of men. (Heb. 2: 14) St. Paul states that it was “according to the flesh Christ came.” (Rom. 9: 5) And, as we have heard, John says (1: 14): “The word was made flesh.” This Jesus was a flesh and blood person. His name was entered upon the official records of the Roman Empire as a member of the human family. He had a real body and soul and a human will, as the Scriptures abundantly testify. He was subject to the laws of humans living on earth. He ate, drank, slept, grew weary and, yes, he died - he died a real death.

4. Far from shying away from speaking of Christ’s human nature, we cannot identify Him too closely with our humanity. Only in one respect does He differ from His brethren: He was without sin. Not only that, He was impeccable, i.e., incapable of sinning. This is because He was more than a man; He united in His one person a divine nature with His human nature. And we cannot ascribe the possibility of sinning to divinity. Sin is a matter

of the person, and the divine nature is together with the human nature in the one person of Christ.

5. But we digress. Our aim in this paper is to show the importance of the incarnation in Luther's theology, particularly with reference to his hymns. We can get a taste of Luther's view of the incarnation from a discussion he had with Oecolampadius and Zwingli at the Marburg Colloquy. Oecolampadius had said that we ought not to adhere to the humanity of Christ so closely but be lifted up to His divinity, to which Luther replied: "I know of no God except Him who became man. Therefore, I also desire to have no other God.¹ The significance of the incarnation could not be put any more simply or strongly than that. There is no other God - no true God other than He who became man. Knowing what Luther believed about this, it is unavoidable that he should give expression to it somehow, somewhere in the songs he taught the people to sing. This does not mean that some reference to the incarnation appears in every hymn he wrote, but it appears in a number of them and several even center around it. As for the rest of his hymns, though there be no reference to the incarnation, it is there by implication.

Luther's Hymns

6. Hymn writing was not on Luther's mind at the beginning of his reformation labors. The days immediately following the nailing of the Ninety-Five Theses were too turbulent for the spirit of poetry. He first concentrated on translating the New Testament and getting that into the hands of the people (first distributed in September, 1522). His poetic soul was stirred in the following year to write his first hymn. It was on the occasion of the burning of two young Augustinian monks in Brussels. The original

title of the hymn was, "A New Song of the Two Martyrs for Christ, Burnt at Brussels by the Sophists of Louvain." It later was known by its opening line, "By Help of God I Fain Would Tell." There is no direct reference to the incarnation in this hymn as in others. Yet, knowing the core theology of Luther, we know that the incarnation is implied in his thinking when he speaks of a person being justified. Thus it is that we understand stanza six of this hymn:

Thus by the power of grace they were
 True priests of God's own making,
 Who offered up themselves e'en there,
 Christ's holy orders taking;
 Dead to the world, they cast aside
 Hypocrisy's sour leaven,
 That penitent and justified
 They might go clear to heaven,
 And leave all monkish follies.

7. The next hymn that Luther was to write was a versification of a favorite Psalm of his, the *De Profundis*, Psalm 130. "Out of the Depths I Cry to Thee" is one of his most powerful hymns. Yet here again there is no direct reference to the incarnation. However, we cannot deny that there is at least a veiled reference to this when in the fifth stanza it speaks of "Our kind and faithful Shepherd, He/ Who shall at last set Israel free/ From all their sin and sorrow." The Shepherd who sets Israel free is none other than the Shepherd who gave His life for the sheep, and this could not have happened without the incarnation.

8. A note of interest: It is said of this hymn that it was sung so diligently in the homes of the people that, according to tradition, even a green-finch (parakeet?)

learned the melody. The story goes that during the Thirty Years War the bird's mistress had to flee her home, and she hid the bird in its cage under an old bench in a secluded place in the house. When she returned a few days later, the bird greeted her by singing "Out of the depths I cry to thee." As the story goes, the bird was promptly lifted from its humiliation and given a good meal.

9. In a more serious vein, the hymn reportedly was sung at the funeral of Elector Frederick the Wise (1525), and by the weeping multitude in Halle when on Feb. 20, 1546, Luther's body was taken to its last resting place in the Castle Church in Wittenberg.

10. The first mission hymn in Protestantism is Luther's great hymn, "May God Unto Us Gracious Be," or, as we know it, "May God Bestow on Us His Grace." It is a versification of Psalm 67, which begins, "God be merciful to us and bless us, And cause His face to shine upon us. That Your way may be known on earth, Your salvation among all nations." The thrust of the hymn is made plain in the first stanza: "And also to the heathen show Christ's riches without measure/ And unto God convert them."² When the author of the Psalm glanced out upon the broad fields of nations ripe unto harvest he was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write Psalm 67, in which the prayer ascends that God may give His Word free course and grant it an abundant return. Luther, in turn, was inspired by the Psalm to write this hymn. Again, the incarnation is by implication. We cannot begin to think of God's grace without knowing of the mercy He has shown unto us through His incarnate Son. This hymn was one which was sung by Gustavus Adolphus and his men before the battle of Luetzen in 1632.³

11. Luther found inspiration for another hymn in Psalm 124: "If it had not been the Lord who was on our side... Then the proud waters had gone over our soul... Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler: the snare is broken and we are escaped." This formed the basis for that moving Reformation hymn, "Had God Not Come, May Israel Say." If one is looking for mention of Christ's incarnation in the hymn, he will not find it. However, the God of Israel, the God whom David worshipped and to the worship of whom he gave expression in this Psalm is the God who would send His Son "to be made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Gal. 4: 4-5) And now, for that Augustinian monk who, like St. Paul, had slaved and struggled for righteousness under God's law only to find that he became more ensnared by it, it was most liberating and exhilarating to discover that God's Son has become "the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth." (Rom. 10: 4) No wonder, then, that he should exult over this new found freedom in Christ and burst into song:

The snare is broken - we are free!
 The Lord our helper praised be,
 The God of earth and heaven. (stanza 3)

This hymn continued to grow in popularity after Luther's death. One of several incidents that are reported in connection with its use is that of Elector John Frederick of Saxony when he had been imprisoned by Emperor Charles V. After being incarcerated for several years, and having been spared the death sentence, the Elector was finally released. Upon his release, we are told, he sang with grateful heart this beautiful hymn.

12. A hymn of the Reformer which has been virtually unknown is “Happy the Man Who Feareth God,” which could well be placed in the “Home and Family” sections of our hymnals. It is a description of a pious household, and was often sung at weddings. Based on Psalm 128 it points to God’s blessing upon the man who values his redemption and is constrained to walk in the way of the Lord. The fourth stanza of this five stanza hymn sings of the blessings that flow from Christ, the chief Cornerstone of His Church, into every receptive heart and home:

Out of Mt. Zion God shall send,
And crown with joy thy latter end;
That thou Jerusalem mayst see,
In favor and prosperity.

13. We don’t need any introduction to this next one. All we need to do is mention Psalm 46, or “The Battle Hymn of the Reformation” (Alas, this might still not ring a bell with many Lutherans). If you said, “Our God He is a Castle Strong,” that would be acceptable. This mighty victory song is based on the victory which the incarnate Christ, the Valiant One whom God has elected, has won for us:

Ask ye, who is this?
Jesus Christ it is,
Of Sabaoth Lord,
And there’s none other God;
He holds the field forever.

14. This hymn more than any other epitomizes Luther’s thought and personal experience. The debate as to the year when these verses were written has never been settled. It would not be illogical to place it at the Diet of Worms

(1521). Others think it was as late as the Diet of Augsburg (1530). It is doubtful that it lay around on his desk for a number of years before it was published. That would not be in keeping with his general practice. As someone has observed: He wrote hymns not as a means of self-expression, but to serve his fellow men. His chief aim was to get it out to the people.

15. Assuming that the date when it was published was 1530, the historian D'Aubigne writes: "Luther, full of faith, revived the courage of his friends by composing, and singing with his fine voice, that beautiful hymn, since become so famous, 'Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott.' Never did soul that knew its own weakness, and yet, looking to God and despising every fear, find such noble accents. The hymn was sung during the Diet, not only in Augsburg, but in all the churches of Saxony; and its energetic strains often revived and inspired the most dejected heart." When Elector John Frederick sent Luther to the fortress of Coburg during the Diet at Augsburg he related to Dr. Selnecker that Luther sang the 46th Psalm daily. The number of anecdotes surrounding the history of this hymn would fill volumes.

16. "Look Down, O Lord, From Heaven Behold" is said to have greatly furthered the cause of the Reformation. The strong and passionate temper of the Reformer comes through in its verses. It carries an earnest plea against false teachers and hypocrites in the Church, picturing their cunning and deceptive ways, and their scorn for the truth. Not all translations of this hymn are as true to the original as is that of the Lutheran Hymnary and the Lutheran Hymnal. One notable instance is in stanza four where the line, "My saving Word for them shall fight," is a closer translation of the original than is to be found in other versions

of the hymn. We see in this line a reference to the incarnate Word. Also, reference to the cross in the fifth stanza implies a belief in the incarnate Savior. At one time papal authorities in Brunswick tried to weed out the "Lutheran heresy." Preaching on the parable of the Unmerciful Servant, the papal spokesman declared that salvation is by good works. At the close of the sermon a citizen began to sing this hymn, and the whole congregation joined in the singing, thereby causing the priest to leave the pulpit in frustration, never to return.

17. The next title is not in our hymnbooks: "The Mouth of Fools Doth God Confess." Poetically this hymn is not considered to be equal to Luther's other efforts. It describes the scene that God beholds as He looks down upon mankind walking in its own sinful ways. In the sixth and final verse it teaches that through the Son divine mercy follows spiritual Israel and brings rejoicing to Jacob. "God will Himself at length show grace ... That will He do by Christ their King." It concludes, "Let Jacob then be glad and sing/ And Israel be joyful."

18. "Though in Midst of Life We Be" (Hymnary), "In the Midst of Earthly Life" (Hymnal), is Luther's version of *Media vita*, an ancient Latin hymn. The origin of the first stanza may go back as far as the fifth century. Luther translated it into German and then added two more stanzas. The early stanza had come into general use as a hymn of prayer and supplication in times of trouble. In the two stanzas which he added Luther expresses sorrow for the sins which stirred God's wrath, and he prays for deliverance from the depths of death which follow the eternal judgment. Then in the third stanza the worshiper is directed to the incarnate Son for help:

Where shall we for succor flee,
 Who, oh, who will hide us?
 Thou only, blessed Savior.
 Thy precious blood was shed to win
 Peace and pardon for our sin.

Each verse ends with a *Kyrie eleison*. These stanzas held a prominent place among German hymns for the dying and have comforted many in their last conflict.

19. Another Luther hymn that could be found in the German funeral hymns of that day was "In Peace and Joy I Now Depart." Believed to have been written at the time of the Diet of Worms, its words convey a strong spirit of faith which soothed the Reformer at the thought of death threatening him in Worms. Death for the redeemed, he sang, "is but a slumber." The reason he could be so confident he attributes to the One whom God has sent to secure eternal life for all believers: "'Tis Christ that wrought this work for me/ The faithful Savior." (v.2) In his later days, whenever speaking of death as a sleep, Luther is said to have repeatedly quoted this hymn instead of its corresponding passage in Scripture. (I Cor. 15: 20; I Thess. 4: 14)

20. There is a Pentecost hymn dating back to the tenth or eleventh century which Luther used as the text for his version of the same: "Come, God Creator, Holy Ghost" ("Come, Holy Ghost, Creator blest"). It pleads that God the Creator, who moved upon the face of the deep at creation, might come to bestow the gifts of His grace in recreating fallen man by water and the Word. The final stanza, a doxology, praises the Father, "and the Son Who from the dead is risen again." (as the original has it in German) That is the Son who became flesh that He might suffer

and die for us, but who rose again and whose life the Spirit also bestows upon believers.

21. A better known hymn on the Holy Spirit from the Reformer's pen is *Nun Bitten Wir den Heiligen Geist* ("Now pray we the Holy Ghost"). This we know from our hymnbooks as "We Now Implore God the Holy Ghost," or "O Holy Ghost, to Thee We Pray." The Hymnary uses it as a hymn for opening the divine service. The first stanza was written some time during the 12th century and introduced into Germany by the Franciscan monk and famous preacher, Berthold.⁵ Luther made use of it and added three more stanzas. It is a prayer to the Holy Ghost for His coming with the grace of light, love and comfort from God. The second stanza highlights Jesus Christ as the true and only Savior. Luther intended his version to be a post-Communion hymn. Because it was common to hear martyrs and even criminals singing this on their way to execution, it became known as "the hymn of poor sinners."⁶

22. Still another fine hymn for Pentecost is Luther's *Komm, Heiliger Geist, Herre Gott* ("Come, Holy Spirit, God and Lord"). The first stanza is an antiphon from around the tenth century, translated from the Latin. Luther added two stanzas of his own. Concerning his work with the hymn he remarked that the Holy Spirit inspired it, both as to its words and melody. The one stanza which had been sung prior to the Reformation spoke of the Holy Spirit as the one who gathers from all the nations people who become one in faith. Luther builds on that and emphasizes the importance of true teaching: "Teach us to know our God aright/ And call Him Father from the heart." Then it continues:

From error, Lord, our souls defend,
 That they on Christ alone attend;
 In Him with living faith confide,
 And in unfaltering trust abide.

The light of the Holy Ghost is seen and known through the Word, and the prayer is that He will teach people to seek their salvation through Christ alone. The character of the hymn would seem to indicate that it originated during the time of the Diet of Worms.

23. Arguably the finest hymn that Luther wrote is *Nun Freut Euch* ("Dear Christians, One and All Rejoice"). When it first appeared in a collection of hymns it bore this title: "A Christian Hymn, by Dr. Martin Luther, Touching the Unspeakable Grace of God, and True Faith." Here the Reformer tells how Christ has freed him from the anxiety caused by his slavish efforts to save himself by the works of the Law. The hymn consists of ten doctrine-packed stanzas, with balanced Law and Gospel, in which the incarnation plays a central role.⁷ The salvation which Luther sought, a concern which every Christian shares, is answered by a merciful God in sending His beloved Son to

...bring to man salvation;
 From sin and sorrow set him free,
 Slay bitter death for him that he
 May live with Thee forever.

Thus spake the Father to His Son and the Son obeyed Him willingly. He "was born of virgin mother" and "came to be my Brother." Yes, "A servant's form, like mine, He bore/ To lead the devil captive." Without the incarnation, no salvation -- so Luther would teach. Unlike many

of his other hymns, Luther did not designate any special aim regarding the use of this hymn in the service. There is not an occasion in the church when its use could not bring blessing.

24. "God the Father with Us Stay" is a three stanza litany to the Trinity. It originally was a medieval litany, which Luther then revised. He eliminated invocations to Mary, the angels and saints. This revision produced a hymn that became immediately popular. There is no direct reference to the incarnation, but the prayer "Jesus Christ, be Thou our Stay" could not be made without that as its basis.

25. Dr. Luther is also the author of a hymn on the Nicene Creed: "We All Believe in One True God." Here we have a clear and direct use of the incarnation, when in the second stanza faith is confessed in Jesus Christ who dwells with God from eternity (*Der ewig bei dem Vater ist*). This Christ was "Born of Mary, virgin mother/ By the power of the Spirit/ Made true man, our elder Brother/ That the lost might life inherit/ Was crucified for sinful men/ And raised by God to life again." (Hymnal #251)

26. In Reformation times this hymn was used in various ways, one of which was to have the liturgist recite the first Article of the Creed, after which the congregation sang the hymn. Luther included this among his funeral hymns. Normally in services it was sung after the sermon, but at funerals it was usually used before the sermon. It was so used, for instance, at the funeral of Frederick the Wise.⁹

27. It is in Luther's Christmas hymns that we would naturally expect to hear of the incarnate Christ, and here he does not fail us. The first of these we mention is not a

“Luther original” but a translation by him from the Latin to German, a hymn by St. Ambrose. We have it in English as “Savior of the Nations, Come.” It tells of the incarnate Son, who left His royal throne to be born of a virgin for accomplishing redemption. No mention is made of His death on the cross, but that He descended into hell and then ascended again to God’s high throne.

28. Another Christmas hymn which Luther translated from the Latin is “Now Praise We Christ, the Holy One.” It tells of Jesus’ humiliation for the sake of man’s redemption and that, by the grace of God, the virgin becomes His mother. It pictures how He who “feeds the ravens when they call” must now Himself be fed. The Lutheran Hymnal omits one stanza from the hymn that Luther used:

The holy maid became th’ abode
And temple of the living God;
And she, who knew not man, was blest
With God’s own Word made manifest.

29. As well known as any of Luther’s compositions is the soul-stirring Christmas hymn, “From Heaven Above to Earth I come.” We might call it an “anthem to the Incarnation.” All the stanzas except for the first are Luther’s original. They announce the birth of the Virgin’s Son who is Christ the Savior. He brings salvation and points out the marks by which He shall be known. People and shepherds are invited to come and behold the child Jesus. A grateful welcome is offered to Him as they contemplate the profound meaning of all of this. This Child is offered the sanctuary of a devout heart in what has become one of the most quoted stanzas:

Ah, dearest Jesus, Holy Child,

Make Thee a bed, soft, undefiled,
 Within my heart, that it may be,
 A quiet chamber kept for Thee.
 (Hymnal #85)

The final two stanzas adore and praise the incarnate Son and the Father who gave Him to us, and through whom a new era is ushered in.¹⁰

30. A favorite Luther hymn which most strongly states the significance of the Incarnation for the redemption of the world is "To Shepherds as They Watched by Night." One hymnologist observes: "The manly spirit of *Ein Feste Burg* lives in it."¹¹ This hymn does not appear in the Hymnary but, happily, has been retained in the Hymnal. How more clearly can the effect of the incarnation be stated than in the words of the two middle stanzas:

Oh, then rejoice that thro' His Son
 God is with sinners now at one;
 Made like yourselves of flesh and blood,
 Your brother is the eternal God.

What harm can sin and death then do?
 The true God now abides with you.
 Let hell and Satan rage and chafe,
 Christ is your Brother- ye are safe.
 (Hymnal #103)

It was somewhat of a surprise to find that the line, "Your brother is th' eternal God," in Luther's original was *Eur Bruder ist das ewig Gut* ("Your brother is the eternal Good"). "Eternal God" or "eternal good"- both are, of course, equally acceptable and true, and the good doctor would doubtless have approved the use of either expres-

sion. While "From heaven above" was regarded as the proper hymn for public worship, and "To shepherds" was used more for private occasions, in time this shorter hymn was repeatedly substituted for the other.

31. An Advent/ Christmas/ Epiphany hymn which Luther amplified and introduced was an old Latin hymn, which in the German translation was entitled, *Gelobet Seist Du, Jesu, Christ* ("All Praise, Lord Jesus Christ to Thee, Who Condescendest Man to Be"). It appears in an abbreviated version in the Hymnal (#80). In the Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary it is #136, with seven stanzas. The first stanza was pre-Reformation, which Luther translated from the Latin and to which he added six of his own. This hymn depicts the Christian kneeling before the Holy Child lying in a manger in His mother's arms. Here is God's wonderful Light, banishing the shades of darkness from a dreary world: "The midnight brings th' eternal Light/ A newborn glory gilds the night."¹¹

32. There is an Epiphany hymn which is attributed by some to Luther, though in the Hymnal Sedulius is credited with it: "The Star Proclaims the King is Here." Luther's hymn, "Why, Herod, Unrelenting Foe," was based on Sedulius's longer Latin hymn. Even though its composition is not considered Luther's best, it nevertheless reflects his constant awareness of the incarnation, as he sings "All honor unto Christ be paid/ Pure offspring of the holy maid."

33. A hymn that was used for both Advent and Christmas is "Savior of the Nations, Come." The original hymn is that of St. Ambrose, which was later freely reproduced by Luther into German. It is an invitation to the Savior of

the nations, known as the promised Virgin's Son, to come to this world as promised. And how was He to come? Witness the incarnation:

Not by human flesh and blood,
By the Spirit of our God,
Was the Word of God made flesh
Woman's Offspring, pure and fresh.

34. For one who stressed the teaching of spiritual truths to children as well as to adults, and therefore also produced the Catechism, it is not surprising that he should then have written Catechism hymns. One of these is his poetical treatment of the Ten Commandments, which begins: "That Man a Godly Life Might Live." Would a hymn on the Ten Commandments have room for the incarnation? Perhaps not directly, but Luther found room for it indirectly, at least. After his exposition of all the commandments in verse, he adds this final stanza:

Help us, Lord Jesus Christ, for we
A Mediator have in Thee.
Our works cannot salvation gain;
They merit but endless pain.
Have mercy, Lord!
(Hymnal #287)

The "Mediator" is the God-Man, the incarnate Son, the "mediator of a better covenant." (Heb. 8:6)

35. Since the Reformer wrote another hymn based on the Commandments, this one was distinguished in the old hymn books as the "long" hymn. The other one, known as the "short" hymn, is "Wilt thou, O man, live happily." Even in this shorter version the hymn ends with a plea

that Christ the Mediator would aid us. As in the long hymn, here also the stanzas end with *Kyrie Eleison!* acknowledging that the will of God in each commandment has been broken, and that the penitent worshiper pleads for pardon.¹²

36. In hymn writing, did Luther forget about Baptism? Hardly. He would sooner forget his own name. There is an eight stanza (nine lines each) hymn ascribed to him and entitled: "To Jordan Came Our Lord the Christ." In the very first stanza it is stated that "our Lord the Christ" came "to do God's pleasure willingly." He came "To wash away transgression/ And quench the bitterness of death/ By His own blood and passion." Further reference to the incarnation is seen in the seventh stanza:

The eye of sense alone is dim,
 And nothing sees but water;
 Faith sees Christ Jesus, and in Him
 The lamb ordained for slaughter;
 It sees the cleansing fountain red
 With the dear blood of Jesus,
 Which from the sins inherited
 From fallen Adam frees us,
 And from our own misdoings.

Though this hymn does not appear in either the Hymnary or Hymnal, it has been incorporated in the Lutheran Book of Worship which, we might add, is to its credit. And now, most recently, it is to be found in the ELH, #247. As one reviewer has written of this hymn: "A casual reading is not sufficient to reveal it as a pearl of great price."

37. How about a Communion hymn? Is one to be found under Luther's authorship? Indeed, not one, but two. The

first of these is “Christ, Who Freed Our Souls From Danger.” A Latin hymn by John Hus afforded the theme and inspiration for Luther to write his own hymn on the subject. “Whereas the hymn of the Bohemian Reformer contained a dogmatic explanation of the elements of the Lord’s Supper, Luther’s hymn offers knowledge concerning its significance and use, and therefore affords the individual an important preparation for a worthy reception.” (J.P.Lambert) It is Christ, the incarnate Son, who in this hymn is saying (stanza 2): “Take my flesh hidden in this piece of bread and eat it, and drink my blood in this wine.” In the fourth stanza the communicants are exhorted to praise the Father who “for misdeeds thou hast done Gave to die His beloved Son.” To summarize: Without the incarnation there would be no Sacrament.

38. The second of the Communion hymns is likely familiar to those who have used the Hymnary: “May God be Praised Henceforth and Blest Forever.” The first stanza originated in the 5th century and was retained by Luther. To this he added two of his own. The first stanza reminds us that God “With His own flesh and blood our souls doth nourish,” and the second declares that the Lord could not bind us to Him with any stronger love than by that which He has done: “Thou hast to death Thy holy body given/ Life to win for us in heaven.” Again, no Sacrament without the incarnation. The third stanza breathes the heartfelt prayer that the Lord might bless the reception of His feast unto a proper walk in life and in love to the brethren.

39. Another hymn of the Reformer which fits under the Communion section is that majestic song called “The German *Sanctus*,” or what we know as “Isaiah, Mighty Seer in Days of Old.” This was sung in the service be-

fore the Lord's Prayer and the Words of Institution, and at other times after the bread was consecrated and distributed. The prophet Isaiah beholds his Lord in glory so expansive that it fills all space, while angel choirs vie with one another in chanting His praises. No reason for the prophet to give glory in such manner, except for the salvation which God prepared for the world through His victorious Son: "For my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." (Is. 6:5)

40. Luther also had his *Te Deum*: "Lord God, Thy Praise We Sing." Its origin is an ancient hymn traced back to the Greek Church in the third century. St. Ambrose later translated it into Latin, and Luther did the same into German. It begins by glorifying the Trinity and closes with a humble petition for grace and protection. Special emphasis is given to praising the blessed Savior for His great love that moved Him to redeem mankind, for His humility, His victory and glorification.

To save mankind Thou hast not, Lord,
The Virgin Mary's womb abhorred;
Thou overcamest death's sharp sting,
Believers unto heaven to bring.

41. Among the hymns of him who championed the priesthood of all believers one would expect to find one on the Christian Church. In this we are not to be disappointed, though our hymnbooks have not included it. "Dear is to Me the Holy Maid" consists of three long stanzas, vigorous in style and content but considered somewhat artificial in its construction. By connecting this hymn with the Apocalypse, Luther presents a picture of the Christian Church. His "maid" called "woman" in the book of Revelation, is the congregation of God in the Old Testament

and now the Christian Church of the New Testament. "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered." (Rev. 12,1 & 2) The second stanza describes the glory of the Church, and this glory is a reflection of the incarnate Lord:

She stands, the Bride of Him who died:
Sore travail is upon her;
She bringeth forth a noble Son
Whom all the world doth honor;
She bows before His throne.

42. A couple of Luther's hymns are called "Closing Hymns" or "Hymns of Peace" and were often used right after the sermon. One such hymn, of two stanzas, is "In These Our Days So Perilous." The origin of the first stanza is ascribed to Gregory the Great. During the Turkish uprising and the threat of massacres Luther translated this into a form suitable for his congregational singing. In part it reads:

In these our days so perilous,
Lord, peace in mercy send us;
No God but Thee can fight for us,
No God but Thee defend us;
Thou our only God and Savior.

43. This was sung either separately or in connection with the other "hymn of peace": *Erhalt Uns, Herr, bei Deinem Wort* ("Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Thy Word"), a hymn surely known to all of us.¹³ Nicholas Selnecker has shown

how beautifully the train of thought in the three stanzas follows the order of the first three petitions of the Lord's Prayer. First, there is the prayer to God, the Father, for help to keep His holy Word. Secondly, the prayer to God, the Son, for the coming of His kingdom, as well as for strength to believe His Word and live a godly life in accordance with it. Thirdly, a prayer to the Holy Ghost for the communion of His saints on earth and in heaven. It is the incarnate Son who is the subject of the second stanza. The "Lord of lords" is He who "was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called the Word of God." (Rev. 19: 13) The enemies of the Church will oppose the Son sent from heaven in the flesh to wage war against Satan, a war culminating in the Son's victory on the cross. "These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will overcome them, for He is Lord of lords and King of kings." (Rev. 17: 14)

44. There remains to be considered one more hymn, a hymn to the Trinity: "Thou Who Art Three in Unity." It is included in the Hymnal as "O Trinity, Most Blessed Light," and is used as an evening hymn. The two-stanza Latin original was the work of St. Ambrose, which Luther translated and to which he added a third stanza. It is one of his last hymns and has found universal use as a Vesper hymn. The stanza which Luther has added is a doxology to God the Father, and to the Son who is the only Lord, who with the eternal Comforter is equally to be adored.

SOLI DEO GLORIA

Endnotes

1. Luther's Works, Vol. 38, p.82
2. Literally, "Jesus Christ, salvation and strength" (*Heil und Stärk*)
3. Duke Henry of Wolfenbuettel, one of Luther's bitterest foes, allowed some Protestant hymns to be sung in the court chapel. A priest admonished him not to tolerate such hymns, even if the people delight to sing them. The Duke asked, "What hymns?" The priest said, "Most gracious sir, such as 'May God to us gracious be.'" The Duke interrupted him and said, "Ah, shall the Devil be gracious to us? Who shall be gracious if not God?" The priest could say no more. (*Luther's Hymns*, by J.F.Lambert Philadelphia, 1917)
4. Just one example: A gigantic music festival was held in Boston in 1869. Ten thousand voices, accompanied by eleven thousand instruments sang this hymn in five different languages- German, English, Swedish, Norwegian and Danish. (Ibid)
5. Berthold was so popular, it is reported, that churches grew too small to accomodate the thousands who would come to hear him, so pulpits were constructed for him in the branches of trees from which he preached and exhorted the people to sing. (Ibid)
6. It was sung by the people at Whitsuntide "during the ceremony in which a wooden dove was lowered by a cord from the roof of the chancel, or a live pigeon was let fly down." (Ibid)

7. Almost every line of the ten stanzas can be supported by quotations from the Scriptures.

8. One of the many anecdotes associated with this hymn will show its strong effect on the people. A large congregation had gathered in the city of Frankfurt, hoping to have a Protestant service. But the pulpit was occupied by a Roman priest who preached his own peculiar doctrine. After listening for a while in silent indignation, the congregation arose and began to sing this hymn. They fairly sang the priest out of the church.

(Luther's Hymns, J.F.Lambert)

9. According to an old order in Sweden, when this hymn was sung the whole congregation stood. Not to stand and sing signified a denial of the faith. (Ibid)

10. This song reportedly was written when Luther was deeply absorbed in preparation for his Christmas services. "Katie" had asked him to tend the cradle of baby Paul while she took care of other duties. As he gazed upon the small, frail and lowly figure in the cradle his heart was moved with profound impulses. Taking in hand his lute he began to sing and the verses began to come, until the hymn was completed. (Ibid)

11. It is said that none sang this hymn more frequently than Count Nicholas von Zinzendorf. One incident from his life is that of his freeing a group of missionaries who had been imprisoned on the island of St. Thomas. He then preached to the natives, his constant theme being the Gospel of life and freedom in Jesus. With strong emotion the whole congregation joined him in reciting the Second Article of the Creed, and then with deep gratitude they sang Luther's hymn, "All praise, Lord Jesus

Christ, to Thee.” (Ibid)

12. In his *Treasury of Hymns*, Vol. III, Olearius defends Luther against a misconception of the first stanza, as though a person could live the life of the blessed, and abide with God forever, through the works of the Law. He says, “He who has no desire to keep the Commandments and, in harmony with their teaching, to show his faith by his love to God and to his neighbor in a practical way, cannot live the life of the blessed, whether in the kingdom of grace or the kingdom of glory and honor.”

13. In Joseph Klug’s book of hymns (*Geistliche Lieder*) this bore the title: “A Hymn for the Children to Sing Against the Two Arch-enemies of Christ and His holy Church, the Pope and the Turks.” (*Luther’s Hymns*, J.F. Lambert)

14. This hymn was naturally distasteful to the papists. Some time after Luther’s death, when the Protestant states had been conquered by the Emperor, the singing of it was forbidden on pain of death. (Ibid)

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A Sermon for the Third Sunday after Epiphany (Matthew 8:1-13)

by Pastor Jakob Aall Ottesen (1825 - 1904)

Translated by Herbert Larson

Text: When He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean." Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus said to him, "See that you tell no one; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them." Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented." And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him." The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. "For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel! "And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. "But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you." And his servant was healed that same hour. (Matthew 8: 1-13 NKJV)

“He taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes.” (Mt. 7:29) That is how the evangelist Matthew concludes his account of the Lord’s sermon on the mount. We hear in today’s Gospel that many people followed him when he came down from the mountain. They had been greatly impressed by his speaking when they heard him and they could not so soon be separated from

him. They had understood from his sermon that they really had reason to be frightened when he explained the Law of Moses to them and they knew that it demands the heart, and therefore more than the scribes who only aimed at an outward obedience. And yet no one could really keep it perfectly because the apostle Peter says of the Law that it was "a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear." (Acts 15:10) But the Lord had also shown them where the power could be obtained. He had taught them to pray, "Our Father," taught them that they have a Father in heaven who really wants to give good gifts to those who ask, a Father to whom they could pray "forgive us our trespasses," and to whom they could pray with confidence because he has said, "Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full." (John 15:24)

This was comforting. God opened the leper's heart for this comfort so that the Word which he heard and which brought comfort could find root in his heart. The leper heard him praise an afflicted person as blessed; and he was afflicted. He heard him say: "Ask, and you shall receive," and now when by his power he believes this and finds comfort for the wounds of his heart in it, then he also believes that the Blessed Man who could lessen the pain of his heart must be more than a man. When the disciples of the Pharisees were sent out to arrest him they could not lay a hand on him but returned and said, "No man ever spoke like this Man." (John 7:46) The leper felt it too. By the grace of God the word of Jesus had such power in his heart to relieve and to comfort it that he also trusted him to heal his body of leprosy, which no one else could do. That's why his confident cry is, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean." And in the midst of the certainty of faith that he can, he humbly leaves it up to

his will: if he is willing. The Lord does not put faith like that to shame. He shows him immediately that this same Word which has demonstrated his power to relieve and to comfort the heart can also heal the sicknesses of the body. "I am willing. Be clean," the Lord says, and right away the sick man was cleansed of his leprosy.

We see the same thing also with the centurion. He too has heard of the Lord and is certain that one word from him is sufficient. "Just say the word," he says, "and my servant shall be healed." We know what happened. In both these examples the comforting power of the Word of God is set before us like this. And, therefore, in this hour of worship we will try to show

THE POWER OF GOD TO CREATE NEW LIFE IN THE HEART

while we consider

I. The Power Of The Word *and*

II. The New Life.

May our dear God from whom all our ability comes and without whom we are capable of nothing, bless our meditation and show the power of his Word upon our hearts in this hour to his glory and to the strengthening of our faith, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

I.

In the Holy Scriptures we learn about the Word of God that "all things were made through him, and without him nothing was made that was made." (John 1:3) It says that "by the Word of the LORD the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth... For he spoke, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood

fast.” (Ps. 33:6,9) And just as we thus learn from Scripture that everything is made by the Word so do we also learn that he upholds all things by the Word of his power, or, that he preserves and directs all things by that same Word.

This is so not only in the realm of nature but also in the realm of the spirit. “The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life,” says the Lord,” (John 6:63) “the power of God unto salvation,” (Rom. 1:16) “a life-giving seed,” (Mt. 13) “the light which shines in the darkness,” (John 1:5) “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow,” (Heb. 4:12) “‘Is not my word like as a fire?’” says the Lord; ‘and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?’” (Jer. 23: 29) “This is my comfort in my affliction, for your word has given me life,” (Ps. 119:50) “Unless your law had been my delight, I would then have perished in my affliction.” (Ps. 119:92)

The power of the Word of God in spiritual things also consists in this, that just as it creates and upholds all things in the realm of nature, so also in the spiritual it can create life in the heart which it of course must first crush and kill but then also quicken, relieve and comfort, in other words, create and uphold all spiritual life.

And because we learn this from the passages I’ve quoted and many others like them, it also implies that this Word is the Word of the eternal, almighty God. Therefore it must have the same power as God himself. The Word is the channel for God. When it speaks, then it is God himself who is speaking. Therefore it also says, “So shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth: it shall not return to me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.” (Is. 55:11) The Word must have power to accomplish everything

which it asserts.

We see that the centurion has understood that. He concludes very simply from his own experience: "If my word, which is only the word of a man, can have the power that when I say to my servant, Go, and he goes, how much more then must not Jesus, whom he confesses as the Messiah, that is, as the Lord himself, be able to speak so that things happen, and just say to the sickness, Go, and it has to go, as his servant does." So the centurion says to the Lord, "Just say the word and my servant shall be healed." And in this way we learn from Scripture rightly to use examples from daily life and to be able to conclude the greater from the lesser.

But when we see here in this way that the power of his word consists in creating and upholding all spiritual life, then we can also understand how important it is to have his Word pure and unadulterated because only the Word of God has this power, not the fabrication of man or the lie of the devil. And when by his mercy we have his Word unadulterated, then it means also that it behooves us to seek to partake of its power in thankfulness and praise for his having given it to us and preserved it among us.

And how can we do that? We read that power to heal physical illness flowed from his garment so that those who touched it were healed. Therefore people flocked to him to be healed by touching his garment. Power also flows from the garment of his Word to heal all spiritual illness, yes, power to create life out of death. So, we should also flock to this Word to be healed by it, that is, by hearing and believing it, we can be healed. If it is an insult to a person, a king, for example, not to want to listen to him when he is speaking to us - if we do not want even *to listen* to him, much less *to believe* him - how much more should we guard against despising the King of kings by not hearing and believing his Word!

You should also use his Word diligently and properly and not resist it, but willingly believe it. We know that the power of his Word in temporal things cannot be defied; when the Lord says in the Gospel, "I am willing; be cleansed," it happened immediately. But by our opposition to it in spiritual things we can hinder the healing and the awakening to life which he wants to bring to perfection by his Word and which he wants to accomplish equally as earnestly in everyone who hears the Word, because God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked but desires that he turn from his wickedness and live. God desires that everyone should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. He does not want anyone to be condemned, but that everyone should be converted.

But we can resist the power of his Word and we can prevent it from having its intended effect, which is to create faith in us and thus to regenerate us. He isn't going to force anyone, but in a friendly way he prevails upon us to believe, though we should however remember that while it is always our fault alone if we continue in opposition to it, because "you have destroyed yourself," (Ho. 13:9) so it is his mercy alone when by his divine power he prevails upon us to believe; then it is God who works in us both to will and to do according to the good pleasure of his will. Faith is always a gift of God, a creation, an awakening from death to life. And when we say that he does this creative work by prevailing upon us through the Word, then of course we cannot understand his works or comprehend why not everyone who hears the Word is converted and regenerated, but we will be content with this, that in Scripture the Spirit of God calls his actions in the matter both a creation or an awakening from death to life, for example, when he says, "Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light," (Ep. 5:14), and also a prevailing upon, when it says, for example,

“Lord, you have prevailed upon me, and I was persuaded; you are stronger than I.” (Jer. 20:7)

It seems to me that these two things cannot really be reconciled. In our blindness we would rather conclude according to reason like this: If it is a conviction, then surely it ultimately is our own doing if we let ourselves be convinced and then no creation is called for, and, if we are converted, then it seems that it is a creation, and no conviction is called for. The Scriptures, however, teach both those things and our Christian faith also experiences its truth and says with the beautiful hymn:

If you would see God's kingdom true,
 You also must be born anew,
 Your sinful flesh be drowned and die
 In Baptism's flood, with Spirit nigh.
 Your mind God's ways can never trace -
 That what God wills, that e'er takes place;
 Nor do you understand the way
 His Word o'er all holds secret sway.

You are then to hear his Word and give heed to it, and not mock him by neglecting or despising it, or defy him by resisting it. Hear and read it diligently and attentively with prayer to God for his Spirit's enlightening, and say with the God-fearing Samuel, “Speak, O Lord, Thy servant heareth.” (1 Sa. 3:9) Draw near to him in the Word, bringing the hardness of your heart so that the hammer of his law can break you, and teach you to be terrified over your sins and consider how great they are. Then with a broken spirit which is terrified before his Word you can say with David, “Against you, yes, you only, have I sinned, and done this evil in your sight: that you might be justified when you speak, and be clear when you judge.” (Ps. 51:4)

Draw near to him in the Word with the darkness of your soul so that he can enter with the light of his Word and let the glory of his grace shine in your heart. Draw near to him in the Word with the empty vessel of your poor heart so that he can fill it with the riches of his mercy. And if you will not hold still for the Lord, then it is really your own fault if you forfeit what he pours out both willingly and abundantly. But when you do hold still and thus grasp his power, then it is he who opens your heart just as he opened Lydia's heart so that she paid attention to what Paul was saying, because we are not "sufficient to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God." (2 Co. 3:5)

Then we will endeavor to take the Word to heart, trust him when he chastises and crushes just as when he comforts and lifts up. In other words we are to believe the Word of God, not of ourselves, it is a gift of God through the Word, because faith comes in this way that one hears, but the fact that one hears occurs through the Word of God. Thus the leper and the centurion have taught us to hear and to pay attention to the Word of God and through his power to believe that things happened as they did when they believed. And when with the help of God we hear and use the Word properly, then we shall also learn to believe and thus to partake of its power to heal our hearts of the leprosy of sin by creating new life in us.

And now after we have spoken of the power of the Word of God and have shown both wherein this power consists and how we partake of it, we now want to speak of the new life which the Word creates and show both how it is created and how it must necessarily show itself.

II.

We have said that we partake of the power of the Word when it works faith in our heart. In that way there is a new

creation in us which is called regeneration, which, as our *Catechism* says, is the same as the imparting of a living faith or an awakening from spiritual death, a conversion and a translation from darkness to light, from the kingdom of Satan to God. But two things obviously lie in the fact that it is called a regeneration, a being born again. First, the fact that it is an act of God - because who can give birth to himself or assist with it? Second, that what happens to us is a reawakening from something, as I said before; and by that is meant a renewal of the image of God which was destroyed in us.

Regeneration therefore is a return from the ruined state of our heart to the state in which man was earlier, to the life which he received at the first creation and whose creation is recorded as being a creation in the image or likeness of God. And that was not a physical likeness, because God has no body, but we were like him in our inner being, we had spiritual communion with him through a spiritual covenant with him who is our light and life and salvation. Therefore we also had our light and life and salvation in him alone. We had pleasure only in that in which he has pleasure, hatred for everything which he hates.

But now when by the malice of the devil man found pleasure in something other than the will of God, then this likeness, this spiritual fellowship with God, was severed. We were then separated from him who is light and were again in darkness, and what communion does light have with darkness? We were separated from him who is life and salvation and were therefore in death and condemnation, which is a wrathful separation from God and his blessedness. Instead of being a child of God man became a child of wrath, which we therefore all were by nature, afraid and trembling before him who has eyes like a consuming fire toward all rebellious sinners. In enmity

against God the heart was turned away from God from fear of punishment because the carnal mind is enmity against God.

Regeneration, or the new life must therefore be constituted of, or consists in, this that we again receive the image of God so that a new light is created in the understanding and that I know and believe God as he is, as the God of grace and the Father of mercy, and not just as a God of wrath. Then new power, desire and longing are created again in the will, so that I who previously wanted to seek pleasure and happiness elsewhere from fear of being captive to him, now can delight in his law according to the inner man, long for him, seek him instead of fleeing from him, and receive more and more power from him to do his will, to hate what he hates and to love and to bring to perfection what he wills, even if it demands pain in the flesh. In the conscience which previously was like a trembling leaf, so that we would flee if anything pursued us, now peace and joy are created. The point to admire in this basic change in man's heart is faith which is the substance of things hoped for and a firm conviction about things which are not seen. That is, that the heart is now certain of the love of God, believes that it is reconciled in Christ, that he has washed away all our sins in his blood, believes this and therefore is turned from fleeing from him out of fear, to seeking him with joy, to being changed again from being separated from him to being with him.

This then is the nature of life: that we again enter into fellowship of the Spirit with him, are born again in his name, which consists in true wisdom, righteousness and holiness, peace and joy. We then know God as he is, which is true wisdom. We obtain hatred for sin and joy in what is good. It is holiness and righteousness. It is having our blessedness solely in him. It is true peace and joy. Then

even if we do see our sin with greater sorrow and embarrassment each day in the new light shining in our heart from His Word, yet the light of grace shines more clearly through the darkness of sorrow and lets us taste in faith the comfort in the forgiveness of sins, and we confidently sing:

Well do I know my sin is great,
But Christ says in his Word,
It is forgiven thee.

And now if this new nature is a new life, then it must necessarily also be evident. "Our faith is a light deeply hidden in the heart, which shines as beautifully as a clear morning." And where there is light, brightness must be found. This is the will of God for us and it follows of necessity from the nature of faith. The leper, when the Lord had had mercy on him and healed him, surely did not want to return again to the old misery and wretchedness in desert places, separated from people, but naturally he would gladly use his health in the pursuit of life. And the centurion's servant would certainly not remain idle on his bed, but he would rouse himself against everything which could bind him again to the pain and inactivity of the sickbed so as not to be just a care and a burden for his master. Now he would also gladly serve his beloved master who had esteemed him so much and loved him and therefore had interceded for him. Your Lord also considers you worth much, even though you lie helpless in sin's distress. He purchased you with his blood and he healed you so that you should serve him, not because he has need of your service but because he knows that only when you are in his service can you have health, life and salvation, while the former master whom you served previously gives only death and eternal pain to his servants.

Therefore you must let the new light appear and you must show it in this that through his power you daily seek to lay aside the unprofitable works of darkness, daily hate and flee from every evil thing, and pursue that which is good. Otherwise it is not true if you say and think that you believe and that you have a new life, because faith produces works just as light shines brightly. And when you know that he who begins his good work in us must also complete it and that he does this through the same Word of his divinity with which he has also regenerated you, then, more than anything else, you must cling firmly to this Word and as a newborn babe desire its sincere milk so that you may grow thereby. In it he will teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance so that in all your thoughts, words and deeds you can see what is sinful in them and receive power to fight against it and see what he especially wants from you, and then be enabled to do and to suffer what he asks of you.

And then even if you are often tempted and often fall - because we all do fall in many respects - then when you cling firmly to the light of his Word, you yourself, however, will become more and more a light in the world's night, a light which shines before others so that they see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven, just as Moses' face shone when he had been with God on the mountain. And even if you are often troubled when you see that your own strength is worth nothing, when you stay with his Word you shall, however, become more and more like the hardness of a rock so that you are not tossed to and fro like a reed but remain firmly rooted in him who is the Rock so that you shall not ever be moved. Just as Moses obtained water in the middle of the desert by striking the rock with his rod - God had promised that the water was there - so shall you also smite the Rock of the Word with the rod of faith in the hour of need and

always find relief in the midst of the heat of summer so that you can say with David: "I am afflicted very much; revive me, O LORD, according to your word." (Ps. 119:107)

If even the Lord's first disciples who walked with him had to pray, "Lord, increase our faith," (Luke 17:5) then you also should pray to him daily about it, and humbly, as one who says with the centurion, "I am not worthy that you should come under my roof," but still fearlessly say daily, "Come in to me and to all that is mine," because you know that he has said himself, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock." (Rev. 3:20) And in the quietness of your mind you will answer gladly, "Come in, Thou Blessed of God." Then he will gladly come in and sup with you, come in and lead you and strengthen you in all things and daily increase your faith. You will then also pray diligently, early and late, morning and evening to him who has said, "Call upon me in the day of trouble! I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me." (Ps. 50: 15) If you will cling firmly to him like this in the Word and in prayer, then you will be made capable of every good work and will comfort and help yourself in every need, because whoever is grounded in his Law like this shall be like a tree planted by the river's edge, which bears fruit in his season and from which not one leaf falls, and he shall find pleasure in everything which he does. Yes, even to old age and grey hair he shall be the same, and if by his mercy you cling firmly to the staff of his Word in your final agony, which is death, God is going to lead you victoriously into his heaven.

O dear redeemed congregation, for a lifetime now you have had this holy and blessed Gospel of God pure and unadulterated here in your new homeland! How have you received it and taken it to heart when he spoke to you in season and out of season? How have you allowed all his

leading to draw you to look at the light and to yield to its power? Have you been born again to a new life through it because you know that it is written, "Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God?" (Jo. 3:5) And are you then also sure of this, that everything has become new in you, so that you are like the city on the hill which cannot be hid? Or when he blesses you, must the Lord lament over you as he did over Israel, "I spoke to you in your prosperity, but you said, 'I will not hear.'" (Jer. 22:21) And when he examines you, must he then say: "I have stricken them, but they have not grieved; they have refused to receive correction"? (Jer. 5:3)

Every single person among us answers for himself: How do things look for me and mine, for my friends and neighbors, for the whole congregation? Do we let it be evident in all our dealings that the Word of God is mighty within us to create life from death, light from darkness? Can we sing from our hearts: "God's Word a treasure is to me, Thro' sorrow's night my sun shall be, The shield of faith in battle"? What good does it do that you have the Word, and perhaps boast of the form of sound doctrine, asserting that you know it and confess it, and saying that you have everything in order in an orthodox congregation, even the correct exposition of the Word - what good does it do if you do not believe it and do not, therefore, bear good fruit, either? Because every tree which does not bear good fruit is going to be cut down and thrown into the fire, you will also be cut down and burn in eternal perdition if you continue to be an unfruitful tree. Then it avails nothing that you boast of the "pure doctrine" which you have, just as little as it availed privileged Israel that they cried, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord." (Jer. 7:4) And today's gospel also reminds us of that when it says that the children of the kingdom shall be cast into outer darkness. Ask

yourself, then, whether you are praying faithfully for yourself and your loved ones that the Lord will strengthen you to serve him in the obedience of faith.

When you see that you receive so much, is it your daily concern, your daily desire, that he will help you to serve him better? Do you come zealously and devoutly to his table of grace, where he commands you to receive power and promises to give it? Is the Word of God becoming more and more precious to you, and more precious than gold, yea, much fine gold? Are you becoming more and more zealous for furthering its preaching and the administration of the Sacraments, holding out your hand like this, yes, as far as your prayer reaches?

When you have suffered, perhaps you gave much for this purpose and were glad to do so. Now when you receive much, perhaps you give little and do it with a sigh. Your fields bear much rich fruit now. Do the fields of your own heart and those of your companions and those of your children bear richer fruit? Are there fewer thorns and thistles there now, less wormy fruit, more rich and noble fruit from the good seed of the Word? Or have things perhaps turned brighter for you? Do we not now hear about such sins in our midst as quarreling and envy, unrighteousness and lewdness, lust and drunkenness, by which the name and teaching of God are blasphemed among us and of which it is written that those who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God? And even if God preserves you and yours from sin and shame in outward things so that perhaps everything has a good Christian appearance where you are concerned, yet, a mere outward appearance does not help you. Remember, God demands the heart. Is it, through his power in the Word, turned to him, reborn in his image, so that all your joy is in him and you are willing to suffer ridicule and trial for his name's sake? Or do you desire the things of this earth

most of all while your heart is far from God and his Word?

Do you not see that the love of the world and the things of the world hang like a fog over so many people both young and old because of the indifference of our times? The Lord has spoken about it to you so often to awaken you and he has reminded you that he will spit the lukewarm person out of his mouth. Why then do you go on being careless and content with a nominal Christianity without earnestness and without zeal to continue in and to grow in faith? What are you going to say and how will you justify yourself on the Day of Judgment if you must then hear the word: It would have been better for you had you never known the way of righteousness than that you knew it and merely said that you would follow it, but, however, did not do it?

Pray therefore that God will awaken you, open your heart and anoint your eyes so that you can see the distress you are in and also grasp the help and the strength which he brings in his Word so that you can arise from sleep, and as one who is risen with Christ seek the things which are above. And as he heard the cry of the leper and came to the aid of the centurion, he will also in grace hear your cry and come to your aid - "come under your humble roof, and it shall yet become a blessed day" - enter your poor heart with light and life and power. Seek him then while he can be found and call upon him while he is near. In this very hour he is near in the Word of faith which is preached. He even speaks to you and calls to you; your unbelief has not destroyed his faithfulness; he still wishes to come in to you and be with you and bless you. Grasp him then in faith and beseech him to preserve you through his Word so that you never lose Jesus from your heart until you see him face to face in eternal life. Yes, preserve us, dear Lord God, in the Word and faith until we die so that in the next world we can sit at the table with you in your kingdom! Hear us for your mercy's sake! Amen.

Prædikener over Kirke-aarets Evangelier
(pp. 121-132)

What is meant by τὸ τέλειον in I Corinthians 13:10?

by John Moldstad, Jr.

A pastor has raised the question as to whether I Corinthians 13: 8-10 could be seen as defining the cessation of "tongues speaking" (γλῶσσαι) at the arrival of the completed New Testament revelation. An article by Prof. Mark E. Braun in the June 1996 edition of the *Northwestern Lutheran* quoted favorably Prof. Douglas Judisch on this interpretation of the verses just cited.

The verses in question read in the Greek:

8. Ἡ ἀγάπη οὐδέποτε πίπτει· εἴτε δὲ προφητεῖαι, καταργηθήσονται· εἴτε γλῶσσαι, παύσονται· εἴτε γνώσις, καταργηθήσεται. 9. ἐκ μέρους γὰρ γινώσκομεν καὶ ἐκ μέρους προφητεύομεν· 10. ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ τὸ τέλειον, τὸ ἐκ μέρους καταργηθήσεται.

The NIV gives this rendering:

8) Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. 9) For we know in part and we prophesy in part, 10) but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears.

In his book entitled *An Evaluation of Claims to the Charismatic Gifts* (Baker, 1978), Judisch discusses how

he prefers the translation “piecemeal” in verse 9, where the NIV has “in part” or (as in verse 10) “imperfection.” His point is that “in contemporary English perfect and imperfect usually carry a moral connotation that is alien to the passage under consideration.” (p. 46) Judisch argues that this section is not speaking of a contrast between the present time and the time a believer is in heaven, but rather the contrast between the time prior to the completion of Old and New Testament Scriptures in contrast to the reader’s present time when Scripture is realized as “the complete thing” (τὸ τέλειον). [See Judisch’s remarks on pp. 46-49 in his book.]

Some pertinent questions to be asked when doing an exegesis of the above verses are: Should the verbs πίπτω, καταργέω and παύω be taken as interchangeable synonyms in verse 8? Or, is a distinction to be made with παύω in connection with “tongues?” Do verses 12 and 13 of this same chapter carry the contextual weight? If so, then is the term τὸ τέλειον (v. 10) to be explained as the time when one will be “face to face” (πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον)?

1. In my opinion, it seems that an affirmative answer to the last query helps to settle the issue. The idiomatic usage of the prepositional phrase ἐκ μέρους is found in verse 12 (“Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.”), just as it also is found in verses 9 and 10.

2. In verse 10, the ὅταν of the future more vivid condition appears - in my estimation - to signal the indefinite (yet vivid!) aspect of the Final Day of Judgment. If this sentence were, as Judisch would contend, referring to the “completion” of the entire scriptural canon at the close of the apostolic age, one possibly would expect a simple

ὅτε clause with the indicative.

3. Thus it appears that τὸ τέλειον in v. 10 is best taken as a reference to the state of perfection which a Christian enjoys in life eternal. The LC-MS Commission on Theology and Church Relations gave this summary of the verses in question back in a 1972 document on the Charismatic Movement: "Christian love also has the remarkable characteristic that it will continue on into the unending future, always relevant. Other gifts of the Spirit such as prophecies, tongues, and knowledge are imperfect and incomplete in this life and shall therefore pass away when they have served their purpose, but Christian love will remain intact even in the state of perfection."

YAHWEH THE LORD

by Adolph Harstad

Two ancient transcriptions in paleo-Hebrew script have recently surfaced on the antiquities market. Both are written in ink on pieces of pottery and are apparently from the hand of the same scribe. The one seems to be a receipt for a donation to King Solomon's temple. The other records the plea of a widow for a portion of her husband's property. Though the opinions of scholars differ on the precise date of these ostraca, some have dated them as early as the ninth century B.C. There seems to be little doubt of their authenticity. In November 1997, reports and photos of these Old Testament era writings appeared around the world. Hershel Shanks, editor of *Biblical Archaeology Review*, reports on the texts in his November/December 1997 issue. His article includes color photos, transliterations and translations of the texts.

These inscriptions are of special interest to us here because both contain clear representations of the special name of our Savior-God, the name YAHWEH. The paleo-Hebrew form of the name in the title of this article above is exactly as the name appears in the temple receipt document. It appears in the expression, "to the house (or temple) of YAHWEH." With the name of YAHWEH in the news around the world because of these ostraca, we thought it fitting to review for readers some basic information about this wonderful name that our God has cho-

sen to reveal to us.

In his Hebrew concordance Abraham Even-Shoshan lists 6,639 occurrences of יהוה/YAHWEH in the Old Testament, the first of which is in Genesis 2:4. יהוה/YAHWEH is the proper noun-name of God. This name distinguishes the God of free and faithful grace, who revealed himself to Israel, from the worthless idols of other nations. The name is always definite in itself, never taking the definite article as אלהים/*elohim* sometimes does. יהוה is often referred to as the Tetragrammaton (“four-lettered name”) or simply as “The Name” (השם/*hashem*; see Lev 24:11 and Deut 28:58).

As a precaution against blasphemy, the later Jews did not place on their lips this *nomen ineffabile* in public reading. This practice of not pronouncing “The Name” aloud began sometime in the Second Temple period (516 B.C. - 70 A.D.). When coming to the word יהוה the Jews generally read in its place the word אדוני/*adonai* (Lord).

Many modern English translations follow the practice of translating יהוה as “LORD” (in all upper case letters) and translating the word אדוני/*adonai* as “Lord” (with the first letter in upper case and the others in lower case letters). English readers thus know which word appears in the Hebrew text.

ETYMOLOGY

The key to the etymology of יהוה is Exodus 3:14. There God tells Moses:

אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר

אֶהְיֶה וַיֹּאמֶר כֹּה תֹאמַר לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל

אֶהְיֶה שְׁלַחְנִי אֵלֵיכֶם

“I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” (NIV)

אֶהְיֶה is the Qal imperfect first person singular of the verb הָיָה, “to be,” “to become.” Although some translate the form as a future, “I WILL BE WHAT I WILL BE,” it seems best to render it in the present: “I AM WHO I AM.” The imperfect tense here unites and combines past, present, and future into one ever-present tense to indicate the existence of the eternal, unchangeable, self-determining One.

יְהוָה (YAHWEH/THE LORD) is the Qal imperfect third person masculine singular form corresponding to the first person אֶהְיֶה. While God declares of himself, “I AM/אֶהְיֶה,” others speaking of him would give his name as “HE IS/יְהוָה.” In Exodus 3:15 it is the third person form which God speaks, since he is telling Moses what he should say before Israel about their God.

יְהוָה is the older form of יְהִיָּה (“he is”). The letter *waw* in the development of this Hebrew word for “to be” later became *yod*. In other Hebrew words likewise an original *waw* later became *yod*. Examples are *pe yod* verbs and some “hollow” verbs; note Eve’s name in Genesis 4:1 which is spelled with a *waw* while it is clearly from the verb חָיָה, whose middle character is a *yod*; see also the archaic form of the verb “to be” itself in Genesis

27:29, where the imperative retains the ancient *waw*.

In Joshua 1:17 the Tetragrammaton and the 3ms imperfect of the verb “to be” are juxtaposed and display to the eye their etymological connection.

For the sake of balance in presentation, we should note that some scholars do not hold to the above etymology that the name יהוה is actually derived from the verb “to be.” R. Laird Harris, for example, prefers to think that יהוה is a word of unknown origin that *sounded something like* the old form of the verb “to be”/יהוה. In that interpretation, strict etymology is distinguished from a “popular” or “sound-alike” etymology. The Old Testament at times presents etymologies of the sound-alike variety.

VOWELS AND PRONUNCIATION

As for the vocalization and pronunciation of יהוה, the most preferable is YAHWEH, with *patach*, *shwa*, and *segol*. That form and pronunciation is now almost universally accepted. The Qal imperfect of *pe waw* verbs indicates that the earlier form of the Hebrew Qal imperfect had a *patach* as its original vowel. Some, on the basis of the *patach* under the *yod*, take the form of the Tetragrammaton to be a Hiphil (“he causes to be” rather than “he is”). That assumption seems unwarranted in light of the context of Exodus 3:14. It is also unnecessary in light of the development of Hebrew with the Qal having a *patach* in the language’s earlier stages. The early church fathers also give evidence to this vocalization and pronunciation. Theodoret in the fourth century says that the Samaritans pronounced it as *iabe*. and Clement of Alex-

andria in the third century writes it as *iaoue*.

As the name יהוה appears in the Hebrew text with vowels of the Masoretes, the form is a "hybrid" designed to keep the word from actually being expressed. That is, the vowel pointing of the Masoretes in the Qere (what is to be read) leads to a reading of the name as "Adonai," while the consonants preserve the Kethiv (what is actually written in the text). The fact that the Septuagint usually translates the Tetragrammaton as *kurios* seems to show that the practice of reading יהוה as *adonai* was already established in the third century B.C., though this was long before the time that vowels were written into our Hebrew text. Some early Septuagint manuscripts preserve the Hebrew word יהוה itself or transliterate it with Greek letters. (See *Biblical Archaeology Review* 1978, Vol. IV, No. 1) The Masoretes, who gave us our vowel pointing for the OT text about 400-900 A.D., kept alive the practice of reading יהוה as *adonai*. The pronunciation "Jehovah" came from reading the Kethiv consonants with the Qere vowels of the Masoretes, a combination that results in a deliberately impossible form. The pronunciation "Jehovah," according to Ludwig Koehler, began to be used by about 1100 A.D. Those who insist on "Jehovah" as the original pronunciation obviously do not understand the method of the Masoretes for keeping יהוה from being pronounced.

DENOTATION

Beyond derivation and pronunciation, all-important is what God reveals about himself through the Tetragrammaton itself and what the contexts reveal. The key texts are Exodus 3:13-15 and 34:5-7. Through the

name itself, "I AM WHO I AM," God expresses his absolute timelessness, constancy, independence and self-sufficiency. The above contexts show him as the God of pure grace who had established his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and then as the one who calls Moses to deliver Israel from Egypt as a first step in his plan of salvation. While he is not obligated in any way to redeem sinful mankind, and while no one has merited his salvation, he chooses purely from his own loving heart to save through the Seed of Abraham. יהוה/YAHWEH is thus the God of free and faithful saving grace, whose loyal love is not to be used as a license to sin (34:7), but is the power that produces faith, love, and grateful service. Jesus ("YAHWEH is salvation"), whose name in its first syllable contains יהוה, explicitly applied the name and the reality behind the name to himself in John 8:58-59: "Before Abraham was born, *I am!*" In that context he returns to the original first person expression of Exodus 3:14 as he shows himself to be not only eternal God but the Savior-God יהוה in human flesh.

(The above presentation draws on unpublished notes of R. Honsey and C. Lawrenz and on the entries under יהוה in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* and *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*.)

“LIBRA” and the Yafo (Joppa) Excavations

by *Adolph Harstad*

Classrooms can be stuffy and dull. That is not the case when your classroom is a whole country, specifically, the land of Israel. Mountains, caves, plains, deserts, seas (dead and alive), beaches, forests, spectacular vistas - this and more make up the small but greatly varied land of the Bible with its rich topography, history and meaning. If you are interested in biblical studies that involve your feet, hands, heart and mind, consider an opportunity for learning in the land that Jerome called “the fifth Gospel.”

LIBRA, an informal organization of ELS and WELS scholars, will soon be providing more finalized information on digging, studying, and touring in the land of the Bible. We are presenting here some basic information on LIBRA and our Yafo (Joppa) project for those who want to organize their calendars early. The LIBRA representatives for Bethany Seminary and College are, respectively, Professors A. Harstad and J. Bruss.

LIBRA

LIBRA (Lutherans Interested in the Bible and Related Antiquities) is a free association of confessional Lutheran scholars whose intent is to promote pursuits which further the investigation of the biblical text in its historic setting. To this end LIBRA’s motto is *textus in contexto*.

The group held its first informal gathering in November of 1996 in New Orleans at a time when scholars of ELS and WELS were attending meetings of the Society of Biblical Literature and the American Schools of Ori-

ental Research. Professor Adolph Harstad of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, Dr. John Brug of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, and Dr. John Lawrenz, WELS Administrator For Ministerial Education, were asked to serve as LIBRA directors. The business office of Bethany College and Seminary has agreed to manage the accounting of funds associated with LIBRA and its projects.

A world wide web site has been created with the help of staff at Michigan Lutheran Seminary. The LIBRA address is <http://www.mls.pvt.k12.mi.us/libra/>. The same site is also available through a "hot button" on the ELS web site (<http://www.evluthsyn.org>) and on the WELS (www.wels.net) web site.

Yafo (Joppa) Project

LIBRA is currently organizing opportunity for field experience in archaeology and historical geography within Israel. Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary offered a Summer Quarter in Israel with a similar program in 1978, 1980, and 1982. That was done in cooperation with the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University at two locations, Tel Michal and Tel Gerisa. Over 100 ELS and WELS pastors, teachers, and lay persons participated. LIBRA seeks to revive that beneficial program for a new generation of pastors, teachers, students, and lay people. With a man of our fellowship, Dr. John Lawrenz, serving as co-director of one of the two major archaeological projects of Tel Aviv University in Israel, a special opportunity for participation presents itself for people of ELS and WELS.

Tel Aviv University's Institute of Archaeology is currently sponsoring digs at both Megiddo and Yafo.

The Megiddo dig is under the direction of Drs. Israel Finkelstein and David Ushishkin. Megiddo was re-opened

in 1996 and will be seeing field work in even numbered years. Dr. Finkelstein met the joint Bethany/MLC study tour in Megiddo in January 1996. During his lecture at the site he stated that there is evidence for an Old Testament-period library of materials at Megiddo. If a treasure of written documents from OT times is found, it would be a first within the borders of Israel.

At Yafo (Joppa) a short season of digging was conducted from September 21 to October 1, 1997. When it comes to favorable conditions for archaeology in Israel, it doesn't get any better than Yafo. Palm trees wave in the gentle Mediterranean breeze over the site that is now an archaeological park and garden. Lawrenz and Harstad participated in the Yafo preliminary dig together with the project director and Israeli students from Tel Aviv University. Probes to a depth of about ten feet were made across the tel to determine the extent of the fill over the undisturbed levels of habitation. It is quite obvious even to the amateur archaeologist that some of the tel is now covered with recent fill. For example, we found a coke bottle with a date of 1988 (A.D.!) *below* late bronze age pottery.

The Yafo dig, like Megiddo, will occur every other year, but in the odd years. Before the first season begins in June of 1999, the layer of fill will be removed by bulldozer. Diggers will thus not have to deal with coke bottles but can begin with the "real thing." Dr. Ze'ev Herzog of Tel Aviv University is the director of the Yafo project and Dr. Lawrenz the co-director.

Former dig participants from ELS and WELS are acquainted with both of these men. The two worked together already in the early 70s at Beersheba with the well known archaeologist and author Yohanan Aharoni.

Lawrenz and Harstad, as a result of their visit to Yafo and meetings with Dr. Herzog, anticipate an arrangement

for ELS and WELS participants along the following lines.

- A standard program of 23 days. This program, beginning in the summer of 1999, would include 10 days of field archaeology at Yafa and 11 days of travel to key geographical sites in Israel, plus one travel day each way to and from Israel.

- There would be three standard programs built around the first two, middle two, and final two weeks of archaeological field work, as follows:

Monday, June 7 to Tuesday, June 29, 1999

Monday, June 21 to Tuesday, July 13, 1999

Monday, July 5 to Tuesday, July 27, 1999

- Participants would be given the option to lengthen the field archaeology program by 10 or 20 days by entering or exiting the program with different groups.
- Consideration would be given for at least one group built primarily around touring with five or fewer days of exposure to field archaeology.
- A ceiling of 40 participants per group would be set.
- LIBRA would recommend that participating schools offer two credits each in field archaeology and historical geography for the standard program and a half credit per week for additional field work.
- Participating schools, such as Bethany College and Seminary, would establish their own program guidelines in consultation with LIBRA.

- The opportunity for ELS and WELS people to tour, study, and dig at Yafo would be open not only to students seeking credit, but more generally to interested lay persons, pastors and teachers.
- Costs would be targeted in the \$2500 range, all included.
- Information would be posted and regularly updated on the LIBRA web site and other publicity resources within ELS and WELS.

Yafo: History and Past Excavations

Yafo is biblical Joppa. The Hebrew is יָפוֹ and יָפוֹן. The name means “beautiful” or “beauty” and is a description of its attractive location on the Mediterranean about 35 miles WNW of Jerusalem. The ancient site rests on the top of a 100 foot high hill just south of modern Tel Aviv. A breakwater of rocks, still present about a hundred yards off shore, made Joppa an important early seaport.

1. *Biblical References* Joppa is named in Joshua 19:46 in association with the original allotment to the tribe of Dan. At the time of Solomon and again 450 years later in the days of Ezra, cedar logs were floated from Lebanon to Yafo for building the first and second temples (2 Chron 2:16[v 15 in Heb]; Ezra 3:7). It was from Yafo that Jonah sailed for Tarshish (Jonah 1:3) and met with his unique surprise.

Joppa is again prominent in the NT as the town of Tabitha or Dorcas (Acts 9:36-42) and of Simon the tanner (Acts 9:43) Peter stayed at Joppa with Simon and on the roof of his house received his vision. The Church of St. Peter is thus prominent on the site today as well as a location marked as the site of Simon’s house.

2. *Extra-Biblical References* The name Joppa has appeared in many writings outside the Bible over the last 3,500 years. We will briefly trace the record.

The earliest reference, pre-dating even the writing of Joshua, is in connection with Joppa's capture by Thutmose III in the 15th century B.C. (See *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 242.) It is mentioned again in the Harris papyrus # 500, which tells of Joppa's daring capture (*ANET*, 22-23). Joppa appears twice in the famous Amarna letters of the 14th century B.C. In papyrus Anastasi I, a satiric letter of the 13th century B.C., an Egyptian official tells of his experience with a woman of Joppa who made a fool of him. Sennacherib's prism names Joppa as one of the cities that the Assyrian king took in his 701 B.C. invasion of Palestine (*ANET*, 287). It was at that same time that Sennacherib targeted King Hezekiah and Jerusalem.

Sidonian king Eshmunazer in an inscription shows that Joppa came into the hands of Sidon about 450 B.C. Later Joppa came under the control of Alexander the Great, the Ptolemies, and the Seleucids. The Maccabees (Jonathan and Simon) captured Joppa for the Jews, as the apocryphal book of Maccabees relates (1 Macc 13:11, 14:5). The latter reference says that "as his crowning glory (Simon) captured the port of Joppa and made it a gateway to the isles of the sea."

Classical scholars may be interested to know that Joppa was where Andromeda was chained to a rock before she was rescued by Perseus. Further references to Joppa appear during the Roman period, the post-Roman period when it became the seat of a Christian bishop in the 5th century, and at the time of the Crusades. Napoleon took Joppa in 1799, and in 1917 Allenby took it from the Turks. In the present century, Joppa was largely an Arab city until the 1948 war of independence and the emergence of the

State of Israel. Before 1948 the old citadel area was covered with Arab homes. After Israeli victory, the Arabs fled and their houses were removed. In 1950 Joppa (Jaffa) was affixed to the city of Tel Aviv.

3. Excavations at Joppa Earliest excavations at Joppa were conducted by P.L.O. Guy in 1948-1950 for the Department of Antiquities. In 1952 the same area was investigated by two archaeologists, Bowman and Iserlin, for the University of Leeds. Beginning in 1955 Jacob Kaplan conducted seven seasons of systematic excavations. Kaplan died before all his findings were published. Dr. Ze'ev Herzog of Tel Aviv University was recently granted the permit to resume excavation of the site. He anticipates many seasons of archaeological work following the just completed short season in September and October of 1997. Since the exact location of the gate of the ancient citadel of Joppa is known, the unexcavated areas beyond the gate seem most promising for interesting yields.

Significant finds at Joppa from past excavations include the following.

- A thirteenth century B.C. gate with an inscription in hieroglyphics of Rameses II. This would be from the same time as the OT the judges. The gate has been reconstructed and is the centerpiece of the park today. The inscription is in the nearby museum.
- A heavy bronze door hinge from a level that was burned ca. 1230 B.C.
- A pre-Philistine temple from about the end of the 12th century B.C. The skull of a lion, perhaps once embalmed,

was found on the floor with half of a scarab seal near its teeth, suggesting a lion cult in the temple.

- A Phoenician inscription indicating the presence of a Sidonian temple to the god Eshmun
- An agora from the Greek period with a double row of shops
- An inscription with the name of Ptolemy Philopator (221-204 B.C.)
- A hoard of 851 coins from the Maccabean period of Alexander Jannaeus, dated ca. 90-85 B.C.

What artifacts or structures unearthed by ELS and WELS excavators in coming years at Joppa will be written up in the archaeology textbooks of tomorrow? Readers wanting their names added to the list of people interested in the Yafo archaeological project and study tour are invited to correspond with the undersigned. Individuals who would like to lend support to a theological student or another to enable participation are also encouraged to make their desires known.

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Book Review:
Law & Gospel "Bad News- Good News"

by John Moldstad, Jr.

Leroy A. Dobberstein, *Law and Gospel "Bad News - Good News."* Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1996. 181 pp.

Order from our Bethany College Bookstore at
1-800-944-1722. Price: \$8.99

Dr. Martin Luther once observed: "Whoever is adept at the art of dividing law and gospel, let him be set above and call him a doctor of Holy Scripture." Far from padding the prestige of his own doctorate, the great reformer was drawing attention to the perennial - no, daily ! - struggle of all Christians to exercise great care in separating the two vital doctrines of Scripture on treating sin and grace. How difficult a task! Pastors and teachers of God's Word feel the weight. But it must be done. One doctrine is a letter that kills, the other is a word that gives life, joy, comfort, and assurance. Who can live up to the challenge? As Paul says, "Our competence comes from God." (2 Cor. 3:5) No wonder Luther in his 1532 sermon on law and gospel goes on to say: "The Holy Spirit must be the Master and Teacher here."

Professor L. Dobberstein of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary admirably sifts through the precise points of distinction to be noted in these two prominent teachings in the Word of God. He nicely sums up their respective purposes in his recent publication. He writes: "The law especially must be preached to the comfortable in order to

afflict them. The gospel also must be preached in order to comfort those afflicted by the law.” (p. 33)

Dobberstein’s book is part of the new WELS People’s Bible Teachings series, a Northwestern Publishing House series designed especially for lay readership. As a complement to the popular People’s Bible commentary series, the 25-volume People’s Bible Teachings series is intended as a presentation of all of the main doctrines of the Bible. Each book in the series also has a companion Bible study prepared by the same author.

Not only will *Law and Gospel* be of great benefit to the laity, it also will serve pastors well. It provides concrete illustrations of ways in which the law/gospel hermeneutic often has been violated. By careful exegesis the gravity of even a subtle departure in the necessary law/gospel distinction is exposed. A good example of this comes in the author’s discussion of the law. He says “it should come as no surprise that in the history of the church Satan has waged some of his most subtle attacks against the gospel by deceiving people concerning Scripture’s teaching of the law.” (p. 74) In chapter nine he takes up the discussion of the more subtle form of antinomianism - the one dealt with in Article VI of the Formula of Concord. He describes the problem:

The other form of antinomianism does not go quite so far. It recognizes the need for the preaching of the law to unbelievers and unrepentant sinners. It admits that such persons need to hear the demands of God’s law and feel God’s wrath against sin and that they need to be told that they are lawbreakers and are going to hell because of their sins. But it denies that the law should be preached any longer to Christians. It contends that

Christians do not need the law to guide them in their lives of good works (p. 101).

The author then tackles the key verse which has been abused by this brand of antinomianism:

Those who deny the Christian's need for the law usually quote I Timothy 1:9: "We also know that the law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious." But take a closer look at the passage. In this opening chapter of his first epistle to Timothy, Paul is not discussing whether the Christian needs the law in his life of sanctification. Paul's concern is justification... When Paul says that the law is not for the righteous, he does not say that the justified are to live without the law. He does insist that the law cannot burden with its curses and wrath those who have been redeemed through the perfect obedience and blood of Christ (pp. 101,102).

In his book Prof. Dobberstein clarifies the real reason Lutherans have been so adamant about observing the proper distinction between the law and the gospel. He says, "The Lutheran concern in teaching God's Word faithfully - law and gospel, justification and sanctification - is that Christians are not turned back to doubt and fear." (p. 136) Yes, any suggestion that even a fraction of the sinner's forgiveness and eternal salvation depends upon his/her fulfillment of law is a threat to the substitutionary righteousness won by Christ at the cross. It wipes out salvation offered to the individual as a free gift apprehended by faith through the means of grace. If the righteousness of Christ is not allowed to stand as the sole

source of one's total forgiveness and salvation, man foolishly looks to himself for the cause of his redemption. But sinner that he is, dead and at enmity with God by nature, man can have no certainty of his success by hanging his hopes on the law. In fact, "everyone who exalts himself will be humbled." (Luke 18:14) On the other hand, since Christ, the eternal God, has overcome sin and hell for us, any soul that looks to him cannot fail to have full assurance of everlasting life. This is pure gospel! Such a one will not be condemned, for "he has crossed over from death to life." (John 5:24)

In his final chapter, where he discusses the importance of the Lutheran Confessions, the author lists another prime consideration: "If law and gospel are confused, every other doctrine of the Bible will become flawed. With careful distinction of law and gospel at the heart of the church's teaching, all other doctrines of Scripture take on new meaning and importance." (p. 163)

One may find a couple of things about which to raise questions. The first is rather superficial: Why does the author use two different sequences in enumerating the three uses of the law without giving any explanation (mirror, curb, guide - p. 42; and curb, mirror, guide - p. 109). It is true that both listings have been found, the former reflecting the fact that the mirror usage is the chief function of the law. But to avoid confusion, the latter order contained in the Formula of Concord seems a wise choice. In our own Explanation to Luther's Catechism the Formula's order was adopted by the ELS.

The other question is a little more substantial. On pages 80 and 81 we find these similar contentions: "As we read through our New Testament Scriptures, we do not find any commandments that are not contained in the natural law." Again: "Nor are there any laws in the New Testament that are not rooted in the natural law." Although

this reviewer certainly agrees that no “ceremonial laws” are incumbent upon New Testament Christians, are there not New Testament “evangelical” injunctions - *Mandata Dei*, if you will - which (strictly speaking) are made applicable only in the New Testament era? Examples here might include the command to baptize (Matt. 28:19), to administer the Lord’s Supper (Luke 22:19), to gather for worship (Hebrews 10:25), and the command to have the public ministry (Rom. 10:15). Then too one wonders if certain precepts on the role of women in the church (I Cor. 14 and I Tim. 2) find classification in this category.

Congregations will be greatly edified in using *Law and Gospel* for a Bible class series. Good discussions can ensue on topics such as the following, as they are addressed by the author:

- Roman Catholic and the Reformed handling of Law and Gospel
- legalism - what it is, and how it shows up also in Lutheran churches at times
- importance of the Sacraments
- discussion of liberation theology
- antinomianism in various garbs
- use of Christian liberty (adiaphora)
- moralizing
- the proper understanding of good works
- the value of Luther’s catechisms

We highly recommend purchasing a copy of *Law and Gospel* "Bad News - Good News." It will serve as a fine addition to church libraries. By taking one of its twelve chapters (plus the conclusion) each month, Sunday school teachers' meetings also may enhance their biblical discussions. There is no more important topic for life in the church than sharpening the focus on what constitutes *bad news and good news* in the Word of God!

Book Review:
God's Providence "He Cares for You"

by John Moldstad, Jr.

Mark J. Lenz. *God's Providence "He Cares for You."*
Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1997.
146 pp.

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1-800-944-1722. Price: \$8.99

Another offering from the NPH People's Bible Teachings series is one by Prof. Lenz of Martin Luther College concerning the protecting and preserving hand of God. Drawing heavily on incidents in Scripture exhibiting the providence of our gracious heavenly Father, the book makes pertinent application to today's Christian carrying on his life in a busy, stressful world. "The Isaelites did not lack anything for 40 years! The Lord still provides for his people today, although not usually in such a dramatic way. Being able to buy bread from a supermarket and having water instantly available by turning on a faucet doesn't seem as dramatic as manna from heaven and water from a rock, but the Lord is providing just the same." (pp. 14, 15)

In many theological circles today the providence of God is discussed without much reference to the doctrine of justification. This is not the case here. The author is well aware that the goodness of God in securing and sustaining his children with the necessities of life has its di-

rect tie to what the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ, has already done in procuring full salvation for souls once lost. Oh, the unbeliever, too, experiences God's providence (p. 49), but the believer sees the sustenance of life in this world as an indication or outcropping of God's deepest mercy. Reflecting the truths brought out in John 10 and Romans 8, Prof. Lenz remarks: "He is not just a shepherd, not even just a good shepherd, but a shepherd who laid down his life for the sheep. If he took care of your greatest need, paying the price of your redemption, will he not also take care of all your daily, earthly needs as well?" (p. 22)

Questions arise when discussing the providence of God. "If there is a God, why is there so much evil in the world?" (p. 63) "Does everything have to happen the way it does, or could things happen otherwise?" (p. 78) "Does God really prolong a person's life as a reward for obedience to parents? What about godly children who die young? Does God really change his mind about the length of a person's life?" (p. 96) These and other questions are treated in *God's Providence* with Scripture passages right at hand. Prof. Lenz also devotes an entire chapter to common aberrations concerning the providence of God: Stoicism, determinism, fatalism, Epicureanism and Deism.

God's Providence - as may be expected by the topic - is quite devotional. It is easy reading, and a number of Christian homes will find it (especially the early chapters) appropriate for time at "the family altar." Homes in the parish - as well as the parsonage! - will see *God's Providence* as an excellent tool to direct attention to our merciful, loving God and his concern for us both spiritually and physically.