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LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN

CHURCH OF THE LUTHERAN CONFESSION



*Jesus I will ponder now
on Thy Holy Passion*

Choosing Barabbas

(Read Mark 15:6-15 from your Bibles)

What a surprise it must have been for him that day! The notorious criminal Barabbas lay chained in prison awaiting death because of his attempt to overthrow the Roman government. All of a sudden they sent for him and released him.

There were revolutionaries in those days too, and Barabbas was apparently one of the ringleaders. According to Matthew's Gospel Barabbas was a notable prisoner (Mt. 27:16). According to Mark's account he was one "who lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection." (Mk. 15:7) Luke says that Barabbas was guilty of sedition and murder (Lk. 23:25), while John simply calls him a robber. (Jn. 18:40)

Barabbas was imprisoned and sentenced to death for crimes against the state. According to the law he

was guilty and deserved death, but he received pardon. Meanwhile the Lord Jesus was captured and finally sentenced to death on false charges by the Jewish religious leaders. He was innocent of sin against God or man, but He received death, the cruel, agonizing death of the cross. What justice! A murderer pardoned and released while God Himself in human flesh is condemned to death!

The Choice of Man

But that is the way it always is when the choosing is left up to man and his sinful flesh. That is the way it was with the Jews in their day. When offered the choice between God and man they did what comes naturally—they chose man.

That is the way it is in our day also. Man is by nature totally corrupt, dead in trespasses and sins. Therefore he cannot make a decision

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Editor: David Lau, 1534 West Ave., Red Wing, MN 55066; Artists: Waldemar Bernthal, Peter Gullerud, Randi Gullerud; Staff: G. Sydow, F. Archer, H. Duehlmeier, M. Eibs, M. Galstad, E. Hallauer, D. Menton, Rollin Reim, R. Roehl, P. Schaller, W. V. Schaller, D. Schierenbeck, J. Schierenbeck, M. Sydow.

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for Christ. He can only choose Satan, evil, the things of the world, and of his flesh. In short, natural man is able only to choose Barabbas.

It is only by the working of the Holy Spirit through the Word that we are convicted of sin and brought to faith in the Savior. Jesus Himself said: "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." (Jn. 15:16) Only then, after we have become children of God through faith in Christ Jesus, are we able to choose Christ and things spiritual. Left in his natural state, before conversion, man will always choose Barabbas.

The Choice of God

Yet we are able to see in this account, in spite of man's corruption, the mercy and grace of our God in all its wonder. Even though the Jews chose Barabbas to be freed and Jesus to die, yet in that very death their sins and our sins were pardoned. Truly this love of God is amazing. The life and death of the Son of God canceled the sin-debt of the whole world. Perfectly fulfilling God's Law in life and death, Christ won forgiveness for all.

Even if you and I had been the only ones on earth, He would still have lived, suffered, and died just for you and me. In the movie *Barabbas*, which was shown some years ago on the movie screen as well as on television, the last scene showed Barabbas fully realizing what Jesus had done for him. Jesus had personally taken the place of Barabbas, being crucified on the very cross that had been reserved for him. Of course we do not know what really happened to

Barabbas after his release. But we do know this: our Lord's living, as well as His dying, was a personal act in our behalf. He was mankind's substitute, to be sure, but He was also *our own personal substitute*, for God had chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world. All of this means that today and forever our concerns are His concerns; our problems are His problems; our needs are His needs, every one of them.

Our Choice

Because God has chosen us in Him from eternity, has worked out our salvation in time, and has brought us to faith by the Gospel, we are now able to do some choosing of our own as He empowers us. We have a choice in how we will live our lives. We have a choice in how we will help extend the kingdom of God on this earth. We have a choice as to how we will make an effort to share the blessed Gospel message with our own families and our neighbors.

The new life given to us by the Holy Spirit is not to be a life of luxury. It is rather to be a life of self-sacrificial service.

Therefore we ought to fill our lives with the Lenten and Easter message of salvation for lost mankind through the suffering and death of Christ in order that we will gladly burn ourselves out by sharing and spreading the joy of the forgiveness of our sins. For God has chosen us as His instruments to employ the Gospel message, so that lost mankind will stop choosing Barabbas.

—F. Archer

DOCTRINAL THEMES

in the

Book of Concord

The Triune God - The God of Our Salvation

Most of us are quite familiar with at least two of the three ecumenical (universal) creeds of the Christian Church, the Apostolic (Apostles') and the Nicene. These we use regularly in our worship services. The third creed, the Athanasian (*Lutheran Hymnal*, page 53) is often used on Trinity Sunday in our churches. For this reason it is the least known of our three creeds. The Athanasian Creed, like the Nicene, was written to defend what Scripture teaches concerning the Triune God and the deity of Christ.

The Nicene Creed was named after the city of Nicea, near Constantinople, where a very important church assembly convened in 325 A.D. This Council had been called for the purpose of settling a dispute that had arisen between those who believed what Scripture teaches concerning the Trinity and several groups who in various ways denied the Bible doctrine. The leader of the opposition was a man named Arius.

No Compromise

After much discussion a number of those present decided to promote

a compromise which would satisfy both sides. The ensuing debate actually centered in one word, in fact a single letter. In the Nicene Creed we confess Jesus Christ to be "the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, Being of one substance with the Father, By Whom all things were made." It was this phrase "of one substance with the Father" which some wanted changed to "being of similar substance as the Father." It did not seem like an earth-shaking change. In fact, in the Greek original it involved adding only one letter. But behind this apparently minor change was an effort to undermine the doctrine of the Trinity. Arius and his followers believed that Jesus was not God, that He did not possess equal power and majesty and glory with the Father.

Those who upheld the Biblical teaching of Christ as true God in every respect and the three Persons of the Godhead as co-equal and co-eternal were led by a staunch and eloquent young spokesman named Athanasius. The ensuing debate

between Athanasius and the Arians and semi-Arians was a long and bitter struggle. However, by the grace of God the truth finally prevailed, and the Council of Nicea became one of the great moments in the history of the Christian Church.

Although the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds received their names from this important Council in 325 A.D., the exact creeds as we know them were gradually formulated by the church in the centuries that followed. They became and remain the standard by which all Trinitarian expressions are judged. Luther called them the grandest production of the church since the days of the apostles.

Triune God Essential

The Athanasian Creed is a clear and most precise confession of the Triune God. It describes as accurately as is possible in human language the mystery of the Trinity, part of the depth of the riches both of the knowledge and of the wisdom of God. It weaves together both the Trinity and Unity of God, showing how the unity, the oneness of God, does not obliterate the distinction of the three Persons, nor does the identity of the Persons sever the Unity of Essence. There is equality in every respect between Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Thus each of the three Persons is God, and yet there are not three gods but One God. Flesh and blood has not revealed this to us, but our Father which is in heaven.

The Athanasian Creed also shows how faith in the Triune God lies at the very foundation of our faith, how

it is absolutely essential to salvation.

“Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic (universal, Christian) faith. Which faith except everyone do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. And the catholic (Christian) faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity.”

During the days of the Reformation the controversy between Luther and the Catholics did not include the doctrine of the Trinity. In this area both sides accepted the views of Scripture. This explains why, with the exception of a few brief paragraphs in the *Augsburg Confession* and the *Smalcald Articles*, there is little said concerning the Trinity in the rest of our Lutheran Confessions. The *Book of Concord* does, however, condemn a number of false Trinitarian ideas that were prevalent outside the Catholic Church in those days. These and other false views found support and in many cases have continued to this very day. The Unitarians, the Universalists, and Jehovah's Witnesses all in one way or another deny the Triune God, and thus exclude themselves from God's kingdom.

Idolatry Today

So often we hear: Why is the Trinity so important? Of what practical value is one's belief in the Triune God? The answer lies in our creeds. It is absolutely essential that we know and believe in God as He has revealed Himself in His Word. When we reject the Triune God, we reject

the One and Only God, the God of our salvation. Any other worship is idolatry.

Think about this the next time your pastor speaks of those organizations which make religion or prayer an essential part of their existence, but recognize only some vague supreme being as "god". Think about this the next time you are attending some school, or athletic, or social event in which there is an opening prayer or invocation. Ask yourself: To whom is this prayer addressed? To the Triune God revealed in Scripture, or to a mind-made idol? Think about the Athanasian Creed the next time someone asks you how you feel about prayer in public schools, or

when you are confronted with the old familiar arguments: "We're all worshipping the same God, aren't we?" or "Worship at the church of your choice." Remember that worship is not worship and prayer is not prayer unless it is directed to the true God and flows from hearts filled with faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

"God is a Spirit; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24) Let us appreciate and cherish our confessional heritage, especially our three creeds which concisely and boldly confess and proclaim THE TRIUNE GOD as THE GOD OF OUR SALVATION.

—D. Schierenbeck

Unionistic Involvements Ourselves and Others

In November of 1965 Professor Edmund Reim presented a study of the *Aid Association for Lutherans* (the AAL) to the faculty of Immanuel Lutheran College in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. His conclusion, that "as a school we cannot solicit support from this source without denying the scriptural principles to which our CLC stands committed," was approved by the faculty.

Since Professor Reim's study made evident that the AAL was involved in "church work" and that "it was joint work with such as were no longer joined in the confession of their faith, hence unionistic in character," a process of instruction and admonition began among the pastors, teachers, and members of our church body on this matter of unionistic involvement in fraternal insurance companies.

The CLC Position

We should not have had a particularly difficult problem on this issue, since we had already declared in our confession *Concerning Church Fellowship* (1961): "We further believe that *all manifestations* of fellowship are forbidden with those who deviate from the Word of God in their teachings. (Rom. 16:17b)" Also: "We reject the plea of 'cooperation in externals' when it is used

as license for actual joint church work with errorists." "Cooperation with church groups having a different confession (in doing church work) can hardly be described as avoiding, withdrawing, or coming out from among them and being separate." (CCF, pp. 41, 43, 35)

Yet there is no doubt that this has proved to be a difficult issue for many CLC members and congregations. Nevertheless, by God's grace our church body was enabled at the 1976 and 1978 conventions to pass resolutions (unanimously, I believe) that call for the elimination of this unionistic leaven from our midst, "so that by God's mercy and grace in Christ Jesus we all act in accordance with God's Word and speak the same thing."

A Missouri Synod Pastor

As we continue to learn and teach and admonish in this area, we are very often encouraged by the testimony of others outside our church body who have come to the same conclusions as we and have even been willing to give up their membership in the AAL and *Lutheran Brotherhood* (the LB) for reasons of conscience.

For example, a recent issue of *Christian News* (Nov. 20, 1978) printed a letter to the AAL from a Missouri Synod pastor in Minnesota, who stated among other things: "We wrote to you and spoke to different men within your organization, protesting the use of our monies to support heterodox church bodies. . . . And now we read of more of our monies being used in support of Christ Seminary—Seminex. . . . Therefore we cannot in good conscience continue our insurance with AAL any longer. While it will cost us a good deal of money at this late date to surrender our policies . . . , it is something we must do."

Of particular interest in this letter is the pastor's suggestion to the AAL: "We . . . stated that all grants should . . . be made proportionately on the basis of the number of policy holders within each church body. You, however, wrote in reply that it would be impossible for you to do this." If this is true, AAL members who have used this argument to defend their continued membership will have to reevaluate their position. In the case of the CLC this argument of course carries no weight, since the CLC does not accept any AAL benefits. Our point is that membership in the AAL in itself commits us to its unionistic church work regardless of whether our money is supporting such church work or not.

The Wisconsin Synod

Among Lutherans in our country we perhaps could expect the most support for our position from the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS). There are some in that church body who are concerned about the propriety of receiving funds for their church work from organizations such as the AAL and the LB, as we reported in the January 1978 *Lutheran Spokesman*.

A special committee of five was appointed by the 1977 WELS convention to give this matter "careful study in the light of Scripture" and report to the ten

districts of the WELS in 1978. The *Northwestern Lutheran* of August 6, 1978 brings the reaction of the ten districts to the findings of this special Committee on Grants. A copy of the committee report is not at hand, but we can gain an insight into its contents from the report from the:

South Atlantic District: "A matter of great concern was the report of the Committee on Grants. The delegates concurred with the report that at present there is no violation of Scriptural principles in the requesting and receiving of grants, but urged continuous scrutiny of the philosophies and purposes of those organizations which offer grants and constant evaluation to make sure that the reception of such gifts does not undermine the free giving of our members."

With that much understanding we take note of what was done by the other districts:

Arizona-California: ". . . the convention adopted a statement that special grants be considered a matter of Christian liberty, but that caution be used in applying for and receiving them."

Dakota-Montana: ". . . the delegates adopted a resolution encouraging the members of the District to study the report carefully to gain a clear understanding of the principles involved and advocating constant watchfulness and self-discipline in this area of the church's work."

Michigan: "The report of the Committee was hotly debated, many arguments being offered in favor of and against the acceptance of aid from such outside WELS's fellowship. Because of the wide disagreement among the delegates, the entire matter was tabled and deferred to the area pastoral conferences for further study."

Minnesota: "By rejecting a resolution supporting the recommendations of the Synod's Committee on Grants, the District in effect did not express any positive agreement."

Nebraska: "The Committee on Grants was asked to restudy the issue and clarify its document for the 1979 convention. A motion to criticize the committee report more sharply lost by only three votes."

Pacific Northwest: "The Report of the Committee on Grants was also adopted without a dissenting vote."

North Wisconsin: "Expressing the opinion that the Report of the Committee on Grants 'does not adequately treat the matter of encumbered gifts' and 'falls short of healing the disunity found among us over the matter of seeking and receiving grants from outside sources,' the convention resolved that 'we express our conviction that the committee's report is inadequate in some areas of concern to our brethren,' that we 'ask the committee to continue its work so that eventually a policy may be recommended to which all can agree,' and that we 'encourage our pastors and congregations to promote and practice good stewardship principles and resist the encroachments of organizations outside the church into congregational life.'"

Southeastern Wisconsin: ". . . provoked a great deal of discussion. Recognizing that there are no Scriptural principles which prohibit the use of aid from sources outside the Church, the delegates 'endorsed in substance' the committee's report."

Western Wisconsin: "Pastor H. Wicke . . . cited many warnings concerning the dangers of becoming dependent on grants, with probably poor stewardship resulting from this. At the same time he reminded the convention that we dare not judge others when they in Christian freedom accept that which God's Word neither commands nor forbids."

It is obvious from the above reports that there has been no meeting of minds in the Wisconsin Synod on this issue. It seems clear that their main objections to the receiving of such funds revolve around the Scriptural teachings of stewardship and free-will giving. This is of course an important concern.

But in our judgment a much greater problem has to do with the gathering of

such funds through the unionistic practices of fraternal benefit societies to which the members of the synod belong. We are surprised and saddened that this aspect of the problem does not seem to bother them. It is the part of wisdom to recognize that money can have a detrimental effect on our confessional integrity.

D. Lau & G. Sydow

Faith Makes the Difference

*A chapel talk given at Immanuel
Lutheran College, Eau Claire, Wisconsin*

Hebrews 11:4—By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.

“Two people do the same thing, yet it is not the same.” These words of the church father apply very fittingly to the two brothers of whom our text speaks. We see Cain and Abel bringing their sacrifices to God, and outwardly we can find almost no difference between the two acts of divine worship. To our eyes Cain’s sacrifice seems in no way secondary to Abel’s in quality. The book of Genesis says that it was in fact Cain who took the initiative in bringing an offering. Cain came first, and Abel followed.

Again, Cain, like Abel, brought the offering to the true God, to the faithful and gracious Lord Jehovah. So close was he still to the great events of creation, the fall into sin, and the promise of a Savior, that Cain too was undoubtedly theologically sound, possessing a correct knowledge of divine truth.

Nor may we find any significant

difference in the fact that Cain brought an offering of farm produce and Abel an offering of the fat pieces of a lamb, for both brought the fruits of their own labor, Cain being a farmer and Abel a shepherd.

What Is the Difference?

So we see two people doing the same thing, and yet it is not the same. For our text tells us that Abel’s sacrifice was “more excellent” in God’s sight than Cain’s. Genesis already hints at the reason. On the one hand, we are told, Cain brought some of the fruits of the field as an offering to the Lord. On the other hand, Abel brought of the *firstlings* of his flock and of the *fat pieces* thereof. Apparently Cain offered only that which first came to hand, whereas Abel offered his first and best. Thus we have a suggestion, already in Genesis, that Cain may have offered only because it was time and

custom to give, so that his sacrifice would have been merely an outward thing and not of the heart. Abel, however, selected and gave the best he had—an indication of worship that truly involved the heart.

But it is our text, the New Testament divine commentary on this incident, that shows us clearly the basic difference between the two brothers and their sacrifices. **BY FAITH ABEL OFFERED UNTO GOD A MORE EXCELLENT SACRIFICE THAN CAIN.** Abel's act of worship was done as a fruit of faith, and it was because of this unseen faith of his heart that God looked with favor on him and his sacrifice. By contrast, Cain's was done without faith, and on him and his sacrifice God did not look with favor.

Abel's Faith

In the worship of God, then, the presence or lack of faith makes vital difference. What was the faith of Abel? When we read through the book of Hebrews, we learn that such faith was bound up with the promised Savior, Jesus Christ, who would one day bring redemption from sin and death, undoing all the effects of Satan's temptation and Adam's fall.

Our text adds that it was through this faith that Abel **OBTAINED WITNESS THAT HE WAS RIGHTEOUS, GOD TESTIFYING OF HIS GIFTS.** In some way God made it clear to the two brothers that He regarded Abel as righteous in His sight because of the *faith* that lay behind the gifts he brought. It's not that Abel was righteous in himself,

for Genesis tells us that Adam begot his children, not in God's image, but in his own sinful and corrupt image. (Gen. 5:3) God regarded Abel as righteous for the sake of the promised Savior in whom he trusted, that Savior who would one day fulfill all righteousness for every sinful child of Adam, that Savior who would one day do right everything we have done wrong!

Abel is dead, but he is not silent. **BY IT (by his faith) HE BEING DEAD YET SPEAKETH.** In the pages of Holy Scripture Abel teaches also us that it is only through faith in Jesus Christ that we receive that gift of righteousness by which alone we and our worship will be acceptable to the Lord God.

Our Lenten and Easter Worship

"Two people do the same thing, yet it is not the same." *Faith* makes the all-important difference! In the days that lie before us in this Holy Week and Easter season, we will all have repeated opportunities to bring sacrifices of worship to God. Will He look on these sacrifices with favor, or will He reject them as utterly worthless in His sight? It all depends on whether or not there is faith in our hearts!

If, for example, we attend the Lord's Supper on this Maundy Thursday in an outward way, merely as a matter of custom or because it's the right thing to do, then our attendance will be worse than worthless. But if we go to the Lord's Table with faith in His words: "This is My body, this is My blood, given and shed for

you for the remission of sins," then we will be partakers of all the riches of His grace and forgiveness.

If on Good Friday our commemoration of Christ's death does not go beyond a Memorial Day kind of observance, then it would be better if we did not set our foot into the house of God. But our worship will truly be pleasing to God if we can make this our believing confession:

I caused Thy grief and sighing
By evils multiplying
As countless as the sands. (LH 171:4)

If on Easter we attend church out of mere custom or for the purpose of showing off and seeing the latest spring fashions, our festival worship will not be accepted by God. But how different it will be if we go with hearts that have found peace and

hope in that Truth of truths:

Thou hast died for my transgression,
All my sins on Thee were laid;
Thou hast won for me salvation,
On the cross my debt was paid.
From the grave I shall arise
And shall meet Thee in the skies.
Death itself is transitory;
I shall lift my head in glory. (LH 207:4)

Since faith makes the difference, may God give us this day the faith of an Abel, graciously answering that prayer which we have just sung:

Grant that Thy Spirit prompt my praises,
Then shall my singing surely please Thine ear;
Sweet are the sounds my heart then raises,
My prayer in truth and spirit Thou wilt hear.
Then shall Thy Spirit raise my heart to Thee
To sing Thee psalms of praise in high degree. (LH 21:3)

—C. M. Kuehne

INTERPRETATION IX

A survey of the principles of hermeneutics (interpretation) would be incomplete without mention of *dispensationalism*. This method of interpretation contrasts distinctly from the historical-critical principles used by liberals. It also varies from the historical-exegetical (historical-literary) approach advocated by pastors and teachers in the CLC. Liberals consider the Bible just another human book, subject to humanistic tests regarding its accuracy and authenticity. We regard the Bible as the inspired Word of God, which tells the truth with literary variety—sometimes using figures and sym-

bols. Dispensationalism is an approach to the study of Scriptures which takes literally sections of the Bible which the Holy Spirit intended to be understood figuratively. (On this subject I acknowledge the resources of, and recommend reading, an article by Pastor Paul Nolting, "Dispensationalism," in the *Journal of Theology*, Vol. 14., No. 1, March 1974, pages 1-10.)

According to the *New Scofield Reference Bible*, "A dispensation is a period of time during which man is tested in respect to his obedience to some specific revelation of the will of God." In every dispensation there is

(1) a covenant—expression of God's will; (2) a stewardship—responsibility of mankind to obey; and (3) a probation—the time period during which this particular test is dominant in history. When men fail the test, there follows judgment—and then a new dispensation. The *New Scofield Reference Bible* lists seven dispensations:

1. **Innocence** - Genesis 1:28 (or Freedom);
2. **Conscience or Moral Responsibility** - Genesis 3:7 (or Self-Determination);
3. **Human Government** - Genesis 8: 15 (Civil Government);
4. **Promise** - Genesis 12:1 (or Patriarchal Rule);
5. **Law** - Exodus 19:1 (Mosaic Law);
6. **Church** - Acts 2:1 (Grace);
7. **Kingdom** - Revelation 20:4 (Millennium).

The prevailing emphasis of modern dispensationalists is with the last two. Dispensational interpreters are by and large interested in, and concerned about, the future.

History

The Reformation was a world-changing event. One of the by-products of this era was the idea of futuristic interpretation. During the early 1500's after recognition of the Scriptural teaching concerning justification by faith without the deeds of the law, all the Reformers branded the Roman Papacy as the prophesied Antichrist. In order to avoid the stigma of this identification, Roman Catholic Jesuits counteracted by asserting that the Antichrist of Scrip-

ture was someone coming yet in the future.

During the 19th century the principles of futurism began infecting the Protestant Church in England. The most famous of its proponents was a man named John Nelson Darby, who started the Brethren Movement in Ireland and England about 1830. The adherents of his teaching became known as the Plymouth Brethren. The principles and conclusions of Darby were compiled and amplified in the *Scofield Reference Bible* of 1909 (revised in 1917, further revised in 1969 in the new Scofield Reference Bible). Dispensationalism is not the property of any one church body, but has become an important tenet of many so-called fundamentalist, evangelical, conservative groups. This futuristic teaching has made inroads into some areas of Lutheranism.

Evaluation

As a hermeneutical approach dispensationalism suffers in three areas. In the first place an outline of biblical history is imposed on the text of Scripture which detracts from the theological realities of sin and grace. Secondly, because of this view of history, many Scriptures are interpreted differently from their intended meaning. Finally, with such an emphasis on future events, the spiritual blessings of Christ's vicarious atonement are undermined by the prospect of a future, temporal kingdom on earth.

Although the *New Scofield Reference Bible* argues that salvation in all

ages is solely through faith in Jesus Christ, it still insists that God dealt with people in different eras in different ways. In our own instruction we consider various periods of biblical history as a convenient pedagogical device. For the dispensationalist there is much more. One John Walvoord says, "The unfounded notion that God treats all saints of all ages exactly alike is hard to displace in the theology of the church." (*Op. cit.*, Nolting, page 5) Dispensationalists argue that God has a different purpose in dealing with Israel, the Church (which is called a "mystery parenthesis"), and the Gentiles. However, we believe mankind's problem in each era is the same: they are fatally enslaved by sin. The entire history of revelation features God's proclamation about the solution for mankind's sin through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. This Gospel is the same for Israel, the Church, Gentiles, everybody.

Dispensationalism has developed a scenario of the end of the world which will involve among other things these events: the Rapture (Christ comes *for* His Church; the believers are taken out of the world), the Tribulation (a seven-year period during which the Antichrist is revealed, nations prepare for the war of Armageddon, there is mass conversion of the Jews), the Millennium (Christ comes *with* His Church to establish a 1000-year rule on earth), and finally the Judgment. In order to defend this outline many Scriptures are interpreted, not according to their apparent meaning, but in order

to fit into the outline. The prophecies of Daniel regarding the Great Colossus (ch. 2), the Four Beasts (ch. 7), and the Seventy Weeks (ch. 9) are wrested from their evident fulfillment in connection with the coming of Christ to events of the future. The Olivet Discourse of Jesus (Matthew 24) is made to harmonize with the dispensational outline. The book of Revelation from chapter four to the end is considered solely a prophecy of future events and not depictions of the on-going struggle between the ungodly world and the victorious followers of the Lamb. Prophecies, in Isaiah, Zechariah, and Ezekiel, which speak of healing for spiritual Israel in the coming of the Messiah, are understood regarding a future, national Israel—in Palestine, and Jerusalem . . . with Temple.

Dispensationalists say their approach to the study of Scriptures is literal interpretation. This sounds admirable, especially considering the prevalence of historical-criticism and humanistic relevance. But not all portions of Scripture are intended to be taken literally. We have earlier in this series asserted that the passages of Scripture have only one intended meaning (the "second" rule of hermeneutics). So Luther observed and insisted. Sometimes the one intended meaning is figurative. The text itself will give the clue as to how a particular passage is to be understood. We interpret the Scriptures *literarily*—understanding that some of its words are to be taken literally, others figuratively.

“The authority of the Word can be undermined by a faulty ‘literal’ hermeneutical principle as well as by the historical-critical method. The futurist social gospel of the millennium is as deadly as the social gospel emphases of the World Council of Churches.

The conversion of the Savior from sin to a political-social ruler in a future kingdom is as destructive of the faith as is the conversion of the Savior from sin into a paragon of moralistic virtue.” (Nolting, page 8, 9)

—M. Sydow

Daily Devotions

THE HYMNS OF EASTER

Although Lent does not give way to Easter until the middle of April, we do not hesitate to sing the songs of the Resurrection the whole month through. After all, it is in the light of the Passion season that the glory of Easter shines forth. The Resurrection of our Lord is the divine seal upon His redemptive work, proof positive that Jesus is the God of our salvation. Easter, then, is the very crossroads of history, and every Sunday a “little Easter”. Each week we are reminded of Christ’s resurrection and reassured that God will also raise us from the dead. It is this emphasis which caused the Sundays *in* Lent not to be considered Sundays *of* Lent.

In the early days of the New Testament church Easter was not only the chief festival, but also the beginning of the church year. It is not surprising then that some of our Easter hymns are centuries old. Hymns 187, 191, 199, 204, 205 for example.

April	Scripture		Hymn for Meditation (Lutheran Hymnal)
1	Isaiah 63:1-9	209	Jesus has fought our foes for us.
2	Revelation 5	211	The Lamb is the Lion and our Lord.
3	1 Peter 1:3-9	207:1-2	None can fully sing the glory of the Resurrection story.
4	Acts 13:26-39	207:3-4	Through this Jesus is preached unto you forgiveness.
5	Psalms 89:1-8	207:5-6	“I will sing of the mercies of the Lord.”
6	Exodus 15:1-21	204	Ancient Israel’s redemption pictured ours.
7	John 11:18-46	196	Every one of us who are the Lord’s shall hear, “Come forth.”
8	Matthew 21:1-16	161	“Hosanna in the highest!”
9	Psalms 118:14-29	205	“I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord.”
10	Colossians 2:6-15	192	Risen with Christ our Lord, we live.
11	Isaiah 25:1-8	190	Christ has broken death’s strong chain!
12	Psalms 118:1-13	313	The body He gave. The blood He shed. O give thanks!
13	Psalms 98	210	Let songs of praise His triumph tell.
14	Acts 2:22-39	195	Death could not hold Christ our Lord.
15	Matthew 28:1-10	191	Christ the Lord is risen today.
16	Job 19:22-27	200	I know that my Redeemer lives!
17	1 Corinthians 15:12-28	187	Christ is risen indeed.
18	John 20:1-10	203	See the place where Jesus lay.
19	John 20:11-18	188	Why weepest thou? Jesus lives!
20	Luke 24:13-35	194	Abide with us, Thou King of Grace.

21	Luke 24:36-49	197	When His name is preached, Christ comes to us.
22	John 20:24-31	208	"My Lord and my God!"
23	Romans 4:23-5:11	189	He is risen! We are reconciled!
24	I Corinthians 15:51-58	193	Where, O Death, is now thy sting?
25	Acts 10:34-43	202	Hell today is vanquished, heaven is won today.
26	Romans 8:1-11	201	Jesus lives! Death's reign is done.
27	Revelation 1:9-18	199	Now above the sky He's King.
28	John 21:1-19	422	Follow Him who died freely for you—and rose again.
29	John 10:11-18	368	The Lord, who is alive forevermore, is my Shepherd.
30	I Corinthians 15:35-49	206	In this flesh I then shall see Jesus Christ eternally.

—W. V. Schaller

CLC Directory Corrections

Lowell R. Moen
 3455 Jill Ave.
 Eau Claire, WI 54701
 Pastor Robert S. List
 208 Le Sueur Ave., Box 62
 Eagle Lake, MN 56024

The CLC Board of Education

The present members of the Board of Education are Robert Rehm, L. W. Schierenbeck, Gerhardt Mueller, and Gerhardt Voigt.

Treasurer's Report

July 1, 1978—February 1, 1979

RECEIPTS:	JANUARY	TO DATE
Offerings	\$ 30,787.50	\$173,528.16
Memorials	49.00	217.50
Interest earned	—	6.56
TOTAL RECEIPTS	\$ 30,836.59	\$173,752.22
DISBURSEMENTS:		
Retirement Benefits	2,271.00	15,074.00
Emergency Support	—	1,047.00
Capital Investments	2,204.27	12,772.49
General Administration	463.01	4,675.72
Missions - Administration	8,493.15	58,617.33
Board of Education	—	46.00
Immanuel Lutheran College	11,200.25	78,401.75
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	\$ 24,631.68	\$170,634.29
CASH BALANCE FOR PERIOD	\$ 6,204.91	\$ 3,117.93
CASH BALANCE, JULY 1, 1978	—	6,020.10
CASH BALANCE, FEBRUARY 1, 1979	—	\$ 9,138.03

Installation

As authorized by President Egbert Albrecht, I installed Robert Reim as pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, Broomfield, Colorado, in a worship service thanking our living God for the continuation of the Gospel ministry. The installation was held on January 14, 1979.

—Michael Sydow

Coordinating Council

The Coordinating Council of the Church of the Lutheran Confession will meet at the Holiday Inn at Eau Claire, Wisconsin on Wednesday and Thursday, April 25 and 26. The first session will begin at 8:00 a.m.

—Egbert Albrecht, President

348 9699 1 139
SCHALLER, PAUL REV MRS
20864 HAVILAND AVE
HAYWARD CA

94541

OTHER RECEIPTS:

ILC Expansion Fund	\$ 8,142.26	\$ 24,414.15
Mission Extension Fund	809.46	7,030.68
Udo Education Fund	494.68	1,089.55
Nigerian Fund	10.00	516.14
Nigerian Visitation Fund	10.00	313.65

COMPARATIVE FIGURES

	JANUARY	SEVEN MONTHS
BUDGET OFFERINGS NEEDED	\$ 27,543.00	\$192,801.00
BUDGET OFFERINGS RECEIVED	30,836.55	173,752.22
SURPLUS FOR THE MONTH	\$ 3,293.55	
DEFICIT FOR THE YEAR		\$ 19,048.78
BUDGET OFFERINGS, 1977-78	\$ 21,309.04	\$133,798.14
INCREASE FOR 1978-79	9,527.51	39,954.08

Respectfully Submitted,
Lowell R. Moen, Trustees Treasurer
Bertram J. Naumann, Chairman