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TEMPTATION

READ MATTHEW 4:1-11

The Spirit drove Him into the wilderness. It was not a very logical place for the just annoyed Messiah to begin His rule over His people Israel. But the Servant submits and spends 40 days and nights contemplating that kingdom. But He is not alone. Never alone. A voice keeps hammering away at Him relentlessly, persistently, viciously: Did God really say? Do you suppose God really wants you to suffer? Should the Beloved Son be treated like this?

Yes, we know the methods of the Evil One. One day in the far distant past, under opposite circumstances he came into God's beautiful garden. Here the children of God lived in perfect happiness surrounded by every blessing of a gracious God. Yet under ideal circumstances the Devil managed to make Eve question the goodness of God. He led her to actually distrust her wonderful God. He brought her to take matters in her own hands and *improve* the condition of man, though it involved disobedience to God.

And now the situation is reversed. Where Satan went into God's garden, Eve's descendant must go into the stark and friendless wilderness of Satan. Where Eve had everything perfect, Jesus sits bereft of companionship, burdened with impossible responsibility, and phys-

ically deprived of food for 40 days, starving. And in such awesome circumstances the day arrives that He should turn the tables and crush the Serpent's head.

He Trusted in God

"If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." The force of this thought which Satan hurled at Jesus has often been lost by the peculiar interpretation that Satan was trying to make Jesus doubt whether He was the Son of God. Satan is a little more subtle than that. The "if" in this case does not imply any doubt in the reality of Jesus being the Son of God. Satan builds his wicked temptation on the very truthfulness of Jesus' divinity.

The temptation lies in the words, "Command these stones." You are starving, you are miserable, you cannot build in that condition. Why should you, the Son of God, put up with such a miserable lot. Take things into your own hands, capable hands, and do something about this. Notice how close this is to the temptation of Eve. Are you getting a fair shake? Satan wants Jesus to doubt the providence and goodness of God toward the "beloved Son."

How perfectly Jesus met this

temptation. God had placed Him in the wilderness and God had placed Him in this situation of starvation. God would take care of Him. His mind harked back to another wilderness where the discontented children of Eve had to learn the lesson: "Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." Jesus refused to use His divine power to extricate Himself from the situation into which His Father had placed Him. He trusted in God. The shield of faith caught the fiery dart and Satan was wounded.

This temptation would be echoed again and again. It would become intense at the end. Peter tries to force the divine hand by taking the sword in Gethsemane and tempts Jesus to call the 12 legions of angels. They spit it at Him on the cross with the save yourself, if you are God's Son. Himself He cannot save. But the holy Servant kept high the shield of faith, and refused to escape the cup His Father poured for Him.

How often Satan attacks us with this same temptation. You don't have to put up with the raw deal

you have. Do something about it. Why should you suffer more than other Christians? Why are you stuck out here in the backwoods with such a poor call, a place not worthy of your talents. Change the course of your life, change the course of providence so that you can serve more effectively. How often the church and individual have forgotten that building the kingdom is not deciding on a fruitful project of our own which guarantees success, but the challenge is always submitting to the will of God wherever we are placed today.

No Crown Without a Cross

Swiftly and powerfully Satan switches his tactics. He hopes to identify his suggestion with the thinking of the weakened Jesus. When the attempt to make Jesus doubt the goodness of God failed, and Jesus showed forth this amazing childlike trust, Satan figures to get Jesus to carry this trust to superstitious extremes. He takes him to the pinnacle of the temple and gives a challenge to this trust. You

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wish to build the kingdom by trust, then use your faith to establish it. If you are the Son of God hurl yourself down, trusting in that God who promised to bear you up on the hands of the angels.

The carpenter's son from Nazareth must fulfill the Old Testament promises and be Israel's King. How can this be accomplished with the Roman in the land, and with the Jewish leaders suspicious and fearful of all who would do anything to antagonize Rome. In the early hours of the day Jesus perhaps sees the worshipers streaming through the temple gates for the morning hour of prayer. In a moment the incense will arise before the Holy of Holies beseeching God to come and rescue His people, to deliver them as He had promised. Surely in this moment it would be the perfect time to float down from heaven into the midst of God's Israel. This would be the perfect sequel to the appearance of Gabriel at the side of Zacharias some thirty years ago. Jesus had just been anointed King at Jordan, and this is the moment of coronation.

But suddenly another wilderness story comes to the mind of Jesus. At Massah the Israelites had bitterly complained at the lack of water and wished they were back in Egypt. They had objected to the wilderness path which would lead them to the promised land of milk and honey. Later Moses reminded them of this incident when they were about to enter the land. He warned them never to put God to the test again with their objections to the way in which He led them.

Never to dare to seek a different way.

Powerfully and surely Jesus grasped this sword of the Spirit and thrust it deep into Satan's side: "It is written, 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord, Thy God'." This would be an objection to the cross, a seeking the crown without the path of suffering which God had set before Him. His work was to submit to the will and word of God, wherever that might lead Him. He would leap from greater heights and fall to greater depths, even to being forsaken by God. But He would then trust God to sustain Him, for it would be in the course set by the Father.

How often this temptation came back at Jesus. Especially through Peter who objected so violently to the cross. Again in the appeal of the crowd which would make Him a King. And finally with all the burning fierceness of hell in the Garden, where He would writhe on the ground making sure that the cross was indeed the only path to the end.

How easy Satan has it with the churches of today. He uses this temptation with signal success. Again and again he calls upon the churches to "meet a new challenge," to "grasp an opportunity to expand its influence." How ready the churches are to use every new glamorous approach to establish the kingdom, every new method to statistical success. Again and again the methods of God are discarded and churches fall for the big splash approach. And how churches are ridiculed who fail to grasp the op-

portunities, because one little word of God stands in the way. How we are cursed and condemned for refusing to join in the ecumenical movement with its enormous opportunities, and base our objection on some obscure little Bible passage!

The Father's Business

The last temptation is at once the greatest and the crassest. What visions suddenly appear before the eyes of the young man from Nazareth! He sees all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. Millions of people in different lands and continents in different eras of the world. These were promised to Messiah in the Old Testament. The uttermost ends of the earth would be His possessions. And how could this be accomplished when all these kingdoms were steeped in their wicked ways and wicked beliefs, all so completely under the dominion of Satan. Only if Satan releases his hold on mankind, can they become the kingdoms of the Lord.

But Satan in desperation goes a step too far. Bow down and worship me! A beautiful compromise, a practical solution. But it would not be the Father's business. With the last thunderbolt from Deuteronomy, Jesus crushes the serpent's head: "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written: 'Thou shalt worship the Lord, Thy God, and Him only shalt Thou serve.'" This would not be service to God. It was not the Father's work to take the kingdoms of this world and place them under

a new rule. This world must be judged and destroyed and a new world built on its ashes in a new creation by the Spirit of the Lord Christ.

And so the Master walked for three years in that uncompromising way. He would take no help from the leaders of Israel, from the Romans. He would proclaim His judgment on all flesh. He would calmly walk alone as a failure to the cross, and 40 days later confidently send 12 somewhat weak and fearful men out into the world to conquer it.

Praise be to our Lord Jesus, who in the wilderness reversed the fatal disobedience of Adam and Eve, and by a perfect trust submitted completely to the will and word of God.

We begin now our 40 days of Lent. The 40 days hark back to these 40 days and to the 40 years of Israel in the wilderness. It is a period each year during which we ponder again the mighty victory of our Lord over the Evil One from hell. It is a period during which we gain strength and resolve from this victory to stand against Satan as he continues to attack us day after day.

We are strong in the knowledge that our Lord has vanquished him. We are strong in the trust and faith we daily seek as the Spirit's gift. We are strong in the power of that mighty Word which still lays Satan low. But of ourselves we are impotent. Hasten then to Calvary with our Lord and there be instilled with the desire to submit and subject ourselves to the will of God.

W. S.

FIRST PETER

A Book for the Passion Season

It is not exactly a new book. The first edition came out about 1905 years ago. But it is more timely than any Lenten books written in the 20th century. Do yourself a favor and deny yourself 15 minutes a day during Lent to study this letter.

Simon Peter made a point of addressing it to you, for it is written to exiles who are staying for a short time in this foreign land, but who are looking forward to going home to Jerusalem. Peter writes particularly to exiles who are scattered in small colonies and who are having a pretty rough time of it during their exile.

How does one read a book of the Bible and get the maximum out of it? There are three obstacles to remove before the Bible becomes as easy and clear as an article in the Reader's Digest.

1. There is the barrier of language. Peter wrote in Greek and the exact meaning of the Greek must be determined before Peter's message can be communicated to people who read only English. After the precise meaning of the Greek is determined, these thoughts must then be recast in smooth English which will make the same impact on the reader today as Peter's Greek made on his readers 1900 years ago. Here we thank God for thousands of scholars who have perfected themselves in the Greek of

the first century. The archaeologist has also helped by digging up thousands of scraps of paper from this time, including everything from school essays to grocery lists. From these the precise usage of a word in a given time and area is determined.

Our first letter of Peter has a good example of this in 3:21. Bible students were always perplexed by the meaning of Baptism as the "answer" of a good conscience. Recently we have found the word used in every day business transactions of the first century and that the sense in this verse is that Baptism is an "*appeal* of a good conscience" to God. The true comfort comes out.

The art of translating has also received massive attention in this century. The language barrier is finally crossed when the translator finds the smoothest and clearest English to make the same impact on your ears that Peter made on the ears of his readers. Your pastor will help you in suggesting the best translation for your use.

2. There is the barrier of history. We are 19 centuries removed from the actual situation. The writer of a letter takes many things for granted which he knows his readers know. When we answer a letter we do not repeat the thoughts of the first letter, but address ourselves to the questions or problems raised.

So Peter may base his letter on certain reports which have come to Rome. But this barrier can be removed, at least to a very great extent. By long and hard study of the entire New Testament and of the first century history we can reconstruct the situation and place ourselves into the first century. Later in this article we shall attempt to do a little of that in connection with First Peter.

3. The final barrier to reading the Bible with comprehension lies in our flesh. By nature we do not want to listen to God. We must be aware of our natural tendency to talk to God instead of listening. We often read into the Bible what we wish to find. This calls for emptying our minds of all earlier notions and truly listening. This can only be done through prayer. Humbly approach a book and pray without ceasing that the Holy Spirit open your ears to hear.

The Background To First Peter

First we want to picture the congregations and Christians to whom Peter is writing. In verse one he mentions five Roman provinces which cover 95% of Asia Minor. Find this area on the map in the back of your Bible called "The Missionary Journeys of Paul." So Peter is addressing a large number of congregations including those established by Paul on his 1st and 2nd journeys, the ones which spread out from Ephesus on the third journey, and whatever other work was done in the 15 year period since the first journey.

In 46-48 Paul began his work in

Asia Minor. The center of gravity is moving westward. Paul goes on to Greece and is now at Rome. It is realistic to think of Asia Minor as being the center and firmest base of the church of the 6th and 7th decades of the first century. In Greece there were individual congregations in various larger cities. The work in Italy is young, and in Spain it is about to begin. The Palestinian church is still strong but within 10 years will come to a halt with the destruction of Jerusalem.

In Asia Minor we seem to have synodical activity and a type of missionary work which penetrated from city to city and hamlet to hamlet. So we should view the area not as on the outer edges but more likely as the center and perhaps the numerically largest concentration of Christian congregations. It is most critical for the future growth of the church that this group be strong and faithful. Later John was to direct his letters to these same congregations, as well as the Book of Revelation. In the next century they were to be a source of mission work to Gaul and for several centuries the theological center of the church.

From the start of the Gospel work Asia Minor was the great battleground for the clash between the Gospel and all opposing forces. The antagonism of Judaism was the greatest right here. Paul described his Ephesus ministry as one of fighting the beasts. The closing address to the Ephesian elders mentions trials which befell Paul here. Luke tells us of conflicts with the

synagog, conflicts with superstition, conflict with the commercialized state religion.

Paul's very first letter was to the Galatians here dealing with a crisis on the Christian's freedom from the law. Some 12 years later Paul writes to the Colossians to cope with the new problems of Gnosticism which would blend Greek thinking with the Gospel. That the Asia Minor congregations had become battle weary is obvious from Paul's letter to the Ephesians, perhaps addressed to the entire area in Asia Minor. He reminds them in forceful terms that they are God's workmanship and that they are called and created to a life of unity and good works. He pleads with them to straighten out their relations to others in the area of family, congregation, and labor. He closes with the stirring call to arm themselves against all the powers of hell.

Now, only a year or two later, Peter writes to the same area. He writes from Rome, for that must be the meaning of Babylon (5:13). Though Paul is under the endless compulsion to go west and west and west, pushing the Gospel frontiers to the very end of the world, he is also concerned with the attacks of Satan against the established work in the east. Why does Peter write to them? Evidently, after the Ephesians letter, the news gets gloomier. Paul is leaving for Spain and Peter has arrived in Rome. The two must have had many discussions about the state of the churches. Peter has ended his ministry to the circumcision and

now shares concern and responsibility for the Gentile churches. What is more natural than that Paul ask Peter to write a general letter to all the congregations in Asia Minor? The situation is critical.

The tie-in with Paul is evidenced by the participation in the letter of Silvanus (Silas) (5:12). Peter wrote through him, who had been the close co-worker of Paul on the 2nd journey. It may well be the Greek of Silas expressing the thoughts of Peter.

But as we speculate here on how Peter happened to write this letter, Our Lord Himself gives us the main reason during that sorrowful journey across the Cedron on the night in which He was betrayed. "And when you have turned again, strengthen your brethren." Because he had failed so completely and been forgiven, Peter had been perfectly trained for this particular task of strengthening the brethren when their resolves became weak, when their determination flags, when their loyalty is becoming divided. And the Lord made sure in some way that Peter was at the right place at the right time to provide a powerful word which would strike a strategic blow against Satan's all-out attack against the congregations of Jesus in Asia Minor.

What Was The Problem?

There was no particular doctrinal problem involved. Yet Satan's attack is very serious. It was nothing new, but very universal. In the case of the Asia Minor churches, it was quite extreme. In one word, they

were suffering from self-pity. In the course of the 15 years since they first adopted Christianity they have fought many battles. Now they are weary. They were surprised at the fiery ordeal, at persecution (4:12). They had made the unrealistic picture of themselves that things would get better, that soon they would be accepted by the community. Now they were upset at the thought of suffering, 3:13-14. They want people to like them, but people are against them. The more we do for Christ, the more we suffer. It isn't fair. They are filled with anxiety and worries.

It had gone quite far and had become quite general, making this letter to so many congregations necessary. Having grown tired of suffering, they no longer wanted the role of exiles, but wanted to conform to the old patterns, and get some pleasure out of life, 1:13-15. In this neurotic worrying they were acting miserably toward each other resorting to evil and deceit, pretense, jealousy, slandering, 2:1ff. They had forgotten that exiles are colonizers, and not conformists, 2:9-10. Anxiety-filled people become belligerent, 2:11; they assert themselves over against employers, 2:18; self-pity makes marital love impossible, for each is afraid to trust and submit, 3:1ff.; we must stand up for our rights, 3:8. Popularity is all-important, one must be loved at any price, 4:1ff. Instead of giving lives of service, they are concerned with self-service, 4:7ff. This ruined relations in the church and the leaders act like tin gods, and the younger ones resent all

authority.

This should indicate how very relevant this letter is for our time, and for Lenten meditation on our attitude towards the cross. For isn't it possible that even one of us in the CLC has been tempted to think he has a hard row to hoe? Maybe one of us has even been worried? Peter will strengthen us with the power of the Spirit and enable us to strengthen the many anxiety-filled ones in this 20th century.

But the true beauty of the letter lies in the first 12 verses. Peter uses no words of censure, but also no word of pity. But he is filled with compassion. He weeps as Jesus wept, because the people should not have been so miserable with Him in their midst. In the first 12 verses Peter calmly reminds them who they are, which they have forgotten. He paints a realistic picture of exiles in 2 opening verses. Then from 3-12 he paints the true picture of how God has been treating them. He relates them to the Father's merciful plan, he relates them to the Father's gracious and necessary activity of preserving their faith, he relates them again to their Lord Jesus, and he relates them to all history to demonstrate how truly blessed they are above all generations.

Having thus caught them up and given them again the big picture of the whole dimension of God's salvation plan, the rest is easy. They themselves can easily correct the many emotional problems they have. 1:13-25: As exiles, pattern yourselves after the home life, not the foreigners; 2:1-10: as exiles,

fulfill your role as colonizers among the barbarians; 2:11-17: as exiles, submit to the rules of the foreign nation without rebellion; 2:18-25: as exiles, don't look for an easy life, remember Christ; 3:1-7: secure in God's love, you can risk submissiveness in marriage; 3:8-22: blessed above all, you exist to be a blessing to all; 4:1-19: as exiles about to return home, be sober and watchful; 5:1-7: as a colony of Christ, let leaders and followers live in

harmony; 5:8-11: your enemy is not God, but Satan.

A thorough study of First Peter will not only strengthen us in soul and spirit and mind and emotions, making us healthy Christians. There is another bonus. So fundamental and complete is this presentation of true Christianity, that a thorough knowledge of First Peter will serve as a key to understanding all the books of the New Testament.

W. S.



A Peninsula Parish

St. Stephen Church of the Lutheran Confession gives "San Francisco Peninsula" as location. And with reason. When the officers of the congregation were installed for 1966, no less than five Peninsula cities were represented. Mr. Richard Byers, the chairman, is from Palo Alto; Professor Oscar Erpenstein of Milbrae is the secretary; Mr. Lloyd Greeley of Menlo Park,

the treasurer; Dr. Rod Neubert of San Bruno, the financial secretary; and Mr. Ward Giedt, the auditor.

The pastor, Rollin A. Reim, lives in another city midway on the Peninsula. Public services are regularly held at 9:00 a.m. in yet another, namely, Redwood City. Cottage Bible study meetings are held each week in San Bruno toward the north, and in Palo Alto toward the south.

The new church council is undertaking an intensive search for a

property site which will suit the needs of this unique church, which keeps finding its open doors at widely scattered points throughout the Metropolitan Bay Area and particularly in the 35 mile long Peninsula.

Readers of the *Spokesman* are urged to notify Pastor Reim, 317 Sycamore Street, San Carlos, California 94070, if they know of anyone who might welcome the ministry of St. Stephen Church.

In the San Fernando Valley

Eighteen months of frustration have come to an end. In the summer of 1964 Servant of Christ Lutheran Church set forth to purchase land, sell bonds, and build a church. But the smog sometimes fills the corridors of City Hall.

Land was found after much searching, and for Los Angeles at a reasonable price of \$20,000.00. The location was excellent. The first application for church use to the Zoning Administrator was rejected because the land was too small for church use.

Some members joined forces and acquired some adjacent land, and application was made again. Lengthy preparations were made for the hearing, but there were objections from certain neighbors and the application was denied.

Now followed lengthy meetings with the owner of the entire tract and with city officials. Finally a

plan was developed for rearranging the property, doubling the church's frontage on the primary highway, and decreasing its depth. A buyer had to be found for 4 residential lots which would be behind the church property. Finally everything was solved to the satisfaction of the property owner, the church, and the city. Application was made again.

After the application was granted, a lawyer living next to the property filed an appeal. The City Planning commission asked the church to make several changes, including the location of an alley. After thousands of hours and dozens of difficult meetings, the problems now seem solved. In the next two months the necessary permits will be obtained, plans approved, improvements made, and then building can begin.

Servant of Christ has ended up with a better property, but one which will be more costly to improve. We will have more street to widen, more alley to install, more curb and gutter, and more sidewalks.

The bond program had been completed on time with the sale of \$35,000 worth of bonds. As planned, \$20,000 has been used for land purchase, and the \$15,000 has been in savings waiting for building to begin. The growth of our mission has been hampered by not being able to erect our buildings. Yet the small membership has been strengthened to meet their obligations and are making regular payments each Monday into the trust fund which provides for the interest

payments and future bond retirement on schedule.

The 30 communicants are raising over \$600 per month to meet their obligations. In the meantime, Servant of Christ continues to worship at the Northridge Woman's Club at 18401 Lassen Street. Some may have missed this new address which differs from the address in the current directory.

Parsonage Dedicated

December 5, 1965, will be remembered by St. Paul's congregation Green Garden, Marquette, Michigan, as the day they dedicated a new home for their pastor.

The speaker for the afternoon dedication service was Pastor Bertram Naumann of Calvary congregation, Marquette. His text was from Psalm 127:1.

Volunteers from the congregation supplied much of the labor. Members of St. Paul's sister congregation, Calvary of Marquette, and other friends assisted in the building project in various ways. Construction began in May 1965.

In 1963 St. Paul's 184 communicants observed the congregation's centennial. Sometimes observances of this kind, which commemorate the past, fixate on what has been. This evidently was not the case among St. Paul's members. Their centennial observance seems to have stimulated interest and energy in the future, particularly, in passing on to future generations the Gospel heritage which they presently enjoy.

Construction of the parsonage did not only mean that their pastor

would have a new home. It was the first parsonage for their first resident pastor. One month before construction began, St. Paul's congregation installed its first resident pastor, Paul G. Fleischer. Until that time, during its more than a century of existence, St. Paul's had been part of a joint parish with its sister congregation in Marquette. The last pastor to serve both congregations as one parish was Pastor Bertram Neumann.

The pastors who had served the joint parish of St. Paul's and Calvary lived in Marquette, some 10 miles from the Green Garden area. Taking note of this fact, a former pastor of St. Paul's, Pastor Egbert Albrecht of Faith Lutheran, Dalton, Wisconsin, wrote: "The Apostle Paul knew that long distance pastoral work is not as fruitful and effective as that which can be carried on in the midst of fellow believers. So his prayer was always that he might 'come to those' (Romans 15:32; Philippians 2:24; 1 Corinthians 16:5) who were members of his flock and be in their midst to serve them." Trusting in the Lord's blessing, St. Paul's congregation is confident that this new relationship will be fruitful and of benefit in preaching the Gospel, and in carrying on the Savior's work in and around Green Garden.

The new parsonage is located adjacent to the church, on a plot of ground donated for the purpose by a member of the congregation. Pastor Fleischer and his family, who had been living in Marquette, moved into their new home in mid-October.

Nuturing Tender Plants

Understanding Our Children

What is a child? There are two extreme answers to this question. One answer is that a child is born good; he becomes evil only because of bad environment, poor education, and poverty. The other answer is that a child is born evil; he becomes good only through the Gospel of Jesus Christ by the working of the Holy Ghost. In between are such answers as every child has some good in him, children are neither bad nor good, and children are good with a tendency to become evil.

The Bible gives us the extreme answer that every child is by nature sinful and unclean. Whatever good develops in it must be the work of the Holy Ghost through the Gospel. Without the work of the Holy Ghost a child may do what seem to be good works, but these are only imitations because they proceed from a sinful heart.

The Bible says of Seth: "Adam . . . begat a son in his own likeness, after his image: and called his name Seth." Adam had lost the image and likeness of God through the fall into sin. He had been "created in righteousness and true holiness." But after his sin Adam was no longer righteous and holy. His attitude toward God and man was no longer right. His record before God was no longer holy. He

had become sinful and afraid of God.

After his sin Adam for fear tried to hide himself from God. He tried to deny his sin. And he tried to place the blame for his sin on God who had given Eve to be with him.

This is the depraved and unrighteous nature of our children at their birth. They love themselves more than God or anyone else. Their will is contrary to God's will. And their carnal mind is enmity against God so that God's Word seems foolish to them while the words of man seem wise.

Through the Gospel the Holy Ghost creates and raises up in them a new man who is truly righteous and holy. This new man loves God above all things. He loves his neighbor as himself. His will is to do the will of God. God's Word is his highest wisdom and noblest treasure.

But our children also retain their old Adam and so these two, the old Adam and the new man, fight against one another. We cannot remove their old Adam from them. We cannot make their old Adam strong. But we can by prayer, word, and example teach them to put down the old Adam and to let the new man rule.

R. UDE

BOOKS AND IDEAS

J. B. Phillips needs no introduction. Even the severest critics of "The New Testament in Modern English" pull the shades and lock the study door so they can read Phillips' translation of one of Paul's epistles, which they have not been able to comprehend clearly. There is only one word to describe my feelings toward Phillips. I *envy* him. He has mastered the most difficult and most important art, the art of communication.

Having spent several years trying to comprehend the technical jargon of the engineers who developed our Atlas and Titan ICBM's and then trying to communicate their operation and maintenance through the printed word so that any GI would clearly understand, I learned to appreciate the communication problem the hard way. When we completed the books, we would have to observe while the enlisted men carried out all the steps involved in preparing a missile for firing. This was to test the books. If the instructions were not clear the whole place could be blown up — including the writers.

Far more difficult and with far greater consequence is the task of comprehending the Good News and

communicating this news to modern man. How often we speak in 16th and 17th century tongues and the outsider who enters thinks we are mad (1 Cor. 14:23). Sometimes we act as though there is a magic in the phrases and expressions of the past. Just repeating them will have a good effect whether the hearer comprehends or not.

In 1961 J. B. Phillips wrote a book, "Your God is Too Small," which had its fourth printing in a MacMillan paperback in 1965. In Part I Phillips shows the inadequacy of 13 common concepts of God. In Part II he describes his concept of the adequate God.

The first example in Part I he calls the "Resident Policeman." This is the concept of God held by people who think of conscience as God.

"The Parental Hangover" is the concept of God which is based on one's own father. If the father has been very authoritarian such people retain an abnormal fear of an angry punishing God.

Chapter III is one of the better chapters, describing a concept of God as a "Grand Old Man." This is a very old fashioned God who does not understand radar. He can-

not be expected to cope with the complexities of life today. Phillips says we do much in the churches to encourage this concept. "The Bible is read in beautiful but old-fashioned language as a rule. Our services are often entirely conducted in a form of language that no one uses today. We address God in our prayers in the archaic second person singular, and these prayers themselves often give the impression of being cast in a form that the Grand Old Man can both understand and approve . . . Sermons and addresses again and again are stuffed with religious jargon and technical terms which strike no answering chord in the modern heart . . . The words may have beauty and dignity, but it is the beauty and dignity of a past age; and the message often appears to be wholly irrelevant to the issues of today."

The fourth concept is the "Meek-and-Mild." Phillips grieves that so few words rhyme with child, because the poets keep making God mild. "Why 'mild'? Of all the epithets that could be applied to Christ this seems one of the least appropriate." This gives people a sugary and soft and sentimental religion, quite properly rejected by many people on the outside.

Closely connected is the "Heavenly Bosom" concept. Phillips gives scathing treatment to the immature escapism of a "Jesus, Lover of my soul, Let me to Thy bosom fly." Though God is our Refuge, and in the midst of the stresses and storms, we find our strength in Him, yet the Christian does not avoid

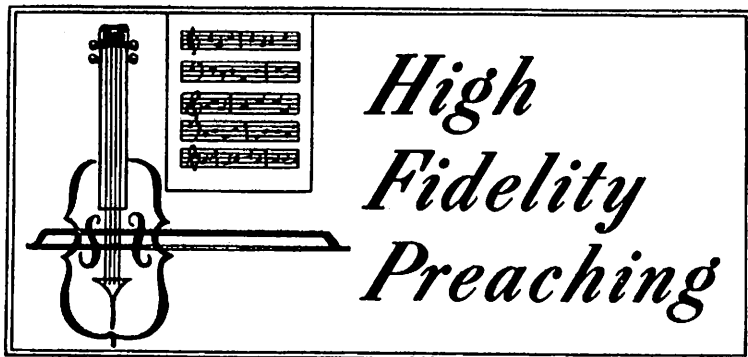
the duties and burdens of life. This is different from hiding in the bosom "till the storm of life be past."

Then there is the "God-in-a-Box" concept which regards God as the Party Leader of a particular denomination; the "Perennial Grievance" God who has proven a disappointment by His treatment of me; the "Pale Galilean" who inhibits and cramps all activities; the Projected Image and other assorted concepts. Each one of these is so well written that the reader will again and again be conscious of having often been guilty of narrowing his God.

The positive section leads us to Christ as the focusing God. Phillips makes it very clear that only in Jesus do we see God, for He is God. He beautifully portrays the greatness of this God and has no use for a modernistic concept of Jesus. Unfortunately Phillip's God is narrowed by his inability to see the completeness of the Good News which he again and again conditions by man's commitment to Christ. Would that this genius who sees so much and communicates so perfectly, could also see the full glory of the completed work of Christ as the perfect Substitute for man! He comes so very close.

A good project for the ladies' group or men's club would be to provide the library or pastor's study with the new 3-volume Lutheran Encyclopedia. No library can afford to be without this wealth of information, but very few pastors can afford the \$27.00.

W. S.



C. THUROW

CHORAL

During this season of our Lord's passion we, as children of God, desire to meditate upon the deadly weight of our sin which would bear us all to hell. But then we look upon the comforting love that caused our Savior to take all our sin upon Himself and bear all its punishment for us on the cross.

The much fine recorded music for the Passion season should not be overlooked as an aid to our meditating. A LONDON album merits a close look: *Excerpts from Bach's St. John Passion*, 5796 for \$4.79 and OS-25796 at \$5.79. This is a unique record of excerpts. Instead of concentrating on the choruses it takes only the most outstanding of them but includes much of the narrative from the Gospel of John. This paints a vivid picture of the Lord's passion from Gethsemane right to the final chorus after His death. The performance is in English and is very nobly done by the famed Choir of King's College, from which we have some of our finest Christmas records. The excellent three-record set from

which these excerpts are taken is a A-4348 at \$14.37 and OSA-1320 for \$17.37.

The all season hymn, *Jesus, Priceless Treasure* (LH:347) is very dear to us in the Lent and Easter season. Bach arranged its six stanzas in a motet that is called by the same name. The above choir has also recorded this motet in English and on a LONDON import, ARGO-RG234 or stereo ZRG-5234, either for \$5.79. This motet is one of Bach's greatest works. The overside has seven of the most loved songs from Schemelli's *Gesangbuch*, including *O Jesus so meek*. The stately acoustics of King's College Chapel and the intense yet disciplined singing of the choir are well captured on both of these albums, and the stereo is good.

The *Jesus, Priceless Treasure* motet is combined with two others in a new release, notable for both quality and price, *NONESUCH H-1060* or stereo *H-71060* for \$2.50. This rates with the best performances now available in German. We can only hope that the set will soon be completed with an album of the other three motets because they all bring joy to Christian hearts.

ORGAN

Of interest to all lovers of organ music is *French Organ Masterpieces of the 17th and 18th centuries*, NONESUCH H-1020 or stereo H-71020 for \$2.50. This is one of the finest organ records ever produced and a good sampling of the brilliant color of French organs and music of that time. Among the composers are Couperin, Marchand, Piroye, De Grigny, and Clerambault.

Organ Music before Bach is a new MHS album played by Marie Claire Alain on a restored organ of that period. Some of the composers are Frescobaldi, John Blow, Bruhns, Pachelbel, Cernohorsky. One of the longer selections is by Sweelinck, a set of variations on a German song, "My Young Life Is at Its End." This is lovely in itself, but especially so because we find in it echoes of several of our hymns, such as "The Will of God Is Always Best," (LH:517). Order MHS M-627 or S-627 for \$2.50.

First Organ Book of Louis-Nicolas Clerambault (1676-1749) is another new issue, MHS M-640 or S-640, \$2.50. The peer of French organists, Andre Marchal, plays on the same organ used in the above record, in the cathedral in Auch, southern France. Composer, organist, instrument, and acoustics combine for a memorable concert. MHS records must be ordered from *The Musical Heritage Society, 1991 Broadway, New York 10023*. Pay if you decide to keep the records.

Owners of the first volume of the VANGUARD series of Bach organ works should know that the second is now issued, *Bach: Organ Works, Volume II*. Order BG-674 at \$4.79 or BGS-70674 at 5.79. This brings several well known preludes and fugues, whereas the earlier one (BG-637 or BGS-5049) is *Organ Concertos after Vivaldi*. Organist is Anto Heiler: very good.

RECORD PLAYING EQUIPMENT

The many inquiries regarding types of playing equipment, as well as combinations of same and cost-quality comparisons — all these have brought this writer to save himself some time by mimeographing several sheets of reliable information on equipment that happens to be exceptional in quality, price, or both. The three sheets now prepared cover automatic changers (one of which has now become truly hifi), phono cartridges (the needle assembly), and amplifiers. A sheet is in preparation on speakers. Others will follow from time to time as developments warrant. We do not pretend to cover the audio field, but we watch lab reports for items of exceptional merit in the areas of greatest interest to our readers. Then we actually use these components so that we can speak from the vantage point of personal enjoyment.

These sheets may be had without charge at any time by sending the writer a stamped return-addressed envelope at 460 75th Avenue N.E., Minneapolis, Minn. 55432.

The Bread of Life

THE TIME OF THE PATRIARCHS

While all the world powers were trying to achieve greatness, God chose the nation of Israel to be His children and the bearers of His Gospel-promise of a Savior. He carefully trained the ancestors of this people in the faith which they should hand down to their children and preserved them from being contaminated with the idolatry of the heathen people around them.

GENESIS

Isaac had once consented to be sacrificed. Throughout his life his outstanding characteristic was meekness. As Jehovah had used his father's energetic ways, so He sanctified Isaac's meekness and used it to advance His plans.

Mar. 1 — 25:19-28	Jehovah changes the order of inheritance	514,1-2
Mar. 2 — 25:29-34	A birthright for a bowl of soup	400,1&4
Mar. 3 — 27:1-17	Sin works its way out	514,3-4
Mar. 4 — 27:18-29	Wait on the Lord	514,5-6
Mar. 5 — 27:30-40	The reward of sin	369,1-3
Mar. 6 — 27:41-45	Wrong-doing seldom makes men better	369,4-6
Mar. 7 — 27:46-28:5	Blessed in spite of yourself	374

God had chosen Jacob to supplant Esau. But Jacob had taken matters into his own hands. Instead of committing his ways to the Lord, he used cunning and deceit to secure Isaac's blessing. Jehovah had to purify him by cross and trial to make him a fit vessel for His purpose.

Mar. 8 — 28:10-22	"Tis good, Lord, to be here"	135,1&4-5
Mar. 9 — 29:1-12	Selfishness gives way to service	395,2&4

Jacob meets his superior in cunning and craftiness. He is repeatedly deceived, but Jehovah protects him.

Mar. 10 — 29:13-20	"I will serve for Rachel"	622
Mar. 11 — 29:21-30	History repeats itself	518,7
Mar. 12 — 29:31-35	Jehovah intervenes	518,6
Mar. 13 — 30:1-13	"Am I in the place of God?"	518,3-4
Mar. 14 — 30:14-24	Joseph — the Lord adds	518,1
Mar. 15 — 30:25-36	The wisdom of this world	366,1
Mar. 16 — 30:37-43	Wise as serpents, but innocent as doves	366,5&7
Mar. 17 — 31:1-16	"Deliver us from evil"	458,5&8

Jacob, completely self-helpless but wonderfully protected by Jehovah, throws himself upon God and receives the name Israel.

Mar. 18 — 31:17-32	But God said to Laban, "Be careful"	13,1
Mar. 19 — 31:33-42	"God saw my affliction"	529,1-3
Mar. 20 — 32:1-12	"I am not worthy of the least"	34,1-2
Mar. 21 — 32:13-21	"Your servant — my Lord, Esau"	464,1-3
Mar. 22 — 32:22-32	"I will not let you go, unless you bless me"	365
Mar. 23 — 33:1-11	"Esau kissed him — my brother"	464,4-6
Mar. 24 — 33:12-20	"God, the God of Israel"	34,3-4
Mar. 25 — 34:1-12	"Make marriages with us"	404,1-2
Mar. 26 — 34:13-24	"The sons of Jacob answered deceitfully"	404,3-4
Mar. 27 — 34:25-31	You have made me hated	402,1-2
Mar. 28 — 35:1-4	"Put away your gods and purify yourselves"	402,3-5
Mar. 29 — 35:5-8	"Fear of God fell upon the cities"	15
Mar. 30 — 35:9-15	"I am God Almighty"	249
Mar. 31 — 35:16-29	Isaac died and his sons buried him	395,6-8

CHURCH OF THE LUTHERAN CONFESSION

TREASURER'S REPORT

BUDGETARY

RECEIPTS:	January, 1966	Total to Date
Offerings	\$ 6,680.67	\$52,304.35
Memorials		22.00
Revenues, Tuition	1,627.00	8,703.00
Revenues, Board and Room	3,025.00	15,078.00
Revenues, Other College	5.00	425.50
Interest Earned, 1964-1965		160.26
Total Receipts	\$11,337.67	\$76,693.11
DISBURSEMENTS:		
General Administration	\$	\$ 946.63
Capital Investments	323.00	2,761.00
Home Missions and Administration	3,248.87	22,799.98
Japan Mission	550.00	3,850.00
I.L.C., Educational Budget	3,981.67	26,506.88
I.L.C., Auxiliary Services Budget	2,904.01	17,674.00
Journal of Theology		214.00
Loan to The Spokesman		500.00
Total Disbursements	\$11,007.55	\$75,252.49
Cash Balance This Period	\$ 330.12	\$ 1,440.62
Cash Deficit July 1, 1965		—5,386.84
Cash Deficit February 1, 1966		—\$ 3,945.84
I.L.C. Classroom Building Fund	\$ 2,213.15	\$11,624.56

Respectfully submitted,
 Lowell R. Moen, Treasurer
 1309 7th Avenue N.W.
 Austin, Minnesota

COMPARATIVE FIGURES

	January	Seven Months
Budgetary Offerings Needed	\$ 8,522.00	\$59,654.00
Budgetary Offerings Received	6,680.67	52,304.35
Deficit	\$ 1,841.33	\$ 7,349.65
Budgetary Offerings, '64-'65	\$ 9,041.10	\$48,283.41
Decrease, '65-'66	\$ 2,360.43	
Increase, '65-'66		\$ 4,020.94

Board of Trustees
 L. W. Schierenbeck, Chairman

CLC Pastoral Conference

Time: Week of Easter
Place: Trinity Lutheran Church,
Watertown, South Dakota
Speaker: Pastor Martin Galstad
Alternate: Professor Clifford Kuehne
Program: Discussion of Pastor Leland
Gram's *Exegesis of 1 Timothy 2;*
Doctrine and False Doctrine, A
Brief Definition of Terms, M. J.
Witt; Our Mission Responsibilities
— Are They Developed or Innate?
Gordon Radtke.
Kindly announce yourself to the host
pastor.

Paul F. Nolting, *Secretary*

Offer

Any congregation desiring a set of
chancel furniture may have an altar,
pulpit, lectern, baptismal font, kneeling
rail, and hymn boards. All items
are in fine condition. For further in-
formation, please contact Pastor Eg-
bert Albrecht, Dalton, Wisconsin.

Nominations

The following names have been
placed in nomination for the position
of president of ILC for the period
July 1, 1966 to July 1, 1968:

Professor R. Dommer
Professor C. M. Gullerud
Professor R. Gurgel

Any communications should be in
the hands of the undersigned by April
1, 1966.

James C. Pelzl, *Secretary*

Ruth Schaller
304 N. Broad Street
Mankato, Minn. 56001

NOTICE

The Business Office of the Lu-
theran Spokesman has been moved
from New Ulm, Minnesota to the
following address:

The Rev. N. Harms
8503 Noble Avenue
Sepulveda, California 91343

Subscriptions and address chang-
es must be sent to this address.

W.S.