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The New Year and All Things

MARTIN H. FRANZMANN

Early Christian Attitudes Toward the Roman State

WALTER W. OETTING

The Second Vatican Council

GEORGE A. LINDBECK

Brief Studies

Homiletics

Theological Observer

Book Review

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THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD

MATT. 3:13-17

Problem and Goal

Man has an inflated opinion of his achievements. In his contour seat at the controls of the Mercury or Gemini spacecraft he does not occupy God's seat of authority. Ever since Babel, men have overestimated their importance. The goal of this sermon is to cut ourselves down to proper size, to view ourselves in relation to God, so that we have a proper perspective for viewing God's entrance into our world, to worship the Son in the spirit of the Wise Men, by faith.

The Propers

The Epistle ("... and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy Light. . .") foretells the appearing, ἐπιφάνεια, of the Son of God with the visible sign, light, that shall accompany the appearing. The Gospel brings His appearing into focus as "the young Child" and directs our gaze to "His star in the East." In the Collect we pray as those who worship Him by faith, not by sight, and as those who fervently hope to "be brought to look upon the beauty of Thy majesty" (*usque ad contemplandam speciem tuae celsitudinis perducamur*). The Hymn of the Week (*The Lutheran Hymnal*, No. 343) is properly a hymn of praise to the Christ, to whom we are drawn by the Gospel's saving power (stanza 2), specifically by the Spirit, Word, body and blood (stanza 4). The last line of the hymn expresses the hope of the Collect: "Lord, I look for Thy returning." The text presents His public appearing at the beginning of His

ministry, an appearing also accompanied by visible signs (the open heaven, the descending dove, and an audible sign, the Father's voice).

Introduction

The "beep-beeps" from the satellites and the signals relayed by Telstar are announcing, as Babel never could, the monumental achievements of man in the 20th century. New breakthrough discoveries by cosmonauts and astronauts on the unexplored sea of space are being headlined to the world in rapid succession. The President has promised that we shall endeavor to beat Russia to the moon in this decade, an accomplishment which, if successful, fairly staggers the imagination. We look on ourselves as conquerors of the universe, supermen who may one day burst through into the domain of God and occupy His seat of control.

This is why we need the Epiphany, the account of God's great breakthrough to us. This was space travel in reverse: God's descending to our world as the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. His coming was announced, not by headlines, but by the appearing of a star. He didn't wear a space suit, but was wrapped in swaddling clothes like any infant. But His coming was still the almighty God breaking in upon our world to save us. The more we magnify and proclaim this event and this Word made flesh, the smaller our own achievements will appear. We are reduced to our proper size by the Epiphany, as the Christ breaks through to our hearts to receive His proper place in our life and worship.

The Breakthrough of the Christ Assuming His Public Office Was Signaled by the Father and the Spirit to show that

- I. He properly assumes His office of "fulfilling all righteousness"
- II. He has full authority from on high to enter that office

I

John had been promised a sign from God by which he was to recognize the Christ when He came: "When you see the Spirit coming down upon someone and resting upon him you will know that this is he who is to baptize in Holy Spirit" (John 1:33 NEB). And after the event of our text, John testified, "I saw it myself, and I have borne witness. This is God's Chosen One."

But John had a moment of hesitation when Jesus arrived at the Jordan from Galilee to be baptized by him. On this day, as on any other, John was preaching and baptizing those who came out to him confessing their sins. His hesitation was natural for one who believed in Jesus as God's Messiah. His attempt to dissuade the Lord came from John's recognition that this Man was the Sinless One. And John's baptism was a "baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins." Jesus had no sin; therefore He needed no baptism. With characteristic humility John protested, "I need rather to be baptized by you." This is reminiscent of Peter's humble protest "Thou shalt never wash my feet."

Jesus was not requesting Baptism for His own forgiveness. He recognized the incongruity of it: "Let it be so for the present." Then He explained. This was a part of His "fulfilling all righteousness" ("conform with all that God requires"—NEB). He indicated that His purpose was to become sinful man's Substitute in every respect. This is why He was circumcised, presented in the temple, why He attended the festivals, celebrated the Passover. He was obedient Israel, the Chosen One "in whom My soul delights" (Is. 42:1), the One whom the Lord has "called in righteousness" (ἐν δικαιοσύνη, Is. 42:6 LXX). He said, "Do not suppose that I have come to abolish the Law and the prophets; I did

not come to abolish but to complete" (see Matt. 5:17, where πληρῶσαι is used as in v. 15 of text).—He was put under the authority of the Law and was made the object of its curse—that He might purchase (ἐξαγοράζω) our freedom from the Law's tyranny and from its curse (see use of word in Gal. 3:13 and 4:5).

How do we respond to His coming to share our humanity, our temptations, our misery, even our death and our shame? We find ourselves behaving as though it were in our power to "fulfill all righteousness" or as though God did not take seriously our condition "under the Law." And so we heap praise on man's achievements (closing the eyes to his shortcomings), as though man can, by his own "know-how," build his own "stairway to the stars." The dust-free "white room" of the spacecraft builders has become a symbol of the supposed sin-free "white room" of man's spiritual house. And if our shortcomings of 1962 haunt us, we have only to turn to the clean slate of 1963 and get a "fresh start," a "clean bill." Or we suppose that God must needs adopt American-made standards of righteousness, to keep up with the times. And who sets American standards of morality? Not the Supreme Court or the Constitution, but, as the Court has suggested, the moral climate of the community itself. Thus we think we have become a law to ourselves, that we make the rules—and God must conform to our standards, whatever they may be. As a result we neglect the gift of our baptism, our Christian life, which, according to Luther, "is nothing else than a daily baptism, once begun and ever continued . . . so that the longer we live the more gentle, patient, and meek we become, and the more free from greed, hatred, envy, and pride." (LC IV 65 ff.)

II

And as He assumed His office to fulfill all righteousness, there came the overpowering confirmation of faith in the demonstration

by the Father and the Holy Spirit that He has all authority to enter that office.

Where John was hesitant, he was given the appearance of the promised sign: the Holy Spirit descending as a dove (St. Luke here is very specific: *σωματικῶ εἶδει*, 3:22). John could now look to Him with new confidence and say, "This is the Lamb of God" (John 1:36). And later Peter could say, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power." (Acts 10:38)

Moreover, the heavens were opened as a confirming sign. A detailed description is not given. Could it have been something like Jacob's vision (Gen. 28:12), what Stephen saw (Acts 7:56), or what was promised to Nathanael (John 1:51)? It was a clear sign of God's presence and authority for that event.

Then there was the voice of the Father, like the unseen voice that spoke at Sinai, declaring, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." This is the divine sanction referred to in Is. 42:1 and Ps. 2:7 (some Greek manuscripts for Luke 3:22 quote the LXX verbatim from Ps. 2:7 as being the Father's words). And the writer to the Hebrews, speaking of the Son's superior authority, says, "To which of the angels has God said, Thou art My Son?" (Heb. 1:5)

All this for John's sake and for ours — his by sight and ours by faith. For surely the authority and power of Jesus would not have been diminished had that sign not been given that day. He would have been no less the Son of God if the heavens had not opened and the Father had not spoken. Our Lord reminds us that the Father's voice, on another occasion, came "for your sakes, not for Mine" (John 12:30). The Epiphany is for our sakes: that the Christ may take His proper place in our life and worship. We say with John, "This joy of mine is now full. He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:29,30). Our own importance, our own achievements, shrink as Christ's glory floods

in on our life. Our own baptism takes on new significance, for the faith of our baptism is renewed and strengthened by His continual appearing to us in the Gospels, especially the Gospels of the Epiphany season before us. All the while we wait patiently for the gift of sight when we shall be "brought to look upon the beauty of His majesty" at His coming.

THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

JOHN 1:35-42

Problem and Goal

Problem is (1) that of letting the signal of the spoken Word grow weak, since sight is denied, and (2) that of expecting discipleship to cost us little and change little in us. Regarding the Word as a sort of "initiation" requirement and membership in the church as a sort of "subscription" that is periodically "renewed."

THE PROPERS

Our Lord shines forth as Son of God. He declares in the Gospel, "I must be in My Father's house." His devotion to the Word. The Epistle reveals the transforming power of the "mercies of God." The Hymn of the Week, No. 98 of *The Lutheran Hymnal*, has the refrain, "evermore and evermore," in praise of the eternal Son. The text picks up the theme of our devoted response to the proclaimed Word, which calls us to discipleship and transforms our lives.

Introduction

The breakthrough of the Christ to men is signaled by words, the witness of John, as well as by many signs. The Word is prominent in today's Gospel. Those who respond to the proclaimed Word may not make the columns of the next *Who's Who in America*, but they are registered in the book of life. Reporters look for influence in a man; God

looks for response to the witness of such as John the Baptist. One who responded to John's witness, St. John, gives a detailed report, day by day, of this important week, showing

The Breakthrough of the Christ Signaled by John

- I. Through the witness of the Word
- II. Through the witness that points to Jesus as Lamb of God
- III. Through the witness that transforms men's lives

I

A. The Baptist's personality was powerful; his life, rugged; his preaching, forceful, direct, convincing. A man's man. How do we explain why two of his disciples suddenly leave his following? Why does he encourage them?

B. It was the content of John's preaching. See his witness of the previous day (vv. 29—34). John's purpose was to gain disciples in order to lose them—to Christ.

C. The two disciples found their answer in Christ. Their curiosity, shyness, hesitancy were overcome when our Lord turned to ask, "What are you looking for?" He turns to men in order to save them (cf. Matt. 9:22). How was the rest of the day spent with Jesus? No doubt our Lord instructed them, completing John's witness. It was through hearing (*ἀκούσαντες*) that they became followers (*ἀκολουθήσαντες*). See Rom. 10:14 and 1 Cor. 15:11. He whose appearance was signaled by a star, by the form of a dove, by the open heaven, by His miracles, was also signaled to men through the Word.

The proclaimed Word for us must become more than an initiation requirement. It is what keeps us in discipleship (SA III ii 3 to 10; LC V 28—32). Luther emphasized that the proclamation of the Word is God breaking through to us, "whether uttered by a schoolboy or by the angel Gabriel." (*Luther's Works*, Vol. 22 [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1957], pp. 528 and 529)

II

A. John's witness had a definite object. John's "looking at" Jesus was with recognition and faith (*ἐμβλέψας*). He directs the two to "see" Jesus as he saw Him (notice different verbs used in the Greek text for action of seeing): as the Lamb of God. (1 Peter 1:19; Is. 53:7; 1 Cor. 5:7; Rev. 5:8 and 9)

B. "Lamb of God" also speaks of our relationship to Him. Lamb a sacrificial animal. Sacrifice for whom? For us! To see Him as Lamb is to see ourselves as deserving the death that He died.

III

A. How lives were changed because of hearing and following Him. The two disciples stayed with Him that day (*ἔμεινον*). Soon to be summoned to complete self-denial (Matt. 4:18-22) and to martyrdom (John 21:18). Change of name from Simon to Peter indicates the complete change in way of life. Having come to Him, they stayed. (John 6:66-69)

B. Where are you staying? He lives in us to change us. We were given our Christian name in Baptism to indicate a new life begun in us (as Simon became Peter). Candidates for Baptism were once dressed in new white robes to indicate they were to "walk in the newness of life" with Christ. If there is little evidence of change, no difference between us and the world, then the signal of the Word has grown weak. Recognition of this should compel us to see our need for Word and Sacrament.

THE SECOND SUNDAY
AFTER EPIPHANY

JOHN 1:43-51

Problem and Goal

The problem of the text is superficial discipleship, attempting to engage in religious experience by proxy. The goal is the realization that "finding, knowing, believing, con-

fessing" are personal, intimate experiences. Discipleship involves the total personality. The Lord "found" Philip; He "knew" Nathanael.

The Propers

The Gospel is the account of "the first of the signs by which Jesus revealed His glory" (NEB). The testimonies in the first chapter of John prepare the reader for such signs as are proper for One who is called "Son of God," "Lamb of God," "Messiah," "the One spoken of by Moses in the Law and by the prophets," "King of Israel." The Epistle deals with the personal involvement of the Christian in the use of special talents and gifts for the Lord and the church. The Gospel shows His glory illuminating an intimate situation, a wedding. The text emphasizes the personal involvement with Christ: finding, believing, confessing.

Introduction

A letter is marked "Personal" to make sure it reaches the proper person, not a mail clerk or secretary. Or it is sent by registered mail, with signed receipt requested. God has sent us a message marked "For your very personal attention." What God has to say to us is a very personal matter. This is why Philip invited Nathanael to "come and see." The creeds are confessed in the first person singular.

Yet people say, "Pray for me." Parents drop off their children for Sunday school. Parents are saying, "None of this is addressed to us adults." A pity. For

The Breakthrough of the Christ Is Aimed at Men's Hearts

Very personal matters of the heart are

- I. Coming to the Christ by faith
- II. Confessing Him with the lips

I

A. Conversion is like voting or getting married: nobody can do it for you. Conversion of Andrew, Peter, Philip, Nathanael, and

the evangelist himself are examples in the first chapter. Each had to come and follow personally. The Lord "found" (εὕρισκει) Philip, He "knew" Nathanael (γινώσκει). More than contact with the senses, involving the whole person.

1. Case of Nathanael. More detailed than Philip's call. Jesus perhaps near Cana on way to Capernaum (v. 43). Philip's desire for his friend to know Jesus as the One spoken of by Moses and the prophets. (O.T. references in Nestle text margin at v. 45)

2. Not easy for Nathanael to accept invitation on that basis. "Jesus of Nazareth?" Galilee? Nathanael appears to be a student of the Scriptures (Billerbeck tells us that it was customary for rabbis and learned men to expound the Scriptures while seated under a fig or olive tree, Hermann L. Strack and Paul Billerbeck, *Kommentar, zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch, II* [Munich: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung], p. 371). Micah speaks of Bethlehem (5:2). Nothing good, in the sense of Redeemer, expected from Nazareth.

3. Others had this problem. On the feast day in the temple some said, "This is really the prophet," or "This is the Christ." Others said, "Is the Christ to come from Galilee?" (John 7:41). Pharisees and chief priests were certain. "Search, and you will see that no prophet is to rise from Galilee."

4. But the case is somewhat different with Nathanael. He trusted in Old Testament promises as basically spiritual. "A true Israelite, without guile" (Ps. 32:2; Zeph. 3:13). A man of great spiritual depth, waiting for the promise of 2 Sam. 7:14-16 and Ps. 2:7. Jesus labeled his sincerity, even as He later labeled the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. (Matt. 23)

B. It is always a matter of being honest with oneself. This is to find, as Nathanael did, the sweet promises of the Scriptures fulfilled in the Christ.

1. Pride and deceit in our society. Public officials betraying public trust. Executives of companies conspiring to fix prices. Widespread scandal in agricultural deals of last year. Caught in his web of deceit, a man blew himself and 33 others to bits on a Miami-bound airliner.

Oh, what a tangled web we weave
When first we practice to deceive!
(Sir Walter Scott)

2. Deceit at our own address: living more expensively than we can afford. Deceit, like an octopus, squeezes out the life of Christ from us.

3. Christ overcame Nathanael's hesitancy by revealing Himself. Divine foreknowledge is revealed: "I saw you under the fig tree. . . ." Greater revelations were in store for him (v. 51). See Gen. 28:12. Later miracles did present our Lord as "connecting link" between earth and heaven. Nathanael accepts Christ as "King of Israel" ("Messiah," a title of royalty, Ps. 2:2), as Wise Men did (Matt. 2:11), and as the Palm Sunday throng did. (John 12:13)

4. The big question: Is He this for us? His death earned for us the treasures of a "King's ransom." Do we give this King of Israel our undying allegiance?

II

A. 1. Faith in Him stimulates personal confession of Him. John, the Baptist (v. 34), Andrew (v. 41), Philip (v. 45), and Nathanael (v. 49). Also Peter. (John 6:68, 69)

2. After Pentecost the witness increased (Acts 4:31). The peculiar witness of the apostles: martyrdom (John 21:18). Nathanael said to have witnessed in Albanople, was skinned alive, crucified, then decapitated by a scimitar after death.

B. Personal faith is accompanied by our personal witness (Rom. 10:9). We live for Him and speak for Him. Thus it is evident to all that we personally march under the colors of the Christ, the King of Israel.

THE THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY

JOHN 4:5-14

Problem and Goal

The text deals with the problem of making the water of life a private pipeline that is brought only to a specific group or class. The goal is that of letting the waters of life bubble up in us to overflow to all men, whoever and wherever they may be.

The Propers

The text continues the Epiphany theme of Is. 60:3: "And nations shall come to your Light." This is also evident in the Gospel, where people who were formerly considered unfit to enter the temple (a leper and a Gentile) are now received by the Christ as having a preferred place in the kingdom of heaven. The Epistle speaks of a love that extends even to the enemy, and the text suggests the best drink we can give a thirsty enemy (Samaritan) is the water of life.

Introduction

No nation or race has an exclusive and private pipeline to the gracious waters of life. This is the lesson of the Epiphany season (Is. 60:3; Matt. 2:2). Human pride always seeks an exclusive arrangement. In St. Louis, 6 percent of the white population have become Lutheran. Of the nonwhite population, 0.5 percent are Lutheran. 57.4 percent of our Synod's baptized membership live in metropolitan areas, where 62.9 percent of the nation's population live. Yet the inner city, where cultural backgrounds vary, has been called the new frontier of the church today. Our Lord demonstrates to us that

The Breakthrough of the Christ Is Signaled to All Men

- I. Natural and cultural barriers fall
- II. They receive the water of life from Him

I

A. Our Lord's evident humanity was a natural barrier. He was a tired, thirsty traveler sitting exhausted by the well, resting. To the woman He seemed considerably less important than Jacob, the ancestor who gave them the well. It was not until He disclosed His divine knowledge of her past that she saw in Him (1) "a prophet" and (2) "the Christ." So also in Galilee His own townsmen said, "Is not this the carpenter's son? . . . Where then did this man get all this?" (Matt. 13:55)

Many today cannot accept Him because of His evident humanity. Luther: "We recognize neither the Word nor the person of Christ, but we take offense at His humble and weak humanity" (*Luther's Works*, Vol. 22 [St. Louis: Concordia, 1957], p. 527). Luther maintains that we despise His humanity when He chooses to come to us in the word that our parents, pastors, or neighbors speak to us.

B. The woman also indicates the religious grounds that separate them (v. 12), raising the question of the Lord's relation to Jacob. He gives the true relationship (vv. 13, 14). The religious barrier between Jew and Samaritan is more pronounced in vv. 20 ff. Samaritans accepted the books of Moses, but not the prophets; worshiped at Gerizim, not Jerusalem. A rival temple on Gerizim had been destroyed about 150 years earlier.

C. Especially on racial grounds did the woman consider herself and our Lord divided. Jews no longer considered Samaritans pure, because their blood was mixed with Babylonian and Arabian ancestry after the deportation of the Northern Kingdom's leaders. The woman was properly surprised that our Lord would think of the two as sharing a drinking vessel. (V. 9)

Because these barriers existed, she also mistook for physical waters (v. 15) the waters that our Lord offered her.

We are permitting many to go to broken cisterns today because we are not ready to

offer the water of life to all as our Lord did to the woman. We forget that the power of the Son of God can speak and work through the word that is brought to men by our humble humanity. We let racial differences stand as a "dividing wall of hostility" between those of a different race and our witness to them. Our witness is too often only "to our kind."

II

A. Our Lord lets the woman have a glimpse of His divine knowledge. (Vv. 17, 18, 29)

B. He overcomes the religious hostility by indicating that the water He had to give was more than physical and that true worship was a spiritual activity, not bound to a certain place (vv. 21 ff.). The water that He could give will be an inner spring "welling up for eternal life" (Is. 12:3; John 7:37 ff.). His aim was to reveal Himself as the life-giving Savior, the Messiah. (V. 26)

C. Racial barriers were broken down by our Lord in offering this woman and her fellow townsmen (v. 41) membership in the true Israel, the kingdom of heaven (see Gospel, Matt. 8:11). For "in His own body of flesh and blood" He has made Gentiles and Jews one and "has broken down the enmity which stood like a dividing wall between them" (Eph. 2:14). Those who were once far off (Samaritans) have been brought near through the shedding of Christ's blood. (Eph. 2:13; Gal. 3:28, 29)

We have the buckets to draw water from the wells of salvation: Word and Sacrament. Are we doing it in the spirit of Christ? With joy? Offering it to all?

THE TRANSFIGURATION
OF OUR LORD

JOHN 5:39-47

Problem and Goal

The problem is that we formally pledge ourselves to the "prophetic and apostolic writ-

ings of the Old and New Testaments as the pure and clear fountain of Israel," but actually pay mere lip service to these writings in the forming of our personal and parish life. More particularly we are inclined to dip only from one side of the "fountain of Israel" (i. e., the New Testament) and to leave untapped the other side of the fountain (the prophetic writings of the Old Testament), as though these waters were unable to slake the thirst of Israel. Furthermore, as a substitute for the pure and clear fountain we turn to the bottled elixir of "canned programs," sure-fire methods of the advertising craft.

The goal is to let the prophetic writings take their proper place in our personal and parish life and direct us always to the life-giving Christ. Moses is more than "fodder" for Sunday school leaflets; he is God's lamp to lighten our darkness. (2 Peter 1:19)

Propers

The significance of Moses is found throughout the propers of the day. Before the Morning Star arose on the horizon (Hymn of the Week, *The Lutheran Hymnal*, No. 343), there was God's lamp (λύχνος) shining in the darkness. The Collect speaks of the "testimony of the fathers" confirming the mysteries of the faith, referring to the appearance of Moses and Elijah on the mount. Matthew speaks in the Gospel of our Lord's face shining as the sun, revealing Him as One greater than Moses, whose face shone from being in the presence of God (Ex. 34:29). In the Epistle, Peter shows us that the majesty of the Christ and the voice of the Father, far from overruling the authority of the Old Testament Scriptures, make the Old Testament witness "more sure" (βεβαιότερος). Moses still testifies of the "departure" (ἔξοδος) which our Lord accomplished at Jerusalem (Luke 9:31). He is Spirit-directed (φερόμενος), Father-approved, Son-illuminated — God's instrument to signal the breakthrough of the Christ to men.

Introduction

Whenever the Scriptures are overridden or overlooked, we can always look for the cause of it in our own selfish pride. Yet is it not true that large portions of the Scriptures are little used by us? We regard the Old Testament much as we would the prolog of a Shakespearean play. Moses, we feel, has served his purpose in setting the stage for the coming of the Christ. But now he has left the stage and can be forgotten. Luther could not so easily "sweep Moses under the rug," but found in him important examples of Law and the promises of God for today (*Luther's Works*, Vol. 35 [Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1960], p. 169). He complained that "we simply regard the entire Old Testament as of no account, as done for and no longer valid. Yet it alone bears the name of Holy Scripture." (Ibid., p. 123)

Our text helps us ask — if the beams of Moses' light no longer get through to us — what artificial light has moved in to take its place to distract us? It is not that the Daystar from on high has put out Moses' light, for Christ helps us appreciate Moses as the sun helps us appreciate the moon. It may be that we are satisfied with something less than the whole of Scripture today because programs, methods, organizational structure have become more than tools whereby God's people respond to God's Word — they may be taking the place of God's Word in our personal and parish life. We need to take a second look, then, at how

The Breakthrough of the Christ Was Signaled Through Moses so that we

- I. Avoid the dangerous game of paying mere lip service to Moses
- II. Let Moses direct us clearly to the Christ for life

I

A. Sometimes men profess to honor Moses when, in fact, they have discarded him. The Pharisees solemnly maintained: "We are

Moses' disciples. We know that God spoke to Moses" (John 9:28). Our Lord spoke of the doctors of the Law and the Pharisees as sitting in the chair of Moses (Matt. 23:2). The Jews frequently used Moses as a standard in questioning our Lord (Matt. 19:7; 22:24). And they indeed felt that their search of the Scriptures was rewarded with eternal life. (Strack-Billerbeck quotes R. Jischmael: "If one is in duty bound to give thanks before and after for food that maintains life for a fleeting hour, how much more ought one be bound to give thanks before and after for the Law, in which the future world, eternal life, is found." (Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, II, 467)

B. It was startling for the Jewish leaders to hear our Lord use Moses to attack their position and accuse them of not truly giving ear to his message (vv. 40, 46; Mark 7:10; John 7:19). They were so intent on following the rabbinical interpretations of the written Law that they did not see that thereby human authority was set above God's authority (Mark 7:8, 9). When our Lord took them to task (vv. 42-44), they stood condemned by the very Moses whom they professed to honor. (V. 45)

C. Our allegiance to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments is a matter of record in our constitutions and confessions. But do we always reduce it to practice? Do the Scriptures truly provide us with motivation and guidelines for action in our voters' assembly, in our mission and stewardship committees, in organizational work? Is the voice of Scripture heard at all in meetings of committees and voters? Or can we no longer find stimulation for action in Moses? Can we no longer lift our hearts to God with the psalmist? Do we in practice regard the Old Testament, as Luther complained, as "done for and no longer valid"? We say that we must adapt our life to changing times, but do we mean by this that Moses has nothing to say to people living in the space age? Is God,

who piled up the waters of the Red Sea with the "blast of His nostrils," incapable today of surpassing with His might the blast of the Atlas booster rocket? Or does not He who "binds the chains of the Pleiades or looses the cords of Orion" (Job 38:31) still "sit above the circle of the earth" (Is. 40:22) watching our Gemini spacecraft flit about like a grasshopper beneath Him?

II

A. Our Lord boldly presents Himself to His enemies as (1) the One of whom Moses testifies (vv. 40, 46), (2) the One who gives life (v. 40), and (3) the One accredited by the Father. That Moses testifies of Him is accepted by the disciples (John 1:45), affirmed by our Lord (3:14), who died as the paschal Lamb (1:29; 1 Cor. 5:7) in fulfillment of Scripture. (John 19:28)

The life that Christ gives is a life that Moses' life-giving manna merely foreshadows (6:30-35). He it is that gives living waters, which the ceremonial waters of the festival could only prefigure (7:37, 38). The light He sheds on us is the life-giving light (8:12), which the ceremonial lamps of the Feast of Tabernacles could only dimly imitate (John D. Davis, *Dictionary of the Bible* [Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1942], under the article "Tabernacles, Feast of"). Moses also pointed to Christ and His life-giving work (Gen. 3:15; 49:10; Deut. 18:15), and the risen Lord interpreted His work to His disciples in terms of Moses' writings. (Luke 24:44)

To say that He came "in the name of the Father" is to say that He was accredited or commissioned by the Father (v. 43; ὄνομα, 4, c, γ, in Arndt-Gingrich, *A Greek Lexicon of the New Testament* [Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957]). The Father's accreditation is seen in today's Gospel (v. 5) and in the Son's works (John 5:36). And the Father's commending voice is heard again just before the Son's final suf-

fering (12:28), giving His sanction to the suffering of our Lord as glorifying the Father's name.

B. To be a disciple of Moses, therefore, is to be a disciple of Christ. To heed Moses is to accept Christ (v. 47). And to find Christ through Moses is to have eternal life (vv. 39, 40). Today we stand with the three disciples viewing Christ in the splendor of His divine glory breaking through to us on the Mount of Transfiguration. And at the same time, with the disciples, we hear the

testimony of the fathers, Moses and Elijah. We see that their presence and witness does not detract from His glory but rather enhances it.

We need to let the Old Testament Scriptures burst through to use with their revelation of the glory of the Christ. We need to turn to Moses for divine power in our personal lives and parish life. For Moses will lead us to Christ, and we shall be made "co-heirs with the King of His glory and be brought to the enjoyment of the same."