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AN ANALYSIS AND COMPARISON OF ESCHATOLOGICAL  
ELEMENTS IN THE HYMNS AND SERMONS OF THE  
LUTHERAN CHURCH--MISSOURI SYNOD

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of Systematic Theology  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Bachelor of Divinity

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by  
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June 1955

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## CHAPTER I

### THE SCOPE, METHOD, AND PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

It is in the wake of the proceedings of the Evanston Assembly of the World Council of Churches, and the re-examination of the Christian Hope in nearly every denomination of Christendom that this paper has been prepared. If it can truly be said that the actual living doctrine of a church is not properly that contained in its books only, but rather also that proclaimed from its pulpits and in the worship of its people, then this paper has value. It is the writer's belief that this study will suggest more nearly than any other study to date the actual eschatological awareness of the "people in the pews" of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, as well as some of the major factors that have influenced their Christian Hope.

The second chapter of this paper will contain an attempt to show the teachings and stresses in eschatological matters as presented in the hymns of The Lutheran Hymnal.<sup>1</sup> Aside from presenting the eschatological stress in the hymnal as a whole, it will present also the varying stresses of the various periods of the history of the church along

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<sup>1</sup>The Lutheran Hymnal (St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1941).



with any trends that these findings seem to suggest. The chief sources for this chapter will be The Lutheran Hymnal, and The Handbook to the Lutheran Hymnal.<sup>2</sup> Regarding the accuracy and comprehensiveness of this chapter, it might be mentioned that where the term "of significance" or "significant mention" is made, this refers simply to references found and recorded by the writer. He believes his work to be reasonably accurate and comprehensive. Any possible inaccuracies are apt to be uniform and unlikely to influence to any large extent the findings of this study. The location of each specific reference in this chapter is not noted. Since there are upwards of 850 such references they might contribute unduly to the bulk of this paper. Most of them would be of little use to the reader, since the great majority of them concern only common eschatological references. Wherever an unusual phraseology or specially significant eschatological reference is made, its source is duly noted. The final portions of this chapter will be devoted to a more complete treatment of the rarer teachings, significant deletions, and mistranslations which do not in each case have a direct bearing on general trends of emphasis.

The third chapter of this study will be a similar treatment of eschatological elements in the sermons of The Con-

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<sup>2</sup>W. G. Polack, The Handbook to the Lutheran Hymnal (St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1942).



cordia Pulpit, for the years 1931, 1932, 1942, 1943, 1954, and 1955. (The volume for each year was printed in the previous year.) The Concordia Pulpit for the years 1931 and 1932 were chosen because they are among the earliest publications of the series and because they might well typify the Christian Hope as expressed in a depression period. The volumes for the years 1942 and 1943 were chosen because they mark the mid-point between the earliest period and today and because it was between the publication of these two volumes that World War II began. A study of these may show the influence of war upon eschatological stress and teaching. The volumes for 1954 and 1955 were chosen because there will be found in these a presentation of our most modern preaching. Only such sermons were analyzed in these volumes as were specified for commonly observed days in the liturgical year of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, e.g., Sunday mornings, Lenten and Advent vespers, the major festivals, etc. In this chapter each reference is duly noted as to its location.

The final chapter will be a comparison of what is found in the hymns with what is found in the sermons. It will be an attempt to answer questions such as the following:

1. To what extent and in what areas does eschatological stress and teaching differ as comparison is made between the hymns and the sermons? What are the probable reasons for this difference?



2. How well do either or both express the Christian Hope?

3. To what extent may the hymns and sermons be used as a corrective to each other in eschatological matters?

4. In what areas are both the hymns and the sermons strong?

5. In what areas do they show mutual weakness?

6. On the basis of this study, what possible suggestions might be made to future writers of hymns and sermons?

7. How well are eschatological matters kept within the awareness of members of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod?



## CHAPTER II

### ESCHATOLOGY IN THE HYMNS OF THE LUTHERAN HYMNAL

#### A. Overall Eschatological Stress

Of the 650 hymns in The Lutheran Hymnal, 484, or approximately 73.5 per cent contain specific eschatological reference. Hence it can with reasonable certainty be stated that since nearly three out of four hymns contain such reference, the hymnbook is rather strong in its emphasis upon eschatological matters.

#### B. Eschatological Stress By Periods

Prior to 500 A.D. . . . .	9 out of 10, or 90%
500 to 1000 A.D. . . . .	15 out of 18, or 83%
1000 to 1500 A.D. . . . .	22 out of 25, or 88%
1500 to 1600 A.D. . . . .	48 out of 66, or 73%
1600 to 1700 A.D. . . . .	119 out of 148, or 80%
1700 to 1800 A.D. . . . .	105 out of 153, or 69%
1800 to 1875 A.D. . . . .	136 out of 203, or 67%
1875 to date . . . . .	26 out of 32, or 81%

While the above shows no definite trend in any direction it seems to indicate significant fluctuation. The difference between the highest and the lowest in stress is twenty-three per cent. Of some significance is the pre-Reformation period which is significantly high consistently, the highest being the earliest period, where martyrdoms were well remembered. The lowest period, 1800 to 1875, follows upon a period of classicism.



### C. Death in the Various Periods

Before 500 A.D. In the ten hymns of this period, death is twice given significant reference. It is once referred to as being "led captive" (95)<sup>1</sup> and richly implied throughout the hymn concerning the slaughter of the innocent (273). Though the sampling is rather small in this period, it may be said in accord with the nature of these two references that there was a live awareness to the concept of death as being integrally related to the Christian Hope.

500 to 1000 A.D. In the eighteen hymns of this period, death receives significant mention five times as follows:

- 3 - As having been overcome, led captive, unable to hold
- 1 - As a transition to life
- 1 - In a petition to be kept from sleeping in death (555). (This is the only place in The Lutheran Hymnal where a person prays not to die physical death. Here death is referred to as a triumph of the Devil.)

1000 to 1500 A.D. In the twenty-five hymns of this period significant reference to death is made six times as follows:

- 2 - In the context of hope for the resurrection
- 2 - In petition for help at the time of death
- 1 - In the context of victory
- 1 - As leaving this world in gladness

Of chief significance in this period is the apparent

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<sup>1</sup>That is, Hymn Number 95 in The Lutheran Hymnal (St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1941).



complete lack of any reference to death as being fearful or to be dreaded as well as the positive hope.

1500 to 1600 A.D. In the sixty-six hymns of this period, death is given significant reference twenty-four times as follows:

- 10 - As having comfort, victory, harmlessness, etc.
- 9 - In petition for help in the time of death
- 2 - With an admonition to prepare for it
- 2 - As a time of great temptation and assault by Satan (319)
- 1 - In petition for protection from "sudden and evil" death (598). (This seems to refer to death in a time of unrepented and unforgiven sin.)

In this group there seems to be an upsurge of the more fearful aspects of death, as death seems to be viewed very existentially.

1600 to 1700 A.D. Of the 148 hymns of this period, death is given significant mention thirty-five times as follows:

- 19 - As destroyed or triumphed over, etc.
- 5 - In petition for removal of fear, peaceful death, help, etc.
- 3 - As a dark valed, a dreary night, agony, etc.
- 2 - As willingly undergone
- 1 - As unbanishable by earthly means
- 1 - As a chastening (217) (This is the only such reference in The Lutheran Hymnal.)
- 1 - As the end of life's storms
- 1 - To the goal of taking life seriously
- 1 - The Eucharist prepares one for death (315) (Verse 10: "This feast is life in death's dark hour")
- 1 - As no darker a room than Jesus passed through

1700 to 1800 A.D. Of the 153 hymns in this period, death is given significant mention sixteen times as follows:

- 4 - As having no sting, triumphed over, etc.
- 3 - As a gloomy valed, containing horrors, etc.



- 3 - In connection with a petition for help through death
- 2 - The death of one's friends should not trouble him
- 1 - It is the end of the earthly mission
- 1 - It is a joyful experience
- 1 - The holy name of Jesus refreshes the soul in death
- 1 - It is a breaking of the earthly fellowship

In this period there is clearly a very great drop from the previous period in frequency of reference. Reference in this period seems also to be more didactic and less existential.

1800 to 1875 A.D. Of the 203 hymns of this period, death is given significant mention thirty-five times as follows:

- 11 - As having no sting, triumphed over, etc.
- 7 - As assisted by faith, Christ, etc.
- 5 - In connection with a willingness to depart; death is sweet, etc.
- 3 - As a tremulous meeting with the foe's strongest assaults
- 3 - In petition for help through death
- 2 - The terrors and imminence of death used as reason for conversion
- 1 - Severs earthly brotherhood
- 1 - Does not sever the union of brothers in Christ

1875 to date. Of the thirty-two hymns in this grouping death appears significantly three times as follows:

- 1 - In context of hope beyond the grave
- 1 - God will wipe the mourner's tears
- 1 - Petition to be taken to God at death

In this grouping the trend is carried further. There is less than a ten per cent reference to death, and none of these seems to be one of actually facing death.

Summary. Generally, death is not mentioned as a very fearful thing in any of the periods. While in most cases



death is thus pictured as a triumphal, safe, or at times even happy thing, there are nevertheless strongly present the mention of death containing terrors. Often, however, where death is thus mentioned it is usually coupled with a petition for help.

The sampling of the first fifteen centuries is too small to make a very significant statement concerning them, apart from those made in the body of the presentation. The sixteenth century gives death by far the strongest emphasis of all. Here also there are the most petitionary prayers in regard to it, more description of its terrors, a more dynamic facing of it, and it appears generally to be a more conscious thing. This is very likely due to the acute awareness of the imminence of death in the period of the Reformation, as most of the hymns of this period are written by theologians closely connected with the Reformation. On the other hand, the seventeenth century seems most strongly to stress the triumphal aspect of death, perhaps in reaction (a mild one, however), to the death-minded hymns of the sixteenth century. The eighteenth century is clearly by comparison with all previous periods most lean in its frequency of mention of death. It furthermore has no particular point of stress, and tends to take a more didactic approach concerning it. The nineteenth century, similarly lean in its frequency of death-mention, however returns slightly once more to the petitionary as well as the terror aspect of



death. The final period is nearly devoid of reference to death, and where such reference is made it is in each case very casual, and in no case betrays a very realistic facing of death.

Clearly the very dangerous trend throughout the various periods is at once both toward the de-emphasis of death itself, and toward speaking about it in a didactic or philosophical, rather than existential way.

#### D. Judgment in the Various Periods

Before 500 A.D. In this period no specific mention is made. This is not likely of great significance, however, since the sampling is so small, with only ten hymns.

500 to 1000 A.D. Of the eighteen hymns in this grouping, significant reference to the judgment is made five times as follows:

- 2 - As a fond hope
- 2 - As fearful or dreadful, yet with hope for the Christian
- 1 - As connected with the Eucharist (307) (Further treatment will be given this later in the chapter.)

Of greatest significance in this grouping is the very heavy stress generally upon the judgment.

1000 to 1500 A.D. Of the twenty-five hymns of this period, significant mention is made of the Judgment ten times as follows:

- 2 - A day of wrath and mourning
- 2 - A petition to God to spare in that day
- 2 - Used to the goal of repentance and correct living



- 2 - A day for which the faithful may have hope
- 1 - A day that stops the evil and confirms the right
- 1 - Heaven and earth shall pass away

Significant here is the even greater emphasis upon the final judgment, and its very heavy stress upon the terrors and seriousness of it.

1500 to 1600 A.D. Of the forty-eight hymns of this period, sixteen significant references to the judgment are made as follows:

- 5 - A fond hope or exhortation to Jesus to come
- 3 - A petition to God to save in that day
- 2 - Used to the goal of being prepared
- 2 - An evil day, all laughter ceases, no earthly help
- 2 - The proud are abased and the good elevated
- 1 - Everyone will be changed
- 1 - The book will be opened

The stress here continues to be very strong. The terrors of the day and the existential facing of it seem to maintain their stress nearly as strongly as in the previous period.

1600 to 1700 A.D. Out of the 148 hymns of this period, sixteen give significant reference to the judgment as follows:

- 4 - Hopeful petition that Jesus return
- 3 - As a terrifying day
- 3 - An object of hope
- 1 - As being near
- 1 - As revealing Christ's glory
- 1 - It will reveal what we expect
- 1 - The sun, moon and stars shall vanish
- 1 - The soul and body shall be reunited
- 1 - It will be the end of time

Very noticeable and significant in this period is the very sudden de-emphasis of the doctrine of the final



judgment. There is less than one-third the frequency of mention as in the previous period. Also noticeable in this period is the lack of a central stress in the use of the doctrine of the judgment. It seems to be used in a rich variety of ways, and gives the opinion that it is being speculated upon rather than really faced by the writers of this period.

1800 to 1875 A.D. Of the 203 hymns of this period, nineteen significant mentions of the judgment are made as follows:

- 5 - It is an object of hope, or joy
- 4 - It is a motive for work and/or readiness
- 4 - The heavens and the earth shall pass away
- 2 - Sinners face the wrath of God at the judgment
- 1 - The tombs break open
- 1 - Jesus comes with power
- 1 - A petition to be found ready
- 1 - All of the forgotten scenes of life will be revived (111)

The continued de-emphasis is readily discernible as well as the very obvious lack of the terror aspect, or the petitionary context of reference. Here arises more emphasis upon its use as a motive for proper living also. The trend continues toward a more casual and mildly hopeful view of the final judgment.

1875 to date. Out of the thirty-two hymns of this period, four significant references are made to the judgment as follows:

- 2 - As a motive for work, or missions
- 1 - To the goal of trusting Christ's merit
- 1 - Heaven and earth shall pass away



Here again the emphasis is very light, with no reference made in the context of terror, and three out of four uses to a goal for this life.

Summary. Of greatest significance in these periods are two major trends. The first of these is a trend away from a concept of the judgment as being very strongly a thing of terror to being one of hope. The second is the very obvious trend away from facing it existentially as being imminent, and rather philosophizing and speculating upon the details of it. There seems in addition to these an ever-increasing use of the final judgment as a goal for this life. All of these are threaded upon the most observable trend, namely that of general de-emphasis from the Reformation to the present.

In the three earliest periods, which are prior to the Reformation, the focus seems relatively strong upon the judgment as a day of wrath and fear, for which even the Christian must pray for help. Throughout this period the stress is strong. In the sixteenth century the stress remains very strong and continues the fear aspect as well as a very realistic facing of the judgment. This is likely very largely due to the spirit of the age of the Reformation, where each major doctrinal disputant and especially Martin Luther himself, in disputations pleaded to the final judgment as finally declaring their cases to be correct. The seventeenth century hymn writers put less than one-third of



the stress present in the sixteenth century upon the final judgment, and when they do refer to it, they seem to do so in a more casual, didactic or philosophical way than do their predecessors. This same trend is carried through the eighteenth century as there arises more noticeably also the tendency to "use" the judgment to a "this-worldly" goal. The nineteenth and twentieth centuries seem to complete the trend of de-emphasis, lack of terror-context, increase proportionately of the hope aspects, and use for a this-worldly goal.

#### E. Body and Soul in the Various Periods

Before 500 A.D. No significant mention is made. It seem significantly absent, especially in the context of the very scant reference in the two succeeding periods.

500 to 1000 A.D. Of the eighteen hymns of this period only one significant reference is made. This is a very unusually mystical sort of reference. The flesh is here spoken of as a burden to the soul (559).

1000 to 1500 A.D. Out of the twenty-five hymns significant mention is made only twice. Both of these are insistences upon the physical resurrection. No mention is made of the relationship of the soul to the body, nor is any allusion made to the state of the soul after death.

1500 to 1600 A.D. Out of sixty-six hymns, significant mention is made fourteen times. These mentions can be



divided into four major groupings, as will be done in treatment of the remaining periods and their treatment of death.

1. The awakening of the flesh, the sleeping of the person, the resurrection of the body: In this category there are in this period seven significant references.

2. Possible implications of the soul alone existing eternally: There are no such references in this period.

3. The soul precedes the body to heaven at death and is reunited with it at the final judgment: There are four such references:

- 2 - Soul precedes body to heaven
- 1 - The thief in paradise "before tomorrow"
- 1 - The soul goes to Abraham's bosom, the body to the earth

4. Only the soul given significant mention.

- 2 - The soul receives a reward, meets the patriarchs, gets a crown

Significant is the continuing lack of focus upon the state of the soul after death as being the Christian hope, though in one-half of the instances it becomes part of it, and in two such direct focus is given.

1600 to 1700 A.D. In the 148 hymns of this period significant mention is made twenty-two times as follows:

1. (The awakening of the flesh, the sleeping of the person, the resurrection of the body)
  - 8 - Awake from death or slumber
  - 1 - Christ's glory hid from us until the judgment (If taken literally this would imply that the soul does not see Christ.)
  - 1 - At the resurrection the saints are finally together (This could imply that they are not together previously.)



2. (Possible inference that the soul lives alone eternally)
  - 2 - Soul to the Father's abode, soul stands eternally before God (601)
3. The soul precedes the body to heaven and is reunited with it on the final day (three affirm this)
4. The soul mentioned with no bodily reference
  - 4 - The saints are now in heaven
  - 2 - The soul goes to heaven at death

The stresses and teachings of this period correspond rather closely to those of the previous period, although the stress is somewhat leaner.

1700 to 1800 A.D. Of the 153 hymns of this period, significant mention is made twenty-eight times.

1. (as 1. above)
  - 4 - Resurrection of the body
  - 1 - Friends are not seen until the judgment
2. (as 2. above)
  - 3 - Soul redeemed from hell or death
  - 1 - Soul rejoices forever (196) (This seems to indicate a resurrection of the soul to live eternally severed from the "fettters" of the body.)
  - 1 - The soul inherits all things (381) (This seems to preclude any need or use for the resurrection of the body.)
  - 1 - The soul sees judgment at death (376) (This would seem to take any necessary emphasis from the final judgment.)
  - 1 - Souls are fixed in an "eternal state" at death (113). Eschatological hope throughout this hymn is focused upon the state of the soul after death.
3. (as 3. above)
  - 2 - Soul, then body
4. (as 4. above)
  - 12 - Saints now above, souls go to heaven at death, soul praises after death, etc.
  - 1 - The saints above partake of grace
  - 1 - Souls above have nothing to do with the earth
  - 1 - Saints above and below make one communion

In this period there seems suddenly to arise a rather significant stress upon the condition of the soul after



death. Suddenly the state of the soul after death becomes a more centrally focal point of the Christian hope.

1800 to 1875 A.D. Of 203 hymns from this period, thirty-one significant references are made to the body and/or soul as follows:

1. (as 1. above)
  - 13 - Resurrection of the body
  - 2 - Sleep is undisturbed (587, 588) (implies unconscious soul)
  - 1 - The soul sings while sleeping
2. (as 2. above)
  - 2 - Heaven is a rest for spirits (9)
  - 1 - The imprisoned soul longs for home (616)
  - 1 - The soul partakes of the paschal feast while the body is in the grave (415). (This is perhaps the most emphatic soul-exalting reference of the lot.)
  - 1 - When earthly things are past, bring ransomed soul at last
  - 1 - The ransomed soul is something eternally for God
3. (as 3. above)
  - 3 - Body sleeps while soul is in heaven, etc.
4. (as 4. above)
  - 4 - Saints now pray and praise in heaven
  - 1 - The soul is preserved through death by Jesus
  - 1 - The souls reunite at death with those gone before

This corresponds rather closely with the last period, except that there seems to be a resurgence of emphasis upon the resurrection, although preoccupation upon the state of the soul after death is still strongly present. There is slightly less overall emphasis.

1875 to date. Of the thirty-two hymns of this period there are only two significant allusions concerning the body and/or the soul. One of these speaks of the souls as commended to the Savior's hand to rest in peace eternal (293).



The other reference is to the saints, of whom it is said that they who are at rest, now praise God.

Summary. The first three centuries are nearly devoid of reference in this matter. It is rather significant, however, that two of the three mentions that do exist in these periods refer specifically to the resurrection of the body. The one reference to the spirit is a very odd one and would look out of place in any period. In the sixteenth century the greatest stress continues to be placed almost exclusively upon the resurrection of the body, though the soul is not infrequently referred to as being conscious in the interim, and joining the body on the last day. The seventeenth century continues about the same in areas of emphasis, although frequency of mention falls off somewhat. In the eighteenth century, however, the soul seems suddenly to come into prominence and become the central point of focus for the Christian hope. While the doctrine concerning the soul would not necessarily put the resurrection out of the picture it would tend to make it seem unnecessary, and the stress upon the soul after death, would tend to withdraw attention from this facet of the Christian hope. Since this is generally referred to as the classic period of Lutheran orthodoxy, this stress may be the result of too much speculating and philosophizing concerning death and eternity to the near exclusion of an existential facing of death and eternity so obvious in the earlier periods of the church's



history, to the extent that for some of the hymn writers it might seem that the body is at best a necessary evil and at worst an unnecessary one. The nineteenth century seems to begin a trend of reversion to what had been prevalent in the seventeenth century, with, however, less general stress in each area. In the final period, the whole matter is thoroughly de-emphasized, with little thought of eschatological reference to either body or soul or both. These findings seem to indicate a necessity for establishing for people of today just where our eschatological hope ought to center.

#### F. Heaven in the Various Periods

Before 500 A.D. Of the ten hymns of this period, significant reference is given to heaven eleven times as follows:

- 5 - A place of praise or adoration
- 4 - A fond hope
- 1 - In petition to be taken to heaven
- 1 - A place where there is no time

Of significance here is the predominance of heaven as a place of praise, as well as a total lack of "using" the concept of heaven to an earthly goal.

500 to 1000 A.D. Of the eighteen hymns in this period, twelve significant references are made as follows:

- 5 - A fond hope
- 3 - A place of praise
- 1 - Christ wields the scepter forever
- 1 - There the Christian possesses an eternal quality sought here
- 1 - A place of rest
- 1 - In petition



Obviously the same general emphases remain, although the frequency of mention is somewhat less. There seems thus far to be a nearly complete lack of describing heaven as the sort of place where what could be termed selfish desire is satisfied.

1000 to 1500 A.D. Of the twenty-five hymns of this period, significant reference is made to heaven twenty-seven times:

- 5 - A place of praise
- 4 - A place of glory, deathlessness, joy, etc.
- 4 - God is the portion of heaven
- 3 - It is a reason for toil and struggle
- 3 - It is the goal of life
- 3 - It is a place of rest
- 3 - The object of a petition
- 1 - Jesus is the King of heaven
- 1 - It is the place of the beatific vision

Here the stress equals once more the stress of the first period. Here is observed also a far wider use for the concept of heaven. Here for the first time it is used for a this-worldly goal, and is described in such a way that it might appeal to an unbeliever. Nevertheless, it remains above all a place of praise.

1500 to 1600 A.D. Of the sixty-six hymns, significant mention is made of heaven thirty-four times in this period as follows:

- 8 - A fond hope, longing
- 6 - A place of praise
- 6 - The end of earth's pilgrimage
- 5 - The object of a petition
- 4 - It is God's work and purpose for us
- 2 - Christ or God is the treasure of heaven
- 1 - It is a reason for consecration or trust



- 1 - It is a place of rest
- 1 - It is not gained by works

The emphasis upon heaven in this period is less than one-half that of the previous period, and a few new uses arise in this period. Its status as the goal of the earthly pilgrimage seems here to be in the ascendancy, and the fact that it is God's work and purpose for us, obviously a reformation stress to counter the nearly exclusive "Harsh Judge" view of God.

1600 to 1700 A.D. Of the 148 hymns of this period significant reference is given to heaven 115 times as follows:

- 48 - Fond hope and longing, etc.
- 14 - A place of personal glory, reign, joy, power, etc.
- 12 - The goal of the earthly pilgrimage
- 11 - The object of petition
- 11 - A place of praise
- 7 - God is the reward
- 3 - It is an impetus to work
- 2 - It is related to the sabbath day
- 2 - We have on this earth a foretaste of heaven
- 2 - It is related to the Eucharist (315) (to be discussed later in the chapter)
- 1 - It is the Christian's because baptism gives it (301) (to be discussed later in this chapter)

The basic stresses have not extensively changed from those of the previous period, although its use has become somewhat broader, and the new elements introduced in the last period with the exception of heaven being God's will for man are further emphasized.

1700 to 1800 A.D. Of the 153 hymns of this period, ninety-three significant mentions are given to heaven as follows:



- 38 - A fond hope of joys, mansions, pleasures, glory, etc.
- 10 - A place of praise
- 10 - God is the reward
- 8 - It is the goal of the earthly pilgrimage
- 8 - The object of a petition
- 5 - The Christian reigns and has honor
- 3 - Reason for fighting, waiting; gives eternal perspective for life
- 3 - Time, change, and/or the universe ceases (13, 651)
- 2 - Related to the Sabbath day
- 2 - Already tasted here (26)
- 1 - The paschal feast
- 1 - It will surpriss us
- 1 - Secrets will be revealed
- 1 - Heaven deliberately excluded from the focus of hope (to be discussed later in the chapter)

The switch from heaven as a place of praise, pure enjoyment of God Himself, and purely altruistic ideas of heaven seem farther on the decline in this period. There seems much more speculation on what heaven is like and a much wider use of the concept. There seems to be also a rising use of heaven to this-worldly goals. The overall stress is somewhat less than in the previous period.

1870 to 1875 A.D. Of the 203 hymns of this period significant reference is given to heaven 151 times as follows:

- 45 - Reward, joy, fond hope, etc.
- 18 - A place of singing and adoration
- 15 - To the goal of work, stewardship, fighting, preparedness, etc.
- 15 - An object of petition
- 13 - The true home after life's pilgrimage
- 10 - God Himself is the reward
- 7 - A place of rest
- 5 - The Paschal banquet
- 4 - All questions will be answered
- 4 - Saints will reign and have glory. (They will even be praised themselves (656).) (This is the only place where the hymns speak of the saints in light as being worthy of eternal praise.)



- 3 - Tasted in this life (396)
- 2 - Saints offer themselves eternally to God (24)
- 2 - It is a new creation
- 1 - It is the church at rest
- 1 - The saints are a priestly band (656). This seems to be the only place which might suggest intercessory prayer by the saints. (?)
- 1 - Christ both the Host and the Guest
- 1 - The church calls people to heaven
- 1 - The place of the beatific vision
- 1 - Focus deliberately removed from heaven (discussed later in this chapter)

The overall stress for this period is slightly higher, but not significantly so. The trend quite obviously continues to favor more and more speculation upon the nature of heaven, and a wider use of this concept. It is in this period that nearly every sort of mention of heaven is made.

1875 to date. Of the twenty-six hymns of this period, significant mention is made of heaven twenty-five times as follows:

- 8 - Fond hope, place of joy, etc.
- 6 - The object of a petition
- 3 - To the goal of missions, good works, etc.
- 2 - A place of praise
- 2 - Connected with the Eucharist (308, 314) (to be discussed later in this chapter)
- 1 - The joys that await us are unknown
- 1 - The church in heaven is communed within the Eucharist (634) (to be discussed later in this chapter)
- 1 - A place of service
- 1 - God is our portion

The trend away from a theocentric view of heaven is here carried slightly farther. While there are only three such references there seems to begin in this period a re-awakening to the eschatological significance of the Eucharist. The overall stress of this period otherwise, while



being slightly heavier, is nearly the same as in the previous period.

Summary. In the first period the stress upon heaven is very heavy. The greatest emphasis here is upon heaven as a place of praise. This would seem to indicate that the most primitive church achieved its highest and finest experience of God in worship and adoration. The fond hope of this period, which with the concept of praise almost entirely dominates is almost without exception the fond hope for this place of praise and adoration of God. The following period is very nearly the same. The third period seems also to be primarily in the same general scheme, with praise and adoration first and again in the same spirit "God as portion" in third place. A large measure of consistency and uniformity is thus found in the first fifteen centuries of the church's history on this matter. In the sixteenth century these elements remain almost central, but there is now added in significant frequency the idea that heaven is God's will and purpose for men (perhaps in antithesis to the Roman abuse) as well as heaven as the goal of the earthly pilgrimage, and a greater stress upon heaven as an object of petition. To this point there seems very little use of the concept of heaven to the goal of earthly toil, good works and the like. This spirit changes rather abruptly in the seventeenth century, where heaven becomes more a place of joy, pleasure, and power and glory, described almost as



the sort of place that might appeal to the unregenerate. In line with this it now becomes rather extensively used to the goal of responsible living here in the world. In the eighteenth century the concept of heaven as a place of praise, or as being completely theocentric wanes further with a general de-emphasis on heaven itself. Here the various joys of heaven are more completely described and extensively used. There remains no great central stress unless it has become that of heaven as a fond hope or a high reward. In the nineteenth century and through to the final century this trend reaches its peak. The aspect of heaven as a place of worship or adoration is here all but disappeared, and the concept of heaven is more strongly used to underscore other teachings, viz., the good life, reason for conversion, etc. As has been demonstrated the general trend throughout the periods seems to be from a theocentric heaven to an anthropocentric heaven, moving from the concept of heaven as a place of praise to heaven as a place of reward, and from thence to widely divergent emphases and uses. In every period with the exception of the sixteenth century the stress remains very heavy.

#### G. Eschatology and the Sacraments

Baptism. While there are several references to baptism as giving saving faith, saving us from sin, saving us, or granting gifts for eternal life, there is only one where it



is mentioned that "by this sacrament we inherit eternal life" (301).

The Eucharist. While there are several places where the gifts offered in the Eucharist are spoken of as contributing to salvation or everlasting life, there is but one hymn in the hymnal which in the rendered text explicitly links the Lord's Supper with the marriage feast of the Lamb (164).

There are, however, two hymns in which this aspect has been omitted through mistranslation:

Hymn 305: In verse 9 the following mistranslation is found:

Dass ich auch, wie jetzt auf Erden  
Moeg' dein Gast im Himmel werden

is rendered:

Through the gifts thou here dost give me  
As Thy guest in heaven receive me.

The original seems to suggest a peculiar sameness of the Eucharist with the heavenly feast: ". . . That I, as (a guest) now on earth, may become your guest in heaven."

Hymn 307: In this ancient hymn a link seems to be made between the Eucharist and the final judgment, which was deleted in translation. The final two lines of the third verse read in the original:

Alpha et Omega, ipse Christus Dominus  
Venit venturus iudicare homines.

In translation they are rendered:



O Judge of all, our only Savior Thou  
 In this Thy feast of love be with us now.

Since both of these hymns were translated in the middle of the nineteenth century it is not unlikely that these mis-translations are partly due to a pietistic influence (the sacrament made to focus almost entirely upon the death of Christ). This seems intrinsically evident in hymn 307, where the concept of judgment, central in the original, is all but removed, and Christ as Savior, absent entirely from the original receives central focus.

#### H. Hymns Deliberately Minimizing Eschatology

Hymn 399: "Thee will I love . . . Nor for the hope of high reward."

This would point out the danger of loving or serving only in the anticipation of remuneration. This might be a reaction to the transition in the hymns from an emphasis upon heaven as a place of praise, etc. to a place of reward or pleasures.

#### Hymn 356:

All that makes the angels glad  
 In their garb of glory clad  
 Only fills me with distress  
 If Thy presence does not bless.

This hymn, though by the same author as the previous one, seems yet more pointed in its effort to assail the sort of longing for heaven which might come from a selfish motive. Whatever was the motive behind the willful drawing of at-



tention from eschatology in his first hymn is likely also true of his second.

### I. Significant Deletions

Hymn 59: The following verse is deleted:

Yes, Thou wilt speedily appear  
The smitten earth already reels  
And not far off we seem to hear  
The thunder of Thy chariot wheels.

It is somewhat questionable just why this stanza was deleted. It is perhaps because of a millennialistic flavor in the last two lines. Yet if this be the reason, the following verse, still present in the text, might have been deleted as well:

O come a reign o'er every land  
Let Satan from his throne be hurled  
All nations bow to Thy command  
And grace revive a dying world.

Hymn 360: The following verse is among deleted ones:

With Me, your Chief, ye then shall know,  
Shall feel your sins forgiven  
Anticipate your heaven below  
And own that love is heaven.

This is probably deleted because of a less than adequate definition of heaven, or because of what may seem a subtle attempt to remove the Christian hope from its eschatological setting.

Hymn 370: The following verse is deleted:

I trust His righteous character,  
His council, promise, and His power  
His honor and His name at stake  
To save me from the burning lake.



This is obviously removed on the grounds of taste. It seems a general rule that while in hymnody a writer can be very vivid in his description of heaven, such vividness in a description of hell is not permitted.

Hymn 558: The following stanza is omitted:

The faster sleep our senses binds  
The more unfettered are our minds  
O may my soul from matter free  
Thy loveliness unclouded see.

Aside from its being questionable biologically, this verse is perhaps omitted for its quasi-mysticism and disparagement of the body.

Hymn 581: The following verse is deleted:

He giveth His beloved sleep  
When these frail heart-beats cease  
And in His presence then will keep  
Our souls in endless peace.

It is doubtful just why this verse was deleted. It was possibly deleted because of the implication in it that only the soul exists in endless peace. This interpretation is somewhat doubtful, however, since there are many hymns remaining that suggest this sort of thing even more specifically.

Hymn 593: Line three of the fifth stanza was originally rendered:

Up to the Lord our flesh shall fly

It was altered to read:

Up to the Lord we, too, shall fly.

The nature of the alteration in this case would suggest



that this is not an attempt to de-emphasize a physical resurrection, nor the importance of the body, but rather a matter of taste.

### J. Summary

Eschatological stress throughout The Lutheran Hymnal is generally rich and varied in all departments except that of hell. The reason for the lack of much mention of hell may well be found in the nature of hymn worship itself. Concepts of hell do not seem to lend themselves as well to praise as do other eschatological concepts. On the other hand, the heaviest stress by far is upon heaven. This is also due in part to the nature of praise and the ease with which reference to heaven lends itself to a song of praise.

It seems generally true that in periods where death is given extensive treatment, the concept of judgment is given extensive treatment also. It is also noteworthy that the nature of the mention of death in any given period seems to parallel the nature of the mention of judgment in the same period.

There seems also to be the tendency to decrease focus upon death and judgment in the same periods in which matters of body and soul, and increased stress upon heaven is made.

There is quite obvious the attempt of the editors to keep the hymns doctrinally pure, and they do so with good success. At times it becomes evident that millennialistic



views are eliminated, as well as mysticism, and such things also as saccharine views of heaven and richly descriptive views of hell. A few results of pietism, especially in connection with the Lord's Supper remain, as well as some rather classic formulations regarding body and soul.

Throughout the periods the stresses of the hymn writers have changed considerably. Heaven, which begins as a place of praise, where God is worshiped and loved for His own sake, undergoes a general transition to where it becomes a place of joy, reward and glory, primarily. In the later centuries it is used more and more to underscore the advisability of a good life <sup>in faith</sup>. Throughout the periods the concept of judgment becomes less fearful and more desirable, and is also used more and more to underscore the advisability of a good life and faith. The tendency in the matter of death is away from an existential facing of it to a speculating and teaching concerning it, and thence to a strong de-emphasis of it.

An evaluation of the relative merits of the varying stresses of the various periods is not a primary concern of this paper. The findings of this analysis of eschatology in the hymns would indicate, however, that such study is highly advisable in the near future if not necessary.

5. Death in the Various Periods

1825-1850 of 127 sermons analyzed from this period.



## CHAPTER III

### ESCHATOLOGICAL STRESS IN THE CONCORDIA PULPIT

#### A. Overall Eschatological Stress

Of the 251 sermons analyzed for eschatological content in the various issues of The Concordia Pulpit, it was found that 218, or approximately seventy-seven per cent contained at least one significant eschatological reference. This makes clear that there has been strong eschatological consciousness within the church of the last thirty years.

#### B. Eschatological Stress by Periods

When divided into two year periods about ten years apart, the relative stress in the periods is as follows:

1931-32 . . . .	92 out of 127, or 72%
1942-43 . . . .	50 out of 57, or 88%
1954-55 . . . .	76 out of 97, or 77%

While there seems to be a rather marked difference between the low of 1931-32 and the high of 1942-43, there is nevertheless no trend established. Possible reasons for this variation will be discussed later in the chapter. Generally, however, from the above, eschatological stress seems to be reasonably uniform.

#### C. Death in the Various Periods

1931-32. Of 127 sermons analyzed from this period,



twenty-seven gave this concept significant reference forty-three times. The distribution of reference is as follows:

- 15 - Context of victory, or deliverance from (1931: 31, 19, 46, 57, 80, 145, 177;<sup>1</sup> 1932: 18, 66, 97, 124, 147, 225, 196, 238)
- 8 - To the goal of faith (persuasion) (1931: 19, 78, 269; 1932: 66, 97, 147, 196, 225)
- 6 - As the wages or result of sin (1931: 37, 78, 135; 1932: 89, 161, 230)
- 4 - Casual mention in the phrase, "Sin, death, hell" (1931: 138, 249, 269; 1932: 51)
- 4 - To the goal of hope or comfort (1931: 46, 57, 80, 269)
- 2 - As being under Satan's jurisdiction (1932: 18, 87). At other times God is pictured as ruling death.
- 1 - As being imminent (1932: 229)
- 1 - Enoch and Elijah did not taste it (1932: 160)

In a very large number of cases in this period death seems to be treated rather extensively and elaborately. The ratio of uses per sermon with eschatological content is high, illustrating this. There is no significant difference in stress between the years 1930 and 1931.

1942-43. Of the fifty-seven sermons analyzed in this period, sixteen gave death significant reference a total of twenty-four times. The distribution is as follows:

- 7 - In the context of victory, saved from, etc. (1942: 108, 334; 1943: 286, 315, 233, 497, 308)
- 4 - Casual mention in the phrase, "Sin, death, hell" (1943: 187, 307, 315, 122)
- 2 - A dark, gloomy vale (1942: 108; 1943: 111)
- 2 - Imminent (1943: 8, 283)
- 1 - As painful to the Christian as to the unbeliever (1943: 72). (The meaning here is that death holds the same temptation to fear, the same pain and

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<sup>1</sup>The Concordia Pulpit for 1931. The following numbers are page references.



- forboding. The sermon later states that the Christian has comfort the unbeliever has not.)
- 1 - Jesus calls to rest (1943: 72). (This seems in striking opposition to other references which permit the idea that death is Satan's work, and not necessarily God's will or doing in every case.)
  - 1 - The wages of sin (1943: 300)
  - 1 - There is universal fear of it (1943: 216)
  - 1 - We ought to think of it (1943: 216)
  - 1 - All creation dies (1942: 273)
  - 1 - To the goal of readiness (1943: 8)
  - 1 - As a motive for work while alive (1943: 39)
  - 1 - To underscore the goal of faith (1943: 233)

In this group there is a tremendous difference between the years 1942 and 1943. In the 1942 edition death occurred only four times. In the 1943 edition it occurred twenty times. This seems to indicate that there had been a trend toward a lack of considering death, which may have been changed by the event of World War II. The use of death in this period is highly existential. There is a general lack of use of the concept toward underscoring the necessity of faith or a good life. There is not a great amount of glib "victory" mention. Here death seems to be "faced" rather than "speculated upon," and is in general a deadly serious matter. There is also significantly little urging that people "ought to think about it." The use of death in this period seems largely accommodated to people acutely aware of its imminence and reality.

1954-55. Of the ninety-seven sermons of this period, twenty-one give mention twenty-seven times. The distribution is as follows:



- 9 - In the context of victory (1955: 143, 147, 153; 1954: 12, 150, 23, 329, 97, 176)
- 4 - As imminent, close, or waiting (1955: 4, 102, 120; 1954: 333)
- 3 - Casual mention in the phrase, "Sin, death, hell" (1955: 155; 1954: 163, 260)
- 2 - As the wages of sin (1954: 45, 268)
- 1 - God appoints the time (1954: 175). (Another typical example of God being the ruler of death, and the inference that it is at His hand that death comes.)
- 1 - Passing from one phase of life to another (1954: 180)
- 1 - "Better he did not die" not condemned (1954: 187). (Here it seems obvious that a specific death might not have been the will of God.)
- 1 - As universal (1954: 224)
- 1 - As the greatest storm in the world (1954: 329)
- 1 - The thought of it recalls sin
- 2 - To the goal of accepting the gospel (1955: 102, 120)
- 1 - As warning against coldness (1955: 104)

This group seems significantly rich in variety of usage, but rather light in its overall stress. The trend seems to be away from an existential facing of death, to a theorizing about it. It is seldom used toward the goal of improving Christian life. Both sides are taken to the question, "Does God or Satan cause death?" Each solution seems satisfactory to the editors of the book.

Summary. Since the greatest emphasis on death is in the central period, no evidence is hereby given for the existence of a definite long-term trend. If such a trend is to be found, it must be found by comparing the first and final periods. Here the following trends are at least slightly noticeable:

- a. A wider and richer use of the concept will be



noticed in the later period.

b. The later period is more didactic concerning the nature of death.

c. The relevance of death to faith and the Christian hope is more clearly stressed in the earlier period.

d. While the overall similarity in stress between the earlier and later period does not on the surface indicate a trend, there has been a great de-emphasis on death from the year 1930 to the beginning of the war, and a gradual de-emphasis ever since. It may well be true that we of today are now in a period of the de-emphasis of death.

e. There is the rather questionable tendency to stress death when it is consciously in the minds of people and to fail to stress it when it is no longer a very conscious concept.

#### D. Judgment in the Various Periods

1931-32. Of the 127 sermons analyzed, twenty-six make thirty-four significant mentions of judgment. The distribution is as follows:

- 7 - As adverse to unrepentant sinners (1931: 8, 177, 256, 132, 4; 1932: 77, 178)
- 4 - As imminent, sudden or final (1931: 183, 229, 235, 73)
- 4 - To the goal of willingness to work or suffer (1931: 42, 235; 1932: 9, 2)
- 3 - As a glorious hope (1931: 42, 72, 145)
- 3 - Casual mention (1931: 47, 90; 1932: 11)
- 2 - To the goal of repentance and faith (1931: 8, 238)
- 2 - People will be surprised at the outcome (1931:



- 31; 1932: 63)
- 1 - As delayed (1932: 9)
- 1 - Must not try to predict the date (1931: 6)
- 1 - Must not relish the coming judgment of an enemy (1931: 20). (This is the only direct attempt to prevent the Christian hope from being vengeful.)
- 1 - In petition for (1932: 243)
- 1 - More tolerable for heathen than for rejectors (1932: 60)
- 1 - To the goal of faithfulness to the Bible (1931: 6)
- 1 - To the goal of patience (1931: 4)
- 1 - Works rewarded at (1932: 2)

In this period there is very light, but rather richly varying stress. There seems in general to be no basic or central purpose in its use. There is considerable reference made to the more fearful connotations of the judgment and its seriousness, and the look forward to the judgment seems to be generally one urging responsible living.

1942-43. Of the fifty-seven sermons in this group analyzed, sixteen of them make a total of thirty-four significant references. The distribution is as follows:

- 4 - It is Christ's return to reveal Himself again (1942: 274, 360, 282; 1943: 499)
- 4 - To the goal of repentance and faith (1942: 267; 1943: 5, 19, 106)
- 2 - To the goal of readiness (1942: 258, 264)
- 2 - As sudden and unexpected (1942: 263; 1943: 499)
- 1 - The outcome is known beforehand (1942: 267)
- 1 - Only God's Word counts at the judgment (1942: 267)
- 1 - It is the end of procreation (1942: 306)
- 1 - It is hastened by gospel preaching (1942: 390). This need not bear the connotation that the date is not already set, but hinges upon the time it will take to preach the gospel sufficiently to all nations to fulfil the prophecy.)
- 1 - Not necessarily near nor far (1943: 5)
- 1 - To the goal of belief in Scripture (1942: 267)
- 1 - In opposition to the social gospel (1943: 7)
- 1 - It is certain to come (1943: 496)



- 1 - It is deferred to give time for repentance (1943: 136). (This also need not bear the connotation that the date is not necessarily specifically set.)
- 1 - Those who scoff at the judgment do so out of a fear complex (1943: 134)
- 1 - God will strike hard (1943: 19)
- 1 - All must give account (1943: 222)
- 1 - It is fearful to unbelievers (1943: 395)
- 1 - Will expose the real poverty of the rich (1943: 48)
- 1 - To the goal of preparation (1943: 496)
- 1 - To the goal of earnest labor (1943: 4)
- 1 - To the goal of not loving worldly things (1943: 9)
- 1 - To the goal of perseverance (1943: 395)
- 1 - To the goal of mission work (1943: 134)
- 1 - To the goal of retaining consciousness of it (1943: 134)

Outstanding in this period is the great variety of teachings and purposes concerning the judgment. It is generally polemical in tone. The ratio of mentions per sermon treating the subject is higher than any other aspect of eschatology in any period (thirty-four mentions in sixty-six sermons). There are in this period two sermons directed almost exclusively to this aspect of eschatology (1, 32). There is in this period not a single sermon that simply mentions the judgment casually in passing. Throughout this period the judgment is strongly stressed as a deeply serious matter.

1954-55. Of the ninety-seven sermons analyzed, twenty-four sermons mention it significantly forty times. The distribution is as follows:

- 7 - To the goal of works, love, altruism, good life, etc. (1955: 4, 9, 189; 1954: 53, 115, 299, 333)
- 7 - As Christ's return to reveal Himself once more (1955: 156, 32, 184, 187; 1954: 153, 289)
- 4 - In casual passing reference, quotes, etc. (1955: 86, 24; 1954: 106, 221)



- 2 - Fearful to unbelievers (1954: 53, 115)
- 2 - To the goal of waiting daily (1955: 189, 9)
- 1 - Unbelievers bow to Jesus (1955: 131)
- 1 - As very close (1955: 4)
- 1 - All human judgments bow to this final one (1955: 18)
- 1 - We are in God's hand until (1955: 49)
- 1 - Seals the doom of the wicked (1955: 48)
- 1 - We receive crowns at the judgment (1955: 86)
- 1 - To the goal of not judging fellowman (1955: 18)
- 1 - Sudden (1954: 6)
- 1 - Denied by Sadducees (1954: 16)
- 1 - Christ confesses us before the Father (1954: 50)
- 1 - Terrifying when we consider our sin (1954: 67)
- 1 - Wealth is of no value at (1954: 102)
- 1 - Altruism repaid (1954: 279)
- 1 - Must all appear (1954: 334)
- 1 - Evil angels reserved to that day (1954: 538)
- 1 - Not based upon our works (1954: 363)
- 1 - To the goal of accepting Christ (1954: 102)
- 1 - To the goal of clinging to Christ's words (1954: 329)
- 1 - To the goal of rejecting heresies (1954: 365)
- 1 - It should chase us to Christ (1954: 67)
- 1 - To the goal of proper faith (1954: 363)

Once again a very broad use of the teaching of the judgment is evident. There is a dual stress, the use of it to a variety of specific goals as well as a rather pronounced effort to spell the doctrine itself out clearly. There is no sermon of the period exclusively devoted to the doctrine of the judgment.

Summary. Throughout all of the periods there seems to be a richly divergent use of this doctrine. There is in each mention of the judgment, and a very existential view of it. The latter period, while strong in these respects, seems to begin, however, a trend toward the de-emphasis of it, as well as a more casual and speculative treatment of it. Apart from this trend, however, the tone in connection



with the judgment is deadly serious. It is generally used to underscore the necessity of proper faith and morals, although its use as a fond hope is more than casually evident.

#### E. Body and Soul in the Various Periods

1931-32. Of the 127 sermons analyzed twelve sermons make significant mention nineteen times. The distribution is as follows:

- 6 - Stress and insistence upon resurrection of the body (1931: 82, 145, 98; 1932: 50, 93, 90)
- 2 - The spirit receives a crown at death (1931: 17, 19)
- 2 - A sharp distinction drawn between the healing of the soul and the healing of the body (1931: 3, 61)
- 2 - "Immortal soul" (1932: 43, 66)
- 2 - Salvation of the soul (1931: 157, 159)
- 1 - The soul goes to heaven (1932: 92)
- 1 - Significance of both asserted (1932: 229)
- 1 - Souls wrested from Satan's grasp at the crucifixion of our Lord (1932: 66), (understandable only if not true historically or temporally)
- 1 - Polemically: soul goes immediately to heaven or hell at death (1932: 160)

While the greatest single stress in this period is upon the resurrection of the body, nevertheless a great amount of the Christian hope is directed to the state of the soul after death, sometimes as though the body were an unnecessary part of the Christian hope.

1942-43. Of the fifty-seven hymns analyzed ten refer to the concept of body and soul significantly twelve times. The distribution is as follows:

- 7 - The resurrection of the body (1942: 537, 351, 352; 1943: 486, 490, 75, 497)
- 1 - At death "more alive than before" (having moved)



from a clay tenement to an immortal house (1942: 490). (Extremely difficult to understand, It seems clearly to imply that the soul is imprisoned in the body, and better off without one. This seems to exclude any value in the resurrection of the body and to withdraw the Christian hope from it.)

- 1 - "We can feel the presence of an immortal soul in the body" (1943: 217) (a very difficult statement)
- 1 - At death the soul is either in God's presence or in hell (1943: 219)
- 1 - The consciousness of the soul never ceases (1943: 219)

The emphasis on a body and soul teaching is very light, but nevertheless very present and very confusing. There seems, at times, a tendency to speak theological opinion in a dogmatic way. There is also the very present tendency toward focusing eschatological hope for the Christian to the state of the soul after death. Nevertheless, strongest emphasis for the Christian hope is placed in the resurrection of the body.

1954-55. Of the ninety-seven sermons analyzed twelve of them make fourteen significant mentions. The distribution is as follows:

- 6 - Focus of hope upon the resurrection (1955: 143, 187, 145; 1954: 53, 168, 208, 334)
- 1 - The soul saved (1955: 39)
- 1 - Eternal life entered at death (1955: 102)
- 1 - "Soul in Paradise" means "Soul in Heaven" (1955: 154)
- 1 - The soul after death is in the highest possible communion with God (1955: 106) (another seeming disparagement of the body)
- 1 - The soul goes to heaven at death (1955: 334)
- 1 - Body and soul separate at death (1955: 350)
- 2 - Casual mention (1955: 143; 1954: 208)

While there is less overall stress upon the concepts of



body and soul, and their eschatological significance, there still remains a rather strong focus of eschatological hope upon the state of the soul after death.

Summary. The theology of the sermons in this area at times becomes very vague, and at other times seems to take one of two courses. The more prominent of these is that of focusing eschatological hope squarely upon the resurrection of the dead. The hearer is directed to place his eschatological hope in the return of Christ to the earth, when He will raise up the dead person and give to him eternal life. This becomes the focus of attention and the ultimate in eschatological fulfilment. The second of these is the tendency to focus attention upon the state of the soul after death. At times when the focus is placed here the soul is spoken of as enjoying perfection in the fullest, and even at times of being capable of this because of its release from the prison of the body, as though the life of a soul without a body is better than life with a body. At this point in the sermon the subject is sometimes changed, and would incline the hearer to wonder about the importance of the resurrection. In general, two views are constructed as follows: At death the soul leaves the body. At this time either the person experiences blessed sleep in Jesus, or his soul finds complete fulfilment in the presence of God, or some point between these two extremes. (At times each of these extremes is preached in a tone which would suggest



their exclusive truth.) At the final day the body and soul unite. For the former point of view this reunion is the all-important eschatological hope, and for the latter, while true, it is of lesser significance.

#### F. Heaven in the Various Periods

1931-32. Of the 127 sermons analyzed sixty-nine mention heaven significantly seventy-nine times. The distribution is as follows:

- 9 - As a place of joy, pleasure, glory, gain, etc. (1931: 42, 128, 196, 159, 62, 89, 140; 1932: 60, 236)
- 8 - As won by Christ (1931: 260, 267, 94, 121, 125; 1932: 54, 62, 66)
- 7 - As "eternal life" (1931: 37, 78; 1932: 54, 56, 94, 98, 125)
- 6 - To the goal of a good life (1931: 146, 154, 158, 179; 1932: 159, 123)
- 3 - As a place of rest (1931: 5, 8; 1932: 223)
- 3 - See God face to face, etc. (1931: 154, 105)
- 2 - Earth is a place of probation for (1931: 230; 1932: 271)
- 3 - To the goal of humility and love (1931: 151, 108; 1932: 126)
- 2 - No marriage nor propagation (1931: 195; 1932: 163)
- 2 - It is God's will for man (1931: 126; 1932: 247)
- 2 - As certain (1932: 79, 137)
- 2 - As a place of service to God (1932: 231, 63)
- 1 - All accomplishments will be revealed (1931: 152)
- 1 - Related to the sabbath (1931: 150)
- 1 - As an eternal betrothal to Christ (1931: 71)
- 1 - A small faith is enough for entrance (1931: 139)
- 1 - The reward is proportionate to our works (1931: 158)
- 1 - As a place of praise to God (1931: 250)
- 1 - Mention in petition (1931: 267)
- 1 - To the goal of enduring scorn (1931: 17)
- 1 - To the goal of remaining in the faith
- 1 - To the goal of accepting Christ (persuasion) (1931: 121)
- 1 - Related to Eucharist (1931: 263). (One of the



only two such cases in the entire 281 sermons analyzed. The relationship is that of the marriage feast prefigured.)

- 1 - As a result of our election (1932: 54)
- 1 - As a land of perfect love (1932: 58)
- 1 - Promised to those who love Christ (1932: 126)
- 1 - The crucified thief is now in heaven (1932: 147)
- 1 - Won for us through the Bible (1932: 148)
- 1 - The sole reward for good works is the "honorable mention" of God (1932: 159). (A pious thought, but it is not necessarily so.)
- 1 - Place of perfect righteousness (1932: 196)
- 1 - For sinners (1932: 222)
- 1 - To the goal of believing the Bible (1932: 137)
- 1 - To the goal of praying for it (1932: 121)
- 1 - To the goal of preparing for it (1932: 174)
- 1 - To the goal of believing the words of Christ (1932: 195)

In this group heaven is referred to more frequently as a place of joys and pleasures than of worship, service, perfection, etc. These factors are, however, also present. Much reference in this grouping concerns itself with description. Its use is more generally directed toward goals of faith and belief than toward goals of life and work, although there is only one instance in which heaven is used to woo a decision to accept Christ. Many of the mentions are casual, and nearly a dozen of the sermons mentioning heaven mention it only once, and that usually in a quote or at the very end. Generally a less than extensive treatment is given to heaven aside from its frequent mention. There is no sermon devoted centrally to the concept of heaven.

1942-43. Of the fifty-seven sermons analyzed in this group thirty-four mention heaven significantly fifty times. The distribution is as follows:



- 8 - To the goal of love, works, endurance, etc. (1942: 268, 317; 1943: 47, 149, 189, 283, 428, 517)
- 4 - As a place of blessing, glory, etc. (1942: 365; 1943: 325, 137, 486)
- 4 - After tribulation; goal of pilgrimage (1942: 269, 292; 1943: 189, 283)
- 4 - To the goal of remaining in the true faith (1943: 70, 147, 206, 301)
- 3 - As "everlasting life" (1942: 268, 320, 366)
- 3 - See God (1942: 259; 1943: 428, 490)
- 2 - Works of men of no avail in (1943: 47, 256)
- 2 - Casual reference in the phrase, "for time and eternity" (1943: 280, 225)
- 2 - As certain (1942: 369; 1943: 147)
- 2 - An object of petition (1943: 338, 354)
- 1 - As the purpose of Word and Sacrament (1942: 252)
- 1 - Place of the Church triumphant (1942: 259)
- 1 - As God's gift (1942: 296)
- 1 - Experienced after the resurrection (1942: 340). (Seems in tone opposed to the idea that heaven is a place for souls without bodies.)
- 1 - All people there retain individual characteristics (1942: 360)
- 1 - Here man discovers his true nature (1942: 360)
- 1 - A part of heaven begun here (1942: 360)
- 1 - To the goal of use of Word and Sacrament (1942: 252)
- 1 - To the goal of repentance and belief (1942: 268)
- 1 - No time (1943: 108)
- 1 - Inheritance incorruptible (1943: 233)
- 1 - As man's true home
- 1 - The thing of chief importance is that the soul goes here (1943: 285)
- 1 - False gospels will never get us there (1943: 70)
- 1 - The marriage feast connected with Eucharistic feast (1943: 116). (One of only two such parallels in the 281 sermons.)
- 1 - Christ guides us to heaven (1943: 203)

In this grouping there is little mention of heaven for its own sake and proportionately greater stress upon the meaning of heaven for this life. There is much passing and casual mention. Of the thirty-four sermons containing reference to heaven eleven of them contain such reference either in the last sentence, in a quoted hymn verse or Bible



passage. Heaven is here usually a place of joy.

1954-55. Of the ninety-seven sermons of this group analyzed, sixty of them made significant mention of heaven ninety-seven times. The distribution was as follows:

- 13 - Casual mention, quote, hymn verse, last sentence, etc. (1955: 32, 40, 52, 100, 175, 178; 1954: 29, 349, 30, 259, 264, 296, 198)
- 9 - To the goal of a dedicated life of works, etc. (1955: 175, 123, 189, 116, 115; 1954: 299, 322, 252, 182)
- 9 - As reward, glory, mansions, security, etc. (1955: 46, 36; 1954: 41, 193, 112, 305, 372, 343, 363)
- 8 - As life with God, face to face, etc. (1955: 147, 184, 122, 25; 1954: 61, 191, 158, 323)
- 7 - As a gift through Christ (1955: 156; 1954: 106, 148, 212, 342, 349, 363)
- 7 - As eternal life, heritage, salvation, etc. (1955: 162, 52, 166, 187; 1954: 30, 94, 119)
- 6 - To the goal of willingness to suffer, etc. (1955: 162, 188, 46, 36; 1954: 112, 247)
- 6 - To the goal of faith (1955: 80, 102, 103; 1954: 265, 353, 149)
- 3 - To the goal of decision for Christ (1954: 99, 119, 204)
- 2 - As guaranteed (1955: 127, 121)
- 2 - Life here is a preparation for (1955: 168; 1954: 248)
- 2 - Works rewarded in heaven (1954: 53, 299)
- 2 - As a place of service (1954: 79, 305)
- 2 - To the goal of longing for it (1954: 7, 17)
- 2 - Place of perfection (1955: 100; 1954: 180)
- 1 - Very close (1955: 4)
- 1 - Promised by the Eucharist (no festal link) (1955: 135)
- 1 - Barriers to heaven removed (1955: 128)
- 1 - Christmas promises it (1955: 32)
- 1 - Thought of it gives proper perspective for life (1955: 189)
- 1 - Not all church members will go there (1955: 80)
- 1 - It is God's will that we go (1955: 102)
- 1 - No fornicator gets there (1955: 115)
- 1 - Hope of it is given by Spirit (1954: 25)
- 1 - As an extension of God's present kingdom (1954: 75) (in the sense that he who is now a member of the kingdom of God has a foretaste of what heaven will be)
- 1 - A world of love



- 1 - An elimination of festal link with the Eucharist (1954: 144-5). The eschatological quotation of Jesus, "I will not drink of this cup, etc." is quoted, and not expounded.
- 1 - To be equated with "Paradise" (1954: 154)
- 1 - The flesh and blood of Christ gives (1954: 201) (not necessarily in the context of the Eucharist)
- 1 - A feast (1954: 301)
- 1 - No marriage (1954: 304)
- 1 - To the goal of mission work (1954: 76)

The stress is heavier than any stress in any other period.

This can, however, be misleading. The general tone in which heaven is mentioned is rather casual in nature, and tends more than in any other period to be didactic and philosophical rather than existential. There is very little conception of heaven here as a place of service to God, and very much use of it to underscore the advisability of living a good life (as a product of faith, of course) here on earth. There is not so much as one reference in the ninety-seven sermons that describes heaven as a place of praise, and rather few where God is referred to as the source of enjoyment.

Summary. Throughout the various periods the emphasis upon heaven is very rich, both in variety of usage and frequency of appearance. It has increased in each successive period. It has been rather heavy in its emphasis toward the goal of godly living. It is generally rather lean in its stress on heaven as a place of worship or service to God, or as containing as its prime joy God Himself. The trend is that as heaven itself is more and more greatly stressed, these emphases become increasingly weaker. Its



use in undergirding doctrinal points and giving them significance is ever present. Significant is the fact that it is never used in a way that even suggests that this life is of less value or worthy of less responsibility than it would be were there no heaven.

#### G. Summary and Conclusions

While the overall trend in comparing all of the periods is that of increase in frequency of mention of things eschatological, the following points must be noted:

1. It is the increase of frequency in the mention of heaven that is almost totally responsible for the entire trend. Here, a close observation has revealed that while frequency of reference to heaven has increased, there has also been a switch in stress concerning the nature of heaven. The switch seems to be from a consideration of heaven as a place of service, love of God, praise, knowledge of God, and a more Christ-centered joy, to one of crowns, pleasure, gain, enjoyment, glory, reward, etc. This might be a dangerous trend, which, if pressed too far could make Christianity a "good deal" even in terms of the Old Adam. This might be interpreted as a trend toward activism and increased interest in reaching great numbers at the possible expense of the retention of conservative theology. The fact that heaven in more recent times has been used more to underscore proper life than proper doctrine might be indicative



of the same sort of trend.

2. A close observation of the use of the concept of the final judgment appears to disclose the same sort of trend. Though the trend is only very slightly toward increased frequency of its mention, the nature of its mention is also considerably changed from the first period to the present. It is quite obvious that most fearful connotations of the judgment have been eliminated, and the judgment seems more frequently to be viewed with the same sort of hope that anticipates heaven. Here too the trend seems to be away from a use of judgment to underscore doctrine, to a use of it to underscore life, which might itself also be a result of the influence of activism.

3. The concepts of death and hell have dropped proportionately more in frequency than the concepts of heaven and judgment have arisen. This may also be indicative of the same sort of trend.

As one relates eschatological trends to political and economic situations according to the period, he is led to postulate several theses concerning the periods.

1931-32. This was a period of depression and generally a central point in the rise of the social gospel. It might be advanced that it is in this context that death and hell are underscored so definitely, and even at times polemically. This would show immediate and consistent war within The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod against certain doctrinal



aberrations concomitant with this movement. However, here also a curiosity arises, which might hardly have been anticipated by a historian, that while in antithesis to the social gospel death and hell was stressed, heaven was not particularly stressed. In addition to this, where heaven is mentioned it is even in this period frequently used to underscore a responsibility for this life and this world. If this sort of thesis and interpretation is accepted it speaks well for the level-headedness of the preaching in the Missouri Synod of this period. It would seem to indicate that while the church despite all was still denouncing heresy wherever she found it, nevertheless she permitted herself to be put aware of earthly responsibility, where such awareness might have been lacking.

1942-43. The period of greatest fluctuation in eschatological stress in all points was this period, the period of the beginning of World War II. Here the overall stress was eleven per cent above the average of all periods, and almost fifteen per cent above the average of the other two periods. This might indicate that it was the war that brought on a suddenly renewed interest in every facet of eschatology. In this period death becomes a very real thing, existentially faced, as do the judgment, and considerations of the nature and relationship of body and soul. Suddenly eschatological elements seem to lose their use as a method of underscoring the necessity of good works,



and become a fond yet important hope, and as such underscore the goal of proper faith. In this period the tone changes appreciably from one of trying to awaken interest in eschatology to one of satisfying the interest already present.

1954-55. This might generally be characterized as a period of expansion, or a golden age for the church of prosperity, enthusiasm and perhaps activism. Such a thesis could help to explain what in this case come to be very dangerous trends in the use of eschatology in the church of today. As was pointed out before, in its dealing with heaven, heaven is made attractive almost even to the Old Man, by drawing emphasis away from love and service and praise to God to crowns, reward, etc. The name of Synod's new television series may also be indicative of this trend: "This is The Life." There is the danger whenever a church tries to persuade the unregenerate community to enter her portals that she will compromise the truth of the Gospel, by soft pedaling "distasteful" emphases, and stressing only the beautiful. This is, of course, true in the case of use of the Judgment, of which the trend has been nearly to eliminate the aspect of fear or foreboding, and to liken the anticipation of it to that of heaven (not by any means in all cases, however). The fact that stress upon death and hell has so greatly decreased could also be symptomatic of the same thing. To what extent this explanation of eschatolog-



ical usage is true is of course a matter of private opinion, but to the extent that it is true, the church faces a very important problem. Will we truly be able in the current era of activism and expansion to retain a conservative and orthodox position doctrinally?

Other problems given rise by this study are the following:

1. To what extent must a pastor conform his stresses upon eschatology to the current tastes and attitudes and interests of his congregation, and to what extent should his use of eschatology be fashioned to mould such tastes, attitudes and interests?

2. To the extent that the latter is the proper emphasis, what is finally an orthodox system of stress in the realm of eschatology?

Such study may well be relegated to some future thesis.



## CHAPTER IV

### A COMPARISON OF THE SERMONS AND HYMNS

#### A. The Overall Stress

Of the sermons analyzed, 218 out of 281, or seventy-seven per cent had eschatological content. Of the hymns analyzed 484 out of 650, or seventy-three and five-tenths per cent had eschatological content. In this respect they are nearly similar.

#### B. The Richness of Stress

Of the 218 sermons containing eschatological references, significant reference was made 542 times, or an average of two and five-tenths significant references made per sermon containing eschatological reference. Of the 484 hymns containing eschatological reference, such reference was made 762 times, or an average of one and fifty-seven hundredths times per sermon. Hence it is clear that there is greater eschatological stress per sermon than per hymn. However, it must be brought to mind that since a sermon contains far more words than the average hymn, the stress per words is far greater among the hymns.

#### G. A Comparison of Death in the Hymns and Sermons

In the case of both sermons and hymns seventeen per



cent of total eschatological stress was placed upon death. This is a remarkable coincidence. The following differences remain:

- a. In the hymns the concept of death is used more to undergird faith, whereas in the sermons it is used more to undergird the proper sort of life.
- b. There is greater stress in the hymns on the terrors and temptations connected with death.
- c. Both attribute the call to death to the devil at times, as well as to God at times. In both God receives the majority.
- d. The sermons are more didactic in their stress concerning death. (This is perhaps because there is more room for teaching.)
- e. Generally both tend to view it existentially rather than philosophically.
- f. The more recent periods of both tend to de-emphasize it.
- g. Both seem profoundly influenced by world conditions present at the time of writing.

It would seem that in the case of death neither is superior to the other to any great degree. A good study of the fifteenth century hymns as well as their frequent use, and a review of the 1942-43 sermons might help to alleviate the current trend of de-emphasis.



#### D. A Comparison of Judgment in the Hymns and Sermons

In the sermons analyzed, twenty per cent of the total eschatological stress is focused upon Judgment. In the hymns analyzed, ten per cent focused upon the Judgment. It is, of course, significant that in this case there is twice as much stress in the sermons as in the hymns. This is, however, partly explainable by the fact that mention of the judgment usually implies the necessity of more extended thought than a few words. The following points are also significant:

- a. Treatment of the Judgment is more didactic and rich, as well as more often stressed in the sermons.
- b. Greater extremes of both the terrors and the joys of the Judgment are found in the hymns.
- c. The sermons speak of the Judgment in more existential terms, generally.
- d. The more recent of both the sermons and the hymns are weaker in emphasis.
- e. The hymns tend to associate the Judgment with death, and stress Judgment heavily in the same periods in which they heavily stress death. The sermons tend to relate it more to heaven and to increase its stress in the periods in which heaven is more firmly stressed.
- f. The context of hope rather than the fearful implications of Judgment is stressed more in the sermons than in



the hymns.

If one assumes the Scriptural emphasis upon the Judgment to be a correct emphasis for today, then it can be said that the hymns could stand to learn from the sermons regarding the Judgment.

#### E. A Comparison of Body and Soul Concepts in the Hymns and Sermons

Of the sermons analyzed, ten per cent commented significantly <sup>on</sup> to this matter. Of the hymns, thirteen per cent made significant reference. The following are also significant:

a. The hymns fluctuate far more on this matter than do the sermons. In the classic period of the eighteenth century a tremendously heavy stress was made upon the soul. For all practical purposes it came and left in this period. During this period reference is considerably more frequent than in the sermons in any period. Apart from this group of hymns, however, the sermons stress the matter more.

b. While the sermons increased significantly in eschatological stress in the war period, they did not change in doctrine as did the hymns of the classic period.

c. Many contradictory opinions are offered on the matter. Neither the teachings of the hymns nor the teachings of the sermons on body and soul could be logically systematized.



Summary. In this area both hymns and sermons are guilty of widely divergent stress. As was mentioned previously in this paper there are tendencies to focus eschatological hope either upon the resurrection of the dead or upon the state of the soul after death. The hymns will in places go so far as to declare that the soul at death is "fixed in an eternal state" or that it "receives a crown" or that it worships, or even that while the body is in the grave it attends the paschal feast, thus reducing the body to little or no importance. In other places the hymns will declare that a person who dies sleeps "undisturbed" until the time of the resurrection. The sermons will on the one hand declare that the soul is imprisoned in the body and can never be truly happy until freed from the prison of the body, or will state that the soul before God has complete happiness and fulfillment, making the resurrection of little importance and often not worthy of mention. On the other hand, these, too, will declare in places that a person sleeps until the glorious resurrection day. Generally the treatment of these issues is wider and more extreme in the hymns than in the sermons. While in both there is a greater and more frequent resurrection stress, the trend in the sermons seems to be slightly away from such stress, and in both the hymns and the sermons less overall treatment of the matter is given. These findings may suggest a need for a study as to just where and to what extent our eschatological hope



ought to be centered.

F. A Comparison of the Use of Heaven  
in the Hymns and Sermons

Of the sermons analyzed, forty per cent of eschatological stress is placed upon heaven. Of the hymns, the figure is sixty-one per cent. The far greater stress in the case of the hymns is most likely chiefly because thoughts of heaven seem more readily to mix with thoughts of praise, than do the other elements of eschatology. The following points are also worthy of notice:

a. In the hymns there is a far greater stress upon heaven as being a place of service, or praise, or enjoyment of God Himself, and heaven for its own sake than is present in the sermons.

b. In the sermons there is a greater tendency to use the concept of heaven to underscore other points on faith and life.

c. The trend in the various periods of both the hymns and the sermons are toward point two.

d. There is a careful avoidance of millennialism in the hymns as shown by significant deletions, and a few polemical words against it in the sermons.

e. A sort of rich description and gushy sentiment is found from time to time in the hymns more than in the sermons.



f. If the highest and noblest reference to heaven is the most altruistic, then the early hymns are about all we have as an antidote to the creation of a heaven that appeals to the unregenerate for selfish reasons.

#### G. A Comparison of the Use of Hell in the Hymns and Sermons

In the sermons, twenty per cent of eschatological stress was upon hell. In the hymns such stress was negligible. The probable reason for this is that descriptions of and references to hell do not befit poetry as readily as prose and to hymn editors apparently seem in bad taste. Significant deletions from the hymns are obviously made for this reason. It is probable that there are more deletions of hell from the hymns than there are remaining in the rendered text of the hymns in The Lutheran Hymnal. If the sermons should ever fail in their stress of hell the hymns could hardly be a corrective.

#### H. Eschatology and Today's Worshipper

The average worshipper, if we can speak of him as attending church once a week on Sundays, where he hears a sermon and sings an average of three complete hymns (there is, of course, no such thing as an average worshipper, or representative church, but such figuring of an average worship based on Concordia Pulpit sermons will help offer a desirable



impression) will in the course of one year:

Hear heaven mentioned one hundred times in hymns and thirty-eight times in sermons;

Hear death mentioned thirty times in hymns and seventeen times in sermons;

Hear reference to body and soul twenty-four times in hymns and nine times in sermons;

Hear hell brought to his attention seventeen times in sermons and very seldom mentioned in hymns;

Hear all of these things mentioned more in the liturgy than in the hymns and sermons together;

All of this somewhat in the distribution described in the previous chapters.

To what extent this can be considered "good" or "bad," overstressing, understressing, wrongly stressing, or properly stressing eschatology is, of course, not the topic of this paper. To what extent it is Scriptural, to what extent a Scriptural stress is relevant to the modern day with its present problems; to what extent eschatology ought to be preached to the consciousness of the people of a given age; and to what extent their eschatological consciousness should be moulded by the preaching or worship itself; the problem of what ought to be done with the current and ever-present difficulties involved in the concepts of body and soul; these and other questions and problems remain and must be constantly discussed and wrestled with as the church in this age as in any other tries to confess its eschatological hope.



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