



"Meditate  
upon these things;  
give thyself  
wholly to them;  
that thy profiting  
may appear unto all"

I Timothy 4:15

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## THE POWER OF GOD,

### EPHESIANS 1:19

In an earlier issue of this Journal (April, 1961) we presented a discussion of what we called "The Imperatives of Scripture." The article was written out of genuine concern over our inborn tendency to read into certain terms, on the basis of their grammatical form, the idea of LAW -- even though context and use show them clearly to be purest Gospel. It is quite obvious that this can only lead to a grave misunderstanding and eventual gross misuse of such terms.

There is a similar tendency, also inborn, to take out of certain terms and passages a thought-content that is clearly there, but which presents certain difficulties to our human way of thinking, perhaps because it is so great and rich that it defies our efforts to fit it into the mold of our human terminology and classification. To find this tendency even in the case of some outstanding theologian should not be surprising. Nor does it, of course, imply that we must therefore question his personal faith. Operating with our human methods of thought and speech, influenced by our human feelings and emotions, cramped by our human limitations of perception and understanding, we all fall short, again and again, of fully comprehending what our God tells us about Himself. So we lapse into the old failing of drawing Him down to our level, likening Him to ourselves, to the inevitable detriment of our conception of His true greatness and glory. How easily this can happen may be seen if we take as an illustration the passage referred to above (Eph. 1:19) and note the startling difference between two outstanding Lutheran commentators, Stoeckhardt and Lenski, on the subject of the power of God.

The passage is from Paul's great prayer in behalf of his Ephesians, as we find it in his first chapter. "(17)



That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: (18) The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, (19) And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, (20) Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead. . ."

At the critical point, verse 19-b, Stoeckhardt's translation is quite parallel to the King James Version quoted above except for one significant point which even Stoeckhardt's translator, Dr. Sommer, failed to notice. For it is not an oversight when Stoeckhardt, omitting the comma that most versions have, translates: "the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe according to the working of the strength of His might which He wrought in Christ. . ." It is his considered purpose to point out the close connection between our faith and the power of God (see the underlined words above). For he writes: "The very fact that we now believe, that faith now lives in us, that has been wrought through the working of the power of God's might." (Stoeckhardt - Sommer, p. 105) The thought is carried even farther: "...the Apostle definitely emphasizes the fact that our status of faith, according to its beginning, its progress, and its end (that is meant by the *ἐκ τῶν ἀρχῶν τοῦ πιστεύοντος*), rests upon the might and power of God. The Apostles here heaps, as it were, the synonyms which express God's power. He wishes to impress upon us that we owe our faith to the might and power of God, which is stronger than everything else, the omnipotence of God, which, as Hofmann correctly explains, conquers even the most stubborn resistance. Everything in us and in our nature resists faith, Christ, and the Gospel of Christ. Faith is repugnant to the corrupt nature of man. Man resists God and His Christ with every shred of na-



tural power within him. This hatred, enmity, and resistance to Christ is the most intensive demonstration of human energy of the natural man. And now God, the Father of glory, glorifies His almighty power just in this way that He conquers this resistance in man, makes this man obedient to the Gospel, changes the enmity against Christ, and then suppresses the resisting flesh in the Christian and preserves faith, as it were, against the constant and continued protest of the flesh. The production and preservation of faith is the chief triumph of divine omnipotence." (p. 105f) Reminding his readers of an earlier section (on verse 13) where he had stated that, however, all force and compulsion are excluded from this saving activity of God's omnipotence, that faith is pure willingness, but a willingness which the almighty God has created through the Word of truth, Stoeckhardt concludes by saying: "The more thoroughly and the deeper we Christians recognize our own natural depravity and our congenital moral ruin, the better we shall learn to understand and to evaluate the sublime, superior, all-conquering might and power of God, which has victoriously overcome our resistance, given us saving faith, and still preserves us in this faith." (Ibid. p. 106)

Lenski's translation of the verse under discussion reads much the same as that of Stoeckhardt: "So that you get to know what is. . . the exceeding greatness of his power for us believing ones in accord with the working of the strength of his might, which he wrought in the Christ." (Interpretation of Ephesians, p. 395) But it carefully avoids any wording which might suggest that faith is the result of the working of God's power. It recognizes that this "greatness of God's power" is operative "for us believing ones," but makes the following (what God has wrought in Christ) the measure of that power. What God does for the believer is in keeping with ("in accord with") the power that He has shown in the resurrection of Christ.



While the technical points of New Testament grammar that Lenski advances in support of his translation certainly deserve serious consideration, they still do not seem conclusive against the naturalness and simplicity of Stoeckhardt's version.\* But our chief concern is about Lenski's doctrinal objections. Writing some twenty years after the death of the former, Lenski draws up a scathing indictment of his theology. Referring to the sections quoted above, he writes: "The cause of faith is the power of grace in the Gospel; to make Allmacht, Allgewalt, omnipotence, the cause is the opposite of Scripture teaching. This wrong conception is even carried to the extreme claim that 'the greatest triumph of the divine almightiness' is said to crush 'the intensest exercise of their (men's) power' in resisting God. This is the irresistibility of Calvinism. Then, why does God use this all-crushing omnipotence upon only so few? To escape this plain Calvinism it is assumed that there are two kinds of Allgewalt, one that may, and one that may not be resisted. The Bible knows only the latter; the other does not exist." (Lenski, Ephesians, p. 398f) -- A similar passage will be found in the same work, p. 500. We need quote only a few lines. Speaking of the power which quickens the spiritually dead and fills them with spiritual life, Lenski continues: "This is the power of God's love and grace (2,8), operating in the Gospel (Rom. 1,16). Omnipotence does not work in the spiritual domain, which is a Calvinistic idea; love and grace operate in this domain. These have their own 'power,' which in their domain is as great as omnipotence is in its domain. Confounding the two,

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\*) Our original intention was to forgo any further discussion of this question lest this divert attention from the following theological issue, which was our main concern, or obscure it by the technical nature of the discussion. Lest too many questions be left unanswered, however, we have decided to make this particular matter the subject of a future article.



because 'power' is used with reference to the latter, misreads the Scripture statements."

This is indeed quite a broadside. And while Lenski does not say in so many words whom he means, his direct quotes from Stoeckhardt are enough to identify his target.\* --Such a charge is certainly not to be taken lightly, and we who hold to Stoeckhardt's position need to be very sure of our ground. To teach the irresistibility of Calvinism in regard to conversion would indeed be a most grievous kind of error. But let us test these conclusions of Lenski.

Lenski is certainly not to be faulted for what he says about the greatness of the power of grace, the power of God's love, or for that matter the power of the Gospel. We know that the Gospel is a power (Rom. 1:16). We know that God's love, the Savior's love, is a mighty magnet. For we love Him because He first loved us. And it is the power that moved God to send His only begotten Son into the world (1 Jn. 4:9). We know and rejoice in the power of grace, for it is by grace that we are saved (Ephesians 2:5 and 8). Note how these terms enrich each other, "power" telling us something about the greatness and effectiveness of grace and love, while "grace" and "love" express the qualities of this power that is operating in the Gospel. These are indeed terms that are appropriate to the spiritual domain. For it is God's love and grace, even as it is God's power, that works in and through them. In no sense do these terms exclude each other. They simply present different aspects of the mighty working of God.

But why then exclude that power that we call omnipotence? Why rule this out when we are speaking of

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\*) Seeming differences are explained by the fact that while we are quoting the Sommer translation, Lenski was doing his own from the German of Stoeckhardt.



the creation of faith in the heart of the believer? Our God is One. All power is at His command. The difference lies not in the existence of several different kinds of power, one of which would be right and the other wrong for a given purpose. The difference lies rather in the use to which that power is put. At one time it was to create heaven and earth, at another to cleanse that earth by means of a Flood; once it was to deliver His people from hopeless bondage while at the same time breaking the power of the oppressor. It was used to bring about that tender miracle of which Isaiah spoke, that a virgin should conceive and bring forth a Son, and it was used again to raise that Son from the dead. It caused the miracle of tongues on Pentecost, as well as the greater miracle of the building and preserving of the New Testament Church. Sometimes it served the interests of justice, sometimes those of love and mercy: sometimes in the realm of material things, sometimes the spiritual. But it was always the same power, the power of the One God.

Then why not admit the use and grant the propriety of speaking of the omnipotence of God when we discuss the doctrine of conversion? Are there not great and mighty foes that need to be overcome there also? --foes so great that they can be overcome only by a power that is all-mighty? Is not the working of faith a creative miracle of God? Scripture is very free in the use of such expressions that magnify just this thought. In addition to the Ephesians passage under discussion Paul speaks of the quickenings of those who were dead in trespasses and sins (2:1 and 5), our being raised with Christ (v.6), our being His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works (v.10). We read of the God who does these things for us as one who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us (3:21). Or note II Cor. 13:4 -- we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you. Now, if Scripture uses these terms so freely,



without in any way ruling out the idea of omnipotence, if it does so also in the spiritual domain of faith, then certainly no one should be branded with the stigma of Calvinism for speaking as did Stoeckhardt.

When Lenski raises the specter of Calvinistic irresistibility he seems to forget one important fact, that it is God who wields the power of which we speak. Indeed, if men had such unlimited power at their command, there would be every reason to fear the use they would make of it. Then unjust coercion would be the rule and arbitrary violence would reign. It would be used for selfish ends, ends that would be ruthlessly pursued. But not so with the power that is in God's hands. He can coerce indeed, when coercion is called for. Pharaoh experienced that. But in the conversion of man He does not. Scripture tells us that. Therefore it is utterly presumptuous to ask --as Lenski rather tauntingly does-- why then God uses His omnipotence upon only so few.

The prayer of Paul quoted in the beginning of this discussion applies also to us, that the eyes of our understanding be enlightened, that we may know (in addition to the other blessings mentioned before) what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward. Let the power of God be magnified rather than diminished, for our need for it is so great. The foes that confront us are so overpoweringly strong. The situation in which we find ourselves is so desperate. Our strength is not only inadequate, but non-existent. What a glorious thing, then, to know that God's power, His almighty power, has been and is being employed in our behalf. No child that is sure of the love of its father will be troubled over the great strength that he may have -- even though to the child it may indeed be "irresistible." On the contrary, he will be very proud, sure that this impressive strength will be used for his protection, not coercion. So with the Christian and his God. To know this is to be **strengthened** in our faith and in the assurance given by



our Savior concerning His flock: "They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My father which gave them me is greater than all; and no one is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." (Jn. 10:28f)

Let us in closing recall what has been quoted from Stoeckhardt on an earlier page: "The more thoroughly and the deeper we Christians recognize our own natural depravity and our congenital moral ruin, the better we shall learn to understand and to evaluate the sublime, superior, all-conquering might and power of God which has victoriously overcome our resistance, given us saving faith, and still preserves us in this faith." (p.106)  
--How can it better be said?

E. R.

## A PASTORAL LETTER

### III

Therefore SURSUM CORDA,\* my brethren, that we may both rightly learn to ask and rightly to answer the question: Where will we be, when these brief, uncertain days shall have passed away? In what company? In what attitude toward Jesus Christ? With what memories from our work in the ministry, the work among our congregational members, our home folks?

It is thoughts like these which alone can bring the right seriousness in our life's attitude and thereby in our life's work. It is these thoughts, when they not only become some passing emotion or sentiment in our

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\*Lift up your hearts.



life, but the daily constant voice in our spirit, which will make us willing and glad servants of God's word, so that we will let ourselves be led by what God tells us, and not by our own thoughts and opinions.

Even as we then will have to apply to ourselves that which Paul, in Rom. 2, says about the law: "Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery?" etc. Likewise we have to apply to ourselves that Gospel which we preach to others. Or is it only our hearers we shall encourage and comfort? Has not our Savior borne also our sins? Does He not also love us? Does He not know of the many dangerous temptations which we above others are exposed to? Does He not perhaps see and know that just we above all other men stand in need of the Holy Spirit's daily help that "our faith fail not"? Most assuredly yes! And when we encourage others to honour God by believing His holy promises, then let us first and foremost ourselves believe them, and rejoice in that for which we have God's own word, and that also we have experienced His mercy. It is of course true that God wants us to believe it. It is to Timothy that Paul says: "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." 2 Tim. 2,1. Only thus strengthened - through faith that he himself has gotten grace - can he follow the next admonition: "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." Timothy had through many years been a Christian and a teacher when Paul wrote these words to him, and still he needed the admonition anew to strengthen himself by grace.

When we apply to ourselves the great, all-inclu-



sive word of comfort, for example: "My grace is sufficient for thee" and "casting all our care upon him; for he careth for you," it is not to be understood that we then once and for all get rid of everything. When you today comfort yourself by casting all your care upon the Lord, and feel yourself so lightened and happy, then on the morrow there will be new sorrows which you cannot carry, and a new necessity to understand that when you have God's grace you have that which is sufficient.

Just this personal, daily use of the Gospel of grace it is which alone can give us strength to take care of our ministry faithfully, with wisdom and patience, and it is just this which shall help us to look upward and forward to that which soon awaits us.

Our circumstances are not well suited to give us time and occasion for quiet meditation, as the servants of the church at other times have been able to devote themselves and to enjoy it. It is therefore all the more important for us to make use of the time which we do have, so that we may be trained always to have our service in our thoughts and an eye on our objective. It is important for us to have the word with us in our hearts, that we ourselves personally become fashioned for life eternal and to be presented to Jesus Christ. If we thus become, we will fain get as many as possible of our parishioners with us, and God will not let our service be in vain.

It is the thoughts of eternity which shall give us the right inclination and course for the work of our ministry. When a person's heart is gripped by this or that great thought, a great and ideal objective

or the like, we say that he is enthused by it. But there is no enthusiasm which can wholly and fully do justice to this expression without the "inspiration" which is created by the Holy Spirit, and of which the holy apostles through their writings in the New Testament are the most glorious examples. What else is their life, as it is revealed to us in their letters, other than "a song of praise to the honour of their God." They praise God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has begotten them again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. They forget that which is behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, they press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Well do they know the objections of their flesh and reason, but they bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ. Faith's all-conquering certainty is in their hearts and so completely fills them that it is their real life. Therefore they consider their afflictions short and easy. Therefore they can say that in all these things they are more than conquerors through Him that loved them. Therefore their life is a song of praise to the honour of God, and rightly and beautifully has it been said that "the tone of this song of praise is so highly pitched and so deeply gripping, because the humble, joyous obedience does not praise what men can understand, but what he can not understand. And therefore the instrument of this song of praise is not human reason's child-trumpet, but it is faith's heavenly trumpet."

Now I can well imagine that one or the other of you, my brethren, will say to himself: "Yes, I would fain be a believer; I would, God be praised, fain belong to my Saviour - but pastor I should never have become. I



should never have entered upon this difficult office. If I had known what it was, I would never have entered it." I know these thoughts quite well, with you as well as with others. What is it that causes them? They may be different with different persons. With some it is the flesh, which cringes at the daily cross not to be able to follow its own will. With some it may be family crosses of various kinds, which will make his pastoral work extra heavy. With some it is finally the thought that they lack the gifts which they ought to have..

But isn't it so, that if these thoughts be permitted to govern us, it will be because we forget to take our Saviour, the Lord of the Church, along in our counseling. And yet it is under such thoughts that His call came to us, and which should make the matter clear to us. Or - was He not with us in the direction of our life? Did He not know us? Was His hand not present when we were inducted into the office?

It is to be sure true, that not every one is fit. There is a measure of "gifts," some natural, others acquired, some physical, others spiritual, which according to God's word are demanded. When it can be shown that these are not present, there the call is not right, for then it is not in accord with the rule of the Word.

But we ought not to confound the original lack of yon gifts with the lack which may later be acquired - that the gifts, that "pound" which God had bestowed upon you, either has not been used, or has not been used with zeal and attention.

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(The final installment of this Pastoral Letter will appear in the next issue of the Journal of Theology. --N.A.M. Sr.)



## THE KINGDOM OF GOD\*

On a certain occasion a Pharisee inquired of our Lord "When the kingdom of God should come." The same question, posed in exactly the same sense, has since engaged the minds of many Christians, and a variety of false premises has led them to a great diversity of answers. In all their diversity, however, such conclusions manifest the common trend which has found concrete expression and almost universal recognition in chiliastic thought. He who is so oriented has a specific "Weltanschauung" which colors his judgment of all events particularly in the history of nations and of the human race. In tranquil times this viewpoint confronted us primarily in theoretical form, except in instances when intrusions of church leaders and their parishes upon the processes of public affairs were justified with the argument that the Church has a call to pave the way for, if not indeed to bring about, the realization of the Kingdom of God. But whenever an age of revolutionary events dawns in which numerous changes in international relations develop, the hope that the desired hour may have arrived is kindled anew in all who raise the question of the Pharisee.

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\* We herewith reproduce for our readers, in translation from the German, an article which appeared in the *Quartalschrift*, the theological magazine of the Wisconsin Synod, in 1918 (Vol. 15, Nos. 2-3). The original author was Prof. John Schaller. Our discerning subscribers will recognize the significant and timely contribution which the article makes toward an understanding in the current discussion in Lutheran circles relating to the doctrine of the Church. Because of its length it will appear in our Journal in instalments.



It was inevitable that the world war, which does not yet appear to have run its full course, would rouse to action all those who regard themselves as prophets of the millennialist hope. In the first stage of the war, of course, when the horrors of modern combat in its unprecedented fury and scope were unfolded before the eyes of men, those especially who had been nurtured with chiliastic hopes were as people turned to stone. They came to doubt, not only these expectations, but the true Christian hope as well. When enemies of the Christian faith sardonically inquired whether this fearful world-conflagration were the best product of which the faith in Jesus Christ was capable, few were prepared to give the proper answer; even in Christian circles one heard the conjecture "that Christianity proved a failure." In time, however, men became adjusted to the headlines of disaster, and hope again revived that one of the belligerents might by a genuine victory succeed in advancing the cause of the Kingdom of God on earth toward a realization. After this anticipation had for a long time nourished itself with all sorts of miserable crumbs, it was measurably strengthened by the conquest of the British forces which succeeded in wresting southern Palestine and the city of Jerusalem from the Turks. Since that victory every chiliast fondly believes that the fulfillment of those promises is imminent in which according to their interpretation God gave assurance of the restoration of a kingdom of the Messiah on earth; for on the basis of such prophecies it is supposed that a return of the Jews to the Holy Land and a restoration of the ancient glory of Jerusalem will be show-pieces of the expected reign of God on earth.

While the Lutheran Church has ever recognized and rejected Millennialism as unscriptural enthusiasm, this has from the outset been, and to this day remains,



a prominent characteristic of Reformed Protestantism. Not all Calvinistic teachers, indeed, have incorporated coarse chiliastic ideas in their doctrinal systems; yet in their entire conception of the Kingdom of God on earth lies the fruitful seed of all false hopes which a Chiliast is disposed to harbor and nurture in his heart. On another occasion (Seminary Catalogue 1915-16) we have demonstrated that the liberties enjoyed by our nation have been imperiled by the growing influence of Calvinism upon its political life because the Reformed denominations have never understood or approved a separation of church and state in its fundamental principle and because over a period of decades, with increasing success, they have diligently sought to becloud for our people the true standard of this essential feature of our form of government. In that connection we also outlined the relation between this activity and the Reformed concept of a visible kingdom of God on earth. In the meantime we have been supplied with conspicuous and abundant evidences of Reformed designs. For the well-balanced observer of the national scene there can be no doubt of the fact that in assessing the nature of the present war, in which we ourselves have now become actively engaged, many of our fellow-citizens are governed by considerations which are not only political, but religious as well. For proof of this we need only to refer to the acclaim accorded many sectarian clergymen who are abusing the privilege of the pulpit by engaging in vulgar rabble-rousing. But here the religious background is none other than the false concept of the Kingdom of God and the related conceit that some nation or country is divinely appointed to bring to pass the institution of this divine State on earth.

It might seem legitimate, furthermore, to express the fear that the Lutheran Church in our country, too,



has become widely infected with this aberration of the Reformed and has, in the matter of the separation of church and state, also been deprived of clear vision and firm conviction. In recent years many Lutheran parishes, headed by their pastors, as well as larger Lutheran associations in meetings attended also by numerous members of the clergy, have publicly recorded their views on issues connected with the war - and have done so in the name of the Lutheran Church. Unduly emphasizing their rights of citizenship, Lutheran pastors individually participated in political agitation designed to bring influence to bear upon measures planned by the Federal government, insensitive to the fact that their efforts could be influential or successful only because, as a result of the Calvinistic training of our people, they were bound to be regarded as representatives of their church bodies. Such conduct constitutes an egregious blunder indeed, and we are already suffering painfully from the consequences. But it is in no wise necessary to seek for it any explanation other than the emotional excitement which in these days can adversely affect even the judgment of otherwise sober people. Nevertheless such developments indicate that we have every reason for reflecting upon the divine truths which are to govern our judgment and by which we ourselves want to be governed.

This study is not intended to be exhaustive, but is to serve as stimulant for more profound reflection. At numerous points it will content itself with hints and references. But even within so limited a scope it is possible to underscore and outline as scriptural several thoughts, namely: 1. That "Kingdom of God" essentially denotes, not a mere state or condition, but an uninterrupted activity, a continuous rule and operation of God; 2. That in exhibiting this ruling activity of God the Scriptures refer only incidentally to God's



general dominion over the world and, strictly speaking, always envisions only His rule through the Gospel; 3. That in its derivative sense "Kingdom of God" designates a place at which men arrive, or a possession to which they may attain; and 4. That "Kingdom of God," when used in this latter sense, never refers to anything material and outward, but invariably only to the gifts which are imparted to us by means of the Gospel. If in this discussion we deal primarily with statements of the New Testament, it is not because the Old Testament speaks otherwise concerning the Kingdom of God. Although because of the theocratic relationship between God and His people Israel such a difference in speaking might be anticipated, our occasional references to familiar Old Testament passages will show that in this matter the point of view of the Old Testament fully conforms to that of the New.

It will doubtless be conceded without question that among us the understanding of Scripture statements concerning the Kingdom of God is strongly influenced by the view that Scripture with the use of that term designates certain persons or things which under God's rule are joined together as a unit. This view is manifested when we, for example, say that God's Kingdom of Power constitutes the entire universe and consists of the totality of all creatures; that the Church on earth is the Kingdom of Grace and consists of the believers; that the Kingdom of Glory consists of the angels and the elect. Among us that is so predominantly the prevailing conception that without further reflection we gather many offerings "for the Kingdom of God" and that in so doing everybody assumes that the sums thus collected serve "for the building of the Kingdom of God on earth." This, however, immediately gives rise to a substantial number of exegetical difficulties which place a heavy burden on the preachers and in-



Metonymy - *effort for cause. the sign for things significant, contents for the contained*

Synecdoche - *a figure of speech - part for whole (city seen for backslaps) the spirit for the person*

duce them to make an effort, whether they are conscious of it or not, to force upon a number of well-known statements of the Lord and His Apostles an interpretation which will bring them into harmony with the concept they entertain. The mistake lies in this, that without further reflection a metonymy, which in itself is entirely appropriate, is substituted for the actual sense, and the latter is entirely set aside, instead of reversing the process and deriving and justifying the ~~me~~ metonymy from the actual sense. The prevalence of this mistake among us is the more astonishing when, after careful examination of the passages involved, one realizes that it is doubtful whether the equation: Kingdom of God = Church is at all to be found in the Scriptures!

The Greek word for "Kingdom" is βασιλεία . . . . Since this is the βασιλεία Θεοῦ, God is βασιλεύς and His rule is called βασιλεύειν. It is essential that at this point and for the present we rule out as inappropriate and irrelevant those pictures which the German (or English) words conjure up in our minds. When we hear of a king, we imagine a person in a certain position of respect, dignity and authority. A king is king, even when he sleeps or lies unconscious in an illness, yes, even when he is mentally incompetent for the performance of the duties of regency. Indeed, the modern world is familiar with kings who serve as mere ornaments of a certain form of government and never minister as kings, whether awake or asleep. History knows of many an example of kings for whom others made it impossible to enjoy more than the nominal honor of being kings; yet even such figure-heads retain the honor, the dignity, the office. In their case, too, one could venture to speak of a βασιλεύειν in the sense that it may in our terms of reference be predicated of a king even when he is playing horsie for his little prince in the nursery. In other words: According to our normal manner of thinking,



kingship is a condition which exists and is present whether it is activated or not. Being king is the foundation of the authority.

When Scripture speaks of God's kingship, the attributes of validity, of dignity, of authority are certainly not excluded; but essentially the term signifies an activity, a functioning. As βασιλεύειν primarily means "to function as king," so also with βασιλεία the accent lies upon the active discharge of regal powers. In the parlance of Scripture "God is King" does not in the first instance mean: "He has kingly authority which according to His option He may or may not employ," but says that God operates, creates, rules - that He engages in the activities of a divine King. The "Kingdom of God" in its exact sense therefore is the divine rule per se. This verbal sense of the term is evident also in certain Scripture passages which do not speak of God's kingdom. In his address concerning Beelzebub Christ says: "If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand?" (Luke 11:18). This observation surely concerns itself, not with the state of being a ruler, but with the activity of regency. Not merely Satan's prerogatives as monarch, but his entire functioning as regent would terminate, were he not in accord with himself. The term receives the same value in that question raised by the disciples on the day of Christ's Ascension: "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). It expressed, not so much their hope that Israel might again acquire its own king, but rather their desire that national independence and self-rule might be restored to Israel. In these passages, too, the idea of authority, though present, is entirely secondary; the emphasis rests upon the concept of the activity and functioning of the power of rule.

This meaning of the term unquestionably faces us in



those assertions that speak of the Kingdom of God without including any reference to the persons or things subject to the kingly activity of God. Here the saying of Paul is very instructive: "For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." (1 Cor. 4:20). In the context, the Apostle had just announced that he would come to the Corinthians shortly and then would "know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power." He would not be deceived by bombastic, sonorous phrases; if they are actually under God's influence, His power would have to be manifest in them, since the βασιλεία the kingly activity of God, is not an empty phrase or a mere title, but an actual administration of power. For the divine power is never mere capability, a latent capacity for the exertion of power, but the exerting itself. Only in this sense, also, is the statement of Jesus intelligible: "But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God (with the finger of God, Luke 11:20), then the kingdom of God is come unto you." (Matt. 12:28). These words remain incomprehensible as long as "Kingdom of God" is taken to mean a specific group of human beings; but they reveal a great Truth as soon as it is understood that the Lord is speaking of the regal ruling activity of God. The Pharisee should and could have concluded from the miracles of Jesus that God had in a special manner drawn near to them with His activity; for in this very activity which was taking place before their eyes does the Kingdom of God consist.

St. Paul also uses the term in this sense when he writes: "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." (Rom. 14:17). He who approaches this passage with the presupposition that "Kingdom of God" denotes the subjects of God the King and thus expects to find herein a description of the Church discovers that the very first words immediately involve him in dif-



ficulties. One could conceivably suppose that according to Paul's words all those people belong to the Kingdom of God who have righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; but then one would by the same logic be obliged to accept the proposition that those are people who neither eat nor drink! Paul is here not intent upon showing who it is that belongs into the Kingdom of God, but writes these words in order to demonstrate that externals such as eating and drinking, not eating and not drinking, are not at issue when we speak of the correct attitude of a human being toward God. Certainly God also creates food and drink, as well as the enjoyment of these gifts; but the activity of God with which evangelical preaching deals is not concerned with such externals. The Gospel proclaims that function of God by which He prepares righteousness, peace and joy and offers them to men. "For he that in these things serveth Christ," that person is under the rule of God's Grace and is, *sola gratia et efficacia Dei*, "acceptable to God, and approved of men."

Similarly, yet from quite another point of view, Jesus tells the Pharisees: "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." (Luke 17:20f). Many interpreters join Luther in regarding this passage as being exactly parallel with the passage from Romans discussed above; but that is an untenable view. While we may concede that *ἐν τὸς ὑμῶν* can mean: "Inside of you," that interpretation is impossible here since Jesus is addressing the Pharisees, His unbelieving opponents (compare the contrast v.22: "And he said unto the disciples...!"). Certainly the Savior neither would nor could say of the Pharisees that a new, spiritual life had had its inception in their hearts. They had asked: When the kingdom of God should come. The sense of their question was: By



*mean*  
what token can we anticipate the coming of the Kingdom of God? The sense of the Lord's answer may be summarized as follows: Such advance calculation is impossible; there are no signs that enable you to predict the coming of the Kingdom of God in the fashion in which an astronomer charts in advance the movements of heavenly bodies; and the most conclusive evidence of this lies in the fact that God has already begun His working and creating among you and you are unaware of it! Quite obviously the Lord in these words refers to what **He** had previously told these same people in Luke 11:20.

We include at this point an evaluation of the passage John 18:36: "My kingdom is not of this world" etc.\* This was a most appropriate answer to Pilate's question: "Art thou the king of the Jews?" The governor was not interested in knowing whether Jesus bore the title, but whether Jesus laid claim to the right of functioning as king. How inadequate the reply would have been had Jesus intended to use the word "Kingdom" as a term for the subjects of the Kingdom! But the sense of His answer actually was: My kingly activity is of a nature quite other than that of earthly kings. These seek the protection of physical weapons and employ the services of other people; but my βασιλεία, my royal activity, is not of this nature; "now is my kingdom not from hence," my rule is not founded upon earthly investiture of power. In this sense Pilate understands Him; for he pursues the subject: "Art thou a king then?" Do you actually

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\* For our present purpose it is not necessary to analyze the distinction between Kingdom of God and Kingdom of Christ; these are two designations for the same concept defined as seen in varying perspective, as is manifest from Ephesians 5:5 where Paul uses them as synonyms.



rule? And Jesus replies: Yes, I am king, and my ruling is carried on by my testifying to the Truth. Whoever is of the Truth stands beneath my scepter. This last statement, introduced here only to complete the line of thought, will bring its full weight to bear in the next succeeding point of our discussion. For present purposes it suffices to have shown that the wonderful statement of Jesus reveals its significance to us only when we understand the term "Kingdom" as a designation for the activity of Jesus Christ the King. It is wholly consonant with the facts presented, therefore, when we understand that the concept "Kingdom of God (Christ)" cannot be better transcribed than with the words of the Lord: "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." (John 5:17). The Kingdom of God in the true sense is the eternal and continuous rule-activity of the almighty God, by which He pursues certain purposes **with** specific means to the attainment of a predetermined objective. It is unnecessary that we add further proof-passages to establish this understanding of the term; once it has been clearly perceived, it obtrudes everywhere. Therefore it is presupposed in all that follows in this discussion, although there will be ample occasion for repeated emphasis.

In the treatment of the doctrine of the kingly office of Christ it has been the practice, for the sake of a simpler review, to group all statements concerning the activity of the glorified Savior under three heads and thus to speak of a three-fold Kingdom of Christ. This division, which Scripture does not make, suffers from substantial weaknesses, and efforts to apply it consistently meet with failure in several respects. Most of the difficulties arise because precisely in this context the expression "Kingdom" is taken to refer to a specific group of things and persons, whereas in conforming to the biblical manner of expression one ought to re-



gard the "Kingdom" as designation for the activity, the ruling, the administration of God and think only secondarily of the persons whose relationship with God is determined by the nature of a given phase of His ruling. The latter view, to be sure, makes it difficult to characterize the "Kingdom of Glory" as a separate "Kingdom", since in accord with Scripture we teach that God at all times, and Christ's human nature since its glorification at God's right Hand likewise, has ruled and will thus eternally rule. But even the distinction between a Kingdom of Power and a Kingdom of Grace leads to inconsistencies, because in this distinction the grace of God appears to be separated from His Power, whereas according to Rom. 1:16 and especially in the light of Ephesians 1:19f it is precisely in the so-called Kingdom of Grace that the almighty Power of God alone accomplishes the result which He purposes. Certainly we shall, with our feeble reason and logic, never penetrate the depths of the wisdom and knowledge of God or thereby succeed in analyzing His ruling in all its ramifications. We doubtless best approximate the mystery when we apply the familiar distinction between Law and Gospel current among us and simply say: With the term, God's Kingdom of Power, we denote the divine rule in which with irresistible power God unfailingly carries out His full purpose and relentlessly immobilizes every conscious or unconscious resistance. On the other hand we define as Kingdom of Grace that power-activity of God which through the Gospel He applies to the hearts of men, free of any coercion and yet in such a manner that every resistance of the individual is overcome and God achieves His objective, the salvation of the sinner. But even such definitions are unsatisfactory as an effort in ordering the divine thoughts, as we know them by revelation, according to our rules of reason; in every concrete instance the borders of the two "Kingdoms" overlap.



For that very reason the Scripture makes no such distinctions between various "Kingdoms" of God. It describes but one ruling of God over His creature, with the single purpose of carrying out His predestined plan for the gathering, edifying and final glorification of His Church. The Scriptures do indeed provide a sufficiency of information concerning the rule of God under Law, which is evidenced in nature by what we call laws of nature, but among men by the fact that God through the application of moral or physical force maintains a certain outward order and that all human activities are, sometimes obviously and sometimes more subtly, made subject to the interests of God's drive toward His objectives. But where Scripture speaks of the "Kingdom of God," the universal rule of God in nature and in human existence - though it is of course presupposed - is never directly designated by the use of that term. In short: "Kingdom of God" in Scripture never means simply "Kingdom of Power;" and only very rarely does the expression contain so much as an allusion to "Kingdom of Power." For the latter category no more than two passages can be listed, both of them in the Book of Revelation. Rev. 11:15: "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ;" and Rev. 12:10: "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ." Yet even these passages manifestly deal primarily, if not exclusively, with the success of the divine rule of Grace which at last overcomes all resistance. Even in the Old Testament, wherein one might more reasonably expect to find passages in which "God's Kingdom of Power" is called His "Kingdom," we search in vain for express statements of this sort. It is Daniel who writes most frequently of the "Kingdom of God" (2:44; 3:33; 4:31; 6:26; 7:14.27). But from among these references we immediately eliminate the statements of Nebucadnezzar and of Darius (3:33; 4:31; 6:26); for one will not want to



assume that these men spoke in the Spirit of prophecy, and it would be difficult to demonstrate that they possessed more than a mere outward knowledge of God. So only Dan. 2:44 and 7:14.27 need be considered here; but in these passages the prophet proclaims the rule of the Messiah, so that the accent on a rule over the world cannot simply be construed as denoting "Kingdom of Power." In the historical books, so far as I can determine, only I Chron. 30:11 is relevant here: "Thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all." But who would not immediately see that David is speaking of the Messiah-activity of God and expresses himself exactly as Paul does in Eph. 1:21f? From the Psalter only Ps. 103:19 ("The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.") could with some appearance of justification be cited as proof-passage for the "Kingdom of Power"; and yet the entire Psalm so definitely treats of the ruling of God by the Gospel that the general world-rule of God, if it is meant at all, is referred to only as a subordinate basis of comfort for believers. Passages such as Ps. 22:28 ("The kingdom is the Lord's; and he is the governor among the nations."), Ps. 45:6 ("Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever: the scepter of thy kingdom is a righteous scepter.") and Ps. 145: 11-13 ("....speak of the glory of thy kingdom ....the glorious majesty of thy kingdom .... Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom.") refer so unmistakably to the Messianic "Kingdom of Grace" that it would be a very clumsy exegete who would find in them so much as a reference to the power-rule of God.

(To be continued.)

E.S.



## PAIDEIA

### LESS SOCIAL, MORE INDIVIDUAL

When the modern prophets of education rejected the tragic view of life they built their optimism on the power of society to take the tragedy out of the lives of men. They felt that with learning and understanding of nature and with the impressing of it into the service of mankind progress would be automatic. Even churches and synods have talked the same language with reference to their particular efforts. One does not need revealed wisdom to know better; he needs but open his eyes.

John Dewey, as spokesman and not inventor of the idea, said that society is capable of shaping man into what he can best become. This was the mode of thought that was fed through the schools until the two World Wars .

In method these reformers did render a service in helping to empty education of its dull treadmill formalism; but that is a different story. Using a new solution they overworked it into a new abuse: life adjustment, acceptance by the group, happiness at all costs, democratic togetherness as the chief goals. All these were based on the notion that what society agrees is good, is good. It is not that these things do not have their measure of desirability. But their source in the social, social, social has been drummed into us for a half-century until the individual should have all but disappeared.

Yet he hasn't! "Individualism" has been "reconsidered." The weakness of "organization man" has been clearly pointed out. The pursuit of excellence for the in-



dividual has been reasserted. Man, among some thinkers in the world, is asked to learn what he can, to become himself again, not just a contribution to mass-man

The needs of our time call for men who can master a given field as individuals. "Adjustment is too modest an ideal, if it is an ideal at all. Competence in the use of one's powers for the development of individually defined and socially relevant excellence is much more to the point," said a recent writer on education (Jerome S. Bruner in "Saturday Review," June 17, 1961, p. 59; all quotations from him by permission). In other words, it is time for each child and man to do the best he can as a man among men, not just as a part of the social whole, serving as a cog. The need for the same among members of the church should be obvious.

So school is not a mere introduction of the child into the way of adults among us. As Christians we know that the way of the world's adults is not good enough; it is perverted; it is wrong, it is sinful, it is rebellion against God. Not even the way of life of Christian adults, imperfect as it is, and the way of "Christian" society (if we could find such a society!) is worthy of our children. Christian education in particular must open for each child a newer and a better "way." And this is a process. It is a becoming, as Luther put it. It is, to borrow the educator Jerome S. Bruner's words again, "the special community where one experiences discovery by the use of intelligence, where one leaps into new and unimagined realms of experience, experience that is discontinuous with what went before, as when one first understands what a poem is or what beauty and power and simplicity inheres in the idea of the conservation-of-energy theorems --that nothing is lost, only converted, and that measure is universally applicable" (p. 76). Not that intelligence defined as



"flesh and blood" reveals these new realms of experience in spiritual matters, but the Spirit of God. But the Christian student is in pursuit of two learnings, as we must always remember, closely related as those two always should be.

Education, then, is the opening of new doors, not the training of our children to walk the imperfect paths of the past. All we can find truly to imitate and transmit from the past is the discovery of nature-revealed truth and the life of those whose faith we are to follow, but even that is conceived as the path that lies before us. Holding before us the "habitual vision of greatness," as Whitehead urged, is holding before our children "the glory of the Lord," remembering that they "are changed into the same image from glory to glory" (II Cor. 3:18).

This is not just idealized excellence, as some of our high school seniors observed of much talk about democracy in a social studies text. It is translatable into the lives of those who encounter it. Christian parents and teachers have one assignment: to make the confrontation, to hold before them the Christ crucified together with all of His revealed will and Word. This is not adjusting them to any society; it is pointing them to a new and foreign life, undreamed-of by the world, but revealed to us.

So let us as parents and teachers walk before our children as those who believe and practice what we teach, imperfect as may be our walk, but sincere and upright in our fighting the good fight and finishing the course and keeping the faith. This means war with the world, not a lazy falling into the cozy and erring ways of those about us.



Now, then, we are ready to do the two things that education must do: one, structure our message to them, organize what we have learned and present it to them as truth; the other, invite them to experience it for themselves and see that it is true. In His Word God outlined His will, especially in the Ten Commandments; in Proverbs Solomon so much as said, "I have tried it in wide experience, and, people, it is true." For us not to do the first suggested above would short-change learners. Not to do the second would rob them of the "Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves" (John 4:42).

In the words of the same Mr. Bruner again: "Insofar as possible, a method of instruction should have the objective of leading the child to discover for himself. Telling children and then testing them on what they have been told inevitably has the effect of producing bench-bound learners whose motivation for learning is likely to be extrinsic to the task at hand --pleasing the teacher, getting into college, artificially maintaining self-esteem. The virtues of encouraging discovery are of two kinds. In the first place, the child will make what he learns his own, will fit his discovery into the interior world of culture that he creates for himself. Equally important, discovery and the sense of confidence it provides are the proper rewards for learning. They are rewards that, moreover, strengthen the very process that is at the heart of education --disciplined inquiry" (p.77).

To summarize, we give the child the benefit of our experience, a general idea of "how and where things fit." Then we both let a child discover for himself and help him make the discoveries. What a child discovers in books and laboratory exercises is not his own, but he makes it his own, even as what one learns directly from



Scripture is uniquely his own learning in a way superior to getting it by assignment and testing. This means that individuality is emerging in each learner, not a "me, too" conformity to the behavior of the herd. The young student at his work is not really a different kind of person from the scholar at his research or the theologian at his work --each is an individual striving to learn and understand. Each is "earning his name;" in this life a recognition of the fact that he is himself, and in the life to come he will correspond to his name which already is written in heaven.

M.G.

## PANORAMA

### E.L.S. RESOLUTIONS ON SYNODICAL CON- FERENCE FELLOWSHIP

For the information and study of the readers of the Journal, the 1961 resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod regarding its Synodical Conference membership and relations with the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod are here reproduced:

#### RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED REGARDING DOCTRINAL MATTERS

The 44th Regular Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod  
Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, Minnesota

August 22-27, 1961



## I.

WHEREAS, The position taken by the theological faculties and the Doctrinal Committee of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod on the doctrine of Fellowship, as expressed in "The Theology of Fellowship, Part II," all but rules out the application of Matt. 7, 15-16; Romans 16, 17-18; Titus 3, 10; etc. so far as the church today is concerned, and fails to state clearly the principle that Church fellowship is exercised here on earth between Christians on the basis of their confession to the pure marks of the Church (means of grace - Word and Sacraments), as is stated in several ways in the presentations of the Overseas Brethren and the other synods of the Synodical Conference;

WHEREAS, The presentation of the theological faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, "A Statement on the Form and Function of the Holy Scriptures," excerpts of which appeared in the Lutheran Witness, April 4, 1961, ("The Scriptures express what God wants them to say and accomplish what God wants them to do. In this sense and in the fulfillment of this function they are inerrant, infallible, and wholly reliable") is, to say the least, extremely unclear and does not include a clearcut confession of the fact that the Holy Scriptures are, to quote the Brief Statement, "in all their parts and words the infallible truth, also in those parts which treat of historical, geographical, and other secular matters, John 10, 35," which presentation gives us great concern regarding the position of that seminary faculty towards Scripture;

WHEREAS, Despite the fact that we have been informed that official Synodical discipline is being practised within the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, nevertheless gross error publicly promulgated goes publicly unrepudiated, I Tim. 5, 17-20;

WHEREAS, It is the announced intention of the Doctrinal Committee of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod to meet again with the National Lutheran Council, thus rejecting the plea of the Synodical Conference; be it

1. RESOLVED, That with deep sorrow we, on the basis of Romans 16, 17, reaffirm our act of suspension of fellowship relations with the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, which to us, as to our Brethren of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, means "terminate", and also with them entertains the hope that conditions might some day warrant the re-establishment of fellowship.

## II.

WHEREAS, The fact that we together with the other synods of the Lutheran Synodical Conference have not been able to prevail upon the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod to maintain and uphold a doctrine and practice in its midst that is in conformity with the orthodox confessional standards of the Lutheran Synodical Conference;

WHEREAS, The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod also has suspended fellowship with the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod; be it further

2. RESOLVED, That the Evangelical Lutheran Synod declare that, as matters now stand, by its membership in the Lutheran Synodical Conference, it is not expressing and confessing a unity of spirit existing among the constituent synods.



### III.

WHEREAS, It is evident that the Lutheran Synodical Conference is no longer functioning according to the prime purposes stated in its Constitution, and its existence, as its membership is presently constituted, is no longer truthful; be it

3. RESOLVED, That the Evangelical Lutheran Synod direct a memorial to the 1962 convention of the Lutheran Synodical Conference to institute measures to dissolve the Lutheran Synodical Conference; and be it further

4. RESOLVED, That we are ready to continue our support of the joint projects carried on by the Lutheran Synodical Conference and by groups within the Lutheran Synodical Conference until we can adjust to the new conditions brought about by this present action.

### IV.

WHEREAS, Conditions in the Lutheran Synodical Conference are such as to have made the action defined above necessary; and

WHEREAS, The official representatives of our Synod may be asked to take part in meetings of the Lutheran Synodical Conference during the interim; therefore be it

5. RESOLVED, That it is understood that the official representatives from our Synod do not meet in a fellowship framework in Lutheran Synodical Conference meetings where the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod participates.

### V.

WHEREAS, It is our fervent prayer that the 1962 convention of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod will do something to change the situation which has prompted the above resolutions; be it

6. RESOLVED, That the officers of the Synod be instructed to schedule our 1962 convention during the time between the convention of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod and that of the Lutheran Synodical Conference; and be it further

7. RESOLVED, That our Synod send observers to the next convention of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod.

### VI.

WHEREAS, We realize that there are many among those with whom we have had fellowship who stand with us in doctrine; and

WHEREAS, Our present action of terminating fellowship relations may be misunderstood by some; therefore be it

8. RESOLVED, That our resolutions do not pertain to or affect the fellowship relations that have heretofore existed between our Synod and the Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (Slovak), the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, the National Evangelical Lutheran Church (Finnish), and the brethren from overseas who have all along been regarded as affiliated with us; and be it further

9. RESOLVED, That we in addition invite such others as agree with us to identify themselves with us in supporting our Scriptural position.

### VII.

10. BE IT RESOLVED, That these resolutions be regarded as our answer to, and rejection of, resolution III of the 1961 Lutheran Synodical Conference recessed convention on Doctrinal Matters, asking that the presentations of the four synods on Fellowship be held in abeyance, that a new approach and effort be made, and a Doctrinal Commission of the Lutheran Synodical Conference be established.



VIII.

11. BE IT RESOLVED, That copies of these resolutions be sent to the Lutheran Synodical Conference officials and to the presidents of the constituent synods of the Lutheran Synodical Conference.

IX.

WHEREAS, Various memorials from individuals and groups within the Synod have been addressed to this convention relative to these matters; be it

12. RESOLVED, That the resolutions adopted above shall be the Synod's answer to them all.

In the absence of a clear-cut answer to the memorials asking for withdrawal from the Synodical Conference, we can well understand that the people who have waited for the E.L.S.'s "Final decision" are still left in doubt as to what that final decision will be.

History will record the fact that the E.L.S. did not in 1961 reach a final decision on its membership in the Synodical Conference. The mere assertion that membership in a body does not involve fellowship does not make it so. A body assembled around a confessional standard cannot become a mere legal corporation by the simple declaration of one of its members. As a present member of the Synodical Conference, operating under a constitution which confesses a unity in fellowship, the E.L.S. has by this resolution committed itself to another meeting of the Synodical Conference and will no doubt exercise its franchise under the constitution, a document which certainly makes it clear that the body is more than just a legal corporation but functions for spiritual ends and purposes. Under the same constitution, the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod will exercise its franchise in voting on a proposition which it has consistently opposed. Official spokesmen for the Missouri Synod have to this day (i.e. Lutheran Witness, Sept. 5, 1961, p. 20) made it clear that they do not favor a dissolution of the Synodical Conference and do not find cause for such action. The Synod of the Evangelical



Lutheran Churches (Slovak) has furthermore made it clear that it does not favor dissolution. The only outcome we can see is another round of arguments with the majority vote carrying the day so far as the Synodical Conference organization is concerned. Aside from the fact that the E.L.S. did not withdraw from an association which for a number of years has been unionistic, it has now evolved a procedure which is both unrealistic and contrary to sound logic.

From past experiences members of the E.L.S. who have been concerned may well view resolution No. V with considerable reserve. Ever since 1956 the E.L.S. has heard reports on its convention floor to the effect that Missouri Synod conventions have passed resolutions which have indicated a change of heart. Such reports have had the effect of postponing action on memorials asking for withdrawal from the Synodical Conference. We can well expect that the 1962 convention of the Missouri Synod will bring forth resolutions of much the same nature as in 1956 and 1959. If then the E.L.S. found it possible to continue in the Synodical Conference after those conventions, what Scriptural basis can it quote for getting out in 1962?

It all brings us back to the proposition that there can be no proper solution to the dilemma in which the E.L.S. finds itself but to repent of its errors which have been called to its attention. So long as there continues to be a defense of past erroneous practices, there can be no proper return to the old paths which have been forsaken. So long as the E.L.S. stands by its resolution of the 1960 Recessed Convention, p. 33. ("Be it resolved that we reject any interpretation of our suspension resolutions of 1955 which implies.....b) that our continuing membership in the Synodical Conference under present circumstances is in violation of Rom. 16:17.") so long will the problem of unionism be unresolved with regard to this phase of our differences.



There is evidence which gives rise to the hope that the E.L.S. may come to see this error and repudiate its past defences of prayer and mission work carried on with the Missouri Synod within the framework of the Synodical Conference since 1955. We are referring to resolution No.IV. If the reaffirmation of the suspension resolution in 1961 makes it impossible to have meetings with the Missouri Synod within the framework of fellowship in the Synodical Conference, then it was by the same token wrong after the 1955 suspension resolutions. In both cases (1955 and 1961) Romans 16:17 was invoked. This was the Scriptural basis whether the word "suspend" or "terminate" is used. In this matter the Wisconsin Synod has pointed the way for the E.L.S. and it would be the brotherly thing for the Wisconsin Synod to point out to this group its previous inconsistency. Dr. J.W. Behnken, president of the Missouri Synod, in giving his reactions to the Wisconsin Synod suspension, alludes to this difference. He says concerning the E.L.S.: "The latter suspended relations with our Synod in 1955, though they continued membership in the Synodical Conference and also continued to discuss doctrinal issues and to formulate doctrinal statements. Furthermore, they continued to cooperate with us in mission work among the negroes in our country as well as in Africa (Nigeria and Ghana)." Lutheran Witness, Sept. 19, 1961, p. 10. Those of us who withdrew from the E.L.S. objected to this unionistic practice.

C.M.G.

#### THE E.L.S. AND THE DOCTRINE OF THE CALL

To this reporter the most alarming resolution passed by the E.L.S. at its '61 convention was the blanket resolution pass-

ed with reference to relations between three pastors and the congregations which they serve. (By the way, these blanket resolutions seem to be the current way of handling cases which appear troublesome but which surely have



their individual phases. Thus we are reminded of the 1960 resolution which placed two pastors who withdrew to join the Missouri Synod into the same category with two pastors who withdrew because of the E.L.S.'s continuing fellowship with Missouri within the framework of the Synodical Conference. All four were with one accord charged with having given offense by their action.)

The text of the resolution previously referred to is here given because of its bearing on the doctrine of the call:

"WHEREAS, Harvard Street Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cambridge, Mass.; Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tracy, Minnesota; Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church of Elk Rapids, Mich., are members of the E.L.S., and

WHEREAS, these congregations are being served by pastors who have terminated their membership in the E.L.S. by voluntary resignations for conscience' reasons; and

WHEREAS, these resignations presented by the pastors of the Synod alter the basis on which these calls were originally predicated; and

WHEREAS, these pastors did not present their resignations to their congregations for action, the above mentioned congregations have not been given an opportunity in a constitutional manner to declare whether or not they want these calls to remain in force, thus disregarding and violating the sovereignty of the congregation, and

WHEREAS, it is reported this situation has caused unrest, disruption and division in these congregations to the spiritual detriment of precious souls, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That whenever pastors are involved in such situations, they be advised to submit their resignations to their congregations so that the con-



gregations may exercise their sovereign right and thus have an opportunity to take such action as will be in accordance with God's Word and expressive of the Spirit-guided will of the congregation. cf. I Cor. 14:40; I Tim. 2:4; I Pet. 5:6; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the respective Circuit Visitor and/or Synodical officers ask these congregations for an opportunity to meet with them to discuss and explain this action of Synod."

It would appear from this resolution that the E.L.S. believes that when a pastor separates from the Synod for reasons of conscience, then this automatically removes the basis on which his call was predicated. If, therefore, the pastor does not forthwith submit his resignation in order to give the congregation the opportunity to decide whether or not it wants to keep him, then the charge is made that the congregation's sovereignty has been disregarded. According to the passages cited, then decency and order has not been observed, the pastor is proud, and God's will for the salvation of all men is being frustrated.

In orthodox Lutheran theology, the reasons for which a congregation may say that it does not want its pastor's call to remain in force are: false doctrine, ungodly life, and wilful neglect of duty. So far as we know, no attempt has been made to prefer such charges against any of the pastors who have been involved and indeed the resolution makes no such reference. If such charges were made and proved to be true then no one will deny that the congregation would have the right to depose its pastor. Let us say that when a pastor takes such action as is referred to in the resolution then the first duty of the congregation is to test the pastor's action to see whether or not it is according to Scripture. This may take time and every congregation will want to take time in such an im-



portant matter. Certainly a pastor who sincerely believes he has done right will instruct his congregation that it may take the same action. That belongs to a faithful shepherding of the flock. He will not desert the flock. When it becomes evident that his ministry is repudiated by the congregation and that it no longer wishes to listen to him, then he has no choice but to declare that the relation is broken. Assuming that the pastor's position is right, the blame then is not on the pastor but on the congregation which has rejected the ministrations of a faithful pastor. Surely synodical membership neither breaks nor makes a call. But this seems to be the "new look" in regard to the doctrine of the call. There have been many such violations of the doctrine of the call, but this is the first time in this controversy that a Synod has put it down on paper in a synodical resolution.

C.M.G.

## THE WISCONSIN ACTION

While Wisconsin's suspension of fellowship with Missouri is no longer news, the action is of such far-reaching import that it will remain a subject for discussion for some time to come. As a basis for such discussion and as a matter of record we herewith reproduce the entire resolution as supplied by President Naumann's office, including the important supporting propositions.

### RESOLUTION NO. 1

SUBJECT: The Report of the Commission on Doctrinal Matters.

WHEREAS, The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod has lodged many admonitions and protests with the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod during the past twenty years to win her from the path that leads to liberalism in doctrine and practice (Cf. Proceedings 1939..page 159; 1941..page 43f; 74ff; 1947..page 104ff; 114f; 1949..page 114ff; 1951..page 110ff; 1953..page 95ff.); and



- no agreement in doctrine admitted*
- WHEREAS, Our admonitions have largely gone unheeded, and the issues have remained unresolved; and
- WHEREAS, Many of the policies and practices which called forth our admonitions were in the field of fellowship; and
- WHEREAS, The 1959 Convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod therefore gave its Commission on Doctrinal Matters the directive "to continue and accelerate the discussions in the Joint Union Committees to bring about complete unity of doctrine and practice in the Synodical Conference. . . to give primary consideration in their discussions to the area of fellowship. . . to continue its efforts in the Joint Union Committees until agreement on doctrine and practice has been reached, or until an impasse is reached and no such agreement can be brought about." (Wisconsin Synod Proceedings, 1959, p. 195); and
- WHEREAS, The Commission has faithfully carried out this directive but now regretfully reports that differences with respect to the Scriptural principles of church fellowship -- differences which it holds to be divisive -- have brought us to an impasse; and
- WHEREAS, Our Commission's Theses on Church Fellowship are not to be considered a formal confessional document. (Otherwise it would be advisable to expand them considerably, for instance, to preface them with the Doctrine of the Church, the Marks of the Church, etc. They were set up and used simply as a working document in the discussions of the Joint Doctrinal Committees. As such they were to express the Scriptural and historical principles of the teaching and practice of church fellowship held by the Synodical Conference.); and
- WHEREAS, The substance of these Theses is an expression of the Scriptural principles on which the Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod has stood and which have guided it in its practice for many years (Cf. FELLOWSHIP THEN AND NOW ); and
- WHEREAS, In the Statement of the Overseas Committee, FELLOWSHIP IN ITS NECESSARY CONTEXT OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH, we have found nothing to warrant any modification of our position on church fellowship; and
- WHEREAS, In the new forum suggested by the Overseas Committee and adopted by the Synodical Conference we see no avenue leading to the removal of the difference in regard to church fellowship principles which now exists between the Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod and our Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod; and
- WHEREAS, The doctrine of the Church has not been slighted in the intersynodical discussions in the past (Cf. Synodical Conference Reports 1946, 1948, 1950, 1952, 1954); and
- WHEREAS, The Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod has not retreated from the unscriptural position long held by it and also expressed in THE THEOLOGY OF FELLOWSHIP, Part II, but continues to defend that position and carries on fellowship practices which conform to that position (e.g. the two meetings with the National Lutheran Council on co-operative activities, July 7-9, 1960 and November 18 and 19, 1960, with a third meeting to be held October 30-November 1, 1961; the National Lutheran Education Conference, Jan. 8-10, 1961; the Conference of Lutheran Professors of Theology, June 5-7, 1961 -- all of these including conference devotions); and



- WHEREAS, We recognize our sacred trust and the obligation to "contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints," and also to give vigorous testimony on Church Fellowship before the church and the world; be it
- RESOLVED: a) That we now suspend \* fellowship with the Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod on the basis of Romans 16: 17-18 \*\*with the hope and prayer to God that the Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod will hear in this resolution an evangelical summons to "come to herself" (Luke 15:17) and to return to the side of the sister from whom she has estranged herself; and be it further
- RESOLVED: b) That under conditions which do not imply a denial of our previous testimony we stand ready to resume discussions with the Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod with the aim of reestablishing unity of doctrine and practice and of restoring fellowship relations, these discussions to be conducted outside the framework of fellowship; and be it further
- RESOLVED: c) That we are not passing judgment on the personal faith of any individual member of the Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod, but that we are addressing the stern admonition required by love to the Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod as a corporate body; and be it further
- RESOLVED: d) That we are ready to continue our support of the joint projects carried on by the Synodical Conference and by groups within the Synodical Conference until we can adjust to the new conditions brought about by the suspension of fellowship with the Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod; and be it further
- RESOLVED: e) That we call upon all our members to manifest the understanding, consideration, and patience of love during this period of change and adjustment. (We also direct attention to the fact that this Convention has already taken note of the problems that will arise and has approved a study committee that would supply helpful counsel and guidance. See the Report of Committee No. 4, Resolution 2.); and be it further
- RESOLVED: f) That the action taken in our resolution of suspension does not apply to our fellowship relations with the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, the Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of England, the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church (Evangelisch-Lutherische Freikirche), the Evangelical Lutheran (Old Lutheran) Church (Evangelisch-Lutherische [altlutherische] Kirche), and the Igreja Evangelica Luterana do Brasil, as well as any other church bodies outside the Synodical Conference with whom we have been in fellowship; and be it further
- RESOLVED: g) That we declare our desire to discuss the principles of church fellowship further with the church bodies that were represented by the members of the Overseas Committee, and that we initiate such steps as might be necessary to carry out such further discussions; and be it further

Footnotes ..... \* The word "suspend" as used in the resolution has all the finality of termination during the duration of the suspension, but contains the hope that conditions might some day warrant the reestablishment of fellowship. \*\* "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple."



- RESOLVED: h) That we encourage all who are of a like mind with us in this matter to identify themselves with us in supporting the Scriptural, historical position of the Synodical Conference; and be it further
- RESOLVED: i) That the president of our Synod transmit copies of this report to the president of the Lutheran Church -- Missouri Synod, to the presidents of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod and of the Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, and to the president of the Synodical Conference; and be it finally
- RESOLVED: j) That the resolutions adopted by this Convention constitute our answer to the letters and memorials which we have received on this matter.

W. Franzmann, Chairman  
V. Weyland, Secretary

THE RESOLUTION AS ADOPTED.

*Oscar J. Maumann*  
President

If one considers that this probably means the dissolution of the Synodical Conference, that brave venture of ninety years ago where Walther, Hoenecke and others sought to establish a nucleus for the gathering of conservative Lutherans of North America, if one considers how for the better part of those ninety years this body served its purpose nobly and well, it is hard to resist a mood of melancholy. But if one thinks of those founding fathers as viewing the strife and weighing the issues that have torn this church body during the last twenty years or more, if one recalls the principles for which they contended so stoutly in their day, one can fairly see them nodding their approval. They wanted union, but never at the expense of Truth. They sought fellowship, but solely on the basis of full doctrinal agreement. And finally, if one notes that Wisconsin has found it within itself to take this momentous step, to translate the countless words that have been written and spoken in this matter into action, one is moved to thank God that at least so much has been done. For it is not easy to move against the stream of public opinion, even as it is hard to silence the thousand objections raised by



the flesh when any such matter is in prospect. This is real cause for joy, not indeed over the wrecking of the Synodical Conference, but over the new course which Wisconsin has thereby set for itself.

It is, however, quite clear that for Wisconsin the battle is far from over. The decision reached at the convention is sure to be challenged. Some congregations and pastors are protesting the action and calling for reconsideration. Others are declaring that they will ignore the resolution and continue in fellowship with Missouri in spite of the Synodical position. Still others are declaring or threatening to declare their withdrawal. It may well be that Wisconsin's real Gethsemane still stands before. For if the convention meant what it said when it based its resolution on Romans 16:17-18, it has taken a position that admits of no compromise, where retreat would be the equivalent of surrender. It is a huge task with which the administration is confronted, even as it is an acid test for the entire Synod. The manner in which Wisconsin faces this internal issue can go far to give substance and meaning to the recent resolution and clarify a position which we feel is compromised by the ambiguous "Whereas" paragraphs. That there will be many striving to defend and uphold this resolution as truly scriptural doctrine, we are confident. That they face a bitter struggle is sure. And it is equally sure that the temptation will be great to settle for half a loaf, to treat the whole issue as a matter of human judgment. Surely, those who are battling for the true Scripture position deserve our prayers. who

In the meantime let us of the CLC look to our own state of mind -- and heart. Let us not fail to see that this is a time of testing also for us. The very fact of our previous membership in, or fellowship with Wisconsin makes it impossible to be indifferent to what is happening within that body. Certainly, if there should



be but a momentary flicker of smug or gleeful satisfaction over this painful spectacle, if we should but attempt a pose of superiority, we must recognize this for the diabolical temptation that it is and banish it accordingly. The harm that we ourselves would suffer thereby would be the greater evil. But there are other temptations less crude, but for that very reason more insidiously dangerous. To mention but a few:

Belittling the Action. While the resolution does not settle everything, it did not happen by itself. Some real work was done. Let us be big enough to recognize this.

Finding Fault. Not hard, since in all our human endeavor there is so much more that is faulty than good. But here the question is not how much may be wrong, but how much good we can find.

Predicting the Outcome. It is but a step from predicting to the prejudging of which we do not want to become guilty. Since Wisconsin's decision has been challenged by its own members, we do well to await the outcome of that struggle before declaring it to be either good or bad. For then it will be known whether the Synod holds its resolution to be Scripture or human judgment. Then we can give our findings with assurance. *Then the fact that at this time they do look upon decision as human judgment.*

Narrowing the View. We are naturally concerned about what is best for our CLC. But let us not lose sight of the larger interests of the Kingdom of God, of the cause of the Gospel.

In the meantime we shall do well to heed two things: the counsel of the Apostle, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock. . ." and the plea of our Lord Jesus: "Watch -- and pray!"

E. R.



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