

"Meditate

upon these things;

give thyself

wholly to them;

that thy profiting

may appear unto all"

I Timothy 4:15

Journal
of
Theology

Church of the Lutheran Confession

VOLUME 9

MARCH 1969

NUMBER 1

—ESSAYS AND ARTICLES—

THE GLORY OF THE GOSPEL MINISTRY.

(Reflections on II. Cor. 4:1-6)

- "1. We who have this ministry, therefore, just as we were granted mercy, do not grow weary;
2. Rather, we renounced for our part the hidden things of shame, not engaging in opportunism or falsifying the Word of God, but by open proclamation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience before God.
3. But if our Gospel is indeed obscured, it is so in connection with those who are going to perdition,
4. Among whom the god of this age made blind the minds of the unbelievers so that there should not dawn (upon them) the brightness of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is God's image.
5. For not ourselves do we preach, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and us as your slaves for Jesus' sake.
6. For the God who once said: 'Out of darkness let light shine,' shone in the sphere of our hearts for a luminescence of the knowledge of God's glory (as it is) in connection with the countenance of Christ."

.....

What is without question the most extensive, the most moving and the most brilliant glorification of the Christian ministry of the Word ever penned is recorded through the Apostle Paul in Second Corinthians. Yet experience and observation indicate a relative lack of appreciation of this inspired and inspiring outpouring of faith,

not only generally among the saints in God's House but on the part of those privileged few to whom the office of the public ministry is entrusted. There are several factors which might be listed to explain why Paul's ode to the Gospel ministry does not more readily make its appeal felt. For one thing, it is not concentrated in a single chapter or portion of the Epistle, as is the Apostle's hymn to love in I Corinthians 13, or like the Savior's highpriestly prayer in John 17, but actually forms the substance of the entire letter. And this fact could be overlooked during a cursory reading of the epistle because of the profound detail of practical application and exhortation with which Paul enriches his basic theme.

Then too, the letter was written in response to a very critical situation and is thus charged with emotion to which the casual reader does not always respond until he has surveyed the historical background and gained a sympathetic understanding. Once we know that not only the person of the Apostle Paul, but the very essence of his ministry and apostolate were being critically attacked in Corinth, we begin to appreciate that he is laying bare his heart in an intimate burst of feeling because he knows that the very life of the true Gospel ministry is at stake in the large Corinthian congregation. But to one lacking that insight, numerous key passages may remain obscure and even a bit distasteful, such as those which involve Paul's "boasting," or his frequent references to local circumstances, his "vision" in chapter 12, and the like, so that the centrality of the Ministry in all that he writes is apt to be missed.

The listing of such reflections will help to explain the nature and purpose of this present treatise. Any attempt at setting forth the Apostle's tribute to the ministry of the Word in all its detail would require the writing of a commentary on the entire epistle; and of such an ambitious undertaking there is no prospect. Nor would there be any real need; for there are enough expositions of value on the market. But in a limited way it may prove helpful to concentrate attention upon a select portion of Paul's delineation of the public ministry and reflect on what he says

therein, with due regard for the context. It is hoped that this would serve, not only to bring the entire epistle into focus, but especially to stimulate and edify all those who have been entrusted with the ministry of reconciliation, both in its personal, private exercise to which every believer is committed through Baptism and in its public form to which all pastors and teachers of the Word have been called. For basically there is only one ministry of the Truth, in which every believer functions as God has assigned a place to him. In its activity and fruits we are all involved to such an extent that an existence without it here on earth is unthinkable, would indeed not be viable for anyone who is a called saint. Surely, then, we all desire to be fully aware and intensely conscious of its wonderful function.

To this end we address ourselves now to the first six verses of the fourth chapter of Second Corinthians as they are presented in translation at the head of this essay. But as we begin, the text itself with its "dia touto" reminds us that we had best lay the foundation which the previous chapter itself supplies at least in part. It is true that the "dia touto" actually appeals to somewhat more than the content of the third chapter alone; but the paratactic clause which it introduces leans most heavily upon the foregoing. So it seems advantageous to supply here also the entire third chapter in translation and take occasion, at the same time, to add the brief comment that the translations herein offered, while done independently and based upon the Greek text of Nestle, are in no way intended to supplant already existing correct versions or to give any impetus to yet another translation of the New Testament! They are reproduced merely to stimulate the professional student with a fresh look at the text and to invite reader reaction. Here, then, is chapter III:

- "1. Are we again beginning to speak of ourselves in a commendatory manner? Surely we do not, as some, need letters of recommendation to you, or from you?

2. You are our epistle, deeply written as it has been in our hearts, known and read by all men;
3. for you are manifest as an epistle of Christ, one having been ministered by us, written not in black (ink) but by the Spirit of the living God, not in stony tablets but in flesh-heart tablets.
4. But such confidence do we have toward God, through Christ.
5. Not that we are adequate of ourselves to evaluate anything as having its source in ourselves; rather, our sufficiency is from God,
6. Who even made us adequate as ministers of a new testament, not of letter, but of spirit; for the letter kills, but the spirit makes alive.
7. Now if the ministry of death, engraved as it was in connection with letters in stones, was brought into being in a context of glory, so that the children of Israel were not able to look intently at Moses' face because of the glory of his countenance, a glory that was even then fading -
8. How much more will not the ministry of the spirit be in a context of glory?
9. For if the ministry of the condemnation is glorious, much more does the ministry of the righteousness overflow with glory!
10. For in respect to this surpassing glory even that which was made glorious must be said to have had no glory at all.
11. For if what is of transitory nature could pass through a glory phase, how much more certainly in a sphere of glory is that which is permanent.
12. Having such hope, then, we continue to employ a full freedom of approach,
13. And do not (do) as Moses, who kept hanging a veil over his face so that the children of Israel should not gaze upon the last of that (glory)

which was being done away with.

14. But their thoughts (minds) became hardened. For to the present day that same veil remains unlifted upon the reading of the Old Testament (lections), since (only) in connection with Christ is it done away with;
15. but until now, whenever Moses is read, a veil lies upon their heart;
16. yet whenever it turns to the Lord, the veil is fully removed.
17. But the Lord (here meant) is the Spirit; now where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.
18. So we, all with unveiled face beholding the glory of the Lord, are being metamorphosed into the same image because of glory into the sphere of glory, as by the Lord's Spirit."

.....

That, then, is the glory of the spiritual ministry to which the Apostle points in the words we are especially considering (4:1, "ten diakonian tauten"). Its magnitude, especially when we think of it from the viewpoint of the Apostle and his associates, is best appreciated through careful consideration of its significance. When our Lord defined the Call of His Apostles by saying: "... and ye shall be witnesses unto me unto the uttermost parts of the earth" (Acts 1:8), He conferred upon them a very particular and exclusive role in the history of salvation. We recall that the letter to the Hebrews compares them with the angels in the Old Testament as direct transmitters of revelation (Heb. 2:2-4); and when the Lord called them His "witnesses," the title had a distinctly forensic quality. The existence of official eye- and earwitnesses precluded the prospect that the truths of salvation in their efficacious purity were to be communicated to sinners and saints by some haphazard development of a body of hearsay evidence in the form of a general tradition, preserved and perpetu-

ated by the Church. The Gospel in its New Testament fullness is a deposition formulated, first orally and then in writing, by the Apostles, sometimes personally and sometimes through their associates, and certified by their Call, the divine designation of their office as the witnesses of record. Apostolic preaching, then, as it has come down to us, is not a consensus doctrinae of the Church, but the inspired foundation on which the Church rests and to which it is bound (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 2:21). Such is the essential character of the ministry which Paul magnifies in this Epistle.

The message of this ministry he characterizes as "tradition." The true, Scriptural sense of this term has become almost obliterated by the presumptuous claims of those who have postulated the existence of a legitimate, continuing tradition which not only served as the source of the apostolic Scriptures but reaches beyond them in its scope. Thus the preaching of the divinely appointed witnesses is subjected to "correction" and "modification" by critics who elevate the validity of a vague, humanly contrived and sometimes contradictory collection of more or less ancient ecclesiastical records above that of the canonical Scriptures. In effect the apostolic ministry is abrogated by all who rely upon a transmission of the Truth separate and distinct from the inspired Word of God. It is even claimed that neither the human authors of the New Testament nor its earliest readers regarded its books as either peculiarly holy or distinctively canonical.

That Paul, for his part, would have had no patience whatever with such ambiguous and wicked reflections upon his witness is loudly affirmed by his repeated evaluation of his office and message. He certainly speaks of the latter as "tradition," but in quite another sense. To him it means that which has been handed down with authority, an authority not validated by its antiquity nor yet by the Church which received it, but through the office of the apostolate with its attendant promise of the inspiration of the Spirit. It is the product of this divinely ordained source to which Paul gives the title "Tradition," "paradosis."

Thus he had written to the Corinthians: "I praise you that you remember all my things, and that as I have handed over to you the traditions, you hold (them) fast." (I Cor. 11:2). And again he had told the Thessalonians: "Now therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold to the traditions which ye were given either by word (of mouth) or by our epistle" (2 Thess. 2:15). And it was Paul who gave to this unique form of transmission of the Gospel the distinctive designation which sets it apart from anything that men might choose to call "tradition" (cf. Mk. 7:8) when he wrote to the Thessalonians: "And therefore we, too, give thanks to God unceasingly that, having received from us a word of hearing of God, you accepted (it) not as a word of men, but as a word of God, even as in truth it is" (I Thess. 2:13).

It was for this reason that Paul considered the apostolic ministry essential to the cause of the Gospel in the world. That ministry alone supplied the substantive message by which men could be brought to faith in the one and only salvation provided them. So he boldly and firmly wrote to the Corinthians: "I call to your mind, brethren, that Gospel which I preached unto you, which also you accepted, in which also you stand, through which also you are being saved by means of whatever word I preached unto you, if indeed you hold fast to it - unless of course you believed to no purpose!" (I Cor. 15:1-2). In speaking so, the Apostle certainly did not intend to imply that the apostolic ministry was his alone. While he had firmly rejected the claim of some of his detractors that the authority of his witnessing was second-rate and derived from, or dependent upon, the testimony of other Apostles (Gal. 1:11-12, 15-19; 2:6-9), Paul is equally definite in declaring himself to be a beneficiary of tradition other than that which originated with him by virtue of his own Call. For he continues in the 15th chapter of First Corinthians, from which we quoted above, saying: "For among primary matters I handed you that which I also received" (paralambano), and then goes on to list the historical facts of the work of Redemption and their aftermath: the suffering, burial, resurrection and subsequent appearances of the living Sa-

viator. It seems arbitrary and quite unnecessary to insist, as do A. T. Robertson, R. C. H. Lenski, and others, that Paul received the "tradition" concerning these events directly from the Lord Jesus, basing such an interpretation on Paul's defense of his Gospel in Galatians. Is the interpretation actually essential to the real point of the argument submitted to the Galatian Christians? To make the nearest and simplest assumption that Paul had, in a natural way, been supplied by eye-witnesses with the historical details of the Redemption story detracts in no way from the self-sufficient authority of Paul's Gospel preaching. The same conclusion is valid in regard to the Apostle's review of the institution of the Sacrament in 1 Cor. 11:23-25.

By whatever process of revelation any part of the divine message came to him, whether by direct inspiration alone or by receipt of inspired tradition from others endowed with the same apostolic gift, Paul's oral and inscripturated preaching of the message of God to men bore the divine seal of that perfect Truth by which alone man can be made whole; and the Apostle unblushingly refers to it as "MY Gospel" (Rom. 2:16; 16:25; 2 Thess. 2:14; 2 Tim. 2:8). This is the marvellous prerogative to which Paul pays tribute when he now magnifies this service in awed tones. Indeed, he compares it closely with the other great gift of his life and that of his co-laborers. "Kathos eleethemen," he writes. By the same marvel of divine pity which found them, worthless and miserable sinners among whom Paul considered himself chief, and "mercied" them, calling them out of their helpless blindness into the light that shone from the Cross, giving them faith for ignorance and hope for despair, changing enmity into reconciliation, they were also turned into vessels of honor as dispensers of saving grace, sources of the life-giving, sanctifying Word.

How unthinkable it would be, then, that their response to such mercy should ever have the quality of "kakia!" That is the basic thought of the "enkakoumen" which Paul disavows. In the New Testament, especially in the Gospels, we frequently find the expression "kakos echon," literally, "having it bad," (Matt. 8:16; 9:12; etc.) referring

to people who were ill; diseased, physically or emotionally weak. "enkakeo" means: I behave badly in something, falling far short of full vigor; then: to become weary or lose heart. It describes a failure in rising to the occasion because of a negative attitude.

The Apostle was not declaring that he or his co-workers were immune to physical illness, emotional depression or the threat of becoming incapacitated; but he does insist that the thought of the mercy they had received was constantly preserving them from surrendering to the laming effect of discouragement or disaffection. No one who has and understands the miracle of such a ministry will be overcome by a sense of futility even amid the most adverse circumstances.

Those who in Paul's day falsely claimed to be apostles in their own right could not, of course, be so dedicated while laboring in a call which they did not have. And their methods of operation as self-appointed ministers of God apparently matched their fraudulent credentials. They reached out for success in their mission by means of devices which the Apostle repudiates for himself and his associates.

With weariness and disillusionment might have come the temptation to engage in maneuvers which would have discredited and emasculated both Paul's Call and his Gospel. But because true servants of Christ gave no place in their ministry to defeatism, they rejected also its tactics. Therefore Paul writes: "... we have renounced the things that hide shame, not engaging in opportunism nor falsifying God's Word ..."

How frankly and realistically the Apostle describes the corrupt arts available to such who feel that they must somehow endow their ministry with enabling devices. He calls them "the hidden things of the shame ..." The nature of the Genitive "tes aischunes" as intended by the author is a debatable point. Should it be read as qualifying, as subjective or as objective Genitive? It is here being translated as objective: "... the things that hide shame," because this seems to respond best to the Apostle's description.

Men who engage (walk about) in opportunism, "panourgia" (pan and ergazo), a readiness to do anything to gain their ends while professing to be Apostles of the Word, are actually thereby concealing, disguising a feeling of shame or embarrassment. They have no confidence in the integrity of their call or their message. They feel foolish when limiting themselves to the simple proclamation, for they do not find it adequate even as a foundation for fixed principles in their own lives. Thus they turn to devious and ambivalent methods. That this policy is a thing quite different from Paul's readiness to be "made all things to all men" (cf. 1 Cor. 9:19-23; 1 Cor. 10:33) need hardly be stated. What he here repudiates would be a disgrace to the mercy of the glorious apostolic calling.

The alternative to which false servants can turn if they find opportunism distasteful, however, is the greater, more inclusive crime of falsifying God's Word, which is in itself a form of opportunism. Giving lip service to the Gospel while divesting its "logoi" of their divine content is a favorite form of perversion among those who want to be regarded as spokesmen for the Most High on their own terms. They speak of up-dating the Gospel, making it relevant to the times by presenting it in its "true" fulness, free from mythical accretions or provincial ad hoc theology. This simply means that, while Paul could declare: "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ," such deceitful corrupters are ashamed of it, and conceal their shame under the cloak of a counterfeit Gospel.

Of such contemptible manipulations Paul and his associates had neither need nor use. Therefore their response to the marvellous mercy of their calling could be a presenting of themselves before every man's conscience by an open, unveiled proclamation of the Truth as in the sight and presence of God. What a delightful sense of confidence and freedom, what a boon to the distraught, despairing souls of men is revealed in such a description of the activity of a true Apostle of Jesus Christ! He has nothing of which to be ashamed insofar as his office is concerned, least of all the Gospel itself. There is not a single thing in

what he says or writes by inspiration of the Holy Ghost for which he must make apology or which he must somehow modify for its purpose. It is made to order for every human conscience and its needs; it says exactly what all men, whatever their state or condition of life, need to hear and know in order to deal effectively with the terrible demands and condemnation with which the divine Law confronts their impotence. Here is the answer, undisguised and unqualified. What is more splendid than the privilege of a ministry which confers a perfect solution for the worst of human ills?

But may this assessment really be so unqualified? Paul describes his ministry as an absolutely efficacious, open preaching of the Truth; yet how can it be such when so evidently it fails to commend itself to uncounted souls who derive no benefit from it? The evidence of this could very well engender profound discouragement even in the heart of an Apostle, who must see himself hounded from city to city by gainsayers or beset by hostility in the midst of some of the congregations he established. Paul has an answer for this; and he presents it formally in the next verses:

"But if our Gospel is indeed obscured" (condition of reality), "it is so in those who are going to perdition, among whom the god of this age has made blind the thinking of the unbelievers so that there should not dawn (upon them) the brightness of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."

Here we have an example of that plain, unvarnished truthfulness that proceeds from the apostolic ministry and which, however unpalatable it be to the human mind, remains the only effective answer to the human conscience. That which is deemed a "failure" of the ministry of the Gospel is not a failure at all. Since that is the issue raised, the term "apistoi" here does not refer to pagan unbelievers to whom the Gospel had never come, but to those who despite the illumination granted them continue to resist the Holy Spirit by hardening themselves against the God-wrought response of heart and conscience (Heb. 10:26-29). This is not due to Gospel-collapse or ministry-

failure, but is the result of human failure, as surely as spiritual enlightenment is God's work alone. And it is to be expected that, where men harden their hearts against better knowledge, Satan will promptly provide his own brand of blindness to reinforce the veil of unbelief which they have draped over their hearts to shut out the shining glory.

Such tragedy in no way diminishes a genuine apostolic witnessing. It is not the preacher who must come through to the hearts of the hearers, not even if he be an Apostle; it is the Lord Christ, image of God, who is either received in all His fulness or rejected. And that is the secret of the quiet confidence with which the ministry of the Gospel fills its servants; as Paul says: "For it is not ourselves that we preach, but Christ Jesus as Lord, and us as your servants for Jesus' sake." In these candid words there is no trace whatever of a fawning humility by which a devious man might seek to play upon the emotions of his hearers in order to divert their attention from his own obvious inadequacy, as though he were to say: "Folks, you have me dead to rights! I have not conducted my ministry as I should. But as long as I preach Christ, you ought to think of Him and forget about my faults." Rather, Paul is underscoring what he has just made clear, namely that the glory of his ministry remains unimpaired despite the multiple rejection of its message among men, because that glory is not identified with him as a man, but with the Christ whom he preaches. Here lies the real secret of a ministry's joyful confidence: "For the God who once said: Out of darkness let light shine" (Volitive Future) "shone in the sphere of our hearts for a bright luminance of the knowledge of God's glory in connection with the countenance of Christ."

So Paul comes back to his exaltation of the mercy that conferred such a ministry upon him. That he and his associates were clothed with it and made sufficient unto it was but a sequel to the miraculous grace by which their souls were enlightened to a knowledge of the true glory of God, revealed in the person of the promised Messiah.

Apostles or not, this they had received; this was the great gift. To this extent alone were their persons involved. Their Lord used them as lighted windows from which the beams of the life within might shine forth with pure radiance and guide the lost homeward. God is known by every truth revealed in connection with Christ - whether in the Old Testament which testifies of Him or in the New Testament which displays Him. And this IS life eternal (John 17:3). To have a part in the transmission of pure light in the midst of utter darkness is truly a calling in which a man may exult beyond measure.

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Thus we have tried to reflect Paul's view of the glory of his Gospel ministry. His words have been treated all too briefly here; but the brevity is of necessity, since we are obliged to add an answer to a legitimate question. What has all this to do with us? Near the beginning of this essay its purpose was in part defined as a modest effort toward edification of "all those who have been entrusted with the ministry of reconciliation, both in its personal, private exercise and in its public form to which all teachers and pastors of the Word have been called." At other points also the reader found intimations to the effect that what applied to Paul applies also to present-day ministers of the Word. It is therefore necessary that this relationship be clarified and the proper foundation laid for any title that the incumbents of the Gospel ministry in our midst may have to the profound confidence and joy in which Paul exercised the duties of his calling.

What does the Call of a pastor or teacher in the Church have in common with the Call of an apostle? To what extent, if any, may they be identified? Much has been written concerning this relationship; and not all of it is scripturally correct, even when it comes out of Lutheran circles. One finds statements that are inadequate, ambiguous or confusing, and therefore essentially false. Let us try to be exact and to the point. The apostolate was a distinctive service to which certain men were called by the

Lord Jesus Christ Himself (Lk. 6:13; Rom. 1:5). Its nature and purposes are listed in Matt. 10:1; Mark 3:14-15; Luke 9:1-2; Acts 1:21-22. This service has not been perpetuated in a succession of called men. In that sense it is extinct. It continues ONLY in and through the inspired Word by which the apostles are and will be the teachers of the Gospel to all men to the end of time (John 17:20). That enduring, unique, essential service rendered by the apostolate can be compromised if men try to link its ministry formally to the Call of living servants of the Word, whatever their title.

To say that "the ministry established by the calling of the Apostles is to continue to the end of time,"* and to imply that it continues, insofar as it was a ministry of preaching, in the pastoral office of today is surely misleading. It is also quite unnecessary to seek such a connection. Today's pastors do not hold the office of apostles in any essential point. But this does not mean that they are not ordained to the ministry of preaching, which was established as a distinct concept by the exalted Savior before His Ascension and conferred upon the entire Church. Of this ministry the pastor's office, as well as that of the Christian teacher, is a "public" exercise.

There is, to be sure, only one divinely revealed Gospel. But the proclamation thereof, to which the Church has been commissioned, is a distinctive function in its own right. Its authorization does not derive from the apostolate, but from a direct institution of the Lord Jesus Christ entrusted to His Church on earth; and this fact delivers every legitimately called public servant of the Word from the obligation of seeking confirmation of his office in an alleged derivation from the apostolate. It also makes it easier to see and understand the one sense in which our ministry IS dependent upon the apostolate and its collaborators (Mark, Luke, the author of Hebrews). For it is their inspired message which the Church and its public servants are called to proclaim (Mk. 16:15; 1 Pet. 2:9-10).

* The Lutheran Synod Quarterly, Vol. IX, No. 1, p. 18.

clarity of the translations depends on how well they are understood. Three questions must be answered: a) of whom is the Apostle speaking in verse 6? b) what does he mean by the "form" of God (and "form" of a servant in verse 7)? and c) what does he mean by "robbery"? -- It seems almost absurd to ask the first question, since the antecedent to the pronoun at the beginning of verse six is spelled out in the preceding verse: Christ Jesus. But unless one wishes to accuse Paul of carelessness in his choice of terms, these words can mean just one thing. They are the names given to the Savior after His incarnation: the one by Mary and Joseph at His circumcision, the other by His disciples on the basis of inspired prophecy (Mt. 16:16f). Yet NEB seems to be speaking of an earlier time, prior to the incarnation ("divine nature was His from the beginning"). Also Phillips and ABS ("Always had the nature of God") certainly open the door in that direction. The thought is, of course, true in itself. But it does not happen to be what Paul is speaking of at this point, the point where he is showing what the eternal Son of God endured after the time of His incarnation, while He swelt here on earth.

The second question deals with that strange term, the "form" of God: the form (MORPHE) of a formless being, of the One who is Spirit (John 4:24)! While most versions suggest "nature," this still leaves the problem unsolved. But Scripture does make God recognizable and identifiable by His attributes: His divine wisdom, power and majesty. Also by His deeds it reveals Him as what He is -- God over all. And this MÖRPHE THEOU -- this God-form -- Jesus always had. Even when it was veiled by His flesh, His disciples "beheld His glory" (John 1:14; 2:11). When the next verse then speaks of His MORPHE DOULOU -- His servant-form -- it is again by His attributes (humility) and actions (obedience) that this same Jesus becomes recognizable to us as the EBED J'HOVAH, the Servant of the Lord of whom Isaiah spoke. -- But to return to verse six: AV, RSV and NAS translate well, particularly the latter ("He existed in the form of God"). Nor are ABS, NEB and Phillips to be faulted for their preference for

never fall prey to what J. J. Jowett describes as commonly observed among the clergy:

"We are tempted to leave our 'noon-day' lights behind in our study, and to move among men of the world with a dark lantern which we can manipulate to suit our fancy. We pay the tribute of smiles to the low business standard. We pay the tribute of laughter to the fashionable jest. We pay the tribute of easy tolerance to ambiguous pleasures. We soften everything to a comfortable acquiescence We become the victims of illicit compromise. There is nothing distinctive about our character. It is neither one thing nor another. We are of the kind described by the Prophet Isaiah: 'Thy wine is mixed with water,' or like those portrayed by Jeremiah: 'Reprobate silver shall men call thee.'"*

Why should such practices of accommodation carry any appeal for us when we have the blessed assurance that, so long as we proclaim the divine message of the prophets and apostles, we are confronting the consciences of all men with their only viable alternative, and may expect a positive response to its power? As surely as our own hearts are captive to the Truth, so surely may we know that ours is the supreme service of love and the ultimate hope of lost sinners. It has sometimes been crudely referred to as a job of selling; but if it can with any propriety be called that, at least we know that the last thing we would wish to do is sell ourselves. And therefore we are unimpressed by any statistics of failure which some might cite against us. It remains true for dedicated Gospel servants, as it was true for the apostles, that when despite the power of the living Word hearers are lost in their sins, it is the result of a perverted self-hardening of hearts upon which Satan has seized when otherwise his power is unavailing. The Light will shine and heal, though many allow themselves to be blinded by the devil. The glory of our ministry is not measured by evident popularity or sensational victories, but by its own intrinsic worth.

* The Preacher: His Life and Work, pp. 54-55.

In this context we may indeed, and ought in all sincerity, speak of our Gospel, of the traditions we have received, holding them in highest esteem. It is historically as well as theologically understandable that there should be defectors from the Truth who, being of reprobate mind, defile their clerical robes with the vile mucus of denials and distortions of the Truth while they sanctimoniously speak of the precious trust which God has committed to them by the gift of His Word. And their number is growing, together with the impact which their heresies exert, because such men find themselves able to ply their nefarious trade within the sheltering walls of church bodies that fail to bring them to an accounting. But it seems incredible that clergymen of integrity should be willing to continue in a fellowship which gives sanctuary to manifest purveyors of illicit poisons, even jousting with them on a theological battle-front where "equal time" is an accepted amenity. Surely the glory of our ministry is too great to be tarnished by association with its despoilers.

It is not for these "apistoi," but for the searching and hungry souls that our ministry is intended; and in the present state of the Church on earth that ministry, which is as vital in its sphere as that of the apostles, assumes a very special glow by reason of its scarcity. If we who have been graciously spared to continue in the service of the unadulterated Gospel were to diminish our devotion to it by losing sight of its true significance, how then shall the elect be gathered in? And though indeed they shall in God's own time BE called and sanctified, with or without us, how would we answer to the searching inquiry that awaits at the return of our Lord?

May we learn to speak with an ever greater sense of authority and confidence of the Gospel which we preach. We have our detractors, of course.* But the validity of

* For example, Faith-Life, published by the Protes'tant Conference, speaks with characteristic and disconcerting vehemence of "the crimes the shepherds of the CLC have committed against the preaching and the preachers of 'the Gospel of Forgiveness of Sins through our Blessed Savior," etc. (Nov.-Dec. 1968, p. 21).

times too feeble reactions against rationalistic theology, as well as other weaknesses which we confess and deplore are products of that inherent unbelief of the flesh against which servants of Christ must constantly strive and pray. The glory is surely not of us; but both our Call and our faith, 'divine gifts of mercy, are glorious indeed. We desire, then, *mutatis mutandis*, to share in the observations which Luther made concerning his own ministry:

"Unless those who are in the office of preacher find joy in Him who sent them, they will have much trouble. Our Lord God had to ask Moses as many as six times. He also led me into the office in the same way. Had I known about it beforehand, He would have had to take more pains to get me in. Be that as it may, now that I have begun, I intend to perform the duties of the office with His help. On account of the exceedingly great and heavy cares and worries connected with it, I would not take the whole world to enter upon this work now. On the other hand, when I regard Him who called me, I would not take the whole world not to have begun it."*

E. Schaller

* Table Talk; Luther's Works, Vol. 53, p. 12f.

The JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY is published at Eau Claire, Wisconsin, by authorization of the Church Of The Lutheran Confession.

Subscriptions: \$3.00 per year, \$5.50 for 2 years, payable in advance.

Issues are dated: March, May, July, October, December.

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THE PROBLEM OF CHOICE (concluded)

The texts chosen for our previous comparative studies of some modern translations have touched on sensitive areas of doctrine. They have, we hope, shown how easily it may happen that error not only will find cover under some new version of an old text, but sometimes is actually suggested and fostered thereby. Before we end our series one text remains, however, where the situation is somewhat different. The reference is to Philippians 2:5-11, the classic passage describing the humiliation and subsequent exaltation of Jesus Christ. -- This does not mean that error has not been taught also in this vital area of Christian doctrine. It has. But while dogmaticians have sometimes strained the truth in order to fit it into their particular systems, and commentators have misinterpreted some important features of the passage in order to adapt it to their preconceived ideas, the translators are by and large in substantial agreement on what the text actually says. They do not always translate equally well. They are not always clear. Sometimes the privilege of a free rendering to which every translator must occasionally resort is rather strongly abused. But when one reads and compares the resultant versions, the basic truths of the passage are all there. Such is the strength of the underlying text.

But does this mean that these various and varying versions are therefore to be accepted uncritically? Let each one of us read the passage in his favorite version. Is it not clear that here we are in the Holy of Holies? For this is the very heart of the Gospel: the redemptive work of the Savior, His vicarious obedience and substitutionary sacrifice. What Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53 are to the Old Testament, that is what our passage is for the New. Realizing this, we will want more than the mere assurance that there has been no error, either in translation or doctrine. The text does indeed present some problems of more than ordinary magnitude. But even while making due allowance for this fact, the nature and importance of this great sub-

ject do require that one have certain standards. The least we can therefore ask of the versions is that at this point they give us first of all accuracy and clarity, and then -- in keeping with the grandness of the theme -- that this be done with dignity, reverence, and all the beauty which literary skill can supply. Accuracy, for there is no room here for the liberties to which paraphrasers sometimes resort. Clarity, lest current readers be left in doubt as to what the Apostle was saying, and what the Philippians were gathering from his words. Dignity, for what Paul is picturing so vividly is an act of royal majesty. Reverence, for He who here is giving Himself for us is no less than God's own Son. And beauty, the beauty of language at its best. Anything less would be unworthy of the tribute that we want to bring when also we bow the knee at the Name that is above every name, and with joyful tongues confess that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the glory of God the Father.

With these standards in mind let us address ourselves, verse by verse, to a comparison of those translations with which we have already become familiar through our earlier studies.* -- Verse 5 in the AV is classic in its simplicity: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:". It is a model of accuracy and clarity. It is outstanding for its dignity, reverence and beauty. RSV comes close, but does not equal the older version. Beck strives for brevity, but becomes obscure. When the others, however, come with "attitude," or NEB with "bearing," they are substituting an outward result for the inner, underlying cause. For it takes a certain quality of mind or spirit to produce that attitude or bearing which the Apostle is trying to teach his Philippians -- and us.

Verse 6 is the crux of the entire passage, presenting problems of such importance that the accuracy and

*) The abbreviations: AV - Authorized Version; RSV - Revised Standard Version; NAS - New American Standard; NEB - New English Bible; ABS - American Bible Society. Phillips, Beck and Taylor will be referred to by name.

clarity of the translations depends on how well they are understood. Three questions must be answered: a) of whom is the Apostle speaking in verse 6? b) what does he mean by the "form" of God (and "form" of a servant in verse 7)? and c) what does he mean by "robbery"? -- It seems almost absurd to ask the first question, since the antecedent to the pronoun at the beginning of verse six is spelled out in the preceding verse: Christ Jesus. But unless one wishes to accuse Paul of carelessness in his choice of terms, these words can mean just one thing. They are the names given to the Savior after His incarnation: the one by Mary and Joseph at His circumcision, the other by His disciples on the basis of inspired prophecy (Mt. 16:16f). Yet NEB seems to be speaking of an earlier time, prior to the incarnation ("divine nature was His from the beginning"). Also Phillips and ABS ("Always had the nature of God") certainly open the door in that direction. The thought is, of course, true in itself. But it does not happen to be what Paul is speaking of at this point, the point where he is showing what the eternal Son of God endured after the time of His incarnation, while He swelt here on earth.

The second question deals with that strange term, the "form" of God: the form (MORPHE) of a formless being, of the One who is Spirit (John 4:24)! While most versions suggest "nature," this still leaves the problem unsolved. But Scripture does make God recognizable and identifiable by His attributes: His divine wisdom, power and majesty. Also by His deeds it reveals Him as what He is -- God over all. And this MORPHE THEOU -- this God-form -- Jesus always had. Even when it was veiled by His flesh, His disciples "beheld His glory" (John 1:14; 2:11). When the next verse then speaks of His MORPHE DOULOU -- His servant-form -- it is again by His attributes (humility) and actions (obedience) that this same Jesus becomes recognizable to us as the EBED J'HOVAH, the Servant of the Lord of whom Isaiah spoke. -- But to return to verse six: AV, RSV and NAS translate well, particularly the latter ("He existed in the form of God"). Nor are ABS, NEB and Phillips to be faulted for their preference for

never fall prey to what J.J. Jowett describes as commonly observed among the clergy:

"We are tempted to leave our 'noon-day' lights behind in our study, and to move among men of the world with a dark lantern which we can manipulate to suit our fancy. We pay the tribute of smiles to the low business standard. We pay the tribute of laughter to the fashionable jest. We pay the tribute of easy tolerance to ambiguous pleasures. We soften everything to a comfortable acquiescence We become the victims of illicit compromise. There is nothing distinctive about our character. It is neither one thing nor another. We are of the kind described by the Prophet Isaiah: Thy wine is mixed with water,' or like those portrayed by Jeremiah: 'Reprobate silver shall men call thee.'"

Why should such practices of accommodation carry any appeal for us when we have the blessed assurance that, so long as we proclaim the divine message of the prophets and apostles, we are confronting the consciences of all men with their only viable alternative, and may expect a positive response to its power? As surely as our own hearts are captive to the Truth, so surely may we know that ours is the supreme service of love and the ultimate hope of lost sinners. It has sometimes been crudely referred to as a job of selling; but if it can with any propriety be called that, at least we know that the last thing we would wish to do is sell ourselves. And therefore we are unimpressed by any statistics of failure which some might cite against us. It remains true for dedicated Gospel servants, as it was true for the apostles, that when despite the power of the living Word hearers are lost in their sins, it is the result of a perverted self-hardening of hearts upon which Satan has seized when otherwise his power is unavailing. The Light will shine and heal, though many allow themselves to be blinded by the devil. The glory of our ministry is not measured by evident popularity or sensational victories, but by its own intrinsic worth.

* The Preacher: His Life and Work, pp. 54-55.

ness of men, no great difference is involved. The Greek allows for either translation. We prefer the latter. For just like the incarnation, so also His birth of a Virgin was not yet per se a part of His humiliation. That came with what this Child subsequently endured, and the Son of Man later did when

(Verse 8) "Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (AV) -- Again no serious lapses in translation, except for ABS ("He was humble") which waters down what the original so emphatically states: "He humbled Himself." But for accuracy as well as the solemnity with which it leads up to the climax, "even the death of the cross," none of the alternate versions measure up to the AV, at least in the opinion of this writer. And if "fashion" has an antique sound, it still serves well to express the pattern, the way of life by which the God-man humbled Himself. -- Those old Elizabethans surely had something!

Verse 9: -- Almost perfect agreement in the first part: "Wherefore God hath also highly exalted Him;" for whether one has "exalted" or "raised" makes little difference, though the "lifted" of Phillips seems a bit crude. But when AV continues: "and given Him a name which is above every name," the use of the indefinite article makes it vague, is anticlimactic. While some important manuscripts lack the definite article at this point, there is more than enough evidence to support the reading chosen by all our alternate versions (excepting Phillips and Taylor): "the name which is above every (other) name."

*) But, lest this be considered a "minor" exception, one must realize what is at stake: the genuineness of the obedient suffering and suffering obedience of Christ. For this servant-form (MORPHE DOULOU) was just as real as the God-form of the preceding verse. While Taylor is surely not trying to teach the error of Docetism, this unfortunate reference to a "disguise" does allow for, if not even suggest, that ancient heresy that the suffering of Christ involved no more than a phantom body, was "suffering" in appearance only.

Verse 10 -- There is almost complete acceptance of AV, "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow." For when Beck says that "everyone ... should kneel," and ABS has it "that all beings ... will fall on their knees," they are saying the same thing. But when AV continues, "of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth," it not only is needlessly repetitious, but it invites speculation as to just what those "things" might be. The original text is much more concise, and Taylor renders it adequately: "every knee ... in heaven and on earth and under the earth." The other versions agree in substance.

Verse 11 is a grand doxology, so much so that we find our several versions not only in substantial, but almost without exception in literal agreement. No further word of criticism! Simply a heartfelt joining in the joyful confession "that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the glory of God the Father!"

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Our conclusions should be brief. Our passage has its difficulties, indeed. One can understand the perplexity of the translators. But what stands out is the unifying strength of the underlying text, so that even translators of widely different eras and of completely opposite theological backgrounds are nevertheless brought into substantial agreement.

Let this be remembered. Working in doctrinally sensitive areas of Scripture as we have been, one may well find the product of the various translators vexingly confusing. But as the area of study is widened, and particularly if this can be done with constant reference to the Greek or Hebrew, one finds that with all their differences these various versions nevertheless are helping rather than hindering a careful student of the Word. Our confidence in its eternal strength and truth grows in the process.

See our Journal (July, 1968, pp. 8-9) for a suggestion as to how these potential aids could be put to practical use -- even by our CLC.

E. Reim

== PANORAMA ==

THE DOCUMENTS OF VATICAN II -- AN EXAMINATION (Continued)

For some time the Roman Church had known that its grip on the people had been losing its holding power and that something more than an edict from the Vatican was

needed to recapture lost ground. It saw that popular appeal and the twentieth century rebellion against old forms were making an impact and threatening the bastions which it had long maintained by papal and conciliar power. Adaptation, renewal and reform were being called for not only by a restive laity but also by a beleaguered hierarchy which had been attempting to hold the line on the domestic field. And so the Vatican Council was convened and Constitutions, Decrees, and Declarations were weighed in the balances of discussion and debate (all under the control of the pope) and were passed and decreed. Valiant efforts were made to retain the hard core of official doctrine, as well as to preserve the infallibility of the pope and maintain the position of the clergy as the divinely appointed interpreters of Scripture and custodians of the truth. But now that the Council is ended the Roman Church finds that it has a bobcat by the tail. The restless element was quick to act upon what it considered a carte blanche; and now the brakes have to be applied lest the teaching authority be lost. A notable example is that of the birth control controversy now raging in the Catholic Church. It has been our contention from the start that any major concessions which seem to have been made in the Vatican decrees were illusory and that the pope in artful cunning would see to it that nothing fundamental to the papal system was surrendered. Concessions indeed were made on peripheral matters and a certain flexibility was allowed in other controversial items, but all under the control and supervision of the central authority. The following two documents bear out the truth of these observations.

7. Decree On the Appropriate Renewal of the Religious Life. (Perfectae Caritatis.)

The purpose of this decree is summed up in the document itself, as follows: "In this present document, the Synod intends to deal with the life and rules of those institutes whose members profess chastity, poverty, and obedience, and to make provisions for their needs as the tenor of the times indicates." (#1). Accordingly this decree relates to members of those communities who have committed themselves to the practice of the so-called "evangelical counsels." These have reference to the vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience. While a certain freedom is allowed regarding religious habits (and the change in the garb of monks and nuns has not been slow in coming); while allowance is made for the development of fresh forms of religious life; while room is provided for the introduction of modern techniques in keeping with the circumstances of time and place, the final right to make decisions is posited in the hierarchy. "In the work of appropriate renewal, it is the responsibility of competent authorities alone, especially of general chapters to issue norms, to pass laws and to allow for a right amount of prudent experimentation, though in all such matters, according to the norm of law, the approval of the Holy See and of local Ordinaries must be given when it is required." (#4)

The basic requirement for the life of the religious (as they are called) is still represented as dedication to the fulfillment of the vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience. These are carefully defined and left untouched. To have reversed its stand on these vows the Roman Church would have had to disavow its confession of the Council of Trent where these vows were commanded and decreed (25th session, Chapter I). But Rome must not admit that its Councils have erred! It merely asserts that these conciliar decrees have been clarified and interpreted! How sad that a church body finds it so hard to admit an error! Regarding the practice of the so-called "Evangelical Counsels" by those who have taken the vows, Luther has sufficiently shown that it not only drives its devotees to hypocrisy but also nurtures self-righteousness and feeds the flames of law-religion.

We can see some good coming out of this decree, namely if those who read it will pay particular attention to this sentence in the sixth paragraph: "In the first place they should take the sacred Scriptures in hand each day by way of attaining 'the excelling knowledge of Jesus Christ' (Phil 3:8) through reading these divine writings and meditating on them." Yet even here we have the uncomfortable feeling that the "ex opere operato" element which permeates Roman Catholic theology is not missing. If the importance of "faith" had been enunciated, the statement would have been much improved.

8. Declaration on Christian Education. (Gravissimum Educationis)

In the very first paragraph of this declaration a true education is defined as one which aims at the formation of the human person with respect to his ultimate goal and with respect to the good of those societies of which he is a member. The aims of a Christian education are listed thus: "That as the baptized person is gradually introduced into a knowledge of the mystery of salvation, he may daily grow more conscious of the gift of faith which he has received; that he may learn to adore God the Father in spirit and in truth (cf. Jn. 4:23), especially through liturgical worship; that he may be trained to conduct his personal life in righteousness and in the sanctity of truth, according to his new standard of manhood (Eph. 4:22-24)." (#2). Before one becomes too ready to subscribe to this summary of aims, it is necessary to bear in mind that the references to faith, to liturgical worship, to personal life are in this context to be understood in the light of the Roman doctrine. One doesn't easily forget the judgment that was passed by the Council of Trent in its 6th session and in its 12th canon: "If anyone says that justifying faith is nothing else than confidence in divine mercy, which remits sins for Christ's sake, or that it is this confidence that justifies us, let him be anathema." At the same session and in its 20th canon it is declared "If anyone says that a man who is justified and however perfect is not bound to observe the commandments of God and the Church, but only to believe, as if the

Gospel were a bare and absolute promise of eternal life without the condition of observing the commandments, let him be anathema." In view of these confessions which stand today one cannot call the education of a Roman Catholic school Christian, regardless of how many fine phrases are found in the Declaration on Education of Vatican II.

While the document allows for the pluralistic character of modern society and the need for public schools, it is not backward in urging upon the parents the importance of entrusting Catholic children to Catholic schools where and when it is possible. It allows for the possibility that Catholic schools may take on forms which vary according to local circumstances. "Thus the Church feels a most cordial esteem for those Catholic schools, found especially where the Church is newly established, which contain large numbers of non-Catholic students." (#9). Evidently in such circumstances it can trim its sails according to the prevailing winds in order that non-Catholic students may not be alienated.

In the following quotation it seems that the way is opened for collaboration between Catholic and secular schools: "At the diocesan, national and international level, the spirit of cooperation grows daily more urgent and effective. Since this same spirit is not necessary in educational work, every effort should be made to see that suitable coordination is fostered between various Catholic schools, and that between these schools and others that kind of collaboration develops which the well-being of the whole human family demands." (#12)

This document is quite articulate in its insistence that it is the duty of public authorities to allocate public subsidies for the benefit of private religious schools such as the Roman Catholic: "Public authority, which has the obligation to oversee and defend the liberties of citizens, ought to see to it, out of a concern for distributive justice, that public subsidies are allocated in such a way that, when selecting schools for their children, parents are genuinely free to follow their consciences." (#6). The declaration considers it an infringement on a family's

exercise of religious freedom when such subsidies are not provided so as to make possible the choice of a private religious school. On this basis one can well understand the philosophy behind the push which the Roman Church is making for funds for its schools to be raised by general taxation. It is an open secret that the Catholic Church is experiencing great difficulty in financing its schools and in providing them with salary-free teachers as heretofore. Surely they are not the only ones who are finding it difficult to raise money for the maintaining of private religious education; but this does not make it right to seek public support for it and particularly not from public funds which are raised by taxation.

C. M. Gullerud



"CONSERVATISM"
and Romans 16:17

In the February 17, 1969 issue
of Christian News (pp. 10-11) ap-
peared an exchange of letters

which, because of the subject matter, is of particular concern to members of the CLC.

A Wisconsin Synod member, writing to the editor of the paper, remarked that he would be interested in reading an explanation "as to why your congregation in New Haven remains a member of the Missouri Synod."

As is generally known, Pastor Herman Otten, shepherd of the said congregation in New Haven, Missouri, and editor of Christian News, devotes much of the space in his periodical to exposure and criticism of the doctrinal corruption and errorists presently being tolerated within the Missouri Synod. In turn, both the editor and his publication are roundly berated and severely judged by much of the Missouri Synod clergy and others. Yet through it all the editor and his congregation have maintained their membership in that synod.

It is well to note also that Pastor Otten vigorously champions the confessional position of the Brief Statement, which in paragraph #28 says, among other things, that "all

Christians are required by God to discriminate between orthodox and heterodox church bodies, Matt. 7:15, to have fellowship only with orthodox church bodies, and, in case they have strayed into heterodox church bodies, to leave them, Rom. 16:17." The confession also explains that "the orthodox character of a church is established . . . by the doctrine which is actually taught in its pulpits, in its theological seminaries, and in its publications."

Anyone who reads Christian News must be well aware of the fact that by the above canon the Missouri Synod has long since become a heterodox church body according to orthodox Lutheran standards. For though many protests are being heard within its membership, the official voice of the church body is hoarse with error protected, defended and proclaimed. The interest of the Wisconsin Synod member as expressed in his communication is therefore entirely understandable. Has the editor satisfied it?

We reproduce here that portion of the editor's extensive reply which specifically relates to the issues on which we wish to comment:

"The New Haven congregation has protested against the theological liberalism tolerated within the LCMS (Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod) for almost ten years. We believe that we represent the confessional position of the true LCMS, and not the liberals within the LCMS.

However, the congregation has

'RESOLVED, That we petition the 1969 Denver convention of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod to submit the matter of pulpit and altar fellowship with the American Lutheran Church to a congregational referendum; and be it finally RESOLVED, That, if the 1969 convention of the LCMS declares altar and pulpit fellowship with the American Lutheran Church or should join the Lutheran World Federation, the World Council of Churches, or the National Council of Churches in Denver this July, then in obedience to Holy Scripture we will withdraw from the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.'

Our suggestion to those like yourself, who claim to be theological conservatives, is that they concentrate upon the theological liberals rather than wasting energy fighting or criticizing fellow conservatives. In too many instances conservatives are defeating themselves because they cannot work together. They fight among themselves and their congregations suffer one split after another. They should pay a little attention to what the Scriptures teach about true love and unity."

It is to be regretted that the writer failed to meet the issue squarely. His answer to the "WHY" of the inquiry is limited to the contention that he, with his congregation and his publication, represent the true Missouri Synod, and that the "liberals" are the ones who ought to leave the synod because they are out of step.

Such a line of argumentation might be employed by church members attempting to defend their legal claim to the property of an incorporated church in a court of law - if the Supreme Court had not recently determined that secular courts have no jurisdiction in litigation involving confession of faith. But as a reply to the requirements of Romans 16:17 the answer of the writer is wholly irrelevant, including his reference to the valiant struggle against the union proposals of the leadership in the Missouri Synod.

The real issue is joined only when it is recognized that, by any Scriptural standard, the Missouri Synod must be adjudged a heterodox church and that God's Word forbids fellowship with such a church.

Editor Otten, like so many other earnest defenders of a confessional position, seems to entertain the mistaken idea that Rom. 16:17 allows him to remain in fellowship with a heterodox church body and/or with errorists as long as he can admonish and instruct or until he arrives at the decision that his efforts have proved unavailing. Neither this passage nor any other Word of God calls for or permits continuance in fellowship with false teachers. The only human judgment required is a recognition of the fact that they are causing divisions and offenses contrary to the doc-

trine; when that is evident, we are to avoid them.

The pursuit of an unscriptural course in this respect leads to other aberrations. In his reply the editor moves rather sharply to an attack upon those who, as he sees it, waste energy fighting "conservatives" instead of working with them against a common foe. But by setting up a broad antithesis between "conservatives" and "liberals" a brand of unionism may be fostered which is no less damaging to the preservation of sound doctrine and preaching than a sophistry which justifies continued fellowship with a grossly heterodox church.

Scripture knows of no discipleship called "conservatism." "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." Those who ask that their doctrine and practice be considered immune from critical review or disavowal by other "conservatives" because they are "conservatives" are undermining their own cause. For they demand and expect from all "conservatives" a comradeship-in-arms that ignores doctrinal differences and overlooks disobedience in practice within its own circle. Such an exercise of a fellowship of convenience would be unionistic, and all the more dangerous because of its superficial plausibility.

We wish and pray that all Lutheran "conservatives" might work together in true unity, which is nothing less than full confessional agreement in doctrine and practice. It is indeed sad that they should be divided. But an alliance built on differences ignored or unresolved, or cemented in spite of them, would be even sadder.

Every Scriptural objection, from whatever source, voiced against heresy in a spirit of true love and humility, moves us deeply; and we thank God for it. But agreement in the Scriptural doctrines of Inspiration, Creation, the Vicarious Atonement and other fundamental truths is in-itself not a sufficient basis for joint worship or church work, not even for a joint struggle on the battlefield chosen by the enemies of the Gospel.

Let those who seek a united front against evil begin by taking the necessary steps to remove the contradictions

that hinder their own unity. And let this movement begin with a separation of all from existing false fellowship relations as the basic testimony of consciences bound in God's Word. Upon that effort they may pray for and expect God's Grace to rest; and a resulting oneness would indeed become a weapon of God against apostasy.

We are all miserably prone to think that contending for the faith finds its best promise of success when it can be waged as a power struggle. Our flesh tempts us to take a dim view of the effectiveness of testimony by individuals or fragmented minorities when pitted against massive numerical or organizational majorities. Victories so won seem insignificant. The lessons to be learned from Gideon's three hundred (Judges 7) and from Elijah's Carmel experience (I Kings 18) are easily forgotten or discounted. Moreover, most of us are inclined to misconstrue past blessings of our God. Our former relative security within the substantial ranks of the now defunct Synodical Conference, whose synods at one time seemed a comfortable and growing bulwark of orthodoxy, was allowed to condition us to the idea that it is an inalienable right of Christians to be able to confront the forces of error with rank upon rank of ecclesiastical batteries. So it becomes extremely difficult to accept the actual, historic fact that in the struggle of faith for the Truth we must oftentimes be deprived of an outward show of strength; that the volunteers from Manasseh, Asher, Zebulon and Naphtali will be thinned down before the battle is joined; and that the "mighty army" of the hymn will not appear as such in the struggle against apostasy.

Yet let us work and pray against disunity, and not accept that condition with fatalistic resignation. May we seek every legitimate avenue leading toward the finding and establishment of concord among those who profess to cherish the inspired Word and Luther's doctrine pure, and are willing to listen to it, "bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5).

E. Schaller

BOOK
REVIEWS

1.

IN CHRIST'S STEAD: Lectures on
Preaching by Arthus Gossip. Baker
Book House, 1968; 247 pages, \$2. 95.

The preface to this book makes for great expectations. The title is beautiful. The setting is impressive. For these are the Warrack Lectures, delivered to the students of the colleges of the United Free Church of Scotland in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Aberdeen. The stated purpose is inspiring: to impress upon future ambassadors for Christ the glory of their calling. Yet the book itself is disappointing.

It is indeed an effective oratorical device to make casual reference to what was once said by some famous author or great person. If the man is present he is flattered. So is the hearer who recognizes the quotation and knows its source. If he does not, his ignorance is not exposed unless he himself reveals it. And everyone admires the speaker for the wide range of his reading. But when this goes on page after page, it may well be that not only the hearer, having been led into so many by-paths, will have lost his bearings, but perhaps even the speaker himself. For when the author quotes what Amiel said of Vinet ("that it is a disadvantage to a man to have his mind always at church"), when he reminds one of what Lord Morley said of Emerson, and then casually throws in an opinion of Stevenson -- all this within nine short lines -- then this reviewer cheerfully confesses to having missed more than half of the haul.

A far more serious flaw appears when the author speaks with obvious enthusiasm about the way "the people" were learning so quickly to adjust themselves to the "new outlook" (the New Theology, the first wave of modern liberalism; for further information see Webber, History of Preaching, Vol. II, 427-432. -- E.R.). In this connection the date of those lectures, 1926, is significant. One begins to wonder what the writer means when he speaks so warmly of "bringing Christ to the people," or what form Christ is

being given in the process. When the object of the sermon is defined as "the salvation of the hearer" (quoting Newman), one looks for the best. But when the author adds that "salvation is a vast word" (p. 113), and then goes on through the rest of the chapter without becoming more specific, when all he can say about sin is a passing remark that fear does not stop a man from sinning, and the vague observation (p. 144) that "God is hurt by the sins and sorrows of the world," one wonders again. For this is indeed a far cry from the plainspoken Presbyterianism of earlier days, of days when, even if one could not always agree with its Calvinistic theology, it commanded respect as a church that stood as a landmark of conservative theology, the theology of Sin and Grace.

The last two lectures deal with the Making of the Sermon and the Delivery of the Sermon. Here the author offers practical suggestions by which certainly also Lutheran preachers can profit. But even so, they must choose with care.

E. Reim

2.

The Apostle Paul: His Life and His Work, by Dr. Olaf Edward Moe. Reprint of a 1950 translation by Dr. L.A. Vigness of St. Olaf College from the Norwegian original of 1923; Baker Book House, 1968; paperback, 575 pages plus Index and Maps: \$3.95.

Those fortunate enough to be able to add this volume to a library which also contains a copy of the roughly contemporaneous work: "Life and Letters of St. Paul," by Dr. David Smith of Londonderry, will have collected

what is probably the best and most exhaustive biographical material presently available on the subject of the great Missionary Apostle.

The present volume, while lacking the extensive and scholarly references to the Greek of the original sources as supplied by Dr. Smith, is nevertheless in its own way a noteworthy contribution to the subject. It begins with a thorough discussion of what is known or supposed of the childhood and youth of Saul of Tarsus, and closes with an appraisal of the "Personality of Paul."

Readers will find the book informative and stimulating. A valuable feature is the opportunity, provided by the schema of the work, to enjoy an isagogical review of the content of the several letters of Paul as placed into the historical context of his life and apostolic labors.

Dr. Moe was professor of New Testament Exegesis at the Independent Theological Seminary in Oslo. One cannot agree throughout with the author's observations and judgments. In particular, his millennialistic interpretation of Rev. 20:4 (p. 75), his indecision as to the identity of Antichrist (p. 311), and his notion that Paul taught the ultimate conversion of Israel as a people (p. 564) are aberrations that color his point of view. But the independent Lutheran student who can recognize such weaknesses will use the book with profit.

E. Schaller



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