



"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 IMPORTANCE OF PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT

### IN OUR CALLING \*

There is little doubt that all of us have at one time or another given thought to the matter of our professional improvement as we carry out the duties of the callings which the Lord has given to us. Surely we are conscious of the awesome responsibility that we have in shepherding the lambs and sheep of Christ. Surely we are aware also of our personal limitations in doing this eternally important work. The desire to become more faithful and more adequate as undershepherds of Christ is beyond question one of our fondest wishes and the subject of some of our most fervent prayers before God's throne of grace.

#### I. The Need for Professional Improvement

The need for professional improvement should indeed be obvious to each of us. For who among us has become self-satisfied and smug about the present level of his competence in the classroom? We rejoice, of course, at any fruits which the Lord may be producing through us as laborers in His Kingdom -- and we ought never doubt that there are such fruits. But we are conscious of our personal limitations, and realize how the Lord has often had to achieve His purposes, not so much because of us, but rather in spite of us. Perhaps we have taught a Bible story, but felt that our presentation of it lacked something because our own understanding of the text was still somewhat shallow. Perhaps we have failed on occasion to stimulate interest in a lesson in history or geography, because a lack of adequate background information made our teaching little more than a somewhat dull commentary on the textbook. Perhaps we have ques-

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tioned our methods in teaching mathematical skills, when we find that some of our students just don't get the point no matter how hard we try to make it clear to them. Perhaps we have become frustrated in trying to get our children to use their voices well during music periods, and wonder whether there might not be a better way to achieve this most worthy goal.

So our own frequent feelings of insufficiency suggest a need for professional improvement. But Scripture itself impresses upon us such a need. The last exhortation that we have from the pen of the Apostle Peter is that we "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Pet. 3:18) With respect to our spiritual understanding and faith, things simply do not stay on a level. Where there is a right and continued hearing of the Word of God, there will be advancement in knowledge and in conviction through the power of the Holy Spirit. But where there is a wrong or neglected hearing, spiritual retrogression is the inevitable result. For Christ tells us: "Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he seemeth to have." (Luke 8:18)

This fact of our spiritual life may well have its analogues also in areas commonly called "secular." The concert pianist who stops trying to better his technique will probably find that he is losing what skills he has already achieved. The athlete who has become satisfied with his performance will hardly find himself in the kind of condition necessary to set new records. And our own effectiveness as teachers may well be diminishing once we have put our lecture notes into final form, or once we begin to feel that we have arrived at the best possible methods of imparting instruction.

Again, in our zeal for the Word of God as the "one thing needful," we may be tempted to disparage the secular branches of learning and be satisfied with a modicum of knowledge. Such an attitude, however, does not seem to be consistent with the Creator's express injunction to "subdue the earth," by learning its secrets and employing them to His glory and the benefit of our fellowmen. Stephen reminds us that "Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," and God may well have used also this secular knowledge in enabling him to become one who "was mighty in words and in deeds." (Acts

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7:22) There can be no doubt about the Apostle Paul's broad erudition, and this surely aided him in becoming "all things to all men," that he "might by all means save some." (1 Cor. 9:22)

So there is surely good reason for us to be interested in professional improvement -- in all areas of knowledge that relate in some way to our callings.

## II. Methods of Professional Improvement

### A. With Respect to Our Sufficiency as Ministers of the Gospel

We are, first and foremost, ministers of the Gospel, and any improvement in that calling can come only from God Himself. Paul makes this clear: "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament." (2 Cor. 3: 5-6) And how does God produce such sufficiency? Luther once listed the following three factors as all-important in the making of a theologian: prayer, meditation, and Christian experience.

There is prayer. Surely we must be impressed -- and perhaps put to shame as well -- when we note the example of the early disciples of Christ. That they were enabled by God to bring the Gospel of the Kingdom "into all the earth" and "unto the ends of the world" was probably due, in no small way, to the fact that they continued instant and fervent in prayer. Do we feel at times that we are too busy to pray in such a fashion? We should rather feel that we are too busy not to pray. Luther was correct when he said that "well prayed is half studied," for Scripture tells us that "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (James 5:16) The Lord still gives gifts to His Church, including the gifts of ministers who are sufficient for the work to which they are called. May any inadequacy that we see in ourselves be due in part to our own neglect of prayer? Do we fall under the judgment of Scripture: "Ye have not, because ye ask not"? (James 4:2)

But we need not say more about the importance of prayer in this matter of "professional improvement," when the subject was treated so adequately in the *Journal of Theology* (September, 1973). May each of us find

frequent places in his daily schedule for prayer, for he will then find how well the Lord is able to carry out His all-embracing promise: "All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." (Matt. 21:22)

Then there is meditation, and by this Luther meant the regular searching of Scripture and the pondering in our hearts of its truths. We need to study the Word of God first of all for the sake of our own faith and life, and we therefore do well to set up for ourselves a program of private Bible study that is not directly connected with the religion lessons that we must teach in school the next day. When the Apostle Paul wanted to show Timothy how he might be able to progress in his pastoral calling, he directed him as follows: "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." (1 Tim. 4:16) It may surprise us at first to realize that Paul is here telling Timothy to be concerned first of all about the welfare of his own soul. The following quotation (cited in the *Journal of Theology* for September, 1972) is to the point:

"Every day on which I do not penetrate more deeply into the knowledge of the Word of God in Holy Scripture is wasted. I can only go on with certainty on the firm foundation of the Word of God. ...

"I cannot expound Scripture unless I let it speak to me every day. I will misuse the Word in my office if I do not keep meditating on it in prayer. If the Word is often empty to me in the daily office, if I no longer experience it, that should be an unmistakable sign that for a long time I have stopped letting it speak to me. ...

"The Word of Scripture should never stop sounding in your ears and working in you all day long, just like the words of someone you love. And just as you do not analyze the words of someone you love, but accept them as they are said to you, accept the Word of Scripture and ponder it in your heart, as Mary did. That is all. That is meditation. Do not look for new thoughts and connections in the text, as you would if you were preaching. Do not ask 'How shall I pass this on?' but, 'What does it say to me?' Then ponder this Word long in your

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heart until it has gone right into you and taken possession of you. ...

"We may never give up this daily concern with Scripture, and must begin it straightway, if we have not already done so. For it is there that we have eternal life."

~~-And-it-is-there~~

And it is there that the Holy Spirit works the sufficiency to serve as able and faithful ministers of the Gospel of Christ!

Luther points, finally, to the role of Christian experience in the making of a theologian. He has in mind, surely, the burdens, struggles, problems, reverses, and crosses that according to God's gracious providence confront us in our callings as ministers of the Word. We need not devise such tribulation for ourselves; the Lord will fashion for us however much of it we need. But let us not despise such experience when it comes, but rather rejoice in it. For we know from Scripture that "tribulation worketh patience (patient endurance); And patience, experience (a tried and tested Christian character); and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." (Rom. 5:3-5)

## B. With Respect to Matters Not Revealed in Scripture

But our teaching is not limited to subject matter which is directly revealed in Holy Scripture. And even so our professional improvement ought to extend itself also into the "secular" branches of learning, particularly those areas of knowledge which we are expected to impart to our students. There are basically two methods which are open to us as we seek such professional improvement, that of private study, and that of study in the schools of the world.

Private Study. Professional growth through our own programs of study can come about efficiently only if we are able to meet a number of requirements. There is, first, the demand for self-discipline. We must find in ourselves the ability to adhere rigorously to a program of study, even though we are not being prompted to it by such things as formal class bells and periodic examinations. Our flesh is lazy, and only too many of our enthusiastically conceived plans for personal study have

suffered the fate of the majority of New Year's resolutions. If we wish to benefit fully from a program of private study, we must possess the initiative to pursue it with faithfulness and regularity. If it is during the summer recess, we had better set definite hours for study, and then regard their observance as important -- just as if we were enrolled in some college or university!

Another requirement for an effective program of private study is that of careful planning. A hit-or-miss approach will lead to early discouragement and will inevitably fall short on results. Such a program should recognize which areas in our learning or methodology as teachers are most in need of improvement, and should involve a careful selection of study materials. Consultation with others (our former teachers, our colleagues, others who work in the area of professional education, librarians, etc.) may be helpful in arriving at such a selection. A word of caution, however, is in order. We must be realistic in setting educational goals for ourselves. If the aim is too low, we will accomplish less than we are able. But if it is too high, discouragement and frustration can easily result.

Surely we can find many opportunities in our lives for private study. The summer presents an especially valuable time for professional improvement. An instructor at a Lutheran college of education once said that if a teacher neglects this opportunity, he has simply wasted his summer. But there are occasions for private study also during the school year. A professor at a certain state college made it his aim to read one new book each week -- and somehow he found the time to do it. At our last conference we heard a paper on "The Teacher's Reading as Preparation for Teaching," and in the discussion which followed, it was suggested that we always have something handy to read in every room of the house -- every room!

Study in the Schools of the World. None of us surely will question our right as Christians to use the educational institutions which the state has provided for its citizens. Whether or not it is in every case wise for us to use them is, of course, another question. For as Paul said to the Christians at Corinth, speaking by way of a general truth: "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful

for me, but all things edify not." (1 Cor. 10:23) In at least three schools of the CLC, the teachers are encouraged to take courses at public colleges and universities, through the payment of their tuitions by the bodies which have called them.

A strong caution must, however, be expressed. There are dangers involved, spiritual dangers, whenever we, the children of God, submit to the instruction of the children of the world -- and most of the faculty members in the public institutions of higher learning do fit into that latter category. A couple quotations may be given here, to underscore this warning (cited in B. W. Teigen's essay, "The Philosophic and Religious Foundations of Modern Education," *The Lutheran Synod Quarterly*, Dec., 1965):

"On the fundamental religious issue, the university intends to be, and supposes it is, neutral, but it is not. Certainly, it neither inculcates nor expressly repudiates belief in God. But it does what is far more deadly than open rejection; it ignores Him. ... Atheism is no speculative opinion. It is leaving God on one side, having 'no need of that hypothesis'. In that case one need not bother to deny the existence of God, one is simply not interested; and that is precisely the condition of a large part of the world today. It is in this sense that the university today is atheistic.

"Our public schools and colleges are rarely anti-religious; they simply ignore religion. They look on it as a minor amusement to be practiced by those who find it fun, to be neglected if one desires. Obviously this outlook is quickly communicated to the young."

The modern university does, however, have its authoritarian creed, a creed which is hostile to our religious convictions, a creed which it inculcates so successfully on the minds of many of the students subjected to its instruction. Someone has summarized that "faith" as follows (cf. the Teigen article): 1) Whatever is not subject to man's reason, and to his scientific and philosophical methods, is not real. 2) The evolutionary hypothesis must be accepted as a valid scientific explanation of origins. 3) The natural order is self-sufficient, and is not acted upon by any outside agency or power. 4) Education is the instrument of social sal-



vation. 5) The state is the primary order of man's life. 6) Man's primary responsibility and accountability is to man (not God). 7) True learning must be divorced from any and all authoritarian religious beliefs. 8) Morality is relative (not absolute and eternal), and religion is no more than a product of human ethics. 9) Evil is the result merely of environmental factors. 10) Nature is infinite and uncreated.

We do well not to think that we are above being tempted and deceived when we place ourselves at the feet of those who have dedicated their lives to the promulgation of such a naturalistic, humanistic, atheistic creed. Several of us in attendance at this conference can name a number of former brethren whose religious convictions were eroded, undermined, or altered when they engaged in programs of graduate study following their graduation from Lutheran colleges or seminaries. No doubt they were aware, at least in part, of the dangers which would confront them in such secular schools, but they were deceived nonetheless.

Whether a person will choose a program in a public institution for his professional advancement may well depend on the type of courses which he intends to take. It seems advisable that he not take courses offered in departments of religion or philosophy, unless for some reason it is made absolutely necessary. In subjects like history, sociology, and psychology, the answer does not seem quite so clear. Such courses will hardly be taught in a manner consistent with the Word of God, and this is bound to reduce or eliminate much of their value for us. The situation may well be different in courses which involve skill learning, such as in the areas of foreign languages, mathematics, and music. Courses in the methods of teaching may be helpful, but we need to guard against accepting uncritically new and unproved ways of teaching children. We remember that generation of children who failed to learn how to read well, largely because the old-time phonics was eliminated from reading instruction in the lower grades. And a recent issue of the *U. S. News & World Report* (Sept. 3, 1973) presented evidence that many recent educational innovations, including such things as the new math, team teaching, unstructured class days, the allowing of children to learn at a self-chosen pace, and general permissiveness, have often fallen quite short of the enthusiastic claims once made

for them.

On the whole, a program of professional advancement in a public college or university can offer some advantages -- particularly for those of us who may for one reason or another not be succeeding too well in programs of private study. By enrolling in a summer or evening course, in a seminar or workshop, one is involved in a regular routine of learning, rather than an on-and-off approach that may characterize so much of our private endeavor. The tests normally given tend to enforce efficient habits of study, often with the happy result of a greater amount of learning in a shorter period of time. Beyond this, the typical college or university program helps to make us acquainted with a vast array of teaching helps and materials, from which we can then make a selection according to the needs of our own classrooms and, of course, the financial resources of our congregations and church body. There is still another type of "advantage" in coming into direct contact with the public institutions of higher learning. One can perhaps become better aware of the subtleties and dangers of the wisdom of the world, opposed as it is to the wisdom of God. And thus one may be able to prepare his own students more effectively for the spiritual battles which they themselves may someday have to face. But, indeed, it can be argued that there are other ways to find out what the world is thinking besides going to its schools. And the spiritual dangers of such attendance are ever present!

Programs of education are available, of course, in schools other than colleges and universities. Think, for example, of the evening programs at public high schools or vocational-technical institutes. Some of these programs, being of a more practical nature, may be of greater usefulness to us as teachers than their equivalents on the college level. Still other courses may be available through business concerns, such as workshops in applied music.

Nor should one forget the extension or correspondence courses which are available through most state universities. The course offerings are generally very broad, and many of them are well enough designed to be very profitable.

Before leaving this discussion of programs of study in secular schools, we should consider the question of

whether or not is is advisable to enter upon a program leading to a degree. At times it may well be necessary, or at least useful, to do so. More and more states are requiring that elementary teachers in parochial schools have a bachelor's degree and a teaching certificate. But where there is no clear need for such a degree, a non-degree type of "continuing education" may be preferable. In such a program, which is generally available at least to those who have a bachelor's degree, a person can pick courses with far more freedom. He can select them according to his needs or interests, and, if he chooses to audit them, he may not even have to complete all of the assignments. Because a person is free from the regimentation (such as required courses which may have little value to us) and from the time limits of a degree program, he can generally approach the courses which he takes with a more positive attitude, and thus hopefully enjoy them even more.

### Conclusion

Let it be said, in conclusion, that the entire question of professional improvement should be for each of us a matter of personal entreaty to our God in prayer. To make a wrong choice may at best involve a waste of precious time and of money; at worst it may involve a threat to our Christian faith and life. We want to do what God wants us to do, and to that end we ought to beseech Him to subdue our own fleshly desires and direct us in the ways that are best for us and for the flocks which we are serving. Here too, then, we do well to plead:

*Thy way, not mine, O Lord,  
However dark it be.  
Lead me by Thine own hand;  
Choose Thou the path for me.  
I dare not choose my lot;  
I would not if I might.  
Choose Thou for me, my God;  
So shall I walk aright.*

C. Kuehne

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LAMENTATIONS 3:24a -- A WORD STUDY

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In prayer, the almighty power of God is, as it were, put at our disposal -- at certain moments, it seems as if God were abandoning everything to us. The most demanding type of prayer is that of the lament which can be rather summarily described as God wrenching out the most heartfelt cry of sorrow from the soul of repentant man.

The Latin word *lamentum* is a relative of *latrare*, meaning "to bark" and is most simply described as an expression of grief in complaints and cries that is frequently composed in the literary form of an elegy, mournful ballad or dirge.

Perhaps because of the innate nature associated with the lament form, the book of Lamentations is one of the most neglected in all of God's revealed Word. For that reason perhaps it is necessary to provide a brief background sketch of the book before we offer a more close examination of verse 3:24a.

Thus this article is divided into three main sections the first of which is merely background material. The second section comprises an examination of the word  $\text{רָנָה}$ , and in section three we offer a reflective interpretation based on the implications of  $\text{רָנָה}$  then and now.

## I

We must realize that God is historicized in the concrete living reality of this world even as He transcends it and within the covenant community of the Old Testament the presence and activity of God is self-evident. Nowhere is this more clearly demonstrated than in the book of Lamentations.

The author of these five poems of laments is traditionally considered to be the prophet Jeremiah though objective evidence is not entirely conclusive.

Most scholars are agreed that the place of composition was Palestine as the book nowhere indicates any special interest in either Babylon or Egypt.

Certain Biblical students feel that the book was

written in the three months between the burning of Jerusalem and the departure of the remnant to Egypt during which time the seat of government was at Mizpah as recorded in Jer. 40:8. Their conclusions are based on an analysis of Jer. 39:1-2 in comparison with Jer. 41:1, 18 and 43:7. However, the conclusions of these scholars cannot be objectively sustained as their deduction is somewhat speculative in nature.

But even more speculative are some of the conclusions reached by a few Jewish and Christian scholars who think that each of the five different chapters were written over an extensive period of time and by a variety of different composers. However, there is absolutely no uniformity among any of their conclusions which appears to me to be self-evident of the highly speculative nature of their deductions.

Based on the reliable works of N. K. Gottwald and others, probably the safest and most objective conclusion one can arrive at is that the laments were probably written shortly after 587 B.C. but not necessarily within the first three months. There would be nothing to exclude the possibility that the author wrote each chapter over some period of time rather than all at once but there is no objective evidence (either external or internal) to suggest it was written over a period of centuries. One of the primary reasons for Gottwald's position is that the terrible horrors of the Jerusalem events seem to be quite fresh in the mind of the poet and secondly, nowhere does it give expression to the hope that things will soon get better. Such an attitude of immediate relief was quite common in later exilic times and if composed then it probably would have given expression to this concept.

The book of Lamentations itself is composed of five chapters. The Qinah meter (basically 3 + 2) is used extensively -- as expected -- but not exclusively throughout. Probably the most striking factor of the book is that it was composed in the manner of an alphabetic acrostic. The first two chapters of twenty-two stanzas have three lines to each stanza and only the first word of the first line starts with the serialized letter of the alphabet. The fourth chapter is dissimilar only in that it has but two lines to each stanza. Chapter three is more elaborate because while it has three lines in each stanza, each of the three lines starts with the pro-

per letter of the alphabet. The fifth chapter is not an acrostic but it does have twenty-two lines.

Various reasons for using the acrostic have been suggested and undoubtedly a combination of them all is the real reason. Some think it was a pedagogic device for aiding the memory while others feel that it suggests an artistry where spirit is controlled by form leading to economy and compactness of thought. Others believe that it symbolized completeness in that the laments encompass the whole range of human emotions -- everything from A to Z. However, in the final analysis, no one reason for the acrostic is decisive within the present range and scope of scholarship.

With this brief sketch of some of the background material involved in Lamentations, let us now move on to a closer examination of the use of  $\text{P}^{\text{ז}}^{\text{ן}}$  in Lam. 3:24a which compactly reads: "Yahweh is my portion."

## II

Even a brief examination of the Hebrew word  $\text{P}^{\text{ז}}^{\text{ן}}$  shows that it has wide usage throughout the Old Testament but that its definition is quite narrowly confined. The Koehler-Baumgartner Lexicon<sup>1</sup> indicates that related words in Biblical Aramaic, the Akkadian *eqlu* and the Old South-Arabian all point up its antecedents in the meaning of field, share or piece (or in the case of certain attached suffixes "allotted portions").

A. The primary meaning of  $\text{P}^{\text{ז}}^{\text{ן}}$  is "share of" as found in Habakkuk 1:16. "Therefore he sacrifices to his net and burns incense to his seine; for by them his portion is fat, and his food is rich." 2

This meaning of "share of" however can be broken down by a number of other references within the Old Testament so that at times it becomes exceptionally precise in its definition.

1. Share of possession is indicated by a wide range of texts but Gen. 31:14 is probably as good an example as any.

"Then Rachel and Leah answered him, 'Is there any portion or inheritance left to us in our father's house?'" 3

2. Share of booty is indicated by several verses and in Isaiah 17:14 is parallel to goral. Gen. 14:24 provides a typical example of this usage: 4

"I will take nothing but what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me; let Aner, Esheal, and Mamre take their share."

3. Share in a generalized framework is indicated by such passages as Deut. 18:8: 5

"They shall have equal portions to eat, besides what he receives from the sale of his patrimony."

4. Share in reference to lots of property is exemplified by Joshua 18:5: 6

"They shall divide it into seven portions, Judah continuing in his territory on the south, and the house of Joseph in their territory on the north."

B. There are a few other verses where meaning share or portion is used in a quite specific situation not as generalized as in the first section above but normally just as concrete.

1. Share or portion in reference to what is owned by a person is found in Isaiah 57:6: 7

"Among the smooth stones of the valley is your portion; they, they, are your lot;"

2. Share or portion meaning answer as found in Job 32:17:

"I will also give my answer; I will also declare my opinion."

This usage is not so unusual when it is realized that פָּרָה is also the root base for a word meaning flattery.

3. Portion as referring to territory or plots of land is typified by Psalm 17:14: 8

"From men by thy hand, O Lord, from men whose portion in life is of the world. May their belly be filled with what thou hast stored up for them; may their children have more than enough; may they leave something over to their babes."

4. Portion meaning profit or reward is found frequently in the book of Ecclesiastes as in 2:21, 3:22, 5:17, 9:6,9, and 11:2. Let us look specifically at 2:10:

"And whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them; I kept my heart from no pleasure, for my heart found pleasure in all my toil, and this was my reward for all my toil."

C. A number of Old Testament passages dealing with our topic are somewhat transitional in character as far as our study is concerned. These passages are not dealing with as much concreteness or definiteness as those

previously but for the Israelites they were nevertheless just as real. In these instances  $\text{קָזָה}$  is used somewhat more generally as a reference to a claim as in 2 Chronicles 10:16 which reads:

"And when all Israel saw that the king did not hearken to them, the people answered the king, 'What portion have we in David? We have no inheritance in the Son of Jesse. Each of you to your tents, O Israel! Look now to your own house, David.' So all Israel departed to their tents."

1 Kings 12:16 reiterates the same use of the word and practically the exact same words are repeated in 2 Sam. 20:1. Psalm 50:18 uses the term in a slightly different sense in this instance meaning more of a "companionship with" although syntactically it fits with the references in this section.

D. This last section deals with the interpretation of  $\text{קָזָה}$  as it is broken down into three parts though the relationship between the three is extremely close. Primarily we shall be looking at the word "portion" as it is used of the relationship between God and man. Unfortunately most commentators and interpreters have seen this use of "portion" as being less than material, less than concrete and somehow having a more real quality of transcendence about it despite the otherwise most obviously concrete heritage and use made of the word throughout the rest of the Old Testament. In fact, I would maintain that the passages in this section deal with that which is most concrete, most material, most absolute and anything but transient or transcending.

1. Job 20:29 illustrates that "portion" given by God:

"This is the wicked man's portion from God, the heritage decreed for him by God."

2. A number of other passages provide greater detail in illustrating the relationship between God and man.

"For the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob his allotted heritage." Deut. 32:9.

"For the Lord has made the Jordan a boundary between us and you, you Reubenites and Gadites; you have no portion in the Lord. So your children might make our children cease to worship the Lord." Joshua 22:25. <sup>9</sup>

C. Finally we come to the last use of  $\text{קָזָה}$  in its relationship to the phrase "God is."

"The Lord is my portion, says my soul, therefore I



will hope in him." Lam. 3:24.

"And the Lord said to Aaron, You shall have no inheritance in their land, neither shall you have any portion among them; I am your portion and your inheritance among the people of Israel." Num. 18:20.

"The Lord is my chosen portion and my cup, thou holdest my lot." Ps. 16:5.

"My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever." Psalm 73:26.

"The Lord is my portion; I promise to keep thy words." Ps. 119:57.

"I cry to thee, O Lord; I say, Thou art my refuge, my portion in the land of the living." Ps. 142:5.

### III

"Yahweh is my portion." An obvious passage easy to interpret but perhaps a little meditative reflection will demonstrate that this brief passage carries more freight than we might expect. An examination of our recent categorization of the passages which use the word "portion" seems to reveal something in itself.

In the first section we noticed that the word was used quite objectively in referring to concrete physical realities such as possessions, booty and inheritances. These were material objects readily at hand.

The second section illustrated the use of "portion" not in any less objective sense but in one that was not quite as concrete. These passages exhibited decidedly less concreteness and specificity but just as much definiteness in its mundane orientation.

The third section of passages seems to move further away from the concrete and definite and more towards the theoretical -- though no less practical -- understanding of portion as a claim.

Finally, in the last section we are confronted with the topic and theme of this paper: the relationship between God and man as it is expressed so clearly in the phrase -- God is my portion.

A. The Israelites seldom dealt in abstractions. To much of the world the idea of "godness" is a topic merely of metaphysical speculation. To the Israelites however God was an objective self-revealing reality. In fact, when an Israelite talked about a "broken-heart" he

probably meant the term quite literally -- Israelites would have found it quite difficult to separate the emotional from the physical.

The first thesis I would like to suggest then in understanding the phrase "Jahweh is my portion" is that "portion" while used here in a less than concrete form still had a definiteness and quality of objective reality about it which we of our modern age might not be able to easily comprehend or assimilate. Thus when it was claimed that the Lord was their portion (or even denied for that matter) this carried a concrete and objective connotation to it which modern man would probably dismiss as unsophisticatedly archaic. Modern man has the unfortunate habit of repeating the same mistakes as his ancestors -- he only turns to God as a last resort. The religious man -- when all else is lost -- can always console himself with the fact that he still retains God. But this is not the point of this phrase here in Lamentations though generally misinterpreted that way.

Throughout the whole book of Lamentations, the Fall of Jerusalem is recognized as the handiwork of God -- Babylon is just the instrument of His will. But the people put the blame for God's wrath solely upon themselves -- in their repentance they realize that they themselves were ultimately responsible for their destruction. So the phrase is not a reflection of a last hope of the nation itself but is rather a recapturing of a hope that had always been available but had been shunted aside. This brings us to our second point.

B. The third chapter of Lamentation is the reflection of the individual poet (Jeremiah!) as illustrated by the very first verse:

"I am the man who has seen affliction under the rod of his wrath."

The important clue here for my second thesis lies in the word my -- The Lord is my portion. This is an individual's cry of hope-- a hope he desires to share with all true repentants to remind them that not all is lost nor ever needs be.

The outstanding point of the book of Jeremiah itself is not Jeremiah's personal anguish but the apparent neutrality of God. Yet despite this apparent neutrality Jeremiah continued in the faith, persevered and hung on to his God tenaciously. And when he says in this third chapter that the Lord is his portion it is not a last

grasping effort at rationalization but a statement lying at the very heart and soul of Jeremiah's theology. As we read starting in verse 21:

"But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, says my soul, therefore I will hope in him."

Our phrase under consideration is anything but a last-ditch attempt at rationalizing away God's wrath. First, because the people were already repentant and aware of their responsibility in bringing about their own doom. Secondly, the phrase is an expression of the individual poet -- his strength to face each day -- whether of disaster or blessing. In fact, the poet could well have expressed the same feelings at the very height of Israel's glory for the expression is true regardless of man's condition. The phrase is inordinately the poet's starting place in his theology -- not the last thing he would turn to only in despair.

C. A final point to bring up is the proper emphasis in this verse. Most people probably have a tendency to read it as "The Lord is my portion." But in the last part of Section II an examination of the involved verses will demonstrate not only a relationship because of the word portion but also a most undeniable emphasis on "The Lord."

Job 20:29 "...portion from God."

Deut. 32:9 "...the Lord's portion is."

Josh. 22:25 "For the Lord made the Jordan..."

Zech. 2:12 "And the Lord will inherit Judah..."

Num. 18:20 "And the Lord said to Aaron..."

Psalm 16:5 "The Lord is my chosen portion..."

Psalm 142:5 "I cry to thee, O Lord..."

I remember that Bonhoeffer once pointed out in his book on Ethics that Christians have for too long put the emphasis on love in the phrase "God is love." Properly the emphasis must be re-orientated in our being to "God is love" where the main thrust is on God the activator. The same critique may also be applied to our study-text for today.

Thus our third thesis is that the proper emphasis must be understood so that we can leave our ego-centric orientation and replace it with the proper interpretation: Yahweh is my portion.

Yahweh and only Yahweh. No rationalizations, no hedging of any kind. Only God and God only can be and must be the center of the Christian's life -- and where is such dedication and obedience found among mankind today?

Only if God is first in our lives will he be our portion. There can be no substitute -- no alternative. Our portion is eternal but is achieved not by ourselves but by God and if we misplace this realization we too shall be misplaced just as the Israelites were on the Day of the Wrath of God.

Judah was destroyed but the Lord is! Zion became a widow but never died and so may we too participate in that deathlessness of Zion if we follow the Lord in faith and obedience.

### Conclusion

Thus, while it is not improper to comment upon this passage as referring to a hope of eternal bliss to be enjoyed sometime in the after-life, such an interpretation has all too often neglected the immediacy of hope that is inherent throughout all of Lamentations and completely ignores the objective practicality connected to the use of ? throughout the whole of the Old Testament.

Yahweh is our hope in and through eternity.

But this does not mean that He is not our hope, our portion in the nexus of the immediate moment.

The interpretations are not necessarily exclusive but unfortunately most commentators have chosen to view it this way, for some inexplicable reason. This neglect of God's immediate presence is what brought about Israel's downfall in 587 B.C. In their repentance they once again recaptured this immediate sense of the reality of the "living God" as their portion. This repentance in the hearts of the pious we can be sure led to a deeper understanding of the relationship inherent in the faith/obedience demands of the covenant God.

And what have we done with God today?

Is it an unfair supposition to suppose that perhaps we too have dismissed God from our lives? Have we neglected and dismissed God by assuming that He is in his place in heaven and we'll confront Him there sometime in the future of eternity and have never realized that the

confrontation is before us at every moment -- crying out for recognition -- seeking to be heard -- even needing to be proclaimed --

Do we subconsciously read "The Lord is my portion some day in the future" as the Israelites came perilously close to doing or do we read it truly with the sense of pregnant expectations intended by the author.

The Lord is my portion -- right now.

The presence of eternity is not in the future -- in fact, it is in grave danger of falling behind us! Dare we allow such an event to overtake us or is it time to perhaps call the Christian church not only to worship but to lament?

It is so easy to worship because of our God-given faith but it is so difficult to lament because of our lack of obedience.

God wishes to be accepted in His fullness -- to be our portion in life today -- not to be a mere convenience to be exercised at our option.

Must God always lament at our failures?

The church has perhaps bloated itself on worship -- maybe it is time to cry!

*Garrett B. Frank*

#### FOOTNOTES

1. Koehler, L. and Baumgartner, W., Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros, (Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1958), pp. 306-307.
2. Also see Lev. 6:10.
3. Compare with Deut. 10:9, 12:12, 14:27.29, 18:1, and Num. 18:20.
4. See also Num. 31:36 and 1 Sam. 30:24.
5. Compare with Num. 18:20, Jos. 14:4, 15:13, 18:7, 19:9, Jer. 10:16, 51:19, Ezek. 45:7, 48:8.21, Micah 2:4 and Nehemiah 2:20.
6. See Jos. 18:9, 2 Sam. 20:1, 1 Kings 12:16, 2 Chron. 10:16, Job 20:29, 27:13, and 31:2.
7. See Isa. 61:7.
8. Compare with 2 Kings 9:10, Amos 7:4, Ho. 5:7 and Job 17:5.
9. See Joshua 22:27 also.

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THE GREEK ARTICLE  
AND THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST'S DEITY

(Part V)

With this issue we carry forward our consideration of the Rule of Granville Sharp and of those four passages which according to Sharp ascribe the title of "God" to Jesus Christ. The previous four issues have dealt with the subject as follows: 1) the presentation of the rule and exegetical conclusions of this English philanthropist and philologist, Granville Sharp; 2) an evaluation of his findings in the light of the grammatical usage of the Greek New Testament -- leading to the tentative conclusion that the rule is a valid principle of syntax, and that the four passages do constitute proof passages for Christ's deity; 3) a summary of the detailed findings of Christopher Wordsworth, who in six letters to Sharp presented copious evidence from the Greek fathers in support of the rule in general and also of Sharp's exegesis in several of the passages in question; and 4) a presentation and refutation of the negative findings of a contemporary opponent of Sharp, Calvin Winstanley. Sharp published his monograph in 1798, and the responses of Wordsworth and Winstanley appeared in 1802 and 1805, respectively. It remains now to present and evaluate the views of a number of grammarians and commentators who have published their works since that time.

It will surely help in following the discussion below if the rule and passages are again repeated. First, Sharp's Rule in its simplified wording:

*When two personal nouns of the same case are connected by the copulative  $\kappa\alpha\iota$  (and), if the former has the definite article, and the latter has not, they both relate to the same person.*

By "personal nouns" Sharp means nouns which are descriptive of personal relations, qualities, offices, ranks, and such like -- common nouns of personal description as opposed to proper names. Sharp specifically excluded proper names from the application of his rule. It will be noted, also, that the rule as worded excludes personal nouns when they are found in the plural number.

The four passages which are part of our study are the following:

Ephesians 5:5 ... οὐκ ἔχει κληρονομίαν ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ Θεοῦ (does not have an inheritance in the kingdom of the Christ and God).

2 Thessalonians 1:12 ... κατὰ τὴν χάριν τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (according to the grace of our God and Lord, Jesus Christ).

Titus 2:13 ... προσδεχόμενοι τὴν μακαρίαν ἐλπίδα καὶ ἐπιφάνειαν τῆς δόξης τοῦ μεγάλου Θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ (waiting for the blessed hope and appearance of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus).

2 Peter 1:1 ... ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν καὶ σωτῆρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (by the righteousness of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ).

### The Grammarians

MIDDLETON. One of Sharp's most eminent supporters, surely, is Thomas Fanshaw Middleton (1769-1822), an English cleric who in 1814 became the first Anglican bishop of Calcutta. Middleton attained distinction by his work *The Doctrine of the Greek Article Applied to the Criticism and Illustration of the New Testament*, a significant treatise which passed through a series of editions between 1808 and 1858.<sup>1</sup> In a real sense, Middleton's work was the forerunner of all subsequent scientific studies of the Greek article. While some of his observations are no longer part of current grammatical theory, his volume has been cited with approval repeatedly by such modern scholars as A. T. Robertson, C. F. D. Moule, and Nigel Turner.

Middleton enters upon a discussion of Sharp's Rule with the following generalization concerning the usage of the article in classical and Koine Greek: "When two or more Attributives joined by a Copulative or Copulatives are *assumed* of the *same* person or thing, before the first Attributive the Article is *inserted*; before the remaining ones it is *omitted*." (p. 56f.) Middleton defends this principle on the basis of numerous citations from Greek literature and by means of his own theory concerning the fundamental nature and force of the article. He concludes this section with the observation that Sharp's Rule "accords with the usage of the best

Greek writers." (p. 60)

Several pages are then devoted to a discussion of the *limitations* of the rule. Middleton finds that the following types of nouns must be excluded: 1) names of substances *considered as substances* (cf. ὁ λίθος καὶ χρυσός, stone and gold, 2) proper names (cf. τὸν Ἀλέξανδρον καὶ Φίλιππον, Alexander and Philip), and 3) names of abstract ideas (cf. τὴν ἀπειρίαν καὶ ἀπαιδευσίαν, inexperience and ignorance).

Middleton then asks a very necessary question. While it is true that when attributives referring to the same person are coupled together by a writer of Greek he prefixes the article to only the first, will it be true *conversely* that when we find the article prefixed to only the first of such attributives they are always to be taken as referring to the same person? Sharp's Rule is, of course, expressed in terms of this converse. Middleton finds that Sharp was correct in excluding *plural* attributives from the application of his rule, for numerous exceptions involving such plurals can be found in both the New Testament and in classical literature. Moreover, while Sharp was unable to locate in the New Testament any exceptions involving *singular* attributives, Middleton does recognize their occasional occurrence in the classics, such as this phrase from Plato: τοῦ δικαίου καὶ ἀδίκου (the just man and unjust man). But in all such occurrences, Middleton notes, the attributives thus coupled together "are in their nature plainly incompatible; and we cannot wonder, if, in such instances, the principle of the rule has been sacrificed to negligence, or even to studied brevity, where misconception was impossible. The second Article should, in strictness, have been expressed: but in such cases the writers knew that it might safely be understood." (p.69)

Middleton concludes, therefore, that Sharp's Rule is a valid principle of Greek grammar, and he continues: "Having thus investigated the canon, and having explained the ground of its limitations and exceptions, I may be permitted to add, that *Mr. Sharp's* application of it to the New Testament, is in strict conformity with the usage of Greek writers, and with the Syntax of the Greek tongue; and that few of the passages which he has corrected in our common version, can be defended without doing violence to the obvious and undisputed meaning of the plainest sentences which profane writers supply. ...



That the Fathers understood such passages (as Ephesians 5:5 and Titus 2:13) in the manner in which Mr. Sharp would translate them, and as, without doubt, they will be translated at some future period, has been fully ascertained by the researches of Mr. Wordsworth: and whatever may be thought of the Fathers in some other respects, it may surely be presumed that they knew the use of one of the commonest forms of expression in their native tongue." (p. 69f.)

In the second part of his book, Middleton examines in detail Sharp's exegesis of the passages that we are considering. With one exception, he concurs completely with Sharp. First, in regard to Ephesians 5:5: "The principle of the rule was sufficiently demonstrated in Part i ...; and it cannot be pretended that the present instance in any respect deviates from the conditions there prescribed, since both  $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$  and  $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ , the former retaining its more usual sense, and not being taken as a Proper Name, are as plainly what I have denominated Attributives, as are any of the words which appear in illustration of the rule:  $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ , indeed, is itself adduced in one or two of the examples." (p. 362) Middleton recognizes that some people might think that Paul's phrase, in a literal English translation, is somewhat harsh: "the kingdom of the Christ and God." To ease their concern he points out that "the Article of our language [English] not being a pronoun, has little resemblance to that of the Greeks; and the proper rendering of  $\tau\omicron\upsilon \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\upsilon \kappa\alpha\iota \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$  is not 'of the anointed and God,' but 'of Him (being, or) who is the Christ and God.'" (p. 363)

Middleton continues: "But not only the principle of the rule ... and the invariable practice in the N. T. with respect to  $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$  and all other Attributives, compel us to acquiesce in the identity of  $\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omicron\upsilon \kappa\alpha\iota \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ , but the same truth is evinced by the examination of the Greek Fathers so ably executed by Mr. Wordsworth; who affirms, 'we shall have the consolation to find, that no other interpretation than yours (Mr. Sharp's) was ever heard in all the Greek churches.'" (p. 363f.) In conclusion, Middleton states concerning Ephesians 5:5: "On the whole, I regard the present text, as it stands in the Greek, to be among the least questionable of the authorities collected by Mr. Sharp, and as being, when weighed

impartially, a decisive proof, that in the judgment of St. Paul, Christ is entitled to the appellation of God." (p. 367)

It is in regard to Sharp's exegesis of 2 Thessalonians 1:12 that Middleton feels compelled to express several objections. The passage reads: κατὰ τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. The problem, Middleton believes, lies in the fact that the phrase κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (Lord Jesus Christ) is used in the epistles quite frequently as a compound proper name, and that if it is so used here, the verse would not be subject to Sharp's Rule. A second concern of Middleton is that there is no clear evidence from the writings of the church fathers, on either side of the question, respecting the interpretation of this text. If the verse could in fact be understood as a proof text for Christ's deity, Middleton asks, why was it not more frequently cited as such during the patristic period?

To the present writer it indeed seems that Middleton has raised some valid questions concerning Sharp's exegesis. That κύριος when used *alone* is commonly subject to the rule must be admitted, if one examines the evidence from the writings of the Greek fathers.<sup>2</sup> But it is perhaps impossible to demonstrate that in our verse we *must* detach κυρίου from Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ -- which we would indeed have to do if we were to insist upon the application of Sharp's Rule. For again, if κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ be taken together, it would constitute a proper name, and Sharp's Rule would not apply.

Yet, in support of Sharp's exegesis, it should be pointed out -- as Middleton himself does -- that in at least two passages of the New Testament it is possible to divide the κύριος from the Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, namely, 1 Cor. 8:6 (εἷς κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, one Lord, Jesus Christ), and Phil. 2:11 (ὅτι κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, that Jesus Christ [is] Lord). It is true, of course, that in these verses the division, if made, would be suggested by the context -- which is not necessarily so in our verse. But it may be pointed out, as even weightier evidence in favor of Sharp, that if Paul had indeed intended to refer to two persons in our verse, he could easily have added a second article, thus: τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν καὶ τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.<sup>3</sup> That the phrase κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός can have an article is clearly seen from Romans

13:14 (ἀλλὰ ἐνδύσαθε τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ). Compare also the well-attested variant readings at 2 Cor. 16:23 (ἡ χάρις τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μεθ' ὑμῶν, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ [be] with you) and at 2 Tim. 4:22 (ὁ κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός μετὰ τοῦ πνεύματός σου, the Lord Jesus Christ [be] with your spirit). While it is true that κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός generally occurs in the epistles without the article, most of the cases of such absence of the article probably result from the fact that the phrase is an object of a preposition.<sup>4</sup> Paul, now, was obviously well acquainted with that principle of syntax which we have come to call Sharp's Rule. If he had wished to refer to two persons in our passage, he could have readily avoided ambiguity by inserting a second article. Why did he not do so? May it not be that he was in fact thinking of only a *single* person, thus: "The grace of our God and Lord, Jesus Christ"?

But for Middleton an even stronger reason for doubting the correctness of Sharp's exegesis was the fact that 2 Thessalonians 1:12 was so seldom cited by the fathers in defense of Christ's deity. There may, however, be a reason for this silence. The chief opponents of the orthodox Christians were the Arians, and the Arians were quite ready to admit that the New Testament does refer to Christ as θεός and κύριος (God and Lord).<sup>5</sup> They argued that Christ's deity was of a *secondary* kind, and our verse would not have furnished the fathers with any effective defense against this assertion. May this not explain why it was not used more frequently in the early church? It is clear why such verses as Ephesians 5:5 and Titus 2:13 were more commonly cited against the Arians, for in the first "the kingdom" is ascribed to Christ, and in the second He is called "the great God."

Middleton concludes: "On the whole, then, I am disposed to think, that the present text affords no certain evidence in favour of Mr. Sharp. We have seen that the words Κύριος Ἰησ. Χριστός are usually taken together; and the acquiescence of antiquity induces a strong suspicion, that in this instance such was the received construction." (p. 382) The present writer feels that this appraisal of Sharp's exegesis here may be somewhat low.

With respect to Titus 2:13, Middleton concurs completely with Sharp's interpretation, namely, that the

words τοῦ μεγάλου θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ should be understood: "of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus." He says: "According to the principles already laid down, it is impossible to understand θεοῦ and σωτῆρος otherwise than of one person ... the word σωτῆρ not being exempted from the operation of the rule: nor is there a single instance in the whole N.T. in which σωτῆρος ἡμῶν occurs without the Article, except in cases like the present, and in 1 Tim. i.1. κατ' ἐπιταγήν θεοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν, where σωτῆρος wants the Article, on account of the preceding omission before θεοῦ, exactly as in the common forms; ὁπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν, ἐν θεῷ πατρὶ ἡμῶν, etc. ... Accordingly, we learn from *Mr. Wordsworth*, that all antiquity agreed in the proposed interpretation; and many of the passages which he has produced from the Fathers, could not have been more direct and explicit, if they had been forged with a view to the dispute." (p. 394)

Earlier in his book, Middleton makes this significant observation: "Almost every chapter of the N.T. contains some exemplification of the rule in question [Sharp's Rule], with which, therefore, the Sacred Writers were well acquainted, and must have supposed their Readers to have been acquainted also; and if in Titus ii. 13. they did not mean to identify the Great God and the Saviour, they expressed themselves in a manner which they well knew would mislead their Readers ..." (p. 364)

Finally, 2 Peter 1:1: τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν καὶ σωτῆρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (of our God and Savior, Jesus Christ). Middleton says: "As this instance differs not in any point of importance from Titus ii. 13. I can have little new to advance with respect to its interpretation. The passage is plainly and unequivocally to be understood as an assumption, that 'Jesus Christ is our God and Saviour.' The only difference between the present text and Titus ii. 13. is, that ἡμῶν is here placed after the first Noun, not after the second: but for a plain reason, the position of the Pronoun does not affect the sense: in all such cases, strictly speaking, the Pronoun ought to be repeated after each and every Noun, (supposing more than two,) τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν καὶ σωτῆρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ, κ.τ.λ. and if it be only once inserted, for the repetition is unnecessary, it is wholly unimportant,

whether it be after the first or after the last Noun; if after the first, then it is understood after the remaining ones; if after the last, it comprehends those which precede: the only mode, in the present instance, of limiting the effect of ἡμῶν to τοῦ θεοῦ, would have been to prefix an Article to σωτήρος; and why that second Article, on the supposition that two persons were intended, was not employed, as (among a multitude of examples) in 1 John ii. 22. τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὸν υἱόν, it might be difficult to show: in that instance, indeed, it may be said, that the very sense makes the distinction, and yet no MS. has ventured to read τὸν πατέρα καὶ υἱόν." (p. 433)

Middleton points also to the great similarity between verses 1 and 11 -- they differ only in one word: θεοῦ in the former, κυρίου in the latter. Even the position of the pronoun ἡμῶν is the same! Surely no one would doubt that in verse 11 "our Lord and Savior" are meant of the same person. Grammatical consistency would seem to require that "our God and Savior" in verse 1 likewise be taken of one person, namely Jesus Christ!

WINER. The first comprehensive grammar of New Testament Greek to achieve widespread use was surely that of George Benedict Winer, which appeared in a long series of editions beginning in the year 1822.<sup>6</sup> While Winer does not refer directly to the rule of Sharp, there can be no doubt that he came close to it in his own investigation of the article. He says in a footnote: "For a repetition of the Article is not admissible before connected nouns which, for instance, are merely predicates of one and the same person, as in Col. iii. 17 τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ [to the God and Father], 2 Pet. i. 11 τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν καὶ σωτήρος Ἰ. Χρ. [of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ]. Eph. vi. 21; Mark vi. 3; Acts iii. 14." (p. 126)

It is indeed strange, then, when Winer later refuses to accept Titus 2:13 and 2 Peter 1:1 as proof texts for Christ's deity. The reason for this inconsistency is his own theological bias. In regard to Titus 2:13 he says: "... for reasons which lie in the doctrinal system of Paul, I do not regard σωτήρος [Savior] as a second predicate by the side of θεοῦ [God], as if Christ were first styled ὁ μέγας θεός [the great God] and then σωτήρ [Savior]. ... In the above remarks I did not mean to de-

ny that *αυτηρος ημων* can *grammatically* be regarded as a second predicate dependent on the Article *του*; only, doctrinal conviction, deduced from Paul's teaching, that this apostle could not have called Christ *the great God*, induced me to show that there is also no grammatical obstacle to taking *και αυτ. ... Χριστου* by itself as a second subject." (p. 130)

The attempt by Winer to show that one can take "Savior Jesus Christ" as a second person separate from "the great God" is indeed weak. He says: "The Article is omitted before *αυτηρος*, because the word is made definite by the Genitive *ημων* [our], and the apposition *precedes* the proper name [Jesus Christ]." (p. 130) Middleton discusses the matter of the *ημων* above, and shows that its placement in Titus 2:13 does not invalidate the application of Sharp's Rule to this verse. Let it be added that Winer might have done well to compare other passages in the New Testament which are similar in form to Titus 2:13. He would have found that the presence of a genitive or other adjunct with either of the nouns in no instance excludes a passage from the application of the rule -- so long as the basic pattern remains: definite article + personal noun + *και* + personal noun.<sup>7</sup> Whenever the holy writers wished to speak of two distinct persons, they either omitted the article before both nouns or inserted it before both.<sup>8</sup> Compare 1 Thess. 3: 11, which is similar in form to Titus 2:13 except for the addition of a second article: *ο θεος και πατηρ ημων και ο κυριος ημων Ιησους* (our God and Father and our Lord Jesus). Here Paul inserted an article before *κυριος* -- even though no ambiguity could have resulted from its omission. Such passages show well how sensitive the apostle was to the force of the article and to the effect of its use or nonuse.

Winer's attempt to avoid the clear meaning of 2 Peter 1:1 is even weaker: "Similar is 2 Pet. i. 1, where there is not even a pronoun with *αυτηρος*." (p. 130) But this lack of *ημων* after *αυτηρος* does not seem to bother him in verse 11, which reads exactly the same as verse 1, except for the substitution of *κυριου* for *θεου*. Note his words on verse 11, quoted three paragraphs above, and see how he is not at all reluctant to apply Sharp's Rule to this latter verse.

In Winer's treatment of Titus 2:13 and 2 Peter 1:1 we see the sad result when doctrinal considerations are

permitted to have a bearing on grammatical theory. The following comments by A. T. Robertson indicate that Winer may well be responsible for much of the confusion that has surrounded the exegesis of these passages during the generations since his time: "The simple truth is that Winer's anti-Trinitarian prejudice overruled his grammatical rectitude in his remark about 2 Peter i. 1. The name of Winer was supreme in New Testament grammar for three generations, and his lapse from the plain path on this point is responsible for the confusion of the scholars in the English Versions on 2 Peter i. 1. But Schmiedel, in his revision of Winer (p. 158) frankly admitted Winer's error as to 2 Peter i. 1: 'Grammar demands that one person is meant.'<sup>9</sup> After pointing to Winer's admitted doctrinal bias, Robertson adds: "The grammarian has nothing to do *per se* with the theology of the New Testament, as I have insisted in my grammar. Wendland challenged Winer on Titus ii. 13, and considers it 'an exegetical mistake' to find two persons in Paul's sentence. . . . It is plain, therefore, that Winer has exerted a pernicious influence, from the grammatical standpoint, on the interpretation of 2 Peter i. 1, and Titus ii. 13. Scholars who believed in the Deity of Christ have not wished to claim too much and to fly in the face of Winer, the great grammarian, for three generations. But Winer did not make out a sound case against Sharp's principle as applied to 2 Peter i. 1 and Titus ii. 13. Sharp stands vindicated after all the dust has settled. We must let these passages mean what they want to mean, regardless of our theories about the theology of the writers."<sup>10</sup> In his *Short Grammar*, Robertson rightly questions the correctness of Winer's anti-Trinitarian "doctrinal conviction": "... Paul's doctrinal system in Phil. 2:9 and Col. 1:15-19; 2:9, not to mention Rom. 9: 5 and Acts 20:28, does not forbid the natural import of the one article here [namely, in 2 Pet. 1:1 and Titus 2: 13]."<sup>11</sup>

Winer's comments on Ephesians 5:5 and 2 Thessalonians 1:12 are much briefer. He finds two persons in the words τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ θεοῦ (of the Christ and God), and assumes that the reason for the single use of the article is to mark the two nouns as "parts of one whole, or members of one community." (p. 127f.) Similarly, he finds two persons in the phrase τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (of our God and Lord, Jesus Christ), and

assumes an ellipsis of a second article before *καί*. (p. 130) It is clear that Winer has little appreciation for Sharp's Rule when it comes to the passages involving Christ's deity.

JONES. In 1827, a Unitarian minister by the name of John Jones presented to the academic world of England *An Explanation of the Greek Article*,<sup>12</sup> containing among other things an "analysis and refutation of Dr. Middleton's theory" and "an application of the article to obscure passages in the New Testament." We need not spend much time in discussing Jones' work, for it is marred by a number of questionable statements and conclusions, the result probably of a rather obvious anti-Trinitarian bias.

In discussing Middleton's defense of Sharp's Rule, Jones proceeds on the unlikely assumption that the Greek article is in its nature an adjective, and that if it qualifies one noun it must, as an adjective, be extended by the reader to qualify other nouns, if any such succeed it. (p. 25f., p. 140) He does admit that when the copulative *καί* connects nouns which are names of two different persons, the article is more likely to be repeated, "because being in themselves distinct subjects, the writer must have felt desirous to convey that impression to his readers." (p. 26) Jones, of course, assumes that two persons, the Father and the Son, are spoken of in each of the four verses which we are studying. How does he explain the fact that the article is *not* repeated in any of them? In each case he assumes ellipsis, and asks the reader to supply an additional article. (p. 142) And how is the reader to know when to add an article in this fashion? Jones' remarkable answer: "In every instance of words thus conjoined, whether they mean the same or two different persons or things, the reader must depend not on the use of the *article*, but upon the exercise of common sense, which he is supposed to possess." (p. 27) Thus, for Jones, "common sense" must be used to direct the course of exegesis -- which is, as we know, a basic hermeneutical principle for Unitarians!

Jones regards Sharp's Rule as "mere rubbish, without any foundation in truth." (p. 140) But he is not really fair in his attack upon the rule, for he repeatedly points to examples which Sharp and Middleton specifically exclude from its application, such as those



which involve proper names. Let Jones consider only those passages in the New Testament which contain nouns of personal description in the singular number and in the form: article + noun + *καί* + noun. He would find use for his "ellipsis" argument only in our four passages, for in each of the remaining passages it would be abundantly clear, even to him, that only one person is being designated by the holy writer. The fact that he must insist on ellipsis in the four indicates, not linguistic acumen or even common sense, but simple dogmatic bias!

(to be continued)

C. Kuehne

#### FOOTNOTES

1. The citations made in this article are from the new edition, with prefatory observations and notes by Hugh James Rose, published by J. & J. Deighton, Cambridge, and J. G. & F. Rivington, London, 1833.
2. For such evidence, cf. *Journal of Theology*, March, 1974, p. 16f.
3. For the effect of a repeated article, cf. *Journal of Theology*, December, 1973, p. 27f.
4. According to a list of the appellations of Christ compiled by Rose and printed in Appendix II, p. 9f., of the volume by Middleton (cf. footnote 1), the phrase *κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός*, without article or modifier *ἡμῶν*, occurs a total of 17 times in the epistles of Paul. In 11 of these instances it occurs after a preposition in the familiar phrase *ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ* (from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ), and in two further instances it follows the preposition *ἐν*. The absence of the articles in such prepositional phrases is to be expected, as many grammars of the New Testament will attest. (Cf. Blass-Debrunner, edition of 1961, p. 133: "... the article appears when the specific Jewish or Christian God or Lord is meant ..., but it is sometimes missing, especially after prepositions ... and with a genitive which depends on an anarthrous noun.") The remaining occur-

rences of the phrase κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός located by Rose in the Pauline epistles are found in Phil. 3:20, in 1 Tim. 1:1 and 5:21 (cf. the readings of the Textus Receptus), and in our passage. In 1 Tim. 1:1, the article is lacking because the phrase is a genitive dependent on an anarthrous noun. (Cf. the quotation from Blass-Debrunner above.) 1 Tim. 5:21, in the reading of the Textus Receptus, is like our passage. This leaves only Phil. 3:20: ἐξ οὗ καὶ σωτῆρα ἀπεκδεχόμεθα κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν (from which also we expect as a Savior the Lord Jesus Christ). Thus there is very little pertinent evidence to support any assertion that the phrase κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός normally occurs in the New Testament without an article.

5. Cf. *Journal of Theology*, March, 1974, p. 16f.
6. The citations from Winer made in this article appear in the seventh edition, enlarged and improved by Gottlieb Lünnemann (Andover: Warren F. Draper & Co., 1904).
7. Cf. *Journal of Theology*, Dec., 1973, p. 25f.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 27f.
9. A. T. Robertson, "The Greek Article and the Deity of Christ," *Expositor* (London), series VIII, no. 21 (1921), p. 185. (This brief, but excellent, article by Robertson provided the present writer with much of the initial incentive to research Sharp's Rule and exegetical conclusions at greater length.)
10. *Ibid.*, p. 186f. Robertson makes similar comments concerning Winer in his *Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman Press, c1934), p. 785f.
11. A. T. Robertson, *A Short Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, 3rd ed. (New York: Hodder & Stoughton, c1908), p. 75.
12. John Jones, *An Explanation of the Greek Article* (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1827.)

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 SERMON: IN MEMORIAM \*
 

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*There is a fountain filled with blood  
 Drawn from Immanuel's veins,  
 And sinners plunged beneath that flood  
 Lose all their guilty stains.*

*The dying thief rejoiced to see  
 That fountain in his day;  
 And there have I, as vile as he,  
 Washed all my sins away.*

*Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood  
 Shall never lose its power  
 Till all the ransomed Church of God  
 Be saved to sin no more.*

*E'er since by faith I saw the stream  
 Thy flowing wounds supply,  
 Redeeming love has been my theme  
 And shall be till I die.*

*When this poor lisping, stammering tongue  
 Lies silent in the grave,  
 Then in a nobler, sweeter song  
 I'll sing Thy power to save.*

Grace be unto you and peace from God, our Father,  
 and our Lord Jesus Christ!

In Christ Jesus, who is the Lord both of the living  
 and the dead, Fellow Redeemed:

The verses of the last stanza of the hymn that we  
 have sung are a natural favorite for ministers of the  
 Word:

*"When this poor lisping, stammering tongue  
 Lies silent in the grave,  
 Then in a nobler, sweeter song  
 I'll sing Thy power to save."*

---

\* *Delivered in a service held in memory of Pastor  
 O. J. Eckert during the CLC Convention, 1974.*

No matter how eloquent the preacher may be, no matter how articulate he may be, no matter how great a master with the use of words he may be, yet it is always with a poor lisping, stammering tongue that he is able to proclaim the glory of our God's grace. Think of what that one word  $\chi\rho\omicron\iota\varsigma$  -- grace -- means! What words are there that can describe and proclaim that word to its fullest -- that our holy God should make us unacceptable ones acceptable in His sight, that we who are justly guilty should be proclaimed righteous before Him. It is with a lisping, stammering tongue that we proclaim the glory of our God's grace, and so also did our departed brother.

Many times he may also have thought of these verses:

*"Then in a nobler, sweeter song  
I'll sing Thy power to save."*

The hymnist was perhaps thinking of the time after death when the saints of God, whom St. John saw in Rev. 7 as a great multitude, will lift their voices and say: "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne and to the lamb." But there is another way of speaking after your lisping, stammering tongue lies silent in the grave, and that way is indicated in a very difficult verse in the twentieth chapter of the book of Revelation -- the second slide in that series of four slides where St. John says: "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection." There has been many a heartache and much headache over the interpretation of these words. What is meant by this "first resurrection"? There is a natural division between those who consider it literally and those who consider it figuratively. The literalists in this case are the premillennialists, for whom the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ is not a single event devoutly to be looked for, but rather a series of events covering a period of one thousand and seven years. The first of the seven years is to be anticipated at the so-called Rapture of the Saints, when the Lord shall come for His saints and then shall be the first resurrection -- a bodily resurrection according to this belief. Then shall follow the coming with the saints seven years later to establish the millennial rule here upon the earth. We reject this literalizing as in conflict with the Scriptures that know of but one physical resurrection from the dead.

So there must be a figurative or tropical explanation. There are those that picture the first resurrection as a matter of conversion or as a figure of speech for conversion. But the result is a little bit out of line, for St. John says, "I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection." To call remaining faithful unto death and then living and reigning with Christ the equivalent of conversion does not sound and ring right.

But there is a figure of speech here, a tropical use of the "first resurrection." If you picture the days of St. John when people, assembled as we are assembled today, would not dare to assemble so publicly for fear of execution. Think of a group of Christians lined up quietly singing hymns while the executioner was flexing his muscles to lop off their heads with one swift cut. And he began his work and continued with one, with two, with three. And as he continued with his work, he observed the peace, the quiet, the steadfastness, the unwaveringness with which these men and women and children remained faithful until their death. And then all of a sudden he would lay down his axe and proclaim, "I, too, am a Christian. I, too, believe on this Jesus the Christ." He would say in effect with the words of Julian the Apostate, "Thou hast conquered, O Galilean," and then take his stand among the prisoners to have his head lopped off also. While he was doing his work, the headless corpses, the heads piled in a gory heap, were speaking, were testifying. It is a testifying after we have left this earth. The writer of the book of Hebrews speaks of this same thing when he reminds us, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh." Heb. 11:4. Abel speaks to this day. He was the first of the noble martyrs that laid down his life for that which he believed. And he speaks. This is the first resurrection. We sing of it:

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*"Abel's blood for vengeance  
Pleaded to the skies;  
But the blood of Jesus  
For our pardon cries."*

There is a speaking after you are dead -- after your poor lisping, stammering tongue lies silent in the grave.

We think of our departed brother, Pastor Eckert, and we eulogize this day the grace of God in and through him -- that God in His grace from eternity chose him to be His own, that the providence of our God caused him to be born in a Christian family and to receive the blessing of the Word connected with the water in holy baptism by which he was washed and cleansed. We bless the grace of God that justified him, that sanctified him, that consecrated his gifts into the use of bringing others to Christ. Had he been with us, his hand would have been raised in sessions yesterday, and he would have been testifying on the basis of his personal experience and giving insights into the Word of the Lord. Some ten to twelve years ago when the time of decision came, the grace of God gave him power to speak, even though he was pastor in an area in which entrenched ecclesiasticism was strong. He had to testify against the organizational church, but he did so. He testified not only with word but in deed, leading his sheep out into an unheated theater where the organist had to play with gloves on her hands, and then to a bank building, and finally into the present quarters of that congregation. He testified by the grace of God. Now that lisping, stammering tongue lies silent in the grave, but the testifying goes on.

We have here young pastors at this convention and young delegates for whom the exodus from our former synods is nothing more than a matter of history to be read about. It is not a matter of personal experience. And it is important for us that we listen to the testimony of those whose lips lie silent in the grave. They testify that it is worth it, that God would have us speak and He would have us act. And so we remember too the testimony of all of those that have gone before us. We remember the keen mind of a Professor Schaller, the quiet but steadfast voice of a Professor Reim, then the unending and exhilarating exhortations of Grandpa Tiefel, the quiet

voice of a Chris Albrecht, the voice of a younger man, Reuben Ude, who spoke not much but who acted when the time called for it, and then we think of the fearless testimony of a Madson who stood on the bulwarks, and then of the silver-haired Pieper. And now Otto Eckert has joined those ranks -- silent in the tomb, yet speaking, testifying that "by it he being dead yet speaketh." They speak unto us.

May God give each one of us the quiet steadfastness to stand and to testify to this dying and corrupt world that there is salvation in none other than in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. The testimony of these men is urging us on -- that we take no Word of God lightly, that we are ready to stand, and that we are ready as St. Paul to say, "though dying yet behold we live," to consecrate and dedicate every bit of strength, every bit of vitality, every gift, every ability, our entire earning power, all that we have and all that we are unto the cause of our Lord Jesus Christ. The witness, the testifying of the dead, is upon our consciences this day. May God grant that when we lie silent in the grave those that come after us will not curse our names as having been cowards in the face of danger but as having fearlessly, steadfastly, lovingly, pleadingly testified to the glory of our salvation in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Lord Jesus, Lord of the church, we confess that we are plagued by our old flesh, that we speak, sometimes even without realizing it in pride to defend what we have spoken, to make a name for ourselves, to cut a little niche. We confess that we are not beyond envy and jealousy, that we are easily wounded. Lord, we confess that by ourselves we can do nothing but harm for you and your Kingdom. Grant us the grace of forgiveness and with that the strength to so order our words and footsteps and our lives so that we may bear witness unto you and your holy Truth, so that when the time comes that our lisping, stammering tongues lie silent in the grave we may yet bear witness unto our children and our children's children. Oh God of all mercy, hear and help. Send unto us your Holy Spirit. Abide with us now and forevermore. Amen.

*Paul F. Nolting*

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ADDRESS AT THE OPENING SERVICE AT IMMANUEL LUTHERAN  
COLLEGE, AUGUST 26, 1974

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Dear students of ILC, both old and new:

We greet you on this opening day of the new school year with a question. This is the question: "Who are you?" We are not asking you to respond by giving your name and address or by telling us who your father and mother are, for we have all this information carefully recorded and placed into a file folder bearing your name. This we have together with transcripts, family history, physical history, etc. No, it is not the purpose of our question to gather this information. "Who are you?" "Who am I?" This is a popular question with young people of our day. Young men and women are telling us that they need to get away from the old familiar scenes in order to find out who they are. We understand it in this way, that they are seeking their true identity with life and their true function in this world. We tend to sympathize with those who are honestly finding it difficult to answer the question, "Who am I?" But the answer will not be found in the places where most people seek for it, nor is it to be found in the ways being pursued by the vast majority. Indeed, the answer is alone to be found with Him who gave life, who sustains life, and who has placed each individual into this world.

With you, the Christian youth, there should be no problem in establishing your identity and in determining what your purpose in life really is. The answer is found in the Word of God chosen for consideration at this opening of our school year: "*Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.*" I Peter 2:9-10. There you have the answer to the question, "Who am I?" You are giving the true answer when you say: "I am a child of God, born again of water and the spirit unto a life of



faith, dedicated to the service of my Lord and Savior." Our God goes so far as to say that you are a "chosen generation." When Gerald Ford was sworn into the office of the presidency a short time ago, the question was asked, "How will the people receive him since he enters the office without being elected by the people he is to serve?" The president may not fully know the answer to this question until and unless he stands for election at the end of his term. But you, dear students, do not need to be in doubt concerning a far more important question, namely the question, "How do I stand in the eyes of the supreme God?" He has told you in no uncertain terms that you have been elected, you have been chosen by Him. Indeed, at the opening of this first letter of Peter God says that we are chosen "according to the foreknowledge of God the Father by the sanctifying work of the Spirit." No one needs to go away from home or away from here to find this out. No one needs to join a youths' crusade for Christ, a Messiah movement, a Jesus society, a charismatic movement, in order to get the answer to his question. For the Word of God assures you that in Christ you have been chosen to faith and to eternal life and God wants you.

Furthermore, you are priests and kings. As priests, you know that you may approach the heavenly Father with your prayers through Jesus Christ and be assured that your petitions will be heard and will be answered. It should be self-evident then that you will, during the days that lie ahead, make diligent use of this privilege as you address your Heavenly Father in your private prayers and in your joint worship at chapel time morning and evening. This priesthood is a royal office because in Christ you are ruling with a power that has been bestowed and given by grace -- as a free and unmerited gift. No man stands over you in your relation to God. No man stands between you and God. For you have all things in Christ, your substitute and vicar.

Although you come from many parts of the country, from states as far apart as California and South Carolina; although we will have students here this year also from a foreign country, yet you are all before God one holy nation, joined together in a faith which unites you with a closer bond than citizens and subjects of any earthly nation or kingdom. You have all been cleansed and washed in the holy blood of Jesus which joins you to-

gether in a society that has no Watergate in its make-up. Nor is there a need of a Judiciary Committee to get at the facts. You are a people of God's possession, belonging to Him as His property. You recognize Him as your Lord and Master to whom you owe all allegiance. This is what it means when we say that you are a "peculiar people." Who are you? You know that you are a people who were born into darkness but were called out of that darkness and are now the people of God.

Now what has all this got to do with the opening of school here at Immanuel? Much in every way, for as surely as you know who you are in God's sight, so surely do you know what your life is all about and what the purpose and object of your life ought to be. It is your highest purpose and object to proclaim the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness and redeemed you and sanctified you. This does not refer only to those who are trained to go forth as preachers and teachers, but it refers to all of you -- not five, ten years in the future, but right now, and in the days to come here at ILC. Your words, your speech, your behavior, your conduct, your life-style should be a preaching of the goodness of God toward you. You know very well that there are many words, many actions, many deeds which have no place in the Christian life. We know also that things do occur also here at ILC that are out of harmony with this life-style which calls for proclamation of God's praises in word and in deed. The Old Adam is also active here and shows his ugly head wherever he can. But as surely as you are a child of God you will by daily contrition and repentance drown him with all sins and evil lusts. For this purpose you will need all the spiritual strength that is to be found in the inspired Word which you will need to read and meditate upon most diligently whether you are a freshman in high school or a senior in the seminary. As you go along here in your studies we hope and pray that right many of you will decide to devote your full time to the work of the public ministry in order that the places may be filled which the Lord is opening for us. Especially are we thankful this year over the fact that two natives from Nigeria, Africa, will be with us to prepare for service in that faraway land. We are most happy to have this opportunity of serving them. May God give us all the grace that we may not disappoint them in what they will see and ex-

perience here at ILC. So much the more reason for all of us to remember who we are and to what we have been called and accordingly how we should conduct ourselves.

May God grant us then a blessed year in Jesus' name. Amen.

C. M. Gullerud

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### THE WISDOM OF GOD AND THE PRESENCE OF EVIL IN THE WORLD\*

Scripture tells us three things about God and the presence of evil in the world: 1) that He is unalterably opposed to evil; 2) that He often prevents the occurrence of evil; 3) that when evil occurs, God often reverses its effect, causing it to serve His own good purpose, as when Joseph was sold by his brothers. To a rationalistic point of view, however, these answers to the problem of harmonizing God's wisdom with the presence of evil in the world are not sufficient. Therefore, those who will not accept the Words of Scripture have sought various answers from their own intellect.

To an atheist the problem is simple. Instead of seeking to find an answer in theology or even in philosophy, he simply denies the existence of God. The conduct and attitudes of man are for him the natural development of the evolutionary process and are, therefore, not good or evil. And where there is no problem, there is no need of a solution.

One who holds with dualism finds the matter more complicated, but he also finds a way around it by making evil co-existent with good (God). Where evil is, there is God, and conversely the same. If God is from eternity, so also is evil. This, of course, is no answer at all and avoids the real issue.

We might mention two other opposing schools of thought: the Pessimists and the Optimists. Pessimists, such as Schopenhauer, simply look on the whole world as the worst possible. They feel that God should have created it in a much better way. Hence they not only de-

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\* Developed for lecture notes in teaching a course in Milton's Paradise Lost.

ny that God's wisdom is perfect, but, if they go so far as to accept God, they deny that He is wise. As for the Optimists, they have just the opposite viewpoint. They hold that since God in His wisdom, love, and power has made this world the best conceivable, sin and evil are to be minimized as mere imperfections. Needless to say, we need only look about us in the world to realize that both these viewpoints are impossible, and (if there are degrees of impossibility) the view of the Optimists is worse, for their implication that man is very nearly perfect, with only the slightest flaws, is completely overthrown by that which our modern history demonstrates with war after war, evil after evil!

Still another wrong solution to the problem is the answer which the Calvinists present. They, finally, make God responsible for all evil. Included in God's eternal purpose is the permission of evil acts, they assert, for through them also His whole nature is to be revealed to man. They would maintain that in this way His righteousness, justice, and love is more clearly manifested. Thus, God does not (or may not) do the evil Himself, but He permits it out of His inscrutable wisdom, and the immediate responsibility rests on those who choose to sin. Calvinism says that the only freedom man has is to act in accordance with his nature, but God is ultimately responsible for that nature which man has. This attempt to solve the problem goes contrary to the objective knowledge of God revealed in Scripture, however, and presents a horrible image of God, making Him worse than any pagan idol. The rationalist seeks all sorts of ways in which to soothe his conscience and to disclaim all guilt for his own sin.

Other solutions have been brought forth, solutions which are simply weak and inadequate and therefore also quite incorrect. One of these says that God could have prevented the Fall and the entrance of sin into the world, if, first of all, He had created man without a free will; secondly, if He would have forcibly prevented Adam from sinning; and, thirdly, if He had simply made it impossible for man to fall into temptation. Then this "solution" goes on to say that these actions, if taken, would have been unworthy of God's dignity, and for that reason God did not take them. The evident error in this rationale is seen when the question is asked: by what authority can those who accept this line of

reasoning decide what is or is not worthy of God?

Another such inadequate solution is that which lays the blame for the presence of evil in the world on man, saying that God created man in His own image but that in endowing man with free self-determination He gave man only the remotest possibility of falling into sin, through an abuse of his freedom. This solution is weak, because it does not answer the question but, rather, avoids it. Why did God create man with even the remote possibility of sinning, when, in His almighty power, He could have created him without it?

Still another weak solution is that which tells us that with our human limitations we should not seek to find the answer to our question for the reason that we are not wise enough to know every single event that has occurred in the history of the world and, therefore, cannot analyze it. So also then we would not be able to grasp the significance which each single event has when comparing it with the complete picture. This answer is inadequate, because it forgets that our problem has to do with the origin of evil. Hence it also provides no real solution.

Try as he may, the rationalist can find no really acceptable answer to the question as to how the world can contain both the wisdom of God and evil. This is because he is not willing to accept the clear words of Scripture. If he would be content to have Scripture answer him, instead of seeking to find his answer in what reason (even Milton's "right reason") offers, he would find the solution with which one must ultimately be content, namely: that God is wise, and that sin and evil originated against His holy will. These facts the Bible tells us. Further, Scripture declares that the fulness of God's wisdom appears in His plan of salvation through Jesus Christ, His Son, and therefore also sin and evil must eventually serve His glory and honor. What further answer is needed for the believing child of God? We are satisfied with this and the awareness that we shall have complete knowledge in the promised life to come.

*John Lau*

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