

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

I Timothy 4:15

Journal
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Theology

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OUR CALLING

SERVANTS OF GOD - SERVANTS OF PEOPLE

PART I

LOOKING AT Looking at ourselves is not an easy task.
 OURSELVES Most of the time we see little there that
 we wish to look at, little there to encour-
 age us, and even less that we want to talk about. Not long
 ago in a comparative reading of volumes on Pastoral Theo-
 logy a certain page came down rather hard and seemed to
 demand critical self-evaluation and mental examination of
 the pastoral ministry in general. The page referred to
 has these words:

"The greatest problem in the Church is the pas-
 tor. People are no better than their leaders. 'Like
 people, like priest.' Hos. 4:9; Matt. 15:14. Qualis
 rex, talis grex. Much depends upon the pastor's
 spiritual leadership. Said Oecolampadius (died 1531):
 'How much more would a few good and fervent men ef-
 fect in the ministry than a multitude of lukewarm
 ones!' Said William Reid: 'The mere multiplying
 of men calling themselves ministers of Christ will
 avail little. They may be but "cumberers of the
 ground" ... Even when sound in faith, yet through
 unbelief, lukewarmness, and slothful formality they
 may do irreparable injury to the cause of Christ,
 freezing and withering up all spiritual life around
 them. The lukewarm ministry of one who is theoreti-
 cally orthodox is often more extensively and fatally
 ruinous to souls than that of the grossly inconsis-
 tent or flagrantly heretical.' Luther complained
 that some men in the ministry 'ought to be more pro-
 perly swineherds and dog tenders than caretakers of
 souls and pastors.' (Triglott, 567, 2)" 1

ARE WE FIT? These are rather hard sayings. They cause
 one to begin to question whether one is
 fit for such a high and worthy office as the public min-
 istry. It has always been a seeming paradox that God
 should use us sinful creatures to carry out such a heav-
 enly assignment as is intricately connected with being
 "stewards of the mysteries of God." (I Cor. 4:1) There-

fore, it is understandable for us to hear one of our colleagues declare, after coming through the humbling experience of preparing a difficult assignment for study at a pastoral conference, that he felt as though he should resign from the ministry because of his sheer ignorance. Yet, on second thought, he decided that his replacement would probably be no better off and so nothing would be accomplished.

How often must not all of us become painfully aware of our inabilities as we meditate on the Scriptures and pray for strength and faithfulness to communicate to people as the "oracles of God"? (I Pet. 4:11) How often does not one wonder how God can accomplish anything through such fumbling, sin-plagued creatures as ourselves? For even after we may have taught the message, we struggle with the strong possibility that we may not have communicated the message!

An interesting observation which has all the marks of a struggle with this matter was made in *Christianity Today* when it is said:

"Jesus' post-resurrection ministry gives us incentive to teach even when we are pretty sure that we are not getting fully across our message. That even our Lord, through no fault of His own, had difficulties along these lines should encourage us. (To be sure we need to recognize that in our case, inadequate communication is as often the fault of the teacher as of the student.) The disciples were later to have a better understanding of what Christ had earlier taught them; so also can the children, new converts, and others to whom we seek to minister." 2

And so, in spite of our view of ourselves, the Lord has called us to be His own people, called us into the special labor of the public ministry, and has placed upon us a responsibility which no man dare take lightly.

SERIOUS The care of the souls of people means that
BUSINESS we are dealing in eternal things, and it
 hardly needs be said that this is serious
business. From one who was dubbed the "Golden-mouthed"

preacher of the 4th century, Chrysostom, come some words to emphasize the seriousness of it. He concluded, "It is a miracle that a pastor can be saved." Now we well know, of course, that it is a miracle that anyone is saved, a miracle of God's grace. But Chrysostom's point is likely that it is a miracle that a pastor is finally saved because of the special responsibility that goes with his being a "minister of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God." (I Cor. 4:1)

But lest these words of Chrysostom frighten away candidates for the public ministry and cause the rest of us to become despairingly alarmed, the late Dr. Norman Madson does well to put them into perspective in the following fashion:

"He is not thereby wanting to dissuade anyone from entering the ministry, but is merely calling attention, in a most striking way, to the serious nature of the work to which God has called him. For while the ministry may be a place of refuge from many of the common temptations besetting mankind (especially the more open and gross sins and vices), it has on the other hand so many and serious temptations by way of laziness, indifference, and the taking all too lightly the things which God has told us have the seriousness of eternity about them, that it might be well for every pastor to have the words of Chrysostom stamped in bold letters on the study table before him: 'It is a miracle that a pastor can be saved!'" 3

Therefore, though we realize our lack of ability, our faults and our shortcomings, from which we all suffer in various degrees; and as we recognize the responsibility which the high office of a servant of the Word carries with it, first in respect to our Lord and secondly in respect to God's people, it seems that perhaps we could be strengthened in our labors by meditating upon some of the thoughts transmitted to us from the inspired pen of Malachi, in the first chapter. For there we are again reminded of 1) our high calling as a child of God, and 2) our special calling as public servants of God and of His people.

CALLED TO BE HIS BY GRACE As the prophet Malachi begins, a foundation is laid for the entire book. And what could lay a better foundation than the love of God as set forth in the election of grace? This is a lesson for all of us to review constantly, for the grace of the Lord will be greatly magnified in our hearts and in our work when the election of grace is given its rightful place. When this teaching of Holy Writ is permitted to stand without addition or subtraction, it graphically shows, on one hand, the chasm of sin which not only separates between God and man as he is by nature, but also threatens him with eternal death. It makes it clear that man, dead in sins, deserves nothing but God's unrelenting wrath forever. On the other hand, it vividly portrays the mystery of God's infinite grace which bridges the gap, rescues us, and brings us into His presence in Christ Jesus, showering us with His unmerited love in time with a guarantee of perfect peace and the blissful joys of heaven forever. (Cf. Eph. 1 & 2)

WHY JACOB AND NOT ESAU? Malachi is inspired to demonstrate a portrayal of our just and gracious God, on one hand, in the family of Esau and, on the other hand, in the family of Jacob. The hatred of God toward Esau and his descendants was not founded on injustice or arbitrariness, nor was it a result of eternal decree of reprobation. Without going into the details of the history of the Edomites, we may simply conclude on the basis of our knowledge of the justice of God and the nature of man that His hatred toward Esau was fully justified.

At the same time we would be foolish to attempt to find anything in the house of Jacob which should cause God to choose it. For the sinful nature of man makes it evident that the love of God toward Jacob was totally undeserved. Moses is caused to point out:

"For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: but because the LORD loved you, and

because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto our fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt." (Deut. 7:6-8)

ATTITUDES TOWARD THE ELECTION OF GRACE The descendants of Jacob were called upon to recognize the unique and undeserved place that they were chosen to occupy in the labor of God's kingdom upon earth. They were to realize that just as their calling was not a result of any goodness on their part, so also their exalted position as God's people did not restrict salvation to Israel. Far from it. The promise of salvation by God's grace in the seed of the woman given to Adam and Eve was universal and thus it should ever be. Therefore Malachi is caused to say, "The LORD will be magnified from (beyond) the border of Israel." (Mal. 1:5)

Esau and his descendants, of course, were not prevented from receiving God's love by some eternal decree. But the rejection by the Edomites of the one true God and His eternal love, as in the case of their father Esau, resulted in God's wrath resting upon them as long as they existed as a nation.

Neither is there any basis anywhere in Scripture for that man-made rationale that some people have only a natural resistance while others have also a willful resistance to God's grace. All people by nature willfully resist God's grace. The Apostle Paul makes no categories when he emphatically reminds us, "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son ..." (Rom. 5:10) And again, "... there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God ..." (Rom. 3:22-23) In some, that "enmity," that resistance, is overcome by the power of God's grace, while others remain in spiritual death and rejection of that grace.

REJOICING IN OUR CALLING OF GRACE Sad though it may be that many continue in their enmity against God and remain outside of His kingdom, yet this very fact serves to emphasize the won-

der of God's grace toward us, who are as corrupt by nature as any other person upon the face of the earth. We will spend no time trying to answer the unanswerable: "Why me?" Neither have we any right to feel superior, in any wise, to anyone else upon earth. Rather, our whole heart should be overflowing with rejoicing, praising, and thanksgiving in the Spirit-ordained truth that "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 Pet. 2: 9-10)

And so, entirely aware of our unworthiness, we sing joyfully with the hymn writer:

Lord, 'tis not that I did choose Thee;
That, I know, could never be;
For this heart would still refuse Thee
Had Thy grace not chosen me.
Thou hast from the sin that stained me
Washed and cleansed and set me free
And unto this end ordained me,
That I ever live to Thee. (L.H. 37:1)

Thus the mystery of the election of God's grace through belief in God's merciful kindness crowds in upon our reason and pushes it aside in favor of faith which believes, rejoices, and serves Him in spiritual peace and thankful dedication. Regardless of our faults, our shortcomings, our inabilities, the Lord takes us just as we are. And in spite of our weaknesses He causes His name to be magnified and glorified through us from the borders of His kingdom of grace.

(To be continued)

Dale Redlin

FOOTNOTES

1. John H. C. Fritz, *Pastoral Theology* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1945), p. 17.
2. *Christianity Today*, April 11, 1975, p. 28.
3. Norman A. Madson, *Preaching to Preachers* (Mankato, Minnesota: Lutheran Synod Book Co., 1952), p. 96.

THE KEPHALE-STRUCTURE AND THE E.R.A.

Kephale (κεφαλή) is the Greek word for head. By "kephale-structure" we mean the head-subordination relationship that is the God-ordained structure of society, governing all relationships in society, but especially that between man and woman.¹ The "ERA" is, of course, the proposed Equal Rights Amendment, which now lacks ratification by only four states from becoming the Twenty-Seventh Amendment to the Constitution.²

In the pro and con debate on this subject the Bible has, as is usually the case, been used and misused by protagonists on both sides. Jesus is pictured as a female liberationist, St. Paul as a misogynist. There has been much sound and fury with little hearing of the clear call of the trumpet. It is the thesis of this paper that the ERA poses a threat to the *kephale*-structure of society, especially to the relationship of man to woman and woman to man.

God is a God of order. The universe reflects that order; man has discovered that order in the law of nature. God's order also regulates society. When His order is disregarded or violated, anarchy ensues and society becomes self-destructive and finally disintegrates, as the rise and fall of nations and civilizations has repeatedly shown.

In the beginning God created man. Subsequently He created woman from a rib of man. Adam recognized the origin of this new creation and expressed it in the name that he gave her: "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." (Gen. 2:23) To what end and for what purpose was this new creature created? God left no doubt: "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet - that is, fit or suitable - for him." (Gen. 2:18) Discarding the options of creating woman first and thus man from and for woman or of creating both man and woman simultaneously, God created man and then woman from and for the sake of man. Thus the basic *kephale*-subordination structure was established in and by the act of creation.

Such concepts as superior-inferior, intelligent-ignorant, capable-fumbling, master-slave, oppressor-oppressed, person-property did not and could not enter the minds of either Adam or Eve, for both were created in the image of God. Both recognized the *kephale*-subordination structure of society as God-ordained. God acted upon the basis of the structure that He had established. He gave the command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil to Adam before Eve was even created, as the text indicates. (Gen. 2:17) Then after Eve was created, Adam told her of this Word of the Lord, thus preaching the first sermon in the first church, consisting of but the preacher and his congregation, his wife.

When Satan plotted and engineered the fall of man, he approached Eve, not Adam. He had previously rebelled against his position as a creature of the Creator. He approached Eve, who had heard the command indirectly, from Adam, and who had been created in a position subordinate to Adam. By creating doubt in Eve's mind as to the Word of the Lord, by using the master device of the half-truth, and by dangling the bait of becoming "as gods, knowing good and evil," Satan completely deceived Eve. In so doing he also led her to act independently of Adam, to usurp the *kephale*ship of the family and the entire race. She unilaterally made a decision that was to affect not only her husband but the entire human race. Adam fell and thus completed the fall into sin when he honored Eve more than God by heeding her words rather than the Word of God, thereby violating the *kephale*-structure of the family and of God towards man.

Man's sin does not disannul God's purposes; neither does sin remain without divine retribution. Eve's independence was rewarded with dependence, "thy desire shall be to (for, RSV) thy husband." Eve's usurping the *kephale*-ship of the family was rewarded by imposed subordination, "he shall rule over thee." (Gen. 3:16) The result of this judgment has borne heavily upon women down through the ages, reducing them in many societies to the status of chattel.

It is the cross, not the feminist movement, that has brought healing from this judgment, for "there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

(Gal. 3:28) The only spot in the world where there is complete and perfect equality is at the foot of the cross and at the opening of the empty tomb. All are equal sinners beneath the cross and saints at the empty tomb.

But this complete equality in sin and in forgiveness through Christ does not disannul the *kephale*-structure that God has ordained between man and woman and in society. To the Corinthians St. Paul wrote, "But I would have you know, that the head (κεφαλή) of every man is Christ; and the head (κεφαλή) of the woman is man, and the head (κεφαλή) of Christ is God." (I Cor. 11:3) Notice that the *kephale*-structure pyramids to heaven itself: man-woman, Christ-man, God (the Father)-Christ. Paul's commentary on this last *kephale* relationship is recorded in I Cor. 15:28: "When all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject (subject Himself) unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."

In detailing the relationship between husbands and wives in his letter to the Ephesians Paul again employs the basic *kephale*-structure established in creation and reaffirmed and sanctified in redemption: "Wives, submit yourselves unto you own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head (κεφαλή) of the wife, even as Christ is the head (κεφαλή) of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything." (Eph. 5:22-24) Here the analogy is drawn between the *kephale*-structure of the Church to Christ. This indicates that the proper relationship between spouses is self-sacrificing love on the part of the husband and self-submitting love on the part of the wife. That the *kephale*-structure in marriage in no way gives the husband the prerogative to give license to his flesh by lording it over his wife is indicated by the general statement that introduces the entire discussion of the relationship of spouses to each other: "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." (Eph. 5:21)

The *kephale*-structure is not unique to the institution of marriage. It is to govern the family, "Children,

obey your parents in the Lord." (Eph. 6:1) It governs society as a whole, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." (Rom. 13:1) The government is the duly instituted *kephale* of the citizen, but the *kephale* of the government is God - a point that government officials tend to forget as easily as citizens like to challenge the *kephale* position of all government officials. The *kephale*-structure also governs the generation gap, "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder." But notice again how Spirit-created love tempers this relationship, "Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility." (I Peter 5:5) In the economic field the *kephale*-structure likewise holds good, "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh." If we recall that these words were originally addressed to Christian slaves, how much more should they not apply to a freely-entered-upon relationship of employee to employer? But again, the slaveowners at the time of St. Paul, as well as the corporate employers of today, are reminded, "Knowing that your Master also is in heaven." (Eph. 6:5-9) The position of *kephale* here on earth gives no one license to act autocratically and irresponsibly, for the ultimate *kephale* is always the Lord God, the Judge of all flesh. Even in the church this *kephale*-structure is to be maintained, the abuse in the rise of the Papacy, for example, notwithstanding: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you." (Heb. 13:17)

It is evident that all society is *kephale*-structured with the Lord God being the sovereign *kephale* over all. As such, He entrusts various segments of society with *kephale* authority and responsibility: the government over the citizens, the called ministers of the Word over the sheep, the teacher over the student, the parent over the children, the employer over the employee, the older over the younger. So God has established society. So it is to be. Whenever the *kephale*-structure of society begins to fail, society falls victim to anarchy and self-destruction.

The cry of the ERA movement is for the complete equality under the law of the sexes. This is a liturgical versicle directed to the American god of "democracy," but it is inherently an attack upon the *kephale*-structure that God has ordained for society here on earth.

The cry of the feminist-liberationist, regarding the relationship of man and woman in marriage, is "50/50." That is calculated rebellion against the Word of the Lord, which makes it clear that anything less than "100/100" is a violation of the Word and Will of the Lord. When St. Paul instructs husbands to love their wives "as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it," (Eph. 5:25) that is no call for a "50/50" relationship. If Christ would have loved the church on a "50/50" basis, woe be unto us! He gave His all, 100%, for the Church. So a husband is to give his all, 100%, for his wife. And the wife? She is to submit herself unto her own husband "as unto the Lord. ... Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing." (Eph. 5:24) How does a "50/50" relationship fit into the analogy of total obedience by the Church unto its Lord? The "50/50" cry of the liberationist is a major contributing factor in the current 50% marriage-dissolution rate, the destruction of the father and mother figures in the home with the resultant scourge of incipient homosexuality, and the alarming increasing incidence of juvenile delinquency, for the "50/50" concept between spouses in the home soon becomes a "50/50" relationship between parent and children, thereby destroying the God-established *kephale*-structure of the home.

From all segments of our society there rings out the belligerent cry, appropriated by the feminist movement, "We want our rights!" Students want equal rights in running the schools, labor in controlling the management of the company, prisoners in dictating policy and conditions in the prisons, citizens over against their elected officials, have-not nations over against those whose largesse alone prevents them from economic collapse. Everyone wants his rights! Everyone wants to be equal to the other, although inequality is the most self-evident fact in nature, in society, in athletics,

economics, academic life, the political arena or whatever other area one can call to mind.

How is this demand for rights and howling for equality to be evaluated in the light of Holy Writ? Consider but a few holy words from the pens of men inspired by the Spirit of God: "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another." (Rom. 12:10) "Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ ..." (II Cor. 10:1) "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." (Eph. 5:21) "Let nothing be done through strife or vain-glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." (Phil. 2:3) "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." (I Pet. 5:5) How would these passages be received in the council chambers of Ms. Betty Friedhan, as she and her girls plan strategy to gain the majority in another legislature?

The fist-clenched cry, "Give me my rights,"³ is as unChristian as the tyrannical withholding of rights. The cry for equality, besides being a call for mass national mediocrity, is a challenge to the *kephale*-structure that God has established for society. The Spirit of the Lord has advice that our society needs and should heed: "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God" (Eph. 5:21) and "By love serve one another." (Gal. 5:13) Those words fall unheeded on the hardened ears of the equal rights militants, but they should register upon the ears and hearts of all those who love the Lord and His Word. If they do, we may yet be salt sufficient to keep our society from disintegrating and consuming those who are destroying it with their incessant clamoring for "rights" and "equality."

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FOOTNOTES

1. The writer first became acquainted with this term while reading *The Ministry and the Ministry of Women* by Peter Brunner. Contemporary Theology Series, Con-

- cordia Publishing House, St. Louis.
2. The first section of the proposed 27th Amendment reads: "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex."
 3. Mrs. Phyllis Schlafly, the crusader against the ERA, reported that Betty Friedhan once told her, "I'd like to burn you at the stake." Rights? Equality?



HOMILETICAL HINTS FROM I AND II CORINTHIANS

Among all the books of Holy Scripture, besides the pastoral epistles, the two letters of Paul to the Corinthians are an especially rich source of instructions and hints for the practical carrying out of the work of the ministry. It is no doubt due to God's special direction that the holy apostle Paul was moved by the shameful offenses which occurred in the Corinthian congregation to speak his mind on numerous questions which touched the life of the congregation, as well as that of its individual members. Here, perhaps more than anywhere else, Paul appears as a true Seelsorger, who carried in his heart the eternal well-being of the souls entrusted to him. Oh, how he sought to bring the erring back to the right path! How intent he was on strengthening and preserving the believers in the true faith! In these letters he holds out the mirror of the divine Law before the congregation, as well as before individuals. He contends against the attacks of the false apostles on the pure doctrine, as well as suspicions concerning his person and office, which were actually aimed against the Gospel he proclaimed. With holy zeal he condemns the divisive factions, the despising of the Lord's Supper, the lack of love and humility, the misuse of Christian liberty, and the gross offenses and public sins on the part of individual members of the congregation. And then he proclaims ever so sweetly and lovingly the comfort of the Gospel to them, and calls them to faith and to the resultant God-pleasing conduct. He gives instructions as to the proper handling of church disci-

pline by reprimanding the sinner, excluding the impenitent, and receiving back the penitent. He teaches concerning the attitude of the preacher toward the congregation. With great determination, he sets forth his apostolic authority, and then goes on with great humility as a brother among brethren. He shows the congregation how they are obligated to give their preachers the wages that they deserve as laborers in God's vineyard, even though he himself renounced it for the sake of the Gospel. Furthermore, there are abundant hints for what is really the most important duty in our pastoral ministry: the public sermon. It is this last which will receive our heartfelt consideration in this and the following articles of this series.

In connection with sermons today, one sometimes hears the complaint that they are lacking in something, and the question is asked how sermons can be made better and more effective. Countless books on homiletics have been written to offer advice in this regard. But truthfully, no better advice can be given than this, that a preacher should abandon all non-essentials and turn back to the word of the apostles. Listen to them and learn from their manner of preaching. The closer we come to the Word which the Holy Ghost Himself has given to us, the more our sermons will be what they should be, and the more they will accomplish that which God intends. As we therefore center our attention on Paul's two letters to the Corinthians, we propose in this series to discuss the preacher, the contents of the sermon, and the preacher's attitude toward his hearers. We finally hope to say a little about the form of the sermon and its public delivery among those for whom it is prepared.

I.

Since the Apostle takes up the pen to write to the Corinthians in the name of the Triune God in matters pertaining to their salvation, he first of all reminds them and himself of his call to the apostleship. (I Cor. 1:1; II Cor. 1:1) This was necessary for the Corinthians' sake, because the false apostles had had much success in their efforts to undermine the apostolic authority of Paul. At the same time, there were members in the congregation who adhered to him in a carnal manner for

his person's sake, and who had no regard for the word of his fellow-laborers because they were only helpers. So Paul testified to them: Through the will of God I am called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ in the world, and for that reason I am also to preach the Gospel among you. Therefore you should not be so concerned about the gifts and talents which I and the others have or don't have, but you should look to the Word which we have proclaimed to you as stewards of the mysteries of God. — Neither Paul nor any of his fellow-laborers should have dominion over their faith. They all wanted nothing more than to be helpers of their joy. (II Cor. 1:24)

And Paul mentions his call also for his own encouragement. He felt very keenly his own unworthiness (I Cor. 15:9) and his insufficiency (II Cor. 3:5) for this high office. The malicious talk of the false apostles and of the Christians in Corinth who had been led astray compelled him to be humble. But he leaned on his call. He had to praise God for His completely unmerited grace, that Christ had chosen him as His apostle. But he also said, to the glory of God, that this grace had especially been glorified in him, as the Corinthians knew very well. (I Cor. 15:9-10; II Cor. 12:12-13) Therefore he also had trust in God through Christ, that this would daily make him ever more sufficient to carry out his office (II Cor. 3:4-5) Whether other preachers also had splendid gifts did not trouble him. He looked to the Lord Who had called him, for He must give success to his preaching. — We can only plant and water, but God must give the increase. (I Cor. 3:5-7) — Paul was not influenced by either the praise or the blame of men, but commended all judgment to the Lord, Who requires nothing more of His stewards than faithfulness. (I Cor. 4:1ff) It was this certainty of his call which enabled him to suppress the fleshly thoughts which might have hindered him from writing as he did.

So the preacher should keep his call in mind at all times, not only when he goes about his work of preparing a sermon, but also at that moment when he steps into the pulpit. This is highly necessary for him. For he, too, will not be spared many of the same experiences as the apostle Paul had. He will not be lacking in either praise or blame, and at times the latter will come to his ears

more frequently. In His omnipotent wisdom God sees to it (as does also the devil in his wickedness) that the feeling of our own unworthiness and incompetence is kept alive within us. At such times how important it is that we look up to the Lord, Whose Word we preach, in order that things may again appear in their proper perspective. Paul teaches us to trust in the grace of God in spite of our great unworthiness. Even though we are entirely incompetent, God's strength is made perfect (τελεῖται) in weakness. (II Cor. 12:9) He knows the counsels of the heart and will bring them to light. (I Cor. 4:5) As stewards appointed by God, we are to go forth joyfully and courageously, without fear or favor of men. We give the members of God's household their meat in due season. (Matt. 24:45) We urge obedience to the Word which has been commended to us. In this way we will be preserved, on the one hand, from an exalted opinion of ourselves, when God places us in a position of responsibility in His Church, and in which we hold the respect of our fellowmen. And on the other hand, we will be preserved from despondency, when He does not lay upon us the seemingly greater work of "planting," but only the apparently lesser work of "watering." (I Cor. 3:6-8) God calls people to do both. Finally, by thinking about our call, we remain zealous in our desire to work, so that we are willing to say wholeheartedly and joyfully with the apostle: "I preach the Gospel ... for necessity is laid upon me." (I Cor. 9:16) Luther surely comforted himself in his call. He would not trade all the treasures of the world for his Doctorate. "For," he says, "in the end I would have to despair and lose heart in these great and difficult matters which lie upon me, if I had to sneak into this work without a call and command." (St. L. XX: 1670)

When we, in reading the letters to the Corinthians, give attention to the person of the apostle, then we get the feeling from every single word that what he preached was something that really lived in him. From a heart that was overflowing, one thought after another poured forth, with so many things to say. When he says, "But if against my will" (namely, the preaching of the Gospel), "a dispensation (οἰκονομία = stewardship) of the Gospel is committed unto me" (I Cor. 9:17), then it would be contrary to the entire context of the passage to con-

clude that this was for him a burdensome necessity and that he was preaching only in obedience to some command. To be sure, he had to keep his lazy and unwilling flesh in bounds through the divine command, for it was always ready and willing to lust against the Spirit. (Gal. 5:17) But it was so unlikely that he would preach the Gospel "against his will" that he much preferred to renounce all earthly reward for preaching, and declared that his highest reward was to be able to preach. (I Cor. 9:18) To him it was a wonder above all wonders that he who had earlier been a persecutor of the Church was not merely received by God into grace, but that he was also chosen to be a preacher of the Gospel. (I Cor. 15:9-10) It was this that opened his mouth. "The love of Christ," which he had surely experienced, "constraineth (συνέχει = hold together, compel) us." It transformed all his powers of body and soul into one great desire: to lay the world at the feet of Him Who died for us and rose again. (II Cor. 5:14-15) It was the same with him as it had been with David: "I believed, and therefore have I spoken." (Ps. 116:10; II Cor. 4:13) To him it was a dreadful thing to contemplate a person who was blessed with wonderful gifts, and even the gift of preaching, but who then was nothing more than sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal, (II Cor. 13:1) so that having preached to others, he himself would be a castaway. (I Cor. 9:26-27) On the other hand, he thanks God for the comfort with which he had been comforted in his tribulation, for now he could comfort others with that same comfort. (I Cor. 1:3-6) In short, he had experienced within himself the power of God's Word which he now preached to others.

In theory, it is easy to draw appropriate applications from this for ourselves. But it becomes most difficult to put into practice. For one thing, this fact stands out, that a preacher who does not himself have the true faith is the most lamentable creature that one can imagine. It isn't as though God's Word has no power when it comes from the mouth of such an individual. Just as little as God's Word is made powerful by the faith of him who proclaims it, just so little is it weakened and diminished when it goes forth from the mouth of an unbelieving preacher. But it is God's will that only a true Christian should occupy a Christian pulpit. And only such a person can rightly expound the truth as it

should be done, especially when it comes to distinguishing Law and Gospel. After referring to I Cor. 12:3, Luther said: "It is not possible rightly to teach and confess Christ without faith." The heart must be filled with the Gospel if it is going to be eloquent in proclaiming the Gospel. The preacher himself must be a poor sinner who has found righteousness in Christ, and who daily seeks and finds this righteousness, before he can properly extol Christ as the Savior of poor sinners. He himself must earnestly fight against the devil, the world, and the flesh, before he can really warn against these enemies with appropriate earnestness, exhorting people to battle against them. When the Word of Scripture has made the world itself too narrow for him, then he can also cling to every letter and word of Scripture as the infallible Word of God.

When true faith and love for Christ is in a person's heart, then godly jealousy flows out from this, concerning which Paul writes: "I am jealous over you with godly jealousy." (ζήλω — II Cor. 11:2) The "chaste virgin" which he had "presented to Christ" he sees to be in great danger of being seduced from simplicity in Christ to some shameful clinging to a stranger. (v. 3) For this reason he is filled with zeal, and therefore speaks sharp and earnest words. The Corinthians would not find him to be the kind of father that Eli was in the Old Testament. Rather, he was one who could and would swing the rod when it was necessary, (I Cor. 4:21) in order to avenge (by excommunication) the disobedience of those who resisted. (II Cor. 10:6) And yet a person can sense in everything that Paul says the heartfelt and fatherly love which fills his heart. He doesn't want to be as a taskmaster, but as a father. He doesn't want to come to them with the rod, but with love and in the spirit of meekness. (I Cor. 4:15,21) Even when he had to speak sharp words to them, we can see the thoughts of his heart when he says: "Out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you." (II Cor. 2:4; cf. 7:8ff.)

In this connection, we cannot help but marvel at the wide disparity existing between many renowned preachers today and the picture which the apostle presents in "god-

ly jealousy." What many a sermon lacks in earnestness and sharpness and warmth is replaced by pious-sounding, but empty, phrases. Or perhaps the preacher speaks in a very sad way about God's love and mercy, and thereby follows the example of Eli, not endeavoring to arouse real zeal for the glory of God. We surely recognize that in our times there is an ever-increasing attitude of indifference toward the Word of God. There is a frightening apathy also on the part of would-be Christians toward the binding nature of every single word of Scripture. And hand in hand with this goes an increasing disdain for the conscientious ministry of that Word. In this setting, it is surely very necessary that we stand up with heavenly zeal and testify to the world, saying: "Thus saith the Lord!" We dare not twist the meaning of His words. We can only submit to what God tells us in His Word.

But it must be a godly jealousy which moves the preacher, not fleshly zeal and concern. And there will be times when he will hear that he is doing something for fleshly reasons, when actually he is only seeking the glory of God and the salvation of souls, and is even doing this with the right means and in the right way. The apostle Paul was blamed for this too. (II Cor 10:2ff.) But with the boldness of a good conscience, he quietly and firmly denied that this was the case. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal"; they do not originate in carnal reason and pleasure. But his weapons were mighty, pulling down the strongholds of Satan. They were weapons which break into pieces, which pierce an object, and which cause grief and pain. They were weapons which God has given also to us, so that we might use them for the upbuilding of His kingdom and for bringing His elect to the knowledge of their salvation. This is also what the preacher is to do. When he must chastize, then he is always moved by God-given love which he has for his hearers, and by the desire to help them along on the way to salvation.

(To be continued)

A. Schulz



A POSTSCRIPT TO COLWELL'S RULE AND JOHN 1:1

In the March, 1975, issue of this *Journal*, the undersigned discussed Colwell's Rule and the exegesis of John 1:1 as the concluding portion of a series on "The Greek Article and the Doctrine of Christ's Deity." In looking through a recent volume of the *Journal of Biblical Literature* (vol. 92, no. 1, pp. 75-87), I subsequently located another article on this general subject. It seemed advisable to comment here briefly on the substance of this article, by way of a postscript.

The article in question is by Philip B. Harner of Heidelberg College, Tiffin, Ohio, and is entitled "Qualitative Anarthrous Predicate Nouns: Mark 15:39 and John 1:1." Harner states his awareness of Colwell's Rule and its application to the first verse of John's Gospel: "In an article some years ago E. C. Colwell examined this type of word-order [anarthrous predicate nouns preceding copulative verbs] and reached the tentative conclusion that 'definite predicate nouns which precede the verb usually lack the article.' In accordance with this rule he regarded it as probable that the predicate nouns in both Mark 15:39 and John 1:1 should be interpreted as definite. Colwell was almost entirely concerned with the question whether anarthrous predicate nouns were definite or indefinite, and he did not discuss at any length the problem of their qualitative significance. This problem, however, needs to be examined as a distinct issue." (p. 76)

While Harner does not reject the possibility that Colwell's Rule may be the explanation for the lack of an article before θεός in John 1:1, he himself believes that the article was omitted because of a qualitative significance intended by the holy writer. He examines the stylistic characteristics that John exhibits in his Gospel, and reaches the conclusion "that anarthrous predicate nouns preceding the verb may function primarily to express the nature or character of the subject, and this qualitative significance may be more important than the question whether the predicate noun itself should be regarded as definite or indefinite." (p. 75) This conclusion is, of course, similar to that of Dana-Mantey, whom I cited at some length in my recent discussion.

As an aid to the understanding of the verse, Harner offers to the reader what John might have written as well as what he did write. "In terms of the types of word-order and vocabulary available to him, it would appear that John could have written any of the following:

- A. ὁ λόγος ἦν ὁ θεός
- B. θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος [John's actual words]
- C. ὁ λόγος θεὸς ἦν
- D. ὁ λόγος ἦν θεός
- E. ὁ λόγος ἦν θεῖος

"Clause A, with an arthrous predicate, would mean that *logos* and *theos* are equivalent and interchangeable. There would be no *ho theos* which is not also *ho logos*. But this equation of the two would contradict the preceding clause of 1:1, in which John writes that ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν [the Word was with God]. This clause suggests relationship, and thus some form of 'personal' differentiation, between the two. Clause D, with the verb preceding an anarthrous predicate, would probably mean that the *logos* was 'a god' or a divine being of some kind, belonging to the general category of *theos* but as a distinct being from *ho theos*. Clause E would be an attenuated form of D. It would mean that the *logos* was 'divine,' without specifying further in what way or to what extent it was divine. It could also imply that the *logos*, being only *theios*, was subordinate to *theos*."

Harner continues: "John evidently wished to say something about the *logos* that was other than A and more than D and E. Clauses B and C, with an anarthrous predicate preceding the verb, are primarily qualitative in meaning. They indicate that the *logos* has the nature of *theos*. There is no basis for regarding the predicate *theos* as definite. This would make B and C equivalent to A, and like A they would then contradict the preceding clause of 1:1.

"As John has just spoken in terms of relationship and differentiation between *ho logos* and *ho theos*, he would imply in B or C that they share the same nature as belonging to the reality *theos*. Clauses B and C are identical in meaning but differ slightly in emphasis. C would mean that the *logos* (rather than something else) had the nature of *theos*. B means that the *logos* has the

nature of *theos* (rather than something else). In this clause, the form that John actually uses, the word *theos* is placed at the beginning for emphasis."

I have cited Harner at some length, because his illustrations and remarks are interesting and, I believe, for the most part valid. It must be admitted that a qualitative significance for the anarthrous *θεός* of John 1:1 is a distinct possibility.

It is to be regretted, however, that Harner insists also upon the indefiniteness of the noun *θεός*. He admits that in other verses anarthrous predicate nouns preceding the verb may be primarily qualitative in force and yet may also have some connotation of definiteness, and rightly affirms that the categories of qualitateness and definiteness are not mutually exclusive. (p. 87) But in our verse he thinks that "the qualitative force of the predicate is so prominent that the noun cannot be regarded as definite." (p. 87) The category of indefiniteness seems singularly inappropriate for *θεός* in John 1:1. The term indefinite implies that the noun would be general and unidentified. But in what way could we speak of the Word, Jesus Christ, as being "God" in such an indefinite sense? For Scripture shows us that the Word shares with the Father one and the same divine essence. Moreover, to take *θεός* here as indefinite could easily serve to perpetuate the antitrinitarian error that the Word is merely "a god" in some vague, undefined sense of the word. This interpretation Harner himself would vigorously oppose. For he suggests: "Perhaps the clause could be translated, 'the Word had the same nature as God.' This would be one way of representing John's thought, which is, as I understand it, that *ho logos*, no less than *ho theos*, had the nature of *theos*." (p. 87)

So it does not matter significantly whether we accept Colwell's exegesis of John 1:1 or the suggestion of Dana-Mantey and Harner that *θεός* is qualitative in significance. In either case, this verse remains a seat of doctrine for the Scriptural truth that Jesus Christ is true God!

CH A P E L A D D R E S S *

Text: I Corinthians 1:30-31: But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

Besides wisdom and righteousness, God has made Christ to be for us also our sanctification and our redemption.

The word "sanctification" here in our text refers to what we often call the Christian life. We speak of it in the explanation to the Second Article of the Creed in the familiar words: "That I should be His (Christ's) own, and live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness."

This sanctification includes many things. It includes the desire to use the Word of God and the Sacrament faithfully and regularly. It includes our attendance at church services and at chapel. It includes the support of church work through our offerings in the collection plate. It includes witnessing to our Christian hope. It includes faithfulness in using our God-given abilities in our callings in life as students and teachers. Sanctification includes the doing of those things that we know to be pleasing to our heavenly Father, and the avoiding of those things that we know to be displeasing to Him.

If this, now, is what sanctification is, have we perhaps finally come to something in which we can take at least a small amount of personal pride? Do our Christian lives, to the extent that we are leading them, offer us some ground at least for glorying in ourselves? For, after all, aren't we the ones who are doing the running in the way of God's commandments? Isn't it our own personal faith and love that prompt us to offer our lives as sacrifices pleasing to God?

* Given at Immanuel Lutheran College, May 13, 1975.

While it is indeed true that we are personally involved in the lives of sanctification that we are leading, yet our text clearly tells us that there is no room for personal pride and self-glory in this matter of our sanctification. Here too all of the glory belongs to Christ. Surely we should know this well from Scripture. When we are prompted to do what is right and avoid what is wrong, what is the source of that motivation? The Psalmist tells us: "I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart" - Lord, when you have filled my heart up with Thy Word and Thy Spirit, then I will be willing and ready to pursue your holy will in my life. (Ps. 119:32) Again, the Apostle Paul tells us that "the love of Christ constraineth us" - that love of His by which He has purchased and won us from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, urges us on and impels us that we should not henceforth live unto ourselves, but unto Him which died for us and rose again. (II Cor. 5:14) So the motivation for our sanctification comes from Christ!

And where do we find the strength and ability to live sanctified Christian lives? Once again the source of it all is Christ. In John, chapter fifteen, the Lord gives us the picture of the vine and the branches: "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." (v. 5) The branches on a grape vine produce fruit only because they are attached to the stem and the roots, from which they receive life-giving water and nutrients. So also the strength and ability to produce the fruits of good works come only from Christ, to Whom we are connected by faith!

What Paul tells the Philippians is surely true: "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." (2:13) There is no room at all for self-glory or pride when we consider our sanctification, for both the willing and the doing are Christ's own work within us. God has made Him to be also sanctification for us, even as we sing:

Jesus Christ, my Pride and Glory,
He, the true and living Light,
Strengthens me with glorious might.

Christ, revealed in sacred story,
Whom I now as Lord confess,
Teaches me true holiness.

"That, according as it is written, He that glorieth,
let him glory in the Lord!"

Paul tells us, finally, that Christ has been made for us also redemption. Coming as it does in the last place in our verse, the word "redemption" surely refers here to that deliverance from evil that shall be ours when Christ comes again and takes us from this vale of tears to Himself in heaven. It is that redemption of which Christ Himself speaks when He urges us to await with joy His coming on the Last Day: "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." (Luke 21:28)

In spite of all the Vietnams, all the recessions, all the corruption in high places, and all the failures to reform mankind, the unbelieving world still thinks that it can somehow redeem itself. In a poll recently taken by a national news magazine, it was found that the majority of Americans keep holding to the hope that "Things have got to get better." (USNWR, May 5, 1975) Clean up the mess in Washington, put some honest politicians in office, give everyone a decent job and a measure of self-respect, and we will surely be one step closer to achieving a heaven on earth!

But things just aren't going to go that way, at least not in the long run. For Satan and sin are going to prevail more and more the older that this world gets. We know what the Psalmist means when he speaks of this earth as an old, tattered garment, ready to be cast into the fire. (Ps. 102) And before the coming of the Lord things will get so bad spiritually that Christ Himself asks: "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8)

But in the midst of all the turmoil and trouble, you and I can go forth into life with happy hearts and steadfast steps. For our risen and ascended Lord has assured us: "Let not your heart be troubled. ... I go

to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14:1-3)

Let all your hopes rest securely, then, not in the plans and devices of men, but rather in the Christ who has been made also your final redemption. As you go forth once again to your own communities and families and jobs, keep on looking upward and pray with the confidence of faith:

O Jesus Christ, do not delay,
But hasten our salvation;
We often tremble on our way
In fear and tribulation.
Then hear us when we cry to Thee;
Come, mighty Judge, and make us free
From every evil! ...

That prayer the Lord Christ shall most certainly hear and answer, for God has made Him also our redemption. "That according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord!" Amen.

C. Kuehne



== PANORAMA ==

ON REWRITING HISTORY

On pages 95 and 96 of the Proceedings of the Forty-second Biennial Convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS), held at Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota, August 8 to 15, 1973, is printed that convention's "Resolution No. 11." Its subject bears the title: "Scriptural Warrant for State of Confession." So as to put matters in proper perspective, we quote that resolution in its entirety:

"WHEREAS at the joint meeting of our [WELS] Commission on Inter-Church Relations with the Board of Doctrine of the Church of the Lutheran Confession the matter of dealings between church bodies when error or false doctrine has arisen was discussed; and

"WHEREAS the Church of the Lutheran Confession representatives saw no Scriptural warrant for a state of confession in dealing with such situations; and

"WHEREAS our Commission held that a state of confession is frequently called for before terminating fellowship with a group that has become infected with error for the following reasons:

- a) "In order to offer opportunity for determining what the confessional position of the group for which it must be held responsible really is (this may become necessary because of mutually exclusive statements, pronouncements, resolutions made in such a group; because of conflicting positions contending for mastery in this group, one or the other of which may for good reasons be considered to be only temporarily in control);
- b) "To offer opportunity to bring Scriptural testimony against the error infecting the group to those brethren who are not themselves advocating and propagandizing the errors — before treating such brethren as responsible partakers of the error or false practice infecting their group; and

"WHEREAS the Commission holds that, in dealing with situations where error or false doctrine has infected a larger group of confessional brethren, there is Scriptural warrant for use of the term, 'state of confession,' in view of the many Scriptural injunctions quoted in the Synod's Church Fellowship Statement, bidding us to exercise and make earnest effort to preserve the bond of confessional fellowship, to help the weak and the confused; therefore be it

"RESOLVED,

- a) That we endorse the Commission's position as presented to the CLC Board of Doctrine on the definition of the term, 'state of

confession,' at the July 18-19, 1972, meeting with the CLC Board of Doctrine; and be it finally

"RESOLVED,

- b) That we also endorse the Commission's subsequent clarification of this position relative to such dealings as stated in its report: 'It needs to be borne in mind, of course, that when this report, quoted in full, uses the term "state of confession," it is not referring to a concept defined in Scripture itself, so that it always will and must mean one and the same thing. When the term "state of confession" was used during the period before 1961 to designate the fellowship relation of our Synod over against the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod, the synodical resolutions in effect during that period should make it quite evident that the term "state of confession" was not yet meant to express a judgment tantamount to that of Romans 16: 17.'"

In the PANORAMA section of our *Journal* in an earlier issue (under the title, "WELS and CLC — Is There Still a Difference?"),¹ much of the statement above was quoted from the minutes of the WELS representatives at the July 18-19, 1972, meeting held between representatives of the WELS and the CLC. The editorial response given at that time was as follows: "We have reviewed the WELS church fellowship statement and have also studied the essay delivered in exposition of the theses but find no Bible passage which allows for the above-mentioned 'IN STATU CONFESSIOINIS' procedure. We simply come back to the plain injunction of Romans 16:17-18 ..."

While, no doubt, much could and should still be said in response to the now official (since the adoption of the above-quoted resolution) position of the WELS in this matter of its relation with a church body which has become "infected with error" (a rather tenuous and certainly unclear description), we shall at this present time confine our comments to a discussion of the last half of Part B. of the resolution itself: "When the term 'state of confession' was used during the period before 1961 to

designate the fellowship relation of our Synod over against the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod, the synodical resolutions in effect during that period should make it quite evident that the term 'state of confession' was not yet meant to express a judgment tantamount to that of Romans 16:17." It is our contention that by this resolution the WELS is making an unsuccessful attempt to rewrite history by *fiat*. Therefore, for the sake of those who were not personally involved in the controversy during the 1950's, the following is an attempt to adduce evidence from official proceedings and declarations to demonstrate that the WELS did, in fact, exist in a "state of confession" during the period before 1961, in which the judgment of Romans 16:17-18 was clearly applied by the WELS to the LCMS.

In 1950 Professor J. P. Meyer of the WELS seminary at Mequon, Wisconsin, wrote concerning II Thessalonians 3:14-15:

"... Paul is speaking strictly about church life, not about social, political, or business affairs. But regarding church life his instruction is very definite: have nothing to do with him — no pulpit and altar fellowship, no prayer fellowship, nor even an occasional joint prayer. And this in spite of the fact that the break has not been consummated, and they still regard him as a fellow-believer. In this way they will show real brotherliness. They will show real brotherly concern. They will show how serious his error is in their estimation, while an occasional joint prayer would, to say the least, take the edge off their testimony."²

Two years later, at the St. Paul, Minnesota, convention of the Synodical Conference, the WELS representatives declared themselves to be in a "state of confession," for which II Thessalonians 3:14-15 was adduced as the Scriptural basis. In 1953 the WELS, in convention assembled, approved "the Protest agreed upon by our representatives immediately following the St. Paul convention of the Synodical Conference, 1952," which declared, "We find ourselves in a STATE OF CONFESSION." The present writer was in attendance in the meeting of the WELS representatives at the 1952 convention of the Synodical Conference

and clearly recalls that at the time when the vote favoring the entering into such a state of confession was taken a clear explanation of the meaning of such an action, namely that it would be necessary to cease the practice of fellowship, was given by Professor E. Reim. Thus, by its approval of its representatives' actions at St. Paul, the WELS entered upon a state of confession, officially, at its 1953 convention. Surely, by that time the list of false practices carried on by the LCMS was well-known, so that an identification of "causers of divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine" was clearly possible.

Before the WELS met in the summer of 1955, therefore, its Standing Committee in Matters of Church Union felt constrained to report:

"E. In our dealings with our sister synod we have been earnestly endeavoring to heed the Scriptural exhortations to patience and forbearance in love.

"F. We have, however, arrived at the firm conviction that, because of the divisions and offenses that have been caused, and which have until now not been removed, further postponement of a decision would be a violation of the apostolic injunction of Romans 16:17 (I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them).

"On the basis of these considerations we recommend the following resolution, which we herewith submit for study by our brethren and for subsequent consideration and action by the synodical convention.

"RESOLVED: That with deepest sorrow, taking notice of the fact that the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod is causing divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which we have learned, we, in obedience to God's injunction to avoid such, declare the fellowship which we have had with said synod to be terminated."

It cannot be denied, then, that those representatives of the WELS who had been dealing with the LCMS had come to a "conviction" based on God's Word that the judgment of Romans 16:17-18 applied to the LCMS at that time. The

report of the WELS president, O. J. Naumann, to the 1955 convention of that synod sheds some historical light on the matter:

"... we are convinced that our position not only in doctrine but especially in the application of doctrine in our lives and in the lives of our members, is the position that the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference had occupied ever since its organization. The differences that have arisen between us, which we have been trying to face honestly and soberly, and to remove in an evangelical manner by the application of God's Holy Word brother to brother, have not been removed. They have increased. Things we consider contrary to God's Word have been defended with the statement, 'That passage does not apply in this case.' We have heard so often the expression 'Synod's interests are sufficiently safeguarded.' Matters which we named in our resolutions of 1953, which we considered dangerous to our souls' welfare, deterrent to our Gospel ministry, and detrimental to our fellowship in the Conference, have been and still are vigorously defended. The charges which we brought in an effort to do our brotherly duty before God, have been definitely denied. We have reached the conviction that through these differences divisions and offences have been caused contrary to the doctrine which we have learned. And when that is the case, the Lord our God has a definite command for us: 'Avoid them!'

"For those of us who have been closest to these problems, it appears quite definite that we must now obey the Lord's Word in Romans 16:17. Deeply grieved over the developments of the past years, with hearts heavy at the sight of a crumbling fellowship, and at the same time aware of the presence in our sister synod of many who share our position, we expressed our innermost convictions in our preliminary report of the Standing Committee on Matters of Church Union."

We note, in passing, the quite evident change that has taken place in the thinking of the WELS leadership. In the paragraph just above it is declared that, in spite

of the many in the LCMS who shared the WELS position, God's command to avoid them because of the divisions and offenses caused by them was clear and had to be obeyed. Now, in the 1973 resolutions of the WELS, we are told that because of those same individuals (the ones who share the WELS position or, at least, "are not themselves advocating and propagandizing the errors") fellowship ought not to be terminated for a time!

At the time that the WELS held its 1955 convention its Standing Committee made the following additional statement, among others, in its Supplementary Report:

"We affirm our position that the Mo. Synod by 'its acceptance of the Common Confession as a settlement of past differences, which are in fact not settled,' and 'by its persistent adherence to its unionistic practices (Common Confession, Joint Prayer, Scouting, etc.)' has brought about a break in relations, and that our Synod, bound by the Word of God, should now declare itself on the matter."

Certain conclusions are quite evident from these statements made just prior to the 1955 WELS convention. Both the Standing Committee and the Praesidium declare that they have reached the "firm conviction" that it would be a violation of God's clear Word if the injunction to "avoid them" in Romans 16:17 would not be obeyed at that time. There was, in these reports, no suggestion made or implied that the possibility existed, either (a) that the LCMS might not yet be "infected with error" so that a final determination ("conclusive judgment," if you will) of causing divisions and offenses could not yet be made; or (b) that, having recognized that the LCMS was causing divisions and offenses, the WELS should now postpone its avoiding of that church body. It is important to keep this in mind.

It is also evident that a certain advance in judgment had taken place since 1953. In its 1953 convention the WELS had said: "... by its persistent adherence to its unionistic practices," the LCMS "has brought about the present break in relations that is now threatening the existence of the Synodical Conference and the continuance of our affiliation with the sister Synod." How-

ever, in 1955 the Standing Committee reported: "We affirm our position that the Mo. Synod ... has brought about a break in relations, and that our Synod, bound by the Word of God, should now declare itself on the matter."

The 1955 convention of the WELS responded to the reports given to it by its President and its Standing Committee on Matters of Church Union by adopting, unanimously, the following statement and resolution:

"In view of these facts your Floor Committee, together with the Standing Committee in Matters of Church Union, affirms 'our position that the Missouri Synod ...' has brought about a break in relations and that our Synod, bound by the Word of God, should now declare itself on the matter. ... A church body which creates divisions and offenses by its official resolutions, policies, and practices not in accord with Scripture also becomes subject to the indictment of Romans 16:17-18. The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod has by its official resolutions, policies, and practices created divisions and offenses both in her own body and in the entire Synodical Conference. Such divisions and offenses are of long standing." (1955 Proceedings of the WELS.)

The essential statement adopted by the WELS, then, is: THE LCMS HAS CREATED DIVISIONS AND OFFENSES. A CHURCH BODY WHICH DOES THIS IS SUBJECT TO THE INDICTMENT OF ROMANS 16:17-18.

When the Secretary of the WELS reported on "the action of the convention" in regard to the above resolution, the Proceedings clearly show that a distinction was made between the unanimous adopting of the above-cited resolution and the clearly not unanimous adopting of the subsequent resolution of the same convention in which the WELS postponed the action of "avoiding" called for over against those who had been identified as causers of divisions and offenses.

In 1958, three years later, it was argued by the so-called Protest Committee, who were by that time following a line of argumentation developed by Professor Law-

renz of the theological faculty at Mequon, that the 1955 convention did not "conclusively" apply the judgment of Romans 16:17-18 to the LCMS at that time, but, rather, postponed its entire judgment on the matter. It is interesting to note that in its "Letter to the Protesting Brethren" of the WELS, dated June 27, 1958, after quoting Professor Lawrenz' interpretation, the Protest Committee was constrained to acknowledge: "It is true that many did not understand the resolution in that way originally. The members of your Protest Committee will need to admit that they did not understand it that way at the time." In view of the statement actually adopted by the WELS in 1955 it is evident that the original feelings of the Protest Committee were correct.

Consider, for a moment, what would have been involved, if Professor Lawrenz' interpretation were the correct one. In that case the WELS would have been following an unheard-of procedure: 1) Its official representatives find themselves bound by conviction, based on God's Word, to declare that the LCMS must be avoided because it has been causing divisions and offenses; 2) The Synod adopts — in advance — a resolution which it will apply later on, if conditions still warrant it, in the future. (!!!)

However long it took for the Protest Committee's interpretation of the 1955 resolutions of the WELS to become public, it is certain that that was not the official interpretation given at the time! Which brings us to an important point about the interpretation of official church records, documents, resolutions, etc. It may be granted that at times they need official interpretation by church leaders, in order that their meaning may be clear. But such interpretation can correctly be made only when needed — when, for example, the statements are not clear in themselves. Then, too, once an official interpretation has been made, it surely is not historically correct, especially at a later date, to reinterpret it with a different meaning. Such reinterpretation, unless it is based upon new and hitherto undiscovered evidence from the same time as the original statement, is more properly termed revisionism!

Let us, then, briefly examine the interpretations

of the WELS resolutions given at the time, 1955. The *Post-Convention News Bulletin* was published in that year for the purpose of explaining to the members of the WELS the actions of its convention. It is important to note that this bulletin was never repudiated at the time by the WELS Praesidium, but was allowed by it to stand as a factual report of the convention action. The bulletin declared the following:

"HISTORY of the 'growing apart' in matters of doctrine and practice between us and the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod was restudied, showing that serious differences began already in 1939. Finally in our convention in 1953 we with heavy hearts had to declare that the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod 'has brought about the present break in relations that is now threatening the existence of the Synodical Conference and the continuance of our affiliation with the sister synod.' The Floor Committee found no substantial change in the attitude of the Missouri Synod to date.

"GOD'S WORD in Romans 16, 17-18 was studied in relation to the present situation. It was agreed by the body that this passage with its injunction to 'avoid them' applied not only to those who openly teach false doctrine, but also to 'a church body which creates divisions and offenses by its official resolutions, policies, and practices not in accord with Scripture.' Thus it was declared that THIS PASSAGE DOES APPLY to the Missouri Synod because of its persistent adherence to its unionistic practices (Common Confession, Joint Prayer, Scouting, Chaplaincy, and others). Thus it was time for us to declare ourselves on this matter.

"AGREEMENT on the fact that Romans 16, 17-18 applied to the situation in the Missouri Synod was almost unanimous. [Actually, the record indicates that the vote was unanimous. J.L.] The divisions and offenses are clear. There was an honest difference of opinion on whether it was necessary to break relations completely with the Missouri Synod now or whether we, in the words of our President, 'still have an unpaid debt of love to those whose

fellowship we cherished so many years.' The body, by a vote of two to one, decided to wait a year."

It is quite evident that this published interpretation made it very clear that the WELS had applied Romans 16:17-18 to the LCMS. The only debate in the matter was over the question of whether the actual avoiding should take place immediately or should be postponed in the hope of finding opportunities to bear still further testimony to the LCMS which might be heard.

The official interpretation which appeared in the Northwestern Lutheran (the official organ of the WELS) later on in 1955 also declared much the same thing:

"But there is good reason to hope that our Synod can live with this disagreement" [regarding the passage of time before action on terminating fellowship] "until, God willing, it can be resolved in 1956 by action of Synod agreeable to all. For there is still a broad base of unity and a wide area of agreement. Even in action on the Floor Committee report there was evidence to that effect.

"The preamble, which reiterated the 1953 charges of our Synod and applied Romans 16:17-18, was unanimously adopted. All were firmly convinced and fully agreed that the charge of unionism against the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod was valid and that the Romans passage is applicable, even though some could not agree that action be deferred until the next meeting of that Synod."

The Proceedings of the 1955 WELS convention contain a letter of protest written by Professor E. Reim. The letter stated:

"The decision of the Synod to continue its fellowship with the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod ... (even while recognizing that there is full reason for a separation now) compels me to declare that I can continue in fellowship with my Synod only under clear and public protest."

The WELS did not accept Professor Reim's proffered re-

signation but, instead, expressed its continued confidence in him as a leader of the church. His interpretation of the Preamble was in no way rejected. Rather, he was asked to continue to serve on the Standing Committee on Matters of Church Union and as professor in the seminary at Mequon. The question must be asked: If Professor Reim was wrong, and his basis for resignation was therefore incorrect, why was he not told so, officially? It seems quite evident that his understanding of what the WELS had said and done in 1955 was generally accepted at the time.

Two years later, in 1957, the Protest Committee gave its report to the WELS convention of that year. [Note: This convention report is not to be confused with the Protest Committee letter of June 27, 1958, mentioned earlier. J.L.] This report clearly did not differ in any way from the official interpretations cited above, and it was adopted by the convention, with no objections recorded in the Proceedings. Thus it seems evident that the WELS itself, in convention assembled, having full opportunity to accept or reject an interpretation of its former (1955) resolutions, found itself in agreement with the following:

"While there exists in our midst confusing divergence of opinion concerning the interpretation of Romans 16:17,18, especially with regard to the meaning of the expression 'avoid them'; while essays were delivered and it would appear were officially or tacitly accepted in our midst, which are not in harmony with one another; yet the Synod did speak a very clear language concerning this passage at the Saginaw Convention in 1955 when it passed a resolution unanimously, stating that the passage did apply to the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod, though the voting on the break was delayed, for the reasons given, for another year."

Furthermore, the Proceedings of the 1957 convention of the WELS again spoke of "the continuation of the offenses with which we have charged the sister synod, Romans 16:17-18 ..." (Proceedings, p. 144) Thus the synod itself interpreted what it had declared in its earlier conventions, namely that it had "charged" the LCMS with

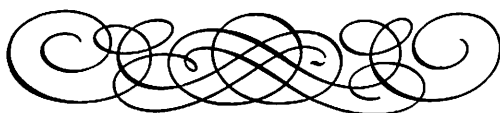
the offenses spoken of in Romans 16:17-18.

Through its most recent resolution on the subject, adopted in its 1973 convention, the WELS would make an attempt to authenticate the interpretation, first published by its Protest Committee in 1958, of its 1953, 1955, and 1957 resolutions. This later interpretation has been shown to be in direct opposition to official interpretations presented at the time or closer to the time of the original resolutions. The historical evidence, as reviewed and cited above, sheds its own clear light on the subject and will not let the latest attempt on the part of the WELS to rewrite its history succeed.

John Lau

FOOTNOTES

1. *Journal of Theology*, December, 1972.
2. *Quartalschrift*, April, 1950.



B O O K R E V I E W

Paul & Jesus, by F. F. Bruce; Grand Rapids:
Baker Book House, 1974. 91 pp. Paper, \$1.95.

Frederick Fyvie Bruce, presently Rylands Professor of Biblical Criticism and Exegesis at the University of Manchester, England, is surely one of the most prolific authors among contemporary evangelical scholars. His writings cover a variety of topics in the field of Biblical studies, particularly on the New Testament.

The present volume, Paul & Jesus, consists of a revised version of six lectures which Bruce delivered at Ontario Bible College in 1973. Their purpose was to refute the proposition, commonly put forth by liberal critics of the New Testament, that the theology of the Apostle Paul was a departure from that of Jesus. In the Introduction he states his own studied conviction that "if

we are concerned with the real Paul and the real Jesus, then a movement away from Paul turns out to be at the same time a movement away from Jesus, who found no more faithful interpreter than Paul." (p. 16) In the six chapters which follow, Bruce demonstrates in convincing fashion the theological unity of the New Testament Scriptures.

Surely this result will not be surprising to the many readers of this *Journal* who with this reviewer hold to the conviction that all Scripture is the verbally inspired Word of God. And yet it is an enjoyable experience to follow the author as he shows the agreement between Paul and Jesus in matters both of historical fact and of doctrine. The chapter on "The Way of Salvation," for example, shows clearly that Paul's claim to "have the mind of Christ" (I Cor. 2:16) was well-founded. "Nowhere has Paul more fully entered into the heart of Jesus' teaching about God and man than in his insistence on justification by divine grace. ... It is not surprising that scholars in the Lutheran tradition should concentrate ... on Paul's teaching about justification by faith and its links with the ministry of Jesus; but similar conclusions could be reached if the same kind of attention were directed towards other dominant themes of Paul's teaching." (p. 56, 61)

The author's repeated insistence upon the importance of the historicity of Jesus' life, His words and works, is a proper and wholesome emphasis in a day that is still marked by the skepticism of a Bultmann.

Bruce is not, of course, of the Lutheran "tradition," and it is therefore not surprising that at some points he shows his disagreement with this theology. He takes the οὐτως of Romans 11:26 (KJV: "And so all Israel shall be saved") in an unlikely temporal sense, and from this verse wrongly infers that at the end of the New Testament period there will be a large-scale conversion of the Jews. (p. 35) He reveals also an imperfect understanding of the reconciliation spoken of in II Corinthians 5:18, when he states: "In Paul's thought 'God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself,' no more needs to be Himself reconciled than the father in the parable needed to be reconciled to his returning son. It was the son's heart, not the father's,

that had to undergo a change." (p. 58f.) The reconciliation of which Paul speaks in this verse refers, not to a subjective change in man's heart, but to an objective change in the status of sinful man before the tribunal of God's justice - a non-imputation of sin for the sake of man's Substitute, Jesus Christ.

Paul & Jesus ranges widely across the Gospels and the Pauline epistles, and contains interesting and helpful exegetical suggestions on passages too numerous to mention. Bruce shows, for example, that the title "Lord" ascribed to Jesus in Romans 10:9 and Philippians 2:9-11 almost certainly represents the covenant name of Yahweh (Jehovah) of the Old Testament Scriptures. (pp. 89-91) Some of the author's exegesis is, however, subject to question. This reviewer is inclined not to agree with him when he affirms that the phrase "after three days" in Jesus' prophecy of His resurrection in Mark 8:31 may be a general expression meaning merely "in a short time." (p. 48) Further examples of this nature could be cited.

Bruce began his professional career as a layman, giving instruction in the Greek classics for more than a decade in Edinburgh and Leeds - a background that reveals itself again and again in his writings. It is not surprising, then, that this present volume too "avoids the extremes of being unduly technical or unhelpfully brief." It can be read with understanding and profit by laymen as well as theological graduates. Nor is it surprising when Bruce weaves into his text allusions to classical times and literature, such as references to Tacitus' Annals and to the Roman legal system. (p. 46, 49)

Paul & Jesus is not in itself a reference work which will find repeated use in the library of a pastor or layman. But it does provide the careful student not only with several hours of wholesome reading, but also with a number of opportunities for making worthwhile notations in the margins of the Bible he uses for reference and study.

C. Kuehne

OUR CALLING: SERVANTS OF GOD — SERVANTS OF PEOPLE	1
Dale Redlin	
THE KEPHALE-STRUCTURE AND THE E.R.A.	7
Paul F. Nolting	
HOMILETICAL HINTS FROM I AND II CORINTHIANS	13
A. Schulz	
A POSTSCRIPT TO COLWELL'S RULE AND JOHN 1:1	20
C. Kuehne	
CHAPEL ADDRESS	23
C. Kuehne	
<u>PANORAMA</u> : ON REWRITING HISTORY	26
John Lau	
<u>BOOK REVIEW</u> : <i>Paul & Jesus</i>	38
C. Kuehne	

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