



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

I Timothy 4:15

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## CHRISTIAN STEADFASTNESS

( A WORD STUDY OF ὑπομονή - HUPOMONE )

"YE HAVE HEARD OF THE  
PATIENCE OF JOB"

In James 5:11 we are told,  
"Ye have heard of the patience  
(ὑπομονήν) of Job ..." All of

us are acquainted with this man and what he had to endure, but let us briefly review. Satan accused God of making an hedge about Job and all that he had, suggesting that if Job were stripped of his many blessings Job would curse God to His face. God accepted the challenge on behalf of His servant Job, giving Satan permission to do what he would to Job short of laying his hand upon Job himself. Subsequently Job's oxen, asses, sheep, camels, servants, and seven sons and three daughters were killed in different ways. Satan was amazed as he heard Job worship God, saying, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither; the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21f.).

Satan was dumbfounded that a human being could maintain such steadfast faith under such adverse circumstances. How can one "hold fast his integrity" (2:3) under such prevailing conditions? Satan then figured that assailing Job's physical health would get to Job: "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the Lord said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life. So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. And took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes. Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God and die. But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips" (2:4-10).

End of story? Hardly. That Job was, by God's own description, a "perfect and upright" man did not mean

that he was sinless, as subsequent chapters abundantly reveal. For a full week (2:13) Job sat silently with his three friends, mulling over all that had transpired. Then he began to murmur and complain, cursing the day of his birth (3:3,11). In three subsequent cycles<sup>1</sup> Job's tactless friends, miserable comforters to be sure, suggest, for example, that Job must have done something wrong that all this had happened (4:7); that God is arbitrary in His dishing out of punishment (9:17); that some pet sin is the cause of Job's suffering (11:5,6,13-15). As the book develops, Job struggles with such questions, seeking to answer the eternal "Why?" behind the suffering of believers.

While Job makes statements which are marked with doubt and confusion, showing his sinful nature, he never entirely loses his faith (Cf. his confession of his Redeemer, 19:23-27). And in the end God's purpose is accomplished in His servant. Job learns, finally, to be silent before God. He learns not to accuse God of injustice and arbitrariness. When God speaks to him out of the whirlwind, Job confesses his sin (42:5-6) and confidently places himself in the hand of his God, having rediscovered peace with the Lord. God then rebukes Job's friends, commends Job before them (42:8), and Job prays for his friends' forgiveness. Rather than embittering him toward others, the suffering endured by Job made him even more patient and loving toward both God and others. As for Job's possessions, God grants him another seven sons and three daughters and restores everything else in double measure.

There are those who are completely perplexed and befuddled by the book of Job and the seemingly unjust treatment he receives from the hand of God. A stark example of this is the recent book hailed as a best-seller: *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*.<sup>2</sup> This is easily the most depressing and distressing book I have ever read, which is not surprising because it is Christless from beginning to end. The chapter on "The Story of a Man Named Job" writes off the book as "a pious old fable." The gist of the book is that what happens to "good" people happens "at random." One by one the author summarily attacks all the "conventional explanations" given by Christ-

ians for suffering. In a closing chapter entitled "What Good, Then, is Religion?" the author says, "The question we should be asking is not, 'Why did this happen to me? What did I do to deserve this?' That is really an unanswerable, pointless question. A better question would be 'Now that this happened to me, what am I going to do about it?'"<sup>3</sup> In plain words, human beings are left to themselves to make the best of bad situations that sooner or later will come to them in this life. They are told to stoically put mind over matter and practice "positive thinking," Norman Vincent Peale style. According to this book there is no hope for finding comfort in a loving Savior-God, no hope for any final and complete, eternal deliverance.

Stoicism, which originated with the ancient Greek philosopher Zeno, taught people to be indifferent to pain as well as pleasure, not to become very attached to anything. In this way the sufferer was encouraged to "keep his chin up" in spite of disaster. Other man-made religions, such as Buddhism, teach the same idea, that detachment is the way to overcome life's troubles. The popular prayer of the alcoholic ("God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference") at least gives passing reference to God.

But there is much more to the HUPOMONE to which God's spokesman, St. James, directs Christian believers as the basis for Job's steadfast endurance. The basis for Job's HUPOMONE differs radically from the philosophies advanced by ancient and modern-day advocates of humanistic Stoicism. All this becomes beautifully and wonderfully clear as we examine the use of the concept of Christian steadfastness, endurance, patience in the divinely inspired Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

#### OLD TESTAMENT

HUPOMONE (ὕπομονή) is derived from the verb HUPOMENO (ὕπομένω), which means, literally, to "abide under" and from which come the derived meanings "to bear up under, endure, be steadfast or patient, wait for." In his *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Kittel points

out that three different Hebrew verbs can be considered counterparts to the Greek word HUPOMENO. They are יָחַד, יָחַד, and יָחַד. These words occur in such passages as these:

The Lord is good unto them that wait (יָחַד) for him, to the soul that seeketh him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait (יָחַד) for the salvation of the Lord (Lam. 3:25).

Therefore I will look unto the Lord; I will wait (יָחַד) for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me (Micah 7:7).

I have waited (יָחַד) for thy salvation, O Lord (Gen. 49:18).

What lies behind this pious waiting for the Lord and His salvation? It has nothing to do, we suggest, with stoical detachment and insensitivity or with personal courage and bravery. Rather, it stems from the believer's knowing God as the covenant God, as a loving, forgiving, redeeming Savior-God. It was the Old Testament believer's confidence that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would bring to pass the salvation (deliverance) He promised in His Son, Jesus Christ, the promised Seed of the woman (Gen. 3:15). While living in the midst of a confusing, sin-cursed world and having to endure much trouble and sorrow as a result, God's children know that they are living under Jehovah-God's gracious direction and protection in their lives. They know by faith that they only have to wait for the Lord's vindicating, liberating action which will surely bring about an alleviating of their situation.

There is a distinct eschatological tone to this pious waiting of believers in the Old Testament:

My righteousness is near; my salvation is gone forth; and mine arms shall judge the people; the isles shall wait (יָחַד) upon me, and on mine arm shall they trust (Is. 51:5).

Therefore wait (יָחַד) ye upon me, saith the Lord,

until the day that I rise up to the prey; for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger; for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy (Zeph. 3:8).

For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and no lie; though it tarry, wait (תַּחַן) for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry (Hab. 2:3).

Thou shalt know that I am the Lord, for they shall not be ashamed that wait (תַּחַן) for me (Is. 49:23).

Already here we can see what the patient endurance of the believer is not. It is not an inner quality of the human being that merely needs to be developed or discovered. Rather, it is a virtue that comes from outside a person, a quality that is given to those who hold fast to God, His gracious words and promises. We notice how Job, in the depths of his doubt and dismay, asked, "What is my strength, that I should hope (לַחֲיוֹת)?" (Job. 6:11). Job knew he could not find deliverance in his own strength, but he needed to rely upon his God. Far from being stoical, Christian believers are "waiters for Jehovah": "But they that wait upon the Lord (יִשְׁכְּבוּ וְיִתְחַנְּנוּ) shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint" (Is. 40:31).

Going hand in hand with this pious waiting of believers is a confident hope in God. In Psalm 71:5, for example, we read, "For Thou art my hope (תְּהִי לִי בְּרִיָּה), O Lord God; thou art my trust from my youth." The Psalms are replete with such expressions of the believer's confident hope in God for deliverance — deliverance not only eschatologically but also over against the present difficult or troublesome circumstances in which they might find themselves. No one who in Christian steadfastness waits on the Lord will be disappointed or ashamed. Knowing this to be so, the trusting believer prays:

Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. O my God,

I trust in thee; let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me. Yea, let none that wait (וַיִּחַל) on thee be ashamed; let them be ashamed which transgress without cause. Show me thy ways, O Lord; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me, for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait (וַיִּחַל) all the day (Ps. 25:1-5).

No fewer than eleven times in Job do we find the use of the word וַיִּחַל. Job waited his entire life for God to intervene in his case: "All the days of my appointed time will I wait (וַיִּחַל)" (14:14). And, of course, Job was not disappointed in his God. After patient endurance he was granted to see "the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy" (James 5:11).

#### NEW TESTAMENT

Having viewed the HUPOMONE of Job from the vantage point of the Old Testament, our understanding and appreciation for the God-given virtue of Christian steadfastness is broadened and deepened as we examine how the concept is used in the New Testament.

As has already been suggested, there is a two-sidedness to HUPOMONE and/or HUPOMENO, that is, it is either toward God or toward the world. It can refer to a waiting upon or expecting of God eschatologically (the most frequent Old Testament use), or it can refer to a standing fast, bearing up under, enduring, or persevering under trials which believers experience in this present, evil world (the most frequent New Testament use). W. E. Vine<sup>4</sup> lists HUPOMONE as referring to patience in trials in general (Lk. 21:19); in trials from service to the Gospel (2 Cor. 6:4, 12:12, 2 Tim. 3:10); in trials under chastisement (Heb. 12:7); and in trials under undeserved afflictions (1 Pet. 2:20). In addition to these passive uses of the word, he lists these active uses: persistence or perseverance in well-doing (Rom. 2:7); in fruit-bearing (Lk. 8:15); and in running the Christian race (Heb. 12:1).

Let us now look briefly at the usage of HUPOMONE in the Gospels and in the Pauline and non-Pauline epistles. First, in the Gospels.

## HUPOMONE IN THE GOSPELS

The word HUPOMONE appears but three times in the Gospels, and that only in the synoptic Gospels, and each time from the lips of our Savior. 1) The parable of the Sower and the Seed concludes with Jesus' words: "But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience (ὕπομονή)" (Lk. 8:15). How significant are these words! For one thing, they underscore the fact that HUPOMONE is a quality which can only be, and is, possessed by those who faithfully hear and learn God's Word (Cf. Rom. 15:4). No human being will come into possession of HUPOMONE as a result of a personal resolve or determination to detach himself from trial, trouble, or affliction, nor for that matter by resolutely deciding to "keep one's chin up" under adverse circumstances. Rather, HUPOMONE stems from hearing the comforting words and promises of God in an honest and good heart. Furthermore, the Savior's use of HUPOMONE here underscores that it is, in fact, an active force in the life of the believer. The steadfastness and persistence that marks faithful hearers of God's Word does not cause them to nervously, sullenly twiddle their thumbs, chafing and murmuring against God for their circumstances. No, they bring forth fruit with HUPOMONE. In spite of all, their Christian faith is allowed to demonstrate itself in works which glorify their Father which is in heaven.

It might be interjected here that believers should not allow a lack of HUPOMONE in their lives to lead them to doubt their Christian faith. Being sinner/saints, as Job, there will be times when believers will bend under some trial or tribulation, will tremble under God's chastening hand, maybe even murmuring and complaining against the Lord. The old sinful flesh within all too easily rises up to question the Lord's ways, and yet when the Word of the Lord is faithfully heard, the Holy Spirit works to restore, leading again to repentance and its fruits. This is the "time of refreshing" mentioned by Peter in Acts 3:19.

2) The Savior also uses our word when He says: "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake; but he that shall endure (ὕπομένων) unto the end, the same

shall be saved" (Mk. 13:13; cf. Mt. 10:22, 24:13). As the word is here used it is "a basic attitude of the Christian as he faces the attacks of a hostile and unbelieving world and as he finds himself in the midst of its temptations ... it is a decisive precondition if the individual is to attain personally to the final salvation of God."<sup>5</sup> Trials and tribulations of all kinds, if not open then subtle, will come to God's children (cf. John 16:33). Only if they persevere and endure unto the end shall they attain eternal salvation. The Spirit-wrought quality of HUPOMONE is therefore an absolute necessity for obtaining the end of our faith, the salvation of our souls.

3) The Savior's third use of HUPOMONE occurs in Luke 21:19: "ἐν τῇ ὑπομονῇ ὑμῶν κτήσασθε τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν." These words are variously translated: "In your patience possess ye your souls" (KJV); "By standing firm you will save yourselves" (NIV); "Endure patiently, and you'll win your lives" (Beck); "By your perseverance you will win your souls" (NASB). The meaning is clear: Those who do thus endure shall without question be saved.

HUPOMONE IN THE PAULINE EPISTLES      We might expect that HUPOMONE as a basic Christian virtue and attitude is sketched for us most richly by the Apostle Paul, who himself endured so many trials and tribulations for the Gospel's sake. St. Paul learned early on in his ministry that "we must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22). He could write his young co-worker Timothy: "But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering (μακροθυμία)<sup>6</sup>, charity, patience (ὑπομονή), persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured (ὑπήνεγκα)<sup>7</sup>, but out of them all the Lord delivered me" (2 Tim. 3:10f.).

The quality of HUPOMONE that Paul possessed was learned in God's school of affliction and persecution for Christ's sake. In addition, Paul had the "thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me" (as God had permitted Satan to buffet Job), but the Apostle had learned to "take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in ne-

cessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong." The endurance which he thus learned was in no small way responsible for the fact that Paul could accomplish many things for the Lord, as he tells the Corinthians: "Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience (ὕπομονῃ), in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds" (2 Cor. 12:7-12). Notice again that HUPOMONE is here an active virtue both in the Apostle's Christian life as well as in his Gospel ministry.

And it will be, should be, that also in the lives of all those who serve the Lord in the public ministry. Privileged as they are to be "workers together" with Christ (2 Cor. 6:1), His Gospel ministers will be careful that they give "no offense in anything that the ministry be not blamed; but in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience (ὕπομονῃ), in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses ..." (2 Cor. 6:4). It is not only interesting but highly significant that the first credential here listed by Paul as regards God's ministers is that they show themselves to be approved unto God by virtue of their steadfast endurance under difficult circumstances. So also, part of Timothy's pastoral training involved learning that he, as Paul, should "endure (ὕπομένω) all things for the elect's sake, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (1 Tim. 2:10). Steadfast endurance under trial and affliction on the part of Christ's ministers will serve as an encouraging example to those they are called to serve: "And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring (ὕπομονῃ) of the same sufferings which we also suffer" (2 Cor. 1:6).

The quality of HUPOMONE is not confined to, or reserved for, some special class of God's children on earth. It is the call of every Christian to endure trial and tribulation. This endurance, in turn, serves to nurture the quality of HUPOMONE: "But we glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience (ὕπομονήν) and patience (ὕπομονή) experience, 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 un-

to us" (Rom. 5:3-5; cf. 2 Pet. 1:6). Notice that ὑπομονή is here linked with ἐλπίς as it often is, as well as with ἀγάπη and πίστις. In 1 Thessalonians 1:3 St. Paul praises the Christians for their "work of faith (πίστεως) and labour of love (ἀγάπης), and patience of hope (τῆς ὑπομονῆς τῆς ἐλπίδος) in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father." (Cf. also 1 Tim. 6:11, 2 Tim. 3:10, 2 Thess. 1:4, Titus 2:2, 1 Cor. 13:7.) Christian hope seeks to be steadfast and to endure under all uncertainty and doubt (Rom. 8:25). In Paul's hymn of praise to ἀγάπη in 1 Cor. 13, one trait of noble Christian love is said to be that it endures all things (πάντα ὑπομένει). As used in these references HUPOMONE is a passive, calm and confident reliance upon God which allows the hopeful, loving, believing child of God to face all the vicissitudes of life without weariness, despondency, grumbling, or complaining.

It cannot be emphasized too strongly that HUPOMONE is a Spirit-given attitude or attribute of God's children. Nowhere does this come out more clearly than in Colossians 1:11: "Strengthened with all might according to his glorious power, unto all patience (ὑπομονήν) and long-suffering (μακροθυμίαν) with joyfulness, giving thanks unto the Father ..." (Cf. Eph. 3:16). This passage also shows that HUPOMONE is not a dull, long-faced resignation to one's "fate," but a joyful spiritual strength and steadfastness inspired in the believer's heart through the glorious power of God in the Gospel. According to the inner man, the believer is moved by the Spirit of God to "take patiently" (ὑπομενεῖτε) the suffering that will come as a result of his well-doing (Cf. 1 Pet. 2:20f.).

Christian steadfastness and patient endurance is also inspired in the believer by the example of Christ. Countless Christian believers (including Job, Joseph, and other Old Testament heroes of faith) have been encouraged to "run with patience (δὲ ὑπομονῆς)" the race that is set before them by "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross (ὑπέμεινεν σταυρόν)..." (Heb. 12:1ff.). If we are tempted by Satan to murmur and complain against God's loving chastisements in our lives, we do well to

"consider Him that endured (ὕπομεμενηκότα) such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds" (12:3).

We have a couple of times listed the Greek word μακροθυμία in passages where it occurs together with ὑπομονή. Whereas HUPOMONE refers to patience under trials, referring to things, MAKROTHUMIA refers to patience under provocation, referring to persons (hence, forbearance, long-suffering). As HUPOMONE, so MAKROTHUMIA is an holy attitude of all believers according to their new, Spirit-given nature: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering (μακροθυμία), gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. 5:22-23).

It is likewise noteworthy that MAKROTHUMIA as well as HUPOMONE is mentioned as a necessary quality for Christ's Gospel ministers (Cf. 2 Cor. 6:4ff.). St. Paul could humbly call to Timothy's attention the MAKROTHUMIA that marked Paul's ministry as he sought to be all things to all men. In their calling as "Seelsorgers" Christ's ministers need to pray for the quality of patience or long-suffering under provocation from people, as well as patient endurance and steadfastness under trials of other kinds.

At the same time let it be noted that it is MAKROTHUMIA and not HUPOMONE that is attributed to God. God is not in need of HUPOMONE since He is not subject to the trials that come from outside pressures as we sinful human beings are. MAKROTHUMIA is attributed to God, for example, in 1 Peter 3:20. When speaking of the people who provoked God before the Deluge, Peter writes: "Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering (μακροθυμία) of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing ..." Those who despise the "goodness of God" which "leadeth to repentance" are told that they are despising the "μακροθυμίας of God" and thus are "treasuring up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God" (Rom. 2:4ff.). All sinners, as "vessels of wrath," must be taught to rejoice in the knowledge that God endures "with much long-suffering (ἐν πολλῇ μακροθυμῇ)" their sins which are deserving of eternal destruction (Rom. 9:22). Yea,

were it not for the MAKROTHUMIA of the Lord, no sinner could long survive His just wrath. But behold, "the long-suffering (μακροθυμῶν) of our Lord is salvation!" (2 Pet. 3:15). Eschatologically speaking, we will not fail to rejoice in the fact that "the Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering (μακροθυμεῖ) to usward, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9).

We have said that HUPOMONE is not attributed to God. This presents no difficulty in spite of the fact that the phrase "ὁ θεὸς τῆς ὑπομονῆς" does occur. In Romans 15:4 St. Paul has spoken of the Scriptures being "written for our learning, that we through patience (δύναμις τῆς ὑπομονῆς) and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." He then prays that "the God of patience (ὁ θεὸς τῆς ὑπομονῆς) and consolation" might grant the Roman Christians to "be like-minded one toward another according to Christ Jesus." The apostle's prayer is that the God Who gives or imparts the most necessary Christian virtue of HUPOMONE might be the object of their common praise and glory.

Finally, in 2 Thessalonians 3:5 Paul prays that the Lord would direct the hearts of the Thessalonian Christians "εἰς ὑπομονὴν τοῦ χριστοῦ." This phrase is translated "steadfastness of Christ" (RSV and NASB); "patient waiting for Christ" (KJV); "Christ's perseverance" (NIV); "how patiently Christ suffered" (Beck). According to W. E. Vine, this phrase can be taken one of three ways: as referring to the believer's 1) patient waiting for Christ's second coming; 2) being as patient in sufferings as Christ was patient; 3) being patient in hope of Christ's triumph and their deliverance even as Christ waited that His enemies be a footstool for His feet (Heb. 10:13). In view of Hebrews 12:1ff., it seems that the second rendering would be the best choice.

#### HUPOMONE IN THE NON-PAULINE EPISTLES

We have referred above to a few passages where the word HUPOMONE is found in Peter's epistles.

In addition we have noted instances where the word is found in Hebrews and James, to which we would now add Revelation. Significantly, these three books of the Bible

(Hebrews, James, and Revelation) were all written to the Christian Church under persecution. In each of them we find exhortations to HUPOMONE if the crown of glory is to be won.

Hebrews 12, to which we have previously referred, directs the believer's gaze to Christ, the model martyr. It points out that steadfast endurance of trials and tribulations and afflictions has the value of divine discipline. Hebrews 10:32-39 calls upon believers who are growing weary under the cross and in danger of backsliding to "call to remembrance the former days in which, after ye were illuminated ye endured (ὑπέμεινότε) a great fight of afflictions." Believers are warned against casting away their Christian confidence and hope, "for ye have need of patience (ὑπομονῆς) that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." How dreadfully sad if, lacking ὑπομονή, the weary pilgrim draws back unto perdition, losing his eternal reward.

The Epistle of James begins and ends with exhortations to HUPOMONE. In the first chapter James writes: "But let patience (ὑπομονή) have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (1:4). And: "Blessed is the man that endureth (ὑπομένει) temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love him" (1:12). Notice how the holy writer encourages the tried and tested believer by directing him to the end result or goal of his patience (HUPOMONE). That result or goal is being given (not earning!) the crown of life in heaven as a reward of grace. Spirit-wrought patience (HUPOMONE) has a stablishing, strengthening, settling effect upon the very faith that allows the believer to "endure" his Christian calling which includes suffering for Christ's sake (Cf. Phil. 1:29). This, in turn, supports the view expressed by the writer to the Hebrews that God's loving chastisements are "for our profit" (Heb. 12:10), to which this word of explanation is added: "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby" (12:11). The believer who is graciously permitted to maintain such a perspective in the midst of suffering knows

what James means when he writes: "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience (ὕπομονήν)" (1:2-3).

In his last chapter James is again speaking eschatologically when he exhorts to patience. He refers to the believer's need for patience under trials from things (HUPOMONE) and to patience under trials from persons (MAKROTHUMIA). The exhortation to "Be patient (μακροθυμήσατε)" occurs twice (5:7 & 8) in the face of the fact that "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." The illustration the holy writer uses is that of the husbandman or farmer who, having planted seed, knows of the need for patience (MAKROTHUMIA) as he waits for the timely rains for his crop. If we wonder why it is said that the need is for patience under trials from persons, the answer is likely found in the fact that there will always be those who ridicule a believer's calm and confident trust and dependence upon a loving Creator-God, the "Father of lights" from Whom cometh down "every good and perfect gift," including the necessary moisture for an abundant harvest (Cf. James 1:17).

Similarly, tried and tested Christian believers need patience (MAKROTHUMIA) because of the fact that "there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming?" (2 Pet. 3:3f.). There always have been, and ever will be, those who (as Job's "miserable comforters" as well as early and latter day advocates of stoicism) seek to lead the suffering believer to question his faith in the fact that the Lord of heaven has better things in store for him than this life and the transitory things it can provide.

The number of those who scoff at the Second Coming of Christ and the promised deliverance it will afford the suffering believer has hardly decreased since the days of the Lord's prophets to whom James refers as those "who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction and of patience (μακροθυμίας)" (5:10). The prophet Elijah is referred to later in the chapter. Elijah is a good example of a prophet of the Lord who stood in need of patience under provocation from persons.

Wicked King Ahab scoffed at the Lord's prophet for his prediction that it would not rain upon the land, but the Lord vindicated (as He always does) the word spoken by His prophet.

When all is said and done with regard to the trials of believers, we see how right James is when he writes: "Behold, we count them happy which endure (τοὺς ὑπομένον-τας). Ye have heard of the patience (τὸν ὑπομονήν) of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy" (5:11).

As "the book of the martyr Church," the Revelation of St. John contains the word HUPOMONE seven times. (John's Gospel and three epistles do not use the word.) This book was written when John was in exile "in the isle that is called Patmos for the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." John describes himself as a "companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience (ὑπομονῇ) of Jesus Christ" (1:9). Tribulation is part and parcel of the Christian faith and life, and those who persevere are assured a place in the eternal Kingdom of Christ which was won for them through Christ's innocent sufferings and death in their behalf. Aged John himself had not long to wait (Cf. Matt. 5:10).

The exalted Savior Who, while on earth, had encouraged believers to possess their souls in patience (Lk. 21:19), does not overlook this virtue as He beholds it in His Church on earth. With divine approval He acknowledged, regarding the Church in Ephesus: "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience (ὑπομονήν), and how thou ... borne, and hast patience (ἔχεις ὑπομονήν), and for my name's sake has laboured, and hast not fainted" (2:2-3). Regarding the Church at Thyatira: "I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience (τὴν ὑπομονήν σου) ..." (2:19). Regarding the Church at Philadelphia: "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience (τὸν λόγον τῆς ὑπομονῆς μου), I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth" (3:10).

Especially in these trying, latter days, Christian pastors have the solemn duty to strive to further the qua-

lity of HUPOMONE in the congregations they serve. They should be personal examples to the flock in this regard. They should pray that God the Holy Spirit would bestow pious, Christian steadfastness in the hearts and lives of the members. And above all, they should faithfully proclaim what Christ here calls "τὸν λόγον τῆς ὑπομονῆς μου." They should untiringly "preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering (ἐν πάσῃ μακροθυμίᾳ) and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:2). They should preach the Gospel message which tells of Christ's patience under suffering in the sinner's stead, and the blessed fruits thereof, forgiveness of sins, life and eternal salvation.

The last two appearances of the word HUPOMONE are in Revelation 13:10 and 14:12: "Here is the patience (ὑπομονή) and the faith of the saints" and "Here is the patience (ὑπομονή) of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." As the book of Revelation in so many places clearly reveals, Satan will see to it that the last days will be filled with severe trials and testing for believers. Rather than destroying the believer's faith, this trial and testing, to Satan's dismay, causes the patience and faith of the believing saints (as in Job's case) to come into its own (Cf. Rom. 5:4f.). In their patience the saints have hope and faith that does not disappoint them. The end of their faith, the salvation of their souls (1 Pet. 1:9) is assured them in the promise that is solemnly sealed by the Holy Spirit of God Himself: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them" (14:13).

The "golden-mouthed" church father, Chrysostom, called HUPOMONE the queen of virtues. Luther said, "Patience is the most excellent of virtues. It is very highly commended in Scriptures by the Holy Spirit." Commenting on Romans 12:12 ("patient in tribulation, τῇ θλίψει ὑπομένοντες"), Luther said, "We should accustom ourselves to endurance in afflictions, and we should not be impatient and murmur against God, no matter how many and how great the calamities are that oppress us. But it hurts."<sup>8</sup>

Yes, it hurts. Job and all Christians know that. But at the same time they have the steadfast assurance and confidence, based on the certain promises of God's holy and saving Word, that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. ... What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? ... Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Rom. 8:28,31-32,35-37).

Paul Fleischer

#### NOTES

1. The three cycles of discussion between Job and his friends are in chapters 4-14, 15-21, and 22-31 respectively.
2. Harold S. Kushner, *When Bad Things Happen to Good People* (New York: Schocken Books, 1981). The author is a Jewish rabbi of Temple Israel in Natick, Massachusetts. His argumentation is revealed in such words as these: "Let me suggest that the author of the Book of Job ... believes in God's goodness and in Job's goodness, and is prepared to give up his belief ... that God is all-powerful. Bad things do happen to good people in this world, but it is not God who wills it. God would like people to get what they deserve in life, but He cannot always arrange it. Forced to choose between a good God who is not totally powerful, or a powerful God who is not totally good, the author of the book chooses to believe in God's goodness" (p. 42).
3. *Ibid.*, p. 136.
4. W. E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co.).
5. Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing

- Co.), Vol. IV, p. 585.
6. We here list μακροθυμία as it occurs together with ὑπομονή, since a comparative study of these words comes later in the paper.
  7. ὑπήνεκα: aorist, from ὑποφέρω, meaning "to bear up under, sustain, endure," usually regarding temptations, as in 1 Cor. 10:13; but cf. also 2 Tim. 3:11, 1 Pet. 2:19.
  8. Ewald Plass, *What Luther Says* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), Vol. II, p. 1024.
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## THE IMPORTANCE OF ESCHATOLOGICAL PREACHING\*

The decade of the 70's was a time of great popular interest in what the Bible says about the times leading up to the return of Christ. Those were the days when paperback books on Bible prophecy appeared in supermarkets and drugstores. Hal Lindsey's *The Late Great Planet Earth* sold in the millions. Announcements of series of lectures on Bible prophecy appeared in the local newspaper and in brochures which came in the mail. Terms such as "Antichrist" and "Armageddon" became familiar to people who had very little knowledge of the Bible. There was a new fascination with current events in the Middle East as many became convinced that these things were happening in fulfillment of Bible prophecy.

This interest in eschatology seems to have subsided now and it is easy to see why. The treatment of Scripture in the popular books and lectures was mostly superficial, appealing to man's idle curiosity about the times and the seasons which the Father has put in His own power. What the modern-day prophets tried to predict, using the Bible as their crystal ball, did not come to pass and the prophets became discredited. Yet this past boom in eschatology did serve a purpose. It made us aware of the importance of knowing what the Scriptures really do say about the last

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things. Some among us did some good sound studies of material in the Scriptures which many of us had not studied previously.

But with the passing of popular interest in the last things, our interest in the proper study of these things may diminish as well. In the days to come we will need to be careful not to neglect the last things in our study and preaching. For if we do, we will place ourselves and our people in danger of being overtaken by the carnal security of the world. If we are to avoid this danger, we will need to be convinced of the importance of eschatological preaching and to be clear about the reason for its importance.

The first reason that eschatological preaching is important is that eschatology is part of the counsel of God recorded for us in the Holy Scriptures. All preachers should be able to say to their congregations what Paul said in his farewell to the Ephesian elders, "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). As called ministers made overseers by the Holy Spirit, we have the responsibility to "preach the word" (2 Tim. 4:2). This responsibility includes the preaching of those things which come under the heading of eschatology. For Christ and His apostles taught the second coming of Christ (Acts 1:11; Heb. 9:28); the resurrection (1 Thess. 4:16-17; 1 Cor. 15:12,13,20,51-52); the judgment (Acts 17:31; 2 Tim. 4:1); the end of the world (Luke 21:33; 2 Pet. 3:10); heaven (Matt. 25:34); and hell (Matt. 25:41).

As part of the counsel of God, eschatology is related to the central doctrine of the Scriptures: the salvation of sinners by the grace of God through faith in Christ Jesus. The teachings concerning the last things are part of that revelation of God which is able to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Proclaiming these truths is then a part of our responsibility as ambassadors for Christ. Therefore, if we are to fulfill this responsibility, we must understand and keep in mind exactly how eschatology relates to justification. Eschatology is related to justification in that it is the study of the ultimate results of the fin-

ished work of Jesus Christ. Everything that we say about the last things is based on the knowledge that Christ's work is complete. Whoever would preach about the last things must be thoroughly steeped in what the Scriptures say about the perfection of Christ's work of redemption.

A study of the last things must go back long before the coming of the Christ. Even the Old Testament saints saw the work of the promised Savior as complete. The prophet Isaiah could speak of the sufferings of Christ as though they were already in the past and say "with his stripes we are healed" (Is. 53:5). Jesus could say of Abraham that he "rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it and was glad" (John 8:56). Job could confess faith in his own resurrection, not as a possibility but as a certainty (Job 19:25-27).

A study of the last things must take in the life and work of Jesus and the inspired commentary on those things provided by the epistles. At the end of His ordeal upon the cross, Jesus said, "It is finished" (John 19:30) and with this confidence commended His spirit into the Father's hands. The Father then demonstrated to the world that He had accepted Christ's work as complete and perfect by raising Him from the dead (Acts 13:30). The resurrection of Christ is the key doctrine of the Christian faith because it is the clear, visible testimony of the Father that the sin of the world has been removed, that the world has been reconciled to Him. This is why the Scriptures place so much emphasis on the resurrection, making much of the many witnesses who saw the Lord alive after His resurrection, making mention of it again and again in sermons, and expounding its importance. The ascension of Jesus into heaven offers additional proof of the perfection of His work. By raising Christ to His right hand, exalting Him also according to His human nature and placing Him in a position of supreme authority, God the Father again demonstrated His acceptance of His Son's work (Eph. 1:20-23).

True Scriptural eschatological preaching proclaims this finished work in that it sets forth Christ returning in glory to reveal His victory over sin and death before all the world and to manifest the fruits of that victory.

It sets forth the glorified Christ Who appeared to John (Rev. 1) as "the one which is, and which was, and which is to come" and who, in every detail of His appearance, demonstrated His victory over sin and its consequences. The long garment belted at the breast indicates one at rest, his work finished. The white hair symbolizes perfect holiness as of one who has overcome sin. His eyes, feet, and voice show aspects of His authority as the righteous Judge of all. He identifies Himself as the one "that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and death." The Lord's judgment of condemnation upon the unbelieving is also evidence of His finished work. In it He will take vengeance upon them that "obey not the gospel." It is their rejection of Christ's work on their behalf that makes them guilty. We see the victory of Christ in His power to raise the dead. All that are in their graves will come forth when they hear the voice of the Son of Man (John 5:27-29). And especially do we see His victory in His gift of eternal salvation. He not only lives but gives eternal life (John 10:28); He has gone to prepare a place for us (John 14:2); He bestows the crown of life upon the faithful (Rev. 2:10; 2 Tim. 4:8).

All of this may be obvious enough to those who read this paper. Yet it is undoubtedly worthwhile for us to review these things. The importance of relating eschatology to justification cannot be overstated. This becomes clear when we see how far they have strayed who have failed to do it. The fundamentalists who have failed to relate their teachings on eschatology to justification have introduced ideas which have nothing to do with the gospel and which contradict clear statements of Scripture. For example, they assign much importance to membership in the Jewish race, contrary to the Scriptural teaching that the true children of Abraham who will inherit his blessing are those who believe in Christ, no matter what their ancestry (Gal. 3:29).

One of the clearest examples of this failure to relate eschatology to justification is the teaching of many fundamentalists on the Antichrist. They are looking for a future appearance of an extremely powerful political figure because they have not understood the Scriptures

which describe the Antichrist as a primarily spiritual force whose wickedness is in this that he sits in the temple of God as a spiritual leader and from that position of spiritual authority opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped (2 Thess. 2:4). Because of this lack of understanding about the nature of the Antichrist, these fundamentalists have failed to see its fulfillment in the Roman Papacy, which curses the doctrine of justification.

Why have these fundamentalists hailed to relate eschatology to justification? It is because they do not fully understand either the doctrine of justification itself or its central position in the Scriptures and importance to the Christian faith. As F. Pieper wrote,

What, then, may be the reason that men are today disinclined to recognize the Pope as the Antichrist? Whence this strange and deplorable phenomenon that nearly all recent "believing" theologians search about for the Antichrist while he is performing his work in the Church right before their eyes, his soul-destroying activity as plain as day? The trouble is that they have no living knowledge of the doctrine of justification and of the importance of this doctrine for the Church. From my own experience I must confess that I was vitally convinced that the Pope is the Antichrist only after I realized, on the one hand, what the doctrine of justification is and how much it means to the Church, and, on the other hand, that the real essence of the Papacy consists in denying and cursing the doctrine of justification and in binding men's consciences to itself by its show of piety and its claim to be the only saving Church. (*Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. II, pp. 554-555).

No doubt the fundamentalists would be shocked to be accused of failing to understand and properly emphasize justification. Yet we find in their sermons and writings an emphasis on religious experience rather than on the objective work of Christ; we find a confusion of justification and sanctification, e.g., in telling people to pray for their own conversion.

Those who have failed fully to appreciate the doctrine of justification and to understand eschatology in its light have done much harm with their eschatological preaching. In some instances they have taught people to regard the Bible as a sort of code book by which one can predict future world events. Surely that has interested many in studying the Bible, but to what end? The predictions which some preachers have attempted to make on the basis of Bible prophecy have caused others to turn away from the Bible as something frivolous, not worthy of serious study. For they see the foolishness of trying to predict future events in the Middle East and of trying arbitrarily to identify specific persons and things in the world today as fulfillments of certain prophecies (e.g., Henry Kissinger as the Antichrist).

But, done properly, eschatological preaching will have a salutary effect on the hearers. It combats security in material things. Man naturally tends toward the attitude of the rich fool: "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry" (Luke 12:19). And if he is not rich, he imagines that he would be happy and secure if he were.

In addition to this tendency of the flesh which exists in every age, each age has its own special problems. One of ours seems to be the constant sensory stimulation to which we all are subjected, the never-ending stream of pictures and sounds which keep many from thinking seriously about death and the judgment. The message of death and the end of the world is the strong medicine we all need to distract us from the distractions of contemporary life, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

Even more insidious than materialism, which even the world sees as empty at times, is the natural tendency of man toward work-righteousness. This is the direction in which man moves when he begins to think seriously about death and judgment. But true eschatological preaching forces the sinner to face the reality of judgment before God Who demands perfect righteousness. Faced with that prospect, the sinner must despair of his own righteousness and trust only in the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Finally, true eschatological preaching offers the sinner true security. The things which people strive for in life always disappoint them, often as soon as they are attained. Those things which do give some lasting pleasure are spoiled by the knowledge that they must some day be given up. Life in general always brings much pain; the strength of our years is still labor and sorrow. But when we have suffered loss or are troubled by the thought that we must ultimately lose everything we have on earth, we are cheered by the message of resurrection and everlasting life which assures us in Christ that, though we lose everything, we still possess the only thing we really need, the only thing which is of genuine and lasting value.

*John Klatt*



### "THERE IS STILL A DIFFERENCE"

A 12-page tract entitled "There is Still a Difference" — a discussion of the differing positions of the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC) and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) in regard to the doctrine of fellowship — is available at cost and may be ordered from the CLC Book House, Immanuel Lutheran College, 501 Grover Rd., Eau Claire, WI 54701.

This tract, written by Professor John Lau, is a reprint of the article printed in the June, 1982, issue of the *Journal of Theology*, entitled "An Open Letter to Students and Alumni of Northwestern College."

## ===== PANORAMA =====

### A NEW LUTHERAN MERGER — UNION OR UNITY?

September was the month set for balloting on a merger which was to bring three Lutheran church bodies together into one organization. On the 8th day of the month at about the same hour the votes were cast at the separate conventions. The tallying of the votes showed a large majority in favor, and through a special telephone hookup the news was communicated to the several church bodies, which received the favorable report with jubilation and praise to God. The three church bodies involved were the Lutheran Church in American (LCA), the American Lutheran Church (ALC), and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (AELC). The target date for the consummation of the union has been set for 1988.

Now our question is: "Was this merger of churches a manifestation of a true unity of the Spirit based on the inerrant Word of God (the Holy Bible), or was it merely a joining together of heterogeneous elements to form a large and impressive church organization?" If the former were the case, then it would ill become us to stand apart on the side lines and find fault with it. This would label us as being moved by a loveless and separatistic spirit. But if the latter be the case, then it would be loveless and uncharitable to stand by and observe the passing scene in silence. The fact is that the parties to the merger have long contained in their ranks member churches and pastors of varying confessions and teachings which they have not considered to be divisive of church fellowship. Any discerning student of 19th and 20th century church history knows that there have been differences in doctrine (e.g., in such doctrines as the inspiration of Scripture, conversion, justification, predestination, the last things, and others) which lay bare the heterogeneous character of the merging church bodies where varying teachings have been tolerated. With the exception of one party (AELC), the others are products of a number of unionistic mergers that have taken place in past and recent years.

Now it has certainly been argued that the separate synods that were brought together in the LCA and ALC had stood apart chiefly because of cultural and language barriers and because of misunderstandings and varying emphases. If this were all that kept them apart in the years of their separate existence, then it casts a bad light upon the early fathers on every side who spent long hours and attended many wearying meetings seeking to settle differences which they were convinced were doctrinal in nature and not just a matter of partisan prejudice and methodology.

But we are convinced that the spirit of unionism has taken its toll and has spawned all manner of arguments and false exegesis to justify the practice of church fellowship without agreement in all doctrines. Formulas have surfaced, for instance, which defended fellowship on the basis of agreement in fundamental doctrines while disagreement in the non-fundamentals was tolerated in the same communion. However, even such a central doctrine of the Bible as justification has been left undefined because no consensus could be reached (e.g., the meeting of the Lutheran World Federation in Helsinki). The "*intuitu fidei*" theologians are still defending their false teaching on predestination. The defenders of the historical critical method of interpretation stand along-side of those in the same fellowship who rightly insist that Scripture in all its parts is to be accepted as inspired and factually true, including all references to scientific, historical, and geographical matters. The unionistic spirit is quite evident.

Since the merger has already been approved, there seems to be little incentive to discuss any doctrinal differences. The Commission that is to work out the details of the merger will very likely be occupied with such matters as organizational structure and the external flow of authority and ecclesiastical officialdom. And since pulpit and altar fellowship has already been practiced by the merging church bodies, the basis for such interchange of pastors and communicants has *de facto* already been accepted as being sufficient. So what is left is only some "horse trading" on the details of ecclesiastical set-up and how to arrange things so that the great-

est impact may be made on society and the civic sphere. And, human nature being what it is, this could take up the six-year period that has been set aside for such negotiations. What we can see in the offing is more jockeying for power than any substantive action in dealing with doctrinal differences.

Some deplore the fact that the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (LCMS) is not included in this merger, since it has been argued that Missouri would have provided the doctrinal emphasis needed in the new church body. To this we would say that LCMS's best testimony to former brethren (ALC and AELC) is given by its non-participation in it, although this could be eroded by its continued participation in the activities of the Lutheran Council in the USA. It must, however, have had its eyes opened when it noticed how soon after the break with the ALC that church body moved to merge with a church which represents the most liberal spirit within Lutheranism. At any rate, Missouri has its hands full in dealing with those leaders within its own body who make it no secret that they approve the merger which is now taking place and deplore the fact that their synod is not a part of it. Indeed, unless Missouri comes to terms in dealing with its own unionism it will hardly be in a position to admonish others. And, furthermore, what would Missouri's testimony amount to, for instance, in the matter of the historical critical error so long as it contains within its own body leaders who openly espouse it (cf. *The Cresset*, Nov. 1982, p. 4)? How could Missouri effectively testify against the practice of ordaining women as pastors when it has opened the door to women's suffrage in the church? Scripture says: "If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" (1 Cor. 14:8). "Brethren, be not children in understanding; howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men" (1 Cor. 14:20).

C. M. Gullerud

## THE NEW LUTHERAN MERGER — ITS ROOTS

The present generation often finds itself partially

or totally unfamiliar with the roots of the church bodies involved in the merger plans adopted in September of this year. Certain distinctive characteristics of the merging synods are easily lost sight of. Past differences are either judged as no longer existing or are disregarded as not being divisive of church fellowship. The past history of the church bodies involved would indicate that the latter is the more accurate description of the present situation.

In order to be of some service to those who are looking for material that will give them some insight into the past history of the church bodies under discussion, we present a thumb-nail sketch not only of the origins but also of some of the chief differences which existed. It is not the intention to list all of them, but rather to point to differences which set the designated synods apart from our own confession. It would be naive to believe that these differences have completely disappeared from the scene, for it is the spirit of unionism to permit them to exist without any effort to remove them by doctrinal discipline.

## I. The American Lutheran Church (ALC)

The American Lutheran Church was organized in 1960 and brought together the American Lutheran Church (to be distinguished from the present TALC), the Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELC — which was originally named the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America), the Lutheran Free Church, and the United Evangelical Lutheran Church. Each of these bodies had a history of its own which must be considered in order to understand the heterogeneous character of the merged American Lutheran Church which is one of the component parts of the new Lutheran merger. By virtue of its liberal attitude of toleration of differences in certain doctrines it was possible to draw the discordant elements together into one church body — the American Lutheran Church of 1960.

A. The American Lutheran Church was organized in 1930 and brought together the following church bodies: Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Ohio and Other States, Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Iowa and Other States, and

Buffalo Synod. The Ohio Synod was organized on September 14, 1818, at Somerset, Perry County, Ohio. It fostered a seminary which finally found its home in Columbus. It was a charter member of the Synodical Conference of North America, organized in 1872. However, in 1881 it withdrew as a result of the Predestinarian controversy. Ohio's view on predestination was known as the "*intuitu fidei*" position on eternal election. The Iowa Synod was organized on August 24, 1854, at St. Sebold, Iowa. Its seminary was located in Dubuque and was known as Wartburg Seminary. In 1879 the Iowa Synod stated that it did not consider it necessary to agree in all doctrines as a prerequisite for the practice of church fellowship. The differences which it was willing to tolerate were called "open questions." Among such open questions it listed such doctrines as the teaching of Sunday, the Anti-christ, the first resurrection of Rev. 20 and certain other eschatological matters. On the doctrine of election it expressed itself as disagreeing with the doctrine confessed by the Missouri Synod, which it considered crypto-calvinistic. The Buffalo Synod was organized in 1845 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Its leading spirit was J. A. A. Grabau, who placed his stamp on this synod by his views on church and ministry which represented a strong hierarchical practice. In fact, in 1859 Grabau pronounced a formal excommunication upon the entire Missouri Synod. Through the years the Buffalo Synod experienced a rocky existence, with congregations and pastors here and there defecting and joining other synods because of their dissatisfaction with the pressures of the hierarchy. — As a postscript we mention here that meetings were held in later years between these three church bodies and synods of the Synodical Conference, but no solution to the differences resulted. Finally, after the three synods joined to form the original American Lutheran Church, meetings were held with the Missouri Synod which brought forth the "Common Confession" (a combination of an ALC Declaration and the Missouri Synod Brief Statement). However, other synods of the Synodical Conference (Wisconsin Synod and the ELS) could not accept it as a settlement of the differences.

B. The Evangelical Lutheran Church (previously called the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America) was organiz-

ed in 1917. This merger brought together the following church bodies: The Norwegian Synod (not to be confused with the ELS, which was organized in 1918 by a minority of the Norwegian Synod who could not for conscience' sake participate in the merger), organized in 1853; the United Norwegian Lutheran Church (organized in 1890); and the Hauge Synod (organized in 1846). This merger joined church bodies which previously had been separated mainly because of differences in conversion and predestination. The one side held to a formulation on conversion which left room for synergism, while the other side held to a strict monergism. In the doctrine of predestination some taught an eternal election "in view" of faith and others a predestination "unto" faith. The Norwegian Synod had stood shoulder to shoulder with the synods of the Synodical Conference in upholding the monergism of grace in conversion and a predestination unto faith in the doctrine of election. However, when the three Norwegian bodies merged in 1917, the majority of the Norwegian Synod voted to unite with the Hauge Synod and the United Norwegian Lutheran Church on the basis of a settlement which allowed the differences to stand on an equal basis.

C. The Lutheran Free Church was organized in 1897. A study of the doctrinal position of this body reveals aberrations mainly in the doctrines of inspiration and objective justification. A loose practice in pulpit and altar fellowship was quite apparent, besides a pietistic orientation.

D. The United Evangelical Lutheran Church was organized in 1896. This synod was largely composed of pastors and congregations of Danish extraction. The unionistic character of this body was shown through its participation in the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam in 1948.

## II. Lutheran Church in America (LCA)

The Lutheran Church in America was organized in 1962 as a merger of the United Lutheran Church, the Augustana Synod, and the American Evangelical Lutheran Church.

A. The year 1918 marks the beginning of the United

Lutheran Church (ULC) as a church body formed by a merger of the General Synod (organized in 1820), the United Synod — South (organized in 1863), and the General Council (organized in 1866). The historical background of the individual bodies of this merger encompasses material too massive and voluminous for the present sketch. But it does demonstrate that when more conservative churches (e.g., General Council) capitulate to the more liberal (e.g., General Synod), then doctrine and practice rapidly deteriorate. The ULC became known as the most liberal of Lutheran bodies in America. It was no secret that this body carried on a loose practice with respect to the lodge and freely carried on fellowship relations with the Reformed and others. The most blatant denials of the verbal inspiration of the Bible were given expression within its circles. The ULC made it clear that it saw no need for any other basis for church union than a subscription to the Book of Concord, which, however, it accepted only in-so far as it agrees with Scripture and not because it agrees with Scripture. This also threw the door wide open to a great variety of teachings on the pretext also that they had not been symbolically fixed. This made of the confession a *norma normans* instead of a *norma normata*.

B. The Augustana Synod was organized at Clinton, Wisconsin, in 1860. Augustana College and Seminary at Rock Island, Illinois, and Gustavus Adolphus College at St. Peter, Minnesota, were its main educational institutions. The unionistic character of this body was demonstrated by its participation in the formation of the World Council of Churches in 1948 and in the activities of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA. Together with the ULC it held that subscription to the historic Lutheran Confessions was sufficient for Lutheran unity. Lodge members found a church home in the Augustana Synod with no disciplinary action being practiced.

C. The Suomi Synod (Finnish) was organized in 1890 at Calumet, Michigan.

D. The American Evangelical Lutheran Church (originally known as the Danish Lutheran Church in America) was organized in 1872. It was one of the participants in the

First Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1948.

### III. Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (AELC)

This church body was organized as a result of separation from the Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod on the issue of the historical critical view of Scripture according to which it is held that the facticity and inerrancy of Bible teachings must be judged on the basis of their Gospel orientation. Such matters as scientific and historical references (e.g., six day creation, existence of Adam and Eve, Jonah and the great fish, etc.) are thus largely held to be mythological and not to be understood as factually and literally true but as figuratively presenting lessons to be learned. Since this type of theology was not to be tolerated at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, a walk-out of the majority of the faculty and student body ensued. A seminary known as Christ College — Seminex was established and a new church body came into existence which drew into its circle others in the Missouri Synod who were of the same mind. (It is no secret that pockets of Seminex sympathizers still remain within the Missouri Synod and are exerting their influence wherever opportunity presents itself.)

C. M. Gullerud

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## BOOK REVIEWS

*The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text*, edited by Zane C. Hodges and Arthur L. Farstad. Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982. 810 pp, plus a 46-p. introduction. Hard cover.

Ever since Westcott and Hort published their Greek New Testament in 1881, the manuscript basis for most editions of the Greek New Testament has been chiefly the ancient Egyptian uncial texts known as Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus. Since Westcott and Hort believed that the so-called Byzantine texts represented later confla-

tions and were inferior to Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, the value of these Byzantine texts was minimized. In fact, one scholar (Vincent Taylor) even formulated this principle: The text which diverges from the later ecclesiastical text is more likely to be original.

But now there is increasing evidence that the Westcott-Hort text relied too heavily on Vaticanus and Sinaiticus. These manuscripts, old as they are, are not necessarily more reliable than the Byzantine texts in determining the original text. Surely it is better to make use of all the manuscript evidence rather than to depend solely on two texts that originated in only one area of Christendom.

As the Westcott-Hort text represents one extreme in textual work, the championing of the so-called *textus receptus* represents another extreme. Even though there is very little textual support for certain portions of the Greek text known as the *textus receptus*, there are those who insist that this text based primarily on Erasmus' third edition must stand, simply because it was the text used by most Christians in the period between the Reformation and 1881. The King James Version was based on the *textus receptus*, and many do not believe it is wise to make any corrections either in the King James text or in the Greek text on which it is based. But if there are some sentences in the King James Version that have very little basis in any Greek text, why must we insist in hanging on to these sentences? How can we be sure that these few sentences are God-breathed words if they are not found in the great majority of the Greek manuscripts?

We are very happy therefore to have in our hands *The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text*, published by Thomas Nelson in 1982. This text differs both from the Egyptian text as presented by Westcott and Hort and all their successors such as Nestle-Aland and the United Bible Societies editions, and from the *textus receptus* on which the King James Version is based. Editors Hodges and Farstad claim that "the witnesses to the Majority Text come from all over the ancient world. Their very number suggests that they represent a long and widespread chain of manuscript tradition." They believe that

the Majority Text "has a higher claim to represent the original text than does the Egyptian type." Nevertheless, Hodges and Farstad do not claim that their text in every particular is necessarily the original text. They recognize that "the present work ... is both preliminary and provisional" (pp. ix-x).

This Greek New Testament is very easy to read. The Majority Text itself is printed at the top of the page. Then on every page under a dark line are printed two sections. The first section presents the differences between the Majority Text and the *textus receptus* and the major evidence on which each is based. The second section presents the differences between the Majority Text and the Egyptian text (Westcott and Hort, Nestle-Aland, United Bible Societies) and the major evidence on which each is based.

At this point in time we have not yet been able to examine the entire book in detail. But perhaps our readers would be interested in knowing at least some of the places where the Majority Text differs from the *textus receptus* and therefore also from the King James Version.

The Majority Text does not include these words from 1 John 5:7-8: "in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth," although these words are found in the *textus receptus* and the King James Version. It has long been recognized that the textual basis for these words is flimsy. Martin Luther said already in his time: "The Greek books do not have these words" (*Luther's Works*, Vol. 30, p. 316). It is unfortunate that Erasmus printed them in his third edition, although not in his first edition, and subsequent editions continued to print them until the time of Westcott and Hort. Incidentally, the New King James Version, Thomas Nelson 1982, includes the words in the text, but a footnote says: "Only four or five very late Greek manuscripts contain these words." But why print them in the text at all if the evidence is so weak? Why not print them in a footnote or omit them altogether?

The Majority Text does not include Acts 15:34: "Not-

withstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still." Here the manuscript evidence is divided, but the editors were convinced that the verse should be omitted, thereby agreeing with Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, rather than with the *textus receptus*.

The Majority Text does not include the last part of Acts 10:6: "He will tell you what you must do." Here the Majority Text evidence is supported by papyrus 45 as well as by the Egyptian texts, but the *textus receptus* includes the sentence.

The Majority Text does not include the last sentence of Acts 9:5: "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks," even though this sentence is part of the *textus receptus*. Nevertheless, the identical sentence is part of the Majority Text reading in Acts 26:15. The Majority Text does not include the first parts of Acts 9:6 either, where the King James Version says: "And he trembling and astonished said, 'Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?'" But in Acts 22:10 the Majority Text does include the words translated: "What shall I do, Lord?" It seems that texts used in the *textus receptus* inserted these sentences in Acts 9 from the two other accounts of Paul's conversion.

Another verse omitted in the Majority Text, but included in the *textus receptus*, is Acts 8:37: "And Philip said, 'If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.' And he answered and said, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.'" The evidence here clearly favors the omission of this verse. The New King James Version has a footnote that says: "It is found in Western texts, including the Latin tradition." But because of its omission from most Greek texts, however, we should be careful not to use this passage as a proof text in connection with the doctrine of Baptism.

The Majority Text does include the account of the adulteress in Jn. 8:1-11, although there are a great number of small changes in this section from the *textus receptus*. The Nestle edition and the United Bible Societies edition bracket these words as not part of the original text, but a footnote in the New King James Version

says these words "are present in over 900 manuscripts." In the introduction the editors present the evidence for their conclusion "that the story (Jn. 7:53-8:11) is originally Johannine, despite the prevailing contrary opinion" (pp. xxiii-xxxii).

The Majority Text does not include Lk. 17:36: "Two men will be in the field; the one will be taken and the other left." The *textus receptus* did not include this verse either, and yet it found its way into the King James Version, apparently on the basis of a minority of manuscripts that contain this verse. The Majority Text does contain the words in Mt. 24:40.

The Majority Text does include Mk. 16:9-20, which are bracketed in the Nestle edition and the United Bible Societies edition as not original. The New King James Version explains in a footnote that these verses "are lacking in Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus, although nearly all other manuscripts of Mark contain them."

The Majority Text does not include the last part of Mt. 27:35: "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, 'They parted My garments among them, and upon My vesture did they cast lots.'" This presents no real problem, however, since the identical words are part of the Majority Text in Jn. 19:24.

These are some of the major variations between the Majority Text and the *textus receptus*. A more complete study would reveal that in general the Majority Text is more in agreement with the *textus receptus* than with the Egyptian text used in the Nestle edition and in the United Bible Societies edition. English translations based on the Majority Text will be in substantial agreement with the King James Version, whereas most of the English translations of today, such as NIV, NASB, and AAT are translations of the Egyptian text traditions. In fact, we are prepared to argue that one of the chief defects of the NIV, NASB, and AAT is their agreement with the Egyptian text tradition, thus laying more weight on Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus than a careful investigation of the facts warrants. For example, the NASB note on Mk. 16:9-20 says: "Some of the oldest manuscripts omit from

verse 9 through 20." The AAT note says: "The two oldest and best manuscripts lack Mark 16:9-20 but ends Mark's Gospel with v. 8." The NIV note says: "The most reliable early manuscripts omit Mark 16:9-20." Yet the Majority Text includes these verses, and John Burgon in his thorough study of these verses uncovered overwhelming evidence for their authenticity (John Burgon, *The Last Twelve Verses of the Gospel According to St. Mark*, 1871).

For our part we are happy to have *The Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text* for our study in addition to the Nestle text and the United Bible Societies text. Even though it is probably still too early to reach a definite conclusion on these matters of text, we shall not be surprised if further research in this huge area of study reveals that the Majority Text is in fact superior to the text represented in the Egyptian manuscripts.

David Lau

*Young's Analytical Concordance of the Bible*, by Robert Young. Introduction by Donald Guthrie. Thomas Nelson, Publishers. Nashville, Tennessee. \$22.95

Through the years *Young's Concordance* has proved to be a helpful tool for Bible study, a truth to which many of our pastors can testify. Those who do not possess it can be well advised to purchase it in its present newly revised edition. Students of the Bible have found it to be especially helpful not only because of its exhaustive and comprehensive nature (311,000 references and nearly 5,000,000 words) but also because of its valuable Hebrew and Greek index-lexicons. The editors of this new edition have checked each reference to make sure that it is correct and that there have been no omissions. Definitions of people and places have been up-dated, taking into account recent archeological discoveries. An added feature is an introduction by Dr. Guthrie, giving instruction on how the book is to be used. Dr. Guthrie calls attention to a new feature of this new edition which was lacking in the original edition — i.e., a numerical sys-

tem. The Bible student who puts this new edition to use will thus find that a number has been assigned to each Hebrew and Greek word to conform to Strong's numbering system found in his *Exhaustive Concordance*. This makes it possible to refer the student to many biblical reference works which make use of this system. This is particularly useful to those who have only an elementary knowledge of the Hebrew and Greek terms.

Another addition to be found in the new edition is "The Universal Study Guide to the Bible" (219 pages). Here a word of caution is in place, especially in connection with the sections dealing with doctrine. Here, as in the case of chain reference Bibles and parallel reference Bibles, passage references may be cited which are not only misleading in their application but doctrinally oriented to teachings that are false. We take, for example, the references to Baptism and the Lord's Supper. References in the Study Guide indicate that the compilers regarded these sacraments not as means of grace but merely as symbols of grace. A common error of the Reformed is propagated in the reference to John 6:26-58 which is listed as a spiritual explanation of the Lord's Supper. Under the heading of Christian Baptism, John 3:3,4,5 is listed as being figurative of regeneration instead of teaching that Baptism is a means of regeneration. Likewise, Titus 3:5 is designated as "illustrative of cleansing" instead of "a washing of regeneration" as the passage clearly teaches.

In comparing this new edition with the original edition, one will find that in not a few pages the print is not as sharp and distinct as in the old. In this it has suffered in the reproduction. On the other hand, in the index-lexicon to the Old and New Testaments the type shows up with a much more readable print than in the body of the concordance.

C. M. Gullerud

*Idols — Dead or Alive?*, by Reuel J. Schulz. Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Paper. 258 pp. \$7.95.

In a foreword by Harold E. Wicke is contained a remark about this book with which we are in hearty agreement: "There are books that ought not to be written and published, and then again there are books that ought to be written and published. This book by Pastor Reuel J. Schulz is one of the latter. What's more, it ought also to be read and digested, for it comes to grips with one of the basics of the saving faith" (p. 5).

The surface intention and purpose of this book is to set forth the various ways in which God's First Commandment is disobeyed through idolatry — both in ancient and modern times. The various chapter headings are as follows: 1. The Only True God; 2. Idols in Bible Times; 3. Twentieth Century Idols; 4. Idols in Government; 5. Idols in Judaeo-Christianity; 6. Idols Versus Christian Missions — Evangelism; and 7. Idols Defined by Doctor Martin Luther. In all seven chapters the author carefully and painstakingly presents idolatry in all its forms, from ancient Egypt to modern times with its CARC (the Common American Religious Creed). There are discussions not only of Zen Buddhism and other of the Eastern religions, but also of idolatry in lodgery, scouting, women's liberation movements, popular columnists and TV personalities, Communism, and (Yes, Virginia!) in Santa Claus. In addition, later chapters deal with the idolatry to be found in various aspects of government: the pledge of allegiance, oaths, Christmas stamps, Christmas carols in public schools, "In God We Trust" on coins, military and legislative chaplains, and in public school prayers. The next to the last chapter brings rather surprising information regarding idolatry as practiced in the customs of American Indians. The final chapter is a masterful presentation of Luther's definitions of and applications of idolatry to matters which concerned him.

The author's main and more essential goal becomes apparent, however, as one reads this very interesting and well-written book. He is extolling the name of the Lord and praising Him while he is condemning all forms of idolatrous attempts to rob God of His honor. We can not help appreciating Pastor Schulz's efforts and wish to recommend this book to all our readers.

*John Lau*

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