

The Voice

of the Mennonite Brethren Bible College

VOL. VI

September-October, 1957

No. 5

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Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. — 2 Tim. 2:15.

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Ein neues Schuljahr.

Ps. 90:17: "Und der Herr, unser Gott, sei uns freundlich, und foerdere das Werk unsrer Haende bei uns; ja, das Werk unsrer Haende wolle er foerdern."

Im Blick auf das neuangetretene Schuljahr stimmen wir in das Gebet des Mannes Mose ein. Dass der Herr das Werk unsrer Haende segnen moechte, ist unser tiefes Verlangen.

Am 23. September schlug die Stunde, in der unser vierzehntes Schuljahr, unter der gnaedigen Fuehrung Gottes, seinen Anfang nahm. Zwei Tage waren zur Orientierung und Registration bestimmt worden, und Lehrer und Schueler sind in der Regel froh, wenn diese Tage vorbeiber sind, und der Unterricht begonnen werden kann.

In den Raeumen des College wurde bis zuletzt gearbeitet, um alles in Ordnung zu haben zum Empfang der Schueler. Wir schaezten uns in diesem Jahr recht gluecklich ein zufriedenstellendes Heizsystem zu haben, dank der Freundlichkeit unserer Bruderschaft. Auch war es uns eine Freude die frisch herzugekommenen Lehrer in Herz und Schule aufzunehmen.

Der Herr schenkte uns fuer dieses Jahr eine schoene Schar lernlustiger Brueder und Schwestern, aus den Gemeinden. Sie verliessen ihre Berufe und ihre taegliche Beschaeftigung im tiefen Bewusstsein, dass der Mensch nicht vom Brot allein lebt. Insofern der Herr Gnade gibt, glauben wir, dass aus den Reihen dieser versprechenden Schar, manche in den geistlichen Dienst treten werden. Andere suchen sich eine biblische Orientierung fuer's Leben — moechten sie selbige finden.

Unsere Eroeffnungsfeier fand, unter grosser Teilnahme, am 6. Oktober in der Elmwood Gemeinde statt. Durch Zeugnisse in Wort und Lied wurden wir auf den grossen Meister — Christus, hingewiesen. Bruder F. C. Peters wiess auf die Bedeutung und die Kennzeichen einer guten Vorbereitung zum Dienst hin.

Es moechte unseren Lesern von Interesse sein, einen Einblick in die Zusammenstellung unserer Studentenschaft zu bekommen. Wir lassen daher einen kurzen statistischen Bericht folgen:

(Fortsetzung auf Umschlagsseite 3)

THEOLOGICAL

Jesus and the Rabbinic Method

The topic under discussion deals with the use of the rabbinic method in the teaching ministry of Jesus. Jesus came into an historical setting, was born of a Jewish mother, and was reared in a Jewish home. Yet He was the "Word made flesh" who had come to bring the "good news", the gospel. We know that in many ways Jesus taught in a way not entirely dissimilar to the teaching ways of the Jewish rabbis of His day.

The Jewish Teaching Body. Since Jesus continually came into direct contact with the religious teachers of the day, it is well that we note who these men were. The title "scribe" was given to the teacher since the time of Ezra. Apparently these teachers, or scribes, were priests, or followers of the priestly group. It did not take long for the influence of the priest to wane, and gradually the authority in Scriptural interpretation shifted to the scholar. His work was summed up thus: "Be careful in judgment, and make a hedge about the Torah."

Shortly before the birth of Christ, probably during the reign of Herod the Great (37-4 B.C.), two separate schools of scribes came into existence.¹ The issue seems to have been the authority of tradition in the interpretation of the Scripture. Thus the two schools of Shammai and Hillel existed side by side for some time.

Jesus as Rabbi. There appears to be general agreement among the various writers that Jesus was recognized as a rabbi in Jewish circles. This title, which in the Gospels is often rendered by the ordinary Greek form of address (Lord, Sir), marks Jesus as belonging to the class of teachers. This implies, then, if we are to take the findings of scholars seriously, that Jesus, being a teacher, could have received some teacher training. Unfortunately, it is difficult to de-

termine exactly what course of study was followed at the time of Jesus. The premise that Jesus was well versed in the knowledge of His day has been well supported by T. W. Manson in **The Teaching of Jesus.**² In favor that Jesus was conversant with the knowledge of the schools, he advances several arguments. Jesus' use of the quotations from the Old Testament shows that His knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures was both extensive and profound. Anyone who had the acquaintance with the language of the Scripture shown by these quotations would have little difficulty with the language of the scholars.

Jesus is addressed as rabbi not only by His own disciples (Mk. 9:38), or by members of the public (Mk. 9:17), but also by the learned themselves (Mk. 12:14, 32). This suggests that they recognized Him as a competent scholar who could meet them on their own ground. Had this not been the case, it would surely have been doubtful that they would have addressed Him in such a manner since the dignity of the title was guarded zealously.

In the earlier part of the ministry Jesus is reported as teaching in the synagogue. At the age of twelve we find Him sitting among the teachers in Jerusalem. We must ask ourselves what happened in the intervening eighteen years before the beginning of the active ministry. Is it not likely that much of this time was spent in the continuation of just such studies as we have suggested? The strong condemnation of the scribal refinement of the Law suggests that Jesus was thoroughly acquainted with it.

The fact that Jesus was brought up in a humble household and did manual labour does not tell against His being a scholar in the Jewish sense. Many great ornaments of rabbinical scholar-

ship were men of humble birth who supported themselves, and their families, by manual labour while pursuing their studies in the schools of the Law. Paul is an example of this very thing.

From the gospel record it is clear that Jesus actually lived as a Jewish teacher. As such He takes His place in the synagogue. As such He gathers about Himself a circle of disciples. As such He discusses questions of the Law with pupils and opponents or with people seeking knowledge. In the discourse He uses the same methods of presentation used by the rabbis of His day. Similar to the custom of these rabbis He speaks in parables and proverbs. The content of His teaching is vastly different from the content usually discussed in rabbinic circles, but the method is Jewish.

The Rabbinic Methods Accepted by Jesus. Several teaching methods were used by both Jesus and His Jewish colleagues.

1. **Poetic Form.** That much of the sayings of the Hebrews was cast into poetic form, is clearly revealed in the writings which we have today. Let us now point to the similarities in the characteristics of the language used by Jesus in His teaching and the rabbis in their discourses.

It has been established by means of research that all the formal element of Hebrew poetry—parallelism, rhythm, and rhyme—are present in the sayings of Jesus. These poetic forms were used most frequently by the rabbis of the first century, and were essential elements of the instructional process of the day.³ The *Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*⁴ states that up to the 7th century no great changes took place in the form of Jewish poetry. The forms used in the Bible, Talmud and the Midrash were about the same.

Parallelism. The correspondence of one verse, or line, with another is called parallelism. Lowth, a recognized authority in Hebrew poetry, is quoted by Manson as distinguishing between parallel lines and parallel terms.⁵ Parallel lines may be reduced to three sorts of parallels: synonymous or similar in thought; antithetic or contrasting in thought; and synthetic or supplement-

ing in thought. The following citation from the Old Testament would illustrate this classification.

Synonymous:

The heavens declare the glory of God;
And the firmament showeth his handiwork. Ps. 19:2.

Antithetic:

The memory of the just is blessed;
But the name of the wicked shall rot. Pro. 10:7.

Synthetic:

I waited patiently for the Lord,
And he inclined unto me and heard my cry. Ps. 40:1.

It would suffice to quote a few examples of the parallelism used by Jesus as recorded in the Gospels. These will show the resemblance in form to the structure of the previously quoted references. A great similarity also exists between the form of Jesus' sayings and the Wisdom Literature of Sirach. It is evident that the scholars of Christ's day were very careful to follow the form of those who taught before them. Edersheim refers to the great Hillel who was wont to mispronounce a word because his teacher before him had done so.⁶

Three gospel passages which have great resemblance to the poetic form used by the Jewish rabbis are:

Synonymous:

There is nothing hid that shall not be made manifest,
Nor secret that shall not come to light. Mk. 4:22.

Antithetic:

He that would save his life shall lose it:
But he that shall lose his life . . . shall save it. Mk. 8:35.

Synthetic:

I came to cast fire upon the earth,
And what will I, if it be already kindled? Lk. 12:49.

Other writers add another type of parallelism to those mentioned above, namely, step-parallelism, in which the second line takes up a thought contained in the first line and then carries the

thought from that threshold to a climax of the whole.

He that receiveth this child in my name, receiveth me;
And he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me. Mk. 9:37.

Verse, Meter, Rhythm, and Rhyme. Besides the feature of parallelism, it is possible to distinguish in Hebrew poetry certain regular rhythmic structures depending on the number of stressed syllables to a line. Since a detailed account of these various poetic measures would be impossible, reference is made to the work of Professor Burney, *The Poetry of Our Lord*, where numerous examples are given.

The detection of rhythm and rhyme in our Lord's sayings would depend largely upon a retranslation into the original language. This work has been attempted and achieved with a measure of success by Burney. A great similarity exists between the forms of speech used by the Master and those contained in the rabbinic literature. *The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia*⁷ gives some striking comparisons between the literary form used by Christ and that used by the rabbis.

A beautiful presentation of poetic form in verse and meter is given in Luke 12: 24-28.

Consider the ravens,
They do not sow or reap;
They have no barn or storehouse;
And God feeds them.
How much better are you than the birds?

Another less complex, yet very beautiful passage is Luke 11: 31,32.

The queen of the South shall rise in judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them, (a)

For she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon (b)

And lo, a greater than Solomon is here. (c)

The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation and condemn it, (a)

For they repented at the preaching of Jonah (b)

And lo, a greater than Jonah is here. (c)

Manson enumerates the examples in the gospels where the poetic form is used. He gives twenty examples of such form.⁸

2. **The Argumentive Form.** There was a method of argumentation popular with the rabbis which was called the "heavy and light" method. The procedure was a development from the less to the greater, from the less important to the more important. One rabbinic example which illustrates this "a fortiori" argument is quoted by Cadbury in *The Peril of Modernizing Jesus*.⁹ He relates the conversation between Rabbi Gamaliel's daughter and the Emperor Hadrian concerning the resurrection. The question was: Can dust come to life? Then the daughter cites this incident. Two potters work in the city, one makes his vessels from water and the other out of clay. Who is the greater? It is agreed by Hadrian that the one using only water is the greater. Now comes the argument from the lesser to the greater. If God creates a man out of water, how much more can he do it out of clay (the dust of the grave)?

This method was also used in the Old Testament, and probably was adopted by the rabbis from that source. The parable used by Nathan of the ewe lamb follows this method of reasoning.

Jesus, too, used this method which was so popular in His time. Several quotations from the Scripture would illustrate this point. "If ye being evil know how to give good gifts, how much more shall your heavenly father . . ." Lk. 11:13. "If God so clothe the grass . . . how much more will he clothe you . . ." Lk. 12:28. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing . . .? Ye are of more value than many sparrows" Matt. 10:29.

The rabbis used this method drawing their inferences and analogies from the Scripture. The argument was always presented thus: If that is so, then this is more so. Jesus, too, presents certain arguments with deductions from the Old Testament. "A greater than Solomon," or a "greater than Jona" is here (Lk. 11:32). "It shall be more

tolerable for Sodom and Gemorrah in the day of judgment . . ." Matt. 10:15.

3. **The Use of Superlatives.** According to Cadbury, many of the superlatives used in the Gospels can, in a most interesting way, be paralleled with the rabbinic literature. For "camel through the needle's eye" the rabbinic literature says "elephant through the needle's eye." Both, of-course, express the sheer impossible. Again the camel is used as the big creature over against the gnat: "Strain at a gnat and swallow a camel." In other words, to labour at the minor things overlooking the major.

There are rabbinic parallels to the removal of a mote, or a beam; these are always spoken of in connection with censoriousness. The Lord uses the mustard seed to express the minimum, and the tree or the mountain as a picture of the maximum. Both were typical rabbinic superlatives. Another incident where Jesus definitely uses the language of the bookish, letter-conscious scribe or scholar is the mention of the immutability, in the Law, of even the jot or the tittle. The former was the smallest letter of the alphabet; the latter is a decorative flourish placed over the letters of the Old Testament texts in Hebrew.

4. **The Interrogative Method.** Edersheim gives as one typical characteristic of the rabbis the "hyperingenuity in questioning."¹⁰ This had become proverbial. The general practice was a resort to one question with a counterquestion, thus evoking a rather lively discussion or debate. This method was to have the virtue of stimulating a man's capacity for finding his own answers to questions.

One example will show to what extreme this method was often carried. The Sadducees and the Pharisees differed on the matter of Levitical defilement or profanation. The Pharisees claimed that the touch of anything sacred "defiled" the hands. The Sadducees, on the other hand, ridiculed the idea that the Holy Scriptures "defiled" the hands, but not a book such as written by Homer. The Pharisees replied by asking on what grounds the bones of a High Priest "defiled," but not those

of a donkey. The Sadducees replied that a greater value lay in the former, lest a man should profane the bones of his parents by making spoons of them. The reply of the Pharisees to this was that the same principle applied to the Holy Scriptures. It was against such ridiculous chatter that Jesus spoke so severely.

And yet Jesus uses the interrogative method in dealing with the people. The reason for the question is to induce the opposite party to pass judgment. Then the analogy is drawn from the verdict. In Matthew 21:31, the story of the two sons who were sent by the father into the vineyard is used as a bait for a judgment. Jesus asks: "Which of the twain did the will of the father?" After the hearer has passed his judgment, Jesus makes the application.

Again, Jesus often answered one question with a counterquestion, especially if the interrogator was a scribe or a Pharisee. "Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?" The reply is: "Whose image and superscription?" (Matt. 22:17-19).

5. **The Use of Proverbs and Maxims.** The proverbs receive a prominent place in the Old Testament writings. The rabbinical writings also abound in proverbs. Some of these involve comparisons: "As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman without discretion" (Pro. 11:22).

A few of the rabbinical proverbs are original, but in general they are simple variations of certain Old Testament proverbs. Several examples from rabbinical sources serve to clarify this point.

"The words of the Torah are like the speech of the children of men."¹¹
"Vows are a hedge to abstinence."¹²

Like the rabbis, Jesus coined proverbs. Many of these have a likeness to those found in the Old Testament. An interesting comparison can be made between the proverbs of Hillel and Jesus. The following proverbs of Hillel will show the resemblance in content and form.

"Judge not another man until thou art in his place."¹³

"Render unto Him, that which is His."¹⁴

"What thy own soul hateth, do not do they neighbour."¹⁵

According to the **Universal Jewish Encyclopedia**, Matt. 5:13 was probably a popular proverb used most frequently by the rabbis. Its exact reproduction is found in the rabbinic literature.¹⁶

Very often these sayings were preceded by the well known form of prophetic address, such as blessings and woes. The Beatitudes illustrate this method of teaching. Again Matt. 23 gives numerous illustrations of this form of delivery. "Woe unto you, ye blind guides . . ." "Thou Pharisee, cease first that which is within the cup and platter."

This same method was employed by the rabbis of Jesus day. Edersheim quotes one typical example from the **Talmudic Tractate Abhodah Zarah**: "Woe to the ship which sails without having paid the dues" (Ab. Zar. 10b).

The proverbial expressions used by Christ reveal the extent to which He used the rhetoric of His teachers. Thus instead of saying: "Benevolence should not be with outward display," He says, "When thou givest alms, do not blow your trumpet . . ." Instead of saying, "Wealth is a great hindrance to true religion," He says, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God."

6. **The Parabolic Method.** Among Jewish teachers the parabolic method was a common and well understood way of illustrating, and, according to Dodd,¹⁷ the parables of Jesus are very similar in form to the rabbinic parables. In its simplest form the parable is a metaphor or simile drawn from nature or common life, and then enlarged upon. They were to arrest the attention of the hearer by their vividness or by their strangeness and to motivate the mind to search out the application.

In likeness to the rabbi's use of the parable, Jesus uses it to entice the hearer to a judgment upon the situation depicted, and then challenges him to make the application to the matter at hand. Thus Jesus begins His parable with: "What think ye, if a man had a hundred sheep . . ." "What do you think? a man had two children . . ."

Whether the question is stated or not, it is usually there. The answers to the parables lie in the judgment on the imagined situation, not in deciphering or decoding all the elements contained in the story.

The parables spoken by Jesus were **all true to life**, or to nature. This is certainly not true of the parables of the rabbis, as examples will reveal. In the case of Christ's parables, each one could be observed so in the Jewish environment in which it was spoken. Dodd points to the essential difference between the parables of Jesus and those of the rabbis. The latter were more scholarly and possessed a **high degree of artificiality**. Edersheim is sharp in his criticism of the rabbinic parables and says:

"Accordingly, by the side of what was noble and pure, what a mass of utter incongruities, of conflicting statements and too often debasing superstitions, the outcome of ignorance and narrow nationalism; of legendary colouring of Biblical narratives and scenes, profane, coarse, and degrading . . . merging into the ridiculous, and even the revolting."¹⁸

Some examples from rabbinic literature will serve to establish our criticism. To establish the authority and sanctity of the sabbath, a parable is cited where a river called Sabbatyon ceases to flow on the sabbath.¹⁹ Another more lengthy parable finds a fox persuading a wolf to go to a Jewish home on a Friday night to view the preparation for the sabbath.²⁰

There was hardly a moral or religious thought which the rabbis did not illustrate by a comparison or an appropriate tale. Their popular expression was: "Let not the parable (mashal) be light in thine eyes, for by means of the parable a man can stand in the words of the Torah."²¹

The Rabbinic Methods Rejected by Jesus. Several criticisms of the rabbinic methods have been interwoven into the article thus far. Several general criticisms could be added which point to the main differences between the teaching methods of Jesus and those of the rabbis.

We find that the rabbi's of Jesus day definitely lacked originality. One of

the virtues lauded of Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai, for example, according to the eulogy in *Sukkah* 28a, is that he never uttered a word which he had not heard from the lips of his teacher.²¹ The words of the teacher were worshipped to the letter, and imitated to the finest detail. As was mentioned before, Hillel was wont to mispronounce a word because his teacher had done so.

The difference between the teaching method of Jesus and that of the rabbi was soon noticed by the audience. This difference finds expression in Mark 1: 22: "He taught them like an authority, not like the scribes." The meaning is that Jesus showed an independence which was foreign to the rabbis. He had direct instruction from God which made His message convincing.

The method employed by the rabbis in teaching was one of constant referring to some other rabbinical authority. Thus their teaching became one of "inverted commas." Jesus, however, stood in His own right as a teacher, and with authority He says, "But I say unto you . . ."

Most of the rabbinical parables start with an Old Testament text. Christ does not strictly adhere to this method. His sayings were new adventures of faith and not mere repetitions of the past.

In general, one could say that Jesus was **not bound** by form, He simply used it for an advantage and was free to discard it if need be. He had come with a message, method was always subordinate to the message and its servant. This was not true of the rabbis who were method bound.

Conclusion. Jesus, then, did not ignore the prevailing teaching methods of His time and we may assume that He had received training in the use of the rabbinical method. Even though His message ushered in a new day, He carefully clothed that message in the traditional forms of communication as they were prevalent in His day. In His delivery and in the technical composition of His message, He remained a Jewish Teacher. This gave Him access to the synagogue where only the learned of Israel could instruct.

In His deviation from the prevailing methods, through His originality, Jesus set Himself apart from other teachers of His day as One who excelled, who was greater. He became recognized as "the teacher sent from God." Probably this was the reason why the rabbis hated Him so.

It also becomes apparent that a knowledge of the cultural history of Israel at the time of Christ is essential for a proper understanding of the teachings of Jesus. It is necessary to separate essential from non-essential, message from method. Unless one understands the Eastern mode of teaching, with its rich use of metaphors and similes, the truth cannot break through the barriers of semantics.

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 - ³ *Ibid.*, p. 50.
 - ⁴ Vol. viii, p. 557.
 - ⁵ Manson, *op. cit.*, p. 50.
 - ⁶ Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. New York: Longmans, Green, 1899, Vol. 1, p. 98.
 - ⁷ "Parallels Between the Teachings of Christ and those in the Rabbinic Writings." Vol. vii.
 - ⁸ Manson, *op. cit.*, p. 56.
 - ⁹ Henry J. Cadbury. *The Peril of Modernizing Jesus*. New York: Macmillan, 1937, pp. 58-63.
 - ¹⁰ Vol. 1, p. 93.
 - ¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 28.
 - ¹² *Ibid.*, p. 18.
 - ¹³ *Univ. Jew. Encycl.*, Vol. vii, p. 8.
 - ¹⁴ *Loc. cit.*
 - ¹⁵ *Loc. cit.*
 - ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. ix, p. 391.
 - ¹⁷ C. H. Dodd. *The Parables of the Kingdom*. London: Nisbet and Co., 1946, p. 15.
 - ¹⁸ Edersheim, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 106.
 - ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 15.
 - ²⁰ *Univ. Jew. Encycl.*, Vol. vii, p. 396.
 - ²¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. viii, p. 393.
- Frank C. Peters.

The Preservation of the Believer

Statement of the Problem

Earlier theologians styled that aspect of salvation, which dealt with the preservation of the believer, "the perseverance of the saints." Popularly it is spoken of as "the eternal security of the believer." That this question has been a bone of contention throughout the history of the Christian church is common knowledge. In approaching this doctrine, as well as many others, it has been so difficult to remain balanced. Here, too, we must learn "to comprehend with all saints," and "the man who is least qualified to speak with authority, will be, very often, the most dogmatic."¹

Perhaps to give us "a base of operation," it might be well to let some of the proponents of the "eternal security" teaching, define their position.

The Scriptures declare that, in virtue of the original purpose and continuous operation of God, all who are united to Christ by faith will infallibly continue in a state of grace and will finally attain to everlasting life.²

. . . that they who have once been regenerated and effectually called by God to a state of grace, can never completely fall from that state and thus fail to attain to eternal salvation, though they may sometimes be overcome by evil and fall in sin.³

Chafer says of this doctrine that "it is more distinguished by the fact that it is set forth in the New Testament in the most absolute terms and is there seen to be an indivisible feature of that which God undertakes when a soul is saved."⁴ The Westminster Confession declares: "They whom God hath accepted in his Beloved effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace; but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved" (17.1).

Perhaps we could let Stauffer summarize the teaching of eternal security:

. . . that eternal life once received can never be forfeited by any act or

determination of the human will; that eternal life is a gift and cannot be withdrawn; that if you deny eternal security, then you assert that salvation is by works, by means of human merit, and not by grace; that to deny eternal security is to belittle the finished work of Christ; that since believers become ministers of Christ's body, if you deny eternal security, then Christ will have a mutilated body throughout eternity; that Christians may backslide, imperil their reward, lose their fellowship with the Master, but can never lose their salvation or go into apostasy.⁵

This is probably a somewhat drastic way in which to summarize the teaching, nevertheless, it does place the issue squarely before us.

In contrast to these views, some Christians maintain that true believers may fall away and be eternally lost. This problem we must face in this paper.

Delimitation of This Study

As just indicated, the purpose of this paper is to inquire which of the two opposing views (or both, or neither) is tenable on Scriptural grounds. To make us more aware of the deep roots of these divergent teachings, it was considered necessary to give a cursory review of their historical background. Moreover, it was felt that a brief statement of the basic tenets of the opposing theological systems, which gave rise to the conflict regarding this teaching, might help us to appreciate more intelligently the doctrinal antagonism with which we are faced in this field. In the final section, which deals with the Biblical data, the vastness of the field called for a most unfortunate delimitation of the subject. To make a careful exegesis of all the passages that support the "eternal security" position, as well as those that do not, lies far beyond the scope of this paper. The main passages on which the doctrine of perseverance is based are simply indicated, but, in view of the fact that the warnings of Scripture are so often

"explained away," an attempt has been made to examine a few of the key warnings of the New Testament. To give us a panoramic view of what has been attempted in this paper, an outline is given at this juncture.

The Outline for this Paper

I. The Historical Background for Divergent Views on the Subject.

A. The Patristic Period.

1. Pre-Augustinian Fathers.
2. Augustine's Monergism.

B. Medieval Oscillations.

C. The Era of the Reformation.

1. The Views of the Reformers.
2. The Reaction under Arminius.

D. Wesleyan Arminianism.

II. The Basic Tenets of Opposing Theological Systems.

A. The "Five Points" of Calvinism.

- B. The Arminian "Strongholds."
- C. In Defence of "Perseverance."

III. The Biblical Data and Their Interpretation.

A. The Question of a Right Approach.

B. Scripture Passages that Teach the Security of the Believer.

C. A Brief Study of Some of the Warnings of Scripture.

Summary and Conclusion.

I. THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR DIVERGENT VIEWS OF THE SUBJECT.

A. The Patristic Period

1. Pre-Augustinian Fathers. — From those who have examined the doctrines that are most closely related to the question of the preservation of the believer, we learn, that the early Apologists (such as Justin) represent the origin of the new life somewhat dualistically. "Sometimes it appears to be wholly dependent on the free choice of man, and then again it seems to be entirely contingent on the free grace of God."¹ The Alexandrian Fathers (such as Clement and Origen) also appear to recognize the free will of man which enables him to turn to God and to accept the salvation which is offered in Christ. As for the Greek Fathers, whose main interest lay in the field of Christology and Theology, also betray a kind of dualism in the matters of sin and grace. "On the whole, the

main emphasis was on the free will of man, rather than on the operation of divine grace."⁶

In the West the emphasis seems to have been somewhat different. Tertullian, for example, reduces human efficacy to a minimum, but at times his language still savours of the synergistic theory of regeneration, that is, that God and man work together in regeneration. Berkoff quotes Kahnis as saying: "It stands as an assured fact, a fact knowing no exceptions, and acknowledged by all well versed in the matter, that all of the pre-Augustinian fathers taught that in the appropriation of salvation there is a co-working of freedom and grace."⁷

2. Augustinian Monergism. — With Augustine a clearer monergism comes to light. No doubt his dark background and drastic conversation experience influenced him in his view of the total depravity of man and God's sovereign grace. Although he did not deny to man the natural ability or freedom to do civilly good acts, he held that man cannot will what is good in the sight of God, and so if he is to be renewed, this renewal must be entirely by God's grace. What God does in time for the gracious renewal of the sinner, He will do in eternity, and so there emerges his doctrine of predestination and election, which consequentially demands the doctrine of perseverance. If God chose some men, absolutely and unconditionally, to eternal life, these persons must, and would certainly be saved. He did, however, seem to think that men who were true believers and who were regenerated might fall away and finally perish, but these did not belong to the elect. To the later Calvinists this was a most erroneous view, but they did agree with Augustine that the elect were eternally secure.⁸ As a rule the followers of Augustine have inclined to the theory of "indefectable grace" or "final perseverance."

With the Augustinian views, the Pelagian doctrine of sin and their emphasis on the free and undetermined will of man, clashed violently. The Semi-Pelagians arose to mediate between the two views by not denying man's corruption but by holding that man has

an element of freedom which enables him to co-operate with divine grace. Such views were an attempt to refute the "irresistible grace" of Augustine. One must be careful, however, not to interpret the later reactions to Calvinism as a continuation of Pelagian ideas. Unfortunately, Arminianism has been so interpreted.

B. Medieval Oscillations.

Although Augustine's system of theology was dominant in the West, it suffered considerable modifications from time to time. The Roman Church went over into externalism, and so the idea of salvation by grace was obscured. Even in Augustine's day there were already perverted notions about the effects of outward ordinances, and Augustine did not remain untouched by such views either. Eventually the doctrine of irresistible grace came to be supplanted by the sacramental grace of baptism. Voices were heard throughout the Middle Ages in favor of the Augustinian view of predestination, while at the same time the idea that man can co-operate with God in salvation seems to have been popular. Lombard, for example, believed in *gratia operans* which enabled man to turn to Christ, but from there on it was *gratia co-operans*. So from Augustine to the time of the Reformation the pattern of teaching regarding salvation is quite indistinct, however, with the great emphasis that Rome laid on good works, it is quite natural to see her violent opposition with the monergism of the Reformers.

C. The Era of the Reformation.

1. The Views of the Reformers. — Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli all taught the total depravity of man and his absolute dependence on God's grace for renewal. Both Luther and Calvin were predestinarians, although Luther was not so outspoken on this point and at times inclines to make it dependent on foreknowledge. Calvin stressed the sovereignty of God in bestowing unmerited grace, so that while in Calvin election becomes increasingly prominent, in Luther it recedes into the background. Calvin also held to the decree of re-

probation which the Lutheran confessions excluded. Calvin taught that God had determined once and for all who would be saved and who would be damned and to inquire into the reasons of the divine will was idle. As a consequence—the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. In Luther the grace of God is resistible. Even though salvation is entirely of grace, man can frustrate the divine operation. Whereas the *ordo salutis* of Calvin centered in election; in Luther it centered in faith and justification. We must of course admit that in Lutheranism and Calvinism there was represented at all times a wide latitude of variation in the doctrine being held. In all fairness it should be said that Calvin cannot be held responsible for the promotion of every form of doctrine which appears under his name. But this very same thing must be said of Arminius, under whom we have the reaction against Calvinism.

2. The Reaction Under Arminius. — Arminianism centered in Holland, and it represents the great revolt against Calvinism—a revolt which had built up over a period of time. A student of the supralapsarian Beza, Arminius was called on to defend supralapsarianism, but after investigating it, he changed his views and began to spread these. This eventually led to the so-called Remonstrance which found formal expression in the Synod of Dort (1618). Arminius had died in 1609, and Simon Episcopius presented the case of the Arminians at this Synod which was designed by reformed theologians to lead to a great victory for Calvinism. The Remonstrants were condemned but this did not mean the end of their teaching.

Now regarding Arminius' view on perseverance, he seems to have been hesitant at first, then left it as an open question, but his followers took a strong stand against it and affirmed the possibility of a total and final fall from grace. Arminius says concerning this doctrine:

My sentiments respecting the perseverance of the Saints are, that those persons who have thus been made partakers of his life-giving Spirit, possess sufficient powers to fight against Satan,

sin, the world and their own flesh, and to gain the victory over these enemies—yet not without the assistance of the grace of the same Holy Spirit.⁹

Of course much more than the doctrine of perseverance was at issue at the Synod of Dort. The Synod affirmed double predestination (i.e. election of some and preterition of others), as well as total depravity (man cannot of himself turn to God), and the doctrine of perseverance. On the latter point the Synod ruled:

God who is rich in mercy according to his unchangeable purpose of election, does not wholly withdraw the Holy Spirit from his own people even in their grievous falls; nor suffers them to proceed so far as to lose the grace of adoption and forfeit the state of justification, or to commit the sin unto death or against the Holy Spirit; nor does He permit them to be totally deserted, and to plunge themselves into everlasting destruction.¹⁰

Such a position seemed untenable to the Arminians who sought to guard the responsibility of man in redemption, and the view that those who are justified and regenerated may by neglecting grace and grieving the Holy Spirit finally fall into perdition, was generally held by the followers of Arminius. May it be said once again, that Arminius, although he abandoned all the other major principles of Calvinism, did not himself renounce the belief in security. However, some of his followers, even before the Synod of Dort had already renounced the doctrine of security. Their *ordo salutis* maintained that God bestows universal grace on man which enables the sinner to believe the Gospel and if he turns to God he is justified on account of his faith, and if he perseveres to the end becomes partaker of eternal life. Absolute election or reprobation is denied by them, and they base election on foreseen faith, obedience, and perseverance, and reprobation on foreseen unbelief, disobedience, and persistence in sin. Unfortunately, there have grown out of this position some unhappy extremes, but to charge the Arminian with continuing the tradition of Pelagianism (as Berkoff does) is most unjust.

D. Wesleyan Arminianism.

In the evangelical revival of the 18. century Arminianism and Calvinism clashed once more in the persons of the great preachers: John and Charles Wesley, Fletcher (who were Arminian), Whitefield and Toplady (who were Calvinists). Dr. Rattenburg points out that "nothing did so much to destroy popular Calvinism in England as Charles Wesley's hymns."¹¹

It is believed that Wesleyanism represented Arminianism more like it was in its beginnings. Whether it would be right to say that in Wesleyan theology man has a little more dignity than in Calvinism I am not prepared to say, but they did have an earnest regard for human freedom. They regarded the free will of man a necessary inference from the idea of the justice and mercy of God—to deny free-will, they thought, made God the author of sin. In contrast to Calvinism the Wesleyans appealed to God's justice in dealing with man, rather than to the absolute sovereign decrees of the Calvinists. Perhaps it could be said that in contrast to the emphasis on the sovereignty of God, in Calvin, we have, in Wesley, the stress on the mercy of God. In Wesleyan theology, although man is said to be depraved, the universal benefits of the atonement enable man to turn in faith and repentance to God. John Wesley argues against Calvinism:

Wenn diese Anschauung zu Recht bestehen soll, dann ist ja alles Predigen umsonst; und vor allem: diese Lehre ist offenkundig dazu angetan, die Heiligung allgemein zunichte zu machen; denn sie beseitigt voellig die grundlegenden Beweggruende der Heiligung nachzujagen, die in der Schrift so oft erwahnt werden, die Hoffnung auf zukuenftige Belohnung und die Furcht vor der Strafe.¹²

Against the humanists, the Wesleys urged the depravity of man; against the Calvinists, the salvability of man.¹³ They advocate that "das Heil oder Nichtheil eines jeden Menschen lediglich von seinem eigenen freien Verhalten gegenueber den Einflussen des Heiligen Geistes abhaengt."¹⁴

Perhaps the Biblical position of John Wesley with regard to this aspect of

soteriology can best be seen from a conversation that Charles Simeon of Cambridge had with the venerable leader of the Arminians in England. At the same time we sense something of the fine spirit of Wesley when faced with men who held the Calvinistic doctrines.

"Sir, I understand that you are called an Arminian; and I have been sometimes called a Calvinist; and therefore I suppose we are to draw daggers. But before I consent to begin the combat, with your permission I will ask you a few questions." Permission being readily and kindly granted, the young minister Simeon proceeded to ask: "Pray, Sir, do you feel yourself a depraved creature, so depraved that you would never have thought of turning to God, if God had not first put it into your heart?" "Yes," says the veteran, "I do indeed." "And do you utterly despair of recommending yourself to God by anything you can do, and look for salvation solely through the blood and righteousness of Christ?" "Yes, solely through Christ." "But, Sir, supposing you were at first saved by Christ, are you not somehow or other to save yourself afterwards by your own works?" Here is where Calvinists feel they can charge the Arminian with Pelagian synergism. "No, I must be saved by Christ from first to last." "Allowing, then, that you were first turned by the grace of God, are you not in some way or other to keep yourself by your own power?" "No." "What then are you to be upheld every hour and every moment by God, as much as an infant in its mother's arms?" "Yes, altogether." "And is all your hope in the grace and mercy of God to preserve you unto His heavenly kingdom?" "Yes, I have no hope but in Him." "Then, Sir, with your leave I will put up my dagger again; for this is all my Calvinism; this is my election, my justification by faith, my final perseverance: it is in substance all that I hold, and as I hold it; and therefore, if you please, instead of searching out terms and phrases to be a ground of contention between us, we cordially unite in those things wherein we agree."¹⁵

Although the Wesleys clashed with Whitefield because of opposing theological positions, Charles Wesley, after much growth in grace, wrote a loving epistle to Whitefield, in which, among other things, he says:

It matters not; if all our conflicts past,
Before the great white throne we meet
at last . . .¹⁶

(To be continued)

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—David Ewert.

EXPOSITIONAL

Der Gebrauch des Alten Testaments in der Neu-Testamentlichen Gemeinde

Das Alte Testament war die Bibel des Herrn Jesu und der Apostel. Sie brauchten die Heiligen Schriften des Alten Testaments als Richtschnur zum Aufbau der Gemeinde. Den Schlüssel zu einem rechten Verständnis und zu einem richtigen Gebrauch desselben auch für unsere Zeit finden wir in der Apostolischen Praxis. Wir dürfen das Alte Testament nur in dem Sinne erklären und anwenden wie Christus und die Apostel es getan haben.

Ein Studium der Geschichte der Christlichen Kirche durch die Jahrhunderte zeigt sehr klar, dass man dieses Prinzip nicht immer beachtet hat. Viele Irrtümer der Kirche sind direkt zurückzuführen auf eine falsche Auffassung über das Verhältnis des Alten Testaments zum Neuen. Anstatt das Alte Testament zu brauchen als die Grundlage für ein rettendes Evangelium, hat man es vielfach gebraucht (oder richtiger: gemissbraucht!) zur Restfertigung von unchristlichen und gottwidrigen Handlungen.

Der baptistische Kirchenhistoriker, A. H. Newman, macht darauf aufmerksam, dass nach der Verbindung von Kirche und Staat im Jahre 323 A.D. die Kirche das Alte Testament gebrauchte zur Rechtfertigung der Verfolgung von "Ketzer". Newman schildert die Situation in folgenden Worten:

"Für die Mehrheit der Christen hatte das Alte Testament dieselbe Autorität wie das Neue Testament, und man fand in demselben das ideale Vorbild für die Kirchenverfassung. Das Alte Testament enthält bekanntlich viele Geschichten, in welchen der Verfolgungseifer der Regenten dargestellt wird als dem Herrn wohlgefällig" . . . "Christliche Herrscher glaubten, dass sie sich selbst sowie

auch Gott verherrlichten, durch das Nachahmen solcher Beispiele; und christliche Prediger glaubten, sie folgten in den Fussspuren der Alt-Testamentlichen Propheten, wenn sie die Regenten anspornten zur gewaltsamen Ausrottung des Heidentums und der Ketzerei." (Frei Uebers. Vol. I., p.315.)

Während der Kreuzzüge (1905—1291 A.D.) rechtfertigte die Kirche die Vertilgung der "Ungläubigen" (Juden, Türken und Sarazenen) mit dem Beispiel der Könige Israels. Die Kindertaufe hat man vielfach begründet mit der Beschneidung im Alten Bunde. Bis in die neueste Zeit hinein haben Theologen die traurigsten und schlimmsten sozialen Uebel und moralischen Verbrechen — wie Beteiligung am Kriege, Sklaverei, ja sogar Vielweiberei, u.s.w., sanktioniert auf dem Boden des Alten Testaments. So haben Christus und die Apostel das Alte Testament **nicht** gebraucht!

Auch in unsern Gemeinden merkt man es hier und da, dass man das Alte Testament nicht in rechter Weise gebraucht. Indem man das Alte Testament oft in unabhängiger Weise studiert, gelöst von der Lehre Jesu und der Apostel, kommt man zu theologischen und eschatologischen Auffassungen, die im Lichte des Neuen Testaments ganz unzulässig sind. In diesem Studium möchten wir uns beschränken auf den Gebrauch des Alten Testaments in der neutestamentlichen Gemeinde, wie derselbe aus der Apostelgeschichte und aus den Briefen ersichtlich ist. Auch hier wird uns eine kurze Zusammenfassung dessen, was die Apostel beim Lehren und Lesen des Alten Testaments betont haben, genügen müssen. In welcher Weise haben die Apostel das Alte Testament gebraucht?

1. **Zum Wegweiser auf Christum.** Die Apostel haben das Alte Testament "christologisch" verstanden und ausgelegt. Die Verheissungen auf Christum waren für sie die Zentralwahrheit der Offenbarung. So hatte der Herr Jesus sie, sowohl als auch seine jüdischen Zeitgenossen, belehrt: "Suchet in der Schrift; denn ihr meineth, ihr habet das ewige Leben darin; und sie ist's, die von mir zeuget." (Joh. 5:39). Diese Tatsache, dass das Alte Testament vornehmlich ein Zeugnis sei vom kommenden Messias und Welterlöser, hatte der auferstandene Christus ihnen noch vor seiner Himmelfahrt so klar und eindringlich an's Herz gelegt. Nachdem der Herr Jesus sich ihnen offenbart hatte, am späten Abend jenes ersten Ostertages, sprach Er zu ihnen diese denkwürdigen Worte: "Das sind die Reden, die ich zu euch sagte, da ich noch bei euch war; denn es muss alles erfüllt werden was von mir geschrieben ist im Gesetz Mose's, in den Propheten, und in den Psalmen." (Lukas den bedeutungsvollen Nachsatz hinzu: 24:44.) Lukas fügt diesem Worte noch "Da öffnete Er ihnen das Verständnis, das sie die Schrift verstanden."

Durch diese Belehrungen des Meisters kamen die Jünger zu einem ganz neuen Verständnis des Alten Testaments, welches im scharfen Gegensatz stand zu der traditionellen jüdischen Auffassung. Für die Schriftgelehrten und Pharisäer was das Alte Testament vornehmlich eine Völkergeschichte mit Israel im Zentrum derselben; für die Jünger was das Alte Testament von nun an vornehmlich Heilsgeschichte mit Christus im Mittelpunkt der ganzen Offenbarung. Christi Beispiel und Belehrung befähigten die Apostel, das Alte Testament als eine Heilsbotschaft zu gebrauchen.

Diese Tatsache geht klar hervor aus den Berichten der Apostelgeschichte. In seiner kraftvollen Heilsbotschaft am Pfingsttage zitiert der Apostel Petrus zwei Worte aus den Psalmen Davids (Psalm 16: 8—11 und Psalm 110: 1) und beweist damit die Heilstatsachen von Christi Auferstehung und Himmelfahrt. Für den grossen Heidenapostel, Paulus, war das Alte Testament nach seiner Bekehrung ein Wegweiser zu

Christus und das Gesetz ein "Zuchtmeister" auf Christum. (Verg. Apostelg. 13: 23-36, und Gal. 3:24.) In seiner meisterhaften Verteidigungsrede vor dem König Agrippa fasst Paulus den Inhalt seiner Botschaft in diesen bedeutungsvollen Worten zusammen: "und sage nichts ausser dem, was die Propheten gesagt haben, dass es geschehen sollte, und Mose: dass Christus sollte leiden und der erste sein aus der Auferstehung von den Toten und verkündigen ein Licht dem Volk und den Heiden." (Apostelg. 26: 22, 23.) Wenn wir die alttestamentlichen Zitate im Neuen Testament einmal studieren in ihrem geschichtlichen Zusammenhang, wie letzterer uns im Alten Testament gegeben ist, zwingt sich uns die Ueberzeugung auf, dass die Apostel das Alte Testament gewissermassen "vergeistlichten." Die Geschichte Israels war für sie das Gefäss durch welches Gott der ganzen Welt das Heil nahebringen wollte.

Der Schreiber des Hebräerbriefes braucht das Alte Testament auch als Wegweiser auf Christum. Der Mittler des Alten Bundes, die verschiedenen Opfer, das Amt des Hohen priesters — alle weisen hin auf Christum den einzigen Mittler, das vollkommene Opfer und den göttlichen Hohenpriester. Doch die Apostel brauchten das Alte Testament auch.

II. **Zum Beweis der Universalität des Heils.** Auf dieser Linie merken wir auch ein ganz neues Verstaendnis bei den Aposteln — sie fanden im Alten Testament den göttlichen Missionsgedanken für die Völkerwelt. Im Gegensatz zu dem jüdischen Partikularismus, der die göttlichen Verheissungen auf Israel beschränkte, brauchten die Apostel die alttestamentlichen Schriften als Beweis für die allgemeine Bedeutung und Anwendung des Evangeliums. Als die Apostel Paulus und Barnabas in ihrer Missionsarbeit in Antiochien (Pisidien) sich gezwungen sahen, sich den Heiden zuzuwenden, weil die Juden beständig widersprachen und lästerten, fanden sie eine Begründung für ihre Handlungsweise im Alten Testament: "Denn also hat uns der Herr geboten: Ich habe dich den Heiden zum Licht gesetzt, dass du das Heil seist bis an das Ende der Erde." (Vergl. Apostelg.

13:47 und Jes. 49:6.) Im Briefe an die Römer, wo Paulus in Kap. 3 darauf hinweist, dass kein Unterschied besteht zwischen Juden und Heiden in ihrer Sündhaftigkeit (Vergl. Kap. 3:23) zeigt er weiter in Kap. 10, dass auch kein Unterschied besteht in der Annahme des Heils: "Es ist hier kein Unterschied unter Juden und Griechen; es ist alles zumal ein Herr, reich über alle, die ihn anrufen" (v. 12). Zum Beweis zitiert der Apostel das Wort aus Joel 3:5: "Denn wer den Namen des Herrn wird anrufen, soll selig werden." Im selben Kapitel ruft er auch noch den Propheten Jesaja herzu zur Bestätigung der Universalität des Heils. Jesaja aber darf wohl so sagen, 'Ich bin gefunden von denen, die mich nicht gesucht haben, und bin erschienen denen, die nicht nach mir gefragt haben' (Vergl. v. 20 und Jesaja 65:1).

Das oftmals gespannte Verhältnis zwischen Judenchristen und Heidenchristen in den Gemeinden der Apostelzeit ist zurückzuführen auf den Umstand, das erstere die Errettung und Aufnahme in die Gemeinde der Heidenchristen nicht vereinbaren konnten mit ihrem Verstaendnis der Verheissungen, die Gott den "Vätern" gegeben. Dass die Errettung der Heiden im vollen Einklang mit den Heilsgedanken Gottes im ganzen Alten Testament, und dass die all-umfassende Heilsbotschaft keine "neue" Offenbarung Gottes sei, ist daher das beständige Argument der Apostel. In dem schon zitierten Briefe an die Gläubigen in Rom (die es mit dem erwähnten Problem zu tun hatten) zieht der Apostel Paulus im 16. Kapitel noch einmal in meisterhafter Weise verschiedene Schriftstellen des Alten Testaments zusammen zur Begründung und Bekräftigung dieser Wahrheit. In den folgenden Versen verbindet der Apostel das Gesetz, die Psalmen und die Propheten.

"Darum will ich dich loben unter den Heiden und deinem Namen lobsingen." Und abermals spricht er: "Freuet euch, ihr Heiden, mit seinem Volk." Und abermals: "Lobet den Herrn, alle Heiden, und preiset ihn, alle Völker!" Und abermals spricht Jesaja: "Es wird sein die Wurzel Jesse's, und der auf-erstehen wird, zu herrschen über die

Heiden; auf den werden die Heiden hoffen." (Vergl. Römer 15:9-12 und Psalm 18:50, 5. Mose 32:43, Psalm 117:1 und Jer. 11:10). Es war gerade dieser Gebrauch des Alten Testaments, der den Führern und Schriftgelehrten des Judenvolkes das grösste Aergernis bereiteten. Diese Beweisführung auf Grund des Alten Testaments zerstörte zum grossen Teil ihre nationalistischen und materialistischen Hoffnungen in Verbindung mit der Zukunft ihres Volkes. Das Reich Gottes war grösser in seinem Umfang und anders in seiner Beschaffenheit als die Rabbiner zur Zeit Jesu es ihrem Volke vormalten.

Doch wir finden bei den Aposteln ein anderes wesentliches Moment in ihrem Gebrauch des Alten Testaments. Sie brauchten es

III. Zur Bestätigung der Glaubensgerechtigkeit. Das Evangelium der Rechtfertigung durch den Glauben war für die Apostel keine "neutestamentliche" Wahrheit; schon im ersten Buche der Bibel fanden sie Beispiel und Bestätigung dieses göttlichen Prinzips. Es gibt eine recht weit-verbreitete Auffassung auch in christlichen Kreisen der Gegenwart, die im Alten Testamente eine Gesetzes-Gerechtigkeit auf Grund der Werke sieht, im Gegensatz zu der Rechtfertigung des Glaubens im Neuen Bunde. Diesen Irrtum widerlegen die Apostel mit sehr klaren Beweisen und Beispielen aus dem Alten Testament. In Römer 4 wirft Paulus die Frage auf, ob Abraham gerecht geworden auf Grund seiner Werke. Sehr bestimmt zitiert Paulus 1. Mose 15:6: "Abraham hat Gott geglaubt, und das ist ihm zur Gerechtigkeit gerechnet." (Vergl. Römer 4:3.) In demselben Kapitel braucht Paulus auch das Zeugnis David's zur Bestätigung der Glaubensgerechtigkeit. (Vergl. Römer 4:6-8.)

Im Briefe an die Galater, wo Paulus das rechte Verhältnis zwischen Gesetz und Glaube klarlegt, unterstreicht er noch einmal die Unmöglichkeit der Rechtfertigung auf dem Boden des Gesetzes und zeigt, dass die Propheten des Alten Bundes schon diese Wahrheit gelehrt und erfahren. Hier ist Pauli Argument in Gal. 3: 11: "Dass aber durchs Gesetz niemand gerecht wird vor Gott ist offenbar; denn der Gerechte wird

seines Glaubens leben." (Vergl. Hab. 2:4.) Die Apostel sahen in Abraham den "Vater der Gläubigen" (Vergl. Römer 4:11) und in den Heiligen des Alten Bundes eine Wolke von Glaubenszeugen, die mit uns zur grossen Gottesfamilie gehören. (Vergl. Hebr. 11:40 und 12:1.)

Doch beachten wir eine weitere Verwendung des Alten Testaments in der apostolischen Gemeinde. Es wurde gebraucht

IV. Zur Warnung vor dem geistlichen Abfall.

Die Apostel fanden in der Geschichte Israel's mehr Warnungstafeln als Wegweiser für Leben und Wandel der neutestamentlichen Gemeinde. Zum richtigen Verständnis und rechten Gebrauch des Alten Testaments auch in unsern Tagen ist dieses Prinzip von grösster Bedeutung. In der Geschichte des Christentums finden wir manche Irrtümer in Lehre und Leben, die zurückzuführen sind auf eine falsche Auffassung, wo man im nationalen und sozialen Leben Israels ein Vorbild fand für das Leben und Wirken der Gemeinde. Die "heilige" Geschichte des Alten Testaments ist, soweit es Israel betrifft, oft eine sehr "sündliche" Geschichte und soll uns zur ersten Warnung dienen. In dieser Weise braucht Paulus die Geschichte Israels in 1. Kor. 10. Beachten wir einige Ausdrücke: "Dass wir uns nicht gelüsten lassen des Bösen, gleichwie jene gelüftet hat" . . . "Werdet auch nicht abgöttisch, gleichwie jener etliche wurden" . . . "Auch lasst uns nicht Hurerei treiben, gleichwie etliche unter jenen" . . . "Lasset uns aber auch Christum nicht versuchen, wie etliche von jenen" . . . "Murret auch nicht, gleich wie jener etliche murrten" . . . Im 11. Verse fasst Paulus diese Warnungen zusammen: "Solches alles widerfuhr jenen zum Vorbilde; es ist aber geschrieben **uns zur Warnung**, auf welche das Ende der Welt gekommen ist." Dass Israel's tragischer Abfall sich auch im Leben der neutestamentlichen Gemeinde wiederholen könnte, war den Aposteln eine erste Sorge. Deshalb ziehen sie die Beweise und Beispiele aus Israel's Geschichte hervor und stellen sie auf als Warnungstafeln am Wege der

neutestamentlichen Gläubigen. In Römer Kap. 11, wo Paulus darauf hinweist, dass "aus ihrem (Israel's) Fall den Heiden das Heil widerfahren", warnt er die Gläubigen vor einem falschen Ruhm und einer falschen Sicherheit: "Sie sind ausgebrochen um ihres Unglaubens willen; du stehst aber durch den Glauben. Sei nicht stolz, sondern fürchte dich. Hat Gott die natürlichen Zweige nicht verschont, dass er vielleicht dich auch nicht verschone." (Röm. 11:20, 21.) Nie kamen die Apostel auf den Gedanken, die Sünden und Fehler der alttestamentlichen Gläubigen zu rechtfertigen und dieselben zu gebrauchen, eine falsche Freiheit, und eine fleischliche Sicherheit in der Gemeinde zu sanktionieren. Gott gebe uns ein besseres Verständnis der ersten Warnungen des Alten Testaments für die Gemeinde der Gegenwart!

Abschliessend möchten wir noch darauf aufmerksam machen, dass das Alte Testament in der Urgemeinde gebraucht wurde

V. Zum Trost in den Glaubensprüfungen.

Schon der Herr Jesus hatte es seinen Jüngern nahe gelegt, dass Schmähungen und Verfolgungen, die sie um seines Namens willen würden erdulden müssen, nichts Neues seien. "Denn also haben sie verfolgt die Propheten, die vor Euch gewesen sind." (Matt. 5:12.) In den Erfahrungen der alttestamentlichen Heiligen, wie sie uns auch besonders in den Psalmen geschildert werden, fanden die Gläubigen ein Spiegelbild ihrer eigenen geistlichen Erfahrungen. Der Schreiber des Hebräerbriefes tröstet die Gotteskinder, die einen grossen "Kampf des Leidens" erduldet, und die ihre Güter verloren, mit dem Beispiel der Märtyrer des Glaubens im Alten Bunde. (Vergl. Hebr. 11:36-38.)

Als nach dem ersten Angriff von seiten des Hohen Rates die Apostel wieder zu den "Ihren" kamen, fand die angefochtene junge Gemeinde in einem Psalmwort einen wunderbaren Trost. Ihre Erfahrung, sowohl als auch die Erfahrung ihres Herrn und Meisters, fanden sie mit sehr klaren Strichen gezeichnet im zweiten Psalm. Das

Alte Testament wurde für die Gemeinde eine reiche Trostquelle in den Anfechtungen des Glaubenskampfes. (Vergl. Apostelg. 4:23-28.)

Die angedeuteten Richtlinien geben uns kein erschöpfendes Bild des Gebrauchs des Alten Testaments in der neutestamentlichen Gemeinde, aber sie sind meines Erachtens grundlegend und

richtunggebend für Auslegung und Anwendung des Alten Testaments. Möchte der Herr dem ganzen Lehrdienst in unserer Gemeinde die Gnade schenken, das Wort der Wahrheit, wie es uns im Alten Testament gegeben ist, recht zu teilen nach dem Beispiel Christi und Seiner Apostel.

—J. A. Toews.

DENOMINATIONAL

Syncretism or the Movement Toward the Merger of Faiths

The subject of "Christian Unity" is today receiving more attention than ever before in the history of the Christian Church. The schismatic subdivisions of the Protestant Church have puzzled and bewildered religious leaders. With the breaking of the stranglehold of the Roman Church and the emphasis of the "Priesthood of the Believer" have arisen numerous splinters of religious beliefs, sects, and independent religious bodies. In the last fifty years numerous individuals and bodies have advocated and worked in the direction of federation and union of the various bodies of historical Protestantism who freely acknowledge their affinity with one another in terms of the Christian faith. Many books and articles in periodicals deal with this matter, starting with the merger of like Protestant Faiths and going all the way to the fusion of World religions. It is the purpose of this article to expose the radical point of view of Ecumenicity.

Definitions

In the field of religion, syncretism is the term descriptive of the mingling of Faiths which come in contact with one another. It may take place consciously as in the case of some modern religions which are the product of deliberate weaving together of the various strands of religious thought to

form a new religion. Frequently it is also an unconscious process of "give-and-take" such as inevitably occurs where differing faiths meet. We are here primarily concerned with that aspect of syncretism which is the goal of a conscious aspiration of religious bodies and leaders of demoniations.

Webster's Dictionary defines Syncretism as: "(1) The reconciliation or union of conflicting beliefs, especially religious beliefs, or a movement or effort intending such. (2) In the development of a religion, the process of growth through coalescence of different forms of faith and worship or through accretion of tenets, rites, etc., from those religions which are being superseded." It is a compromise on the basis of Liberalism or Latitudinarianism, advocating a merger of all religions on the basis of "electicism," and being unwilling to condemn as evil what is good in other Faiths. Furthermore, it is an attempt at absorption of the distinctives of "pure religion" by assimilation, amalgamation, or integration. It is one of the notable aspects of modern Liberalism to tolerate each others distinctive views and to bring to an end all partisan strife. However, Truth and doctrine are of such a nature that they cause cramps and convulsions to the religions that seek to swallow them.

Syncretism appears to be an illegitimate marrying of religions. The uni-

fyng factor is not a unity of doctrine, but a common effort to help men become "better." Even the religions of antiquity and the naturalistic, non-Christian religions are today deeply imbued with this conviction, and are uttering the stereotyped remark, "all religions are one." William Ernest Hocking, a long-time champion of ecumenism for inter-Christian fellowship and of syncretism in the approach to mission work, in advocating a "world faith" which all can accept, states: "Syncretism . . . now carries the flavor of theological promiscuity. To be suspected of "syncretism" is to be accused of a peculiar poisonous variety of heresy. In itself it is an entirely respectable name for a process repeatedly exemplified in the early history of Christianity." However, we must say that the whole semantic orientation of this type of ecumenical theology rests on religious pragmatism and is foreign to the New Testament concept of unity. The general spirit of syncretism does not fall into the orbit of John 17, but rather one is compelled to inquire: "What concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?"

Sources

Various sources of Syncretism become immediately apparent even to the casual inquirer. The fact that the syncretistic approach is so prevalent today is an index as to the type of soil which produces it and the kind of environment in which it flourishes.

Whenever Syncretism emerges to the surface it is the direct product of either humanism, or, of the ramifications of the humanistic approach. Humanism was an accompaniment and manifestation of the Renaissance and thus helped to precipitate the Reformation, but, at the same time it can be characterized as an anti-Protestant movement. The essence of humanism consisted in a new and vital perception of the dignity of man as a rational being apart from theological determination. This new approach is the method of natural man and appeals to the natural man. Theological pessimism and gloom is cast

aside, and life is declared to be full and lovely and "Romantic." Self-realization becomes the classic ideal, and the freedom from restraint, or *Laissez faire*, which will not interfere with the "this-worldly" pattern of living was propounded. Having brought man down to the level of nature and having stripped him of his divine endowments, eliminated the necessity of his redemption and of the intervention of the supernatural. A humanistic heaven would give admittance to all sincere people irrespective of faith.

Furthermore, Syncretism came as the result of studying comparative religions and taking the evolutionary view point in regard to the origin of religion. This progressive development theory regards religion as the product of human development. Religion is traced from its simple beginnings of magic and superstition to its present high theological beliefs. Christianity is viewed as a naturalistic religion, as all other world religions, only higher up on the continuum. A modified kind of Christianity, void of all its distinctives and absoluteness, is all that we have left. From there it is a simple matter to become eclectic and take the "good" from all religions.

Furthermore, Syncretism is a child of the "NEW Theology" which insists that religion is both natural and normal to man. Theological liberalism which does not hold the Bible as the infallible revealed Word of God, Redemption as an absolute necessity for the sinfulness of man, and faith as the only means of salvation, hails the ecumenical movement as the highest form of unity to which we can aspire. Such nominal, shallow kind of Christianity is seeking for unity and Brotherhood. Surely, such so-called Christians are not far removed from Buddhism, Confucianism, or Mohammedanism and are often solicitous for wholesale joining of hands and accommodations.

Then too, we can say, that desire for religious uniformity is often the expression of decadent Christianity. A lukewarm Christian is in need of "eye-salve" and cannot see the issues that are at stake, invariably he will seek for some kind of compromise. Much of

the quest for interdenominationalism and assimilation is merely a sign of confusion and shallowness rather than a genuine desire for fellowship.

Solution

Christianity is distinctive, and it must continue to be so. It must never cease to separate Truth from Error. Its primary distinctiveness lies in its revelation of God in the Word and in Jesus Christ. It can never give equal place and prestige to other "Faiths" and be true to its real nature. We must turn from all pseudo-religions which exaggerate a man-made form of worship and go to the Bible for the source and norm of Christianity.

Missions may as well pull stakes and go home if the Saviour of Christianity can be brought to the level of Mohammed, Confucius, or Buddha. Never must Christianity apologize for its method of "radical displacement" of religion. Unless it can replace the pagan or dead faith and life with a new, living faith it is not effective. So the entire approach is not a matter of absorption or assimilation and sloughing-off the undesirable, it is a matter of causing "old things to pass away and making all things new." The proof of the superiority of Christianity is not its superior civilization or the scientific method, for these may mean the destruction of mankind; the superiority of Christianity lies in the fact that it has the Scripture which is the self-revelation of God.

We are called to declare the necessity of the re-birth of the individual but not the re-birth and reconstruction of society. Social righteousness must follow as a fruit of the regeneration of the individual. The New Testament pattern is not the forging of bonds of unity outside of the bonds of "Peace." Man's attempt at synthesis, order, and unity is doomed to failure unless it is conceived of on the basis of Truth and the Gospel.

God has created man with the endowment to discern spiritual values. Furthermore, He has revealed his power and godhead in creation, having made himself perceptible in this manner; however, these can only be used as

points of departure. Those things that man does by nature: offer sacrifices for his guilt feeling, worship idols to satisfy that longing in the human breast to provide a throne within for a deity, or make preparation for life after death, can serve as points of contact to bring the Truth, but never can we equate them with the real.

So the syncretistic approach cannot be justified as a method approved of by the scriptures. A Christianity which seeks to produce Buddhist-Christians is a fake. Men are either Christ's or not. Hindu converts may be Christianized and continue in their pagan ways, and Adlai Stevenson may remain a Unitarian after joining the Presbyterian Church, however, the Bible does not know such hybrids. The Bible speaks of "unity of the faith" and of unity in the organism or of the body of Christ, but not of organizational unity, unless it be the unity of "tied in bundles ready for the fire" (Matt. 13:30). The Gospel of Christ produces true spiritual unity, a brotherhood of believers against which the gates of hell shall not prevail (Matt. 16:18).

—H. R. Baerg.

Dr. A. J. Gordon: "Whenever, in any century, whether in a single heart or in a company of believers, there has been a fresh effusion of the Spirit there has followed inevitably a fresh endeavor in the work of evangelizing the world."

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Ed.

PRACTICAL

Das Studium der Literatur fuer den Arbeiter im Reiche Gottes

Unter den Gaben, die Gott den Menschen gegeben, zählen wir auch die Sprache. Darohne können wir uns kein geordnetes Leben denken. Obzwar sie eine Gabe ist, so können wir dieselbe doch entwickeln und vervollständigen. Für den Prediger, wie auch für den Lehrer, ist es besonders wichtig, dass er dieses tut. Je umfangreicher seine Sprache, desto grösser sind seine Möglichkeiten für das Verständnis seiner empfangenen Botschaft, und folglich auch desto klarer die Verkündigung derselben. Wenn ein Lehrer eine Wahrheit nicht in seinen eigenen Worten ausdrücken kann, so ist das ein Zeichen, dass er sie noch nicht verstanden hat. Oftmals kann ein Prediger selbst nicht eine Wahrheit aufnehmen, weil er eben nicht über einen Wortschatz verfügt, der ihm den Schlüssel zu derselben reichen könnte. Andererseits, wenn eine Wahrheit verkündigt wird, findet sie nicht Aufnahme, weil die Zuhörer die Worte nicht verstehen.

Hieran erkennen wir, dass wir an die Verbesserung unserer Sprache arbeiten müssen. Wie ist dieses nun am besten möglich? Wenn es hier doch einen kurzen, leichten Weg gäbe! So etwas gibt es aber nicht. Auch hier heisst es, "Im Schweisse deines Angesichts." Nur durch Studium auf verschiedenen Gebieten kann man es erreichen. Zu nennen wären hier die Gebiete der Philologie (Wortkunde), und Grammatik. Kultur- und Weltgeschichte sollte man hier auch nicht vergessen. Ein anderes Gebiet wäre die Literatur.

Wir wollen das zuletztgenannte Gebiet kurz ins Auge fassen, um zu sehen, was es uns in dieser Hinsicht bieten kann. Wir stellen unsere Betrachtung unter den Hauptgedanken: Das Studium der Literatur für den Arbeiter im Reiche Gottes.

Wenn wir von einem Studium der Literatur sprechen, so bedeutet das in erster Linie, dass wir uns mit den Werken der Dichter und Denker beschäftigen. Zwar kann man etwas gewinnen, wenn man das liest, was andere über diese Werke geschrieben haben, aber damit haben wir noch nicht Literatur studiert. Solch ein Studium reicht uns ein Wissen zweiter Hand dar, und nur selten übermittelt es uns den Geist des originellen Werkes. Oft ist es sogar ein verstelltes Bild. Es bleibt einmal dabei, wer nicht Kirschen gegessen hat, weiss nicht wie sie schmecken. Wer nicht Literatur liest, kann darüber auch kein richtiges Urteil haben. Das wäre so, als wenn mir jemand sein Gutachten über diesen Aufsatz gebe, ohne denselben gelesen zu haben.

Wie kann ich aber alles lesen, das schon auf dem Gebiete der Literatur produziert worden ist? Das ist eine Frage, die wir uns vielleicht gleich stellen, wenn wir auf dieses Gebiet kommen. Soll man dann all die Romane, Dramen, Novellen, Artikel, Zeitungen oder noch sogar Räuberpistolen, Liebes- und Mordgeschichten lesen? Die Antwort ist ja von vorne herein gleich klar. Hier muss man eine genaue Auswahl treffen. Wovon lassen wir uns hierin leiten?

Zu allererst sagen wir uns, das Minderwertige muss ausgeschaltet werden. Es gibt bekanntlich viel Material, das nicht wert ist, gelesen zu werden. Es ist dieses die Literatur für die die Schreiber "pro Meter" bezahlt bekommen, und die wir schon an der Art und Weise, wie sie angepriesen wird, erkennen. Dann gibt es viele Bücher, die zu ihrer Zeit gut waren, heute aber leider veraltet sind. Sie mögen gewisse Probleme aus ihrer Zeit sehr schön behandelt haben, aber heute haben wir andere

Probleme und andere Zeiten. Dieses bezieht sich besonders auf Bücher auf dem Gebiete der Naturwissenschaften.

Andere Bücher sind den Zeitungen gleich. Jeder Editor der grossen Zeitungen weiss, dass er das Wesentliche auf gewisse Seiten der Zeitung bringen muss. Oftmals sind die Fortsetzungen auf den weiteren Seiten nur eine Wiederholung des schon Gesagten. Wenn man gewisse Seiten gelesen hat, hat man das Wesentliche. Manche Schreiber sagen in einem dicken Buch von fünfhundert und noch mehr Seiten, nichts mehr als sie schon auf den ersten Blättern gesagt haben. So ein Buch braucht man dann schon nicht zu lesen.

Wir eilen weiter; sonst stehen wir in Gefahr in dieselbe Rubrick zu fallen. Wenn auch schon eine sehr strenge Auswahl geübt worden ist, so bleibt dennoch eine Unmenge von Büchern, die wert sind, gelesen zu werden. Man schätzt, es würde 3000 Jahre nehmen, sie alle durchzulesen. Das ist ja für uns unmöglich und auch unnötig. Wie wir später anführen, sollen Bücher uns Anregung geben zum Denken. Wer nun nicht durch ein paar Bände, die er im Laufe von etlichen Jahren durchliest, Anregung zum Denken erhält, der würde auch schwerlich in 3000 Jahren eine Anregung erhalten.

In seinem Buche "Men and Books" behauptet Austin Phelps, dass es nur ganz wenig Schriftsteller gegeben hat, die eine Literatur von universalem Wert geschaffen haben. Er nennt, im Ganzen, achtzehn. Darunter befinden sich fünf aus der Heiligen Schrift, Moses, Jesaja, David und Johannes. Damit stellt er nicht die andern Schreiber der Bibel beiseite, sondern er betrachtet ihre Arbeit hier nur vom literarischen Standpunkt. Dann nennt er drei Deutsche (Goethe, Schiller, Kant) und vier Englische (Chaucer, Shakespeare, Bacon und Wordsworth). Ob wir nun ganz mit ihm mitgehen, ist eine andere Frage, aber bemerkenswert ist, dass wir als Mennoniten mit unserem biblischen wie auch deutschem Hintergrund und neulich nun mit der englischen Verbindung, eigentlich mit zweidrittel der grössten Dichter sehr leicht bekannt werden können.

Nun, wenn die Sachen erst in diesem Massstabe beschaut werden, dann stehen sie schon im Rahmen unserer Möglichkeiten. Also wir können mit wenig Anstrengung das Beste lesen. Wie aber schon angedeutet; nur Lesen genügt nicht. In England hatte sich in der Vergangenheit das sogenannte Ideal des "Country Gentleman" gebildet. Das waren Männer, die von dem Ertrage einer Wirtschaft oder Erbschaft ihr sorgenloses Leben hatten. Sie sammelten grosse Bibliotheken und lasen Wochen, Monate und Jahre hindurch. Leider produzierten sie nichts. Sie lebten und lasen und starben. Heute hört man oft den Ausdruck: "Der liest viel!" Schön und gut! Aber was tut er damit? Man könnte gerade so gut von einem Faulen sagen: "Der isst viel." Beide produzieren nichts.

Weil es nun nicht genügt, nur zur eigenen Belustigung, oder zum Zeitvertreib zu lesen, so fragen wir uns zum Schluss noch, was wir als Prediger durch's Lesen der literarischen Werke bezwecken wollen.

Da wir so eine herrliche Botschaft zu verkündigen haben, so ist es auch notwendig, dass wir sie so schön und geschmackvoll wie möglich darbieten. Durch das Lesen der guten Werke bilden wir uns ein Urteil über das, was guter Stil und gute Form ist. Das gute lernt man nur durch persönlichen Kontakt kennen. So ist es ja auch auf anderen Gebieten. Wer zum Beispiel nie reife Kirschen vom Baume gegessen, der weiss eigentlich nicht wie reife Kirschen wirklich schmecken. Da kann man noch so viel Abbildungen über Kirschen lesen, aber letzten Endes muss er schmecken, um zu wissen. So ist es mit der Literatur.

Weiter wollen wir beim Lesen beobachten, wie andere gedacht und diese Gedanken ausgedrückt haben. Die grossen Denker und Dichter haben erst das Problem durchgedacht, und sind dann zu einem Entschluss gekommen. Wir brauchen ihnen garnicht zustimmen in ihren Entschlüssen, aber wir merken uns, wie sie versucht haben, bis dahin zu kommen. Dann merken wir uns wie sie diese Gedankengänge in einer verständlichen Sprache ausge-

drückt haben. Sie waren nicht "so gelehrt", dass sie keiner verstehen konnte. Nein, sie waren noch klüger und konnten sich so ausdrücken, dass man sie verstehen konnte. Dieses ist ja ein grosses Problem beim Predigen, denn hier sollen wir die grossen Gedanken und die ewigen Wahrheiten unseres grossen Gottes in Menschenworte verkündigen. Da müssen die Wahrheiten erst bei uns klar sein. Wir müssen viel darüber nachdenken und dann versuchen in Worten auszudrücken. Wir werden merken, dass die grossen Dichter sich durchweg in einfachen Worten und Sätzen ausdrücken. Da wollen wir lernen, denn wir merken, dass manch ein Redner oder Schreiber sich, bildlich gesprochen, mit hochtrabenden Worten und verwickelten Sätzen den Strick um den Hals gewunden hat. Man hörte wohl noch Töne, aber keiner vernahm den Sinn. Damit ist aber nicht gesagt,

dass wir nur ein- oder zweisilbige Worte brauchen sollten.

Weiter wollen wir von den grossen Dichtern lernen wie auch wir etwas schaffen können. Obwohl die Mehrheit nicht viel Originelles produzieren wird, so wollen wir uns doch hüten vor dem blossen Nachahmen. Jemand hat einmal gesagt, dass das Malen nicht in erster Linie die Kunst der Hand, sondern des Auges ist. Je genauer der Maler beobachtet, desto schöner kann er malen. Wenn wir genau Obacht geben werden, wie andere geschrieben und gesprochen, so werden wir es auch besser machen.

Abschliessend möchten wir unterstreichen, dass wir uns bemühen wollen, das Evangelium in einer schönen Form darzubieten. Natürlich soll die Form nicht den Inhalt ersetzen. Der Inhalt bleibt die Hauptsache.

—V. D. Toews.

CHRISTIAN WORKER'S LIBRARY

Books for Preachers of the Word

In one of his more recent articles (which he contributed regularly to the **Moody Monthly** magazine and which appear under the feature caption, "In the Study") Dr. Wilbur Smith makes extended reference to the preaching of Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones of Westminster Chapel, in London, England. His remarks, based on personal impressions received in the services at which Dr. Lloyd-Jones preached, are highly enthusiastic and literally aglow with admiration and esteem for this great minister of the Gospel. Towards the end of this article, Dr. Smith reaches the very pinnacle of heart-felt praise, as it were, when he declares emphatically, "I have not heard such preaching for years. One thing I determined in my own soul, I would never be satisfied again, as long as I live, with preaching anything but the very best that I have in deadly earnestness and, pray

God, in the power of the Holy-Spirit. This is preaching."

Those who know something about Dr. Lloyd-Jones' God-given capacity and utter devotion to the holy task of proclaiming the Gospel will very readily understand and appreciate Dr. Smith's highly favorable attitude towards and regard for this particular preacher of God. Now, perhaps few of us have heard Dr. Lloyd-Jones or any other minister quite as effective and-or quite as influential as he; but many of us—I am sure—have had other more modest experiences which we recall with something of the same delight and gratitude—experiences in which some lesser, and yet also inspired preacher fairly gripped our own minds and hearts and profoundly affected our own inner lives by and through his heaven-sent messages. These are experiences which lay preachers, in particular, count very

dear, for in and by them have come to them personally both unusual inspiration and genuine help, of a very practical kind, as far as their own preaching ministry is concerned.

However, whether or not we have all been privileged to thus personally hear and benefit from the preaching of some great preacher of the Gospel, we may all have that experience, not only once but again and again, (albeit in a vicarious and more restricted way) by a) **reading about the lives and ministries of such preachers** and by b) **reading their sermons and-or homiletical works**. All too often, however, we do not avail ourselves, let alone look about for such material of which there is, indeed, enough about to occupy us for many months and years, if need be!

In this month's review of books for the "Christian Worker's Library," we wish to call attention to two books only from amongst a great host which, of seriously and devotedly read, could be for their readers this very thing of which we have just spoken. The one book is **Preachers I Have Heard**, by Alexander Gammie (Pickering and Inglis), and the others is **Heralds of God**, by James S. Stewart. (Charles Scribner's Sons).

Gammie's book contains brief personal portraits of many of the foremost preachers of England and Scotland in the very recent past. The author has not, for obvious reasons, included here any preacher still living; all fifty-seven preachers which he has included are such as he himself heard preach, at least once—often more than once. This series of preachers of the Word of God constitutes a very distinguished and impressive array indeed! Some of the names, to be sure, will be more familiar to our readers than others; many will, perhaps, be altogether unfamiliar. A very few of those included, it is true, were **moderately liberal** in their theological views, at least in respect to some doctrines of the Christian faith; the great majority of them, however, were, without any doubt, genuinely orthodox and conservative. But all, one may conclude from Gammie's descriptions and interpretative remarks, are worthy of inclusion in such a gal-

axy of eminent preachers. Each one profoundly affected, in a distinctly spiritual way, many of those who regularly heard him preach, and each one helped, in his own individual way, to advance the general cause of Christ in this world of sin and unbelief.

Here are a few of the names, chosen more or less at random from this great "gallery of pulpit princess": **Dr. Alexander Whyte**, of St. George's in Edinburgh, of whom it was said, "To know Dr. Whyte was to know what the Covenanters were like in their most splendid hours;" **Dr. George Matheson**, of Glasgow, whose sermons, it was said, followed their hearers through life and would not let them go; **Professor David Smith**, the great preacher of Glasgow "who came forth from the inner place with the fragrance about him although he wist not that his face shone"; **Principal A. M. Fairbairn**, of Oxford, who "could splash at a ten-league canvas with brushes of comets' hair, so opulent were his historical resources and so wide his horizons. His massive, thought-crammed, ornate discourses moved with a majestic sweep, but they were also hot with conviction and aglow with enthusiasm;" **Rev. John McNeill**, whose name became, during his lifetime, a "household word throughout the English-speaking world"; **Dr. Joseph Parker**, of London City Temple, a "supreme interpreter of the Scriptures," whose **People's Bible** is still a rich mine for preachers; **Principal John Cairns**, of Edinburgh University, "a saint who was unconscious of his saintliness, and thus, by voice and pen, he exercised a greater influence than he ever knew;" **Dr. J. H. Jowett**, who, while a master of pulpit technique and an expert in regard to sermon construction, could yet preach with such a strangely wooing note that few hearers could leave the service untouched or unaffected; **Dr. John Kelman** of Scotland, whose personal life and preaching power convinced many young men of his day that "the preacher's is the grandest calling that any young man could choose to follow;" **Dr. F. B. Meyer**, of whom Dr. Parker could say, "He brings a benediction with him, a better air than earth's poor murky climate, and he

never leaves me without the impression that I could have been face to face with a man of God"; **Principal James Denney**, of Glasgow, whose influence upon Scottish preachers, particularly in respect to the **content** of preaching, has been perhaps without parallel in this generation; and, finally, **Dr. Campbell Morgan** of London, of whom it may truly be said that he did something quite unique "in helping to rediscover the English Bible to multitudes of men and women."

The highly personal and entirely sympathetic tone and style of these pen portraits, whole perhaps proving somewhat annoying to the fastidious historian and the meticulous scholar, ought to appeal greatly, we have no doubt, to most lay preachers who, after all, are not so interested in merciless objectivity and encyclopaedic scope, in respect to biographical detail, as they are in a brief portrait that makes the man "come alive" and that proves genuinely inspirational and heart-warming in its general effect and impression upon them.

There is, however, a more distinctly practical (in the more mundane sense of this word) benefit for the preacher to be derived from a careful reading of this book. **Preachers I Have Heard** contains, scattered here and there throughout its pages, a wealth of anecdotal illustrations and comments that could, without too much time and effort, be gathered up by the zealous preacher and filed away for use in sermon preparation, as the need arises. Here are illustrations taken from life itself—illustrations that are, most of them, bold, lively, pointed, and incisive—and such are not to be found just anywhere and everywhere, as every diligent and honest preacher knows!

But we must turn, now, to the other book, **Heralds of God**, and say something, briefly, about its special merits and general value for all who look upon themselves as preachers who are still in frequent need of such inspiration, help and guidance as good books can provide! In the author of this general study of preaching, Dr. James S. Stewart of Edinburgh, we have a contemporary minister of the Gospel who, it

can be affirmed already, also belongs among the great preachers of Britain. Already great tribute has been paid to him as a preacher of great power, persuasive appeal and deeply spiritual influence, by both conservative and liberal preachers and leaders of Britain and America. Two books containing some of his great sermons have recently been published by C.Scribner's Sons; they are **The Strong Name** and **The Gates of New Life**.

Heralds of God itself is, however, not a book of sermons but a book **about preaching** as such. By the use of a seemingly simple and yet truly skilful division, Stewart is able to take up and consider at some length most of the important problems that confront any sincere and diligent preacher. His five-fold division by chapters is as follows: **The Preacher's World**, **The Preacher's Theme**, **The Preacher's Study**, **The Preacher's Technique**, and **The Preacher's Inner Life**. And what a masterful and effective handling of the preacher's problems it is! Here are no facile platitudes and no prosy commonplaces. These pages reveal such an intimate **acquaintance**, on Stewart's part, with the essential core of these problems that one is completely reassured as to his capacity to help one. They reveal, too, such an **originality** in dealing with old and familiar aspects of the preaching task that one is charmed and utterly captivated, again and again, by his remarks. They reveal, also, such a pervasive note of tremendous **spiritual conviction and certainty** that one cannot but be personally challenged and influenced both to regard and to proclaim the fundamental truths of the Christian Gospel with much greater seriousness, passion and concern than ever before.

In this book, also, as in **Preachers I Have Heard**, there are numerous illustrations and anecdotes of the kind that bear more frequent repeating. Apt literary allusions are particularly plentiful in **Heralds of God** and do so much, often, to reinforce or further illustrate some aspect of the subject under discussion. Stewart's style is, in general, a very pleasing and effective one. It is characterized by those very

CAMPUS NEWS

On the surface, September 23rd may have been as any other day of the year, yet for a hundred or more students, whose application to Bible College had been accepted, it was an historic day. September 23rd marked the first official day of the current school year.

"O taste and see that the Lord is good" Psalm 34:8. Young men and women, one hundred and fifteen strong, from four countries, and five provinces in Canada, converged on M.B.B.C. to sharpen their spiritual appetite. The Lord Jesus Christ challenged the world merely to taste and it would certainly realize that the Lord was good. Tasting and seeing the goodness of the Lord is serious business and a sense of business-like purpose seemed to pervade the enrolling groups of students as they went through the routine of counselling, registering and noting their first class-lectures.

The group of students the Lord has given the Bible College this year presents an interesting cross-section of Canadian M.B.'s. Their ages range from the late teens to the early thirties; their occupations cover nursing, teaching, factory work, clerical work, mining, farming, mission-work, driving, lumbering, construction, etc.; their talents run the gamut of abilities from painting, singing and playing, to writing, speaking and entertaining; their status, however, is limited in one respect—they are either married or single.

After several weeks of organizational planning, each College student has been placed by the Home Missions director

qualities for which so many writers and preachers yearn and strive, and yet, too often, never acquire: directness, liveliness, verve and immediacy. It is a preaching and a teaching style that may very justly be summed up in the phrase which the "British Weekly" applied to it: "compelling eloquence"!

—H. Giesbrecht.

into some practical work. All the committees responsible for student activities have already gone to work planning recreational, literary, devotional and musical projects. A special uplift for the students are the Saturday night testimony and prayer meetings and the Friday evening Student Nights. It has been the experience of numerous individuals to come to the Saturday testimony meeting feeling tired and dull after a week of strain, and to walk away light-hearted after hearing one experience upon the other of God's marvellous and loving provision in the lives of other Christians.

Rev. J. J. Dick, missionary on furlough from India, was guest speaker at the first Student Night, October 4th. Together with his wife, Rev. Dick presented the challenge of an expanding field in very courageous, optimistic terms. A humorous note was added when, racing against time, because of a train appointment after the service, Rev. Dick stated that in India he had often made the trains wait for him!

The second student evening, October 11th, began a new series of programs prepared by the Literary Committee. Till Christmas, on a trial basis, on alternating Fridays, the programmes will be of a literary, or a spiritual nature. "College Culture" was the first effort of the Literary Committee when Dr. F. C. Peters spoke on the "Christian Culture." Everyone was challenged to examine his life for matters which should be foreign in his Christian makeup and work toward becoming a principled individual.

Chapel Period is part of the day which holds a unique, treasured position in each student's life. The blessings which the period may hold are keenly anticipated and often forthcoming. The College instructors have belivered challenging personal messages from time to time. Rev. F. C. Peters reminded us of "Something beyond Knowledge"—the

(Fortsetzung von Umschlagsseite 2)

Nach Provinzen:		Nach Kursen:	
British Columbia	31	Theologie	36
Alberta	15	Relig. Bildung	54
Saskatchewan	12	Musik	14
Manitoba	30	Allgemeiner Bibelkursus	10
Ontario	22		— 114
Japan	1	Nach Gemeinderichtung	
Paraguay	3	Mennoniten Brueder	110
	— 114	Andere	4
Nach Geschlecht:			— 114
Brueder	61	Nach Alter:	
Schwestern	53	Durchschnittlich	23.7
	— 114	Nach Ehestand:	
Nach Bildung:		Verheiratet	31
Bibelschulbildung	57	Ledig	83
Nicht Bibelschulbildung	57		— 114
	— 114		

(Eine ganze Anzahl haben einige Jahre Universitaetsbildung und andere Ausbildung).

Nach Beruf:

Studenten, (solche, die direkt aus anderen Lehranstalten kommen)	37
Lehrer (Tagesschulen)	26
Krankenschwestern	10
Geschaeftsleute	13
Andere	18
	— 114

Im Blick auf die grossen Anforderungen die an uns durch solche Schar junger Leute gestellt werden, helft uns beten, dass der Herr das Werk unserer Haende foerdern moechte.

—D. Ewert.

acquiring of spiritual gifts which surpasses in value anything that mere education in itself can give us. Rev. H. R. Baerg, using Daniel's life as an example, showed positive steps to successful Christianity. And recently Mr. Giesbrecht, College librarian, spoke about "Disappointments in the Christian Life" giving helpful ideas on the causes, and aids to combat periods of depression in the lives of God's children.

Several students have particularly challenged the entire student body during Student Chapel periods. Mr. Harvey Gossen in the interest of the Home Mission department, emphasized the "Requirements of the Personal Worker" making special application to each person's practical work for the coming winter. Dave Nickel, mission-worker at Compass, Saskatchewan, for seven

years, presented the absolute necessity of "Giving the Best in Preparation for the Lord's Service."

Visitors frequently vary the tone of Chapel services. Rev. A. H. Unruh, in his fatherly manner, encouraged the students to "Bind up the Loins of your Minds." Rev. W. Falk, in a conversational manner, inspired renewed love for a Saviour who said, "I will not leave you desolate."

School passes rapidly. It seemed that we had scarcely arrived and already a month has gone. As one ponders the rush of life, a single wish fills the heart, that one could utilize all the opportunities which present themselves at College. Life is rich and full of possibilities, oh, that we might live it with all of youths vigor put to use!

—Harold Jantz.

Good Timber

The tree that never had to fight
For sun and sky and air and light,
That stood out in the open plain
And always got its share of rain,
Never became a forest king
But lived and died a scrubby thing.

The man who never had to toil
To heaven from the common soil,
Who never had to win his share
Of sun and sky and light and air,
Never became a manly man,
But lived and died as he began.

Good timber does not grow in ease;
The stronger wind, the tougher trees;
The farther sky, the greater length;
The more the storm, the more the strength;
But sun and cold, by rain and snows,
In tree or man, good timber grows.

Where thickest stands the forest growth,
We find the patriarchs of both;
And they hold converse with the stars
Whose broken branches show the scars
Of many winds and of much strife—
This is the common law of life.

Douglas Malloch