

# The Voice

of the Mennonite Brethren Bible College

Vol. XI

September - October, 1962

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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### “Haltet solche Männer in Ehren!” (Phil. 2, 29 in Menge)

Die Veranlassung zu dieser Aufforderung des Apostels Paulus war der aufopfernde Dienst eines treuen Mitarbeiters, der nicht nur seiner Lokalgemeinde (Philippi), sondern dem ganzen Missionswerk zum großen Segen gewesen war.

Wir möchten obige Ermahnung beachten, in dem wir uns an zwei Knechte des Herrn erinnern, die auf unsere Schule, sowie auch auf unsere ganze Bruderschaft, einen segensreichen Einfluß gehabt haben. Beide wurden kurz nacheinander vom Herrn in die obere Heimat gerufen.

**Dr. S. A. Witmer**, Exekutiv-Sekretär der “Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges,” starb in Fort Wayne, Indiana, am 11. September dieses Jahres. Dr. Witmer, der viele Jahre der Präsident des Fort Wayne Bible College war, gehört zu den Gründern der A.A.B.C. Als im Jahre 1950 unser Bibel College Aufnahme in dieser Vereinigung suchte, wurde Dr. Witmer von der Leitung der Organisation beauftragt, unsere Schule einer gründlichen Prüfung zu unterziehen, die er dann auch mit einem Gehilfen unternahm. Unsere Bekanntschaft und Freundschaft mit diesem Leiter im Christlichen Bildungswesen datiert aus jener Zeit. In den letzten Jahren widmete Dr. Witmer seine ganze Zeit der Förderung der Sache der Bibel Colleges in den Vereinigten Staaten und in Kanada, als Direktor der A.A.B.C. Einerseits war Dr. Witmer ernstlich bemüht um die Hebung des Unterrichts in diesen Schulen. Andererseits versuchte er das Interesse für die Bedeutung dieser Schulen für die Ausbildung von Gemeindearbeitern in der Öffentlichkeit zu wecken und zu fördern. Als geistliches Vermächtnis hinterläßt er seinen vielen Freunden das wertvolle Buch: **THE BIBLE COLLEGE STORY: EDUCATION WITH DIMENSION**, welches im Februar dieses Jahres in Druck erschien. Sein Gedächtnis bleibt ein Segen.

**Dr. H. S. Bender**, Dekan des Goshen Biblical Seminary, starb am 22. September, nachdem er seinen Studenten die ersten Vorträge im neuen Arbeitsjahr gegeben. Mit dem Abscheiden dieses Mannes hat

(Fortsetzung auf Seite 24)

## SEASONAL

### Let Us Be Grateful!

“Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you” (I Thess. 5:16,17).

Mankind is basically ungrateful. This is the testimony of history and of prophecy. Paul writes to the Romans and relates the history of the human race, and says, in 1:21, “Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imagination, and their foolish heart was darkened.” In II Timothy 3 Paul speaks of the latter days and says, “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be . . . unthankful.”

We may observe ungrateful people about us daily. There are thousands of people in this country who live in abundance, who eat three meals every day, for 365 days a year, and never stop to bow their heads in gratitude to God who provided for them. You can see them going to the tables in restaurants like horses to the manger, without returning thanks to God who gave it all.

There are parents who consider themselves cultured and refined, and want to teach their children to say thank you to the neighbor and the stranger for every kindness shown, but they never thank God for all His benefits. Their children never see them on their knees to thank God fittingly for food and raiment and life and health.

The government has set aside one day in the year as a national day of thanksgiving. But what use do we make of it? True, many grateful hearts join in praise and thanksgiving. For many others, however, it is just another long weekend to be spent in pleasure-seeking. Many will sit down to eat a thanksgiving dinner without saying grace at the table. Others will enjoy the privileges of citizenship of this fair country and will not even think of thanking God for our country and our liberties. Some-

one has said, “Call a man ungrateful and you can call him no worse.”

The Master still asks with grave concern, “Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine?” The present need is for more grateful people. That is why we should take Paul’s exhortation seriously and give thanks in everything.

**I. The source gratitude** is to be sought in the joyful and prayerful heart. Prayer usually precedes praise. The man who asks is grateful when he receives. The man who demands, grumbles. The demanding child is usually an ungrateful child. The laborer who demands higher wages, fewer working hours, and better working conditions is seldom thankful at heart when his demands are met. The demanding citizen is usually a harsh critic of the government. The demanding creature is ungrateful to the creator. Too many people regard God as a debtor rather than as a benefactor. They feel that God owes them all that they want, and they have no intention of returning thanks for what they consider a debt repaid. But the man who cultivates a habit of prayer, who lives in a continual spirit of worship and in a devotional frame of mind will have many things to be grateful for. He who begins the day with prayer must necessarily end with a season of praise, for unceasing prayer leads to unceasing praise. But he who thinks that God owes him everything and has need to ask for nothing; who rises without a prayer and retires without praise, will go through life grumbling, and souring in his disposition. Let a man look up to God in prayer and he will have learned the secret of thanksgiving.

**II. The scope of gratitude** is expressed in the words, “in everything.” Thanksgiving covers the whole range of God’s gifts of grace. Duly sensible of our benefits, we acknowledge them with cheerfulness. However, in our limited understanding of God’s ways, we are sometimes tempted to single out certain

things which are pleasant to us as items of praise and others we leave unmentioned. But if we acknowledge the wisdom of God we will thank Him for all things. We will thank him for what he gives, and for what He withholds; we will thank Him in things great and in things small; in the common things as well as the rare things; we will thank Him for the material blessings and also for the spiritual. We will thank Him in joy and in sorrow, in prosperity and in adversity, in health and sickness. We will also thank Him for the chastisements which are sent in love. Out of the depth of affliction we want to say with Job, "The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

**III. The ground of gratitude.** "For this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." God wants His children to live a life of constant joy, a life of

unceasing prayer, and a life of perpetual thanksgiving. God has given us His choicest blessing in Jesus Christ, our Saviour. It is His will that we now offer the sacrifice of praise to Him continually. Gratitude to God for blessings bestowed will restrain from apostasy. Ingratitude forces people down the highroad to spiritual ruin. If we want to stop this avalanche we will have to turn to God as a nation NOW, accept His gracious gifts and thank Him for them. This is the only remedy.

Gratitude also paves the way for future blessings. The Psalmist has well said, "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God." Praise is still one of the channels of God's blessings. Let us not block this channel by our unwarranted ingratitude!

J. H. Quiring

## MISSIONS

### Christliche Liebestätigkeit

(Fortsetzung)

Wir haben in der vorigen Ausgabe des „Voice“ die heilsgeschichtliche Grundlage der christlichen Liebestätigkeit erörtert, und auch einleitend auf das große Gebiet der dienenden Liebe hingewiesen. In einer weiteren Beleuchtung der Frage in bezug auf das Gebiet der christlichen Liebestätigkeit möchten wir sagen, daß

**b) sie sich auf die leibliche und geistliche Not der Menschen erstreckt.**

In unserm Dienst müssen wir immer diesen beiden Seiten der menschlichen Not Rechnung tragen. Der Herr Jesus hat es in einzigartiger Weise in seinem Dienst gezeigt, wie die Linderung der leiblichen und geistlichen Not nicht voneinander zu trennen sind. Er predigte das Evangelium und speiste die Hungrigen bei derselben Gelegenheit. Er vergab dem Gichtbrüchigen seine Sünden und heilte ihn von seiner Krankheit.

Dieser Umstand machte das Zeugnis Christi so kraftvoll, so gewaltig. In den Gemeinden des ersten Jahrhunderts hatte man das Prinzip tief ergriffen, daß sich die Liebestätigkeit auf leibliche sowie auf geistliche Not erstrecken muß. In der Gemeinde zu Jerusalem führt es zu einer zeitweiligen Gütergemeinschaft. In den andern Gemeinden kam es zu einem „Ausgleich“ (Vgl. 2. Kor. 8, 14) in Zeiten der Not. Es ist wertvoll zu beachten, daß die Gemeinde zu Antiochien, die gleichsam den Vorrang in der Aussendung von Missionaren in die Heidenwelt hatte, auch den Vorrang in der Organisierung des ersten Hilfswerkes zwecks Linderung der leiblichen Not hatte (Vgl. Apg. 11, 27-30). Leider ist dieses biblische Ideal nicht immer festgehalten worden, und in unserer eigenen Gemeinschaft finden wir Kreise, wo man einerseits kein Interesse für das Hilfswerk zeigt, in andern Kreisen wiederum kein Interesse

für Evangelisation und Mission. Eine einseitige Betonung und Praxis führt zu krankhaften Erscheinungen im Gemeindeleben. Unsere Vorväter haben es erkannt, daß das Geben, das Opfern von Geld und Gaben auch für leibliche Not zum Vorrecht und zur Pflicht der Gemeinde gehört. Auch Kirchenhistoriker außerhalb unserer Gemeinschaft weisen darauf hin, daß die Mennoniten Hollands, sowie auch später die Mennoniten in Preußen, Rußland und Amerika, sich hervor getan haben in den verschiedenen Zweigen der christlichen Wohltätigkeit. In den letzten Jahrzehnten ist auf diesem Gebiet jedoch eine Tendenz zu bemerken, die sich negativ auf die Mission der Gemeinde auswirken kann. Der moderne Staat der „Sozialen Wohlfahrt“ (welfare state) dringt mehr und mehr in dieses Gebiet ein, welches früher vornehmlich das Gebiet der Gemeinde war. Der moderne Staat sorgt für die Armen und Arbeitslosen, für die Alten und Kranken, für Witwen und Waisen. Ist diese Erscheinung zum Teil auf das Versagen der christlichen Kirche in ihrer Aufgabe zurückzuführen? Sollten wir vielleicht noch weiter gehen und fragen, ob die anti-christliche und anti-kirchliche Gesinnung der modernen sozialistischen Parteien auch auf dieses Versagen der Gemeinden zurückzuführen ist? Ob letzteres nun die Ursache ist oder nicht, eines steht fest: Ein großes Gebiet der Betätigung und eine wunderbare Gelegenheit für das christliche Zeugnis sind der Gemeinde in manchen Ländern verloren gegangen.

Andererseits hat sich eine neue Tür geöffnet, besonders auch für unsere mennonitische Gemeinschaft, in der unbeschreiblichen Not, die durch die furchtbaren Weltkriege des 20. Jahrhunderts sowie auch durch Naturkatastrophen entstanden ist. Hier ist wahrlich ein Gebiet so groß wie die Welt, wo wir im „Namen Christi“ helfen können. In einer haßerfüllten Welt haben wir eine wundervolle Gelegenheit, die Botschaft der Liebe und des Friedens mit Wort und Tat zu bezeugen. Da, wo die Mörder ihr blutiges Handwerk getrieben und den Menschen halb-tot liegen gelassen haben, bietet sich dem Christen die herrliche Gelegenheit zur praktischen Nächstenliebe. Hier liegt die

Aufgabe der Gemeinde in Zeiten der Not und des Krieges.

Gott sei's geklagt, daß es auch heute viele gibt, die sich Jünger Jesu nennen und dem Priester und Levit gleichen, in dem sie kalt und gleichgültig an der Not vorbeigehen. Noch trauriger ist es, wenn viele einem Petrus gleich, das Schwert aus der Scheide ziehen und Wunden schlagen anstatt Wunden heilen. Wie hat die christliche Kirche im allgemeinen und auch unsere Mennoniten-Gemeinschaft im besondern, sich immer wieder auf dieser Linie versündigt. Gott gebe uns Gnade zur Buße und zu einer neuen und tieferen Erfassung unserer Aufgabe in der Welt. Die „Großen“ in dieser Welt werden darnach abgeschätzt, wie viele sie „niedergeschlagen“ haben. Die Feinde Jesu gaben dem Sohn Gottes am Kreuz ein wunderbares Zeugnis: Er hat andern geholfen, er hat Gott vertraut (vgl. Matth. 27, 42, 43). Gottvertrauen und dienende Liebe kennzeichneten sein Erdenleben. Wahre Größe besteht nicht im Herrschen, sondern in selbstverleugnendem Dienen. Möchte diese Gesinnung des Meisters auch in unsern Gemeinden mehr und mehr zum Ausdruck kommen.

Wir haben darauf hingewiesen, daß die christliche Liebestätigkeit sich auf alle Menschen erstreckt und zwar auf ihre leibliche sowohl als auf ihre geistliche Not. Es ist hier jedoch eins zu beachten. Die Linderung der leiblichen Not ist und bleibt Mittel zum Zweck. Leibliche Hilfe soll den Weg zur geistlichen Hilfe bahnen. Was die Welt noch nötiger braucht als das natürliche Brot ist das geistliche Brot. Das größte Problem der Menschen ist nicht auf sozialer, ökonomischer oder politischer Linie zu suchen. Das Grundübel ist und bleibt die Sünde. Hier kann nur das Evangelium helfen. Wenn wir in unserm Hilfswerk dieses Ziel aus dem Auge verlieren, dann wird unsere Arbeit vergeblich sein. Einer unser Väter in Christo, den Gott in besonderer Weise in der Errettung vieler unserer Volksgenossen aus leiblicher Not gebraucht hat, äußerte bei einer Gelegenheit folgenden Gedanken: Ich würde meine Arbeit zum Teil als eine vergebliche ansehen, wenn diese aus leiblicher

Not Geretteten nicht auch eine geistliche Errettung erleben würden. Möchte unsere Wohltätigkeit immer wieder den Weg bereiten für ein kraftvolles Zeugnis der rettenden Gnade.

Auf noch eine Frage möchten wir kurz eingehen.

### 3. Welche Bedeutung hat die christliche Liebestätigkeit?

In 1. Kor. 13 gibt der Apostel Paulus uns das wunderbare Bild der Liebe. In einzigartiger Weise schildert er die Bedeutung, die Kraft und die Dauer der Liebe. Wahrlich, „Liebe ist stark wie der Tod“ (Hohelied 8, 6). Sie offenbart eine welt-überwindende Macht. Wenn es vom Glauben heißt, daß er der Sieg ist, der die Welt überwindet (Vgl. 1. Joh. 5, 4), dann ist es der Glaube, der durch die Liebe tätig ist. Die Bedeutung der dienenden Liebe ist an ihren Auswirkungen zu ersehen.

#### a) Die Gemeinde Christi liefert durch die christliche Liebestätigkeit einer ungläubigen Welt den besten Beweis wahren Christentums.

Die Welt schaut mit skeptischen und kritischen Augen auf die Gemeinde Christi. Man prüft den Baum an seinen Früchten. Man bewertet den Glauben nach seinen Werken. Eine Liebe mit „Worten und mit der Zunge“ steht den Bollwerken des Unglaubens machtlos gegenüber. Eine Liebe jedoch, die in den Kampf zieht ausgerüstet mit der „Tat und mit der Wahrheit“ gewinnt die Herzen. Der Glaube ohne Werke ist tot, und vermag auch nicht Menschen aus dem geistlichen Tode zu erwecken. Die Welt wird für Christus gewonnen nicht in erster Linie durch ein richtig-biblisches formuliertes Dogma, sondern durch treuen und demütigen Liebesdienst. Vor dieser Großmacht müssen auch die Feinde des Reiches Gottes kapitulieren. Deshalb ruft der Meister seinen Jüngern zu: „Tut wohl denen, die euch hassen.“ Und Paulus ermahnt uns wie folgt zu dieser Liebe: „So nun deinen Feind hungert, so speise ihn; dürstet ihn, so tränke ihn. Wenn du das tust, so wirst du feurige Kohlen auf sein Haupt sammeln“ (Röm. 12, 29). Das Böse geht nur auf einem Wege zu überwinden: mit Gutem. Dieses ist keine idealistische Schwärmerei, sondern

eine praktische christliche Lebensregel, die sich in der Geschichte der Inneren und Äußeren Mission tausendfach bewährt hat. Dienende Liebe gewinnt, erwärmt und erweicht die Herzen auch in unserer Zeit. Dieses ist auch immer wieder die Erfahrung unserer Arbeiter im Hilfswerk. Bei manchen ist der Glaube geweckt worden; bei andern, wo er durch die bitteren Erfahrungen der Kriegsjahre erschüttert worden war, ist er wiederhergestellt worden. Eine MCC Arbeiterin, die in einem nicht-mennonitischen Kreise in der Kleiderverteilung beschäftigt war, machte folgende Beobachtung. Eine Frau, die ein Kleiderpaket empfangen hatte, blieb in tiefer Bewegung stehen, betastete es mit den Händen und sagte, sichtlich gerührt: Wie ist es so warm — so warm von der Liebe!

Die Welt wird in dem Masse von der Liebe Gottes überzeugt, wie dieselbe im Leben der Nachfolger Jesu zum Ausdruck kommt.

#### b) Die christliche Liebestätigkeit dient zur Verbindung der Gläubigen.

Die zerstreuten Gemeinden der Apostelzeit wurden in besonderer Weise durch die christliche Liebestätigkeit verbunden. Die Gemeinde in Antiochien sandte „eine Handreichung“ den Brüdern in Judäa und schlug damit gleichsam über den Strom der Differenzen eine Brücke. Ebenso war die Steuer in den Gemeinden Mazedoniens und Griechenlands für die armen Christen in Jerusalem ein wesentliches Bindemittel in den Beziehungen zwischen heidenchristlichen und juden-christlichen Gemeinden. Es war nicht das Dogma, sondern die dienende Liebe, die die Gemeinden vereinigte. (Vgl. auch Gal. 2, 9.10)

In unserer eigenen Geschichte merken wir immer wieder, wie die christliche Liebestätigkeit nicht nur die zerstreuten Gemeinden verband, sondern auch zur Vereinigung in einem gemeinsamen Werk gedient hat. Die verschiedenen Strömungen der Taufgesinnten in den Niederlanden fanden im 17. Jahrhundert in der Nothilfe für verfolgte Glaubensgenossen einen Boden der Einigung. Als im Jahr 1709 der „Fonds für büttenlandsche Nooden“ gegründet wurde, steuerten sämtliche Gemeinden zu demselben bei, auch die norddeutschen

zu Emden, Hamburg und Danzig. Auf dieser Linie finden wir viele Beispiele in unserer 400jährigen Geschichte. Auch die jüngste Vergangenheit zeugt davon. In Südamerika haben die verschiedenen Gemeinderichtungen sich zum gemeinsamen Werk vereinigt. Im Chaco unterstützen die drei Gemeinden Fernheims eine gemeinsame Mission unter den Indianern. Dasselbe gilt auch von der Lepramission, an der sich alle Gemeinderichtungen aller Kolonien Paraguays beteiligen. Die beste Illustration für dieses Prinzip bildet ja auch unsere Zusammenarbeit im MCC. Der Herr hat sich in den letzten Jahrzehnten wunderbar zu dieser gemeinsamen Arbeit bekannt und sie sichtbar gesegnet. Die Siebente Mennonitische Weltkonferenz in Kitchener, Ontario, mit ihrer starken Betonung biblischer Grundsätze für Gemeinde und Mission, wäre wohl nie zustande gekommen, ohne diese jahrelange Zusammenarbeit im MCC. Auf

dem Boden der dienenden Liebe haben wir einen Einigungspunkt gefunden. Möchte der Herr auch in Zukunft dieses vereinigte Zeugnis unserer Bruderschaft zum Heil vieler Menschen und zum Wohl unserer Brüder in Not segnen.

Das hohe Ziel allen christlichen Wirkens und Strebens ist die Verherrlichung Gottes (Vgl. 1. Petri 4, 11). Der Schreiber des Hebräerbriefes ruft uns zu: „Wohlzutun und mitzuteilen vergessen nicht; denn solche Opfer gefallen Gott wohl“ (Heb. 13, 16). Gott gebe uns Gnade, daß wir aus einem lebendigen Glauben an Christus und aus inbrünstiger Liebe zu ihm gedrungen werden möchten, Gutes zu tun an jedermann, allermeist aber an des Glaubens Genossen, so daß der Herr der Gemeinde auch unserer Gemeinschaft einmal das Zeugnis geben könnte, das er einst der Maria gab: „Sie hat getan was sie konnte“ (Markus 14, 8).

J. A. Toews

## PRACTICAL

### Stewardship of the Total Person

Stewardship and discipleship are almost synonymous terms. Specifically, I imagine, stewardship would be a function of discipleship. When we think of stewardship, we think of the management of life under the new relationship which exists when we are disciples of Christ. Jesus is Lord; we are His servants. He is the Master; we are His subjects. It is His to direct; it is ours to carry out directions.

Most sermons on stewardship deal almost exclusively with management of funds and thus miss the wider scope of what Paul implies when he says, "Ye are not your own." There is more to our relationship with the Master than the discrete handling of funds. He has placed more in our custody than money. It is quite possible that limiting stewardship to the area of money allows the disciple to evade some of the more significant areas of responsibility.

Stewardship conveys the concept to us that ours is a borrowed life. We hold it as a sacred trust from God and some day when He sees fit to recall it, we shall be called upon to give account of our stewardship of life. More than money will be involved in that final reckoning.

To be careful with life and its functions is not a step in the direction of legalism. The legalist hopes to earn something by his meticulous observance of certain rules. It becomes for him the basis of self-glorification and pride. The steward responds in responsible living because of his intense love for the Master, for the Lord of his life. The motivation is different; it is the motivation of love seeking to express itself in service.

The most obvious thing which I hold as a sacred trust is my person. Through the avenue of my personal existence,

I am able to witness and serve. The person I am is much more important than what I say, although we cannot entirely divorce verbal witness from witness of person. What I say is part of what I am. Jesus said to His disciples, "Ye are the salt of the earth."

#### Stewardship of the Body

Our body is a gift of God to be used in service for God. It is the vehicle of expression by which we touch the world about us. The body is the earthen vessel which houses, for a brief time, the eternal "I", the real self. The disciple may not be negligent of the body since the body, too, stands under the Lordship of Christ.

The apostle Paul speaks of the body as being a tabernacle, a temple. Both tabernacle and temple were dwellings designed to be the abode of God. The presence of God was the impressive thing in both tabernacle and temple. Not the beauties created by expert workmanship, not the exquisite outward adornments, but the glory of the presence of a majestic God, who has chosen to condescend to dwell in a building made by hands. Without the presence of God both buildings lost their true meaning.

Today God has chosen to dwell in a temple not made by human hands. Paul writes to the Christians at Corinth: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" To defile this temple is to incur the judgment of God. The body is holy. The holy was that which had been set aside for a specific purpose and could not be used for anything else. God has ordained our body to be the dwelling place of the Spirit of God. Any other purpose frustrates the original intention of God and leads to judgment.

By calling the body a tabernacle, Paul pointed to the transitory nature of the human body. It is to serve for a brief time and will be transformed into something permanent. This also speaks of the fact that something in man is higher than the body. One can become so concerned with the container that one fails to notice the lack of content.

There is a law in God's universe by which the lower serves the higher. Man

is to have dominion over the animals and they are to serve him in his various and many duties in life. For the Old Testament an animal which rebelled against its lower position and harmed man was killed. The law of 'lower-higher' also applies to the body-soul relationship. The body is to serve the higher part of man, his immortal soul, by giving proper expression to men's spiritual life. When people subject the soul to the body, they have reversed God's order and that to their own destruction. For this reason Paul found it necessary to keep his body in subjection (I Cor. 9:27). Having preached to others through the medium of the body, it could happen that through the domination of the body over the soul he could become a castaway, a useless derelict of no value to the Lord.

It is possible to be more concerned about the beauty of the body than the beauty of the soul. For some the health of the body is a greater concern than the well-being of the soul. It is folly for Christians to be more concerned about adorning the body than decorating the soul.

Modern secularism has reversed the divine order. We are again witnessing a revival of the body cult. The Greeks almost worshiped the human body as a symbol of beauty, and modern society has enthroned the body as a symbol of freedom from moral restraints. It is considered proper to expose the body and to speak against it is to identify oneself with the relics of a Victorian ethic. However, young people should remember that no one "lives unto himself" (Rom. 14:7). Paul goes on to say that "we live unto the Lord." We are responsible for the response which we call forth in others. Surely the over-exposure of the body tends to call forth "lower" responses from others, often leading to contamination of the thoughts and imagination. Here Paul's admonition would be in order: "Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification" (Rom. 15:2).

In a sociology seminar, a professor in one of our American universities analyzed social disintegration. He spoke of juvenile delinquency and other forms of moral evil related to youth. Without

referring to Christian standards or Biblical truth, he remarked that it was his considered opinion that many of the juvenile problems were related to the way women and girls dressed. He also referred to the indecent exposure of the body so common in many of the movies which young people attend.

It follows that a healthy body is the basis of a healthy mind and a healthy soul. Many of the spiritual problems which afflict men have a physical basis. Paul was concerned about the physical health of his spiritual son, Timothy. James would have the elders of the church concern themselves with the body, as well as with the soul. The Christian church has expressed a Christ-like concern for the physical needs of men using the ministry to the body as an approach to a healing of the soul.

God has given us one body to use in His service. It behooves us to practice sound stewardship of body so that the body might serve us well in our great task of proclaiming Christ. Our body is to make possible "a living sacrifice." The body can also be given to a service of sin. Paul warns the Christians not to yield their members as instruments of unrighteousness.

#### Stewardship of the Mind

The mind is higher than the body. A person who gives himself more to the cultivation of the mind is commonly called an intellectual person. The word "intellectual" seems to have come into disrepute in our day, especially in Christian circles. This is a sad state of affairs, for we were created by God for fellowship and this fellowship was not to be on a physical level. Paul was able to bring "every thought under the obedience of Christ (II Cor. 10:5). He admonishes the Philippians "to think on these things" (Phil. 4:8).

The mind of man has two major functions: to think and to feel. Both areas are to reflect the Lordship of Christ, and in both areas Christians are to practise stewardship of the mind. To fail in this vital area is to become men and women of the body, unable to communicate beyond the physical. Paul, as previously mentioned, encourages the

enhancement of the non-physical in our life: truth, beauty, virtue, etc.

The mind in its intellectual functions presents the Christian with a great challenge in stewardship. God puts no premium on ignorance. He uses His children in spite of their ignorance, but hardly because of it. Having placed us into His universe, we are challenged to understand it in order to use it. Erich Sauer in speaking of the early Christians in their contact with the pagans says, "In the arena of the mind, they outthought them. In the arena of living, they outlived them. In the arena of suffering, they outdied them."

Christians should make a habit of honest and strenuous thought. It is never a positive testimony when students who profess Christ do slovenly work in their studies. Christians, of all people, should show a sincere devotion to the search for truth and knowledge. To avoid the rigors of intellectual toil, and to cover up ignorance by pious platitudes is hardly befitting for one who follows the Master, who "increased in wisdom and stature," and was able to converse with the learned intelligently at twelve years of age.

Students sometimes feel that it is not spiritual to study while in school. Nothing can actually be farther from the truth. To do the will of God and to fulfill the purpose of our calling is always the spiritual thing to do. If God has called us to school for preparation, then it would seem to me that studying might perhaps be the most spiritual thing to do.

In order to think well, we need raw material for thought. We cannot think in a vacuum. Our reading helps fill an intellectual reservoir from which we will draw in our thinking. Great thinkers have vast resources at their disposal. "And they, while their companions slept, were toiling upward in the night." Christians should be wise stewards of their minds by stalking it carefully with pertinent data of a biblical and secular nature. The opportunities for reading are almost limitless today. The danger of reading harmful literature is also present. The corner drug stores are overflowing with poison for the mind. Stewardship of the mind in its intel-

tual functions means selecting reading materials carefully, so that we are able "to think on pure things."

Christians are often challenged by evangelists and teachers to "put all on the altar" for Christ. This does not exalt human ability, but simply exhorts us to be good stewards of what God has given us. The question is not how much you and I have, but rather whether we are giving our best to Christ for service.

The mind in its emotional functions presents an equally great challenge for stewardship. We are living in a time when mental illness is on the increase. Although there are often organic factors involved which we cannot control, there are some rules of mental health for us to observe. To violate these is to fail as stewards of our mind. Here are a few hints for health which Christians would do well to follow:

1. Cultivate a realistic approach to life. So often people try to evade the unpleasant and unlovely in their world or in themselves. They develop "gimmicks" to help them "run away" from life and its responsibilities. To recognize these escape mechanisms in ourselves is being a good steward of our emotions. Some people even use heaven as an escape from the responsibilities of life. When things become difficult, they wish they could die and be relieved of all the hardships and trials of life.

A little girl was having problems with her playmate across the street. Instead of facing the difficulty and "resuming negotiations," she sat at home in the corner and piously sang: "When all my trials and neighbors are o'er, and I shall rest on that beautiful shore." Grown-ups do similar things in their minds.

This does not mean that we are satisfied with all things in life. We accept them as they are in order to change what can be changed. Something about ourselves admits of change, and we should strive to better these aspects. Other things cannot be changed. For a student to keep telling himself that he is an "A" student when he is a "C" student is not good. It is not realistic. Paul says that we should not think more highly of ourselves than we ought, "but think soberly as God has given to each one the measure of faith."

There was something in Paul's life that would not change. He calls it a thorn in the flesh. Instead of "beating his head against a wall," he was challenged to accept this problem and take sufficient grace to rise above it. The problem was not changed, but Paul was.

2. Develop the "zest of living." There are so many things which God has for us as His children and these were meant to be enjoyed "with thanksgiving." It is possible to develop a feeling that whatever we enjoy must surely be sin because we enjoy it. The writer of Ecclesiastes says, "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the way of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."

Young people should approach tasks with enthusiasm and purpose. "Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." Half-heartedness and listlessness in young people are not to be encouraged.

A sense of humor developed under proper restraints is an invaluable aid to mental health. It should not be repressed, rather it should be sanctified and used for the glory of God. To take oneself so seriously that every problem becomes a crisis is to invite illness of the mind. God meant for us to have the blessed release of laughter, but let us avoid the laughter of fools. "Blessed is the man who can laugh at himself, he will always have something to laugh at."

3. Live a balanced life. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. All play and no work makes Jack an irresponsible boy. Our body and our mind need the changes which allow for restoration. This is especially true of those living in a complex world where tensions and pressures are the order of the day. Christians must learn to maintain a balance in life and practice good stewardship of the mind.

4. Forgive your failures. Christians often punish themselves for their failings. God's way is forgiveness. We cannot remove our sense of failure by trying to atone ourselves for what we have

done wrong. God forgives us in Christ. We forgive others as He has forgiven us. But we must also forgive ourselves. Paul was willing "to forget the things which are behind." We can become fettered because of past failings and the grace of God would unshackle us so that we could make progress in our Christian life.

Christians also need the "courage of imperfection." It takes little courage to do things perfectly, to do them better than anyone else. To be willing to undertake a task in which one is sure to make mistakes and experience failures, requires courage. Christ does not expect more of us than can be expected of redeemed humans. He does not condemn us for our creatureliness.

5. Do not run away from your fears, worries, anxieties. Investigate them! Knowledge is better than fear and anxiety. A Christian should investigate whether his fears have a basis in reality. Many do not. A college student once came to her psychology teacher and shared her fear of becoming insane. An uncle of hers had spent a greater part of his life in a hospital, and since she had heard that mental illness has an hereditary basis, the possibility of her becoming ill haunted her night and day. Upon careful investigation, she found that the uncle was not a blood relative of hers, he was an uncle by marriage.

People become anxious about certain health symptoms, but refuse to investigate by going to the doctor. Investigation could bring peace of mind to them, even if the investigation revealed that what was feared was actually true. To know is still better than to wonder.

6. Do not repress your sorrows and your guilt. Unload them! The Psalmist knew of the curse of silence. "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me . . ." Only when he was willing "to acknowledge his sin" did he experience the balm of release. James admonishes us to confess our faults one to another, and to pray for one another.

7. Use your emotions; don't let them use you! God gave us our emotions in order that we might make proper use

of them. Tears bring relief in sorrow, and laughter is medicine for the soul. To deny any part of ourselves is folly. Emotions are like a spirited team of horses, they bring energy and drive to us as long as the reins are in our hands. To lose control is to be mastered by our emotions. Recurrent moods which are not dealt with can become a bane to personality.

8. Cultivate your spiritual resources. Marcus Aurelius once wrote: "Nowhere, either with more quiet or more freedom from trouble, does a man retire than into his own soul." Of course, it should be added that the soul must contain the necessary resources for spiritual refreshment. Recent psychiatrists have stressed the need for purpose and meaning for personality adjustment. Such meaning comes to the soul through faith in God. Paul says, "The peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."

Bitterness in one's heart can permeate the entire personality until it acts as a dry rot in the soul, crumbling the foundation of our emotional stability. Such bitterness can be uprooted by forgiveness. "To forgive is divine," and yet we hesitate at times to use this spiritual medication. To be unforgiving means to harm ourselves most.

John writes to his "little children," and offers them this spiritual counsel: "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not perfect in love." Love is able to do what psychiatry cannot do. Love enables people to suffer and be kind. It deals with envy and pride. Love breaks down egocentricity and looks on the things of others. Love makes us Christ-like.

Another spiritual dynamic is the Christian hope. Many fear the future. Christian hope makes ultimate victory a subjective reality. It moves the ultimate victory into the soul of the believer where it produces courage, steadfastness and endurance. Sound eschatology aids mental health.

#### Stewardship of the Personality

Without going into many technical definitions of personality, let us think

of it as "the sum total of all that sets us apart as an individual." There are inner and outer factors to personality. Viewed in its outer dimensions, personality includes the way in which I touch other people. Viewed in its inner dimensions, personality would include our drives and motives, our value-system and other things not apparent on the surface.

Paul writes to the Corinthian church: "Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God." This epistle is "known and read of all men." Stewardship of personality would mean that my human relations are brought under the lordship of Christ so that they might speak well for Jesus Christ and His redeeming grace.

Preaching has been defined as "truth through personality." The gospel flows through us and often is marred by us. When people react against the gospel, they are not always resisting the message, but rather the messenger. There may be something quite offensive in his personality with which he has not dealt.

We manage our personalities in the interest of the gospel since we are to be living object lessons of what the gospel can do. Can the gospel remove bitterness, jealousy, and lovelessness? Can the gospel transform a rude, boorish boy into a gentle, considerate witness

for Christ? Personality can be changed, it is dynamic. Paul could testify that the grace of God had made him what he was, an example to the believers.

Books have been written in this area, but it would seem that the words of Jesus still constitute the best guide to human relations: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them" (Matt. 7: 11). A little reflection on how we would feel in a similar situation would often change our actions radically.

Even the common amenities of life can speak well for a Christian. Courtesy and politeness speak of good breeding and transformed living. These are often the first impressions which people receive from a Christian and first impressions are hard to erase.

As disciples we hold our entire life in trust. It is not ours, it is His. He has given it to us to use in His best interest so that others may be drawn to Him through us. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." He did just that, but He is now drawing others through redeemed, attractive disciples in whom the power of Calvary's redemption has become a reality. Such a disciple has become a steward of the redeeming power in his person. His charge is not to have received the grace of God in vain.

F. C. Peters

## THEOLOGICAL

### Die Erkenntnis Gottes bei den Propheten

(Fortsetzung von der Juli-August-Ausgabe)

Einige Schriftpropheten fanden in dem Abfall Israels die Veranlassung ihrem Volk eine tiefere Erklärung darüber zu geben, was es bedeutete Gott zu erkennen. Nicht daß sie ganz neue Gedanken über Gott aussprachen, aber sie zeigten dem Volk Israel neue Zusammenhänge zwischen Theologie und Ethik. Es fehlte in Israel ja nicht an

einem Wissen über Gott, sondern es mangelte daran, daß man aus diesem Wissen die nötigen Schlußfolgerungen fürs Leben zog. Die Propheten weigerten sich, die Gotteserkenntnis auf den Boden des Dogmas zu schieben. Gotteserkenntnis bedeutete für sie eine Lebensweise. Sie sahen eine Gefahr, daß Erkenntnis Gottes als etwas rein Vertikales verstanden wurde, und daß man die horizontalen Dimensionen übersah. Da

wo man keine Gotteserkenntnis hat (Hos. 4, 1), da wird geflucht, gestohlen, getötet, gemordet und Ehe gebrochen (Hos. 4, 2) — alles soziale, d.h. horizontale, Vergehungen. Oder anders ausgedrückt, wo man betrügt, flucht, haßt, udglm., da ist auch keine Gotteserkenntnis zu finden. Diesen Zusammenhang von Lehre und Leben in der 'Erkenntnis Gottes' versuchen die Propheten — besonders Hosea, Jeremia und Jesaja — Israel zu zeigen.

In der vorigen Ausgabe wiesen wir darauf hin, daß 1. die Erkenntnis Gottes in Israel zu finden war, und 2. die Erkenntnis Gottes in Israel verloren ging. Nun 3. wollen wir sehen wie Erkenntnis Gottes erklärt wird:

### III. Die Gotteserkenntnis wird erklärt.

#### A. Die religiöse Seite.

Gotteserkenntnis besteht nicht notwendigerweise in kultischer Beschäftigung. „Denn ich habe Lust an der Liebe, und nicht am Opfer, und an der Erkenntnis Gottes, und nicht am Brandopfer“ (Hos. 6, 6). Hier stellt Hosea das große Interesse für den äußerlichen Gottesdienst der Erkenntnis Gottes gegenüber. Man darf aus solch einem Urteil nicht schlußfolgern, daß der Prophet gegen den öffentlichen Gottesdienst ist, aber er will uns sagen, daß man an gottesdienstlichen Handlungen teilnehmen kann ohne Erkenntnis Gottes zu haben. Wenn das der Fall ist, kann religiöse Beschäftigung dem 'Kirchengänger' sogar zum Fluch werden. Es kann durch ein reges religiöses Leben die innere Leere zugedeckt werden. Hosea drückt diese Gefahr durch Bildersprache — an welcher er sehr reich ist — aus: „Israel hat graues Haar, und weiß es nicht.“ Der Kultus war zu einer Wand zwischen der Seele und ihrem Gott geworden.

Auch drückt sich Erkenntnis Gottes nicht notwendigerweise in Glaubensbekenntnissen aus. Gott sagt von seinem Volk: „Sie schreien zu mir: Mein Gott, wir, Israel, kennen dich“ (Hos. 8, 2). Das war ja gut und richtig. Anders würde man es auch nicht von Gotteskindern erwarten. So bekennt eine treue Seele ihr inniges Verhältnis zu Gott. Aber es folgt ein Zusatz, der dieses schöne Bekenntnis Israels zu einem lee-

ren Lippenbekenntnis machte: „Israel verwirft das Gute“ (Hos. 8, 3). Das Leben verleugnete das Bekenntnis. Artur Weiser sagt zu diesem Punkt: „Rechtes Bekennen ist nicht Lippenbekenntnis, das in frommen Worten sich äußert, sondern lebendiger Gehorsam, der zur Tat wird“ (Das Buch der zwölf kleinen Propheten, ATD, S. 54).

Wie wird denn die religiöse Seite der Gotteserkenntnis ausgedrückt? (a) Einmal darin, daß man ein Auge hat für das was Gott in der Geschichte tut. Vor allem wird **yada'** (erkennen) gebraucht, um die Anerkennung der Taten Gottes zu bezeichnen. Gerhard von Rad sagt: „Deshalb wird man den Begriff vor allem auf die Vertrautheit mit den Geschichtstaten Jahves zu beziehen haben“ (Theologie des Alten Testaments, II, S. 153). Jesaja klagt auch darüber, daß Israel keinen Blick hat für das was Gott in der Geschichte tut. Ironisch sagt das Volk: „Laß herfahren und kommen den Anschlag des Heiligen in Israel, daß wir's erkennen“ (Jes. 5, 19). Gott war so an die Peripherie ihrer Weltanschauung geschoben worden, daß sie keinen Blick hatten für das was Gott in ihren Tagen vorhatte. Wenn sie es erkannt hätten, daß Gott mitten im Gewühl der Zeit seine Pläne und Ziele ausführte, hätten sie ihr Leben darauf eingestellt. Aber weil sie in einer Zeit zu leben glaubten, in der Gott nichts vorhatte, waren sie zu bloßen Diesseitsmenschen geworden. Gotteserkenntnis ist daran zu sehen, daß man ein Auge für Gottes Wirken in der Geschichte hat.

Auch drückt sich die Gotteserkenntnis (b) in Liebe und Treue Gott gegenüber aus. Hosea drückt dieses durch das Wortpaar **chesed** und **'emeth** aus. **Chesed we'emeth** sind beides Worte, die das Bundesverhältnis zwischen Gott und seinem Volk ausdrücken. **Chesed** dürfte man unter Umständen mit „beständige Liebe“ übersetzen (so RSV recht oft), und **'emeth** mit Treue. Gerade hier fehlte es so sehr in Israels Frömmigkeit. „Eure Liebe (**chesed**) gleicht ja doch dem Morgenwolk und dem Tau, der gar bald vergeht“ (Hos. 6, 4b). „Die Erkenntnis [Gotteserkenntnis] bei Hosea bedeutet also, von Menschen her gesehen, das ganze Bundesverhältnis mit al-

len Verpflichtungen Gott wie der Gemeinschaft gegenüber" (Reiss, „Gott nicht kennen, im Alten Testament“, ZAW, XVII, 1940/41, 79).

Wer Gott die Bundestreue bewahrt, wird seine Gotteserkenntnis auch (c) in Dankbarkeit Gott gegenüber offenbaren. In Hos. 11, 1ff erinnert der Prophet sein Volk an die vielen Gnadengaben Gottes, die es empfangen hatte. Gott hatte Israel erlöst aus Ägypten; hatte sein Kind gehen gelehrt; hatte es in seinen Armen getragen, aber „sie erkannten nicht, daß ich ihr Heiland bin" (11, 3). „Die ganze Stelle will nicht die Unwissenheit, sondern den Undank ans Licht bringen" (Baumann, „Yada' und seine Derivate", ZAW, XXVII, 1908, S. 24). Wer undankbar ist gegen Gott kennt ihn nicht. Wer Gott kennt (d), der fürchtet ihn. Gotteserkenntnis und Gottesfurcht sind oft Synonyma. Jesaja sagt von dem Schössling aus dem Stumpfe Isais, daß der Geist der Erkenntnis und der Furcht des Herrn auf ihm ruhen wird (Jes. 11, 2). Erkenntnis Gottes legt die Betonung etwas mehr auf das Intime des Verhältnisses, während Furcht des Herrn auf die Distanz. Beide zusammen bilden gleichsam eine kleine Summe alttestamentlicher Religion.

Wer Gott kennt (e), der hält seine Gebote. Wiederholt wird der Mangel an Gotteserkenntnis mit dem Übertreten der göttlichen Gebote verbunden. Hosea klagt: „Weil du . . . die Erkenntnis verworfen hast, verwerfe auch ich dich . . . und weil du das Gesetz deines Gottes vergessen hast, will auch ich deine Kinder vergessen" (Hos. 4, 6). Hier steht das Verwerfen der Gotteserkenntnis und das Verwerfen der göttlichen Gebote nebeneinander. Der Widerspruch in Israels Leben wird in Hos. 8, 1.2 hervorgehoben. Israel sagt: „Mein Gott, wir kennen dich"; aber er klagt darüber, „daß sie meinen Bund übertreten und gegen mein Gesetz sich auflehnt haben". Gott zu kennen bedeutet seine Gebote zu 'kennen', d.h. sie zu tun. Nicht so viel um eine mystische Einigung mit Gott geht es bei der Erkenntnis als um ein praktisches Befolgen seiner Befehle.

Doch ist bei der Gotteserkenntnis nicht nur die religiöse Seite zu beach-

ten, d.h. das senkrechte Verhältnis, sondern auch die soziale Seite, d.h. das horizontale Verhältnis. Gott zu kennen bedeutet einfach: den Nächsten zu lieben.

#### B. Die soziale Seite.

In Jer. 22, 16 wird Josias musterhafte Herrschaft hervorgehoben, um Jozakim zu ermahnen. Er hatte den Armen und Elenden zu ihrem Recht verholfen. „Heißt nicht das mich recht erkennen?" Jozakim ist ein typischer orientalischer König. „Deine Augen und dein Herz sind nur auf Gewinn für dich gerichtet und auf das Blut Unschuldiger . . . und auf Berücksichtigung und Erpressung" (Jer. 22, 17). Also, er kennt Gott nicht. Jesaja sieht den Tag kommen wenn die Erde voll Erkenntnis des Herrn sein wird, dann wird man „nichts Böses mehr tun und nicht unrecht handeln" (Jes. 11, 9). Wo keine Erkenntnis des Herrn ist, da sucht man dem Nächsten Schaden zu tun. Wer Gott kennt, der weiß, „daß ich, der Herr, es bin, der Gnade, Recht und Gerechtigkeit auf Erden übt; denn an solchen habe ich Wohlgefallen" (Jer. 9, 23). Gotteserkenntnis bekundet der Gläubige also nicht nur im Gebet, im Bekenntnis, im Gottesdienst, sondern in praktischer Wohltätigkeit an Menschen.

#### IV. Die Gotteserkenntnis ist die Hoffnung Israels.

Der Mangel an Gotteserkenntnis in Israel führte einige Propheten dazu Gottes Volk das Gericht anzusagen. Aber hinter den schwarzen Gerichtswolken sahen sie immer noch einen Lichtstrahl der Hoffnung. Wenn Gott Israel erst würde gerichtet und geläutert haben, würde Israel ihn wieder kennen. Dabei liegt eine Verantwortung auf Israel selbst. Gott wird sich wieder finden lassen wenn Israel die Knechtung, das Trugreden hinwegtun wird und dem Hungrigen Brot darreichen wird (Jes. 58, 9). Der Prophet Jesaja ermutigt Gottes Volk in diesem Geist nach Gotteserkenntnis zu fragen. Hosea schilt Israel nicht dafür, daß sie sagen: „Laßt uns der Erkenntnis des Herrn nachtrachten" (Hos. 6, 4), aber sie sollen es aus anderen Motiven tun. Es gilt daß sie einen Neubrauch der Erkenntnis brechen, da es noch Zeit ist, den Herrn zu

suchen, aber sie finden ihn nicht (Hos. 5, 6). Ihn findet man nur wenn man bußfertig kommt und in seinen Wegen wandelt. Wenn man Gott nicht von Herzen sucht, läßt er sich nicht finden; er verbirgt sein Angesicht (Hes. 39, 23).

Für die Propheten schien es oft aussichtslos zu sein, wenn sie auf Israel schauten, daß die Gotteserkenntnis noch einmal wieder hergestellt werden sollte. Aber sie hielten die Hoffnung an Gottes Macht und Gottes Wirken fest. Nach dem Gericht, das wegen Mangel an Gotteserkenntnis über Israel kommen wird, „wenn ihr mich sucht, werdet ihr mich finden; ja, wenn ihr dann von ganzem Herzen Verlangen nach mir tragt, so will ich mich von euch finden lassen" (Jer. 29, 13.14). „Ich will ihnen ein Herz verleihen, mich zu erkennen" (Jer. 24, 7). So wird Gotteserkenntnis, wie immer, Gottes Gnadengeschenk an Israel sein.

Israel wird Gott wieder kennen, wenn der Herr sich mit seinem Volk aufs Neue verlobt. „Ich will mich mit dir verloben auf ewig . . . und du sollst mich, den Herrn, erkennen lernen" (Hosea 2, 21.22). Gott ergreift wieder die Initiative, um ein untreu gewordenes Weib wieder in seine intime Gemeinschaft zu ziehen. Ein anderes Bild braucht Jesaja. Er spricht von der neuen Herrschaft (Jes. 11). Der Herrscher kommt vom Stamm Isais, und er ist voll Erkenntnis des Herrn. Das Endresultat seiner Herrschaft ist, daß die Erde voll Erkenntnis des Herrn ist (Jes. 11, 9). Während das Verlangen nach einer verbotenen Erkenntnis (1. Mose 3) das Paradies zerstörte, führt nun die Erkenntnis Gottes paradiesische Verhältnisse herbei. Durch eine neue Vermählung, durch eine neue Herrschaft und

durch einen neuen Bund (so bei Jeremia) schenkt der Herr Israel wieder die rechte Gotteserkenntnis. Wenn Gott erst wird sein Gesetz in das Herz schreiben, „da braucht dann niemand mehr seinem Genossen und niemand seinem Bruder Belehrung zu erteilen und ihm vorzuhalten: Lernet den Herrn erkennen! Denn sie werden mich allesamt erkennen, die Kleinsten wie die Größten . . . denn ich will ihnen ihre Schuld vergeben und ihrer Sünde nicht mehr gedenken" (Jer. 31, 33.34). Also gibt es nur dann rechte Gotteserkenntnis, wenn Gott das Herz reinigt. Das ist das Evangelium der Propheten.

**Schluß:** Wir versuchten in der vorigen Ausgabe des „Voice" zu zeigen, daß das Gotterkennen bei den alttestamentlichen Propheten nicht ein intellektuelles Erforschen der Tiefen Gottes ist. So war es auch in diesem kurzen Schreiben unsere Absicht, zu zeigen, daß es bei Gotteserkenntnis um viel mehr als Theologie geht. Es geht um einen Umgang mit Gott, der zu einem gerechten Leben führt. Es bedeutet einen Blick für Gottes Wirken in der Geschichte zu haben. Es bedeutet Gott zu lieben und ihm die Treue zu halten. Es bedeutet ihm für all seine Güte zu danken. Es bedeutet ihn zu fürchten. Es bedeutet seine Gebote zu halten. Es bedeutet das ganze Leben von Gott aus zu orientieren. Solche Erkenntnis drückt sich in praktischer Liebestätigkeit aus; im Meiden alles götzendienerischen Wesens; im Einstehen für Wahrheit und Gerechtigkeit. Wer Gott so kennt, wird erfahren was der apokalyptische Schreiber in Daniel 11, 32 sagt: „Aber das Volk derer, die ihren Gott kennen, wird fest bleiben . . ."

D. Ewert

### The Biblical Doctrine of Sanctification

One of the most fundamental questions confronting man is the question, "How can I become right before God? How can I, who am a guilty sinner, be freed from the judgment and condemnation of a righteous God?" The answer to that question centres on Jesus Christ and His righteousness. God's

gracious provision in Christ, through His life and death, is the only basis on which man can be made right before God. The means by which Christ's righteousness is applied to man is through a faith which is a 'whole-souled' commitment to Christ, the Saviour (Romans 4-5).

The second, equally significant, question related most intimately to the first is the question of the believer's holiness or sanctification. Deep in the heart of every believer in Christ is the desire to be sanctified. More than anything else, the believer wants to walk according to the ways of God—to obey Him, to give expression to the fruits of the Holy Spirit such as “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control.” At the same time the believer, walking in fellowship with our Lord, is painfully aware that he is a sinner, that his thoughts and deeds bear the marks of sin, and in everything fall short of God's holy standards. That is to say, that even the highest and noblest attainments in the believer's pursuit of holiness do but bear witness and testify to his need to run to the cross of Christ to obtain mercy and grace.

This has become the conflict of the Christian: he desires to please God in every way, and at the same time he groans in the consciousness of indwelling sin. It is this conflict which caused Paul in the moment of deep Christian experience (an experience too seldom in our lives) to cry out, “Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?” It is the cry of all the godly living in close fellowship with our Lord. It is the cry of the regenerate heart which longs to be entirely delivered from sin in all its aspects. The answer to that cry is found in Christ and His grace. Not that there is complete deliverance in this life—but there is the hope of ultimate and complete deliverance when he comes again. When Christ shall appear we shall be like Him, who is pure (I John 3:2,3). At that moment we shall be changed, for this corruptible shall put on incorruption (I Cor. 15:50-57). Only then shall sin be completely eradicated. Meanwhile the conflict rages.

What then actually happened to the Christian the moment he believed? Does not Scripture speak of him as a saint? Does not Paul repeatedly address the believers as those who are already sanctified? What does this mean as far as the actual experience of the believer is concerned? Then too, does not

John speak in rather absolute terms when he writes, “Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither knoweth him” (I John 3:6)? Paul also assures the believer that he has died to sin, and that sin shall not have dominion over him. How can we reconcile these statements with the reality of our daily struggle against sin? In this pursuit of holiness and sanctification, is there growth and development? These are the questions with which we hope to come to grips in our study of the biblical doctrine of sanctification.

Throughout the history of the Christian church men have sought to answer these questions in different ways. It is unquestionably true that the doctrine of sanctification has played a very significant role in the life of the church. During the Middle Ages it led men and women to withdraw from normal life in society and seek holiness in meditation in monasteries, caves, and on poles. Since the Reformation other views of sanctification have been influential in shaping and giving impetus to various powerful movements in the church. Of these, the Puritan, the Pietistic, and the Wesleyan movements stand out quite prominently. Many later holiness and perfectionist movements have added to the confusion regarding the teaching of Scripture.

This writer believes that a clear understanding of the doctrine of sanctification enables the believer to enter more fully into the richness of redemption which is his through union with Christ; it encourages him in his struggle against sin for righteousness; and it guards him from making excessive unbiblical claims of attainments in Christian perfection.

### I. THE NECESSITY OF SANCTIFICATION

That a believer must be holy or sanctified in order to be in fellowship with God is abundantly clear in Scripture. At the very centre of God's self-revelation, in both the Old and New Testaments, is the revelation that He is holy.

When Scripture describes God as holy, it may point out that God is more than man. God is the creator; man is

merely His creature. God is unique, above man, transcendent over all creation, as is expressed in the Song of Moses: “Who is like thee among the gods? Who is like thee glorious in holiness?” (Ex. 15:11). In addition to this, there is another aspect included in God's holiness. God is holy in a moral sense; He is pure and sinless. It is the purity and sinlessness which make God a consuming fire; God cannot make His peace with sin. Sin is the very contradiction of God.

Because God is holy, the condition of being in fellowship with Him is the holiness of His people. This basic principle, which governs the relationship of God and His people is expressed in the Old Testament in the words, “Ye shall be holy because I your God am holy” (Lev. 19:2). It is quite evident that the emphasis on the personal holiness of the believer is no less marked in the New Testament. Peter exhorts to a sanctified, holy life when he writes, “but like as he who called you is holy, be ye yourselves also holy in all manner of living” (I Peter 1:15).

The absolute necessity for the holiness of God's people is presented even more urgently in Hebrews 12:14: “Follow after peace with all men, and sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord.” The apostle John states it in a negative way, saying that walking in darkness (i.e. in sin) is a definite denial of one's fellowship with God (I John 1:6). It is, therefore, unmistakably clear that a sanctified life is a condition of maintaining fellowship with God.

It is at this point where man encounters a basic problem. Scripture not only emphasizes God's holiness and the need for man to be holy, but it also underscores the truth that man is wicked, perverse and depraved in his thoughts and deeds. So explicit is Scripture's description of our heart (man's inner being from which spring his will and actions), that we recoil from it and would wish to deny it. But God sees more than man sees, and he describes man's heart in this manner, “every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was **only evil continually**” (Gen. 6:5). God traces man's depravity to the very ori-

gin of his thought, to the deepest inward movement of desire and thought—and finds it only evil continually. This condition of the heart of man is there from his early youth (Gen. 8:21). There is, therefore, no innocence or neutrality in man; his heart is polluted from the outset.

In the New Testament, Paul's description of man is no departure from the Mosaic revelation of God. Man's failure to place God in the centre of his worship and life brought about a disastrous deterioration of man's soul and mind (Romans 1:18-32). The Jew as well as the Gentile is completely devoid of all righteousness. There is none that does good; all are under sin and fall short of the glory of God (Rom. 3).

It is to such a fallen creature that God's redemption is directed. The glorious gospel comes to all. One can only marvel at the love and grace of God, and at the might and power of the Gospel of Christ to effect a radical change in man. One of the central purposes of that gospel is to make man holy. This was God's avowed purpose in the election of Israel (Ex. 19:6); this purpose is to be realized in greater measure in the crowning redemption of our Lord: “He gave himself for his church that he might sanctify and cleanse it: that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Eph. 5:25-27).

Here we approach the heart of sanctification. **The restoration of sinful man into fellowship with God requires, not only a deliverance from the guilt and penalty of sin (through faith), but also a spiritual renewal and a deliverance from the defilement and power of sin.** Sanctification directs itself to this latter end; it has respect to God's grace in man, separating him from sin and impurity and causing him to participate in the purity and holiness of God in Christ.

### II. Definitive and Progressive Sanctification

Generally, sanctification has been defined as the **process** of spiritual renewal and deliverance from the defilement

and power of sin through the gracious operation of the Holy Spirit. By this process the believer is progressively renewed into the image of Christ, a process which finds its culmination at the appearance of Christ. Some define sanctification as the process of putting off the old man and putting on the new man. It is also spoken of as the continuous operation of the Holy Spirit "by which the holy disposition imparted in regeneration is maintained and strengthened." All of these definitions concentrate upon the aspect of **process**. This has been the most characteristic manner of setting forth the nature of sanctification; it is a continuous process in the believer, not a definitive act.

The progressive aspect of sanctification in the believer is a very important truth of Scripture. It suggests that the believer is in constant struggle against sin. He is urged to follow after sanctification, for without it he cannot see God; he is exhorted not to let sin reign in his mortal body, nor to present his members "unto sin as instruments of unrighteousness" (Romans 6:12-13). The believer is commanded to put to death his members which are upon the earth—"fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, covetousness, which is idolatry" (Col. 3:5), as well as "anger, wrath malice, railing, and shameful speaking" (Col. 3:8). On the other hand, the believer is urged to present his members as instruments of righteousness to God (Romans 6:13). He is to put on "a heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, longsuffering, . . . love" (Col. 3:12-14). All of these commandments clearly indicate the fact that the believer is not without sin, that he must struggle against it, and that this struggle is not a once-for-all accomplishment, but a life-long conflict. Complete holiness can be expected only at the coming of Christ (I Thess. 3:13; 5:23; I John 3:2). In the meantime a transformation is being effected by the gracious and continuous operation of the Holy Spirit. As the believer beholds the image of Christ (in the Word and through the Holy Spirit) he is being changed into that image (II Cor. 3:18). Sanctification has a progressive aspect.

However, to define the biblical doctrine of sanctification purely in terms of its progressive nature does injustice to the biblical teaching. **Sanctification is a completed act as well as a process.** Scripture teaches that sanctification has also a definitive (once-for-all, decisive) aspect. Take, for example, Paul's address to the Corinthian church: "unto the church of God which is at Corinth, them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called **saints**" (I Cor. 1:2). Of particular importance is the word translated "are sanctified." This word indicates that the Corinthian believers were in a sanctified state. Because of a particular event or experience in their lives they had become sanctified. Here Paul does not speak of a process; he speaks of sanctification as something accomplished in the believer, as a definitive, once-for-all act.

The same thought is expressed in Paul's words in I Cor. 6:11. In the preceding context Paul has pointed out some unrighteous actions, unbecoming for Christian brethren; he also reminds them that they had been gross sinners before they had been regenerated. Then Paul describes a most decisive event in their lives in these words: "but ye were washed, but ye were **sanctified**, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God." Here, as in other portions of Scripture, we have reference to sanctification as an accomplished act in the life of the believer. It is suggested that a decisive act of sanctification took place in the initial stages of the life of the believer. It is part of that revolutionary change which was wrought in the experiential life of the believer when he was united to Christ through faith. The Spirit of God sanctified him.

It is this Scriptural concept—of having been sanctified—which we want to examine more closely. (To be continued)

V. Adrian,

Lord of the harvest, who dost sow good seed into the hearts of all men: grant that our hearts may not be so hardened by the world's traffic that the seed can take no root; nor so shallow that the roots can find no depth; nor so cumbered that the growing shoots are choked; but that we may be good ground to the glory of Thy name. Amen. G. W. Briggs

## PREACHING

### Illustrating the Sermon (IX)

(Continued from last issue)

**3. Devotional literature.** A third category which we have deliberately set apart from "general literature," and designated "devotional literature," includes religious meditations, prayer and private devotion books, deeper life studies, religious poetry, hymns and hymn studies, certain types of sermons, and personal diaries. In a recent issue (Sept. 25, 1961) of *Christianity Today*, J. W. Montgomery raises the practical question, "Can we recover the Christian devotional life?" and answers his own question by reminding ministers of the importance, for one thing, of going back to the classic devotional inheritance of the past. In this same issue, he lists one hundred select devotional books (all of them now in print) which are "capable," as he remarks, "of performing radical spiritual surgery on sensitive Christian hearts." This is a very useful listing and ought to be studied, with a view to purchase for personal use, by every preacher of the Gospel.

The far-reaching benedicts of the personal study, by both the preacher and the layman, of such classic devotional works are suggested over and over again, in a revealing work by C. J. Strank: *Anglican Devotion: Studies in the Spiritual Life of the Church of England Between the Reformation and the Oxford Movement*. Jeremy Taylor's *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living* (1650), for instance, written "to sustain afflicted members of the Church of England," as Strank tells us, "profoundly influenced John Wesley in the eighteenth century and John Keble in the nineteenth."

Again, concerning J. Wesley's own *Journal*, it has been said that "probably none of the journals . . . possesses equal literary merit. It is the worthy reflection of a great soul. When the *Journal* is combined with his best statement of

the doctrine which Wesley promoted above anyone of that generation, *The Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, we again have works which have influenced men from Wesley's day to this."

Another instance of such influence—this time involving a contemporary response to an older devotional classic—is described for us in the *Preface* to the Westminster Press edition (1955) of William Law's *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*. In the *Preface*, John Meister recounts how the group reading and meditation upon this classic not only affected deeply the few brethren who met regularly in his private study, but also ultimately transformed the spiritual life of an entire church.

Ruby Dare, in an article in the Winter, 1961 issue of *The Gordon Review*, ventures a few predictions in this connection. Among the contemporary devotional works which she holds out as probably classics of this century are the following: C. S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters*, and *The Great Divorce*; A. Schweitzer's *Out of My Life and Thought*; J. B. Phillips' *Your God is Too Small*; Rufus Jones' *Pathways to the Reality of God* and Th. R. Kelly's *A Testament of Devotion*. Concerning Kelly himself, the last in this brief list, D. V. Steere has written thus: "There was a natural attractiveness and loveliness about [him] that drew students and colleagues to him . . . He delighted in earth's incongruities, all the more perhaps because he saw eternal things and the values that transcend the earth . . . even the publicans and sinners among the students respected and loved him"; and, again, "the thought of him was always a beatitude, a great light, a wind of courage." It is, therefore, not at all surprising to find his *A Testament of Vision* such a veritable treasure-trove of thoughts, waiting to be lifted out and put to use by the re-

sourceful preacher—thoughts like the following one, for instance, “The last fruit of holy obedience is the simplicity of the trusting child, the simplicity of the children of God. It is the simplicity which lies beyond complexity. It is the naiveté which is the yonder side of sophistication. It is the beginning of spiritual maturity, which comes after the awkward age of religious busyness for the kingdom of God—yet how many are caught, and arrested in development, within this adolescent development of the soul’s growth! The mark of this simplified life is radiant joy. It lives in the Fellowship of the Transfigured Face. Knowing sorrow to the depths it does not agonize and fret and strain, but in serene, unhurried calm it walks in time with the joy and assurance of Eternity. Knowing fully the complexity of men’s problems it cuts through to the love of God and ever cleaves to Him.”

**4. Periodical literature.** Another large area (*The National Review of Biblical Studies* lists over 400 **Biblical** and **theological** journals alone!) which affords an abundant source of sermon illustration material comprises **periodical** and **serial literature**, especially those magazines and journals which are religious in content and evangelical in basic orientation. Several years ago (in 1954), Wilbur Smith, in his column, “**In the Study**,” in *The Moody Monthly*, confessed that no one subject had brought so much mail to his desk as that involving the selection and use of religious periodicals. In consequence, he presented, with explanatory and qualifying discussion of each title, a list of some 25 periodicals that were, as he felt, among those **most useful** to the evangelical minister. His list included the following: *The Sunday School Times*; *The Christian Century*; *The Christian* (London); *The Life of Faith*; (concerning these last two, Smith writes that “many ministers are now finding the best food for their souls . . . in either or both of these papers”!); *Moody Monthly*; *Eternity*; *The Evangelical Christian*; *The Christian Herald*; *The Expository Times*; *Our Hope*; *The International Review of Missions*; *Frontier*; *The Biblical Archaeologist*; *Biblio-*

*theca Sacra*; *The Churchman* (London); *The Evangelical Quarterly*; *Interpretation*; *Scottish Journal of Theology*; *Westminster Theological Journal*; *Journal of American Scientific Affiliation*. Some others (not all of them religious, however) that may well be added to Smith’s list are these: *Christianity Today* (the leading evangelical periodical in America today!); *Home Life*; *Mennonite Life*; *The Sunday School Builder*; *The Hymn*; *Reader’s Digest*; and *The Sermon Builder*.

The last of these—to comment further on only one of this list—includes, within the pages of a typical issue, the following features that are all “grist for the mill”: “sample sermons” with analytical notes in margins, “The Mid-Week Service,” “The Junior Pulpit,” “Seed Thoughts,” “Preaching Program” (with suggested illustration references), and individual poems here and there.

The prudent and zealous preacher will, if at all possible, personally subscribe to at least two or three of such recommended periodicals and supplement this with a perusal of others (in a theological library at convenient intervals). In connection with the latter, he may find ready assistance in such “periodical reviews as appear in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, *The Gordon Review*, or also in *The Moody Monthly* (in W. Smith’s column, “In the Study”).

Although he also acknowledges the value of **denominational magazines**, W. Smith is careful to add, rather pointedly, that “**most denominational periodicals** — — can be read in about seven minutes, and then cast aside; in them there is nothing to clip for filing, and very little that makes a definite contribution to an understanding of the Word of God.” And, in general, we can only agree with Smith here.

The **daily newspaper** ought not to be entirely overlooked as a possible source of timely and pertinent illustrations. Indeed, the renowned C. H. Spurgeon perceived so many possibilities here that he once wrote a little book on the subject, entitled *The Bible and the Newspaper*. But caution and discrimination must be exercised lest the news of the day become the main fare offered by

the preacher to a helpless congregation Sunday by Sunday.

Finally, illustrative material can also be gleaned, oftentimes, from the editorial comments on current events (secular and religious) by such discerning editors as C. F. Henry, in *Christianity Today*, or J. H. Hunter, in *The Evangelical Christian*.

**5. The literature of, and about science.** It was C. H. Spurgeon, who, though he had himself received but little formal higher education, urged the value of an acquaintanceship with the sciences upon all ministerial students: “It seems to me, brethren,” he once asserted, “that every student for the Christian ministry ought to know at least **something** of every science; he should intermeddle with every form of knowledge that may be useful in his life’s work. God has made all things that are in the world to be our teacher, and there is something to be learned from every one of them.” And he did more than merely expostulate here, for he concluded the study containing this counsel (*Lectures to His Students*) with a suggestive treatment of the possibilities of astronomy as a seed-plot for sermon illustrations.

In recent years, the “Sermons from Science” films, devised and directed by the Moody Institute of Science, have revealed to us how interesting facts of natural science can be employed to point up and emphasize certain truths of the Christian religion. It seems clear that present-day preachers have not sufficiently explored the possibilities here. And there are enough popular, yet essentially reliable studies of science and scientists available to afford a rich source of illustrations—and to make quite unnecessary the recourse to difficult or highly specialized works.

There is available, for example, Sir J. Jeans’ *The Growth of Physical Science*, an admirable account, for the layman, of the main developments of physical science from Phoenician and Grecian times to the modern era. An even more popular and profusely illustrated, yet nonetheless balanced treatment that focusses principally on the crucial experiments in the advance of science is Frank S. Taylor’s *An Illustrated History of Science*. Also, there

are E. T. Bell’s *Men of Mathematics* and *The Development of Mathematics* which open up for the ordinary reader the “astonishing triumphs of mathematical divination.” Then, there is Sir J. Jeans’ *The Stars in Their Courses*, an easy and readable introduction to the fascination of modern astronomy and the wonder of the universe. Again, in *Great Men of Medicine*, Ruth Fox supplies us with a dramatic account of the lives of some nine doctors whose contributions formed the foundation of modern medicine. These men, as she remarks in the “Preface,” “were forced, each by his own peculiar motive, away from the comfortable mediocrity which surrounded them; some, by mad curiosity to find knowledge where no other man found it; some, by that rare quality, genuine love of humanity; some, by ambition to do something never done before.” There is, to give one final example, A. T. White’s book, *Lost Worlds*, which tells with absorbing interest the story of the heroic archaeologists who, on four continents, dig from the earth records of the lost civilizations of the past. These, and many others like them, await the aspiring preacher who will make the effort to uncover their wealth of curious and significant facts and then to transmute this into illustrations that render spiritual truth more concrete and more persuasive.

**6. Life itself.** Having suggested several selected sources of illustrations for the sermon from the world of literature, we must, however, once more return to the actual world of men and nature—to life itself and to the personal observation of, and involvement in it. It was in the actual world of human activity and human relations that Christ found a host of illustrations that became the departures for, or elaborations of His sermons and exhortations, and it is in the same realm that the preacher of His Gospel, too, will need to gather a generous portion of his own illustrations. C. H. Spurgeon, indulging in the language of hyperbole, used to say that “the whole world is hung round by God with pictures, and the preacher has only to take them down, one by one, and hold them up before his congregation.” And L. R. Jenkins, in the “Preface” to

his own useful collection, **450 Stories from Life**, exclaims, ". . . all about us are stock piles of material that could be put to use. **The greater difficulty is rather with us who, having eyes see not, and having ears hear not.**" And because most of us are, by natural disposition, so dull and unimaginative, we need to consciously cultivate what Dr. W. Sangster called "a trawling eye"—to practise looking at life around us closely, curiously, and with a certain captivation.

Some, like the English poet, John Keats, it is true, manifest this capacity of sensitive and perceptive vision from the outset. Of Keats, Dorothy Hewlett has said that 'even to the artist trained to use his eyes Keats' power of observation was an abiding marvel. The song of a bird, the rustle of small creatures in the hedges, the changing light and shadow with their shifting colours, the swaying of a leaf, a branch, the shivering of tall grasses, the slow pageant of the clouds; nothing escaped him. He was aware, too, of the human things they met; the creeping animalism of many tramps in that starving, workless age, a woman's bright hair, the smile of a rosy child. The sea was never far from his mind. When a wind arose and went, as he said, 'billowing through a tree' or he heard it springing up from afar across the dark-hued woodland, he would shout "The tide .the tide!" and leap up on to a stile or a low bough and await its coming, listening with breath held and cheeks aglow, 'like a young fawn waiting for some cry from the forest-depths.'" But most of us are not so fortunate, and must deliberately develop not only the ability to see a thing clearly as it is but also the ability to see it in its possible relationships to a moral or spiritual truth. This alertness to the possibility of an analogical or symbolical relationship existing between a seemingly commonplace phenomenon in the world about him, or else an ordinary experience of the world within him, and the facts of the Christian faith, is a wonderfully useful capacity and can help the preacher "transmute to his own purposes," as H. E. Luccock once put it, "**all that he receives.**"

7. **Special compilations or cyclopedias of sermon illustrations.** Possibly, a final word needs to be said, before we bring this fourth main section on **Select-ed Sources of Illustrations for the Sermon** to a close, about the use of published collections of sermon illustrations. The judgment implied in C. C. Brown's comment that "when the flames lick up the pages of such a book of sermon illustrations . . . it will be a worthy and acceptable burnt offering to the Lord" is undoubtedly too severe. The remarks of Ian Macpherson (in **The Burden of the Lord**) on this subject are more moderate in tone: "There, any day, like little Jack Horner, you may put in your thumb and pull out a plum. Only, the plums, by the time you come to serve them in your sermons, are apt to be vary wrinkled prunes, devoid of bloom and juice, and people have a quite natural distaste for such homiletical dried fruit. Omnibus volumes of illustrations, insofar as they are valid pulpit aids at all, may prove of profit to you in the early years of your ministry, provided you use them chiefly as a mode of priming your own thought rather than as supplying you with ready-made chunks of sermon material."

Again, the comment of Richard Caemmerer (in his recent study, **Preaching for the Church**) is, in our own estimation, the most judicious of these three: "Books of illustrations are useful chiefly for alerting the reader to **sources and methods of discovering them . . .** They are usually better for displaying one man's **method of gathering findings which appeal to him** than for offering items for direct use." Here we may suggest further, that the **way in which illustrations are selected for, and worked into a particular sermon** deserves study as well; indeed, this aspect is probably more basic than any yet discussed in connection with the art of illustrating sermons. For, an illustration, as H. G. Davis (in **Design for Preaching**) reminds us, "can be safely used only if it has become an integral part of the preacher's own thought, and if it is presented in unmistakable connection with the general thought it exemplifies"; a careful consideration, therefore, of how other preachers have

successfully achieved this in their own sermons enables us to actually see **something** of this creative process at work. Two collections of sermons which are particularly useful in the pursuit of such a study, because they contain not only fine sermons but also notes, by the preachers, on their own methods of preparation, are Donald MacLeod (editor): **Here is My Method** and Robert J. Smithson (editor): **My Way of Preaching**.

But having said this, we may relent a little here and add that there are a few compilations of illustrations which are superior to the "general run" of them, and which, if used with caution and discernment, can prove decidedly helpful. There is, first of all, C. H. Spurgeon's collection of proverbs and

maxims, known as **Salt-Cellars**. Someone has said that three things go to the making of a good proverb: shortness, sense, and salt. Certain it is that the sayings in this collection possess all these qualities, and fairly sparkle with the incomparable wit and homely charm of this "prince of preachers." Again, there is Keith L. Brooks' more limited but, in some ways, more contemporary collection of maxims, **The Cream Book of Sentence Sermons**. Finally, three of the best compilations of various types of illustrations are: C. L. Wallis' **A Treasury of Sermon Illustrations; Illustrations from the Sermons of Clarence Edward Macartney**; and F. F. Selle and E. Plass' **Quotations and Illustrations for Sermons**.

H. Giesbrecht.

## MUSIC

### Some Thoughts on Luther and Music

Our Mennonite Forefathers must often have felt very thankful for the German translation of the Scriptures made by Martin Luther. Not only did this translation allow the ordinary person to read the Bible, but it also did much to establish the German language, as did the King James version for the English language. It is not so generally known however, to what extent Luther was also responsible for the congregational songs that we now take so much for granted as an important part of the church service and the worship of the believer.

Since Luther placed the emphasis on the individual with respect to matters of salvation, and made him responsible for his own faith in God, he soon realized that the individual Christian must then take an active part in the worship service as such. In order that he participate actively, he must understand what is being said or sung — hence the language of the common people must be employed rather than the Latin language which only the priests

knew well. Thus Luther began translating hymns from the Latin into the German language, and paraphrased many of the psalms in the other poems which he composed. He called on other writers to assist him, and from this period date the hundreds of fine chorales that have since become the common property of the Christian church everywhere — chorals such as "Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern," "Christ ist erstanden", "Jesu meine Freude", "Christ lag in Todesbanden", "Großer Gott wir loben Dich", "Nun danket alle Gott", "O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden". Isn't it inspiring to see how much blessing can flow from one man who "sees the Light", and puts his good ideas into practice?

Although we must admit that Luther had shortcomings with respect to his theological position, we can nevertheless profit from his example in a great many ways. I am sure we often feel we need many things in our M.B. Conference in the area of publications in particular. We have so few books in

theology or music or Sunday School materials or the like that are published by our own conference. Luther was not the one to sit around and wait for somebody else to provide him with what he needed. He himself wrote a good deal and encouraged others to do the same; he publicized the need and asked for assistance in meeting it. It is astonishing to note how soon the needs were met.

I think the publication of our *Ge-sangbuch* was carried out somewhat in the old Luther spirit. We can look back now and see how much blessing this one book has been to our own conference and to churches outside our conference. The English translation of this book, though admittedly full of faults, is nevertheless another instance of this same sort of spirit. I am sure that if our conference were to encourage its theologians to write the books we need, and pay them for doing so, we would soon have worthwhile results in those areas as well.

One of the reasons why the Reformation was so successful was that Luther made so much use of music in spreading his teachings amongst the people. Nor was he satisfied with using any kind of music — he used the best materials available in his day. Luther was a skilled musician as well as a noted theologian. His discriminating taste with respect to words and music are everywhere in evidence from the chorales themselves and from his writings that have come down to us. One of the reasons why we do not get more out of our regular worship services today is due to the fact that so few of our ministers, preachers and church leaders have an adequate understanding of music itself. I believe it is time to place more emphasis on this area in the training of prospective church workers and Sunday School teachers.

Luther had a well-worked-out philosophy of music as an art and its purpose in the church service. Could this be said of our own church leaders and ministers generally? Let me close this short article with a few quotations from Luther's writings on music which indicate his point of view. The quota-

tions appear in a little pamphlet called "Luther on Music", by Walter E. Buszin, published by the Lutheran Society for Worship, Music and the Arts (I wish our conference had a similar organization).

"I have always loved music. Those who have mastered this art are made of good stuff, they are fit for any task. It is necessary indeed that music be taught in the schools. A teacher must be able to sing; otherwise I will not as much as look at him. Also, we should not ordain young men into the ministry unless they have become well acquainted with music in the schools:

Music is a beautiful and glorious gift of God and close to theology. I would not give up what little I know about music for something else which I might have in greater abundance. We should always make it a point to habituate youth to enjoy the art of music, for it produces fine and skilful people."

"I am not ashamed to confess publicly that next to theology there is no art which is the equal of music, for she alone, after theology, can do what otherwise only theology can accomplish, namely, quiet and cheer up the soul of man, which is clear evidence that the devil, the originator of depressing worries and troubled thoughts, flees from the voice of music just as he flees from the words of theology. For this very reason the prophets cultivated no art so much as music in that they attached their theology not to geometry, nor to arithmetic, nor to astronomy, but to music, speaking the truth through psalms and hymns."

"... In suma, next to the Word of God, the noble art of music is the greatest treasure in this world. It controls our thoughts, hearts, mind and spirits... Our dear fathers and prophets did not desire without reason that music be always used in the churches. Hence we have so many songs and psalms. This precious gift has been given to man alone that he might thereby thereby remind himself of the fact that God has created man for the express purpose of praising and extoll-

ing God. However, when man's natural musical ability is whetted and polished to the extent that it becomes an art, then do we note with great surprise the great and perfect wisdom of God in music, which is, after all, His product and His gift... A person who gives this some thought and yet does not re-

gard it (music) as a marvellous creation of God, must be a clodhopper indeed, and does not deserve to be salled a human being; he should be permitted to hear nothing but the braying of asses and grunting of hogs."

Peter Klassen.

## YOUR QUESTION

**FRAGE: Ich würde es schätzen, wenn jemand von den Lehrern im College etwas über die Bedeutung der leiblichen Haltung beim Gebet schreiben würde.**

Eine bestimmte äußere Haltung für das Gebet wird uns in der Heiligen Schrift nicht vorgeschrieben, doch werden uns manche wertvolle Beispiele gegeben:

1. **Stehen.** Von Abraham der so ernst für die Erhaltung von Sodom und Gomorra betete, wie wir es in 1. Mose 18 verzeichnet finden, heißt es in Vers 22, "Aber Abraham blieb stehen vor dem Herrn." Der Herr anerkannte diese Haltung beim Gebet und gewährte ihm seine Bitte; nur fand Gott in der Stadt nicht die nötigen 10 Gerechte, und die Stadt mußte untergehen.

Der Herr Jesus erzählte das Gleichnis von dem Pharisäer und dem Zöllner, die beide hinauf in den Tempel gingen, zu beten. Da lesen wir in Lukas 18, 11: "Der Pharisäer stand und betete bei sich selbst..."; und in Vers 13 heißt es, "Und der Zöllner stand von ferne... und sprach: Gott, sei mir Sünder gnädig!" Beide standen, aber das Gebet des einen war dem Herrn nicht angenehm, und der andere ging gerechtfertigt in sein Haus vor jenem. Sie hatten beide dieselbe äußerliche Stellung; sie standen; doch die Herzensstellung war von so großer Bedeutung, daß das Gebet des einen Erhöhung fand und das des andern nicht. Man lese auch: 1. Samuel 1, 26; Matth. 6, 5; Mark. 11, 25.

2. **Knien.** Von einem Daniel lesen wir in Daniel 6, 11, daß er in sein Haus

ging und, "fiel des Tages dreimal auf seine Knie, betete, lobte und dankte seinem Gott." Dies war dem Herrn gewiß wohlgefällig, weil sein Herz richtig eingestellt war. Lese weiter: 2. Chron. 6, 13; Ps. 95, 6; Jesaja 45, 23; Mark. 1, 40; Eph. 2, 14.

3. **Niederfallen.** Wenn wir den Herrn Jesus in Gethsemane beobachten so sehen wir, daß er "niederfiel auf sein Angesicht und betete." Solch ein Niederfallen vor dem Herrn ist in der Bibel wiederholt erwähnt. Von der göttlichen Offenbarung überwältigt, fiel ein Prophet Hesekeil auf sein Angesicht, laut Hes. 1, 28. So erging es auch einem Daniel, laut Dan. 10, 9; dem Apostel Petrus, laut Lukas 5, 8, und auch Johannes nach Offbr. 22, 8. Weitere Beispiele findet man in: 1. Mose 17, 3; 24, 26; 4. Mose 14, 5, 13; Jos. 5, 14 und andere.

4. **Sitzen.** Als Jesus mit den Emmaus Jüngern sich zum Abendbrot vereinigte, geschah es, laut Lukas 24, 30, "Da er mit ihnen zu Tische saß, nahm er das Brot, dankte, brach's und gab's ihnen." Da hat Jesus, allem Anscheine nach, beim Beten gesessen. Laut Menges Übersetzung, heißt es in 2. Sam. 7, 18, von David: "Der König David ging hinein, setzte sich vor dem Herrn nieder und betete..." Dieses war dem Herrn auch angenehm.

5. **Liegen.** David sagt, in Psalm 63, 7, nach Menges Übersetzung: "So oft

ich deiner gedenke auf meinem Lager in den Stunden der Nacht..." Manche Gläubigen haben besonders in Zeiten der Krankheit, viel selige Stunden verlebt, indem sie auf ihrem Lager beteten. Siehe auch 1. Kön. 1, 47; Psalm 149, 5.

Also merken wir, daß beim Beten die äußerliche Haltung verschieden sein kann. Doch mehr wichtig ist die Herzensstellung. Da sagt die Schrift laut Menges Übersetzung, in Psalm 51, 19: "Opfer, die Gott gefallen, sind ein zerbrochener Geist; ein zerbrochenes und zerschlagenes Herz wirst du, o Gott, nicht verschmähen." Mit einem stolzen

Herzen vor Gott knieen hat keine Bedeutung. Doch findet die ergebene Herzensstellung oft ihren Ausdruck in den gebeugten Knien. Ein Mensch, ohne Ergebung, will sich nicht beugen. Doch es kommt die Zeit, wo Jesu Herrlichkeit und Majestät so reell vor den Menschen offenbart werden wird, "daß in dem Namen Jesu sich beugen sollen aller derer Knie, die im Himmel und auf Erden und unter der Erde sind, und alle Zugen bekennen sollen, daß Jesus Christus der Herr sei zur Ehre Gottes des Vaters."

J. J. Toews.

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**WE PRAY:** O God of infinite mercy, who hast compassion on all men, hear the prayers of thy servants, who are unworthy to ask any petition for themselves, yet are in duty bound to pray for others: Let thy mercy descend upon the Church; that her sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving may ever ascend to thy throne.

Forgive our enemies and help us to forgive. Comfort the afflicted; speak peace to troubled consciences; strengthen the weak; confirm the strong; instruct the ignorant; deliver the oppressed; relieve the needy; and bring us all by the waters of comfort and in the ways of righteousness to thy eternal Kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

After Jeremy Taylor

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(Schluß von Umschlagseite 2) —

unsere Mennonitische Weltbruderschaft einen treuen und gottgeweihten Führer verloren, und unsere Mennoniten Brüdergemeinde einen wohlwollenden Freund. Es ist dieses nicht die Zeit und der Platz seine großen Leistungen als Geschichtler und Theologe zu bewerten. Dr. Bender liebte die Wahrheit, und er versuchte in "geschichtlicher Sauerkeit" dieselbe auf den Leuchter zu stellen. Auf den Mennonitischen Weltkonferenzen, wo Dr. Bender oft geschichtliche Vorträge gab, scheute er sich nicht, "historische Fehler" zu korrigieren. Dieses trifft in besonderer Weise auch zu in Verbindung mit seinen Klarlegungen über die Entstehung und späteren Entwicklung der Mennoniten-Brüdergemeinde. Er hatte persönlich eine große Wertschätzung für den besondern Beitrag und für die besondere Mission unserer Konferenz. In unserer letzten Gemeinschaftsstunde in seinem Heim in Goshen, etwa 5 Wochen vor seinem Tode, kam diese Liebe zur ganzen Bruderschaft und auch zu unsern Gemeinden in besonderer Weise zum Ausdruck. Seine beständige Betonung der Jüngerschaft als Grundprinzip des christlichen Lebens hat sich uns tief eingepreßt. Wir wollen an unsere Lehrer gedenken, die uns das Wort Gottes gesagt haben. Wir wollen ihr Ende anschauen und ihrem Glauben nachfolgen. "Haltet solche Männer in Ehren!

J. A. Toews

## *Filled with His Fulness*

Upon the sandy shore an empty shell,  
    Beyond the shell infinity of sea ;  
O Saviour, I am like that empty shell,  
    Thou art the Sea to me.

A sweeping wave rides up the shore, and lo,  
    Each dim recess the coiled shell within  
Is searched, is filled, is filled to overflow  
    By water crystalline.

Not to the shell is any glory then :  
    All glory give we to the glorious sea.  
And not to me is any glory when  
    Thou overflowest me.

*Amy Carmichael, Toward Jerusalem*

*“That you may be filled unto all the  
fulnes of God” (Eph. 3:19).*