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EDITORIAL

**Ein Unberechtigte Dichotomie:
Der gottlose Osten und der
gottesfürchtige Westen**

Das religiöse Denken großer Kreise evangelischer Christen Amerikas wird in unserer Zeit stark beeinflusst von einer Voraussetzung, die bewußt oder unbewußt, immer wieder zum Ausdruck kommt in Predigten, in Vorträgen, und in einer zunehmenden Literatur. Diese Voraussetzung besteht einfach darin, daß man die Welt als eine geteilte Welt sieht. Der Eisernen Vorhang trennt Ost und West nicht nur politisch-ideologisch, sondern auch sittlich-religiös. Nach dieser Ansicht findet man das Reich Gottes hauptsächlich in den freien demokratischen Ländern des Westens; hinter dem Eisernen Vorhang, in den kommunistischen Ländern, findet man vornehmlich das Reich Satans. Diese geographische Dichotomie oder Teilung der Welt in ein Gebiet des Lichts und ein Gebiet der Finsternis ist ein populäres Thema, daß von manchen Kanzeln und Kathedern mit großer Begeisterung (oft im Rahmen des prophetischen Wortes) verkündigt wird. Um als evangelischer Prediger zu gelten, genügt es nicht, Christus, den Gekreuzigten, als den einzigen Erlöser der Welt zu predigen; man erwartet vom Prediger auch eine Verteidigung des christlichen Amerikas und eine Verurteilung des kommunistischen Rußlands. Irgend welcher Versuch, sich über diesen ideologischen und nationalistischen Standpunkt zu erheben, wird als ein Kompromiss mit der Sünde und der Ungerechtigkeit gestempelt. So stark sind die Vorurteile mancher evangelischer Richtungen, daß man den Pazifismus (Friedenslehre) ohne weiteres mit dem Kommunismus verbindet, und als Folge "das Bad mit dem Kinde ausschüttet." Als mennonitische Bruderschaft, welche in ihrer eigenen Geschichte furchtbare Erlebnisse zu verzeichnen hat aus der Zeit des Terrors und der Unterdrückung hinter dem Eisernen Vorhang, sind wir in besonderer Gefahr dieser Gesinnung zum Opfer zu fallen. Es könnte daher von Bedeutung sein, diese unberechtigte Dichotomie einmal etwas näher zu untersuchen.

I

Wo liegen die Ursachen solcher Denkweise? Eine sachliche Untersuchung führt zu der Schlußfolgerung, daß historische und kulturelle Faktoren dazu beigetragen haben.

Einmal möchten wir auf eine allgemeine Tendenz hinweisen, das Christentum mit einem politischen System zu identifizieren. Trotzdem die Konstitution der Vereinigten Staaten eine scharfe Trennung fordert von Kirche und Staat, findet man im populären Denken der religiösen Gemeinschaften eine enge Verbindung. Dieses ist zum Teil zurückzuführen auf den Umstand, daß die

“Gründungs-Väter” (Founding Fathers) vielfach aus Glaubens- und Gewissensgründen Europa verließen um in der Neuen Welt Kirche und Staat auf einer biblischen Basis aufzubauen. Aus der Geschichte Neu-Englands wissen wir, daß die Puritaner sich als Gottes auserwähltes Volk betrachteten, daß durch Gottes Vorsehung in das “Verheißene Land” gekommen war, um hier einen “heiligen Gottesstaat” (Holy Commonwealth) zu gründen. Diese Idee (die auch in der ersten Blütezeit nur einer sehr schwachen Verwirklichung fand) hat sich im Denken amerikanischer Christen als ein gewisses Ideal festgesetzt. Dazu kam später noch die Auffassung, daß die demokratische Staatsverfassung ein Nebenprodukt des protestantischen Christentums sei, und daß letzteres ohne ersteres eigentlich nicht existenzfähig ist. In seinem interessanten und aufklärenden, **The New Shape of American Religion**, nennt Professor Martin E. Marty diese Denkweise “Die Religion der Demokratie.” Diese Identifizierung von Christentum und Demokratie wird symbolisch zum Ausdruck gebracht (leider auch in manchen Kirchen der M.B.-Gemeinde!) indem man neben der Kanzel an der einen Seite die Nationalflagge aufstellt — an der andern die Kreuzesfahne. Ein führendes Journal der evangelischen Christenheit Amerikas, **Christianity Today**, findet es für notwendig, in jedem Jahre eine spezielle “patriotische Nummer” herauszugeben, um das Nationalgefühl und den Patriotismus der Gläubigen zu stärken. Noch weiter geht Professor J. Paul Williams von Mount Holyoke College. Er empfiehlt ein bestimmtes Vorgehen: Amerikaner müssen dahin kommen daß sie das demokratische Ideal “als Gottes Willen ansehen, oder, wenn erwünscht, als Gesetz der Natur... Demokratie muß der Gegenstand religiöser Hingabe werden.” (Zitiert in Marty, **op. cit.**, S. 82).

Für Christen die in solcher Atmosphäre ihre religiöse Erziehung erhalten haben, ist es schier unmöglich zu glauben, daß es auch hinter dem Eisernen Vorhang, unter einer kommunistischen Regierung, rechte Jünger Jesu geben kann. Diese werten Freunde vergessen, daß das Christentum einmal entstanden zur Zeit des römischen Weltreiches, dessen Staatsverfassung durchaus nicht demokratisch war. Ein historischer Vergleich zwischen dem Rom von früher und dem Moskau von heute würde ohne Zweifel zeigen, daß die Herrschaft der römischen Kaiser mit der Diktatur im Soviet-Staate viel mehr gemeinsam hat als mit dem Wesen einer westlichen Demokratie. Und doch erlebte das Christentum eine wunderbare Blütezeit und eine eizigartige Ausbreitung unter solch einem autokratischen und despotischen Regiment. Diese Tatsache sollte uns als Warnung dienen, daß wir den christlichen Glauben nicht an eine demokratische Staatsverfassung binden, wie sehr wir auch letztere schätzen mögen.

Nahe verwandt mit dieser Auffassung ist die Ansicht, daß das Christentum nicht zu trennen ist von einem bestimmten ökonomischen System. Es kann historisch nachgewiesen werden, daß sich der Kapitalismus am besten entfaltet hat in den protestantischen Ländern des Westens. Die einfache (aber täuschend!) Schlußfolgerung ist nun bei manchen wie folgt: Christentum und Kapitalis-

mus gehören zusammen, sowie auch Atheismus und Sozialismus. Auf Grund solcher oberflächlichen Schlußfolgerung fordert Norman Vincent Peale die christlichen Kirchen Amerikas auf, sich für die Verteidigung des Kapitalismus einzusetzen! Er fürchtet für Weiterexistenz der Kirche bei dem zunehmenden Sozialismus in dem Wohlfahrtsstaat des Westens.

Das Zeugnis des Neuen Testaments, sowie auch die Tatsachen der Geschichte widerlegen solch ein Argument. Die Gemeinde Jesu Christi ist an kein ökonomisches System gebunden. Sie hat oft Schaden genommen, wenn sie sich mit dem einen oder andern System identifiziert hat. Im übrigen trifft die obige Schlußfolgerung nicht zu. So findet man zum Beispiel im sozialistischen Schweden viel mehr Religionsfreiheit als in kapitalistischen Spanien. Tatsache ist auch, daß Gott in den Ländern hinter dem Eisernen Vorhang seine treuen Zeugen hat — unter ganz andern politischen und ökonomischen Verhältnissen als im Westen. Dieser Gedanke kam wiederholt zum Ausdruck in den Berichten der vier Baptistenprediger aus der Soviet-Union, welche vom 19. Mai bis zum 1. Juni dieses Jahres mehrere mennonitische Kreise in den Vereinigten Staaten besuchten. “Es ist wahr”, sagte Ilia Ivanov, Kassierer des Baptistenbundes Rußlands, “wir haben keine Sonntagsschulen, keine Seminare, keine organisierte Missionstätigkeit. Wir arbeiten unter ganz andern politischen und sozialen Verhältnissen — aber unsere Gemeinden wachsen trotzdem.”

II.

Nachdem wir etwas auf die historischen Ursachen dieser unberechtigten Dichotomie aufmerksam gemacht haben, wäre es jedenfalls am Platze, auch die **Folgen** so einer Denkweise hervorzuheben.

Einmal möchten wir darauf hinweisen, daß so eine Gesinnung die Untersuchung der geistlichen Schäden der Christenheit in der westlichen Welt sehr erschwert. Es ist leichter, die Ursachen des eigenen Versagens in der Ferne zu suchen, als eine ernste Selbstprüfung und Selbstkritik zu unternehmen. Es ist leichter über die Gottlosigkeit der Kommunisten zu schelten, als die Habsucht, Genußsucht, und Gleichgültigkeit eines weltförmigen Christentums in Amerika zu strafen. Wir vergessen so leicht, daß auch die westliche Welt zum Machtgebiet Satans gehört, und daß es schwerer ist die Macht des Bösen zu bekämpfen in der Gestalt eines Engels des Lichtes, als in der Form eines brüllenden Löwen. Im tiefsten Wesen ist die Welt dieselbe in Ost und West — der Unterschied ist ein Unterschied in der äußeren Gestaltung, nicht in der innern Art. Ehe wir den Splitter aus unsers Bruders Auge ziehen können, müssen wir den Balken aus unserm eigenen Auge entfernen. Das gilt auch auf unser Verhältnis zu den Gläubigen hinter dem “Vorgang.”

Die Identifizierung des Christentums mit Demokratie und Kapitalismus macht es den evangelischen Gemeinden Amerikas auch

schier unmöglich, eine prophetische Stimme zu erheben in der Verurteilung sittlicher Schäden in Kirche und Staat. Die Ausbeutung des Arbeiters, das Vorurteil gegen andere Rassen, usw., im "christlichen Westen" ist gerade so verwerflich in den Augen Gottes wie die Unterdrückung der Bevölkerung im "antichristlichen Osten."

Solche unberechtigte Dichotomie zwischen Ost und West erschwert auch die Ausführung des großen Missionsbefehls unsers Herrn. Dieser lautet: Gehet hin in alle Welt, und prediget das Evangelium aller Kreatur! Die oben angedeutete Denkweise jedoch sieht in den Ländern hinter dem Eisernen Vorhang nicht so viel ein Missionsgebiet, das für Christus gewonnen werden soll, als ein Feindesgebiet, daß vom "christlichen Westen vernichtet werden sollte. Man sieht im Kommunisten nur den politischen Feind, und nicht den verlorenen Sünder, für den der Herr Jesus auch gestorben ist, und für dessen Rettung die Gläubigen beten und wirken sollten. Die Einstellung vieler Prediger Amerikas erinnert stark an die Einstellung der Kirche des Mittelalters zur Zeit der Kreuzzüge. Papst und Bischof forderten die Kirche auf zum "heiligen Feldzug" gegen die Gottlosen des Ostens — gegen Türken, Sarazenen und sogar gegen die Juden! Christi erlösende Liebe umspannt die ganze Welt. Mit dem erhobenen Christus schaut die Gemeinde über alle politischen und ideologischen Vorhänge hinweg.

Die oben angedeutete Denkweise erschwert auch die Anerkennung und Wertschätzung der Gläubigen hinter dem Eisernen Vorhang. Bei dem Besuch der Baptistenprediger aus Rußland wurden selbige auf etlichen Stellen von ihren eigenen Glaubensgenossen in den Vereinigten Staaten begrüßt mit folgenden Plakaten: "Hirten der Herde, oder Wölfe in Schafskleidung?" "Botschafter der Kirche oder des Kremlin?" Es muß die russischen Brüder, die manches um Jesu willen erlitten, schmerzlich berührt haben, daß sie von Gläubigen im "christlichen Amerika" nicht als Jünger Jesu anerkannt wurden (vgl. Pauli Erfahrung in Jerusalem, Apg. 9, 26). Sie hätten jedenfalls ebensoviel Ursache, den Glauben der Christen Amerikas in Frage zu ziehen im Blick auf den Materialismus, Patriotismus, und sogar Militarismus den manche Bekenner Christi hier offenbaren.

Gott helfe uns in dieser Frage die Gesinnung Jesu Christi in Wort und Tat zum Ausdruck zu bringen. Mit John Oxenham wollen wir bekennen:

In Christus ist nicht Ost noch West
In Ihm nicht Süd noch Nord
Nur eine große Bruderschaft
In der ganzen, weiten Welt.

(Aus dem Englischen frei übersetzt)

J. A. Toews

ARTICLES

A Heterogeneous Congregation Challenges the Preacher

From time to time the average minister experiences moments when he views the work of the teacher with a certain degree of envy. The teacher has the distinct advantage of working with a fairly homogeneous group of students that is limited in number according to accepted standards. The students are grouped according to age and in many instances according to ability. Such grouping makes it possible to work on one grade level which results in more satisfactory progress in the teaching process. The homogeneity of the class is maintained by proper classification and a process of elimination of those who cannot keep up with the class.

The minister is confronted with a different challenge. His audience, usually much larger in number (and he would have it so) is characterized by great diversity. In his congregation are the old and the young, the experienced and the inexperienced, the emotional and the intellectual, the educated and the uneducated, those who are set in their opinions and those that are more pliable. Before him are the doctors, professors, business executives, lawyers, farmers, housewives, students, children and teen-agers challenging him to bring a message from which all can derive information, exhortation and encouragement for progress in their everyday life. This situation provides sufficient stimulation for him to work and pray earnestly during the preparation of his message while he visualizes the motley group that will come with keen anticipation to hear him next Sunday morning.

The situation, although challenging, is loaded with some dangers and pitfalls for the minister and his congregation. It may be questioned whether a minister can successfully serve such a diversified group. A minister asked some time ago whether it will not become necessary to organize churches in such a way that they can offer a program to meet the needs of certain strata of society. Others appear to observe a trend of members to gravitate to the church which represents a more homogeneous membership into which they can fit.

It is evident that such an arrangement could ease this particular burden of the minister and enable him to communicate more readily with the total audience, but is this classification of churches into distinct types what we want? Have we not consistently resisted a college church? Surely, we do not want to foster any such movement because it would militate against our concept of the church as the great leveler of society and of its purpose to unite all believers into one working organism where everyone needs everyone else.

There is also the danger for the minister to consciously or sub-

consciously cater to a specific group within the church. It may be the group that constitutes the majority, or the minority that exerts the greatest influence, or the group with which he has the greatest rapport. It could also be that he wishes to cater to that growing group which moves consistently toward a higher educational and professional level. It would be tragic for the minister as well as for the congregation if he should decide to minister to any one particular group and leave the others to feel unattended.

The heterogeneous congregation challenges the minister to address himself to the entire audience with a clear message from God. There are so many areas of common need and concern which cut across all social ranks that it ought not to be difficult to preach on truths that would win for him the voluntary attention of all that are present.

It is my observation that members of the different professional groups do not cherish the idea of being classified into smaller groups within the church or to be singled out either by way of direct address or in the use of selected illustrations. Neither do they expect the minister to show special preference and deviate from theological themes to deal with topics relating to specialized professional interests. The scientist does not expect the minister to concentrate on the latest scientific discoveries. The doctor does not anticipate an illustrious treatise on a current medical theme. The business man does not ask for instructions on how to increase the financial returns on his investments. The professionals do not come to church to hear a lecture on science, government, business, pedagogy or medicine. They want a gospel message from God's word.

The heterogeneous congregation challenges the minister to be an authority in his particular field so that they can come to him with their spiritual problems. It is clearly impossible for the average man to become well versed in all branches of learning, particularly in an age like our own, when ambitious intellects push the boundaries of learning into outer space and make unprecedented advances into the field of the unknown.

This is a time of specialization and the minister is expected to be an authority in the field of biblical and practical theology. Men will forgive him for a lack of knowledge in unrelated and even in related fields of learning in which he has not majored and in which he is not expected to serve. They will, however, find it more difficult to tolerate if he does not properly analyse spiritual problems and cannot present true and effective answers to man's spiritual needs. All members of the congregation wish to look up to their minister as one who knows and to whom they can confidently come with their questions.

Certainly it is expected that a minister will observe and read widely and refer to facts of science for purpose of illustration. He must, however, strenuously resist the temptation to speak about things he does not know. By making false or inadequate statements he exposes himself to the ridicule of those who would like to respect him.

The heterogeneous congregation further challenges the minister to be profound, yet simple and clear in his presentation. The educated adult segment of the congregation will not continue to give undivided attention when the minister insists on deliberating at length on the extremely obvious, even if they admire his style and choice of expressions. The attention of the less trained will terminate quickly if the discourse is presented in words which they do not understand.

The old and young, the learned and the unlearned, will listen with rapt attention when profound subjects relating to pertinent problems of everyday life, are dealt with in logical order and in a language which they can understand.

Do not underestimate the receptive ability of the younger and less educated section of your congregation. Do not misjudge the expectations of those who are older and more advanced. Be profound and be clear and you may well succeed in meeting the needs and expectations of your diversified audience.

We are in need of a theologically enlightened and established church. It is the responsibility of the minister to strive to hold the flock together by feeding them together with clear and profound messages that manifest genuine study and research and a proper understanding of the psychology of his people.

It would not be fair nor realistic to expect all members, with their differing degrees of readiness, to understand and appropriate every truth which the preacher proclaims. However, each member is selective and particularly sensitive to that which meets his needs and will appropriate for himself what he understands and is able to apply to himself.

The heterogeneous audience presents a great challenge to the preacher. I trust he will accept it in good grace and seek to meet it satisfactorily.

J. H. Quiring

Die Gleichnisse des Herrn

Das Wort "Gleichnis" kommt in den heiligen Schriften, alten und neuen Testaments, öfters vor u. wird in der Schriftsprache zur Bezeichnung verschiedener Wahrheiten gebraucht; zur Warnung, wie auch zur Erklärung. Im ersten Fall wird es auf Gott angewandt, denn von Ihm ein Bild, ein **Gleichnis** zu machen, verbietet die Schrift. Im letzteren Fall bezieht es sich auf den Menschen, der nach dem 'Gleichnis' Gottes geschaffen ist; ausschließlich aber auf die Geheimnisse des Reiches Gottes.

Das Wort "Gleichnis" (parabole) bedeutet in der Grundsprache, ein "Nebenwurf." Gleichnisse sind Bilder oder Vergleiche, welche mit Bestimmtheit den Geheimnissen Gottes gegenüber gestellt werden und dazu dienen, die Ereignisse und Zustände in der höheren Welt begreiflich zu machen. Man dürfte auch sagen, daß zwei Welten im Gleichnis sich gegenüber stehen. Die natürliche, sichtbare Welt, aus der das Äußere des Gleichnisses genom-

men wird, steht neben der geistlichen, unsichtbaren Welt in der die Anwendung zu finden ist.

Die Gleichnisse enthalten immer einen besonderen Kern, der die Wahrheit, die man zu übermitteln sucht, enthält.

Das Gleichnis unterscheidet sich von der Fabel dadurch, daß in dieser menschliche Eigenschaften und Handlungsweisen auf Tiere übertragen werden, während in dem Gleichnis die beiden Welten, von denen die niedere zum Bild für die höhere dient, immer klar auseinander gehalten werden. Das Gleichnis, wie Jesus es braucht, bleibt der Wirklichkeit immer getreu. Das Gleichnis läßt alles so vor sich gehen, wie es in der Natur, in dem bürgerlichen und häuslichen Leben wirklich erfolgt. Bei dem Gleichnis ist die Geschichte aus der gewöhnlichen Menschenwelt die Leiter auf welcher das Gleichnis den Menschen die Geheimnisse der geistlichen Welt vor die Augen führt.

Überhaupt muß der sorgfältige Bibelleser feststellen, daß er sich beim Lesen in einem großen Bildersall befindet. Zur Übermittlung geistlicher Lehre brauchen die Schreiber eine Menge Bilder aus dem alltäglichen Leben.

Das neue Testament enthält wohl bei 36 Gleichnisse, welche ausschließlich den Herrn als Autor haben, und deshalb auch in die Lebensgeschichte Jesu eingereiht sind. Sie finden ihren Wert aber besonders darin, daß so viele der Erklärungen über das Reich Gottes gerade in Gleichnissen gegeben wurden.

I. Der Grund und die Ursache des Gleichnisses

Wenn je ein Gemüt durch die Fülle, Mannigfaltigkeit und Schönheit der Natur, durch die Sitten und Gebräuche eines Volkes zu der Bildersprache hätte veranlaßt werden können, so ist das bei Jesus der Fall. Wie klar war sein Auge, wie rein sein Gemüt, wie empfänglich und so ganz der Natur entsprechend seine Seele! Aber wir müssen die Ursache des Gleichnisses nicht allein in der menschlichen Natur des Herrn suchen. Der Grund lag tiefer.

Erstens lag die Ursache darin, daß die Wortsprache nicht hinreichend ist, die Wahrheit, wie sie in Jesus lag und verkörpert war, und Er sie auch lehren wollte, zu enthüllen und auszudrücken. Dies würde sich nicht nur auf die Umgangssprache, deren sich Jesus damals bediente, beziehen, sondern auf die menschliche Sprache überhaupt. Ein Ausleger nennt die Gleichnissprache eine **Ergänzungssprache**.

Zweitens ist sie auch für jede belebte sprachliche Darstellung notwendig. Bilder sind dem Sprachgebrauch nicht unterworfen und können deshalb nie zu leeren Worten, Formeln oder Phrasen werden, wie es bei der Wortsprache öfters der Fall ist. Das Wort kann ein totes Zeichen bleiben in dem der Inhalt dem Leser unverständlich bleibt. Bildersprache dagegen läßt etwas dynamisches dem Leser oder Hörer zukommen. Das Bild will leben. Die Gleichnisse kamen aus dem Leben und griffen auch ins Leben der Hörer. Man soll sie nicht als einen farbigen Redeschmuck oder einen poetischen Hauch ansehen.

Drittens finden wir einen weiteren Grund in der Harmonie, welche zwischen der Natur und Geisterwelt besteht. Beide haben Gott als Urheber und beide entwickeln sich nach göttlichen Gesetzen. Auch in der Natur liegt eine Zusammenfassung des Göttlichen und des Menschlichen — ein göttliches Band umschließt das Ganze.

Ein vierter Grund lag wohl in Jesus selbst. Haben wir soeben angedeutet, in welchen engen Beziehungen die geistige und materielle Welt zueinander stehen, so ist dieses vor allem auf Jesus anzuwenden. Die Geheimnisse der Natur waren Ihm nicht fremd; sondern er war in sie eingeweiht. Er kannte ihren Ursprung und ihr Ende, ihren Zweck und ihre Bedeutung. Er stand in Fühlung mit beiden Welten, denn Er war selbst der Mittelpunkt. Als Gottmensch sagte man von Ihm: "Es hat nie ein Mensch also geredet, wie dieser Mensch." Der Herr mußte die Gleichnisse nicht erst suchen und bilden, sondern sie waren eine Offenbarung seines gottmenschlichen Wesens und seiner Weisheit.

II. Der Gegenstand der Gleichnisse

Die Gleichnisse befassen sich nur mit den Angelegenheiten unserer Seele, mit den geistlichen Bedürfnissen unseres Herzens, mit unserem eigentlichen Lebenszweck, mit dem Heil. Keine profane Lehre kommt uns auf diese Art und Weise zu. Das Gleichnis befaßt sich mit dem Reich Gottes auf Erden und im Himmel, mit seinem Ursprung, Anfang, seiner Entwicklung und Vollendung. Dieses Himmelreich ist aber nicht bloß eine Idee, auch kein bildlicher Ausdruck etwa von einem irdischen Reiche entlehnt, sondern die höchste Realität.

Da wo Gottes Wille erkannt und angestrebt wird, da kommt das Himmelreich; wo er fortdauernd befolgt wird, da besteht das Himmelreich.

Das Reich Gottes nahm nicht erst mit der Geburt Christi den Anfang, sondern war schon vor der Erschaffung der Welt da. Wo Gemeinschaft mit Gott ist, da ist auch das Reich Gottes. Das Reich Gottes entstand im Himmel und findet wieder im Himmel seine Vollendung. Inzwischen wurde es auf die Erde gepflanzt und auf Erden bekam es die Gestalt einer Heilsanstalt. Aber im Himmel wird das Reich seinen ursprünglichen Charakter in seinem ganzen Umfang wieder annehmen.

König dieses Reiches ist der Sohn Gottes, und das Grundgesetz ist die Liebe. Die Untertanen sind immer solche, "die den Willen des Vaters" tun. Der Zweck des Reiches ist die Verherrlichung Gottes und die Seligkeit seiner Geschöpfe. Die Dauer des Reiches ist ewig.

III. Die Einteilung der Gleichnisse

Zu einer Einteilung nötigen uns die Gleichnisse selbst, da sie nicht alle in eine Klasse gehören. Jedes bildet für sich ein Ganzes, jedes gleicht einer Perle. Jedes ist in Kästchen voll vielseitig geschliffener Juwelen und doch sind sie in Gruppen zu teilen.

Merkwürdigerweise hat Johannes keine Gleichnisse. Die Synoptiker dagegen haben sie in verschiedener Reihenfolge. Die Einteilung dieser Gleichnisse wird von verschiedenen Auslegern verschieden vorgenommen. Das Folgende wird nur zur Beprüfung vorgelegt. In keinem Fall sollte man diese Einteilung als entgültig betrachten.

Eine Klasse von Gleichnissen schildert das Himmelreich als **Gotteskraft**. Zu dieser Klasse gehören, unter vielen anderen, die folgenden drei Gleichnisse, die uns als Beispiele dienen:

1. Der Sämann — die verschiedene Wirkung des Wortes hängt von der verschiedenen Beschaffenheit des menschlichen Herzens ab;
2. Das Senfkorn — der Entwicklungsgang des Christentums;
3. Der Sauerteig — die alles erneuernde Kraft des Christentums.

Eine zweite Klasse von Gleichnissen zeigt uns die äußere Wirkung des Reiches Gottes auf die menschliche Gesellschaft. Hier merken wir, daß Entscheidungen hervorgerufen werden. Entscheidung führt letzten Endes zur Scheidung. Man merke hier auf folgende drei Gleichnisse:

1. Das Fischernetz — die engültige Scheidung;
2. Das alte Kleid und der neue Lappen — von der falschen Besserung;
3. Der unfruchtbare Feigenbaum — die Ermahnung zur wahren Buße.

Die dritte Klasse umfaßt all die Gleichnisse, in welchen vornehmlich die Bürger des Reiches nach Gesinnung, Wandel und Schicksal betrachtet werden. Ich lasse wiederum drei Beispiele folgen:

1. Der reiche Mann und der arme Lazarus.
2. Der barmherzige Samariter.
3. Die zehn Jungfrauen.

Einige erkennen in den sieben Gleichnissen in Matthäus 13 die ganze Entwicklung des Reiches Gottes in ihren Hauptmomenten. Nach dieser Ansicht würde das Gleichnis vom Sämann das apostolische Zeitalter abbilden, das Gleichnis vom Unkraut auf dem Acker die Periode der altkatholischen Kirche, usw. Man sollte aber nicht das Gewicht auf die Reihenfolge der Gleichnisse legen, sonst mißversteht man die Absicht Jesu, welche ohne Zweifel mehr in dem Charakter des Himmelreichs als in den verschiedenen Entwicklungsperioden desselben zu suchen ist.

IV. Der bedeutungsvolle Zweck der Gleichnisse

Der Zweck, den Jesus beim Gebrauch der Gleichnisse im Auge hatte, war Seelen zu retten und den Geretteten die ganze Fülle des Heils, samt ihren Vorrechten und Pflichten zu zeigen, sie immer tiefer in das Wesen des Christentums hineinzuführen und sie darin zu befestigen. Solche, die sich nicht retten lassen wollten, nahm Er jegliche Entschuldigung.

Der Zweck dürfte ein dreifacher sein. Die Jünger fragten den Herrn: "Warum dürftest du zu ihnen in Gleichnissen?" Damit woll-

ten sie vielleicht sagen: die Leute können es ja nicht verstehen, diese Rätsel können sie nicht lösen. Seine Antwort kann zusammengefaßt werden in den Worten: "Wer Ohren hat zu hören, der höre!" Das Gleichnis war den Ungelehrten ein Reiz, ein Ansporn für den natürlichen irdischen Sinn. Er muß tiefer geführt werden in dem er nachsinnt über die Bedeutung und den Sinn dieser Bildersprache. Das Gleichnis hat also den Zweck den Suchenden in einer angemessenen Weise dem Evangelium nahe zu bringen und ihn zum weiteren Fragen und Forschen zu veranlassen. Man dürfte vielleicht von einem **pädagogischen** Zweck sprechen.

Das Gleichnis hatte auch einen **evangelistischen** Zweck. Der Herr sagte seinen Jüngern: "Euch ist gegeben das Geheimnis des Reiches Gottes zu wissen" (Markus 4). Aber diese Geheimnisse sollen nicht Geheimnisse bleiben. Die Jünger sollten sie nicht für sich behalten, sondern verwerten und im Predigen anwenden. Der Herr gab ihnen Predigtstoff. Sie sollten diese Wahrheiten in der Ausbreitung und Förderung des Reiches Gottes benutzen.

Für diejenigen, die auch für die beredteste Sprache kein Ohr zum hören hatten, hatte das Gleichnis einen **richterlichen** Zweck. Wer sich durch die Gleichnisse nicht zum Fragen, Forschen, Finden, und Verstehen bewegen ließ, an dem bewußt die Wahrheit ihre richtende Kraft, und an solchen muß nun ihre Schuld völlig offenbar werden, daß sie nicht hören wollen, obwohl sie konnten. Sie fallen der Verstockung anheim, und das Wort des Lebens gereicht ihnen zum Tode.

Über den Gebrauch des Gleichnisses bei der Auslegung ist schon öfters in diesem Blatte geschrieben worden. Man müßte nur auf diese Winke der Hermeneutik achten und das Gleichnis erfüllt heute noch den bestimmten Zweck wozu Gott es gab.

F. C. Peters

A SERMON

Breaking the Vicious Circle

(A Chapel Sermon)

"For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die;
 a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;
 a time to kill and a time to heal;
 a time to break down, and a time to build up;
 a time to weep and a time to laugh;
 a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
 a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;
 a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing;
 a time to seek and a time to lose;
 a time to keep and a time to cast away;

a time to rend and a time to sew;
 a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
 a time to love and a time to hate;
 a time for war and a time for peace.

What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboreth? I have seen the travail which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised therewith. He hath made everything beautiful in its time: also he hath set eternity in their heart, yet so that man cannot find out the work that man hath done from the beginning even to the end" (Eccles. 3:1-11).

"We speak wisdom, however, among them that are full grown: yet a wisdom not of this world, who are coming to naught: but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, even the wisdom that hath been hidden, which God foreordained before the word unto our glory: which none of the rulers of this world hath known: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory: but as it is written,

Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not,
 Whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him.

But unto us God revealed them through the Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." (I Cor. 2:: 6-10)

The preacher, in the passage which we have cited, describes the pathetic fate of the whole world order. It is all vain; it is all empty; it is all meaningless. Klass Schilder, in his outstanding trilogy on the Passion of Christ, repeatedly describes this world order as being caught in a vicious circle of naturalism, and every man apart from Christ finds himself revolving in that meaningless circle. It is this vicious circle which is the theme of the preacher.

Very likely the preacher speaks from the vantage point of the end of the Old Testament age. Gone is the glory of Solomon's kingdom! Gone is the power of Israel! Gone is her wisdom and culture! All that which had shone with brilliance and magnificence had been wiped away. Here is the cycle of human history, a demonstration of the futility of the efforts and accomplishments of man. There is nothing new under the sun. All man's striving is only after wind — it is tedious and futile. It is a vicious circle.

This is how the natural man views the world. One ought not, however, to believe that the natural man is entirely satisfied with the world he creates and interprets, for **God has set eternity into the heart of man.** Consequently man is conscious that he does not belong only to time and to this world. In his inner restlessness he tries to find meaning and impose some order on the events of time; his is a desperate attempt to discover the nature of things.

The preacher is, also, one who sought for meaning in this world. He represents man apart from God, who examines himself in the world of nature and human history; he is the humanist, the historian, the scientist, the artist and the activist, who wants to make life a meaningful existence. As an astute observer he turns first to the created universe, then to the life and accomplishments of

man. He observes all that is done under heaven. What does he find?

He tries to find the meaning of life in the created universe. He observes a cyclical pattern, of sunrise and sunset, of wind blowing in one direction and then blowing again in the opposite direction, of rivers running into the sea and the sea returning back to the rivers. Finally he concludes that there is a cyclical pattern of behaviour in the things of nature — there is nothing new under the sun. It is the same story over and over again. It can tell him nothing about the purpose of life.

He tries to find meaning in life and the accomplishments of man. He seeks meaningful existence in pleasure, in wine and in laughter, only to conclude that all is vanity.

He tries to satisfy his restless heart in the pursuit of culture. He amasses a fortune; he builds great buildings; he becomes an expert farmer and horticulturalist, creating beautiful parks and gardens. He also delights his heart in music, gathering choirs and orchestras. But all the fruits of the hand of man, all the cultural attainments and the glory of man, failed to satisfy his restless heart; in the final analyses it was meaningless. One cannot help but notice the parallel in Daniel (Chapter seven) who in a dramatic vision observes the rise and fall of the kingdoms of man. Daniel describes man as the sea, restless in motion, existing in a ceaseless ebb and flow. Out of the sea of man beasts emerge — the kingdoms and civilizations of man — in close succession. One kingdom devours the other; one succeeds the other; the beasts emerge from the sea of man and return to the sea of man. There is no continuity, no meaning, no goal — it is only one vicious circle.

What then has the preacher discovered? He has been spinning about in the world. He has found the whole life of the world subject to the law of rotation; it is all a merry-go-round of futility.

There is — a time to be born, and a time to die;
 a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which
 a time to kill, and a time to heal; [is planted];
 a time to break down, and a time to build up...

One effort, one act, one development cancels out the other. Man finds himself in a desperate situation.

Dear friends, **this is always the case, if God does not break into the vicious circle of man in the grace of Jesus Christ, if God is not the sole interpreter of life and the world.** Life cannot explain life! History cannot explain itself! Nature and history, apart from Christ, hurtle man into the vicious circle, into a cyclical process which leads to nihilism. This is what the preacher discovered: "... he hath set eternity in their heart, yet so that man cannot find out the work that God hath done from the beginning even to the end." Man left to his own resources, cannot in his blindness get out of the vicious circle. Only Christ can set the crooked straight and the rough places plain.

What the preacher has said is confirmed again and again in

the history of human thought. In our twentieth century this is particularly evident. Spengler in his *Untergang des Abendlandes*, traces the rise and fall of civilizations as though each were an isolated plant which grows and flowers according to unalterable laws and then dies, without any continuity with following civilizations. His interpretation of history is, in principle, conformable to the cyclical pattern of the Greeks — history does not disclose to him the purpose of life and human destin. Franz Kafka a modern writer and novelist is considered by many literary critics to be a writer who gives clearest expression to the mood and thought of our age (As Dante and Shakespeare did not their respective ages). Kafka portrays the world as a great labyrinth, where one moves constantly from place to place without ever getting anywhere or reaching anything conclusive. History is for Kafka an eternal recapitulation of the same experience. Man is as it were, falling in a void. Meaning does not lie in this world; it lies beyond the human world, and the Messiah always comes to late.

This is the tragic vision produced by man who is caught in the vicious circle of naturalism. The ultimate eüpression given by such blindness was the crucifixion of our Lord. Had they known what God revealed in Christ, writes Paul, "they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." As long as man moves in the vicious circle of man's interpretation of himself and the universe, he will crucify Christ afresh — he will not recognize Him. For him God will remain the **Deus absconditus**, the hidden God, and life will remain bereft of meaning and purpose.

It is in the context of what the preacher says and what is constantly confirmed by the blindness of sinful man, that the mystery, hidden, but revealed in Christ, shines in glorious splendor:

Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not,
And which entered not the heart of man,
Whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him.
But unto us God revealed them through the Spirit...

Christ has broken the vicious circle of man. Through the enlightenment of his Spirit we can understand Christ, receive him into our lives, be nurtured by his word and strengthened by his grace. Christ is God's revelation of himself; through Christ life becomes meaningful — our eyes are opened to the purposes of God. Christ also breaks into the vicious circle of history. His kingdom is not subject to destruction and fall, but is an everlasting kingdom of power and righteousness and peace.

Here is the answer to man's restless heart into which God has placed eternity. Augustine, who for years searched restlessly confesses the truth when he writes, "Thou hast formed us for thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee."

It will be the same in our lives. Only to the extent that we permit Christ to enter our hearts with his life-giving grace, and be the sole interpreter through the Word and the Holy Spirit, shall we find meaning in our daily lives and value in our labors in this world. In Him life is rich and full.

V. Adrian

BOOK REVIEW

C. Kilby's the Christian World of C. S. Lewis: A Brief Review

Soon after the decease of a renowned writer we may certainly anticipate a flurry of articles and books that pay hurried and superficial homage to him. We do not, however, expect the appearance of a more definitive study until a sufficient lapse of time has provided the distance needed for proper critical perspective. In the case of the Christian scholar and writer, C. S. Lewis, we may report the unusually early (only five months after Lewis' death!) publication of at least a **fairly substantial** study of this influential writer's religious works. This study, entitled **The Christian World of C. S. Lewis**, was prepared by Clyde S. Kilby and published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company in April, 1964.

Chad Walsh, another critical commentator upon the writings of C. S. Lewis, has already paid high tribute to Kilby's book and indeed gone so far as to assert that "for anyone who wishes to make a profound study of Lewis, his religion and the literary expression of his religion, this book will henceforth be the indispensable starting point. It is a model of reasonable and balanced judgment, and it is invariably readable." That **The Christian World of C. S. Lewis** will prove a logical starting point for future studies of Lewis' **religious** books and that it is a highly **readable** book are assertions which seem sound and just; the assertion that it is also a "model of reasonable and balanced judgment", however, will seem a little exaggerated to mature readers of Lewis' works, particularly in view of the fact that **The Christian World of C. S. Lewis** is devoted more to

synopsis and summary of the writings of Lewis than to systematic and probing comment upon their distinctive themes and theology, by and large.

The personal and professional qualifications of Kilby, as writer of this book, appear to be adequate, if not extraordinary in nature. As Professor and Chairman of the Department of English at Wheaton College (since 1935), he has undoubtedly acquired a comprehensive grasp of, and keen sensitivity to both Christian and secular literature generally. Also, as a writer of several books (**Poetry and Life; Minority of One; and Christianity and Aesthetics**) and contributor to various periodicals (such as **Studies in Philology; The Explicator; Gordon Review; His; Christianity Today**), Kilby has developed a certain native ability to express clearly his own reactions to such literature. And as one who has "talked Lewis" with numerous other Christian teachers and critics of literature and conducted several seminars on Lewis (at Wheaton College), Kilby has demonstrated a particular interest in Lewis himself, not only as a literary and social critic, but — even more — as a Christian novelist and apologist.

Then, too, the avowed purpose of Kilby in preparing **The Christian World of C. S. Lewis** for publication — to induce novices to turn to Lewis' religious books for a first time and to **help** others who are already **appreciative** readers of these to interpret **them** more soundly and to perceive the full breadth and scope of his work more clearly — is

a commendable one and one that will, we are confident, be fulfilled for many readers.

This general purpose will be fulfilled for many because, in the first place, **The Christian World of C. S. Lewis** briefly introduces its readers to the man himself — to the characteristic elements of his personality as well as to the central passion of his life. Some of these elements of personality which Kilby rightly emphasizes are Lewis' utter honesty and frankness, his high contempt for all moral pride and pretence, his strong aversion to modern travel and tourism, and his deep love for nature and solitude. The dominating passion of his life, explicitly traced out in Lewis' autobiography, **Surprised by Joy**, and implicitly developed (through myth and metaphor) in his novel, **The Pilgrim's Regress**, Kilby here describes as the soul's search for "a great and permanent satisfaction" or joy — as that eternal "Sehnsucht or longing which haunts every man and entices him toward God."

Kilby's declared purpose should be fulfilled for many, in the second place, because **The Christian World of C. S. Lewis** brings before its readers a panoramic picture of the world of Lewis' religious novels — a world of fantastic adventures that provide ample evidence of his unusual imaginative powers and shrewd insight into the moral nature of man. By means of deft summarization of narrative content and skilful evocation of atmosphere and aura, Kilby introduces his readers to some thirteen novels: those which deal with heaven and/or hell (in one respect or another) — **The Screwtape Letters** and **The Great Divorce**; to one which portrays the hellish sin of selfishness, masquerading as love — **Till We Have Faces**; to several which involve space or time voyages of one

kind or another — **Out of the Silent Planet**, **Perelandra**, and **That Hideous Strength**; and finally to that fascinating collection of children's fairy tales, the Narina stories — **The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe**, **Prince Caspian**, **The Voyage of the Dawn Treader**, **The Silver Chair**, **The Horse and his Boy**, **The Magician's Nephew**, and **The Last Battle**. One of these, **The Screwtape Letters**, has already achieved the status of a genuine satiric classic of our time; most of the other novels, while not nearly as well known, also possess considerable literary merit (as satiric or symbolic works). With respect to his space novels, for example, one critic (writing in the London **TIMES**) has remarked that Lewis was writing "brilliantly imagined and exciting science fiction long before the term was current, and using it, as he used children's fiction, to convey a deep conviction about God and about living with a subtlety and symbolic power perhaps to be found elsewhere only in the work of his beloved Edmund Spenser."

It is in his succinct representation of the strange characters and episodes of these novels and suggestive comment upon their mythical splendor and symbolic significance that Kilby is at his best, we feel. Here, the author's own special fondness for imaginative literature becomes quite evident and should prove infectious for sensitive readers.

In the third place, Kilby's intended purpose should be realized for many readers because **The Christian World of C. S. Lewis** presents, very simply, the basic religious convictions of Lewis. While Lewis may not have been the "pure theologian" that Etienne Gilson, the renowned Catholic philosopher of our time, said he was, he did hold strong convictions about what he considered to be the elements of Christian theism and was

able to explain and defend these with wonderful clarity and persuasive power. Indeed, if one principal difference between a "pure" or "professional" theologian and a "lay" theologian be that the latter is less given to general abstraction and analysis and more given to specific application or analogy and to creative or dramatic illustration, of the truths in question, Lewis was a "lay" theologian par excellence.

In his book, **Reflections on the Psalms**, for instance, Lewis reveals his profound conviction that God causes "His Word to go forth even through the written account of sin and the sinner who wrote it", that His law is as real "as trees and clouds" and firmly rooted in His nature, and that prayer to Him "is either a sheer illusion or a personal contact between embryonic, incomplete persons (ourselves) and the utterly concrete Person (God)."

Again, in the more distinctly apologetic work, **Miracles; a Preliminary Study**, Kilby explains, Lewis demonstrates his overwhelming conviction that nature is not absolute but one of God's dependent "creatures" with its own good and bad features, and that the grand miracle which all of creation shadowed forth in a thousand different ways was that of the Resurrection of Christ. And in his **Letters to Malcolm**, Lewis reveals an abiding conviction that heaven and its joys are intensely real, that "the closer one comes to the purity of heaven the more he will wish for some preparation, some hallowing of the soul," and that all eternity involves a certain moral progress for the saints of God.

Finally — to select one other book of Lewis upon which Kilby focusses briefly — in his brilliant work, **The Case for Christianity**, Lewis reveals his stout conviction that human free will is "the only thing that makes

joy and love and goodness possible", and that "a man's choices through a period of many years slowly turn him into a heavenly or hellish creature."

These are only a representative sampling of Lewis' theological and religious convictions. Kilby presents others as well, and in his cursory discussion of them also suggests something of the charming wit and paradoxical manner of expression which characterize so much of his best writing in the area of apologetics especially. More critical students of theology and apologetics, however, will be disappointed in discovering that Kilby does not develop his discussion of these convictions and beliefs in a truly systematic or incisive fashion. A concluding chapter of **The Christian World of C. S. Lewis**, we find, offers a summarial survey of major themes involved in the religious writings of Lewis but some of these were already described earlier in the book. A strict segregation and reservation of one class of themes for this final chapter would have been justified, of course, but Kilby's own scattered treatment of themes leads to unnecessary confusion, or at least diffusion, of thought and to unnecessary duplication of comment.

Nor does the author offer any extended critical analysis of Lewis' departures — or at least seeming departures — from Christian orthodoxy. A fuller treatment of the latter would seem to belong in any consideration of the "Christian world" of C. S. Lewis. But it may be that the author, keeping in mind his less informed readers and knowing full well that other scholars have already concerned themselves with this and related aspects of Lewis' thought (note Kilby's own brief descriptions of doctoral studies in an appendix), deliberately chose the

more popular approach. In any case, the use of a more cursory and casual manner in **treatment** and of a more colloquial manner in **style**, which characterize Kilby's book as a whole, really preclude any designation of it

as a "**model** of reasonable and balanced judgment", and really constitute its one main weakness, from the point of view of more knowledgeable readers at any rate.

Herbert Giesbrecht.

Geography and Revelation

Denis Baly — The Geography of the Bible

(New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), pp. 266.

Why review a book that has been on the market for seven years? Several reasons may justify such a late attempt: In spite of its availability only few people in our circles seem to have become acquainted with it. Furthermore, many who have known the book have seen in it only a text book for a course in Bible Geography and appreciated it because of the detailed and accurate description of topographical factors, overlooking some other features of the volume which are even more significant.

Having been occupied for some time with the school of "Geographic Determinism" in our study of Sociology, and having noted the far reaching implications this school can have upon the theory of social and cultural formation, it is intriguing to ask the question: What contribution did the geography of Palestine have upon Israel's "Way of Life"? Did God use geographic factors to accomplish his purpose in the history of his people? One can not help but wonder why God called Abraham out of his father's land and located him just here and not in some other land? To answer these and other questions Baly's book can give us some valuable information.

Geographical Setting — It is generally acknowledged that soteriological truth has been given to us in a historical setting. Although divine

revelation transcends all time factors we must remember that "when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his son" (Gal. 4:4), and "when the day of Pentecost was fully come" (Acts 2:1) the Holy Spirit came with heavenly dynamic. It is therefore important for any student of Scripture to be reasonably acquainted with the point in history when God revealed himself in a unique way. Although God's revelation was intended for universal benefits it was geographically localized. Such localization was for our sake rather than because of a divine necessity. Just as the historical perspective is an imperative for the understanding of God's word, so also are the geographic factors of significance. This Baly underscores with remarkable clarity and yet we believe, without an over emphasis. Nevertheless, a reader may unconsciously be carried away in his thinking as he follows Baly's repeated description of how geographic conditions helped to influence certain historical situations and human experiences.

Geographic Centrality — The Bible carries in it a universal perspective. God is the creator of heaven and earth and all that may be contained therein (Gen. 1:1). God "hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth" (Acts 17:26). Therefore "the earth is the Lord's and the fulness there-

of, the world and they that dwell therein (Psalm 24), and "the Lord looketh from heaven, he beholdeth all the sons of men (Psalm 33:13). Many readers of the Old Testament are under the impression that in the calling of Abraham in Genesis 12:1 the Lord restricted his sphere of operation to one man and his descendants. Such separation of Abram and later, Israel, did not change the Lord's objective. He called his people that they might be a channel of communication in order that he might reach the whole world. Abram was called from Ur in order that he might be a blessing and all the families of the earth might through him be blessed (Genesis 12:3). Hezekiah prayed that Jehovah might save Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib with the words: "Now therefore O Lord our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord, even thou only" (Israel 37:20). Again the devout Israelite prays in Psalm 67 that God shall be gracious to his people and shall bless them, "that thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations." The geographic factor comes into bold relief again. If God chose his people for a world wide ministry then he needed to locate them in a spot where they would be on the crossroads of cultural interaction. God did not leave his people on the geographic periphery or in isolation. He moved them into a country where world powers came into contact with each other and where ideological cross-currents were frequent. What major civilization of Bible times did not cross the Judean plains? Assyrian, Chaldean, Egyptian, Grecian, Roman, and other forces have left their cultural imprints in Palestine. But the reverse is also true. It was difficult for these powers to escape the influence

of a theocentric faith which Israel and the early church radiated upon them. Nineveh turned to God in the days of Jonah; Babylon worshipped the God of Daniel; Pharaoh yielded to the power of Jehovah; Rome capitulated to the cross; etc. God planted his people on the geographic highway of expanding civilizations and thus Judaism and Christianity had an opportunity to spread.

Baly could have made more of this point in his book. He mentions the strategic position of Palestine in relation to the rest of the world just briefly in a few instances without elaborating. However, this may not have been part of his purpose of writing the book. But having stimulated one's thinking in this regard in his detailed description of Palestinian topography, he goes on to point out the significance of geography in God's purposes for the nations.

Geographic Variations — Palestine is not a land of geographic monotony. It is a land of contrasts: A land of hills and valleys, a land of milk and honey, as well as of want and poverty. If God wanted a people whose experiences were to become the universal frame of reference, the country in which such experiences took place must, at least in part, represent a great variety of geographic conditions. In Palestine one does not encounter the vast expanse of the prairies or the monotony of the Sahara desert. This helps to bring the experiences of God's people in such a country home to the people in other lands, and makes universal applications of divine principles easier.

Baly, of course, limits his discussions to the geographic features of Palestine without making such applications. This is what one would expect in a text book in Bible geography. However, one cannot resist

the temptation to imagine how that people from almost any part of the world could find a spot in Palestine where they might feel quite at home.

Geographic Determinism — In reading the book one cannot help but ask: Why has a land of such geographic potential not produced a more progressive culture? The land which has more ideological cross-fertilization than any other has remained culturally sterile and static. According to Baly, mechanization is lagging; in agriculture primitive methods are still used; people dress in ancient fashions; societal structure has departed but little from that what it was centuries ago. This is where geographic determinism breaks down. Geography limits cultural possibility at certain points. The frigid Arctic demands a certain type of housing, clothing, etc., and militates against extensive agricultural pursuits, while the tropical sun will call for different garments and housing, and for ventilation. But we must not overlook the great variety of cultures existing in areas of similar latitude and therefore also similar climatic conditions. We only need to compare such countries as Spain and the United States to substantiate the above. Geography is not the only factor that dictates the mode of life to its human occupants.

There are other factors at work, some even stronger than geography. What people believe appears stronger in determining the way of life than the geographic environment. The main factor in cultural inertia in Palestine seems to be religion. Islam has closed its ideological gates against foreign infiltration and has resisted stimulation from foreign sources. The strength of ideological determinism is further evidenced in Palestine of our day. Geographic and climatic conditions have remained constant but the birth of the state of Israel with a readiness to adopt new cultural innovations is rapidly changing the land from a desert to a garden, while Jordan with its restricted Mohammedan concepts remains an arid land.

Although much of this contrast in Palestine has developed since Baly wrote his book it was sufficiently evident at the time to have merited source attention in a study of Palestinian geography. A chapter dealing with this point could have brought the book more up to date. As it stands now, it is more of archaeological value. Someone using the text will need to supplement it with material dealing more with the present conditions as they exist in the land of Canaan.

J. J. Toews

'Rest Awhile'

"Let us go into the desert and rest awhile." "When the people are fainting? When they are like sheep without a shepherd? How can Jesus talk of rest? When the scribes and Pharisees, like wolves, are rending the flock, how can he take his followers on an excursion into a quiet resting place? When the decisive battle is beginning and the enemy is breaking though on every side, can one retreat to rest quarters? . . . The Lord Jesus knows better. He will not exhaust the strength of his servants prematurely, and quench the light of Israel. Rest time is not waste. It is economy to gather fresh strength. Look at the mower in the summer's day, with so much to cut down ere the sun sets. He pauses in his labor — is he a sluggard? He looks for his stone, and begins to draw it up and down his scythe, with a rink-a-tink, rink-a-tink, rink-a-tink. Is that idle music — is he wasting precious moments? How much he might have mowed while he has been ringing out those notes on his scythe! But he is sharpening his tool, and he will do far more when once again he gives his strength to those long sweeps which lay the grass prostrate in rows before him" . . . Nor can the fisherman be always fishing; he must mend his nets. So even our vacation can be one of the duties laid upon us by the kingdom of God." —Spurgeon

The New English Bible

The publication of the NEB was the most exciting event in religious publishing for a long time. The New Testament of the NEB, published in 1961 (the Old Testament is not yet completed), has given the critics sufficient time to pronounce their verdicts. Judging by the sales, the NEB has scored a great success. But, as all new Bible translations, it has had its share of malicious attacks. Fortunately, as A. M. Hunter has it in a review of the NEB, there are worse things people can do than argue about the Bible. In this Biblically illiterate world, we can always be happy when people will, at least, discuss a Bible translation.

There were at least three good reasons why this new translation of the Bible in English was produced. (1) The great advance in the field of lexicography; (2) the developments in the area of textual criticism (the science of establishing the best original reading); (3) the changes in the English language.

The reason why Bible readers found it so hard to leave the Authorized Version of 1611 behind, was because it had been left to hold the field so long, that people come to think it sacrilegious if anyone deviated from its 'sonorous prose'. When a serious effort was made (1881-1885) to revise the Authorized Version, cries of protest went up all over the country. What this English Revised Version (1881-1885) gained in accuracy, it lost in style, and so it never became popular. Private modern speech versions continued to appear throughout the first half of our century, witnessing to the need for the Bible in modern English. The NEB was to answer this need for this 'beatnik genera-

tion', to which "the Lord is my shepherd" is a foreign language.

I. The Inauguration of the Project

As in 1611, so again in 1946, a Scotsman led the way. The Rev. George S. Hendry persuaded his Presbytery to petition the General Assembly to prepare a new translation in the language of the present day'. When the General Assembly agreed, other non-Roman churches of Great Britain agreed to join them. A joint committee was set up, and four panels of translators and advisers were set up (one panel for Old Testament, one for the New, one for the Apocrypha, one for literary questions). General director of the whole project was Professor C. H. Dodd, of Cambridge, with leading scholars comprising the panels. Individual translators submitted their translations to the respective panel, and after the translations had been given a thorough 'going over', the draft was sent to the literary advisers. When all was ready, the joint committee gave its stamp of approval, and off it went to the press.

II. The Guiding Principles

In the Preface to the New English Bible (NT), a summary statement suggests three of the guiding principles that governed the work of the translators. "To produce a faithful rendering of the best available Greek text in the current speech of our time, and a rendering which would harvest the gains of recent Biblical Scholarship." First, then, the best Greek text was to be chosen; second, the precise meaning of the Greek was to be given; third, the sense of

the Greek was to be given in clear and idiomatic modern English.

These principles call for a bit of elucidation. (1) The textual base. The translators were not out to revise the AV (of 1611) or the ERV (of 1881-1885) — as the American RSV committee was —, but they aimed at a fresh translation from the best Greek text. The AV (1611) was an excellent piece of translation, but it was based on the Byzantine Text. The ERV (1881-1885) was based on Westcott and Hart's text, which was mainly the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus MSS. The NEB does not follow any manuscript (or family of manuscripts) exclusively. Rather, it seeks to weigh the textual variants seriously at every instance, and then decide on the best reading. E.g., in Mark 1:41 the choice lies between "being moved with pity" (**splagchnistheis**) and "being moved with anger" (**orgistheis**). Up till now all official versions (even RSV) have chosen the first reading. The second is the 'harder' reading, and would explain best the variant 'to have pity'. The NEB dares to translate 'In warm indignation Jesus stretched out his hand.' In Matthew 27:16f, Pilate is heard asking the mob: "Which would you like me to release to you Jesus Bar-Abbas, or Jesus called Messiah?" The murderer's name probably was 'Jesus' (as some MSS have it) and was suppressed by scribes, who did not want him to have the Lord's name.

This illustrates what is meant by establishing the best Greek text.

(2) The precise meaning of the Greek. The new accuracy in the NEB is due to the fact that the translators had the advantage over their predecessors in lexicography. This does not mean that the translators in every case captured all the nuances of the Greek phrases, or that improvements could not be made, but

it is a respectable piece of work. One example! "Blessed are the poor in spirit," is a literal rendering of the Greek. But what does that mean? Not 'poor-spirited' or 'spirited-poor' but 'poor' in a **religious sense**. It denotes people who have realized their spiritual need before God. And so the NEB translates: "How blest are those who know that they are poor." We are given to understand that when the Old Testament of the NEB appears the word 'leprosy' will be absent. The reason given is, that this Old Testament Hebrew term did not mean what leprosy means today. So, we are in for surprises. Of course, the translator must be on his guard, lest he try to fulfill the task of translator and interpreter at the same time (as when **kosmos** in I John 2:15-17 is given as "godless world").

(3) Idiomatic, modern English. Everyone knows that there are two kinds of translations: the literal and the literary. In the former you match words, in the latter you translate according to the sense. The latter alone leads to intelligibility, but it is harder to carry out. This kind of translating calls for a measure of paraphrasing.

The question of 'modernity' is also complex. Is a Bible to be a literary masterpiece? Certainly the Greek NT. is not. But it is not colloquial to the point of vulgarity, either. The translators of the NEB try to move between these two extremes.

Some renderings are most felicitous, others perhaps not. Americans should be careful not to judge the vocabulary through their own linguistic looking glass. To illustrate what what is meant by contemporaneity in the good sense of the word: "Pray have me excused" now becomes "Please make my apologies"; "con-descend to men of low estate" becomes "Go about with humble folk";

"braided hair" becomes "elaborate hair-styles."

The format of the NEB is so designed as to give the impression that one is reading a modern book, i.e., a book that speaks to our day. No double columns, no arbitrary verse divisions, poetry appears as poetry, the text is in paragraph form with appropriate titles and sub-titles supplied.

III. The Reception by the Public

No new translation has escaped criticism. Either, it was not accurate; or it was too archaic, or too modern; or the translators were not fundamental in doctrine; etc. And so this Bible, too, has had its critics. T. S. Eliot, for example, thought it was not even a work of "dignified mediocrity." "Something which astonishes in its combination of the vulgar, the trivial and the pedantic ... causing to ask in alarm: What is happening to the English language? ... It would also be good if those

who have authority to translate a dead language could show understanding and appreciation of their own." To this criticism, Tom Saunders, of the Winnipeg Free Press, remarks, "One wonders how T. S. Eliot, who has taken some pot-shorts at the translators of the NEB, would have handled the problem if he had been personally involved. We might have had more majesty of language and a much less readable and understandable work."

Professor Chadwick has called it 'the Bible for the beat generation'. We can only hope that this generation will read it and find light for their darkness. This will not absolve the interpreter (from Sunday School teacher to divinity school professor) from his task of 'making it plain'. Above all, we must continue to pray as we read even the best version of the Bible (and for that matter the original): "Open thou my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."

D. Ewert

Preaching and Theology

"Be well instructed in theology, and do not regard the sneers of those who rail at it because they are ignorant of it. Many preachers are not theologians, and hence the mistakes which they make. It cannot do any hurt to the most lively evangelist to be also a sound theologian, and it may often be the means of saving him from gross blunders. Nowadays we hear men tear a single sentence of Scripture from its connection, and cry 'Eureka! Eureka!' as if they had found a new truth; and yet they have not discovered a diamond, but a peice of broken glass. Had they been acquainted with the holy learning of the great Bible students of ages past, they would not have been quite so

fast in vaunting their marvellous knowledge. Let us be thoroughly well acquainted with the great doctrines of the Word of God, and let us be mighty in expounding Scripture. I am sure that no preaching will last so long, or build up a church so well, as the expository. To renounce altogether the hortatory discourse for the expository would be running to a preposterous extreme; but I cannot too earnestly assure you that if your ministries are to be lastingly useful you must be expositors. For this you must understand the Word yourselves, and be able so to comment upon it that the people may be built up by the Word."

Spurgeon, *Lecture to my Students*

The College's Divinity Program

(Open to university graduates who feel the call of God
to the ministry of the Word)

First Year

First Semester	Hours per week	Second Semester	Hours per week
Bible	4	Bible	2
Christian Ethics	3	Christian Ethics	3
Biblical Theology	2	Biblical Theology	2
Church History	3	Evangelism	2
Greek I	3	M. B. Missions	2
Electives	2	Church History	3
	————	Greek I	3
	17		————
			17

Second Year

Bible	4	Bible	4
Syst. Theology I	2	Syst. Theology III	3
Syst. Theology II	3	Christian Education	2
Mennonite History	2	Mennonite History	2
Homiletics	2	Homiletics	2
Greek Exegesis	3	Greek Exegesis	3
	————	Elective	2
	16		————
			18

Third Year

O.T. Research	2	N.T. Research	2
Contemp. Theology Seminar	2	Hermeneutics	2
Church Administration	2	Christian Education Seminar	2
Greek Exegesis	3	Greek Exegesis	3
Hebrew	3	Hebrew	3
Electives	2	Anabaptist Seminar	2
Research Papers	3	Electives	3
	————		————
	17		17

Note: Research Papers: Students will be asked to do 3 rather comprehensive research papers in different fields of theological studies. One paper must be in the Biblical field.