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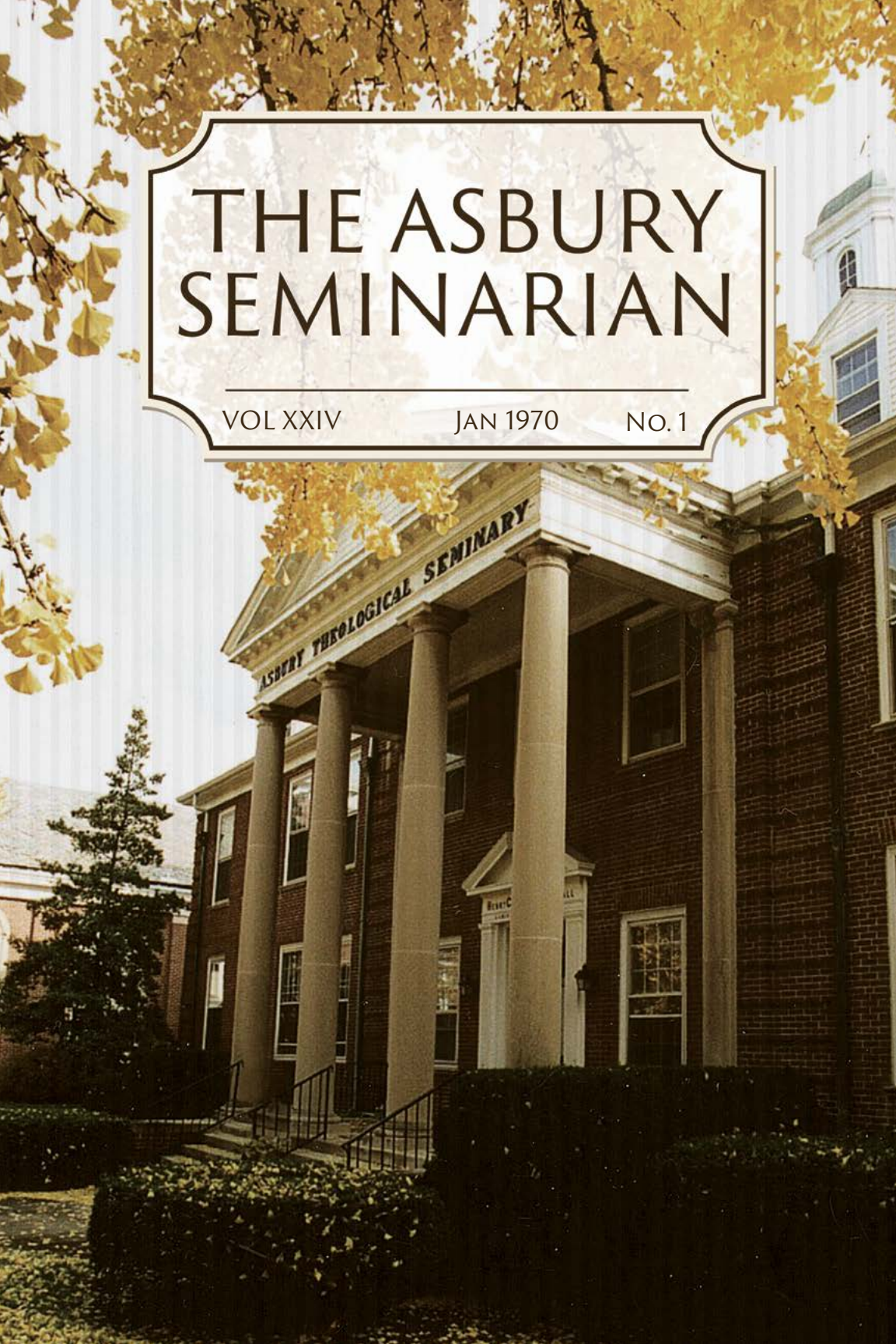

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The Wesleyan Message In The Life And Thought Of Today

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The ASBURY SEMINARIAN

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EDITORIAL

Prophetic Succession

William B. Coker*

It must come as a real shock to ministers of non-episcopal churches that they cannot participate in the "apostolic succession"—and apostolic succession seems to be so important in some circles. In the recent merger talks between the Church of England and British Methodism, this was a matter of real concern to the Anglicans: that Methodist ministers should have Episcopal hands laid upon them, thus assuring "apostolic succession."

But there is another "succession" which is vitally more significant; that of prophetic succession. No more noble trust is committed to Christian ministers than that of being God's prophet. One fears that our modern concern for a beautiful worship center in the sanctuary to displace the central pulpit is only one expression of the diminishing emphasis on preaching. In tones of humility we are told that the preacher is not to be in the "limelight"; he must be out of the center that the focus might be on God. Yet the prophets of both the Old and New Testaments were in the center of activity without destroying a theocentric or Christocentric emphasis. The centrality of God and His Son was the heart of the preaching and needed no stained glass windows to "create an impression." Perhaps our practice suffers from our misconception of the prophet.

The Greek term προφήτης (from προ - φημι) is not difficult to analyze. It means "one who speaks forth," with the special religious meaning, "one who speaks for a god and interprets his will to man" (Liddell & Scott). The etymology of the Hebrew term *navi'* is not so apparent. Some scholars think it is from the Hebrew word meaning "to boil, to pour", indicating the ecstatic practices of the prophet. Some feel that the word derives from Akkadian, indicating that the prophet is "one who is called" (passive) or "one who calls or proclaims" (active). Whatever its etymology, the first usage of the term *navi'* in the Bible demonstrates the function of the prophet:

> And the Lord said to Moses, "See, I make you as God to Pharaoh; and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet. You shall speak all that I command you; and Aaron your brother shall tell Pharaoh to let the people of Israel go out of his land (Ex. 7:1-2, R.S.V.).

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As Aaron was a prophet for Moses to speak Moses' word to Pharaoh, the prophet of God is one who speaks for God. As in Greek usage, he interprets the will of God to man.

Anyone who would be a part of the *prophetic succession* ought to be aware of his predecessors and the principles which obtained in their ministries. There are at least three primary principles, and none more vital than the first: a *conscious identification* as a prophet. He must be aware of his calling.

One is impressed by the testimonies of the biblical prophets. Amos declares: "I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was a herdsman and a gatherer of sycamore fruit: and the Lord took me. . . and the Lord said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel" (7:14-15). Isaiah's words were later to be read by the Son of God to the synagogue in Nazareth: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because the Lord has anointed me to preach. . ." (61:1). Jeremiah's compulsion to preach is reflected in his forthright confession: "I said, 'I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name.' But his word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones and I could not refrain" (20:19). Paralleling these Old Testament prophets is Paul's understanding of Jesus' instruction to him: ". . . rise, and stand upon your feet: for I have appeared unto you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of these things which you have seen, and of those in which I will appear unto you" (Acts 26:16).

This conscious identification as a prophet is not to be confused with egotism and its offensive concomitants. Rather, its positive contribution shares largely in producing God's man for any hour. While we may not express ourselves as Jeremiah or have such an astounding experience as Paul, yet the prophet must identify, for this identification gives authenticity to his role. To speak for God becomes the ambition of his life; all else is secondary. To speak for God is his assignment; any other appointment is subordinate. But most importantly, it is precisely this conscious identification which gives authority to his speaking. He speaks not for himself; not in his name nor in the name of any other, man or institution; he speaks for God. One readily understands Moses' hesitancy: "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh?" (Ex. 3:11). Who indeed is any man? But he to whom God says "now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say" has authority to preach!

There must also be *complete identification with the preaching.* Though the modern prophet might find Isaiah's naming of his children important to the interpretation of his message, he is hardly likely to "go and do likewise" (though Maher-shalal-hash-baz might appeal to a

generation seeking to be different!). Neither is he likely to imitate Ezekiel's methods, lying on his side or shaving his head to demonstrate his point. Such would be mere histrionics to his hearers. However, he must not overlook the prophetic principle of complete identification with the preaching. His life must also reflect the impact of the message he is to share.

How the message is reflected is seen in part in the demonstration of the conviction of his preaching. Pulpit antics have no place for the prophet. Superficial sermonizing and lifeless lectures convey no sense of conviction. Unless a sermon is a part of the preacher, it lacks the breath that makes it live. No sermon is a part of the preacher unless it bears the corroboration of his practice. And no sermon is a part of the preacher that is not marked with the sweat-stains of real preparation for preaching. Superficial sermons are avoided only through diligent and dedicated effort to discern the mind of the Lord, just as lifeless lectures are fired by passing through the burning heart of one who is committed to the proclamation of that mind. Who can separate a prophet from his preaching?

One last prophetic principle is the *compassionate identification of the prophet with the people.* The classic statement of this is found in Ezekiel: "I sat where they sat. . ." (3:15); but one should not forget its illustration in Isaiah and Jeremiah. The latter is frequently identified as the "Weeping Prophet" for his compassion flows over as he weeps: "O that my head were waters and my eyes a fountain of tears that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people (9:1). But Isaiah too, the austere man of God, is deeply moved by the plight of his people: ". . . look away from me: I will weep bitterly; labor not to comfort me, because of the spoiling of the daughter of my people (22:4). The prophet must be genuinely moved by those to whom he speaks as well as touched by Him for whom he speaks, else there is no bridge from God to man. The chasm is spanned only when the bridge is related to both sides.

However, compassion is not to be misunderstood as a sentimentalism which reneges on its responsibility for fear of discomforting some hearer. Christian compassion is a concern for men's souls which precludes compromise of the eternal truth by which all men are judged; it is a care for men's souls which prevents the coldness of professionalism. When he who speaks for God compassionately identifies with his people, he will be given the opportunity to speak to them, which opportunity is not a part of one's call!

No man has the right to be a prophet; to some men is given the privilege. To be a part of the *prophetic succession* demands a prophetic ministry, achieved through an incorporation of those prophetic principles

which identified those of whom the Father spoke: "My servants, the prophets!" But no example for our calling is nobler than that of which the poet sang:

> "O young and fearless prophet of ancient Galilee:
> Thy life is still a summons to serve humanity,
> To make our thoughts and actions less prone to please the crowd,
> To stand with humble courage for truth with hearts uncowed."

ARTICLES

Preaching the Resurrection

Donald G. Miller*

Various Solutions to the Problem of Death

The ever-present and inescapable fact of death has drawn from man various responses. These may be subsumed under three general types described as "death-denying," "death-accepting," and "death-defying." We shall seek to delineate each of these, with some critical comments, and then to set forth the Christian doctrine of resurrection, based on the resurrection of Jesus Christ, as being faith's ultimate answer to the problem of death. It should be noted that the Christian doctrine of resurrection is to be classed with the "death-defying" type of solution, although as we shall try to suggest later, it is unique and to be distinguished from other "death-defying" proposals.

The Denial of Death

There are many signs that our age is rapidly developing a "death-denying" culture. Our language, our customs, our general outlook, our refusal to discuss death with our children, our dealing with the aged, our lengthening of the span of life by medical skill, all combine to remove death from the consciousness of modern man and to give him the illusion that death is unreal, that although it may occasionally engulf others it is no concern of ours. We contrive by every possible means to shut out of our thought the reminder of the psalmist that

> "Man cannot abide in his pomp,
> he is like the beasts that perish" (Ps. 49:12).

In Western culture we have tried to adopt the illusion "that death is a fictive experience and does not truly exist."[1]

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1. Charles W. Wahl, "The Fear of Death," in *Death and Identity*, edited by Robert Fulton (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1965), p. 58.

The reason for our efforts to escape the reality of death may well be that death is the only problem which modern man, who indulges in the rather silly foible that he has "come of age,"[2] does not feel adequate to solve. Modern man can manipulate and control his physical environment to a degree undreamed of by his forebears. He feels, therefore, adequate to the solution of any problem which confronts him. As a scientist has recently put it: "Success has become a habit of the species."[3] "But," the same writer continues,

> There is a glaring exception to this paean of man's conquests, one problem where all his assurance, ingenuity, and wit avail him nothing; an area which stands in bold contrast to the rest of nature which is so malleable to his will. I refer, of course, to the phenomenon of death. Here man, with all his cleverness, is powerless. He may postpone death, he may assuage its physical pains, he may rationalize it away or deny its very existence, but escape it he cannot. . . And if it does not yield to science and to rationality as does the rest of the physical universe, then we are perforce impelled to employ the heavy artillery of defense, namely, a recourse to magic and irrationality.[4]

The defense for many is to try to push death so far over into the circumference of consciousness that life goes on as though death did not exist.

A survey of some of the literature on death or a glance at many of our current medical and funeral customs, reveals how far this defense has

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2. It seems to me that our age in many respects manifests many of the marks of adolescence. It has come suddenly into a great new body of knowledge and does not know what to do with it. Our tendency to try to emancipate ourselves from history, as though nothing that happened to the human race prior to our time has any significance, is a mark of immaturity. The easy assumption that because man has developed a host of new products in recent decades through which he has greatly increased the consumption of goods, or because he can make tin cans immeasurably faster than our grandparents, or because he can go to the moon, necessarily means that we are wiser and more mature than former generations, is highly questionable. Grandfather, living on the soil of New England two hundred years ago, may have been wiser than modern man trying to carve out an existence on the moon. It could even be argued that the Greeks some centuries before Christ knew the meaning of life better than we do.
3. Wahl, *op. cit.*, p. 57.
4. *Ibid.*

gone. Are you accustomed to hearing that someone has died? No, he has "passed away," "gone home," "gone beyond," "departed." Do people usually die at home, surrounded by loved ones and friends who see that death is a reality which cannot be avoided and has some relationship to all the activities of life which go on in that home? No, men usually die in hospitals or nursing homes, in an environment totally detached from the normal living of either the victim or his family and friends. Furthermore, men now usually die drugged into uncousciousness, so that they do not experience what Browning referred to when he wrote:

> . . . to feel the fog in my throat,
> The mist in my face,
> When the snows begin, and the blasts denote
> I am nearing the place,
> The power of the night, the press of the storm,
> The post of the foe;
> Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible form.[5]

And following death, does its stark reality stare us in the face by the necessity of family and friends preparing the body of the dead one for burial? (There is in the possession of the family of a former colleague of mine a "cooling board" which was used a long generation ago by his parents to lay out and prepare for burial the bodies of those who died in his community). Now we have a professional class who remove the corpse from sight and relieve those not in their group from any association with the dead body. The body is taken to a "funeral parlor" or "funeral home" or "memorial home," where modern skills are artfully applied to erase the marks of death from it. Visitors to the funeral establishment are likely to be told that "Mr. Smith is in Room 14," which is called the "slumber room." We are likely to be reminded how "lifelike" and "natural" the corpse looks. This has all the marks of a process of self-deception, whereby we exchange all the hard facts of death for an illusion of sleep.

We then bury the body, resting on an air mattress, in a waterproof vault, another aspect of the illusion suggesting that the corpse is not really dead but sleeping, so that we would not want water to seep in either to disturb his comfort nor to drown him! Also by protecting the corpse from water damage we are enabled to bypass the fact that the worms will probably not leave enough for water to damage, even if it should get in.

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5. "Prospice," *op. cit.*, p. 395.

And where is the body placed in the ground? Not in a "graveyard" next to the church, where the worshippers are reminded weekly of the fact of death, but in a "memorial park," or a "garden of memory," or in a mausoleum called a "temple of memories" with "Clean Dry Above Ground Burial," where no touch of elegant landscaping is omitted, and where frequently grave stones are forbidden lest they remind us of what the lovely park contains. The illusion is carried even further by the encouragement of picnics and weddings in these parks designed to disguise the reality of what these places represent. All of our handling of death is contrived to suggest psychologically that death is not an ugly intrusion on life but a sort of nonentity enshrined in sunshine and loveliness.

Our refusal to face death is to be seen also in the wariness with which our generation discusses, or rather refuses to discuss, death with children. In a recent study of "Attitudes of the American Public toward Death," Robert Fulton discovered that those intellectuals who are most emancipated and sophisticated in other realms are the least willing to have their children confront death in any form. He writes:

> It is worthy of note that such finding. . . is inconsistent with all that characterizes the style of child rearing of professional and progressive groups such as this. Typically, families of the social, professional, and intellectual level of . . . [this] group strive to bring their children up in a world of reality through the discouraging of such phantasies as ghosts, hobgoblins, Santa Claus, and the bogies of sex. Nevertheless, in this setting they appear to behave contrary to form and seek to shield the ultimate truth from their children.[6]

Another writer asserts that a child whose "insatiable curiosity" leads him to raise the question "What is it to be dead?" has this question

> met today, as his questions about sexuality would have been met in the 1890's, with evasion and subterfuge. He encounters the same embarrassed prudery and frightened withdrawal which he would have encountered fifty years ago in his efforts to find out about sex. . . And the answers which are supplied are as straining to his credulity and faith in his parents as were

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6. "The Sacred and the Secular: Attitudes of the American Public toward Death, Funerals and Funeral Directors," in *Death and Identity*, p. 103.

> the "stork" and "baby-in-the-basket" stories which were proffered to him three decades ago in response to his sexual questions.[7]

In surveying these modern evasions of the question of death, I do not want to be misunderstood, as though I am suggesting that the outward form they take is always wrong. It may well be that for hygienic and aesthetic reasons, to say nothing of possible theological reasons, some of our current customs may be preferable to those of cruder times. If our quick separating of the bodies of the dead from the living were only to avoid disease, if our attempts to beautify death were motivated by our faith in a final resurrection, if our efforts to turn cemeteries into gardens bespoke our rejoicing in the memory that God's triumph over death came in "Joseph's lovely garden," there might be some theological justification for some of our modern customs. But the plain fact is that society's attitude toward death reflects "emerging secular emphasis,"[8] and, as Robert Fulton asserts, "The suppression of the idea and presence of death" is the result of "temporal-mindedness and scientific scepticism in America."[9] He adds:

> Modern industrial America with its emphasis upon long cars, long vacations, and longevity has struck a new note in the minds of man. . . death becomes an infringement upon our right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. As never before, we choose to disguise it and pretend the meanwhile that it is not the basic condition of life.[10]

But is the denial of death really any solution to the problem of death? As long as death is the end of all living things, its denial is merely escape by means of delusion. And does this not mean illness both for individuals and society? Do not efforts to escape into unreality take their toll? It is beyond the limits of this lecture to explore this subject in any depth. We may, however, call attention to a study by Dr. Adolph E. Christ of one hundred acute psychiatric geriatric patients, eighty-seven per cent of whom had never talked about death or dying before.[11]

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7. Wahl, *op. cit.*, p. 65.
8. Robert Fulton and Gilbert Geis, "Death and Social Values," in *Death and Identity*, p. 68.
9. *op. cit.*, p. 100.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
11. "Attitudes toward Death among a Group of Acute Geriatric Psychiatric Patients," in *Death and Identity*, p. 152.

He concluded that "one can speculate that at least some of their psychiatric symptoms, which often included fear of being poisoned, killed, or thrown out of their homes, as well as frank, somatic delusions, may be symptoms of marked denial of death."[12]

As far as the consequence of the denial of death on the whole of society is concerned, it may be sufficient to point out a judgment of Franz Borkenau, that primitive men who asserted that "man need not die" converted

> tribal society into a madhouse. Every death is then regarded as the effect of black magic, and the life of the tribe centers not so much upon the procurement of the necessities of existence as upon the search for witches who appear to threaten life much more than do famine and disease. . . it invariably goes with a socially organized persecutory paranoia.[13]

It is possible that some, at least, of the witch-hunting of our own time is rooted in the denial of death, in that death itself is not considered our enemy but whoever seems to threaten the way of life we have carved out which we think will normally not end in death. The view of Dr. Charles W. Wahl may have some validity, that "the pell-mell dash of mankind from the central and inescapable fact of existence, viz., its finitude," leads to a "heavy reliance upon magical thinking and delusion. . . which . . . even when collectively shared, raises problems of emotional sickness and health both for the individual and society which are directly germane to the field of psychiatry."[14]

There is little to be gained by the refusal to look death in the face, by excluding it "from our images, our words, our ideas, because death will obliterate all of us, beginning with those who ignore it or pretend to ignore it."[15] A civilization, says the Mexican author and diplomat Octavio Paz, that denies death ends by denying life. [Man] "must open himself out to death if he wishes to open himself out to life."[16]

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12. *Ibid.*
13. "The Concept of Death," in *Death and Identity*, p. 44.
14. *op. cit.*, p. 58.
15. Octavio Paz, "The Day of the Dead," in *Death and Identity*, 391.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 391-92.

Facing the inescapable fact of death, we need a better answer than shutting our eyes to it.

The Acceptance of Death

A second way of dealing with the problem of death is merely to accept it as our inevitable fate. Man dies—so what? So do butterflies, flowers, animals, and trees. Even the stars will some day burn out. Man is born to die. Death is but the natural outcome of birth. It is "the eternal void" into which all life passes. It is merely "the end point of aging." It is "the inevitable conclusion of a natural process." Marcus Aurelius gave this view classic expression in his *Meditations*:

> It is the duty then of a thinking man to be neither superficial, nor impatient, nor yet contemptuous in his attitude toward death, but to await it as one of the operations of Nature which he will have to undergo.[17]

The author of Ecclesiastes said more vividly: "For the fate of the sons of men and the fate of beasts is the same; as one dies, so dies the other. They all have the same breath, and man has no advantage over the beasts; . . . All go to one place; all are from the dust, and all turn to dust again." Here is "absolute death" with nothing beyond.

Modern materialistic views of life confessedly produce much evidence to undergird such a view. We know that man is a psychosomatic organism. Thought, feeling, appreciation, will, a sense of values—all that has historically been spoken of as the spiritual or psychic part of man's life—function definitely through the biological organism which is man. The nervous system, culminating in and controlled by the brain, is the physiological seat of the intellect, feeling and will. If the brain is damaged, so are thought, feelings, appreciation. If these are so thoroughly related to, and dependent on, the functioning of the brain, why is it not logical to assume that to destroy the brain is to destroy these? There is no existence for man beyond the empirically observable biological and psychic life of man as we now know him. Since this is inescapable fact, it is futile to "kick against the pricks" concerning this. We may as well accept death as the end of what may have been a pleasant or an unpleasant, a fruitful or an unfruitful, a successful or an unsuccessful, threescore

17. Quoted by Fulton and Geis, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

years and ten, plus or minus. When death comes, it should not be surprising; it should be expected. We are born, live, die—period.

Is this a satisfactory, or even a realistic, view of death? Two questions, at least, are to be raised about it. First, can we be so sure that death is the end, that there is no form of existence beyond that which is "discernible to direct human experience"? Have not the hope, and the fear, of something "beyond" been so universal as to raise the suspicion that death may not be the end? Does the camel's foot create the desert? If man's intimations of something beyond death were merely in the form of hopes, it might well be said that this was wishful thinking. But this is too easy an explanation, in the light of man's fears of the beyond. Man's fears could as well have made his wishful thinking take the form of denying any existence beyond this life. Franz Borkenau reminds us that civilizations that have issued from India

> serve as a memento for all who regard belief in immortality as ordinary wish-fulfilment. Every form of Indian belief since the Upanishads has treated metempsychosis, hence immortality, as both a certainty and a curse! Indian thought and its Buddhist derivatives in China, and even more so in Japan, are occupied with the problem of liberation from this curse, be it by dissolving the individual in the absolute, be it by vouchsafing him eternal death, on condition of the faithful performance of certain ascetic techniques. Among certain Japanese sects the final outcome has been a veritable religion of suicide, an active search for death[18]

"Death-worship" is not only the acceptance of death but a longing for it and a searching after it. For those of this persuasion, at least, the idea of some form of existence beyond death can hardly be accounted for by wishful thinking. F. H. Lovell-Cocks points out that

> Epicurus, with more insight than some of his modern disciples, saw that what man fears is not that death is annihilation, but that it is not; that the horror of death is not extinction, but the wrath to come.[19]

The same is true for more sophisticated Western man. Shakespeare put the case for many when he wrote:

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18. *op. cit.*, p. 54
19. Quoted by Alan Richardson, "Death," *A Theological Word Book of the Bible* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1955), p. 61.

. . . The dread of something after death,
The undiscovered country from whose bourn
No traveler returns, puzzles the will
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of.[20]

Wishful thinking could as well obliterate any suspicion of existence after death as create it. The ear usually does not create the music. There are times when blurred ringings stir in the ear which do not come from without, but these are usually distinguishable from those objective sounds which are stimuli to which the ear responds. So the well-nigh universal sense of something beyond the sphere of our biological living may be a response to a reality which we do not create but which calls forth this response from us. In spite of the widespread discounting of this on the part of modern scientific secular man, Browning's "Grand Perhaps" remains.

The second question is whether human life can retain any sense of meaning through a "death-accepting" view. I have talked with people who claim that if death ends all they would still find life a joyous experience, that the prospect of personal extinction holds no horrors for them. In fact, George Eliot in her poem "The Legend of Jubal," argued that it is life's brevity which gives it its preciousness. In her legend, death had never entered the world until it arrived by accident. The effect of death, which shortened life, was revolutionary.

Now glad content by clutching haste was torn,
And work grew eager, and device was born.
It seemed the light was never loved before,
Now each man said, 'I will go and come no more.'
No budding branch, no pebble from the brook,
No form, no shadow, but new dearness took
From the one thought that life must have an end.
And the last parting now began to send
Diffusive dread through love and wedded bliss,
Thrilling them into finer tenderness.[21]

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20. *Hamlet*, Act III, Scene I. *The Complete Dramatic and Poetic Works of William Shakespeare*, edited by William Allan Neilson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1906), p. 911.
21. Quoted by P. T. Forsyth, *This Life and the Next* (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1948), p. 3.

True though it is that life's brevity imparts certain values to certain cherished experiences, would this prevail if there were certainty only that death ended all for everyone? Was not P. T. Forsyth right when, in commenting on Eliot's poem, he said that the effect of this view would "be like that of alcohol–first bustle, then blight, excitement, and then stupidity."[22] Forsyth thought Tennyson, considered passe by our generation, much nearer the truth when he said that if we could not be sure of immortality, most of us would be

> Halfdead to know that I shall die.[23]

Forsyth saw plainly what has come to pass dramatically in our own time, that if men on a large scale began to think that "death ended all," even if morality were not immediately arrested, this would "lead to a lowered sense of that which is behind morality and is the condition of it–the value of personality."[24]

It is rather startling to find a modern analyst of the human condition finding the echo of Forsyth's analysis in the state of our world today. Franz Borkenau, formerly professor of history at the University of Marburg, has written:

> *Our modern post-Christian attitude* has somehow had to come to terms with the ingrained Christian belief that life without immortality is nothing. This conviction, once the concomitant belief in an actual after-life is abandoned, results in despair, which indeed has increasingly colored the more recent phases of Western–and latterly of Eastern–Christian history. There is an obvious tendency for the Christian concept of personality to follow the Christian belief in immortality into limbo. In consequence modern secularism is

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22. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
23. "In Memoriam," Stanza, *The Poetic and Dramatic Works of Alfred Lord Tennyson* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1898), p. 171.
24. *Op. cit.*, p. 8. F. W. Robertson once said: "If there be no God and no future state, yet even then it is better to be generous than selfish, better to be chaste than licentious, better to be true than false, better to be brave than to be a coward." *Life, Letters, Lectures and Addresses of Frederick W. Robertson*, M. A., edited by Stopford Brooke (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1865), p. 86. This may have been true for a few rare souls among whom F. W. Robertson would rank with the highest. It is still to be doubted, however, that such a view would be valid for the mass of mankind.

> patently about to end in nihilism, i.e. in denying the relevance, almost the existence, of personality.[25]

Borkenau finds the roots of modern totalitarianism at this point. When personality is denied, it seeks to sublimate itself in a higher entity, the social, racial, or national group. The test of total abandonment of personhood is to be willing to die for the group to which one is attached. But paradoxically, a free choice to die for this higher loyalty leaves a modicum of personality for the individual who makes it, for it is he, by his own free decision, who wills to die. Logically, therefore, the total depersonalization process must issue in one dying for the group, not by his own choice, but by the will of the group. For, as Borkenau says:

> No one is allowed to retain even the right to choose suffering willingly for the sake of the larger whole. Indeed, as Orwell has demonstrated [in his 1984], this free acceptance of martyrdom becomes the ultimate heresy.[26]

Given this logic, even the leaders of a totalitarian movement would be destroyed, for "in this system all must be equally crushed, and there is no torturer who would not at the same time be a victim."[27] Modern totalitarian leaders, of course, do not follow the logic of their own "death-acceptance," and hypocritically try to save their own skins by eliminating all rivals. A totally depersonalized nihilism, however, is the logical outcome of the "death-accepting" view. If death ends all, then nothing is ultimately of any value. It may be fortunate that the human race, in the large, is likely not clear thinking enough to see, nor honest enough to accept, the implications of their professed faith in the acceptance of death.

One wonders whether the acceptance of death, with the resultant meaninglessness of life, is not at the root of much of the bizarre individual behavior rampant in current society. The spreading of the desire for LSD trips into a dream world, the ever-wider use of marijuana, the craze for intoxicants, the growth of pornography and the easy sex standards of the so-called "new morality" in which many moderns are now indulging, may be symptoms of the total loss of meaning in life and the depersonalization that follows it. Although it may not be present to the consciousness of many of the participants, it may well be that this is the logical outcome of the fact that men have accepted death as the end and no longer believe in

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25. *Op. cit.*, p. 52.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 53.
27. *Ibid.*

anything beyond the grave. The logical outcome of "death-acceptance" may be some form of "death-worship"—either mass neurosis, which destroys millions of people, or some individual form of destroying one's personhood even before death. There must be a better answer to the problem of death than this.

The Defiance of Death

There is a third alternative in dealing with death. In contrast to "death-denying" views, it is to look death squarely in the face, fully aware that it is the inevitable historic end toward which all living things move. It cannot, therefore, deny death. On the contrary, since this end casts its shadow so decisively back over the whole of life, the reality of death must be reckoned with every day. For death is not an unfortunate accident that may be avoided by various safety-first measures, nor an unreality which does not exist if we refuse to think about it. Death begins with our first breath. Cells are born to die. They are replaced by living ones, and during babyhood, childhood, adolescence, and youth, the processes of life hold the ascendancy over the processes of death. In early adulthood and in our middle years, however, life and death maintain an uneasy balance for a period. Then, after that, death begins to gain the ascendancy over life. Following a longer or a shorter battle in individual lives, the grim monster finally triumphs and we are done. Death, therefore, is so inevitably the fate of all living things and so inextricably interwoven into the structure of every day that, whether we are aware of it or not, the real significance of any day is that it brings us twenty-four hours nearer death.

This third alternative, although it refuses to deny death, refuses also to accept it. It sees death as real and inevitable, but not final. This view has been termed "death-defiance" in that "it accepts death but also aims at transcending it."[28] It looks upon death as the end of life as we now know it, but not as the end of existence. It views death as marking the transition from one era to another, as a "passage" from life in time and history to another form of existence. Time and matter give way to eternity and spirit. Life continues beyond death. Therefore, death is faced as real, but not accepted. It is defied in the name of a higher life. The acceptance of death is replaced by the hope of immortality. This "defiance of death" in the name of immortality has a long and varied history which cannot be traced here. It includes the grosser forms of hope represented in burial customs where food, clothes, furniture, and all the

28. Franz Borkenau, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

accoutrements of life here were placed in the tomb for the use of the departed, suggesting that the immortal life was a sort of Mohammedan heaven with a quality of life quite like that we now know. It includes the struggle for democratization, where the monopoly on immortality, held by kings and the great of the earth, was increasingly challenged to make the after-life available to all men.[29] It includes also the more refined and sophisticated forms of belief in the immortality of the soul, held by some ancient Greeks and many moderns, whereby the spirit of man is set free from the prison of the body and the ambiguities and frustrations of time and history, and enters into a purely spiritual existence beyond death.

The Christian Doctrine of Resurrection

It is clear that in its dealing with death, Christianity belongs to the category of "death-defiance." Borkenau is right when he insists "that defiance of death is at the core of the Christian message. . . it was left to Christianity to place defiance of death at the center of its perception of the human situation."[30] What I should like to stress now, nevertheless, is that however much Christianity belongs in the general category of "death-defiance" it is unique and to be clearly distinguished from other views belonging in this category. And this is for at least two reasons.

First, other "death-defying" views posit the immortality of the soul—that there is something deathless in man as men. This suggests a consummate pride of man in his own existence, as though he had in himself an eternal, deathless quality, and as though he were somehow the arbiter of his own destiny. As Reinhold Niebuhr put it: "All the plausible and implausible proofs for the immortality of the soul are efforts on the part of the human mind to master and to control the consummation of life. They all try to prove in one way or another that an eternal element in the nature of man is worthy and capable of survival beyond death."[31] Should this be countered by the judgment that belief in man's immortality is not human pride, but rather testimony to the wonder of man as God made him, it may be answered that this is the ultimate pride which refuses to take man's sin seriously. Even if one believes that man was created by God as immortal, it is difficult to believe that such a state is permanent in the light of the Old Testament's word, "in the day that thou eatest

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29. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
30. *Ibid.*, pp. 50, 51.
31. *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943), II, 295.

thereof thou shalt surely die," (Gen. 2:17), and the New Testament's word, "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23).

The Bible has no doctrine of the immortality of the soul. As Alan Richardson has reminded us: "The Bible never for one moment allows men to forget their mortality. . . . The illusion of natural or inherent immortality is the Serpent's lie (Gen. 3:4)."[32]

The Bible knows only of resurrection. And resurrection is not something inherent in man. It is God's action, and God's alone. Man dies; it is *God* who raises from the dead. And what is more, the Bible's doctrine of resurrection is not a mere theory, a generalizing about what God will do for man; it is rather related to the distinct historic event of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The apostles, we are told in the Book of Acts, proclaimed in Jesus the resurrection of the dead" (Acts 4:2); or as the most recent English translation of the New Testament puts it, they "were teaching the people that Jesus had been raised from death, which proved that the dead will be raised to life."[33] The word of Christ is "because I live, you will live also" (John 14:19). The New Testament hope of resurrection is so tied to the historic event of Christ's resurrection that the two can never be separated. And granted that this event goes beyond the dimensions of ordinary events, it cannot be less than they are, and thus transformed into the category of myth, quite so easily as we are wont to do. My colleague, Markus Barth, has stated: "For the biblical witnesses . . . there is no difference between the *factuality, reality, actuality* of the crucifixion and of the resurrection events. They possess the same historicity."[34] He goes on to point out that this historicity can hardly be reduced to the category of myth. If the biblical witnesses

> were speaking solely of a voice that was heard by them, of a feeling that was formed in them, of a sense of mission that fell upon them with irrisistible force, or of a private or communal cultic experience and vision—then their reports. . . might stand on the same level as some mystics' intuitions and meditations. Since they do speak of seeing him, or touching him, or eating with him. . . they confront their hearers and readers with a concrete, this-worldly presentation of the

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32. "Death," *op. cit.*, p. 60.
33. *Good News for Modern Man: The New Testament in Today's English* (New York: The American Bible Society, 1966).
34. Markus Barth and Verne H. Fletcher, *Acquittal by Resurrection* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), p. 11.

> reality and meaning of the resurrection which assaults not only the sensibilities of the Sadducees and the Athenian philosophers, but those of every man. They might have spared themselves and their interpreters many difficulties if they had given the slightest indication that their speech referred to events that, unlike the crucifixion, did *not* occur at a given place, at a specific time, before chosen witnesses! But they do not spare us such difficulties. However much and deeply they interpret the event, they denote the event as an *event*, not as a timeless symbol, and for this reason they do not invite an allegorical or demythological interpretation.[35]

To this Alan Richardson adds:

> Against all theories that the risen Christ was merely a kind of ghostly appearance the Church taught that his resurrection was real, objective, palpable—bodily. His presence to the apostles after his resurrection was as 'real' as his bodily presence in Galilee had been.[36]

Hence, although Christianity is most certainly to be classed with the "death-defying" faiths, it is to be distinguished from others in this class by its doctrine of resurrection rather than immortality, and its tying of resurrection solely to the unique act of God in raising Jesus. The uniqueness of Christianity at this point lies in the uniqueness and finality of her Lord as raised by God from the dead. Longfellow's

> Dust thou art to dust returnest
> Was not spoken of the soul[37]

is hardly biblical Christianity. Karl Barth has written:

> In the controversy over the resurrection, two worlds clash. . . the world of the gospel. . . and a religious and moral world which looks very much like Christianity.[38]

We must not confuse the two.

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35. *Ibid.*, pp. 11 ff.
36. "Resurrection," *op cit.*, p. 194.
37. "A Psalm of Life," *The Complete Poetical Works of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1893), p. 3.
38. *The Resurrection of the Dead* (London: Hodder and Stoughton Limited, 1933), p. 126.

The second thing that distinguishes Christianity from other "death-defying" views is its belief not only in resurrection, but in the "resurrection of the body." Resurrection, for the Apostles, was not merely some sort of spiritual resurrection in a life beyond, but "a renewal under new conditions of the ultimate unity of body and soul which was human life as they knew it."[39] It hardly need be pointed out here that the resurrection of the body, for the New Testament writers, was not a crude hope of the resuscitation of the atoms of our present fleshly body. Paul makes it clear that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable" (I Cor. 15:50). Both living and dead, at the final resurrection, will be "changed." "For this perishable nature must put on the 'imperishable' and this mortal nature must put on immortality" (I Cor. 15:53). The Bible knows nothing of disembodied spirits; it knows nothing of spirits temporarily dwelling in bodies to be released at death; it knows nothing of an unreal sort of death which is "only a discarding of the outworn envelope of the body." It knows only "persons" who are made up of both spirit and body. As Karl Barth has put it:

> The corruptibility, dishonour, and weakness of man is, in fact, that of his corporeality. Death is the death of his body. If death be not only the end—but the turning point, then the new life must consist in the repredication of his corporeality. To be sown and to rise again must then apply to the *body.* The body is man, body in relation to a non-bodily, determined, indeed, by this non-bodily, but body. The change in the relationship of the body to this non-bodily is just the resurrection, not, therefore, some transition of man to a merely non-bodily existence. Of such Paul knows nothing whatever. The persisting subject is rather just the body. It is 'material' body this side, 'spiritual' body beyond the resurrection.[41]

In the New Testament, however, this hope of resurrection is tied solely to the resurrection of Jesus. Barth writes elsewhere:

> Christian faith is not to be understood as idealism that has succeeded in discovering light in darkness, life in death, the majesty of God in the lowliness of human existence and

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39. Alan Richardson, "Immortal," *op. cit.*, p. 111.
40. *Ibid.*
41. *The Resurrection of the Dead,* p. 201.

> destiny. On the contrary, *that* light, *that* life, *that* God are acknowledged by Him Himself Who without any human aid and against all human expectation, as light broke through the darkness, as life overcame death, as God triumphed in and over the lowliness of human existence. Resurrexit means—Jesus is conqueror.[42]

We are free, of course, to disagree with the New Testament writers at this point. But it may be well to note, as Barth reminds us, that Paul so rests his whole structure of the Christian faith on this that to reject him here is to reject the whole of his theology. To reject Paul here is tantamount to "calling Christianity as such into question.[43]

One wonders whether the ease with which many today seem to reject Paul here, on the easy basis of a different "world view," may not be coming very near to a "different gospel" of our own making (Gal. 1:6). Admittedly, this is insoluble mystery, stupendous miracle. But maybe such is the only thing that can match the tragedy of death. And remember, not all the problems are on the side of those who hold with Paul. Reinhold Niebuhr reminded us that "The Christian hope of the consummation of life and history is less absurd than alternate doctrines."[44] He added:

> The doctrine of the immortality of the soul implies that eternal significance can be ascribed only to that element in the historical synthesis which transcends finite conditions. If this implication is followed to its logical conclusion nothing remains in eternity but an undifferentiated unity, free of all particularity and distinction.[45]

The biblical hope on the other hand, is "a consummation which will sublimate rather than annul the whole historical process[46]

In a recent lecture, Eduard Schweizer, of Zurich, indicated that the resurrection hope, although it involves being raised with Christ now, moves in the general realm of apocalyptic. Two features of apocalyptic, he said, correct the present tendency to reduce resurrection to a purely subjective phase of present experience. First, God is free to act entirely outside our

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42. *Credo* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), p. 98.
43. *The Resurrection of the Dead,* p. 128.
44. *Op. cit.,* p. 298.
45. *Ibid.,* p. 296.
46. *Ibid.,* p. 298.

experience. Second, God creates an entirely new world, and does not only give us a new understanding of our own individual existence.

In the resurrection of Jesus, God has acted outside us, destroying death by His action, and has then opened the new aeon into which we are invited to enter. Since He has done this in Jesus Christ,—then Christ is final—our only hope.

Many years ago a traveler in Ireland asked a peasant the way to Dublin. The peasant replied: "I do not know the way to Dublin. I have never seen Dublin. But travelers who come from the direction you are going tell me that they have come from Dublin." I did not witness the resurrection. I have seen no empty tomb. I have not "seen" the risen Lord. But the Apostolic witnesses tell me they have, and on their testimony I rest the case. "Blessed are they that have not seen, yet believe" (John 20:29). This is enough to kindle hope. This "is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). It does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (I John 3:2). Our hope, then, rests not in a philosophy, nor a theory, but solely on Him. "Without having seen him [we] love him; though [we] do not see him [we] believe in him and rejoice with unutterable and exalted joy. . . Through him [we] have confidence in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that [our] faith and hope are in God" (I Peter 1:8, 21).

Is this subjective hope, or spiritual pride? We answer with a final word from Karl Barth:

> Christian faith is happy and confident because and in virtue of this fact, that in the very exaltation of Jesus Christ, not faith, but, just as in His humiliation, Jesus Christ Himself acted, that is *God* in Christ; happy and confident that the very disclosure of God in His revelation is not interpretation of history but, equally with His concealment, *is history*. . . . It is no bold surmise, no dialectic sophistry, no religious arrogance if we believe in face of sin, evil, death and devil—that God's wrath does not fall upon us, that we are righteous, that we are God's and that the peace that passeth all understanding may be our consolation. In all that we are arrogating nothing to ourselves. . . . we are merely allowing God to be God![47]

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47. *Credo,* pp. 98, 99, 103.

The Resurrection, History and Christianity

Robert W. Lyon*

One is not necessarily being profound when he draws attention to the crucial role played in the New Testament scholarship of the last century by historical research into the life of Jesus. Indeed, such phrases as the "old quest" and the "new quest" have come to be almost trite as scholars have sought to go beyond mere events to try to determine the contemporary significance of the ancient story and its appended creeds. Distinctions between "Historie" and "Geschichte," between "Jesus" and "Christ" as well as a new vocabulary that includes "kerygma," "Holy (or Salvation) History" and a host of other *termini technici* have made theological students well aware of what is described in generic terms as 'the historical problem.'[1] Though it may sometimes appear that the scholars are playing games with words, yet the issues are very real, especially because the generally accepted world view of our day is held to be (and is) so different from that which is seen in the pages of Scripture.

Perhaps nowhere does this difference come through so clearly as when one considers the resurrection of Jesus in modern thought.[2] The resurrection of Jesus seems to cut directly across all modern

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1. A brief statement of the problem and a bibliography is to be found in a small booklet by J. Jeremias, *The Problem of the Historical Jesus,* translated by N. Perrin. Facet Books: Biblical Series, edited by John Reumann. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964). A larger treatment is given by Carl E. Braaten, *History and Hermeneutics,* which is Vol. II of the series "New Directions in Theology Today." (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1966).
2. The prominence of the resurrection in modern discussions can be readily seen in a bibliography the present writer, with the help of a number of students, is preparing. This bibliography on the resurrection will cover only the twenty year period 1950-1969, but will have several hundred entries.

conceptions of historical reality. But does its uniqueness, by the very fact that it is unique, automatically lead to a rejection by historians and a re-interpretation by theologians? It shall be the purpose of this article to give consideration to one representative view, then to ask some questions which the present writer believes are raised, and then, finally to make certain observations which relate to a satisfactory assessment of the resurrection.

I

Shortly after the turn of the century Kirsopp Lake presented a careful critique of the literary evidence for the resurrection in a book[3] which in many ways was typical of the classic liberalism of his time. Most of his book is given to explaining away on the basis of a reigning naturalism the traditional understanding of the resurrection. Recently there has been published in English a very penetrating essay by Willi Marxsen which has the same commitment to the modern mind but which is especially important in that it grew out of the work of the Theological Commission of the Evangelical Union Church.[4] It thus takes on the proportion of a programmic essay for discussion within the Church.

Marxsen is as much committed to a twentieth century world view as was Lake, but their writings are very different. Whereas Lake felt it necessary to explain away the literary evidence and then suggest a new center for the faith, Marxsen simply says that we know the resurrection did not happen *the way it is traditionally understood.* If one asks why this is so, Marxsen simply states that we live on the right side of the eighteenth century Enlightenment. At the same time Marxsen and his contemporaries stand over against the earlier liberalism in that they are better biblical theologians who rightly note that the resurrection of Jesus is at the heart of the New Testament faith and must be retained as the fundamental feature of the Church's proclamation. He affirms with the Apostle Paul that without the resurrection there is no gospel. In fact he goes even further and says that Jesus did in fact rise from the dead and insists on the event-ness of this resurrection. At the same time he denies

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3. Kirsopp Lake, *The Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ* (New York: Putnam, 1907), 291 pp.
4. Willi Marxsen, "The Resurrection of Jesus as a Historical and Theological Problem," in *The Significance of the Message of the Resurrection for Faith in Jesus Christ,* edited by C.F.D. Moule; Studies in Biblical Theology, Second Series, No. 8 (London: SCM Press, 1968), pp. 15-50.

that we can believe the accounts the way the early Church did and declares that the resurrection cannot be turned into history. He knows he cannot abandon the resurrection, for to do so would be to have no message. But he also knows he cannot forsake the twentieth century. Any treatment of an event must be "in accordance with our own historical judgment."[5] Thus, one sees in a very real way the predicament of modern man.

How, then, did the early Church come to a belief that is not even an option in our modern world? In developing his material, Marxsen emphasizes certain basic facts and makes a number of subtle distinctions. He acknowledges that the early Church believed the tomb was empty and that it was empty for the reason given by most Christians of all ages. He further admits that it was a belief the Church came to hold within months after the crucifixion. How did this belief originate? The answer is rather clear: it was a deduction, that is, a conclusion based on other matters they had come to believe. At this point he emphasizes one feature that is clear to all who have ever looked at the texts, namely, that no one saw Jesus rise from death, or in his phrase, "experienced the resurrection." No one actually saw the event take place. The resurrection is, therefore, an affirmation which grew out of certain experiences. By this he means that certain remarkable events took place, but these occurred to the disciples, not to Jesus. Marxsen writes,". . . witnesses. . . claimed that something had happened to them which they described as seeing Jesus, and reflection on this experience led them to the *interpretation* (italics his) that Jesus had been raised from the dead."[6] In so expressing himself he secures the event-ness of the Easter message as well as its centrality for the proclamation. At the same time he readily admits this is not what the New Testament says. When asked how one may hold to the theological content while re-assessing the historical validity of the narratives, the author argues that we have already done this very thing with the accounts of creation. At this point, however, some may take exception, for it is not immediately evident that the writer of Genesis was convinced he was using 'scientific' language in his account. There is a more important question: if the "event" that lies behind the Easter messages is a series of experiences with Jesus after His death, which led to a certain deduction or interpretation, why was that interpretation expressed in terms of 'resurrection'? Marxsen says the answer is rather clear: the witnesses used the terms and tradition that

5. Marxsen, p. 16.
6. Marxsen, p. 31.

were at their disposal. The concept of resurrection was widespread in Judaism at that time. Jesus probably embraced it, and it seems to have been in harmony with Semitic anthropology which did not conceive of a living person without a body. So when the witnesses described what had happened, they did so within their natural frame of reference. The One, therefore, who appeared to them came to be the Risen One—by a process of deduction within the patterns of their culture. But, as we noted above, Marxsen reminds us that is not our culture, nor our world-view, and so asks if we are bound to it. Obviously we are not, for we must express reality in our terms as they did in theirs.

What then is the significance of these appearances to the disciples? Marxsen finds his clue for the answer to that question in the persons to whom He appeared. Each individual or group had a function in the early Church. Paul, for example, argues for his own ministry on the basis of the appearance of the Lord to Him. The appearances bring into being a function, namely, to continue the proclamation of the public ministry of Jesus. To justify this functional view of the appearances, Marxsen points to the fact that on several occasions reference is made to them apart from any use of resurrection terminology (cf. Gal: 1:15f; I Cor. 9:1; Matt: 28. 16ff). In so doing he seeks to demonstrate that the appearances had a forward thrust for mission: the old purpose was set in motion afresh. This, according to Marxsen, is permanently valid and enables the Church to re-affirm the centrality of the "resurrection."

II

Now it needs to be said at the outset that this is a serious presentation which deserves a serious response. That it represents the thought and mood of large numbers of people is very clear and it is equally clear that to speak to our age we must recognize its *zeitgeist.* But the present writer would like to raise a number of technical questions and then three much larger questions which relate to the nature of Christianity.

1. The first question is one that has been raised often in defense of the orthodox view of the resurrection: can one dismiss the empty tomb so easily? It is often said that an empty tomb would prove nothing, that there could be numerous explanations, one of which is actually mentioned in the narrative of the first gospel.[7] But conversely, why would the early Church refer to it if its evidential value was nil? Is it not possible that the oppo-

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7. Matthew 28:11-15.

nents in those early days were handcuffed at this point, that is, they had no effective way to nullify the reference to an empty tomb? The attempt to explain it by theft was apparently short-lived. At this point the arbitrary nature of Marxsen's treatment is self-evident. For, he says, if the tomb was empty, that would be historical fact and would require some historical explanation. But the resurrection as traditionally understood cannot be historical; so it cannot be the explanation for the empty tomb. Some natural explanation would have to be found. It should be mentioned that this manner of treating the material was not valid prior to the arrival of rationalism. One must reckon with more than just the empty tomb to justify this treatment of the material. Why, for example, is there reference to the burial[8] with all the details? Perhaps the empty tomb does indeed *prove* nothing. But reference to it does suggest that the authorities were *powerless to disprove* the assertions of the disciples that Jesus had indeed been raised.

2. In his discussion of appearances Marxsen divides the traditions into two groups: (a) occasions where only the *fact* of the appearances as such is mentioned; (b) the second group consists of the *elaborate* tales of appearances (italics his). Though it is readily acknowledged that the first group (e.g. I Cor. 15.3ff) is older and earlier than the latter group, is it justifiable to speak, as he does, of a literary development from the first to the second? Is it being realistic to believe that there was ever a time in early Christian preaching when there was merely the reverence to appearances without the actual stories of how they took place? Are we not more apt to have precisely the opposite circumstance, namely, that the stories were told so frequently that finally reference to the event was sufficient to recall the entire story? Would matter-of-fact references have any impact whatsoever on a non-believing world?[9] At this point it might also be suggested that some of the fine distinctions made by the author are not able to carry the significance he seeks to attach to them. Does the terminology by which Paul refers to his Damascus road experience really reveal

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8. I Corinthians 15:4; Mark 15:42ff and parallels.
9. C.F.D. Moule in a recent address at the Fourth International Congress on New Testament Studies (soon to be published in *Texte und Untersuchungen*) scored those critics who, in their studies of the *kerygma,* suggest that early proclamation of the gospel was even remotely possible apart from the stories about Jesus which came to be incorporated into the written gospels. Similarly Paul can speak referentially of the cross precisely because they do know the story.

the nature of his experience? Is unvarying use of specific resurrection vocabulary mandatory? Had it been so, then it probably would have been a sure sign of continuous apologetic motif through the whole tradition.

3. Mention must now be made of a more serious matter upon which most of Marxsen's reconstruction relies, namely the suggestion that the event came to be described in terms of resurrection because this was the means which their religious tradition placed at their disposal.[10] One cannot seriously question the presence of an idea or ideas of resurrection in Jesus' culture and in theory it would be possible to explain the development of a resurrection tradition in terms of this phenomenon *if* the experiences of the disciples satisfied the expectations associated with the resurrection. But this is precisely what the appearances of Jesus to his disciples did not do. In contemporary Jewish thought the resurrection was associated with the end time, the day of the Lord, that is, the eschaton. So, for example, when Jesus says to Martha that her brother Lazarus shall rise, she responds in typical fashion by saying, "I know that he shall rise in in the resurrection in the last day."[11] It can be clearly seen, then, that although thought of the resurrection was prominent in their tradition, not any event would have fit these expectations. In fact it is difficult to believe that any event short of the "Day of the Lord" could have called for the use of resurrection terms unless the disciples had been provoked into using the language. What is suggested here is that the common conceptions of the resurrection would not have led the disciples to express themselves through the traditions placed at their disposal. Unusual as these appearances were, they are not apt to have led through a deductive process to a belief in the resurrection. The visions would have led them to affirm that He was alive, but, even given the Semitic anthropology, not to the belief that He had been raised. In the opinion of this writer, such a "sufficient cause" could most likely be found in one of two places, either Jesus spoke in these terms or the appearances were of such an undoubtedly corporeal personality as to leave them with no alternative but to speak in terms of resurrection. Given the Jewish doctrine, Marxsen's understanding of the "event" does not offer a sufficient basis to explain the adoption of the vocabulary.

4. Another question is raised regarding the function of the appearances. Marxsen comments, "They [i.e., the appearances] substantiate their

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10. Marxsen, p. 32.
11. John 11:24

[the disciples'] right to further [Jesus'] purpose by claiming that they had seen Jesus after His crucifixion."[12] This raises in the mind of the present writer a serious question: Why could not their authority to continue his ministry be based on the fact that they had seen Him and been with Him throughout His ministry? This was indeed part of the qualification for the one chosen to succeed Judas.[13] We are surely tempted to believe that their prolonged exposure to his pattern of ministry, his use of Scripture, his mighty works and his private instruction constituted a more substantive basis for their future ministry than the highly subjective appearances, no matter how impressive they were. It is indeed possible that a vision can strongly motivate to unusual ministry, but are we able to say this is the *reason* for the appearances? If so, then why the appearances to the women? Furthermore, how could it be said today that he has destroyed the power of the evil one if he has not in some very real sense been raised from the dead? If he only appeared, then he did not triumph over death, but only in the continuation of his ministry and proclamation?

5. One final question must be raised before comments of a more general nature are made. Marxsen says we are forbidden to understand the resurrection the way the early Church understood it because of the historical method and our modern world view. But if such an understanding as that held by Paul and those who formulated the *kerygma* is no longer possible because of our scientific historical methodology which excludes the unique, then are we not forbidden to ascribe any uniqueness to Jesus? Inasmuch as the disciples are historical entities, is it not true that anything that happened to them must be explained in terms that satisfy the twentieth century? Are the appearances (or visions, a word Marxsen also uses) any more acceptable than a bodily resurrection? If the twentieth century is our plumbline, can we speak at all of eschatology or of any definitive event? In this type of cultural context the work of Christ cannot in any way be regarded as determinative in human history since that implies finality—a concept equally out of place since the Enlightenment. Finally, one may ask without being facetious, what is there in the Christian proclamation, however interpreted, that can satisfy a century regarded as the legitimate offspring of the Enlightenment?

These questions are enough to pinpoint the issues that have been raised by Marxsen's penetrating mind. Before concluding, however, it is

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12. Marxsen, p. 37.
13. Acts 1:22

necessary to raise a number of questions as to the nature of Christianity as seen through the prospective of Marxsen's article.

1. Is it possible to speak of a sovereign God? When one is committed to a given concept of truth or reality which is given to him by his age, does he not thereby circumscribe the activity of God? If a given understanding of Scripture is regarded as not possible because of the contemporary *Weltanschauung,* are we not dangerously close to making the Scriptures subservient to the modern mind? How, then is Scripture, or the sovereign God it reveals, to be redemptive? How is the Word of God to be a corrective when the modern mind is given veto power? At this point it should be noted that it is not the nature of the narratives, their ambiguity, or lack of coherence that leads Professor Marxsen to move away from the pattern which has been regarded as the obvious understanding of the resurrection. To be sure these narratives have many literary, historical and theological problems. It is doubtful if all the narratives can be put together into one chronological account. There is reasonably clear evidence of telescoping and abbreviation of material. There is obviously more than one strand of tradition. But given all this, it still is not the host of problems or the form of Scripture which has led to the present reconstruction. It is rather that the scriptural accounts are out of step with the modern scientific view of history. Marxsen is very straightforward at this point in that he acknowledges that the common understanding of the resurrection is simply not acceptable. He does not waste time pointing out the discrepancies or the problem areas. On the contrary, he acknowledges that Paul and the early Christians did believe that Jesus had been raised from the dead. There is no ambiguity at that point. The problem lies rather in the fact that *two irreconcilable world-views are confronting each other.* Are we able to affirm that God is Lord of history when he is made subject to a post-Enlightenment world-view? Are we not being called to a wholly new view of God who is void of transcendence? To this writer it seems that more than just a view of the resurrection is at stake.

2. Another question presses itself at this point. It is commonly said that Christianity is a historical religion, and by this one usually means that what one knows about God and His will have come to us through historical events *which He has brought about.* Herein lies the question: given Marxsen's commitments to modernity, is it possible to speak of events which God has brought about, or over which He has exercised any superintendence? In other words can Christianity be a historical religion? Can we speak of "acts of God" when the very concept is not acceptable to scientific historical methodology? The modern mind can, for example, say that the Hebrew tribes came to believe that God had delivered them out of

Egypt, but can the modern mind believe that God in fact did deliver them out of Egypt? The physical resurrection of Jesus differs only in degree, not in kind, from the other activities of God whereby He has directed the flow of history. We do not intend to suggest that one should retain a given view of the resurrection in order to be able to remain secure in what in other days would be called a normative view of Christianity. Truth is truth and must be followed wherever it leads us. It is our intention in raising these questions to suggest that Christianity itself as a historical religion, and not just the bodily resurrection, is incompatible with our times. Otherwise, how could we speak of our age as being under the judgment of God?

3. We are now led to raise one final question: is it possible in the light of Marxsen's commitment to speak at all of revelation except in personal terms? Can we speak of the "work of Christ" in any final sense? Can we speak of the work of Christ in any universal sense? Can we speak in terms of the knowledge of God or in terms of the will of God? It is doubtful if any of these or similar questions can be answered affirmatively if we permit strictures on the nature of events that may take place. May not the idea of finality be adopted only in terms of personal experience? One may be able to find as he reflects on Jesus that in some way that reflection makes a definitive change in the orientation of his own individual life. But then if we are confined to these terms, can there be any normative Christianity? Can we speak any longer of a Christianity "apostolic and universal"?

The belief that any view of Christianity must be acceptable to the canons of the Enlightenment determines beforehand the nature of Christianity. It may be expressed in traditional categories, and thus Marxsen believes we can still proclaim the resurrection. But there the similarity will end. The trend in theology has seemed to be in this direction. The modern theologians speak as much about resurrection, redemption and eschatology as any generation of scholars has done. But is it the same clear word? Has the man in the pew sensed this uncertainty, and is he expressing his dissatisfaction by his absence?

The Song of the Suffering Servant

G. Herbert Livingston *

There are certain Old Testament passages which have had peculiar and profound impact upon Christians throughout the ages. But no portion of the Old Testament has so pervasively molded the New Testament presentation of Christ as Isaiah 52:13–53:12. Here is the supreme prophetic portrait of the Servant of the Lord in which Philip the deacon, the Gospel writers, and most Christian theologians have recognized the Sufferer on the central cross of Calvary.

Passages in the Bible of great significance invite repeated purviews of their riches and challenge the student to look for treasures both new and old. The Song of the Suffering Servant is no exception, and it is with a hope that a bit different approach may stir the mind to see new facets of the truth that this study is presented.

One of the motivations behind this study has been the observation that in all the essays written about this passage, almost no effort has been made to evaluate the verbs which appear in the Song. Hence, these objectives have been set for this paper: a) to explore the nuances of meaning that the Hebrew verbs may possess, b) to note problems relative to expressing these meanings in an Indo-European language, c) to clarify the ambiguity resident in selection of specific verb tenses for the translation of key verses, d) to suggest options available to translators, and e) to relate those insights to the problem of identifying the Servant.

The procedure in the paper will be, first, to describe briefly the essential nature of Hebrew verb forms in order to provide background for the verb analysis; secondly, to set forth the structure of the Song and in each section to identify the verbs and to describe their functions. In relationship to the verbs, there will be an effort to outline the possibilities of tense available to the translator. In each section also, the basic burden of its message will be summarized. The third step will be to relate the total Song to Jesus Christ.

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FUNCTIONS OF HEBREW VERB FORMS

The Hebrew verbal system does not have tense and mood at its core. Temporal guidelines must be gained from other factors in Hebrew syntax or in larger literary units. Sometimes the function of a verb in the sentence or in the literary unit will provide clues. Frequently, a translator will be forced to speculate; thus one translator will arrive at a different conclusion than another.

Hebrew verbs, especially in the perfect, imperfect and participial forms, stress qualities and varieties of action or condition. The perfect denotes completed action. This action may be wholly in the past, or in the past but continuing till the present. The perfect may depict a stable condition in the body, mind, emotions, will or in a combination of these aspects of a person's life. The perfect may provide an emphatic sense to an action or a condition; it may specify actions with such definiteness that it will have the force of an imperative. These are the main qualities of the perfect; there are other less common functions.

The Hebrew imperfect has a special interest in motion and thus designates incomplete action or condition. The imperfect depicts possible or contingent action and thus is similar to the subjunctive mood, but it also designates repeated activity, and actions which are developing or desired. When it occurs with a conjunction in a narrative, the imperfect denotes the movement of the story from action to action. The imperfect may connote the general traits of a group or a general truth. There are other less common functions.

The Hebrew participle stands for pure, continuous action and lacks in itself any time indicators, thus it can serve as either a verb or a noun. The verbal action portrayed by a participle tends to be harsh, stark and dramatic.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE SONG

The medieval effort to divide the text into chapters was clumsy at this particular point. The beginning of this passage is Isaiah 52:13. Evidently, the shift of address from God to a human source, which takes place at 53:1, misled the man who made this division of chapters.

Isaiah 52:13-15 is an introductory proclamation proceeding from God through his spokesman, and is addressed to whoever would listen. The subject-content moves from a presentation of "my servant" as supreme in verse thirteen, as humiliated in verse fourteen, to the servant as the object of amazement in verse fifteen.

Isaiah 53:1-3 focuses on the Man of Sorrows himself, particularly as

seen through the eyes of those who behold him. Isaiah 53:4-6 presents a verbal portrait of his sufferings in relationship to human sin. Isaiah 53:7-9 depicts his sufferings in relationship to his death and burial. Isaiah 53:10-12 lays bare the purposes of God which give significance to the suffering, the death, and the resurrection of the Servant in terms of the redemption of man.

MAJESTIC YET REPULSIVE– Isaiah 52:13-15

This section begins with an expletive, "behold," and then an imperfect, *yaskîl,* "act wisely," which may be regarded as designating a present repeated activity or a future activity. Most translators prefer the future tense for an English rendering. The same is true of the next verb, *yārûm,* "exalt," which refers to a general truth about the Servant. Immediately following are two perfects: *nissā',* "lift up,"and *gāvah,* which also means "exalted." Each perfect is parallel to the other and tends to reinforce the verb *yārûm,* pushing the concept to its highest limits. Whatever tense in English is selected for the imperfects would apply to the perfects also.

Verse fourteen has only one verb in the Hebrew, namely, *shāmemû,* "amaze, astonish." Since it denotes an inner attitude, it may indicate a past condition which continues unchanged, a present attitude or a subjunctive mood. The possibilities are "were astonished," "have been astonished," "are astonished," or "should be astonished."

Verse fifteen, like thirteen, begins with two imperfects: *yazzeh* "sprinkle, startle," and *yiqpetsû,* "shut, close" and a series of perfects: *suppar,* "report, tell," *rā'û,* "see," *shāme'û,* "hear," and *hitbōnānû,* "consider, think about." Again the imperfects can represent present repeated actions or a simple future tense in English. Most translators choose the future tense. The phrase *kî 'asher,* "for that which," tells the reader that the four perfects provide a logical cause for the actions of the nations and the kings. The perfects occur in pairs. In each pair the first perfect has a negative which denotes a definite exclusion and the second perfect points to a certainty which may be put in an English present or future tense, thus:

for that which has never been told them,
they see (or, shall see)
and that which they have never heard,
they understand (think about, or shall think about)

The thrust of the introduction is three-fold: First, the divine message is that the person of the Servant would be unusual indeed. He would have

the capacity to manage relationships with others in a successful and sensible manner. He would possess high position and authority. The Servant would be no "run of the mill" man. He would be at the very top, displaying royal traits. Though submerged in the main body of the Song, this theme is persistent in its peek-a-boo appearances.

The second theme is the Servant's humiliation. He would be so physically disfigured that the people would express surprise, after looking at Him. Both his face and body would be seriously deformed. This fact is vividly detailed later in the Song.

The third theme, in verse fifteen, is not so clear cut because of the controversy over the meaning of the verb, *yazzeh.* The time honored English rendering is "so shall he sprinkle many nations." Elsewhere in the Old Testmaent the verb occurs in a context of ritualistic cleansing and does mean "sprinkle." The Greek Septuagint carries the meaning of "marvel," and the RSV has "startle," and S. H. Blank proposes an emendation to *yirgezû,* which means "be aghast".[1] Either "startle" or "be aghast" would seem to produce an excellent parallelism with verse fourteen. But "sprinkle" is by no means impossible. The redemptive import of the verb is an important emphasis of 53:4-9, but the theme of shocked surprise is not so reiterated later in the Song.[2]

To believe that the disfigured Servant would be qualified to engage in an act of cleansing, would seem to be a concept beyond the grasp of those who gazed upon him. Even the most powerful men would be amazed. The Servant humbled and wounded would have a power to act which would be greater than their own royal power. How could suffering and power be paired so effectively? Is it not a truism that a beaten person is also a helpless person?

"MAN OF SORROWS"

Isaiah 53:1-3

The opening verse of this chapter with its two questions, might suggest that the kings of 52:15 had recovered their powers of speech and were giving verbal vent to their amazement. However, the prophets were no strangers to the fact that people were frustrated in the face of the

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1. S. H. Blank, *Prophetic Faith in Isaiah* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1967), p. 89.
2. See "The Manual of Discipline," *The Dead Sea Scriptures* T. H. Gaster, translator (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1946), pp. 50, 53, for this same association of "sprinkle" with redemptive purity, *(IQS etc.).*

magnitude of their message; they saw the inability of mankind to comprehend. Nor was it unusual for a prophet to employ an editorial "we" to express a common sense of bewilderment; the prophets also were overwhelmed.[3] Especially would this be true of a prophet who had a disfigured "Servant" to portray to a skeptical world. So it would seem that these first two questions were utterances of the prophet himself.

Verse one has two rhetorical questions, each containing a Hebrew perfect form; *he'amîn,* "believe," which is an inner condition or state, and *niglātāh,* "reveal," in the passive voice. Both perfects point to a past situation which continues into the present and can include the future. The English tense must indicate this condition; so a past perfect, a present or even a subjunctive are possibilities.[4] The obvious answer to the rhetorical questions is "No one!" So the perfects serve to show that this situation still continues and that all are excluded as participants in believing or receiving the revelation.

An imperfect with a conjunction, *waya'al,* "grow up," mostly found in narrative, stands at the beginning of verse two. Yet this is not narrative. The verses from two on provide the message which is the cause of frustration behind the questions in verse one.

A search through the standard Hebrew grammars and manuals on Hebrew syntax provides little light on this construction with the exception of the work by J. W. Watts.[5] His suggested translation puts the imperfect in an English future tense, but it could be a present tense, though most translations prefer a past tense. There is no compelling reason why the past tense should be employed.

The only other Hebrew verbs in verse two are perfects: *wenir'ēhû,* "see," and *wenehmedēhû,* "desire," each with a conjunction prefixed and a pronoun suffixed to it. Both are in subordinate clauses and carry a subjunctive connotation, hence the translations: "that we should look at him" and "that we should desire him." (RSV).

There is a series of three Hebrew participles in verse three: *nivzeh* (twice, in passive voice denoting "in a condition of being despised") and *ûkemastēr,* "hide". All of these are timeless in value; so the translator

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3. None expressed this amazement more forcefully than did Jeremiah (e.g., Jeremiah 4:19-21; 5:3-5, 21-22; 6:10).
4. J. W. Watts, *A Survey of Hebrew Syntax in the Hebrew Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing House, 1964), p. 75.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 108-111, 126-128.

must interpret the time value of the entire passage in order to select suitable English tenses. The verse ends with a perfect: *hashavnûhû,* "esteem, value," which, since it denotes an inner attitude, has no inherent time indicator. Selection of tense is up to the translator.

Commonly, in the ancient Near East, suffering, impotence and sin were tightly bound together. As far as is known, non-Israelites never related pain with power in a positive manner, and many an Israelite was of a like mind. A reading of some of the Psalms will quickly demonstrate this phenomena.[6] Within such an environment it is not surprising that the average Israelite had great difficulty in understanding the divine message that, redemptively, God can work powerfully in the lives of men and women who go through suffering, persecution and abuse. And the claim that a superior person, a Savior, could redeem mankind through personal suffering was even more incomprehensible. Such an intermixing of the "arm of the Lord," the symbol of power, with a "Man of Sorrows" was not part of their heritage. How could the average man recognize God's redemptive activity? The Redeemer-Servant would not be an obvious figure in society. He would be as vulnerable as a tender plant. He would be, outwardly, as weak as a root in a desert, as plain as a common person, as inconspicuous as an average man. He would not know a normal fulfillment, for he would be one of the unfortunates, one of the dispossessed. He would not be accepted by the masses; sorrow would weigh heavily upon him. Grief would be his companion. He would be outside proper social circles, the recipient of prejudice and bigotry. He would be this sort of person, not because he would actually be a bad person, but because men looked at Him as such a person. Yet, this fact that men would be ignorant of His true character would not lessen his pain; rather, it would intensify his inner agony.

THE SIN-BEARER

Isaiah 53:4-6

A series of three verbal perfects appears in the first part of verse four. They are *nāsā',* "lift up," and *sevālām,* "carry," which serve as a pair in parallelism, for they are synonyms in this context. The other perfect is *hashavnûhû,* "esteem, value," which designates an inner attitude; hence in itself is timeless. Three other verbal forms in this verse are participles. Two are used as nouns in a genitive relationship to other nouns. These

6. See Psalm 6:1-7; 10:1-2; 13:1-4; 22:1-18; 38:1-14; and others.

depict pure action and are devoid of time values. The other one is simply a verbal noun without time value. The forms are *nāgûa'*, "strike," *mukkēh,* "smite," and *ûme'unneh,* "afflict."

The tense value in English given to these verbs will depend a great deal on whether the translator regards the Servant himself to have lived and suffered prior to the writing of this passage, at the same time as the passage was written, or whether this is an event to come. If completed action in history is depicted by the perfects, then the English past tense is proper. If these perfects are the so-called "prophetic perfect," which the prophets employed plentifully to emphasize the certainty of God fulfilling His purposes in the future, then the English future tense is in order.[7]

Three more participles show up in the fifth verse. They are *meḥōlāl,* "wound," *medukkā',* "bruise," and *mûsar,* "chastise." Each is timeless and expresses the startling aspect of action. The verse ends with an imperfect, *nirpā',* "heal," which can be present, future or a subjunctive.

The next verse, six, has three perfect verbal forms: *tā'înû,* "wander," *pānînû,* "turn aside," and *hifgîa',* "lay on." These can have the sense of past action which continues till the present, or can be a present tense in English.

In this portion of the song, the prophet brings to the surface that which lay hidden behind an outward appearance which offended man. The word "surely" stresses the real work of the Servant. He would not suffer due to personal acts of sin. He would suffer because men are sinners. In the participles mentioned above, the nature of that suffering is vividly set forth. To gain the full force of these participles one should add vocal inflection and gesture, plus imagination. One should use or imagine gestures of pounding, of thrusting, of crushing, of swinging a whip. Visualize the black bruises, the wounds, the crack of bones, the snap of the lash. If one can add to the words themselves the visual symbols of stark action, as this punishment is horribly carried out, then something of the force of these Hebrew participles can be grasped.

The contrast between the unconcerned, carefree human race and the bleeding Servant appointed by God to be man's Redeemer is most striking in verse six. At first glance man does not impress one as worth saving.

THE DEATH OF THE INNOCENT
Isaiah 53:7-9

The first verb of verse seven is a perfect in the passive voice: *niggas,*

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7. Consult any standard Hebrew grammar or manual of syntax for this function of the Hebrew perfect verb form.

"oppress," or more fully, "in the condition of being oppressed." This latter meaning is highlighted by a participle, passive voice, *na'aneh,* "afflict," which stands in a parallel relationship to the first verb. Whatever tense has been chosen for the perfects in verse four would carry over to these two verbs since there is time continuity between these two sections. Yet the imperfect form, *yiftaḥ,* "open," which closes this parallelism strongly suggests a present or a future tense in the English. Imperfects normally only have a past sense in narratives, unless some time word rules the passage. An obvious time word does not occur in this Song up to this point. The last part of verse seven is a set of similes in parallelism. The verb that comes first is the imperfect form, *yûvāl,* "lead, bring," and the other verb is the perfect form, *ne'elāmāh,* "silent, dumb." The imperfect suggests a present or a future tense; and, since the perfect denotes an inner condition, it can also be present or future. The tense of the first would govern the second. Again the imperfect *yiftaḥ,* "open," closes the parallelism.

A perfect form, luqqah, "take," is the first verb in verse eight, and its tense in English would be governed by that given to the opening perfects of verse four and verse seven. The next two verbs, though, are imperfects. They are *yesôḥeáh,* "consider, lament," and *nigzar,* "cut off." As imperfects, they suggest either present or future tenses for English.

Verse nine has the character of an obituary after the death of the Servant, hence it begins with an imperfect with the form of the conjunction used in narrative literature. Normally this situation requires a past tense in English translation. The imperfect is *wayyitēn,* meaning "gave, provided, or appointed." The other verb is a perfect form, *'āsāh,* "done," which denotes an action or condition before the death of the Servant; so, rightly, it should be translated as "had done."

This section of the Song deals with the lamb which was to be slaughtered. In Job, 4:7, Eliphaz flings at Job the overpowering questions: "Whoever perished, being innocent? or Where were the righteous cut off?" Job could not answer these questions. But Isaiah declared to the world that there would be one who, though innocent, perished; one who, though righteous, was cut off. In the Old Testament, the law of retribution declares that he who sins shall die (Ezek. 18:4). Job's friends tried to reverse this law by saying that he who suffers must, by the very nature of the case, be a sinner[9] (Job 20:1-29 *et passim*). They did not realize that the word "suffer" is much broader in scope than the word "sin."

The prophet declared that the Suffering Servant, in his life and death, would suffer, not because of his own sin, but because of the sins of others. He would be the lamb slain as a sin offering. The irony of the

situation would be that those for whom the redemptive act was done would not recognize it as "for them." The One would go to His grave misunderstood and rejected.

THE VINDICATED SERVANT
Isaiah 53:10-12

Typical of each of the sections in chapter fifty-three, the opening verbs are perfects, namely *ḥāfēts,* "please, desire," and *heḥeliˆ,* "make sick, grief striken." Both designate inner conditions, the first a decision of the Lord and the other the agony of the Servant. Consequently, both perfects are timeless. The Lord's decision continues without break, past, present and future. The tense of the second perfect would depend on whether the translator regarded the Servant's grief to be in the past, in the present or in the future. It could be left timeless by translating the phrase, "he (God) has determined to put him to grief."

For the first time in the Song a Hebrew word indicating "time" occurs in the text. One of the functions of the word *'im* is to indicate an indefinite time, mostly future in the sense of possibility. This goes well with the rather long series of imperfects which continue through the rest of verse ten, through verse eleven and the first part of verse twelve. These imperfects ar *tāsîm,* "set, place, prepare," *yir'eh,* "see," *ya'arîk,* "prolong," *yitslāḥ,* "prosper, have success," *yir'eh,* "see," *yisba',* "satisfy," *yatsdîq,* "make righteous," *yisbōl,* "carry, bear," *'aḥalleq* "divide," and *yeḥallēq,* "divide." Practically all English translations properly put these in the English future tense.

The three final verb forms are a perfect form *he'erāh,* "pour out," a passive participle, *nimnāh,* "numbered, counted," another perfect *nāsā',* "lift up, bear," and a final imperfect, *yafgîa',* "supplicate, intercede."

This group of verbs is initiated by a phrase denoting the reason for all that the series of imperfects had just described. The phrase *taḥat 'asher* can be translated as "because," or more fully, "due to the fact that." This immediately points to the past tense for an English translation. The final imperfect denotes a repeated action which has no necessary stopping point.

The basic theme of this section is that God had made a firm decision, in regard to the Suffering Servant, which gave to everything that happened to him, to everything he did, an overwhelming significance. This has been, is and will ever be God's will; this is the way God has always intended it to be.

In making known the future triumph of the Servant, the prophet grounded his message upon the established intention of God whose purposes would be actualized in the life, the deeds, of the Suffering Servant. The passage makes it clear that God's intention was to offer up this

Servant as a sin offering for the redemption of all mankind. What would happen to the Servant would not be accidental; God had already decided that the life and death of the Servant would be a redemptive event in history. The Servant was the "lamb slain from the foundation of the world." (Rev. 13:8). Within the intention of God the redemptive event would surely come to pass.

But the Servant would not remain slain. It is true that the word "resurrection" does not occur in this song, but it is difficult to read the last part of verse ten and the first part of verse twelve without noting that this slain Servant is very active, very powerful indeed. Power, victory and success are to be his as fruits of the struggle and the agony. Triumph paces its steps back and forth through these sentences.

CONCLUSION

The Ethiopian asked the deacon Philip, "Of whom speaketh the prophet this?" With that question as an opening to the conversation, Philip compared the Servant to Jesus Christ. Not all have been as responsive as the Ethiopian to such preaching. In reference to the corporate interpretation of the 'Servant,' where in all mankind can an individual or a community be found which can measure up to the prophet's portrayal of the Suffering Servant? No ancient person or community can be brought forth which can meet the standard of righteousness set forth in 53:9, "He has done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth." But Jesus provided such an example, for he was without sin. Neither could any Old Testament individual or community provide redemption for "us all." But Jesus provided redemption for all mankind. Jesus is the same yesterday. The verbal image in the Song of the Suffering Servant matches the Jesus of Nazareth who died and rose again. And Jesus is the same today.

Turn back to 53:4-6 again and read it in a different way. First transform the pronouns to nouns. Those that refer to the Suffering Servant, replace with the name Jesus. And the plurals, "our," and "we," make very personal by replacing them with "my" and "I" or better, insert your own name. Then read thus:

> Surely, Jesus has borne my griefs,
> and carried my sorrows;
> Yet, I have esteemed Jesus striken,
> smitten of God and afflicted;
> But, Jesus was wounded for my transgressions;
> Jesus was bruised for my iniquities;
> The chastisement of my peace was upon Jesus;
> And with Jesus' stripes I am healed.

I, like a sheep, have gone astray;
I have turned to my own way,
But, the Lord has laid on Jesus my iniquity.

Those who have refused to accept Jesus Christ as the true Messiah have refused to accept this correlation. But to the earnest follower of our Lord the relationship between the Suffering Servant and the crucified Jesus is transparent.

The verbal portrait of the Suffering Servant in the song, the gospel presentation of Jesus of Nazareth, and the contemporary Christ, who speaks to our hearts today, fit together. There is no distortion when the three are aligned with each other. There is no mismatch. Rather, the Suffering Servant, Jesus of Nazareth, and the resurrected Christ are the same forever.

BOOK REVIEWS

If Man Is to Live, by Beverly Madison Currin. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969. 174 pages. $3.50.

The author, rector of Christ Episcopal Church, Pensacola, Florida, previously served as Dean of the Episcopal Cathedral Church of St. Luke and St. Paul in Charleston, South Carolina. He received his Doctor of Theology degree from Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Virginia.

It is Dr. Currin's thesis that an understanding of the Atonement is the very heart of Christianity. His firm restatement of this distinctive doctrine of the Christian faith opens the way to a new and wider perspective on the meaning of the death of Jesus Christ.

In the Prologue the author declares that the Crucifixion was not a bad thing which happened to a good man; it was the actual event through which God transformed the world and through which He is able to transform the entire universe.

The author gives a three-dimensional approach to the subject. He looks first at the actual event of the Crucifixion as recorded in the Scriptures and deals with such questions as: Did Jesus have to die? What caused Jesus' death? Part Two, a study of the interpretation Paul placed on the Crucifixion, describes the reality of the event as causative in the transforming spiritual experiences of that apostle. The author furnishes a convincing discussion of the fact that for Paul the Crucifixion of Christ was the event through which God effected deliverance for man—deliverance from sin and deliverance to life. An illuminating discussion of the effects of the Atonement is presented through a word study: "redemption" speaks of an enslaved man set free; "justification," of a guilty man acquitted; "reconciliation," of an alienated child restored to parental favor.

The final part of the book applies the Crucifixion and Resurrection to the individual life. Two questions are faced frankly: Why be a Christian? What can Christ do for me? The answer is to be found in the transforming power of Christ in one's life, the creation of "the colony of heaven" on earth, and in the sharing in the resurrection power. The book closes with an insistent appeal. The Crucifixion must be spiritually experienced if the resurrection is to be experienced. The purpose of life

is not death, but resurrection. It is time for Christians to begin living as resurrected Christians. The best place to begin is where we are, and the best time to begin is now!

In this age of so-called "secular theology," here is a refreshing book for those who are convinced of the validity of divine revelation and who believe increasingly in a Christo-centric soteriology.

Frank Bateman Stanger

Exposition of Isaiah (Vol. I), by H. C. Leupold. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1968. 598 pages. $7.95.

Presented as "a practical commentary that stresses the abiding values of this rich prophetic work," Leupold's exposition is a verse-by-verse treatment of Isaiah 1–39. The brief introduction deals, in a rather cursory manner, with the historical background, the personality of the prophet and critical opinion on the history of the text. Leupold is aware of these issues, but, as a conservative, evangelical scholar, he views the critics and their theories critically. He observes, for instance, with considerable justification, that the form-critics usually pay more attention to form than to content. But his handling of critical issues sometimes leaves the reader wondering whether Leupold has dealt adequately with the problems.

A detailed analytical outline of the book of Isaiah (1–39), reflects the author's grasp of Isaiah's structure and content. This outline, distributed throughout the exposition, enables the reader to keep perspective by relating the part to the whole. The author's translation of the Isaiah text is careful and often illuminating, usually reflecting a good understanding of the Hebrew and sound judgment in deciding among alternative renderings. His exegesis of Isaiah 7:14, for example, reflects an adequate grasp of the problems and avoids over-simplification. With good reason he advises restoring "virgin" to the text and "young woman" to the margin. Sometimes the author is content to quote the opinions of several scholars and then make his own decision, rather than to conduct an independent investigation from primary sources. Seldom does Leupold permit himself to indulge in speculations about the fulfillment of eschatological passages; some readers may be disappointed that the relevance of passages is not explored more thoroughly, either in the *exposition* itself or in the *notes* appended to each section.

In general, this is a very serviceable commentary. It lacks the imagination of a G. A. Smith, the linguistic precision of a Delitzsch, or the meticulous detail of an Edward Young; but it does combine erudition, evangelical insight and sound judgment. It may be used with profit by the critical scholar and consulted with confidence by the evangelical in his quest for a better understanding of the message of the "prince of the prophets."

George A. Turner

The Zondervan Topical Bible, edited by Eduard Viening. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1969. 1114 pages. $9.95.

In this "summary of the Holy Scriptures" the content of the Bible follows a topical rather than an alphabetical arrangement. For instance, more than three closely-knit double-column pages, devoted to the topic "man", gather appropriate Scripture verses under such sub-headings as these: Duty of, Equality of, Ignorance of, State of (after the fall). Where practicable, major topics are thus subdivided. In all, there are 21,000 topics and sub-topics with more than 100,000 Scripture verses including their references, the whole carefully cross-referenced. The work is not only a topical reference Bible but it includes also definitions or summary treatments of all persons, places, and events in the Bible. The chain references enable the student to pursue a given subject throughout the entire Bible, and the significant texts are printed in full. It is the hope of the publishers that this reference volume will stimulate interest in the study of the Bible. "The need for biblical preaching has never been more urgent—this and future generations need to hear God's word speaking to the great issues of our time" (Preface).

James D. Robertson

Learning to Live, by Walter Russell Bowie. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969. 299 pages. $4.95.

This is a beautifully written, intensely interesting autobiography of one of America's prominent churchmen, whose active ministry spanned

most of the first seven decades of the twentieth century. Walter Russell Bowie has had a manifold and versatile Christian ministry as pastor, editor, theological school professor, and author.

When does a person have the right to publish an autobiography? The author faces this question frankly at the beginning of the book. His answer provides the underlying motif of the entire volume: "if the book can open out upon scenes and people and the crowded drama of our human relationships which go beyond a mere personal story." This is the personal story of how Walter Russell Bowie learned to live. (He confesses with William James that at the end of his life he is "just beginning to be fit to live.")

The author learned to live through "the influences from many other lives which have flowed into him." Over and over he asserts that "the relationships which any of us have had with those we know and love are what make life meaningful at last." Throughout the book he speaks of the influence of loved ones, and particularly his wife, of teachers, parishioners, ministerial colleagues, academic colleagues, and the great minds of all the centuries.

He learned to live through his education, which he prized deeply. He learned to live through a total dedication to his God-given tasks. He learned to live through his involvement with people and society. He learned to live through the great Christian affirmations. The closing chapter of the book is a presentation of "the things I am sure of."

For the Christian this is an inspiring narrative of a fellow Christian's pilgrimage with God through life. For the minister this is a book filled with meaningful insights out of the heart and experience of a fellow minister. For the prophet of social action, here is the story of one who combined social yearnings with "the enthusiasm for old-fashioned Christian religion." For the historian, here is a valuable interpretation of an important period in the history of Christian Churches in the United States. Altogether this is a fascinating and uplifting autobiography.

Frank Bateman Stanger

The Wind of the Spirit, by James S. Stewart. Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1969. 191 pages. $3.75.

This remarkable volume has already been printed more than once in the British Isles (Hodder and Stoughton), and will no doubt go through

many impressions in the course of its career. *The Wind of the Spirit* is a masterpiece of authentic spirituality and homiletical genius.

Here are some of this reader's impressions:

Stewart's sermons reflect his familiarity with all forms of classic English literature.

They are highly inspiring because highly divine in content.

They make wide use of adjectives–a practice risky for most writers, but indispensible to the Stewart style.

In them the Gospel is alive, relevant, and contemporary.

Victory over suffering is the great theme of all Stewart's sermons. Victory is demonstrated beyond question in Christ. Stewart believes in realistic supernatural resources. These only can keep us in this terribly wicked world–keep us encouraged, strengthened, and morally right.

Homiletically, the sermons are masterpieces of organization and construction. Introductions paint realistic pictures of man's dilemma; bodies of sermons point out Gospel answers to man's dilemma; conclusions lift one above the dilemma.

Stewart's sensitivity to the world movement of the Holy Spirit is a major feature in making this book the value that it is. See for example the closing sermon on "What the Spirit is Saying to the Churches," He is saying things radical and revolutionary, things utterly in the spirit of the New Testament.

Altogether there is not a finer book of addresses to be found in the current list of sermon books.

Donald E. Demaray

Religion in the Middle East: Three Religions in Concord and Conflict, by A. J. Arberry, General Editor. (Vol. I. Judaism and Christianity) Cambridge: University Press, 1969. 596 pages. $22.50.

A substantial volume on an important subject in an important area of the world, is this book in which thirteen authors contribute thirteen chapters. Four of the chapters are devoted to Judaism in the Middle East, and the remainder to Christianity. Two chapters deal with Judaism as it is today, both in the world at large and in Israel, and two chapters deal with Oriental Judaism, with a special emphasis upon the Jews of Yemen.

After a survey of Christianity in the Middle East, during the first eighteen centuries, chapters deal specifically with the Orthodox, the

Roman Catholics, the Copts, the Ethiopian churches, plus surveys of the Syrian, Armenian, and Assyrian churches of the Middle East. Two concluding chapters deal with the Lutheran, Reform, and Anglican churches. Pictures and maps add interest and information to the volume. Most of the chapters are dealt with in a matter-of-fact way, giving considerable detail but with a minimum of documentation and footnotes. Although much research is packed into these pages, the authors gained perspective by the judicious handling of the details.

The chief value of this volume is not mainly an assessment of current issues in the Middle East: most of the essays were written before the convulsions of 1967. The value of the book rather is the historical perspective with which existing situations can be viewed.

The history of religion in the Middle East, at least for the last sixteen centuries, is not a happy one. This is particularly true of Christianity, which has been all but eclipsed in most of these areas by the Moslem conquest. Until recently, the history of Judaism has fared even worse. At the present day, even Islam as a world religion is not flourishing in the Middle East. Among the more informative chapters is the one dealing with the Armenian church. The Turks engaged in wholesale genocide of the Armenian nation. The 100,000 survivors remain scattered. The Nestorians of Mesopotamia are even more widely scattered than the Armenians. A somber and melancholy note characterizes even the last chapter, an essay on the Anglican church. It has been so linked with British nationalism that its hold today on the inhabitants of the area is very tenuous.

One striking fact emerges from the study of these different religious communities of the area. All of them seem to have in common a link between church and state. None of them practice a separation of church and state; consequently national rivalries become for the same reason church rivalries. Wars tend to become holy wars. Only Christian missions are in a position to transcend national rivalries and present the claims of Christ without regard for national interests. But even here the newer mission churches encounter indifference or hostility from both Jew and Moslem. Practically the only converts won by the younger missionary churches are from the ranks of the Armenians and the Greek Orthodox. This subject is scarcely dealt with, however, in any of these chapters. Instead they are preoccupied with the problems of history and the posture of the older churches. For those seriously interested in the Holy Land, as the tortured home of three religions, this work of reference is well nigh indispensable.

George Allen Turner

What God Hath Wrought, by Lawrence M. Brings. Minneapolis: T. S. Denison and Co., 1969. 191 pages. $3.95.

Central Lutheran Church began fifty years ago with twelve men. In 1919 these men and their families rented Central Baptist Church building in the loop of Minneapolis. They hired a minister and launched a $7,000 budget.

In 1969 this active church has about 6,000 members, a budget of over $600,000, and dreams of a Central City concept to serve even more effectively in future years. A flexible, changing, serving structure has marked this thriving church. Plans call for a six-block development around the original church structure. Camps on Lake-of-the-Woods and Lake Superior implement the urban ministry.

Preaching to a procession of transients, displaced persons, non-members, floaters, poor, and disillusioned people has called for more than mere words. Pastoral service has focused on non-members. Sometimes visitors comprise nearly half of the congregation.

"Service to Others" has been the motto during these five decades. Hundreds of organizations have served their day. The cost of church suppers has escalated from 35 cents during the hard years of the depression to $6 for the Fiftieth Anniversary Banquet.

This book is primarily local history of local people in a local church. But the struggle, the faith, the dedication, the adaptation, and the blessing of God—all these are more than local color, more than local interest.

God is at work where His Church seeks above all else to serve the present age.

Ralph L. Lewis

The Missionary Between the Times, by R. Pierce Beaver. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1968. 196 pages. $5.95.

In recent years, R. Pierce Beaver, Professor of Missions at the University of Chicago Divinity School, has written a number of books on various aspects of the Christian world mission. *The Missionary Between the Times* is the latest, and in many ways the best, contribution he has made in the field.

The author deals with a variety of subjects relating to the missionary task of the Church: the theological imperative of mission,

the nature of the missionary vocation, the hostile environment of modern mission, the frustrations of the missionary and his wife, the nature of dialogue in mission, the importance of indigenity in the young churches, the missionary message, methods of communicating the Gospel, and the relationship of the missionary to the home church.

As the title of the book suggests, Dr. Beaver firmly believes that the missionary of today "stands between the times . . . . The ambassador of the gospel now stands between the age of the separate histories of peoples and regions, on the one hand, and of world history, on the other." The world is now one; the mission is one. This is the main reason why the missionary and the Church are facing perplexities, baffling problems, and frustrations. "But this is also why the Christian world mission is now so exciting and full of promise and opportunity."

The reader is impressed by the realistic way in which the author faces the perplexities and frustrations of the present missionary situation. He faces them honestly and courageously, and comes out with a contagious spirit of confidence and optimism. He makes many constructive suggestions to help the missionary become an effective witness to Christ.

Written in a lucid, interesting style, *The Missionary Between the Times* can be read with considerable profit, not only by the full-time career missionary, but by the layman of the Church, for God is calling him to involvement in world-wide mission.

John T. Seamands

Beacon Bible Commentary: Genesis Through Deuteronomy, edited by A. F. Harper. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1969. 630 pages. $6.95.

This is Volume I of the ten-volume Beacon Bible Commentary. Genesis is treated by G. H. Livingston, of Asbury Theological Seminary; Exodus, by Leo Cox, of Marion College; Leviticus, by President Dennis F. Kinlaw, of Asbury College; Numbers, by L. J. DuBois, of Northwest Nazarene College; and Deuteronomy, by two British authors, Jack Ford and A. R. G. Deasley, both of British Isles Nazarene College, Manchester, All are mature and respected scholars.

The commentary is slanted especially toward the pastor and Sunday school teacher. After an introduction and analytical outline of each book of the Pentateuch, a running commentary on the King James text follows, concluding with a bibliography which includes commentaries, supplemental studies and articles. The text of the Bible is not included except for

the portions being explained. Footnotes often direct the reader to reference sources for further research.

The viewpoint of the contributors is Wesleyan-Arminian. Their prime concern, however, is explaining the Scriptures rather than inculcating a certain creed. Exegetical difficulties are not evaded (e.g., Gen. 6:1-8; Lev. 16; Deut. 24:16) but are dealt with in an informed and a responsible manner. With preachers and teachers in mind, homiletical hints and outlines are included. This volume serves well its stated purpose.

George A. Turner

Existentialism and the New Christianity, by Harry W. Barnitz. New York: Philosophical Library, 1969. 509 pages. $10.00

This volume is basically an attempt to show the affinity which the existential approach has for the follower of Emanuel Swedenborg—the member of the "New Church" Society. As such, it has but a limited interest for the average reader, since its apologetic base is distinctly parochial.

It needs to be pointed out, however, that some of the analyses of the themes of Existentialism are keen and have value for themselves, apart from the author's relation of them to Swedenborg's doctrines. It has thus value as an occasional reference for the one who traces existential theses in the thought of our time.

Harold B. Kuhn

The Broadman Bible Commentary, edited by C. J. Allen. Vol. I. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1969. 472 pages. $7.50.

The volume is the first of a twelve-volume commentary on the entire Bible, the set to be produced by the Southern Baptists and Broadman Press. Working with the general editor are J. I. Durham, R. L. Honeycutt Jr., J. W. MacGorman, Frank Stagg, W. J. Fallis, J. F. Green and H. P. Colson, several of whom are seminary professors.

This volume is a commentary on Genesis by G. H. Davies and on Exodus by R. L. Honeycutt Jr., respectively. In addition there are general

articles on translation, interpretation, geography, archaeology, Old Testament history and theology, and a chapter on "Contemporary Approaches in Old Testament Study."

The set aims at a balance between exegesis and exposition and, in this volume at least, succeeds. The general treatment of these two Bible books measures up to the editorial aim of avoiding "current theological fads and changing theories" but concerns itself instead "with the deep realities of God's dealings with men." The writers, aware of critical theories concerning biblical scholarships, seek to avoid most technical terms and foreign phrases (*Sitz im Leben*). They use English translations instead. In general the scholars adopt a mediating position with a conservative slant, veering somewhat from the typical fundamentalist approach. For instance, the creation of mankind is attributed to the creative word of God, but it is not indicated whether or not Adam is a specific individual. The discerning reader learns that the author(s) accept the critical positions of men like Driver and von Rad but are reluctant to challenge a literal interpretation of the accounts. The reader without prior knowledge of "higher criticism" can read most of the commentary without suspecting that the historicity of the accounts is often doubted by the authors. This is done by viewing the accounts as stories in which theological interests outweigh the historical and scientific.

Among the commendable features of this volume are the selected bibliographies at the end of each chapter. The general format is effective: the Bible text is given (RSV) in sections and the commentary which follows reflects an adequate acquaintance with the Hebrew text (transliterated), an alertness to contemporary scholarship, and a constructive interpretation and application of the text.

For those looking for an up-to-date, informed, middle-of-the-road commentary, this one has much to commend it.

George A. Turner

Preaching in American History, by De Witte Holland, Editor. Nashville: Abingdon, 1969. 436 pages. $8.95.

This enlightening volume describes the variable role of American preaching (1693-1967) as it has interacted with the forces of history in helping shape both church and society. Under the editorship of Dr. De Witte Holland of Temple University, the book comprises a series of essays by twenty contributors representing a variety of vocations and

theological backgrounds, each essay dealing with major pulpit issues of the respective periods. Chapter titles are indicative of the broad scope of the text: "Civil War Preaching," "The Rise of Unitarianism," "Preaching on Slavery," "The Social Gospel," "Preaching on War and Peace," "Neo-Orthodoxy and the American Pulpit," " The Ecumenical Movement," "The Radical Right," "Race Relations," and "The Challenge of the Secular." The whole furnishes an illuminating perspective on the singular, often turbulent, role of the American pulpit in the life of the nation.

Historically, sermon themes in the American churches fall roughly into several categories. Among them is a primary concern with the Word of God, an emphasis crossing all denominational lines; concern with a vital personal experience of salvation; enthusiasm for correct doctrine (which bred all kinds of schisms and sectarian splits); concern with personal morality and public order; and involvement in contemporary issues of general controversy (see pp. 29-30).

In some instances, an author's treatment of an issue will seem to reflect his own particular theological bias. Yet in following the discussions of these controversial matters that across the years confronted the American pulpit, one cannot but emerge sharpened in the art of polemic theology.

In an introductory chapter, Harold A. Bosley gives no place to those who decry the relevance of preaching in the contemporary world: "The fact of preaching and the administration of the sacraments is constant and will last as long as the church does, and that is as long as the gospel is to be preached. 'With preaching, Christianity stands or falls' " (p. 34). An extensive bibliography adds significance to the value of the book.

James D. Robertson

BOOK BRIEFS

Christian Education in Local Methodist Churches, by John Q. Schisler. Nashville: Abingdon, 1969. 266 pages. $6.00

This book is devoted to the study of the history of Christian education in local Methodist churches. Since there is no other book of its kind, it meets a real need.

Starting with the influence of John Wesley, the history of religious education is traced from its beginnings in America through dissension and separation within the church. Against a background of national wars and social unrest, the author details the progress of the former Methodist Episcopal Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church (South), and the Methodist Protestant Church. Finally, he highlights modern trends toward unification and developments in the educational work of The Methodist Church through 1955. Thus, historians, students, and ministers are given a comprehensive view of Christian education and its place in Methodist history.

This book is well-researched and well-written, the product of one who has been long involved in the work he writes about. It should find wide usage among those interested in professional Christian education.

Daniel: A Detailed Explanation of the Book, by Geoffrey R. King. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1966. 248 pages. $3.75.

A neglected and often misunderstood prophet comes to life in these expository studies. Too long we have surrendered this vital Old Testament man and his valuable book to itinerant preachers with their dogmatic interpretations, assured answers and apocalyptic accents.

Instead of striving to set definite dates for the Day of Doom, focus falls on the man, his message, and his mission in history, along with some moral, spiritual and prophetic values. Contemporary comparisons and applications add relevance to the study.

There is ". . . a new and almost light-hearted approach" with some hints of humor, such as: "I feel sorry for those lions. . . . he was half grit and the other half backbone!. . . . And those lions were hungry!"

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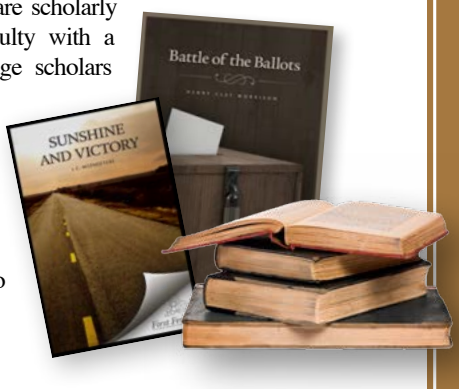

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