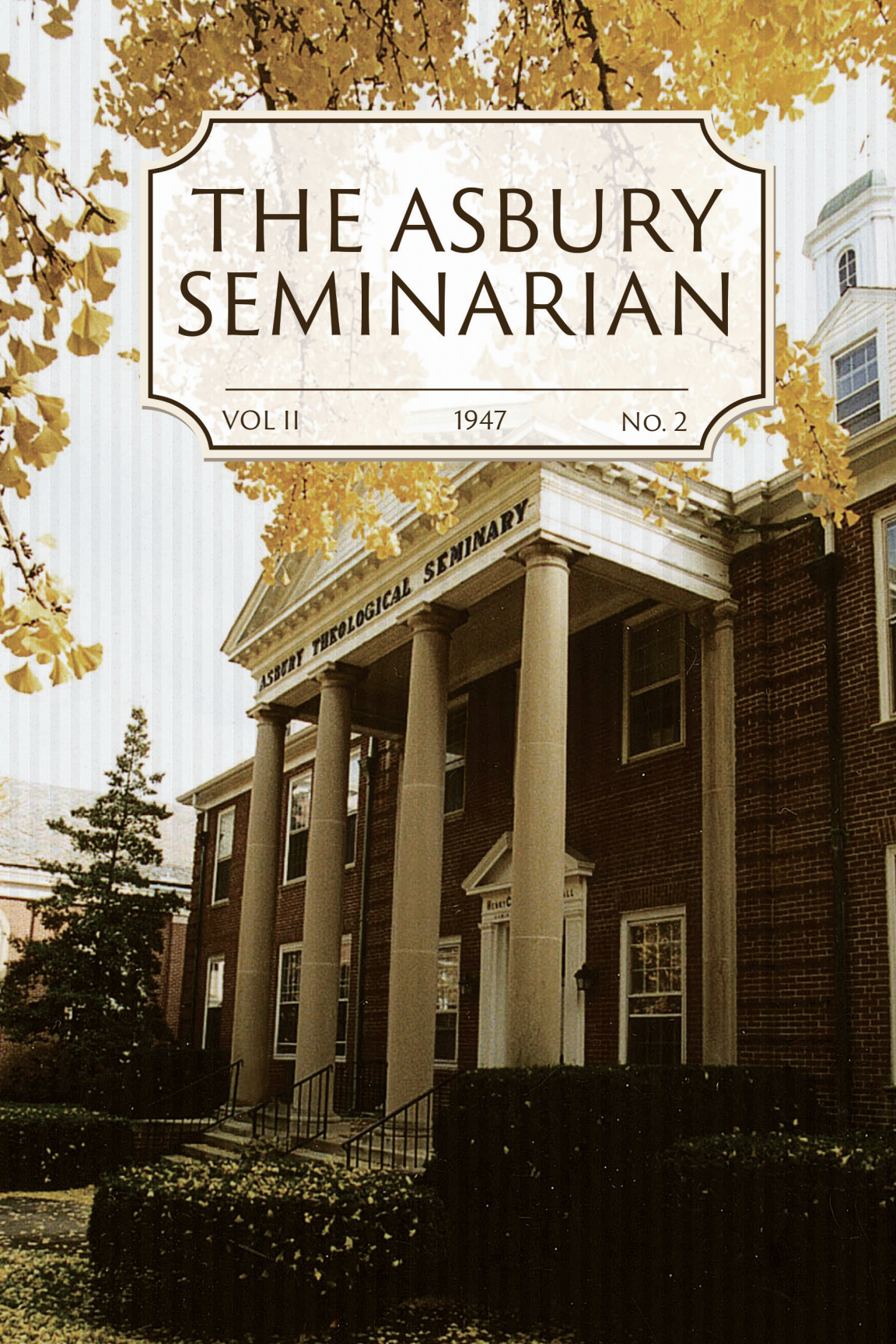


# THE ASBURY SEMINARIAN

VOL II

1947

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# THE ASBURY SEMINARIAN

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# The President's Letter

JULIAN C. MCPHEETERS

The commencement at Asbury Theological Seminary on June the 1st completed a year of achievement for which we have cause for much gratitude to God and to the many friends of the seminary who have cooperated with us in the support of the work, both with their prayers and with their money.

Thirty-two degrees were awarded to members of the senior class, including twenty-nine for the Bachelor of Divinity degree, and three for the Master of Religious Education degree. The Reverend Don A. Morris, pastor of the First Methodist Church in Saginaw, Michigan, was awarded the Doctor of Divinity degree. There will be candidates for six additional degrees at the close of the summer quarter.

A number of recognitions worthy of note came to the seminary during the year. The seminary was accredited by the American Association of Theological Schools in June of 1946. An official relationship was established between the seminary and the Free Methodist Church in October of 1946. The John Wesley Seminary Foundation of the Free Methodist Church will maintain a divinity house, near the campus of the seminary, beginning with the fall quarter of 1947. The Dean of the John Wesley Seminary Foundation will be a member of the faculty of Asbury Theological Seminary. The seminary was approved by the University Senate of the Methodist Church in March, 1947.

The new building program had two lines of development. One of these lines of development was the purchase and conversion of additional properties near the campus at a cost of approximately \$110,000, providing a total of seventeen apartments, twenty G. I. families, room for fourteen single women, housing for three staff members and the addition of approximately three acres of land. Without this development more than fifty students would have been turned away for the academic year 1946-47. The other development has been the construction work on the H. C. Morrison Administration building and the Betty Morrison apartment house. The expenditure on these buildings for the year amounted to approximately \$100,000. Every effort is being made to complete both of these buildings for the opening of the fall quarter in September. It will take approximately \$200,000 to complete and furnish these buildings and erect the central heating plant.

The friends of the seminary are to be highly commended for their financial support. The total contributions for the year are as follows:

Building Fund .....	\$ 64,208.20
Scholarship Fund .....	17,322.37
Wills .....	32,188.02

## THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Student Loan Fund .....	500.00
Permanent Endowment from the Glide Foundation, to be administered on the basis of 4% yield for the seminary .....	200,000.00

The Board of Trustees has launched a victory campaign for the raising of \$200,000 for the completion and furnishings of the two Morrison Memorial buildings and the central heating plant. The first phase of this campaign was the commencement offering which amounted to over \$13,000 in cash and pledges. The Alumni Association of the Seminary launched at the recent commencement a campaign for a million dollars of living endowment through scholarships. The goal is four hundred annual scholarships at \$100 each, which will be the equivalent of a yield of four per cent on a million dollars. The alumni are taking hold of this campaign with enthusiasm.

A significant event of the recent commencement was the tribute paid to Dr. Fred H. Larabee, Dean Emeritus, on the occasion of his retirement from the faculty. The alumni banquet was the occasion for honoring Dean and Mrs. Larabee who have spent thirty-two years on the Asbury campuses. Dr. Larabee was Dean of Asbury College for a number of years before becoming Dean of the seminary. The influence of his long and effective teaching career is indelibly stamped in the lives of hundreds of his students who are today preachers, teachers, and missionaries unto the very ends of the earth.

There will be three additions to the faculty with the opening of the fall quarter in September. W. C. Mavis, Ph.D., comes from Greenville College to become the Dean of the John Wesley Seminary Foundation and head the Department of Pastoral Counseling. Claude H. Thompson, A.B., B.D., with residence work completed for a Ph.D., Drew University, will become Professor of Practical Theology. Mr. Thompson spent the past year in doctrinal studies at Oxford and Edinburgh Universities on the William S. Pilling Fellowship of Drew University. Rodney Long, A.B., B.D., will be an addition to the Music Department as Director of Chorus Work and Quartets.

The summary of enrollment, including the summer quarter of 1946, reveals that we had 177 men students; 58 women students, making a total of 235 different students.

Dean W. D. Turkington states that if we had housing, the enrollment for the fall of 1947 would be well over 300. If the apartment house can be finished by that time, the institution will be in a position to provide housing for 250 students including use of community homes.

The summary of the Christian service of the students for the year reveals the following items of interest:

Preaching Services 1218; Teaching Sunday School 349; Open Air Services 74; Jail Services 54; Singing (leading quartets, trios) 203; Youth Services 175; Personal Work—House calls 2034, Tracts given 3265, Hospital calls 307, Counseling (by students) 183; Conversions 352; Reclamations 38; Entirely Sanctified 42; Called into Christian work 2.

Unto God we give the praise and glory for these achievements and we request that our friends continue to pray for the work of Asbury Theological Seminary.

## The Problem of the Future

The Hollywood mentality, with its mania for a 'happy ending' in any and all phases of human life and activity, is well on its way to becoming dominant in our Western world outlook. Even among those who sense the fundamental shallowness which the movie industry is fostering on every hand, there is a blind faith that some temporal tomorrow will bring a fulfillment to today's incomplete experience. Now, it is normal to hope that the new sunrise will mark a break with the evils and contradictions of today. What is not so clear is, just what we may reasonably expect any historical change to achieve for us.

Whether we wish to acknowledge it or not, man seems to be incurably eschatological in his outlook. The reader is doubtless aware that a self-confident scholarship has been inclined to view patronizingly the entire question, and to suggest that eschatology was a convenient mode of adjustment for an age which was defective in reducing the margin of the unexplained and the unpredictable to a tolerable width. It is implied, however, that we now have no need for this type of outlook. Rather, our age has assumed that the increase of natural and historical knowledge has rendered it a bit absurd.

Few will deny that the interpreters of the eschatology of the Bible have frequently been misled into shallow and unwarranted extremes. In some exceptional cases its adherents have so interpreted it as to suggest that the Christian approach to human problems ought to be one of complete indifference; 'let the Church be the Church', say some, this remark implying that only such activity as conduces to the preparation of men for eternity is worthy of the devout. There are, however, some encouraging signs in

the direction of an increasing sense of social responsibility upon the part of many groups of conservative Christians.

Those groups, however, who inveigh against the abuses which extreme eschatological interpretations produce ought to remember that the so-called social gospel has its own Messianism. The writer is aware that the proponents of this latter type of religious approach are recently more sensitive to the realities of the times. Probably the roseate social expectations of Rauschenbusch and his followers are vanishing among even more liberal groups of Christians today. At least some of them are aware that the State is taking over many of the functions formerly claimed by the 'social gospel' so that liberal Christianity must alter its mode of attack.

More significant still is the emphasis in many liberal quarters upon the essentially fragmentary and problematic character of all temporal life. Historic Christianity owes a great deal to the Theology of Crisis at this point. While conservative Christians cannot overlook the fact that the theologians of this movement are essentially 'liberal' in their approach to the Scriptures, they ought to welcome the emphasis of the latter upon the essentially eschatological character of the Christian faith.

It would be wholesome if at some time a representative of liberal Christianity would frankly recognize that the conventional theological liberalism is itself a form of Messianism. Communism is more frank in its approach to the problem, openly avowing the temporal and earthly character of its proposed millenium. It is difficult to see just how the former can expect to effectively oppose the latter by any technique of fighting fire with fire. If

we are to acquiesce in *any* belief in a temporal tomorrow in which today's broken experience will be brought to completion, then it seems almost logical to cast in our lot with that movement which promises most in temporal realization. Upon these terms the Christian Church will probably seem to many to be a poor competitor to Stalinism.

Underlying much of temporal Messianism is some degree of acceptance of historical dynamism—some belief that history itself is a mover. The adherents of the social gospel seemed certain that just as certain specialized abuses (such as African slavery) were left behind, so also all of the evils which human life manifests *must* in the sweep of the new social awakening be overcome. This view cannot wholly disavow its kinship with the philosophy of Marx, who taught that the dialectic of history was moving unalterably in a given direction.

May it not be that all such philosophies of history share the fallacy of giving a false concreteness to such an abstraction as 'history'? Such a fallacy glides easily into a baseless confidence in the power of history to work for man. This in turn is not materially different from a dogmatic assertion of man's power to achieve, by himself and unaided by any super-temporal Source, the solution of his own ills. In other words, perhaps the Religious Humanists are right in their assertion that theological liberalism is an untenable half-way house between 'outmoded orthodoxy' and frank humanism.

In the light of this, may it not be timely to re-assert the difference between pagan confidence in history and Christian faith in God? Such an assertion will be emphatic at the point of the biblical insight of God as Lord of History. It will be satisfied with no view of God as immanent in the tem-

poral process, but must and will declare the distinction between eternity and time, ceasing at the same time to assert the ultimateness of human finite experience. To most of the forms of contemporary liberal thought, these will seem to be hard sayings; few can bear them. And yet perhaps men will have to.

We sometimes forget that our vaunted increase of human knowledge is limited to knowledge of past and present. By a merciful arrangement we are, as Reinhold Niebuhr points out, as ignorant of the future as was Abraham. At the same time, we must in some manner dispose of what might be called the problem of the future. It is the purpose of the remainder of this editorial to indicate some factors with which we must reckon in dealing with this problem.

Essential, first, is a recognition of the problematic and broken character of all temporal life. This is hard on our youthful idealism, by which we anticipate certain milestones, the attainment of which is expected to bring emancipation from certain major problems and limitations. Human experience is all but unanimous in declaring that life turns back upon us in our facile expectations. When, for example, we reach the age of twenty-one, we discover that at best we trade new frustrations for old ones, and that attainment of our majority brings no absolute severance from any significant problem of our minority.

The numerous frustrations of the present tend to cause us to rely much too heavily upon points of transition, and upon the siren song of a glib 'new day.' There is evidence that multitudes find the present tolerable only upon the basis of hope. This is not to be condemned in itself; what is to be deplored is that too many trust in wrong kind of a future. Perhaps the Christian ministry has been unfaith-

ful in its failure to be realistic at the point of the fractured character of all temporal life. There is danger in expecting too much in the here-and-now. It is perhaps time to be hard-headed in presenting the truth, that while within the law of averages our earthly life may yield a good measure of legitimate satisfactions, that its ultimate meaning *cannot* be found here. A recognition of this basic pluralism in temporal experience will fortify against a multitude of disillusionments. The second ingredient in the Christian approach to the problem of the future is the type of faith which brings meaning into the experience of today. It is by no means easy to maintain the balance between a Christian view of the *eschaton* on the one hand, and the Christian view of the present on the other. Many of us have little difficulty in anticipating the day when divine grace will "make all things new." It is not so easy to live in the light of a faith which sanctifies the present. And yet there is an intensely practical quality to the Christian gospel, in which complete trust in a sovereign God brings fulfillment and ultimate meaning to the details of the life of today.

This fulfillment does not yield the removal of the perplexities which grow out of the problematic character of finite life. In reality it pierces through our facile hopes for a monism in the temporal life of today. In their place it affords a strong confidence that the minutiae of present experience are "working together for our good," that God is synchronizing even those details which seem inconsequential in the fulfilment of a master plan. And in this plan no fragment of today's life is insignificant. To the Christian, every day is a holy day: every choice is a decisive one: every action may be performed *unto Him*.

The final factor to be noted in this connection is that Christian eschatol-

ogy does issue in an active confidence in a final restitution of all things—an ultimate recapitulation of all things under the headship of Christ. In this final summation the fragmentary character of today's experience will be transcended, and its ultimate significance disclosed. This involves, of course, not only a belief in personal immortality, but a recognition of the utterly moral and spiritual character of the Christian goal. Eternal life, in the Christian sense, is conditioned by personal redemption. It is thus much more than prolongation of existence.

Faith thus becomes specialized in the case of him who takes Christian eschatology seriously. It finds no resting place short of the confident realization, in the here and now, of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ which comes to grips with man's basic problem at the levels at which it occurs. This personal realization is, at heart, an anticipation in the life of the individual of the final recapitulation of all things. The problem of human sin, is by no means a simple one. Objectors may raise questions at the point of what actions are sinful which we cannot answer. But raising questions does not eliminate from the enlightened consciousness the apprehension which human disobedience to the most elementary principles of conduct produces. On the other hand, multitudes have lived in strong confidence of divine forgiveness of sins upon the basis of redemption in Christ.

The Christian outlook toward the future produces, moreover, a dissatisfaction with man's congenital moral disposition. Without giving a blanket assent to the conclusions of the newer psychology, especially to those forms which emphasize the study of the unconscious and/or the subconscious, we believe that this movement affords some aid and comfort to those holding the historic Christian

view of original sin. To say the least, modern psychology finds sinister and unpredictable forces seething in the deeper reaches of the inner life, and finds difficulty in holding any rose-tinted view of man's deepest nature.

Those who take seriously the historic biblical message in this connection cannot but be exercised at the point of the manner in which the Christian gospel proposes to deal with

this innate disturbance. Perhaps it is for this reason that the theme of Christian Perfection will not 'down and stay dead.' To face realistically the problem of the future one cannot, at any rate, be cavalier with the question of man's disorder and God's design for its treatment. In the light of this, possibly the historic message of Scriptural Holiness has a new and fresh relevance.

—H. B. K.

## *Our Contributors*

JULIAN C. MCPHEETERS, president of Asbury Theological Seminary, is well known in the field of Christian journalism, and contributes regularly to this journal. His Letter is a feature anticipated by alumni and friends of the Seminary.

RALPH M. EARLE, JR., (Th.D., Gordon Divinity School) is professor of Biblical Literature in Nazarene Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Missouri. His writings have appeared in this quarterly in the past; readers will welcome another contribution from his pen.

J. HAROLD GREENLEE (Ph.D., Harvard University) is professor of Greek in Asbury Theological Seminary, and Secretary-Treasurer of the Seminary Alumni Association.

CLYDE W. MEREDITH (Th.D., Iliff School of Theology) is president of Taylor University in Upland, Indiana. His paper embodies the substance of his address on Seminary Alumni Day on May 31 of this year.

WILBER T. DAYTON, (Th.D., Northern Baptist Theological Seminary) is associate professor of Theology and Bible and acting Dean of the Divinity school in Marion College, Marion, Indiana. Published here is a summary of his doctoral dissertation.



# The Revival of Biblical Theology

RALPH M. EARLE

A review of recent religious literature discloses three significant changes in the field of Biblical studies. Three great trends had their rise in the nineteenth century and flooded over into the twentieth century. But in the last few months and years there has been a marked reversal in the direction of the current.

The time was when Old Testament theology, New Testament theology, Pauline and Johannine theology were required disciplines in theological schools. That day has long since passed. In the Biblical field theology has been replaced by criticism. Today the student in the average seminary finds most of his time in the Biblical department devoted to the investigation of problems in literary and historical criticism. There is very little time or desire for seeking the vital religious message of the Bible.

A second trend sponsored by the German scholarship of the nineteenth century was the substitution of analysis for synthesis in the study of the Bible. The analytical method was pursued with such insatiable passion that it became increasingly atomistic and devastating. Sharp-eyed critics, by means of high-power mental microscopes, managed to find as many as two or three documentary sources for a single verse in the Old Testament. Phrase by phrase the books of the Pentateuch and the prophets were torn to pieces and assigned to their various pigeon-holes. Even some recent outstanding works in the field of Old Testament introduction have carried on the ruthless work of dissection

until the student finds himself in Ezekiel's valley of dry bones. Bones are scattered all about, "and behold they were very dry." Much of modern Biblical scholarship has not only stripped the meat from the bones but scattered the very bones themselves in a mass of hopeless confusion. What is needed is a revival that will get the bones organized into skeletons, get some flesh on them, and then breathe into them the breath of life. Biblical study must cease to be dead and deadening.

A third trend was the wholesale application of the infallible theory of evolution to the study of Biblical religion. Any seemingly advanced conception of God must automatically be assigned to a late date. All the writings of the Bible were fitted with easy confidence into the framework of this evolutionary scheme. The Old and New Testaments were simply source materials for the study of the development of the Hebrew and Christian religions. God and divine inspiration were shoved out the back door of theological thinking.

But in very recent times a decided reaction has set in. This change is reflected in a number of articles appearing during the last year; although I should like to insert, if I may, a personal statement that I became very much aware of this new emphasis in the books I was reading before I read any articles or reviews calling attention to it. I mention that to confirm the fact that recent literature does exhibit clearly and unquestionably a change of direction.

## I.

First, there is apparent a new emphasis upon Biblical theology in current religious periodicals. In the autumn number of *Religion in Life* for 1946 there is an article entitled, "Biblical Theology and the Sermon on the Mount," by Alexander Purdy. Professor Purdy, of Hartford Theological Seminary, speaks of "the current revival of biblical theology." After stating that "the discipline known as biblical theology has largely vanished from our theological curricula," he goes on to say: "The re-emergence of biblical theology, in fact if not in form, is accordingly one of the most striking phenomena of current New Testament studies."

Dr. Purdy mentions Barthianism as one of the influences producing this change and then notes among "other possible reasons for the revival of biblical theology" the inadequacy of historical criticism. After justifiably labeling the results of form criticism as "subjective" he makes this intelligent observation:

If precise historical conclusions as to the origin of Christianity are uncertain, the fact remains that it emerged as a living, vital faith. Now such a faith is desperately needed in our troubled times. It is natural and praiseworthy, as well as justifiable, that scholars should sense this need and should be influenced by it in their examination of the records. For these and other reasons we are witnessing a revival of interest in the theology of the New Testament.<sup>1</sup>

Another recent article of significance is "Neo-orthodoxy and the Bible," by Professor G. Ernest Wright of McCormick Theological Seminary, a paper read at the 1946 meeting of the National Association of Biblical Instructors and published in the May, 1946, issue of the *Journal of Bible and Religion*. Professor Wright speaks of the fear entertained by Biblical schol-

ars "of being considered unscholarly and homiletical." He then goes on to make this pertinent observation:

Our training has led us to picture the ideal figure to which we should conform as an Aristotle or Einstein, rather than as an Isaiah or Jesus. It is much more comfortable to be a strictly impartial and objective marshaller of facts, than an interpreter of their ultimate meaning and truth.<sup>2</sup>

Professor Wright objects to the dominance of Greek influence in religious thinking today. Greek philosophy magnified the good life but was utterly inadequate because it had no solution for the problem of human sin.

While the Bible affirms the worth of man, its central problem is the reason for man's inability to obtain the good life he desires. It thus concerns itself with the problem of human sin, with a realistic analysis of human nature, with God's attempt to deliver man from the tragedies which have resulted from the misuse of his freedom, and with an answer to the question untouched by the Greeks: how shall man do that which he knows he ought to do?<sup>3</sup>

One of Professor Wright's great contributions to contemporary Biblical study is his emphasis on the vital importance of the religious message of the Bible. In this article he declares:

Throughout the New Testament and the prophetic writings of the Old there is a sense of urgency, a sense of the absolute importance of their proclamation, and a demand that the hearer make a decision.<sup>4</sup>

Dr. Wright has himself highlighted this sense of urgency and authority in his powerful little book, *The Challenge of Israel's Faith*,<sup>5</sup> one of the most helpful books written in the Old Testament field in our day. Every preacher would do well to read and reread this small but weighty volume. One quotation from it will have to suffice for

<sup>1</sup> G. Ernest Wright, "Neo-Orthodoxy and the Bible," *The Journal of Bible and Religion*, XIV (1946), p. 88.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>4</sup> Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1944.

<sup>1</sup> Alexander C. Purdy, "Biblical Theology and the Sermon on the Mount," *Religion in Life*, XV (1946), pp. 498, 499.

the present. He says:

Many of us have been doing more reasoning and arguing than *proclaiming* the word of the Lord. If the truth of God the King is to produce conviction, to strike at the will, to reorganize life, it must above all be preached and proclaimed, lest we lose ourselves in discussion and fail to utter it at all! It is at this point that the biblical study of the last century failed us.<sup>6</sup>

Before turning our attention from periodicals to books, we should mention a new quarterly journal which began with the issue of January, 1947. It is called *Interpretation—A Journal of Bible and Theology* and is put out by Union Theological Seminary, of Richmond, Virginia. The first article in *Interpretation* was a happy choice. Dr. H. H. Rowley, of Manchester, England, has reflected the purpose and plan of the journal in his article entitled, "The Relevance of Biblical Interpretation." His opening sentence reads: "The appearance of a journal specifically devoted to biblical interpretation is a symptom of our time."

After pointing out the effect on Bible study produced by the scholars of the nineteenth century, Dr. Rowley goes on to say:

Against this a reaction has set in. There is a growing recognition that only a biblical religion, founded on and nourished by the Bible, can suffice for this or any other day. It would be unfair to pretend that such an attitude is wholly new, nor do I maintain this for a moment here. My point is simply that at the present time there is a strong trend in this direction.<sup>7</sup>

Let me give briefly here just two more quotations from this article. Dr. Rowley declares: "The renewed interest in theology is a significant mark of our time." Then, after discussing the defects of an over-emphasis on the historical-critical method during the last century, he says:

That is why men are asking for commentaries

with a new emphasis, and an interpretation that is no less scholarly than we have known but more profoundly theological. We need a more dynamic view of the Bible and its ideas.<sup>8</sup>

## II.

We want now to look at some books which reflect the new interest in Biblical theology. Unless otherwise noted all references are to books published in 1946. The discussion of them is not based on material gleaned from reviews but an actual reading of them.

The Westminster Press of Philadelphia has rendered, and is rendering, a great service to the American public in reprinting many of the most significant theological books appearing in England. The value of this contribution can only be appreciated by comparing the solid worth of the Westminster books of the past three years with the type of volumes coming from some other presses. We want to notice two or three of these British books in relation to the revival of Biblical theology.

One of the most satisfying books which I have read in recent months is one entitled *The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament*, by Norman H. Snaith. Dr. Snaith is a Methodist leader in England and teaches Old Testament at Wesley College, Leeds.

The main contention of this book is that Christian theology has tended wrongly to build more on Greek intellectual concepts than on the great religious teachings of the Old Testament. In his preface the author states very clearly the thesis of the book. He writes:

In this Fernley-Hartley Lecture I have set forth what I believe to be the distinctive ideas of Old Testament religion. These are different from the ideas of any other religion whatsoever. In particular they are quite distinct from the ideas of the Greek thinkers. The aim of Hebrew religion was *Da'ath Elohim* (the Knowledge of God); the aim of Greek thought was *Gnothi seauton* (Know thyself). Between these two there is a great gulf

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 46, 47.

<sup>7</sup> *Interpretation*, I (1947), p. 3.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

fixed. We do not see that either admits of any compromise. They are fundamentally different in a priori assumption, in method of approach, and in final conclusion. . . . The New Testament has been interpreted according to Plato and Aristotle, and the distinctive Old Testament ideas have been left out of account. . . . The "righteousness" of Aristotle has been substituted for the "righteousness" of the Old Testament.<sup>10</sup>

We have already noted Professor Wright's similar complaint against the dominance of Greek influence over modern thinking. Another quotation from his previously mentioned article will make this still more clear. He says:

Now what impresses me most about the Bible is the utter difference between its solution of the problems of existence and that of all other religions and philosophies of which I am aware. . . . Most thinking people today, however, hold a position much more similar to the idealism of Greek philosophy than it is to Biblical faith.<sup>11</sup>

Dr. Snaith selects as the distinctive ideas of the Old Testament the holiness of God, the covenant-love of God, the election-love of God and the spirit of God, and devotes a chapter to the discussion of each.

The main feature in Dr. Snaith's treatment of these ideas is his careful and painstaking study of the exact meanings of the words used in the Old Testament to express these ideas. While a knowledge of Hebrew is an advantage in getting the most out of this book, it is not at all a prerequisite to its study. Any serious student will find the hours spent in reading the book both profitable and pleasurable. While dealing with profound truths, Dr. Snaith has the happy — and altogether too rare — faculty of making theology interesting and even fascinating.

One of the more important points which Dr. Snaith emphasizes is that

<sup>10</sup> Norman H. Snaith, *The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament*, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1946, p. 9.

<sup>11</sup> *Journal of Bible and Religion*, XIV (1946), p. 192.

the Hebrews always thought of virtues in terms of concrete activity rather than abstract passivity. God's acts reveal His character, and His character can only be known by observing His activity.

It is interesting to see the emphasis given by a Methodist writer to the ideas of covenant and election. Dr. Snaith does not confess any obligation to the continental crisis theologians, but perhaps a wholesome, mildly corrective influence has come to him from those quarters. His theological point of view is definitely theocentric. Perhaps a closing quotation from this book will illustrate that fact and also furnish a summary of the book's main thesis.

The Hebrew system starts with God. The only true wisdom is Knowledge of God. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." The corollary is that man can never know himself, what he is and what is his relation to the world, unless first he learn of God and be submissive to God's sovereign will. The Greek system, on the contrary, starts from the knowledge of man, and seeks to rise to an understanding of the ways and Nature of God through the knowledge of what is called "man's higher nature." According to the Bible, man has no higher nature except he be born of the Spirit.<sup>12</sup>

My own reaction to Dr. Snaith's book is well expressed in a review of it by the editor of *Interpretation*. He says:

It is in a real sense an Old Testament Theology, one of the best, if not the most exhaustive, in the English language. It is more than that; it is a passionate appeal for a return to the Old Testament, not for illustrations or for prooftexts supporting a doctrine or a sermon, but for a thought pattern for Christian theology.<sup>13</sup>

Speaking of Old Testament theologies, this might be a good place to mention Snaith's own statement about the current dearth in that field. He says: "It is significant that for the last standard work in English on Old

<sup>12</sup> Snaith, *op. cit.*, pp. 237, 238.

<sup>13</sup> *Interpretation*, I, p. 87.

Testament theology we have to go back to A. B. Davidson's *The Theology of the Old Testament* which is dated 1901." Books on the origin and development of the Hebrew religion have taken the place of works on Old Testament theology.

Less satisfying to me than Dr. Snaith's book was the one by Professor H. H. Rowley, entitled *The Re-Discovery of the Old Testament*. But his volume contains some helpful emphases, to which we shall now call attention.

The most obvious thing that should be said, of course, is that we are grateful to the author for his attempt to underscore the importance of the Old Testament for the Christian church. There has been in recent years a very decided neglect of the older scriptures. But here, again, we can see a change. The author says regarding the modern attitude of ignoring the Old Testament: "Against this we are now witnessing a healthy reaction, and the rise of a new sense of the meaning and worth of the Old Testament."<sup>15</sup>

Dr. Rowley calls attention to the fact — sometimes forgotten — that the Old Testament was the Bible of Jesus and the early Christians. The New Testament was not intended to replace it, but to supplement it. "Many things did not need to be said in the New Testament, just because they were already so magnificently said in the Old."<sup>16</sup> Writing in a similar vein he says: "The New Testament moves in the world of ideas that is found in the Old."<sup>17</sup>

One of the better chapters of the book is on "The Meaning of History." Here the author emphasizes the fact that the historical books of the Old

Testament were classified among the prophets because to the Hebrews history had religious meaning. They conceived of history as God in action, working out His principles of government. Dr. Rowley also has a good chapter on "The Significance of Prophecy." Not so satisfactory is his treatment of "The Growth of Monotheism." He is not prepared to accept Albright's belief in a Mosaic monotheism, although he allows for a practical henotheism.

The last chapters of the book contain more striking statements of truth than the earlier ones. In his discussion of "The Meaning of Worship" Dr. Rowley says: "It scarcely needs to be said that all who refuse to allow any sacrificial significance to the Cross part company with the New Testament, as well as cut adrift from the Old."<sup>18</sup> He also declares that the sacrificial system of the Old Testament "fitly prepares for the New Testament conception of the Work of Christ."<sup>19</sup> This is certainly not thorough-going liberalism.

One of the values of the book is that it furnishes a corrective to an over-emphasis on the historical method in Old Testament study. The author makes this wise observation: "For any true understanding of prophecy we must have a clear historical sense. Yet beyond that we must have spiritual penetration."<sup>20</sup>

Another English book published here by Westminster Press this last year is *Christianity According to St. John*, by W. F. Howard. Dr. Howard is an outstanding authority in the Johannine field, having published sixteen years ago a scholarly work entitled, *The Fourth Gospel in Recent Criticism and Interpretation*. It is interesting to note that in his new book he has concerned himself entirely with

<sup>15</sup> Snaith, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

<sup>16</sup> H. H. Rowley, *The Re-Discovery of the Old Testament*, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1946, p. 11.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 234.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 237.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 300.

the theology of the Johannine literature. It is at least another straw blowing in the same direction.

Like Dr. Snaith, his fellow-Methodist, Professor Howard is opposed to the modern habit of finding the roots of New Testament theology in Greek philosophy, which has been done especially in the field of the Johannine writings. Most of the books on the Fourth Gospel written in the past generation have played on one string, and one only: John's Gospel is the Hellenistic Gospel, saturated with Greek thought.

It is a refreshing change, to say the least, to find a distinguished scholar emphasizing the Jewish background of the Gospel of John. After his extensive and intensive study of the subject Professor Howard writes: "The more closely the Johannine writings are studied the more clearly does the Jewish character of both language and thought stand out."<sup>21</sup>

Again he says: "The Fourth Evangelist was a Jew in training and tradition. . . . The clue to the Johannine conceptions is to be sought in Jewish sources rather than in foreign cults and philosophies."<sup>22</sup>

There are so many good things in this book—including a careful study of significant Greek terms—that one hardly knows where to begin or leave off. Perhaps we had better confine ourselves to the quotation of one particularly fine statement. "Truth is not a correct conception of God to be apprehended by the intellect so much as a revelation of reality to be received in a personal relationship."<sup>23</sup> That is the kind of emphasis that theology must have if it is to be vital and living.

It is over fifty years since George B. Stevens of Yale published his definitive work on *Johannine Theology* in

1894. The book has served nobly as a text for countless classes in that subject. But for almost a generation that course has been disappearing from the curriculum until it has become a rare antique. It is certainly not without significance that there has again appeared an able exposition of the teachings of one whom D. A. Hayes styled "the greatest theologian and the most profound philosopher of the early Christian church."<sup>24</sup>

While we are thinking of the Gospel of John we might mention another study of it which also appeared in 1946. If one desires a very readable popular presentation of the liberal view of the Fourth Gospel, he will find it in *The Spiritual Gospel*, by W. A. Smart.<sup>25</sup> The author builds on the usual thesis of the Greek background of the Gospel and holds that we do not have here the actual words of Jesus. Rather we have "the claims of a religious genius for his Lord."<sup>26</sup> However, he thinks that we should accept the Johannine picture of Jesus. The book is definitely less objectionable than most books on John's Gospel which have appeared in recent years.

In passing we might mention briefly another English book published by Westminster Press, *Jesus the Messiah*, by William Manson. This has been highly recommended in reviews, but we found it somewhat disappointing. Two outstanding statements appear in the preface:

The real background of the mind of Jesus, to judge from the tradition, was not Jewish apocalyptic or ethnic gnosis, but the prophetic religion of the Old Testament. . . . By a renewed placing of the Synoptic tradition against the background of the Old Testament religion I have come to a deepened sense of its historical and revelational value.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup> D. A. Hayes, *John and His Writings*, New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1917, p. 68.

<sup>25</sup> New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1946.

<sup>26</sup> p. 134.

<sup>27</sup> William Manson, *Jesus the Messiah*, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1946, p. 9.

<sup>21</sup> W. F. Howard, *Christianity According to St. John*, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1946, pp. 29, 30.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 185, 186.

The subtitle of the book reads: "The Synoptic tradition of the revelation of God in Christ: with special reference to Form-criticism." Dr. Manson has made a real contribution in pointing out the limitations of this popular new method for the study of the Gospels and presenting careful evidence against the validity of some of the assumptions of its adherents. As a mild, yet scholarly, corrective of radical criticism it may be destined to play an important part in the changing scene. We can only hope that it may.

Far more satisfying to our appetite was a book carrying the superscription "An Essay in Biblical Theology" and entitled *The Resurrection of Christ*, by Professor Michael Ramsey of the University of Durham, England.

In this book Dr. Ramsey has made a careful investigation of the critical problems involved in a belief in the resurrection of Jesus. He pays high tribute to Bishop Westcott.

Westcott's teaching represents the historic faith of the church as presented in a spirit of scholarly orthodoxy in the latter decades of the last century. . . . Westcott's teaching may yet be found to outlive the theories which the succeeding half-century has produced.<sup>29</sup>

After examining briefly the theories of Strauss, Keim, Streeter and Kirsopp Lake, Professor Ramsey asserts his own belief in the bodily resurrection of Christ. "The Gospel in the New Testament involves the freedom of the living God and an act of new creation which includes the bodily no less than the spiritual life of man."<sup>30</sup>

We come now to two books written by American scholars and published by the Westminster Press in 1946. The title of the first one is an illustration and confirmation of the title of

this article. Millar Burrows, Professor of Biblical theology at Yale Divinity School has called his latest and most important book *An Outline of Biblical Theology*. The author very modestly in his preface emphasizes the fact that he is only attempting to give a bare *outline* of the great subject of Biblical theology. But it would seem to this reviewer that he has covered the field very comprehensively, although obviously the task could not be accomplished with complete thoroughness in one volume.

In the introduction Professor Burrows has indicated clearly the need for a revival of the study of Biblical theology. He writes:

In recent times there has been a marked decline in biblical preaching. . . . New subjects have crowded into the theological curriculum and pushed the Bible into a corner. . . . The modern critical study of the Bible has unquestionably caused confusion and the loss of a sense of divine authority, thus diminishing the confidence with which a preacher could use the Bible. The result . . . has been a perceptible thinning out of the content of preaching. Listening for the word of God, the people too often hear only a man's opinions. . . . What Christian preaching needs above all, however, is not biblical adornment but the structure and substance of the Scriptures. Our major concern here is with the essential nature and basic features, the real fundamentals, of biblical religion.<sup>30</sup>

In his chapter on "Authority and Revelation" Professor Burrows makes some very fine statements regarding inspiration and Biblical authority. He writes: "Christianity, like Judaism before it, has always held that its faith is based on divine revelation, and the authentic record and deposit of that revelation has been seen in the Bible."<sup>31</sup>

Again, in seeking to understand the importance of Biblical history, Dr.

<sup>29</sup> A. Michael Ramsey: *The Resurrection of Christ*, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1946, p. 48.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>30</sup> Millar Burrows, *An Outline of Biblical Theology*, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1946, pp. 2, 3.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

Burrows writes:

The conviction that God is revealed in history, and especially in the history of his chosen people, explains why there is so much history in the Bible. It is told, not for the sake of the record itself, but for the revelation of God's judgments in the events narrated.<sup>32</sup>

But Old Testament history has one final and certain goal. "The special revelation of God in the history of Israel reaches its culmination in the incarnation of God in Christ. . . . All the saving truth of Scripture is summed up in the person of Jesus."<sup>33</sup>

To try to review briefly a book of this scope would be utterly impossible. We shall have to be content with one or two general observations. In the first place, the traditionally orthodox conservative who seeks here a confirmation of his views will be definitely disappointed. Professor Burrows does not represent that point of view. But, secondly, we should like to say that the serious student of the Bible will find here a comprehensive, panoramic view of the great teachings of the Scriptures which will help him to achieve a far better perspective for the study of God's Word. Viewed in any way, this text in Biblical theology is a contribution of major importance. It is also a significant indication of the present-day trend which we have labelled "The Revival of Biblical Theology."

One of the interesting features of the book is the inclusion of hundreds of footnotes referring to Biblical passages. In fact, very few other references are made. The author is interested primarily in stimulating an intelligent study of the Bible itself.

The other book by an American scholar is *Eyes of Faith*, by Paul Minear, now professor of New Testament Interpretation at Andover New-

ton Theological School. It is a work on theological epistemology, seeking to answer the vital question of how we may know God.

Dr. Otto Piper speaks very highly of this book in a review of it in the current issue of *Interpretation*. He says:

The treatment of the subject is not only learned and profound but also full of religious vitality. Its historical significance cannot easily be over-rated. In the field of biblical theology this is the first creative reaction America produces to the theological renaissance of the Continent. The many new approaches to biblical theology and theological epistemology which the European theologians have ventured in recent years are here integrated in one consistent view. Because he is so familiar with the American philosophy of religion, Dr. Minear is able powerfully to oppose it with his biblical outlook.<sup>34</sup>

The great indebtedness of Professor Minear to the crisis theologians of the continent is obvious to even the casual observer. The first three chapter headings alone give that fact away: "God Visits Man," "God Chooses Man," "God Says, 'Choose'." Then, if one glances at the footnotes he meets frequently with familiar names, especially those of Brunner and Kierkegaard. It is interesting to note that the author refers a number of times to *The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament* by Snaith, to which we have already drawn attention.

*Eyes of Faith* is not exactly easy reading. What book on epistemology is? But the one who will put his plowshare in deep and then apply plenty of mental power will find his work rewarded. I can only offer my personal experience for whatever it is worth. The first hour or two that I spent with the book was a thrilling time. I found myself gripped over and over again as the author grappled with vital problems of man's relation to God.

Dr. Minear states as the object of

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 39, 40.

<sup>34</sup> *Interpretation*, I (1946), p. 83.



this book "that of coming to terms with the Biblical perspective." He indicates the true nature of his work when he says: "Our desire is not to construct a Biblical theology, but to provide a preface for such theology."<sup>35</sup>

### III.

We spoke at the beginning of three trends evident in current religious literature. We have devoted most of our attention to the first of these, the revival of interest in Biblical theology. Now we wish to note briefly the other two.

In the hands of German critics the analytical method was worked vigorously—we might say viciously—until the Bible became a scattered heap of minute fragments. The contrasts between the Old and New Testaments were played up to the exclusion of all sense of unity in the Bible. In the New Testament a half dozen or more religions were found. This was the emphasis of Parson's *The Religions of the New Testament* (1939) and E. F. Scott's *Varieties of New Testament Religion* (1943).

But now a reaction has set in. This is how A. M. Hunter of Oxford, England, expresses it in his excellent little book, *The Message of the New Testament*, published by the Westminster Press in 1944.

These words are a parable of what is happening in the world of New Testament scholarship today. Anyone conversant with the most recent work on the New Testament must have sensed in it a change of approach, a change of direction. The scholars are leaving "the circumference and the corners." They are "bent on the centre" . . . . There is a growing recognition of the essential unity of the New Testament and of the need for synthesis.<sup>36</sup>

"Since the dawn of criticism," he

<sup>35</sup> Paul Minear, *Eyes of Faith* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1946), pp. 1, 2.

<sup>36</sup> A. M. Hunter, *The Message of the New Testament*, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1944, p. 9.

writes, "the approach has been largely analytical."<sup>37</sup> Here is the way he describes it:

It is on such differences that analytical criticism concentrates; it reveals contrasts, divergencies, inconsistencies; it distinguishes the various christologies, soteriologies, eschatologies in the New Testament and labels them Synoptic, Pauline, Petrine, Johannine, and so on.<sup>38</sup>

But things have been changing in very recent times. "The Liberals are now fighting a defensive battle."<sup>39</sup> Scholars are finding a new point of view. "The older approach was analytical; the newer approach will be synthetic. The older approach revealed variety, the newer approach will disclose unity amid that variety."<sup>40</sup>

This splendid little book by A. M. Hunter is literally packed with quotable material. The purpose of the book is indicated by its three main divisions: One Lord, One Church, One Salvation. It reminds a person of Floyd Filson's excellent study, *One Lord, One Faith* (1943).

The unity of the Old and New Testaments is also being stressed today. G. Ernest Wright has recently written:

Here, then, is the essential meaning of the Bible, as I see it, according to its own claims. It is upon such a rough outline that a Biblical theology must be erected—not merely a genetic theology of the Old Testament, nor one of the New in isolation, but a *Biblical* theology.<sup>41</sup>

One is constrained to express the hope that Professor Wright will some day find time to produce just such a work on Biblical theology.

The outstanding Old Testament theology in German in our day was written by an eminent Swiss theologian, Walther Eichrodt. Of this work

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>41</sup> *Journal of Bible and Religion*, XIV (1946), p. 92.

W. F. Albright says: "The author's three-volume *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (Leipzig, 1935-39) represents a strong reaction against the excesses of historicism in favor of a unitary conception of Israelite life and thinking."<sup>42</sup>

The new emphasis on unity is applied to the study of the Gospels by R. V. G. Tasker in his 1944 book, *The Nature and Purpose of the Gospels*. One remark which he makes in the Preface will be of interest as indicating again one of the main sources responsible for the change in approach to the Bible. He says: "It will be evident that I have been in no small degree influenced by the crisis school of Evangelical theologians."<sup>43</sup>

Another book by Tasker seeks to exhibit this basic unity in a wider field. Just published by the Westminster Press on March 27, 1947, it carries the title, *The Old Testament in the New Testament*. The author suggests that it is a sequel to his earlier work on the Gospels. In this study Dr. Tasker, who is Professor of New Testament Exegesis in the University of London, examines the quotations from and allusions to the Old Testament in the various sections of the New Testament.

After paying his respects to Karl Barth and Kierkegaard in the preface, Dr. Tasker goes on in his introduction to comment on the new trend we have been noting. He says: "Perhaps the most important feature of recent New Testament scholarship has been the stress which it has laid upon the essential unity of the Bible, and of Biblical theology."<sup>44</sup>

In common with many British scholars, Dr. Tasker is more conservative

and constructive in his theological point of view than in his treatment of Biblical criticism. But he has made a real contribution in this book toward the re-emphasis on the unity of the Bible.

Very briefly we glance at the third trend, the reaction against the evolutionary explanation of everything in the Bible, especially in the Old Testament. In the June, 1946, issue of the *Journal of Biblical Literature*<sup>45</sup> there appeared a review of Dr. Fosdick's volume, *A Guide to the Understanding of the Bible* (1938). It was written by Walther Eichrodt, the Swiss theologian already mentioned, and was hindered by the war from reaching this country earlier. In it are some significant statements relating to our study. Eichrodt writes of Fosdick: "He bases his approach to the ethical and spiritual values of the Bible almost wholly on an evolutionary historicism; . . . reflecting the prevailing intellectual atmosphere of the past generation in biblical scholarship."<sup>46</sup>

Then the reviewer makes this very striking statement:

At the same time one cannot but be aware that Fosdick's book reflects a period of biblical scholarship which is now drawing to an end, while a new period is dawning. In his book the author has, to speak candidly, written the obituary of a whole scholarly approach and method of investigation.<sup>47</sup>

Eichrodt points out the fact that Fosdick's chief difficulty was his slavery to the evolutionary explanation of history. He says:

Thus Fosdick adopts a fundamental error of modern scholarly research in making the evolution of the religion of Israel begin with the most primitive ideas and practices in order to point a contrast between the alleged low level of early Israel and the high level evident in later books of the

<sup>42</sup> *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LXV, p. 413.

<sup>43</sup> R. V. G. Tasker, *The Nature and Purpose of the Gospels*, New York: Harper, 1944, p. x.

<sup>44</sup> R. V. G. Tasker, *The Old Testament in the New Testament*, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1947, p. 13.

<sup>45</sup> Reprinted by permission in *The Asbury Seminary*, Vol. I, No. IV (December, 1946), pp. 129ff.

<sup>46</sup> *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LXV (1946), p. 205.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

Old Testament.<sup>48</sup>

Pursuing the criticism a bit further he shows the arbitrariness of this method.

The author fails entirely to mention such fundamental matters as the wrath and the stern severity of God, which formed so large a part of the prophetic message, presumably because they do not seem to fit well into the rising evolutionary curve from primitive polytheism toward the concept of the God of love.<sup>49</sup>

Lest it should appear that our terminal facilities are seriously out of order we must bring this study to a close. The evidence for a revival of

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 206.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 207.

Biblical theology could be continued almost indefinitely. But we should like to conclude with a few words from the closing paragraph of Hunter's fine work on *The Message of the New Testament*. He writes:

These are great days for theology. The Queen of the Sciences is once again coming into her own. Men are beginning to see that a Christianity without a theology is not Christianity at all; and they are turning back, some to Luther or Calvin, some to Thomas Aquinas. Some of us, with no disrespect for these great names, feel that the theology which the age needs should be built primarily on New Testament foundations. But, whatever be our views, all are realizing anew the importance of Biblical theology, and the paramount importance of the New Testament.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Hunter, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

# *Alumni Message*

J. HAROLD GREENLEE

The 1947 Commencement season of Asbury Theological Seminary was marked by a number of important "firsts" which furnish further indications that the seminary is "coming of age." Of the most immediate consequence of these was the fact that this year's class was the first to be graduated with full accreditation by the American Association of Theological Schools and approval by the University Senate of the Methodist Church. Another significant step was the awarding of the first of the Master of Religious Education degrees to three candidates, in addition to twenty-nine who received the Bachelor of Divinity degree.

Two other "first" honors were both received by the Rev. Don A. Morris, alumni association president. Elected to membership on the seminary board of trustees, he became the first graduate of the seminary to hold such a position; and at the commencement exercises he became the first graduate of the seminary to be honored by the seminary with the Doctor of Divinity degree, and thereby the first to hold two degrees from the seminary.

A change in commencement procedure is the inauguration this year of a graduation service at the end of summer school in addition to the regular spring exercises. Six degrees are to be conferred at the end of the current summer session.

A real treat of Seminary Alumni Day was the Alumni Day address by Dr. Clyde W. Meredith, president of Taylor University. By special arrangement, this address has been prepared for publication and appears elsewhere in this issue of the *Seminarian*. Be sure to read this challenging article.

The Seminary Alumni Banquet honored Dean Emeritus and Mrs. F. H. Larabee. Dr. Larabee is retiring from the faculty after thirty-two years of service in Asbury College and Asbury Theological Seminary. Ninety-nine guests crowded the seminary dining hall for a fine dinner and a special recognition service for the Larabees.

Three hundred seventy-three alumni have now received degrees from Asbury Theological Seminary. This means an increasing alumni association membership and consequently an increasing opportunity for the alumni to be of service to the seminary. Be an *active* member by keeping your annual dues paid or by becoming a Life Member. Then add the weight of your prayers, contributions, and influence to enable the seminary to fulfill its responsibility to the world.

# A Seminary's Alumni and the Expansion Of Her Public Relations

CLYDE W. MEREDITH

There is a text of Scripture which is relevant to the discussion which I plan to share with you today. It is Colossians 4:5, and reads "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time." One might be tempted in addressing the alumni of a seminary to discuss the theories that are now advanced concerning the actual position of Wesley on Eschatology, or the relation between capitalism and Calvinism. It is not my purpose, however, to pursue such a course. I have decided to be as intensely practical as the responsibilities of a college president have forced me to be in my own work. And it is for that reason I am interested in discussing with you, The Alumni and the expansion of the public relations of your Alma Mater.

There is something in a name, and for that reason the institution which you represent and the institution which I represent have certain connotations as we think of the names of them. Taylor is named after one of the greatest missionary bishops of early Methodism. This seminary is named after one of the first American bishops of Methodism, whose life was poured out in the evangelization and the superintendency of the church among the new colonists. What these men stood for comprise the traditions and aims of the institutions that bear their name.

The need for Asbury justified its inception. There was a call for a con-

servative seminary with an Arminian approach to Christian doctrine. Asbury Theological Seminary is reputedly just that. The products of this seminary must justify her continuance as an institution. No seminary should go far without asking herself on occasions: First, would the kingdom of God suffer if I were suddenly interred? Second, are my products now quite well identified with the ideals of my founders? Third, just what are the arguments now for my continuance? A candid reflection upon the matters involved in answering such questions must ever be part of the life of an institution which would gear itself with the past.

The noble and heroic work of Dr. and Mrs. H. C. Morrison lingers fresh in the memory of us all. They labored and you entered into their labors. Remember, however, that seminaries get old and most of those who have gotten old are no longer as they were in their youth. In no small measure, therefore, the future of Asbury lies not in her present staff, nor in the sacred regard we hold for her founders. Rather, Asbury's future lies in the alumni. What you allow here and what you foster here will make the Asbury of tomorrow. The road for changing any institution is always a long one. Particularly is this true of an educational institution. All of us recoil from too much monotony in life and the cry for a change is never silent for long. The time will come

when someone of the alumni of Asbury will clamor for a change in something, and he will not have to do so alone. What I am trying to say is, what seems secure now in Asbury Theological Seminary both in its aims and objectives and in its traditional ideals will without any question be secure tomorrow only after successful effort. It will require more than debate, but rather much wrestling and heroism to insure the same security day after tomorrow. But it can be done! The Alumni can see that that is true. It cannot be done, however, with an attempt upon the part of the alumni to hold their own to maintain the status quo; but rather, it must be done in a manner similar to our techniques in war. Our best defense is an offense in war, and likewise our greatest opportunity in keeping Asbury what she now is is to enlarge her horizons through her public relations. The alumni are a vital part of that enlargement.

By public relations I do not mean just general ballyhoo. Circuses have need of a parade, but seminaries do not. Nor do I mean by public relations a form of propaganda. So often there is propaganda where there is much ado about nothing. In other words we can have an alarm sounding with no actual fire. By public relations I do not mean publicity. That, as commonly understood, means talking Asbury Theological Seminary everywhere you go, the issuance of statistics, and the setting up of comparisons and contrasts with other schools. This may have its legitimate sphere in publicity. I refer to something deeper and more important, namely, the buildup which you can give to Asbury Seminary that results in a favorable verdict from the public. I mean the ability you have of selling yourself as an example of the Seminary's product.

The techniques of selling an institu-

tion locally, let us say, in its campus outreach, are quite well defined. Public Relations are included in recruiting programs for new students, the fund raising programs for expansion, the publicity that comes from the issuing of brochures, and other forms of advertising that keeps the reading public abreast of what is going on. Our public relations directors are aware of a certain finesse that must be observed in an institution's courteous treatment of any and all who come and go from the campus. The indifference of the telephone girl, or the girl at the information desk, sometimes accounts for unfavorable reactions that prove costly. An institution might have a professor very loyal to its point of view, but who is a grouch so that only his jelled orthodoxy could be boasted of. I mention these things only in passing for the alumni's relation to the public relations program concerns itself with those vistas of opportunity that are out there where you have gone and where there are no ends of possibilities.

There are material possibilities. Not long ago an Ohio pastor brought a gentleman to our campus after having sold him on the worth of an institution that was producing men standing for the things which characterized his ministry. That man wanted to make an investment in an institution that was seeking to provide undergraduate preparation in an atmosphere like that to which he had been committed across the years. There is a large student loan fund of \$300,000 in an institution not far from here that came as a result of a \$100 gift to a student in that institution a few years ago. Before the close of the school year in which that \$100 has been given as a grant-in-aid the student who had been recipient of that gift sought out from the administration the name and address of the man who had helped to make her year in school a reality.

Sitting across from him she gave him her name, a report on her work, and expressed heartfelt thanks for the investment he had made in her. Upon learning this the donor inquired if there were others like her, and it resulted in a \$300,000 student loan fund being set up in that institution. Think of the \$100 gifts that have been sent in to Asbury students enabling them to carry on!

But spiritual possibilities loom up as your greatest opportunity to enhance Asbury's prestige and growth. Remember there is a mandate from God concerning these precious doctrines you have been taught here. Many people do not know what is wrong with human society now; they merely know that something is wrong. Dr. Compton of George Washington University has said, "Vision—Hope—Faith, are not a part of Science." Eisenhower recently said, "If society is to be saved it must be saved by the church." Now Asbury men know what these men mean. But you must become aware, if you are not already, that the rank and file of our ministers out in the field are trying other and devious methods of meeting the issues of our time. They are not interested in the prayer-meeting about which you have been taught and in which you have participated. They do not believe in the evangelism in which you have been encouraged to engage. The Sunday night service with them has long since been discarded. Nevertheless they have a program and a following, and frankly there is a veritable Mt. Carmel contest before you. "The God that answereth by fire, let Him be God" is a part of the verdict of modern times.

To put it another way, as an alumnus of Asbury Theological Seminary you must in your respective community vindicate the contention that God is God of revivals, the God of high

moral standards, the God of the prayer-meeting, the God who smiles upon the type of work you are doing as a minister who is committed to the ideals which were inculcated here. Remember if you compromise out there it will not be long before you will insist on a compromise back here. Many times a professor is introduced onto the staff of an institution with this sort of an explanation, "It is true that he does not stand exactly where the former professor stood and he has some ideas which are a bit foreign, I admit, to what the institution actually is supposed to represent or reflect, but in the main he is all right and any way, his position on the faculty will enhance the prestige of the institution, etc." You as alumni will need to maintain a ceaseless vigilance against such encroachments.

It must ever be your contention that there can be no compromise out where you have gone. Your object must be to enhance the justification of need for Asbury Theological Seminary by you yourself proving conclusively that men of your type are the type needed by the hour in which we live. If you yourself are a mountain of eccentricities, if you have a single tracked, hobby type of ministry, then Asbury Theological Seminary will be that in the eyes of a lot of people. On the other hand it will appear to be a great crusading institution fostering holy living and contending for sound doctrine, if you as an alumnus will follow that line in your ministry. Asbury must not just maintain her status quo. Asbury must abound, and you must help her. And at the same time let us seek to live in such a way that if God were to permit Dr. Morrison to come again in the flesh and observe this institution, he could exclaim. "Thank God."

# John 20:23; Matthew 16:19 and 18:18 In the Light of the Greek Perfect Tenses

WILBER T. DAYTON

## I THE PROBLEM

Commenting on the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament, W. D. Chamberlain of Louisville Presbyterian Seminary cites Matthew 16:19 as an example of an error which the revisers failed to correct. He quotes and comments as follows:

"I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." The words 'bound' and 'loosed' in the original Greek are in the future perfect tense and should be translated 'shall have been bound' and 'shall have been loosed.' The difference in the two meanings is of theological importance—it is a question whether Jesus means that Heaven determines the policy for Christian ministers, or whether the ministers have authority over Heaven. I don't know whether the translators perpetuated this mistake through ignorance or by choice.<sup>1</sup>

The importance of this reference is seen in the fact that the authority back of one of the most prevalent and most significant errors in Christendom is found in the current translation and interpretation of the Greek future perfect tense in Matthew 16:19 and 18:18 and the Greek perfect tense in John 20:23. On this basis over half of the professed Christians in the world believe in sacerdotalism—that is, that

<sup>1</sup> *Louisville Courier Journal*, Feb. 17, 1946. Quoted in *The Union Seminary Review*, May, 1946 by P. Frank Price, "The 1946 version of the New Testament—from a Reader's Point of View," p. 209.

certain men have been divinely authorized to forgive sins in behalf of God.<sup>2</sup>

The verses in the Authorized Version in English read as follows: (In parentheses the suggested corrections of tense are made.)

John 20:23—Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted (perfect tense: have been remitted) unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained (perfect tense: have been retained).

Matthew 16:19—And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound (future perfect tense: shall have been bound) in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed (future perfect tense: shall have been loosed) in heaven.

Matthew: 18:18—Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound (future perfect tense: shall have been bound) in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed (future perfect tense: shall have been loosed) in heaven.

The problem of translation and interpretation involves the whole question of man's place in the Divine Economy. Are the servants of God to act upon their own judgment and initiative and bind Heaven to ratify their own exclusions from, and inclusions in, the kingdom of heaven (as seems to be a fair interpretation of the implications of sacerdotalism as so commonly practiced by the Roman Catholics and some other bodies)? Or are

<sup>2</sup> J. R. Mantey: "The Mistranslation of the Perfect Tense in John 20:23, Matthew 16:19 and Matthew 18:18," *Journal of Biblical Literature* LVIII (1939), p. 243.



the ministers of God sent forth as ambassadors who carry the terms of peace and forgiveness — doing what God has authorized and has Himself done, and declaring what God has declared? That is, are the men of God judges who decide the salvation or reprobation of their hearers or are they preachers, “proclaiming the acceptable year of the Lord” and offering salvation on Divine terms?

Evangelical Protestantism has always held to the latter while sacerdotalism has generally if not always involved the former through the priestly insistence upon selecting the recipients of its saving sacraments. It should be said, however, that the evangelical view need not be interpreted as minimizing the high calling of the Gospel ministry. What could be a more exalted position than that of an ambassador of Christ beseeching men in Christ’s stead to be reconciled to God and declaring the terms of reconciliation? Man’s function is necessary and in a limited sense decisive. But God trusts no human being to give the ultimate verdict in any soul’s salvation. God Himself by the Holy Spirit applies redemption personally. Man is authorized only to carry the tidings and to intercede. That seems to be the implications of the Greek tenses. In all of the leading English Versions, at least, there is either considerable ambiguity or the positive implication of the opposite view: namely, that man, in God’s stead, forgives sin and God ratifies the act, making it His own.

Part of the confusion may lie in the fact that there is no exact equivalent in English of the Greek perfect tense and that at best one can only use an English tense and leave the untranslatable element to the commentators. But it was, in the writer’s opinion, unfortunate to use a rendering in these passages that makes no suggestion of a past action that has come to

completion and has abiding results.

With Chamberlain, the writer does not fully understand why no revision has been made of the translation of these passages. The wonder is increased by the fact that at least three or four times this matter has been called to the attention of the scholars.

In 1922, J. R. Mantey had an article published in *The Expositor* in London under the title “Perfect Tense Ignored in Matthew 16:19; 18:18, and John 20:23.” Later he read before the Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis in America a paper entitled “The Mistranslation of the Perfect Tense in John 20:23, Matthew 16:19, and Matthew 18:18.” In 1939, this article was published in the *Journal of Biblical Literature*.<sup>4</sup> In the same issue a rebuttal appeared under the title “The Meaning of John 20:23, Matthew 16:19 and Matthew 18:18.”<sup>5</sup> The author was Henry J. Cadbury of Harvard University, a member of the newly selected committee on revision. He expressed strong disagreement with Dr. Mantey at several crucial points of the discussion. In 1941 W. D. Chamberlain produced *An Exegetical Grammar of the Greek New Testament*<sup>6</sup> in which he commented on Matthew 16:19 and 18:18 in words similar to those already quoted.<sup>7</sup> He agreed essentially with Mantey.

This difference of opinion that existed among these scholars and that involved a member of the committee on the new revision attracted the attention of a doctorate candidate who was majoring in the field of New Testament at Northern Baptist Theological Seminary. He continued the research in consultation with Professor Mantey and compiled the results in the dissertation which is being

<sup>4</sup> Volume XXIII, pp. 470-2.

<sup>5</sup> Volume LVIII, pp. 243-9.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 251-4.

<sup>7</sup> Macmillan Company.

<sup>8</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 180.

summarized in this article. The final copies were presented to the seminary in May, 1945, and the conclusions were sent to Professor Cadbury. It was found, however, that the work of revision had already been officially terminated and the material had reached the publisher. Hence no action was taken—either favorable or adverse.

Briefly stated, the aim of the research was to clarify the problems of the controversy and, if possible, to find the correct translation and interpretation of the verses. More explicitly, the purpose of the dissertation was to ascertain the basic meanings of the *Koiné* Greek perfect and future perfect tenses and to determine the proper divergent meanings, and to bring this information to the translation of John 20:23, Matthew 16:19, and Matthew 18:18 with a view to finding a correct translation and interpretation and removing the grounds for the erroneous doctrines and corrupt practices connected with sacerdotalism. With this objective, the work is naturally a sequel to and extension of Mantey's articles.

## II

### PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

As strong collateral evidence against the common translations of these passages Mantey points out in his articles that it was not until the torch of learning and theology passed from the Greek-speaking and Greek-writing Ante-Nicene Fathers to the Latin-writing Fathers that these passages were used to support such a doctrine as sacerdotalism. The inference is of course that Greek-speaking theologians would have known their own language well enough to realize that the Greek tenses would permit no such interpretation.

Mantey further states that not only did some Latin Fathers quote these passages to prove that priests, as

successors of Peter, can forgive sins, but that it was in the Latin versions that erroneous translations appeared and that these errors have been repeated in all languages up to the present time. That is, of course, quite natural in view of the fact that the perfect tense in Greek is far from identical with that in the Latin, English, and modern European languages. Allen and Greenough point out the loss of the distinction between the two uses in Latin (i.e., perfect definite and the historical or aoristic perfect).<sup>9</sup> Goodwin and Gulick also state that, unlike the Latin and English perfects, the Greek Perfect is not properly a past tense, but rather represents a fixed condition in the present.<sup>10</sup> That this does not exclude a past reference also is, however, clear in their further statement that "the perfect represents an action as finished at the time at which the present would represent it as going on."<sup>11</sup> Dana and Mantey add that the "Greek aorist is much wider in range than the English simple past, while the Greek perfect is more restricted in use than the parallel English tense."<sup>12</sup> They add that "the confusion arises from the effort to explain the Greek in terms of our own idiom."<sup>13</sup>

To these perils confronting the translators must be added the uncertainty that arises from the fact that ancient scholars did not adequately use the inductive and historical methods and were too little aware of the value of the study of comparative languages. It was not until the nineteenth century, in the days of Winer and Bopp, that these methods really began

<sup>9</sup> J. R. Mantey, "The Mistranslation of the Perfect Tense in John 20:36, Matthew 16:19 and 18:18," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LVIII (1939), p. 244.

<sup>10</sup> *Latin Grammar*, Article 279 (Note) p. 296.

<sup>11</sup> *Greek Grammar*, Article 735, p. 172.

<sup>12</sup> *Op. cit.*, Article 1273, p. 272.

<sup>13</sup> *Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, p. 201.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 200.

to come into their own."

Furthermore it is known that by the time of Latin Christianity there was already a marked tendency to shift the function of the ministry from the more evangelistic and prophetic work to the more formal and liturgical. Simultaneous with the resultant obscuring of Christian experience and the passing of creeds from genuine confessions to mere symbols, there was a definite strengthening of the outward organization of Christendom. This was accomplished in part by increasing the authority of the clergy and assuming that the priests were divinely authorized to forgive sin.

If, then, the Greek-speaking Fathers did not support their ecclesiasticism and sacerdotal tendency by these verses and the Latins did, the circumstances being what they were, it would seem reasonable to question the accuracy of the Latin translation and application until it could be firmly established. The same would apply to the subsequent translations into the languages affected by the Latin tongue, traditions and theology.

But the central argument against the current translations is the fact that, as Mantey says, "according to the unanimous testimony of all Greek grammarians, the perfect tense pictures a past action, the result of which was present to the speaker or writer." Regardless of which phase of meaning is dominant, he insists that the perfect tense always implies past action, even though the emphasis is on the continuance of the results. There are, he admits, a few rare usages where for rhetorical or dramatic effect a perfect may be used to imply immediate future action, but he considers such an irregular translation a most unsafe foundation for a doctrine. The future perfect tense also, he argues, carries the idea of action completed at the

<sup>14</sup> A. T. Robertson, *Greek Grammar in the Light of Historical Research*, pp. 3, 10.

time of the leading verb. Finally, the general trend and tenor of the New Testament was invoked as confirming the conclusion that an accurate translation of the perfect tenses precludes the possibility of any sacerdotal teaching in these words of Jesus.

In the rebuttal, Cadbury grants that the perfect tenses usually indicate a situation already existent at some time contemplated in the sentence but denies that the time contemplated is necessarily that of the other verb in these sentences. He argues that the influence of the general conditions in which these verbs occur makes it difficult and unnecessary to limit them as to past, present, and future. Four verses are quoted which he considers proof that the perfect in the apodosis does not always indicate an action or condition prior to the time in the protasis.<sup>15</sup> Various New Testament grammarians are cited to show that the perfects used are not regular but are variously termed futuristic (Blass-Debrunner),<sup>16</sup> vivid use for event yet future (Moulton),<sup>17</sup> gnomic present perfect (A. T. Robertson) and proleptical (A. T. Robertson).<sup>18</sup> Cadbury lists John 20:23 with these and treats it similarly.

Permanency and certainty rather than prior time seem to him to be the significance of the future perfect tense as used in Matthew. He cites Goodwin<sup>19</sup> and Stahl<sup>20</sup> in confirmation of his opinion. In view of the difficulty of rendering the Greek idiom adequately into English and because of the influence of the general condition, he feels that the future tense is as good

<sup>15</sup> I John 2:5; James 2:10; Romans 14:23 and Romans 13:8.

<sup>16</sup> 6 Aufl. 1931, Article 344.

<sup>17</sup> *Prolegomena*, p. 271.

<sup>18</sup> *Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, 1914, p. 897.

<sup>19</sup> *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses*, 1890, Article 77, 78, 79.

<sup>20</sup> *Kritischhistorische Syntax des griechischen Verbums*, 1907, p. 143f.

a translation as any.

Cadbury then seeks by the case of the paralytic to clinch his rebuttal of Mantey's assertion that the perfect tense would place the act of forgiveness prior to the time of the conditional clause. He points out that Jesus used the perfect tense in Luke 7:47 and obviously meant "thy sins have been hereby forgiven by me." He objects to allowing an authority to Jesus which we do not allow to his disciples and urges that for consistency the cases must be treated alike.

He implies, finally, that Mantey stakes his whole argument against priestly absolution on the past reference in the perfect tense and adds that the case for or against sacerdotalism does not rest upon disputed points of Greek grammar. Though there is some truth in these last two statements, it is the writer's opinion that they do not do justice to Mantey or to the issue at stake.

Though many branches of knowledge have something to contribute to a subject of this sort, the chief point in question here appears to be linguistic and grammatical. Therefore the major emphasis in this investigation is placed upon this phase in an attempt to remove the seeming contradictions among the scholars concerning the meaning of the perfect tenses.

However, the linguistic findings should be tested, substantiated, and supplemented by facts from theology and church history. This is in harmony with Mantey's example, and even Cadbury went on record against the advisability of deciding the matter of sacerdotalism on grammatical grounds alone.

The first step in the method of approach is to seek the basic meaning of the perfect tense. This is done by reference to the standard grammatical works and by examination of the Greek texts, themselves. Then it is

necessary to examine, classify, and evaluate the alleged variations in relation to the basic meaning of the tense. Finally, the findings are applied to John 20:23 with the aim of estimating the degree of probability or discovering the certainty of the translation and interpretation that emerges. To check the results, brief reference is made to church history and theology.

This same process is repeated with the future perfect tenses in the Matthean passages and the resultant renderings of all three verses are compared with the sacerdotal system to see if there is any real basis in Scripture for the priestly claims.

### III

#### BASIC MEANING OF THE PERFECT TENSE.

A. T. Robertson declares that:

Each tense has its specific idea. That idea is normal and can be readily understood. Various modifications arise, due to the verb itself, the context, the imagination of the user of the tense. The result is a complex one, for which the tense is not wholly responsible.<sup>21</sup>

In this chapter it is our concern to find this one specific idea of the Greek perfect tense. After it has been located, it is illustrated and confirmed by references from the classical and *koine* writings.

A survey of the opinions of scholars on the basic meanings of the perfect tense reveals a general agreement on certain essential points, though there may be considerable variety in expression and application of the principle. In the writer's opinion, Mantey's statement still stands that "According to the unanimous testimony of all Greek grammarians, the perfect tense pictures a past action, the result of which was present to the speaker or writer." The following serve as examples:

<sup>21</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 830.

Burton: The reference of the tenses is thus double: it implies a past action and affirms an existing result.<sup>22</sup>

Davis: The perfect indicative generally expresses the present result of past action. It then has to do with the past and the present.<sup>23</sup>

Moulton: The perfect action is a variety by itself, denoting what began in the past and still continues.<sup>24</sup>

Goodwin and Gulick: Perfect, action finished in present time and so denoting an accomplished state.<sup>25</sup>

Kuhner: Das griechische Perfect . . . nicht bloss eine gegenwartig vollendete Handlung, sondern die vollendete Handlung zugleich auch als in ihren Wirkungen und Folgen noch fortbestehend bezeichnet. The Greek Perfect . . . not merely marks a present fulfilled act, but the completed act also as in its operations and results continuing to exist.<sup>26</sup>

Blass: Das Perfectum (sammt dem Plusqu.) vereinigt in sich gleichsam Präsens und Aorist, indem es die Dauer des Vollendeten ausdrückt. The perfect (along with the plusq.) unites in itself as it were present and aorist, in that it expresses the duration (continuance) of the completed act.<sup>27</sup>

In all of these instances there is a variety of expression but a single central fact described harmoniously by all. It is clear that the basic function of the tense is to picture both a past action and a result that is present. A close observation of the word 'present' in these quotations would convince one that the grammarians mean in each case 'present to the speaker or writer.' In fact, several writers were very explicit in this detail.

Examples are numerous in the Greek texts to substantiate this principle.

In the Anabasis 2.1,4 Bevier translates the per-

<sup>22</sup> *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek*, article 74, p. 37.

<sup>23</sup> *Beginner's Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, article 368, p. 152.

<sup>24</sup> *Prolegomena*, p. 109.

<sup>25</sup> *Greek Grammar*, Article 1250c, p. 267.

<sup>26</sup> *Ausführliche Grammatik der griechischen Sprache*, article 384, pp. 146-7.

<sup>27</sup> *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch*, p. 194.

fect of die, τετελεύτηκεν, "He has died (is dead)"

In Lysias XII, 22 the perfect tense is used in the statement that they have done nothing bad or shameful to denote the guilt that would have existed.<sup>28</sup>

Galatians 3:1—Jesus Christ was set forth as crucified (perfect tense, implying that he remains a propitiation).

Space does not permit one to multiply examples, but both past action and present result are seen in each.

This is a significant point because it makes Mantey stand on the literal basic use of the tense while Cadbury is found championing a figurative or irregular usage. The latter may occupy his position by choice but by so doing he must assume the burden of proof, for it is an accepted principle of hermeneutics that the literal meaning of a passage is the correct meaning unless some necessity for a figurative interpretation can be found in modifications arising due to the verb itself, the context, or the imagination of the user of the tense.

#### IV

##### APPLICATIONS AND MODIFICATIONS OF THE MEANING OF THE PERFECT TENSE

It is in the study of the various applications and modifications of the basic idea of the perfect that the grammarians express a great variety of opinions and multiply terms to express their views. Here one meets such expressions as extensive perfect, intensive perfect, intensive present, perfect with present meaning, perfect of existing state, entered state, result, presents of resulting condition, aoristic perfects, gnomic or empiric perfects, iterative perfects, dated past action, dramatic historic present perfects, proleptical perfects, vivid for future perfect, futuristic present perfects, future action vividly expressed, permanent state, and duration.

<sup>28</sup> C. D. Adams, *Lysias, Selected Speeches*, p. 78.

Therefore the task at hand is to discover from a study of the various grammars which of the many uses of the perfect tense are but specific applications of the basic meaning and which, if any, are distinct variations from it. For the purposes of the present paper the simple applications will be called regular or literal usages and the distinct variations will be called irregular or figurative. When the more or less figurative uses have been isolated, analyzed, classified, and accounted for as well as possible, John 20:23 will be studied in the light of the comparative frequency or scarcity of the figurative use.

What A. T. Robertson calls the extensive perfect presents no problem because it is the usual and most natural use of the tenses.<sup>29</sup> Because of the overlapping it is possible to group together under the intensive perfects the perfect with present meaning, perfects of existing state, presents of resulting condition, and perfects of entered state and result. These are comparatively confusing if one tries to find consistency in the grammars concerning them. The same men frequently come so near to contradicting themselves that one must study closely to grasp the real meaning.

Burton says that no sharp line exists between the perfect of completed action and the perfect of existing state and adds:

To the latter head are to be assigned those instances in which the past is practically dropped from thought, and the attention is turned wholly to the existing result.<sup>30</sup>

He<sup>31</sup> also quotes Goodwin to the effect that:

The perfect, although it implies the performance of the action in the past time, yet states only that it stands completed at the present time.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>29</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 893.

<sup>30</sup> *Op. cit.*, article 76, p. 38.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40, article 85.

<sup>32</sup> *Moods and Tenses*, p. 44.

Robertson classifies the perfect of existing result with the intensive perfect and defines the latter as "perfects where the punctiliar idea is dropped and only the durative remains"<sup>33</sup> but remarks that "it is questionable if the difference does not lie in the nature of the verb rather than in a special modification of the tense."<sup>34</sup>

It becomes at times a bit difficult to harmonize all of the statements of the same writers so that they are consistent with themselves, but if there is no sharp line between the two functions and if it is not grammatical considerations that eclipse the past reference and make these perfects "almost purely durative,"<sup>35</sup> it would seem proper to call these instances true perfects. That is, the reason for the use of the perfect tense instead of present could be traced to the fact that the action which was completed and which produced the continuing result was not wholly lost from consideration.

The grammars contain a number of references in which the writers make very broad statements about the loss of the punctiliar force or past reference and then hasten to qualify their statements as did Burton and Robertson.

Concerning verbs of senses, emotion, etc., Smyth says "The intensive perfect apparently denotes an action rather than a state resulting from an action, and is translated like a present."<sup>36</sup> But then he hastens to state that "most if not all such verbs may be regarded as true perfects, i.e., they denote a mental or physical state resulting from the accomplishment of the action; as πέρφρικα, 'I have shuddered and am now in a state of shuddering'."<sup>37</sup>

Moulton, in his edition of Winer's

<sup>33</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 894.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 895.

<sup>36</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 288, article 1135.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 286.

work, states the issue clearly. He says:

The perfect is used for the present, only in so far as the perfect denotes an action or a state the commencement and establishment of which belong, as completed events to past time.<sup>38</sup>

Kuhner illustrates this use by τέθνηκα "ich bin gestorben, und bin nun tot (I have died and am now dead)."<sup>39</sup>

In these uses it should be kept in mind, as Enslin points out, that though occasionally the emphasis is almost wholly on the result, the action which produced it is not overlooked. It is actually more taken for granted than consciously emphasized.<sup>40</sup>

Again there are those instances where the grammarians say that the past act is dropped from thought but by the very wording of their statement they imply that there was such a past act in the background which was in some sense responsible for the occurrence of the tense. Burton mentions this phenomenon in relation to a "few verbs which use the perfect in this sense only."<sup>41</sup> He illustrates with γέγραπται, is written, stands written. Nunn illustrates the verbs in which "the past action of which it is the result is left out of account by γέγραπται, πέποιθα, οἶδα, ἔγνωκα and μέμνημαι."<sup>42</sup> Smyth illustrates those that may be properly translated by the English present tense with κέκτημαι (I have acquired) possess, κέκλημαι (have received a name) am called, etc.<sup>43</sup>

Moulton refers to the perfects with present meanings and accounts for them on the basis of "the mode of action belonging to the root, and on that exhibited in the present." He

illustrates by the conative present πείθω "apply persuasion" with its intransitive early perfect πέποιθα "I trust"<sup>44</sup>: It is worthy of note that Moulton accounted for the phenomena by other than grammatical means even in this verb which Thackeray remarks has "so much come to be regarded as a present that a new first aorist ἐπεποιθήσα is formed from it."<sup>45</sup>

Kuhner gives a list of forty-one verbs as not deriving the present meaning out of the concept of fulfilled action in the usual sense.<sup>46</sup> Many of these have already been discussed under other headings and one of them, οἶδα, is used by Moulton to illustrate the peculiar genius of the Greek perfect tense. He translates it "I discovered (εἶδον) and still enjoy the results," i.e., "I know."<sup>47</sup>

In view of all of these considerations it would not be presumptuous to state that even though the intensive perfect and the uses grouped with it do emphasize the entered result instead of the past act, it is to be seriously doubted that the influence of the past act is ever lost. And even if it should be lost, the nature of the verb would account for it instead of the significance of the tense itself. But in any case, the verbs in Matthew 16:19; 18:18, and John 20:23 do not even fall in this marginal class of words. Hence a concession here, even if necessary, would not be damaging to Mantey's position.

Another usage of the tense is called the aoristic perfect. In this use the emphasis is primarily on the punctiliar force, and it is the durative force that is in danger of eclipse. It might be said in passing that the aorist would normally have been used instead if there had not been a subtle

<sup>38</sup> Section 40, pp. 340, 1.

<sup>39</sup> *Ausführliche Grammatik*, p. 148.

<sup>40</sup> "The Perfect Tense in the Fourth Gospel," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LV (1936), p. 124.

<sup>41</sup> *Op. cit.*, article 75, p. 37.

<sup>42</sup> *Op. cit.*, article 96, p. 70.

<sup>43</sup> *Op. cit.*, article 1134, p. 286.

<sup>44</sup> *Prolegomena*, pp. 146, 7.

<sup>45</sup> *A Grammar of the Old Testament in Greek*, Vol. I, p. 287.

<sup>46</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 148, 9.

<sup>47</sup> *Prolegomena*, p. 109.

recognition of the result of the act. But whatever one concludes, the results are irrelevant since this paper is concerned only to note the preservation of the past reference.

Gnomic or empiric perfects appear to emphasize sense instead of the past but the past act may still be implied. Smyth says that the empiric perfect "may set forth a general truth expressly based on a fact of experience."<sup>48</sup> If so, there is nothing particularly irregular about this use of the perfect. At least, it is always safer to assume that there was a reason for using the perfect instead of the present tense. And that reason would normally be some sort of past reference.

Iterative perfects express a broken continuity, according to Robertson.<sup>49</sup> The perfect of dated past action to which Smyth refers<sup>50</sup> clearly has past references and so is irrelevant to the present study.

The existence of the dramatic historical present perfect is debated. Burton says there are no certain New Testament instances and says of possible instances that "This idiom is perhaps rather rhetorical than strictly grammatical."<sup>51</sup> Robertson defines this use as one in which "an action completed in the past is conceived in terms of present time for the sake of vividness."<sup>52</sup> However the past reference is not completely lost whether for the sake of vividness one by reflection throws himself back into the vivid past or by imagination draws the past up to the vivid present.

Proleptical perfects are also variously called prophetic-perfects, futuristic present perfects and futuristic perfects. From the foregoing discussions it is obvious that this future reference is rare and that it can hardly

be said to be due to grammatical considerations but rather to dramatic and rhetorical demands of the context. As Kuhner says:

The perfect, and to be sure in all forms, will with rhetorical stress be so used, that a not yet entered act will be anticipated as already fulfilled.<sup>53</sup>

He illustrates from Xen. *Cyr.* 7. 5, 23 (so that it is necessary that they either flee swiftly from the houses or be swiftly burned up.) Here the perfect is more forceful and dramatic than a simple future since it contemplates not the beginning of the calamity but its awful consummation as completed. This is a use that can hardly be denied. Nor is it denied in the classical writings by Mantey.<sup>54</sup>

Kuhner explains it as follows:

To the futuristic present (article 382, 5) corresponds consequently a futuristic perfect. The connection of the future comes either out of the construction of the sentence or out of the whole context of the speech before.<sup>55</sup>

Robertson also remarks that since the present tense is so often used in a futuristic sense, it is not strange to find the present perfect so used also as equal to the future perfect.<sup>56</sup>

Cadbury is right that a few New Testament grammarians do cite instances of a perfect implying future action. Robertson and others do grant a proleptical reference in a few passages such as I John 2:5, James 2:10, Romans 14:23 and 13:8.<sup>57</sup> But Burton states concerning his example (James 2:10) that "this is rather a rhetorical figure than a grammatical idiom."<sup>58</sup>

While it would likely be going too far to deny the possibility of such occurrences of proleptic perfects, it is

<sup>48</sup> *Op. cit.*, article 1136, p. 287.

<sup>49</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 893.

<sup>50</sup> *Op. cit.*, article 1137, p. 287.

<sup>51</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 38ff.

<sup>52</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 896.

<sup>53</sup> *Op. cit.*, article 384, p. 150.

<sup>54</sup> *Journal Biblical Literature*, *op. cit.*, pp. 243ff.

<sup>55</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 150.

<sup>56</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 898.

<sup>57</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 898; Moulton, *Prolegomena*, p. 271; Burton, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

<sup>58</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 23.



necessary to exercise due caution against using this figurative interpretation more freely than the facts demand. Good hermeneutics demands that the literal translation be used if practical before the figurative be considered. To grant a figurative use in one situation for sufficient reasons does not mean that it would have to be conceded elsewhere for insufficient reasons.

Furthermore, a number of examples cited fall short of certainty. Enslin says of instances in the Fourth Gospel that it is far simpler to call them theological. That is, though the events had not taken place in the lifetime of Jesus, they had for the later church.<sup>59</sup>

It should also be made clear that the issue in the proleptical perfect is not whether they should be considered simple futures in significance but whether or not they were used vividly for future perfects which will be discussed later.

Finally there is the perfect of permanent state or duration, which Cadbury also emphasizes. This meaning lies close to the genius of the tense as it has been described in this paper. The only caution that needs to be expressed is against so completely dissociating this permanent result from the past act which produced it and proceeding still farther to a figurative future translation as Cadbury does.<sup>60</sup> Permanence is not a substitute for the past act but rather a result of it.

That the Scripture writers did not mean simple future time seems quite obvious from the fact that they did not use the simple future tense. At least it should be assumed that they used the perfect tense consciously and literally until adequate ground for a figurative translation can be found in either the verb itself, the context, or the imagination of the writer.

<sup>59</sup> "The Perfect Tense in the Fourth Gospel," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LV (1936), p. 129.

<sup>60</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 252.

In conclusion, it may be said that no conclusive proof has been found of any use of the perfect tense in Greek where, due to grammatical considerations, the significance of past action was lost. Consequently, so far as any proof to the contrary is concerned, every perfect is, from a strictly grammatical standpoint, a true perfect. That is, it looks at both ends of the action or at least bears the marks of the influence of both the past act and existing result. Otherwise the present or aorist tense would have been used.

And it is seriously doubted that even the influence of the meaning of the verb itself, contextual elements, or the imagination of the writer ever completely removes all traces of either the past reference or the existing result from the perfect tense. Modification is common but eclipse has not been proven.

One might conclude that the literal is never wholly lost even in the figurative but is simply modified under varying influences. And there is a point beyond which a tense cannot go in departure from its literal use and still maintain even its symbolic value. If it goes beyond that point it is useless even as a figure. Another tense would have to be used.

#### IV

#### PERFECT TENSE IN THE KOINE' GREEK

To verify the findings of the preceding studies and to estimate more accurately the comparative frequency of the figurative and obscure uses, special attention was given to Colwell and Mantey's *Hellenistic Greek Reader* and Strabo's *Geography*, Vol. I.

In the former volume the writer located some 258 examples of the uses of the perfect tense (exclusive of pluperfects and future perfects). After those with quite obvious past reference were eliminated, 27 occurrences were left—less than ten and one-half per cent of the whole. These passages

contained only 10 different verbs with their compounds and were of the type that has already been discussed at length. No reason was found to modify the previous conclusions.

In Strabo's volume, 363 examples of the perfect tense were studied. Here, if allowance be made for certain technical expressions such as the words for torrid, frigid, etc., some 43 instances were worthy of special attention, or less than 12 per cent. 29 of these uses involve only 4 common verbs and their compounds which have already been treated. Careful study only confirmed the former findings.

The marked absence of proleptical perfects in the volumes studied is significant, the only clear instances noted being in the imperative mood and hence on a very different basis from the figurative use that would be needed to translate John 20:23 proleptically.

Neither from the Greek grammars, nor the classical illustrations, nor the Koiné studies has any reason been found to deny Mantey's statement that "the perfect tense pictures a past action, the result of which was present to the speaker or writer."

## V

### TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION OF JOHN 20:23

In the foregoing discussion, it has been amply shown that the normal use of the perfect tense is to indicate a past act with its result still present to the speaker or writer. And it has appeared that this implication of past action persisted even in the various modifications and applications. Therefore, it would be quite presumptuous to insist on grammatical grounds that one should leave this literal use of the perfect tense and use a figurative rendering that ignored the prior past act.

Since the perfect tense is used, there is a past action implied that would

normally be reckoned from the time of the speaker. Thus a literal translation would seem to rule out the origination of the forgiveness in the human agent and demand that the forgiveness be an already accomplished fact (at least in the Divine purpose) at the time to which Jesus referred. In other words, the human agent must treat as forgiven none except those whom God had already forgiven. The forgiveness would then be a divine act simply proclaimed by the human agent but not in any real sense accomplished by him. Man's function would be that of interpreting and applying the will of God to man instead of intruding into the mediatorial office of Christ and deciding man's salvation. As Christian scribes and interpreters they were warned only to apply the divine will.

This literal use will stand unless some reason for a figurative sense can be found due to the verb itself, the context, or the imagination of the user of the tense!<sup>11</sup>

In the first place the verbs used here are not of the type that needed such full disposition because of a loss of emphasis on the past act. Secondly, there is nothing in the context or the inherent logic of the statement that would make the literal translation improbable. In fact, if one grants the supernatural, as he must if he hopes to understand the Bible, it would be far more logical that God in His eternal purpose would, on the basis of His foreknowledge of repentance, forgive the penitent than that He would leave the decision to fallible man. As it has been said, "It is logical that the remitting of sin and retaining of sin would, as prophetically ministerial acts, rest upon corresponding acts of God, already accomplished in the Spirit."<sup>12</sup> Or as Wesley says, "Are not the sins of one who truly repents and unfeignedly believes in Christ, remit-

<sup>11</sup> A. T. Robertson, *op. cit.*, p. 830.

<sup>12</sup> Lange, *Commentary*, John 20:23.

ted without sacerdotal absolution? And are not the sins of one who does not repent or believe, retained even with it?"<sup>65</sup>

Thirdly, the imagination of the writer, if we grant the Divine inspiration of the writer and the consequent theological consistency of the Scriptures, would support the literal use instead of the figurative. Jesus constantly warned against the assumptions and excesses of the Pharisees. How unthinkable that he should now commission such extravagances. Romans 8:28-30 seems to make it very clear that the idea of forgiveness is God's; the purpose is God's; the knowledge is God's; the predestination is an act of God; the pattern is God's; justification and glorification are acts of God. All is of God in a final sense though there are human conditions to be met. Man proclaims but God has final authority. It is God's gospel proclaimed by human beings, and as Matthew Henry says, "God will never alter this rule of judgment, nor vary from it; those whom the gospel acquits shall be acquitted, and those whom the gospel condemns shall be condemned."<sup>66</sup>

## VI

### OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED

It has been objected that these perfect tenses stand in general conditions and hence are very difficult to classify as to time. One must concede that the problem is complicated by this fact and surprise may even be expressed that the perfect tense should even occur in these conditional sentences. But the very fact that the perfect tense did here displace the more regular present is evidence that the writer had a reason. Might not the reason be the normal function of preserving a reference to prior action?

<sup>65</sup> John Wesley, *Notes*, John 20:23.

<sup>66</sup> *Commentary*, John 20:23.

If relatives, participles and the like are also considered, the present writer has located 17 cases where the perfect is so used besides the Johannine passage.<sup>67</sup> In some of these examples it is not wise to assert dogmatically that the action expressed by the perfect is always necessarily past to the speaker or previous to the action of the protasis. Romans 6:7 and 7:2, in fact, seem to imply that the action of the protasis makes a contribution to the completion of the act or state of the apodosis. The action is of course past from some point but sometimes in a general condition that seems to be a moving point as it applies to each of the particular cases on which the generalization was based. Thus these verses can be translated "For the one who died finds himself freed from sin" and "If the husband dies, she is in a state of having been freed from the law of the husband."

The remaining 15 passages vary considerably, sometimes emphasizing the permanent state and sometimes exhibiting a proleptical tendency. But they are all true perfects. It simply is not always possible, because of the nature of a general condition, to fix the point of the completion of the action as previous to the time of the speaker or of the protasis.

However there is a new element that must be considered in John 20:23. In the other cases only one agent had to be considered and the nature of the construction often demanded that this sole agent aid in bringing about the result in the apodosis. However in John we have a double agency. Both God and man are pictured as acting. It is simply a question of who has priority. The literal use gives precedence to God and the figurative to man.

<sup>67</sup> Romans 2:25; 6:7; 7:2; 13:8; 14:23; John 3:18; 5:24; I Cor. 7:39; Jas. 2:10; I John 2:5; I Esdras 3:21; Xen: *Anab.* i, 8, 12; Xen: *Mem.* i, 2, 21; Xen: *Cyr.* iv, 2, 26; Demosthenes 24, 139; Plato: Protagoras 328b; Thucydides 2, 45.

Since the literal makes sense, the figurative is, from a grammatical standpoint, highly improbable.

Another question arises from the words "ye remit." The clear implication is that man has a part in the remission. However, the logic of the situation would be satisfied by the "prophetically ministerial" act of proclaiming God's will and the conditions of pardon.

Another question arises from the words "ye remit." The clear implication is that man has a part in the remission. However, the logic of the situation would be satisfied by the "prophetically ministerial" act of proclaiming God's will and the conditions of pardon.

Then there remains Cadbury's final objection to allowing a "sacerdotalism" to Jesus that we do not allow to his disciples. That is a theological question that must be answered theologically, in part. The present writer feels that there is adequate evidence for the unique character and deity of Jesus Christ to warrant such a distinction, but space does not permit prolonged doctrinal discussion. It can only be stated in passing that Jesus in assuming the "sacerdotalism" of forgiving sins was attempting to establish his unique claim to Deity with all of its prerogatives. Nothing in the situation warrants the assumption that the divine prerogatives were shared by the apostles. Hence it is concluded that the literal interpretation is grammatically probable, logically reasonable and in harmony with the facts of the rest of the Scripture.

For similar reasons it is held that the figurative translation, as authorizing priestly absolution, is from a grammatical standpoint highly conjectural, from logical considerations preposterous, from the viewpoint of theological consistency impossible, and from the records of the apostolic practice historically untenable.

Therefore the evidence appears to be

preponderantly in favor of the literal translation "Whose soever sins ye remit, they have been remitted to them; whose soever sins ye retain, they have been retained" and the corresponding interpretation that man's act was preceded by God's act and that men were warned to avoid any scribal or priestly assumptions and treat as forgiven only those whom God has already forgiven.

## VII

### THE MEANING OF THE FUTURE PERFECT TENSE

In contrast to the abundance of material on the perfect tense there stand the few fragmentary references to the future perfect tense in Greek grammars. One gains the impression from the paucity and inadequate nature of the treatments that very little is known about the subject. This is quite natural in view of the rare occurrence of the tense in literature.

The situation can be more fully appreciated when it is realized that the writer upon examination of Strabo's *Geography*, Vol. I; Plutarch's *Lives*, Vol. I; Philo's *Works*, Vol. I; the *Hellenistic Greek Reader*<sup>66</sup>; *Papyrus Reader*<sup>67</sup>; *Catalog of Greek Papyri in John Rylands Library*, and part of Plutarch's *Lives*, Vol. II for future perfects, found only two clear cases of the use of the tense.<sup>68</sup> However he found 1100 examples of the perfect tense in only the first volumes mentioned. As Robertson and Davis say, the "future perfect was always a rare tense and nearly extinct in the New Testament."<sup>69</sup> They attribute this to the fact that such a tense is not often necessary.

The present method is to study the

<sup>66</sup> Colwell and Mantey.

<sup>67</sup> Goodspeed and Colwell.

<sup>68</sup> Plutarch's *Lives*, Vol. I, p. 66; Philo, Vol. I of *Omnia Opera*, p. 358.

<sup>69</sup> *A New Short Grammar of the Greek Testament*, article 403b, p. 305.

opinions of the various grammarians and also to make a first-hand analysis of the sources used by these writers together with such other examples as can be found in the texts themselves.

Kuhner says that the Greek "futurum exactum" marks an action which is fulfilled in the future and lasts on in its effects so that it is the future of the perfect.<sup>70</sup> He is one of the few to treat the matter with any degree of thoroughness. His 45 illustrations comprised by far the longest list of future perfects that the writer had seen prior to his own list of 95 which incorporated Kuhner's work.

Whereas the perfect tense contemplates an action that is complete at the time of the speaker, the future perfect simply projects the whole unit into the future and conceives an act which will have been completed at the time contemplated in the future and of which the results will abide. If the analogy of the perfect can be followed in this manner, a way has been found to compensate for the paucity of illustrations. Thus the hypothesis is suggested that the future perfect will not likely completely lose its implication of completed action or its reference to abiding results any more than the perfect tense did. However this must be tested.

As far as the basic, literal use of the tense is concerned, at least the grammarians seem to agree with Kuhner and with this hypothesis. And there appears to be no necessity of assuming that Goodwin and Gulick are contradicting these views when they speak of the permanent state depicted in the future perfect tense.<sup>71</sup> As in the perfect tense, the permanent state is simply the result of the completed action.

Examples include Plato, *Gorgias*,

<sup>70</sup> Anthon, *A Grammar of the Greek Language*, p. 230; Bevier, *op. cit.*, p. 48; Goodwin, *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses of the Greek Verb*, p. 43.

<sup>71</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 172.

506c "You will have been enrolled as the greatest benefactor"<sup>72</sup> and Dem. 14, 2 "All the present fear will have been dispelled."<sup>73</sup>

However, as there were specialized and figurative uses of the perfect, so there are of the future perfect. Goodwin says that "when the perfect is used in the sense of a present, the future perfect is used as a regular future; e.g. κεκλήσομαι, μεμνήσομαι, ἀφεστήξω."<sup>74</sup> But for the same reasons that the perfect tense was used instead of the present, the future perfect is used instead of the future. That reason must be found in some vestige of the idea of completed action of which the existing state is a result. Hence it would be difficult to deny that they are futures of true perfects even though the desire for rhetorical or dramatic effect has modified them considerably. Likewise there are intensive future perfects that correspond to intensive perfects. They express the same idea in the future time.

It can then with fairness be concluded that there is no necessity of interpreting the scholars as totally excluding all implication of completed action from the future perfect tense any more than from the perfect tense.

## VIII

### THE 95 EXAMPLES

The writer is of the opinion that of the 95 examples of the future perfect which he has examined, the literal significance of an act already completed in the future with enduring results is quite clear in 58 instances. In 16 more cases it seems necessary for one reason or another to reckon with an intensive element. And in the remaining 21 usages there are problems that deserved special consideration. These include such matters as threats, point-

<sup>72</sup> Goodwin, *p. cit.*, p. 43.

<sup>73</sup> Bevier, *p. cit.*, p. 48.

<sup>74</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 44.

ed warnings, strong affirmations of certainty and other decisive savings where the dramatic and rhetorical demands make a figurative use either possible or probable. However that is not the same as proving that the basic significance of the tense is wholly lost.

The regular future perfects have already been illustrated. The figurative is seen in such passages as Aristophanes, *Plutus*, 1027 "Speak and it shall have been accomplished" (or shall be fully achieved at once), and *Iliad* B, 257, "and this word shall have been brought to pass (shall verily be brought to pass)."

The periphrastic problem was also investigated and 33 of the 95 were so classified besides 8 more that were compound non-periphrastics. The other 54 were simple forms. It was observed that these were distributed somewhat evenly between the figurative and literal passages. Though there are interesting trends observable in such a study there appears to be nothing about the periphrastic idea, *per se*, that would determine the translation of a given passage as figurative, though it might conceivably increase the likelihood of such a use. In any case the figurative interpretation is dangerous unless necessary. And if necessary, the context will point the way and safeguard it from wild speculation.

Thus it appears that the literal use of the future perfect tense is as a future of a true perfect to express an act that will be already completed at the time contemplated in the future and that will have abiding results. Since this use appears to outnumber the figurative by a safe margin, since some of the figurative uses are granted on such uncertain grounds, since even the figurative examples maintain a solid ground of literal fact to support the analogy, and since the periphrastic construction does not materially change the translation, a figurative

translation would be highly conjectural from a grammatical standpoint.

## IX

### THE TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION OF MATTHEW 16:19 AND 18:18

The literal rendering of the Matthean passages would then be "whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven." And as has been indicated, the literal translation ought, from a grammatical standpoint, to be used unless it is shown to be awkward or impossible.

The meaning of the passages, then, would be that the apostles were elevated to the same rank and privileges which the scribes enjoyed, but they were cautioned against the abuses common to the scribes.<sup>76</sup> They were not to exceed their authority but were to forbid what God would have already forbidden and permit what God would have already permitted. They were to be heralds, preachers, ambassadors—not priests with authority to bind God by their acts of priestly absolution.

As in the case of the perfects in John 20:23, the future perfects of the Matthean passages occur in general conditions. The same problems arise with the future perfects in these conditions as were considered in connection with the perfect tense, and the same methodology finds similar answers. Though contextual and logical demands do in some cases force one to grant that the action described by a perfect or future perfect tense in the apodosis is not always prior to that of the protasis in a general condition, there is no such necessity in these passages. The double agency of God and man relieves any pressure that might otherwise occur. And since there is no emergency that demands a figurative

<sup>76</sup> J. R. Mantey, *op. cit.*, p. 246.

use, it is unsafe to depart from the literal. At least any doctrine that is based on such a translation has a foundation of sand.

Since all three passages are parallel in meaning, the same logical, theological and historical arguments apply in favor of the literal translation and against the figurative. Therefore it can be concluded that sacerdotalism, as based on these three passages, is

highly conjectural grammatically, preposterous logically, impossible theologically and untenable historically. Priestly absolution must have grown up without Scriptural sanction until it found a good hiding place in a misleading translation of these passages. If that is so, it is regrettable that no way has been found in the recent translation of the New Testament to improve the rendering.

# Book Reviews

*Faith Is the Victory*, by James Flint Boughton. Louisville, The Herald Press, 1947. 36 pp. \$.15.

One of the significant trends in current religious life in America is indicated by the appearance of a number of books and booklets devoted to the cultivation of the personal spiritual life. Some of these are worthy to take their places beside such classics as those produced by Dr. Jowett and by Mrs. Charles B. Cowman. *Faith Is the Victory*, being the first of a projected Asbury Series, promises to be one such.

The author has been professor of philosophy in Asbury College, his relationship to Christian education being indicative of his sincere interest in young people and their problems. This booklet, with the sub-title of "Deeper Devotional Readings," is tailored to fit the needs of youth, and particularly the needs of young people who must perforce come to grips with the issues which confront the senior high school and college student.

Professor Boughton is in this series primarily concerned with emphasizing the creative and spontaneous elements in Christian living. Such words as 'abundant,' 'wholesome,' 'enriching,' and 'creative' appear constantly. It is evident also that he is seeking to express the motif of Christian Perfection in an appealing manner, so as to disarm the skittish, and to lift the life of godliness into prominence as a thing supremely desirable. In all this, the reference is primarily toward Christ and His ability to capture the loyalties of young men and young women.

By the use of contrasting type, the

material is made to be unusually readable. There are also unconventional forms of arrangement which make the readings decidedly refreshing. It is to be hoped that our author finds it possible to carry further his efforts in the direction of providing such devotional material. *Faith Is the Victory* is a worth-while beginning.

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*An Outline of Biblical Theology*, by Millar Burrows. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1946. 380 pp. \$3.50.

This is a very difficult book to review briefly because it covers such a vast range of subject matter in the most concise manner. To give a summary of the seventeen different items in Biblical Theology ranging from "Authority and Revelation," "God," and "Christ," to "Moral and Social Ideals" would be impractical and to show a basic movement of thought is impossible. The Winkley Professor of Biblical Theology at Yale has given us what is distinctly a reference work of real value that will undoubtedly be widely acclaimed.

In spite, however, of the ripe scholarship, thoughtfulness, and some sound teachings, Dr. Burrows' book seems to us to be basically wrong. In the preface we read: "Whether what is here presented is theology may be questioned by some readers; there may even be some who will deny that it is biblical; but all must admit that it is



only an outline." We are among those who deny that it is really biblical although it cites more texts per square inch than any book we have read in years. Because the work impresses us as it does we will review it by a series of criticisms of specific statements. It is hoped thereby to give the reader of this review a feeling for the trend of the book no less than the tenor of the reviewer's own opinions. It is to be remembered that not all the points to which we take exception are dealt with, nor is it to be forgotten that there is much of which we approve.

"We cannot use the miracles to prove the divine origin of the Bible, because we are dependent on the Bible itself for the record of their occurrence" (p. 17 cf. also p. 132). With respect to this it may be said: first, miracles are not used to prove inspiration but merely to authenticate God's messengers. Second, the historicity of miracles rests, not on the inspiration of the Bible, but on historical evidence. For example, we believe that a strong case for Jesus as miracle worker would remain although the inspiration of the gospels were denied, just as an overwhelming case for Christ's existence remains for those who do deny the divine inspiration of the records of his life.

Dr. Burrows rejects predictive prophecy with a high-hand. It either was not uttered when the Bible asserts or does not mean what it must in order to be truly predictive (p. 17). This means that Jesus' predictions of his death were later insertions and that Joel's prediction which was quoted by Peter at Pentecost was misapplied. It would be more honest if Dr. Burrows would frankly say that he would not believe predictive prophecy regardless of evidence.

Our author asks whether God or Satan incited David to make the

census, implying that 2 Sam. 24:1, which suggests the former, and 1 Chr. 21:1, which asserts the latter, could not both be inspired (p. 24). Let us ask a question: Is there not an active and passive incitement, and is it not conceivable that God permitted Satan actively to incite David and was thereby passively involved? In this same connection (arguing against inspiration) Burrows contends that Jesus could not have said "kingdom of God" in a parable in Matthew and "kingdom of heaven" in the same parable recorded in Luke if both accounts were inspired. True, if it was the identical parable spoken at the same time. But if Jesus was anything like this preacher he repeated himself from place to place and varied his sermons and illustrations considerably.

"Not the books, not the words, but the men were inspired." (p. 25). 2 Tim. 3:16 is cited as proof of this statement but when we turn to the passage we find that in the original and in the various translations it says that *scripture*, the written word, is given by inspiration of God.

Speaking of the angel of the covenant, Dr. Burrows says, "Sometimes it is God's angel that appears, though in several of these instances there is a curious confusion or lack of sharp distinction between Yahweh and his angel" (p. 26). We note a similar "confusion" between Christ, whose Father is greater than he (John 14:28) and Christ, who is one with the Father (John 10:30). Could it be that the church has been right these many centuries in finding in the angel of the covenant the pre-incarnate Christ who both is and is not identical with God?

After analysis of the criteria of revelation and the elimination of all objective factors, our author is forced to this conclusion: "We must proceed on the basis of what appears to be true by the best light we have" (p. 42; cf.

p. 50). But if so, has not revelation become mere discovery and may not Christ have said: "Blessed art thou Simon bar Jonah for my Father which is in heaven has not revealed it unto you but flesh and blood."

We do not find the reconciliation of these statements easy: "It is now clear that we cannot reconstruct the order of events in Jesus's life, nor be sure of the settings and contexts of his sayings or their exact wording. We cannot even make a list of sayings that are certainly authentic" (p. 46). "At the same time, for all this, the gospels preserve a clear and undoubtedly authentic picture of a distinct personality and a definite message" (p. 47).

"The Bible can be a reliable guide only when it is rightly used and interpreted in the light of the central revelation in Christ" (p. 47). But our author has already shown, first, that we cannot be sure what the revelation of Christ is; that we can only accept that revelation which "appears to be true by the best light we have"; and, has made it perfectly clear that he allows only that to belong to Christ which his school of critics deems "true by the best light we have."

On page 81 there is an interesting advocacy of a novel form of Unitarian Modalism that requires no comment at all, or else more than could be given in this brief review.

Summing up the New Testament view of Jesus: "Certainly he regarded himself as a real man, and certainly not as part man and part God, or as a being of two natures." (p. 109). Proof? "He came eating and drinking, the friend of publicans and sinners." These citations would indicate that Jesus regarded himself as real man, but not that he did not consider himself God as well—certainly not in the light of other statements in the gospels the force of which Dr. Burrows seems to feel (cf. p. 112).

"Like both Jews and Gentiles of his time, he (Jesus) regarded such afflictions as epilepsy and insanity, if not ordinary sickness, as the work of demons" (p. 125). Yet in at least eleven places in the New Testament demon-possession is distinguished from disease and in only one case is it identified with epilepsy (Matt. 17:15) and two with insanity (Matt. 8:28 and Acts 19:13f.).

It is difficult to resist the temptation to comment on the alleged Biblical case urged against total depravity, but we must hasten to conclude this with a glance at John's eschatology. "But just as the fourth evangelist spiritualizes the ideas of the *parousia*, resurrection, and judgment, so eternal life is no longer the life of the coming age but a present possession of the believer." (p. 215) But John 3:16 and the resurrection references in John 5 alone make it clear that these doctrines are not always "spiritualized." Why should we not attempt to reconcile the statements by the both-and technique (*both* eternal life beginning now *and* being consummated hereafter, etc.) rather than creating problems by the either-or approach? It is easier to believe that a writer would be consistent with himself than that he would so obviously contradict himself.

From the foregoing, the reader will discern that the volume, while moving in the newer direction of a biblical—as against a merely speculative—theology, is nevertheless conditioned in its conclusions by an inadequate view of the Christian Scriptures. Its author thus shows himself in a transitional stage in his thought.

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*The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*, by Carl F. H. Henry. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1947. 89 pp. \$1.00.

The social isolationism which has been characteristic of so much of Protestant Fundamentalism, with its tendency to leave social and cultural problems to purely secular agencies, has been a perennial puzzle to thoughtful Christians. The factors which render isolationism in other areas a practical impossibility are also compelling Evangelicals to search their outlook for possible misplacements of emphasis. Dr. Henry's newest volume is an analysis, with a view to diagnosis, in this significant area.

The author is concerned above all else to penetrate the surface issues, and to discover precisely what factors have led Fundamentalists to be wary of non-evangelical movements for the betterment of society. Some of these are shown to be implicit in the exclusiveness which is part of orthodox Christianity. Another factor is that of the eschatological character of the Christian world outlook. This latter creates a problem to which the author offers no facile solution. The program which he suggests is one which takes for granted the unresolved tensions at this point.

Professor Henry sees a four-point program as offering the only workable solution: (1) an awakening of evangelicals to the relevance of its message to the world situation; (2) a stress upon the factors which unite all evangelicals in confronting a common world danger; (3) the discard of elements in the evangelical message which sever the nerve of world compassion; and (4) a rethinking of Christian eschatology. (p. 57). In this, one can discern a pattern for an ecumenicalism within conservative Christianity; the proposals are by no means trivial.

Throughout the volume the author confesses himself to be among those who sense a deep antithesis between Greek thought on the one hand, and the Judeo-Christian outlook on the other. While agreeing in the main with Henry at this point, the reviewer wonders whether he does not rather indiscriminately attribute all of the inadequate features of the 'modern' world-view to Greek thought.

One is impressed with the fact that the author sees with unusual clearness the many-sidedness of the current uneasiness of Fundamentalism at the point of her social message. He does not exclude the possibility of a twentieth-century reformation within conservative Protestantism—a reformation which will involve no significant alteration in basic tenets, but which will re-orient the methodology of the Church so as to cause it to rise to meet the challenge of the time, rather than to content itself with being a second- or third-class power in the contemporary world.

In the chapter under title of "The Evangelical Formula of Protest" Henry pleads for an emergence from isolationism, the formulation and implementing of a more affirmative program, and for cooperation, so far as is possible, with any denominational agencies which do not actively thwart the exertion of an evangelical testimony. This will, it is hoped, pave the way for a new reformation in which conservative Christians will unitedly seek the maximum exertion of their energies in the direction of amelioration of world ills, but within a specifically redemptive frame of reference.

The appearance of such a volume indicates a wholesome trend within evangelicalism. While the solutions offered are very general, they point the way toward some hard-headed thinking in the direction of a more effective implementation of the Chris-

tian Gospel in its message of social healing.

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*The Power of the Cross*, by Herman Hoeksema. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1947. 135 pp. \$1.50.

Books about preaching have recently been much more numerous than books of actual sermons. Possibly this is a reaction against the tendency to print all sorts of trivia entitled 'sermons' for the purpose of getting something into print. Herman Hoeksema has, however, brought together a collection of discourses upon "the most vital theme in the world" in such a manner as to set forth a theology of the Cross. In so doing he has both dignified the sermon and rendered his theology crystal clear.

This reviewer must admit at the outset his differences with the point of view of the author, and confess his inability to assent to many of the tenets of the Reformed (Calvinistic) creed. At the same time he finds himself in accord with the more basic features of Hoeksema's exposition, notably his emphasis upon the incarnation, humiliation, reconciling death, and bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. Moreover, he feels a deep kinship with the author in his warm-hearted presentation of the Christian Evangel. It is at this point that Hoeksema approaches Arminian evangelicalism.

Welcome is the emphasis upon the paradoxes involved in the Cross. The dialectic of humiliation-power, of Godhead-death, and of shame-reconciliation—all this does justice to the element of tension implicit in the Gospel of redemption, without making the surrenders in the area of the objective truth of the Gospel narrative which

are so characteristic of the Dialectical Theology. Hoeksema in this treatment challenges rationalism in any and all of its approaches to the doctrine of the atonement, and at the same time seems to do justice to the Christian Evangel as being essentially satisfying to the disciplined reason.

We can learn much from our author's treatment of the questions of life and death, and particularly from his insistence that death is not mere inactivity, but that it is positive opposition to the Divine will. Against this, life is declared to consist in "the operation of our whole nature in the direction of and in harmony with God." (p. 79) The either/or of life and death leads Hoeksema into the usual problem confronting the Calvinistic position, namely, that of the nature of the righteousness of the regenerate. He seeks to avoid the charge, that if Christ's perfect obedience is ours by imputation, then our subsequent conduct is a matter of no vital concern: that we may as well "continue in sin, that grace may abound." His answer seems to us essentially that of the Arminians: that the effect of free justification is primarily and characteristically that of causing men to abhor sin, and to walk as children of light.

At the same time, the author is careful to safeguard his position against the charge of Perfectionism! He asserts that "Our old nature, earthly and carnal, remains with us till the grave." (p. 99) Nor does it assist us much to be assured that "although sin is not dead in the believer, he is surely dead to sin." It seems to the reviewer that being "dead *indeed* unto sin" implies more than being merely out of agreement with sin's lordship.

The final chapter, under title "The Power of Universal Reconciliation" is possibly the most challenging of the book. It goes without saying that the author advocates no universalism;

rather, he seeks to lift into prominence the motif of the universal impact of sin, the alienation of the cosmos from God, and the Divine purpose of a final restitution of all things. It goes without saying that this chapter will have little appeal outside the circle of those who are pretty frankly biblical in their outlook.

The reader who is able to make up his own mind at the point of his attitude toward the doctrines which differentiate Calvinism from Arminianism can find a great deal in *The Power of the Cross* which he will appreciate. He will find his total appreciation of the Atonement enlarged, and at the same time perceive that there are some issues with respect to the extent of salvation which lie deeper than the definition of terms.

The volume is well written and easily readable. Its style has an infectious charm. The author illustrates without using illustrations, through the medium of vivid words and disciplined figures of speech. In spite of our differences with many of the theological views expressed, we recognize and appreciate the truth which the book contains, and the warm heart which lies behind it.

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*The Interseminary Series*, 5 vols. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1946. \$1.50 each. Vol. I. *The Challenge of Our Culture*, Clarence Tucker Craig, Chairman. Vol. II. *The Church and Organized Movements*, Randolph Crump Miller, Chairman. Vol. III. *The Gospel, The Church and the World*. Kenneth S. Latourette, Chairman. Vol. IV. *Toward World-Wide Christianity*, O. Frederick Nolde, Chairman. Vol. V. *What Must*

*the Church Do?* Robert S. Billheimer.

#### VOLUMES I AND II.

This imposing series of volumes on contemporary Christianity is the joint work of some thirty-seven authors plus the advice of the "Commissions" which planned the series. As one reviewer has said, the list of authors reads like a hall of fame of present-day leaders in the American church. The series was heralded by the *Christian Century* as "the intellectual foundation of movement which should be much in the minds of thinking people." Actually the volumes are written primarily for stimulus and guidance to a group of theological students who met this summer (June, 1947) at the national conference sponsored by the Interseminary movement of the United States, held at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. The three-fold aim of this series is stated to be, "to outline the character of the contemporary world which challenges the church; to proclaim afresh the nature of the Gospel and the Church which must meet that challenge; and to set forth the claims which ecumenical Christianity makes upon the various churches as they face their world task." (I, vii)

Each chapter is written by a recognized authority in his respective field. The cooperative effort bears witness to a sense of importance and urgency which actuates the authors. As might be expected each chapter is a concise summary of a broad field of inquiry. The avowed purpose is less to provide information than to produce an awareness of a situation which calls for common action. The volumes are an analysis of the contemporary situation in the world and in the church; they are designed to stimulate study rather than outline details of action.

In the analysis of contemporary

problems they are for the most part excellent. Some of the statements probably would not be written now. They are too far to the "left" to meet the approval of the majority since the trends of the last six months. For instance, there is an uncritical blanket endorsement of labor union leadership which would evoke no surprise six months ago but now seems either biased or anachronistic. This is not to say that these writers have not the courage to declare their convictions, but it can hardly be disputed that liberal Protestantism is too often the reflection of the trends of the times, of the *Zeitgeist*. Thus some attitudes which were considered axiomatic by "liberals" a few months ago would be challenged by the same group now.

On the whole the series is wholesome and stimulating to both liberal and conservative Christendom. For the latter there will be a much needed broadening of vista. The conservative student, however, will look in vain for guidance as to how he may integrate the principles and precepts of the Bible with the new "social conscience." He will be challenged however to do it for himself and perhaps that is best after all. Certainly no careful reader of these volumes can escape the task of sober reflection on the implications of the Gospel—there will be some "searchings of heart." Commendable is the emphasis that easy, ready-made answers will not suffice. Commendable also is the insistence that the Church has now become a minority group, pitted against a pagan world, and Christians must "stand up and be counted." They must define and defend their faith; they must prove their faith by their works. This of course, represents a change of mind only for the liberals; the conservatives knew all along that they were pilgrims in a hostile world.

The first volume of the series concerns itself with the question. "What are the main features of the cultures of the world which challenge the Church and its gospel, and what is the nature of the challenge?" The most commendable feature of this volume is the incisive analysis and indictment of many phases of contemporary culture. In this it sets a precedent for the whole series, for in each volume there is discernible a much clearer understanding of the ills of society than of their remedy. This, however, regrettable as it is to many, is not altogether to be deplored since the purpose of the series was to be provocative rather than remedial.

In volume two there is an appraisal of the "allied and opposed organized movements of our day with which the Church must deal." There is, for example, a penetrating discussion by Elton Trueblood, showing that the rival faiths of Christianity are not so much the other "worlds living religions" but rather labor unionism, "Marxism, Scientism, Anthropocentric humanism, and Nationalistic mysticism." These competitive ideologies are often more potent than the Christian faith even where that traditional faith is not expressly repudiated. Fraternalism and the cults are ably discussed by Dwight Smith and Pierson Parker, respectively. These and similar analyses can scarcely fail to arouse the thoughtful reader to the challenges from new quarters and make volume two perhaps the most valuable of the series.

These volumes should do at least two things: they should arouse a complacent Christianity and should make a modern apologetic more effective by showing the nature and location of the newest foes of the church. This awareness of common peril should promote a more determined desire among

the Churches to work together.

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VOLUME III.

Although these "volumes have been designed for the Christian public in general" their arrangement cannot be fully understood aside from their setting as a "venture in cooperative thinking" preparatory to the first North American Interseminary Conference which convened at Miami University, Oxford, Ohio during June 1947. The program content of that conference can be gathered from its general title, "Man's Disorder and God's Design." In general, the first two volumes of this series deal with man's disorder while this volume plus the two succeeding ones have to do with God's design, both theoretically and practically.

This symposium, which is divided into three parts, represents the work of eight authors. Each has addressed himself in some degree to the question: "Has the Church the spiritual and moral resources to meet the present world crisis?" The first part of the book deals with the nature of the Gospel and the Church, the second part seeks to find the *modus operandi* of both the Gospel and the church, and the concluding part deals with the task before the Church.

It is difficult to present a unified view or any clear cut pronouncements on a symposium such as this, for while some of the authors have done splendidly in the reviewer's estimation, there are parts which need to be read critically. If any one school of theology might be dominant it would certainly be that of American Neo-Orthodoxy. Many of the authors make up a veritable "Who's Who" among the professors who adhere more or less to this position in the seminaries at Yale, Union of New York, and Princeton—

Kenneth Scott Latourette, John Knox, Paul Scherer, W. Norman Pittenger, Richard Niebuhr, John C. Bennett, Luman J. Shafer, and Elmer G. Homrighausen.

John Knox in his chapter entitled, "The Revelation of God in Christ," presents the key-note of the Gospel. He insists that the Lord Jesus Christ must be preached as a *total event*. It is a mistake, he claims, to attempt to divide between the "real" Jesus and the response to him on the part of his associates, to divide between the earthly life of Jesus and the resurrection, or between the "Jesus of history" and the "Christ of faith" and emphasize any saving efficacy in either one or the other. The point of revelation is not to be found in "some particular incident of Jesus' life or in some particular aspect of his nature." It is rather to be found in both the person of Jesus and all that happened in connection with him. "It is nothing less than the supreme moment of human history."

Dr. Knox then proceeds neatly to avoid all Christological controversy by pointing out that the important part to consider was not *who Jesus was*, but rather, what God did—God's *action* through Christ. The importance of the Nicene and Chalcedonian creeds "lies in the witness they bear to the reality and significance of God's *action* in history in and through the whole event we have been discussing rather than in their metaphysical accuracy." We who hold to the Evangelical orthodox position might wish that Dr. Knox had stressed a bit more positively the person of Christ without minimizing God's action either. What was the essence of this action on God's part? The most decisive consequence of Christ's coming is that through him God brought into existence a new people, a new community, His Church of redeemed ones. This atonement may be inexplicable but no one can doubt the fact of it. "It is a

mighty affirmation that God is our Creator, Judge, Redeemer, Companion; that man, made in His image, standing every moment under the judgment of His righteous will, is also the object of His love. . . ."

The remainder of the book is devoted to the Church, giving special attention to the polarity which exists between it and the world and the tension points within the Church such as community vs. the individual, responsibility vs. isolationism in the Church, inclusiveness vs. exclusiveness, unity vs. freedom, ecumenicity vs. denominationalism.

The last two chapters deal with the present task of the Church. Luman J. Shafer calls for "Necessary Reorientations in Thought and Life." The method he advocates is for the Church to make a careful examination of the environmental factors — governing ideas and ideals, changing mores, and mass thinking — which are molding the American community today. This information should then be brought over against the thought and life of the Church, and an effort made to discover where the lag in church is to be found, in what respects this is inherent in the unchanging nature of the Church, and in what respects reorientation is possible and necessary." The danger of this principle lies in its very nearly humanistic approach. Any fixed point of control, such as the Bible upon which objective judgment might be passed upon both the Church and the world, seems to be overlooked. The Subjectivism, such as Dr. Shafer seems to imply, has been subversive to the true task of the Church in the past and can only lead to further confusion as to just at what points there are unchanging elements in the Church and just what needs reorientation. It is with appreciation, however, that one finds Dr. Shafer calling for a more family-centered Christianity.

Elmer G. Homrighausen closes the

volume with a discussion of Christian vocation. He heavily scores the secularization of vocation which has crept into the Christians' thinking and into the Church itself. Dr. Homrighausen pleads for a new sense of *Christian* vocation in which "the whole life of the Christian, whatever his social position or professional labor, is to be under the sovereignty of God. There is no separation between the religious life and the daily life."

This is the type of book which cannot be wholly recommended, neither can it be totally condemned. It represents some of the best thinking in American theological circles today and will present a challenge to anyone who reads it carefully. To those of us who take a more conservative position than do most of the authors there are some objectionable features: nevertheless, it has much of value which will at least stimulate thought in some new fields of thinking and challenge us to action at some points where we might have been tragically dormant.

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#### VOLUME IV.

Volume four of *The Interseminary Series*, like the first three volumes is also a symposium of articles, in this case embodying the work of ten authors. This volume is an attempt to portray the past, present and the future goal of ecumenical Christianity.

Editor O. Frederick Nolde and Commission III have organized their material into a well-formulated and recognizable plan. Matthew Spinka at the beginning of the volume interprets the current situation of ecumenical Christianity, showing the need for greater unity among the churches. John A. Mackay presents the ecumenical goal in terms of the Biblical and



Theological bases for unity. John C. Bennett discusses the practical aspects of the ecumenical goal and presents the various possible forms of Ecumenical Christianity. Henry Smith Leiper, Abdel R. Wentz and Charles W. Iglehart present two interesting articles on Ecumenical History. A chapter on "Christian Community and World Order" by the editor of the volume follows the historical study and supplements it by telling the story of the attempt by the churches to lay foundations for peace and build a world order. H. Paul Douglass continues the historical treatment by presenting the developments *toward world-wide Christianity* in the churches of America. The reader is warned of obstacles ahead and reassured by the practical suggestions in the article by W. Stanley Rycroft which are offered to outweigh them. Elmore M. McKee concludes the volume by emphasizing the need for practical steps toward greater unity at the parish level.

In the reviewer's opinion the significant section of the volume is the chapter by Dr. Mackay and Dr. Bennett on "The Ecumenical Goal." Dr. Mackay presents the ecumenical goal as distinct from several conceptions. He holds that none of the following are the ecumenical goal: the achievement of world community, the reunion of unreconciled churches, the question of unifying order, a submission of Christians to a supreme hierarch. In fact, he utterly rejects the Roman pretension.

Positively, Dr. Mackay speaks of the ecumenical goal as "the fulfillment by the Christian Church of its total task, on a world front, in the spirit of Christian unity," and as "concrete corporate allegiance to Jesus Christ." The theological basis of the ecumenical task Dr. Mackay finds in creative Bible study. He pleads for Bible study which forgets world views and philo-

sophical systems foreign to the Bible. This note is refreshing indeed! From the Bible Dr. Mackay finds two affirmations which constitute the heart of his argument. These are: the Church is the New Israel, and the Church should be a community, the community of the redeemed. The second presents the truth that the Church is an organism, not merely a society. He holds that Christian unity is primarily a unity of the Spirit, and that questions of order are secondary.

Most Christians in the Wesleyan tradition would agree with Dr. Mackay's assertions. One wishes, however, that he had been more explicit at the point of Biblical authority. How can there be a real unity of faith when there is a divergence of Biblical interpretation?

Many of the remaining authors by implication go much further than does Dr. Mackay in his treatment of the ecumenical goal. Dr. Bennett cites the possible forms of church unity in five forms. These are: 1) unofficial organization and fellowships, 2) mutual recognition, 3) federation for co-operative witness, 4) federal union, and 5) corporate union. Dr. Bennett sees danger in the fifth form, but underwrites the remainder. As an example of the first form he cites the Student Christian movement. Under Mutual Recognition he proposes four methods: interchange of membership, which is already practised by the great central core of American Protestantism, interchange of ministries, intercommunion, and comity arrangements in missions and church extension. He cites the Federal Council of Churches and the International Council of Religious Education as examples of Federation for co-operative witness. Federal Union would involve the delegation of authority to central powers. Rycroft, in his article, points out some difficulties in the way of this scheme of unity. For instance, the theological differences of

the Conservative-Modernist type would never permit an interchange of ministries. The reviewer is of the opinion that Dr. Mackay is on the right track in his insistence that the only real basis for unity is the Bible. Here again is another debatable point. Divergent views of biblical inspiration lead to divergent theologies. Unity of faith will only come when there is a unity of interpretation.

Although representing many viewpoints, volume IV along with the rest of the Interseminary series is a "must" for all informed Christians who desire to comprehend the present ecumenical movement. The section on Ecumenical History and present-day ecumenical movements comprises the greater portion of the volume and is packed with valuable information. The volume contains an appendix with messages from such ecumenical agencies as the Madras Conference, and the Constitutions of the Proposed World Council and International Missionary Council.

Although written for the immediate purpose of providing study material for the Oxford Interseminary Conference, the Interseminary Series in general, and volume IV in particular, is so pertinent to the contemporary emphasis on ecumenies that every minister should acquaint himself with this material.

EVYN M. ADAMS,  
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VOLUME V.

*What Must the Church Do?* is the capstone of the Interseminary Series. It is written by Robert S. Billheimer, the executive secretary of the Interseminary Movement who has been the guiding light in the preparation of the whole series. This volume draws together and synthesizes the implications of the previous four volumes relative to the task of the Church.

Mr. Billheimer finds that there are four characteristics of our age which provide the basis of the contemporary challenge to the Church. The obsession with economic achievement as characteristic of our age is caused by the ability of machine production to indefinitely gratify the desire of all men for comfort and power. Three dominant forms of organization, corporations, unions and governments, stand out in our age as testimony to the fact that without organization there is no power. The third characteristic is an interesting insight into contemporary society. Society today substitutes mechanical for spiritual unity. Mr. Billheimer traces the beginning of this characteristic to the breakdown of the medieval synthesis. The fourth characteristic is that society produces tensions which lead toward a disastrous rather than a creative life. The challenge to the Church is that these four characteristics deny man's full stature. They truncate human interests, limit freedom, deny man's responsiveness and dissipate his energies.

The new note of the volume is the interpretation of the ecumenical movement as an "ecumenical reformation" comparable in importance to the Protestant Reformation. Our author states that although this reformation has beginnings in the past century, it is still in its infancy. This reformation asserts the unity of the Church amid the disunity of the churches. It carries with it a recognition of the value of the community, not merely as a source of strength, but as a value in itself. Our author holds that this reformation recaptures the basic New Testament conception of the Church.

This volume, and the *Interseminary Series* as a whole, present a challenge to serious thought.

EVYN M. ADAMS,  
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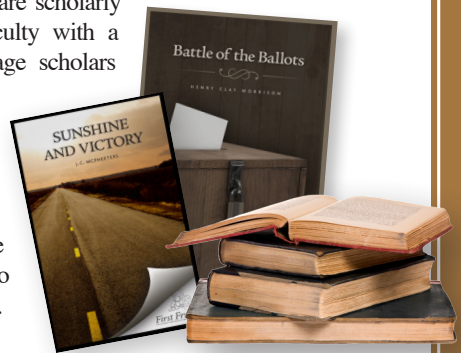
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