

# JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN SCIENTIFIC AFFILIATION



*An evangelical perspective on science and the Christian faith*

## ***Scientific Inputs to Biblical Studies***

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*"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom."*

*Psalm 111:10*

VOLUME 26 NUMBER 2

JUNE 1974

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INDICES to back issues are published as follows: Vol. 1-15 (1949-1963), *Journal ASA* 15, 126-132 (1963); Vol. 16-19 (1964-1967), *Journal ASA* 19, 126-128 (1967); Vol. 20-22 (1968-1970), *Journal ASA* 22, 157-160 (1970); Vol. 23-25 (1971-1973), *Journal ASA* 25, 173-176 (1973). The *Journal ASA* is indexed in the CHRISTIAN PERIODICAL INDEX. Present and past issues of the *Journal ASA* are avail-

able in microfilm at nominal cost. For information write University Microfilms, Inc. 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106.

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# JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN SCIENTIFIC AFFILIATION

JUNE 1974

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

VOLUME 26, NUMBER 2

## The New Testament and Historical Criticism



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*Since the rise of modern biblical criticism the study of the New Testament has been characterized by a scepticism that is often extreme with regard to the historical credibility of the Gospel narratives. While in recent years historians of Greece and Rome have come to treat their sources with increasing respect, especially since external evidence has more often verified than contradicted them, New Testament scholars have in many cases retained an unwarranted scepticism towards the possibility of reconstructing detailed New Testament history from the Gospel records, even though their sources are as promising as those at the disposal of classical historians. Moreover, many New Testament theologians employ methods that appear arbitrary and would be rejected in most other fields of ancient history. Hence classical historians, using ordinary historical methods, often find the Gospel narratives a good deal more trustworthy than do many critical New Testament scholars.*

### The Problem of Historical Credence

One of the basic problems that each historian faces is how he should treat his sources, that is, what historical credence he should give them. The Gospels and the Book of Acts claim to present an accurate record of the events surrounding the life and ministry of Jesus and the growth of the early church. Any historian who deals with these accounts is faced at the outset with evaluating these claims.

The way in which an historian treats his sources differs according to his temperament and preconceptions; it may also differ according to the historical school to which he belongs or the *idées reçues* of the era in which he lives. Modern historical methods for the most part date back to early nineteenth-century Germany. It was here for the first time that evidence at the disposal of the historian was systematically and critically examined. Historical documents were scrutinized for distortion and inaccuracies using newly-developed methods of source-criticism in an attempt to sift history from mythical or legendary accretions. The same mood that produced the beginning of critical historiography also produced a new kind of biblical criticism, especially associated with the Tübingen school, notably of F. C. Bauer and David Strauss. This involved the use of the historical-critical method, as it has come to be called, and it arose from an effort to understand the Bible in purely historical and naturalistic terms, rejecting altogether the supernaturalism of orthodox theology. The result was a radical scepticism regarding the credibility of the Gospel narratives.

### Scepticism

This scepticism was due not simply to the use of critical methods, but to the spirit in which those methods were used. Historical criticism of the early nineteenth century was much influenced by the secularising presuppositions of the Enlightenment. This was especially evident in biblical criticism. Not only did the Tübingen school use new methods of historiography but behind their approach was the *Aufklärung* belief that miracles do not happen and therefore any supernatural element must be rejected as a breach of the laws of nature. Thus they set out to reconstruct New Testament history without the supernatural element. Faced with accounts that were shot through and through with the miraculous they became extremely sceptical of their sources. Their presuppositions led them to recreate New Testament history along far different lines from those presented by the Gospels.

If the Gospels suffered under the impact of the new criticism, so did other ancient sources. The scepticism amongst the Tübingen school with regard to the New Testament was paralleled by that of the historians of Greece and Rome towards their sources. German historians in the nineteenth century, influenced as they were by positivism, were attempting to write 'scientific history.' They had a set idea of what history was and how it should be written. They tended to disparage ancient authors whose methods did not fit the canons of historiography that they had established. One ancient historian who suffered under the rigid conception of nineteenth-century historiography was Herodotus of Halicarnassus, who lived in the fifth century B.C. and was the first Greek to write systematic history. But the 'Father of History' did not meet the standards

of nineteenth-century historians. He wrote in the pleasant, easy manner of a story-teller; his very style raised questions: could this seemingly credulous collector of fantastic stories be any more than a naive, superficial historian? German historians replied in the negative and contrasted Herodotus unfavorably with Thucydides, whose style was difficult and tortured. Thucydides was admired as the master ancient historian because he seemed to write history according to the 'scientific' standards of the nineteenth century. He employed painstaking research, carefully constructed his narrative, was free from the influence of religion and superstition, and seemed unbiased and impartial. Herodotus, by contrast, fared badly. He liked to tell a good story and would digress at the drop of a hat; he seemed superstitious and pietistic; he was willing to record every account told to him (although perceptive critics might have noted that he plainly stated that he didn't believe everything he recorded). Herodotus the 'Father of History' seemed rather to be the 'father of lies.'

### A Decrease in Scepticism

Gradually in this century such views have undergone change.<sup>1</sup> As more and more archaeological evidence has come to light from all over the Mediterranean world, historians have been faced with abundant extra-literary sources with which to test our ancient authors: archaeological remains, inscriptions, papyri, and coins. In surprisingly few cases has this material controverted the literary sources; rather the archaeological finds have tended time after time to confirm the ancient authors. Among the authors who benefitted was Herodotus: in case after case it is now apparent that Herodotus' descriptions are accurate and his reporting trustworthy, and his reputation has for some time been rising. Contrary to the practice of historians of even a generation ago, we are more apt to trust his account even where we can't confirm Herodotus directly, since his reporting seems reliable where it can be checked.

The findings of archaeologists have tended to temper the scepticism of the ancient historian toward his texts. In contrast to historians of a few generations ago, he tends to approach the literary sources with a good deal of respect. Historians exhibit a more trusting and conservative attitude towards the writers of antiquity because they have proven to deserve that approach. This is not to say that historians have ceased to examine their sources critically, but they have for the most part come to have a good deal more confidence than their predecessors of the nineteenth century.

### But Not Among New Testament Scholars

Thus it is surprising that while historians of Greece and Rome have been growing in confidence in their sources, New Testament scholars have retained what appears to be a hypercritical attitude toward the Gospel narratives long after such an attitude has given way to a more sensitive and open approach among classical scholars. This is especially surprising because archaeological discoveries in the last two or three generations have done much to corroborate the biblical record in detail. The archaeological evidence bearing on the New Testament is not so imposing as that bearing on the Old Testament, but it has been sufficient to enhance the credibility of the Gospels and Acts. This has long been evident to classical historians, who give



the New Testament high marks for historical accuracy. For example, Sir William Ramsey, who in the last century acquired an intimate knowledge of the topography and archaeology of Asia Minor, observed that Luke had an extremely accurate acquaintance with Asia Minor and the Greek East of the first century. Ramsey wrote of Luke:

Luke is a historian of the first rank; not merely are his statements of fact trustworthy; he is possessed of the true historic sense; he fixes his mind on the idea and plan that rules in the evolution of history, and proportions the scale of his treatment to the importance of each incident. He seizes the important and critical events and shows their true nature at greater length, while he touches lightly or omits entirely much that was valueless for his purpose. In short, this author should be placed along with the very greatest of historians.<sup>2</sup>

This high estimate by a distinguished classical archaeologist of Luke has been re-echoed in recent years by several historians. A. N. Sherwin-White, a distinguished Roman historian, writes:

For Acts the confirmation of historicity is overwhelming . . . any attempt to reject its basic historicity even in matters of detail must now appear absurd. Roman historians have long taken it for granted.<sup>3</sup>

Yet there are many New Testament scholars who persist in ignoring the strong evidence in favour of the high historical reliability of Acts; indeed A. A. T. Ehrhardt observed that historians have generally maintained a higher estimate of Luke as an historian than have theologians.<sup>4</sup>

### Historical Criticism of Fourth Gospel

This is not to deny that there have been advances in the historical criticism of the New Testament. One of the most interesting developments in the study of the Gospels in the last few years has been the fresh reappraisal of the historical value of the Fourth Gospel. Until recently it had been almost a critical orthodoxy to set the Fourth Gospel over against the Synoptics. The Synoptics place Jesus' ministry in Galilee, while John centers it in Jerusalem. The style of Jesus' teaching in John's Gospel is markedly different from that of the Synoptics, organized as it is into long discourses rather than in the short sayings we find in the Synoptic Gospels. It was assumed that the writer's background reflected the Hellenistic world and embodied a radical interpretation of Jesus' ministry and teaching in Hellenistic terms, and that the author's viewpoint represented a long theological development which resulted in a theological rather than a historical picture of Jesus. Consequently it was assumed that the Fourth Gospel was not to be regarded as a witness to the Jesus of history, and little historical value was attributed to it.

Today all this has been changed. In some quarters this change has been influenced by the discovery and study of the Qumran literature; in others it has been the result of further study of the Fourth Gospel in its New Testament context. It used to be thought that the wealth of place-names, exact locations, and persons in John's Gospel was simply 'name-dropping,' an attempt by a pseudonymous author to lend authenticity to his account. But archaeological discoveries and a greater understanding of Palestinian locations attest in detail the Fourth Gospel's accuracy in depicting the background of Jesus' ministry. Moreover, the view once held that John's approach was not historical but essentially mystical, and that he was not concerned

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whether his narratives were factual but regarded them merely as illustrations of metaphysics, has recently been challenged by C. H. Dodd and J. A. T. Robinson among others. Robinson believes that the Fourth Evangelist regarded the tradition of Jesus' life basically from the same point of view as the other Evangelists, that the background of his ministry is Palestinian, that there is a real continuity in this tradition going back to the earliest days of Christianity, and that John's Gospel can be regarded as a reliable historical witness of Jesus.<sup>5</sup>

### Reasons for Confidence

The archaeological confirmation and the advances made in the historical study of the New Testament in the last generation or two have given us more reason than ever before to be confident in the general accuracy and credibility of the historical portions of the New Testament. I have already observed that classical historians find themselves in a similar situation with regard to their sources for Greek and Roman history, and they have, for the most part, adjusted their attitudes and adopted a more respectful approach to their sources. But despite some adjustments in outlook, such as the 'New Look on the Fourth Gospel,' there has been no corresponding shift among a large body of New Testament scholars. Instead, there remains among many theologians what to a classical historian seems to be an unwarranted scepticism regarding the possibility of reconstructing the history of Jesus' ministry and message from the Gospels. The belief of Bultmann, for example, that the historical Jesus is unknowable, that the history of his message and mission cannot be written and that the task of reconstructing history from the Gospels is not only impossible but illegitimate, seems to an historian simply incredible. Bultmann's views cannot, of course, be regarded as representative of all New Testament scholars. Nevertheless, it seems that even among more moderate theologians there is more distrust of the Gospel records than is warranted.<sup>6</sup>

### Reasons for Persistent Scepticism

With the progress that has been made in the study of the Gospels in this century why do such views still obtain among New Testament scholars? Two reasons suggest themselves to me. First of all, New Testament criticism has from the early nineteenth century been dominated by an excessively analytical approach that has attempted to sort out the divergent elements that make up the Gospels. The result has been to produce a belief that the Gospels preserve little more than a mass of fragmentary and contradictory traditions, what C. H. Dodd has called 'a New Testament of bits and pieces.' Now source-criticism is an important part of historical reconstruction. Where excessive emphasis has been placed on *Quellenforschung*, however, the result

has sometimes been to introduce undue scepticism regarding the possibility of an accurate transmission of historical material; to point out inconsistencies, conflicting sources, prejudice, and legendary material and to assume that because of the presence of these elements a narrative has little historical worth; and by dissection of a narrative to reduce a source to the level of what R. G. Collingwood called 'scissors-and-paste history'.<sup>7</sup> This is true of the approach to the New Testament that has dominated the last generation of New Testament scholarship, the school of form-criticism. The form-critics have attempted to get behind the written Gospels and their literary sources to the oral stage of the Gospel tradition. Such an attempt is certainly worth making, but it is a method that is by the very nature of the materials bound to produce highly uncertain results, for the approach is subjective and its results must always be tentative.

One of the basic principles of many form-critics is the assumption that the early church played a significant creative role in reformulating the traditions surrounding the life and teachings of Jesus with the result that Jesus' teachings came very quickly—in the brief span of a generation—to be misrepresented by the early church. Thus from the Gospels it is held that we can recapture for the most part only the faith of the primitive church, which has reinterpreted the original teachings of its founder. Such a view holds little respect for the ability of the early Christians accurately to transmit by oral tradition the message of Jesus. Yet recent studies, both in history and anthropology, have shown the ability of oral tradition to maintain an extremely accurate account of historical events without distortion or contamination.

Herodotus provides evidence of this. A. N. Sherwin-White has pointed out the similarities between the type of material with which both the Gospel-writers and Herodotus were dealing.<sup>8</sup> Herodotus set out to write a history of the Persian Wars. He had few written records on which to rely in Greece, and in the Near East, where he had records, he is unlikely to have been able to use them; so he was forced to rely on oral tradition. Wherever he went Herodotus gathered accounts of historical events that had taken place from 50 to 150 years earlier; some had been passed down by word of mouth for several generations. Not very promising material, it would seem. Yet in the past century historians have scrutinized Herodotus with the help of archaeological evidence and rigorous historical criticism. We have collected enough evidence to be in a position to say that the material that Herodotus gathered from oral tradition was characterized by a high degree of accuracy. Herodotus dealt with oral traditions regarding famous battles, heroic deeds, and religious institutions—subjects that lend themselves easily to magnification and distortion. Yet the cases in which significant distortions have occurred are (as far as we can tell) few. Nor was Herodotus an objective, detached historian: he was passionately interested in his material, moralistic, and religious. Yet his attitudes did not seriously affect his concern for truth.<sup>9</sup>

Why then should the form-critics doubt the ability of the early church (a small and closely-knit community) to maintain an accurate recollection of the events of Jesus' life and teachings? The Gospel-writers had not to deal with material handed down orally for several generations, as did Herodotus, but with material

transmitted through one generation. And can it really be imagined that Jesus' hearers, his very disciples, would seriously distort his message after his death? Rather it seems that they would be at pains to preserve an accurate account of his teachings. The powerful personality of Jesus impressed many, and some of his followers must have lived long enough to carry a vivid recollection of him till the end of the first century (just as there are some today who can recall vividly events in which they participated in the First World War or even the Boer War). It was in the second century that the myth-making began, and we can see elements of it in the apocryphal and pseudepigraphical works of that period. But the real personality of Jesus obviously made a strong impression on his followers, and this personality is apparent in the Gospels, which are by their very quality so easily distinguishable from the legendary material that grew up later.

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#### The Gospels as Historical Sources

Thus it seems to the classical historian that New Testament scholars are in a most advantageous position for reconstructing the life of Jesus. They have several documents that contain eye-witness accounts of Jesus' ministry written by contemporaries. Yet the results they produce seem much more meagre than we should expect. An objection that is often raised to the argument that I am pursuing is that there is a good deal of difference between what the writers of the Gospels were trying to do and what historians might attempt. The Evangelists were not writing history or even biography; thus they did not always take the trouble to arrange their material chronologically. Nor were they neutral observers; they were deeply committed by faith to their subject and they interpreted their subject-matter in the light of this faith. The Gospels were not written to be used as historical source-material: "But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:31). Of course all this is true. But this does not mean that the Gospels cannot be used as historical sources, and good ones at that. One of the most important sources for the reconstruction of Greek and Roman history is the Greek writer Plutarch, who lived in the second century after Christ. Plutarch was a man of letters, cultivated and widely read, but not really a scholar. Plutarch wrote a series of lives of well-known Greek and Roman statesmen. He was removed by nearly 700 years from some of his subjects, and he was dependent for his material on both primary and secondary sources. Plutarch was not a historian but a biographer (he himself says, at the beginning of his life of Alexander, that he is not writing history but lives). He was not, as A. W. Gomme

has pointed out,<sup>10</sup> really even a biographer in the strict sense, but an essayist. His purpose was not to give a detailed account of a man's life or career; what he was primarily interested in was a man's character. He wished to illustrate virtue or vice in his subjects; hence he passes over great events briefly in favor of anecdotes or sayings that illustrate a man's character and moral conduct.<sup>11</sup> Plutarch is indifferent to the accurate dating of events and he sometimes mentions an event out of chronological order if it suits his purpose to illustrate a man's personality. Thus his narrative is marked by omissions and some distortion, but this does not prevent the classical historian from using Plutarch extensively, while at the same time being aware of his limitations.<sup>12</sup>

### Differences in the Gospel Narratives

It is not uncommon to read that the great divergences that exist in the Gospel narratives about certain events in the life of Jesus, such as the Resurrection, make it difficult to understand what really happened. This scepticism is strange, for to a classical historian what seems impressive about the Gospels is not their difference of viewpoint or occasional divergence but rather their agreement in so many areas. There are many instances in ancient history where we face much more serious disagreements than those in the Gospels; yet this does not cause the historian to despair of ever attaining knowledge of what took place. Moreover, there are important figures of antiquity for whom the basic sources reflect far more serious differences than to do our sources for the life of Jesus.

Socrates and Alexander come to mind. The sources for the life of Socrates raise problems. Basically we are dependent for our information regarding his life on the writings of three men: Aristophanes, Plato, and Xenophon. At first glance the portraits of Socrates painted by these three men appear antithetical to one another. Indeed in the nineteenth century scholars inaugurated a search for the "historical Socrates," not unlike the quest of the "historical Jesus." Because of the difficulty of reconciling our sources there was a tendency at the turn of the century to an almost total scepticism on the part of many scholars about the possibility of knowing anything about the "historical Socrates." The foremost Socratic scholar, Hermann Diels,

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called Socrates an "unknown X." Today the situation is quite different. Most students of Socrates are confident of their ability to control their sources and make sense of them. There is little doubt that we have the materials for the reconstruction of Socrates' life and teaching.<sup>13</sup> The historical scepticism concerning the possibility of describing the "historical Socrates" is merely a chapter in the history of scholarship.

Alexander the Great presents one of the most intractable problems in ancient historiography.<sup>14</sup> Our evidence for his life and career comes from six sources of the most divergent nature. Our earliest substantial narrative, that of Diodorus, was composed nearly three

centuries after Alexander's death. Our most trustworthy source for Alexander, that of Arrian, was written two centuries after Diodorus. Several disparate strains are to be found in the literary sources (e.g., pro- and anti-Alexander material). So much legend, romance, sensationalism, gossip, slander, and anecdote crept into the tradition about Alexander at an early date that sorting all of it out is a difficult problem in source-criticism and historical reconstruction. Moreover, the complex personality of Alexander has produced a variety of modern interpretations of the man and Eugene Borza has remarked that "the startlingly dissimilar portraits of Alexander which issue from modern historians can be attributed at least as much to the psychological predilections of the scholar as to the state of the evidence itself."<sup>15</sup> Yet despite the very real problems that surround the writing of any modern history of Alexander there is general agreement that his career can be reconstructed not only in its major outlines, but in considerable detail.

### Naturalistic Presuppositions

Besides the undue emphasis on source-criticism I believe that there is a second factor that vitiates much current historical criticism of the New Testament: the attempt to explain the origin and growth of Christianity in purely naturalistic terms. This is part of the heritage of the Tübingen school of New Testament scholarship, and of course it goes back to the Enlightenment. An often unspoken assumption of much New Testament criticism is the view that the evidence for the miraculous element in the Gospels cannot be taken at face value. We are sometimes told by theologians that the historical method involves assumptions that exclude the possibility of divine intervention, or that as historians we do not have the tools to deal with miracles because they lack analogy in our experience. Since the eighteenth century it has been common to apply to history the assumption of the physical sciences of a cause-and-effect relationship within a closed continuum. But historians should not permit their discipline to be fitted into a Procrustean bed of preconceived theory based on a mechanistic view of the universe. Historical research does not circumscribe the limits of what can and cannot happen; rather it is a tool for discovering inductively what actually happened. The historian knows that every event with which he deals is unique and that no two events occur in exactly the same way. The historian should be willing to evaluate and test critically any evidence that comes to hand and he should not *a priori* rule out any possibility. This means that he should be open to the possibility that the events in the Gospels happened as they are described.

Much modern criticism of the New Testament seems to be based on the assumption that Stephen Neill attributes to Kirsopp Lake, who "took the view that the Resurrection could not possibly have occurred in the way in which it is recorded in the New Testament; therefore it must have occurred in some other way."<sup>16</sup> Biblical history written from this viewpoint is open to the shifting sands of *idées reçues*. It might be objected that the acceptance of the supernatural element is not practised in any other area of ancient history. If we exclude or excise the divine element from other historical documents why should we not do the same in dealing with the Gospels? The answer is that the Gospels describe

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events that are *sui generis*, and the acceptance of these events as historical is dependent on acceptance of the claims of Jesus to be the Christ. If these claims are true, there can be no philosophical objection to the miraculous element in the Gospels. And these claims must be evaluated in part by the veracity and credibility of the documents that describe them. One sometimes feels that the extreme and often improbable reconstructions of New Testament history by some theologians reflect an unwillingness to come to grips with the supernatural element in the Gospels, whose writers were proclaiming that God had intervened in time and space in Jesus Christ.

#### Theologians Could Learn from Classical Historians

It is encouraging to see that some scholars engaged in the "new quest of the historical Jesus" admit the possibility of knowing as much about the life of Jesus as they do, in spite of the persistence of over-rigorous methods. But to an ordinary historian, trained in squeezing the elements of history out of far less promising material than the Gospel narratives, it seems that we are in a position to know much more than many form-critics admit. The currently dominant schools of New Testament scholars (who are mostly theologians and not historians) have limited themselves unnecessarily by allowing the intrusion of improper philosophical presuppositions into their work and by the use of hypercritical methods of research that are applied in no other area of history. Every discipline creates its own methods of research and if parochialism is not to develop these methods should be compared from time to time with those of related fields. Theologians perhaps could supplement their use of methods developed for the critical study of the New Testament with some of the insights gained by classical historians in the

last few generations. I am not suggesting that New Testament scholars return to a pre-critical historiography, only that they recognize the essential historical reliability that the New Testament Gospels have shown themselves to possess. A century of the most rigorous criticism has demonstrated that they demand a far more respectful treatment than they are often given.

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- <sup>1</sup>See, e.g., R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford 1946), pp. 17-20, 28-31; and Peter Green, 'Clio Perennis,' in *Essays in Antiquity* (London 1960), pp. 63-73.
- <sup>2</sup>Quoted by F. F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* (fifth edition, Grand Rapids 1960), p. 91. For an estimate of Ramsay and his work see W. Ward Gasque, *Sir William M. Ramsay, Archaeologist and New Testament Scholar* (Grand Rapids 1966).
- <sup>3</sup>*Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament* (Oxford 1963), p. 189.
- <sup>4</sup>See Gasque, *op. cit.* p. 62.
- <sup>5</sup>J. A. T. Robinson, 'The Place of the Fourth Gospel,' in *The Roads Converge* (New York 1963), pp. 49-74.
- <sup>6</sup>This is true of the most widely acclaimed and influential recent life of Jesus, Günther Bornkamm's *Jesus von Nazareth* (English translation, New York 1960). Bornkamm is a student of Bultmann who rejects Bultmann's extreme scepticism but nevertheless seems to take a far more limited view of the possibility of reconstructing Jesus' life and ministry than the materials at our disposal would lead us to expect. See the comments of Stephen Neill, *The Interpretation of the New Testament*, 1861-1961, pp. 278-283.
- <sup>7</sup>It is not only the New Testament that has suffered from this approach. The excessive use of *Quellenkritik* in the study of the Roman historian Livy has caused M. L. W. Laistner to write: 'The conclusions reached by modern critics, moreover, are so often mutually contradictory or destructive that one is disposed to question the value of much that passes for scholarly investigation' (*The Greater Roman Historians*, Berkeley 1963, p. 83).
- <sup>8</sup>*Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament*, pp. 189-191.
- <sup>9</sup>See A. D. Momigliano, 'The Place of Herodotus in the History of Historiography,' in *Studies in Historiography* (London 1966), pp. 128-129.
- <sup>10</sup>*A Historical Commentary on Thucydides*, Volume I (Oxford 1959), pp. 54-57.
- <sup>11</sup>See Plutarch's comments in *Alexander* 1. 1.
- <sup>12</sup>After I had written this paragraph I discovered that Stephen Neill had made a similar comparison between Plutarch and the Evangelists (*The Interpretation of the New Testament*, pp. 260-261).
- <sup>13</sup>For full discussions of the sources and the problems in writing the life of Socrates see A. E. Taylor, *Socrates, The Man and His Thought* (New York 1953), pp. 11-36; and W. K. Guthrie, *Socrates* (Cambridge 1971), pp. 5-57.
- <sup>14</sup>For a convenient discussion of the sources for Alexander and the problems in reconstructing his career see Eugene Borza's introduction to Ulrich Wilcken's *Alexander the Great* (New York 1967), pp. ix-xxviii.
- <sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, p. xi.
- <sup>16</sup>*The Interpretation of the New Testament*, p. 281.

*The gynaecologist, aware that ultimately the decision lies with him, has his question. He also is thinking of cessation of pregnancy, and the results foreseen and unforeseen by his patient, which may follow. But he, almost alone, is thinking of abortion. Of the act. It is a lonely operation. Although dilatation of the cervix, the neck of the womb, is an operation he performs many times a week, on this occasion it will be different, He takes that first dilator and is tinglingly aware that he is about to seal the fate of a fetus, that he is about to alter history. In other operations the cervix will dilate readily, but in this operation it will fight, grip the end of the dilator and force it back into his hand. And then at last he will win, and as he does so he will wonder who has lost.*

R. F. R. Gardner

*Abortion: The Personal Dilemma*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan (1972), p. 14



# The Linguist and Axioms Concerning the Language of Scripture



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Some of my academic colleagues seem to hold to theories which are useful in their offices, but are such that one cannot live by them. Thus a deterministic view may be a tool for scientific research, but if carried consistently forward in all details, does not allow for normal living. I, however, search for a theoretical view which works not only in my office, but on the street, and at home—or in church.

Since I am a linguist, I need, therefore, to look at all those problems of Christian living which appear to me to contain a language component. This may be especially true today, when the relation of language to the message of God is much in the fore. It seems possible, also, that it may be no accident that linguistics has become a prominent vehicle for the work of God, just at the time in the history of the church that these other problems have arisen in great strength. And it may, therefore, be the responsibility of the linguist to search to see if by chance there is some minor place where his technical working assumptions might be helpful.

Here, then, are some general principles which I have been thinking about which might be relevant. They are given deliberately from a linguistic point of view. They claim to be neither the whole truth nor the only truth, but in my opinion they should be studied by theologians—especially by those who may be accustomed to attend seminars on the inspiration of the Scriptures—conferences with no one present whose professional training is in the area of theory of the nature of language.

*Axiom 1a: Bible language is human language, normal in pattern, rules, use.*

It is observed empirically, by linguistic methods, that the language of the Scriptures is natural language.

*Author's Note: Otis Leal and Dr. Frank Andersen read an earlier draft of this paper, and made numerous very helpful suggestions. If they were writing a similar paper, it seems clear that they would state a number of points differently, and especially would give warnings against abuses of such axioms in different degrees or in a different manner. This paper has also been published by the Graduate Christian Fellowship of Australia, Interchange 12, 228-31 (1972)*

One cannot differentiate the Greek used in the New Testament from the language of the time. It is not even elevated style, but the language of the man in the street. It is ordinary language, spoken by ordinary linguistic rules such as those studied at the Summer Institute of Linguistics by persons preparing to analyze unwritten languages for the Wycliffe Bible Translators.

This implies that whenever we listen to Bible language, or study it, it is within the framework of the principles which apply to all language. It leads us to ask questions about the nature of language in general, since these principles in turn affect our interpretation of a Biblical language. Hermeneutics is integrated here with linguistics. We wish to know what language is structured like, how it works, and something about its strengths for communicating a point of view, as well as the constraints imposed upon it by the way of structure while doing so.

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*It may be no accident that linguistics has become a prominent vehicle for the work of God.*

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*Axiom 1b: Jesus spoke ordinary human language.*

Jesus spoke the contemporary vernacular, which, like any living language, enables people to communicate effectively. It is not fair to the resources of a language to say "words fail me"; it is rather that we fail to exploit the potentialities of a language, or to use it with sufficient creativity.

Jesus' creativity functioned in a matrix of sociological usage and literary tradition which supplied the common ground for himself and his listeners: he spoke in *their* language. Hence any knowledge we can gain of the linguistic milieu of early first century Palestine will aid in understanding the words of Jesus. His work is firmly embedded both in history and in human language and culture. Jesus in his incarnation accepted the constraints of human language, just as he accepted constraints as to walking in time and place in a body.

*Axiom 1c: Jesus' message was incarnate in human language, yet "without sin".*

Christ was incarnate in the flesh of man, but grew up with no bone broken, and no sin in that flesh. It seems to me worth exploring the suggestion that the discussion of inerrancy of Scriptural writings is similarly an attempt to express our belief that in some sense—difficult to define or get agreement as to details—the Scriptures are also preserved without certain of the kinds of twisted meanings which the twisted bodies of our forefathers would have generated had they been left without guiding controls. But the borderline between sin and nonsin is very hard to specify (often impossible to do so) even in ethical matters of the daily walk, since a component of intent enters, and Christian people differ even in their interpretation of ethical detail—for example, as to the point where duty to God overrides duty to government, or as to voting when the choice is restricted to options between greater and lesser evils. Similarly, Christians differ strongly as to which kinds of interpretation of details of Scripture would lead to their being “warped” or wrong. It is not my purpose here to try to discuss any of these areas of disagreement; rather I wish to suggest a few further principles which interest me.

*Axiom 2a: In natural language, and hence in Scriptural language, one can make some true statements.*

From this axiom, without which human behavior as we know it could not exist, I believe, important consequences flow.

What criterion of truth will work for a natural-language statement which is neither complete nor unambiguous in its detail? Here, as Edward J. Carnell said once (in *An Introduction to Christian Apologetics*, Grand Rapids, 1956, p. 45), “The true is the quality of that judgment or proposition which, when followed out into the total witness of facts in our experience, does not disappoint our expectations.” That is, the true statement leads us to act so that we will not be upset by finding out further details of a situation; we will not have been misled by false information.

*Axiom 2b: As part of the result of man's being created in the image of God, the communication system of God and that of man are not disjoint.*

The implication here is that by creation God has made man's language sufficiently like his own internal communication system, whatever that may be, that man's is a pale reflection of his own and allows talk across the barrier in both directions.

*Axiom 2c: Human language is a sufficient vehicle for carrying communication from God in propositional form.*

The assumption that the language of man is continuous with that of God opens the way for us to find propositional content sharable in two-way communication between the two. He can get his cognitive message through to us. I do not assume this, on the contrary, for the relations between God and a snail.

*Axiom 3a: The scriptures are translatable in their crucial intent and content.*

Various important consequences hang on this as-

sumption. We could not hope to translate successfully into another language if Axiom 2c were false, if God's message could not be communicated in human language. If the Greek and Hebrew of Scriptures had to be special languages, due to some inherent defect in Hebrew and Greek as natural languages, then the same defect would carry over into all translations. Similarly, Axioms 1a and 1b are necessary as underlying belief before one can assume that the Scriptures can be translated.

Transcultural communication must be granted as possible, or human society as we experience it would be impossible. But more than a crude approximation must be possible; the communication must be in some sense transculturally effective.

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*The assumption that the language of man is continuous with that of God opens the way for us to find propositional content sharable in two-way communication between the two.*

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There are differences of view within this requirement. Effectiveness may be equated with inerrancy (as in my Axiom 1c), or with effectiveness only at points assumed to have theological relevance.

It should be observed closely, however, that linguists of both persuasions are likely to agree that there is inevitable category slippage in translation, and that this poses certain problems for the translator. On the one hand he must accept some “losses” (for example, in a language with no plural suffixes it would be unwise at every occurrence to try to find phrasal substitutes for plurality, even when in crucial contexts it is always possible to show plurality); on the other, he is tied to “additions” of categorial distinction (as, for example, in a language which must differentiate between familiar and formal kinds of pronouns for ‘you’, where one or the other must of necessity be used, but where choice implies a small component of meaning.)

This factor demands that the translator make judgments about the marginality of some of the categorial elements. And this in turn implies some unavoidable subjective judgment by every translator on the intent or cruciality of the context of the Scriptures. We make room for this judgment by this axiom—but at the same time recognize that translator judgments will differ, (hence a translation committee), even when they share the same presuppositions about the nature of language and of theology. If either of these presuppositions differ, the translation judgments may vary more widely. The audience aimed at (learned, semi-literate) may also affect these and related stylistic choices substantially.

In this connection, further, it should be observed that the New Testament in Greek is already a translation, in so far as it is quoting Christ and the apostles. If translation theory cannot allow for truth preserved across translation, in spite of category slippage, then theology is already in difficulty linguistically.

*Axiom 3b: God can speak English—or any other language.*

But the very strength of Axiom 3a may bring to the linguistically-oriented reader a further problem

which might not concern other readers. If, he might argue, there is effective translation possible, but with minor category slippage, is there no slippage, or "error," in the "translation" of the message from God's communication system into the language of man? Our axiom here is designed to show that there is a false presupposition underlying the question itself. The question implies that there is a given message in specific detail which must in that detail be translated for man. But my view, through this axiom, is very different. It allows to God the capacity which any bilingual has, a capacity to lecture on the *same topic* with a slightly different but equally true verbalization of the topic at two different times in the same language, or at two different times in different languages. That is, the inspiration of propositional revelation into Greek or Hebrew does not have to be tied first of all to translation axioms, but to more general axioms connecting language with truth, (cf. Axioms 2a, 2c).

*Axiom 4a: No statement includes all possible relevant information: truth is not equated with completeness of detail.*

There is always something left unsaid in every statement; one could always go into more detail, more background, more presuppositions made explicit. One can always add massive "footnotes" and excessive technical jargon, but this would stop communication rather than helping it. Thus one cannot equate truth in communication with completeness of every detail.<sup>1</sup> If one tried to do so, any truth in science would eventually be impossible.

*Axiom 4b: Every statement in natural language has a range of potential meanings from which the intended one must be selected by use of context and the general thrust (or meaning) of the document as a whole.*

There is a range of ambiguity to every statement in all natural language; taken in isolation, every word has a range of meanings. Selection of the special set of meanings for the words within any one sentence must be made in a way appropriate to both (a) the immediate context and (b) the discourse as a whole.

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*One cannot equate truth in communication with completeness of every detail.*

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But for natural language to work as it does in behavior, where people assume that friends sometimes tell the truth,<sup>2</sup> we must assume the possibility of some true statements—and hence for Scripture statements as well. Note that for interpretation of a passage, a subjective judgment of the author's intent is unavoidable, as is a subjective judgment as to the relation of an item to its context. The evangelical may be concerned about possible abuses of such an axiom, but as far as I know, interpretation of any document, including the Scriptures as an integrated whole, cannot escape from it.

*Axiom 4c: The interpreter of a document must assume that its author intended to communicate some*

*meaning, and that he probably (i.e., except in special instances of deliberate obfuscation) tried to do so in a coherent manner.*

In natural language, therefore, if we do not at first understand, we search for a meaning which we have missed (or we may even ask a speaker what his meaning was). When we don't succeed in finding such a coherent surface meaning, we may start looking for a "hidden" meaning, a joke, a pun, or a metaphor. So, too, with the Scriptures. We assume a meaningfulness, an intent, a coherence of doctrine. None of these things are "provable" in certain ways; but all must be assumed for rationality.

Here, again, there are possible abuses of the axioms. Interpreters may distort a document, or a point of view, by attributing to a person a meaning which was far from his thought—by trying to analyze hidden motives, or by bringing some philosophy or interpretation to bear, e.g., psychologizing, which was alien to the author. Yet the necessity of playing fair with a document, with the author's observable statements, does not eliminate the necessity of searching for the coherence of an isolated passage with its larger or remote contexts. And somehow we must leave to the interpreter some possibility of judging coherence in a document; without this capacity, even though it be a subjective one, no theological system could be rationally discussed.

*Axiom 5a: Every report is selective.*

Even a lengthy report of an event can never give all the detail of the situation during any two-minute period; it is vast, with the numbering of the hairs of each man's head being only a small part of the specification of the situation which includes the atomic spin of each element in each hair. Hence, every report is selective; only some parts can be given, those judged by the writer to be relevant to some purpose.

*Axiom 5b: An effective true summary may not necessarily be verbatim or complete.*

If one wishes a short summary of a discourse which lasted an hour, and for which the crucial terms were dispersed over many paragraphs, the most effective summary may not be a specific sentence or paragraph, or miscellaneous bits of paragraphs quoted verbatim, but one which concentrates the terms into a more compact form than they were in the original discourse. Such a summary is a true report of the event, provided that one does not affirm that he is giving a complete verbatim report or a selection of "exactly" quoted bits. Even that kind of report would still be incomplete since it leaves out intonation, voice quality and timing, and personal vocal characteristics.

*Axiom 5c: Indeterminacy occurs at the borderlines of linguistic taxonomic classes.*

This axiom affirms that in linguistic theory we are frequently puzzled about difficult cases; whether an item is to be considered as a noun or a verb may be impossible to decide by non-arbitrary criteria, or by criteria which can meet the approval of linguists working under the same axiomatic sets. Other kinds of ambiguity crop up in many places in linguistic theory and practice.

It should not be surprising, therefore, that in handling problems related to the language of the Scrip-

tures we may be at times in doubt. Is a particular item to be considered a metaphor? If it is a major matter, like the resurrection, a difference of judgment will lead to effectively two different religions; if it is a minor matter, relative to a treatment of Christianity, it may lead to merely individual preference; all shades come between.

There can be no escape from this kind of problem. No extensive legalistic judgment can ever resolve all cases of ambiguity; new ones will continue to arise to require either further judgments or to handle apparent clashes within a particular system. Christian faith must commit itself on the major decision points, as to those which it believes to have been the intent of our Lord and of the Scriptures as a whole; to make secondary judgments about those which may divide us as working 'teams' in denominations or institutions, since they sometimes appear to individuals to be of sufficient importance to change their allegiance to institutions; and to have charity on those matters which do not affect in serious measure the perceived intent of God toward man, nor our behavior toward one another, nor our commitment to following orders towards God's program for his church in the world.

*Axiom 6a: Languages change over a period of time.*

As far as I can tell, no linguist would question this basic axiom. Nevertheless, this axiom, in connection with Axiom 1a, that the Biblical language is normal language, has extremely important consequences. The briefest study of Chaucer, let alone of Old English, lets us know that in 500 to 1000 years our language has changed radically, so radically that we do not understand it without aids. This we take to be normal for all language.

When, therefore, we hear discussed—or study for ourselves if we are Hebrew scholars—the language of the Old Testament, and note that if we accept the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, and comparable judgments about other Old Testament writings, then the gap of time between Moses and Malachi can cause us to think of Beowulf (Old English) and the New York Times, and there is no reason to suppose that the change was any less.

Thus we are faced with two quite different problems: (1) On the one hand, I gather (from other scholars, since I am not competent in this area) that there is more diversity within the Old Testament documents than is often recognized. (Differences of dialect among the writers, or differences of older forms preserved in some of the songs, for example, may have been insufficiently studied.) (2) On the other hand, the degree of uniformity within the documents is such that they could not reflect in their present form the precise original shapes in which they were written, or the historical changes affirmed by this axiom (in connection with Axiom 1a, that Bible language is normal language) as inevitable. The conservative scholar must come to closer grips with linguistic problems raised by the relation between (a) an original set of documents written over a time span which must have involved (by this axiom) substantial differences, and (b) our current Scriptures which do not include that degree of difference. Somewhere this involves the need for theologians to discuss in detail the nature of an original document in reference to such changes in transmission or standardization, or compilation, and thus impli-

cations for meaning (and compare Axiom 3a).

*Axiom 7a: Language requires a perspective from which the speaker is to talk, if he is to talk at all. The necessity for such a starting point is inherent in all communication, and of itself is to be equated neither with truth nor with error, but with the innate properties of the communication system.*

When for example, we are talking with someone, we speak of "I and you;" but our companion also takes himself as the starting point when he uses "I and you," even although "I" in the first instance is applied to me, and in the second instance, is applied to him. The change of perspective has nothing to do with truth or error, but with getting a starting point from which people can talk.

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*The Bible is not to be used as a textbook on physics, since its truth was not written from that perspective.*

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The significance of this axiom goes far beyond the use of pronouns where it is clear, however. It is this axiom which is related to Axioms 4b,c in terms of intent. If, for example, the starting point in a particular moment of discourse is surveying land to put up a building in the center, the map and coordinates used, and the theory behind the procedure, are specifically those of a mercator projection (in which the north pole is stretched out clear across the map) and a flat world. No one believes the latter two circumstances to be truth—nor is anyone deceived by it in a way relevant to the intent of the local survey and messages communicating between surveyor and architect or law department. When planning a great circle airplane route, or an expedition to the north pole, however, a different map is used, and a different model of the physical world which allows communication about shortest distances through the air, and journeying from eastern to western hemisphere over the pole. When a particular perspective (or "projection") is used in an area inappropriate to it, serious difficulties arise in selecting appropriate behavior for response.

The Bible is not to be used as a textbook on physics, since its truth was not written from that perspective, nor to provide a map which would prescribe appropriate behavior in the physical sciences. Similarly, no one particular parable should be stretched beyond limits, for it also is then being treated as a kind of a map to be followed in behavior in areas for which it was not designed.

Since truth is given in a message which must be related to a starting point of perspective, interpretation can be in error by a wrong identification of this point of perspective. This places error in the interpretation rather than in the original statement.

*Axiom 7b: There may be culturally determined habits of reporting events.*

A person in that culture, using with integrity the language habits in the way his colleagues do, would neither disappoint them nor be disappointed (in the Carnell sense—see quotation under Axiom 2a) if he

were later to see a re-play of the scene; he would not have to say, "I was wrong there, wasn't I?"

Yet it is astonishing how sentences can appear to be wrong if one is not "seeing" the context correctly. Recently I was reading some (unpublished) material by Adam Makkai in which he shows how wrong one can be in such judgments. For example, he gives the sentence: "It was five years before he was born and seven years after she died that the baby divorced his grandmother". Suppose, he queries, that this is said by folks who believe in reincarnation, with change of sex in the meantime, and the word "divorce" has the meaning of freeing oneself from a certain kind of guardianship—then the sentence makes sense. Tremendous difficulties arise constantly in linguistic discussions these days on such matters. If this is true for current English how much more for the past, where we do not know the culture intimately! (It suggests that we may need to wait until we too can see the "re-play" before assuming that some Scripture sentences are in error, rather than in a surface clash which we find currently unresolvable.)

*Axiom 7c: Inspiration is not dictation, but works concurrently with normal human literary activity.*

No serious evangelical theologian known to me adopts a dictation theory of inspiration. Nevertheless, my personal feeling is that occasionally evangelicals who affirm the nondictation view do, in fact, adopt, perhaps emotionally rather than intellectually, a view which is difficult to distinguish from dictation. If verbal inspiration is treated so strongly that no single word is under the simultaneous normal control of the author, but is exclusively under the control of the Holy Spirit, then it is easy to move to the belief that the surface individual coloring of different authors' styles is no more than the effect of complete verbal control through a non-active "mold," like a plastic squeezed through a form in which the form has no initiative.

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*Through natural language we can speak truth, with intent and content interpreted in the light of the cultural and linguistic content of the time and of the moment of utterance.*

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If, however, we try to affirm the concursive role of the human author, there must be left room for the normal human active struggle to compose a letter, for conscious systematic organization of a discourse, for deliberate attempts to clothe a message in both metaphors and words and structures which would be effective to the chosen audience and pleasing to the authors in terms of style. Each has his own geographical dialect, a dialect which is also placed in time, and colored by his own personal characteristics.

*Axiom 7d: Natural language is oriented to the viewpoint of action as lived, not to some abstraction.*

So the understanding of language and literature, and of sociology, and history, must be brought to bear upon the understanding of Scripture passages which are in turn in natural language (Axiom 1a).

*Axiom 7e: A message may be carried by metaphor but is not thereby identified with it.*

In connection with Axiom 7c, this one specifies that the understanding of the nature of the dawning day, for example, is not to be equated with an understanding of the laws of physics; and the phenomenological reference to the rising sun is not to be equated to physical laws.

To confuse metaphor with message, when message is dependent upon metaphor for its communication, is to assume the presence of error where there is none. On the other hand, to assume that no explicit truth can be communicated through metaphor, or to assume that serious statements intended to represent concrete events are to be taken as metaphor, is to deny intended message. At this point differences of belief concerning the specific relation of metaphor to message will lead to different affirmations of faith, as liberalism over against orthodoxy. The study of language, as language, does not by itself resolve such problems or disagreements.

As an orthodox Christian assumption, but not one growing out of the nature of language as such, we choose to believe that the statements about the resurrection of Christ are to be taken as sober fact, not metaphor.

*Axiom 7f: There is a hierarchy of commitment to the nonmetaphorical versus metaphorical elements in the Scriptures.*

In an ambiguous or clashing situation, a general commitment to a theological perspective—say some denominational pattern, or a particular perspective which integrates the Old Testament with the New—leads to the selection of one interpretation over another. This may show up in relation to the elements considered metaphorical by different individuals.

Here, then, are more important and less important doctrines, from the view of a judgment as to some central core of doctrines. In some denominations, the area of difference of opinion on the borderlines may be greater than in others—but every preacher speaking of a new insight, and every teacher or theologian trying to advance the understanding of his community, witnesses to the presence of such differences on some scale.

## Summary

The view of language which I hold, tries to come to terms with the observed fact that the language of Scripture is natural language; but that through natural language we can speak truth, with intent and content interpreted in the light of the cultural and linguistic content of the time and of the moment of utterance. Within this language, Christ has spoken to us, in saying to the Father, "Thy Word is truth".

## REFERENCES

- <sup>1</sup>For discussion of Axioms 4a and 4b, see my "Strange Dimensions of Truth" in *Christianity Today*, 5, pp. 25-28, May 8, 1961; reprinted in *"With Heart and Mind"*, pp. 46-53, 1962.
- <sup>2</sup>See Axiom 2a. But if one follows William Hordern, there is ambiguity and hence *not* infallibility in the statement, 'God is love,' since one could get the wrong impression from it. See my discussion of this point in the reference given in Reference 1.



# Paul, Participles and Parameters



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## Literary Statistics

We all intuitively recognize differences in style among authors. We even try to express these stylistic differences subjectively by such terms as “eloquent”, “verbose”, “pleasing”, “smooth”, “flowing”, etc. However, we do not normally try to pinpoint, refine or even analyze comparative differences in any detailed or quantitative way. On a more sophisticated level, literary critics have wrestled with the problem of style and its role as an accurate criterion of authorship. Scholars have long been engaged in distinguishing authentic and spurious pieces of literature for a given author. However, the application of style as a criterion for authorship has been mainly a matter of art and subjective judgment even among these scholars. Recent attempts have been made to turn this aspect of literary criticism into a science by combining insights from modern linguistics and statistics; the result is a hybrid known as literary statistics.<sup>8</sup>

## Pauline Writings

Differences in style within the so-called Pauline Corpus of the Bible have long been noted and described even by the most conservative biblical scholars, and in recent years evangelical scholars have generally conceded that the book of Hebrews is nonPauline. These scholars have usually attributed the differences in style to the occasional nature of the writing, Paul's use of a scribal secretary (amanuensis), and a certain progression in Pauline thought. Yet attempts to explain stylistic differences have never led evangelical scholars to question the authorship of the thirteen Pauline epistles. A “statistical” approach to Scripture had its beginning in 1921 when P. N. Harrison examined the Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles (I, II Timothy, Titus). Harrison acknowledged that every so-called Pauline epistle has certain characteristics, which is lacking in others. Yet, for the most, the letters form a more or less clearly defined series within certain limits. However, in terms of comparative word usage, unique words, and certain grammatical features, Harrison concluded that the Pastorals form an exception

to the Pauline series, and must have been written by a “Paulist” at some later date.<sup>2</sup>

Even more recently, a minister in Scotland, A. Q. Morton, has been talking a great deal about “scientific and conclusive” evidence showing that only Romans, I and II Corinthians, Galatians, and possibly Philemon are from Paul, and that the rest of the epistles are from four or five different authors.<sup>3</sup> Morton feels that at first the church had no reason to question the authenticity of the Pauline epistles. But for the last 150 years, scholars have sought to obtain more accurate information about Paul and about Christianity itself. They have done the best they can with the tools available, but there has been little or no agreement concerning which are Paul's and which are spurious. Morton concludes that traditional literary criticism is non-uniform and too inconclusive to be of real value; there is widespread disagreement concerning the proper criteria for evaluations, and most of the findings are contradictory. Morton also dismisses theological analysis as an acceptable tool for determining authorship on the same grounds. He feels that statistics is the only truly objective, and thus valid approach.

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*Literary critics have wrestled with the problem of style and its role as an accurate criterion of authorship.*

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Morton posits that any Greek prose author has a pattern which is as distinctive for him as a fingerprint. This distinctive pattern is unconscious, but may be discerned in terms of sentence length and the frequency of Greek particles (notably *kai*). He claims that this has been consistently proven in 400 samples from Isocrates to late Hellenistic authors. In each case, discrepancies in these areas precisely coincided with the scholarly opinion on the genuine and spurious works attributed to the various authors. These tests were then applied to the thirteen letters ascribed to Paul. Morton concluded that only the four major letters (*Hauptbriefe*)

are genuine Pauline writings. Morton has gone on to apply several other tests in addition to sentence length and *kai* frequency.<sup>4,5</sup> The point is that his tests have a cumulative value rather than completely independent confirmation.

### Purpose and Method

It is our thesis that more basic work still needs to be done concerning parameters which adequately define style and the minimum sample size that can be used. In this paper, we want to investigate one major literary characteristic which has not been studied to date, namely the Pauline use of the participle. We use the statistical technique called discriminant analysis to study the usage of the participle by distinguishing among groups of similar participle usage. B. Van Elderen has provided us with a systematic tabular count of the usage of the participle.<sup>7</sup> This count becomes the data for the discriminant analysis.

Discriminant analysis is a statistical method that is used to discriminate between two groups of individuals or objects on the basis of several properties of those individuals or objects. Mosteller and Wallace used discriminant analysis in their study of the disputed Federalist Papers.<sup>6</sup> Wachal used discriminant analysis in his study of the authorship of *Federalist* 55 and concludes that discriminant analysis is to be preferred as a classifying procedure.<sup>8</sup>

1. Suppose an anthropologist has discovered a skull in an area that he knows possesses two types of skulls. He desires to classify his newly found skull as belonging to one of the two types that are found in the area by means of a series of measurements taken on the skull. He takes a set of skulls belonging to the first type and records the measurements taken on them. He records the same measurements on a set of skulls belonging to the second type. If the two types were somewhat similar with respect to all those measurements, it might not be possible to classify the skulls correctly by means of any single measurement because of a large amount of overlap in the distributions of this measurement for the two types. However, it might be possible that a linear combination of the various measurements exists such that the distribution of this linear combination for the two types would possess very little overlap. Using discriminant analysis, this linear combination could then be used to yield a type of discriminant index number by means of which skulls of the two types could be distinguished with a high percentage of

*We investigate here one major literary characteristic which has not been studied to date, namely the Pauline use of the participle.*

success. Once a discriminant index for each type of skull was determined the procedure for classifying a new skull would be to simply determine, on the basis of the same measurements, the index number for that skull. Whichever skull type index number it more closely approximated, that type of skull would be its classification type.

2. The first step in the discriminating process is to determine the relative importance of the participle types as discriminating agents. To accomplish this, a series of five multiple regression analyses were performed with each participle variable serving as the dependent variable in one of the analyses. In this manner, correlation coefficients were determined and could be used to determine the relative importance of the participle types. The multiple regression analyses suggested the attributive and circumstantial to be the most important discriminating agents of the five participle types listed by Van Elderen and hence were selected for use in the discriminant analysis.

3. The overall statistical feature of discriminant analysis is to attempt to maximize the variation between the different groups without noticeably increasing the variation within the group itself. This can best be accomplished by using methods of the calculus and maximizing the ratio of the Between-groups Mean Square to the Within-groups of Mean Square?

All the mathematical details and calculations for the application of discriminant analysis to the data can be found in the IBM 1130 Scientific Subroutine Computer Software Package, No. GH 20-0252-4, published by the IBM Corporation, White Plains, New York.

### Presentation and Treatment of the Data

Table 46 in Van Elderen's work<sup>7</sup> furnishes the data for this discussion and is reproduced below. Van Elderen has listed the distributions, according to percentage, of five types of participles as these participles occur in the 13 epistles. As previously discussed, only the attributive and circumstantial types warranted study based upon correlation obtained from regression analyses. In addition, Titus and Philemon were not

Distribution of Participles in Paul According to Type<sup>a, b</sup>

Letter	Attributive	Circumstantial	Supplementary	Independent	Substantive
Romans	61.0	29.9	1.2	7.9	34.3
I Corinthians	56.4	37.0	5.5	1.1	38.6
Galatians	55.4	38.6	6.0	0.0	32.5
I Thess.	57.9	38.6	0.0	3.5	19.3
II Thess.	65.4	27.0	3.8	3.8	30.8
I Timothy	51.3	43.7	3.7	1.3	18.8
II Timothy	59.3	40.7	0.0	0.0	14.8
II Corinthians	37.1	47.4	6.2	9.3	20.6
Ephesians	36.5	59.8	3.7	0.0	11.3
Philippians	26.8	67.9	5.3	0.0	14.3
Colossians	23.4	62.3	10.4	3.9	3.9 (1)

a) By percentage of the total number of participles in the epistle.

b) After Van Elderen.<sup>7</sup>

*The usage of the participle in the Pauline Corpus fails to furnish the sensitivity needed to distinguish differing styles.*

used in the analysis. The data are furnished by the first two columns of the Table for the first eleven epistles.

Our study is an attempt to shed more light on the subject of the authorship of the Pauline Epistles. The paper specifically considers the attributive and circumstantial participles as parameters and by using discriminant analysis tests for significant differences in usage in the Pauline Epistles. The basic procedure involves arbitrarily grouping books and comparing similarities and differences among these groupings within the Pauline Corpus.

*First Set of Groupings*

Using Romans, I and II Corinthians, and Galatians as Group 1, and I and II Thessalonians and I and II Timothy as Group 2, the groups are distinguishable at the 5% level of significance. The discriminant analysis resulted in an index of 312.98 for Group 1 and an index of 346.93 for Group 2. Testing Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians individually, the results were:

	Group 1	Group 2
Ephesians	371.22	372.60
Philippians	369.40	370.19
Colossians	305.47	302.93

Comparing these values to the index values for each group we have:

- (1) The numerical difference between the Group 1 value for Ephesians and the Group 1 index is 58.24 while the numerical difference between the Group 2 value for Ephesians and Group 2 index is 25.67. Since the difference between the Group values and the Group index is minimum for Group 2, Ephesians is determined to be more similar to Group 2.
- (2) The numerical difference between the Group 1 value for Philippians and the Group 1 index is 56.42 while the numerical difference between the Group 2 value for Philippians and the Group 2 index is 23.26. Since the difference between the Group value and the Group index is minimum for Group 2, Philippians is determined to be more similar to Group 2.
- (3) The numerical difference between the Group 1 value for Colossians and the Group 1 index is 7.51 while the numerical difference between the Group 2 value for Colossians and the Group 2 index is 44.00. Since the difference between the Group value and the Group index is minimum for Group 1, Colossians is determined to be more similar to Group 1.

Thus, Ephesians and Philippians are more similar to Group 2 while Colossians is more similar to Group 1.

*Second Set of Groupings*

With Romans, I and II Corinthians, and Galatians as Group 1 and Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians as Group 2, Hotelling's  $T^2$  showed that the groups were distinguishable at the 1% level of significance. The

analysis resulted in an index of 273.03 for Group 1 and 348.05 for Group 2. Testing I and II Thessalonians, I and II Timothy, the results were:

	Group 1	Group 2
I Thessalonians	297.39	290.10
II Thessalonians	248.66	230.51
I Timothy	302.74	298.76
II Timothy	319.65	315.53

Looking at the numerical difference between each Group value and the corresponding Group index, we determine that I Thessalonians, II Thessalonians, and I Timothy are more similar to Group 1 while II Timothy is more similar to Group 2.

*Third Set of Groupings*

With I and II Thessalonians, and I and II Timothy as Group 1 and Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians as Group 2, Hotelling's  $T^2$  test showed that the groups were distinguishable at the 5% level of significance. The analysis resulted in an index of 242.88 for Group 1 and 226.80 for Group 2. Testing I and II Corinthians, Romans, and Galatians, the results were:

	Group 1	Group 2
I Corinthians	229.56	219.27
II Corinthians	179.92	183.61
Romans	218.91	204.34
Galatians	232.50	222.80

Looking at the numerical difference between each Group value and the corresponding Group index, we determine that all these epistles are more similar to Group 2 than Group 1. However, it should be noted that in the cases of Romans and Galatians the differences between classification into the group is very slight (e.g. Romans has difference of 23.97 for Group 1 and 22.46 for Group 2).

**Conclusions**

These tests indicate that the usage of the participle in the Pauline Corpus offers no real additional assistance in determining differing literary styles. As a parameter for authorship in the Pauline Corpus, it fails to furnish the sensitivity needed to distinguish differing styles. For example, based upon the suggested groupings in this paper, inconsistencies in classifying elements of the Pauline Corpus have been noted. The separation of II Timothy from I Timothy in test two and the slight difference in the classification of Romans and Galatians in test three illustrate the point.

One must be careful not to "read into" these conclusions any support for the hypothesis that Paul wrote all the Pauline Epistles or for the hypothesis that Paul wrote only a portion of them. Such support or proof was not the intent of the investigation. Such support will have to wait until more sensitive parameters can be found and tested.

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## Which Books Belong in the Bible?



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*Following an introduction and definition of basic terms (canon, apocrypha, pseudepigrapha) the development of the Old Testament canon is treated, followed by an appraisal of Old Testament apocrypha. The second section treats the congealing of the New Testament canon, and the vast literature of New Testament apocrypha. The third section considers modern day questions of canon and apocrypha, both from the standpoint of deleting Scriptural books as well as from the viewpoint of adding "new scriptures" to the canon.*

### Introduction

A person who is not yet a believer may offer a challenge, "I heard that in the 4th Century it was decided to leave some books out of the New Testament." Or, "Why did the Protestants decide to remove about a dozen books from the Old Testament?" Or even worse, "You claim the Bible is the very Word of God, and yet human beings decided which books should be in the Bible! Why 66 books? Why not 166 books, or why not just 26 books? It seems to be the word of man just as much as the Word of God!"

We hope to answer these and other questions in this paper. We limit ourselves to this particular topic: "Which books belong in the Bible?" This means we do not have latitude to explore another question of great interest, "By what means did God's mind get communicated into the minds of the men who wrote the Scriptures?" For our purposes, let us assume that God succeeded in delivering his word authentically and accurately through chosen men. Let us assume the inspiration of God's Word. The question now before us is: How was the distinction made between books given by the inspiration of God on the one hand, and on the other hand the books that are hoaxes, forgeries,

or good human material but not meant to be included as Scripture?

Let us begin with two terms that are basic in a discussion of "Which books belong in the Bible?"—

#### Canon:

A normative or regulative standard as to what should be included in sacred writings; straight (orthodox) teachings; the Scriptures viewed as a rule of faith and conduct (from the Greek *kanon*, from the phoenician *gana'*, Hebrew *ganeh*, meaning a rod, cane, or reed, usable for measuring).

#### Apocrypha:

Books rejected as unauthentic, of hidden origin, or uncanonical (from the Greek *apokryphos*, hidden away). Closely related is the term *pseudepigrapha*, referring to books written under false (Greek *pseudēs*) authorship (Greek *epi* + *graphe*, to write upon), such as Books of Enoch, Psalms of Solomon, etc.

### A Consideration of the Old Testament

Some argue<sup>1</sup> that the Old Testament books, 39 in the Protestant Bible, were established as a canon as early as 444-400 B.C., in the time of Ezra, contemporary of the Persian King Artaxerxes (465-424 B.C.). This view is supported by the writings of Flavious

Josephus (37-100? A.D.), Jewish soldier, statesman, and historian, who in his "Against Apion" states "We have but twenty-two books. . . . From the days of Artaxerxes to our own times every event has indeed been recorded; but these recent records have not been deemed worthy of equal credit with those which preceded them . . ." (Those twenty-two books were the same as our thirty-nine, since the twelve minor prophets were on a single scroll, and thus counted as one book. Ruth was attached to Judges, and Lamentations tacked on to the Jeremiah scroll. Likewise Ezra and Nehemiah were together. And each pair of Samuel, Kings, Chronicles were treated as one book. This arrangement is well-known and well-accepted.)

This view, which may be oversimplified in dating the canon closed at 400 B.C., has value in that it shows how Josephus, a first century Jew, from a practical point of view based on current usage, considered the canon "well-jelled" by 400 B.C., after which Josephus considered prophetic inspiration to have ceased.

A more precise study reveals that the Pentateuch (the law of Moses, the first five books) was in use canonically as early as 400 B.C.; that the Prophets, a second Jewish division of Scriptures, was closed canonically by 200 B.C.; and that the third division, the Writings, was closed in 100 B.C.<sup>2</sup> (This three-fold division of Jewish Scripture is commonly known, and it has been designated by the acronym *tanak*, which means *torah* (law), *nabiim* (prophets), and *Kethubim* (writings).

An important date is 90 A.D. when the Council of Jamnia convened under Johanan ben Zakkai, officially congealing the Old Testament canon in its present form of thirty-nine books without Apocrypha.<sup>3</sup> Prior to this the canon had been socially closed by usage and practice, and discussions about Ezekiel, Daniel, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, and Esther, for example, were academic and not of historical and theological significance. (Such discussions even continued after the formal closing of the canon in 90 A.D.) Perhaps the development of Christian literature, which was coming to the fore, made it prudent for the rabbis to take official action in closing their canon.

### Old Testament Apocrypha

The Apocrypha (and Pseudepigrapha) were produced between 250 B.C. and the early Christian centuries. The Apocryphal books, found in the Douay Version (Roman Catholic), can be roughly divided into three groups:

1. Books that are allegedly *additions and completions* of existing books of the Old Testament canon. (II Esdras adds apocalyptic visions given to Ezra; "The Rest of Esther" seeks to show God's hand in "Esther" in clearer focus; and three additions to Daniel, the first two of which are based on the lion's den setting: Song of the Three Holy Children, Bel and the Dragon, and History of Susanna, add to the heroic feats of Daniel.)
2. Books that can be called "*wisdom literature*", similar to Job, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. These are Wisdom of Solomon and Ecclesiasticus.
3. Books that treat *historical narrative*, sometimes with apparent forthrightness, as I and II Maccabees, which relate the Jews' warfare for liberty (175-130

B.C.) against the Syrians under the ambitious and outrageous Antiochus Epiphanes; on other occasions the historical narratives appear legendary (I Esdras regarding Zerubbabel), or infused with romantic love (Tobit and Judith), or mere paraphrases from other books (Baruch paraphrasing the prophets Jeremiah, Daniel, etc.).

What has been the fate of these assorted books? The rabbis did not want to accept them in the Old Testament canon because they appeared in Greek in the Septuagint translation in 150 B.C., and God's language is Hebrew! (Four were *originally* written in Hebrew.) It is important to emphasize that Jewish usage rejected these books from their canon. They were definitely rejected at Jamnia in 90 A.D.

On April 8, 1546 The Council of Trent of the Roman Catholic Church declared some of these above-mentioned apocryphal books to be canonical or deuterocanonical, offering an anathema against any who ventured a different view. The books were Tobit, Judith, The Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, Baruch (with the Epistle of Jeremy as Chapter 6) and I and II Maccabees. The Rest of Esther was added to canonical Esther, and Daniel was expanded by The History of Susanna, Song of the Three Holy Children, and Bel and the Dragon.

In the New English Bible the Apocrypha also includes I and II Esdras and the Prayer of Manasseh, which were rejected by the Council of Trent. It is evident that this Apocrypha is about equal in length to the New Testament.

Martin Luther, the German reformer, felt that some of these books favored papal doctrines. He also rejected the Apocrypha. Probably he was over-reacting, as these books are not *theologically* radical and heretical. More important is the principle that these books were never part of the Jewish canon of the Scriptures. They found their way into the Bible via the Greek Septuagint version, and its translation into Latin in the second century, and the Latin Vulgate which was completed in 405 A.D. by Jerome. Once included alongside canonical Scripture, tradition tended to canonize these apocryphal books also.

It is worth noting that Jesus is not recorded as having quoted from these apocryphal books. There is no explicit reference to them in the New Testament canon. They are useful books in terms of understanding the life and thought of Judaism in the intertestamental period, as a bridge between Old and New Testaments. We should not be threatened by these books or seek to burn them thinking they are devilish tools. But we do not see sufficient evidence for accepting them as canon material. Likewise historical investigations show the pseudepigraphal documents to be unauthentic and unacceptable.

Representative reading samples from the Apocrypha are offered as an introduction: (1) *Additions and Completions*, see Daniel's vindication of Susanna's innocence, in History of Susanna 49-64. (2) *Wisdom Literature*, see Wisdom of Solomon 14:23-26 for rituals of evil, and a passage to arouse Women's Lib, Ecclesiasticus 25:19-26. Also 26:9-12 on the loose woman. (3) *Historical Narrative*, see I Maccabees 1:10, 20-24, 41-64 on the outrages of "that wicked man, Antiochus Epiphanes" who set up the "abomination of desolation" on the altar of the temple (175 B.C.).



### A Consideration of the New Testament

The Old Testament canon jelled between 400-100 B.C. (first the Law in 400 B.C., then the prophets in 200 B.C. and finally the Writings in 100 B.C.) with a final definitive decision being made at the Council of Jamnia in 90 A.D. In like manner the New Testament canon jelled, between about 75 A.D. and 400 A.D. Again we observe three stages of development in the New Testament canon, culminating in its congealing at the synods of Hippo Regius (393 A.D.) and Carthage (397, 419 A.D.).<sup>4</sup>

(1) In the period of the apostolic church there were hints and allusions that make us suspect that authoritative Christian writings were in the making. For instance, Jesus Christ was a person of authority who spoke with authority, e.g., "You have heard that it was said . . . but I say . . .". One would expect that sooner or later such sayings would be recorded, along with his memorable parables, and narratives of his mighty deeds. Paul the apostle claimed, in his letter to the Galatians, to have received instructions directly from the risen and ascended Christ concerning the breadth of the gospel for both Jew and Gentile, and concerning all men being made right with God by faith; one would expect these apostolic revelations to be written. Indeed, Paul did develop his concepts in letters, and instructions were given to Christian churches to circulate these letters and read them. Peter referred to Paul's writings in his letters, comparing them with "other scriptures" (II Peter 3:16). Paul, in his first letter to Timothy, quotes the words of Jesus and refers to his source as "scripture". All this gives a feeling that there is developing a Christian canon, even as there was a Jewish canon.

As new false teachers arose here and there, Christian leaders in the generation following the apostles wrote letters to combat these wrong ways and encourage the Christians. In so doing, from 95 A.D. to 150 A.D. we find Clement of Rome quoting from half a dozen sources that we presently have in our New Testament canon. In like fashion the letters of Polycarp and Ignatius, the Didache, Papias, the Epistle of Barnabas, Justin Martyr, and Tatian all quote freely from authoritative sources that they had (although the New Testament canon was far from being jelled), and their sources read the same as they do in our New Testaments.

Two of the false movements are worthy of special note.<sup>5</sup> The heretic Marcion (about 140 A.D.) challenged the church with an assorted set of Christian writings which he put forth as a canon. They included his own mutilated arrangement of Luke and ten of the letters of Paul. Needless to say, this made the church ponder, as early as 140 A.D., just what should be the correct limits for a New Testament canon. The church responded with a larger canon close to our 27 New Testament books. In the second place, we call attention to the school of the Montanists, who had exaggerated claims of inspiration in their own utterances, making necessary *written* teachings from the apostolic era, closer to the time of our Lord Jesus Christ.

By the time of 180-200, things had jelled to a degree that a "New Testament" was clearly and definitely present. The church was conscious that it possessed documents from the apostolic age, and these documents were regarded as canonical and of apostolic authority. Evidence for this comes from three great

*How was the distinction made between books given by the inspiration of God on the one hand, and the books that are hoaxes, forgeries, or good human material but not meant to be included as Scripture?*

writers of the period, Irenaeus (of Asia Minor and Gaul), Tertullian (of North Africa), and Clement (of Alexandria, Egypt). There was discussion about whether Hebrews and Jude belonged in the canon, and also about the status of James, II Peter, II and III John, and Revelation.

(2) During the years 200-325 A.D. discussion about "fringe books" continued. Origen of Alexandria faced all the literature that claimed to be apostolic and classified it "genuine", "doubtful", and "rejected". The canon was beginning to solidify. Eusebius, leader from Caesarea and an historian, followed Origen, and in 330 A.D. wrote that seven doubtful books had been accepted (Hebrews, James, II Peter, II and III John, Jude, and Revelation). Other literature, such as The Epistles of Barnabas, The Shepherd of Hermas, and the Didache, which had been fringebooks, were accepted as useful but not included in the canon. By now the canon was becoming well-shaped, twenty-seven books in all, just as our New Testament.

(3) From 325-400 A.D. we see the church taking an official position on the canon. Christianity was no longer persecuted, for Emperor Constantine had embraced the Christian gospel. It is reasonable to imagine that leaders could breathe more easily. Furthermore, communication was opened more freely, making it possible for church leaders to appreciate why certain letters had been directed to churches in distant areas. Authoritative pronouncements on the canon began on local levels, by bishops of provincial churches. Later councils and synods endorsed the canon on a larger geographical basis. Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, in his Easter Letter of 367 A.D. listed our twenty-seven books as canonical. Then at the synods of Hippo Regius (393 A.D.) and Carthage (397 A.D. and 419 A.D.) the same twenty-seven books were accepted. (This canon was supported by Augustine (354-430 A.D.), bishop of Hippo, one of the great Latin church fathers.) The canon issue of the New Testament was thus settled.

Let us note these conclusions about the New Testament canon.

(1) In making its choices, the early church was greatly influenced by "apostolic authority". They accepted the scriptures clearly attributed to apostles. They screened out forgeries supposedly written by apostles. They accepted literature from sources that had apostolic authority by approval or inference, such as Luke's writings.

(2) Although the collection of twenty-seven books into one volume was slow, the belief in a written rule of faith came very early. Furthermore the time span gave the church ample opportunity to sift out the possibilities. It is perhaps better that we do not rely on a hastily-made decision of one solitary church council, say, from 100 A.D.

(3) The proof on which we should accept the

books today is historical evidence. We need not accept blindly those church councils' decisions of 393-419 A.D. Modern scholarship has been applied to the New Testament canon, and these twenty-seven books fare very well as authentic, when subjected to scientific inquiry.

(4) This scholarship which promotes our assent to the credibility of the canon is added to our personal certitude that Almighty God has been faithful and not left himself without accurate witness. The certitude of our faith in God is more important than our assent to careful scholarship.

### New Testament Apocrypha

No Christian Bibles of today (Roman Catholic, Orthodox, or Protestant) include New Testament apocryphal writings. Pastoral experience indicates that laymen are less knowledgeable about New Testament Apocrypha than they are about the Old Testament Apocrypha. Yet the collection of such writings is huge, comprised of false gospels, false Acts of the Apostles, false epistles, and false Revelations. Its content quickly appears to be vastly inferior to the tone of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament.

An admirable collection of these documents has been published by the Oxford Press, under the direction of Montague Rhodes James, editor and translator.<sup>6</sup> Here are some excerpts.

The Gospel of Thomas reports that the boy Jesus went with his mother to the house of a dyer. Various pieces of cloth were here and there, brought by sundry customers, waiting to be dyed different colors. The boy Jesus plunged them all into the black dye. This "sore vexed" the craftsman and irritated Jesus' mother who had to "amend that which" the boy Jesus had done. But "the beautiful child Jesus" pulled out the fabrics, and each was dyed a different color. (Page 67).

In the same Gospel of Thomas the boy Jesus changed a group of children into goats for a short time, and made this ethnocentric statement to the amazed women onlookers:

Verily the children of Israel are like unto the black folk among the natives, for the black ones seize the outer side of the flock, etc. (Page 68)

The Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew has Jesus get off his mother's lap to be worshipped and adored by dragons, lions, leopards, and wolves, once fearsome but now docilized. On the third day Jesus caused a very tall palm tree to bend down to give Mary fruit; when it rose again a spring issued from its roots. (Pages 74, 75)

When Jesus was four he was playing by the Jordan and arranged seven pools. Another lad messed up the pools. He "was struck dead", but when his parents complained Jesus resurrected him. But when the son of Annas the priest broke up the pools with a stick, one word from the four year old Jesus sufficed to wither the bully, who was not raised up. From the pools he also made clay sparrows, "clapped his hands", and twelve feathered birds took flight. (Page 76)

At age eight he crossed the Jordan River whose waters parted, in company with a group of docilized lions, saying "... the beasts know me and are tame, while men know me not". (Page 76)

Concluding the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, we make reference to Jesus' stretching a cut beam of wood

to a correct length, after it had been cut too short by a lad working for Joseph who had a contract for a bed nine feet long. Then in school, on his second day, the teacher demanded: "Say Alpha". Jesus replied that the teacher must first tell him what Beta was, and then Jesus would explain Alpha. When the teacher struck Jesus, the teacher died. (Page 78)

The Arabic Gospel of the Infancy relates how Jesus, when placed on the back of a mule, restored the mule into a man. Later Jesus carried water in his cloak when his earthen jug had been broken. And the account of the boy Jesus in the temple is enlarged to specify his having been questioned about law, astronomy, and philosophy, answering all questions perfectly. (Pages 81, 82)

Passing now to spurious Acts accounts, we refer to The Acts of John for a narrative in which beautiful Drusiana, who had no sexual relations with her husband Andronicus, due to John's directives, was almost seduced by a man named Callimachus. In sorrow she died. While John was trying to console the relatives, evil Callimachus was attempting to have intercourse with the corpse of Drusiana. Fortunately a serpent appeared and slew him. Later John and the unfortunate widower went to the tomb. First John raised the seducer Callimachus from the dead. Then he raised the wife Drusiana. Callimachus instantly became a believer and Drusiana forgave him. Another man, incidental to the plot, was also raised from the dead by John, but he said he did not want to be raised, and after John had prayed this man was bitten by a snake, had blood poisoning, died, and the corpse turned black. (Pages 243-250)

In the Acts of Andrew, this apostle healed one Maximilla of a fever and she was raised up and converted. Andrew instructed her to abstain from relations with her husband, with whom she had lived and borne children. Andrew told her that marriage is a "foul and polluted way of life", and he encouraged her to resist the "artful flatteries" of her husband. For this Andrew was imprisoned, scourged, and crucified. He hung on the cross for three days preaching. When he died, Maximilla embalmed his corpse and buried it. (Pages 349, 352)

Of course a more extensive perusal of these apocryphal New Testament narratives will fill in the contexts of the selected passages listed above. However, even in context these events appear fanciful, even absurd and often purposeless, quite different qualitatively from the blending of miracle and teaching in the Gospel of John, or from the skillful composition of the Gospel of Luke. One is not surprised to know these accounts were rejected by the early church.

### Some Review Questions and Answers

In drawing some modest conclusions, we return to our original question, "Which books belong in the Bible?" Let us evaluate our understanding by a few review questions and answers.

1. Did humanity receive the Old and New Testaments, bound in sixty-six books, directly from God in a once-and-forever package, as when a phone directory is brought to our door by a company representative? (Answer: No.)
2. Are Biblical teachings and our understanding of God distorted more seriously by the Old Testament Apocrypha or by the New Testament Apocrypha? (Answer: The New Testament Apocrypha.)
3. What were the dates when the Old Testament canon was

- firmed up? (Answer: Pentateuch 400 B.C., Prophets 200 B.C., Writings 100 B.C. All the thirty-nine books at the Council of Jamnia, officially, in 90 A.D.)
4. Did the Roman Catholics invent and add the Old Testament Apocrypha to our Bibles about 1546? (Answer: No, the Old Testament Apocrypha found their way into the Scriptures as a caboose attachment by means of early translations into Greek and Latin, about 150 B.C. and 150 A.D., long before lines of disagreement were drawn between Catholics and Protestants.)
  5. Do the Jews recognize the Old Testament Apocrypha as canonical books? (Answer: No.)
  6. Did the Christian church have a definite New Testament of twenty-seven books at the time of Paul's life and ministry? (Answer: No.)
  7. The New Testament canon was firm at twenty-seven books, the same books as are found in our New Testaments, by the year 325 A.D. (Answer: True.)
  8. It can be argued that the fixing of the canon over long periods of hundreds of years helped careful evaluation and helped avoid hasty and dogmatic determination. (Answer: True.)
  9. The authenticity of New Testament books is based on a two-fold approach involving (1) apostolic authorship or apostolic approval, and (2) historical scholarship which determines if writings are genuine or forged. (Answer: True)
  10. Do we have certitude that God has given to the world a reliable written record of his actions in history, and that this record is a rule of faith and life?

### Modern Opinions and Modern Apocrypha

Here are some practical issues today.

(1) How do you evaluate a contemporary claim that ecstatic words spoken under the anointing of the Holy Spirit are directly the words of God himself, and thus by implication, equal in authority to the Bible's words?

(2) How do you evaluate the books of Mormon, the writings of Mary Baker Eddy, or the scriptures of Bahai, for example, in their claim to be authoritative rules from God, intended to be added to the historic canon?

(3) How do you weigh the claims of a modern scholar to the effect that the Gospel of John should be removed from the Bible, for certain reasons expressed, such as its difference from Matthew, Luke, and Mark, etc.?

(4) How do you react on reading a newspaper claim that the Epistle to Laodicea, mentioned by Paul in Colossians 4:16, has been found in a cave in Palestine (not far from where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found)? This discovery is sensational, because no one has ever seen this letter. The newspaper says it may date from earlier than 200 A.D. It is not known if it is a copy or the original.

(5) How would you respond to a friend who quotes to you from "The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus Christ"? What questions would you ask?

These vital questions are worthy of thought and discussion. Light is shed on their solutions from the foregoing data on how the books of the Bible were chosen and why the apocryphal books were rejected.

### Rejection of Biblical Books

From the sixteenth century, during the Reformation, a most interesting situation presents itself involving the great German reformer, Martin Luther, to whom we owe an enormous debt. Luther's method will interest the scientist because a principle was established as an axiomatic foundation, from which all interpretation of Scriptures proceeded. Thus he studied more by deduction than by induction, more like our classical study of Euclidean geometry than like the modern

*The collection of New Testament Apocrypha is huge, comprised of false gospels, false Acts of the Apostles, false epistles, and false Revelations.*

physicist's gathering of bits and pieces of data.

We are uneasy when theologians assert that they have a "key", a basic center for interpreting Scripture. For if one chooses his basic premise slightly off center, the whole system will wobble. We regard with appreciable tentativeness such alleged keys as Darby's dispensations, Bultmann's demythologizing, or Van Til's philosophical argument for the inerrancy of the original Biblical documents even in matters of astronomy, botany, mathematics, historical numbers, etc. Our approach by inductive study frees us for fresh discovery.

Yet who can fault Martin Luther for his choice of the key principle? Just as we are guided in our Bible study by a profound underlying certitude of faith in the God who revealed himself to us in Jesus Christ, and we admit that this causes us to see the Scriptures through the converted sensors of our new nature, even so Luther chose as his great premise the gracious, redeeming, justifying Christ. How could anything have possibly gone wrong?

The result was that Luther was not concerned to stress the total range of the canon. He wanted the world to hear the heart-beat of Jesus Christ. He expected that all Scriptures should be rejudged according to whether or not they magnified the gracious, redeeming and justifying Christ. While this may appear admirable and defensible, let us pause to remember that this also means that Luther expected his own principle to evaluate the authenticity of the canon.

One would expect that Luther might have thrown out the books of Proverbs, Song of Solomon, Esther, among others, from the Old Testament. But he left the Old Testament alone. It was in the New Testament that he seriously questioned four books. He discounted Hebrews because it appeared to refuse a second forgiveness to apostates, James because it seemed to teach salvation by works rather than by faith, Jude because it appeared to give no clear-cut witness to Jesus Christ but merely to paraphrase some of II Peter, and Revelation because it was so enigmatic and presented what were apparently bizarre pictures of Jesus Christ.

He placed these four books at the end of the New Testament in his German translation. First he listed his twenty-three acceptable books in the Table of Contents, numbering them from one to twenty-three. Then there was a blank space followed by "Hebrews", "James", "Jude", and "Revelation", unnumbered, and apparently excluded as second-class documents. This was the outcome of Martin Luther's postulate of a "key to interpretation". It is ironical that he appeared to remove something from the canon when the Roman Catholic institution was busily putting too much in (that is, along the lines of ecclesiastical traditions and non-canonical authoritarianism)! In the sovereignty of the God of history, who is also the God of the church and the God of the canon, the church has adhered to a New Testament canon of twenty-seven books, while at the same time appreciating Martin Luther and the intensity of the struggles of his day.

### Addition of Nonbiblical Books

#### 1. 1926—*Newspaper accounts of the "Unknown Life of Christ"*

This twentieth century hoax is one of sixteen modern apocryphal (hidden) books that have sprung up rather recently. This genre of uncanonical writings specifically includes attempted additions to the canon. They are described in a slim volume, *Modern Apocrypha*, by Edgar J. Goodspeed, in which the noted scholar, translator of the "Goodspeed translation" (over one million copies sold) and the first scholar to translate the Old Testament Apocrypha directly from Greek to English, turns detective to expose these sensational books that have attracted a lot of attention.<sup>7</sup>

The *Unknown Life of Christ* was sensationalized and popularized by newspapermen in 1926 in this country. It sold like hotcakes. It originated from the travels of a Russian war correspondent, Nicolas Notovich, in 1887, to India and Tibet. Notovich claimed he was laid up with a broken leg in a monastery in Tibet. The chief lama was persuaded to read him the "Life of Saint Issa, Best of the Sons of Man", which Notovich published in fourteen chapters of 244 short paragraphs.

The most fanciful part deals with the "silent years" of Jesus' life, ages 13-30. It is claimed that at age thirteen, instead of taking a wife, the divine youth took a trip. He went with a caravan of merchants to India to study the laws of the Buddhas. He spent six years with the Brahmins and six years with the Buddhists in India. He also visited Persia and preached to the Zoroastrians before returning to Palestine at twenty-nine.

How did this "Unknown Life of Christ" fare under scrutiny? The chief lama indignantly repudiated Notovich's visit. The existence of the manuscript in the monastery was described by the lama as "Lies, lies, lies, nothing but lies." No one could find the manuscript claimed by Notovich, either in the monastery or in the Vatican library, where Notovich claimed the account was included here and there in sixty-three Oriental manuscripts referring to this matter. The great Orientalist Friedrich Max Müller took an interest in exposing this hoax, but claimed little credit for the exposé, since it was never taken seriously by scholars of Buddhism, Sanskrit, or Pali. Furthermore, students of early Christian literature passed it by because it did not stand the test of literary and textual criticism: its own internal content was obviously fraudulent. A lesson here is to hold all newspaper accounts of sensational discoveries in abeyance, and patiently to allow a few years of serious scholarship to evaluate things. The Dead Sea Scrolls, from Jordan, and the Oxyrhynchus papyri from Egypt, for example, have been scientifically studied and evaluated. They have stood the tests, both externally and internally, and have been accepted as genuine.

#### 2. 1911 — *The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ*

This "gospel" is of interest to us because of the way Dr. Levi H. Dowling obtained it. Unlike Nicolas Notovich's claim to some remote and mysterious original document, Dr. Dowling claims to have received his gospel by revelation. Here in California Dr. Dowling (1844-1911), chaplain, doctor, and Sunday School worker, in the "quiet hours" between two and six in the morning, by meditation came into harmony with the rhythms and vibrations of truth preserved in the Supreme Intelligence or Universal Mind, the "Akashic

Records," the imperishable records of life.

The material is called "The Aquarian Gospel" from an astrological teaching that with the life of Christ the sun entered the sign Pisces and that it is now entering the sign Aquarius. This is a new gospel for the Aquarian age. First published in Los Angeles in 1911, it was in its twenty-first printing in 1954, and today it should be selling just fine.

In this "gospel", Mary and Elizabeth get lessons in the history of religions, relating to Tao, Brahm, Zarathustra, and Buddha, the entire content being flavored strongly of Christian Science. John the Baptist is educated by an Egyptian priest for eighteen years. Jesus first studies with the great Jewish teacher Hillel. Then he goes to India, where he spends years among the Brahmins and the Buddhists. Then to Tibet where he meets Meng-ste, the greatest wise man of the far East. Then to Persia to meet the Magi. Then to Assyria and Babylonia, everywhere learning sacred books and talking to sages. Then to Greece, first to Athens, then to the Delphic oracle who declares its day is done. Then to Egypt where he joins the sacred brotherhood at Heliopolis. Finally a council of the seven wisest men of the world is held at Alexandria. They formulate seven great religious postulates and ordain Jesus for his work. At the end of his life and after his resurrection Jesus appears in a fully materialized body to friends in India, Persia, Jerusalem, Greece, Italy, Egypt, and Calilee. He declares himself to have been "transmuted to the image of the AM".

Externally, this fanciful account turns out to be an historical heresy, unsubstantiated by the customary evidence of history demanded by scholars. Internally, potentially profound confrontations with eastern religions are artlessly treated, theosophy flavoring everything, and as Dr. Goodspeed says, "The principal impression is one of literary and religious commonplace". Its origin, having to do with astrology and vibrations, cannot be placed in the same ballpark with the documents of the Biblical canon and their God who works in history.

With these two modern attempts to add books to the Bible we close this introduction to a fascinating area of study, the Biblical canon, or "Which books belong in the Bible?", and we quote an appropriate passage from an appropriate book, the book of Jude:

Beloved, being very eager to write to you of our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. (Jude 3)

May the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, bless his people and keep before them the written Word of God, in its purest possible form, until the living Word of God, Jesus Christ, comes again. This is our prayer and hope, and it is also our certitude and confidence.

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- <sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*
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# The Levitical Dietary Laws in the Light of Modern Science



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*Leviticus 11 presents dietary laws, specifying which animals are "clean" (edible) and "unclean" (inedible). Nine major theories to account for these dietary laws are described in this paper, giving arguments pro and con regarding each. The theories discussed are the Obedience Testing, Arbitrary Divine Command, Assertion of Divine Authority, Moral Discipline, Hygiene, Spiritual Symbolism, Pagan Worship, Religious Badge, and Eclectic theories.*

*The authors conclude that more evidence is needed, especially from archaeology, to come to a definite conclusion regarding the validity of any of these theories. They feel that if the original purpose of these dietary laws can be determined, then perhaps we can make modern applications of lessons from them.*

## Introduction

One of the most obvious characteristics of orthodox conservative Jews as well as of Moslems and of the Christian groups who emphasize the Old Testament is the influence of the Levitical dietary laws on their eating habits. Yet, when one questions those who adhere to these dietary laws about the reasons for them, he receives a variety of answers.

Leviticus 11 describes "clean" animals (i.e., those which may be eaten) as follows: any animals that "part the hoof, are cloven-footed, and that chew the cud." Also, all aquatic animals that have fins and scales, and winged insects that leap (i.e., locusts, crickets, and grasshoppers) are "clean" or permitted for food.

"Unclean" animals (i.e., those that are forbidden for food) were listed as follows: camel, rock badger, hare, swine, aquatic animals lacking fins and scales, eagle, ossifrage, osprey, kite, falcon, raven, ostrich, nighthawk, sea gull, hawk, owl, cormorant, ibis, water hen, pelican, vulture, stork, heron, crawling insects, hoopoe, weasel, mouse, great lizard, gecko, land crocodile, bat, lizard, sand lizard, and chameleon.

While the Bible nowhere states specifically why

the dietary laws were given, several theories have arisen to account for them. Below are brief descriptions of nine<sup>1</sup> of these theories, along with some arguments for and against their acceptance.

## Obedience Testing Theory

This view asserts that the choice of animals was arbitrary, but that God's purpose was to evaluate the spirituality of the faithful. The obedience testing theory also considers the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil (Genesis 2) to have been arbitrarily selected, and that it was the act of disobedience that imparted the knowledge of good and evil rather than any physiological effect of the chemicals present in the fruit.

*Pro:* The Scriptures indicate in several places where the faith of people was tested (Job, I Kings 19, Genesis 2 and 3, etc.).

*Con:* The choice of animals does not appear to be arbitrary as the animals classified are consistent in certain ways as discussed below.

## Arbitrary Divine Command Theory

It seems strange to some that most strict adherents of the Levitical dietary laws accept this theory, though



they may not refer to it by this name. According to this theory, the animals were arbitrarily classified by God as clean or unclean with no specific reason whatever. We are told that to raise questions about the reasons or advantages of these laws is to evade the issue. We are to accept these laws by blind faith. The point is that God commanded, and we are to obey. "God said it. I believe it. And that settles it. Period."

*Pro:* If God had reasons for the laws, or if it were important for us to know of them, they would have been recorded. But such is not the case. The fact that no reasons are given is evidence that they are unnecessary for us.

*Con:* It seems inconsistent with a loving, just, omniscient God to be arbitrary, or to command just for the sake of commanding. The fact that the animals hold certain traits in common (shown in some of the following theories) would tend to rule out the concept that they were haphazardly or arbitrarily chosen.

### Assertion of Divine Authority Theory

The purpose of these laws was to establish God's authority, and to serve as a continual reminder of His authority over and concern for His people, according to this theory. These laws are beneficial in that they tend to establish a habit of thinking frequently about God and His place in our lives.

*Pro:* The concept of God's establishing His authority and reminding others of it is certainly consistent with many Scripture passages, for example, the requiring of phylacteries, and redeeming each first-born donkey with a lamb (Exodus 13:13-14); the Sabbath (Exodus 20:8-11); the rainbow (Genesis 9:11-17); stars (Genesis 1:14); the mark on Cain (Genesis 4:15); Miriam's leprosy (Numbers 12:10); circumcision (Genesis 17:11); and labor pangs, toil and thorns (Genesis 3:17-19). The fact that no reasons are given means none are needed. Reasons would weaken His authority.

*Con:* The selection of animals would seem to indicate that there was more to it than this (as indicated in certain of the following theories). It would seem arbitrary and superficial for God to assert His authority in such an unproductive fashion. Would it not be more profitable for God's kingdom and the spiritual welfare of countless people if God required His people to seek to win others to His ways? If God's purpose for these laws is simply to assert His authority, why would He not make useful laws, such as requiring the faithful to be neighborly?

### Moral Discipline Theory

According to this concept, the laws were to teach moral discipline, much as it was once believed that mathematics and Latin should be taught to discipline the intellect. For similar reasons some military academies have required certain patterns of eating (i.e., special ways of holding silverware, of sitting erect while eating, etc.) in order to remind cadets constantly of their discipline.

*Pro:* The Bible is consistent with moral disciplinary techniques. The fact that the price of a whore and of a dog (Sodomite) were unclean tends to favor the moral interpretation of these laws. In numerous passages the Hebrews were reminded that they "came up out of the land of Egypt." (Deut. 23:4). These dietary laws would serve as similar daily reminders of their

moral discipline. Nazarites were to remain unshaved and to abstain from alcohol for disciplinary reasons (Numbers 6:2-20). Paul beat his body into subjection (I Cor. 9:27). "The rod" is to be used for discipline in certain circumstances (Proverbs 10:13; 22:15; and 26:3).

*Con:* As with the preceding theories, the particular animals selected to be clean or unclean appear to have enough in common to warrant other explanations than this. To limit what foods may be eaten merely for reasons of moral discipline, and to allow no exceptions, could result in malnutrition, death, or forcing an immoral beaking of the laws in the event of famine, poverty, or other problems.

### Hygiene Theory

The adherents of this theory point out that there is close correlation between clean animals and those that are less likely to transmit zoonoses (diseases spread from animals to man), and between unclean animals and those that are most likely to transmit worms, bacteria, and other pathogens to man.

*Pro:* Hogs are particularly likely to spread disease, e.g., trichinosis and Ascaris. Buzzards can transmit many of the diseases that kill the animals on which they feed. Rat meat could give those who eat it trichinosis and other diseases.

On the other hand, while cattle can give us tuberculosis, tapeworms, undulant fever, for example, they are much less likely to give us more serious diseases. Essentially the same can be said for sheep.

Any fish that "looks like a fish" is considered clean, while oysters, clams, and other sea creatures are unclean. It is noteworthy here that true fish as a rule are less likely to be carriers of zoonoses than are other aquatic animals.

Not only does the hygiene theory account for the particular selection of clean and unclean animals, but also accounts for the listing of other unhygienic things as unclean. For example, human wastes were unclean (Deut. 23:12-14), as well as cooking utensils and other solid objects which were contaminated by people with running sores (Leviticus 13:47 and 14:34-55).

Paul wrote to Timothy that he should not drink water, but should drink wine (I Timothy 5:23). Paul's reason obviously favors the hygiene theory, as water was often polluted by human wastes, carcasses and other bacteria sources.

*Con:* A much more sensible and practical regulation would be to specify that all animals in sanitary environments are clean, while those that are raised in unsanitary environments are unclean. Or, better still, properly cooked meat is clean, while raw or rare meat is unclean, regardless of the animal from which it comes. If this were the regulation, not only could beef, mutton, and true fishes be eaten without fear of zoonoses, but the same would be true even of pork and other animals listed as unclean. This theory also faces the difficulty that unclean animals were let down from heaven to Peter (Acts 10:9-29 and 11:5-12), and God responded to Peter's refusal to eat with, "What God has cleansed, you must not call unclean." The fact that menstruating women and women who had just given birth were considered unclean (Leviticus 12), showed that the designation of unclean does not necessarily imply a potential source of contagion or infection. The fact that the price of a whore or of a dog (or Sodomite) was un-

clean shows the same. Although there are numerous poisonous plants, none is listed as unclean. And although water could be polluted by carcasses, human wastes, and other contaminants, nothing is discussed regarding clean or unclean water. Even in those days water was a main source of the spreading of disease. Paul's advice to Timothy not to drink water was of course written many centuries after the dietary laws of Leviticus, and under the circumstances of Timothy going on missionary journeys in which water could be polluted.

Some object to the Hygiene Theory on the grounds that little was then known about hygiene, while others insist that these hygiene laws prove divine inspiration. (See also Matthew 15:11).

### Spiritual Symbolism Theory

It is pointed out by those who favor this theory that the clean animals have in common the fact that they all symbolize spiritual virtues, while the unclean animals symbolize spiritual vices.

*Pro:* It should be emphasized that the Bible is an Oriental book, and that Orientals have long been noted for symbolic and figurative speech. The Bible uses several symbols for Christ: e.g., lamb (John 1:35), lion (Revelation 5:5), root (Revelation 5:5), and grapevine (John 15:1). The Holy Spirit is symbolized by the dove (Luke 3), fire (Hebrews 12), and water (Acts 11:16). God, Satan, Israel, the church, the rebellious wicked, the Gospel, sin, and other persons and concepts are represented by still other symbols, and many of the symbols were animals. Cattle and oxen are clean animals because they represent honest hard work and obedience to duty. Donkeys are unclean as they symbolize stubbornness, spiritual stupidity, and selfishness. Snakes are unclean because they depict Satan and sin (Genesis 3:1-15). Hogs are unclean because they are greedy and look down. The horse is unclean as it symbolizes pride and human military conquest.

*Con:* While the Spiritual Symbolism Theory is intriguing, it has some fatal inconsistencies. The lion is unclean, yet it is used to represent Christ (Revelation 5:5) and the righteous (Proverbs 28:1). The pearl represents the church (Matthew 13:46), yet is produced by unclean clams and oysters. The symbolism in the Bible is not intended to be consistent and clear-cut as this theory would assume. Thus, while doves illustrate the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:22), they also illustrate wicked Ephraim (Hosea 7:11). The donkey is an unclean animal, yet was chosen by Christ to ride for His "triumphal entry" into Jerusalem (Matthew 21). The serpent was a symbol of Satan, but was also used for salvation (Numbers 21:9). Grapes are clean, but their juice was warned against when it is fermented (Ephesians 5:8 and I Timothy 3:3), and was forbidden to Nazarites under most circumstances (Numbers 6:3-20). The eagle is unclean, yet is used to symbolize God's power (Revelation 4:7). The lion is used to symbolize Christ (Revelation 5:5), Satan (I Peter 5:8), the righteous (Proverbs 28:1), and the rebellious wicked (Joel 1:6).

### Pagan Worship Theory

It is noteworthy that the Hebrews spent centuries living among neighbors who worshipped animal-like gods. Part of the worship rites of these religions some-

*While the Bible nowhere states specifically why the dietary laws were given, several theories have arisen to account for them. Given here are brief descriptions of nine of these theories, with arguments for and against their acceptance.*

times included the eating of these animals. Thus, the sacred animals of these pagan religions were unclean, while animals not sacred to these religions were clean.

*Pro:* The eagle was sacred to the Egyptians. The snake, hawk, hog, goat, and horse were sacred to other neighboring religions. Sheep, camels, true fish, and most plants were not sacred to the nations and tribes around the Hebrews, and hence were clean. The faithful were to avoid all appearance of evil (I Thessalonians 5:22). They were forbidden to eat food sacrificed to idols (Revelation 2:14, 20). It is interesting that even today Arabs consider eating with someone to be a close form of fellowship.

*Con:* Several plants were sacred to the pagan religions, but were not unclean (II Kings 23:4). Cattle were sacred to several groups (II Kings 17:16), yet were clean. There have long been fish gods and sea gods, yet true fish were clean. In fact, fish deities are more common than clam, oyster, or shrimp deities, yet the fish were clean while the latter were not.

### Religious Badge or Mark Theory

Many peoples have done or worn certain things to distinguish themselves from others. The uniforms of certain occupations are partly for this purpose, as are some greetings, gestures, hairdos, and customs. The Jews were God's earthly chosen people (Deuteronomy 7:6), chosen to witness for Him.

*Pro:* The Jews were required to do several things as religious marks or badges to make them stand apart as witnesses for God: circumcise their boy babies (Genesis 17:10-27), rest on the Sabbath (Exodus 20:8-11), wear phylacteries on their foreheads (Exodus 13:16) and the like. The dietary laws were a logical extension of these religious badges. The Bible describes several other marks or badges of spiritual significance. Paul was blinded on the road to Damascus to get Paul's attention and to show God's mark of approval of Christ (Acts 9:3-9). Zechariah was struck speechless for several days as a mark of God's relationship to Christ's birth (Luke 1:18-23). Moses' sister, Miriam, was marked with a whitish skin disease to show God's disapproval of her objecting to Moses' dark skinned African wife (Numbers 12:1-15). God put a mark on Cain's forehead as a warning that no one was to seek revenge against him (Genesis 4:13-15). The Nazarites wore long hair and beards and ate a strict diet (Numbers 6:1-21).

*Con:* The selection of clean and unclean animals does not appear to be haphazard, but to fit certain patterns (as discussed in some of the foregoing theories). To prohibit certain wholesome foods merely as religious badges could result in malnutrition or death during famines. It could severely handicap the poor or physically disabled. It could result in financial exploi-

tation and monopolies of the few clean species. It could result in upsetting the balance of nature due to extermination of some species and the ignoring of others. A more practical badge would appear to be some kind of ritual associated with food preparation or eating.

### Eclectic Theory

Some Bible students prefer to combine parts of two or more of the above theories to account for the reasons behind the dietary laws. Actually, there are many variations of the eclectic theory. They obviously differ on which of the above explanations are regarded as valid, and to what extent the accepted explanations are considered to account for each animal.

*Pro:* The fact that the Bible does not indicate any one reason might be due to the fact that several explanations are necessary. The fact that several of the preceding theories appear to be partially valid, yet no one of them is capable of accounting for each animal indicates that some eclectic explanation is necessarily the correct one.

*Con:* It is difficult to evaluate the eclectic theory as its variations are so numerous. Yet, the con arguments for each of the preceding theories are sufficient to show that none is valid as understood at present. If all the links in a chain are weak, simply adding more links will not make it stronger. Adding more straw to a straw house does not make it more fireproof. Likewise, simply adding useless theories together does not make a valid explanation.

### Conclusions

In the light of the above the authors conclude that

present evidence is not sufficient to warrant total acceptance of any one of the nine theories. More evidence is needed, especially from possible future archaeological discoveries. In the meantime, it would appear that, in the light of the different kinds of dietary and other "hygiene" laws given, that some eclectic interpretation is probably correct.

It should be noted that many Christians feel that it is no longer necessary to obey the Levitical dietary laws as the Old Testament Law was our "schoolmaster" to bring us to Christ (Galatians 3:24-25). Their interest in them is primarily historical. Yet if we are able to determine the original purpose of the laws, perhaps we can make modern applications of lessons from them. For this reason it is recommended that further study be made on this subject.

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## The Jewish Family



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### Introduction

As North Americans we filter the Bible through the lens of our own culture. So do Latin Americans, Nigerians, and all peoples of the world. This is not "wrong;" it just is not the necessary first step. We must first attempt to view the Biblical message in its original historical and sociocultural context if that same message is to be communicated to us in a very different sociocultural system.

This need to reconstruct the original setting is especially apparent in the four gospels with their many references to the first century Palestinian Jewish family.

Conversely, an analysis of the gospels themselves is very fruitful in yielding an understanding of the Jewish family system.

### Selection of Spouse

One of the first couples mentioned in the gospels, of course, is Joseph and Mary. In Matthew's account of Jesus' birth we read,

and to Jacob was born Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ. (Mt. 1:16).

How old was Mary when she gave birth to Jesus?

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Based on the customs of Palestine, she was about fourteen years old. A Jewish girl could be married upon reaching physical maturity which, as defined by the law, was when she was at least twelve and a half years old. As for sons, many Jews held that the best age for a man to marry was eighteen.<sup>1</sup>

Of course, a young man did not always choose his own wife. In ancient Hebrew society the arranged marriage form of mate choice had strongly predominated. In the first century family the arranged marriage was still prevalent, but free mate choice, with parental approval, was also practiced. Obviously this differs from the contemporary North American pattern of free mate choice without necessary parental approval.

The power of the Jewish parents either to choose or approve their child's future spouse functioned to allow them to prevent intermarriage and thus maintain their religious and ethnic cohesion. This endogamous process also was an attempt to safeguard the patriarchal system. Of course, mixed marriages still took place, but they were an exception to the customary practice. For instance, Timothy's mother was a Jew and his father was a Greek.<sup>2</sup>

### The Betrothal

After the choice of the future bride, the next phase was the betrothal. This period varied in length, but usually did not exceed twelve months. The most common method of becoming betrothed was for the bridegroom, in the presence of witnesses and with varying formality, to say some solemn words and give the bride a piece or pledge of money. The money was then received by the bride's father, although part of the *mojar* or bride price was maintained by the bride.<sup>3</sup> It may be debated whether this was a purchase or a compensation.<sup>4</sup> Yet neither concept is complete for the *mojar's* main function was to seal the family line, make the children legitimate, and give the woman inherent worth as a woman. Without this indication of "worth," the bride was "worthless."<sup>5</sup>

The background of the following passage from Luke likely relates to the *mojar* mechanism.

Or what woman, if she has ten silver coins and loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin . . .' (Lk. 15:8-9)

Because a divorced wife had the right to keep all of her wearing apparel, most of her personal portion of *mojar* was in the form of coins worn on the forehead. The woman in the parable who had ten coins and lost one was understandably upset because the coin had a value beyond the monetary. To suggest a contemporary functional equivalent imagine a North American wife who had just lost her engagement and wedding rings. In this way, Jesus' illustration can have the same impact upon us as it did upon the original hearers.

A festive meal or celebration may have accompanied the betrothal, especially in Judea. After the betrothal, the couple was treated just as if they were married, except that they could not have sexual intercourse.<sup>6</sup> It was during this interval that Mary became pregnant.

*We must first attempt to view the Biblical message in its original historical and sociocultural context if that same message is to be communicated to us in a very different sociocultural system.*

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Now the birth of Jesus was as follows. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. (Mt. 1:18)

Mary was not engaged to Joseph; she was betrothed. The Jewish betrothal was much more significant than the North American engagement. The two are form equivalents, but not functional equivalents. The betrothal could not be broken without a divorce. Also, in the legal areas of inheritance and adultery, the same laws applied to the betrothed couple as applied to the couple who had also gone through the less important wedding. Thus, in a very real sense, "marriage" followed the betrothal and preceded the wedding. This contrasts with much of North America where "marriage" follows the wedding and the engagement is simply a tentative promise or an announcement of plans to wed.

Referring again to Joseph and Mary, the gospels give us some idea of what their betrothal may have been like. Mary's childbirth or purification offering given at the Temple is described by Luke as,

. . . a sacrifice according to what was said in the Law of the Lord, 'A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.' (Lk. 2:24)

This was the sacrifice given by parents who could not afford a lamb.<sup>7</sup> Being poor, their betrothal was probably simple and the *mojar* small.

### The Wedding

When the time of the wedding arrived, everyone would come to take part in the celebration. In this regard we read in John,

And on the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there; and Jesus also was invited, and his disciples, to the wedding. (Jn. 2:1-2)

Relatives, friends, and friends of relatives and friends were welcome. Thus, Jesus and His friends were in attendance. The North American may also give an "open" invitation to a wedding or reception. Yet the range of this openness is usually limited to those directly interested in the couple and anyone else asked to come along by a friend is usually considered, and made to feel, unwanted.

In addition to the groom, bride, and guests, others participating in the wedding are also referred to in the gospels.

The attendants of the bridegroom cannot mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them . . . (Mt. 9:15)

He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. (Jn. 3:29)

The kingdom of heaven will be comparable to the ten virgins, who took their lamps . . . (Mt. 25:1)

The attendants of the bridegroom or, literally, "sons of the bridal chamber" led the bride from her father's house to the home of the bridegroom. This transfer took the form of a procession which was directed by the friend of the bridegroom who was the highest status member of the attendants of the bridegroom group. This act seems to have symbolized the transfer of the woman from her father's house to her husband's.<sup>8</sup> During the wedding feast itself, the bride usually sat under a canopy surrounded by virgins, traditionally ten in number. Part of their role was to carry lighted lamps. Of course, the North American equivalents of wedding reception, bridesmaids, best man, and groomsmen are obvious.

The exact day the wedding feast was served is not certain. However, the various references to lamps, as well as the reference in Revelation to the wedding feast being a "supper," all seem to suggest that it took place in the evening.<sup>9</sup> At some point during the evening the couple either withdrew or were led by the attendants of the bridegroom to the bridal chamber. The marriage was then physically consummated. Following this act, the couple returned and continued to take part in the festival. Reflecting their tendency to be event oriented rather than highly "clock" conscious, the celebration continued on for a week or more with new guests arriving each day.

One such wedding feast is described for us in John's gospel:

And when the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to Him, 'They have no wine.' . . . Now there were six stone waterpots set there for the Jewish custom of purification, containing twenty or thirty gallons each. Jesus said to them, 'Fill the waterpots with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. And He said to them, 'Draw some out now, and take it to the headwaiter.' And they took it to him. (Jn. 2:3, 6-8)

This account of Christ's first miracle is in complete harmony with the customary wedding feast. Everyone ate and drank a great deal and supplies sometimes would run out. To perform His miracle, Christ used the stone waterpots which contained the water for the customary ritual purification washing that took place before the feast. John, who may have been an eyewitness, even gives us the size and number of the stone waterpots. "The combined capacity of (them) was about 150 gallons. Reckoning a half pint to a glass, these vessels would contain about 2,400 servings of wine—enough to supply a large number of people for several days."<sup>10</sup> However, John makes no reference to the friends of the bridegroom in his account. Why? Cana is located in Galilee where it was not the custom to have these special male attendants as it was in the more elaborate Judean weddings. In Galilee, all the guests attending the festivals were commonly called "the children of the bridegroom."<sup>11</sup>

### The Family Unit

The end result of the bride choice, betrothal, and wedding was that another family unit was brought into existence. This unit, consisting of husband, wife, and children, seems to have been fairly independent. In the gospels there are references to Joseph and Mary, Zacharias and Elizabeth, Zebedee and Salome. These were all nuclear families which differed from the large extended families of the ancient Hebrews that

also included relatives, slaves, foreigners, servants, and concubines. It appears that as Palestine developed from a nomadic pastoral culture to a more agricultural and urbanized culture the family was required to change and adjust.<sup>12</sup> That is, as the communities became less folk and more urban in terms of a folk-urban continuum, the extended family was put into a state of disequilibrium and it automatically sought a new state of balance. This new equilibrium was the nuclear family with less emphasis on the extended clan and tribal ties.

The synagogue was also involved in this re-equilibrating process. During the Exile the synagogue had taken the place of the Temple. In addition, it also gradually tended to become a functional equivalent for the ancient Hebrew extended family. That is, "the nuclear families now moved into the synagogue rather than into an extended family."<sup>13</sup> One of the social mechanisms supporting this new balance was the new group of religious officials, the rabbis. Without directly challenging the patriarchal extended family structure, the rabbi replaced the patriarch.<sup>14</sup>

Another structural unit that tended to function as an equivalent group for the extended family was the protest or messiah group. These groups formed around a leader and followed him in somewhat of a master/apprentice relationship.<sup>15</sup>

Of course, all of these adjustments did not mean that the family was completely changed. It still remained true to its ancient Hebrew base. It was still father-centered and characterized by a high degree of group cohesiveness. Illustrations of this corporate solidarity can be seen in the following passages.

And when Jesus had come to Peter's home, He saw his mother-in-law lying sick in bed with a fever. (Mt. 8:14)

But since he did not have the means to repay, his lord commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made. (Mt. 18:25)

The first illustration suggests that Peter's mother-in-law may have lived with him and his wife. The second example, a parable, points out that in a financial crisis the entire family unit could be sold in order to pay a father's debt.

### Men and the Family

As the family formed the core of the culture, the father ideally formed the center of the family. The father was responsible for the family and all its possessions. He also took special responsibility for the later socialization of his sons. The male children, especially the first born, were very important for they were the vital links in the Jewish patrilineal form of descent. Through them the preservation of the family name was assured.<sup>16</sup> This unique status and role of the male child is confirmed by Luke.

And when eight days were completed before His circumcision, His name was then called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb. And when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord. (Lk. 2:21-22)

Here we see that Jesus, like other Jewish male infants, went through the customary rite of passage consisting of being named and circumcised on the eighth day after



birth. This ceremony at the first great crisis point of life made explicit the child's status as a member of the Jewish community. No corresponding ritual was required for the female infant.

Luke also mentions a "purification" in the above excerpt. It is interesting to note that the purification period for a woman who had given birth to a male child was seven days as compared to fourteen days for a female.<sup>17</sup> This Jewish dichotomy of male versus female is also reflected in the *Talmud* which states, "Luckless is he whose children are daughters."<sup>18</sup>

Of course, even though sons were highly valued, they did not always prove themselves worthy. Matthew records one of Jesus' observations.

For God said, 'Honor your father and mother,' and 'He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him be put to death.' But you say, 'Whoever shall say to his father or mother, 'Anything of mine you might have been helped by has been given to God,' he is not to honor his father or his mother.' And thus you invalidated the word of God . . . (Mt. 15:4-6)

This passage illustrates that there was, as usual, a gap between the real and ideal patterns of behavior. As Christ noted, some would avoid any duty to assist their parents by saying they had made an offering to God and couldn't afford to help them. This seems to have been a common device used by the Pharisees. An excerpt from the *Mishnah* confirms the accuracy of Jesus' accusation: "He that curseth his father or his mother is not guilty, unless he curses them with express mention of Jehovah."<sup>19</sup>

Growing up a Jew, Jesus was also socialized within the traditional male patterns of behavior.

Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, and Joses, and Judas, and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us? (Mk. 6:3)

It seems that Joseph, like most Jewish fathers, gave his Son a course in vocational education by teaching Him his own trade. Thus, Jesus worked as a stone mason or carpenter during his early years.<sup>20</sup> An expression of the rabbis, "Whosoever doesn't teach his son a trade makes him a thief," exemplifies the Jewish attitude.<sup>21</sup>

The above passage from Mark also suggests that his gospel was written in or generated from a male-dominated social system. How is this apparent? The author gives the names of Jesus' brothers but his sisters are not mentioned by name. This same pattern is also followed in Matthew's parallel passage. In fact, a similar pattern is followed by the authors of all four gospels in their accounts of the feeding of the four thousand and the feeding of the five thousand. That is, they all record only the approximate number of men in attendance, even though women and children were also present.

### Women and the Family

The status and role of a woman was complementary to that of her husband in terms of a balanced family unit. For instance, if a wife was to find a true social meaning for her life, she had to give her husband a child, preferably male.

And after these days, Elizabeth his wife became pregnant; and she kept herself in seclusion for five months, saying, 'This is the way the Lord has dealt with me in the days when he looked with favor upon me, to take away my disgrace among men.' (Lk. 1:24-25)

Failing to have children was culturally defined as a great misfortune; to become pregnant was a result of God's blessing.

The following piece of recorded behavior further relates to the status and role of women.

The Samaritan woman, therefore said to Him, 'How is it that You, being a Jew (negative voice tone) asked me for a drink since I am a Samaritan woman (positive tone)? (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) . . . And at this point His disciples came, and they marveled that He had been speaking with a woman; yet no one said, 'What do You seek?' or 'Why do You speak with her?' (Jn. 4:9, 27)

When Jesus asked the woman for a drink, she may be interpreted as giving Him a rather sharp reply. The woman was a Samaritan and Samaritans, like all peoples of the world, were ethnocentric. She probably didn't feel inferior to Jesus at all. She didn't want to lower herself to interact with a Jew any more than a typical Jew wanted to interact with a Samaritan.<sup>22</sup> Later, when the apostles returned, they were astonished to see Jesus talking with the woman. Why? Not because of her nationality or character, but because He had acted in excess of their norm—alone and in public, he had held a conversation with a woman!

The division of labor by sex is also evident in the gospels.

And Jesus sent two of his disciples and said to them, 'Go into the city, and a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water. . . .' (Mk. 14:13)

Christ, as He gave directions for the preparation of the Last Supper, indirectly alluded to the fact that it was the woman who was responsible for bringing the water from the well to the house. It being uncommon for a man to carry a water jar, this alone would make him recognizable. Jesus also alludes to men's and women's work in His discussion of the coming of the Son of Man.

Then there shall be two men in the field; one will be taken, and one will be left. Two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken, and one will be left. (Mt. 24:40-41)

It was characteristic of Palestinian culture for women's work to be centered in the home while men tended to work away from the house. Ironically, this allowed the wife to exercise a great deal of power in her own sphere, the home.

It should also be noted that many Hebrew laws did view men and women as equal and prescribed the same rewards and punishment. For example, the woman as well as the man was put to death in the case of adultery where both were already betrothed or wed to another. Both men and women were also to obey the food taboos and to receive respect from their children.<sup>23</sup>

### The Termination of a Marriage

The law applied to both men and women. Yet the law's primary function was to protect the family. When a man acted in excess of norm, the law was usually less severe because his behavior had less effect upon the family. For instance, a man's adultery was defined as a major crime only if he seduced a married or betrothed woman, because then he injured the family of another.<sup>24</sup> The opposite was true of a woman. She was the one who biologically gave birth to the

family and was responsible for the family's honor. Thus, "the interest of the family called for the severest punishment of adultery in a woman."<sup>25</sup> Such a woman is referred to in John's gospel.

And the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman caught in the adultery, and having set her in the midst, they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in adultery, in the very act. Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women; what then do You say?" (Jn. 8:3-5)

The phrase, "in the very act," implies that the man must have been discovered with the woman. However, it is interesting to note that only the woman was condemned before Jesus. From this account it also appears that adulterous women could still be stoned during the time of Christ. Of course, some men, like Joseph, simply wanted their (perceived) adulterous wife divorced.

In addition to adultery, another reason for divorce was sterility. Referring to this particular threat to the family, Mace suggests:<sup>26</sup>

... The Hebrew conception of marriage required either multiple marriage or divorce as an expedient for the man who, desiring an heir, had found his wife barren. In point of fact both were resorted to; but in all probability the emphasis in the earlier period was upon polygamy; in the later period upon divorce.

In other words, as polygyny and the extended family became less functional, divorce increased in use as an adjustment mechanism. This was necessary if the Jews were to perpetuate their focus on first-born male dominance and preserve their family name. However, in addition to this functional nature, divorce was also dysfunctional to the extent that the system was abused. Even though there were restrictions, a husband could generally divorce his wife if he simply felt like it. Josephus illustrated the Jewish male point of view when he wrote:<sup>27</sup>

He who desires to be divorced from the wife who is living with him for whatsoever cause—and with mortals many such may arise—must certify in writing that he will have no further intercourse with her; for thus will the woman obtain the right to consort with another. . . .

In addition to Josephus' statement, similar descriptions made by both the Pharisees and Jesus are recorded in the gospels.<sup>28</sup> All three are referring to the law recorded in Deuteronomy which allowed a man to divorce his wife "because he had found some indecency in her."<sup>29</sup> After giving her the certificate the husband simply sent her away and their marriage was ended. The woman lost her property rights, but was free to marry again.

The rabbis, referred to earlier, did attempt to function as control mechanisms by adding or changing some restrictions. Their interpretations of Scripture tended to limit the power of husbands and increase the rights of wives.<sup>30</sup> For instance, when Christ referred to the customary method of separation, He also noted a change in the power of women.

And He said to them, 'Whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her; and if she herself divorces her husband and marries another man, she is committing adultery.' (Mk. 10:11-12)

Wives were also divorcing their husbands during the time of Christ. Although the *Mishnah* did not take this power out of the hands of the husbands, the rabbis did gradually allow a woman to also sue for divorce.<sup>31</sup>

## The Continuation of the Family

So far we have followed the family cycle from choosing a wife to divorcing her. Under the obligation of the levirate or "husband's brother," the cycle was continued in a unique manner after the death of the husband. As described in Deuteronomy, the widow was to be taken as a wife by the brother of her dead husband in order to make sure that the deceased would have a male child to continue his name. It is certain that some form of the levirate was still practiced during the time of Christ. The Sadducees, a group of Jews who did not believe in the resurrection, made a direct allusion to the custom.

There were seven brothers; and the first one took a wife, and died, leaving no offspring. And the second one took her, and died, leaving behind no offspring; and the third likewise; and so all seven left no offspring. . . . (Mk. 12:20-22)

This excerpt from Mark, as well as its parallel passages, indicates that the Sadducees were referring to a duty that could still be enforced.

Josephus also discusses the levirate and notes its main functions.<sup>32</sup>

... for this will at once be profitable to the public welfare, houses not dying out and property remaining with the relatives, and it will moreover bring the woman an alleviation of their misfortunes to live with the nearest kinsman of their former husbands.

The levirate, like polygyny and divorce, was another piece of machinery designed to maintain and perpetuate the vitally important family unit.

## Conclusion

The Jewish family was one part of the total Palestinian sociocultural system. Yet, we need to increase our understanding of the *whole* sociocultural setting of the Bible. Only when we have first asked the question, "What did the message originally mean to them within the totality of their sociocultural setting?" are we then really able to ask, "What impact is it now to have upon us who are part of a very different sociocultural system?" The Christian message is not that we are to become Jewish Palestinians, but rather that we are to be Christ-like North Americans.

## REFERENCES

- <sup>1</sup>Henri Daniel-Rops. *Daily Life in Palestine at the Time of Christ*. Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1962, 118.
- <sup>2</sup>See Acts 16:1.
- <sup>3</sup>O. J. Baab. "Divorce." *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*. Abingdon Press, New York, 1962, Vol. I, 859. See also Alfred Edersheim. *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*. Longman's, Green, and Company, New York, Vol. I, 354.
- <sup>4</sup>Historically, Genesis 31:14, 15 seems to indicate a purchase but it obviously also had additional functions.
- <sup>5</sup>Marvin K. Meyers. "Sociocultural Setting of the Bible." Unpublished manuscript, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois. Compare also Robert Briffault. *The Mothers*. The Macmillan Company, New York, 1931, 242-243. Briffault notes that even in early Christian Europe the main factor determining the legitimacy of a marriage was the "proper payment of the bride price."
- <sup>6</sup>Edersheim., 354.
- <sup>7</sup>See Leviticus 12:8.
- <sup>8</sup>Briffault., 240.
- <sup>9</sup>David R. Mace. *Hebrew Marriage*. Philosophical Library, New York, 1953, 181. Compare also Revelation 19:9 and Luke 12:35-36.

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- <sup>10</sup>Merrill C. Tenney. *John: The Gospel of Belief*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, 1948, 83.
- <sup>11</sup>Edersheim., Vol. I, 355. See also Matthew 9:15.
- <sup>12</sup>Compare O. J. Baab. "Family." *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*. Abingdon Press, New York, 1962, Vol. III, 240.
- <sup>13</sup>Mayers.
- <sup>14</sup>*Ibid.* Note also Gerald R. Leslie. *The Family in Social Context*. Oxford University Press, New York, 1967, 163-164.
- <sup>15</sup>Compare Matthew 11:2,3,12; Acts 5:36,37; and M. Borrows, *More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Viking, N.Y., 1958.
- <sup>16</sup>Although it was still of primary importance for a Jew to marry and assure the preservation of his family name, evidence seems to suggest a slightly increased tendency toward celibacy. For instance, the *Manual of Discipline* of the Qumran Dead Sea community indicates that within the sect were some members who did not marry. Compare also Matthew 19:12.
- <sup>17</sup>See Leviticus 12:1-5.
- <sup>18</sup>Panos D. Bardis. "Main Features of the Ancient Hebrew Family." *Social Science*. June, 1963, 178.
- <sup>19</sup>Alfred Edersheim. *Sketches of Jewish Social Life in the Days of Christ*. James Clarke and Co., Ltd., London, 1961, 101.
- <sup>20</sup>The Greek word for "carpenter" may also mean "master-builder" or "mason." In addition, Palestinian homes were made of stone, not wood and Jesus also uses several figures of speech taken from masonry but almost none from carpentry. See Merrill C. Tenney. *New Testament Survey*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, 1961, 100-101.
- <sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, 100.
- <sup>22</sup>G. H. Waterman. Hermeneutics lecture delivered at the Wheaton College Graduate School, Wheaton, Ill. 1971.
- <sup>23</sup>O. J. Baab. "Woman." *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*. Abingdon Press, New York, 1962, Vol. IV, 866.
- <sup>24</sup>Daniel-Rops., 133.
- <sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*
- <sup>26</sup>Mace., 251.
- <sup>27</sup>Flavius Josephus. *Jewish Antiquities*. Loeb's Classical Library, Harvard University Press, Massachusetts, IV, VII, 23, p. 597.
- <sup>28</sup>Note also Matthew 5:31 and 19:3, 7.
- <sup>29</sup>The interpretation of the phrase "some indecency" (Deut. 24:1-5) to mean any insignificant reason by the Hillel school may also reflect the influence of Rome where, ever since the Punic wars, divorce had become increasingly common. Seneca stated, "Women no longer measure time in terms of the administrations of Roman consuls, but in terms of the number of their husbands." Tertullian was even more concise, "The fruit of marriage is divorce."
- <sup>30</sup>Leslie., 163-164.
- <sup>31</sup>This may again reflect Roman influence. Roman law limitedly permitted a wife to divorce her husband. Compare Edward Westermarck. *The History of Human Marriage*. The Allerton Book Company New York, 1922, Vol. III, 307-308 and Mace., 258.
- <sup>32</sup>Josephus., IV, VIII, 23, p. 599.

### A Declaration of Evangelical Social Concern

As evangelical Christians committed to the Lord Jesus Christ and the full authority of the Word of God, we affirm that God lays total claim upon the lives of his people. We cannot, therefore, separate our lives in Christ from the situation in which God has placed us in the United States and the world.

We confess that we have not acknowledged the complete claims of God on our lives.

We acknowledge that God requires love. But we have not demonstrated the love of God to those suffering social abuses.

We acknowledge that God requires justice. But we have not proclaimed or demonstrated his justice to an unjust American society. Although the Lord calls us to defend the social and economic right of the poor and the oppressed we have mostly remained silent. We deplore the historic involvement of the church in America with racism and the conspicuous responsibility of the evangelical community for perpetuating the personal attitudes and institutional structures that have divided the body of Christ along color lines. Further we have failed to condemn the exploitation of racism at home and abroad by our economic system.

We affirm that God abounds in mercy and that he forgives all who repent and turn from their sins. So we call our fellow evangelical Christians to demonstrate repentance in a Christian discipleship that confronts the social and political injustice of our nation.

We must attack the materialism of our culture and the maldistribution of the nation's wealth and services. We recognize that as a nation we play a crucial role in the imbalance and injustice of international trade and development. Before God and a billion hungry neighbors, we must rethink our values regarding our present standard of living and promote more just acquisition and distribution of the world's resources.

We acknowledge our Christian responsibilities of citizenship. Therefore, we must challenge the misplaced trust of the nation in economic and military might—a proud trust that promotes a national pathology of war and violence which victimizes our neighbors at home and abroad. We must resist the temptation to make the nation and its institutions objects of near-religious loyalty.

We acknowledge that we have encouraged men to prideful domination and women to irresponsible passivity. So we call both men and women to mutual submission and active discipleship.

We proclaim no new gospel, but the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ who, through the power of the Holy Spirit, frees people from sin so that they might praise God through works of righteousness.

By this declaration, we endorse no political ideology or party, but call our nation's leaders and people to that righteousness which exalts a nation.

We make this declaration in the biblical hope that Christ is coming to consummate the Kingdom and we accept his claim on our total discipleship till He comes.

(Adopted 25 November 1973, Chicago, Illinois by participants in the Thanksgiving Workshop on Evangelicals and Social Concern. If you wish to sign the above declaration, please send your name, address, zip code and the date to Ronald Sider, Coordinator Thanksgiving Workshop, Messiah College, 2026 Broad Street, Philadelphia, PA 19121.)

## Is There a Christian Basis for a Sexual Revolution?



RUSTUM ROY

Materials Research Laboratory

The Pennsylvania State University  
University Park, Pennsylvania 16802

*Yes!*

*No!*

RICHARD H. BUBE

Department of Materials Science  
and Engineering

Stanford University  
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*No one needs to be told that a revolution in sexual ethics has taken place in our lifetimes—at least a revolution in comparison with recent centuries. There are far more reasons for this revolution than can be adequately summarized here, and many books have been written on the subject. Christians commonly assume that the principal thrust for this sexual revolution comes from non-Christian sources, that in fact much of the revolution is explicitly or implicitly against the Judaeo-Christian biblical perspective on sex, marriage, chastity, and fidelity. When Dr. Albert Ellis, for example, spoke locally in the summer of 1972, he started with the thesis that all guilt feelings are illegitimate, and went on to defend pre-marital sex and “civilized adultery,” and to condemn “religious claptrap” and monogamous marriage. In group sex experiments, Dr. Ralph Yanev reported to the California Medical Association in the spring of 1973, couples obtain “a greater sense of gratitude and self esteem,” and the relationship between couples is improved and made warmer and closer when each views the other having sexual relationships with a third party.*

*What is usually not recognized by Christians, however, is that there is a movement from within Christian circles to endorse and support at least a portion of the sexual revolution, not for secular and non-religious reasons, but on the basis of their interpretation of Christianity. We are not concerned here with the non-Christian involvement in the sexual revolution, but we are concerned with the arguments and the significance of support for a sexual revolution that claims Christian foundations.*

*To give specific focus to our discussion, we select two representative publications: (1) Sexuality and the Human Community, a report of a Task Force of the Council on Church and Society of the United Presbyterian Church (1970), together with its appendices; and (2) one of the books recommended in the previous report for further reading, Honest Sex: A Revolutionary New Sex Guide for the Now Generation of Christians, by Rustum and Della Roy, Signet Books (1968).*

*To give breadth to our discussion we have been fortunate to receive the participation of Dr. Rustum Roy himself through a statement and responses to questions. Dr. Roy is Director of the Materials Research Laboratory of the Pennsylvania State University, is on the Board of Directors of Kirkridge, a Protestant retreat center at Bangor, Pennsylvania, has helped form the Christian Community experiments Koinonia for students and the Sycamore Community for adults. He has also served on several committees of the National Council of Churches.*

*Our discussion takes the following form. First, a presentation of the issues involved and the arguments advanced for a Christian sexual revolution. Second, responses to some thirteen questions by both Dr. Roy and myself, questions which I had proposed to get at some of the deeper issues for the Christian. Contributions from Dr. Roy were written after he had seen all of my discussion and answers to questions. As usual readers are invited to contribute to our discussion by sending their comments for publication in the Communication pages of the Journal ASA.*

*Because of the limitations of space, we focus in this discussion on the central issues of sexual relationships between men and women, and make no attempt at all to include equally vital subjects treated in Sexuality and the Human Community and Honest Sex, such as contraception, abortion, sterilization, sex education or homosexuality.*

## ISSUES AND ARGUMENTS I

*Richard H. Bube*

### Traditional Biblical View of Sex

Sex is not a peripheral aspect of life, and sex is not a peripheral aspect of the biblical revelation. The biblical basis and development of the significance of male/female sexuality appears immediately in the first two chapters of the Bible. Genesis 1:27 teaches that "mankind" is both male and female. "Unisex" is a non-biblical concept. The same chapters teach that sex existed before the Fall, that sex is therefore part of the good creation, and Genesis 3 indicates that sex like every other aspect of life was affected by the Fall. The greater and more blessed the gift of God in the context of His good creation, the baser and more destructive the abuse of this gift in the context of fallen man. Genesis 2:23-25 sets forth the nature of the sexual relationship between man and woman when uncorrupted by sin,

This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh.

Both man and woman are made in the image of God. Their total sexuality is defined in such a way that they complement each other in every aspect of life. Woman is to be a suitable helper for man, and man is to forsake all other human relationships at the same level at which he gives himself wholly to his wife.

The Ten Commandments are not silent on sex. The same commandments that Jesus said could be summarized as "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind, and love your neighbor as yourself," also state "You shall not commit adultery," and "You shall not covet your neighbor's wife." It is not stretching the argument far to claim that Jesus is saying that

to love your neighbor means not to commit adultery and not to covet your neighbor's wife.

In the New Testament we need call attention to just a few passages that will enter into our later discussion. In Matthew 19:3-6, Jesus refers back to the "one flesh" concept of Genesis 2, and adds, "So they are no longer two but one. What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder." In I Corinthians 6:16, Paul invokes the "one flesh" argument to show the complete impropriety of a Christian engaging in sexual relationships with a prostitute. After the general words concerning a Christian's walk in love in Ephesians 5:1-5, together with the acts and attitudes that are ruled out if one is truly in Christ, Paul goes on in verses 21-33 of the same chapter to set forth one of the most exalted views of the creation-intended character of human marriage: to be representative of the relationship between Christ and His Church.

### *Sexuality and the Human Community*

Three main arguments are advanced by Christian advocates of a sexual revolution. All three of these

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*We are not concerned here with the non-Christian involvement in the sexual revolution, but we are concerned with the argument and the significance of support for a sexual revolution that claims Christian foundations.*

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can be found in both *Sexuality and the Human Community* and in *Honest Sex*. The former is more moderate than the latter, but by the inclusion of *Honest Sex* as recommended further reading it is evidently oriented in the same perspective. It should be mentioned for those for whom the information is not available that the Task Force's report was received, published, and recommended to the churches for study and appropriate action by the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church, with the added phrase, "this action is not to be construed as an endorsement of the report," by a vote of 485-259. An attachment to the report was included by a vote of 356-347 which reaffirms

our adherence to the moral law of God as revealed in the Old and New Testaments, that adultery, prostitution, fornication and/or practice of homosexuality is sin. We further affirm our belief in the extension Jesus gave to the law, that the attitude of lust in a man's heart is likewise sin. . . .

The report also includes excerpts from a 1969 *Report of a Study of the Faith and Order Commission of the Canadian Council of Churches*, "The Biblical and Theological Understanding of Sexuality and Family Life," to which we shall also refer in the following.

The three arguments can be summarized briefly as follows.

1. *Modern scientific understanding and changes in living styles make traditional (non-scientific, pre-modern) approaches to sexual ethics untenable for a Christian today.*

2. *Biblical teachings on sex are either unclear and/or not applicable to modern life.*

3. *The authentic application of the Gospel to modern life calls for a response dictated by Love, not by Law, and hence for radical changes where Love overrides Law in the modern situation.*

Specific examples of the first argument include questioning the church's preoccupation with "technical virginity" because

there is little medical or psychological evidence that premarital coital experience between persons who subsequently marry is necessarily damaging either to their emotional health or to their personal adjustment. (p. 29)

The Canadian Appendix questions the usefulness of the "one flesh" concept as a basis of sexual morality today because

Modern psychology makes it difficult to accept the "one flesh" concept at least as it was construed by Paul and by many others in the Christian tradition until recent times. (p. 44)

One approach to dismissing the authority or utility of the Bible to speak completely about modern sex ethics is to point out examples in the Old Testament law with which no Christian would any longer agree, as for example the death penalty for fornication in Deuteronomy 22, or the exclusion of eunuchs and bastards from "the assembly of the Lord" in Deuteronomy 23 (p.9). Another approach is to call into question the real meaning of the original Greek words translated fornication, adultery etc. and to claim either that these terms applied primarily to "pagan practices

of cultic and commercialized prostitution," (p.27) or to invoke "modern scholarship" as the basis for stating The many New Testament injunctions. therefore, against "fornication," in AV and RV (e.g., Matt. 6:32; 19:9; John 8:41; I Cor. 5:1; 6:18; Gal. 5:19; Col. 3:5 I Thes. 4:3; etc.) cannot with certainty be construed in the traditional sense as explicitly forbidding all extra-marital intercourse. (p. 44)

Finally resort is made to the claim that exegesis of biblical passages cannot be done to produce clear ethical guidance for today. For example,

Problems of exegesis make it very difficult to reach assured conclusions about what, if anything, Jesus actually taught to Jews about the morality of specific sexual acts. . . . the question whether the details of sexual morality fall within or outside the range of revelation. (p. 41)

Attempts to develop sexual ethics based on the "one flesh" concept are criticized because Matt. 19:3-6 represents only an *ad hominem* argument by Jesus against the Pharisees and cannot be universalized beyond its context, and because Paul's use of the "one flesh" idea in I Cor. 6:16 "is questionable exegesis on his part and seems to involve the logical absurdity of a Casanova's being 'one flesh' with a multitude of women simultaneously." (p. 44)

With the negative aspects of the biblical revelation thus taken account of, the third principal argument turns to the question of creative loving in the modern world. Such creative loving is to be contrasted to the "taboos and prohibitions" which often characterize historical Christianity (p.6), to a concern for self-purity rather than the well-being of others based on Jesus' treatment of the woman who anointed Him in Luke 7:36ff (p.10), and to a preoccupation with premarital chastity and virginity (pp.27-29). There is emphasis upon the ends that sexual relationship should produce, e.g.,

those sexual expressions which build up communion between persons, establish a hopeful outlook on the future, minister in a healing way to the fears, hurts and anxieties of persons and confirm to them the fact that they are truly loved, are actions which can confirm the covenant Jesus announced. (p. 11)

the creation and celebration of meaningful communion with another person. (p. 28)

and the implicit or explicit assumption that these ends can be reached only by removing restraints previously applied with biblical sanction. Since sex is a human need, the demands of Christian love call for that need to be met among single as well as married individuals, so that "the church has at least the obligation to explore the possibilities of both celibate and non-celibate communal living arrangements as ethically acceptable and personally fulfilling alternatives for unmarried persons." (p.36) Love is essentially contrasted to law, in the manner of situational ethics, with the conclusion that "where obedience to a higher principle requires it, the inferior details of the law must be disregarded." (p.42) With direct biblical guidance gone, the question, "What sort of behavior in this sort of society is best going to bear witness to the presence and spirit of the saving Christ?" (p.44) is left open to a broad subjective interpretation.

In conclusion it should be mentioned for completeness that the report of the Task Force does argue for fidelity within marriage with the positive statement, "Sexual fidelity is important because it . . . has always been suggestive to Christians of the fidelity of God to his people and of Christ to his church." (p. 31)



### *Honest Sex*

Each of the three arguments described and documented above for *Sexuality and the Human Community* is repeated, extended, developed and usually carried further in *Honest Sex*. In many ways, therefore, *Honest Sex* is an indication of where the continuation of the ideas set forth in *Sexuality and the Human Community* naturally lead. The reason that it merits our concern here is that it is written by authors with a Christian commitment and with a Christian concern for the "sexually disadvantaged, perplexed or arrogant in our time." (Dedication)

The authors of *Honest Sex* see us as living in a wholly new time, a critical time that calls for basic changes if Christian witness is to survive in our particular culture. (p.11). When Ecclesiastes says that there is nothing new under the sun (1:9), "Ecclesiastes is dead wrong. In America today, nothing could be further from the truth." (p.26) Traditional sexual morality is useless (p.15), the sex ethics taught by the Church are only the ethics of a past society (p.17), "much of what Christian authority passed off as God's revealed truth was in fact human error with a Pauline flavor" (p.60), modern man repeatedly verifies by his own experience that the Church's "eternal verities" are false (p.17), commands like "Thou shalt not commit adultery" are "Divine fiats" arising "from conflicting texts written for nomadic societies two or three thousand years ago." (p.24)

Man himself, and especially the modern woman, must be recognized as essentially a "new species" (p. 27) in view of the possibilities of completely controlled conception, personality influencing drugs, the problem of extra leisure time, an increase in the frequency of man-woman contacts, the high public level of sexual stimulation, the vanishing of the family as a reference group, the inclusion of explicit sex language in our culture, and the advertising of sex as fun without reference to marriage. (pp. 27-36) To meet this modern challenge the authors have prepared an in depth study through questionnaires, research and interviews with 150 persons designated subjectively to be "creative Christians." The manuscript of their completed work was reviewed by "most theologians—and many sociologists and psychologists—actively writing in this field in America and some in Great Britain," (p.14) none of whom posed any "major objection . . . to any of the positions . . . taken . . ." (p. 14)

Starting with definitions provided by C. S. Lewis in *The Four Loves*, the authors define four types of love: (1) *Affection*—warm and tender relationships, (2) *Friendship*—personal commitment of persons to a common goal, (3) *Eros*—male/female romantic attraction excepting sexual relations, and (4) *Venus*—sexual desire. To these the authors add the biblical *Agape*—God's love—not as another love beside the four, but as a love which must and can be manifest *only through* the four human loves. *Agape* is defined in terms of "nonreciprocated, planned acts of concern for another." Within the framework of this model (for this is what the authors as scientists have constructed) it becomes possible to redefine words like "adultery" so that they have a relevant meaning:

The terms unchastity or adultery are more meaningfully applied when the relationship can be described as pure Venus, than when a minor Venus strand is found interwoven with strong bonds of Affection, Friendship, and Eros. (p. 54)

**Roy:** My early childhood experience reinforced a viewpoint that equated the deepest commitment to the faith with a genuine freedom from the legalisms of religious and social tradition.

In this way the Venus of the play *Tea and Sympathy* (in which an understanding married woman gives herself sexually to a young student to help him appreciate the reality of his manhood) can be interpreted as a Christian act of love since it was done unselfishly and in the context of the other forms of love existing between the woman and the student.

In their research the authors and their colleagues have found that "the Bible as a whole provides no clear legalistic guidelines for relations between men and women." (p.67) They are amazed that the "typical American" still believes that the Bible clearly indicates that God's law includes monogamy, premarital chastity, proscription of adultery, and an injunction against masturbation. (p.68) (The last of these is somewhat in the nature of a straw man since the argument is based on the disobedience of Onan (Genesis 38)), which almost all Christians recognize is a case of *coitus interruptus* and not of masturbation, and that the judgment against Onan was for disobedience, not for the act.) Of these propositions which the "typical American" still mistakenly believes to be of God's law,

Infinitely better scholars than we have established that one cannot find any literal or simple connection in the Bible claiming that the above statements were God's law or will. . . . There are no laws of sexual behavior consistently spelled out in the Bible. (p. 68)

If the attempt is made to force modern man into the old outmoded sexual ethics, only guilt and anxiety are produced. These are points that "creative Christians" unanimously agree on.

We have not met a single creative Christian who has not found the old rules wanting in some respect. Not one of them thinks that the Christian response should be to turn the volume up on the Church's transmitter proclaiming premarital chastity, pure monogamy, and abstinence from adultery. . . . All ethics are contextual or situational ethics nowadays. (p. 72)

In view of the conviction that "the Bible cited by Protestant theologians as an unerring source of ethics or theology is now a useless dodge" (pp. 72,73), where then is the source of guidance? The authors reply that "the source of our ethic is God—the revealing God speaking via the Bible, and Church, and human experience; speaking most clearly in the Christ event; and being interpreted by fallible, sinful, manipulative men like ourselves." (p.73) "Love alone", "love . . . always preferred to law," and "our interpretation of the mind of Christ revealed in his actions recorded in the New Testament set in the historical tradition of the Old" are to be the guides. (p.77)

The result of such interpretation by the authors and their colleagues is another model: the model of the "saturation relationship." Such a saturation relationship involves complete and thorough knowledge of each person by the other, complete and thorough commitment of each to the other through life and death, a side-by-side commitment to the same goals, and "the primary concern of each party for the good, the happiness and well-being of the other." (p. 85) The conclusion then is,

Wherever a saturation relationship exists, the maximum sexual expression is right and proper and even desirable. (p. 85)

**Bube:** If we follow "a Christ" who leads us where Jesus of Nazareth has forbidden us to go, who contradicts the one who lived and died and rose again, we follow "a Christ" of our own imagination and find ourselves enmeshed in idolatry.

Although the authors agree that such saturation relationships normally find their greatest fulfillment within the marriage relationship, they are by no means to be restricted to the marriage relationship. A variety of other possibilities are opened up. Limitations on space prevent us from doing more than mentioning a few of these.

1. A legalistic approach to sex and personal relationships assumes that everyone has the capability of having a saturation relationship with one and only one person at one time. Assessment of the real situation, however, will show that although some persons can never attain a fully saturated relationship with anyone, others can attain saturated relationships with two, three or more other persons at one time. Thus "it may be 'unethical' to impose a uniform monogynous code on the whole population." (p.93)

2. Since "rightness or wrongness has nothing, absolutely nothing, to do with whether or not physical juxtaposition of sex organs has occurred," (p.100), premarital sex must be considered as a viable possibility, if not the rule.

3. Since "study and conversations" indicate that sexual relations short of a saturated relationship are not actually harmful—even if they do not fulfil the ideal, the possibility of sexual relations without a full saturation relationship should be considered a viable possibility for certain circumstances or groups, such as young people not ready for marriage, or for older persons. (pp. 104,105)

4. Since "as Christians, we do not know precisely what adultery means" (p.110), the "word *adultery* must also be abandoned because it cannot any longer be separated from the wrong pejorative connotations" (p.110), and we must instead consider a variety of co-marital (non competitive) and extra-marital (competitive) relationships. Being willing to share one's spouse sexually with another is a test of our real Christian love.

It is utterly ridiculous to say on the one hand, "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends," and to assert immediately that it is impossible and unnatural for a man (or woman) to agree to share his (or her) spouse with another. (p. 112)

For a married person to have sexual relationships with an unmarried person is right when a deep relationship exists, and when human need exists, e.g., the need of the single person for sexual relationships. Usual strictures against such activity carry no weight.

The data are from history and modern sociology, and from conversations with half a dozen persons with some theologically informed self-awareness who have been part of a co-marital relationship. . . . The flat assertion that no man can have good deep relationships including sexual intercourse with more than one woman at a time is patent idiocy. (p. 115)

It is the business of the Church to develop guidelines for "creative conduct" in such co-marital relationships.

5. Even when both persons are married, why should expression be restricted to one person? Again empirical data "on studying the entire gamut of reported practice in which husbands and wives, by mu-

tual agreement, are both involved in sexual relations with other partners" (p.122) indicate positive benefits.

The reports on the experience are so favorable—including a great deal of unanimity on the improvement of the marriage as a result of such experience . . . a new and real warmth of gratitude toward the spouse . . . an actualization of freedom. (pp. 123,124)

6. The category of "single woman" represents a large and growing sexually deprived group in our society. "Singleness is involuntary suffering for the vast majority" (p.132), and the Christian is called upon to alleviate this suffering by whatever means are possible. To do otherwise is to deny one of the purposes of our existence.

Men and women were not created to belong exclusively to each other in a marriage contract. They belong only to God and to all of Man. (p. 137)

Any difficulties or pain that may be caused in providing sexual satisfaction for single women cannot be compared to "the pain of unrelieved loneliness and its deadening effect on sensitivity to others' needs." (p. 143)

7. The realization "that the Christian ideal of unselfish Agape, concern for *all*, does not restrict all sexual expression to marriage," makes possible "many obvious yet radical changes." (p.153) These changes will actually strengthen the institution of marriage by reserving it for those actually prepared for its requirements. We should make marriage harder and divorce easier. In this way precipitous marriages will be prevented, and we will gradually accept bigamy, polygamy, and polyandry.

The Church, of course, is silent so far. It has no real plans for the aged, nor for the involuntarily single. Let us hope that it will not wait too long before it even considers the merits of polygamy (and polyandry) in meeting the needs of millions of persons for whom it has no other hope to offer. (p. 156)

Finally—without the specific authority of the Bible, and with no clear word from God, how shall we as Christians avoid pure subjective responses to these kinds of sexual issues? The authors reply in a Scientific Postscript,

Only from experimental data can we learn how various patterns of sexual behavior . . . fit the requirements of living as followers of Christ in our own day and situation. . . . We have no doubt that individual Christians and groups can be found to volunteer to try controlled experimental patterns of all kinds. (pp. 200,201)

## ISSUES AND ARGUMENTS II

*Rustum Roy*

I find the above summary of the issues and arguments by Bube admirably fair although I would, of course, have presented and worded them somewhat differently. Rather than try to alter them in detail, I wish to present a very short preface and a statement of the principal issue—which is in fact a direct continuation of the last issue dealt with by Bube.

### Personal History

A small fragment of personal history will introduce the topic. I was born into a third generation (on both sides) Christian family in India which has a 33 generation family tree of Kuleen (i.e., priests to the priests) Brahmins behind it. Ours was among the first

Brahmin families converted in North India. For decades, spanning two generations, the cultural Hinduism (e.g., not eating beef, marrying within the 'right' caste, etc.) continued within this very devoted, active, articulate Christian enclave. With my parents, however, came a definite break from their inherited pattern, not because of greater secularization but because of my father's radical Christian commitment. This spanned his Oxford Group pietism, a social activism when it was against societal trends, and a deep devotional life. (We children went to chapel twice a day, and three times on Sunday—and liked it!) Thus my early childhood experience reinforced a viewpoint that equated the deepest commitment to the faith with a genuine freedom from the legalisms of religious and social tradition. That conviction is, as I read the Bible, the main "religious" revolution that Jesus effected. It is neatly caught up in Paul's pungent question to the Galatians: "O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you . . ." and his theory of why grace overrides law totally. It is caught up in the themes of Augustine (Love God and do as you, then, please) and Luther ("Peccate fortiter," and salvation by grace).

### Two Groups

The argument is so thoroughly and specifically treated at such length that I cannot understand how anyone who takes the New Testament seriously can possibly debate it. The entire letter of Paul to the Galatians, especially Chapter 3, has put the law in its proper place—as the prelude to faith (Ch. 3:23-24). Since they are not Jews, why do Christians persist in ever again putting law above grace. Yet, today, I suppose that the family of those who acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus Christ could ultimately be divided into two groups. One group claims as ultimate authority their *total* perception of Jesus the Christ, revealed through the Bible, through history, the great saints and interpreters, theological illuminations, our contemporary understanding, and all sorts of new knowledge including all of science, which shed light, and not least

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in that direct contact we call prayer or meditation. The other claims that the Bible, literally interpreted by himself, or a particular authority he selects, is the sole authority (or, at least, the final arbiter).

### The Principal Issue

The principal issue is therefore joined. What truth has claim on a Christian? Over what area is *my* interpretation of the Bible, final authority? (Interpretation here may be equated to a weighting scheme for the data, since clearly Jesus' words are weighted more heavily than say those in Leviticus.) Or is a Christian only, repeat only, under obedience to a Grace-ous Living Lord, the central figure of the New Testament *which thereby* acquires its significance. I wish here not to debate this issue, only to state my stance with the latter group.

### The Second Issue

The second issue is immediately contiguous. Over what area and in what degree of detail does the mandate of distinctively Christian ethics operate? Surely it stays my hand from killing my neighbor in anger. Does it prescribe what I wear? (Notice the vast change in attitude to uncovered heads and length of skirts in two decades.) Property laws? Lending laws? (Notice the changes from the Old Testament laws.) What I eat? Remember that one. We will come back to it.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. *Can love function meaningfully without the guidance of law? How does one know what "to love" means?*

**Bube:** Not only are love and law not mutually exclusive but in a Christian context neither can be understood without the other. Law is the guide to what it means to love (Psalm 119:97-104); and love is the fulfilling of what the law requires (Romans 13:10). Examples of extreme pitfalls are legalism on the one hand, which forgets the intent of the law in favor of its letter, and situational ethics on the other hand, which in seeking no law but love so subjectivizes love that it retains little content. In order to love, we must act in accordance with the real world; we do not love a child by giving him everything he wants, nor do we love our neighbor by seeking his presumed "welfare" at any cost. When Jesus was asked which was the greatest commandment in the law, he answered that it was to love God and to love your neighbor (Matthew 22:37-40). On the night before his death, he linked love and law indissolubly together when he said, "If you love me, you

will keep my commandments." (John 14:15) To claim that one can love without reference to the law is to deny implicitly the created reality in which we live. The principles of the law inform us as to what it means to love.

**Roy:** Because love is the care-ful working for the good of the Other, it will frequently codify the meaning of love in *general situations* into "laws." But these laws have validity because, and only insofar as, they fulfil the concern of love. Under "special" circumstances they may be superseded by other dictates of love as understood (with Kierkegaardian Fear and Trembling) by the individual.

That is what the incarnation (of Love) was all about. For a Christian as distinct from a Jew, the Law can never have supreme validity. There are ample illustrations from the life of Jesus which speak directly

to the point. The long list of episodes (healing on the sabbath, eating with unwashed hands, eating corn in the fields, etc. Matthew (12:1-12), Mark (2:23-28), Luke (13:10ff; 14:5), with which Jesus categorically makes his point—that “laws” are subject to situational modification—is simply impossible to argue against. The spirit of the new Testament is “The letter (of the law) killeth, the spirit giveth life.” (II Cor. 3:6) Jesus saying “I am come to fulfil the Law,” (Matt. 5:7) can best be read as “complete and subsume;” it is absurd to twist it to say I am come to prove how good the Law is, by complete obedience to it, when in fact I am breaking its letter every day.

We have excellent analogies in Science. The old Wien and Stefan-Boltzmann radiation laws in apparent conflict with each other, were both shown to derive within certain limited boundary conditions, from the new, more general Planck relationship. The laws of Newtonian mechanics were, after all, not abolished by the discoveries of quantum mechanics—just shown to be special cases involving large numbers and bodies. Situation ethics is the statistical mechanics of individual life, to the thermodynamics of the ten commandments for large numbers. While the large-system-society may run best on the latter, it does not allow us to decide the (best) behavior of an individual.

2. *What is biblical “law?” Is it the social derivation of a primitive people, or is it at least a partial description by revelation of the created structure of interpersonal relationships according to the design of creation?*

**Bube:** In speaking of biblical law, I mean the principles of living laid down in the Ten Commandments, the Sermon on the Mount, and other similar and related prophetic and apostolic exhortations for godly living. This biblical law is given to us by God’s revelation of the nature of the created universe and of interpersonal relationships in that created universe because He loves us. Biblical law tells us what it means to live as a child of God, as He has intended us to live by creation, in the real sinful world in which we find ourselves. If we kept the first of the Ten Commandments, we would need no others; our human situation, however, is such that this is not possible, and God has provided for us a variety of guidance in practical living in the real created world. When this law tells us, “You shall not steal,” or “You shall not commit adultery,” it is indeed reflecting the real content of actual human experience, but it is not ultimately derived from this experience as a relative end in itself. The content of human experience confirms that it is a better world without stealing and adultery because this is the very intrinsic nature of the created world. It is divinely revealed and it is experientially verifiable; one description requires the other, and does not eliminate the other. The commandment “You shall not commit adultery” tells us quite simply that committing adultery can never be an ultimate exercise of love in the real world; its effects are not “up for grabs” any more than the law of gravity or the laws of electromagnetics are at our subjective disposal. We can never love a person by pushing him off the top of a tall building because he feels like floating.

Christian I cannot grant *all* of “Biblical Law” any claims whatsoever on me. I believe that the evolutionary thought development through the Old and New Testaments does, in fact, provide the most profoundly accurate analysis of the nature of Man, of his relation to others, to Nature and to the Ground of his own Being (God). Because they are so profound and basic these laws must be sufficiently general. They are much more useful because they are general, and hence may be applied to the enormous diversity of human situations and solved for each particular situation. We cannot have it both ways. Either God entered *all* of human history in Jesus, and hence provided us with a *general* solution (a kind of Unified Field theory) as the Lord of time and space; or Jesus was only the Messiah of the Jews (and rejected by most of them).

The commandment, “Thou shalt not commit adultery,” tells us, I believe, that adultery as then typically understood—seen as cheating or stealing from the third party (partly connected with property and inheritance rights) was wrong. It simply does not read on the kind of situations, where any or all of these new elements are present: genuine acceptance of the third person into a relationship by husband or wife; mutually “open marriages,” or even the honest “swinging” of the Houston apartment houses. By no means do I believe that these latter are generally acceptable under the “law of love;” the only point I make here is that the seventh commandment by itself is not sufficient to help us decide. We are not the only people to have trouble with this commandment. Our Lord had trouble with its literal application, even by the most conservative reading of John (8:13), and in Matt. (5:28) he totally did away with this particular law, substituting at once a much more rigorous and yet more flexible law: “But I say unto you that whosoever shall lust after a woman in his heart has already committed adultery . . .” That is the single Biblical law on adult sexual behavior to which Christians should repair: I call it the law against lust, allowing love some leeway.

**Roy:** The problem is, who selects out his set of Biblical laws? If taken literally, “Biblical law,” includes a whole lot of Numbers, Deuteronomy and Leviticus. No ordinary U.S. citizen could live under Biblical law. The credit system and the supermarkets could not be patronized. This is problem enough for Jews, but as a

3. *Who is the Christ we follow if not the Christ of the Bible?*

**Bube:** It was Jesus of Nazareth who said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes to the Father, but by me.” (John 14:6). It was Jesus of Nazareth who said, “If a man loves me, he will keep my word . . .” (John 14:23) It was Jesus of Nazareth

who lived, died and rose again, commanding his disciples to go and make disciples of all nations, teaching them to obey all that he had taught them (Matthew 28:19). We have no past knowledge of Jesus the Christ, and no present knowledge, except that which is given

to us by revelation in the Bible. If we claim to follow "a Christ" who leads us where Jesus of Nazareth has forbidden us to go, who contradicts the one who lived and died and rose again, we follow "a Christ" of our own imagination and find ourselves enmeshed in idolatry, not in the worship of the true God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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**Roy:** The Christ I follow is the *Human Face of God* (that is the title of J. A. T. Robinson's brand new treatise on Christology) breaking into history in the person of Jesus, the carpenter of Nazareth. Not only rising again, but most importantly living still as the "active principle" of the God-seeking man. When

Einstein speaks of the mystery of the intelligibility of the Universe, he is struggling with the same issue; when Bonhoeffer participates in the plot on Hitler's life he is (he deeply believes and I agree) informed by that same Living Christ. None of this is in the Bible which is a fragmentary record of Jesus' sojourn in Galilee. The story of Jesus, the Living Lord, is a much longer serial than that—it is still running on every local station. There is but a thin line between idolatry and bibliolatry. We walk that line only in faith, knowing that He who created man but a little lower than the angels, gave him the capacity and the responsibility to make this fateful judgment, and not to hand it over to any idol or any catch phrase or highly selected quotation.

#### 4. *Has the role of sex in interpersonal relationships changed in the course of human history?*

**Bube:** From the description of the sinless creation, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply . . .'" (Genesis 1:27,28), to the first event described in the fallen creation, "Now Adam knew Eve his wife . . ." (Genesis 4:1), the role of sex for union between man and woman on all levels of consciousness and experience shows no indication of changing. The belief that we are living in a new and liberated day requiring new practices and escape from old sexual taboos betrays a lack of appreciation for history. The sexual relationship, the symbol of union between Christ and his church, has always been one of God's finest gifts to man; for that very reason it has always been one of the most abused gifts among men who do not know God.

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**Roy:** It is history that teaches us that the organization of human behavior, including those in the interpersonal area have undergone enormous changes. A variety

of sexual styles has coexisted among the highest and most moral groups and individuals who indeed know God—ranging from the evidence of Hindu temples, from the testimony of Plato and Socrates, to Mohammed and his followers, through Christian monks, to Shaker and Oneida communities in America. What sexual patterns do they have in common? Even just the Christian set. One of our major theses is that this role has been changed in the last 25 years in the biggest step-function discontinuity since life began on this planet. We refer to the simultaneous development of completely controlled conception and to the necessity to stabilize or decrease the population, thereby frustrating on a massive scale the very biological genetically coded sexual instinct. The Pauline analogy to the union of Christ and his Church was surely used in reverse; i.e., Paul used the human experience of marriage to explain to his readers by an analogy *his vision* of Christ's relation to the Church. Regrettably the imputation of sacred tones to ordinary human sexuality, caused by repeating the erroneous reading of this passage has caused trouble for hundreds of years.

#### 5. *Can sex be treated as only a biological function, or at least as no more than eating, sleeping or scratching? Or does sex inevitably involve more of the whole person for either positive or negative consequences?*

**Bube:** The biblical treatment of sex within the "one flesh" concept emphasizes that this relationship is at least intended to correspond to the closest union of man and woman possible. It must be admitted, of course, that sex can be approached on a much lower level than this, and that sexual relationships can be in practice treated as nothing more than the fulfillment of a biological need. But this is possible only because it is possible for man to forsake the image of God with which he is endowed by creation, and to behave as if indeed he were nothing more than an animal. When the category "human" is inappropriate. Whenever sex is treated casually and is experienced outside of a lifelong commitment of love, both parties involved forsake the potentialities and destiny of their humanity, lose the concept of united personhoods, and to a greater or lesser degree pattern their behavior after sub-human creatures.

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**Roy:** The highest uses of the sexual function of man are found within the context of a deep, loving, com-

mitted, relationship. The question at issue in today's world is: Granted this is so, is there any reason why admittedly lesser uses of the sexual function are "bad"? Or are they merely less good? Take the simplest case: Is masturbation in the single unmarried person, bad or wrong? Indeed, is not taboo against the expression of sexuality within other than the best or ideal situation, responsible for much greater losses to the individual, and to the Gospel in whose name such taboos are enunciated? Obviously there are millions of legal marriages which are veritable hells of relationships, yet we accept sexuality within that context. Do we thereby grant the right to create the "rightness" of sexuality to any kind of piece of paper from any country, or deny it only because that piece of paper is missing?

Let me take this as the point for introducing my major new position (beyond that taken in *Honest Sex*). Is not the pre-occupation with sex instead of love wholly a waste of time and energy for Christians today? Is sex not already far on the way to becoming "autonomous," and hence not even a sensible topic for Christian ethics any longer. Take food as an analogy.

**Bube:** The biblical revelation and general empirical data available on society as a whole indicate that the assumption that "saturation relationships" in the sense of a "lifelong commitment of love" (involving sexual intimacy) can exist outside the 1 man/1 woman relationship is based on an illusion, contrary to the created structure of interpersonal sexual relationships.

All religions have, or have had, taboos against eating some kinds of food. Yet slowly at first (e.g., Christians, as distinct from Jews, eating pork); and rapidly now (Hindus and Muslims living in the West eating beef, Roman Catholics eating meat on Friday, etc.) all these proscriptions are falling away. *We are surely wholly autonomous on what we eat and drink.* Some Christians are vegetarians, others enjoy huge steaks, some don't

eat shrimp, others avoid pork, etc. Some drink like Jesus, others abstain. Sex is not identical to eating, but from the beginning of time the analogy has been made. The greater complexities in sexuality are due to the involvement (most of the time) of two (or more) persons, and the possible involvement of pregnancy and property. Now that property is not involved, that fear of conception can be eliminated, that new sexual affluence can often be had by mutual agreement among all concerned to their benefit (as they claim), what do we say? I say with Paul, "All things are lawful, not all things edify." And also, "If meat cause my brother to stumble, I will not eat meat." (Rom. 14:15) I find that these are more effective guidelines or riders on the law of love to guide the behavior of the autonomous Christians than any simple prohibition. It means that although any sexual act may be "legal," it still may not be loving. The Christian law of love is frequently more demanding than the pre-Christian law of Moses.

6. *Can a person with a need for love be satisfied only by sex? If so, why not make a sex-machine?*

**Bube:** There is a purely biological urge involved in sex, and the physical release from this urge can be achieved through masturbation or some kind of "sex machine." The very failure of these methods of relief of the biological urge only, when problems of the whole person in loneliness and need for love are concerned, is self evident. Sex is not the answer to the need for love. Nor need it be supposed that the need for love cannot be satisfied without sex. Many in recent years, caught up in the despair of life without God, have sought to deify sex as the ultimate mystical experience, the answer to life's problems, and the slogan "Make love, not war" can be appreciated but not understood except in this context. When one person *uses* another to obtain relief from his or her sexual drives, the persons involved are being treated as "things"—and this is certainly one of the basic attitudes condemned by the Christian position.

love; including that within the legal frameworks. The Christian affirms the "giving" of love as the primary descriptor of his life-style. There are biological bases for sexual needs, which are clearly not as biologically affecting as those for food. How does a Christian who is under Jesus' injunction to "feed the hungry," "clothe the naked," etc., minister to those who are sexually hungry? Tell them to take cold showers? Try to reorganize society? We are faced with a paradox. To be true to our Lord we should try to "feed" the sexually hungry, not give them Bibles *only*. But this might violate the seventh commandment. Given the new circumstances, maybe such acts could be legitimized. But if so, such sexual caring should be in the context of a loving relationship, i.e., most likely with close friends and not strangers. Note that this is exactly the most demanding type of responsible relationship. Sex with strangers is much *simpler*—(a la Johnson and Masters surrogate partners). Sex with a machine may be the simplest (i.e., least complicating) but certainly not the best.

**Roy:** Never. There is little relation between sex and

7. *Is it possible to have "meaningful, celebrating, person-affirming communion" through non-life-committing and non-self-committing love relationships? If not, why not marry?*

**Bube:** The biblical perspective is that sexual relations between man and woman fulfil their proper role when experienced in the context of a lifelong commitment of love. It is this lifelong commitment of love—as opposed to the brief giving and taking of casual liaisons—which makes it possible to have meaningful celebrating, person-affirming communion. To claim that the pursuit of "meaningful, celebrating, person-affirming communion" is possible without a lifelong commitment of love has neither biblical nor empirical support. If this is indeed the case then why should such a man and woman hesitate to publicly affirm their mutual commitment—i.e., get married? Is it not eminently likely that a refusal to give assent to such commitment publicly is really an indication that such commitment is not given? And if such commitment is indeed not given, it makes little sense to continue to justify sexual relations on the

hypothetical grounds that a "meaningful . . . etc." relationship is involved.

**Roy:** There is a quantitative aspect which is missing here. The question implies that all life-commitments are equal, and equal to marriage. There are all degrees of commitment and all degrees of fulfillment. The empirical data are clear that "life-long" commitment taken on in a typical marriage thoroughly approved by the Church, is highly unlikely to go more than 14 years! Equally deep commitments to love (not to sex) are made by many persons, e.g., members of many religious communities to each other; a nun or a priest committed to their vocation; a man and a woman who cannot marry. Is all sexual contact forbidden to them? Are five and ten year relationships with a vast amount



of contact, concern, love, insufficient to justify any sexual relation, while the casual liaison of a typical weak marriage justifies everything? The latter are prominent in statistically validated samples of mar-

riages, and legalists get all tripped up justifying horrible acts and relations if they affirm "meal ticket" sex as their only *moral* standard. (Meal tickets may be purchased for \$2.00 and a blood test.)

#### 8. Which is a better measure of the reality of human nature: the biblical revelation or empirical surveys?

**Bube:** This is an improper question, and I have formulated it primarily to emphasize this fact. It is improper because good theology (theology that is faithful to the biblical revelation) and good science (science that is faithful to the real world) do not provide measures of human nature which can be categorized as being one better and one worse. Unfortunately it is easy to come by both bad theology and bad science, and both of these enter discussions of the sexual revolution. Bad theology does not take full account of the biblical revelation concerning human nature: it either neglects the creation-intended redemption-restored potential goodness of human nature, or it neglects the fallen and sinful nature of man living in the world today. It is this neglect of man's sinful nature today that permits the fabrication of sexual Utopias (no less than political Utopias) based on the presupposition that human nature is essentially good and capable of self perfection. Bad science underestimates the problem of assessing the character of reality and attributes to limited empirical surveys significance beyond their merit. Bad theology and bad science are combined when it is concluded that *because* it appears that people can do something without serious harm, it follows first that they *may* do it, and then finally that they *must* do it. This is the familiar "is-ought" fallacy which attends any and every attempt to derive a system of ethics from empirical investigations. In response to this question, therefore, if it is interpreted to ask whether the test of the effect of adultery is better given by attention to the biblical revelation, or to the opinions of a few perhaps well-meaning individuals with a particular set of philosophical presuppositions, I must conclude that the biblical revelation is infinitely more reliable.

#### 9. Do we obtain real freedom by ignoring human nature as it is, and treating it as it might be if sinless?

**Bube:** Freedom is never achieved by neglecting reality. To be truly free one must know and live in response to the limitations of the structure of reality. Freedom from the law of interpersonal relationships is as impossible to come by as is freedom from the law of gravity. Absolute freedom never exists in a real world. To neglect reality is to neglect truth, and to neglect truth is always tantamount to losing freedom. If, in a subjective quest for freedom from the law of gravity, I walk off the top of a tall building, I pay the penalty and am no longer free at all. If, in a subjective quest for freedom from the laws appropriate for human beings in interpersonal relationships according to God's creative will, I deliberately violate these laws, I cannot escape paying the penalty and losing my freedom. Jesus tells us, "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free. (John 8:31, 32)

**Roy:** Never. Likewise, however, we get nowhere by neglecting other aspects of human nature. This Man

**Roy:** Since Truth is of a Unity—they both contribute. All of modern science (not only silly sociology surveys) and Biblical revelation are, axiomatically, wholly compatible when both are properly understood. If there are apparent conflicts we better check the data, and/or revise our understanding.

I'm a great proponent of the primacy of Biblical insight based on its statements on the nature of man, fallen but redeemable, which have been empirically validated by 5000 years of recorded human history.

Man's sinful nature makes me question all his artifices to dodge his God-given responsibility of using all of creation to serve his fellow man and thus serve God. Hiding behind comfortable legalisms is one such artifice. For hundreds of years the Church used what is the most explicit Biblical material in the whole area of marriage and sex, i.e., the proscription against divorce (Mark 10:2; Matt. 19:3-9), to foil what was empirically obvious: That in some cases the loving thing for all, was to permit divorce (and re-marriage). Today everyone has forgotten that this was the cutting edge of the "moral" issue a century ago. If you don't believe me, try to find a legal loophole for divorce as practiced by tens of millions of Christians every year. Well, even the Roman Catholics may "reunderstand" the Bible on that one soon . . . (*Sic transit . . .*) Similarly with premarital intercourse; we can see that the empirical evidence and our re-reading of the Bible find no way to fault it, in the absolute and blanket way in which the Church has done in recent generations. The empirical data are that today a high percentage of concerned, loving, active Christians have had wholly positive experience with pre-marital sex: some equally with pre-marital abstinence. Both are options for Christians today.

is also acquisitive, power-driven, creative, inventive, and he was made in the Creator's image; he is a co-creator now. He will and must flex his muscles, and try his wings. He will, for absolutely certain sure, use his new sexual affluence. Our problem is to solve the simultaneous equation: Given sinfulness and sexual affluence, what patterns are best? (Do not respond by giving solutions for pre-1950 sexual poverty.) Here again, is an example where the Bible could *not* have spelled out an appropriate law, because during its time, such a situation did not exist and could not have been conceived.

**Roy:** The evolutionary thrust of history leaves us no doubt as to the outcome. The Church will sooner or later accede to Society's patterns and *then* find the rationale to justify co-marital, loving (including sexuality) with persons other than the spouse. The question is: should not the Church lead the way?

10. *What is the good news of the Gospel to men and women? Does it always allow us to end all and every kind of deprivation?*

**Bube:** Perhaps the saddest quote given above from *Honest Sex*, if we take it literally, is the next to last, in which the authors call for the church to consider the merits of polygamy and polyandry "in meeting the needs of millions of persons for whom it has no other hope to offer." If the church has "no other hope to offer" in its mission of preaching and living the good news of the Gospel, we are in the words of Paul, "of all men most to be pitied." (I Corinthians 15:19). In the RSV version of the New Testament, to cite a statistic, the word "hope" appears 73 times in 19 different books of the 27 New Testament books. Some of these, of course, are used in ordinary English conversation like, "I hope to see you," but the vast majority speak of the Christian's hope in Jesus Christ. The good news of the Gospel is that we need no longer live separated from God by sin, but that God has acted on our behalf in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, so that if we accept for ourselves the grace of God offered in Christ, we may be forgiven, accepted and received back into personal fellowship with God both here and now, and forever. The good news of the Gospel is that God loves us and has made it possible for us to love Him and each other. The good news of the Gospel is that all power in heaven and earth is in the hands of Jesus Christ, who is with us always. Nowhere in the biblical revelation are we promised that this good news means that all suffering, deprivation, and even persecution will be taken from us in this present sinful world; what we are promised is that God is always with us and will grant us both to overcome and to triumph in and with the suffering and deprivation.

If we arrive at the point where the removal of suffering and deprivation justifies *any* means, then we have forgotten the heart of the Christian message which calls for us first to love with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and then in that context to seek every way possible to love our neighbor.

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**Roy:** The good news of the Gospel is the offer of (the) Reconciliation effected by Jesus Christ. By no means does that suggest that every mouth will be filled, every want satisfied. Indeed the recognition of the inevitability of much pain is part of the Biblical insight. But we only earn the right to preach the good news when our lives say that we have bent every effort to clothe the naked, feed the hungry, minister to the sick. The wording in the quote cited by Bube is not clear: perhaps "new programs" substituted for "hope" would clarify it. If the Church were doing all it could to meet the needs for companionship, friendship and sexuality, of the single, aged, etc., it would, of course, be proclaiming its unique message of Hope. Indeed, the importance of the gospel for modern man is that in spite of the despair which, rationally, we must all face, about the potential of feeding and clothing the world, man can still live creatively. Petru Dimitriu's *Incognito*, which must surely rank as one of history's "most Christian," novels makes this acceptance of "the world as it is" come alive. Yet this serenity in the face of despair must be held paradoxically or dialectically against Christ's imperative "to feed, clothe, serve."

11. *Is a "saturation relationship" outside of a 1 man/ 1 woman marital relationship possible?*

**Bube:** This is the kind of question which presumably is a prime candidate for answering on empirical grounds. Such a "saturation relationship" is or is not possible—except, of course, that our empirical investigation is severely hampered by difficulty in objectively defining and identifying a "saturation relationship." Because a "saturation relationship" is claimed does not make it actual. If the term "saturation relationship" is to be identified with our term, "a lifelong commitment in love," then the biblical revelation is fairly clear in providing a negative answer. A positive answer to the question would follow only if God had made men and women so that total lifelong commitments in love could be made at one time by one man to many women, or at one time by one woman to many men. Again the biblical revelation and general empirical data available on society as a whole seem to me to indicate that the assumption that "saturation relationships" in the above sense can exist outside the 1 man/1 woman marital relationship is based on an illusion, contrary to the created structure of interpersonal sexual relationships.

new boundary conditions not dreamed of previously. The data of many careful highly moralistic observers say yes to this question. I know of "saturation relationships" among several threesomes, and foursomes. Some of these saturate at much higher values than a high proportion of marriages. Also, however, in the last few years, the saturation level justifying coitus has moved downward, both within and outside of marriage. There is an enormous struggle in the psyches of most concerned active Christians, societal values against new sexual patterns absorbed during their childhood development, coming into conflict with a reasoned Christian position, and their own loving and sexual desires.

The evolutionary thrust of history leaves us no doubt as to the outcome. The Church will sooner or later accede to Society's patterns and *then* find the rationale to justify co-marital, loving (including sexuality) with persons other than the spouse. (Remember the much worse fight over divorce.) The question is: shouldn't the Church lead the way by affirming its eternal principles of love-and-law to guide our new condition of sexual affluence? The question is how many more millions will see the Church and the entire gospel of Jesus Christ as irrelevant, simply because some pusillanimous Church leaders couldn't keep their minds on love, instead of law.

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**Roy:** This is precisely where empirical data are making inroads on our previous understandings, and for

12. *Granting the possibility of exceptional situations, should such exceptions be made the pattern for the normal?*

**Bube:** This question is prompted by my perception of this kind of approach repeated on several occasions in *Honest Sex*. I am perfectly willing to admit that the existence of an Absolute ethical principle does not guarantee the possibility of giving that principle absolute expression in every instance of human life. I can conceive of situations where the choice to perform a known evil might be the consequence of realizing that in this imperfect world not to act would result in a known greater evil. But such exceptions retain validity only as exceptions, never if they are treated as a guide to the norm. Bonhoeffer, for example, was willing to work for the assassination of Hitler as a crisis exception in his life, but he was absolutely clear that if such forsaking of the normal demands of ethics ever became the guide to the norm, we would all be lost. Even in his case, he was overruled by God, who

judged Hitler in His own way.

**Roy:** Exceptional situations should of course not be generalized as a possible norm. *Honest Sex* may have done this by implication by insufficiently careful wording. Our main thesis was that there is no single value norm. There is a distribution of norms. Hence, obviously, within that distribution of norms, some situations (exceptions?) occur less frequently than others. History is creeping up on that too, and the center of the norms are shifting. In 1973 more than half the U.S. population felt that premarital sex was no longer immoral—a 500% change in two decades. Some of these data are like Jesus' reference to the 'Clouds no larger than a man's hand.' They are early warnings before the event itself.

13. *Is marital exclusiveness reprehensibly selfish, or are there more profound justifications?*

**Bube:** The claim that sexual exclusiveness between one man and one woman who have become one flesh in a lifelong commitment of love, and who are seeking to live out in their lives a representation of Christ and the church, is the result of human selfishness and is incompatible with the requirements of loving one's neighbor, seems to me to be a gross misreading of the biblical revelation. The Bible persistently treats marital infidelity as an analogy to spiritual apostasy for precisely the same reason; as man is to love only God with heart and soul and mind above all else in life—because this is the only way to fulfil the creation purpose of man, so a man and a woman in a lifelong commitment of love are to keep each only for the other—again because this is the only way to fulfil the creation purpose of man and woman. If men and women and sex and human nature were differently constructed, different possibilities might be available. But we are designed to live in the world that God has made, and He has loved us enough to reveal to us what this entails.

**Roy:** Marital exclusiveness in sexual relationships is a beautiful and fulfilling option for any couple where love and tenderness exist between them too, and where

it seems to make them more serving of other's needs. Marital exclusiveness which prevents deeply caring relations to all kinds of others is utterly un-Christian and selfish and therefore reprehensible. That is to say if a man spends so much time and love on his wife that he has no time to care for the kid in trouble, the prisoner recently released, or the widow of his friend, that cannot be squared with a Christian commitment. Furthermore, given our world (America 1974) even marital sexual exclusivity is not the only option open to caring couples. Certainly that option is praised and romanticized in literature. But what of the open marriage which in addition to a sturdy love between the couple permits the caring for the hungry, sick, needy and included among those—the lonely who may need sex and love as well as the gospel? Can the very rare mature marriages, because they are solidly based, allow the joy and beauty of other relationships of each partner to include celebrative sex? Such marriages are exceptions among the hundreds we know, but no more so than ideal marriages everywhere. We are just emerging from the era where this kind of couple would have been a pipedream. Now, they are the new breed, who may be up to preaching the ever-new Gospel to twenty-first century sexually affluent man.

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*There are those who point out, correctly, that other societies have different patterns of relationships between the sexes, patterns which often approve of pre-marital intercourse, and sometimes permit multiple partners. What they do not go on to point out is that the quality of family life in these societies is inferior, both so far as the status of women is concerned, and in romantic love to our ideals. I write from experience of having worked among both polygamous and polyandrous peoples. Our traditional ideal of virginity before marriage and chastity within marriage can only be replaced by practices which are not only lower on an ethical standard, but yield less satisfaction to their practitioners.*

R. F. R. Gardner

*Abortion: The Personal Dilemma*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan (1972), p. 256

# BOOK



# REVIEWS

**CHRIST AND THE BIBLE** by John W. Wenham, 1972, 206 pp., paperback.

**THE CHALLENGE OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES** by Kenneth G. Howkins, 1972, 150 pp. paperback.

Both published by InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois 60515, although the latter book is originally published by Tyndale Press (London).

These two books present variations on a common theme: the reliability and the authority of the Scriptures in the light of modern critical evidence. Wenham, Warden of Latimer House at Oxford, presents the first in an intended series of four books on the Christian view of the Bible; this first book emphasizes Christ's view of the Scripture. Intended for Christians, the book argues that "belief in the Bible comes from faith in Christ, and not vice versa." By an inductive argument, the author works from Jesus' attitude to the Old Testament, His attitude to His own teaching, and His attitude to the continuing witness of His disciples after His death, to belief in scriptural inspiration, without attempting to meet (or even in principle be concerned with) each possible critical objection to specific passages.

Wenham argues that Jesus consistently treats the historical narratives as straightforward records of fact, and although he is willing to admit that Jesus' use of these narratives might conceivably be didactic rather than literal, he feels that there is "no hint that our Lord intended anything of the sort." Similarly he admits the possibility that "Jesus is simply taking his contemporaries on their own ground without committing Himself to the correctness of their premises," but finally concludes that "it seems impossible to accept it as being Christ's real view." His arguments along this line are not wholly convincing and in later places in the text he is willing to grant, e.g., that (a) Jude (1:9) might not really indicate his quotation as coming from the lips of the patriarch Enoch, since "having no access to modern typographical techniques there was no unclumsy way of indicating that the name was recognized as a *nom de plume*;" (b) inexact New Testament quotations of Old Testament passages do not argue against inerrancy for "this shows a complete failure to understand the humanity of the Scriptures, which is no more destroyed by inspiration than is the humanity of Christ by incarnation. Preservation from error does not involve the destruction of normal mental processes," and (c) the words of Jerome can be quoted with approval, "that wherever the evangelists and apostles quote the Old Testament it should be noted that 'they have not followed the wording, but the meaning.'"

All in all, Wensham presents a capable case for

the trustworthiness of the Scriptures, although he does not really come to grips with certain specific thorny issues such as the significance of Jesus's words about the early chapters of Genesis.

*The Challenge of Religious Studies* by Kenneth G. Howkins, Lecturer in Religious Studies at Balls Park College, Hertford, England, is also intended for the committed Christian, especially for the Christian confronted with the academic field of Religious Studies, posing "the insidious danger" that "the proverbial familiarity breeds contempt." He emphasizes the differences between the scientific study of religion, in which religion is treated as a phenomenon suitable for description in natural categories, the sociology and the psychology of religion, the philosophy of religion—and the reality of a living relationship with God. As he states at the end of the book, "The student of biochemistry does not cease to eat and enjoy his food because he also studies food."

Discussing the significance of conventional labels, Howkins makes the memorable comment, "the true scholar should be liberal in his outlook, radical in his thinking and conservative in his conclusions." The author has a healthy understanding for the correlation between science and Christian faith, as illustrated by such statements as "it is unbiblical to speak of 'divine interventions,' as this implies that in general the world is just going on by itself;" "myth is a way of thinking in which the other-worldly and divine are represented as this-worldly and human;" "whether a miracle occurred on a certain occasion is a question for the historian and not for the scientist;" and "the laws of nature are descriptions of what *does* happen and not what *must* happen."

In the context of a book of this sort, Howkins treatment of the stories of creation and the fall are particularly helpful. A few quotations from this section illustrate.

Do these stories contain religious or scientific truth? The very form of the question prejudices certain matters, in assuming that religious and scientific truth are opposites, or that they are alternatives.

It will be found that in Genesis 1 there is a most sublime and majestic account of God creating all; but we search in vain for any details of how He did it.

There is no conflict in principle between science and religion in the doctrine of divine creation. So as regards the origin of the universe, we may say that from the Old Testament we find that God created it but we do not find how He did so; for that we turn to science.

This question is often posed as, "Creation or evolution?" But to put the question that way is again to prejudice the issue, as it implies that these are two different and opposite ideas. . . . If evolution is true, then it is a description of how God created animals and man, and indeed every living thing.

The biblical doctrine of creation is not simply an account of the origin of things. It is a description of something vital about the nature of God, man and the universe, and the relation between God and man, God and the universe, and man and the universe.

We have to face the problem about taking the story of the fall literally. In a way, this is not as big a problem as it might appear. For whether we take the story as literally true or as symbolically true, the final result is the same: man is a fallen creature, with an unrealized potential, and standing in need of God's revelation and God's salvation.

Finally Howkins emphasizes the importance of considering the basic purpose for which the Bible was written, not simply study of the biblical record as an objective exercise. "It is often said that the Bible is not a scientific textbook, and that we do not turn to it to learn science. But it may even be said also that, ultimately, the Bible is not a theological textbook, and we should not turn to it just to learn theology. . . . To know theology without knowing God is a terrible fate."

Both of these books are valuable for placing in the hands of college students particularly, as they often come face to face for the first time with a critical approach to biblical authority.

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**LIVING AND LOVING** by A. N. Triton. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1972. Paperback, 95 p., \$1.25.

The back cover of Triton's book says, "Sex before marriage, adultery, (etc.) . . . are becoming acceptable, even normative, and Christians are under tremendous pressure to conform. But should they? . . . This book attempts to answer . . . and to show why . . ." The result is a fairly standard discourse on some fairly standard issues written for the standard (i.e., pretty straight) Christian British university student. All that the book reveals about Triton is a British origin; background credentials, affiliations, even sex are not to be found. Triton writes, however, like a kindly English country vicar, and the resulting prose is rather bland . . . to say the least. The flavor of both style and content is given by the following: "In the Christian ideal stable marriage is the great thing. Sex is made for marriage, not vice versa." (p. 35).

There are chapters with topical questions. "Why Shouldn't We?" (A: "Contrary to God's ideal.") "Are Christian Morals Unalterable?" (A: ". . . basic moral principles, based on the way we are made . . . therefore unalterable.") "What If We Fail?" (A: David and Sampson did; "Here is both a warning and an encouragement.") "Is Early Marriage the Answer?" (A: ". . . must not be entered into 'unadvisedly, lightly or wantonly.'")

Biblical treatments consider "An Example of Victory" (Joseph with Potiphar's wife) and "St. Paul on Marriage," which is mostly a "very free paraphrase-with-comment" on I Corinthians 7. I found nothing unexpected in these chapters. Various Scripture references are made throughout the book, of course. A chapter entitled "Prelude to Partnership" was contributed by an otherwise unidentified John H. Patterson. In my view, it is clearly superior in style and content to Triton's own work and might justify the cost of the

book.

I thought the views of a middle-aged married person (myself) might be somewhat jaded on the sex-and-marriage issue, so I loaned the book to a single Christian male, age 20, and a newly married Christian female of about the same age. Both reported an occasional helpful point made, but—as the girl said—"It wouldn't have answered the real problems I had before I married." All three of us gave it about a "C" grade. I suggest *I Loved a Girl*, by Walter Trobisch.

*Reviewed by W. Mack Goldsmith, Department of Psychology, California State College, Stanislaus, California.*

**YOUR MIND MATTERS** by John R. W. Stott. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1972, 64 pp., \$.95. Paperback.

This book is about the place of the mind in the Christian life. Subtitled "the misery and menace of mindless Christianity," the book has four chapters with a foreword and notes. In 1972 John R. W. Stott gave the presidential address at the InterVarsity Fellowship Annual Conference. This book is the full text of that address. Stott is Rector of All Souls Church in London and author of the book *Basic Christianity*.

The psychologist who picks up this book might anticipate that the author will treat the mind in a mindless way. Such is not the case. This is a cognitive book. It will arouse some affect as the author intended but it is meant more for the cortex than the limbic system. Stott makes "a forceful appeal to Christians to show devotion set on fire by truth."

Stott believes that some Christians today are like the unbelieving Jews of whom Paul said that they have a zeal for God but it is unenlightened. This anti-intellectualism is illustrated by three sometimes exaggerated emphases: Catholic on ritual, radicals on social action, and Pentecostals on experience.

Stott quotes a man who said, "Whenever I go to church, I feel like unscrewing my head and placing it under the seat because in a religious meeting I never have any use for anything above my collar button!" The book has many quotes which enrich its emphasis on the use of the mind in the Christian life. Billy Graham is quoted as saying, "I've preached too much and studied too little." Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse is quoted "If I had only three years to serve the Lord, I would spend two of them studying and preparing." Lloyd-Jones: "The Bible is full of logic, and we must never think of faith as something purely mystical." Stott takes issue with Norman Vincent Peale and W. Clement Stone for equating optimism with faith. To Stott faith is not optimism but a reasoning trust which reckons thoughtfully and confidently upon the trustworthiness of God.

In conclusion, Stott makes it clear that he is not pleading for "a dry, humorless, academic Christianity." Knowledge, wisdom, discernment, and understanding are the very foundation of the Christian life. He warns, quoting Bishop Handley Moule, against an undevotional theology and an untheological devotion. This is a nifty little book and profitable reading for all Christians.

*Reviewed by Richard Ruble, Professor of Psychology and Biblical Studies, John Brown University, Siloam Springs, Arkansas.*

**QUEST FOR REALITY: CHRISTIANITY AND THE COUNTER CULTURE** by Carl F. H. Henry and Others, Inter-Varsity Press (1973) Paper, 161 p., \$2.95.

*Quest for Reality* is a collection of papers presented at an invitational scholar's conference on "Christian Perspectives on the Search for Reality in Modern Life", sponsored by the Institute for Advanced Christian Studies in October, 1971. Short papers (10 to 18 pages) were presented on five related topics treating various aspects of the counter culture, each paper being followed by two critiques. In this review I shall be more concerned with the main papers, although the critiques are important and some of them make significant contributions.

Armond M. Nicholi II, a practicing psychiatrist and faculty member of Harvard Medical School, presented some excellent insights into the youth culture in the first paper, "Some Clinical Sketches of the Youth Culture". This paper, though brief, is well worth reading. In the next section, D. Elton Trueblood discusses "The Self and the Community", and concludes that it is not an either-or but a both-and proposition,

there must be, on the one hand, a warning against any individualism which makes the separated person his own end, but there must be, at the same time, a warning against any collectivism which regards the community as the end of the individual.

In a critique of Trueblood's paper, David Carley suggests a far more serious charge than Trueblood's, calling the "Do your own thing" of the counter culture a "thoroughly vulgar admonition". He states,

I believe that by our actions, by our life styles and by what we do rather than what we say, the majority of Christians in America today have concern for little other than ourselves; that the concept of community is mostly foreign to our patterns of living; and that the great paradox Trueblood refers to is only a conceptual one for most of us because, in reality, the paradox between choosing self-sufficiency or the good of the whole is hardly a good wrestling match. The self wins almost every time.

In a philosophical analysis of the counter culture, Ronald Nash, Head of Philosophy and Religion at Western Kentucky, selects two prominent spokesmen, Marcuse and Reich, and subjects them to severe criticism based on his thesis that:

If the proponent of the counter culture rules out the possibility of valid inference, he should not expect us to get excited when he argues for his views or against the views of others. If the proponent of the counter culture tells us that truth is relative, he should not expect us to accept his truths as absolute. If he tells us that all beliefs are conditioned by economic and social matters, he should recognize that this vitiates his beliefs as well.

Concerning Marcuse, "his thesis is self-defeating in the sense that no one, including himself, could have obtained knowledge of the thesis. And even granting that Marcuse's books could be the result of a miracle, no one else, according to this theory, could have understood him." Of Reich, Nash says, "Surely there are good grounds for concluding that *The Greening of America* is a confused melange of nonsense." The critiques given by Holmes and Mavrodes are more sympathetic to Marcuse and Reich, although they still find problems from a Christian perspective.

John Scanlon, Prof. of Sociology at Indiana U., gives an excellent discussion of, "The Christian View of Work". He concludes,

The Christian view of vocation as a creative exercise of gifts in holy service to God supplies meaning to work and a basis for identity that is real, in terms of both

temporal and eternal. The challenge to the Christian community is somehow to communicate this view of vocation as reality to all segments of our youth, whether disaffected middle-class white males or expectant blue-collar youth or suspicious blacks or newly-aspiring women.

In, "Some Aspects of the Counter Culture", John Snyder, Executive Vice Chancellor of the University of California at Santa Barbara, provides the best short analysis of the counter culture that I have ever seen. The paper dispels some common misconceptions about the counter culture. The final two papers are summaries; "The Search for Reality", by Calvin Linton and "What is Man on Earth For?", by Carl Henry. The main thrust of this conference is perhaps given in this statement by Henry, "Amid the truly legitimate elements in the counter-cultural complaint, the greatest service that Christian intellectuals can provide is to discriminate what is worthy from what is unworthy in the present social ferment and to reinforce what is right." This book is at least a beginning toward that goal.

Reviewed by B. J. Piersma, Houghton College, Houghton, N.Y. 14744.

**ISSUES OF THEOLOGICAL WARFARE: EVANGELICALS AND LIBERALS** by Richard J. Coleman. Eerdmans, 1972, 206 pages, paperback.

The author of this volume, Mr. Richard J. Coleman, a United Presbyterian minister, is to be commended for his courage in grappling with difficult problems. He writes with a concern for the continued and even widening breach between theological liberals and evangelicals. He proposes that evangelicals and liberals should engage in dialogue, facing the differences that divide them, with honesty and with a desire to learn from each other. He is convinced that if this is done, some—not all—of the differences can be resolved, with a resulting healthier climate for all concerned in the church.

The volume is divided into five chapters in which major points of doctrinal divergence are noted. Chapter one raises questions concerning the movement of faith and the doctrines held concerning God and Christ. Chapters two and three discuss the crucial area of the nature of revelation and inspiration and authority of the Scriptures. Chapter four considers differences in viewpoints held concerning prayer, providence and the world. Chapter five is devoted to consideration of the church and social involvement.

To the author's credit it must be acknowledged that he has endeavored to present both sides of key issues fairly and objectively with accuracy. There is evidence of wide acquaintance with the writings of both liberals and evangelicals. He does not skim the surface with mere generalities and superficial consideration. There is much in the volume that would be read with profit by either evangelical or liberal. And of course, that is the point and purpose of the writing.

It would seem however, that the author is perhaps overly optimistic about the benefit that can be reasonably expected to accrue from dialogue between theological liberals and theological conservatives. If it were only a case of disagreement over minor details, then such optimism would be justified. But when the differences in detail are largely a result of differences in basic presuppositions, it is a different matter.



What reconciliation can be expected, for example, between the liberal view that the task of theology is "to uncover and thematize those aspects of everyday life that contain elements of transcendence and permanence" (p. 54), and that theology "begins with man and moves to God"—and the evangelical position that theology begins with the self-revealing God of the Scriptures? That it is not a case of man theorizing about God from what he may see in man—but of God and His works revealed historically in the Bible, in the created order, and supremely in Christ.

Or what synthesis is possible concerning the person of Christ? On the one hand, he is viewed as "only a supreme paradigmatic model, who can influence our lives only as one who stands in the past . . . (who) is dead except as we can resurrect him through the exercise of our wills" (58-59). On the evangelical view, He is the eternal son of the living God, who became incarnate, who suffered and died, and was raised again from the dead—exalted forever with the Father.

It is true of course, that dialogue is important, for it is a very useful communication. We need to know what the other person is thinking and the reasons that lie behind that thinking. It is also true that controversy and differences of viewpoint serve to clarify positions. The historical development of Christian doctrine repeatedly demonstrates this. It has been in the heat of controversy, from Celsus to Bultmann or Bonhoeffer, that the more complete development of theology and viewpoint based upon the Bible has resulted. But this has not been a mere synthesis, or a compromise between two positions. It has more often been a clarifying of doctrine, with the impetus for the more complete statement furnished by the challenge.

But on issues where the positions are diametrically opposed, as is true in many instances in the liberal-evangelical controversy, one side or the other would need to make major concessions. A half-way position would not be an acceptable solution. And reluctant as some liberals have been to grant it, the evangelical remains fully persuaded of the truth of his position on basic doctrines—and this after careful, painstaking consideration of most of the implications involved in the position. It does seem significant that laymen in large numbers from within some of the major denominations, as is referred to by the author in his introductory chapter, are expressing their concern for vital Christian faith in opposition to liberalism of much of the official leadership.

The phenomenon of differences of judgment and interpretation continues to be an interesting matter in almost every discipline—although often frustrating and baffling. Whether we think of psychology, philosophy, art, astronomy or theology—different viewpoints are in evidence. And this is one thing that makes life interesting. How boring it would be if everyone thought alike on every subject. The incentive for further study and research would be at an end.

This volume then is commended for further study. Occasionally it will jar the evangelical, and at other points, it will possibly stir the liberal. Surely this will be useful for all concerned.

*Reviewed by Enoch E. Mattson, Trinity Western College, Langley, B.C., Canada.*

JUNE 1974

**INSIGHT, AUTHORITY, AND POWER** by Peter A. Schouls. Toronto: Wedge Publishing Foundation, 1972, 46 pp.

This book is a compilation of adaptations of lectures given by the author for conferences of the Association for the Advancement of Christian Scholarship, an international organization whose purpose is to see the Word of God have an impact on higher education and on learning in all areas of life. The topics include a definition of the question of insight, authority, and power, followed by a description of the possession of these attributes by Christ. The nature of insight, authority, and power are then considered in relation to the community of believers and with respect to the church, the home, and the school.

When Jesus taught, he did not flaunt his academic credentials before his listeners, for he had none. He did not boast of his membership in various prestigious organizations, for he was member of none. Outwardly, he was a simple carpenter, the son of a carpenter. And yet when he spoke, "The crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes." (Matthew 7:28-29). Luke tells us on another occasion, "They were astonished at his teaching, for his word was with authority". (Luke 4:32). The authority that Jesus had was obvious, it was easily recognizable, and it seemingly bore little relationship to the type of authority claimed by the religious leaders of his time. Jesus is the model for the thesis of Dr. Schouls: "To the extent that a person gains or possesses insight, to that extent he obtains or possesses authority. And to the extent that a man possesses authority, he ought to be given the opportunity to act out this authority. Acted-out authority is power." (p. 12).

Many New Testament passages indicate the great

#### Advertisement

### THE EXODUS PROBLEM AND ITS RAMIFICATIONS

Donovan A. Courville, Ph. D.

This two-volume work is the only attempt to date to demonstrate that it is possible to approach a near-total agreement of the *facts* of archaeology with Scripture as far back as the Genesis account of the Dispersion. The author acknowledges that this accomplishment alone is an inadequate basis for recognition of his proposed, but necessary modification of ancient chronology. He rests his case on the fact that, at the same time, numerous other problems of archaeology are provided simultaneous solutions.

These volumes are available through *Crest Challenge Books*, Box 993, Loma Linda, Ca. 92354, price, \$9.95 per set postpaid, tax extra where applicable, and should be of peculiar interest to readers on either side of the debate between Scripture and Science in its various disciplines.

#### Advertisement

insight, knowledge, or understanding (the author uses the three words interchangeably) that Jesus had of the will of God, since Christ was doing what his Father had told him to do. Because Christ has full and complete insight, he has full and complete authority, and, thus, unlimited power. On the other hand, the rest of us possess authority only to the extent that we possess an understanding of God's will for us and demonstrate it in our lives. An individual who assumes power without the possession of the requisite knowledge serves only himself and is a hindrance to others who are truly striving to serve the Lord. Applications of this simple, yet powerful, concept are discussed in the last four chapters.

Dr. Schouls has written a short, but extremely useful book on the proper source of authority and power: the knowledge of God's will for man and man's obedience to that will. Many abuses of ecclesiastical power and tyranny in the name of Jesus Christ would not have stained the pages of religious history had this Biblical principle been understood and followed by those who claimed (and claim today) to be serving the Lord.

*Reviewed by Donald F. Calbreath, Director of Clinical Chemistry, Watts Hospital, Durham, North Carolina 27705*

**REVOLUTION IN ROME** by David F. Wells, foreword by John R. W. Stott, Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1972, 149 pp., bibliography, index, \$4.95

Who speaks for Rome today? David Wells has attempted to give an outline of recent trends in Catholic theology, especially in the light of the documents of Vatican II, 1962-1965. The result is not an easy book (most readers, like myself, are probably unfamiliar with theologians like Hans Küng, or Edward Schillebeeckx) but it is a very important one: the outcome of the current revolution in Rome will have a tremendous effect on us all.

Wells has effectively chosen to divide his subject into appropriately Catholic, rather than Protestant, headings. Thus, the chapters deal respectively with the problems of change, unity, and authority, the sacred vs. the secular worlds, ecumenism, and the definition of the Church. An appendix treats the "unresolved problem" of Mary. All this he has had to compress into a little over a hundred pages of actual text, yet the book is extensively annotated, including references to the latest works of the early '70's. There is also a seven page critical bibliography and a useful index.

It would be futile to attempt a summary of so compact a work. It may, however, be worthwhile to note some of the topics that are *not* covered. Wells has strictly adhered to the particular theological scope he has chosen for himself. There is no discussion of the new pentecostalism or of the "extraordinary developments" that are taking place in the Mass and liturgy, although he well realizes their significance. In this regard the author's lengthy preface should be read carefully for a proper understanding of the purposes and limitations of what follows. Dealing with a particular set of theological issues, Wells provides a clear description of the crisis in Catholic religious thought—the current liberal, traditional, and radical views, and the compromises of Vatican II.

A final comment is deserved by the publisher. As usual, IVP has done an admirable job. The book is well bound between heavy covers, moderately priced, and printed on recycled paper. The layout is attractive, although I did note a missing footnote number on p. 57, and the misplaced page number "75", but this in no way detracts from the fine quality of the work.

As John Stott concludes in his preface, "I believe that a careful perusal of this excellent book will lead many into new and more perceptive modes of dialog and witness. I pray that it may be so."

*Reviewed by Charles D. Kay, History of Science, The Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland.*

**ROCK STRATA AND THE BIBLE RECORD** by Paul A. Zimmerman, Editor, Saint Louis, Concordia Publishing House, 1970, 209 pp.

This short book, edited by Dr. Zimmerman, is a collection of articles "written as a summary of the committee's discussion and of the information dealing with the topics assigned to the Rock Symposium", a project funded by the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The book is divided into five sections.

The first section, entitled "Theological and Scientific Guideposts", contains three chapters dealing with the theological position of the Lutheran Church and the assumptions of science as they pertain to paleontology and historical geology. One's opinion of the theological section will depend upon one's religious beliefs. However, the section on the assumptions in science is well written.

Section II, "Time in Scripture and Geology", is a concise statement of the problems encountered in trying to reconcile Ussher's chronology with the "scientific" age of the earth. Some of the problems inherent in the scientific methods of dating are discussed.

The next section, one chapter long, deals with "The Biblical Account of Creation". The author, Dr. Fred Kramer, compares various translations and interpretations of the Biblical accounts but never comes to any conclusion except that by "its very nature and purpose the Bible leaves many scientific questions regarding the Creation unanswered."

The fourth section, entitled "The Geological Record", deals mainly with the "primate fossil record." Although this section is interesting, one tends to get bogged down in the scientific names and dental classifications.

The last section concerns Noah's flood and its implications. Much attention is given to the question of the extent of flood. It is concluded that "it would therefore seem best to allow Noah's flood to be a concern of theologians".

In summary, the book is short, readable and understandably presents both the pros and cons on each issue touched, but generally lacks any real conclusions.

The main points that are carried through the book are 1) all the information pertinent to our salvation is presented clearly; 2) our understanding of science and the Bible are incomplete—thus we must expect apparent conflict; and 3) we should keep searching for the ultimate truth and be willing to accept new facts as they are presented.

*Reviewed by Floyd L. Wilcox, Sr., Associate Professor of Science, Central Wesleyan College, Central, South Carolina.*



## Relevance of Astrophysical Calculations

In the article "The Astrophysics of Worlds in Collision" by Robert C. Newman (*Journal ASA* 25, 146 (1973)). Newman rejects random-capture and collision views of orbital mechanics because of the small probability of the observed orbits having resulted with such models. He uses the same reasoning again later in this paper. I am not questioning his probability calculations, but I am questioning their relevance.

Newman calculates the probability of the observed orbits from the perspective of one considering the probability of various configurations of the universe before the formation of the universe. All such probabilities would presumably be small when calculated from models conceived by man, not just the one calculated initially by Newman. However, there is now no uncertainty about the type of planetary orbits and it would be more meaningful to calculate the conditional probabilities that various theories are correct given that the observed pattern exists. Another way of expressing this is that it would be more appropriate to compare probabilities like those Newman has calculated for models of interest than to base judgments on the magnitudes of individual probabilities.

I would like to emphasize that this criticism of Newman's rationale does not mean that his conclusions are necessarily wrong. Also, similar comments on the interpretation of probabilities of circumstantial evidence in a criminal-trial setting which are interesting and may be helpful in understanding my comments are contained in the article "The Bayesian outlook and its applications (with discussion)" by Jerome Cornfield in *Biometrics* 25 (1969), 622-3.

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## Catastrophism as God's Direct Action

It is with great interest that I read the various views the writers expressed in *Journal ASA*, December, 1973, on Velikovsky's planetary-induced catastrophes. While I admire the efforts of some of the writers to explain naturalistically the global catastrophes which have occurred, it appears that the writers have neglected one point: the specific role of God Himself. One can hold to the general position that He knew of everything and thus oversaw the entire process of Venus creation and the passes of Mars. This would be the most extreme position of Divine noninvolvement, but God still was there! One can further say with respect to Dr. Newman's probability calculations that the most improbable events actually did with God's help occur. Finally, the whole scheme of worlds in collision could be drastically modified or scrapped. As Newman concluded that efforts to understand such "spectacular physical phenomena" should be continued, I concur but suggest that investigators keep in mind the seemingly naive possibility that God stopped the earth right then, without applying any physical laws on the mechanisms of such a phenomenon (i.e., a "miracle"). Did

not He himself create these laws under which this universe operates? Why must there be an opposing force on the earth if God Himself decided to "stop" it? In addition, it appears that God's role should be conceived as being a more personal one. He reacts specifically to a particular need or prayer of His children. Thus, the latter two possibilities of God's involvement listed above seem more feasible. The reader is encouraged to further examine and consider other possibilities and facets of God's role.

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## The Abstract

There exists a marvelous abstract painting by the painter Adolphus Ealey. The painting is composed of seven or eight large solid fields of color, each of which is pure and bright, imbedded in a heavy black matrix. On first glance, the fields seem to have no particular relation, one to the other, but they make a pleasing combination to the eye. Gradually, however, as you study the picture, the fields begin to relate to each other. They seem to make a pattern of some kind. Suddenly your vision clears, and there hangs a picture of the crucified Christ, complete with bloodied head and side. It is as if you suddenly recognized an old friend, so altered that he was not known at first. You can study the picture for long periods, marveling at the intricate relationships between the fields of color and the total picture.

The relationship of science to Christianity is of the same type. Scientists are busy investigating many different aspects of the universe and each scientific discipline has determined a section of the whole for itself to study. As each field develops, it is able to deepen its understanding, to describe more and more exactly the phenomena within its scope. The color of that particular science turns deep and rich, and some of those devoted to its claim that the whole picture is of that hue. Those devoted to other sciences see other colors and have different perceptions of the whole. But all of the fields blend to make up a reality that is God's handiwork. If we but push far enough, and synthesize well enough, we will eventually come to God. His shape will emerge from the fields. For He is the Creator of the universe and it must show His power and mind. Thus, the Christian has ultimately nothing to fear from science. When completed, it will not lead him into nothingness or into terror, but into the hands of a loving Father.

Treat, therefore, the discoveries of science as the signs of God's hands. Rejoice in the beauty and harmony of His creation as it is unfolded. Be glad especially that you know enough of God's will to live it now and do not have to wait the unknown period of time that will be necessary for science to put together a reasonable facsimile of the whole.

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## Opinion Poll Questionnaire on Medical Ethics in Genetic Therapy and Engineering

Rate your answers to the following questions by number: 4 = always or most definitely, 3 = usually, 2 = occasionally, 1 = rarely, 0 = never.

1. Should we continue present medical practice and extend help to everyone who desires it, regardless of the pollution of the human gene pool and resulting decrease in the quality of physical human life? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Should man attempt to control his own evolution, consciously and scientifically, instead of involuntarily by pressures from social mores, wars, etc. \_\_\_\_\_  
In order to counteract the deterioration of our genetic heritage and correct present defects:
  - a. Should we pursue the development of eliminative eugenics
    3. by altering psychic or mental defects, such as violent or criminal behavior, with the use of drugs or brain surgery? \_\_\_\_\_
    4. by eliminating physical defects with organ transplants, artificial organs, or organs clonically grown from the same individual? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. 5. Should we use genetic manipulation or therapy with viral agents, thoroughly tested and approved for use in humans, to supply missing or correct defective genes? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Should we avoid future defects by promoting genetic counselling of parents and prospective parents, advising them of the risks (based on amniocentesis and biochemical tests for genetic disorders) of genetic disease or defects in their potential children and allowing them to decide for or against abortion of their fetuses? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Would you seek or believe in a legal abortion if there were 1 chance in 2 that your baby would be seriously abnormal? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Should a convicted criminal having chromosome abnormalities linked with aggressive and anti-social behavior be subject to the same degree of capital punishment as one without such chromosome abnormalities? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Shall we legislate to eliminate defective genes by prohibiting their carriers to propagate? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Should we regard termination of pregnancies in the severely mentally retarded or in women carrying fetuses having fatal and costly genetic diseases as moral, as well as legal? \_\_\_\_\_
11. Do you feel that a doctor should have the right to refuse to perform a legal abortion under any circumstances and regardless of the situation and needs of the patient? \_\_\_\_\_
12. When should a fertilized egg have its rights to life as a human being?  
at the moment of conception \_\_\_\_\_ at three-month gestation \_\_\_\_\_ at 4½ months when life is detectable \_\_\_\_\_ when life outside the uterine environment is possible (after 6½ months) \_\_\_\_\_
13. Should we allow the use of egg and sperm banks for artificial insemination with selection of characteristics of donors for potential children (genetic euphenics)? \_\_\_\_\_
14. Is adultery committed in artificial insemination of the egg of a wife with sperm from a nameless donor under the consent of the husband? \_\_\_\_\_
15. Should artificial insemination be allowed in unmarried women who want to have children? \_\_\_\_\_
16. Is it ethical to choose the desired sex or characteristics for a child from 3 or more fertilized eggs and then implant that chosen one in the wife's uterus while destroying the others? \_\_\_\_\_
17. Is it moral for an unmarried woman to be implanted with the fertilized egg of a married couple unable to bear children and then carry their fetus to term, bearing this child for the married couple's family? \_\_\_\_\_
18. Is it ethical to develop human life outside of the uterine environment (test tube babies)? \_\_\_\_\_
19. What is your marital status? single \_\_\_\_\_ married \_\_\_\_\_ separated \_\_\_\_\_ divorced \_\_\_\_\_ widowed \_\_\_\_\_ engaged \_\_\_\_\_
20. How many children do you have, including adopted? none \_\_\_\_\_ one \_\_\_\_\_ two \_\_\_\_\_ three or more \_\_\_\_\_
21. What is your age? 18-29 \_\_\_\_\_ 30 to 49 \_\_\_\_\_ 50 or over \_\_\_\_\_

*No personal identification need be given. This questionnaire is for polling purposes only to gain an idea of how readers feel about the ethics and legalities of genetic therapy and engineering. Thank you for your honest opinions and cooperation.*

*Please send your answers to Jerry Albert, 5202 Cobb Place, San Diego, California 92117*

*Feel free to send either this page, a reproduction of this page, or simply the question numbers and your answers. A reasonably representative response will result in publication of the results in a future issue of the Journal ASA.*

Founded in 1941 out of a concern for the relationship between science and Christian faith, the **American Scientific Affiliation** is an association of men and women who have made a personal commitment of themselves and their lives to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and who have made a personal commitment of themselves and their lives to a scientific description of the world. The purpose of the Affiliation is to explore any and every area relating Christian faith and science. The *Journal ASA* is one of the means by which the results of such exploration are made known for the benefit and criticism of the Christian community and of the scientific community.

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Associate Membership is open to anyone with an active interest in the purpose of the ASA. Members hold a degree from a university or college in one of the natural or social sciences, and are currently engaged in scientific work. Fellows have a doctoral degree in one of the natural or social sciences, are currently engaged in scientific work, and are elected by the membership. Dues: Associate \$9.00, Member \$13.00, and Fellow \$16.00 per year. A member in any of these three categories can take the *special student rate* of \$4.00 per year as long as he is a full time student.

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