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THE GOSPEL MAGAZINE

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"JESUS CHRIST, THE SAME YESTERDAY, AND TODAY, AND FOR EVER."
"ENDEAVOURING TO KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT IN THE BOND
OF PEACE."

"COMFORT YE, COMFORT YE MY PEOPLE, SAITH YOUR GOD."

New Series
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No. 2432

The Editor—'the Trinitarian' —and Spurgeon

In a recent issue of the magazine of the Trinitarian Bible Society the editor of the *Gospel Magazine* came under attack because of the sermon which appeared in the August 1971 issue—the text of which was 1 John 3 : 1. The critical article was introduced thus:

'In the August 1971 issue of the *Gospel Magazine* the editor, the Rev. H. Carson, explains his preference for the American Revised Standard Version rendering on the ground that it includes the words "and so we are", and that these are "in the original", but are omitted by the Authorised Version. Before adding the interpolated words to their Bibles, readers should consider well whether it is possible that the editor of the *Gospel Magazine* and the editors of the R.S.V. may be mistaken, and it should be remembered that neither he nor they have "the original" in their possession.

'Advocates of the R.S.V. and other modern versions often insist that the discovery of many ancient manuscripts since 1611 has put modern scholars in a position to compile a more accurate edition of the Greek text than the translators of the A.V. could produce with the limited material at their disposal. It needs to be made clear that much of the evidence discovered since 1611 confirms the reliability of the A.V., and that modern scholars have attached far too much weight to the discordant testimony of a comparatively small number of documents which support the omissions and other variations with which users of the modern versions have unfortunately become so familiar.'

The argument of the article which followed was basically the contention that the Greek text which lies behind the A.V., the so-called Textus Receptus, is superior to the one which lies behind the Revised Version and the Revised Standard

Version. Your editor's misdemeanour was that he quoted the text as it appears in the R.S.V.—and also in the R.V.

Now our readers are not experts in textual criticism and I fear that some are being troubled by the arguments that are produced so authoritatively. To say as the article does that neither the editor of the *Gospel Magazine* nor the R.S.V. translators have 'the original' manuscripts is to say the obvious—but then the Trinitarian Bible Society does not possess them either! It might be well, therefore, to notice that very many conservative scholars from the great B. B. Warfield to Professor E. J. Young today would not accept the rejection of the Greek text behind the R.V.

But for defence let us turn to another proved friend. Spurgeon also preached on 1 John 3 : 1. He also accepted the position followed by the Editor of the *Gospel Magazine*. His sermon you may read in Volume 32 Sermon 1934 recently published by the Banner of Truth. We reprint the first section of it as possibly the best comment on the T.B.S. article. The title of the sermon is particularly apt!! It was headed:

'AND WE ARE'

A Jewel from the Revised Version

Dear friends, the most of my text will be found in our old version; but for once I shall ask you to look elsewhere for a part of it.

A genuine fragment of inspired Scripture has been dropped by our older translators, and it is too precious to be lost. Did not our Lord say, 'Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost?' The half lost portion of our text is restored to us in the Revised Version. Never did a translation of the New Testament fail more completely than this Revised Version has done as a book for general reading; but as an assistant to the student it deserves honourable mention, despite its faults. It exhibits here and there special beauties, and has, no doubt, in certain places brought into notice words of sacred Scripture which had fallen out: we have a notable instance in my present text. Turn to the First Epistle of John, the third chapter, at the first verse:—

'Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.'

So far we keep to our Authorised Version. Now read the Revised Version and note the words added—

'Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God: and such we are.'

The word '*such*' is not in the original. We therefore leave it out, and then we get the words—AND WE ARE. There are only two words in the Greek—'and we are'. That the addition is correct I have not the slightest doubt. Those authorities upon which we depend—those manuscripts which are best worthy of notice—have these words; and they are to be found in the Vulgate, the Alexandrian, and several other versions. They ought never to have dropped out. In the judgment of the most learned, and those best to be relied on, these are veritable words of inspiration. So far as doctrine is concerned, it does not matter much whether they are or are not in the original text, because we get the same words farther on. 'Beloved, *now are we children of God*, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is.'

The point that struck me as being most worthy of notice was that when the Apostle has said, 'We shall be called children of God', he then adds—We are not only to be called so, but *we are* so. The glory of it is that we now have this thing. We have it in possession: '*and we are*'. This little interjected assertion, 'and we are', brings most forcibly before my own mind the truth of our present sonship towards God—'*That we should be called children of God: and we are*'.

THE RADICAL ATTACK—*continued from page 106*

To discuss the many issues raised by the radical attack on the Universities would take too long. Let us single out for attention the criticism that a training in logic, philosophy, Greek, Hebrew and other ancient subjects was not suitable for the preparation of the minister of the Gospel. It was sufficient, said the radicals, that a preacher know his Bible and have the unction of the Spirit. First, let it be admitted that there is truth on both sides of the controversy. On the one hand, there are many examples in Church History of men and women who, with no wordly learning, have been greatly used by God in the work of extending His kingdom. Yet, at the same time, not a few of the modern sects/cults (e.g. Mormonism and Seventh-Day Adventism) arose in the minds of unlearned men and women. On the other hand, it is right that a minister of a congregation be at least as well educated as members of his congregation. Yet, again, too much book-learning may make him a hopeless pastor and preacher. Obviously the Church needs to use all her resources; her leaders should if possible be 'godly and learned' men in order to be able to distinguish truth from error and defend the truth.

The Radical Attack on the Universities in 1653*

By PETER TOON

Being an important part of society, Universities reflect and mirror in their affairs some of the problems, tensions, and conflicts of society. Few would disagree with this assertion and few would also doubt that in some periods (e.g. the 1960s) the problems are more acute. The kind of things I have in mind are pressures by government, public opinion, or vociferous groups, for changes in the system—e.g. that more places be provided for the children of the working classes (or of minority groups) or that courses be changed to make them seemingly more interesting, relevant, and useful. In response to such pressures the University may make radical changes or, more probably, may make minor changes. But if there is any suggestion that the nature of the University itself is to be changed then academic conservatism rears its head and prepares to defend the *status quo* to the bitter end. Happily English Universities experienced few major upheavals before the educational revolution of this century; but in the days of Oliver Cromwell, Oxford and Cambridge felt that their very existence was in jeopardy; the academics were prepared to defend their institutions to the bitter end. The purpose of this paper is to set that academic upheaval in context and to draw out a few considerations for further thought.

By 1647, after being the royalist centre in the civil war, Oxford, now firmly in the hands of Parliament's forces, was beginning to settle down to the business of educating young men. Puritan preachers, who had been sent down from the Westminster Assembly of Divines in London, sought to cast out false doctrine through their orthodox sermons, and a Board of Visitors went from College to College expelling the defiant, the ignorant and the immoral, Oxford was to be a centre for the training of "godly and learned" men. Tutors were imported from Cambridge University, which had remained in the hands of Parliament in the war. The sons of those who had opposed the King or been neutral in the

* The essence of a talk given at Concordia Lutheran College, Illinois, U.S.A., on December 3rd, 1971, by Peter Toon, B.D., M.Th., Th.D., Ph.D.

national conflict began to arrive as students. Between 1647 and 1660 there was probably an average of about 2,500 men and boys living and working in the Colleges and Halls of the University. Of these a good number would have been servants and tutors but at least 1,500 would have been reading for the B.A. or M.A. degrees.

In 1652-3 and yet again, though less severely, in 1659, the relative peace of Oxford life was disturbed by the excitement produced by fears and rumours that the University was to be closed down or radically restructured. There was even talk of destroying the Bodleian Library, one of the greatest libraries in the world. Before we can appreciate the nature and content of this attack we need briefly to answer two basic questions. First, what kind of boys were sent to Oxford during the thirteen years of Puritan (Presbyterian and Independent) domination? And secondly, what type of study, what kind of curriculum, did the undergraduates follow? Against the background provided by the answers to these questions, the left-wing attack on Oxford and Cambridge Universities will begin to appear reasonable and perhaps justified.

(a) **The Students**

From grammar schools, or after receiving private tuition from tutors at home, boys aged between 14 and 18 years entered an Oxford Hall or College. In the main, these young men were the sons of clergy, gentry, merchants and peers. Some of the sons of the clergy were given free places by Colleges (finance had been set aside by their statutes for this provision): others performed menial tasks to cover the cost of their board, lodging and fees. Yet other boys were awarded what we today would call scholarships which helped to cover their fees (e.g. a certain number were elected each year from Westminster School to Christ Church, Oxford, and Trinity College, Cambridge). Those with the necessary means paid all their own fees and even brought a servant with them! Naturally the sons of those men who had gained promotion in the social class-structure of England (e.g. successful soldiers and merchants who had bought church lands cheaply) during the revolution were to be found in increasing numbers occupying places at Oxford. Nevertheless there were no representatives from the lower order of societies; the sons of yeomen, artisans, shopkeepers, tradesmen and labourers were not particularly welcome. The revolution had not gone that far!

Those young men who did actually get to Oxford were there for one of several reasons. Some of them were intended for

the Church; they were to be clergymen. Puritans, just as much an Anglicans, believed that the parson should be well-educated in the Arts as well as in Divinity. Some were intended for the legal profession but wanted first to acquire a basic education before going on to the Inns of Court in London. Some were deliberately sent by their fathers in order to acquire the veneer and manners of a gentleman in order to live up to their recently-acquired social position. Very probably included in the intention of many fathers (and mothers for that matter!) was the desire that their boys would benefit from puritan discipline and godliness. John Owen, Vice-Chancellor from 1652-57, certainly saw the promotion of godliness as of primary importance. 'One main end of the University,' he said on November 1653, 'is to traine up men as well in divine as human learning that they may be able (when the providence of God shall call them) to publish the Gospel of Christ to the conversion and building up of souls to eternal life.' And in one of his annual orations to the University he complained of the poor training many of the boys had received at their grammar schools and how much additional character-building parents expected the Oxford tutors to achieve.

What happened to the average young man when he arrived at Oxford is perhaps illustrated by the case of John Locke, who became a famous philosopher. His father was a lawyer who owned some property in Somerset and who served in the parliamentary armies in the civil war as a captain of horse. John went first to Westminster School in London and from there was elected to a studentship at Christ Church, Oxford. On arriving at the College his first duty was to have his name entered in the Buttery-Book (to give him the right to eat!). Then he proceeded to pay the young men whose rooms he was taking over various payments for goods received. Thirteen shillings for a bed, fifteen shillings and sixpence for two tables and four pounds ten shilling and sixpence for curtains, chairs and other fittings. Other payments he made during his first few weeks in College are of interest.

	£	s.	d.
Pair of shoes	4	0	
Three maps	3	0	
Compounds for headache			3
Perfume for clothing			5
Antidote against infection of small-pox	1	0	
Tutors fees for quarter year	1	0	0

The sum total of these initial expenses is probably more than a labourer would earn in a whole year!

(b) The Undergraduate Course

John Locke enjoyed the friendship of his fellow students but in his letters to people outside Oxford he did express misgivings about the nature of undergraduate studies. The content of the latter was controlled from 1636 by the Laudian Statutes; although some of these statutes were laid aside between 1647-1660, those statutes which related to the nature of the curriculum and syllabus were not significantly changed. The compulsory course in Liberal Arts included the study of grammar and rhetoric in the first year, logic and moral philosophy in the second, geometry and Greek with more philosophy in the third and fourth. The instruction was in Latin or Greek and there were compulsory lectures both in the Colleges and in the Schools of the Universities. No formal written examinations were taken but this did not mean the young men were not to show their knowledge and skills. Central to the whole educational system were the disputations or formal, organised debates. A controversial point from logic or philosophy was put into the form of a question and then the debate proceeded in three stages. A participant, called the respondent, offered an answer or interpretation of the question. Next several opponents stated contradictory propositions and attacked flaws in the respondent's argumentation. Finally the moderator who presided over the proceedings, summed up the arguments on each side, called attention to matters that had been overlooked and then bestowed praise or blame as due and gave his decision. Normally the debates were in Latin. To gain the degree of Bachelor of Arts the student had to study for sixteen terms (four terms a year), attend the prescribed lectures and participate in a stipulated number of disputations.

Bachelorship did not really signify the completion of a course of study but rather the necessary status which qualified the student to go on to the Master's degree which was a degree in the true sense of the word. For this degree there were further lectures in geometry, astronomy, natural and moral philosophy, metaphysics, history, Arabic and Hebrew. So we see that the curriculum was not significantly different from what it was a century earlier. It gave young men a competence in Latin, and an introduction to what were then known as the Liberal Arts, that is the best of ancient learning, with Aristotle taking primary place. The existence of the famous scientific society at Wadham College in the 1650s (this later became the Royal Society when adopted by Charles II) has been used by some historians to argue that experimental

science of a "primitive" kind was part of the study for B.A. or M.A. In fact the evidence just does not support this interesting theory. Note-books of students at Wadham College in this period show that their lectures, tutorials, disputations and reading were firmly embedded in classical learning. The Wadham group of scientists regarded their enquiries as belonging rightfully to the pursuits of those who had successfully passed through the Liberal Arts course.

(c) **The attacks of the radicals**

The civil war provided an opportunity for the release of many pent-up feelings, ideas and grievances amongst the lower classes of society, and, as we shall see, some of these posed a serious challenge to Oxford and Cambridge. In the atmosphere of toleration in the ranks of the New Model Army during the war, and in the aftermath of the execution of Charles I and the rise to power of Oliver Cromwell, radical views, which horrified the middle and upper classes, gained a wide audience. These views if implemented would have virtually turned society upside down; the legal system would have been changed: the State Church would have been abolished; voting rights would have been greatly extended; and the ancient Universities would have been closed or remodelled.

Reform of the Universities was not a new topic. It had been proposed by the Elizabethan separatists—Henry Barrow, Robert Browne, John Greenwood and others; but they were too powerless to do anything about their ideas. In 1648-9, however, the political situation was such that following the removal of the House of Lords and the execution of Charles I, anything could have happened. Certainly from two highly vociferous groups came calls for the reform of Oxford and Cambridge. The Levellers enjoyed much support in the New Model Army and amongst the artisans and apprentices of London; the Diggers represented the depth of feeling amongst the lower orders of London's society. William Walwyn, the Leveller, attacked the Universities for holding on to the study of Hebrew, Greek and Latin at a time when the Bible was readily available in English. For him the arguments for a 'learned ministry' were in essence little more than 'the learned . . . defending their copyhold'. The Digger leader, Gerrard Winstanley, was even more forthright. For him the Universities were 'the standing ponds of stinking waters, that make those trees grow, the course of ignorance, confusion and bondage spreads from hence all the nations over'. By bondage he meant that the right to teach had been taken from ordinary people—'lay people, tradesmen and such as are not bred in

schools'. What he wanted to see was more emphasis on practical education—in agriculture, mining, carpentry, etc. Within the Leveller and Digger complaints are two basic strands of protest. First, much of the education provided at Oxford and Cambridge was irrelevant, and secondly, ordinary people were deprived of the right of a useful education. These groups were, however, effectively squashed by the might of Cromwell and so their protests came to nothing.

But their cries were re-echoed by other groups who came on the scene in the early 1650s—especially the Quakers and the Fifth Monarchy men. After the closing of the Long Parliament in 1653 by Cromwell and his decision to call an Assembly of Saints (known to history as Barebone's Parliament), the radical religious groups saw their chance. Indeed they believed it was God-given. So there was a growing crescendo of sectarian demands between April and December 1653. A powerful call came for the abolition of the tithe system (which poor people hated), for the removal of any form of State Church and compulsory attendance at parish churches, for complete religious toleration, for universal education fitted to the needs of all types and conditions of men and for a general submission to the rule of Christ, whose Second Advent was imminent. And the Barebone's Parliament came dangerously near to the point of ordering the abolition of tithes and the complete remodelling of the Universities. The academics at the ancient Universities waited with worried hearts and faces for the latest news from London during the autumn and listened with bated breath to the outbursts of the sectarian preachers who appeared in their own towns. These preachers compared the Colleges and Hall, not with 'the schools of the prophets' of ancient Israel (as the academics would have wished) but rather with the idolatrous high-places dedicated to Baal in ancient Canaan—against which the prophets of Israel had protested. They criticised the reliance on Aristotle instead of on the men of Holy Scripture; they cried out that the academic robes and such degrees as B.D. and D.D. were relics of popery, a system condemned by God; they argued that the only equipment a minister of the Gospel needs is a knowledge of the Bible and the gift of the Holy Spirit; and they called for the broadening of the curriculum to include new subjects and the extension of the student body to include people from the lower classes.

Strangely, the case for the radicals was argued publicly and cogently by one who was himself the head of a Cambridge College! This was William Dell, Master of Caius College,

Cambridge, from 1649. (How he managed to reconcile his sectarian views with the holding of a position in the establishment we cannot here examine.) He was certainly opposed to the basic presuppositions of Cambridge (and Oxford) education. 'Human learning,' he argued, 'mingled with Divinity (i.e. the Scriptures) or the Gospel of Christ understood according to Aristotle hath begun, continued and perfected the mystery of iniquity in the outward Church.' To be a minister one did not need to know anything but the Bible. Dell's criticisms were not entirely negative. He wanted schools to be founded in all cities, towns and large villages which offered a wide range of subjects related to the needs of the area; he deprecated the monopoly of higher education by the two ancient Universities.

From another former army chaplain, who had studied as a youth at Cambridge, came a further, widely-read attack on traditional education. He was John Webster and he dedicated his *Academiarum Examen* to Major General Lambert, a fellow Yorkshireman. Like Dell he felt too much time was spent on Aristotle's works and too little on the Bible. Furthermore he wanted a liberalisation of the curriculum and to see more emphasis placed on mathematics and practical disciplines associated with it, and more emphasis on a practical medical education which included such activities as dissection.

Webster and Dell proved easy preys for the dialectical skill of both Cambridge and Oxford scholars, but on the matter of the nature of the curriculum and the needs of the country, the traditional academics had little to say. Indeed they were so completely committed to the basic Aristotelian-dominated Liberal Arts programme, that they could only look upon the criticism of the radicals as inspired by Satan. Looking back now we can see that what really gave fears to the Oxford and Cambridge academics was a social revolution. Against this the teaching profession (which is ever conservative!) reacted. The portion of the message of the critics that made good sense was rejected because to accept any part was to give way to changes in the very fabric of society. It was not egalitarianism versus comprehensivisation but rather traditional society affirming its rights and privileges. This is made clear in the comments of the Oxford Vice-Chancellor in his Orations in 1654 and 1657 to the University.* *Continued on page 99*

* These are translated in *The Oxford Orations of Dr. John Owen*, ed. P. Toon, and available from Gospel Communication, Linkinhorne House, Linkinhorne, Callington, Cornwall, for 40p.

A Prophecy Fulfilled

H. M. CARSON

*A sermon preached on Sunday morning,
25th January, 1970, in Hamilton Road
Baptist Church, Bangor, Co. Down.*

‘This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.’
(Acts 2 : 16).

Last Sunday morning we were looking together at the account of the great outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. We noted the supernatural accompaniments and emphasised the fact that they were supernatural—the wind from heaven which filled the house where they were sitting, the cloven tongues of fire appearing on their heads and the speaking with other tongues; and it is important I believe to emphasise that these three signs stand together so that we cannot say that only one of these signs is an essential accompaniment of being filled with the Spirit. In Acts 4 for example there was a supernatural accompaniment of the coming of the Spirit—the house where they were assembled was shaken. It was a sign very much akin to the mighty rushing wind which appears here in Acts 2, but in Acts 4 the other signs were not present. On the other hand, later in the Acts, Cornelius and those with him, when they are filled with the Holy Spirit, speak with other tongues, so that this particular sign accompanies their turning to the Lord and their being filled with the Spirit. But then there are quite a number of occasions in Acts when the coming of the Spirit is accompanied neither by a mighty wind nor by cloven tongues nor by speaking with tongues. In other words, we cannot say that one or other of these supernatural signs must accompany the fulness of the Spirit and without one of these signs you cannot claim to have the fulness of the Spirit. If you argue along that line you will have to require not simply that you have one sign but that you have all three, because after all there is no distinction drawn in Acts 2 between the different signs; they were essentially supernatural demonstrations that a great thing was happening and the Holy Spirit was being poured forth. And if God chooses on this or that occasion again to demonstrate the

coming and power of His Spirit with a supernatural sign, well of course we accept this as being within God's sovereign purpose and control. But we must not dictate how God shall work and how the Spirit shall come.

Now Peter here is explaining the phenomena which have excited such interest and attention. There were those who were amazed because they heard these men speaking and praising God, and although they are pilgrims drawn from right across the Roman world, many of them hear in their own languages the wonderful works of God being declared. There were others—there are always the cynics—and they say that these men have had too much to drink, that is why they are so excited. So Peter stands up and explains. He appeals first to common sense. He says, 'These men are not drunk, it is too early in the day for them to be drunk; if it were late in the evening, well you might then produce this explanation'. 'No,' he says, 'there is no natural explanation for this. This great event which has just taken place is a fulfilment of the prophecy of Joel.'

Now what has just taken place? The Holy Spirit has been poured out! This is the public inauguration if you like of the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. He has made His promise, 'I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it'. And the church is established upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone. So Acts 2 is the public inauguration of the church. And this, says Peter, was declared beforehand in the prophecy of Joel. So Joel, the Old Testament prophet, was looking forward to the emergence of the church of Christ and to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit which would constitute the very life of the church of Christ. The prophet was speaking, of course, in the first instance to his own day and generation. There was a judgment of locusts upon the land and Joel speaks of deliverance from the judgment and then, he says, afterwards God will do something great, God will pour out His Spirit upon all flesh. So Peter, taking up the prophecy of Joel, says, This is what Joel prophesied, it is being fulfilled now. Joel declared centuries earlier the outpouring of the Holy Spirit—well, it has happened and the church is being set forth as the temple of the Holy Ghost. This is what Joel foresaw and what he declared. 'This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.'

Now Peter draws from the prophecy of Joel this fact that the last days have come. 'It shall come to pass in the last

days,' says God, 'I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh.' Well, the Spirit has just been poured out and this is the fulfilment of the prophecy. So Peter is saying, 'These are the last days'. The last days began with this great outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The last days began with the Day of Pentecost. The same truth comes in the beginning of the Epistle to the Hebrews, where the letter introduces the great fact of God's final speaking of His word through Christ; 'God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son'. These are the last days, these are the days for which all the other days were a preparation. The Old Testament period, the days of Israel, the days of the prophets, they were the preliminary days. The last days are the gospel age, the days of the Messiah, the days in which the Spirit is poured out, the days when the gospel is being declared to the far ends of the earth.

Now someone may quote 2 Timothy 3 : 1 and 2 Peter 3 : 3, and say, 'But surely in the New Testament the last days refer to the time immediately prior to the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, to His coming again'. 'In the last days perilous times will come, in the last days scoffers will arise.' And yet it seems quite clear that here Peter is saying that the gospel age is the last days, and you do not expect Peter to contradict in his epistle what he says here in his sermon in Acts. Well, what is the explanation? If someone has just done 'O Level' at school, the head of department or the master may issue a cautionary word reminding him that 'A Levels' are only two years away. He may well say, 'Now you are on the last stretch'. But just under two years later, when 'A Level' is very, very close, he may say especially to those who do not seem to be taking things as seriously as they ought to, 'You are on the last stretch now'. Now he is using the same phrase, but he is using it with a slightly different emphasis. There is a sense in which the whole two-year period is 'the last stretch'; but when it gets to Easter just before 'A Levels' it is 'the last stretch' in a much more intense sense because the examination is very near at hand. Well, I believe it is in a similar way that this phrase 'the last days' is used in the New Testament. There is a sense in which the last days embraces this whole period from the outpouring of the Spirit to the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ. The last days are the gospel age. But as you move to the end of the gospel age, as you come near to the end of all things in the consummation of the purposes of God, well, in a more intense sense you can speak of them as the last days; in

other words, the last days are building up towards their climax. So there is no contradiction between what Paul says writing to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3 : 1, or what Peter says in his epistle 2 Peter 3 : 3. They are both speaking about the final movement towards the goal of God's purposes.

Now Peter is speaking of what has begun, what has been inaugurated by this outpouring of the Spirit. He says, We are now in the last days, we are in the gospel age, and so he gives the characteristics of this gospel age. And the first characteristic is what they have just seen—the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The great characteristic of the age of the gospel is that the Holy Spirit is poured out upon the people of God. Now the Holy Spirit was present in the Old Testament, but you will remember how in the Old Testament He was present with individuals for a particular purpose. The Spirit came to bestow particular gifts in order that men might execute a particular task. You recall, for example, when the tabernacle was being built, Bezaleel, as recorded in the Book of Exodus, was filled with the Spirit. Now his ministry was a ministry of construction, he was responsible for much of the work of the tabernacle and God filled him with the Spirit for that particular purpose. Or again, the kings were filled with the Spirit for the particular ministry which they had; that is why the king in the Old Testament is referred to as the Lord's anointed. The Lord anointed him with the Spirit for a particular ministry. Or again, in the Old Testament the prophet was anointed; the Spirit came upon the prophet so that Isaiah could say, 'The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord hath anointed me'. In each case a man was filled with the Spirit to discharge a particular task.

Now the big difference, as Peter points out here, applying the prophecy of Joel, is that the Spirit is no longer upon this man or that man for this or that particular task, but now the Spirit is poured out upon all the people of God. 'I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh'; and so he looks in this direction and that, the young men and the old men, they see visions, they dream dreams, they prophesy; and not only that, but he moves even beyond the normal sphere where a Jew would be expecting the Spirit to be at work, and he speaks about the manservants and the maidservants, and the very humble and ordinary people, upon them too the Spirit will come. The great characteristic of the age of the gospel is that it is the age of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit no longer restricts His working in the sense that He only comes to this or that individual for this or that ministry. The Spirit is now poured out abundantly

upon all the people of God and it matters not what particular position a person may occupy in life, how important they may appear to be or how insignificant they may appear to be, each one now through this great outpouring of the Spirit is made partaker of the gifts and blessings of God.

This does not mean to say that every believer will exhibit in precisely the same way the gifts of the Spirit. If you read 1 Corinthians 12 and 1 Corinthians 14 you find how Paul works it out that the Spirit moving in sovereign power within the church imparts to different individuals different gifts, so that this person has one gift and that one has another. But it is no longer a coming to an isolated individual. It is a coming of the Spirit to the whole church, to the whole people of God, and the person who exercises his gift exercises it within this Spirit-filled fellowship. So no longer do you get the isolated prophet to whom the Spirit comes, but the whole church of Christ, the whole body becomes a prophetic body telling forth the glory of the Saviour. So one great characteristic of this gospel age is that it is the age in which the Spirit is poured out upon the whole church of Christ.

Secondly, this gospel age is a period of grace and mercy prior to the final day of judgment. So in this prophecy as Peter is applying it, the last days are days in which the gospel is being heralded to the far ends of the earth, but he is looking forward to that final day, the great and the terrible day of the Lord. So he takes up a theme which is familiar in Scripture, the theme of the heavens and the earth being convulsed by a great derangement of nature; God coming as He came at creation—then He came in creative power, now He will come in destructive power and the whole pattern of the created order will be shattered by the coming of the Lord. That is why we read Psalm 102 this morning. It speaks of God folding up the heavens and laying them to one side. The final day of judgment will be the day when the Creator will come in Sovereign and mighty power. Well, said Peter, the gospel age, these last days are the prelude to the great and terrible day of the Lord. There will be no further age. This is the age which reaches its culmination. The Old Testament was a prelude, it was a preliminary period, it was a preparatory period, it was looking forward to this age, the age of the gospel; and the age of the gospel is looking forward to the final climax when God shall tear up history lengthwise by the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

‘This gospel age,’ says Peter, ‘this age of the Spirit, is the

age in which this gospel shall be preached to the ends of the earth.' If the great characteristic from the point of view of the Spirit's working is that in the gospel age the Spirit is poured upon all flesh, so that all within the church know His presence and power, then the other side of this, the consequence of this is that a Spirit-filled church is called to discharge its responsibility to declare the gospel. So Peter continues to quote the prophecy of Joel. 'It shall come to pass that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.' We tend to take it for granted that the gospel is for the whole world. We assume it is so obvious that we hardly even give it a thought, but it was not obvious to Peter or to the others. They were Jews and it was extremely difficult for them to grasp this fact that the gospel was for everyone. Remember how difficult Peter was to find it later on to accept Cornelius and the others as Christians; they were Gentiles, he was a Jew. You remember how he needed a vision from heaven and God had to deal directly with him and speak plainly to him that the door was open now to the Gentiles, and it was only indeed when God attested the reality of Cornelius' experience by pouring the Spirit upon him, it was only then that Peter was convinced and said, 'Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptised which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?'. It was not something that came quite obviously to Peter or to any of them. They were Jews, and as Jews they believed that the purposes of God were for Israel and it was very, very difficult for them to accept the fact that the gospel was now for the whole world.

After all, they had been brought up on the Old Testament, and in the Old Testament the blessings of God were very much confined to one small nation in one restricted area of the earth. There were a few exceptions in the Old Testament. There was Ruth the Moabitess, there was Rahab from Jericho, there was Naaman, but they were very much the exceptions. They were linked to Israel in as far as they knew the blessing of God, but speaking generally, in the Old Testament God's blessing was confined to Israel. That does not mean to say that the Old Testament is oblivious of God's wider purposes—indeed, the prophets are often looking out beyond their present situation. Joel indeed is declaring that *whosoever* will call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved'.

There is the prophetic call in the Old Testament, 'Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth', there is the great vision of that day when 'the earth shall be filled with the

knowledge of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea'. The Old Testament was restricted in a sense, and yet prophetically it was outward looking. They were looking for the day when God would break the confines of Judaism, when God would move out beyond Israel and reach the Gentiles. But when it came to it, although Peter and the others knew their Old Testament, they were slow to grasp this wonderful truth. But you can sympathise, because after all they had lived with the Lord Jesus Christ right through His ministry, and they must have remembered how He deliberately restricted Himself. 'I am not sent,' He said, 'but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel'. He kept His journeyings within the borders of Israel. You remember how apparently reluctant He was to meet the need of the Syrophenician woman because she was outside the confines of Israel.

But now the great moment has come. The purposes of God, the merciful and redeeming purposes of God, have reached their fulfilment, the Spirit has been poured out upon the church, and now they must look beyond Jerusalem and Judaea and Galilee, they must look to the ends of the earth, because the Spirit has come in order to break the old restrictions, to shatter the confining restraints of Judaism and to reach out to the Gentile world. In fact the Lord Jesus Christ had given a clear indication of this, for although He confined Himself to Israel, He was looking forward to the day not very far distant when His people would go very far beyond Israel. Indeed, even when He was talking to Nicodemus, towards the beginning of His ministry, He was speaking in these terms. Nicodemus was a Jew and so he was thinking of a salvation for the Jews. But Jesus says, 'Nicodemus, God so loved *the world* that He gave His only begotten Son—not Jews only, but Gentiles—those who, judged by your standards, are completely outside—God so loved *the world* that He gave His only begotten Son'. And so prior to His ascension He gives the church its marching orders, those marching orders which still abide as the Lord's permanent commission to us, 'Go and make disciples of all the nations; go and preach the gospel to every creature'. 'You shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem'—yes, still to the Jews in Judaea, but beyond that to Samaria, and so 'unto the uttermost parts of the earth'. This is not a gospel that is to be geographically confined. This is not a gospel for one class or one people. This is a gospel for the whole world, and the outpouring of the Spirit is the public declaration of God that the restraints have been removed, that

the restrictions have gone and now they must look far beyond, for indeed the horizon is the utmost parts.

It shall come to pass that whosoever, whether Jew or Gentile, barbarian or outcast or slave, whoever he is, whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. The Name of the Lord—well, in the Old Testament that very phrase spoke of God as He revealed Himself. But this comes here with a new force because the Spirit has come and the purpose and ministry of the Spirit is to reveal the meaning of the name of the Lord. The Spirit comes to take the scales from men's eyes. The Spirit comes to put light into our darkened minds. The Spirit comes to give us understanding so that we begin to see the truth as it is revealed in the Word. The Spirit comes, in other words, to make known to men what is involved in the name of the Lord. And what is involved in it? Why, all the great truths which you find in the New Testament concerning the Lord Jesus Christ! Jesus Christ the Lord—it speaks of who He was prior to His coming into the world, the second Person of the Trinity, the eternal Son of the Father. It speaks of His coming in the miracle of the Incarnation by which He was born of the Virgin Mary, conceived by the Holy Spirit. It speaks of His perfect life, of the way in which He went about doing good and healing all manner of sickness. It speaks of the perfection of His righteousness, it speaks of the glory of His dying. This then was the Spirit's ministry—to reveal to men what really happened at Calvary. For the disciples, at the time, it had seemed to be tragedy, to those around it seemed to be utter failure, but the Spirit was to declare with power that the Cross, token as it was of the wickedness of men, was supremely a token of the redeeming power of God. The Spirit was going to reveal to men the true significance of Calvary, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. And He was going to reveal also that this name spoke not only of death but resurrection. He was not only Jesus the suffering Saviour who hung on the Cross at Golgotha, but He is Jesus Christ *the Lord*, the One whom the Father took from the grave, the One who emerged as the victor over death and hell, the One who was exalted at God's right hand, the reigning Saviour, the Almighty King—the Spirit is going to reveal all this.

Now as these men go out in their weakness, with all the inconsistencies which beset mortal men this side of heaven, they are going to go out, they are going to speak, and in their speaking the Holy Spirit is going to do this amazing thing, He

is going to use their weak and failing words to be the means of imparting truth, truth concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. So as they preach and as they call on men to repent and to believe, there will not simply be human persuasion, human eloquence, human argument, it will be the Holy Spirit taking human words, human witness and human personality and using them as His instruments to enlighten men and women concerning the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. And those who, enlightened by the Spirit, call upon the name of the Lord, will be saved. What a rich word it is. They will be delivered from the guilt of sin. Formerly they did not even consider the issue of sin or the matter of guilt, but when the Spirit comes He comes to convict a man of sin, of righteousness, of judgment. So that instead of a man considering Christianity as one possible option among the various religious solutions that are presented to him, he begins to realise it is the only answer to the cry of his heart, 'What must I do to be saved?' And as he sees his sin and his guilt before a holy God, well the gospel rings out with a new power. Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, he shall be saved, saved from guilt, saved from the accusations of his own conscience, a conscience which has been quickened by the power of the Spirit and accuses him now with an insistence which brooks no denial, no excuse and no evasion. But as he calls upon the name of the Lord conscience ceases to accuse, because now he is saved from guilt by Christ the Lord. He is saved from the fear of death, saved from the power of Satan, saved from the appalling consequences of sin, namely eternal death. This is the glory of the gospel, a gospel of salvation, of deliverance, of emancipation. And, says Peter, this is what Joel was talking about when he spoke about the pouring out of the Spirit, he was speaking about what God would do with men and women; the Spirit will come to convict, to open men's understanding, enabling them to see who Christ was and what He had done and what He is able to do, and to turn them from their sin to faith in the living Saviour.

These are the last days, this is the gospel age, this is the age in which the Spirit is present and operative, this is the age in which the word of the gospel is being declared across the world. But we must never become complacent, we must never assume that because this is the day of mercy that there is plenty of time to deal with the matter. It is put in the right context here. These are the last days which are moving towards the final day, the great and terrible day of the Lord.

It is the day of mercy which issues in the day of judgment. It is the day when the invitation of the gospel goes forth, but it is an invitation which is always in the context of a solemn warning. It is an invitation with which men dare not trifle because their response to that invitation will be recalled before them when they are summoned to the bar of God's judgment.

Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Let me ask you this morning, Have you called upon the name of the Lord? It is too easily assumed that because we meet on the morning of the Lord's Day that therefore everybody who thus meets has a real experience of salvation. Unconverted people can be in the morning service as much as the evening service—and I ask you therefore, Have you truly called upon the name of the Lord? Do you know this salvation? Do you know it, not simply as a kind of idea or concept, or even just as a word which is so often produced in a church service, but do you know salvation as a reality? Do you know Christ as a reality? Is Jesus Christ your own Saviour? Has He washed you in His precious blood, has He made you a new person? Do you know the meaning of peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ? I am not asking whether you hope, whether there is a possibility or a probability, I am asking if you can say with the apostle Paul, 'I know whom I have believed and I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day'. It may be that as I speak, down in someone's heart, very deep in the recesses of the soul, there is an uncertainty, a doubt. It may be that with all the background of knowledge of the gospel, with all the background of being in church regularly perhaps for years, with all the background of Bible knowledge, it may be that these things have never become intensely and personally real—it may be, to put it very simply, that you have not yet been saved, that you have not yet come to know this Christ. If so, these are the last days, this is the gospel age, and I bring you this morning this message as a word of invitation, a call from God that you should call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and so be saved. But I bring it not as an invitation only, not as a summons merely, but as a word couched in notes of warning, because in these last days we are looking forward to the impending and final day of the Lord when each one of us shall be compelled to give an account. And in that day there is only one name which shall be the answer to the accusing voice of the Judge, and that name is Jesus Christ the Lord.

The Christian in Contemporary Society

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The title of this article—'The Christian in Contemporary Society'—embraces much. The subject has so many facets that a study of it entails extensive research and observation. I feel, therefore, that it is incumbent upon me at the outset to acknowledge my indebtedness to the following books, which have been so useful to me, and on which I have drawn freely in the composition of my paper:

Escape From Reason, by Francis A. Schaeffer.

The God Who Is There, by Francis A. Schaeffer.

The New Morality, by Arnold Lunn and Garth Lean.

Set Forth Your Case, by Clark H. Pinnock.

The Abolition of Religion, by Leon Morris.

The Cult of Softness, by Arnold Lunn and Garth Lean.

The Christian in Industrial Society, by H. F. R. Catherwood.

Runaway World, by Michael Green.

Perilous Times, by Paul B. Smith.

The Christian and the World, by H. M. Carson.

As has been indicated, the title is of such a comprehensive nature that volumes could be written on it; it is, therefore, essential that both the form of the article and the limits prescribed should be clearly outlined. I propose to divide the subject into four sections as follows:

1. First of all, it is my purpose to anticipate and refute objections that might be raised against relating the position and conduct of the Christian to any particular society during any given period of history.

2. The second section will consist of an exposition of the

ethos, that is, the prevailing spirit, of contemporary society and of the thinking which is so insidiously permeating this society.

3. The third section will consist of a description of the symptoms of the disease as these manifest themselves in contemporary society.

4. The fourth section will take the form of a prescription for the Christian whose lot is cast in contemporary society. This will deal with questions such as: how should the Christian be exercised, and what should his response be with regard to the society in which he lives and works?

1. A study of the position of the Christian in a specific society could, quite conceivably, be misinterpreted by some as countenancing the modernist trend of adapting the Christian faith in order to make it, as the catch-phrase goes, 'relevant to the age in which we live'. This modernist trend could be summed up as follows: 'The Christians of the apostolic era belonged to a primitive age; so the Christian in contemporary society must conform to the theological, philosophical, scientific, psychological and social outlook of his day'. This is a concept utterly at odds with the teaching of the Word of God, and, I trust, with the spirit and content of this article.

It may be argued that the world is the world, whether the date be 1969 or 1569 or 69 A.D., that sin is sin now as then, that the gospel is the gospel now as then. This is undeniable; but the spirit of the world manifests itself in a variety of ways, and certain sins are more prevalent in some ages than in others. Society changes in manifold ways.

We are not living in the society in which the Saviour lived. It is not necessary to expatiate here on His ecclesiastical, political and social environment, but it was manifestly different from ours. Careful perusal of the Gospels makes it abundantly clear that He dealt with religious hypocrisy, spiritual ignorance, formal traditionalism, inordinate worldliness, heretical doctrines, etc., as these manifested themselves in the society which was contemporary to Him. Moreover, He dealt with different classes of people in different ways; in other words, He adapted His methods to His audience.

In the apostolic era we find the truth applied to people in forms suitable to their religious, political and cultural background. Examples are numerous: Peter on the day of Pentecost and in the house of Cornelius; Paul addressing the Jews at Antioch and the Greeks in Athens; Paul 'disputing daily at the school of one Tyrannus'; Paul's epistles to the

various churches; Paul's advice to Titus in connection with the Cretians.

Precept and example in the Bible are clear! Therefore the Christian's duty is clear: he must take cognizance of the society in which he lives if he is to be a faithful witness on the side of his Master.

2. In every society since the Fall human nature has exercised itself in various ways, that is, certain human characteristics are more obvious in some periods of history than in others. In order to attain to an intelligent understanding of the present, one must explore the past; for it is certain that the cancer of permissiveness has been working insidiously for many years. One could, of course, in one's research, reach far into the past, but, for practical purposes, I shall confine myself to the 19th and 20th centuries.

If one looks back to the 19th century, and, indeed, to as recent a period as the one preceding the First World War, one finds that in Western society Christians and non-Christians had this in common: they accepted certain presuppositions, the fundamental presupposition being that there were such things as absolutes—absolute truth, absolute knowledge, absolute goodness, etc. People did disagree as to what these absolutes were, but the existence of absolutes was not denied. Both Christians and non-Christians reasoned in this way: if something is true, its opposite is false; if something is right, its opposite is wrong. Even a generation ago, if you said, 'This is right' or 'This is wrong', everyone would understand what you meant. This way of thinking has been called the methodology of antithesis. It was a way of thinking which permeated man's entire mental outlook.

In contemporary society there is a new methodology. The concept of truth and moral rightness has changed. There is no longer in general currency an antithesis like TRUTH v. ERROR or an antithesis like RIGHTNESS v. WRONGNESS. Absolutes have been cast overboard. The new methodology which underlies the prevailing spirit, or ethos, of contemporary society has three basic characteristics:

- (i) *Subjectivism*: religion and morality are not fixed; they depend on individual attitudes.
- (ii) *Relativism*: knowledge can never be absolute; it is limited by man's perceptive faculties.
- (iii) *Agnosticism*: no one knows the right answer.

This is the situation that confronts us. The ethos, the prevailing spirit, of our age is dictated by a way of thinking

completely foreign to previous generations, and to real Christians in our own time. It is not surprising that so many are baffled by contemporary trends, particularly among the young. Young people think that by throwing off the shackles of 'outmoded' religious and moral concepts they will enjoy real freedom. This is an awful delusion. What has happened, and is happening, is that they are the victims of a policy of brainwashing, pursued in the interests of the new methodology. The absolute standards of the Moral Law are ridiculed; men create their own standards as they go along.

Obviously this change did not occur overnight. As I have stated, it is an insidious disease. One can trace its spread westwards from Germany to Britain, and then to America. Its social progress can be traced from the 'highbrow' intellectuals to the more educationally privileged strata of society, to the working class, and then to the upper middle class. However, for our purposes it will be more profitable to follow the progress of the disease, the new methodology, through the disciplines—from philosophy to art, then to music, then to general culture, then to theology.

Before embarking on this exposition it is necessary to make a general statement with regard to all non-Christian thought. There was, and is, in all non-Christian thought a unifying factor—rationalism, or humanism in its wider sense. Humanism, in this sense, is the system whereby man, beginning absolutely with himself, tries with the use of his reason to find a meaning and purpose in life. In one sense, of course, rationalism is the same in every age—man trying to build out from himself. In another sense, humanism is constantly shifting, and so the Christian must be careful to study the form rationalism is *currently* taking.

If we follow the trend in the disciplines already mentioned we discover that men failed in their rationalistic efforts to find a unified meaning to life on the basis of the methodology of antithesis. So, rather than abandon the rationalism which had failed them, they changed the whole concept of truth. If we are to understand the ethos of contemporary society we must follow the conception and birth of modern man through the disciplines—from philosophy to theology.

In the realm of philosophy it was Hegel, the German, who discarded the methodology of antithesis and propounded the methodology of synthesis in the hope of finding a unified meaning to life. However, it is Kierkegaard, the Danish philosopher and theologian, who holds the doubtful distinction

of being the father of modern secular thinking and the new theological thinking. The really significant feature of his philosophy and theology is that he gave up the task of finding a unified meaning to life by the exercise of reason. He stipulated that in order to deal with the purpose and significance of life one must abandon rational thinking about them and make a gigantic 'leap of faith'. Existentialist philosophers, then, have abandoned the hope of a *rational* answer to questions like 'What is man? Why is he here? What is his destiny?' Their answer is that, if one concerned oneself with the rational and the logical, that is, historical and scientific truth, life is meaningless and purposeless. Therefore, one must by a 'leap of faith', or mystical experience, fly into the realm of the non-rational and the non-logical, the realm of intuition and imagination and of what cannot be verified or proved in any way. According to this school of thought, here lies the only hope of finding a meaning to life.

This 'leap of faith', which is quite irrational, has been called a 'first order experience', and it is surely not without significance that Aldous Huxley advocated drug-taking in order to attain to a first-order experience. In fact, the sensitive person today does not usually take drugs in order to escape reality. He fondly hopes that by taking them he will attain to a first-order experience which will give some meaning to life.

Just as philosophers tried to find a humanistic answer to life, so did artists. The Dutchman, Van Gogh, and the Frenchman, Gauguin, collaborated to found a new religion based on humanistic principles, but they quarrelled (how very human!), and Van Gogh, two years later, in a fit of disillusionment, committed suicide. Gauguin created a painting with the pathetic caption 'What? Whence? Whither?' and then failed in his subsequent suicide attempt. Dada, a modern art movement originating in Zurich, proclaims in paintings and poems that everything is chance—life is meaningless.

From the world of music one example will suffice. The *Musique Concrète*, developed by Pierre Schaeffer in Paris, proclaims the same message: all is relative; there is no truth; nothing is fixed.

In the realm of literature Henry Miller is an anti-law writer, a wrecker of conventions. Since life is believed to be meaningless, laws and time-honoured conventions are there to be smashed. It is, however, in the 'theatre of the absurd' that the abject despair of the philosophy of meaninglessness is given its fullest expression. The avowed aim of this group of

dramatists, including Samuel Beckett, Eugene Ionesco, Harold Pinter and Jean Genet, is to depict the absolute emptiness of life. Francis Bacon, one of Britain's leading painters, goes even further: the main theme of his work is the sheer horror of existence. What is considered his best work Bacon is said to have done in a drunken state.

In John Osborne's play 'Martin Luther' an old man, the head of Luther's old monastery, visits Luther and asks, 'Martin, do you *know* you are right?' In the teeth of historical fact, but consistently with the contemporary way of thinking, Osborne puts this reply into Luther's mouth: 'Let's hope so'. Notice the thread running through contemporary culture: life is meaningless, and there are no such things as absolute truth and absolute morality.

In the modern cinema the same message is conveyed. 'The Silence', produced by the Swede, Bergman, is a series of snapshots with immoral and pornographic themes. There is no commentary, for this is supposed to represent life—devoid of meaning and devoid of morals. 'Blow-up', a film produced by Antonioni of Italy, was advertised by posters announcing 'Murder Without Guilt' and 'Love Without Meaning'.

This concept of life has permeated society with alarming rapidity through television, radio, magazines, newspapers, novels, 'pop' music, the theatre and the cinema.

The same ethos is evident in modern theology. Modern existentialist theology is the child of Kierkegaard. The whole system pivots on the 'leap of faith' which I have already mentioned. One of the most remarkable features of modern theology is the close affinity between its development and the development of modern existentialist philosophy. It has already been noted that philosophers had to abandon the humanistic, rationalistic method and embraced Kierkegaard's leap of faith. Theology has been through the same process.

The rationalistic liberal theologians of Germany rejected everything miraculous and supernatural. They discarded the miraculous and the supernatural in the life of the Saviour and attempted in a rational, objective way to find the 'historical Jesus', as they put it. They found it impossible, however, to separate the supernatural aspects of the life of Jesus from what they condescendingly called 'the true history'. If they removed the supernatural, no historical Jesus remained. Two courses were then open to them: they could have renounced their rationalism and returned to Biblical theology, or they could have taken their rationalistic discoveries to their logical

conclusion—nihilism (a belief that all existence is basically senseless and useless)—the religion of despair. They chose neither course. Like the philosophers, they chose Kierkegaard's way—the two-storey division of knowledge and truth. The 'leap of faith' is their magic wand. In essence, this is the theology of Barth, Niebuhr, Tillich, Robinson, Richardson, and all the new theologians. They have separated religious truth, which to them is non-rational and non-logical, from scientific and historical truth, which is both rational and logical. The gap is bridged by the 'leap of faith'. In fact, the faith of modern theology is faith in faith; and the more irrational the leap, the greater the faith.

The new theology is extremely influential in the majority of the churches of our day. It takes the old Christian doctrines and turns them into symbols by emptying them of all definable content. To take a few examples of this:

- (i) *The Person of Christ*: In the lower storey of historical criticism He is a human prophet; by a 'leap of faith' He can be raised to divine significance.
- (ii) *The Bible*: In the lower storey of scientific criticism it is a human document, full of errors; but you can elevate it into being a medium of revelation. Then it is inspired like the Koran and Shakespeare.
- (iii) *Miracles*: According to the new theology, miracles are not facts of history. They are really interpretations which believing people gave to events which touched them deeply.
- (iv) *The Resurrection*: There is no way of knowing whether it happened or not, according to the pundits of the new theology, but one can believe that it happened by a 'leap of faith'.
- (v) *The Cross*: This is a very popular theme, but is treated as a symbol. The blood is ignored or ridiculed. They say that you can still be a Christian even if you do not understand the Cross. 'It is the contemporary Christ who saves,' they say.
- (vi) *The Trinity*: This, as expounded by the new theology, is merely a metaphorical description of God by men who saw the scheme of redemption in that way. If we attempt to take it as literally true, it is a mathematical absurdity.

All these doctrines are part and parcel of the new theology. That makes it more dangerous than 19th century liberalism. It looks so like the gospel, it sounds so like the gospel—when

not investigated. The truth is that in the new theology these doctrines are really symbols which cannot be proved right or wrong and whose content is not fixed. The person who has 'faith' merely loads these symbols with the meaning he chooses according to the consensus of the age in which he lives.

What emerges from this study of the ethos of contemporary society is that absolutes have been abandoned, and the old methodology of TRUTH v. ERROR and RIGHT v. WRONG, which is the methodology of the Bible, has been rejected. People are being conditioned to a new way of thinking: there are no such things as absolutes, and all convictions are relative. Since this is what is believed, all discriminatory legislation and prohibitions must be removed. 'Thou shalt' and 'Thou shalt not' are the imperatives of a morality which modern man rejects. The naiveté of the champions of the cause of permissiveness is such that they fail to understand that in that way lies anarchy—the greatest of all human tyrannies. The key words of contemporary society are 'revolution' and 'freedom'. All revealed law must be destroyed and be replaced by a fluid set of humanly appointed rules. Whatever is, is right.

Across the realms of theology, philosophy, science, psychology, sociology, the arts, literature, the mass-media, government, education, communal and family life, and personal morality, the words of Jeremiah are writ large:

'Lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord; and what wisdom is in them?' (Jeremiah 8 : 9).

3. The religion of contemporary society both inside most of the professing churches and outside their influence is humanism. Biblical Christianity is being pushed from every section of life. Man is the ultimate standard by which all must be measured. It is man who sits in judgment on all questions of religion and morals. If you believe in absolute standards and cherish strong convictions you are condemned as a bigot. According to the standards of contemporary society all the creeds are equally grand, but none is absolutely true. Ecclesiastical leaders speak of our Protestant-Catholic-Jewish heritage.

Ecumenism, which is as dangerous an 'ism' as ever reared its head in this world, is the natural offspring of the ethos of contemporary society. Once the antithesis of TRUTH v. ERROR is abandoned, dialogue, accommodation, and compromise are quite logical.

When we enter the realm of so-called 'religious experience', the influence of the mentality of the 'leap of faith' theology is widespread. Zen Buddhism and the cult of transcendental meditation are becoming popular, because in the lower storey of the rational and logical people can see nothing but meaninglessness and purposelessness. Rationalism has failed to find a meaning and purpose in life, and so there must be a flight from reason into the upper-storey of mystical experience. This partly explains the popularity of LSD and its family of hallucogenic drugs. It is a characteristic of these drugs that they create a heightened self-awareness and a mystical sensation. The aim is to detach oneself from reality and commune with the beyond. One professor has claimed that by going on a 'trip' under the influence of a drug one could enjoy a conversion like the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. At Boston University divinity students 'tuned in' to deeper meditation on 'Good Friday' with the aid of the 'sacrament'—LSD. This flight from rational control is a feature of contemporary society.

The ethos of contemporary society makes itself evident in the realm of politics. The Executive and the Legislature do not concern themselves with the law of God. Why should they, if there are no such things as absolutes? It is the politics of consensus now. It is not 'What saith the Lord?' but 'What does man desire?' The aims of contemporary politics could be expressed thus: let us appeal to man's covetous and self-indulgent spirit and let us create opportunities for shameless and God-dishonouring self-indulgence with legislation like the Sunday Entertainments Bill, Divorce Law, Abortion Law, Sexual Offences Law and the abolition of capital punishment. There is now a movement afoot to amend or repeal the Obscene Publications Act; the result would be licence to publish and sell pornography. Two statements made on radio by Mr. Bryan Forbes, film producer and director, are revealing. He was discussing with others, one of whom was Mr. Malcolm Muggeridge, the subject of censorship. If censorship were removed, Mr. Forbes maintained, 'human nature being what it is, we should get nothing but boring and unadulterated filth'. This sounds rather obvious to us, but his other comment was alarming, especially when it came from such an authentic source: 'There is a conspiracy to exploit the basest instincts of human nature'. Satan does not lack human agents in the prosecution of one of his stock activities.

In the *Cult of Softness* by Lunn & Lean, the authors maintain 'that there is today a brilliant, concerted and partially

successful attempt to take over the mind and culture of the country for secularism'. Within the ambit of this conspiracy are universities and schools. A Christian student or a student with a Christian background can be prepared on coming to a University for an all-out attempt to wipe his mind clean of inherited ideas and implant within it the idea that there are no absolutes. In text-books, in educational radio and TV programmes evolution is presented 'as it happened'. Charts and illustrations of life's progress over millions of years are shown. This, despite the fact that it is a travesty of the scientific method, besides being morally indefensible, to delude students into believing that evolution is a demonstrated fact or even a secure hypothesis.

The form and content of religious education in schools is a matter of grave concern to all who have the moral and spiritual welfare of the young at heart. Pupils learn that 'values' are important for life, but also that no way exists of knowing which values. The absolute values of God's Word are largely ignored.

In the field of literature and the arts, to quote Mr. Quintin Hogg, 'our country is being destroyed before our eyes by intellectuals without faith'. John Calder, the publisher, is inspired by an avowed urge 'to break through the British public's backward puritanical attitude to sex'. Alexander Trocchi, author of *Cain's Book*, a Calder publication on drug-taking, said in Edinburgh in 1963, 'In the days of Charles II there was right, wrong and God. Now that we are not sure what's right and what's wrong, it's dangerous to limit forms of expression. We must allow all manner of opinions to go into the atmosphere for children'. In 1962 the Writers' Conference in Edinburgh was preoccupied with homosexuality and drug-taking. At the Edinburgh Drama Conference of 1963 the monarchy, patriotism, moral values, law and order and religion were attacked. Also in Edinburgh, in 1964, Miss Joan Littlewood, Artistic Director of the Theatre Workshop, told the Press, 'We believe we are breaking through the Puritanism of the world, leaving pre-history. The theatre can be a marvellous world, since God is dead, and religion is dead'. Lord Harewood, one-time Director of the Edinburgh Festival, stated in the 'Daily Record' of 28 August, 1963: 'My greatest enemy is still that old Presbyterian, John Knox'.

Contemporary society also has its sacred cow—science, and the cultural myth of our age is 'evolution'. This is not believed and taught as a fact because there is evidence for it, but

because the humanistic religion of our society needs it. If there is a transcendent God Who is Creator and Lawgiver, the whole fabric of humanism collapses. Such a God must be excluded so that man can be autonomous and free. One need only read extracts from the papers and discussions in the official record—*Man and his Future*—of the conference sponsored by the C.I.B.A. Foundation in London, to be alarmed by the trend of scientific thought:

Sir Julian Huxley: 'Genetic improvement should be brought about by multiple artificial insemination by preferred donors of high genetic quality.'

Dr. G. Pincus: 'This could be done by the Government's putting a chemical in our food or water which made everybody sterile, and then providing a second chemical capable of reversing the effect of the first for those whom it licensed to bear children.'

Professor Bronowski: 'My values come from as objective and definitive source as any god, namely the nature of the human being.'

Notice how unmistakably clear the spirit of the permissive society is among these intellectual giants of the scientific world—the abolition of an objective or absolute morality and the setting up of a variable morality where the reference point is some supposed good to human society.

A prominent feature of contemporary society is what has been called the cult of softness, one of the forms of permissiveness. In their introduction to the book of this title the authors write: 'The great periods in a nation's history, the age of Elizabeth and the Victorian age in our own, are always distinguished by the uncritical acceptance, at least by the ruling class, of an exacting code, the validity of which is unquestioned even by those who fail to practise what they might be ready to preach.' They go on to state: 'In our country, the cult of softness has certainly been responsible for a weakening of the moral fibre not only in sex but also . . . in the erosion of Christian dogma, in education, art and letters, in the increasing tendency to side with the criminal against the police, and in the repudiation of personal responsibility.' Many of the men dedicated to the secularising of our society and to the elimination of all effective Christian influence are entrenched in influential positions in publishing, broadcasting and centres of learning.

Dr. Leach dismisses the value of the family; Dr. James

Henning and his like advocate promiscuity. Dr. Alex. Comfort in a television broadcast stated, 'A chivalrous boy is one who takes contraceptives with him when he goes to meet his girl friend'. In his book, *Sex in Society*, he states: 'It is highly probable that adultery today maintains more marriages than it destroys'.

The cult of softness is most evident in the current attitude to crime. The Bishop of Southwark could tell the House of Lords that 'most of those in prison were there because society or their families had failed them', and the ex-Bishop of Woolwich described suicide as 'a sin of society against the individual rather than the sin of the individual against society'. Yet within 20 years of the end of the Second World War burglaries had increased by over 250 per cent, crimes against women by over 400 per cent and crimes of violence by over 500 per cent.

The breakdown of discipline defaces our society and is one of the symptoms of permissiveness. Mr. Donald Hughes, the Headmaster of Rydal School, summed up the state of affairs prevailing in the educational sphere as follows: 'It is not our job to tell the young what to do, but to give them their heads, to leave them free from directions and stand by to pick up the pieces'. After the pitched battle between Mods and Rockers at Clacton in March, 1964, Mr. Donald MacLachlan asked, 'Are we certain that our schools have the right basic theory of education and discipline? For forty years now the reaction has been going on against hard learning, strictness in class, deterrent punishments, and the role of fear and habit in character formation . . . Perhaps the strongest grievance that teenagers will have against us may be a feeling that we did not give them the secret of the self-control we expect of them, and that we did not give them firm purposes in life'.

It is among the young in particular that we see the fruits of the philosophy of meaninglessness and the denial of absolutes. The mess the world is in, the mess society is in, the apparent purposelessness of the life of the individual drive many to take refuge in a fantasy world. They are assured by persuaders on every hand, 'Sex satisfies; sex is the way to fulfilment'. Another form of escapism is drug-taking, which is assuming alarming proportions. 'Pop' music provides yet another avenue by which the young can escape into the world of the erotic and fantastic. Further, if there are no absolutes, conventions and deference to properly constituted authority must go.

Extremism, whether it be in behaviour or in dress, is symptomatic of the cancer of permissiveness.

Deterioration of standards such as I have mentioned has had a powerful impetus from the broadcasting media—television and radio; and the spirit of this decadent age is not only interpreted but sedulously promoted by them. Blasphemy, sex and violence characterise many of their productions, and in their discussion programmes exponents of the new morality frequently have pride of place. One newspaper comment on the dramatic productions which followed the inauguration of BBC 2 will suffice: 'The final casualty list in Ken Taylor's trilogy on man and belief for BBC 2, *The Seekers*, was one bayoneting, one crushing under a jackboot, one beard set on fire, one suicide by intravenous injection, one rape, one flogging, and six brandings with a cruciform iron'.

The secularising, humanistic campaign, however, is not confined to the world outside the Church. It is believed by many that the power-house of the new morality in the Church of England has been for some time in the diocese of Southwark. Here worked the notorious ex-Bishop of Woolwich and Canon Rhymes. Lord Shawcross summed up the campaign as follows: 'You may be as puzzled as I am about these exhibitionist intellectuals, these psychiatrists in a small way of business, these publicity-minded clerics who talk about the new morality. There is no such thing: this so-called new morality is too often the old immorality condoned. The great principles of good or evil, kindness or cruelty, generosity or selfishness, love or lust, do not change because some confused bishop writes a book about it'.

Private and public morality, the Lord's Day, marriage, family life—all are victims of the denial of absolutes. The fruit in human misery is bitter: venereal disease is outstripping all the modern drugs mobilised against it; sexual offences and crimes of violence are commonplace; mental illness is endemic in our society. Three-quarters of a million young people in England at any one time are the children of broken homes; and from their number something like eighty per cent of criminal offences come. We have the highest crime rate in our history; among the under-twenties it doubled in nine years; prisons are grossly overcrowded. The following figures are six years old, but they are relevant: 55,000 babies a year born to unmarried mothers in Britain; one-third of all first babies were conceived out of wedlock.

Statistics could be multiplied, and they would all bear testi-

mony to the degenerate state of the society in which we live. To our shame our society is mirrored in the Epistle to the Romans, Chapter 1, and in the 2nd Epistle to Timothy, Chapter 3.

4. Having surveyed the contemporary scene, the Christian is not just to raise his hands in pious horror and retire from the battlefield into the cosy security of his own or his church's private citadel. This brings us to the final section of the article, in which the question is posed: how should the Christian be exercised and what should his response be with regard to the society in which he lives and works? As this is the practical aspect which should concern and engage our readers, I shall confine myself to the enunciation of a number of guiding principles.

Every Christian should feel the solemn responsibilities placed upon him by the Saviour in the words, 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven' (Matthew 5 : 16), and in the words, 'Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven' (Matthew 10 : 32 and 33). The injunctions in the Epistle to the Romans, Chapter 12, verse 2: 'And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God'; and in 1st Peter, Chapter 3 verse 5: 'And be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear', are no less solemn as obligations on the Christian in the world. There is, in fact, a wealth of precept and example in the Bible relevant to the attitude of the Christian to the society in which he has his lot. The great pattern is, of course, the walk, life and conversation of the Master Himself. The prescription which follows is intended to be a practical application of the light which the Bible casts on the duties of the Christian in contemporary society.

Three considerations present themselves here:

- (i) What the Christian must avoid.
 - (ii) The ways in which the Christian must be equipped in order that he may be an effective witness on the side of Christ.
 - (iii) Positive duties incumbent upon the Christian.
- (i) Although the Christian is not to be conformed to the

world he has no warrant to justify his being deliberately odd or eccentric. It was to the Roman Catholic saint that spirituality supposedly came by deliberate withdrawal to holy ground in the monastery or in the church. The Saviour was unworldly, but He moved amongst men, so much so that He was accused by His enemies of being 'a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber'. Christians must not engage in moral or spiritual affectation.

Further, the criterion of the world is self-interest, and the Christian must beware of conforming to this brand of worldliness, that is, being concerned exclusively with his own immediate ecclesiastical circle and ignoring the perishing millions outside. There must, however, be no compromise with modernistic evangelism which seeks 'to make the gospel relevant to the age in which we live'. The gimmickry, the mania for tabulated results, the false charity of ecumenism must be shunned like the plague. The Christian must also shun the 'social gospel', which applies to the generality of sinners the words of Christ to His disciples, as if there were no need for personal repentance and forgiveness.

Nevertheless, in seeking to adhere to the old paths, the Christian must avoid the pitfalls of superstitious and idolatrous traditionalism.

Finally (in his relations with, and attitude to, his fellow-sinners) he must never lose sight of the claims of God's glory.

(ii) In seeking to be equipped to be a living witness, the Christian must live a life of much prayer and personal holiness. He must live the faith he professes. Fighting the good fight of faith requires the whole armour of God. The Saviour's words, 'Without me ye can do nothing', must be one of the watchwords of the Christian's life.

He must, moreover, attain to that knowledge which is needed to communicate the gospel. A clear and intelligent grasp of 'the faith which was once delivered unto the saints' is indispensable. A heavy weight rests on the shoulders of the educated Christian and the importance of a teaching ministry cannot be too strongly emphasised.

There is also a lack of Christians who understand the broad sweep of the contemporary intellectual climate. The Christian is duty bound to seek to attain to a clear and thorough understanding of contemporary society—its thinking and its trends.

(iii) However circumscribed his opportunities, the Christian must in word and life be a witness for Christ. The defence of the faith is essential. Sects, cults, heresies and specific declensions must be understood and exposed. Young people, in

particular, must be instructed and prepared for facing the monolithic culture of contemporary society by being taught the source and nature of attacks on the faith in our generation.

The Holy Spirit is sovereign, but the Bible does not separate His work from knowledge; nor does the prerogative of the Holy Spirit in the conversion of sinners relieve us of our responsibilities as parents, pastors, missionaries or teachers, or, indeed, as citizens in our own communities. The human side to evangelism in the spoken word and in the dissemination of the Scriptures and Christian literature is absolutely vital.

Moreover, if we wish to communicate the gospel, we have a duty to learn our hearers' or readers' use of language, so that they understand what we mean to convey. Further, we must treat them as rational beings, for true faith is not a vague thing which replaces understanding. The Christian's part is to present the claims of God in law and gospel as intelligently and intelligibly as possible and wait for the blessing.

There is one pitfall in particular that the Christian must beware of in the communication of the gospel, and that is an exclusive appeal to experience. An inward personal experience there must be, but when religious consciousness becomes the central part of our teaching, doctrines recede into the background. Furthermore, this plays into the hands of the new theology which lays so much stress on faith as a kind of magic wand and on comfortable feelings dependent on some kind of experience. In any case, an experience can be physiological, psychological, theological, or even demonic. Religious experiences not subject to testing can, and are used, as one put it, 'to prove anything from Zen Buddhism to Mormonism'. Two of the pillars of the Christian faith are the veracity of God's actions in history and the reliability of God's Word in the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation. These must not be relegated to a position of relative unimportance. We all know that experience is essential in personal verification, but it cannot stand alone.

With regard to the responsibility of the Christian in the society in which he lives and works two quotations from *The Christian in Industrial Society* will suffice to indicate principles of conduct:

- (a) 'The voice of Christians should be heard in political matters, and they should influence legislation.'
- (b) 'The Christian must be concerned that, as far as he is able to accomplish it, righteousness shall prevail in those spheres in which he is involved, whether it is a

school, faculty, local community, a business, a hospital, or what you will. To leave our fellows to secularism or humanism would be a complete abdication of our responsibility as Christian citizens.'

The absolute necessity for importunity in prayer, and our absolute dependence on the Holy Spirit, have, I trust, been implicit and explicit in what has been said in this paper. I have however, reserved to the end the words of Rev. Thomas Boston, who, in the closing passage of a sermon, so eloquently sums up the duty of Christians with regard to these great indispensables:

'Yet despair not of the reformation of the land or of particular persons, but pray, pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. O wrestle with God and lift up a cry for it. That is a sovereign remedy that would cure all our diseases at once. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth." The work of reformation hath long been like corn in a great drought, yellow at the root; a shower of the Spirit would make all green again, and grow fast. As much as we are divided this would unite us. As bold-faced as wickedness and profanity are, this would stop their mouths. As little good as the gospel does, this would make convincing, converting, and confirming work more frequent, and give ministers of the gospel as much to do with broken hearts, as they have now with hard and impenitent ones. As great lifelessness and untenderness as are among ministers and people, this would purify the sons of Levi, and make the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem pleasant to the Lord as in former years. It would restore our judges as at the first, and our counsellors as at the beginning; and make nobles and gentry cease from building of Babel, and pulling down of the church and of religion; put holiness to the Lord on the bells of their horses, and willingly set their shoulder to the work of the Lord, O! pray, pray for this. And let not your hopelessness and uncharitableness, as to any ranks of people in the Land, whether because of their profanity, apostacy, formality, deadness, enmity to religion and hurtfulness to the church, shuffle them out of your prayers for good. But cry mightily for the outpouring of the Spirit that the whole land may mourn.'

Book Reviews

THE CAMBUSLANG REVIVAL. Arthur Fawcett. Banner of Truth Trust, pp. 256. £1.25.

This is a book of great significance and will, we feel sure, be in use for many years to come. The work has been exceedingly well done and leaves little to be desired. The author evidently found his work congenial and the result is a book that is highly readable.

When historians choose to deal with the subject of revival, a dry, academic style is the last thing that should characterise them. It is therefore pleasant to note that though the book is certainly scholarly, the facts are marshalled and presented in a very stimulating fashion.

From a purely material point of view, the volume has been beautifully produced, is free from typographical errors and bears on its attractive dust-cover a portrait of George Whitefield.

The twelve chapters cover the subject adequately and one is very impressed with the extensive bibliography and sufficient index. The author has chosen to retain in his quotations 'all the colourful variety of spelling, grammar, capital letters and so on' having been 'mildly irritated by the bawdlerizing attempts of various editors to improve original texts'. Whilst entertaining sympathy for the ideal, one is bound to say that the need for the reader to modernise and for the uninitiated to translate the broad Scots dialect in places, sometimes proves something of a mild irritant itself.

Although a separate chapter is devoted to a consideration of prayer in relation to the revival, the importance of seeking God's face is a strain that runs throughout the volume. True, the leaders in that remarkable awakening were far from thinking that prayer, as the work of men, was the cause of the blessing. But then they were also far removed from that fatalism which despises means and ignores the fact that God who has ordained the end, ordains also the means through which that end will be accomplished. Thus we are introduced to the societies for prayer and it is thrilling to read of the way in which believers at home and abroad were bound together in a mighty concert of intercession.

Often, however, it is in the very areas where we imagine ourselves to be at our best for God, that the greatest care

needs to be exercised. Certainly, the societies for prayer cannot escape just criticism and this should sound a note of caution to us.

For one thing, it would appear that these societies often assumed the functions and responsibilities of the local Church and one is struck with the severity of the rules laid down. These covered not only the admission of members but also their subsequent discipline. Guidance about topics for discussion was offered and in some instances an 'order of service' was specified. Thus: 'the members of the society shall pray by turns according to the alphabetical order of their names and at every meeting three, and at the most, five or six shall pray, except where providence calls for more than ordinary wrestling' (p. 69). It may be that this tight rein was kept on the societies to prevent disorder and the introduction of aberrations which inevitably accompany revivals, but it does seem to us that the Spirit must surely have been severely limited. A rigid form of service is hardly conducive to freedom of the Spirit of God.

In marked contrast we are told of the children's meetings which were run by the children themselves (p. 67). We could have wished for more information on this subject. What restrictions were applied here, we wonder, and what controls were operated?

Dr. Fawcett has done well to devote a chapter to 'Danger Points' since this aspect is frequently ignored when the romance of revival dominates our thinking. As he deals with some of the problems initiated by or accompanying revival, one is reminded of the way in which the great Jonathan Edwards approached the same task. Indeed, the spirit of the American Divine seems to pervade much of the work and to impart to it something of his own great authority.

Fully to appreciate the Cambuslang revival one must constantly bear in mind the appalling difficulties under which the people of God laboured. One of the most frustrating trials was the iniquitous system then operated by the Presbyterian Church in placing ministers. The 'heritor' was the all-important figure in a parish when a new minister had to be found and, generally speaking, his theological predilections dictated the spiritual fare of the people. McCullough, the outstanding personality in the revival, was for nine years a probationer and was at length settled in Cambuslang only after a great deal of bitter opposition and animosity from the heritor. On the other hand, Dr. Meek, who was McCullough's successor,

was forced upon the unwilling people despite their manifest rejection of him. He was entirely critical of the revival yet he was succeeded by the Rev. John Robertson who fully sympathised with it. A similar situation obtained at Kilsyth where the godly Dr. James Robe was succeeded by John Telfer who had little to commend him. Dr. Fawcett points out that in several of the parishes associated with the revival, there was considerable trouble owing to unwelcome settlements.

One can appreciate in some measure the bewilderment of the flock as the ministerial pendulum swung from one theological position to the other. No wonder the author can speak in terms of direct links between the people of Cambuslang and the Disruption of 1843! Indeed, it is only as we understand the plight of the people who were subjected to the prejudices of the patrons, that we can appreciate the greatness of Thomas Chalmers and those associated with him in the historic 10 year conflict culminating in the Disruption.

At the General Assembly of 1796, the venerable Dr. John Erskine is reputed to have intervened in a debate by crying out, 'Moderator, rax me that Bible.' Pointing out that some critics question the truth of the story on the grounds of its omission from Heron's account of the debate, Dr. Fawcett appeals to the opinion of Professor Hugh Watt who was 'well satisfied with its veracity'. But the cautious note is added: 'If the story should be apocryphal, the spirit it reveals is authentic enough' (p. 233). Only two pages earlier however, the author relates the story of Dr. Ryland's rebuke to William Carey who suggested that the great commission was obligatory upon his ministerial brethren and himself. It is a pity that no cautious note was added to this quotation since there are good grounds for doubting that Ryland ever said, 'Young man, sit down, sit down. You are a miserable enthusiast . . . when God chooses to convert the heathen, He will do it without your aid or mine.' We quote from Iain Murray's 'The Puritan Hope—'The popular story is repudiated by Ryland's son, John Ryland, Junior, who was Carey's close friend and a fellow member of the Northampton Association, being assistant minister at his father's church at the time when the incident was supposed to have happened. "I never heard of it till I saw it in print, and cannot give credit to it at all." Among the reasons he gives for rejecting its authenticity it is interesting to note that he says, "No man prayed and preached about the latter-day glory more than my father."' Life of Andrew Fuller, John Ryland, 1816. 175.

An interesting chapter is entitled 'Books and the people'

where we learn of the 'intellectual influences that were shaping the opinions of ministers and people throughout the West of Scotland' around the year 1742. It seems almost inevitable that in any such consideration, two books that will receive mention are Watson's *Body of Divinity* and Guthrie's *The Christian's Great Interest*. These, together with Alleine's *Alarm to the Unconverted*, were often the staple diet of the people though we suppose few would emulate Charles Lamb (p. 82) who, making a plea for saying grace for blessings other than meals, asked, 'Why have we none for books, those spiritual repasts?'

Mention of Guthrie's book leads us to question the accuracy of an assumption on page 87 in connection with William Guthrie and the martyrdom of his cousin James. 'Had not the author (of "The Christian's Great Interest") accompanied his cousin James Guthrie when he went to the scaffold?' asks Dr. Fawcett. He then proceeds to assume an affirmative answer. But the convenor of the Publications Committee of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland who re-issued the book in 1951, says in his preface, 'William desired to go to the execution of his valued cousin but was prevented by his friends who feared for his life.' This is reiterated in the unsigned biographical introduction which tells us that 'his deference to the warm entreaties of his session alone prevented him from engaging in so perilous a service'.

Despite the differences which may exist in the assessments of revivals given to us by Christian historians, they are still our most reliable guides. God's dealings with His people are spiritually discerned and so very often the merely professional historian, devoid of that enlightenment of the mind so necessary to a true understanding of the situation, fails completely to make an adequate assessment. Thus Dr. Fawcett can speak of 'the bias of (J. Hill) Burton and this extraordinary ferrago of misrepresentation' (p. 4). Again, on page 75, he draws attention to the 'gross exaggeration' of Henry G. Graham who, in his 'Social Life of Scotland', had avowed that the inhabitants at the beginning of the 18th century were, to a vast extent, unable to read or write.

This book raises many other questions either directly or incidentally, maintaining the interest of the reader throughout. We are grateful for a great book on a great subject and are indebted to the author and the Banner for its publication.

ROBERT RODGERS.

Doctrinal Definitions

PAUL TUCKER

THE FALL OF MAN (Genesis 3 : 9-24)

Adam was the one man created with an entirely free will and if a man is created with an entirely free will there is always the possibility that he may make a wrong and therefore a sinful choice. We see how Adam disobeyed. In Genesis 3 is given the Divine explanation of the present fallen condition of the human family. Here we find the subtle devices of our great enemy, the devil. Here we behold the utter powerlessness of man to walk in the way of righteousness if God withholds His grace from him. Here we discover the spiritual effect of sin, the spiritual consequences of sin, man running away from God with whom earlier he had enjoyed communion. Here we are told the attitude of God towards the sinner; the sinner runs from God, but God seeks the sinner. Here we notice the human tendency to try to cover up one's failures. As soon as Adam and Eve knew that they had sinned they tried to cover their nakedness by making aprons. Here we are taught God's greatest provision for man's need. It was the Lord who provided the coats from the animals in order to give man some kind of temporary standing in His holy presence and here is the first reference to the Redeemer. Here begins the marvellous stream of prophecy that goes through the entire Bible, 'The Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head'.

I. THE FALL ITSELF.

'By one man's disobedience many were constituted sinners.'
1. *The one Commandment.* The Bible cuts right across evolutionary teaching. It shows us man, not climbing rung by rung up a moral ladder, but originally righteous and perfect, made in the image of God, placed in a perfect environment in the Garden of Eden, and deliberately and wilfully rebelling against the clear command of God. Notice that it was just a single command that God gave to Adam concerning this particular tree. God had every right to give him this command. Adam owed his very existence, and the righteousness he possessed, to God. He was responsible to the God who had made him. God does not give any reason for laying down this command; He does not explain to Adam why he should not partake of this tree. We need to remember that God does not need to give a reason for everything that He does. He has not to

justify Himself to men. God has a right to give His laws without giving any reason as to why He does so. It is for us humbly to submit ourselves knowing that whatever He requires of His children is because He is a God of love and is for our highest good and for His supreme honour and glory.

2. *The Failure.* But then of course we know that Adam failed miserably. We are not told how long our first parents abode in a state of original righteousness. Most of the Bible scholars incline to the view that it was not a very long time because of the clear indication in Scripture that Adam and Eve had no children in their holy state. The fall has nothing whatever to do with sexual intercourse. God put His blessing upon this intimate relationship between husband and wife prior to the fall, and it is brought out in chapter 1 : 28. Notice that it was the woman who was first approached by the devil. She is spoken of in Scripture as 'the weaker vessel' and the devil deceived Eve (1 Timothy 2 : 14).

3. *The First Step Down.* The voice of the tempter was listened to: 'The serpent said unto the woman . . .' In the beginning the serpent was not a creeping reptile; he was a beast. See 1 : 24 and 3 : 1. Perhaps the serpent was the most lofty of all the creatures of the field. It seems to me a remarkable thing that Eve expressed no surprise when this creature, a very delightful one, spoke to her. And the moment he started to speak, he started slandering God. 'Yea hath God said ye shall not eat of every tree of the Garden?' Notice that God did not say that at all. In fact He said the exact opposite. See 2 : 16. The devil gives Eve the idea that God is depriving her of every tree of the Garden.

4. *The Second Step Down.* There was a tampering with God's Word. Notice how Eve did three things with God's Word—(a) she added to it, (b) she altered it, (c) she omitted part of it (3 : 2-3). When the only source of light that Eve had in the Garden was taken away from her it was easy for her to be lured on by the prince of darkness. Ever since that day the devil has been busy persuading people either to add to or take from God's Holy Word.

5. *The Third Step Down.* The forbidden thing was looked upon, it was desired and taken and shared. So we can say the Will of God was resisted, the Word of God was rejected and the Way of God was deserted.

II. THE FALL IN RELATION TO SATAN.

In this chapter Satan is introduced without any previous explanation; he is just brought in. Most Bible scholars are of

the opinion that there is a warning in chapter 2 : 15. There the Hebrew word 'to keep' means literally to 'safeguard'. Now you do not need to safeguard something that is not likely to be attacked. It may be that Adam was brought in to cooperate with God and to overthrow the devices of the devil. But somehow the devil slipped in. Three things about him are brought to our notice.

1. *The Sphere of His Activity.* It was primarily in the religious and spiritual realm. He is the god of this world, the prince of demons, and his messengers are the ministers of unrighteousness. It is not right to say that the devil is primarily responsible for the grosser sins of the flesh that a man may commit. These come from the man himself. We are responsible for the way we behave and for our conduct. Some people talk glowingly of the millennium, but the flesh is not going to be chained then. The sphere of the devil is in the religious and spiritual realm. The devil wants to come between the soul and God, he wants to usurp the place in Adam's life that belongs to God alone, he wants to set man up against his Maker. And so he wants to substitute his own lies for God's truth. See 2 Corinthians 4 : 4.

2. *The Method of His Approach.* His approach is very subtle. He comes under the guise of this beautiful creature in order to throw doubt upon God's Word. When God gave the command concerning the tree of knowledge of good and evil, Eve had not been created (see verses 15-18). So Eve never heard this command directly from the lips of God but from her husband. So the devil gets at her with doubt, and then denies the statement of God (see verses 4-5). He ever tries to undermine the authority and integrity of the Word of God.

3. *The Form of his Temptations.* A threefold appeal was made to Eve corresponding with her threefold nature. First there is an appeal to the bodily senses—'when the woman saw that the tree was good for food . . .' Then there was the appeal to the soul—'. . . it was pleasant to the eyes', 'and a tree to be desired to make one wise'. The intellect in Scripture has its centre in the spirit. The devil works in reverse to God's way of working. The devil begins without and works in to the soul. God begins within and works out. In her unfallen condition Satan had no direct access to Eve's spirit. God had direct access to her spirit because she was alive unto Him and in fellowship with Him even as Adam. The only way Satan could reach the spirit was through the bodily appetites and then through the soul, and that is the way he works. When

our Lord Jesus Christ was tempted in the wilderness, the devil adopted the same method with Him because He too was holy and harmless and undefiled.

III. THE FALL IN RELATION TO MAN.

Eve was deceived, but Adam was disobedient. We do not read of Eve's disobedience. Adam was more blameworthy for he went into it with his eyes open. What were the results? 1. *The first was a sense of shame.* The devil promised that in the day they ate thereof, their eyes would be opened, knowing good and evil. They already knew the good, because they were in fellowship with God, but what profit would there be in their knowing evil? They wanted to avoid evil. They had their eyes opened to see the value of the good which they had forfeited and the bitterness of the evil which they had acquired. They knew they were naked. Earlier, they had been naked but were unashamed (2 : 25). And man obtained that which he did not have before, at least, not in operation; he obtained a conscience. Conscience did not operate to accuse him prior to the fall because he was perfectly fulfilling God's will. Man is wretched and miserable today because there is disruption within his personality. Here is one of the proofs that man is not an animal and that he is made in the image of God. No man would put a tormenter within his own breast. God had made man for fellowship with Himself, and when man sinned there was this divine disapproval registering within the spirit of the man. 2. *They attempted to conceal their sin from God and from each other.* They took fig leaves and sewed themselves aprons in order to try to find some sort of covering. Yet when God came they were afraid and ran away. The aprons did not really give them any security. Many today talk of their good works, but when they come face to face with God they will be covered with confusion. 3. *The third result was fear of God.* And ever since then man has been trying to avoid God. There are the same recurring principles all down the centuries. 4. *They made wretched excuses, instead of confessing and forsaking their sin.* People are prepared to blame everybody instead of accepting their own responsibility for their transgressions. But the very ground of their excuses became the ground of their condemnation.

By 'the fall of man' we mean his lapse, his failure, his rebellion against God. Man is a wreck, spiritually speaking, and dead in trespasses and sins. The Bible tells us he is by nature a child of wrath, and not only does an observation of the world tell us what man is like, but our own experience with temptation and with sin tells us what failures we are. See

Psalms 14 : 1-3 and Romans 3 : 10-12. There is a great contrast between the first two chapters of Genesis and the later passages of the Bible, e.g. what a contrast between Genesis 1 : 27 and Genesis 6 : 5. That is why Genesis 3 is a pivotal chapter in the whole of the Bible. If we did not have Genesis 3, which tells us how it all happened, we should have to assume that there was an instant in man's history when he failed. It is very striking to find that almost every religion has this idea of a fall connected with it; it is not peculiar to Christianity. Adam was placed on probation. It means that he was subjected to a certain test, that God put him under certain regulations and under certain directions and under a certain prohibition, and it was up to Adam to obey God.

I. THE PLACE OF MAN'S PROBATION.

It happened in the Garden of Eden, in Paradise (see chapter 2 : 15-17). Whatever was the cause of man's failure, it was certainly not to be found in his environment, nor in heredity, because he had no hereditary tendencies. He was the direct product of God's creative handiwork, and he was created righteous. This repudiates the argument of the sociologist who says that the main trouble with man is in his surroundings or heredity. 1. *Everything was about him that ministered to his entire complex nature, his body, mind and soul.* (a) *For his bodily senses*, melodious sounds, crystal streams, luscious fruits—everything that the body could desire. (b) *For his mental powers* there was the study of the works of God, the naming of all the animals, the tending and keeping of the garden. (c) *For his social affections* he had a lovely and loving partner as perfect as himself in his wife Eve. (d) *For his spiritual nature* he had God and a capacity to enjoy God. 2. *Everything was absent from the garden that would mar and spoil it.* There was no sin, no fear, no insecurity, no sorrow. Here was a man in a perfect environment and yet he failed.

II. THE PURPOSE OF MAN'S PROBATION.

Some people have suggested that it was rather unfair of God to put Adam to the test. Why not leave him alone? Well, of course it is always a dangerous thing to suggest what is fair and what is unfair for God to do. God, being God, has every right to order His creation as He decrees and to deal with His creatures as He pleases. This period of probation was necessary for several reasons.

1. *A virtue which stands and continues only because it has never been assaulted is not a very high kind of virtue.* If Adam had not been tested in the realm of his integrity we

might well have imagined that some mechanical process was operating in order to keep him straight and that he did not really have freedom of will but that it was fixed irrevocably, so that he had to be obedient and had to do right. But Adam is set before us as a responsible being made in the image of God, who had freedom of will either to continue towards holiness or to disobey God. Therefore it was necessary that his virtue should be tested.

2. *God gave man amazing dominion when He created him.* It would have been easy for Adam almost to forget that after all he was subject to God and that though he was holding this dominion over created things he held it in trust. He was still responsible to God. Therefore, in all probability, God gave to Adam this test in order to remind him that though he was sovereign over the created order, yet he was still subject and responsible to God for his behaviour and his loyalty. Adam is presented in a fourfold relationship. In relation to the created order, he is a man, to the animals he is king, to his wife he is husband, but to God he is son. He is subject to God. Though he had amazing authority, yet he was not independent of God. He was dependent upon God for his very existence, and the holiness which he possessed was derived from God who is holy.

3. *That man spontaneously might demonstrate his love for God.* God could have so constituted Adam that he had to obey Him but there would have been nothing spontaneous about Adam's obedience. God is love, and one reason why God made man was in order that he might have fellowship with Him and to love in return. And so Adam was given the opportunity genuinely, of his own volition, to prove his love for God by obeying Him.

III. THE PRECISE TERMS OF ADAM'S PROBATION.

The old scholars hold the view strongly that God entered into a covenant with Adam in the Garden. See Hosea 6 : 7. In the margin the word 'men' is rendered 'Adam'. Just as Adam in the beginning transgressed the covenant into which God entered with him, so Ephraim and Judah were doing the same. It is interesting to notice the terms of the covenant. What was required of Adam was perfect and constant obedience. That is the great indictment against Adam in Romans 5—'By one man's disobedience many were made sinners.' What was God's part in the covenant? God promised life. God was saying 'This do and thou shalt live'. It was a covenant of works. Adam was to be saved, humanly

speaking, by his works. He had never sinned, so he did not need grace, but he would be established in righteousness. He would be confirmed in holiness and would doubtless be translated to a higher level of existence altogether as he obeyed God. He would live physically and spiritually eternally if he obeyed. Death is the penalty for breaking the covenant. We know that Adam failed.

The hardest truth to bring home to a man is that he is saved by grace alone through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. When Adam was created, God entered into a covenant of works with him. When man fell he retained that remembrance, that inherent idea of works, and even to this day this self-righteousness is seen. 1 Samuel 15 : 22, 'To obey is better than sacrifice and to hearken than the fat of rams'. Sacrifice is but a miserable attempt to put away the sins that obedience would have prevented. There is a fountain opened for sin and disobedience, and again and again we can go back to the cross, but let us not trade upon that. 'These things I write unto you that ye sin not,' says the Apostle John.

I wonder whether you will agree with me in this? The new covenant of which the Lord Jesus Christ speaks is the fulfilment of the original agreement into which Adam entered. It is the fulfilment of the original agreement by the last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ, as our Representative. By the disobedience of one man many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one man many were made righteous. The Lord Jesus Christ has taken over where Adam the first failed. The Lord Jesus has been made under the law. But, you say, the law began at Sinai. But the Ten Commandments are here in principle in Genesis 2. Any expression of the will of God constitutes the law of God. And not to partake of this tree was for Adam a summary of the divine law. God has only one standard of holiness whether in the garden or on Sinai.

The great message of the Gospel is that where Adam the first, and everyone since, has failed, and broken the law, and come under the condemnation, the Lord Jesus Christ, the last Adam, has come and He has been made under the law, and He has fulfilled the law to the last degree. He wrought out by His own works the righteousness that was acceptable in the sight of a holy God and because He wrought out that holiness, having been made under the law, He qualified to be our Substitute and to be our Representative upon the cross. Our sin was imputed and reckoned to Him. He who knew no sin was made sin for us and the righteousness that He wrought

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out under the law, as the last Adam, is reckoned to us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. The Apostle Paul puts it in this manner in Galatians—'Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth'. Had he been obedient, Adam could have worked out his own salvation. We can never work out ours because we start as sinners from the beginning, but the Lord Jesus Christ has wrought it for us and we can receive it and enjoy it by faith and then bring forth the fruit of obedience in our lives by the power of the Holy Spirit.

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Last year during the postal strike we did not publish separate issues for February and March, and consequently subscriptions were extended by two months. Readers whose subscriptions normally would have been due in December 1971, and that covers the majority, should renew now. If these are paid without our sending out individual reminders it will greatly ease our office work, and reduce our costs. Many readers kindly renewed in the normal way and said they wished the subscription paid for the two issues not published to be credited to the general fund. This gesture is greatly appreciated by the Trustees. May we remind readers that subscriptions should not be addressed to the Editor—but to the "Gospel Magazine Subscription Department".

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