"Meditate
upon these things;

give thyself
wholly to them;

that thy profiting
may appear unto all"

I Timothy 4:15

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T H E   J O U R N A L   O F   T H E O L O G Y

CONTENTS

NOTES ON THE HEBREW VERB *

References to the Hebrew verbal system are not numer-
ous in our two periodicals. Pastor Galstad once ventured
some thought-provoking comments in connection with his re-
marks on the feeling of timelessness we get from the various
names of our Savior God, who is always coming to us. On
page 4 of the December, 1974, issue of the *Lutheran Spokes-
man* (Vol. 17, No. 6), he writes concerning the Hebrew mind
and language: "Their language has no clear-cut tenses like
ours. Their verbs are in the perfect and the imperfect,
and they distinguish only between action which is completed
and action which is still going on. A seemingly completed
action is never truly completed to the Hebrew mind and ima-
gination. It still lives and moves in the present: 'Abra-
ham is our father.' Realities which made the past, make
the present, and will continue to make the future. Accord-
ingly, there is a certain timeless continuity of prophecy
and fulfillment."

Then there is E. Schaller's book review of *Young's
Literal Translation of the Holy Bible,* found in the Octo-
ber, 1970, issue of the *Journal of Theology* (Vol. 10, No.
4), pp. 36-37. Young was "much preoccupied with the tense
values of the Hebrew verb," and some comment was necessary.
After expressing some doubt as to the merits of Young's
translation, acknowledging the controversy surrounding the
Hebrew waw consecutive, and referring those interested to
J. Wash Watts and to G. R. Driver's note on p. 252f. of
Weingreen's grammar, the writer simply says: "We venture
upon no debate of the point here, except to concede that
the term 'Conversive' as applied to this Waw is a misnomer."

Without belaboring the matter, we must all concede
that this does point up a problem, and that there is no
benefit in ignoring it. Just what is the force of the He-

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* *Robert E. Wehrwein is pastor of St. John's Lutheran
Church at Okabena, Minnesota. Upon request, Pastor Wehr-
wein agreed to share the fruits of his research on the
Hebrew verb with the readers of the JOURNAL. It is hoped
that this will spur our pastors on to a continued study
of the Hebrew language.*

brew tenses? What is the meaning of the constructions
with waw consecutive? Unresolved questions of such import
only increase the discouragement of students already on
less than friendly terms with what appears to be a rather
hostile language; they only increase the rate at which
men busy in their field of work drift away from contact
with the Hebrew. In pursuing any kind of work in Hebrew,
one must sooner or later come to some kind of grips with
the problem; it is difficult, if not impossible, to be
satisfied unless at least some attempt at a more thorough
investigation is made.

There are perhaps two extremes to be avoided. The one
is to breathe a long sigh, and put away the Hebrew Bible.
The other is to become so engrossed in attempting to mas-
ter the countless, often exasperating minutiae of an end-
less area of research (research, too, which sometimes ap-
pears to promise precious little by way of assured results
to apply in one's exegetical work), that one neglects to
study and meditate upon the plain truths of God's saving
message to sinners. Somewhere in between there ought to
be a middle course to choose and follow.

At a time when there was ready access to library re-
sources, some effort at research in the Hebrew verb was
made. The result is these notes. Despite the limitations
of the research and the researcher, the following is here-
with offered, in the hope that it might nevertheless be of
some aid to the brethren.

Sample Quotations

The following are samples of what is being said about
the nature of the Hebrew verb.

The *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* has this
to say: "There are no tenses in Heb, in our sense of the
word. There are two states, usually called tenses, the per-
fect and the imperfect. In the first the action is regard-
ed as accomplished, whether in the past or future ...; in
the second, the action is regarded as uncompleted ..." [1]

Simon Cohen writes in the *Universal Jewish Encyclope-
dia* that the two tenses "do not distinguish time as much
as complete and incomplete action." [2]

Referring to the Hebrew verbal system, the *Encyclopedia Judaica* says: "It is a moot question whether this system marks aspect (without any notion of time) or rather time." [3]

The *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* is a little more definite: "The verb has properly nothing to do with time, but with completeness or incompleteness." [4]

In the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, M. J. Dahood writes: "The function of the Hebrew verb is still a matter of dispute. One view maintains that the perfect form expresses past time and the imperfect form present and future time. A more widely held opinion considers the verb forms as expressing modes of action; the perfect is the mode of completed action, while the imperfect refers to uncompleted action. Neither view can adequately account for all the data, so a less rigid classification seems called for. What has been considered the imperfect form may more fittingly be described as a universal tense because of its possible past, present, or future reference. On the other hand, the perfect form, hitherto regarded as expressing past or completed action, may equally denote present or future action; the context must be the determining factor." [5]

The agreement one might look for is not there. Let's step back into history and go into a little more detail.

Before S. R. Driver

The traditional view of the verb, maintained by the older Jewish grammar, had been that the perfect and imperfect tenses represented the past and future respectively. As a result of the influence of the Jewish grammarians, as well as because of the influence of Latin grammar, this became the accepted view among Hebrew scholars. For example, Gesenius (1786-1842) still called the tenses past and future. The idea of aspect had not yet been advanced. [6]

During the course of the 19th century, the theory of the Hebrew tenses was completely remodelled. The outstanding name here is that of H. G. A. Ewald (1803-1875). "He is considered the father of the theory of Hebrew syntax." [7]

In the preface of *Treatise on the Use of the Tenses in Hebrew*, S. R. Driver acknowledged his obligations to this grammarian. "Ewald by his originality and penetration was the founder of a new era in the study of Hebrew grammar; and there is probably no modern Hebraist who is not, directly, or indirectly, indebted to him." [8] Driver himself built on the work of Ewald.

A word should be said about the constructions with waw consecutive. Roughly described, one construction is the repeated use of a different form of waw (‏ַו‎) with the imperfect after the perfect tense in narratives of past events, with the accent frequently drawn back toward the beginning of the word; the other is the use of the ordinary waw (‏ו‎) with the perfect after the imperfect in future time, with the accent frequently thrown toward the end of the word. The Jews had called the waw, when used in such constructions, ‏וָו הַהִפּוּךְ‎, translated "waw conversive." They thought that under these circumstances the waw had the power to turn the future tense into a past tense, and the past tense into a future tense. Christian grammarians inherited and passed on this idea. When Hebrew syntax was remodelled in the 19th century, however, this term was discarded by many. Already in 1827 a grammarian named Boettcher had suggested the term "waw consecutive." (In explanation of this term, Gesenius' *Hebrew Grammar* says: "This name best expresses the prevailing syntactical relation, for by waw consecutive an action is always represented as the direct, or at least temporal consequence of a preceding action.")9 In 1892 S. R. Driver could write that the term "waw consecutive" had been adopted by Ewald and "most modern grammarians." [10]

The stage is set to examine the work of S. R. Driver.

The Aspect Theory: S. R. Driver

S. R. Driver was born in 1846 and died in 1914. His importance is indicated by the following quotation: "All of Driver's books were well written and carefully researched and three of them are so basic that for all of the progress that has been made since them the specialist still has occasion to consult his ... *Tenses* ..." [11] The work referred to in that quotation is the work we shall examine briefly here: *A Treatise on the Use of the Tenses in He-*

brew, and Some Other Syntactical Questions. It was origi-
nally published in 1874. Some additions were made in the
second edition (1881). The third edition (1892), used in
the preparation of these notes, did not differ substantial-
ly from the second edition. The book had been out of print
since 1942, but was reprinted lithographically in Great
Britain in 1969, and is still in print. Driver's is indeed
a persuasive and articulate presentation of the aspect the-
ory. One might add that not only is the book still a stand-
ard reference work, but also, by virtue of a certain effort-
less elegance of style, it is actually enjoyable reading.

In order to ensure a proper understanding of the fun-
damental nature of the Hebrew verb, Driver takes pains in
the introduction to set forth the distinction (which, he
says, "has not, until recent years, obtained from Hebrew
grammarians the recognition and prominence which it de-
serves") [12] between <u>order</u> of time and <u>kind</u> of time. Order
of time refers to whether an action takes place before or
after some other action; kind of time refers to whether
an action is beginning, continuing, or completed. Action
in any of the time spheres, then — past, present, or fu-
ture — can be regarded either as complete or incomplete.
In contemplating an action, Driver says, a speaker may,
according to his fancy, "lay stress upon the moment at
which it begins, or upon the period over which it extends,
or upon the fact of its being finished and done." [13] On
the next page Driver asserts that whereas Greek recognizes
and expresses distinctions both in the order and in the
kind of time, nevertheless Hebrew "seems totally to disre-
gard" the differences in order of time which are so import-
ant to us. [14] "Now in Hebrew the tenses mark only differ-
ences in the kind of time, not differences in the order of
time ... the three phases just mentioned, those namely of
incipiency, continuance and completion, being represented
respectively by the imperfect, the participle, and the per-
fect." [15]

Although he acknowledges that especially in prose a
past event is usually regarded as completed and is there-
fore expressed by the perfect, and a future as uncomplet-
ed and therefore expressed by the imperfect, he warns
against assuming that this usage is uniform, and under-
scores once again what he regards as the fundamental and

primary facts. The whole theory of the tenses, he says,
must be constructed on these two facts: "(1) that the He-
brew verb notifies the character without fixing the date
of an action, and (2) that, of its two forms with which
we have here more particularly to deal, one is calculated
to describe an action as nascent and so as imperfect; the
other to describe it as completed and so as perfect." 16
A quotation is adduced from a certain Bishop Patteson, a
Poly- and Melanesian scholar, who believed that the mode
of thought of a Semitic man resembled that of a South Sea
islander: "'The Hebrew's mind (and his speech) moved on
with his thought, and was present with the whole range of
ideas included in the thought.'" 17

The imperfect, then, "indicates action as nascent, as
evolving itself actively from its subject, as developing." 18
The idea of reiteration follows closely upon that of incipi-
ency, and is also expressed by the imperfect. In differen-
tiating between the perfect and the imperfect, Driver says
that it is the perfect which denotes the mere occurrence
of an event. The imperfect, therefore, is "chosen in order
to suggest some additional feature characteristic of the
occurrence, which, in the case before us, is the fact (or
possibility) of its repetition." 19 In the more difficult
area of differentiating between the participle and the im-
perfect, Driver says that it is the participle, not the
imperfect, which expresses mere continuance as such. The
imperfect expresses what may be termed "progressive conti-
nuance." 20 "Thus while the impf. multiplies an action,
the participle prolongs it." 21 (In the eyes of some, this
last statement evidently expressed quite aptly the differ-
ence in force between the two forms: both Harper and Ge-
senius-Kautzsch refer to it.) 22 The Hebrew imperfect
corresponds to a degree with the English present in that
it expresses general truths, and also states facts which
which may occur at any time or which do occur periodical-
ly. 23

On the basis of this explanation of the Hebrew tenses,
Driver goes on to treat the consecutive constructions with
waw. In the chapter entitled, "The Imperfect with Waw Con-
secutive," Driver offers an explanation of this construc-
tion which he says is really nothing more than a slight ex-
pansion of the explanation of Ewald. 24 The key sentences
are these: "The principle upon which the imperfect is here

employed will not, after what was said in ##21, 26, be far
to seek. The imperfect represents action as <u>nascent</u>: ac-
cordingly, when combined with a conjunction connecting the
event introduced by it with a point already reached by the
narrative, it represents it as the <u>continuation</u> or <u>develop-</u>
<u>ment</u> of the past which came before <u>it</u>." 25 Thus, the trans-
lation of ‏וַיֹּאמֶר‎ which he suggests is proper is not
."and he said," but "and he proceeded-to-say." 26   (This is
something that will perhaps be familiar to some of us from
J. Wash Watts, whose work we will examine later.) It is
to be noted that association in thought as well as associ-
ation in time will result in the construction of the waw
consecutive with the imperfect.

That the feature of past events seized upon by a langu-
age should be, not the character as past, but the element
of development, of progress, of emergence, Driver says, can
only be explained by the mode of thought of the people.
He also suggests that as this particular construction be-
came common, its real character and original exact sense
were lost sight of, or at least receded greatly into the
background. 27

The chapter on waw consecutive with the imperfect is
the second longest chapter of the book. It is thirty pages
long. The chapter on the waw consecutive with the perfect
is the longest chapter, filling forty-four pages. The
difficulty of the subject is thus indicated. This construc-
tion is not easy to explain.

In treating this syntactical construction, Driver is
again dependent upon the work of Ewald, and he also refers
to the similar ideas of Olshausen and Boettcher. Perhaps
the key sentences are these:

"According to Ewald, #234a,b, the construction
of the perfect with consecutive (the 'relatively-pro-
gressive' perfect ...) was originally evoked by the
opposite idiom of the imperfect with ‏ו‎ consecutive:
there are many well-known aspects under which the
two tenses stand contrasted, and the use of the one
naturally suggests the other as its antithesis, and
so in the present case a specific application of the
latter generated as its counterpart a corresponding
application of the former. Just as before we saw how

sequence in time or association in thought caused an
already completed action to be viewed as passing into
a new phase, assuming a fresh development in the next
act taken up by the narrative, so here it has the
contrary result of occasioning a nascent action to be
viewed as advancing to completion, as no longer re-
maining in suspension, but as being (so to say) pre-
cipitated." [28]

Reference is then made to a suggestion of Olshausen
that this use of the perfect really rests upon "a play of
the imagination": an action is imagined as being actually
completed, because of the character of inevitability which
it assumes when it is related to a previous action as its
consequence. Driver also asserts that the relation of con-
sequence is dependent on the union with waw, and that the
sign which accompanies it, when not otherwise hindered, is
the change of tone. [29] In this construction the first verb
is really the dominant verb. The perfect which follows
"loses its individuality." "It passes under the sway of
the verb to which it is connected," and assumes its char-
acter. [30] "An action described by this construction is re-
garded, it is true, as completed, but only with reference
to the preceding verb, only so far as the preceding action
necessitates or permits.   נ פ ל ת means unreservedly
and unconditionally thou hast fallen: ו נ פ ל ת means
'so hast thou fallen' 'so,' namely, confining the possible
occurrence of the event to a particular area previously
implied or defined." [31]

Such are the essentials of what is known as the "as-
pect theory," according to which even the consecutive
constructions are explained in terms of a tense system
which is regarded as consistently marking, not the order
of time, but only the kind of time. According to F. R.
Blake, this view of the Hebrew verb "is perhaps best pre-
sented by S. R. Driver in his Hebrew Tenses, and forms
the basis for the treatment in various Hebrew grammars." [32]

The Aspect Theory: Other Grammarians

W. R. Harper (1856-1906) — In substance Harper's
treatment, published in 1888, is not significantly dif-
ferent from the foregoing. He repeatedly shows his depend-
ence on Driver. One noteworthy remark is this: "The ease

with which the Hebrew writer passed from one tense to the
other is paralleled only by the difficulty which the mod-
ern translator finds in expressing the force of the
change." 33

In his remarks on the imperfect with waw consecutive,
Harper adduces some explanatory remarks from the second
edition of Driver, which are worth consideration: "For
the explanation of the use of the tense in this connection,
Professor Driver says: 'The Imperfect (from the point of
view of the spectator) expresses what in German is called
Eintritt, and represents action, as *eintretend* — two terms
which may be rendered in English by ingress and ingressive.
A succession of events need not invariably be regarded as
a mere series of completed and independent wholes: each
term may be conceived as having relations with the one pre-
ceding it; it may be viewed as stepping in after it, as
presenting itself to view though an entrance prepared by
its forerunner. The date at which the ingress, or entry,
is imagined to take place is determined by the ·ַ֫ , which
connects the new event with a point previously assigned
in the narrative: the goal at which it sets out, the
starting-point from which it takes its origin, and to
which therefore it is relative, is fixed at the termina-
tion of the action denoted by the preceding verb'." 34

Harper goes on to make comparisons with cognate langu-
ages: there are two forms of the imperfect in Assyrian, of
which the one represents an action as continuing, the other
is the usual narrative tense. In Arabic the imperfect is
sometimes used "in the sense of an Aorist." 35

Harper's comments on the perfect with the waw conse-
cutive are also marked by dependence on Driver. He too re-
fers to Olshausen's suggestion that this usage rests upon
a "play of the imagination." And he says that nearly all
grammarians believe that this idiom "corresponds to and
was called forth by the opposite construction of the im-
perfect with Waw Consecutive." 36

Gesenius-Kautzsch — In this grammar, also, repeated
references to Driver will be found. The Gesenius-Kautzsch
definitions of the perfect and imperfect show that the as-
pect theory is accepted by this grammar also.

"The perfect serves to express actions, events,
or states, which the speaker wishes to represent from
the point of view of completion, whether they belong
to a determinate past time, or extend into the pre-
sent, or while still future, are pictured as in their
completed state." [37]

"The imperfect, as opposed to the perfect, repre-
sents actions, events, or states which are regarded
by the speaker at any moment as still continuing, or
in process of accomplishment, or even as just taking
place." [38]

In this section we are introduced very briefly to a
grammarian named Knudtzon. For we are informed in a note
that the above definition of the perfect is a modification
of a previous definition given in this grammar: "... the
perfect serves to express completed actions." The above
change was made because of the arguments of Knudtzon, whose
studies had led him to propose a partial modification of
the commonly accepted definition of the Semitic perfect
and imperfect. [39] Knudtzon preferred calling the imperfect
the "present," because it "expresses what is either actual-
ly or mentally present." He argued that the essential dif-
ference between the perfect and the imperfect lies in this,
that "the perfect simply indicates what is actually com-
plete, while the imperfect places the action, etc., in a
more direct relation to the judgement or feeling of the
speaker." [40] The same question perhaps occurs to the
reader as occurred to this writer: if it is the imperfect
which places the action "in a more direct relation to the
judgement or feeling of the speaker," whereas the perfect
indicates "what is actually complete," how is it that, on
the basis of Knudtzon's arguments, the authors modified
their definition of the perfect in the direction of allow-
ing more for the point of view of the speaker? Perhaps
fuller information would remove what is only an apparent
difficulty. Unfortunately, no more information is given.

This grammar also rejects the term "waw conversive,"
and adopts as most expressive of the syntactical relation,
the term "waw consecutive." [41] Its definitions of the im-
perfect and perfect with waw consecutive may as well be
given side by side also. "The imperfect with waw consecu-
tive ... serves to express actions, events, or states,

which are to be regarded as the temporal or logical sequel
of actions, events, or states mentioned immediately before."
"The perfect, like the imperfect ... is used with waw con-
secutive ... to express actions, events, or states, which
are to be attached to what precedes, in a more or less
close relation, as its temporal or logical consequence." [42]
It is then remarked that it is a striking peculiarity of
the Hebrew, thus to alternate the perfect and imperfect,
and that an expressive variety is thus achieved, "an action
conceived as being still in progress (imperfect, etc.,)
reaching afterwards in the perfect a calm and settled con-
clusion, in order to be again exhibited in movement in the
imperfect, and vice versa." Depending upon the intention
of the speaker, an action is viewed either as the conse-
quence of what has preceded, or as simply coordinate with
it. In the latter case, it is placed in the same tense as
the previous verb. [43]

The difficulty of really explaining all this is frank-
ly conceded in a footnote. If, they say, the idea of a
waw consecutive is given up, and if the fact is accepted
that the perfect and imperfect consecutives "cannot possi-
bly be used in a way which contradicts their fundamental
character," then "it is difficult to give a proper explana-
tion of this phenomenon." [44] So indeed it is. So far Ge-
senius-Kautzsch.

A. B. Davidson (1831-1902) — We close this section
with a few quotations from one other grammarian whose name
may be familiar to us: A. B. Davidson. We quote from the
19th edition (1914) of his *Introductory Hebrew Grammar*,
originally published in 1874.

"The verb has not Tenses strictly speaking. It
has two forms, which express not time but the quality
of an action as complete or incomplete; the one ex-
presses a finished action, and is called the perfect,
the other an unfinished action, and is called the im-
perfect." [45]

On the consecutive constructions, he writes: "But it
must not be supposed — as was implied by the old name waw
conversive — that the waw really converts the one tense in-
to the other: that is impossible. Various explanations
of this curious phenomenon have been offered, but none will

be probable which contradicts the fundamental character of
the perfect and imperfect as already explained." [46] Note
that he does not offer his own explanation.

One other interesting statement: "The drawing back
of the Tone in waw consec. impf. very well suggests its
connexion with what precedes, and the throwing of it for-
ward in waw consec. perf. suggests its connexion with what
follows." [47]

Hans Bauer

The aspect theory held the field. But it did not pass
unchallenged. A grammarian arose named Hans Bauer (1878-
1937) who vigorously opposed it. He argued "that the two
verb forms of Semitic, as is normally the case in many
languages, are primarily employed to denote difference in
time point (tense) and not time continuance (aspect, *Aktions-
art*)." [48] Among other writings, he co-authored, with P.
Leander, a large work entitled *Historische Grammatik der
hebräischen Sprache des Alten Testamentes*, 1922. That Dri-
ver and Bauer were the leading exponents of opposing theor-
ies is seen from this quotation, taken from a book review
of Brockelmann's *Hebräische Syntax*: "The author is con-
tent to give an outline description of the views of S. R.
Driver and H. Bauer, to note the support which Bauer's
theory has received from G. Bergstrasser, G. R. Driver,
and F. R. Blake, and to indicate his rejection of Bauer's
theory and the gist of his own." [49]

Understandably, none of Bauer's writings were examin-
ed in preparing these notes. But it is important to have
some understanding of what Bauer was talking about, and we
therefore offer the following summary of his theory, taken
from the *Encyclopedia Judaica*. It is worth careful study.

"He worked on the assumption (which others had
made before him) that the imperfect was in the early
stages of the language the only defined verbal form
(i.e., the all-tempora: Aorist), while the perfect
was originally a nominal form (i.e., a type of par-
ticiple: nominal), and thus close in meaning to the
present tense. The nominal participle has two tem-
poral qualities, according to the meaning of each
verb: an act done now or continuously; or an act,

completed in the past, whose results are felt in the
present. The second quality (*perfectum praesens*) is
likely to develop into the *praeteritum*. In each of
the Semitic languages, one of these qualities became
the primary: in Akkadian, the former (Bauer equates
the form *ikasad* with the perfect of the other langu-
ages); in Aramaic, Arabic, Ethiopic, and even Phoe-
nician, the latter. As a result the semantic field
of the all-tempora form became limited in its mean-
ing. In Akkadian it is used as the perfect, but in
the other languages as the present-future. Biblical
Hebrew, which Bauer considered a mixed language, in
this respect stands midway: the conversive tenses
reflect the Akkadian usage, while the regular tenses
are comparable to the use in other Semitic languages.
His view of the mixed nature of Hebrew ("early Canaan-
ite base," close to Akkadian, with a "late layer"
which is closer to the other Semitic languages) de-
rives from certain cases of phonetic inconsistency,
such as the vowels after the *Kof* in קָם (*kam*) as op-
posed to מָקוֹם (*makom*) which both are in Arabic ā
(*qām, maqām*)." 50

Thus, we are now confronted with weighty discussions
of evidence from the historical development of the Semitic
verbal system in the various languages. Such discussions
are prominent in the writings of later grammarians, among
whom is our next man.

G. R. Driver

S. R. Driver had a son named G. R. Driver, born in
1892. The son did not agree with his father. The book
with which we are concerned is his *Problems of the Hebrew
Verbal System*, published in 1936 (now out of print). We
will let the *Encyclopedia Judaica* summarize for us what
Driver was doing in this book. In it, "he explained the
peculiarities of the Hebrew tense system and other features
of Hebrew as resulting from the origin of Hebrew as a mix-
ture of Canaanite and the original language spoken by the
Israelites." 51

The discussions and arguments of this book are based
extensively on phenomena of the cognate languages, Akkadi-
an in particular, and much of the book is therefore beyond

the ability of this writer to understand, much less evalu-
ate. We will try, however, to set forth some of the perti-
nent points from Chapter IX, entitled "Hebrew Consecutive
Constructions."

Driver opens this chapter by advancing various criti-
cisms of the views of other grammarians, particularly those
of his father, which were widely accepted. For one thing,
he suggests that it may be something of a double standard
not only to state that the imperfect, in opposition to the
perfect, expresses completed action, but then also to state
that the imperfect describes action as nascent or emergent.
Furthermore, he claims that the usual theories concerning
the Semitic tenses explain only with great difficulty, if
at all, a number of idiomatic uses of the two tenses. He
regards the purely preterite use of the imperfect to be at
times undeniable, especially after the particle "āz," to
name but one. [52] Then, after citing the views of a certain
Lambert, who had already suggested at the beginning of the
19th century that the ordinary Hebrew perfect and the per-
fect with waw consecutive were actually totally distinct
forms, and that likewise the ordinary Hebrew imperfect and
the imperfect with waw consecutive were similarly distinct
in their origin, Driver says: "In fact, some such hypothe-
sis alone seems capable of meeting satisfactorily all the
difficulties presented by this complex system." [53]

If I understand Driver's theory correctly, he says
that there was a proto-Semitic verb form, capable of de-
scribing action in any period of time: past, present, or
future. From this form there evolved the Hebrew perfect,
qatal, which became the form describing completed action
in past time, but which also retained some of the univer-
sal force of the primitive form from which it evolved, and
was occasionally used in certain contexts with a present
or future sense. Its usage with a future sense occurred
"in poetry which is wont to preserve archaistic usages, in
the prophetic language which is in its very nature poetical,
and in prose when marked by certain safeguards, namely
with consecutive waw and certain other particles" [54] (un-
derlining mine).

This development of *qatal* left an opening for the de-
velopment of a tense for every kind of incomplete action.
"Thus *qatal* became a pure tense restricted almost entirely

to past time ... Hebrew, then, having a perfect, had no
great need of a separate preterite tense but only of one
describing the reverse of completed, i.e. incomplete, ac-
tion." [55] But the form from which the Hebrew imperfect
developed was originally used also as a preterite. This
preterite usage of the Hebrew imperfect survived "sporadi-
cally in poetry and normally also in prose after certain
particles." [56] (Among these particles would be the strong
form of waw (וַ); but note that also other particles are
included.)

In the rest of the chapter, Driver supports this posi-
tion with various interesting considerations concerning
accents and conjunctions. Concerning accents he says: "The
accentuation of the Hebrew verb, then, in the construction
with consecutive *waw* is that of the primitive Semitic speech
as exhibited in the Accadian language and must therefore be
regarded not as a peculiarity invented by the Hebrews but
as an archaism surviving from the common proto-Semitic
speech." [57] He claims that his theory well explains facts
accounted for only unsatisfactorily by previous attempts
to solve the problems of the Hebrew verbal system. [58]

Most of us are familiar with Weingreen's *Hebrew Gram-
mar*, second edition, 1959. At the end (pp. 252-253) there
is a note appended, in which G. R. Driver supplies a suc-
cinct explanation of his views regarding the Hebrew conse-
cutive constructions. A good portion of the material in
the chapter of Driver's book which we have examined is
well summarized there. What is it that Driver has done?
He has renounced any attempt to explain on logical grounds
these constructions, as well as other idioms which he be-
lieves the aspect theory leaves unexplained. Instead, he
offers an explanation based on the historical development
of the Hebrew language.

R. Wehrwein

FOOTNOTES

1. Thomas Hunter Weir, "Languages of the Old Testament,"
   The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, 1939,
   Vol. III, p. 1834.
2. Simon Cohen, "Hebrew Language," *Universal Jewish Ency-
   clopedia*, 1948, Vol. V, p. 279.

3. "Hebrew Language" (under "Supplementary Entries"), *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 1971, Vol. XVI, column 1576.
4. A. Jeffery, "Hebrew Language," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, 1962, Vol. II, p. 558.
5. M. J. Dahood, "Hebrew Language," *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1967, Vol. VI, p. 976.
6. "Linguistic Literature, Hebrew" (under "Supplementary Entries"), *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 1971, Vol. XVI, columns 1396 and 1397.
7. "Ewald, H. G. A.," *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 1971, Vol. VI, column 1006.
8. S. R. Driver, *A Treatise on the Use of the Tenses in Hebrew, and Some Other Syntactical Questions*, third edition, preface, p. x.
9. Gesenius-Kautzsch-Cowley, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, 2nd English edition, p. 133, in a footnote.
10. S. R. Driver, *op. cit.*, p. 72. This page is also the source for the other information in this paragraph. Cf. also J. Wash Watts, *A Survey of Syntax in the Hebrew Old Testament*, 1964, p. 107.
11. "Driver, S. R.," *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 1971, Vol. VI, column 230.
12. S. R. Driver, *op. cit.*, p. 2.
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
17. Bishop Patteson (*Life*, by Miss Yonge, 1874, ii, p. 505), quoted in S. R. Driver, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
18. S. R. Driver, *op. cit.*, p. 27.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
22. Harper quotes Driver on p. 60 of his *Elements of Hebrew Syntax by an Inductive Method*, 1888. Referring to pp. 41 and 42 of the 1881 edition, he quotes Driver thus: "While the Imperfect multiplies an action, the Participle prolongs it; the one presents a series of units, the other, a continuous line." On p. 315, Gesenius' *Hebrew Grammar* (2nd English edition) cites approvingly Driver's stress upon this distinction between the participle and the imperfect.
23. S. R. Driver, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-37.
24. *Ibid.*, pp. 72-73.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 71.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 117.
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ibid.*, p. 118.
31. *Ibid.*
32. F. R. Blake, *A Resurvey of Hebrew Tenses*, 1951, p. 1.
33. W. R. Harper, *Elements of Hebrew Syntax by an Inductive Method*, 1888, p. 57.
34. *Ibid.*, pp. 69-70.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 76.
37. Gesenius-Kautzsch-Cowley, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, 2nd English edition, p. 309. This 2nd edition is revised in accordance with the 28th German edition of 1909.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 313.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 309.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 314.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 133, footnote.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 326, p. 330.
43. *Ibid.*, pp. 330-331.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 330, footnote.
45. A. B. Davidson, *An Introductory Hebrew Grammar*, revised throughout by J. E. McFadyen, 1914, p. 72.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 84.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 86. This statement has elicited criticism, for example from G. R. Driver, who, on p. 85 of his *Problems of the Hebrew Verbal System* (1936), calls this "a purely superficial observation which does not explain the phenomenon." Note also that Davidson's suggestion is not in harmony with what other aspect theorists have said about the close connection of the waw cons. perf. with what precedes.
48. F. R. Blake, *A Resurvey of Hebrew Tenses*, 1951, p. 1.
49. D. Winton Thomas, book review of *Hebräische Syntax* by C. Brockelmann, *Journal of Semitic Studies*, Vol. II (1957), p. 390.
50. "Bauer, Hans," *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Vol. IV, column 330. A preterite tense ("*praeteritum*" in the quotation) is a straight past tense.
51. "Driver, G. R." *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Vol. VI, column 230. As noted before in the section on Bauer, G. R. Driver can be broadly classed as a supporter of Bauer's theory, and an opponent of his father's theory. But

his agreement with Bauer was not complete, either. In
this same chapter he writes that Bauer's explanation
of the waw consecutive construction with the perfect
"is less satisfactory" than his explanation of the
consecutive construction with the imperfect (p. 93).
On p. 96 he says that Bauer and Leander "are only part-
ly right but also partly wrong in calling the Hebrew
perfect and imperfect tenses respectively nominal and
aorist; for these terms are applicable only to the
archaistic Accadian forms and are entirely unsuitable
to describe the proper Hebrew tenses." We need not
detain ourselves in trying to pinpoint further differ-
ences between them.

52. G. R. Driver, *Problems of the Hebrew Verbal System*,
    1936, pp. 86-87.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 88.
54. *Ibid.*, pp. 88-89.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 89.
57. *Ibid.*, pp. 89-90.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 94f.

HOMILETICAL HINTS FROM I AND II CORINTHIANS

(Continued)

In the previous article of this series we entered upon
a study of Paul's two letters to the Corinthians. We ap-
proach these epistles with the purpose of gaining from them
practical hints in the carrying-on of our Gospel ministry,
and particularly that most important aspect of our calling:
the preparation and delivery of sermons. Last time we
spoke in some detail of the importance of keeping our call
before us at all times, both when we sit down to write a
sermon, and when we later step into the pulpit to present
it to our people. We spoke of how the apostle Paul was
moved, not by some fleshly motive, but by love for Christ
who first loved him, to proclaim the Gospel. We now pro-
ceed further with our study of these two letters of Paul.

II.

As far as the content of his preaching was concerned,
Paul said that Christ had sent him "to preach the Gospel"
(I Cor. 1:17). The Gospel is the joyful message of the
grace of God in Christ Jesus. One might say that the Gos-
pel was the beginning, middle, and end of his letters. In
both epistles he sent the same greetings to the congrega-
tion at the very beginning: "Grace be unto you, and peace,
from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ" (I Cor.
1:3; II Cor. 1:2). In both epistles he concludes with the
wish that the grace of God in Christ Jesus might be with
them (I Cor. 16:23; II Cor. 13:14). Moreover, he sets
forth the central sermon theme of all his preaching in the
words: "I determined not to know any thing among you,
save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" (I Cor. 2:2). "We
preach not ourselves," not our human thoughts and opinions,
as though people should believe in us (this is what the
false prophets did, II Cor. 10:12), "but Christ Jesus the
Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake" (II Cor.
4:5). Just as God on the very first day of Creation gave
the command: "Let there be light" (Gen. 1:3), so this same
creative God has shined in our hearts "to give the light
of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus
Christ" (II Cor. 4:6).

Since this was the case, he wanted the Word of the
cross to be his only wisdom. He wanted to preach nothing
other than Christ, for we have the true knowledge of God
only in Christ. In Christ we see the grace of God per-
sonified. Paul occupied the office of the New Testament,
that office which was established for the specific purpose
of proclaiming the reconciliation that Christ had accom-
plished. He looked upon himself as an ambassador, who in-
vited people to enjoy the benefits of the reconciliation
completed by Christ (II Cor. 5:18-21). He calls his preach-
ing simply "the preaching of the cross" (I Cor. 1:18), be-
cause Christ's death on the cross was the very heart and
core of the entire work which the Son of God came to ac-
complish on earth. In Paul's preaching, this fact always
stood out in clear prominence, that Christ "was made to be
sin for us," that God placed the sins of the world upon
Him, in order that He might be the atoning sacrifice for
all mankind. Therefore, since He died for all, they have
all died (II Cor. 5:14). And in this way He has become

the righteousness which avails before God (II Cor. 5:21).
This fact is confirmed and revealed by His resurrection,
as Paul says: "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain;
ye are yet in your sins" (I Cor. 15:17). This is the only
immovable foundation of our salvation. "Other foundation
can no man lay" (I Cor. 3:11). Paul built on this founda-
tion, since he proclaimed the Word of reconciliation.

Paul thus shows us the way. If we wish our preaching
to bear rich results, which will be evident also in eter-
nity, then we have no other recourse than to preach Christ.
And to preach Christ means to preach the Gospel. The Gos-
pel is in no way a series of rules for living, as is the
case with the religious systems promulgated by those who
imagine themselves to be wiser than the Holy Spirit. We
cherish the warning of a sainted professor, who advised
extreme care in the way we use the word "must" in our ser-
mons. "We don't want a lot of musty preachers!" No, the
Gospel is the joyful message of Christ, of His person and
His work, and especially of His death on the cross as our
Substitute. If anything or anyone would tend to remove
our eyes from this central kernel of Christian doctrine,
causing it to be obscured or displaced, then we should at
once tread it under foot. Luther's golden saying should
ring forth from each and every one of our sermons: "In my
heart there reigns, and shall ever reign, this one arti-
cle, namely, faith in my dear Lord Christ, which is the
sole beginning, middle, and end of all spiritual and godly
thoughts which I may have at any time, day or night" (St.
L. Ed. IX:9). To the Corinthians Paul wrote: "Not that
we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your
joy: for by faith ye stand" (II Cor. 1:24). We are sure-
ly to be "helpers of the joy" of our hearers! And the on-
ly way in which we can be such helpers is by trying to
clear away whatever would hinder and disturb their joy.
This would include such things as: sin, fear concerning
God's wrath and displeasure, the terror of the Law and its
threats, doubt, as well as fear of death and hell. At the
same time, we are to preach the "joy of the Holy Ghost" in-
to their hearts (I Thess. 1:6). We are to bring souls to
a certainty of the grace of God and of righteousness, and
surely also of eternal life. If we are to carry out this
huge assignment, there is no other way that it can be done
than by preaching Christ "who of God is made unto us wis-
dom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption"

(I Cor. 1:30).

So Christ is to be preached. But let Him be present-
ed for what He is: not merely as another great teacher
and philosopher and performer of miracles, nor as a para-
gon of virtue, nor as a new Law-giver who comes to add
new requirements to those which were set forth by Moses.
Rather, let Him be preached as Christ the crucified! Oh,
the world indeed considers this Gospel to be just so much
foolishness! It just doesn't fit in with the wise thoughts
of human reason. "The natural man receiveth not the things
of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him:
neither can he know them, because they are spiritually dis-
cerned" (I Cor. 2:14). Should we, then, even try to meet
reason halfway, and try to make the preaching of the cross
more palatable to the world? The Corinthians would have
liked it if St. Paul had done this very thing. But the
Apostle didn't give in to such desires. He didn't want his
knowledge and abilities to be lord over the Gospel, but to
be subject to it. In the firmest manner possible, he re-
jected all human reason as soon as it wanted to be any-
thing but a servant in the proclaiming of the Gospel. "It
is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will
bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent ... For
after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew
not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to
save them that believe" (I Cor. 1:19,21). Even though this
Gospel cannot be comprehended by the world in its intellec-
tual conceit, and even though the world finds it to be an
unsolvable riddle and an irreconcilable contradiction,
nevertheless it is still "wisdom among them that are per-
fect," a wisdom which can be achieved only through the en-
lightenment of the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 2:6ff.). The Gos-
pel comprises a harmonious whole, a unity, for Jesus Christ
"was not yea and nay," was not an unreliable wavering to
and fro, but "in Him was yea" (II Cor. 1:17-19).

Also in our times it is certainly the case that natu-
ral man does not want to endure the "foolish" preaching of
the Gospel. People want to change this doctrine, and de-
velop it into some sort of philosophical system. But woe
unto us if we try to accommodate the rambling streams of
our times. It is useless to think that we must somehow
polish and remodel the old truths of God's Word in order
to avoid being called fools by this progressive world in

which we live! We would be bitterly deceiving ourselves
if we were to imagine that we can in some way prepare the
ground for the Gospel by adapting it to some of the pre-
vailing opinions of the world. Our assignment is simply
to preach that which God has revealed to us through His
Holy Spirit. And as far as our own person is concerned,
we are to "bring into captivity every thought to the obedi-
ence of Christ," and are to bring our hearers into this
same captivity (II Cor. 10:5).

The Apostle says: "We are not as many, which corrupt
the Word of God" (II Cor. 2:17). Why does he not wish to
be numbered among those who corrupt and falsify the Gospel
by human emendations and so-called improvements? The first
reason is this, that the Gospel was revealed to him by God
through His Holy Spirit. It was not revealed to him mere-
ly in a general sort of outline, but also in its individu-
al parts, and even in the very words and phrases with which
it is set forth. "Which things also we speak, not in the
words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy
Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual"
(I Cor. 2:13). "I have received of the Lord that which
also I delivered unto you" (I Cor. 11:23). "I delivered
unto you first of all that which I also received" (I Cor.
15:3). His conscience was bound to these words of divine
revelation, for "we can do nothing against the truth, but
for the truth" (II Cor. 13:8). Therefore he could not per-
mit even the smallest dot over an "i" to be changed or re-
moved. We have this same revelation of God in the inspired
Word of the prophets and apostles, in the Scriptures which
we have before us. When we add to this Word or take away
from it, then we violate the sanctuary of God. The Word
of Scripture can and should be the only source and judge
of our preaching. The work of the preacher is not to pro-
duce something new, but he is rather to explain and to
make appropriate applications from the heavenly words which
lie before us in the Scriptures.

A second reason why St. Paul rejected each and every
alteration of the Gospel is this, that he would then be de-
ceiving his hearers in a matter as important as the salva-
tion of their souls. People cannot be saved by any other
"gospel" than that which the Apostle had proclaimed. "I
declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you,
which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by

which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preach-
ed unto you, unless ye have believed in vain" (I Cor. 15:
1-2). Our faith is vain and our hope is lost if we give up
the Word of the cross. Surely that is a fact which we, too,
should always keep in mind. If we permit even the small-
est detail to be taken away from the Gospel, then we are
giving up the only means we have by which we ourselves to-
gether with our hearers can be saved. Then we rob them,
as well as ourselves, of the spiritual and heavenly bless-
ings which Christ would give to them through our ministry.
The Gospel alone, and that means the entire and complete
Gospel, must be the content of our preaching! Here, too,
the words stand true: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus
Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha" (I Cor. 16:22).

Therefore Paul distinguished very sharply between Law
and Gospel. He set forth the Gospel with great earnest-
ness indeed. To him grace was really grace, and was of
such a nature that it could not endure merit and works
alongside of itself. The work of Christ was complete and
perfect, and could not possibly be made still more per-
fect by the works of men's hands. The Word of God is ac-
tually a Means of Grace. It is the hand of God by which
He offers to us the righteousness which Christ has earned.
Faith is not a work of the Law. It is not a necessary con-
dition which man must carry out in order that the merit of
Christ might become effective for him. Rather, faith is
the empty, receiving hand which grasps the righteousness
which has already been pronounced by God. "All things are
of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ,
and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To
wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto
Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and
hath committed unto us the Word of reconciliation. Now
then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did be-
seech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye
reconciled to God" (II Cor. 5:18-20). Therefore he
preached the Gospel in its full purity.

But Paul was surely no Antinomian ("against the Law").
On the contrary, he struck powerful blows with the thunder-
ing axe of the Law against sin in every form. He held be-
fore the congregation the threat of eternal punishment if
they did not repent of their sins. He did not do this in
the manner of the false apostles, who indeed spoke much

about God's Law, but who then directed people to their own
works, and thereby dulled the cutting edge of the Law's
demands. Paul preached the Law in such a way, that the
hearts and consciences of the people would be cut to the
quick. This was the case, both in the words he wrote when
he was absent from them, and also in the words he spoke
when he was present with them. "For we write none other
things unto you, than what ye read or acknowledge; and I
trust ye shall acknowledge even to the end" (II Cor. 1:13).
"For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but
his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.
Let such an one think this, that, such as we are in word
by letters when we are absent, such will we be also in
deed when we are present. For we dare not make ourselves
of the number, or compare ourselves with some that com-
mend themselves; but they measuring themselves by them-
selves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not
wise" (II Cor. 10:10-12).

But Paul did not expect salvation to result from this
preaching of the Law. He says: "The letter killeth," the
Law only arouses anger and preaches damnation, "but the
spirit giveth life," only the Gospel makes alive and gives
the Spirit and life and righteousness (II Cor. 3:6-9). The
Law must prepare the way for the Gospel. For the Gospel
is intended only for sinners troubled by their sins. When
the Law has done its work, then the Gospel must follow in
all of its sweetness and power, without any conditions and
reservations being added, "lest Satan should get an advan-
tage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices" (II Cor.
2:11).

As evangelical preachers, we are ambassadors who be-
seech people in Christ's stead: God is reconciled; be ye
reconciled to God (II Cor. 5:20). This preaching of the
Gospel is our real assignment. And this cannot be done
successfully without the preaching of the Law. So the
preacher of the Gospel must also preach the Law. It is en-
tirely proper to use that familiar comparison of the pas-
tor's office with that of the physician. A physician's
first assignment is to heal. But in order for him to do
this, it is often necessary for him to make incisions with
his scalpel, and cut away in a seemingly merciless manner.
So also the Law knows no mercy. Its very essence is to
demand and threaten. And this is how it must be preached.

In his well-known book on *The Proper Distinction between Law and Gospel*, Dr. C. F. W. Walther said: "The Law must be preached as though there were no Gospel, and the Gospel must be preached as though there were no Law." Any sweetness that a person brings into the Law weakens it, so that it is no longer able to work with its full power. Sins which may prevail within a congregation, or which may be typical sins of the times, must be exposed in the light of the Law. The natural, in-born corruption of the heart becomes manifest in these sins. The conscience must be sharpened over against such sins, since it may well become dulled through constant exposure to them. But since the Law itself says nothing whatever about grace or mercy, the preacher should use it only to reach his goal, which is, that his hearers be terrified by it. When this has been accomplished, then he comes with the Gospel of the grace of God in Christ Jesus.

And even when the Apostle preached the Law according to its so-called Third Use (as a rule and guide, exhorting his hearers to godliness), he did not forget that the power to do good works and to fight against sin flows only from the Gospel. Therefore he based his exhortations on the reminder that as Christians they should remember their high calling. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (I Cor. 3:16). "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?" (I Cor. 6:2). "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid" (I Cor. 6:15). "Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men" (I Cor. 7:23). "I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say" (I Cor. 10:15). In many other passages the Apostle Paul thus held out to the Christians their high calling.

In addition, he held before them the blessings which they had received through faith. "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (I Cor. 5:7-8). "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in

your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Cor. 6: 20). "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich" (II Cor. 8:9). "Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence am base among you, but being absent am bold toward you" (II Cor. 10:1).

Paul directed his hearers to the love toward God which should be found among Christians. "If any man love God, the same is known of him" (I Cor. 8:3). Neither will we succeed in making Christians more pious through the preaching of the Law. With the Law we can indeed point out to them what truly good works are. But only the Gospel can give either the desire or the ability to do truly good works in the sight of God. The Gospel strengthens the new man, so that its growth becomes ever more evident in every way. Thus Christ the crucified will necessarily be the starting point, the center, and the goal of our preaching.

(To be concluded)

A. *Schulz*
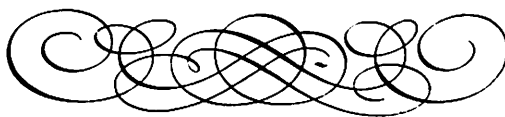
IN CHRIST JESUS

PERFECT AND COM-
PLETE IN CHRIST

This is the condition of each believer in Jesus Christ. So Paul wrote to the Colossians. In his letter Paul held aloft the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whose redemption we have the forgiveness of sins; who is the very Image of the invisible God; the Firstborn in relation to all creation, for He is the very Creator of the universe; the eternal One; the Head of the Church; the Firstborn from the dead; the One Person in whom all ful-

ness dwells; the One who brought peace and reconciled all things unto Himself; the Mystery concealing all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; the One in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily. What a heaping up of expressions, phrases, clauses — all exalting our Lord Jesus Christ above everything and everyone in heaven and on earth! Why this paean?

Theology is practical! Jesus Christ is exalted by Paul because in Him all believers are exalted. Col. 2:9 is a memory passage for catechetical students because of its capsulated christological truth: "In him — JESUS CHRIST — dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily!" So what? What benefit is this fact to the common Christian? Paul continued, "And ye are complete in him" — that same JESUS CHRIST.

This is the truth that was being challenged and denied in Colosse, even as in our day. There were those who were peddling a "superior" form of Christianity, which consisted in subservience to the Mosaic law (2:16), worshiping angels (2:18), and saying "No" to certain forms of matter (2:21). It was an effort to attain a superior sanctification and so a higher form of Christianity through legalism, the occult worship of angels, and asceticism. To all these efforts, which were in fact a rejection of Christ, Paul said "No!" He exalted Christ because Christ exalts all believers.

The believer is perfect or mature (τέλειος) and complete (πεπληρωμένος). These are synonymous terms, yet with differing concepts and emphases. A τέλος is a goal. The sinner reaches his goal, his maturity, the highest stage of development possible in this life when he is "in Christ Jesus." He reaches that goal the moment he is brought to faith in Christ, but the word has an eschatological overtone that points to a fuller maturity which shall be manifest when the sinner appears with Christ in glory (3:4). The word "complete" presents the picture of a vessel filled to the brim, with no possible moral or spiritual excellence lacking or capable of being added when he is "in Christ Jesus." "Complete" is a perfect participle, indicating that the moment a sinner is brought to faith in Christ, he is "complete" with this "completeness" continuing on as long as he remains in Christ.

In 1:28 Paul states that the purpose of his Gospel ministry is to "present every man perfect (τέλειον) in Christ Jesus." In 2:9-10 he writes, "In him — Christ Jesus — dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, And ye are complete (filled up — πεπληρωμένοι) in him." In 4:12 Paul uses both terms, stating that the efforts of Epaphras, the founder of the congregation, had been directed toward this end, that "ye may stand perfect (τέλειοι) and complete (πεπληρωμένοι) in all the will of God."

A Christian is perfect, mature, complete, filled up "in Christ Jesus." Outside of Christ he is as a fish lying on the shore or a mammal submerged in the waters — fallen from grace and doomed to death.

Wherein does that perfectness or maturity and completeness consist? In Christ Jesus is all knowledge and wisdom — the key to all theology, the key to understanding God's relations to man and the sinner's relations to God. That knowledge is the personal experience that God loved and loves sinners who stand condemned before the bar of divine holiness and justice, that despite the fact that all sinners are worthy of eternal death God has forgiven all in and through Christ Jesus. Thus the highest and most lofty knowledge available here on earth is the knowledge of the grace of God in Christ Jesus.

In Christ Jesus is righteousness; in man is unrighteousness. The virtues of man apart from Christ, the very best that the noblest of men can produce, praised and rewarded as they may be by men, are nothing more than glittering vices when viewed in the light of God's holiness. No man can stand divine inspection of his works. No man can pass the test or measure up to the divine norm. In Christ Jesus alone is there righteousness that satisfies the demands for unfailing and undiminished love Godward and manward.

In Christ Jesus is sanctification. The believer sins in all his good works; yet he is nonetheless holy in all his works because all his sins of commission and omission that attend upon his good works are forgiven and covered by the righteousness of Christ.

In Christ Jesus we have reached the goal of human ex-

istence, the fulness of human potential here on earth. In
Him we are perfect and complete. Apart from Him we are
but dust and ashes, the best that we can produce ourselves
but filthy rags. In Him we live and shall live forever-
more. Apart from Him is only death and eternal separation
from God in the midst of indescribable anguish and torment.

COMPLETE IN CHRIST   Can one be complete in Christ, yet
YET EVER MATURING   incomplete; perfect or matured, yet
                        maturing? Yes! This is not a con-
tradiction, but a paradox. How so? St. Paul wrote with a
present or "now" point of view and with a future or "escha-
tological" point of view.

        "In him — JESUS CHRIST — dwelleth all the fulness of
the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him!" (Col. 2:
9-10) That was for the Colossians and is for all Christ-
ians the present reality, the "now" of our situation.

        But earlier, when speaking of his Gospel ministry,
Paul had written, "We preach (Christ), warning every man,
and teaching every man in all wisdom; that ye may present
every man perfect (τέλειον) in Christ Jesus," (1:28). What
does Paul have in mind when he speaks of "presenting" each
and all of the Colossians? A line from his second letter
to the Corinthians gives us the proper perspective: "We
must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ," (II Cor.
5:10). Paul's perspective is eschatological, looking to
the end time of final judgment, which likewise marks the
time of the entrance into the final goal for the sinner,
that of living ἐν δόξη, (3:4). So also in the closing re-
marks of his letter to the Colossians Paul wrote: "Epa-
phras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth
you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that
ye may stand perfect (τέλειοι) and complete in all the will
of God," (4:12). Again, the viewpoint is eschatological.

        We observe also that after stating that the Colossi-
ans were complete in Christ, Paul continues in a subsequent
section, chapter three, to warn against the lusts of the
flesh and to encourage the fruits of faith: "Mortify
therefore your members which are upon the earth," (3:5),
... "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and be-
loved, bowels of mercies, meekness ..." (3:12). In 3:10
Paul speaks of the Colossians as people who "have put on

the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image
of him that created him." It would appear as though the
Colossians possessed all knowledge, but not so, for in the
opening section of his letter Paul had told the Colossians
that he had not ceased "to pray for you, and to desire that
ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all
wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk
worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in
every good work, and increasing in (or by means of) the
knowledge of God." Paul prayed both for an increase of
knowledge and for a greater effectiveness of that know-
ledge in the lives of the Colossians.

How are we to understand this glorious completeness
in Christ, yet continuing maturing until that last great
day? In this way: We and all believers are complete in
Christ now by imputation. All of the gifts of Christ —
righteousness and holiness, knowledge and wisdom, and
sanctification — are ours, wholly and completely, by impu-
tation, that is, by faith in Christ Jesus now. Yet it has
pleased the Lord, in His infinite wisdom, to let remain
in each child of God his sinful flesh, indwelling sin,
which clings to him and remains stubbornly and unalterably
contrary to every Word of God, both Law and Gospel, and per-
sistently and consistently immune to any and every impulse
of the Holy Spirit. So it is that we are both presently
complete in Christ by imputation, yet presently ever matur-
ing in Christ until the moment of death and/or the coming
of our Lord at the end of time.

Consider these parallels: Redemption is complete in
Christ, yet we await a final redemption. "Being justified
freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ
Jesus," (Rom. 3:24), ... "we ourselves groan within our-
selves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption
of our body," (Rom. 8:23).

Justification is complete in Christ, yet justifying
is on-going. The Gospel is the proclamation and so the
offer of "the righteousness of God," (Rom. 1:17), in Christ,
but "a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the
law," (Rom. 3:28). "Righteousness" and "justify" are a
noun and verbal form of the same root in Greek. The justi-
fication of the world is complete in Christ (objective jus-
tification); it is appropriated by faith in an on-going

action on the part of God (subjective justification), till the end of time, for we daily sin much and He daily and richly forgives all our sins.

So also with reconciliation: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself," (II Cor. 5:19). Thus the world was and is objectively reconciled in Christ. Then follows the appeal, "We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God," (II Cor. 5:20). Again, reconciling is both complete in Christ and an on-going process as each individual is brought to faith and continues in faith until the last day.

Paul began his first letter to the Corinthians by testifying that our sanctification is complete in Christ: "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us ... sanctification," (I Cor. 1:30). The same Paul concluded his first letter to the Thessalonians with the wish that "the very God of peace sanctify you wholly," (I Thess. 5: 23). We are sanctified, yet not wholly. .What is lacking in our sanctification is stated by Luther in his well-known observation: "A pious man sins in all his good works." Yet that we are completely sanctified is expressed by Augustine in this way: "All the commandments of God are fulfilled when whatever is not done is forgiven." So we are now sanctified in Christ by faith by which the righteousness of Christ is continually imputed to us. We continue to be sanctified through the on-going work of the Holy Spirit who works faith by the Gospel. Yet we await the time when we shall be sanctified in glory.

All history is complete in Christ, "for all the promises of God in him (Christ) are yea, and in him Amen," (II Cor. 1:20). Yet those promises are still working themselves out historically until the consummation when Christ comes.

DISROBING —   What activity is continually charac-
ENROBING   teristic of a Christian who is at
                      once complete in Christ, yet ever
maturing in Christ, who is both justified and sanctified
in Christ, yet ever being justified and sanctified in
Christ? It is a spiritual activity that Scripture describes as disrobing and enrobing, undressing and dressing, putting off and putting on.

Again, at the beginning of chapter three of his letter to the Colossians St. Paul stresses the tension between the now situation of the Christian and his future situation. Now "ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God," (3:3). Now we are dead to the flesh, the world, and the devil, while being alive, righteous, sanctified in Christ. But that condition, which is ours by imputation of all the blessings of Christ to us, is hid from the eyes of the world, frequently from our own eyes! "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory," (3:4). That's the future, the last day and forever thereafter. Then, and only then, shall what is hidden be revealed. Then we shall be fully matured, wholly sanctified, and glorified through Christ. What unspeakable glory awaits us!

How are Christians to manifest and give evidence of what is hidden now, but shall one day be revealed? By daily disrobing and enrobing, putting off and putting on. St. Paul carries this out in verse 5 through 15 of Colossians 3, then continuing by applying the activity to specific situations in which there is always a relationship of one to another: wives, husbands, children, fathers, slaves, and masters.

The first disrobing is expressed in a violent manner: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth," (3:5). Then follows an enumeration of some of the lusts of the flesh that are to be put to death. In verse 8 the call comes again to "put off all these!" What is to be put off? "Anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another."

Next the entire matter is summed up: "Seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds," (3:9). The "old man" is the spiritual sickness in which we are born that pollutes our thinking, willing, and feeling.

Disrobing alone would leave us naked. So a complementary activity is necessary: "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him," (3:10).

What does this "putting on the new man" mean or involve or entail? It is the ethical activity of enrobing

or dressing oneself in godly virtues. It is an exhortation to the Spirit-given "heart of flesh," (Ez. 11:19), to enlist the members of the body "as instruments of righteousness," (Rom. 6:13), to the end that the Christian walk according to the law written in his inward parts and in his heart, (Jer. 31:33). St. Paul expresses that exhortation in his letter to the Colossians in these words: "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another ... put on charity ... let the peace of God rule in your hearts ... Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly ... And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him," (3:12-17).

Note carefully that these commands to disrobe and enrobe, to put off and put on, are directed to Christians, who had previously been told and assured that they were and are "complete in him — CHRIST," (2:10). What a gloriously paradoxical truth this is! We live day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute complete in Christ by faith, for His righteousness/forgiveness is constantly imputed to us. So we can live, always ready and prepared to die, so that we may live forevermore. Yet our Lord has not chosen to sanctify us wholly, except by imputation. He has left the cross of the flesh in us with the result that our daily, hourly, minute by minute life is to be a putting off and a putting on until the moment of death when we put off the flesh permanently and the moment of the resurrection when we put on the new man wholly and eternally.

Paul expresses the same truths in the companion letter to the Ephesians, beginning in chapter 4. The Lord of the Church established the public ministry of the Gospel to bring individuals "unto a perfect man" (εἰς ἄνδρα τέλειον). Beginning at verse 17 and continuing to the end of the epistle Paul spells out this maturing in terms of "disrobing and enrobing, putting off and putting on." "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man ... And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness," (4:22-24). Specific examples of "putting off" and "putting on" follow, which in turn are followed, as in Colossians, by applications to persons in specific relationships.

A HISTORICAL
PERSPECTIVE:
CREATION TO
RESTORATION

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them," (Gen. 1:27). God wanted man to reflect His nature. Man in his intellectual, volitional, and emotional life was to reflect the holy, moral will of his Creator, and that freely and willingly. In order that it might be evident whether man, who was created with a morally free will, would exercise that freedom of will in a way that reflected his being created in the image of God was the purpose of the test command in the garden. Man failed the test.

Scripture does not say in express words that the image of God was lost to man. It prefers, rather, to outline the degeneration of man over the centuries that led God to the determination that He had to destroy the first world. Having done that, God declared that judgment was no cure, "for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth," (Gen. 8:21). Judgment could not even begin to enable man again to reflect the moral nature of his Creator.

Yet God was determined that man should fulfill his original intention that man should image or reflect the holy, moral nature of his Creator. The Father, who knew all things, including the tragedy of the fall into sin, predestinated us already from eternity "to be conformed to the image of his Son," (Rom. 8:29).

Then in the fulness of the time "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law," (Gal. 4:4). In so living under the law, which is the verbalization of the eternal, immutable, moral will of God, the Son reflected in every relationship with His heavenly Father and His earthly family, with men and women, friends and enemies the moral will of His Father. As a man among men, subject to the temptations common to man, He lived as "the image of the invisible God," (Col. 1:15). Jesus lived freely and fully as God wanted Adam and Eve to live, as He wants all men to live, and as all the inhabitants of heaven shall live.

Man, however, is born to live in a way that does not reflect the image of God. Something that was once man's in the garden of Eden, but that has been lost, must be re-

stored. The prophets indicated the need: "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power,"(Ps. 110:3). "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts," (Jer. 31:33). Our Lord made rebirth a prerequisite for entrance into the Kingdom of God, (John 3:5).

The moment the Spirit of God creates faith in Jesus Christ, that gives the sinner pardon from his sins and covers him with the protective shield of the righteousness of Christ, He simultaneously makes the sinner a new creature, (II Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15).

That which is new, completely different from the old, lives to do its work of reflecting the moral will of God in an environment of the old, which continues to oppose the moral will of God at every point. The result is that the life of a child of God is characterized by unceasing struggle, (Gal. 5:17). The new creation, the restored image, the inward man, the new man — however he is called in Scripture — is to reflect the holy, moral will of God in the entire intellectual, volitional, and emotional life of the child of God. Though this is impossible as long as the flesh remains, the Christian is to pursue this goal with unflagging zeal.

Because the Christian cannot and does not completely reflect the holy will of God in his life, Scripture speaks as it does. It exhorts the Christian, who is completely and perfectly justified and sanctified in Christ, decisively to put on the new man, who is already on but in a manner that needs continual renewing. Though he has been put on, he never succeeds in reflecting perfectly the will of his holy Creator. As long as the Christian remains in faith in Christ Jesus, he is covered with the protective shield of Christ's righteousness which grants him perfect sanctification. Yet during this same time, yea until death, he is exhorted daily to put on the new man and put off the old, that is, live a life of daily repentance, until he loses his flesh in death and is granted the resurrection body in life hereafter henceforth to reflect completely and fully the holy moral will of his Creator.

Until then the Christian at times cries out in anguish with St. Paul: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. 7:24). At times

he talks to himself and exhorts himself as did the psalmist:
"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou dis-
quieted within me? hope thou in God!" (Ps. 42:11). So we
live from day to day, ever and always complete in Christ,
yet ever and always maturing until that day when we shall
wholly, fully, perfectly, freely reflect the holiness of
our God in an untarnished environment of love.

Paul F. Nolting

———————— P A N O R A M A ————————

THE LCMS — STILL   The extensive efforts of a for-
A DIVIDED BODY   merly orthodox church body to
                    return to its former doctrinal
purity and spiritual strength has made the news over and
over again. In many respects it is a pathetic struggle,
not only because of its organizational overtones, its con-
stitution and handbook approaches to the internal upheav-
als, but also because the original problem which started
the whole trouble has not been squarely faced and brought
into focus. The fruit and results of a loose and unscrip-
tural fellowship principle and practice are all too appar-
ent in the festering growth of liberalism which has fast-
ened itself on the body. This has in recent times been
reflected in a very tangible and concrete way, for in-
stance, in the counting of votes on every crucial issue
in convention sessions. For every six votes for the more
conservative stand, four votes have been registered on
the liberal side of the question.

It is quite evident to the discriminating observer
that despite all the protestations of the administration
to the contrary, this body is deeply divided and the lines
are becoming more solidly drawn. There is even now talk
of clusters of congregations gathering for the purpose
of providing asylum for those who feel undue administra-
tive pressures to get them back in line or suffer the con-
sequences. Organizations formed in protest to synodical
resolutions exist and meet regularly and even siphon off
money that would normally flow into the synod's treasury.
District presidents are being told that their offices are
in jeopardy if they continue to ordain and install synod-
ically-uncertified men in congregations that have called
them. The former president of the synod's largest semi-
nary who was charged with false doctrine has been declar-
ed cleared of the charge through a designated synodical
channel, but the guilty one continues to be charged while
serving 400 seminarians who severed themselves from the
parent seminary at 801 De Mun, St. Louis, Missouri. It
was reliably reported that the synodical president who
initiated the proceedings against him during his origi-
nal seminary incumbency, communed with him, using as a
defense that the communion during a convocation was un-
der the auspices of a local congregation with which, of
course, both of them were in fellowship.

On both sides candidates for office have been open-
ly promoted in a power struggle which has tended to side-
track the main doctrinal issue. The latest report from
the desk of the synodical president to the constituency
tells the members that he is moving to the middle, avoid-
ing what he calls the two extremes. Meanwhile, the con-
servative side has strongly urged the liberals to leave
the church body, thus, of course, relieving the officials
of the God-given responsibility of exercising doctrinal
discipline by excluding the false teachers.

There is an inconsistency in all of this which seems
to be disregarded. If the "conservative" majority should
succeed in eliminating the extreme liberal element, the
church body would still be in fellowship with the ALC,
which defends the very views which those LCMS liberals
espouse. The problem would still be there, and it will
remain as long as the original fellowship question which
brought about the rift in the Synodical Conference is

not faced and settled in a God-pleasing manner. As long
as the administration plays on the string of synodical
loyalty as one of the factors that will hold the body to-
gether (cf. *Christianity Today*, Oct. 25, 1974, p. 11),
there can be little hope of a return to the old paths.

From all of this there is something to be learned.
The Church, in the true sense of the word, consists of
believers who have their life from the Word. Consequent-
ly, any rejuvenation or reconstruction cannot take place
through external means, neither through resolutions,
constitutions, handbooks, laws or ordinances, nor through
the election of officers, the appointment of committees,
reshuffling of boards, convening of convocations, and
the like. The outward complexion may thus be changed,
but as long as the spirit is untouched the problem will
remain. Indeed, it is only through the revealed Word of
God that there can be any hope of reconstruction. Through
the holy evangelist John we have these words of Jesus re-
corded: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my dis-
ciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth and the truth
shall make you free" (John 8:31-32). It can be said, as
a fact, of any group of confessing Christians that
strength may be measured by faithful adherence to the in-
fallible Word of God. As one of our revered fathers
said: The Church, the spiritual communion, has its life
from the Word; that is, it draws its spiritual life, its
spiritual attitude, completely and alone from the reveal-
ed Word of God, even the Gospel. Indeed, when that Word
is corrupted in any part, weakness sets in and death may
follow.

There is a lesson to be learned from all of this,
and if we don't take it to heart, then any rehearsal of
the sad events taking place in the LCMS will have been
in vain. There is nothing to be gained simply by pass-
ing on information to satisfy the curious and inquiring
minds if we don't profit from it for ourselves, and if
we don't accompany it with a fervent prayer to God that
the erring may be brought to repentance and return to
the old paths.

C. M. *Gullerud*

BRIEF BOOK NOTICES . . .

> *The Psalms*, by Joseph Addison Alexander, Reli-
> gious Heritage Reprint Library; Grand Rapids:
> Baker Book House, 1975. $9.95.

A valuable addition to the pastor's book shelves,
the present volume is another in the series of "class-
ics" reprinted by Baker Book House. Alexander's pur-
pose in this book was to "make Hengstenberg's Commenta-
ry on the Psalms ... more acceptable and useful to the
English reader."

> *The Typology of Scripture*, by Patrick Fair-
> bairn, Religious Heritage Reprint Library;
> Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1975. Two
> volumes in one binding. $14.95.

Typology is not a well-known or widely-practiced
branch of theology in our circles. However, in view of
the ever-increasing interest in eschatological studies,
a survey of dispensationalism may not be amiss, at least
to obtain a working knowledge of what is involved. This
standard volume would serve in good stead in such study.

John Lau

AN ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT A PRICE INCREASE . . .

When the *Journal of Theology* began its first volume
in 1961, the subscription rate was $2.00 per year. This
lasted for only two years, for the rate was raised to
$3.00 per year beginning with the December, 1962, issue.
The next change occurred with the issue of March, 1967,
when the offer to furnish a two-year subscription for
$5.50 was made for the first time.

The time has now come when another increase in the
subscription rate has become necessary. The cost of
printing our journal has increased approximately 40%
over the cost two years ago. We are, therefore, increas-
ing the yearly subscription rate to $4.00; we will offer
a two-year subscription for $7.50. The new rate will go
into effect with renewals and subscriptions entered after
December 31, 1975.

John Lau, Managing Editor