



**"Meditate  
upon these things;  
give thyself  
wholly to them;  
that thy profiting  
may appear unto all"**

**I Timothy 4:15**

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## JEREMIAH 31:31-34\*

The Jeremiah passage under discussion is one of the most beautiful and magnificent expositions of Gospel in all of Scripture, an exposition especially meaningful because it sharply contrasts pure Gospel to that which is not Gospel. It is a text so rich in meaning and so glorious in content that every moment of study on it is rewarded with deeper understanding and faith, and continues to reveal to those who search, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God. Dr. J. P. Koehler, in commenting on the mysteries of the Christian personality, aptly stated, "*Wir koennen daher immer nur Stueckweise davon reden, um Irrtuemer zu vermeiden, ohne zu meinen, dasz wir alles fuer das menschliche Verstehen klar gemacht haben.*"<sup>1</sup> In presenting this study the writer would underscore this comment. Not everything can be made clear to our human understanding. The Scripture is like a deep well; it presents truths that many times defy further formulation by our diminutive understanding, truths that might best be expressed simply by saying no more than the Scripture itself says. It is the prayer of the essayist that his words and his meditation on this Word of God may not stand in the way of what the Holy Spirit is saying.

- 31) *Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:*
- 32) *Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD:*
- 33) *But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.*

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\* An essay delivered to the General Pastoral Conference of the CLC on July 8, 1981.

- 34) *And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.*

As we read this text, we see at once that our Lord is talking about a New Covenant that He will make with His people, a covenant promised (verse 31), explained (verse 34), and clearly contrasted with the Old Covenant (verse 32).

Whether or not we speak of the Old Covenant or the New Covenant, it is well to note who is speaking. A careful reading of the text reveals to the reader that the identical words that occur most often are the words, "saith the LORD." It is the Lord Who is here speaking, the immutable, holy, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent Lord, the Jehovah-God, the Source of law and the Dispenser of grace. He is the Maker of heaven and earth, the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the One Who is and was and is to be. He is the One Who revealed Himself as the Covenant-God first in Genesis, chapter 2, where He described creation from the standpoint of man; He is the One Who promised His Son to crush the serpent's head; He is the One Who renewed the promise of the Savior to a specific people, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; He is the One Who revealed Himself as the "I am" to Moses at the burning bush; He is the One Who prefaced the Law with those Gospel-words, "I, the Lord, thy God"; He is the One Who gave the Old Covenant and inscribed the New.

The covenant relationship of God to men is a beautiful one. The gracious Covenant of God is a unilateral solemn promise or promises. Our heavenly Father, out of pure grace, condescends to the level of sinful men, makes His promises, backs them with an oath of faithfulness (CHESSED) and vows to extend the promised blessing to the undeserving forever. The motive for this action on the part of God is His infinite and inestimable love. We call the covenant unilateral because man can in no way reciprocate. Contrast, if you will, the love and faithfulness of the Lord to the total unworthiness and faithlessness of man.

In this covenant relationship man is simply the receiver, and even his receiving (faith) is a willingness of heart and confidence in these promises as true and certain for himself that the Holy Spirit alone has worked within him by the very word of promise.

In this text two covenants are contrasted, the Old and the New. The New Covenant, in a sense, precedes the Old. The basis of the New Covenant is that marvelous promise made to our first parents after their fall into sin, the promise of the Seed that would crush the head of the serpent. This promise was renewed in covenant-form and confirmed with a rainbow, when God spoke to Noah after the flood: "I will establish my covenant with you." While this covenant apparently stressed the renewal and preservation of the laws of nature, its basic force was the preservation of man's time of grace to come to know the Jehovah, the Savior-God. (Isaiah 54: "... for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, to rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.") Through Noah, the preacher of righteousness, God kept the promise of the coming Savior alive to a world that had started anew from the eight believing survivors of the flood (Heb. 11:7).

The covenant-promise is most clearly delineated in the life of Abraham, whom God by grace called from Ur of the Chaldees, and to whom He promised that from his own flesh and blood the Savior would be born, and that his descendants would inherit the land of Palestine, the homeland of the promised Seed. This is indeed an unconditional covenant of grace as the New Testament amply teaches. It was a solemn commitment on the part of God to send Christ for all nations unto and through Abraham and his seed. (Gal. 3:16-17 — "the covenant ... confirmed before of God in Christ.") Abraham is a prototype of God's way of saving mankind, namely through faith, i.e., receiving forgiveness of sins and righteousness before God through Spirit-wrought acceptance of God's promises. This is in contrast to the *notitia Dei* of the unregenerate, man's striving to bless God by ethical behavior according to

legal demands. (Romans 4:3-5 - "Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness ... to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.") Abraham is the prototype of those who become children of God by inheritance, by receiving as a free gift what those who would earn their righteousness by performance would never attain. (Gal. 3:18 - "God gave it [the inheritance] to Abraham by promise.") This pre-Mosaic covenant, this beautiful Gospel-covenant made by the Jehovah-Lord to Adam and Eve and ratified to Abraham, had been the hope and blessing of all believers of all time. It is unconditional, it has no strings attached, it is pure grace and promise, and though given specifically to Abraham and his seed, it offered its blessings to all.

This covenant pertained, of course, to the believers who later lived under the Mosaic covenant. It was the true, believing son of Abraham, who on Mt. Sinai recognized "the Lord, thy God, that gave the Ten Commandments" as the Covenant-Savior Who had worked his redemption. Such believers saw the ensuing commandments as a restatement of the gracious will of their Lord, in which by faith they took delight. How often in later Bible history did not God use this covenant to strengthen the faith of His believing children? ("... because of his covenant with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob" - II Kings 12:23 - the Lord was gracious to Israel.) This covenant is essentially the same covenant under which you and I are presently living, of course, no longer sealed by circumcision and no longer pointing to a coming Savior; the essence of the covenant is, however, the same. Our salvation is an unconditional inheritance worked by God in Christ and appropriated through Spirit-worked faith.

What was the Old Covenant? It was the covenant made by God with the Children of Israel through Moses on Mt. Sinai. As far as its content is concerned, it is the holy and immutable will of God that demands perfection. It demands perfection not only in outward works, but a free, natural, spontaneous perfection of mind, will and heart (Lev. 19:2 - "Ye shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy"), a perfection that is consistent with the nature of God, the Giver Himself; a perfection that without any

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external law, from an inner urge, wants to do what is good and hate what is evil. It demands faith, love and obedience. By its nature it is totally conditional. It says, "Thou shalt!" "Bless you, if you do it, and curse you, if you fail!" There are no compromises; there is no hint at forgiveness. It even demands unconditional faith in the Triune God with all the attributes of faith. The recipient must give, perform, do. It is absolute, total and relentless in its demands.

One of the finest commentaries on the meaning and purposes of the Old Covenant (Mosaic Law, Sinaitic Covenant) is chapters three and four of Galatians. Here St. Paul teaches that the Old Covenant did not set aside that precious covenant that God made with Abraham. The Mosaic Law was "added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made" (Gal. 3:19). In itself the Old Covenant was the good, holy and immutable will of God, but in the face of sin it showed only threat with no breath of mercy. What was intended for good only worked evil (Rom. 7:3). *"Waeren wir im Gesetz und das Gesetz in uns geblieben als unsere Art und Natur, so haetten wir es als Gesetz nie empfunden, noch erkannt, so haette es einer neuen Gesetzgebung auf Sinai nicht bedurft."* (Luther)<sup>2</sup>

When after 400 years the family of Jacob finally left Egypt, they left as a stiff-necked, murmuring, non-receptive people, infiltrated with Egyptians and deeply influenced by the Egyptians' amorality and idolatrous animal-worship (cf. Exodus 32). To this people God revealed Himself as the gracious Covenant-God (Ex. 19:3-6), but at the same time added the law because of the transgressions of the people. Because their moral sense was so blunted, the people needed a law to awaken a knowledge of their own sinfulness. But more than that! This law was to intensify their sinfulness (2 Cor. 3:6-7). It was to brand as damning sin every activity of natural man: his powers, his weaknesses, his virtues, his vices, his faith, his loving, his hating. ("For if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law," Gal. 3:21.) Moreover, this applied not only to the Ten Commandments, but to the whole law. There are two important points that we want

to remember regarding the Old Covenant. First, the Law of Exodus forms one unit. In practice there is no difference between the so-called moral, civil or ceremonial law. What God said about what a Jew could eat was as much law as the Ten Commandments. Secondly, the Old Covenant was made with the Children of Israel and with none other. The non-Israelite had his own law which God revealed through the work of creation. ("For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves, which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness ..." Rom. 2:14-15.) The whole Sinaitic code pertained only to Israel as a sort of wall of partition (Eph. 2:14), to keep Israel in and other nations out. God intended the descendants of Abraham to be His "peculiar treasure," "a kingdom of priests..." (Ex. 19:5), who should preach forgiveness in Christ to the ends of the earth. Consider the tender words of Jeremiah, "I made the covenant ... I took them by the hand ... I was a husband, saith the Lord." God wanted this whole people to be His spiritual bride, whom He would love and cherish and for whom He would sacrifice all, but the nation rejected their bridegroom with incessant spiritual whoredoms. "This is a nation that obeyeth not the voice of the Lord their God, nor receiveth correction ... Them I will cause to cease ... the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride" (Jer. 7:28,34).

Because of the unbelief of the people, God established an intermediary priesthood between Himself and man. Only the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies. Blood was the chief thing in the sacrifice; it was through blood that God would forgive Israel their sins and give them new hearts to obey His will. This blood could not be offered directly, but had to be brought to the door of the temple for the priest to pour out on the altar (Lev. 16).

But for all of God's mercies and grace toward Israel, the people as a nation stubbornly rejected Him and would not repent. The Holy Spirit characterizes this unbelief in many places. "Hear ye this, O House of Jacob ... which swear by the name of the Lord, and made mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth and righteousness

... I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck is as an iron sinew, and thy brow brass ..." (Is. 48:1-8). The Old Covenant did not achieve its God-intended purpose of leading the children of Israel to the knowledge of their sin. It failed because the Jews had deceived themselves with their self-invented concept of righteousness, the Satanic delusion that one can fulfill what the law demands and thus earn righteousness before God. As a result, the Jews ignored the purpose of God's law-covenant, and did not understand its transitory nature. They went so far as to create a host of additional regulations to achieve a sort of super-righteousness. Moreover, this system of good works that they had developed they felt was universally valid to extend for all time, ignoring the truth that the Old Covenant was ordained of God to last only until the coming of the Seed that would deliver Israel from this yoke.

There was as much political or geographical reason for this Old Covenant as there was spiritual. God had chosen a particular family from which the Savior would descend and a particular site at which He would be born. The very thought of preserving one people in one geographical location for some 2,000 years is staggering! It is easy to understand the necessity of minute regulations governing the transfer of land, and marriage within the tribes, and rites and ceremonies that would identify the Israelites as a singular people. The Old Covenant was not only to preserve Israel from the spiritual contamination of its neighbors, but was also to hem them in physically until the coming of the Seed. To achieve these purposes a law-covenant was necessary. The people would not listen to the Lord as their Covenant-God; they kept breaking every law God set up (cf. Ex. 16: how the Lord had tested Israel with the law of the Sabbath in the wilderness). Consequently, they needed to be compelled to fulfill God's purposes with His law-covenant.

This ought not strike us as strange! Has there ever been a nation that believed in God? Nations do not believe! Many are called, but few are chosen (Mt. 22:14). It is interesting to note how frequently Christ in His public ministry dealt with individuals on a one-to-one basis. Individuals believe. Men are so readily inclined

to accept the terrifying power of the prince of this world, that the rejecters of the Gospel constitute the majority. The number of professed believers has been an insignificant minority in any nation since the fall into sin, whether we consider the time of Cain and Abel, or Sodom and Gomorrah, or Noah, or the outward nation of Israel. Nothing but external force, law with its demands and threats and promises, would keep the nation of Israel together.

What about that believing minority, that handful in Old Testament times, that in true faith held to the promise of the Seed and longed for His coming? What about the faithful few to whom the promise of Abraham was their hope of salvation? What did the Old Covenant mean to them? To the Children of God the moral demands of the Ten Commandments and the punishments calling for daily repentance were not only a whip to their flesh, but to them as believers, these moral demands became the loving word of a kindly Father Whom they delighted to hear! Nonetheless, these believers had to live under the complete rigid code of the Old Covenant. To such people this covenant served also as a yoke of bondage (Heb. 2:15) that made them long for a deliverer, for a time when they would be free of these restrictions, for that time of New Testament liberty that Christ ushered in. Moses, that great giver of the Law, himself longed for that greater Prophet Who would bring a different and better message, the message of grace and truth (Deut. 18:15-18). All of God's believing people, up through Simeon and Anna, longed for and eagerly awaited the greater day of fulfillment.

In Jeremiah 31 the New and Old Covenants are contrasted. Verse 31 tells us with whom the New Covenant will be made — it says with the house of Israel and the house of Jacob. A careful study of the whole text as well as substantiating passages makes it clear, however, that this covenant was not made with the whole nation in the same way as was the Old Covenant. God wanted to be a husband and father to the whole nation, but the whole nation did not want God, as verse 32 reminds us, "which my covenant they brake." The New Covenant was proclaimed to all, but embraced only the believing remnant which also

included Gentiles (Jer. 3:17 - "and all nations shall be gathered"). This covenant was a covenant of grace and mercy, the covenant of a loving Father, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy. This covenant was initiated, effected and preserved by this loving Father. It was made first with Adam and Eve, who, in their fallen state, had nothing to contribute to their redemption, and it was renewed to all believers of all time. This covenant is complete and unconditional; it is purely an act of the grace of our God. Man does not deserve it, he cannot by his own reason and strength accept it, and he cannot by his own effort or merit contribute a single iota to it. In essence, this New Covenant is no different from the Old. Both are made by the same God; both are made to the same people, sinners; both promise every grace and blessing. What makes the covenants so different is that one demands complete fulfillment (Rom. 10:5), while the other out of pure grace gives everything that the Old Covenant had promised but without any of its frightful demands. The Old Covenant could achieve only slave-service; the new is powerful to save simply because it is totally free and unconditioned. The New Covenant is the message of forgiveness through the blood of Christ. It is pure Gospel.

Notice the Gospel-words: "I will put my law ...". Because Israel could not perform the law-covenant, God would put His New Covenant into their hearts. He literally poured it in. It is a gift, not a performance of the receiver, but of God. Man is simply the object on whom God bestows, for whom He carries out the promise, "We are his work, created in Christ Jesus." Yet if this is pure Gospel, it may seem strange to us that our Lord would describe this covenant by saying, "I will put my law in their inward parts and in their hearts." In the beautiful Gospel passage from Isaiah 42 (vv. 1-8), the Lord uses much the same expression when He calls the Gospel "law" and "judgment" (MISHPAT) - "He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles" and "the isles shall wait for his law." This is the "law" and "judgment" that the "Light unto the Gentiles," the One Who will not break a bruised reed or quench a smoking flax, would proclaim to all the earth. We find much the same expression in the New Testament, where St. Paul speaks of "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:2). This law is

none other than the "perfect law of liberty" (James 1:25), pure Gospel, called law because of its universal truth — because it is perfect and complete and eternal, as reliable and as enduring as God Himself, Who graciously accepts the righteousness of Christ, which is sealed in the resurrection of His Son as full payment for our sins.<sup>3</sup>

This Gospel can be called law in another sense. The law is the absolute teaching of love, but not for natural man since "the law through the flesh was made powerless" (Rom. 8:3). In actuality the sinner gets to know the what and the how of the law through the Spirit, Who gives (writes in the heart and mind), with the result that whatever there is of natural and revealed law in natural man is enlightened, explained, illustrated, and translated into the law of liberty through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Dr. Oesch describes this thought well: "Als neue Schoepfung haben wir nicht einmal eine Norm extra nos noetig, weil sie durch den Heiligen Geist in uns verkoerpert ist, nachdem sie von Christo fuer uns, an unserer Statt erfuehlt wurde, welche Erfuehlung uns gegen jede Forderung schuetzt. Dem Glaebigen, sagt Luther, kann man gute Werke nicht gebieten, denn er tut alles schon zuvor aus Liebe; jedes Gebot und Verbot kommt zu spaet, bleibt ohne Adresse. Aber gerade diese Haltung, die aus dem Glauben allein flieszt, ist es, die das Gesetz eigentlich wollte; durch sie wird der nomos pneumatikos innerlich in den Herzen aufgerichtet, Roem. 3,21; 2,26ff; 8,3ff; Jer. 31, 31-34; Hebr. 8,10. Lex praescribit, evangelium inscribit.""<sup>4</sup>

It is the sole and holy will of our Lord to write the New Covenant into the hearts of His believers. In reality this covenant was not new at all, since believers from the time of Adam found this Gospel their hope and comfort and peace. Rather, it was new in the sense that the mercies of God are new every morning (Lam. 3:23). It was new in contrast to the old, to the elements of this world, to the law. The law is external, conditioned by threats and promises and burdensome to all under its sway. The Gospel is internal, written in the heart, Spirit-created and Spirit-preserved, a source of joy and comfort and blessing to its recipients. The law says, "Do this," but the Gospel assures the hearer that he is God's very

own treasure and possession, that he is the temple of the Holy Spirit. God not only wrote this covenant once in man's heart, but He continues to write it — v. 33: "I will write it in their hearts." ("Will write" = Hebrew imperfect of incomplete action.) It is an ongoing act of the Holy Spirit. He inscribes His grace whereby He sustains our faith unto life everlasting.<sup>5</sup>

Where this is the case, says Jeremiah, "No one from the greatest to the least will be in need of the exhortation to know the Lord, for they shall all know Him." What a beautiful thing it is to be a child of God! The people to whom Jeremiah is talking are such people. They are the "children of God" (Gal. 3:26), who "have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27), in whom "Christ is formed" (Gal. 4:19), who "are led of the Spirit" (Gal. 5:18), who "walk in the Spirit" (Gal. 5:25), who are "in the Spirit" (Rom. 8:9), who are the "sons of God" (Rom. 8:14). Such children of God, from the greatest to the least, know the Lord and need no exhortation to know Him. This is a strong statement, but it is Scriptural truth, reiterated again and again in Scripture. St. John tells us in John 6:43, "It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall be all taught of God.'" Repeatedly St. Paul speaks of God's children as "complete in Christ" (Col. 2:10), "new creatures" (2 Cor. 5:17), having "assurance of full understanding" in Christ since in Christ are "hid all treasures of wisdom and understanding" (Col. 2:2-3).

The compulsion of the law does not apply to the Christian as Christian, since he is a child with child's understanding, reborn and renamed by the Holy Spirit. Isaiah plainly states, "And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children" (Is. 54:13). It is likely that the similar words of St. Peter led to the expression of this truth in our confessions: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (2 Peter 1:3). For the confessions state: "... and, indeed, if the believing and elect children of God were completely renewed in this life by the indwelling Spirit ... they would do of themselves, and altogether voluntarily, without any instruction, admonition,

urging or driving of the Law, what they are in duty bound to do according to God's will" (Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration 6:6).

Significant especially in this connection are the words of our Savior in His high-priestly prayer: "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one even as we are one" (John 17:22). Because of this *unio mystica*, the believer is so intimately united with the Savior that he finds the norm and impulses for his actions in himself. The law does not stand over him as something foreign to his will but has gone over into his will as a force of love motivated by the Holy Spirit. We ought to note carefully that the faith we possess is a perfect entity, a divine creation. Admonitions to grow in faith, necessary because we still have an old Adam, are not admonitions to improve our faith by some use of the law, but that the Holy Spirit through the word would ground, strengthen, and preserve that faith against the way of the flesh.

When Jeremiah writes, "No one will be in need of exhortation to know the Lord," he is giving expression to the purest Gospel that we must not allow our reason to viti-ate. His words underscore the joy and beauty of being a child of God, who in unity with the Father possesses everything — all righteousness, all joy, all knowledge, all understanding. When God wrote, "I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh, and I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them" (Ezek. 36:26), He was describing the glorious beauty of being a child of the heavenly Father, a beauty in direct contrast to tables of stone and the stony heart.

The people of the New Covenant have experienced the pure joy of the Gospel, the greatest joy being their redemption. Verse 34: "I will forgive ... and I will not remember."<sup>6</sup> Again, this is a Hebrew imperfect, expressing the on-going act, a truth beautifully expressed by Dr. Luther, "... daily and richly forgiving all sins to me and all believers in Christ." "He forgives and does not remember" — there is no memory with God of our past

sins, no matter how heinous. You and I may look back on our lives with dismay and regret over sins we wish we could forget. The realization of our present failures and constant sinfulness can only haunt and depress us, but our joy and the key to our future lies in the Gospel-word, "I will not remember." The fact that God has no memory of our sins whatsoever, that for Jesus' sake, without our lifting a finger, we have a clean slate is so impressive a truth, and so contrary to the reward/merit system of our world, that without the Holy Spirit writing this very truth within our hearts, we could never believe it. "I will not remember" is the very essence of our faith; it is the basis of our joy; it is the great peace promised by Isaiah. Moreover, as Jeremiah assures us in the verses following our text, these Gospel-promises of God are as secure and enduring as the laws of the heavens, as the coming of each new day and the shining of the sun, moon, and stars.

You will note that the essayist has very carefully spoken of the Christian as Christian, as a new creature, and has carefully avoided speaking of our baser lusts, our old Adam, which clings to us every moment during our time of grace. The reason for this is clear: it is because the passage under discussion speaks this way. That the Christian has an old Adam that needs to be battled is indeed true; this old Adam contaminates even our best moments and needs constantly to be beaten down as "an untractable, refractory ass." Because of our old Adam, and in so far as we have one, we need the many admonitions, warnings, rules of conduct that the Scripture presents, and with which our Savior and heavenly Father show us what is pleasing to Him.<sup>7</sup> But for the renewal and refreshment of our spirit there is no room for law, but, rather, the precious Gospel that keeps us ever mindful of what our Lord has done for us in Christ and of our blessed estate as God's chosen ones. This is the law of love, not a foreign will from without, but written in our hearts, as Jeremiah says, through and with the act of forgiveness effective by faith.

This magnificent and impressive Gospel-passage of Jeremiah is not without application in the New Testament. The writer to the Hebrews quotes these precious words in

two places, Hebrews 8:9-12 and 10:15-17. In both instances Christ is emphasized as the Mediator of the New Covenant, a Mediator who unconditionally does for man what man cannot do for himself. In Hebrews 8, where the Jeremiah passage is quoted *in toto*, the force is on Christ as the minister of the sanctuary (literally, LEITOURGOS), Who is to officiate, to bring to men the benefits of the redemption that He won through the sacrifice of His life. The New Covenant relationship that Jeremiah describes is very carefully explained from the point of view of the "heavenly minister of the sanctuary" (Heb. 8:2). The Old Covenant established an intermediary priesthood between the Lord and His people. In this priesthood only the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies and offer the sacrifices of blood that had been brought to the door of the Tabernacle. The heavenly Minister is seated "on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens" (Heb. 1:3). Contrast this to Aaron, who was never permitted to sit in the sanctuary, for his work was never done.

The heavenly Minister performs His divine service before the Father for the benefit of others. The earthly sanctuary of the Old Covenant, made by human hands, is done away with. Thus, in the New Covenant, an intermediary, some person to render divine service before God for other believers, is no longer necessary. In fact, it is wrong! Each believer, as a spiritual priest, may now boldly approach the throne of grace, where Christ is the LEITOURGOS. As our Minister, Christ first and foremost offered His own body on the cross once and for all. "Now where remission of these (sins — referring to Jer. 31:35) is, there is no more offering for sin" (Heb. 10:18). As our Minister, aware of our weaknesses, Christ intercedes before the Father even before we sin ("I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not" Luke 22:32). As our Minister, Christ's whole purpose before the Father is to intercede for us in all things ("For he ever liveth to make intercession for them" - Heb. 7:25). Christ is our perfect Intermediary, by Whose blood we are redeemed, and through Whom by the Holy Spirit we approach the Father in all things. "Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Christ, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and, having a high

priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb. 10:19-22).

The writer to the Hebrews, in a magnificent way, explains for us this New Covenant which God will write in man's heart, a covenant centered in Christ, Who is the "all in all" to the believer. At first, it seems that we face a contradiction, namely, that the members of the New Covenant are totally saints who completely approve of every word their Lord has spoken and delight in it, and at the same time possess a flesh that is totally sinful, rebels against God, and must be constrained to any appearance of Christianity. This is, indeed, a contradiction, as much a contradiction as the many paradoxes of the New Testament: he that would save his life shall lose it, or out of death comes life. Yet the writer to the Hebrews has shed light on this contradiction by explaining it in terms of Christ, the Minister of the sanctuary. By faith in Christ I am made a member of His holy Church and by the merits of Christ my sinfulness is covered, even though on this earth I am never free of my flesh. But more than that! The conflict between my flesh and my spirit is resolved by our Minister of the sanctuary, Who as a perfect high priest makes constant effective intercession for me. Gratefulness for this high priest, through Whom all my doings and life are pleasing to the Father, and Who continues to make intercession for the failures and weaknesses of His brothers and sisters in this life, is the only single God-pleasing force that would prompt me to a truly God-pleasing behavior. Thanks be to the Lord that He has melted our stony hearts with the warm and comfortable message of the Gospel, and literally poured out upon us His Holy Spirit to preserve us in our struggle against the devil, the world, and our flesh, as He leads us to eternal life in heaven.

*Robert Dommer*

#### NOTES

1. "We can only express ourselves piecemeal about this matter for the purpose of avoiding errors, with no in-

tention of claiming that we have made everything clear to human understanding."

2. "Had we remained intimately united with the law and the law with us as our very essence and nature, we would never have recognized nor experienced God's will in our hearts as law, nor would a new giving of the law on Mt. Sinai been necessary."
3. What we say here about law (*lex inscripta*) we can likewise say about judgment as used in Isaiah 42. This is the MISHPAT, the judgment of "guilty" that has been blanketed by the judgment of "not guilty" through the merits of our Savior.
4. As new creatures we have no need whatsoever for a norm "outside ourselves." This norm is already embodied in us through the Holy Spirit; it has been fulfilled by Christ for us and in our place, which fulfillment protects us against any demands. No one can demand good works of the believer, says Luther, since the believer already does everything out of love; every command and demand comes too late; it is addressed to no one. Yet precisely this disposition that flows altogether out of faith, is the very one that the law would have. Through faith the "spiritual law" is established within, in the heart. The law prescribes; the Gospel inscribes.
5. In the following quotation from Matthew Henry's commentary on Jeremiah 31 the Reformed emphasis on duty is readily apparent. "That he will incline them to their duty: I WILL PUT MY LAW IN THEIR INWARD PART AND WRITE IT IN THEIR HEART: not, I will give them a new law (as Mr. Gataker well observes), for Christ CAME NOT TO DESTROY THE LAW, BUT TO FULFILL IT; but the law shall be written in their hearts by the finger of the Spirit as formerly it was written in the tables of stone. God writes his law in the hearts of all believers, makes it ready and familiar to them, at hand when they have occasion to use it, as that which is written in the heart, Prov. 3:3. He makes them in care to observe it, for that which we are solicitous about is said to lie near our hearts. He works in them a disposition to obedience, a conformity of thought and affection to the rules of the divine law, as that of the copy to the original. This is here promised, and ought to be prayed for, that our duty may be done con-

scientifically and with delight." The Reformed dogma, in verbal expression, is often so insidiously close to Lutheran dogma that we many times can read our meaning into their words, and vice-versa. That is why doctrine calls for clear expression, and no doubt why Dr. Luther at Marburg (1529) referred to Zwingli as a man of a different spirit: "*Ihr habt einander'n Geist.*"

6. "This could well be translated, 'I forgive and I do not remember.' The Hebrew perfect (completed action) is used in presenting our deliverance and salvation wrought by the suffering Servant. The Hebrew imperfect (incomplete action) is used by God in continuing to proclaim to His children in the flesh His constant valid forgiveness, His forgetfulness of their sins, and the comfort of His judgment, 'not guilty.'" — G. Radtke.
7. "*Weil wir aber nicht nur Geist, sondern auch Fleisch sind, der unheimlichsten Verfuehrung Tag und Nacht von innen und von auszen ausgesetzt, so musz mit dem eingeschriebenen Gesetz auch das vorgeschriebene bestaendig verkoppelt sein, damit das Fleisch in Schranken gehalten und die Luege entlarvt werde.*" — Oesch. (Just because we are not only spirit but also flesh, beset by the most gruesome temptation from within and from without day and night, therefore the *lex inscripta* must constantly be joined with the *lex praescripta*. This is necessary to hold the flesh in check and to unmask sin.)



## II CORINTHIANS 5:19

*"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"* (KJV). ὥς ὅτι θεὸς ἦν ἐν Χριστῷ κόσμον καταλλάσσων ἑαυτῷ μὴ λογιζόμενος αὐτοῖς τὰ παραπτώματα αὐτῶν καὶ θέμενος ἐν ἡμῖν τὸν λόγον τῆς καταλλαγῆς.

This passage brings to mind vivid childhood memories of vibrant living room discussions between an opponent and a defender of the doctrine of objective justification. The champion of the scriptural teaching rightly made repeated reference to II Cor. 5:19, resting his case on this sure word of God's Holy Spirit. We perhaps carry with us memories from confirmation class of explanations of "to wit" and "reconciling," and doubtless we can still recall how keenly our interest was aroused when the question was brought to our attention whether or not "was" and "reconciling" belonged together.

Courses in doctrine, training in Greek, and studies in Isagogics all contributed to bringing us into more intimate contact with this verse, which, under the wholesome promptings of God the Holy Spirit, Who penned all Scripture for the salvation of souls, we learned personally to treasure more and more as an especially concise and clear statement of the Gospel, one to which we could ever return for certainty of salvation. And how our appreciation of this verse was enhanced by a thorough study of its context, with its soul-inflaming earnestness! II Cor. 5:19 is part of a larger section in which Paul dwells on the glory of the Gospel ministry. It is part of a book which seems especially designed to implant in the young pastor a genuine love for souls and to nourish in him a determination to emulate the great apostle in the intensity he brings to bear in his calling. How we ought to return to this letter again and again in order to absorb its unique riches into our souls and to be stimulated into greater spiritual energy in the ministry of reconciliation. Within the larger framework of such thoughts, it is our aim to give special attention to cer-

tain exegetical questions presented by this verse.

Every kind of reading and study is appropriately directed to the pages of Holy Writ, from the most cursory scan undertaken to obtain an overview of a book or letter, to the most minute analysis on the basis of the original language, pursued in order to attain a high degree of precision and accuracy in assimilating the Spirit's message. Such minute analysis is admittedly taxing labor. But it is necessary and wholesome labor. We are not to shy away from it as useless and misdirected effort. Let us work our way into the points at issue by sampling the views of commentators.

Calvin: "But the meaning is fuller and more comprehensive — *first*,<sup>1</sup> that God was in Christ; and, *secondly*, that he reconciled the world to himself by his intercession." "The Father, therefore, was in the Son, in accordance with that statement — *I am in the Father, and the Father in me.* (John X. 38.)" "*Not imputing to them.* Mark, in what way men return into favour with God — when they are regarded as righteous, by obtaining the remission of their sins."

Bengel: He states that ἦν and καταλλάσσων belong together. "*Reconciling, not imputing* — The same thing is generally expanded by affirmative words."

Erdman: "This 'ministry of reconciliation' has one supreme message, namely, that 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.' This was being accomplished by canceling for men debt of guilt, 'not reckoning unto them their trespasses,' and by committing to the apostles of Christ this message of reconciliation."

Alford: "ἦν cannot, as in Erasm., Luther, Calv., Beza, al., and E.V., belong to ἐν Χριστῷ, 'God was in Christ, reconciling' & c., — partly on account of the position of ἐν Ζε., which would thus probably be before ἦν, but principally (Meyer) because of incoherence with θεμελιος ἐν ἡμῶν κ.τ.λ.: for in that case the two latter clauses must express the *manner* of reconciliation by Christ, which the second of them does not."

Plummer (ICC): "Almost certainly, ἐν Χριστῷ belongs to καταλλάσσω, being parallel to διὰ Χριστοῦ in v. 18." "Almost certainly, ἣν καταλλάσσω is the analytical imperfect of which Lk. is so fond (1:21, 2:51, 4:20, 5:1, 16, 18, etc.)." "Just as τοῦ καταλλαξάντος ἡμᾶς explains how God brought about the new conditions, so these two participles explain how He brings about the reconciliation; 'viz. by not reckoning to men their trespasses, and by having deposited with His ministers the message of reconciliation.' Note the change from pres. part., of a process that is going on, to aor., of one that is complete."

Plumptre (Ellicott): He prefers joining the verbs. He also says: "The 2 participial clauses that follow describe the result of the reconciling work. The first is that God no longer charges their transgressions against men."

Hughes (NICNT): "There has never been unanimity as to how the opening clause of this verse should be understood." He lists formidable authorities on both sides and explains both views but does not arrive at a decision.

Lenski: His discussion was not very helpful. But let us note that he takes the καὶ before θέμενος as as-censive, translating: "also having placed ..."2

J. P. Meyer: He accepts the KJV construction, suggesting that the other combination would change the meaning of καταλλάσσειν into something like "bringing to faith." "The establishing of the message of the καταλλαγῇ, in contrast to the working out of the καταλλαγῇ, was a single act, completed in a moment; hence the aorist, θέμενος." He offers next to nothing on the relation of the clauses.

It is readily seen that there is difference of opinion not only regarding how to construe "was," but also regarding the relationship of the three participial clauses beginning with "reconciling" (or "was reconciling"). With good reason, one feels at this point the urge to sketch for himself at least a rough chart of the various possibilities. There would be two groups: one with ἣν

as a separate verb, the other with ἔνυ construed directly with καταλλάσσειν. In the first group the chief possibilities are: a) the three succeeding clauses are parallel or coordinate, each expressing a separate and independent thought; b) the first clause is parallel to the third and the second explains the first; c) the first clause stands by itself and both of the succeeding clauses explain it in some way. In the second group, we would have possibilities corresponding essentially to b) and c) of the first group. Note that even in our above list of commentators, we have two variations of c): the last two clauses give the manner of the reconciliation (Plummer), and the last two clauses give the result of the reconciliation (Ellicott). (We by no means wish to be understood as conceding that all these possibilities are necessarily theologically tenable.)

Let us now advance to a discussion writers who have treated these matters in more detail.

John Schaller:<sup>3</sup> He separates the "was" from "reconciling." "He can presuppose that the Corinthians will immediately be reminded of the wonderful expiatory sacrifice for the sins of the world which God, who was in Christ, offered to Himself." There is no explicit argumentation to support this position. Attention is quickly focused on the relationship of the clauses. A previous issue of the *Journal of Theology* (Sept., 1981, pp. 33-34) brought quotations showing that Schaller rejects the commonly-held view that the second clause (μὴ λογιζόμενος ...) explains the reconciling. (He also writes on p. 318: "As the reconciled One, because He was reconciled, He then of necessity forgave the sins to this same world, justified it.") The argument which he stresses the most — that such a construction "poses the possibility that God has suppressed His holiness with its principled opposition against sin" — is not convincing. Cannot some things be taken for granted? After all, not even the Holy Spirit can say everything at once. Furthermore, the explicit detail for which there is no room at this specific point is supplied two verses later.

The possibility, of course, still exists that Schaller's view of this verse is correct, even if his argument

against an alternative view is unconvincing. As a matter of fact, Luther adopted the very same view, as can be seen from his translation: *"Denn Gott war in Christo, und versoehnete die Welt mit ihm selber, und rechnete ihnen ihre Suenden nicht zu, und hat unter uns aufgerichtet das Wort von der Versoehnung."* Diligent effort in working with the far more difficult German of Zahn's commentary has led me to the conclusion that Philipp Bachman, author of the volume on II Corinthians, holds the same view. This is at least partly demonstrated by the translation offered at the end of lengthy argumentation: *"Wie denn ja Gott in Christus war als einer, der die Welt mit sich versoehnte, nicht (weiter) anrechnend ihnen ihre Verfehlungen und in uns hineinlegend das Wort von der Versoehnung."* The argument cannot be lightly dismissed, but it appears to me to fall short of being convincing and conclusive, especially on the crucial issue of whether the ἦν is to be taken separately. There is another thing that possibly merits consideration. If the three clauses were meant to be parallel, there was a simple way of indicating this: constructing them in a parallel way. As the first participial clause was begun with a noun (κόσμον), so also the two succeeding clauses could have been begun with a noun (τὰ παραπτώματα and τὸν λόγον τῆς καταλλαγῆς). That such easily attained parallelism in the construction of the clauses is not present is an argument against their being parallel. Furthermore, the flow of the sentence seems to indicate apposition as the role of the μὴ λογιζόμενος clause.

H. A. W. Meyer: His chief objection to separating the ἦν from the καταλλάσσω is correctly stated by Alford (see above). Among other things, Meyer expends nearly half a page refuting a novel and peculiar view of Hofmann. His own view is that the last two clauses are related to the preceding "argumentatively." "They must, on the contrary, contain the confirmation [his emphasis] of θεός ἦν ἐν ..." "— ... since He does not reckon (present) to them their sins, and has deposited (aorist) in us the word of reconciliation. ... From both it is evident that God in Christ reconciled the world with Himself ..." Apparently, according to Meyer, the last two clauses supply the grounds for stating that God was reconciling the world to Himself. It must be plainly de-

clared that for this way of viewing things there is not the slightest basis whatsoever. There is no hint that an inference is being drawn from supporting considerations.

But though we can readily dismiss Meyer's conclusion, we cannot so readily dismiss his criticisms of other views. The following deserves close study: "If, as is *usually* done, the participial definition  $\mu\eta\ \lambda\omicron\gamma\iota\zeta\acute{o}\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\varsigma$  is taken in the imperfect sense ... as a more precise explanation of the *modus* of the reconciliation, there arises the insoluble difficulty that  $\theta\acute{\epsilon}\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \eta\mu\acute{\iota}\nu$  also would have to be so viewed, and to be taken consequently as an element of the reconciliation, which is impossible, since it expresses what God has done *after* the work of reconciliation, in order to *appropriate* it to men.  $\theta\acute{\epsilon}\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\varsigma$ , namely, cannot be connected with  $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma\ \acute{\iota}\psi\upsilon$ , against which the aorist participle is itself decisive; and it is quite arbitrary to assume (with Billroth and Olshausen) a deviation from the construction, so that Paul should have written  $\acute{\epsilon}\tau\epsilon\tau\omicron$  instead of  $\theta\acute{\epsilon}\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\varsigma$  (comp. Vulgate, Calvin, and many others, who translate it without ceremony: *et posuit*)."

Lange-Schaff: This likewise makes interesting reading, for though the conclusion arrived at is again unacceptable, there is helpful analysis along the way, and refutation of erroneous views. In this case, the chief victim is Meyer! "It must, however, be conceded, that the way in which Meyer connects the participial sentence with  $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\lambda\lambda\acute{\alpha}\zeta\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ . ('it is evident that God is reconciling the world unto Himself, inasmuch as He does not impute,' etc.), has something artificial about it." "On the whole we think it best with Meyer to take  $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\lambda\lambda\acute{\alpha}\zeta\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$  together, but to regard the participial sentence as a more particular description of the way in which God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, 'God was in Christ ... bringing back the world to a state of friendship with Himself; for He imputed not men's sins to them, and He has committed unto us the word of reconciliation.'" Our doubts develop quickly into disgust when we read: "But the reconciliation ... is mentioned as a process commenced in Christ but not as yet concluded ..." Or: "For God in Christ has truly entered upon a process by which He is reconciling the world." But a grammatical comment

of great interest is the following: "The use of the aorist participle *θέμενος*, here is remarkable. We should have expected *καὶ ἔθετο*, and a slight anacoluthon cannot be denied (Olshausen). The word cannot be connected back with *θεὸς ἦν*, since such a connection of an aorist part. without an article and an imperfect verb, would be not only without an example but without an appropriate sense ..."

David Kuske:<sup>4</sup> One of the chief merits of this article, which is marked by thoroughness, penetration, and careful attention to detail, is the way it marshalls the arguments in favor of construing *ἦν* with *καταλλάσσω* as a periphrastic construction. Separating these two words places a stress upon the incarnation, which would disrupt the parallelism with v. 18. Furthermore, "basing the *θέμενος* clause on the incarnation does not seem to follow well at all (that is, that God's giving us the Word of reconciliation is tied to the incarnation)." Along the way, Kuske challenges the suggestion of J. P. Meyer that the periphrastic construction would mean that reconciling would then amount to bringing to faith. That would be the case only if a present, as distinct from an imperfect, periphrastic were used. And how does he construe the succeeding clauses? "It is important to note that this appositional [our emphasis] *μὴ λογιζόμενος* makes God's act of reconciliation basically one of negative accounting (i.e. not imputing, or not charging) rather than some kind of inner change in God or in man." "In verse 18 two descriptions were given of God: He reconciled the world to himself and he established the ministry of reconciliation. The first of these Paul has explained more fully in 19a; now he takes up the second. The conjunction *καί* ties *θέμενος* back to *καταλλάσσω*. Thus we supply *ἦν* with *θέμενος* and read it as an aorist periphrastic.

The above list of exegetes has been so arranged as to lead us now to focus all our attention upon the *θέμενος*, and its place in the construction of this verse which unites *ἦν* with *καταλλάσσω* as an imperfect periphrastic. The alternatives have been touched on in the above paragraphs. We have either an "aorist periphrastic" or a "slight anacoluthon." One writer cheerfully accepts the aorist periphrastic without so much as batting an eyelash;

others categorically reject it as an impossible construction! Even a background of extensive cursory reading in the Greek New Testament is not sufficient to equip one with the instincts to resolve this problem. If anything, one is likely to be skeptical about the legitimacy of connecting ἦν with θέμενος. At any rate, some convincing will have to be done. Our trail of research is clearly leading us into the Greek grammars.

"The participle is frequently used with a finite verb to constitute a compound tense-form. This mode of expression, common to all languages, is extensively employed in Greek. It occurs in all the voices and tenses, though rare in the aorist. According to Robertson only one periphrastic aorist appears in the New Testament; viz., ἦν βληθεὶς (Lu. 23:19) (R. 375)." This statement of Dana-Mantey (p. 231) is correct: the only reference in Robertson's large grammar to an aorist periphrastic is as follows (p. 375): "The periphrastic aorist appears only in ἦν βληθεὶς (Lu. 23:19) and only in the indicative. But note ἐγένετο σιλόβοντα (Mk. 9:3)." Under "Periphrastic forms" in the index of Burton's *Moods and Tenses*, there are eleven sub-headings, but no specific reference to the aorist. However, under the section of the grammar entitled, "Periphrastic Form of the Present," we find the following (p. 11): "One of the clearly marked peculiarities of the Greek of the New Testament is the frequency with which periphrastic forms composed of a Present or Perfect Participle (Luke 23:19 is quite exceptional in its use of the Aorist Participle; cf. Ev. Pet. 23), are used ..." ("Ev. Pet." is an abbreviation for Apocryphal Gospel of Peter.) Periphrastic tenses are treated on pp. 16-19 of C. F. D. Moule's *An Idiom-Book of New Testament Greek*. Separate paragraphs are devoted to the present, the imperfect, the future, the future perfect, the perfect, and the pluperfect. Here is the concluding sentence of the chapter: "The use of the Aorist Participle with ἦν is regarded by Burton, *M. T.* #20, as 'quite exceptional,' the only N.T. instance being, apparently, Luke 23:19: ἦν ... βληθεὶς, *had been thrown*." (There is a footnote: "H. G. Meecham, *Journal of New Testament Studies* (C.U.P.), 1, No. 1 (Sept. 1954), 62ff., compares Athanasius *De Incarn.* 23 καὶ ὅπως ἦν.") I could find no reference to an aorist periphrastic in either Nunn or Chamberlain. How-

ever, Vol. III (*Syntax*, by Nigel Turner) of the Moulton grammar has the following on p. 89: "Periphrasis with aorist ptc. (=plupf.): Lk 23:19 B ἦν βλήθεις (Engl. impf. or plupf.?) vl. perf., Jn 18:30 S\*, 2 Co 5:19 ἦν θέμενος. No more in NT, but in post-Christian Greek (K-G I 38f. Gild. I 125f. Radermacher<sup>2</sup>, 102)."<sup>5</sup>

An aorist periphrastic is evidently possible. *The Expositor's Greek Testament* also adopts this view: "ἦν goes with both καταλλάσσω and θέμενος." A pluperfect translation is suggested: "*and had placed in our hands.*" Kuske offers no translation, but writes: "As was noted earlier, the contrast in this instance is that while God's reconciling of the world was an ongoing action in the past during the entire life of Christ, God's establishing of the ministry of reconciliation was a simple action, in this case a command (the Great Commission)." And, finally, Kittel (footnote 3 under καταλλάσσω), which was consulted after all other research was completed, has this: "θέμενος in 2 C. 5:19 is not to be subordinated to ἦν ... καταλλάσσω, along with μὴ λογιζόμενος τὰ παραπτώματα αὐτῶν. The change in tense is in itself an argument against this. Grammatically, it is a continuation of the finite verb by a part.; cf. Bl.-Debr. # 468, 1."<sup>6</sup> (We note that the theology of this article is faulty, in that an unconcluded reconciliation is assumed. We also note that references to this passage in several other articles in this reference set likewise assume that ἦν + καταλλάσσω comprise an imperfect periphrastic.)

Though it was this writer's wish to have arrived at a definite personal conclusion through this study, that state of affairs is not yet a reality. Also in such matters, we await and implore the blessings and enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. Perhaps we have at least isolated the chief possibilities: aorist periphrastic, or slight anacoluthon. If these choices seem unacceptable, one would have to return to the drawing board and carefully evaluate the possibilities involved if ἦν were taken as a separate verb. A view such as that of Luther is not necessarily out of the running.<sup>7</sup>

R. E. Wehrwein

# NOTES

1. Unless otherwise noted, all emphasis is in the original.
2. Lenski, who tries to argue from the tenses that no universal justification is taught in v. 19, is refuted by Adalbert Schaller in "Referat ueber die Bedeutung der Rechtfertigungs-Lehre in den heutigen Lehrstreitigkeiten," *Quartalschrift*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (October, 1942), pp. 225-252. The pertinent section (erroneously headed "2 Cor. 5:19-22" instead of 18-21; at one point in the discussion also — middle of p. 242 — vv. 18 and 19 are referred to as 19 and 20 respectively) is on pp. 241-247. Schaller points out, among other things, that Lenski involves himself in a contradiction, and uses the occasion to comment on his "blind spot" for the doctrine of universal justification. In his own exposition, we find him separating ἡν from καταλλάσσω, and emphatically stating that the μὴ λογισόμενος clause explains the reconciling. "Ganz offenbar erklart er die erste Aussage durch die zweite, und wir koennten ruhig uebersetzen: 'Gott versoehnte die Welt mit ihm selber, i n d e m er ihnen ihre Suenden nicht zurechnete.' Versoehnen heisst also nach diesem Wort des Apostels genau dasselbe wie Suende nicht zurechnen," (p. 246).

Also in this section (p. 246) were brief comments on Rom. 4:25 which caught my eye: "Genau was das [Rom. 4:25] ueber den Zeitpunkt der Rechtfertigung sagt, wissen wir nicht, und es ist auch nicht noetig. Nur die Gewiszheit raubt uns kein Mensch auf Erden und kein Teufel in der Hoelle, dasz mit dem Ostermorgen unsere Rechtfertigung ein fuer allemal abgemacht und ausgesprochen war." (The above paragraph is also a correction of the statement near the top of p. 24 in the Sept. 1981 issue of the *Journal of Theology*.)

3. John Schaller, "Redemption and Universal Justification According to Second Corinthians 5:18-19," *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, Vol. 72, No. 4 (October, 1975), pp. 309-326 (translated from the April, 1910, *Quartalschrift*).
4. David Kuske, "Objective Justification in Our Mission Outreach: An Exegesis of 2 Corinthians 5:18-19," *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, Vol. 77, No. 1 (January,

1980), pp. 6-29.

5. The number of times that a total of seven sources, including Robertson's large grammar, referred to II Cor. 5:19 in their index of Scripture passages is a mere ten (three had none). The item receiving the most attention, four references, was the *ὡς ὅτι*. Second, with two references, was the connection of *αὐτοῖς* and *κόσμον*. The possible imperfect periphrastic and the possible aorist periphrastic received one each.
6. The section from Blass-Debrunner cited by Kittel reads as follows: "Paul is fond of continuing a construction begun with a finite verb by means of co-ordinated participles, sometimes in a long series. E.g. 2 C 7:5 οὐδέμιν ἔσχηκεν ἄνεσιν ἢ σὰρξ ἡμῶν, ἀλλ' ἐν παντὶ θλιβόμενοι, ἔξωθεν μάχαι, ἔσωθεν φόβου (short exclamations: 'always plagued!' etc.; Frisk, *Glotta* 17 [1928] 62). 2 C 5:12 οὐ ... συνιστάνομεν ..., ἀλλ' ἀφορμὴν διδόντες (scil. γράφομεν ταῦτα). 2 C 8:18ff. χειροτονηθεὶς has roughly the same function as οὗ ὁ ἔπαινος (Frisk, *op. cit.* 61f.), then στελλόμενοι τοῦτο is definitely anacoluthon in relation to συνέκδημος ἡμῶν (not to συνεπέμφαμεν)."
7. Passing over an array of fine points which keep presenting themselves in an investigation of this type, we still want to note the following:
  - a) The last part of this chapter has repeated solemn doubling of thoughts and expressions.
  - b) The *ὡς ὅτι* suggests that v. 19 is amplification of all of v. 18, not just of the last word or phrase. Suggested translations or equivalents for this expression have been numerous: that is; what I mean is, that ...; i.e.; viz.; to the effect that; since that; etc.
  - c) Lange-Schaff comments on *θέμενος*: "From the force of the middle voice, we infer that the Apostle speaks of the mental act or purpose of God ...; or as Wordsworth prefers to take it, in a more special sense reflexively: 'having deposited *for Himself* the treasures of His grace in us, as in vessels chosen for that purpose, earthen and fragile though we be.'"
  - d) Special attention should be given to *ἡμεῖς* in this section (v. 12ff.). It appears to have quite a narrow scope through at least v. 16, a scope which is perhaps broadened in 18-20. In v. 21, however, its scope is surely as broad as possible. This illustrates its

flexibility, and provides us with an instructive parallel to Romans 4:25, another passage in which there is apparently a broadening of the scope of ἡμεῖς from one verse to the next. John Schaller (*op. cit.*, p. 324) writes on II Cor. 5:21: "Therefore Paul with the pronoun here means himself not only with the elect, with the believing children of God, as a special group among men, but speaks as a redeemed person to the redeemed, as a man to men, who on the one hand are in the same degree of condemnation, on the other are like him the object of the reconciliation and justification which Christ gained for the world." Though we differed above in certain exegetical details from this esteemed writer, we most heartily recommend his study as a thoroughly scriptural and warmly evangelical discussion of that most precious doctrine of objective or universal justification. The entire article will richly repay thorough study.

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## CHAPEL ADDRESS\*

*Matthew 4:17 — From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

Today is Shrove Tuesday, the day before the beginning of Lent and one of the oldest religious holidays still in existence. The celebration of Shrove Tuesday can be traced back to the early part of the Middle Ages, and it is still observed in various parts of the world today.

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\* Delivered at ILC on February 23, 1982.

If you haven't heard much about Shrove Tuesday, it isn't so surprising. For we do not include the day on our church calendars nor do we hold special services to celebrate it. For Shrove Tuesday is a striking example of a good thing gone bad. It began quite well — as a day of repentance prior to the season of Lent, when Christians would come before their pastor and confess their sins, and would then receive absolution or forgiveness. It was this practice that gave the holiday its name, the verb "shrive" meaning to confess one's sins and receive absolution.

But after a few centuries had passed, Shrove Tuesday had become a day of merrymaking rather than of repentance. People came to allow themselves one last fling just before the fasting and self-denial that the Catholic church had imposed upon them during the forty days of Lent. In France Shrove Tuesday became Mardi Gras, and in Germany, *fetter Dienstag* — both terms meaning "fat Tuesday." Parades, feasting, drinking, carousing, and sexual liberties became the order of the day, as we still see it in some parts of our own country.

Shrove Tuesday stands, then, as an example of how something good, like repentance, can in time be changed and finally lost. There can be no doubt about what repentance should be. When Christ in our text says, "Repent," He is pointing to that complete change in mind and heart by which a man begins to look at himself and at God in an entirely different way. When we repent we begin to see our sin for what it really is — not a minor stain upon an otherwise good and noble character, but rather a total corruption of both soul and body, a dread disease inherited from our forebears which is the cause of all of our sickness and misery and death, a wellspring of pride and self-satisfaction, a constant source of rebellion against God in the form of sinful thoughts and words and deeds.

But the word "Repent" as used here by Christ includes also a believing knowledge of what God has done in Christ to rescue us from our sin. By His perfect life Christ has kept for us those commandments of God which needed to be kept but which we could not even begin to

fulfil. By His suffering and death He has paid for us that penalty for our sin that we would otherwise have had to suffer throughout all eternity in hell. By His resurrection from the dead He has freed us from the power of sin and the dominion of Satan, so that we can now live under Him in His kingdom of grace and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness. What then does repentance include? A recognition of our sinfulness, and a trust in Jesus Christ as our Savior from this sin.

And such repentance is to be a daily thing for us Christians. For the word "Repent" in our text means, literally, "keep on repenting." Christ shows us thereby that such repentance is to be, not a one-time or occasional thing in our lives, but an on-going process. Luther caught this truth well in the first of his Ninety-five Theses:

When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ says "Repent ye, etc.," He intends that the entire life of His believers on earth should be one of daily repentance.

We ought not say, therefore, that repentance should be part of a Christian life. Without on-going repentance there can be no Christian life. Such repentance is the Christian life!

Satan ruined Shrove Tuesday for the early church, and he can ruin repentance for us. For he doesn't need centuries to accomplish his deadly purposes. Do we let days go by without considering how corrupt and deceitful, how proud and rebellious, our hearts are, without fleeing to the Father's throne of grace for forgiveness? Do we limit our spiritual self-examination to those few moments before communion once a month in church? Do we think that we can safely indulge our sinful desires once in a while, have our little flings with sin, without suffering spiritual harm?

Our Savior says: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." This is a Gospel word – a Gospel word that carries with it the sure promise of the forgiveness of

sin, fellowship with God, and eternal life with Him in heaven; a Gospel word which carries with it the power of the Holy Spirit to convert our hearts and turn them back to God. May that Gospel create in our hearts the kind of on-going repentance for which it asks, so that each of our days may be Shrove Tuesday in the proper sense of the word — a day on which we come before our God and confess: "God, be merciful to me, the sinner," and then receive from Him that life-giving, comforting assurance: "My child, be of good cheer; your sins have been forgiven you!" For Jesus' sake, Amen.

C. Kuehne

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Women and the Word of God*, by Susan T. Foh.  
Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company,  
1980. 270 pp. \$6.95 paperback.

This book, by Susan T. Foh, a wife and mother and graduate of Westminster Theological Seminary, is subtitled *A Response to Biblical Feminism*. In my opinion the chief value of this book is in its comparison of God's Word with the views of various prominent feminists.

The Introduction notes that a distinction is made in the book between Christian feminists, such as Rosemary Ruether, Mary Daly, and Dorothee Soelle, and biblical feminists, such as Letha Scanzoni, Nancy Hardesty, Virginia Mollenkott, and Paul K. Jewett. The "Christian" feminists are the radicals who do not claim to believe that the Bible is God's Word. The "biblical" feminists, on the other hand, claim the Bible as the source for their views. In reality the "Christian" feminists can hardly be regarded as Christian, and the "biblical" feminists do not accept what the Bible says, as Mrs. Foh makes clear.

BIBLE INTERPRETATION      The first two chapters discuss  
the inspiration and interpretation

of the Bible. Jewett, a biblical feminist, claims that the Bible is inspired, but that some parts of it, such as the apostle Paul's teaching of female subordination, are subject to human limitations. Mrs. Foh rightly points out that in this way "human reason becomes the final authority, the judge of Scripture" (p. 7). She believes, as we do, that the Bible is inerrant, without error, and that there are no contradictions in the Bible.

The biblical feminists "approach the Bible with the preconceived idea that God neither could nor would make distinctions between women and men" (p. 48). Whatever seems like a distinction must be interpreted, they say, in such a way that there is no distinction. Yet the apostle Paul, the chief target of the feminists' attack, claims that the Holy Spirit gave him the very words of his teaching (1 Cor. 2:13). In fact, after proclaiming the teaching unacceptable to feminists in 1 Cor. 14:34-35, he goes on to say in v. 37: "The things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord."

#### A DETAILED STUDY OF THE PASSAGES

A large part of Mrs. Foh's book, as we would expect, is devoted to a detailed study of what God's

Word says about women in the Old and New Testaments. This includes a study of the first three chapters of Genesis, as well as a study of the three sections of Paul's writings dealing with this topic: 1 Cor. 11:2-16, 1 Cor. 14:34-35, and 1 Tim. 2:8-15.

Throughout this discussion the views of the feminists are refuted. For example, Scanzoni and Hardesty say: "Equality and subordination are contradictions" (p. 99). They believe that God teaches the equality of man and woman in Gal. 3:28 ("neither male nor female"), and therefore He cannot teach subordination in other passages, even though the words plainly say so. But why can't there be equality in one respect and subordination in another? Confer 1 Peter 3:1,7: "Ye wives, be in subjection to your husbands." There is the subordination. "Being heirs together of the grace of life." There is the equality.

Scanzoni and Hardesty try very hard to get around

Paul's words in 1 Tim. 2:12: "I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man." They say: "The passage seems directed at a particular situation rather than stating a general principle" (p. 123). Then they speculate that Paul's words were directed at women who were false teachers, or ungifted women, or bossy women. But, as Mrs. Foh says, "Paul says that women should not teach or exercise authority over men, period. There are no conditions attached which would allow exceptions to Paul's command" (p. 123).

Other chapters deal with God as male and female, the metaphysics of sex, marriage, feminism and fulfillment, and women and the church. In all of these areas the feminists have come up with ideas and theories that contradict the Scriptures. Mrs. Foh's book is helpful in refuting these ideas.

**TRADITIONAL CHAUVINISM** But we should not think that the traditional ideas about the relationship between men and women are necessarily based on God's Word. Mrs. Foh finds evidence of unacceptable male chauvinism in many of the fathers. For example, Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274) said: "Woman was made to be a help to man. But she was not fitted to be a help to man except in generation, because another man would prove a more effective help in anything else" (p. 60). Is there any Christian husband who could agree with such a sentiment?

Martin Luther (1483-1546) is also labeled a chauvinist for speculating: "I believe that had Satan first tempted the man, Adam would have gained the victory" (p. 63). It is true that Adam was not deceived, as Eve was, according to 1 Tim. 2:14. Still there is no solid basis for Luther's belief, since the Bible does not say what would have happened if Satan had tempted Adam first. The fact is that Adam's sin was, if anything, greater than Eve's, for he disobeyed God's command without being deceived.

Particularly striking is Mrs. Foh's observation: "There is only one area where most students of the New Testament agree regarding women: Jesus treated women as they should be treated" (p. 90). Dorothy Sayers points

out that Jesus "never nagged at them, never flattered or coaxed or patronized." He "took their questions and arguments seriously, never made arch jokes about them, never mapped out their sphere for them, never urged them to be feminine or jeered at them for being female." In other words, Jesus treated women as human persons in every way. Still He did not send them out as preachers and teachers of His Word.

IN CONCLUSION      We do not agree with every detail in this book. For example, we cannot accept Mrs. Foh's distinction between teaching a Sunday School class of men and conducting a service (p. 250). Nor does she seem to say anything on the subject of woman suffrage in the church. In spite of these limitations, however, this book does provide a wealth of interesting material and good argumentation on a controversial issue.

Mrs. Foh's conclusions, stated in the Introduction and also in the Summary, are as follows: "The Bible teaches that women, like men, bear the image of God and receive the benefits of salvation through faith in Christ, and that women are to submit themselves to their husbands and not to hold positions of ruling or teaching in the church" (p. 1). In explanation of this teaching, she says: "It is not based on any sort of superiority inherent in the man or inferiority inherent in the woman. It is based on God's appointment. ... Though men and women are equal in personhood, God has ordained a difference in function." To those who complain that this is not fair to women Mrs. Foh replies: "It is God and God alone who determines what justice is. ... Christian women, like Eve, are being tempted with half truths and are being told that God (or the Bible or the church) is depriving them of something quite arbitrarily. (We forget that God's commandments are for our own good.) ... Like Eve, Christian women are guilty of sinning against their creator by discussing with other creatures whether or not God's law is fair" (pp. 260-261).

*David Lau*

*Nelson's Expository Dictionary of the Old Testament.* Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, 1980. \$16.95 hard cover.

The text of this book was written by a panel of Bible scholars including such better known writers as Gleason Archer and R. K. Harrison. The editing, as well as the excellent introductory material, was prepared by Merrill F. Unger and William White, Jr.

This is a rare publication, for it exceeds its objective. It was prepared to be a "useful tool in the hands of the student who had little or no formal training in the Hebrew language ... to acquire some appreciation of the richness and variety of the Hebrew vocabulary." To accomplish this the volume contains over 500 more meaningful Hebrew terms, offers information concerning their roots, their use in various contexts, and their impact upon the interpretation of the message.

*Nelson's Expository Dictionary of the Old Testament* (NEDOT) may be of some benefit to the student who has had no training in the Hebrew language. However, it became apparent to this reviewer that NEDOT will be of greater value to clergy who have had some training in the Hebrew language, but have lost the confidence to practice that art in the study of an Old Testament text. The review of basic material and the excellent studies provided by this volume will enable the Bible preacher to proclaim with greater certainty and conviction: "Thus saith the Lord!"

Too many publications with the objective of helping Bible students have frustrated such lofty aims by presenting a mere commentary; a non-grammatical, non-technical collection of a commentator's personal views, convictions, or beliefs about the meaning of a given text. Such material turns off the fountain of genius that might be primed by the kind of objective study material provided by NEDOT.

The word studies in this dictionary are language-based, grammar-based, and Scripture-based. The research into cognate languages for material is carefully done, not falling into the questionable practice of feeling com-

pelled to solve every Bible word problem by at least finding a similar set of root letters in "lower Slabovian" — that thus one can find some positive direction for the solution to the word problem!

The NEDOT expertly carries the used of the Hebrew text into the Hebrew *Weltanschauung*\* (better here, *Sprach=anschauung*\*\*), and from there looks out upon the context. This sound exegetical procedure enables the use to become Hebrew oriented, as well as thought-enlightened, over against the word or phrase in study. Thus the student (and may every clergyman always remain that!) himself can better listen to the divine Word, more accurately hear what is said therein, and the more faithfully and precisely proclaim, "Thus saith the Lord!"

So why not turn off the lamentations over forgotten and neglected gifts, and turn on the review and the recall by spending a bit of time in checking out the words of that Old Testament text in NEDOT? It is easy to use, and it is a time-saver. Obviously, a Hebrew Bible (interlinear is certainly acceptable), concordance, lexicon, and grammar will be basic companion tools.

In an attempt to make a fair evaluation of NEDOT, this reviewer made a special study of twelve of the Hebrew terms found in the book: Law, Sin, Create, Righteous, Bless, Spirit, God, Lord, Judge, Covenant, Maiden/Virgin, and Loving-kindness. Each of the words was found listed according to its usage: verb, noun, adjective, adverb. Alternate roots and/or synonyms were noted; the information was precise and unpadding, basic and clearly defined.

The reviewer sensed a shortcoming in connection with the term "Law." It was carefully defined, observing that the law-term may apply to the whole of it, or to any of its specific parts. What was missing was the observation

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\* "A comprehensive, esp. personal, philosophy or conception of the universe and of human life." - Webster

\*\* Viewpoint based upon a knowledge of the language and its use.

that at times the term law is used for the Will of God concept, God's entire revealed Will — law, which in the dogmatic sense would embrace both law and gospel (as used for example in Psalm 119). This is a vital distinction, lest one force a legalistic sense upon God's Good News to man.

A second shortcoming seemed to appear in connection with the term "create." In the reviewer's opinion the NEDOT goes beyond its usual objective observations and becomes entangled in making theological fortifications in an eagerness to preserve the creation doctrine. The Scriptures adequately guard the doctrine of creation and have no need of theological maneuvers or fortifications.

Yet, far overshadowing what may be a few weaknesses, we have the excellence of such material as found under the term "judge" (NEDOT, p. 204f.):

#### TO JUDGE

##### A. Verb

Shaphat (שָׁפַט), "to judge, deliver, rule." This verb also occurs in Ugaritic, Phoenician, Arabic, Akkadian, and post-biblical Hebrew. Biblical Hebrew attests shaphat around 125 times and in all periods.

In many contexts this root has a judicial sense. Shaphat refers to the activity of a third party who sits over two parties at odds with one another. This third party hears their cases against one another and decides where the right is and what to do about it (he functions as both judge and jury). [NEDOT, p. 204. Here follow examples from texts in Genesis 16.]

Shaphat also speaks of the accomplishing of a sentence. Both this concept and those of hearing the case and rendering a decision are seen in Gen. 18:25, where Abraham speaks of "the Judge [literally, "One who judges"] of all the earth." In I Sam. 3:13 the emphasis is solely on "delivering" the sentence: "For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth ..."

In some cases "judging" really means delivering from injustice or oppression. David says to Saul: "The Lord therefore be judge and judge between me and thee, and see, and plead my cause, and deliver me out of thine hand" (I Sam. 24:15). This sense (in addition to the judicial sense), "to deliver," is to be understood when one speaks of the judges of Israel (Judg. 2:16): "Nevertheless the Lord raised up judges, which delivered them out of the hand of those that [plundered] them."

Shaphat can be used not only of an act of deliverance, but of a process whereby order and law are maintained within a group. This idea also is included in the concept of the judges of Israel. ...

#### B. Nouns

Mishpat (מִשְׁפָּט), "judgment; rights." This noun, which appears around 420 times, also appears in the Ugaritic.

This word has two main senses; the first deals with the act of sitting as a judge, hearing a case, and rendering a proper verdict. Ecc. 12:14 is one such occurrence: "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

Mishpat can also refer to the "rights" belonging to someone (Exod. 23:6). This second sense carries several nuances: the sphere in which things are in proper relationship to one's claims (Gen. 18:19-the first occurrence); a judicial verdict (Deut. 17:9); the statement of the case for the accused (Num. 27:5); and an established ordinance (Exod. 21:1).

The noun shephatim refers to "acts of judgment." One of the 16 occurrences is in Num. 33:4: "For the Egyptians buried all their firstborn, which the Lord had smitten among them: upon their gods also the Lord executed judgments."

This reviewer entertains some reservations concerning the promises stated in the Foreword, that a Bible student who is untrained in the Hebrew language can find that the NEDOT "will open up the treasures of truth that often lie buried in the original language of the Old Testament, sometimes deeply imbedded far beneath the surface ... will experience a special thrill in being able to use this study tool in digging out truths from the Hebrew Bible not otherwise accessible to him" (NEDOT, Foreword, p. vii). Let the user of NEDOT, who has had no prior experience with the Hebrew language, beware of the kind of enthusiasm that springs from a little knowledge and jumps to some very lofty conclusions.

NEDOT's greater value will lie in its ability to incite and excite a renewed interest in working out Old Testament texts from their Hebrew original. The real test will be its use. Get it! Use it!

Gordon P. Radtke

## BOOK NOTICES

Under this heading we call the attention of our readers to publications of recent date which may be ordered from the CLC Book House, Immanuel Lutheran College, Eau Claire, Wisconsin 54701. No attempt is here being made to review the books. However, we offer a brief description of each of them.

From Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee, Wisconsin:

*The Young Christian's Life*, by Richard Grunze; 374 pages; \$8.50. This is a book of 180 devotions intended for the upper grades. Each devotion opens with a question which is answered by a passage from Scripture, followed by a meditation, prayer, and hymn reference.

*Bible Reader's Guide*, by Adolph Fehlauer; 236 pages; paperback; \$5.95. The author presents 400 readings selected from the Old and New Testaments. In the foreword the following description is given: "The readings are topical.

Each has a statement of contents — the location in the Bible by book, chapter and verse — sometimes a corollary Bible passage and a prayer or hymn stanza in which the message of God's Word is applied to our lives."

*Little Dictionary of Liturgical Terms*, by Arnold O. Lehmann; 78 pages; paperback; \$3.75. This pamphlet offers what the name implies. The terms are not limited to those in common usage in our church circles but extend to terms used in other communions.

*Prayers for the Worship Service*, by Arthur J. Clement; 154 pages; soft-bound; \$9.95. A book of prayers is here presented to cover the church year as well as days of special observance. Prayers for individuals under various circumstances are appended. A plastic, ring-type binding serves to keep the book open to the prayer and page that has been chosen.

*Pentecost or Pretence?*, by Arthur J. Clement; 256 pages; paperback; \$7.95. This is an examination of Pentecostal and Charismatic movements and may well serve as an elementary introduction to the study of the same. There are some exegetical questions which may be open to a difference of interpretation, but this does not detract from the usefulness of the study which is both historical and doctrinal. Topical and Scripture reference indices are included.

*Other Sheep*, by Arnold H. Schroeder; 168 pages; paperback; \$6.95. The author has served as institutional and city missionary for 42 years and here records a number of case histories from his experience. Pastors who are called upon to serve people who are in some way separated from the normal flow of life will no doubt find the book useful as well as edifying. Ministration to those especially afflicted and separated requires particular attention and special care, and any assistance that can be given in this area by those with experience in the field is always welcome.

*Marriage Should be Honored by All*, by Herbert A. Birner; 120 pages; paperback; \$5.95. Pastors who are inevitably involved in marriage counselling will find that this

book is deserving of their attention. Having given the book careful study, he will be in a position to decide if it will be a good book to distribute for general use in the congregation. It is a sensitive area and requires a great measure of sanctified wisdom and judgment.

From Thomas Nelson, Nashville, Tennessee:

*The Bible Almanac*, by J. I. Packer, Merril C. Tenney, Wm. White, Jr.; 765 pages; \$14.95. This is a useful guide to the people and cultures of Bible times. Maps, tables, and diagrams are included as well as a large selection of illustrations in black and white and in color. Included among the chief contributors is Horace D. Hummel of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri. It is refreshing to find that this major publication is conservative in orientation; for instance, accepting Moses as the author of the Pentateuch and Isaiah as the sole writer of the prophetic book which bears his name. Adam, Eve, and Jonah (contrary to the de-mythologizers) are presented as true historical characters. The doctrine of the Trinity, the deity and messiahship of Jesus Christ are clearly set forth. However, it should be noted that in the presentation of Baptism and the Lord's Supper the doctrinal significance of these sacraments as means of grace is avoided. The Lord's Supper, for instance, is designated simply as a symbolic meal to commemorate the Last Supper (p. 539). The article identifying all the people of the Bible (pp. 602-726) is especially helpful. The index of proper names and topics serves to lead the student to the desired pages of reference. News of recent archeological finds in the Near East is welcome information to those who have no other source of reference on this subject.

From Christian Herald Books, Chappaqua, N.Y.:

*Ruth*, a novel by Lois T. Henderson; 223 pages; \$8.95. This is Biblical fiction and as with all such productions needs to be read with this in mind. Careful distinction needs to be exercised in identifying Biblical facts as distinguished from the fleshed-out fictional material added by the author.

C. M. Gullerud



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