

*INTEGRITY is published each month and seeks to encourage all believers in Christ to strive to be one, to be pure, and to be honest and sincere in word and in deed, among themselves and toward all men.*

## Integrity

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# Integrity

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was only a few years later when many in Rome were slaughtered because of their faith in Jesus. Preaching of the good news worked for the first-century Christians.

The presence of the church in the world today testifies to the fact that preaching and teaching have continued to work. But still a question remains: "Do preaching and teaching work *today*?"

Dan Baumann, a minister in Whittier, California, has examined the status of nine prominent congregations in the United States. His book, *All Originality Makes A Dull Church*, contains his findings. For each congregation, he describes the community, the congregation, the congregation's program, and transferable concepts. One thing stands out throughout this book—

GROWTH. Whether in Lynchburg, Fort Lauderdale, Dallas, or Washington, growth is occurring. The methods and emphasis vary widely among these congregations, but the fact remains that where the good news of Jesus is preached, conversions result; and where Christians are lovingly taught the truths of God's word, spiritual growth occurs.

Clarifying the terms and understanding the needs of current society answer some of preaching's criticisms, and seeing God's provisions for these needs and their results further answers them. The facts speak loudly and clearly: preaching and teaching—the ministry of the word—are vital to the present and future life of the church of Christ. □

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### ALTERNATIVE TELEVISION?

Recently, while I was sitting in the intensive care waiting room with some brokenhearted friends, a woman wheeled in an elderly companion, flipped on the TV set with the volume several decibels beyond the comfort range, grabbed a pillow, and, with her back to the set, proceeded to take a nap. Whether she was callous or merely ignorant I know not, but it never seemed to occur to her that others might find the noise annoying (they did), or that the program would be offensive to their mood (it was), or that her companion might not be interested (she wasn't). The promiscuity of TV addicts can be harmful in more ways than one.

A few days ago I received a four-page appeal from a religious organization which would like to think of itself as "the 4th network." The entire first page was occupied with glowing recollections of the days of "Father Knows Best," and the letter gave the distinct impression that all that keeps such programs from once again becoming commonplace is a lack of funds to make this organization the "4th major network."

Careful reading, however, gave no real indication of what their "alternative" TV fare might consist of. But, if we may judge from what we have seen of this organization's offerings, their "family" programming would be long on naive testimonials and obtrusive appeals for money. Those who like this sort of thing will find this the sort of thing they like, but it is hardly the vision of family entertainment evoked by an extended lamentation over the demise of "Father Knows Best." Consequently, I felt I had been misled.

Since the integrity of religious hucksters is already under widespread suspicion, the very semblance of evading truth in advertizing should be deplored—whether on radio and television, or in church publications and pulpits. And if we Christians really want an alternative to the sex and crime on commercial TV, we may easily find it in a judicious use of the knobs with which all sets, presumably, are equipped. □

## Biblical Ecology: Man and Nature in the Religion of Israel

### PART ONE

DON HAYMES

Memphis, Tennessee

Recent growth in world population, accompanied by the rapid advance of industrialization and urban sprawl, has inspired a renewal of interest in the earth's natural environment, its dwindling physical and biological resources, and the various processes—all of human origin—which are seen to threaten the very survival of life on the planet. Particularly in North America, these forces have called together a disparate coalition of interests and causes known collectively as the "ecology movement."<sup>1</sup>

One immediate benefit of this new concern is its challenge to the historian and the theologian: to examine in depth the pretensions, presuppositions, and prevailing beliefs of Western culture; to trace the relationship between Man and Nature as it developed from earliest antiquity, to determine how, where, and why it changed; to establish, if possible, "where we went wrong" in order to suggest "what we can do about it."<sup>2</sup> In the words of an eminent historian of technology and culture, Lynn White, Jr., in order to change our actions

we must "rethink our axioms."<sup>3</sup>

It was Professor White who, just over 11 years ago, ignited a raging—and continuing—controversy with a learned and acerbic address to a meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.<sup>4</sup> In that speech White pinned the ultimate responsibility for "our ecologic crisis" on the Judeo-Christian tradition in general and on the Biblical version of creation in particular:

Human ecology is deeply conditioned by beliefs about our nature and destiny—that is, by religion. . . . Our daily habits of action, for example, are dominated by an implicit faith in perpetual progress which was unknown either to Greco-Roman antiquity or to the Orient. It is rooted in, and is indefensible apart from, Judeo-Christian teleology. The fact that Communists share it merely helps to show what can be demonstrated on many other grounds: that Marxism, like Islam, is a Judeo-Christian heresy. We continue today to live, as we have lived for about 1700 years, very largely in a context of Christian axioms.<sup>5</sup>

Professor White is perhaps a bit too facile; our "implicit faith in perpetual progress"—which seems to have dwindled, in these

1. "Ecology," derived from the Greek *oikos*, "house" or "dwelling," here indicates a view of the earth as an "ecosystem" in which all living things are interdependent—with one another and with their physical surroundings. The earth is often pictured as an "ecosphere"—Spaceship Earth—a fragile vessel containing a delicate balance of the ingredients necessary to sustain life, which can be wrecked and ravaged by depleting or despoiling even one element of its essential components.

2. For a monumental survey of the relationship between Man and Nature in Western thought from antiquity to the eighteenth century, see Clarence J. Glacken, *Traces on the Rhodian Shore* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967). Glacken's mastery of a plethora of cultures and languages is breath-taking, but flawed: for the Old Testament and the religion of Israel, he relies extensively on *Clarke's Commentary!* John Passmore, *Man's Responsibility for Nature: Ecological Problems and Western Traditions* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1974), is indebted to Glacken's work, but topically examines the history of several ecological "problems" with wit and critical vigour. George H. Williams, "Christian Attitudes Toward Nature," *Christian Scholar's Review*, Vol. 2 (Fall-Winter 1971-72): 3-35, 112-26, offers a brief but learned survey which concentrates on Patristic and mediaeval Christianity with an eye to the present. Variations on these themes are developed in Professor Williams' earlier, classic work, *Wilderness and Paradise in Western Thought* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1962). More limited in scope, but extremely useful for this study, is J. Donald Hughes, *Ecology in Ancient Civilizations* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1975). Hughes focuses on the ecology of the Mediterranean Basin in antiquity, bringing to bear his training as biologist and historian with great insight.

3. Lynn White, Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," *Science*, Vol. 155 (March 10, 1967): 1204.

4. *Ibid.*, 1203-1207.

5. *Ibid.*, 1205.

latter days, to the size of a grain of mustard seed—might be attributed more accurately to Charles Darwin, Herbert Spencer, and Horatio Alger than to Moses, Jesus, and Paul. White's criticisms of the assorted crimes against nature perpetrated with the blessing, and even the leadership, of the mediaeval and modern churches, are trenchant, and he is gifted with a witty and winning turn of phrase. But his handling of the documentary evidence for his principal claim—the Old Testament—is not so sure. Having asserted that a cyclical view of time kept the Greeks from working out a coherent account of creation, White turns to Genesis:

Christianity inherited from Judaism not only a concept of time as nonrepetitive and linear but also a striking story of creation. By gradual stages a loving and all-powerful God had created light and darkness, the heavenly bodies, the earth and all its plants, animals, birds, and fishes. Finally, God had created Adam and, as an afterthought, Eve to keep man from being lonely. Man named all the animals, thus establishing his dominance over them. God planned all of this explicitly for man's benefit and rule: no item in the physical creation had any purpose save to serve man's purposes. And, although man's body is made of clay, he is not simply part of nature: he is made in God's image.

Especially in its Western form, Christianity is the most anthropocentric religion the world has seen . . . Christianity, in absolute contrast to ancient paganism and Asia's religions . . . not only established a dualism of man and nature but also insisted that it is God's will that man exploit nature for his proper ends.<sup>6</sup>

Ian McHarg, a professor of landscape architecture and a vocal representative of the ecology movement in the United States, amplifies and extends White's indictment:

The great western religions born of monotheism have been the major source of our moral attitudes. It is from them that we have developed the preoccupation with the uniqueness of man, with justice and compassion. On the subject of man-nature, however, the Biblical creation story of the first chapter of Genesis, the source of the most generally accepted description of man's role and powers, not only fails to correspond to reality as we observe it,

but in its insistence upon dominion and subjugation of nature, encourages the most exploitative and destructive instincts in man rather than those that are deferential and creative. Indeed, if one seeks license for those who would increase radioactivity, create canals and harbors with atomic bombs, employ poisons without constraint, or give consent to the bulldozer mentality, there could be no better injunction than this text. Here can be found the sanction and injunction to conquer nature—the enemy, the threat to Jehovah.<sup>7</sup>

For McHarg, "the earliest roots of the western attitude to nature . . . were confirmed in Judaism." He declares that "the affirmation of Jehovah, the God in whose image man was made, was also a declaration of war on nature."<sup>8</sup> While Lynn White's phrasing is more cautious, his view of the consequences of this thesis is no less provocative:

At the level of the common people this worked out in an interesting way. In Antiquity every tree, every spring, every stream, every hill had its own *genius loci*, its guardian spirit. These spirits were accessible to men, but were very unlike men; centaurs, fauns, and mermaids show their ambivalence. Before one cut a tree, mined a mountain, or dammed a brook, it was important to placate the spirit in charge of that particular situation, and to keep it placated. By destroying pagan animism, Christianity made it possible to exploit nature in a mood of indifference to the feelings of natural objects.<sup>9</sup>

Professor White does not explain *how* the spirits would be "placated." Perhaps, in his terms, an occasional human sacrifice to the Redwood forests would allow us to cut a couple of trees now and then—for men outside the Judeo-Christian tradition have devoutly believed that either act would justify the other. The "great cultures" which McHarg so enthusiastically admires for their "sacramental" relations to nature—the Aztecs and the Toltecs<sup>10</sup>—practiced ritual slaughter of human victims on a massive scale to appease their bloodthirsty nature deities.<sup>11</sup> Even in Heroic Greece, humans were so debased before the whims of nature that a king would sacrifice his daughter in order that the wind might

blow.<sup>12</sup> Professor White and his adherents among ecologists, scientists, historians, and theologians<sup>13</sup> are not unlike well-intentioned prosecutors, galvanized into action by the repugnance of a crime truly committed, who read the evidence so as to convict the defendant whom they prefer, for one reason or another, to drag into the dock. White understands the extent and significance of the present "ecologic crisis" quite well; his premise that historical inquiry will spur us to "rethink our axioms"

## I. IN THE BEGINNING, GOD . . .

The Old Testament is not a scientific text-book; nor can it, strictly speaking, be read as "history" in the modern sense. It is, rather, a witness to the faith of ancient Israel in the "one God" who is Creator of the universe and of all life, and who alone is sovereign over all his Creation.

It is quite natural for human beings in every age and culture to seek out their salvation within the terms of the experiences and assumptions which have formed their conception of how the world works. The "Enlightened" Deists of England and America in the eighteenth century, newly mesmerized by the rational order of Isaac Newton's "new physics" and endowed with splendid confidence in the rational powers and individual dignity of man by John Locke's empirical philosophy, conceived of God as a majestic Master Mechanic who made the universe, wound it up like a piece of clockwork, and turned it loose to operate under a system of rational "Natural Laws." Scientific investigation would lead to the discovery and codification of these celestial statues, enabling mankind to govern the world with reason and justice as a Kingdom of God on earth, a restored Eden.

12. Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, 11, 175-235.

13. White's essay called forth a massive response—both pro and con—in articles and books. Not surprisingly, many theologians have responded positively to White's call for an abandonment of the "Biblical" understanding of Man and Nature. John B. Cobb, *Is It Too Late? A Theology of Ecology* (Beverly Hills: Bruce, 1972), and John B. Bennett, "On Responding to Lynn White: Ecology and Christianity," *Ohio Journal of Religious Studies*, Vol. 5 (1977): 71-77, are representative of this view among "process" theologians. Cobb appropriates Frederick Elder, *Crisis in Eden* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), to his cause, but ignores Elder's even-handed and careful treatment of the Biblical tradition. By contrast, H. Paul Santmire, *Brother Earth* (New York: Thomas Nelson, 1970), calls for an "ecological theology" firmly rooted in the Biblical text. A more recent—and important—article by Santmire, "Ecology, Justice, and Theology: Beyond the Preliminary Skirmishes," *Christian Century*, Vol. 93 (May 12, 1976):460-464, surveys the current state of the controversy, offers a brief but thorough bibliography, and renews the call "to examine the Old and New Testaments anew."

14. See William F. Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity* (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1957), pp. 230ff.

is cogent; his concern that effective and immediate action—based on historical understanding—must be taken, is commendable. White's commentary on exploitation of nature in the West after Charlemagne is on target and easily documented, but his cheerful observations about pre-Christian cultures are suspect, and his misunderstanding of the Old Testament is profound. For the Old Testament, examined in its historical context, tells a quite different story.

### The Pagan View . . .

By contrast, the Canaanite cultures of the second millennium before the Christian era in Palestine had inherited and refined a vast pantheon, led by Baal ("Lord" or "Master"), the cloud-riding god of the storm, and the fertility goddesses Anath and Astarte.<sup>14</sup> The Canaanite pantheon is dominated by the "sacramental" relationship to nature so admired by Ian McHarg. But this cannot be construed to be "love" of nature; what motivates worship of Baal, Anath, and Astarte is not love but terror. Here is man bewildered and buffeted by forces beyond his understanding: trembling in fear before the storm, fleeing in nameless dread from fire and flood, helpless amid the tumult of the earthquake. Here is man confronted by nature in all its chaotic, capricious, unconquerable power; the very life-giving water which could make the wilderness bloom would, without warning or explanation, turn and deal death and destruction to everything in its path. In Canaanite iconography which survives, Anath and Astarte are usually portrayed with the lion, symbol of ferocity and blood-

6. *Ibid.*

7. Ian McHarg, *Design with Nature* (Garden City: The Natural History Press, 1969), p. 26.

8. *Ibid.*

9. White, *Ibid.*

10. McHarg, p. 68.

11. For a study of theology and religious practice in Aztec and Toltec cultures, see C. A. Burland, *The Gods of Mexico* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1968), pp. 115-147; "the human sacrifice," Burland writes, "was the focal point of nearly every great ceremony."

shed, and the serpent and the dove, symbols of fertility.<sup>15</sup> In Canaanite mythology, Anath—who is both sister and consort to Baal—conducts a literal bloodbath in which she massacres every human “from the sea-coast to the rising of the sun” and then wades up to her neck in the resulting gore.<sup>16</sup> In yet another saga, intended to be ritually enacted as a form of sympathetic magic, Anath slaughters the god Mot (“Death”) in order to revive Baal, who has been slain by monsters. In William F. Albright’s rendering:

She seized Mot, son of El;  
With the sword she cut him up, with the sieve  
she winnowed him,  
In the fire she burned him, in the mill she  
ground him,  
In the field she sowed him,  
In order that the birds might eat their por-  
tion, in order that they might destroy the  
seed . . .<sup>17</sup>

For ancient man, mystified, awed, and brutalized by the wonders and terrors of the natural world, the moral of this story and the many others like it is painfully clear: to survive, man must do whatever is necessary to appease the wrath of the gods of nature. It is not surprising that ritual prostitution and human sacrifice are dominant fixtures of the Baal cult (see Deut. 12:29-31).

### No Coherent Vision . . .

One may search in vain through the surviving literature of this epoch—outside the Old Testament—for a coherent vision of the universe. Even in the magnificent *Enuma elish*, the Babylonian epic of creation, the ocean exists before any of the gods:

When the heaven (-gods) above were as yet  
uncreated,  
The earth (-gods) below not yet brought into  
being,  
Alone there existed primordial Apsu who en-  
gendered them,

15. *Ibid.*, p. 234.

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 233f.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 232. “In no ancient mythology,” Albright remarks, “do we find such explicit identification of the body of a god with grain.” See also John Gray, *Archaeology and the Old Testament World* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), pp. 109ff.

18. “The Epic of Creation,” translated with introduction and notes by J. V. K. Wilson, in D. Winton Thomas, ed., *Documents from Old Testament Times* (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), p. 5.

19. *Ibid.*, pp. 4, 10f., 14.

20. Paul Watson, *The Meaning of the Old Testament* (Austin: R. B. Sweet, 1968), p. 9.

21. “The Epic of Creation,” p. 12.

Only Mummu, and Tiamat who brought all of  
them forth,

Their waters could mix together in a single  
stream,  
Unrestricted by reed-beds, unimpeded by  
marsh:

For, since none of the gods had at this time  
appeared,

These had not yet been formed, or been with  
destinies decreed.

In the depths of their waters the gods were  
created . . .<sup>18</sup>

Apsu (from which the English word “abyss” is ultimately derived) is here personified as a “‘male’ ocean” and Tiamat (a cognate with the Hebrew *tehom*, the “deep” of Gen. 1:2) as female, elsewhere in the epic they move about and do battle. When Marduk becomes king of the gods, he slaughters Tiamat and creates heaven and earth from her body.<sup>19</sup> Still later, Marduk creates man to be “a mere lackey for the gods.”<sup>20</sup>

‘Blood I will compose, bring a skeleton into  
being,

Produce a lowly, primitive creature, “Man”  
shall be his name:

I will create *lullu-amelu*—an earthly, “puppet”-  
man.

To him be charged the service that the gods  
may then have rest . . .<sup>21</sup>

### The Biblical View . . .

It is against this background that the religion of Israel emerges with a startlingly different view of the natural world. When the “children of Israel” began to establish themselves in Palestine in the latter half of the thirteenth century BCE, they brought with them their traditions of the origin of the world, which eventually became the first ten chapters of Genesis. There are two—perhaps three—accounts of creation in the Psalms, and many more in the Psalms; while they contain many accurate descriptions of nature and natural relationships—plant life is made first, then aquatic ani-

mals, then land animals, exactly the sequence postulated by modern biology!—the purpose of these texts is not to explain the origin of the world scientifically, but to proclaim the sovereignty of God over all “the heavens and the earth.” Here the natural world is “demythologized,” and its demonic dominion over the daily life and ultimate destiny of man is exorcised and destroyed. No longer must man submit to the tyranny of mindless superstition; he is freed from the caprice of an aimless, ever-shifting, vindictive nature.

The sun shall not smite you by day,  
nor the moon by night

sang the Psalmist (Ps. 121:6),<sup>22</sup> and all Israel echoed him:

When I look at the heavens, the work of thy  
fingers, the moon and the stars which thou  
has established;

what is man that thou art mindful of him,  
and the son of man that thou dost care for  
him?

Yet thou hast made him little less than God,  
and dost crown with glory and honor.

Thou hast given him dominion over the works  
of thy hands;

thou hast put all things under his feet,  
all sheep and oxen,

and also the beasts of the field,  
the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,  
whatever passes along the paths of the sea.

(Ps. 8:3-8)

In the first Genesis account of creation (1:1-2:4a), human beings are created last of all living things, as the final masterpiece of all the “good” works of God:

And God said: “Let us make man in our image,  
after our likeness. They shall rule the fish of  
the sea, the birds of the sky, the cattle, the  
whole earth, and all the creeping things that  
creep on earth.” And God created man in His  
image, in the image of God He created him;  
male and female He created them, God blessed  
them and God said to them: “Be fertile and in-  
crease, fill the earth and master it; and rule  
the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and  
all the living things that creep on earth” (Gen.  
1:26-28, New Jewish Version<sup>23</sup>).

In the second Genesis account (2:4b-24), man is “formed from the dust of the earth” before any vegetation has sprouted or rain has fallen. God then plants a garden, “in

22. See the reference to the worship of “the sun, and the moon, and the constellations, and all the hosts of the heavens”—Assyrian astral deities—in II Kings 23:5. All Biblical quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the Revised Standard Version.

23. Jewish Publication Society of America, *Genesis: The NJV Translation* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966).

24. Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis*, tr. John Marks (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956), p. 58.

Eden, in the east,” and places there a man he has made, “to till it and tend it.” Then God forms the beasts and birds “out of the earth” to be companions to man, for “it is not good for man to be alone.” When he had made the animals and birds, God

brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that would be its name. And the man gave names to all the cattle and to the birds of the sky and to all the wild beasts; but for Adam no fitting helper was found (Gen. 2:19f, NJV).

It is then that God makes woman from Adam’s rib; the rest if “history.”

### Man’s Purpose . . .

As we have seen, these texts are repugnant to present-day ecologists, who see in them a mandate to ravage and despoil the earth and its resources. But such wanton exploitation cannot be ascribed to Genesis. God pronounces the natural world to be “good” at every step of its creation. Man and animals are formed from the same materials—from the earth itself. Man is unique in being made in the image of God; but, as Gerhard von Rad points out, this is less a statement of man’s nature than his purpose:

Just as powerful earthly kings, to indicate their claim to dominion, erect an image of themselves in the provinces of their empire where they do not personally appear, so man is placed upon the earth in God’s image as God’s sovereign emblem. He is really only God’s representative, summoned to maintain and enforce God’s claim to dominion over the earth. The decisive thing about man’s similarity to God, therefore, is his function in the nonhuman world . . . Thus man’s creation has a retroactive significance for all nonhuman creatures; it gives them a new relation to God. The creature, in addition to having been created by God, receives through man a responsibility to God; in any case, because of man’s dominion it receives once again the dignity belonging to a special domain of God’s sovereignty.<sup>24</sup>

Man is to exercise stewardship over the earth as God’s deputy; nowhere in the Old Testament is man given a license “to exploit nature in a mood of indifference.”

Rather than being demeaned by this "dominion," the natural world is exalted. Genesis sees this idyllic setting as a moment of complete harmony between man and nature. It is only when man *exceeds* the authority given him by God, seeking to equal rather than to serve his Creator, that the tragic rift between man and nature begins: "cursed is the ground because of you" (Gen. 3:17). As Thomas Sieger Derr has observed:

man does not remain faithful to the conditions of the grant of power. He disobeys, he sins, he behaves toward his surroundings in ways specifically forbidden. The image of God in him is broken. His relation to nature is changed, and dominion, instead of extending God's care, tends to contravene it. But the *original* placement of man above nature is not in error ecologically. Estrangement between man and nature is the evil result of the Fall, corrupting the intent of the original grant of dominion.<sup>25</sup>

### Two Cultures . . .

After Adam and Eve are expelled from Eden, Eve bears two sons, Cain and Abel, in whom are foreshadowed the centuries of conflict between nomadic and settled cultures in the ancient world. Abel, the keeper of sheep, and Cain, the tiller of the soil, both bring sacrifices to God from the fruit of their labours. God accepts Abel's offering, while rejecting the offering of Cain (Gen. 4:1-5). The Hebrews began as nomadic, sheep-tending people, constantly moving their flocks in search of better grazing, and coming into conflict with sedentary settlements of farmers and craftsmen. Perhaps an element of this experience is reflected here; yet God reassures Cain: "If you do well, will you not be accepted?" (Gen. 4:7). But the jealous and angry Cain kills his brother, and receives a significant curse:

And now you are cursed from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength . . . (Gen. 4:11-12).

Cain moves on, and—significantly—founds the first city (Gen. 4:17). Many men in ancient Israel, especially in times of turmoil,

saw the city as a curse. Some withdrew into the desert to practice ascetic monasticism; others continued to pasture flocks and carry on the nomadic life of their ancestors. But these movements were always a minority, and in the New Testament the success of Abel's offering is attributed to his faith, not his life-style nor his occupation (Heb. 11:4). In any case, neither nomadic nor settled cultures can lay claim to ecological purity: overgrazing, erosion, and pollution all amount, finally, to the same thing.

### Covenant With Creation . . .

But when Cain's descendants had multiplied, and filled the earth with their cities, "the Lord regretted that he had made man on earth, and his heart was saddened" (Gen. 6:6). God now determined to destroy with a flood the world he had made: "the earth became corrupt before God; the earth was filled with lawlessness" (Gen. 6:11). Here begins what is, essentially, a third creation story. Finding only one faithful family—Noah, his wife, their three sons and their wives—God commands Noah to construct a great ship in order to save his family "and two each of all flesh in which there was the breath of life" (Gen. 7:15). Not only the "clean" animals which were fit for man to eat were to be saved from the flood, *but all animal life!* When the flood waters recede, God renews his injunction to be fruitful and increase, but he does not offer dominion; he allows man to eat the flesh of animals, but forbids wanton bloodshed. And then God enters into a "covenant," not simply with Noah and his family, but "with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark" (Gen. 9:10). Here is the archetype of the covenant with the whole creation as seen by the prophet Hosea:

And I will make for you a covenant on that day with the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the creeping things of the ground; and I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from

the land; and I will make you lie down in safety (Hos. 2:18).

The flood story has many parallels in ancient literature; many cultures have preserved the memory of some kind of "universal" flood.<sup>26</sup> But I am aware of no other

account in which divine effort to destroy the wickedness of mankind is so beautifully balanced by the desire to preserve and perpetuate all other created life. That life is preserved, whether or not man will benefit from it, because it belongs to God, not man.

(to be continued)

26. See John Bright, "Has Archaeology Found Evidence of the Flood?" in *The Biblical Archaeologist Reader* (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1961), p. 33.

## "The Gospel in Water"

DON REECE

Radford, Virginia

*"The first three thousand persons that were immersed after the ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven were immersed FOR THE REMISSION OF THEIR SINS AND FOR THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. I am bold, therefore, to affirm that every one of them, who, in the belief of what the Apostle spoke, was immersed, did, in the very instant in which he was put under the water, receive the forgiveness of his sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. If so, then, who will not concur with me in saying that christian immersion is the gospel in water."*

—Alexander Campbell

"The poor," said the Lord, "you have always with you." He might, with propriety, have added: "And also the advocates of salvation - at - the point - of - faith - before - and - apart - from - baptism." The pernicious theory, like the Galatian heresy of salvation - by - works or law keeping, has, over the years, been met, answered, and refuted almost times without number; yet it always comes back undaunted in a slightly different form or garb. Such, at the bottom line, is the clear implication of some things that are said in a recent *Integrity* article.<sup>1</sup>

With much that is said in this article, probably with at least 95% of it, I am in wholehearted, total agreement. Like the brother in question I believe that if salvation is put on a

legal basis, to be saved we must be perfect; that one sin is enough to condemn us; that "all who rely on works of the law are under a curse"; and that, consequently, "no one can be saved by his own goodness: we just can't be good enough." Like him I believe that God "does not expect us to amass good deeds" to offset the wrongs we have done; that he saves us "by grace through faith"; and that this "relieves us of the anxiety that comes from trying to score points with him." Like the theologian quoted, I believe that "When we put our trust in Christ we are confessing that we are *not* able to be good enough for Heaven; but we also cease to worry about it"; and that "Because salvation is a gift, we can get out of the good works rat race and enjoy our salvation." I believe that we should "serve God out of gratitude and love for what he has done for us," and not "out of fear of hell or lust for reward of heaven"; that "We are not saved by our works, or damned by our failures"; that it is Christ that "makes the difference"; and that "When we fail, we have the promise that we will be forgiven if we ask." To all the above and much more I can *and do* say a hearty "Amen!"

1. Tom Lane, "Grace Frees," *Integrity*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (October, 1978), pp. 60-63.

25. Thomas Sieger Derr, *Ecology and Human Need* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1975), pp. 69f.

## The Common Mistake . . .

Unfortunately, however, in his zeal for "faith alone," he makes the same mistake that is made by every "faith only" advocate whose writings I have ever read—that of characterizing baptism as a work instead of seeing it as the act in which grace is accepted or received. In paragraph one of the section entitled "The Faith And Works Question" he says:

Some Christians are afraid to say we are saved by faith. They confuse faith with mere belief, then point out that the New Testament asks for obedience (specifically in the matter of baptism) as well. True faith includes that disposition of submissiveness to the divine will which issues forth in acts of obedience to his will. The New Testament speaks, in fact, of faith expressing itself in works motivated by love for God (Gal. 5:6).

This clearly implies that baptism is a work. The same idea is stated even stronger in the next - to - the - last paragraph of the same section, where he says:

We are saved by faith alone. But this faith is active. It performs good works to glorify God. It produces obedience to God in baptism and a life of dedicated service to him.

In another brotherhood publication the same writer repeatedly defines the salvation process as faith, repentance, and *obedience* (emphasis mine);<sup>2</sup> and in a previous *Integrity* article he maintains that the only reason baptism is essential is that obedience is essential—and goes on to argue that we should, therefore, accept into both fellowship and Church membership, not only those who have been sprinkled or poured over, but also those who "have not been baptized under any rubric" provided they have shown obedience in some other way.<sup>3</sup> Thus baptism is subtly, almost imperceptibly, yet none the less very definitely, shifted from the high position of being the one singular or unique expression of faith and the act in which salvation is (normally, at least) experienced, and is reduced to the position of being but an act of obedience, and

that one for which something else can at times be substituted. And the fact that faith is defined as wholehearted commitment or trust, and that this is coupled with repeated assurances that it will result in the kind of disposition that will issue in submissive obedience, in no way changes the *essential nature* of the shift; it only somewhat disguises it, and makes it more difficult to recognize.

## Restoration Thought . . .

The writer is, I think, correct in pointing out that many Restorationists have put salvation on a faith - plus basis by making it to depend on a virtually perfect compliance with the whole of New Testament teachings, and that in so doing they have turned the joy and assurance of both themselves and others into a slavish type of drudgery and fear. We should not, however, attempt to correct this by going to another extreme. Baptism, in Restoration thought, has never been placed on the same level as the ordinary duties of the Christian life. It has always been regarded as the final step in the process of salvation, as the act in which the New Birth is consummated, the point at which we receive the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit—as the act which unites us with, or puts us into, Christ. Thus Walter Scott defined the Ancient Gospel as faith to 'change the heart, repentance to change the life, baptism to change the state, forgiveness to cleanse from guilt, and the Gift of the Spirit to aid in Christian living;<sup>4</sup> and Alexander Campbell said in an article of the same name:

He that goeth down into the water to put on Christ, in the faith that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin, and that he has appointed immersion as the medium, and the act of ours, through and in which he actually and formally remits our sins, has, when immersed the actual remissions of his sins. So that he is dead by sin, buried with Jesus, and is born again, or raised to life again, a life new and divine, in and through the act of immersion.

This . . . is the Bible import of the one immersion. In it we put on Christ, are buried with him, rise with him, have our sins remitted, enter upon a new life, receive the Holy Spirit, and begin to rejoice in the Lord.<sup>5</sup>

On the same point Dr. Richard Batey says (commenting on Romans 6):

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his . . . The believer has been planted with Christ in baptism and dies to the old existence . . . This death to the old self is not the end but the beginning of a new sphere of life . . . The hope for the future resurrection is inextricably connected with the resurrection with Christ in baptism . . .

In baptism the believer re-enacts the death and resurrection of his Lord. In this dramatization of that saving event the believer appreciates God's saving grace and identifies his own life and future with Christ. Thus death on the cross, which is viewed by Paul as victory over the evil forces working to destroy man, is recapitulated in the life of the convert, so that he overtly testifies to the faith which he has in Christ as Savior (cf. Gal. 2:20; 5:24). The cross lies in the past but becomes contemporary for every man who experiences the regeneration of baptism, thereby destroying the *sinful body*.<sup>6</sup>

## The Ultimate Authority . . .

More to the point, however, it is not just Restoration thought—not just Walter Scott, Alexander Campbell, or Dr. Batey—but ultimately Christ and the apostles who put baptism on this high plane. Thus Christ said in the Great Commission (Mk. 16:16): "He who believes and is baptized will be saved" (if this is putting salvation on a faith-plus basis, it is the Lord himself who so puts it). Peter said on the Day of Pentecost: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you . . . for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). Ananias admonished the believing, penitent Saul: "And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on his name" (Acts 22:16). Paul himself said in his letter to the Saints at Rome: "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were bap-

tized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the father, we too might walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:3, 4). He said again in his letter to Titus: "But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us; not because of any righteous deeds we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the baptism of new birth and renewal by the Holy Spirit" (Tit. 3:4-6).<sup>7</sup> And Peter told those to whom he was writing: "Baptism, which corresponds to this [i.e., to eight persons being saved by water], now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a clear conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ . . ." (1 Pet. 3:21).

This high view of baptism's *meaning and purpose* was maintained by virtually all of the Apostolic Fathers;<sup>8</sup> by many of the Protestant Reformers (specifically Luther); by many eminent scholars and commentators across the centuries; and is held today by Churches ranging all the way from Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican, and Lutheran, through Church of Christ / Christian, and Disciple, to Christadelphian, Adventist, and Church of Jesus Christ. A complete, or Full-Gospel stance (i.e., baptism administered only by immersion, only to believers, and with the understanding that it is the act in which the blood of Christ is appropriated) is maintained by at least the following bodies: the Churches of Christ; the Churches of Christ (Christian); part of the Christian Church (Disciples); the Evangelical Christian Churches of Russia and Eastern Europe; the Church of God (Oregon, Ill.); the Church of Jesus Christ (Salt Lake City); the Church of Jesus Christ (Reorganized); the Church of Christ (Temple Lot); the Church of Jesus Christ (Penn.); the Church of Jesus Christ (N. M.); the Worldwide

2. "Fellowship and the Plan of Salvation," *Christian Standard*, Vol. CX, No. 43 (October 26, 1975), pp. 966-68.

3. "A Conservative Basis for Open Membership," *Integrity*, Vol. 8, No. 3 (September, 1976), pp. 38-41.

4. M. M. Davis, *The Restoration Movement of the Nineteenth Century* (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Co., 1931), p. 164.

5. Alexander Campbell, "Ancient Gospel.—No. IV, Immersion," *The Christian Baptist*, Vol. 5, No. 9 (April 7, 1828), p. 222.

6. Richard A. Batey, *The Letter of Paul to the Romans*, The Living Word Commentary, Vol. 7, (Austin: R. B. Sweet Co., 1969), pp. 78-80.

7. *The New American Bible*.

8. Everett Ferguson, *Early Christians Speak* (Austin: Sweet Publishing Company, 1971), pp. 33-41.

Church of God; the Seventh Day Church of God (Denver); the Seventh Day Church of God (Salem, W. Va.); the Church of God (Apostolic); a large group of English Baptists; the United Pentecostal Church; and the Christadelphian Ecclesia. The view here contended for is thus not some fly-by-night interpretation, but represents the thinking, *both ancient and modern*, of a very large part of Christendom. It would be little short of tragic if, in our struggle against, or reaction to, such extremes as noted above, we water down, blunt, or compromise our historical stance at this point—a point on which we are clearly on Catholic, or Apostolic, ground.

### The Only Real Work . . .

Finally it should be noted that baptism is never referred to in Scripture as a work, except in Colossians 2:12 where it is called the working of God: "and you were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead." The only real work which takes place in baptism is the work of God—the washing away, or forgiving of sins on the merits of the death of Christ with which it unites us, and the implanting of the new life of the Spirit—"the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit" (Tit. 3:5). The words of Martin Luther are here very much to the point:

This is not done by changing of a garment, or by any laws or works, but by a new birth, and by the renewing of the inward man, which is done in baptism, as Paul saith, "All ye that are baptized have put on Christ." Also "According to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Tit. iii.5. For besides that they who are baptized are regenerated and renewed by the Holy Ghost to a heavenly righteousness and to eternal life, there riseth in them also a new light and a new flame; there riseth in them new and holy affections, as the fear of God, true faith, and assured hopes, &c. There beginneth in them also a new will, and this is to put on Christ truly and according to the gospel.

Therefore, the righteousness of the law, or of our own works, is not given unto us in baptism; but Christ himself is our garment. Now Christ is no law, no lawgiver, no works, but a divine and inestimable gift, whom God hath

given unto us, that he might be our justifier, or Savior, and our Redeemer. Wherefore to be appareled with Christ according to the gospel, is not to be appareled with the law or with works, but, with an incomparable gift; that is, with remission of sins, righteousness, peace, consolation, joy of spirit, salvation, life, and Christ himself.<sup>9</sup>

Here again baptism stands on the same high plane as faith, which is only once referred to in Scripture as a work, and that once as a work of God: "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he hath sent" (Jn. 6:29). To put this kind of "work" on the same basis as obedience in general, or a lifetime of Christian service, is totally out of the question.

In conclusion it should also be noted that our union with Christ is not, as the brother in question maintains, a "faith union," but is always represented in Scripture as a *baptismal union*. Thus we read of being "baptized into Christ" (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27), of being "baptized into his death" (Rom 6:3); of being baptized into his body (1 Cor. 12:13); and of being "united with him [by baptism] in a death like his" (Rom. 6:5); but never of *believing into*, or of being *united with him* by faith.

Grace frees, Yes! But When? The answer to this, if it is to be realistic, must ever be as it has ever been: When it is accepted in the faith/baptismal experience—not, as our brother maintains, when it is accepted by "faith alone." □

### On "The Power Of Sin" and Debates With Atheists

I come from dens of sin,  
To tempt the hearts of men,  
To hold them in my hands  
And thus their souls to send  
Beyond where men can live,  
Through muck and mire, and then  
When I am through,  
What else? What can they do?  
But despair that they are lost.  
They call me "Logic."

— G. B. Earl

## I Dream of Flying

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Some years ago, on a dark and turbulent night, an airplane strayed off course, ran out of fuel and crash landed in a remote and uncivilized country. Soon people from miles around came to see this strange looking object that had invaded their land. Nervously, they came close to run their hands over the smooth lines and to peer inside at the intricate array of dials and wires. Eventually, plunderers came to haul away pieces as relics or to trade for shiny beads.

Predictably, many later concluded that the object was surely sent from God and that it never should have been dismantled. Under the influence of one particularly vocal member, they began to recreate, in wood and clay, a replica of the original airplane. At first there was an intense commitment to rebuilding the one model. But soon there arose disputes over the size and shape of their project. Some argued over the angle of the wings, while others objected to the contrasting colors of the various sections. When someone suggested that each group build its own version of the model, the idea was applauded as the perfect answer to their dilemma.

Soon, and almost with a spirit of competition, each group was busily engaged in constructing its model according to its own preference. Some constructed elaborate models, with inlaid gold and jewels, while others spent countless hours polishing fine woods for their models. And then they began to worship around what they had created.

Finally, a few members of one group looked around at the spectacle and reflected on how the people were so divided; and concluded that this was all wrong. Instead of uniting their people, their efforts had only served to separate one from another. They concluded that the only way to be really pleasing to God was to find a way to unite their people. They would build one model, around which all people could

meet to worship.

So with intense fervor they began to build a new model—one patterned exactly after the original. When others questioned their efforts, they expressed contempt at the many distorted images others had built. They became even more determined to build one model to answer, for once and all, the questions their critics raised.

Work progressed marvelously. The people were excited as they began to complete each detail. Even outsiders were heard to remark on the zeal that characterized this new group. But something went wrong. They were at first delayed in completing the tail section because people could not agree on the dimensions. When their efforts to resolve the question of the exact appearance of the insignia failed, work ceased. Some refused to be a part of what was happening. So they left, and began to build their own model. Others followed.

They began to have loud and heated disputes, each trying to discredit the other. By this time there were no fewer than two dozen groups. Each claimed to have the original airplane reproduced in what they had created. Eventually, they quit speaking to one another. But many observers looked on, and laughed at the spectacle, concluding that what they saw had nothing to do with God.

One day a visitor from outside the country came. He gazed at all the myriad of models, recognizing some as airplanes. Wandering up to one of the models, one which had a strong resemblance to the original, he asked, "Does this thing ever fly?" One of the keepers responded, "Heavens, no! We would never think of doing something like that."

From time to time after that, people would come by, look at the airplane, and dream of someday making long flights. But the airplane never moved. □

9. Martin Luther, *Luther on Galatians* (Philadelphia, 1801), p. 302.

# The Ministry Of The Word

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Preaching is under siege today. Writers pen harsh words about it; speakers often make it the butt of ridicule. Here and there throughout the Christian communities the cry arises, "Down with the pulpit!" Criticism about preaching is not new, for it received bad reviews early in the life of the church, and even the apostle Paul's preaching was not excepted (2 Cor. 10:10). But criticism did not stop there; it has continued down through the years. Yet, despite the fact that this mass of criticism, often justified, has been heaped upon preaching again and again, preaching stubbornly remains with us.

But a legitimate question remains in some minds: "Is preaching a legacy that we should abandon?" This question must be answered because failure to do so would deny our love for those who ask it. Let us look at the facts and resolve the question.

Much criticism arises from confusion over meaning of terms. What is preaching? Ask a few people to define the word, and you will hear a wide diversity of replies. An objective examination of Christian Scriptures can resolve this confusion.

The Greek text of the Bible reveals two terms that must be examined: *kerugma* and *didache*. *Kerugma* means a proclamation, an announcement, and the verb form is translated "preach." The Bible refers to preaching as the message or proclamation of Jesus Christ (Rom. 16:25). Preaching is for the unbelievers, for people who are ignorant about the good news of Jesus. It is a message of God's love and gift to sinful mankind.

But what about the believers; do they not need preaching? Again the Scriptures pro-

vide the answer. *Didache* in Greek means teaching, instruction. The Scriptures reveal that the believers are *taught* the truths of God's word. It is important to discriminate between preaching (*kerugma*) and teaching (*didache*). The nature of the Christian Scriptures reveal this distinction. These letters are not a new book of law, but of love. They are love letters to the saints which do reveal the way of salvation, but the way of growth for believers constitutes their bulk.

Paul's letters to Timothy shed further light upon the difference between preaching and teaching. Paul urges Timothy to proclaim or preach the word (2 Tim. 4:2), and then in verse five reinforces his instructions by saying, "Do the work of an evangelist." Preaching the word and the work of an evangelist are synonymous. Timothy was to preach the good news of Jesus to the unbelievers.

In 1 Timothy 4, Paul writes concerning the false teachers that will appear. He reminds Timothy of the truths of the faith and the good teaching that Timothy is following, then says, "Command and teach these things" (1 Tim. 4:11, NIV). Teach whom? Teach the saints of God, the believers in Ephesus. So preaching is for the unbelievers, and teaching is for the believers.

## Meeting Universal Needs . . .

Defining the term "preaching" enables us to consider further the function of preaching. An examination of the world reveals a great need for the proclamation of Jesus Christ. Crime, divorce, suicide, was, and dishonesty in government and

business point to the necessity for preaching. The need is apparent, but some say that preaching does not reach this need.

Procedures, not preaching, hinder us from reaching this tremendous need. In order to convert the unbelievers, preaching must reach farther than the four walls of the church building. The letter of Acts reveals that the proclamation of Jesus Christ was taken to the unbelievers. They were not asked, "Come and hear our clergyman on the Lord's day," but all believers went and preached Jesus as Lord and Savior. All preached; all won souls. If the proclamation of the good news of Jesus has been left only to the apostles, the message would probably never have left Jerusalem. Every first-century Christian, however, proclaimed Jesus as Lord and Savior. Rather than invite unbelievers to a worship service, Christians should go to the homes of the unbelievers, to the businesses, campsites, jail cells, hospital beds, and rest homes. Christians need to go to the unbelievers and stop expecting them to come to "church."

The unbelievers need the proclamation of the good news of Jesus, but what about teaching for the saints? Is it needed? If a Christian will only examine himself, he will see that teaching God's word is vital to growing in the faith. This universal need of the saints can best be provided through the assembly of the body for worship on the Lord's day, or in a small study group meeting during the week. The assembly of the saints, large or small, should have the teaching of God's word as the central aspect. It should be a time for ". . . teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16, NIV).

Scripture gives us further instructions concerning the need for equipping the saints:

It was he [Jesus] who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge

of the Son of God and become mature, obtaining the full measure of perfection found in Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead speaking the truth in love, we all will in all things grow up into him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work (Eph. 4:11-16, NIV).

Jesus gave us apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor-teachers to prepare us for works of service. Works of service build up the body of Christ so every member can realize the perfection of Christ. Only then will false teachers and their teaching be defeated, and Christians will know the truth, and the truth will set them free and keep them free.

The truth is always spoken in love. The whole body grows and matures in this love, but only as each part does its work. Christians need training for service to the world and to the Lord's body. Teaching God's word equips the saints for this ministry of service.

## Historical Results . . .

But what about results? Many ask, "Does preaching and teaching work?" Many folk in our number-conscious age think this is the most important question.

The early history of the church, recorded in Acts, includes positive results from preaching. Acts 2:41 records the first response to the preaching of the good news of Jesus: three thousand baptisms. Acts 2:47 states that "the Lord added to their number those who were being saved." In Acts 8 Philip preaches the good news in Samaria, and again baptisms occur. Acts 9 tells of the conversion of Cornelius and all that heard the good news from Peter's lips. Acts 11:21 records that "a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord." The last chapter finds Paul in Rome, where "boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 28:31, NIV). Did preaching reap results in Rome? Yes, for it