

The Bible

James Gunn

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The Bible --Part 1

The Bible

Part 1

James Gunn

Thy Words were found and I did eat them; and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.

Jeremiah 15:16 Divine Revelation Divine revelation refers to the unveiling of God; actually to God's self-manifestation. That God has revealed Himself to man is a glorious fact, a fact that involves two prerequisites, God's ability of self-manifestation and His desire for self-manifestation.

An understanding of the personal attributes of Deity satisfies the mind that God is capable of manifesting Himself; omnipotence shows that God may do anything that He desires. He may manifest Himself, but that ability does not indicate whether or not He desires to reveal Himself particularly to man; nor does it indicate why He should desire so to do. God is sovereign and does not necessarily have to intimate His will; there are mysteries in the purposes of God. It is much more important to know that God desires to reveal Himself to man than to know exactly why He so desires. Repeatedly we are impelled to say with the Apostle Paul, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! (Romans 11:33).

The Reasonableness of Divine Revelation

There are certain facts well known to us which indicate that it is reasonable that God reveal Himself to man: God created man in His own image, after His own likeness (Genesis 1:26); He, therefore, created him a rational being.

Take the matter of articulate speech; this remarkable faculty is limited to three types of beings, two of which are created beings. It is limited to God; celestial beings, seraph, cherub, and angel; and to man.

Long before the creation of man, we know that God created celestial beings and gave them the power of speech, and that they used this power to praise and glorify their Creator (Job 38:7, Isaiah 6:3). Articulate speech was the means of communion between God and His angelic creation.

God has created man in His own image, a rational being. It is only reasonable that He likewise give to man the faculty of speech, and that He has done in order to reveal Himself to man and hold fellowship with man. The highest purpose then of articulate speech is that of communion between God and His creation. Through it God reveals Himself to man and man ascribes praise and glory to God. See appendix 1.

The Restraint of Divine Revelation

“By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned (sinned in their federal head)— Romans 5:12. Consequently, God drove man out of His presence, and guarded the way to the tree of life with a flaming sword (Genesis 3:24). Thus ended the direct communion

between God and innocent man; thus ended one phase of specific revelation. From Eden through to the Eternal State, divine revelation is seen under certain restraint.

When man sinned he placed the trees of Eden between God and himself (Genesis 3:8). Those trees formed the first obstacle to veil the presence of the Lord. God since then has maintained the position that man gave Him.

When He dwelt among His ancient people in the Tabernacle in the wilderness, He veiled Himself behind boards, curtains, and veils. Under those circumstances He could only partially reveal Himself to His people.

When the Temple replaced the Tabernacle, God still did not fully reveal Himself, but remained veiled behind the walls of that magnificent structure.

Of the capital city of the Eternal State, the New Jerusalem, John writes, "I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it" (Revelation 21:22). In that glorious new world, God will no longer cover Himself behind walls, curtains, and veils, then He will fully reveal Himself to redeemed humanity.

While we do not know why God should reveal Himself to man, we do know from Scripture how He has revealed Himself. He has used four different means to accomplish this: creation, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Bible, and providence.

Creation

The modern teaching of evolution, whether material, biological, or social, is not only nonbiblical, it is unbiblical. Both material and biological evolution are beyond experimentation; therefore, their acceptance as

facts is unscientific. Social evolution is disproved by the state of society in the world today.

The creation: God is the source of all. According to Ephesians 4:6, there is “one God and Father of all,” from Him all things proceed; “who is above all,” He transcends all; He indwells all, for He pervades all. In the Ephesian context, He indwells all believers. This passage asserts that God is the paternal source of humanity, saying, “We are the offspring of God” (Acts 17:29).

The Creator’s self-revelation: Among others there are two special passages of Scripture which record the testimony of nature to her Creator, and thus demonstrate how God has revealed Himself in creation.

Let us look at the first one; it is in the Old Testament: “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handywork” (Psalm 19:1).

From Psalm 19 it is obvious that God’s self-manifestation is: first, constant and continuous. The witness of creation is constant in its content and continuous in its duration. The words “declare” and “sheweth” are Hebrew participles and therefore imply that the testimony of nature is perpetual. We might paraphrase the opening verse of the Psalm: The heavens go on declaring the glory of God; and the firmament goes on shewing forth His handywork.

In second place, God’s self-manifestation is in regard to divine transcendency: “The heavens declare the glory of God.”

There is a religious philosophy, pantheism, that identifies God with nature and nature with God, but the

Psalmist here witnesses to God's transcendency over nature, "Inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house. For every house is builded by some man; but He that built all things is God" (Hebrews 3:3-4).

Westminster Abbey is a very remarkable edifice, but it could not conceive its own plan, nor build its own walls. Throughout several centuries there lived men who devised and executed plans which gave it form. Between 1722 and 1740 Sir Christopher Wren and Nicholas Hawksmoor constructed the two west towers, and parts that had deteriorated were restored in 1890 to give it its present appearance. As the greatness of the architect surpasses the greatness of the Abbey so God transcends creation and all its wonders.

Finally, in third place, God's self-manifestation in creation is related to His infinite wisdom and skill. The perfections of creation, His handiwork, witness to the capabilities of the Creator; they witness to the glory, majesty, supremacy and transcendence of God.

The second passage at which we must look is found in the New Testament: "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:19-20).

This passage like the one from the Old Testament may be considered under three salient points. First, the revelation of God through creation is limited. What may be known of Him in this way is manifest in man; yet,

with Elihu we have to say, "Touching the Almighty, we cannot find Him out: He is excellent in power, and in judgment, and in plenty of justice: He will not afflict" (Job 37:23). Creation, so to speak, is only a partial revelation of God. We are grateful for it, but we are exceedingly grateful that in His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, He has more fully revealed Himself.

In second place: This passage states that creation manifests God's eternal power; that is, power in the sense of ability. Divine ability is not only the power that creates but the power that sustains. Centuries ago Job said, "He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing" (Job 26:7). His words mean that God keeps the earth hanging upon nothing. The Spirit of God informs us that He does this through His Son: "For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible,... by Him all things consist" (Colossians 1:16-17).

In third place: This passage testifies that nature witnesses to God's eternal power and Godhead. God is One yet it has pleased Him to manifest Himself in the threefold distinction: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. While the appellation Trinity does not appear in the Bible, the doctrine of the Trinity is found in many parts of the Bible.

There may be several ways in which creation witnesses to her Triune Creator. For example, space is in three dimensions: length, breadth and height. Mass in three forms: solids, liquids and gases. Heaven according to the Bible, is another trinity in nature. The third heaven contains paradise (2 Corinthians 12:2-4); the second,

probably is the outward spaces; and the first, the atmosphere around the earth. Celestial beings are in three forms: seraph, cherub and angel. Time is measured, and the Bible takes this into consideration, in the three tenses: past, present and future. It seems as if God has left the very insignia of the Holy Trinity upon Creation. In her very constitution she witnesses to His Godhead. See appendix II.

My early years of Christian service were enriched by the acquaintance of Fransico Ramos, a Venezuelan Christian. One moonlit night as together we walked about on the cement pavement he used for drying coffee beans, he asked if my family at home in North America could see the same moon we were watching, or, he asked, was there another moon farther north.

After listening to a brief and simple explanation of the planetary system, he waved his arm and hand across the sky and exclaimed, 'What a wonderful God we have!' Yes, we do have a wonderful God and He has manifested Himself in Creation.

The Bible --Part 2

The Bible

Part 2

James Gunn

Thy Words were found and I did eat them; and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.

Jeremiah 15:16 Divine Revelation (Continued)

He revealed God through His words: The Apostle John reports more of the discourses and dialogues of the Lord Jesus than do the other Evangelists: Matthew, Mark, and Luke. In several of these the Lord claims to reveal God through His words. It is John who says, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared (interpreted) Him" (John 1:18).

The Lord Jesus claimed not to speak from Himself, but to speak doctrine given Him by the Father; therefore the very words of the Father. His teaching was a revelation of God's mind to man. At the feast of tabernacles Christ said, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me. If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself" (John 7:16-18).

Later in the temple, having flouted her accusers, and sent the adulterous woman away forgiven, the Lord spoke to His critics and said, "I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father hath taught Me; I speak these things" (John 8:28).

In His prayer in the Upper Room the Lord said, "I have given them the words which Thou gavest Me" (John 17:8). The Lord Jesus was the very mouth piece of God, and through His words revealed God to man.

He revealed God by His works: Dr. Griffith Thomas points out in his volume, *Christianity is Christ*, that in an attempt to prove Christ's Deity by His miracles, frequently the reasoning is inverted. Other men performed miracles: Moses, Elijah, and Elisha, and they were not divine. Instead of arguing that, since Christ performed miracles He must have been divine, the argument should be that, since Christ is divine all that He ever did was miraculous. The greatest of all miracles is Christ Himself. That humanity could live in a world of sin, lust, and violence and remain holy, harmless, and undefiled is the miracle that proves Christ is God. Christ's life on earth was a revelation of God in His absolute holiness.

There is a special miracle where the Godhead was clearly manifested, the healing of the palsied man (Mark 2:3-12). When Christ said, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee," His critics said, "Who can forgive sins but God?" Christ proved His Godhead by including the lesser in the greater. To forgive the sins of the soul was a greater work than to heal the sicknesses of the body. God was manifested through Christ's perfect humanity. Later to other critics He said, "Though ye believe not Me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him" (John 10:38).

In His prayer in the Upper Room, the Lord Jesus made reference to the fact that He had manifested God: "I

have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest Me" (John 17:6).

Josephus, the Jewish historian and contemporary of the Lord Jesus, bears witness that Deity was manifested in Christ:

"Now, there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call Him a man, for He was a doer of wonderful works; a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to Him many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. He was (the) Christ; and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned Him to the cross, those that loved Him at the first did not forsake Him; for He appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning Him; and the tribe of Christians, so named from Him, are not extinct at this day."

The Apostles' Doctrine

A consideration of three important passages in the New Testament will elucidate the teaching of the apostles in regard to the manifestation of God in Christ.

The first was written by John: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth" (John 1:1 and 14).

The Greek word, "logos" used here implies matter, speech and purpose; that is, what to speak, how to speak, and why to speak. The Spanish Bible translated

from the Latin Vulgate uses here the term verb: "The verb was made flesh, and dwelt among us." The particular part of speech called the verb, is that part in the sentence that expresses action. In Christ God becomes active. Christ, according to the doctrine of John, is God expressing Himself through the activities of perfect humanity.

The second was written by Paul: "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in (the) Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world and received up into glory" (1 Timothy 3:16).

Speaking indefinitely this refers to the manifestation of piety through humanity all the way from the incarnation of Christ to the rapture of the Church. God manifested Himself in the perfect humanity of Jesus; Jesus in His perfect humanity made visible God Who to man is invisible. Now He manifests Himself in our humanity in spite of its frailty.

Speaking definitely this refers to the manifestation of God in Christ. Here is the great mystery, God appeared as man. God sent His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh (Romans 8:3).

The third was written by the author of the Hebrews: "Who (the Son) being the brightness (the effulgence, outshining) of His glory, and the express image of His person (His substance)...when He had purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High" (Hebrews 1:3). The descriptive concept, "express image," occurs twice in the King James Version. The other reference is in Colossians 1:15, where it reads, "The image of the invisible God." This concept indicates

that the Lord Jesus was the visible appearance of the invisible God.

Two ideas are contained in the term image. First, the idea of likeness. As the head that appears in relief on the coin is a likeness to the reigning monarch or former president, so the man Christ Jesus bears a likeness to God, a moral likeness before men. Second, the idea of representation, as the head in relief on the coin is a representation of a monarch or president, the Lord Jesus here on earth was the representation of God.

The Miracle of Calvary

It is not difficult to see God revealed in the person of Christ and by His words and miracles, but this study would be incomplete without considering the revelation of God in the death of Christ.

Several passages of Scripture suggest themselves. First, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself" (2 Corinthians 5:19). "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). "He (God) that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things" (Romans 8:32). "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (1 Timothy 2:5-6). "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him" (1 John 4:9-14).

In creation God manifested His eternal power and Godhead; creation bears special testimony to the

personal attributes of God, the Triune God. In Christ God has made Himself manifest not only in all His personal attributes but in His moral attributes as well. It is through the revelation of God in Christ that we learn of the ultimate purposes of His love and righteousness.

Appendix to Revelation in Creation and in Christ I

The likeness of God: “Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness” (Genesis 1:26-27). This decision of the Godhead to create man contains two important concepts, the image of God and the likeness of God.

1. The image of God: The word image in this connection may have a dual meaning; the first part, the word image suggests representation; as for example, the image on a coin or seal. Created man, as a rational being on earth, was to be God’s representative. Man was reminded of this after the deluge (Genesis 9:6).

The second part suggests that a moral fitness becomes such a representative.

The image of God in man has been greatly marred for he is no longer a true representative of God because of his fall in sin. Man no longer has any moral likeness to God. The idolatry into which man fell is full proof of this.

While here Christ was in the absolute what man should have been. Christ was the visible image of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3).

Redeemed man eventually will bear the image of the Son of God (Romans 8: 29; 1 Corinthians 15:49). In this connection the image will be definitely moral for man

will not be the representative of the divine when God will be all in all (1 Corinthians 15:28).

2. The likeness of God: It frequently has been said that man bears a likeness to God in that he is triunity even as God is a triunity; that man being a composite of spirit, soul and body is a reflection of the threefold manifestation of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. This explanation may be partially true but more seems to be involved.

God is a rational being: perfect in intelligence, quick in perception and in all other mental faculties. In creating man after His likeness, He made him also a rational being with mental powers which elevate him far above the animals, and which enable him to fellowship with God.

See appendix to Christian Evidences I.

Appendix to Revelation in Creation and in Christ II

Godhead: The word rendered “Godhead” in Romans 1:20 in the Greek is the word “divinity.” It is another word altogether different from the word “Godhead” in Colossians 2:9.

In nature, ever since creation, God shows His divinity not only in the creating of the material universe but in sustaining the material universe: “By Him all things consist - subsist” (Colossians 1:17).

Man in his attempt to accomplish projects shows his humanity. His failures, imperfections and errors are a display of his humanity, as fallen.

Through the perfections of His workmanship, the precision of its form, the symmetry of its structure, the regularity of its operation, and the beauty of its appearance, God displays His divinity in creation.

Humanity is displayed by men; divinity is displayed by God; consequently, alone. Divinity in reality is God in self-manifestation; therefore, divinity is a manifestation of God in His triunity, in and since creation. The Father manifests divinity; the Son manifests divinity; the Spirit manifests divinity; it is, therefore not a great surprise that the translators of the King James Version have used the word Godhead in Romans 1:20.

Q Divine Revelation Through Providence

Providence is a term for God's preservation and administration of the material Universe, and for His moral government over the affairs of men. It includes also the idea that men may obtain power and guidance from God to mould the course of events for the general good of mankind. Scripture substantiates this definition and states that God is the Saviour (Preserver) of all men, especially of those that believe (1 Timothy 4:10).

The annals of human history are full of incidents in which the hand of God was seen behind the acts of Providence. One of the earliest of these, one that is always contemporary, is the revelation of God in the rainbow. We see Him also in other natural phenomena, national events and in personal experiences.

In the Rainbow (Genesis 9:8-20)

The cross of Christ is frequently considered the token of the covenant of grace. The rainbow may well be

considered the token of the covenant of Providence. This covenant, of course, was also made in grace.

Man's sin and the deluge (Genesis 6:5-8): The deluge was a penal act of God resulting from human guilt. God determined to destroy (blot out) humanity from the earth. This He eventually did with a single reservation. Because "Noah found grace (favour) in the eyes of the Lord," he and all his family were spared.

The covenant of Providence (Genesis 8:21-9:17): God set His bow in the clouds as the token of the covenant that He then made between Himself and the earth. He called Noah's attention to the bow, and instructed him in its true significance.

The Bible --Part 3

The Bible

Part 3

James Gunn

Thy Words were found and I did eat them; and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.

Jeremiah 15:16 Divine Revelation Through Providence
(Continued)

Its extent: "The bow shall be in the clouds; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh" (Genesis 9:16).

Its intent: "I will establish My covenant with you; neither shall all flesh be cut off any more by the water of a flood; ... to destroy the earth" (Genesis 9:11).

Its content: "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease" (Genesis 8:22).

It is impossible for the human eye to look long at the light of the sun at its meridian, but the human eye may gaze with delight upon the rainbow, the bow that is nothing else than the light of the sun broken into its great variety of rays of different intensity. The prisms formed by the rain drops analyze the light of the sun and reduce it to its many component colours. In Providence we may not see God in the same clarity that we do at the cross and the empty tomb, but in the rainbow of earthly events, we see the tokens and the proofs that He is the Preserver of all men, especially of those that believe.

The rainbow definitely is a revelation of God's grace in Providence.

In Natural Phenomena

God, in His providential care for every creature, arranges the seasons of the year (Genesis 8:22), controls the weather (Matthew 5:45), gives physical life and breath (Acts 17:25), and supplies food for all (Acts 14:17). His presence is intimated by the calmness and brightness of a sunshiny day (Psalm 19), and His voice may be heard above the terror and tumult of an electric storm (Psalm 29).

History bears witness to Christ for its dates acknowledge His incarnation. Events have happened either in B.C. (Before Christ) or in A.D. (Anno Domini—the year of our Lord). In a similar way, the almanac, the clock, and the barometer all witness to God's will and wisdom in Providence.

David assures all of God's sovereignty and power over natural phenomena: "The Lord sitteth upon the flood (Marginal reading, The Lord sat enthroned at the flood); yea, the Lord sitteth King forever" (Psalm 29:10). That God controlled that extraordinary phenomenon of nature is proof that He is truly Lord over His own creation.

In National Affairs

Providence generally speaking is seen in natural causes rather than in miracles. For the Christian it is a comfort to know that God is behind the scenes controlling the affairs of the nations. This He does in a great variety of ways.

In dreams: God had promised Abraham that his posterity should become a mighty nation, that his descendants should become slaves for four hundred years, and then be delivered and made exceedingly wealthy (Genesis 15). The years passed and there was no indication of these promises being fulfilled. Abraham's descendants, Jacob and his family, were a nomad group in a land stricken by famine, and the best son of the family was languishing in prison. What had God through Providence done for them?

A great monarch had a dream one night. In the morning he discovered that one of his staff recalled a dream, and recalled also that another fellow-worker likewise had a dream when both of them were in prison. These dreams, he told Pharaoh, were interpreted by a trustee, a man by the name of Joseph. That Joseph was brought out of prison and interpreted Pharaoh's dream is a well known story.

God in His providential administration of human affairs, through these dreams set in motion the circumstances which eventually brought Israel into Egypt. It was while there that they increased in numbers, numbers from which God was able to build the Hebrew nation.

Through insanity: Mental illness in any home is distressing, more so if it is intense. Providentially, through the temporary insanity of a great monarch, God was acknowledged as supreme. Nebuchadnezzar was told that his insanity was "to the intent that the living may know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, and setteth up over it the basest of men" (Daniel 4:17).

The Lord used the delusion of this monomaniac to serve His purpose in the discipline of His people Israel.

In births: The birth of a baby boy is natural. On one occasion, as probably on many more, God in a marked way was behind such a birth. He had predicted this birth and named this baby some 250 years before; the baby was the great Cyrus. Through this natural event, God made possible the return of Judah to her own land (Isaiah 44:28-45; Daniel 1:21; Ezra 1:1), the rebuilding of the temple and of the city of Jerusalem.

Through census: The decree of Caesar Augustus that a census be taken (Luke 2:1) was the act of Providence that made possible the birth of the Lord in Bethlehem, thus fulfilling prophecy (Micah 5:2). The word “taxed” in Luke 2:1 is used in its simplest sense that of “registration,” and the word “world” implies the Roman Empire.

Historians have encountered problems relative to this general registration since there are no records of it in secular history. They have also encountered problems in regard to the stipulation relative to Cyrenius for the date of his appointment to the office of proconsular that has been deduced is somewhat later than represented by Luke. Luke has been proved a very accurate historian. Furthermore, he was directed by the process of inspiration. If historians would accept without question the veracity of Luke’s account, they would be able the more accurately to state dates and events. Eventually archaeology will prove the reliability of Scripture in this case as it has in so many others.

Through execution: The Jewish mode of execution was stoning after which the body was hung upon a tree until

the evening. Crucifixion was a very ancient means of execution. It was practised by the Egyptians, Persians, Assyrians, Scythians, Indians, and even by some nations in comparatively recent times.

Crucifixion usually was performed in some secluded spot outside the city, and generally the bodies were left until devoured by beasts and birds. Under Roman law, burial was generally forbidden except in the case of a Jew, this exception was decreed in their favour.

God in His providential dealings with His people put them under subjugation to Rome in order that all predicted of Christ be literally fulfilled. Psalm 22 was fulfilled in the mode of His death, and Isaiah 53 was fulfilled in the mode of His burial. God's over-ruling Providence directed affairs among the nations so that unconsciously they fulfilled His will.

In personal experiences: The Apostle John commended certain spiritual fathers saying, "Ye have known Him that is from the beginning" (1 John 2:13). In writing to spiritual infants he says, "Ye have known the Father." All true believers know God. In the case of the young, they know Him as Father, but in the case of the mature Christians, they should know Him as the One who is always the same from the very beginning, the immutable and eternal God. All else may change but God remains ever the same. Christian fathers learn this, not through the reading of the Word only, but through the trials and difficulties of life.

Believers may not see miracles in their lives, but they can detect God's providential control over events.

This is illustrated by some of the expressions found in the Psalms of David. He speaks of God as "the Rock of

my Salvation," "My Deliverer," "My Strength," "My Fortress," and "My Shield."

We might conjecture and say that he learned God as his Deliverer when he killed the lion and the bear which preyed upon his father's sheep (1 Samuel 17:34-37). It is not unusual for a young man to kill a wild animal, but it is unusual when he does so by hand. Of this event in his life David could say to Saul, "The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine."

David surely learned that the Lord was his shield down in the valley of Elah (1 Samuel 17). He had put off Saul's armour, laid aside his shield, and went forth to meet Goliath who was fully armed and had an armour bearer to carry his shield. Yet, Goliath was slain; David protected, and made victorious because God was His shield. Henceforth in a very practical way, David could speak of the Lord as my Shield.

On one occasion Saul and his men sought David in the wilderness of Maon. We read, "And they told David: wherefore he came down into a rock, and abode in the wilderness of Maon" (1 Samuel 23:19-29). While David hid behind the rock, Saul heard that the Philistines had invaded the land so he had to stop pursuing David and go and fight the Philistines. That rock, naturally speaking, was David's salvation, but he looked beyond the literal rock, and called the Lord, the Rock of my Salvation.

On another occasion when Saul pursued David in the wilderness of Engedi, a cave became a fortress to him. David hid in that cave, and although Saul and his men entered it, God preserved David and actually delivered

Saul into his hands. David could have killed him, but only cut off a piece of his garment. Well might he call the Lord his Fortress, his High Tower!

Longfellow wrote, "By going a few minutes sooner or later, by stopping to speak with a friend on the corner, by meeting this man or that, or by turning down this street instead of the other, we may slip some impending evil, by which the whole current of our lives would have been changed. There is no possible solution in the dark enigma but the one word, Providence."

To all this we can only say with Cecil, "Providence is a greater mystery than revelation."

Divine Revelation In The Bible

Without doubt God has revealed Himself to man in Creation, in Christ, and in Providence. He has revealed His eternal power and Godhead in the wonders of nature; His grace and truth in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ; and His sovereignty and purposes in the acts of Providence. We are now to consider a self-revelation of God given progressively in the Holy Scriptures. This special revelation of God in one form or another has been contemporary with all generations since the days of Moses.

Divine revelation in the Bible is essential to Christianity for this Holy Book is the self-revelation of the Triune God through the Divine Spirit in Sacred Writings. These He has indited and wholly inspired; consequently they must be inerrant, infallible, and permanent. These Writings, the Holy Scriptures, are the predetermined revelation of the Infinite to the finite.

The Bible uses a certain nomenclature descriptive of its own characteristics and content; with this we ought to acquaint ourselves.

The Word of God (Mark 7:13; John 10:35; Hebrews 4:12; Revelation 1:2, 9): In many of the references in which the name Word of God is found, it stands for the whole of the divine utterance of God to man, and is as comprehensive in its meaning as the term, The Bible.

The Oracles of God: An oracle is closely related to the idea of a word; it means a statement, utterance, or narrative. Paul used it in making reference to the Old Testament (Romans 3:2), and Stephen used it in referring to the Law (Acts 7: 38). There is an occurrence of the word in Hebrews 5:12 where the doctrines of the New Testament are involved. God has made statements which must be accepted as divine, and these statements are found in both the New and Old Testaments.

The Scriptures: A Scripture means a writing and in its biblical sense a holy writing. This name for the Bible is repeatedly given to the Old Testament (Matthew 21:42; 22:29; John 5:39; Acts 17:18-24). It is also used in regard to the New Testament. In 1 Timothy 5:18, the Spirit of God brings the Old and New Testaments together, and calls them both the "Scripture". In this passage Paul quotes from Deuteronomy 25:4 and then from Luke 10:7.

In his Second Epistle, Peter classifies Paul's epistles along with all the other Scriptures (2 Peter 3:16).

Timothy, from his earliest days was acquainted with the Old Testament (2 Timothy 3:15). Paul reminds him of this and then as a summation of all inspired writings, he says, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is

profitable.” The Revised Version of this verse reads, “Every Scripture inspired of God is profitable.” This version discriminates between forged and genuine writings (2 Thessalonians 2:2), and calls the genuine, Scripture.

From these considerations, it is apparent that both the Old and New Testaments are to be accepted as Holy Scriptures.

The Bible --Part 4

The Bible

Part 4

James Gunn

Thy Words were found and I did eat them; and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.

Jeremiah 15:16 Divine Revelation In The Bible

(Continued)

The Perfect Law of Liberty: Although this paradoxical name for the Bible occurs but twice, and both times in the Epistle of James, it is very significant. The combination of law and liberty does not suggest conflict but control; Christian freedom is controlled freedom. The believer looks into the Perfect Law of Liberty and governs his behaviour accordingly (James 1:23-25), and knowing that his conduct is to be judged according to its standards (James 2:12).

The Law: Several different sections of the Old Testament are called the Law: for example, the Pentateuch (Matthew 5:17; Luke 16:16; 24:44; John 1:45, etc.), the Psalms (John 10:34), Isaiah and Ezekiel (Romans 3:19; 1 Corinthians 14:21). It seems that the name Law, in the times of Christ, embraced the entire Old Testament.

The Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms: The Lord Jesus, when He addressed His own after His resurrection, divided the Old Testament into three (Luke 24:44): "The Law of Moses," and this embraced the first five books of the Bible; "The Prophets," and these included both the historical as well as the prophetic books. The historical

writings from Joshua to Esther were called by Jewish students the early prophets, and the other books from Isaiah to Malachi the late prophets. To these two divisions Christ added a third, "The Psalms," all the poetical books. It is used with the definite article as it is in connection with the Holy Scriptures, it singles out the volume they occupy from all other books; there is none other like it.

The Manner of Biblical Revelation

The manner by which God has revealed Himself in the Bible is stated most concisely and significantly: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Timothy 3:16). The Greek word translated here, we are told is in the passive voice and means that which is breathed out by God, and that this He did by His Holy Spirit. Consequently, frequently we find throughout the Old Testament the clause, "I am the Lord". This was God's challenge to Pharaoh and others who questioned His existence. It is still a challenge to atheism and agnosticism. The Bible is the inaudible voice of God manifesting His presence and His will.

The Content of Biblical Revelation

Since the Bible is a revelation of God, in what manner does it reveal Him? This subject is important and comprehensive; we may divide it into several aspects and consider a few of these.

In His essential oneness: The essential oneness of God is clearly stated in both the Old and New Testaments (Deuteronomy 6:4; Zechariah 14:9; Ephesians 4:6; 1 Timothy 2:5). This fundamental truth separates both Judaism and Christianity from the pagan world around

them. The divine Essence as revealed in Holy Scripture, the monotheism of Judaism and Christianity, refutes the error of polytheism which consists in a belief in many supernatural personal beings, gods of greater or lesser influence. It also negates the evil philosophy of pantheism. Pantheism teaches that what the human soul is to the physical body so God is to the material Universe. It more or less identifies God with creation and makes Him a part of it, not its originator and sustainer (Colossians 1:16-17). If in Romanism there is a slant toward a modified polytheism, in many of the modern cults there is a definite inclination toward pantheism. This is particularly true of those cults that are based upon oriental religions.

In His triunity: The Bible not only declares that God is one, but also that He manifests Himself in the threefold distinction: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The word Trinity does not appear in the Bible, but the doctrine of the Trinity is found everywhere throughout all the Holy Scriptures. The Holy Trinity is revealed in Sacred Scripture by various methods: significant language, ceremonial allusions, prophetic inferences, personal identifications, and spiritual analogies.

Significant language: Within the Godhead, the decision to create man was stated in language that suggests the Holy Trinity: "Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness" (Genesis 1:26). Similar language was used in the hearing of Isaiah the Prophet, as in vision he witnessed the glory of the Lord: "Whom shall I send (Divine Oneness), who will go for Us? (Divine Triunity)."

Ceremonial allusions: In the Aaronic benediction we see beyond the allusion to the reality for in it the Trinity is

involved. We might set it out in this way: “The Lord (Jehovah the Father) bless thee and keep thee: The Lord (Jehovah the Spirit) make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The Lord (Jehovah the Son) lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace” (Numbers 6:24-26).

There is also an allusion to the Holy Trinity in the vision seen by Isaiah. He heard the seraphim cry, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts.” In New Testament language that would be: Holy Father, Holy Son, and Holy Spirit.

Prophetic inferences: Notice the Trinity in the prophecy that was fulfilled by Christ as He stood up in the synagogue at Nazareth (Isaiah 61:1; Luke 4:18-19). “The Spirit (the Holy Spirit) of the Lord God (Jehovah the Father) is upon Me (the Lord Jesus).” There are a number of such references to be found throughout the Book of Isaiah.

When we come to the New Testament, this revelation of God becomes more clear and more defined.

Personal identifications: The Lord Jesus during His discourses in the Upper Room (John 13-17) clearly identified each person in the Godhead. He spoke of the Father who had sent Him, the Father to whom He was returning. He spoke of the personal coming of the Holy Spirit to abide with the disciples. Throughout the discourses in the Upper Room, as in all His discourses, He Himself claimed to be the Son of God who was to be glorified with the glory that had been His from before the world existed.

Furthermore, each of the three persons in the Godhead are identified in their individual personalities by the apostolic writers. There are so many references to the

three members of the Godhead in Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians that it has been called the Epistle of the Trinity.

Paul's benediction for the Corinthians is one of the clearest statements we have regarding the Holy Trinity: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen" (2 Corinthians 13:14).

Spiritual analogies: One of the simplest analogies used in the Bible relative to the Holy Trinity is that of light: "God is light" (1 John 1:5). God is as ready to reveal Himself to man as light is to shine. Solar light is a combination of the three primary colours: green, red, and blue, and is therefore a befitting symbol of the Triune God. The perfect combination of these three primary colours results in whiteness, the absence or absorption of all three results in darkness. Truly God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all, no ignorance, no evil; nothing but purity, righteousness, and knowledge.

The Character of Biblical Revelation

Veracity characterizes God's revelation of Himself through the Scriptures. He is the God of truth (John 3:33; 17:3; Romans 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 1:9), and He cannot lie (Hebrews 6:18). The Lord Jesus is full of truth (John 1:14), and is the very personification of truth (John 14:6; Revelation 3:7; 19:11). In like manner, the Holy Spirit is truth; He bears the title, the Spirit of Truth (John 14:17; 15:13; 15:26; 1 John 5:17).

Biblical revelation must be considered as the self-manifestation of the true and only God, given with full

veracity in every degree and aspect thought by Him as necessary for man's welfare.

The Inspiration Of The Bible

Since through the Bible God reveals Himself to man, may this sacred volume be considered as a self-manifestation of God only? Does the Bible not contain other facts?

Here we must proceed with caution lest a misunderstanding occur. The Bible in its entirety was given by inspiration of God, but to affirm that it contains nothing but a self-disclosure of God is to ignore certain important passages. The Lord has recorded the account of Satan's deception in Eden (Genesis 3:14), the devil's tactics with Job (Job 1-2), and warns the Christian against the fiery darts of the wicked one (Ephesians 6:12). The Lord uncovers for us the influence of Satan in the world today; he blinds the minds of them that believe not (2 Corinthians 4: 4), and gives a detailed account of the stupid statements of Job's three friends. He likewise exposes many evils and wrongs from different sources. None of these could be said to contain a revelation of God in the sense of a self-manifestation. Notwithstanding, the Lord wants us to learn the many things that He has written in His Word: the manifestation of His own Divine Person and sovereign will, the exposure of all that is evil, and the commendation of all that is good. If we understand these, even in a limited measure, they will help us to distinguish between revelation and inspiration.

The Meaning of Inspiration

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16). The words “inspiration of God” in this verse mean God-breathed. To elucidate this meaning, an illustration from the creation of man has been used. God made man out of the dust of the earth; He breathed into this human form the breath of life, and man became a living soul. The Bible, so it is reasoned, has a very human appearance and looks very similar to many other books. It is printed on paper, made up of paragraphs, sentences, clauses, phrases, words and letters, but into this book of human appearance God has breathed and it has become a living book. The Bible is indeed The Living Book.

Scholars inform us that the words “inspiration of God” are in the passive voice, and actually mean the out-breathing of God, so that the Bible is a book the words of which are breathed out by God. Since this is the meaning of the word, and the force of 2 Timothy 3:16, we believe what God breathed out is perfect in every detail.

The Means of Inspiration

God has stated explicitly the means that He employed to produce the Holy Scriptures: “God who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets” (Hebrews 1:1). “The prophets have enquired and searched diligently,... the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify” (1 Peter 1:10-11). “Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy

Ghost" (2 Peter 1:21). Men were God's instruments to give us the Bible.

To some this may be difficult to believe, and the question may occur to them; how could God produce a perfect, inerrant book through imperfect agents who themselves are subject to frequent error? Two theories have been propounded to answer this and other similar questions, the mechanical and the potential means.

The mechanical: This theory reduces man to almost a mechanical tool, a pen, a typewriter. It pictures God using the human hand but not the human heart or head. This theory fails to explain many of the obvious facts of divine inspiration.

The potential: If we are to have a proper explanation of divine inspiration, we must take into consideration that in the reading of the Word of God, we can detect the vocabularies, the styles, and the knowledge and circumstances of the human writers. The potential theory of inspiration does take these into consideration. Obviously God used all the ability and all the natural accomplishments available to Him in each human agent. He used the court and legislative language of a prince and statesman like Moses; He used the reasoning powers and convincing style of a logician like Paul; the poetical talent of a composer like David, and the terse and abrupt speech of a fisherman like Peter.

The miracle: Divine inspiration is a miracle. God by His Spirit so possessed and controlled prophets, apostles, and all the writers of sacred text so that, although imperfect and frail in themselves, they produced an inerrant and infallible volume.

Christians accept and revere the miracle of the incarnation. In that event God bound together the human and the divine natures in one glorious personality, the Lord Jesus Christ. In the work of inspiration, the Holy Spirit, in a different manner again brought together the human and the divine and produces another miracle, an inerrant and infallible book, the Bible.

The Bible --Part 5

The Bible

Part 5

James Gunn

Thy Words were found and I did eat them; and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.

Jeremiah 15:16

The Extent of Inspiration

The inspiration of the Old Testament is conclusively confirmed by a number of facts: first, "Holy men of God spake as they were moved (borne along) by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:21); second, the prophets claimed to be writing the very words of God (Deuteronomy 17:18; 30:10; Joshua 24:26; 1 Kings 16:5; Nehemiah 8; Isaiah 34:16; Nahum 1:1). Third, the Lord Jesus frequently endorsed the Old Testament as the Word of God; He constantly referred to it saying, "It is written" (Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 14:27; Luke 4:4-12). Fourth, the apostles of our Lord repeatedly quoted from it as infallible and attributed its words to the Holy Spirit (Ephesians. 4:8; Hebrews 2:7). Fifth, many of the predictions of the Old Testament have already been fulfilled; for example, the birth of Christ (Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:1), His ministry (Isaiah 61:1-3; Luke 4:16-21), His death (Isaiah 53, Acts 8:32-33; Psalm 22:18; John 19:24; Exodus 12:46; Psalm 34:20; John 19:36; Psalm 69:21; John 19:28).

The question might well occur, is there any such internal evidence of the inspiration of the New Testament? Yes. New Testament writers were also guided and influenced

by the Holy Spirit. They claimed to have received truth directly from God, and some of their fellow-writers quote them as they do those of the Old Testament attributing to them the same authority and infallibility.

The New Testament writers and the Holy Spirit: The men who were with the Lord Jesus in the Upper Room were those who were going to make Church history, and those who were going to write part of the New Testament Scriptures.

What the Lord said in regard to them would also be true of others He might choose for similar purposes. He revealed much to them about the person and the work of God the Holy Spirit. He told them just how the Spirit of God would influence them after He, their Master, had left them. It should be remembered that what the Lord said to them in this connection had an immediate and primary application to those apostles.

Three of the Lord's statements indicate the Spirit's power in the production of the New Testament. First, Jesus said, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26). It was through this faculty of the Holy Spirit to activate the memory that we received the four Gospels. In second place, the Lord Jesus said to those same disciples, "When He the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13a). As the Spirit of God guided them into every phase of truth, they were enabled to write the epistles which bear their names. In third place, the Lord made reference to prophecy: "He will shew you things to come" (John 16: 13b). In doing this the Holy

Spirit made possible the Book of the Revelation, 2 Peter, and other prophetic passages of the New Testament.

Through these predictions of Christ, we know that the Holy Spirit, in even a closer operation than with the writers of the Old Testament, worked with the human authors of the books of the New Testament.

The New Testament writers and direct revelation: Some might feel that Paul, the writer of most of the New Testament epistles, was not included in the predictions made by Christ in the Upper Room. This objection is answered by the fact that no writer of the New Testament received so many direct revelations from God, and these covered large areas of New Testament doctrine.

The gospel: Of the gospel Paul wrote, "I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man, For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by revelation of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 1:12-13). Through this revelation Paul was fully fitted to write his two gospel epistles, Romans and Galatians.

The Church: Paul claimed a special revelation of the mystery that God intended to make Jews and Gentiles fellow-heirs and members of the same Body of Christ (Ephesians 3:1-6). Since this was true, we know that Paul was prepared to write the Church epistles, Ephesians and Corinthians.

Other subjects: By special revelation Paul was able to write about the Lord's supper (1 Corinthians 11:23), the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-3), and many other important subjects (2 Corinthians 12:1).

Furthermore, the Lord gave to the Apostle Paul a very special ministry in writing; he indicates this in his Epistle to the Colossians, "The dispensation of God which is given to me to fulfil (complete) the Word of God" (Colossians 1:25).

It must be admitted also that what was claimed by the Apostle Paul was, in part at least, true of the other apostles and writers of the New Testament. They too experienced direct revelations (1 Corinthians 2:9-13); they too were equally empowered for their ministry. In 1 Peter 1:11-12 the Old Testament prophet and the New Testament apostle has equal power, illumination, and authority.

The New Testament writer and apostolic endorsement: If we are willing to accept as a proof of the inspiration of the Old Testament the fact that it is quoted by Christ and His apostles as Holy Scripture, we must also accept this same type of proof for the inspiration of the New.

In speaking of some recompence and honour for the elders in 1 Timothy 5:18, the Apostle sustains his argument by two quotations, both of which he claims are Scripture. The first is from the Old Testament. "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn" (Deuteronomy 25:4), and the second is from the New, "The labourer is worthy of his reward" (Luke 10:7). In Paul's argument the New Testament is as much Scripture as the Old.

A similar deduction may be made from the statement of Peter in his second letter (chapter 3:16): "Paul... according to the wisdom given unto him hath written ... things hard to be understood, which they that are unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures,

unto their own destruction.” Here he places the epistles of Paul in the very same category as all the other Holy Scriptures.

All this evidence leads to but one conclusion, the Bible is the Word of God and by Him in its entirety is inspired.

The Limitations of Inspiration

There are two important limitations upon divine inspiration which require some attention:

Limitations upon the human authors: It must be understood that the writers of the books of the Bible were not always so under the influence of the Holy Spirit as to always write by inspiration. When not moved (borne along) by the Holy Spirit, they were as others. During their lives and ministry, the human authors of the Bible were only temporarily inspired as God required for the accomplishment of His purposes. Some of them were used in this way repeatedly by the Lord, men like Moses and David, John and Paul. Others were used only once, for example, Jonah and Amos, James and Jude.

Limitations upon the manuscripts: It is well to realize that divine inspiration is true only of the original manuscripts.

There is mention made in the Old Testament of books which the Lord has not been pleased to preserve: “The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel” (1 Kings 14:19), “The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah” (1 Kings 14:29). In this connection it seems that some of the prophets wrote books of their own, probably diaries. Mention is made of three such books: “Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold they are written in the Book of Samuel the Seer, and in the Book

of Nathan the Prophet, and in the Book of Gad the Seer” (1 Chronicles 29:29). Obviously, Samuel wrote some things when under the influence of divine inspiration, and some other things when he was not under the influence of divine inspiration.

Luke makes mention of a number of written accounts of our Lord’s life (Luke 1:1), but these have not been preserved for us. It is safe to consider as inspired of God, only those books which the Lord has kept and incorporated in the Canon of Scripture.

Furthermore: In spite of the claims of certain, divine inspiration is not applicable to any apocrypha book whether ancient or modern. The writings of such persons as Mrs. Baker Eddy and Joseph Smith did not originate in the mind of God.

The Purposes of Inspiration

Communication: Without doubt, the primary purpose of inspiration is communication, God breathing out His heart to man. God has much to say to man: first, about God Himself; second, about man, his creation and fall; third, about Satan, his fall and deceptive ability; fourth, about the world, its creation and future; fifth, about the great plan of redemption and how it will effect man and creation. God has much to say to humanity; this He does through the pages of inspiration.

Inerrancy: Inerrancy is to be understood as the equivalent of being absolutely true. The word emphasizes the perfect veracity of the Holy Scriptures. Divine inspiration assures all that the Bible is positively true and completely without error as it was originally written.

Infallibility: Inspiration, as herein discussed, results in the infallibility of the Word of God, and presents it to all as trustworthy. The Lord Jesus believed that the Old Testament Scriptures were inerrant and infallible, He said, "The Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). "It is easier for Heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail" (Luke 16:17). "Till Heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matthew 5:18).

Uniqueness: In the study of comparative religions, the impression may be received that the Bible is only another sacred book among many sacred books, that the text books of all the various religions are equal the one to the other. This is not true of the Bible; divine inspiration makes this holy book unique; there is only one of its kind in all the world; there is no other. Through it God speaks; the Infinite communicates with the finite.

Intrinsic value: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Timothy 3:16).

A paraphrasing of this text may help in the understanding of the ultimate purpose of divine inspiration, a very practical purpose: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for the teaching of the ignorant, the reproof of the wayward, the correction of what is wrong, and the training of all in righteousness; in order that the man of God may be complete, and fully equipped for every good work."

Inspiration and Unity

There is great diversity in the Bible, diversity of vocabulary, style, and type in writing; yet, withal there is a definite unity. There is a cohesive that binds all together into one whole.

That there are differences between the two Testaments all acknowledge; nevertheless, they are united for both are given by inspiration of God. Their divine unity may be demonstrated in several ways. First, all the authors wrote under the influence of God the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21; John 14:26; 16:13). Second, their subject was the same. Old Testament writers wrote of the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow (1 Peter 1:11), and so did the writers of the New Testament (Luke 24:46), with this difference, the Old Testament writers wrote prophecy and the New, history, at least in part. Third, the same way of salvation is presented in both Testaments; in fact, the justification of believing Abraham provides the illustration of the justification of the believer today. Four, prophecy is a strong bond that binds the two Testaments together. Many of the predictions of the former are seen fulfilled in the later. Fifth, Unfulfilled prophecy or eschatology unites the whole Bible.

There is perfect agreement among all parts of Scripture relative to the matters of the last times. This is illustrated by the fact that in many respects the Book of the Revelation compliments the Prophecy of Daniel. This positive unity could only result from divine inspiration.

The Bible --Part 6

The Bible

Part 6

James Gunn

Thy Words were found and I did eat them; and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.

Jeremiah 15:16 The Autographs And Canonicity

Inasmuch as it has pleased God to reveal Himself in and through a book, the Bible, it is proper and even necessary that man understand the origin, compilation, and characteristics of that holy book.

That the Bible was given by inspiration of God has been affirmed; it remains that consideration be given to the method and process by which God produced that volume called the Holy Scriptures.

Providential Preparation

History in its relation to the Holy Scriptures was characterized by a providential preparation that facilitated their writing, printing and dissemination.

The invention of the alphabet: The earliest known method of writing was that of drawing pictures. It was laborious to be sure, but it has this value, there is no language barrier with which one has to contend. Between that stage and the much simpler method, the use of the alphabet in syllabic writing, lies the cuneiform and hieroglyphic script of many elaborate training.

Moses was the first writer of Holy Scripture, so it is believed at present, and while it is true that he may have

written in cuneiform script on clay tablets, archaeology reveals that it is more probable that he wrote in alphabetic script. God in His providence may have from the very beginning had His Word produced in a form of writing that lay within the reach of the ordinary man. This we do know, the earliest productions of the Holy Scriptures were closely associated with the invention of the original alphabet.

The Greek language: While our Lord Jesus and His apostles spoke mostly in Aramaic, the Greek language was used of God in the spread of the gospel throughout the world. The gospel message was for all nations (Matthew 28:19-20; Luke 24:47); to speed its divulgence, God had a universal language fully developed and ready for use. In the days of the apostles the Greek language was international, and although in the early Church there were Aramaic speaking Jews and Greek speaking Jews, these all understood the teachings of the apostles because of a general knowledge of Greek. There is a reference to these two groups in Acts 6:1-6. Through this international tongue God made possible a quick dispersion of His evangel over the then known world.

The invention of printing: The invention of printing in the middle of the fifteenth century providentially was a great aid to the Reformation and the reproduction of the Holy Scriptures. Luther nailed his thesis to the church door at Wittenburg in 1517. The Greek New Testament was first printed in Europe in 1514. In 1522 Luther's translation of the New Testament into German was printed, and in 1525 Tyndale's New Testament in English was also similarly produced.

God in His deep concern for man, through providential guidance had the writing of the Holy Scriptures coincide with the invention of the alphabet; the early proclamation of the gospel and the founding of the Christian Church along with the writing of the New Testament, with the existence of an international language, Greek. He directed that the Reformation and the publishing of the Bible in European languages for ordinary men be expedited by the invention of the printing press.

The Writing of the Bible

The entire Bible appears as if a Jewish work for all the writers with the exception of Luke were Hebrews. (There are some who think that Apollos wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews. If this debatable point were true, there would then be two Gentile writers.)

It was written at intervals over a period of nearly 1500 years, and not only written at different intervals of time but in different places stretching from the city of Rome into Mesopotamia. Men in divers walks of life contributed as they were moved by the Holy Spirit: kings, statemen, soldiers, prophets, priests, a taxgatherer, a rabbi, a physician. Each writer according to his own style and vocabulary wrote prose, poetry, treatises, narratives, biographies, autobiographies, diaries, and personal letters, etc.

The Bible from the human view-point is the product of many minds, controlling many hands writing under many circumstances in many styles. Yet, withal, there is a divine unity that binds each part to the other. Each contribution to the whole was God-breathed; each has a

common theme, Christ, and each a common objective, the reconciliation of man to God.

The Original Manuscripts

There are those who wonder if at some time, somewhere an original manuscript will be found. While this may not be wholly impossible, it is likely improbable. The material on which most of them were written was fragile. Papyrus was made from the inner bark of a reed plant dried in flat strips. These strips placed side by side were gummed to similar strips laid over them in criss-cross manner. This material was not very durable and was badly effected by dampness.

Part of the New Testament may have been written on parchment, a more durable substance made from the skins of animals.

The autographs: The autographs of both Testaments have long since disappeared, and this in itself may be a great blessing. Depraved human nature made an idol out of the serpent of brass and burned incense to it (2 Kings 18:4) so we might expect that it would do the same with original autographs. Among all the ancient relics revered today, it is rather a wonder that some one has not claimed to be in possession of one. Probably such a hoax would be too easily discovered.

The copies: Textual criticism (The examination of dates, the comparing one manuscript with another, and the examination of quotations) is a most profitable and helpful art.

Inasmuch as divine inspiration is true of the original autographs only and these have all disappeared, how reliable are the copies of these originals? In spite of

great care, copyists make mistakes. It is in this matter that textual criticism is so useful.

There are today in different places about 4000 manuscripts of the New Testament, either complete or in part. One of these at least dates back to within forty years of the original writing.

The work of textual criticism falls into three phases.

Dating: By seeking out the oldest of the manuscripts, it is possible to eliminate some of the copyists' errors. The more frequently a writing is copied, the greater is the probability of error; therefore the fewer times the better as far as accuracy is concerned.

Comparisons: By comparing one manuscript of earlier date with one of later date, mistakes are found through the disagreement between them. Agreement among many manuscripts gives confidence that the original words have been preserved in the processes of reproduction. Disagreement results in a closer examination of other manuscripts. This enables the observer to ascertain the date when first the error appeared, and to correct it by the earlier manuscript. If several copies have in them a divergence, not only are their dates taken into consideration, but also the preponderance of evidence against the divergence.

Quotations: There is another line of action through which the purity and accuracy of the Bible text is maintained. Manuscripts are compared with the quotations from the Word of God found in the writings of the immediate post-apostolic era. Quotations in the writings of the Church-fathers, as we call them, are examined for the purpose of comparing them with the manuscripts.

Canonicity

The word canon is defined as a rule or measure or a list. The last is the sense in which it is to be understood in its relation to the Bible. The whole Canon of Scripture is the list of those books accepted by the Church as inspired of God. Frequently references are made to the Old Testament Canon and to the New Testament Canon; these, of course, are the lists of books in the Old Testament given separately from the list of books in the New Testament.

Two questions arise relevant to this, why and how were books chosen for the Canon of Scripture?

The Old Testament Canon: In regard to the question as to why books appear on the sacred list this may be said. Many imagine that the inspiration and authority of a book resulted from its being canonized. The very opposite is true. A book was accepted, before Christ by the Hebrews and after Christ by the Church, because its inspiration, divinity, and authority had been already acknowledged. Consequently, the Canon of Scripture is merely the list of those books already accepted because of their evident divinity. A reading of the books of the Apocrypha and then a reading of the books of the Sacred Canon will show to any person that they are as far apart as the work of the Infinite can be from the work of the finite.

Historians believe that Ezra had much to do with the formation of the Old Testament Canon, and that was more than four hundred years before the birth of the Saviour. We might therefore ask if there are any proofs that the Lord Jesus accepted the Hebrew Canon and did He endorse it? There are proofs that He did. The

number and the arrangement of the books in the Hebrew Bible of the times of Christ were different to ours although both contained the same material. The thirty-nine books of our Old Testament only numbered twenty-four in that ancient Hebrew Bible. It is also certain that the Holy Scriptures in the times of Christ ended not with the Book of Malachi but with the Books of Chronicles.

For centuries the Old Testament has been divided into three: the Law, the writings of Moses; the Prophets, the historical and the prophetical books; and the Psalms, all the poetical books; our Lord Jesus acknowledged all three and thus endorsed the Old Testament Canon. After His resurrection He said to His disciples: "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me" (Luke 24:44).

There is another proof of Christ endorsing the Old Testament Canon; it is found in this; as the Books of Chronicles were the last books in the Hebrew Bible in Christ's day, He made reference to them in such a manner as to suggest His acceptance of the Old Testament Canon. In speaking to the hypocritical apostates who criticized Him, He said: "Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute: That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple" (Luke 11:49-51). These words were tantamount to saying that a charge would be laid against the Jewish

nation of every martyrdom recorded from the first to the last of the Old Testament. The two names, "Abel" and "Zacharias," embraced the entire Old Testament Canon as it was arranged in the times of Jesus. The martyrdom of Zacharias is recorded in 2 Chronicles 24:17-22.

The New Testament Canon: The method by which the books of the New Testament were put into the sacred catalogue was a simple one. First: the divinity of each book was self-evident. This may be readily demonstrated today by a comparative reading of an apocryphal book with a canonical book from the New Testament. The purpose, veracity and divinity of the one will be seen in contrast to the spurious, fictitious character of the other.

In second place, there was in the early Church a Christian consciousness produced by the Spirit of God that quickened spiritual instincts and discernment, and these resulted in special selective powers throughout the entire Church as it was scattered over the ancient world. No Church council undertook to choose the books we call canonical; these were accepted without agreement or planned action.

In third place: It seems that at the first, letters received by churches and individuals were lent to other churches and individuals who made copies of these letters for themselves. These in turn were lent to still others who made more copies. In this manner the originals were duplicated and triplicated until there were numerous copies in different areas.

Justin Martyr who lived about the middle of the second century of the Christian era; that is, about fifty years after the death of the Apostle John, says that it was the custom in those early days to read the writings of the

apostles and of the prophets at the church gatherings on the Sundays. The books of the Bible, at that early date, although hand written, were being spread among the churches of our Lord Jesus.

The Bible --Part 7

The Bible

Part 7

James Gunn

Thy Words were found and I did eat them; and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.

Jeremiah 15:16 The Autographs And Canonicity
(Continued)

In process of time there were those who wrote epistles which they pretended were apostolic, they were spurious, fictitious. The Apostle Paul warns God's people against these in 2 Thessalonians 2:2. Eventually, because of such apocryphal writings, it became necessary to list those which were considered genuine and by divine inspiration. The exact date when the first list was made is not known, but Origen, about A.D. 230 gave a list of New Testament books. It was not quite complete but most of those we have today were on that list. Athanasius in A.D. 367 gave the first complete list of the twenty-seven books we have in our New Testament today.

The English Bible

The translation and printing of the Holy Scriptures into English appears like a beautiful flowering vine. The work is deeply rooted in the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek original manuscripts. As this work has developed, along the stems and twigs of time, periodically translations have bloomed. The more this work has grown and developed, the more translations have blossomed until

at the top in this our day there are many many translations which flower and grace the English speaking peoples of the world.

The first translation of the complete Bible into English was done by John Wyclif about A.D. 1380. This work was translated from the Latin Vulgate.

There was considerable suspicion over the Bible appearing in the language of the ordinary man so a bill was introduced in the House of Lords to suppress it, but the bill did not pass.

The first edition of the New Testament to be translated from the original Greek into English was done by William Tindale, published in 1525. He also translated parts of the Old Testament, but his martyrdom in 1536 left work incomplete. In 1535 the Coverdale Bible, the first complete version of the Holy Scriptures in English, was published with a dedication to King Henry VIII.

The Geneva Bible which was produced by exiles during the reign of Queen Mary sometime between 1553 and 1558, because it was smaller than earlier ones, became the first popular family Bible. It was called the Breeches Bible because of its rendering of Genesis 3:7, "They sewed fig tree leaves together and made themselves breeches."

The Bishops' Bible appeared in 1568, and the Roman Catholic Douay Version in 1609-1610. The Authorized King James Version was published in 1611.

For some 250 years the King James Version, in spite of some slight inaccuracies in translation and the constant change of language meaning, was consistently used throughout the English speaking nations. Toward the

close of the nineteenth century several private translations appeared; for example, that of Dean Alford, Conybeare and Howson, J.N. Darby, etc. Then in 1881-1885 the Revised Version of the King James Version was published. This was considered a great improvement.

In 1901 the American Standard Version was published, but of still more importance was the publishing of the revision of this work under the name of Revised Standard Version of which the New Testament appeared in 1946 and the Old Testament in 1952. This actually is a revision of the versions of 1611 and 1901.

When her gracious Majesty Queen Elizabeth II was crowned, during the ceremony she was given a Bible, and as she received it the Archbishop of Canterbury said:

“Our gracious Queen: to keep your Majesty ever mindful of the Law and the Gospel of God as the Rule for the whole life and government of Christian Princes, we present you with this Book, the most valuable thing that this world affords.

Here is Wisdom; This is the royal Law; These are the lively Oracles of God.”

Let it ever be remembered that no matter what English translations of the Bible we may use and study, they are the Lively Oracles; they are the Holy Scriptures; as a unit, they form the holy book called the Word of God, the Perfect Law of Liberty, the BIBLE.

The Divine Authority Of The Bible

Authority is power, right or influence that enforces obedience, imposes control or demands support. This

authority, generally speaking, is accepted on three levels: absolute authority, delegated authority, documentary authority. Absolute authority is the power possessed by the head of a political state; the president of an organization, industrial or commercial, the moderator of a conference, or a chancellor of a seat of learning. Delegated authority is the limited power deputed by a head or president to a subordinate in order that he fulfil his superior's orders. Documentary authority is the power or influence of a written opinion.

The authority of the Word of God lies in all three spheres. Absolute authority is possessed by God only; delegated authority is invested in the authors of the different books of the Bible, and documentary authority is an attribute of all Scripture given by inspiration of God (2 Timothy 3:16).

Absolute Authority

Absolute authority emanates from both personality and position. The authority of a president of an organization arises not only from what he is as president but who he is in his personality; a weak personality no matter what the position might be exercises but little authority.

God's Position: It is one of transcendence; He is far above all; infinitely superior to all; His supremacy gives authority to all that He may do or demand.

The Divine Personality: God in person wills, purposes, and decrees. God wills to do; He purposes how it should be done, and He decrees that it be thus done. In simple words, God's absolute authority rests; first, upon His transcendence; and in second place, upon His will, His

plan, and His word. That such is the case is fully demonstrated in His acts since creation.

Creation: God willed to make the earth habitable for man; He planned to do this in several stages so He commanded, "Let there be light" (Genesis 1:3), with the result, "There was light."

The deluge: God's absolute authority was demonstrated at the deluge; first, in His transcendence, "The Lord sat enthroned at the flood" (Psalm 29:10, marginal reading). In second place; in His will, "I will"; His plan, "Destroy"; His word, "And God said unto Noah ... behold, I will destroy them" (Genesis 6:7-13).

In the Exodus: How clearly God displayed His absolute authority in the exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt! Pharaoh said, "Who is the Lord that I should obey Him?" (Exodus 5:2). He was to learn that full authority rested in God and that God had to be obeyed or the consequences suffered. God definitely proved this; first, in His transcendence, He said, "Against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord" (Exodus 12:12). Furthermore, He again displayed His authority as in former cases in His will, His purpose, and according to His oath, His sworn word: "I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: And I will take you to Me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you in unto the land concerning the which I did swear to give it

to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an inheritance: I am the Lord" (Exodus 6:6-8).

In the Church: The transcendence of the Lord Jesus is seen in Peter's reply to the Lord's question, "Whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

The word, will and purpose of the Lord are all evident in His prediction, "I say also unto thee (His word), that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will (His will) build My Church (His purpose): and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:16-18).

One more example will further establish the contention that absolute authority rests finally in God.

The Eternal State: In Revelation 21:5-6 the Lord states His determination, His will to execute a great purpose, and He calls upon a recorder to enter these in a document: "Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful." All is in accord with the prophecy of the Lord Jesus, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away" (Matthew 24:35). The old creation will then have undergone changes, but the Lord's words will remain supreme and authoritative. The response will be perfect submission to the divine will, absolute authority receiving absolute obedience, for the recorder replies, "It is done."

Absolute Authority in Christ

In the matter of divine revelation the attention is directed to the words of the Lord Jesus in the Upper Room, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9). His words implied that full divine

revelation was in Him, the incarnation of Deity. The assertion claims that the Triune God was fully revealed in the God-Man, the Lord Jesus.

Similarly, in regard to authority attention is directed to the mountain in Galilee where after His resurrection Christ met with His disciples for there He said, "All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in earth" (Matthew 28:18).

The word "power" that He used denotes positive right to act in an unrestricted manner, the full right of disposal; that is, authority with the power to enforce it.

The Lord Jesus claimed authority in Heaven and in earth, in Heaven where it is already acknowledged and in earth where it eventually will be imposed. On that mountain Christ claimed universal dominion. His is full, divine, absolute and universal authority. Because of this, it is stated, "The Father ... hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man" (John 5:27).

In view of the exalted position and the absolute authority invested in Christ, there is a wonderful picture of Him in John 13:3, "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, ... He riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments; and took a towel, and girded Himself. After that He poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet." What a gracious condescension! What humility!

Delegated Authority

Delegated authority has been defined as authority invested in the authors of the different books of the Bible. A general view of the Holy Scriptures indicates

that God delegated authority to patriarchs, priests, prophets, kings, apostles, etc. and that through these chosen men He spoke authoritatively. Frequently throughout the Old Testament human authors stated, "Thus saith the Lord," or "The Lord said unto me,... whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak." This they did because they heard His voice saying, "I will send thee," or "Go, and tell," or "Say unto them." God, obviously, selected certain persons and gave them authority to act for Him. Many of these men not only spoke for God but according to 2 Peter 1:21, they wrote for God.

Inasmuch as we live in the Church era, an examination into the delegated authority of the apostles is very relevant, especially the Apostle to the Gentiles.

There is a belief among Christians that since the gifts of the apostles and prophets have passed away, they have no important influence upon the Church today. True, the persons who were the embodiments of those gifts have been removed, and unlike the other three public gifts: the evangelist, the pastor, the teacher, these two were not transferable. The gifts, apostle and prophet, were for a special period and a special ministry, and when they had accomplished their purpose, they were removed and not replaced. Notwithstanding, their writings are with us, and these were given by inspiration of God. In their writings we still have the apostles speaking authoritatively to the Church.

The Bible --Part 8

The Bible

Part 8

James Gunn

Thy Words were found and I did eat them; and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.

Jeremiah 15:16 The Autographs And Canonicity
(Continued)

Personal authority: No man today possesses the authority of, say, the Apostle Paul. He could write to the Corinthians, "What will ye? Shall I come unto you with a rod (a sceptre of authority), or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?" (1 Corinthians 4:21). Paul had divine authority invested in him, but that ended with his martyrdom.

Perpetual authority: While divine authority in those worthy men of the past has ended, divine authority remains in their inspired writings. The New Testament possesses for the Church today all the authority of the apostles of far-away times.

There are four verbs used in apostolic writings of the New Testament which emphasize the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures. These are: "to command," "to charge," "to ordain," and "to will." There may be others but an examination of these will suffice in this study.

These verbs do not all possess the same value and force; in fact, their power seems to decrease in the order in which they have been listed. To command is more

forceful than to charge; to charge, more forceful than to ordain; to ordain, more forceful than to will.

“To command”: Someone has said, “To command is to demand obedience.” This verb was used of both the words of Christ and of His apostles. Paul used it and so did Peter. Paul’s commands are given in connection with domestic affairs (1 Corinthians 7:10), public ministry (1 Corinthians 14:37), church fellowship (Colossians 4:10), and personal holiness and behaviour (1 Thessalonians 4:2). Peter used it in connection with the entire ministry of the apostles (2 Peter 3:2).

The attitude of lawlessness so prevalent in the world frequently infiltrates the churches of the saints. Such a spirit resents authority and refuses to obey commands.

“To charge”: While this is a weaker verb than the previous one, it nevertheless carries authority and imposes responsibilities. Paul not only used the verb himself but he instructed Timothy to do likewise.

Paul charged the elders at Thessalonica to read his Epistle to the entire church (1 Thessalonians 5:27). He charged Timothy to observe the instruction concerning elders in the church (1 Timothy 5:21). He also charged Timothy to keep the divine command in regard to moral standards (1 Timothy 6:13), and he charged him to perform the ministry that he, Timothy, had received of the Lord (2 Timothy 4:1).

It would appear that the Apostle John had authority to charge an early church in regard to reception, but one man, Diotriphes, exerted his will against such apostolic authority.

“To ordain”: This verb suggests the making of an appointment or arrangement with authority. This idea of ordaining or appointing was used by the Lord, by the apostles, and by certain apostolic delegates.

Paul uses it in regard to marital relationships (1 Corinthians 7:17), abuses existing in the church at Corinth (1 Corinthians 11:34), overseers (Titus 1:5), etc. It was used by Paul and Barnabas at Galatia (Acts 14:23), and by the elders and apostles at Jerusalem in connection with Christian liberty (Acts 16:4).

“To will” This verb while being the weakest of the four intimates that after proper deliberation one is able to express a preference with a conviction of its correctness. Paul uses the word asserting that the males should pray publicly (1 Timothy 2:8), that younger women should marry (1 Timothy 5:14), and that believers should maintain good works (Titus 3:8).

Jesus marvelled at the humility of the Roman Centurion who said, “I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it” (Luke 7:8). While possessing authority to command, he himself was under superior authority. In reading the Bible we must ever remember that while the human authors with authority command, charge, ordain or will, they were all under the absolute authority of God. As the authority of the Roman Centurion, an officer over a hundred men, was but the expression of the authority of his general; even so, the authority expressed through these holy men chosen of God to write the Bible is but the transmission through them of the supreme authority of Christ.

Documentary Authority

Documentary authority in the sense in which it is used in these studies is the authority of the written word, a writing that furnishes proof and supplies evidence. We are quite accustomed to its use in text books and even in some literal translations of the Bible. This phase of the examination into biblical authority leads to documentary authority in the Old Testament, in the life of Christ, and in the apostolic writings.

In the Old Testament: There are two scenes in the Old Testament very relevant to this matter; one illustrates rejection of and the other submission to documentary authority. Inasmuch as both scenes have to do with the same book of the Bible, their significance is very patent. While one man may rebel against biblical authority and suffer the consequences, another may humbly submit and receive a blessing.

Rejection: This scene is recorded in Jeremiah 36. A roll that was dictated by Jeremiah and written by Baruch the scribe was cut in pieces and burned by Jehoiakim king of Judah. Unlike his father king Josiah who rent his clothes when God's Word was read and enquired of the Lord (2 Kings 22:18-20), this man defied God and sought to destroy the Word of God.

God's reaction to Jehoiakim's foolishness was quick and severe, "I will punish him and his seed and his servants for their iniquities; and I will bring upon them, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and upon the men of Judah, all the evil that I have pronounced against them; but they hearkened not" (Jeremiah 36: 31).

Submission: As Daniel read the writings of Jeremiah and from them understood the character and duration of

God's discipline upon His ancient people, he set his face unto the Lord God to seek by prayer and supplication, with fastings, and sackcloth, and ashes (Daniel 9:2-3). The result of this submission to the written Word of God was a great blessing and revelation. Daniel records the experience, "While I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, ... touched me, ... and informed me; I am come forth to give thee skill and understanding" (Daniel 9:21-22).

As it was in those critical times of Israel's history so it is today; rejection of the documentary authority of the Word of God results in discipline; submission to that authority results in blessing.

In the life of Christ: The Lord Jesus possessed a perfect knowledge of the Word of God, and He acknowledged its power and authority. There are many examples of His submission to the Holy Scriptures. His conduct was governed by their authority when tempted by the devil, and He knew that in them there was power to defeat the enemy (Matthew 4:1-11). He used the authority of the Old Testament to substantiate His claims to pre-existence. He said, "The Scriptures:... they are they which testify of Me" (John 5:39).

In speaking to the two disciples that walked with Him to Emmaus, Christ made reference to predictions concerning Himself in the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets. These were referred to as the authority of all that He told them (Luke 24:13-35).

The Old Testament was our Lord's authority in warning the Pharisees, and in predicting the features of the days of the coming of the Son of Man (Lk. 17:20-37).

In apostolic writings: The apostles accepted the Old Testament Scriptures as inspired of God and wholly authoritative. Peter says, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (1 Peter 1:20-21). The Apostle Paul assures us "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" (Romans 15:4).

The sayings of our Lord Jesus as recorded in the four Gospels were accepted by all the apostles as factual, accurate and authoritative. These holy authors realized that there was a finality about His sayings and they frequently made them the premises of their teaching. For example, Paul's argument for the support of a minister of Christ as given in 1 Corinthians 9:13-16 is based upon the words of the Lord, "The workman is worthy of his meat" (Matthew 10:10. Luke 10:8).

John in teaching that love is an evidence of divine life in the soul and relationship within the divine family (1 John 2:4-6) makes reference to the words of the Lord, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another" (John 13: 34; 15:12).

Every reference made by the human authors of the separate books of the Bible to some earlier writing in either the Old or New Testament is a reference to the documentary authority and value of the Holy Scriptures.

Every reference to Scriptures in articles, pamphlets, tracts or books on Christian doctrine, prophecy, ethics, devotions, etc. is the documenting of the authority for the particular concept as taught by modern writers.

"I do not read the Bible," said a sceptic to a Christian friend, "because we know nothing about the authors of its sixty-six books, and it is not safe today to accept as factual and authoritative the works of men you do not know."

"As a teacher of mathematics, do you know the discoverer of arithmetic or the name of the authors of the first books on mathematics?"

"No, I don't," retorted the sceptic, "but mathematics are different, they are a necessary part of our system of life."

"That is just why I read the Bible," said the Christian, "that Holy Book is necessary to my life. Furthermore, arithmetic is so authoritative that if your income tax payments do not agree with its findings, you are penalized. Similarly, if your faith and conduct are not in accord with the Bible, you are penalized. Your reasons for the importance of mathematics are the same reasons I have for the importance of the Bible."

In contemporary church relations there is occasionally an ignoring of scriptural authority in both a minus and plus direction. Relationship between two assemblies had been strained for some years. Both began to sense how unscriptural their positions and attitudes were and attempted to rectify matters and foster fellowship between them. One of these assemblies received a letter from a third assembly many miles away, in which the third assembly threatened to "cut them off" from their fellowship, and break any previous relationship that had existed between them, if they continued to establish fellowship with those from whom they had been estranged.

The brethren who wrote that letter had no scriptural authority, in the first place to write the letter; in second place, they had no scriptural authority to implement their threat; and in third place, they ignored the authority of the Word of God that grants complete autonomy to all the churches of the saints.

Shakespeare wrote long ago: "Man, proud Man! dressed in a little brief authority, plays fantastic tricks before high heaven as makes the angels weep."

Appendix to Divine Authority of the Bible no. I

An examination of Christ's absolute authority in the light of 1 Corinthians 15:28.

Let us first of all recall the accepted concept of absolute authority.

Authority is power, right or influence that enforces obedience, imposes control or demands support. This authority, generally speaking, is accepted on three levels: absolute authority, delegated authority, documentary authority. Absolute authority is the power possessed by the head of a political state; the president of an organization, industrial or commercial; the moderator of a conference; or a chancellor of a seat of learning. Delegated authority is the limited power deputed by a head or president to a subordinate in order that he fulfil his superior's orders. Documentary authority is the power or influence of a written opinion.

The Headship of Christ

The Word of God asserts that Christ is the Head of the Church (Ephesians 1:22; 4:15; 5:23. Colossians 1:18; 2:10-19). He is also the Head of every man (1

Corinthians 11:3). Headship implies exaltation and priority as well as source and sustainer. He is all this in a unique sense to the Church, and in a general sense to humanity. As Head He must possess absolute authority.

The Bible --Part 9

The Bible

Part 9

James Gunn

Thy Words were found and I did eat them; and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.

Jeremiah 15:16 The Autographs And Canonicity
(Continued)

The Claims of Christ

On the mountain in Galilee (Matthew 28:16-20), the Lord Jesus in anticipation of Pentecost, the beginning of the Church, gathered around Him particularly those men whose ministry was to be the doctrinal foundation of the Church (Ephesians 2:20), and claimed to have absolute authority in Heaven and on earth. He then gave to these men, the apostles, instructions: first, to make disciples; second, to then baptize these disciples; and third, to teach them all things that He, the Lord, commanded. These instructions were followed by His promise, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world (age)."

The Extent of His Authority

In 1 Corinthians 15:27, the full extent of Christ's authority is clearly demonstrated. He claimed in Matthew 28:18 to have all authority in Heaven and in earth. Here in 1 Corinthians 15:27, so universal is that authority that there is only one exception, and that is God who according to Psalm 8 put all things under man

(the first Adam). Since the first Adam failed, this can be true only of the Last Adam, even Christ.

So great is the absolute authority of Christ in His work of redemption that He wields it until all enemies are completely defeated, even the last enemy, death.

Christ having thus brought all things into subjection, His comprehensive work of redemption is complete, His work of Mediator is done; He, therefore, as Redeemer, as Mediator, surrenders His office; it is not longer necessary.

The subjection of Christ is not that of a subject before a sovereign, but as One fully accredited and authorized, on completing the great work of redemption, He yields His authority and power. This He does that a Triune God might be all in all. In the Godhead no One is inferior to the Others and no One is superior to the Others; All are equal.

When the work of redemption is consummated, God in His Triunity will rule all and possess all.

Christian Evidences

Christian evidences are to be understood as the proofs of Christianity, its veracity, reality, and factuality.

Christianity is Christ; that is, everything about Christ, His divine person, His reconciliatory work, His redemptive purposes; these form the faith once delivered unto the saints (Jude 3). Inasmuch as the faith, Christianity, is depreciated and at times denounced by the wisdom of this world (1 Corinthians 2:4-8), Christian evidences are a defence against the enemy.

The Purpose

The actual purposes of Christian evidences may be considered as reaching out in three directions:

Toward Christianity itself: Christian evidences attempt to defend every biblical doctrine against perversion and denial. They endeavour to prove the factuality of the divine nature of Christ, His virgin birth, His impeccable humanity, His vicarious death, His physical resurrection, etc. etc.

Toward the believer: Christian evidences confirm the faith of the child of God. What the believer receives by faith and inwardly experiences, he realizes is true and factual as he examines the proofs.

Toward the unbeliever: When presented to an honest man, Christian evidences may rid his mind of prejudices, misunderstandings and even errors, as these relate to biblical doctrine.

The Method

What possible and systematic way may evidences for the support of the faith be gathered? A step by step flexible procedure may be used; as for example:

The acceptance of divine revelation: The wisdom of this world reasons that proofs of reality lead to acceptance; the Christian accepts each tenet of the faith as real and then learns that these are substantiated by proofs. The starting point for the Christian is altogether different from that of the unbeliever. The Lord Jesus said, "My doctrine is not Mine, but (that) of Him that sent Me. If any one desire to practise His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine whether it is of God, or (that) I speak from Myself" (John 7:17, J.N.D.). There must for

the Christian be an acceptance of the divine will before the knowledge of facts is revealed by the Lord.

Personal experience: While experience does not save the soul, it is Christ who saves, it may confirm the faith of the believer. Answers from God to specific prayers are confirmatory experiences (John 15:7). The receiving from God of unusual wisdom when confronted by a dilemma is another confirmatory experience (James 1:5). The peace of Christ within the heart at the time of some crisis verifies faith (Colossians 3:15; Philippians 4:7). Trials in individual life may be considered the proofs of the fatherhood of God and the sonship of the believer (Hebrews 12:5-11). Personal experiences provide the child of God with evidences as to the existence of God and His care for the redeemed.

Appraising the issue: Before the solution to any biblical difficulty can be found, the difficulty must be thoroughly understood. If the difficulty is the denial of some cardinal truth in the Christian faith, every aspect of the problem must be examined. Take for example the origin of man. This is not actually a biblical problem, but one that has made for himself.

By many the problem is reduced to one single term, evolution. Is evolution really the problem? No. This is only man's attempt to solve his self-imposed difficulty.

The real problem lies in man's disbelief in God and His Word; man's refusal to believe the Genesis account of his own origin. Man disbelieves God and His creative genius, consequently, he must of himself invent a theory to cover the origin of the human race.

A close examination breaks this problem down into at least two parts; first, disbelief of God's record of the

origin of mankind; second, man's attempt to invent an explanation of his own.

Before evidences which verify the Christian faith can be gathered, difficulties, real and imaginary, must be examined carefully and thoroughly understood.

Solving the problem: In order to determine the true character of any matter, it must be tested by various means; difficulties in regard to the Christian faith are no exemptions to this rule. All problems in connection with the Christian faith should be tested by revelation, reason, reference, and experimentation.

By revelation: The Christian should examine every difficulty he encounters in the light of the Word of God. Evolution explains man's origin as the result of spontaneous generation, but the Bible explains it as the result of divine creation. Attempts have been made to harmonize these by assuming that God does not tell how He created man but only why. Actually it is impossible to harmonize for divine generation, creation, ascribes the power and the purpose of human origin to God; whereas, spontaneous generation eliminates God altogether; He has nothing to do with man's origin, it just happened.

By reason: At the beginning God made man after His own image; that is, He made him what He Himself is, a rational being. It is well that man use the powers of reason that were given him by God. The theory of evolution is stated by its adherents as a fact; one adherent writes; "Millions of years ago lifeless matter acted upon by natural forces gave origin to one or more minute living organisms which since have evolved into all living and extinct plants and animals including man."

A test by reason asks if it is reasonable to start with the inanimate and end up with the animate? Is it logical to commence with nothing and end up with something? Is it possible to begin with sterility and terminate with fertility? Is a theory reasonable that makes such claims? It is not.

Is the Genesis account of man's creation reasonable? Yes. Is it reasonable to accept that the living God, all powerful and wise, should create a rational being with whom He might commune? Yes, this is most reasonable. God being what He is, we expect nothing less.

By reference: It is improper to test any unbiblical theory, any man-imposed problem in regard to the Christian faith, by one's powers alone. One should ascertain through books, tracts, pamphlets, lectures, etc., the explanations of others, the solutions that others have discovered.

In this regard a word of caution is necessary. It is impossible to read everything that appears in print, one must choose only the best. If one wants to know the Christian approach to the theory of evolution, or the supernatural element in the Bible, or the difficulties relative to the virgin birth of Christ, he should read only books by those who are competent to write on each of these important subjects, writers accredited to write in their own special fields. All Christians should be ready to contend earnestly for the faith (Jude 3), but some are better equipped to defend specific areas better than are others.

By experimentation: A theory is only a theory until by actual experiment it is demonstrated to be a fact. We are told that water is composed of one atomic weight of

oxygen and two atomic weights of hydrogen. This may be proved a fact by the simple experiment of burning hydrogen gas in the air. The high percentage of oxygen in the air unites with the hydrogen forming water which may be condensed on a watch glass.

Can the theory of evolution be thus tested? Can some scientist take a little portion of jelly and place it under different types of energy until he finds the right one, and then patiently watch and wait for millions of years to see life being thus produced? The energy-time element in such an experiment makes this absolutely impossible.

The theory of evolution obviously is beyond experimentation and cannot be proved a fact.

Consequently it is unscientific to accept it as anything more than a theory. Since it is unbiblical and contrary to the whole tenor of the Word of God, the Christian position is one of rejection.

Examples

The method of testing suggested in this lesson should be tried upon different examples to make sure that they are practical and convincing. Two at least might be used, the creation of the human spirit, and the inspiration of the Bible.

The human spirit: Modern psychology teaches that man is a three-dimensional personality; that is, he is mental, emotional, and physical. Man has a physical body in which he lives, he has emotions which may be stirred or allayed, and he has a mind with the power to reason. If this concept is all the truth and the only truth, then when man dies, he dies like an animal.

The Christian should take this definition of human personality and test it as has been suggested by revelation, by reason, by reference, and by experimentation.

Tested by revelation: In turning to the Word of God we find that it goes beyond the limited concept of human personality and that actually man is a four dimensional creature; he is physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual (1 Thessalonians 5:23). Man has a body in which he lives, emotions which may be stimulated, a mind with the powers of reason, and a spirit that makes him distinct from all other earth creatures, a spirit that links him to the Great Spirit Being who created him. Appendix no. I When the modern concept of human personality is tested by divine revelation in the Bible, it is found to be deficient.

Tested by reason: It might be asked, is it reasonable that God, in bringing order out of chaos in the centre of this particular universe, would create one being separate, distinct, and above all the other earth-creatures? Yes, it is for His intention was that this one be ruler over all other creatures on earth. It is to be expected that in creating this being, that this being be transcendent to all others. If man is to govern the earth, he must be above it not only in position but in nature.

Is it reasonable that God in creating man distinct from and superior to all other earth-creatures, and in placing him as governor over all, give to him a nature suitable for both earth and Heaven, both time and Eternity, a nature that makes it possible for him to contact every earth-bound creature, and yet, at the same time, make contact with their Creator and Sovereign? Yes, it is

reasonable for if man is to rule God's creation, he must have a nature that links him with the Creator and His creation. The particular part of man's nature that links him with God, in the Bible and among men is called the spirit (Ecclesiastes 12:7).

The Bible --Part 10

The Bible

Part 10

James Gunn

Thy Words were found and I did eat them; and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.

Jeremiah 15:16 Christian Evidences (Continued)

Tested by reference: There is little time during a class lecture to test this concept by making reference to the writings of others who have conducted considerable research. Lists of certain works may be made and submitted to any who are interested.

Tested by experimentation: This test has to be carried out in the laboratory of human behaviour where by careful observation several reactions are noted.

First: There is a universal belief in a Supreme Being. Real atheists are in the minority, and being what they are, they are exceptions. Man may be a monotheist, a polytheist, or even a pantheist; notwithstanding, he instinctively believes in a Supreme Being, the Being we call God.

Second: Man also instinctively believes that the Supreme Being is his Creator and that this Creator as a Governor controls the weather and orders the seasons, and that He is over all the acts of providence (Acts 17:22-27).

Third: No matter how ignorant and depraved man may be he believes that the Supreme Being is to be worshipped. The magnificent cathedral of Christendom

and the crude shrine of paganism both alike testify to this universal reaction (Acts 17:24-29. Isaiah 2:8-20; 40:18-26).

Fourth: Furthermore, man believes that his conduct should conform to his belief in a god. In accord with this conviction, his conscience either accuses or excuses him.

Fifth: Among all men there is a sense of retribution. Man naturally fears that his conduct may incur punishment so he attempts through his devotions, gifts, prayers, good deeds, etc. to placate the anger of the Supreme Being, God, or in the case of heathenism, placate some emanation from a superior god.

Sixth: Another observation should be noted, man's fear of the Supreme Being generally remains until a means is found by which the Deity is satisfied and willing to receive man. When man is convinced that he has been thus received, he too is satisfied and at peace with his Creator.

These evidences that man has an intuitive knowledge of God, a fear of punishment by God, and that he is unsatisfied until this fear has been removed and he has been accepted by God, prove that man has a God consciousness. This God consciousness emanates from that part of man's being called the spirit.

Through his soul, his life, man has a consciousness of himself. He may not understand how and why he is alive, but he knows that he is alive; he is conscious of his own existence. Through his body man reaches out to others, out to the environment in which he lives; his body makes it possible for man to be conscious of the world and its

inhabitants. Through his spirit man possesses a consciousness of his Creator God.

The inspiration of the Bible: The real evangelical Christian believes in the inspiration of the Bible and interprets inspiration in terms of inerrancy and infallibility. The religious liberal rejects this concept and claims that if the Bible is inspired at all, it contains many mistakes in history, science, and moral truths. Let us therefore test the Bible by revelation, reason; reference and experimentation.

By revelation: Divine revelation dogmatically asserts, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable" (1 Timothy 3:16). This might be called the apex of the mighty pyramid of truth; the words of Paul to Titus, "God... cannot lie" (Titus 1:2), as the base upon which the pyramid of truth rests. If, therefore we prove the truth of the Bible, we prove its inspiration because the proof of inerrancy is the proof of divine origin.

By reason: Is it reasonable to think that God in revealing Himself and His purposes to man would do so in words purely human, therefore subject to errors, or in words which reflect His own wisdom, precision and truth? This is just what we would expect, that He would manifest Himself and communicate with man in a manner characterized by veracity and accuracy.

By reference: There are many excellent volumes by which one may ascertain the convictions of others in regard to the inspiration, infallibility and inerrancy of the Bible.

By experimentation: If inerrancy is an indication of inspiration, then we must prove the accuracy of the Bible. There are two ways in which this may be done;

first, by an examination of its historical data; second, by an examination of its prophecies.

Its historical data: The science of Archaeology is constantly discovering evidences which substantiate the veracity of biblical history. By careful examination of objects left behind by peoples of the ancient world, the archaeologist is able to confirm certain historical data. These objects he digs up out of ruined houses, temples, and cities. Some are found in ancient tombs and graves. They may be clay bricks or tablets upon which records and accounts have been written; they may be pictures, pieces of pottery, metal vessels, etc. etc.

It is estimated that over 5000 of the places mentioned in Scripture have been located and identified by archaeologists. Their common spades have verified the records of the Holy Writings.

W.F. Albright, a very meticulous archaeologist asserts, "There can be no doubt that archaeology has confirmed the substantial historicity of the Old Testament tradition."

Perhaps one specific illustration will suffice to shew how the historical data of Scripture are confirmed by archaeology.

Let us take the historical description of the land God promised to Israel. From Deuteronomy 8:7-9, it is obvious that the Land of Promise was one of agricultural value and mineral wealth. Yet, when the 12 spies went to survey, they returned with a discouraging report (Numbers 13:27-29). They agreed as to the fruitfulness of the land, but described the cities as walled cities and the population as one of mixed races and nations. Putting these two accounts together we ascertain the

historical description of the Land of Promise: a land of walled cities, agricultural values, mineral wealth, and mixed peoples.

At the end of the nineteenth century a peasant woman rumaging through some ruins in Egypt found some ancient letters. These and others which resulted from the search that followed, are known today as the Amarna Letters. These letters were written about one hundred years before Israel entered the land, and they confirm the description of walled towns; they verify the report of the spies in this regard.

Another ancient document has been found among the ruins of the past. It is the account of a military campaign by Pharaoh Pepi I sometime around 2350 B.C. This account contains vivid pictures of Palestine and confirms the Scriptural description of the land as one of fertility and beauty.

Other historical evidences prove that at the time of the Hebrew invasion of Palestine the population was of mixed peoples. Ancient secular history agrees with sacred history in these details.

As to the mineral wealth, a paragraph from the works of J.A. Thompson will confirm and clarify the statements of the Word of God. "Some reference should be made to the contact of the Israelites with the Kenites. Moses had fled to their land in an earlier day and had married a Kenitish woman, daughter of the priest of Midian (Exodus 2:16). The name Kenite suggests the Hebrew word "qain" which means "smith". That there may be significance in this name is shown by the fact that the area below the Dead Sea was, and still is, an area rich in minerals, an area "whose stones are iron, and out of

whose hills thou mayest dig brass" (Deuteronomy 8:9). The researches of archaeologists like Nelson Glueck have shown that copper was mined in this area at a very early date. The great Solomon had wonderful smelting works here at Ezion Geber... It was precisely in this region that Moses had the serpent of brass prepared (Numbers 21:9).

In the study of the Tabernacle, one often wondered where Israel obtained the large quantities of copper. The gold and silver they took from the Egyptians (Exodus 11:2; 12:35.) It could be that Israel exchanged goods for copper mined on the wilderness side of Jordan. This is seen as very probable when one considers that Moses' wife came from the region in which the copper mines are situated.

Archaeology has found and identified persons and places once considered by Higher Critics as merely legendary. The spade has substantiated the biblical description of customs and practices of ancient peoples, and has produced many proofs of the inerrancy of the Word of God.

An Archaeologist's Testimony

There may be some who question the accuracy of New Testament writings. Can archaeology prove that they are inerrant? There is one author in the New Testament who exposes himself to possible error more than others, Luke the beloved physician. If we can prove him to be in error as to names, titles, customs or dates, we may then assume that other New Testament authors are likewise in error.

Sir William Ramsay ranks among the world's foremost archaeologists. After years of investigation and a complete reversal of mind, here is the testimony that he gives:

"I may fairly claim to have entered on this investigation without prejudice in favour of the conclusion which I shall now attempt to justify to the reader. On the contrary, I began with a mind unfavourable to it, for the ingenuity and apparent completeness of the Tübingen theory had at one time quite convinced me. (The Tübingen school of liberal critics claimed that statements in the Books of the Acts can only be looked upon as intentional deviation from historic truth in the interest of the special tendency which they possess.) It did not then lie in my line of life to investigate the subject minutely; but more recently I found myself brought into contact with the Book of the Acts as an authority for the topography, antiquities and society of Asia Minor. It was gradually borne in upon me that in various details the narrative showed marvellous truth. In fact beginning with the fixed idea that the work was essentially a second century composition, and never relying on its evidence as trustworthy for first century conditions, I gradually came to find it a useful ally in some obscure and difficult investigation."

"Luke is a historian of the first rank; not merely are his statements of fact trustworthy; he is possessed of the true historic sense; he fixes his mind on the idea and plan that rule in the evolution of history, and proportions the scale of his treatment to the importance of each incident. He seizes the important and critical events and shows their true nature at greater length, while he touches lightly or omits entirely, much that was

valueless for his purpose. In short, this author should be placed along with the very greatest of historians.” From St. Paul the Traveller and Roman Citizen and The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament.

Fulfilled Prophecy: For the purpose of Christian evidence, the predictive rather than the declarative element in prophecy is important. That this element is frequently used in different connections throughout both the Old and New Testaments is obvious to any who read the Bible.

Should perchance one prediction eventually be fulfilled, the relationship between the prediction and the event might be considered as coincidental, but when a series of correlated predictions come true there is a proof of supernatural intention. Man is confronted by the fact that fulfilled biblical prediction is the evidence of omniscience. Let us search out such evidences in real historical connections as these are presented in the Bible.

The Jew: It has been occasionally asserted that the authenticity of biblical prediction is sustained by the history of the Jewish people. While this may be true so general a statement is insufficient for this study. Let us review Israel's history and seek for the details: her exile from the Land of Promise, her restoration under Nehemiah, and her future position among other nations.

First, her exile: The pre-exilic Prophet Isaiah, in the year that King Uzziah died, the year 742 B.C. was called to predict the expulsion of Judah from the land. This prediction is recorded in Isaiah 6:8-13. From this passage is learned that the expulsion was to take place

in stages. What was left after the holy seed had been expelled in the invasion by Nebuchadnezzar was devoured by another invasion.

The fulfillment of this expulsion is recorded in 2 Kings 25, and very concisely in Jeremiah 52:28-30. The fulfillment did not take place until 586 B.C.

Consequently, there are 155 years between the prediction and its fulfillment, between the day of Isaiah and the captivity of Judah.

Second, her restoration: The restoration of Judah is also predicted by Isaiah (chapter 44:24-45:3), and involves a pagan monarch who is specifically named. This prediction was made when Hezekiah king of Judah was about 43 years of age, in the midst of his days, as he said, that is in 672 B.C.

The Bible --Part 11

The Bible

Part 11

James Gunn

Thy Words were found and I did eat them; and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.

Jeremiah 15:16 Christian Evidences (Continued)

This prediction was fulfilled in the days of Ezra (Ezra 1), in the year 538; that means the fulfilment was about 134 years after Isaiah's prediction. This also means that Cyrus, one of the most considerate and tolerant monarchs of the ancient world, was named in the Word of God 100 years before he was born.

This might be added, Judah went into captivity 586 B.C. and the temple was finished by those that returned, and its priestly order and sacrificial ritualism restored in 515 B.C. The nation was without these for 70 complete years. These figures from history are in perfect accord with God's Word to Daniel (Dan. 9:1-2).

Third, her future: In order to bring out some of these convincing evidences of the prophetic word, let us pass over many centuries of Jewish history during which God scattered them. He had said, "I will sift the house of Israel among all nations like as corn is sifted in a sieve" (Amos 9:9). Israel ceased to be a nation in A.D. 70, and her peoples have been a hissing and a by-word among all nations, but the Lord prophesied a great recovery for His ancient people, the Jews. First, as to their return to the Land of Promise, "The Lord shall set

His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His People, ...and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth" (Isa. 11:10-16. Zech. 12:6-14). This prediction, at least in part, has been fulfilled. After World War 1 Britain, in deference to Dr. Wiesman, who had contributed so much to their war effort, assumed the administration of Palestine under the Balfour Declaration. In 1947 Britain handed over the problems of Palestine to the United Nations and in November of that year the United Nations decided to divide Palestine into two countries to be shared by the Jews and Arabs.

In May, 1948, Israel was declared a republic with full national status, and that after 1878 years of non-existence as a nation.

In January of 1949 Israel held her first general election, and in May 11, 1949 she was admitted as a member into the United Nations. These events fulfilled, at least in part, a prophecy made more than 2500 years before.

With prophecies regarding the recovery of God's ancient people, there is in second place, prophecies in regard to Jerusalem their capital city: "Jerusalem:... it shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place, from Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king's winepresses. And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited" (Zechariah 14:10-11; 2:12. Jeremiah 31:38-40).

There is also a third element in the prophecies in connection with Israel, that of rebuilding the temple and re-establishing the priesthood and sacrificial ritualism.

That Jerusalem, the entire city, is now in the hands of the Jewish authorities, all know. These authorities are determined to keep the city, and that in spite of the threats of enemies and the advice of friends.

Furthermore, there are indications that the nation of Israel is making plans for a future that is predicted in the Holy Scriptures. An article that was published in the Evening Telegram, Toronto, Ontario, about the middle of September intimates these intentions: "Jerusalem: A major religious controversy is building up around the Old City enclosure known as the Dome of the Rock.

"To Jews this compound is sacred as the original site of King Solomon's Temple. But for centuries, it's been a Moslem enclave second only to Mecca as Islam's holiest shrine.

"A few weeks ago, Israel's chief army chaplain, General Shlomo Goren, held a prayer service within the compound, and the fury of Jerusalem's Moslems hinted that a synagogue would soon share the site with the mosque.

"Jewish orthodox circles were also incensed but their protests had nothing to do with Moslem sensitivities.

"Israel's chief rabbis cited ancient Talmudic laws forbidding Jews to pray on the site until the temple is rebuilt and sacrificial rites are resumed.

"Passions subsided and Moslem authorities continued to administer the compound, charging non-Moslems a small admission fee in accordance with longtime practice.

“Last week, Israel ordered the abolition of these fees and when Moslem leaders refused to comply, a second gate was flung open to give free access.

“A reluctant court has now ordered the Religious Affairs Ministry to state why the Dome of the Rock should not be guarded by people interested in the site as a Jewish holy place.

“Chief Rabbi Isser Unterman tried to be reassuring when he said, ‘Lengthy spiritual preparation is required before temple services can be renewed. The public is not yet ready to accept the idea of a sacrificial service.’”

Surely the history of Israel presents evidences of the reliability and veracity of the Word of God. Fulfilled prophecy witnesses to the authenticity and inspiration of the Bible.

The Lord Jesus: The fulfilled prophecies both about the Lord Jesus and by the Lord Jesus provide further strong evidence of the historicity and reliability of the Holy Scriptures.

First: The place of His birth. Seven centuries before Christ was born, the pre-exilic Prophet Micah wrote: “Thou Bethlehem, Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting” (Micah 5:2). Micah thus designated the place of Christ’s birth, the purpose of His birth and His pre-existence.

The fulfilment of this prophecy is recorded by Matthew in chapter 2:3-15.

Second: The manner of His birth. Another pre-exilic Prophet, Isaiah, similarly, seven centuries before Christ,

predicted the manner of Messiah's birth (Isa. 9:6-7). While prophesying the birth of a truly human child, he applies to that child a number of titles belonging only to Deity. Isaiah indicated in this way that this child was born of Mary but given by God as a Son. In fact, one of these titles pictures Christ not as the child of time but as the paternal source of Eternity. The title Everlasting Father actually is the Father of Eternity.

The record of the fulfilment of this remarkable prophecy is found in Luke chapter two.

Third: The description of His nature: There are a number of Old Testament predictions regarding the nature of the Lord Jesus. These intimate that in Him both the human and divine are united in one personality. His pre-existence is stated by Micah (5:2). His Deity is certainly inferred, as we have seen in Isaiah 9:6-7. In this connection there is another Old Testament passage that should not be ignored, Zechariah 13:7: "Awake, O sword against the Man that is My Fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn Mine hand upon the little ones." The word "fellow" means neighbour or near one and involves similarity of nature and proximity of person. The passage teaches that this shepherd is good in contrast to the evil shepherd described in the earlier part of the chapter. As such He is perfectly human and also essentially divine. His life was taken from Him as a substitute for that of His sheep.

Matthew records that the Lord Jesus accepted this as a prophecy of His own death. See Matthew 26:31. Furthermore, on another occasion Christ claimed absolute equality with the Father God, He said, "I and

my Father are one. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him" (John 10:30-31).

Fourth: The mode of His death: That the death of Christ was to be substitutionary was predicted by Isaiah in his chapter 53, and that this was believed by the apostolic Christians is obvious from certain New Testament references (Acts 7:32. 1 Peter 2:24) made by Luke and by Peter.

That His death was to be crucifixion is intimated in Psalm 22 the opening words of which were used by Christ in the hour of His death (Matt. 27:46. Mark 15:34).

It is improper to say that crucifixion as a mode of execution was unknown to David for it dates from ancient times. The peoples who used it considered it the most horrible of all deaths. Crucifixion was practised by the Egyptians (Genesis 40:19), The Persians (Esther 7:10), the Assyrians, Scythians, Indians, and even the Germans. It was common among the ancient Greeks and Romans. After the conquest of Tyre, Alexander the Great ordered two thousand Tyrians to be crucified as punishment for the resistance of that city.

It may be that in derision the Philistines crucified the body of King Saul. Samuel records, "They fastened his body to the wall of Bethshan" (1 Sam. 31:10).

In Psalm 22 David carefully describes the horrors of this mode of death, and the Gospel narratives show how literally these were endured by Christ. The manner of Christ's death is another evidence of the veracity of the Word of God.

Fifth: The arrangements of His burial: It was not the custom of the ancients to bury the bodies of the crucified; these were left to be devoured by the vultures and wild beasts. The Romans, by an act of legislation exempted the Jews from such an end, and permitted that they bury their own when executed by crucifixion. That this was how they intended to dispose of the body of the Lord Jesus seems clear from the prediction of Isaiah, "They made His grave with the wicked" (Isa. 53:9). God through Isaiah predicted otherwise. "They made His grave...with the rich in His death."

This prophecy was actually fulfilled by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus (Matthew 27:57-60. Mark 15:42-46. Luke 23:50-56. John 19:38-41).

These prophecies so literally fulfilled in Christ provide clear and forceful evidence of the veracity of the Holy Scriptures.

There are also some prophecies by the Lord Jesus which give substantial proof of the truth of Scripture.

Some might have difficulty in accepting the predictions of Christ concerning Himself because they are recorded in the Sacred Writings completed after the predictions had been fulfilled. As evidences of reliability these should be accepted only in the light of other predictions, the fulfilment of which happened after the Sacred Records were made, but are found in secular history.

First: Christ predicted His death and resurrection just as they happened. Christ predicted that He would be betrayed, condemned, delivered to the Gentiles, mocked, scourged, crucified, and that He would rise again from among the dead, exactly those matters that

become perfectly true. See Matthew 20:17-19. Mark 10:32-34. Luke 18:31-33.

Second: Christ predicted the destruction of Jerusalem. There are two passages which in general are accepted as prophecies concerning this event. One in the Gospel of Matthew and the other in the Gospel of Luke. According to Luke (chapter 21), Christ predicted the actual destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in A.D. 70. These predictions are very eschatological and describe a period of unparalleled suffering and sorrow for the Jewish people in the end times. Of this period of great tribulation the fall of Jerusalem is an illustration.

Christ's prophecy concerning the seige and the plundering of the city was dreadfully fulfilled by the Roman legions in A.D. 70.

This study involving archaeology and fulfilled prophecy demonstrates the veracity, historicity and reliability of the Sacred Scriptures, the Holy Bible.

The claims of veracity when so substantially proved indicate superhuman guidance in the truth and superhuman preservation from error; therefore, evidence of veracity and reliability must be accepted as proofs of divine inspiration.

Appendix to Christian Evidences No. I

Spirit, soul and body: All organic life has a body, a physical form. This is true of the vegetable, the animal and man. The kind of life in many cases may be determined by the shape and substance of the body.

Animal life not only has a physical, visible form, a body; it also has a soul. This is true of all animals and of man (Gen. 1:30, margin or J.N.D., Gen. 2:7). The soul is that

capacity that enables the creature to express itself through its body in patterns of behaviour. The soul may be considered as composed of mind, emotion and will. All animals have all of these so also has man. A cat attempting to disturb a bird's nest was shot in the rump by a man with an air-gun. It jumped a distance off the ground, took one glance at the man, and raced away to safety. Several days later, it returned. When the person with the air-rifle appeared, it did not hesitate to dash away. It had a mind to recognize its former assailant. This recognition stirred the emotion of fear, and the will to escape propelled its legs faster than usual to make good its escape.

The spirit is only found in man; this raises him far above the animal for it is the capacity to fellowship with God. The spirit of man is linked closely with his soul. We know that the Word of God distinguishes these (Heb. 4:12). These two parts of human personality are linked together because fellowship with God requires mind for this in on an intellectual level; fellowship with God requires emotion for man may love or hate God, he may seek His fellowship or shun it. Furthermore, fellowship with God requires will for man has the power to decide for or against intercourse with God. Spirit, then, is the capacity for God consciousness and enjoyment.

The Bible --Part 12

The Bible

Part 12

James Gunn

Thy Words were found and I did eat them; and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.

Jeremiah 15:16 Methods of Bible Study Two Irishmen were walking along-side of a bog one day when one of them slipped and fell in. His friend hurried to the nearest farmer and asked that he lend him a shovel with which to help his companion out of the bog.

“How deep is he in the bog?” asked the farmer.

“Down to the ankles,” replied the Irishman.

“You don’t need a shovel,” said the farmer, “tell him to jump out.”

“He can’t,” said the friend of the unfortunate man, “you see, he fell in head first.”

The proper way to study the Bible is to go in head first, to bury yourself in it. What does not reach the head will never reach the heart.

In this lesson we are interested in the reason why, the preparation for, and the methods by which we may study the Holy Scriptures.

The Reason Why

First, we are commanded so to do (2 Timothy 2:15); second, they are inspired of God (2 Peter 1:20-21. 2 Timothy 3:16); third, they witness to Christ (John 5:39);

fourth, they equip the believer for his service (2 Timothy 3:16).

In this connection it should be noted that the Bible is the text book of Christianity. It is for doctrine; that is, teaching. It contains the ethics of Christianity for it reproves misbehaviour. It contains the code of Christian morality; it corrects deviations. It contains the syllabus of Christian training for the disciples of Christ; it contains every beneficial discipline and duty.

Preparation for

There is need for preparation in at least three spheres: spiritual, mental, and mechanical.

Spiritual: Any study of the Bible should begin with prayer; a sense of reliance upon the Holy Spirit should be cultivated (1 John 2:27. John 16:13), and a deep reverence for the Holy Book should be maintained in the heart.

Mental: Mental preparation is also necessary. There should be every attempt to expel from the mind all prejudices, all human slants of interpretation, and all preconceived notions. Bible study is research in the Bible, a deep searching for the revealed will of God.

Mechanical: In the mechanics of Bible Study certain tools are advantageous. For our present purpose we shall reduce these to the minimum.

Several different translations are helpful in discovering shades of meaning in the language. The New Testament in four versions set out in parallel columns is now available and is an excellent tool for study work. A good English dictionary is almost essential. A Bible concordance will give much assistance. Cruden's

Concordance is helpful, but either Strong's or Young's is very much better. One should obtain a reputed Bible Dictionary as soon as possible. There are a number of these now available: Morrish, Smith, Unger, etc.

The student of the Word of God will find it most helpful to always have near a scribbler pad for hurried notes and jottings, and a good note book into which he may transfer the organized material resulting from his studies.

Study Habits

We should develop proper habits of study; with a little practice these become a routine.

There are several steps that we should do habitually. Let us consider these:

First, the schedule: (a) It is necessary that we determine how much time we can apply daily to this effort. By the way, this should be over and above the reading we do in our usual devotions. We should decide what is the best time of day for studies; some have found it best to arise early before the activities of the day actually begin; others have found it best to sit up and study at night.

(b) A period of fifteen minutes a day results in one hour and a half in a week, seven hours a month, and eighty-four hours a year. This investment of time pays large spiritual dividends.

(c) Our schedule must provide time for several steps in the procedure. Suppose we devote four minutes to reading; four minutes to analysis, three to reference work, two to writing, and two to memory work.

Second, reading: This is very important; we should read carefully only eight or ten verses and make sure that we understand each word. Should we find words that we do not know, we must use our dictionary. (b) We should then read the portion over more intently to grasp the ideas. (c) We should read it over the third time to discover the logic that unites these ideas together in a proper sequence.

Third, analysis: This is a more taxing procedure. After we have carefully and prayerfully read the chosen portion, select the different ideas in the passage and write these on our scribbler pad. Next, try and determine the logic that unites these. When this is done, decide which is the major idea of the entire passage.

As an example let us take the first verse of the Epistle to the Ephesians. In this verse there are two major concepts, the writer and the recipients of the Epistle. Let us raise and answer some questions about them:

The author:

Who was he? Paul.

What do we know about him? He was a persecutor of the Church and became a preacher in the Church.

What did he become officially? An Apostle of Jesus Christ. How did he become an Apostle? By the will of God.

What is an apostle? Use dictionaries, both English and Bible.

The addressees:

Who were they? Saints at Ephesus.

What is a saint? Use Bible Dictionary.

Where is Ephesus? Use Bible Dictionary or Atlas.

What were these saints? Faithful in Christ Jesus.

This simple analysis, if done diligently, will result in an increase in biblical knowledge. Through it we may learn about conversion, the position and work of an apostle, the sovereignty of God and the sainthood of all believers.

Fourth, memory work: We should now memorize the several points that we have on our scribbler pad. These short notes may be slipped into the pocket and reviewed during spare minutes at a later period of the day.

It is advisable to add here a word in regard to our schedule. Let us adhere to the time table. Let us stop when time is up, even if we are in the middle of one of the stages in the process.

Furthermore, we should always read the introduction to a Concordance or Bible Dictionary; generally the best way to use such helps is explained in or near the introduction. This is also true of a good English Dictionary.

Study Pointers

There are certain rules which we should observe; for example: the laws of grammar, the law of first mention, the law of full mention, and the law of context.

The laws of grammar: It is well to pay attention to the laws of grammar in the reading of the Holy Scriptures. The Spirit of God can build a strong argument when it is necessary on the number of a noun (Galatians 3:16). Much help can be derived from watching the verb

tenses, even in English not to mention the original languages in which the Bible was written.

Although our English translations were punctuated by men, the translators, this is helpful. In spite of the fact that the system of punctuating the King James Version is obsolete, it offers assistance.

The law of first mention: The first time a subject, doctrine or topic, is mentioned in the Bible, we have in that first mention the seed that eventually is developed throughout the Holy Scriptures. As the mighty oak grows from the small acorn, so doctrines and topics grow from their first mention.

Take for example the first mention of the conflict against Satan (Genesis 3:15). Notice what is here in embryo. (a) The Victor over Satan would arise from the very woman over whom he had been victorious. (b) This Victor would be the seed of Eve, not of Adam. What a hint at the Virgin birth of our Lord! (c) Satan would cause the Seed of the Woman pain, he would bruise His heel. (d) The Seed of the Woman, our Lord Jesus, would inflict upon Satan a fatal wound; He would bruise his head.

The law of full mention: Generally, a doctrine that first appears in germ form eventually is treated in a full and comprehensive manner. Take for example, the resurrection treated fully in 1 Corinthians 15, the rapture of the Church treated fully in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, and the judgment of the wicked treated fully in Revelation 20:11-15.

The law of context: That we observe this law is very important to our understanding of the Word of God. Words, phrases, statements and even concepts should be interpreted according to their immediate context. The

same statements in two different contexts might mean two different things. Take the references in the New Testament to the deluge (Hebrews 11:7, 1 Peter 3:20-21). In the first, the deluge is a means of death and destruction; whereas, in the second, it is a means of salvation. To understand these two passages, we must interpret them in their immediate contexts.

The law of comparison and contrast: We must learn to apply our skill in seeking biblical comparisons and contrasts. A comparison is the association of like things; a contrast, the association of unlike things, opposites.

(a) As an example of comparison, let us examine four different references to the love of God in the New Testament:

- The love of God in declaration (John 3:16).
- The love of God in demonstration (Romans 5:8).
- The love of God in action (Ephesians 2:4).
- The love of God in manifestation (1 John 3:1-3).

By this comparison we learn how God in love sent His Unique Son down from glory that men might become His sons raised to glory.

(b) As an example of contrast, let us place the children of disobedience in Ephesians 2:2 over against the children of obedience in 1 Peter 1:14. Much spiritual truth may be learned from this simple contrast.

Systems of Bible Study

God is the God of variety; creation proves this. How numerous the colours in nature! How many the different species in the vegetable kingdom! How many in the

animal kingdom! What great variety there is in the mineral kingdom! Yet these are all blended together in nature to form one divine whole.

In order to study nature so as to bring its wonders within our reach, we departmentalize our studies. The artist studies colours and their harmony. The botanist and the horticulturist study developments in the vegetable world. The biologist and zoologist study the different species of animals, and the geologist and the mineralogist study the formation and the mineral content of the earth.

The Word of God is one; it is a divine unity; this should not be forgotten. Nevertheless, in order to reduce its content to our capacity, for our own benefit we departmentalize it, and engage in different types of study. We shall attempt to mention some of these in an order that may indicate their importance.

Expository studies: Such studies are to discover the basic meaning of a particular passage of Scripture. To do this we employ all the rules that we have learned. We read and reread; we analyse; we determine the meaning of each term. Furthermore, we examine the context, and compare or contrast the ideas in the passage with the same ideas in other passages of the Word of God. These mental efforts we continue until we are convinced that, as far as our knowledge is concerned, we have ascertained the meaning of the passage.

Doctrinal studies: In doctrinal studies it is necessary that the student decide which doctrine he is going to examine. Probably this type of study could be pursued in three stages:

First: The preparation of a list of selected doctrines.
Here we might prepare such a list, not, of course, an exhaustive one.

The doctrine of God:

- The Holy Trinity.
- The Father.
- The Son.
- The Holy Spirit.

The doctrine of creation:

- The Universe.
- Angels.
- Man.

The Bible --Part 13

The Bible

Part 13

James Gunn

Thy Words were found and I did eat them; and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.

Jeremiah 15:16 Methods Of Bible Study (Continued)

The doctrine of salvation:

- Sin.
- Redemption.
- Salvation.
- Justification.
- Sanctification.
- Glorification.

The doctrine of revelation:

- Revelation.
- Inspiration.
- Interpretation.

Second: We now select one doctrine from this prepared list, and with the help of a Concordance examine progressively every reference that can be found to this particular doctrine or phase of doctrine throughout the Word of God.

A doctrinal study may also be conducted in a more limited manner by confining our work to one book in the Bible. For example, the first doctrine we meet in the

Epistle to the Ephesians is the doctrine of God. We immediately sense, of course, that there is a reference to both the Son and the Father in the opening verse. Now, suppose we decide to examine the references to God the Father in this Epistle. Through our investigation we would learn much that we possibly did not previously realize: God is sovereign; He imposes His will (v. 1). God is Father of our Lord Jesus (1:3, etc.); of glory (1:17); of all, the paternal source of everything (4:6); and of all believers (6:23).

Furthermore, we would learn that God is Father to bless (1:3-6), to choose, predestine, adopt, to illuminate. This He does through the Spirit of Revelation and of Wisdom.

Moreover, we would learn that He is Father to be the Head of a household of persons once alienated from Him (2:18-19).

Third: As we examine each reference and understand the reference in the light of the context, we prepare a systematized outline of every point we have found.

This is a very good way to learn sound doctrine. The study of doctrine in one book or epistle is not as tedious as is the more general scheme, but certainly not as comprehensive.

Dispensational studies: This type of study is being ignored by some and denounced by others, but Christians owe much to this system of Bible interpretation. It is very exacting and demands much time and patience.

Dispensational study engages us in an examination of different periods of time throughout human history, and the epochs which mark these off from the one from the other.

The word dispensation means a stewardship, a method of management or administration. God has used different methods of administration in His dealings with man. He dealt with him first in innocence, then under conscience, then through self-government under Noah. Following these different administrations, He dealt with man under promises and covenants, then under law, and now He deals with man under grace. In the dispensation of the fulness of these times, the millennium, He will deal with man in righteousness.

The Old Testament in great measure treats of those dispensations from innocence to the law; whereas, the New Testament, generally speaking, treats of the dispensations of grace and righteousness. An understanding of these helps one better to rightly divide the Word of Truth (2 Timothy 2:15).

Topical studies: Topical studies are conducted more or less in the same way as are doctrinal studies. We begin by making a list: prayer, faith, giving of our substance to the Lord, suffering, the believer's walk, fruit-bearing, etc.

These studies may be undertaken in the broad extensive manner, a searching of the whole Bible for the references to the selected subject, or in the limited way, a study of the chosen topic in one book or epistle.

One cannot read the short Epistle of Third John carefully without being impressed by the major topic; it is repeated several times, "The Truth." A consideration of the Epistle leads to the conclusion that the truth was practised by Gaius, profaned by Diotrephes, and propagated by Demetrius. In this particular case, a

topical study results in the opening up of the entire Epistle.

Biographical studies: From our earliest days we have enjoyed Bible stories, biographical sketches of the heroes of the past whose lives have been an inspiration to others throughout the centuries. This type of Bible study is fascinating and very productive. We may discuss several steps in the process:

First: Select a Bible character.

Second: Gather all the possible details, examine each reference to the particular character. Trace the traits of character, acts of conduct, failures and successes, the reason for these, his service for the Lord or the lack of service for the Lord.

Trace the dealings of God with the individual: His blessings, His discipline, His guidance, or His disapproval.

Third: Correlate each event, each item, each period in the hero's history to all other events, items and periods.

Fourth: Classification of the most prominent features in the subject's life should be carried out, and the most important one discovered. For example, Job is the man of patience, Abraham of faith, Isaac of peace and Jacob of discipline. When this is executed properly, it will be seen that the entire biographic study is built around this prominent feature. Other details in life present different phases and aspects of this.

Word studies: There are two very fine works on the study of words in the New Testament, the one by Dr. Robertson and the other by Dr. Vincent. Both of these

excellent works give word-pictures which are instructive.

The study of words in the Bible is most productive and helpful. There are several ways in which this type of study may be done.

An English-Greek Concordance should be used in this work. Some times an English word may appear several times in one epistle and yet not be the same word in the original Greek. The help of an English-Greek Concordance will give the assurance that the same word is being treated in the several different references.

First: The simplest form of word study is the tracing of the same word as it occurs, and the examining of the various contexts in which it is found.

For example: the word redemption is found four times in the Epistle to the Ephesians.

By the use of our English-Greek Concordance we discover that it appears in two different forms, and a little observation shows that it is used in two different ways; some are used to show that God redeems and one is used to suggest that man ought to redeem.

When we list all the references where the word is applied to God and examine these carefully, we note the following:

- The price of redemption (1:7).
- The possession of redemption (1:14).
- The purpose of redemption (4:30).

The one reference to our redeeming the time (5:16) may be considered with similar references in some other part of the New Testament.

Take the phrase, "The praise of His glory," it appears three times in the first chapter. An examination of these three contexts shows that it appears in connection with the Father (v. 6), the Son (v. 12), and the Holy Spirit (v. 14).

Second: Another form of word study is that of investigating words in a series, words which seem to complement each other. Ephesians chapter one provides us with such a series. In verses 19-20 the words in the series are: working, power, and wrought. Using the thought of power we could list these references in this manner:

- The potential: "His mighty power."
- The transmission: "The working of His mighty power."
- The operation: "Which He wrought in Christ."

These related words that complement each other could also be entitled: the source, the channel, and the accomplishment.

Third: A third form of word study in the English-Greek is the study of synonyms. Take the verb to know, one of its synonyms means to know through acquired knowledge, the other means to know by intuition. We know chemistry or biology by an acquired knowledge which is gained at school; we know the beautiful from the ugly by an intuitive knowledge. For example, to know the love of Christ (3:19) is to know by an acquired knowledge, to know through experience. To know that a good deed has its own recompense (6:8) is to know by intuition.

There are other systems of Bible Study in which we may profitably engage ourselves: typical studies, prophetic studies, serial studies, etc. but sufficient has been said

to demonstrate that profitable Bible Study results from preparation for a methodical and adequate system.

This recommendation might be made. We should change our system of study from time to time in order to get a more complete understanding of the Word of God. Of course, if one has sufficient time, he may continue using two or even three different systems daily. One giving his whole time to the ministry of the Word ought so to do. By so doing he will have freshness of soul and plenty of sound material for his ministry.

Principles Of Biblical Interpretation

Principles of interpretation are the ways and means of explaining a written document or manuscript. An interpreter is one who attempts to expound the meaning of a writer to his readers by simplifying his language, by removing ambiguities, and, at times, by illustrating his concepts. Decoding a coded message is an extreme case of interpretation. This involves the translation of the code symbols as well as the explanation of their meaning.

If it were possible for us to interpret the Bible in the original tongues to an English audience, it would be necessary that we know those original languages, translate from these and then give the meaning. Since the Bible has been translated for us, and that into excellent English, we need only to study the principles of interpretation which include such ideas as the simplification of language, the interpretation of all figurative expressions and the exposition of each separate concept.

Let us consider a step-by-step method of biblical interpretation.

Submission

Any attempt to understand and interpret the Word of God must begin with a prayerful dependence upon the Holy Spirit. He is the Anointing that we have received (1 John 2:27). In Old Testament times prophets, priests and kings were initiated into their respective offices by anointing. Here John informs us that the Christian is initiated by the Divine Anointing into knowledge, and such knowledge as needs no one to teach him. The Spirit of God directs him into the knowledge of God that saves him from the spirit of error abroad in the world.

Moreover, it is the Holy Spirit who searches the deep things of God, and reveals them unto us (1 Corinthians 2:10-13). The Spirit of God is the Author of the Holy Scriptures (2 Peter 1:21) and is their best interpreter.

Illumination

Spiritual illumination is the influence of the Holy Spirit upon the mind of the student that enables him to see the meaning of the Word of God. We must not allow anything to interfere with the light of the Holy Spirit: no human opinion, no prejudice, no partiality.

When Alexander the Great visited the ancient philosopher Diogenes, he asked that wise man if there was anything he, the Emperor, could do to assist him. "Simply, get out of my light," was the terse reply. We should allow nothing, not even royalty, to obscure the light of the Holy Spirit (1 John 2:27). In this connection the Apostle Paul wrote, "Quench not the Spirit" (1 Thessalonians 5:19).

The Bible --Part 14

The Bible

Part 14

James Gunn

Thy Words were found and I did eat them; and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.

Jeremiah 15:16 Principles Of Biblical Interpretation
(Continued)

Unreliable Methods of Interpretation

While we advocate an historical-grammatical method of biblical interpretation, it is well to acquaint oneself with other methods in order that we avoid the inaccurate.

The allegorical method: This method sees narratives, descriptions, and historical events as similes and emblems of deep spiritual truths. This method is sometimes called “spiritualizing”. For example, there are those who see in Jacob’s stonepillow an accusing conscience; in Joseph’s coat of many colours (pieces) the numerous virtues of good character, etc. By allegorizing the Scriptures one can make them mean anything that occurs to a fertile imagination.

An experienced minister of the Word asked a young man who was to share a gospel service with him of what he intended speaking.

“Of Jacob’s efforts to appease Esau,” replied the young brother.

“I suppose in Jacob you see a picture of a sinner,” said the senior brother. “Yes,” was the reply, “and his gifts as

the attempts of men to appease the wrath of God by their good deeds and religious observances.”

“I see,” said the man of experience, “but do you think that Esau makes a very good picture of God?”

The young man’s allegorical sermon was never preached. We must seek out the true meaning of the Word of God and not rely upon our own imagination. While this illustrates the danger of allegorizing the Word of God, we should nevertheless admit that there are passages of the Bible which lend themselves to allegorical preaching, but the speaker should intimate the literal meaning of the passage and then state that he is using it during his sermon in an allegorical manner.

The mystical method: There are persons who claim to possess what is called an inner light (We must not confuse this with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God.): They disregard all principles of interpretation and are guided by their own feelings. A mystical interpretation of the Bible means that one takes from it any meaning suitable to the reader.

A brother who was not feeling very well decided that he would open the Bible at random and take whatever words his eyes fell on as a message direct from God to him. The Bible opened at Isaiah 38 and the first words he saw were, “Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live.” The brother immediately made an appointment with a physician.

Another brother who advocated this mystical method of biblical interpretation used to open his Bible at a passage predetermined in mind. He would read from the predetermined chapter and verse, and consider that verse a direct message to him from the Lord. Some

young brethren thought they too would try this. One was ready with the Bible and read as the others chose different passages. One young brother with a rather superior attitude chose Proverbs 7:7. The brother with the Bible read slowly and deliberately, "I ... beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding." Some found it difficult not to snicker for they thought the passage appropriate.

The moral method: The moral method of biblical interpretation reasons that while the Bible was given by inspiration of God, it was given for the moral improvement of man, and that therefore the literal and historical sense of Scripture is secondary to a moral meaning that may be imposed upon it. In 1 Corinthians 10 the Apostle Paul does not attach some strange moral significance to the events in Israel's history, but he does draw moral lessons from those events. The literal sense of Scripture is used in an illustrative manner to teach moral lessons to God's people.

The naturalistic method: This method is the product of rationalism, and of course is a tool of the liberal theologian. It attempts to explain the Word of God by ignoring, if not refuting, its supernatural qualities. The naturalistic interpretation explains away the miraculous from the miracles of Christ. For example, the boy with the five loaves and the two fishes, by giving up his lunch to Jesus, shamed others to do likewise and so there was more than enough for all. We need not discuss this method further for as genuine believers we categorically reject it.

The apologetic method: This has also been called the dogmatic method. This method attempts to defend in every possible manner the genuineness of Holy Scripture, but does so by stressing and straining the meaning of the words and the statements of Holy Scripture beyond what is reasonable and natural. Doctrinal concepts are frequently forced upon irrelevant passages with the result that an imposition in place of an exposition is given. This method has brought unnecessary ridicule upon evangelical Christians, and has resulted in the false charge that evangelicals are not scholarly. An example of the dogmatic, apologetic method may be given by a reference to Jeremiah 31:22, "The Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, A woman shall compass a man." Into these statements the Virgin birth of Christ is forced. Surely, the doctrine of the Virgin birth of our Saviour can be defended from the historical data given without resorting to word manipulation in a remote text.

We need not discuss any other erroneous method of biblical interpretation, but proceed with the principles in the historical-grammatical method.

The Historical-Grammatical Method

The historical-grammatical method endeavours to gather from the Scriptures themselves the precise meaning which the writers intend to convey to their original readers. Let us consider this method in a step-by-step procedure.

Observation: A passage of Scripture must be read very attentively in order to ascertain its meaning. Keen observation will notice such particulars as the following: First, the style of writing: This involves the peculiar style

of the individual writer, whether written in prose or poetry, and whether it contains symbols, metaphors, parables, quotations, etc. Second, the atmosphere of writing: By atmosphere is meant the influence of the emotional state of the author at the time of writing. His state may have been one of fear, of joy, of indignation, of disappointment, etc. To sense the atmosphere of a passage helps considerably in its understanding.

Jude wrote his Epistle in a spirit of indignation. Paul wrote 1 Corinthians in a spirit of grief and disappointment. John wrote the Revelation in a spirit of awe, and one can sense his wonderment throughout the entire book. Try and sense the atmosphere of the passage that you are studying and that will help in the discovery of its meaning. Third, the structure of writing: While the punctuation of the King James Version is ancient, pay attention to it. If you have a version that indicates, as does, for example, the Revised Standard Version, each paragraph, pay strict attention to the paragraphs. Read and reread each separate paragraph until you are sure of its exact meaning. This requires that one understand each sentence, each clause, each phrase and term in the entire paragraph. Fourth, the terms used: One should take nothing for granted, but by the use of an English Dictionary find the meaning of each English word. Furthermore, when possible one should discover the meaning of biblical terms by the use of such works as Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible and Young's Analytical Concordance. The more one can find out about the terminology and usage of a word, the more light will be had on the passage under his consideration. One should look into every different

shade of meaning of any one term and then choose the one that fits best the context.

Investigation

Investigation actually is the effort of an inquiring mind to answer certain logical questions. The method and value of investigation are better demonstrated than they are abstractly stated.

Investigation involves: first, the immediate context and then, in the second place, the remote context.

For the purpose of demonstration let us select the verses about hope in Romans 5:2b-5a.

The immediate context: The steps of investigation within the immediate context may be set forth as follows:

First: particularization: Particularization answers the question, what? What is the major topic of these verses? Sometimes it is necessary to read the passage several times and to determine the meaning of certain terms before we can be sure that we have discovered the major theme. In this case the answer is apparent; it is hope.

Second: modification: Modification answers the question, which? Which hope are we reading about? Again the answer here is obvious; it is hope in the glory of God.

Third: motivation: Motivation answers the question, why? Why do Christians hope in the glory of God? The passage explains that they hope in the glory of God because of tribulations now. Such tribulations result in the development of patience, but they also result in hope in the glory of God.

Fourth: realization: Realization answers the question, how? How do Christians with trials and difficulties now hope in the glory of God? They rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Fifth: occasion: Occasion answers the question, when? When do Christians in spite of trials hope in the glory of God? The tenses of the verbs in the passage show that it is now, in their lifetime.

The remote context: An examination of any topic in the remote context involves comparing and contrasting its usages in different passages of Scripture.

Comparison: By comparing hope in Romans 5:2b-5a with hope as mentioned in other passages, we learn that it is: first, a good hope (2 Thessalonians 2:16); second, a blessed hope (Titus 2:13); third, a better hope (Hebrews 7:19); and fourth, a living hope (1 Peter 1:3).

A review of these references indicates that the Christian's hope is morally good because its source is in God; it is a blessed hope because it provides joy and gladness now as well as realization hereafter.

Furthermore, it is a better hope than anything that rests upon the law for it assures complete access to God both now and in the life to come. In conclusion, the Christian's hope is a living hope. The disciples of our Lord lost hope because they expected the immediate coronation of the Lord Jesus as their Messiah. The hope of the Christian rests upon the resurrection of Christ, He who lives in the power of an endless life; it, therefore, has life in itself and has life as its objective.

Confirmation

It is after that we have engaged in our own personal studies that we consult the writings of others. In our lesson on How to Study the Bible certain types of reference books were recommended; here other works are suggested.

First: Each student of the Bible should try to obtain the use of sound expository and doctrinal works. If he can build up a library of his own, that gives him a sense of independence. If unable to do this, he should belong to a library where such works are available.

Second: These books should be used only after personal work has been completed. If we follow first the writings of others, we become slaves to their thinking and conclusions, and the more closely we follow them the stronger will be the mental bondage in which they hold us. Studies should be done with reliance upon the Divine Anointing, the Holy Spirit, (1 John 2:27) and then the works of men may be used as guides over difficulties. The ancient question and answer seem appropriate at such times: "Understandest thou what thou readest?" "How can I, except some man should guide me?" (Acts 8:30-31).

An article published in Food for the Flock was severely criticized; the writer's objection read, "The author has too much of the Pulpit Commentary in his article."

Third: After diligently and thoroughly studying a passage, we may use the writings of others to either confirm or correct our own work. If after consulting the work of another we sense that our logic is poor and our deductions are wrong, we should correct our procedure and with this new guidance develop our studies.

The Bible --Part 15

The Bible

Part 15

James Gunn

Thy Words were found and I did eat them; and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.

Jeremiah 15:16 Principles Of Biblical Interpretation
(Continued)

Permanent Filing

Robert McCrory, a godly and capable minister of the Word of God, once said, "I would give much if some one had advised me to permanently record the results of my early studies in the Word. Precious findings, which at the time of their discovery I felt that I would never forget, have been forgotten. Expositions developed and used in blessing to God's people cannot now be recalled. I wish with all my heart that I had written my studies at least in outline and thus preserved them."

A student should prepare a record of his studies and develop a system of filing these. A very simple system is to have several loose-leaf books of a convenient size. These may be labelled: Doctrinal Studies, Topical Studies, Serial Studies, Expository Studies, etc. At the beginning you may label one Expository Studies in the Old Testament and another Expository Studies in the New Testament. As studies increase with the passing of time two such books may be inadequate; it may be necessary that you have a loose-leaf book for each

section of the Bible. Doctrinal, topical, serial studies may be filed in the usual alphabetical order.

Appendix to Principles of Biblical Interpretation No. 1.

Dual Interpretation: "The Bible is of only one interpretation but many applications," is a frequently repeated assertion that requires some modification. There are statements and examples which cover the matter of dual interpretation in both the Gospels and Epistles.

In writing to the Corinthians, the Apostle Paul suggests that certain facts which in the Old Testament have a literal — historical interpretation for Israel have a moral and spiritual one today: "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Corinthians 10:11-12). The words of warning mean that if we do not heed the admonition of these Old Testament Scriptures, literal in their meaning to Israel but spiritual to us, and go on thinking that we are standing when we are not, like Israel we shall fall under the disciplinary hand of God.

In this passage, we have both a literal and historical interpretation and a moral and spiritual one.

There is a passage in 2 Corinthians where dual interpretation is even more obvious. At the close of 2 Corinthians 6, promises literally made to Israel in Isaiah 52:11 and Hosea 1:10, are quoted in connection with the members of the church at Corinth: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord,

and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (2 Corinthians 6:17-18). The exhortation then follows, “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (2 Corinthians 7:1).

Here we have a literal — historical interpretation in the Old Testament and an ecclesiastical and moral one in the New.

In the parable of the unjust judge, a dual interpretation was intended by the Lord. In the passage, Luke 18:1-8, the Lord first states a literal interpretation. The parable was meant that men should always pray, but after speaking the parable, the Lord intimated that it also has a dispensational interpretation: “Shall not God avenge His elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?”

The parable of the husbandmen (Matthew 21:33-46) is a splendid example of dual interpretation. First, it was understood by the chief priests and Pharisees as an outline of their own history (v. 45). Second, the Lord interpreted the parable in regard to Himself, rejected but eventually exalted.

Here we have a historical interpretation and a prophetic interpretation together.

Sufficient is here stated to show that it is necessary to modify the statement, “The Bible is of only one

interpretation.” The Bible itself occasionally gives to passages a double meaning.

A safe guide to follow in this connection is, do not use multiple interpretation unless the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures makes it plain that such was His intention.

Analytical Bible Study

The composition of the Bible is such that it demands sanctified logic, a detailed thinking in sequence, to grasp its divine meaning. Seldom do we find a complete outline of any subject. Divine Revelation is progressive; therefore references to any subject are complementary, but we must remember that partial statements of all biblical themes are scattered throughout the whole Bible.

Biblical analysis may be defined as the technique by which a minute examination of Scripture is undertaken in order to discover its components and their true meaning. This method of study requires careful reading and rereading until one becomes acquainted with the language of the passage under consideration.

In literature analysis is undertaken to ascertain the real essence of any article or treatise. An orderly method to follow in doing this is to raise questions and seek the answer to these either in the passage itself or in some other part of the Word of God; for example: Who? Where? Why? How? When?

Let us take the first paragraph of the Epistle of James:

- Who? Who wrote this letter? James the Lord’s brother (Galatians 1:19). Saved probably after the resurrection of Christ. Compare John 7:5. He was absent at Christ’s crucifixion (1 Corinthians 15:7. Acts 1:14).

- Where? Where was this letter sent? To Jewish believers of the dispersion. See marginal reading of James 1:1.
- Why? Because of divers trials. Compare 1 Peter 1:6.
- When? Probably about A.D. 44. The absence of any reference to any Gentile believers or work among the nations suggests a very early date. A date before the Church Council recorded in Acts 15.
- How? “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God” (11 Timothy 3:16).

In this type of work each paragraph, sentence and clause; yes, and even phrase, is dissected. Their topic and argumentation are noted and listed. Eventually all the parts of the general subject will be re-arranged in groups and arrangements.

We shall select the Epistle to the Hebrews for this practical demonstration:

The Epistle to the Hebrews

1. The Designation:

2. The general subject: The general subject of the Epistle to the Hebrews may be difficult to discover. The Epistle may reveal its theme only after considerable reading. Let us notice a few general characteristics. Hebrews is not at all similar to the earlier Church Epistles by the Apostle Paul. There is nothing here about the mystery (Ephesians 3:3-10), nothing about the oneness of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-27), nothing of the Lord’s people being the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:15-20), and nothing about the eternal habitation for God which is being

raised by God the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 2:20-22). The Epistle is definitely slanted toward the Hebrew believers. It intimates that the practices which they knew so well under the Levitical economy was a type of the blessed realities found in Christ. They were being taught that the Lord Jesus was the antitype of Aaron the high-priest of Israel. These observations may help us to recognize the general subject.

The writer as he reviews what he has written in the first half of the Epistle says:

We would therefore choose as the title and subject of the Epistle to the Hebrews:

3. The Sections: It is necessary to find the different sections in the Epistle, and to examine each one until we detect the particular aspect or phase of the general subject.

While the sections contain clearly definite aspects of the general subject, they are not to be considered as so many disconnected parts in the entire Epistle. We must remember that they overlap.

Analysis

1. Of a book: Hebrews divides itself into five major sections: (a) (1:1 - 3:6):

(b) (4:11 - 5:5):

(c) (5:6 - 8:2):

(d) (8:3 - 10:25):

(e) (10:26 - 13:19):

Conclusion and benediction.

2. Of a Section: We have found the various elements in the Epistle as a whole. We ought now to take one of the sections and subject it to an analysis; Let us take the first one: (1:1 - 3:6) A little more than two chapters compose this section. (a) (Chap. one):

(b) (Chap. two):

3. Of one chapter: Let us choose one of these chapters and submit it to an analysis: (Chapter two):

(a) (vs. 1-4):

(b) (vs. 5-8):

(c) (v. 9):

(d) (v. 10):

(e) (vs. 11-13):

(f) (vs. 14-15):

(g) (v. 16):

(h) (vs. 17.18):

From this analysis we have learned the seven reasons for the incarnation of the Lord Jesus.

4. Of a paragraph: We shall select a well known paragraph from chapter two. It is verse 9. (a) "We see Jesus."

(b) "Made lower than the angels."

(c) "For the sufferings of death."

(d) "Crowned with glory and honour."

(e) "By the grace of God."

(f) "Tasted death for every man."

The Bible --Part 16

The Bible

Part 16

James Gunn

Thy Words were found and I did eat them; and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.

Jeremiah 15:16 The Standard And Variety Of Oral Ministry Long ago Bernard Manning described oral ministry as “A manifestation of the Incarnate Word, from the Written Word, by the spoken word.” In our studies we have passed through several subjects from that of divine revelation to human communication. No man could fill a higher office than that of being called of God to communicate the revelation of God in the Bible. This is the greatest task ever assigned to any man. The individual who is conscious of having received a call to minister the doctrine of Christ to his fellowmen should assume this grave responsibility with discretion and dedication, and should pursue it with humility and resolution.

The Purpose of Ministry

A paraphrasing of Ephesians 4:11-13, may reveal the true purpose of ministry: “And Christ gave to the Church gifts: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers for the equipping of the saints in order that they accomplish their ministry of edifying the Body of Christ, till we all arrive in the unity of the faith; the full knowledge of the Son of God,...unto the perfection of the

One New Man (Ephesians 2:15), the full measure of the stature of Christ.”

Dr. Handley Moule translates the phrase, “For the perfecting of the saints,” as “with a view to the equipment of the saints for their work of service.” He then calls attention to the fact that the verb form of this word is used in Matthew 4:21, where in the King James Version it is translated, “mending nets;” and in Galatians 6:1, where it is translated, “restore;” and Hebrews 13:21, where it is, “make you perfect.” Obviously, as Dr. Moule says, “Christian ministry is to have its effect above all things in the fitting of the saints for active service for the common Lord.” Each Christian is, by spiritual ministry, to be fitted out, to be equipped to be a builder of the Church of the Living God; each is responsible to bring living stones in order that these become a part of that edifice that will be the eternal habitation of God.

The Standard of Ministry

The standard of ministry is set forth by Solomon in Ecclesiastes 12:8-12, where he summarizes what he as the preacher had written throughout this book of wisdom; albeit, earthly wisdom. His words, whether spoken or written were of the very best, dignified, sound and effective. In this description the art of preaching is seen at its highest.

Notice what characterized this art in Solomon’s day: First, wisdom itself, “The preacher was wise” no doubt with the wisdom that is from above which is pure, peaceable, easily entreated, full of mercy and good fruits; and without partiality and hypocrisy. Second, diligence; he gave good heed and sought out sayings

and words. He was not afraid to quote the good sayings of others. Third, research; he sought out to find. He searched until he discovered what was necessary to his purpose. Fourth, organization; the preacher set his material in order, and left nothing indistinct or confused. Fifth, acceptability; the preacher sought out acceptable words (Literally, words of delight). Solomon advocated excellence of speech with depth of spiritual truths. Sixth, honesty; he wrote only what was upright and absolutely true. Seventh, conciseness: the preacher's messages whether written or spoken are in contrast to the much writing of others; they were not verbose sayings like those of some others. Eighth, appropriateness: The words of this worthy preacher were as goads. As goads are used to direct and correct the oxen in the yoke, so the words of each Christian minister should direct the people of God and when necessary correct their ways. His words were also like nails fastened by the masters of this collection or compilation of holy books. As nails join and hold together any structure, so should the ministry of God's Word through those fitted to teach.

Channels of Ministry

In writing to the Corinthians the Apostle Paul asserted, "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:4). There seems to be much lack of discernment in appraising properly the different gifts, and their different functions in the Church. This is especially true in regard to those basic gifts: evangelist, pastor and teacher.

Some brethren may require the exhortation of Paul to Timothy, "Stir up the gift of God which is in thee" (2

Timothy 1:6), or his admonition to Archippus, "Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfill it" (Colossians 4:17).

When a gift becomes apparent, it should be recognized; it is an endowment from the Risen Head of the Church through the Holy Spirit. In our recognition of gifts, we must learn to differentiate the one from the other.

The employment of gifts: The wrong use of gifts may arise from a failure to understand the true character of the several gifts. Occasionally an evangelist is used when a teacher might be more correctly employed. This mistake is apparent in some annual conferences.

Generally speaking, there are two different types of conferences conducted among the assemblies, one where the platform is left open, as it is called; the other where the platform is arranged. In the first, all the speakers profess to be led by the Holy Spirit in what they minister and when they minister. Frequently, such practices result in every preacher present taking his turn, irrespective of the character or degree of his gift. In the second, where a more cautious method is adopted, where the time of a speaker is arranged, and sometimes his subject, the quality and character of gift is ignored; evangelists are appointed to teach the saints and teachers to take the gospel services. There is a definite need for wisdom in these matters. Each brother who feels urged to minister publicly either in the gospel or in teaching should, in the presence of the Lord, ascertain a sense of his own abilities and his own limitations. Furthermore, elder brethren remember the principles stated for the control of the prophets at the beginning of the Church period, "Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge" (1 Corinthians

14:29). Gifts are the channels through which the Lord ministers. We must therefore recognize them and permit them to function in such a manner as God had planned; only when this is true is God fully glorified and the Church thoroughly blessed.

The Variety of Ministry

In a simple manner we may classify ministry according to the purpose for which it is intended. One rule that should not be ignored is each message, as far as the minister of the Word is concerned, should be relevant to the audience. It is a difficult task to preach the gospel message to a congregation entirely of Christians, and very improper to deliver a hortatory sermon to an audience mostly of children or unconverted persons.

Let us consider several different types of sermons.

First, the evangelistic sermon: It should be remembered that evangelistic ministry is not a lecture for it does not inform; it is not a speech for it is not an entertainment. The gospel message is a proclamation to be delivered by a herald of the King. It is to be obeyed and therefore must be delivered with accuracy and authority. It is intended to move the will through the emotions.

Second, the expository sermon: This type of ministry is informative. It purports to expound the content of a passage of Scripture. It should appeal to the heart but through the intellect.

Third, the doctrinal sermon: A doctrinal discourse is an orderly and logical presentation of the major teachings of the Lord Jesus and His apostles. It should appeal to the heart through the intellect.

Fourth, the hortatory sermon: A sermon of this kind should be inspirational. It is exhortative in character and is intended to stir the individual to spiritual action.

Fifth, the devotional sermon: This ministry, generally speaking, is a presentation of Christ in any particular aspect of His person and work in order that love to Him might be stimulated in the believer's heart, and that love expressed in the performance of duties and activities.

Sixth, the prophetical sermon: This is usually a lecture in eschatology and deals with future events.

Well might the Apostle Peter write, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 4:11).

Preparation for Ministry

Much might be said in regard to the preparation necessary for ministry. Let us confine ourselves to the three spheres: spiritual, moral and mechanical.

Spiritual preparation: It should ever be remembered that the Lord instructed His disciples to await the descent of the Holy Spirit before beginning their ministry, their witnessing for Christ (Acts 1:8). As they were dependent upon Him for power, how much more are we!

It is the Unction from the Holy One that preserves us from error (1 John 2:18-20). The Holy One, of course, is the Lord Jesus through whom the Holy Spirit is the anointing oil, so to speak, and since we have been thus anointed, we have been initiated into knowledge; we, therefore, know all things necessary for our good.

Furthermore this same Anointing teaches us (1 John 2:26-27). Notice, first, His presence with us is permanent; He abides with us; second, His teaching requires no corroboration by man for it is complete and perfect in itself.

Surely, we must rely upon the Holy Spirit for through Him alone we have power, knowledge and instruction, and through Him we are preserved from errors.

Throughout the early years of the Church God made use of men who were filled with the Holy Spirit: men like Peter and John, Stephen, Philip and Barnabas, and many others. May we not be drunk with wine, but may we be filled with the Spirit. This we can do only as we empty ourselves and condition ourselves for the divine infilling (Ephesians 5:18).

Moral preparation: No matter how systematic our studies may be, or how well organized our material, success greatly depends upon our spiritual and moral preparation. In regard to ministry, the Apostle Peter asserts, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Peter 4:11). First, notice what Peter does not say; he does not say, Let him speak the oracles of God. That, every minister of Christ ought to do. Second, notice what he does say, "Let him speak as the oracles of God." The man himself is to be an oracle, his character and conduct should be a message that agrees perfectly with the message that he speaks. What a man is, even so is his message.

It may not occur to all that certain moral qualities should characterize those who participate publicly in assembly functions.

The humorous story is told of a brother who did not usually give his testimony, but who on one occasion did, prefacing his remarks by saying, "I am not a public man; I do not know how to speak, but I feel encouraged to say something because on one occasion the Lord spoke through an ass to Balaam."

The people were embarrassed by his ignorance and hesitance of speech. He was altogether out of place.

After the service one of the elders said to him, "True, Brother, God did speak through an ass once, but He did not say that He would do that again."

While it would be impossible to list the moral qualifications according to any order of importance, these should become apparent.

It would be nice to assume that only the spiritual take part publicly in church gatherings, but we know that such is not the case.

Let us consider some of the qualities that ought to be part of the personality of every one who assumes to minister the Word of God publicly.

Personality

Personality is the sum-total of all that a man is; it is the integration of the components of character: ability, appearance, vigour, attitude, voice, etc., etc. In the Christian worker we look for another, namely, spirituality.

A simple can opener has several parts: a frame, a cutting knife, a pressure gear, and a handle with which to turn the gear. These all fitted together produce a can opener. Even so with personality: character, ability,

appearance, vigour, attitude, etc. are all blended properly together to give one whole.

The Bible --Part 17

The Bible

Part 17

James Gunn

Thy Words were found and I did eat them; and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.

Jeremiah 15:16 The Standard and Variety of Oral Ministry (Continued)

Spirituality

Spirituality is the result of the inworking of the Holy Spirit (See 1 Corinthians 2:14-15; 3:1 and 16). The Holy Spirit develops the disposition and state within the man that recognizes and appreciates spiritual realities, and imparts the spiritual ability to engage in spiritual activities.

Spirituality is the working of the Holy Spirit through the human will. The Spirit's power acts in perfect co-ordination with the human powers: "It is God," the Apostle declares, "which worketh in you both to will (with your own will) and to do (with your own doing) of His good pleasure" (Phillipians 2:13).

A spiritual man according to 1 Corinthians 2:15, judgeth all things, that means he is qualified to sift, to examine. As in sifting we separate good from bad, so the spiritual man recognizes the good, and detects and rejects the bad.

Manliness

Manliness is concerned with the world all around us, its conditions, dangers, demands, and reactions. True manliness is interested in relevant circumstances in both immediate items and places. Manliness must face disappointments, departures, and deterioration, and all the while manifest itself strong in convictions; and at the same time show itself sympathetic toward the weakness of others. True manliness is seen in Daniel who linked himself with his fallen nation, confessing their sin as his sin (Daniel 9:5), and in Jeremiah who felt so keenly for his own people in their distress that he said, "For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt" (Jeremiah 8:21).

While we would not agree entirely with the statement of Joseph Parker, his statement does carry weight: "The most important thing about a sermon is the man behind it." The Man, the Lord Jesus, is the most important thing about any biblical message. Manliness impresses itself upon others by humility and friendliness. The first of these makes me less interested in myself; the second makes me more interested in others.

Friendship

Fellowship with others and a deep interest in the welfare of others are not only necessities in a public man, but they become to him a real blessing.

Friendship broadens a man's knowledge, influence, service and his perspective in life. Friendliness makes one a channel of blessing to others, a blessing that returns in true satisfaction. Let us ever remember that

we are esteemed and respected only as we esteem and respect others within our fellowship.

Industry

There is no place for a lazy man in the economy of grace. To be a successful servant of the Lord, one must apply himself diligently to the work for which God has fitted him, and in this he must be ready to expend himself physically, mentally and spiritually.

Time and effort go into the work of the Lord in both the period of preparation and in the actual execution of the service.

If one is to take public part in any service, he should spend time and effort in preparation invoking the Spirit's guidance and employing his greatest mental powers to give the Lord his best.

The diligence and willingness to work should enter into every aspect of Christian service. Paul's commendation of Timothy crystalizes this idea: "If Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear; for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do" (1 Corinthians 16:10). The verb to work used here by Paul means to toil, to labour. The great need today in the service of the Lord is that of genuine workers.

Mental Culture

For the more part the apostles of our Lord were humble uneducated men. This does not mean that the Lord despised mental culture for let it be remembered that he also chose a Saul of Tarsus, a man well educated and highly cultured.

Today intellectualism has invaded the service of the Lord, and to the extent that brain power is mistaken for the power of the Spirit.

It is splendid when higher education is wholly sanctified to God for His own purposes. It has been well said that there is nothing wrong with the studies of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin as long as we do not put them where Pilate put them, over the head of Christ, but rather at His blessed feet.

While we need not overly emphasize education, we should nevertheless seek in every way possible to cultivate our minds. Today, as never before, when one addresses an audience he must be prepared to do so on the High School or College level. The poor grammar and faulty diction of a former day does not appeal now; in fact, it repels.

Someone has pointed out that Paul's education wholly dedicated to the Lord fitted him to speak to the hearts of pagan philosophers on Mars Hill a definite message from the Lord, and it delivered him from sitting at the feet of those philosophers to learn more of their evil systems.

Let us be careful to cultivate our manners and our minds, but likewise eschew the evils of an education that ignores the Word of God.

When called upon to preach, may we allow our hearts to control our heads. It has been said that as John the Baptist preached to more people with his literal head off, even so there are some preachers who would reach more people with their philosophical heads off.

To cultivate and consecrate should be the effort of every aspirant to public Christian service.

Appearance

The personal appearance and the voice of any public speaker make an impression for either good or ill upon an audience. A slovenly and untidy appearance not only is distasteful, but produces a suspicion that the speaker is also careless and unreliable in his thinking. One negligent about his clothes in all probability is negligent in his mental efforts.

Furthermore, a slouch is a poor testimony to the grace that elevates from sin and its defilement. A poor or improperly used voice or a very high pitched voice may irritate hearers to the extent the message is rendered void. One should dress with decorum and attempt to overcome any deficiency in voice or manner so that he may give his best to the Lord and be His suitable representative before men.

Mechanical Preparation

Sermons should be allowed to grow rather than to be made. That which grows is the outcome of internal strength; that which is made results from external power. Sermons should grow out of the preacher's own devotional reading and Bible study.

During Bible reading and studying, in a separate note book, there should be kept a reference to any passage that presents itself as the basis of a good sermon. The passage should be noted along with the impressions received at the time, and the class of sermon that could be developed from the passage and the impressions.

Structure: There are several different structures which may be used.

First, the point structure. There are some men who become slaves to a three point structure; others to a four, and still others to a seven. When a certain type of structure is used constantly, it becomes monotonous. It is therefore well to vary the structure of your sermons from time to time.

No matter how many points there may be in a sermon, these are all parts of one whole; the points therefore should not protrude like quills on a porcupine. We must ever keep the unity of the overall subject in mind.

Second, another structure form is the verb-tense form: the presentation of truth as it appears in the past, the present, and the future. Here is a simple evangelical sermon based upon the experience of the Colossians as recorded in Colossians 1:21-22.

1. Their past: "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works."

2. Their present: "Yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death."

3. Their future: "To present you holy and unblameable and unreproueable in His sight."

Some texts and passages are like nuts. Before they break open you need to crack them, and until you have done so, you cannot tell how many pieces will result; you may have three, four or even seven. In cracking thus a Scripture, see that you do not destroy its content.

Third, another simple structure might be called the question and answer structure. This involves the preacher in raising and answering four or five questions

in a chosen passage of Scripture. Take for example the words of Christ to Nicodemus: “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5).

What? The new birth.

How? By water and the Spirit.

Why? Except ... cannot enter the kingdom of God.

When? Now, in time.

The structure of the sermon is only the skeleton; it is necessary to put meat on the bones.

Fourth, the sequence structure. In one respect there should always be a sequence, a steady flow from the beginning to the end of a sermon. Each step should be set out in logical arrangement. Every idea is chosen in such a way that all link together to form a chain. Notice the logical arrangement of 1 Timothy 1:15.

1. This is a faithful saying.
2. Worthy of all acceptance.
3. That Christ Jesus came into the world.
4. To save sinners.
5. Of whom I am chief.
6. That in me first (the chief) Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering.
7. For a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting.

Construction: A few words ought to be said about the overall construction of the sermon.

Said a sermon critic, "I could not make head or tail of what he was saying." Said another critic who overheard him, "I could do without the head and the tail if only there had been some body matter to what he was saying."

These critics give us the three essential parts to the sermon: the head, the introduction; the body, the general discussion; and the tail, the conclusion.

First, The introduction should state the purpose of the sermon and should definitely introduce the subject by either a statement, a quotation from another, a poem, or an illustration. In his introduction the preacher should arrest the interest of his audience.

Second, The body of the sermon is, of course, that which has been prepared according to the structural method adopted.

Third, The conclusion is very important for two salient points belong in this part of the sermon, recapitulation and application. It is always helpful to the memory of the hearers to give a brief resume of all that has been said, and then with force and persuasion apply the truths presented to those for whom they were intended.

The closing remarks could be an appeal; they could be the words of the Scripture upon which the whole sermon rests, or they could be an illustration or a poem.

The Bible --Part 18

The Bible

Part 18

James Gunn

Thy Words were found and I did eat them; and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.

Jeremiah 15:16 Temporary Oral And Written Ministry

Contemporary oral and written ministry is a ministry of the Word of God that is relevant to the times, conditions, and people. It involves an understanding of current conditions, the needs of different persons and congregations, and a knowledge of the methods for the best presentation of high quality ministry, both oral and written.

The Word of God is always contemporary; it is never out of date, but the methods of delivering ministry must be constantly revised in order that they never be out of date, old fashioned. The divine message must never be changed, but the procedure of human communication should always be changed to meet the contemporary needs.

Current Conditions

We read of men of Issachar who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do (1 Chronicles 12:32). These were men of sagacity who could discern contemporary conditions, and direct their fellow citizens in what best should be done. Obviously, the characteristics of one decade are not the same as the characteristics of another. God has ministry for each

different time and condition. We need, therefore, men of wisdom to discern the time, the need and the type of ministry.

God gave special ministry through Noah to the antediluvian people. He gave ministry through Moses to meet the need of Israel before, during and after the Exodus. He gave ministry through Samuel to meet Israel's need in the days of Saul, and ministry through John the Baptist in preparation for the manifestation of Christ. The ministry of Paul and the other apostles was in regard to the founding of the Christian Church. God definitely has a ministry peculiarly for the last days, the prelude to apostasy.

In order to meet the need of conditions present in the world and in the Church, we must be aware of these. This awareness, generally speaking, results from a comparison of biblical knowledge with present happenings. The Apostle Paul wrote for conditions present in his own day (1 Corinthians 7:25-31).

Personal Needs

Some persons are more susceptible to certain varieties of ministry than are others. This is not true only of individuals but also of congregations. In the matter of adequate preaching and teaching, it is necessary to know the people as well as to know the times.

In listing the major gifts in Ephesians 4:11, the Spirit of God links together the appellations pastors and teachers suggesting that these may be combined in one person. These two gifts provide the ability to appraise the need, the pastor; and the ability to meet the need, the teacher. The pastor as he shepherds the sheep diagnosis their

state, and the teacher in his ministry prescribes the cure.

It is difficult, because of the time element, for a visiting brother to properly diagnose the condition of any congregation in order that through ministry he may meet the need. It is, therefore, imperative that there be close collaboration between the elders of the church and the visiting teacher.

There are Bible teachers who object to having subjects assigned for ministry. All should remember that the local elders are in a position to know the spiritual condition of their church better than any visitor, no matter how talented he may be.

It was the report by men from Corinth (Those of the household of Chloe) that prompted Paul to write the First Epistle to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 1:11). It was the report by Titus that resulted in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 7:5-8). Furthermore, it was the report by Timothy that caused Paul to write 1 Thessalonians (1 Thessalonians 3:5-10). First hand knowledge of the spiritual state of a congregation is helpful in the preparation of relevant ministry.

Oral Ministry

In regard to oral ministry, the public preaching and teaching of the Word of God, there are two salient matters that should be discussed, different methods for the delivery of a message and proved practices in the delivery of a message.

Methods of delivery: There are at least four different methods by which a sermon may be delivered to an audience:

First; the reading of a manuscript. There have been some mighty men of God who have won many souls for the Saviour who wrote out and then read their sermons verbatim. These sermons had been prepared in great detail and were then read with force and inflections of the voice. This method requires much study and care, but it results in accuracy of statement and excellency of language. If not used wisely it lacks warmth and zeal.

Second; the reciting of a sermon. This method involves careful preparation of the material, meticulous writing of the sermon and then word perfect memorization of the complete manuscript. This method like that of reading has some disadvantages; it lacks warmth and enthusiasm, and lacks the flexibility necessary to be under the full control of the Holy Spirit at the time of presenting the message.

Third; speaking the message after proper preparation. Of the various methods of sermon delivery, this method apparently has the largest acceptance among preachers. It is used in a number of different forms. As suggested by the name, this method requires careful and prayerful preparation, but it does not require a verbatim writing of the entire sermon. Generally, the sermon is prepared only in outline. The divisions, subdivisions, sections and subsections are all memorized in logical sequence.

One variation of this method is to write out the opening paragraph or two and memorize these. This gives a measure of confidence and helps to get off to a smooth

start. It may be compared to the aeroplane moving down the runway before finally taking off.

Another variation is to write out and memorize the concluding paragraphs in order to assure a forceful yet gracious close to the sermon.

Fourth; speaking extemporaneously. It is good for all public speakers to preach occasionally extemporaneously, but to adopt this as the usual way of presenting a message is not recommended. This method frequently arises from indolence and results in many inaccuracies. When persisted in, it develops into a monotony of treatment and language.

All in all, it appears that speaking with due preparation is to be recommended as the most natural and beneficial method.

Proved practices: These cover a number of important items that every preacher and teacher of the Bible ought to know.

First, the use of notes. Whether or not notes should be used during the delivery of the sermon is still a much debated point. That notes be prepared is highly recommended, and that they be memorized as an outline is also recommended, but their use during delivery must be left to individual requirement.

Some find that to have their notes in their pocket so that they might be consulted if necessary at the last minute gives a feeling of confidence.

If notes are being used during delivery of the sermon, this should be done quietly but not hypocritically. There need be no embarrassment about using notes, as long as this is done without pretence.

Second, the use of humour. Sometimes quiet humour will fasten a point upon the memory, but a word of caution might be appropriate here; when preaching or ministering the Word of God, use humour sparingly lest you stumble a soul and do injury instead of good.

Third, vocalization. The human voice is a remarkable instrument, and to use it effectively is a great achievement. One thing is certain, it cannot be used in a better service than in glorifying its Creator. There are three salient points to be considered in the use of the human voice in preaching: pitch, volume, and penetration. The pitch of the voice is not a fixed quality; it may be raised or lowered some extent according to will. It seems that when we are nervous and excited the pitch of the voice is raised. We need to be careful of this, especially when we are just beginning to speak. It is always best to start to speak slowly in a low voice.

The volume of the voice is readily controlled. It has been suggested that when we begin to speak we keep our eyes upon the eldest person seated at the rear of the auditorium, and carefully watch his facial reactions. From these we can usually make the necessary vocal adjustments. If it is obvious that he has some difficulty in hearing us, then we must raise our voice. Generally there is no need of shouting. It is usually conceded that a conversational type of delivery is by far the most effective.

Fourth, the use of the public address system. The volume of the voice is controlled by such apparatus, therefore any anxiety over the volume of the voice may be dismissed. One or two recommendations should be made as to the use of this kind of equipment. If the

microphone is fixed, the speaker should always stand immediately in front of it; to move too far back or from one side to another impairs the usefulness of the whole system. If a lapel microphone is used, be sure that it is firmly fastened in place, otherwise it may fall and be broken. Never, no never, clap your hands immediately in front of a microphone.

Fifth, penetration. The deep penetration of the human voice calls for some remarks. Without either raising the pitch or increasing the volume, we can make ourselves heard for long distances by careful pronunciation and by a deliberate directing of the voice. It is actually possible to throw the voice toward some person at a distance.

Sixth, posture. When speaking we should stand erect yet relaxed, with our feet about twelve inches apart, and our hands by our sides. We should not lean upon the desk nor grip the edges of it as if we felt like Joab when about to die. He clung to the horns of the altar. Our faces should be held normally; they should be radiant because we are the representatives of the Lord Jesus. Our eyes should be directed toward the audience. We should not drop our heads and speak into our breasts.

“Did you hear our speaker tonight?” A visitor was asked at the close of a gospel meeting. “No,” he replied sarcastically, “I am not his breast bone.”

A well prepared sermon merits proper delivery and we should do all possible to make it acceptable to our audience.

Seventh, gesticulation. Someone has said, “Get ablaze and the world will turn out to see you burning.” In which case you will use gesticulations in your preaching for fire has the habit of throwing its arms about.

Gestures are important in many circumstances. The movements of the face and hands as well as the whole body can add impact to any message. When a father of even a little child frowns and places his forefinger over his lips, the child knows that it should stop talking. When an irritated manager points to the office door without saying a word, his subordinate realizes that his audience with his superior is ended.

A study of the facial expressions and the movements of the hands of the conductor of an orchestra shows the great importance of gestures in public speaking.

There are three or four simple rules governing the use of gestures. A gesture should be suggestive, not imitative. A missionary home on furlough while giving a talk so imitated the ways of the natives among whom he was working that his report became an entertainment in dramatics. The young people laughed heartily but the older ones were annoyed. The result of the meeting was that nothing of the report was remembered, but the dramatics of the missionary formed the topic of many conversations.

Gestures may be used to give emphasis. In that case let the gestures be forceful but quiet; nothing is accomplished by banging the Bible and thumping the desk.

Gestures may be used to avoid monotony; they add visual assistance to the preaching.

Here another word of caution is necessary. Gestures should not be over used. They should be the rhythmic movements of one eager to make himself understood. There is little value in swinging the arms about like a windmill. Such extremes detract from the message and

distract the audience. We need some gracious servants to make a deliberate attack upon all windmill preachers.

The Bible --Part 19

The Bible

Part 19

James Gunn

Thy Words were found and I did eat them; and Thy Word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.

Jeremiah 15:16 Contemporary Oral And Written Ministry
(Continued)

Written Ministry

There are three important phases in regard to written ministry which should be mentioned: the appraising of current Christian literature; the writing of articles, tracts, pamphlets, and books; the preparing of manuscripts for publication.

The appraising of current literature: Literature should not be distributed until it has been appraised.

Furthermore, only literature that will be read should be bought for distribution, for literature is costly. While we cannot force a person to read, we may induce him.

All literature for free distribution should be examined, first, for its content. We should be sure that it is biblical in fact and spiritual in tone. Second, it should be examined in regard to relevancy. What was important and relevant a hundred years ago may not be so now. Stories and illustrations of obvious age and foreign background are not nearly as acceptable as those from modern life and local settings.

Third, written material should be examined for interest. Articles written in the first person are as objectionable as a conversation in which a person speaks much of himself. Such statements as "I think," "I have observed," "I do," etc. separate the reader from the writer. The plural pronoun should be used for it involves the reader. Occasionally, the third person may be used for reader interest may be further aroused by direct address.

Fourth, articles should be examined for readability. Long paragraphs reduce readability as do long sentences and long words. Long, little understood and archaic words greatly reduce the possibility of an article being read. Readability is maintained by the use of current language, sentences of normal length intercepted by short pithy ones, and short complete paragraphs.

Fifth, the printing should be considered. Sloppy printing, small type, cheap paper, all reduce the possibility of even good sound ministry being read.

Producing written ministry: The remarkable advance of the cults, humanly speaking, has been due to their literature. This might also be said about communism. The Christian Church should pay more attention to the distribution within itself and beyond itself of sound biblio-centered teaching. There is need for tracts, pamphlets and books of various types, and here we enter the field of Christian journalism.

We should understand that different types of writing require different forms of structure. For example, the structural form of biography should be more or less as follows: Begin with the present, what bearing the character has on the present; then write of his past, his birth, boyhood, etc.; follow this with his progressive

history, the history that made him what he is; close with some prognosis of his influence in the future. Take another example, a know-how article, as such are called, starts with the idea what. Suppose you would like to write an article on how best to arrange an annual conference; this is the what you are going to write about. Next part of the article corresponds to why. Just why has the writer written about the what. Why arrange an annual conference? They are important because of their contribution to Christian life and testimony, but they are costly. The next part states just how the arrangements are made, a step-by-step description how to carry out the ideas. The next step is when. Should the arrangements be made one or three months in advance of the dates chosen? Finally, you close with an appeal that your suggestions be adopted.

If unexperienced writers would only write as they think and speak instead of attempting to be very learned, their articles would be more acceptable.

A long article repels; it does not attract a reader. An article of 1300 to 1500 words is more likely to be read than one of 2000 words.

Each member of a serial should be complete in itself, although each should be complementary to the others. The chapters of a pamphlet or book should be similar.

Preparing to publish: If you have a message from God to write, if at all possible have it typewritten and double spaced. Use only one side of the paper, and leave on both sides a margin of an inch or an inch and a half in order to provide space for the editor to write in corrections, deletions, etc. Only half of the first page

should be used. The top half should be left blank for the editor; on this he writes the instructions to the printer.

It is well to remember that an editor is not only responsible to correct any mistake he may find in spelling, punctuation or syntax, but also to fit articles into the space available. This may require that an article be shortened. A good editor tries to do this without impairing the content. He may do this by deleting repetitious statements, by removing adjectives and adverbs, and at times poetical parts.

An editor usually gives the best space and the most space to articles he considers of vital importance to his reader audience.

Paul exhorted Timothy: "Preach the Word; be instant (diligent) in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Timothy 4:2).

In ministry we are to be diligent and urgent in the proclamation of God's Word even as heralds of the King. There should be no specific place or season for the preaching of the Word, but there should be definite spirit and clarity, all longsuffering and doctrine.

Alford quotes a saying from Chrysostom, an eminent father of the early Church: "If men continue in the same courses even after our exhortation, not even then must we abstain from counselling them. For fountains flow, even if no one draw from them: and rivers run, though no one drinks. So too the preacher ought, even if no one attend him, to fulfill all his own duty; for our rule, who have taken in hand the ministry of the Word, is laid down by God the lover of men, that his part is not to slacken, nor be silent, whether men hear, or pass by."

May what has been suggested help in the fulfilling of this biblical command.