

UNION SEMINARY REVIEW

A Presbyterian Quarterly

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THE UNION SEMINARY REVIEW

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OCTOBER, 1929.

No. 1.

OLD TESTAMENT CRITICISM.

BY REV. H. S. TURNER, D. D.,

Pastor Bethel Presbyterian Church, Staunton, Va.

Prof. John E. McFadyen, of Glasgow, tells us that the publication of Sir George Adam Smith's *Isaiah* forty years ago marked the dawn of a new epoch in the exposition of prophecy. He has recently brought out a new and revised edition both of his *Isaiah* and *The Book of the Twelve Prophets*. The new editions with his recent book on *Jeremiah* make a uniform series by the author on the Prophets. This series may well be called the crowning work of a long life that is rich and full both in scholarship and deep and abiding religious experience. A comparison of the new edition with the first makes a fruitful and suggestive study of Old Testament criticism during the past forty years. It is not the purpose of this article to argue for or against any critical position that may be set forth, but simply to describe the background of Sir George Adam Smith's first editions, some permanent positions that have been reached among critical scholars during the past forty years and some present day tendencies in Old Testament criticism.

Sir George Adam Smith's first edition of *Isaiah* appeared in 1889, the second volume of *The Book of the Twelve Prophets* appeared in 1898. The background of his first edition is, therefore, the story of the critical position during the last decade of the nineteenth century. For years Old Testament scholars on the continent had been working along scientific lines, but

worship. Really to meet God in Christ, in an hour of true worship, will inevitably mean a more Christlike life.

The true lover knows this, too. To have spent an hour of happiness in the presence of the one he loves, even if the hour be but one in all the week, means that the golden memory of that hour will irradiate the duller days, and bring strength to what were else an hour of weakness. So with the lover of God. If, indeed, that hour on the Lord's Day has brought Him close to the God of Love, then not merely in golden memory but in glowing fact, that living Presence will be with him through the duller week, to make life radiant and strong. Having thus prayed, he finds the answer in a life of growing grace:

"God, who touchest earth with beauty,
Make me lovely, too;
Keep me ever, by Thy Spirit,
Pure, and strong, and true."⁽¹⁾

THE GOSPEL WHICH PAUL PREACHED.

BY DR. J. B. GREEN,
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Seminary, Decatur, Ga.*

(This is the first of a series of studies to be given by Dr. Green to the readers of the Review. They were originally delivered at Montreat, arousing widespread interest. Dr. Green writes: "My major interest is in the second and third of these studies. For in those studies I am in fresher and less familiar fields and on more controverted ground. The object of the series is not merely to present the gospel in its essence, but also and especially to point out the consistency of the Scriptures, the unity and continuity of the gospel contained therein.")

These Bible studies are a part of the program of the educational conference. I have the honor and responsibility of

(1) From Mary S. Edgar. Quoted in Christian Quest Pamphlet, "Youth at Worship".

belonging to the fraternity of educators. And to me has been given the privilege of opening this Book in your presence. The educational process involves the opening of books, the opening of truth to the mind. In the whole course of education there is no more educative act than that of opening this Book, giving the sense and enforcing the lessons.

The first passage I shall attempt to open up is 1 Cor. 15:1-11. Let us, first of all, read it attentively. "Now I make known unto you, brethren, the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye received, wherein also ye stand, by which also ye are saved, if ye hold fast the word which I preached unto you, except ye believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures; and that he appeared to Cephas; then to the twelve; then he appeared to above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain until now, but some are fallen asleep; then he appeared to James; then to all the apostles; and last of all, as to the child untimely born, he appeared unto me also. For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not found vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. Whether then it be I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed."

Now, just what is the apostle writing about? Some would answer, "The resurrection of Christ", and they would not be wholly wrong; yet they would not be entirely right. For the apostle's subject includes more than the resurrection of Christ. He tells us definitely in the opening verse what his subject is: "The gospel which I preached." Paul labored more abundantly in the gospel than any of his contemporaries, and influenced more widely and deeply than any other the preaching of his successors in the ministerial office. It is important to know what he preached. How many know the gospel when

they hear it? How many can tell when a preacher is dispensing the gospel, and when he is dispensing with it, Who can express in a sentence or two the gist of the gospel?

A few years ago a pastor in South Carolina asked his congregation to tell him on a space in the morning bulletin their idea of the gospel. He got a variety of answers. The answers revealed wide divergence of thought. Scarcely any two had the same conception of the gospel. This should not be so, need not be so. For the apostle tells us plainly in this text what was the gospel which he preached. And this is the subject of this first study: "The Gospel which Paul Preached."

I. What was the gospel which Paul preached?

It consisted principally of two parts. The first great element of Paul's preaching was the death of Christ. "For I delivered unto you first of all . . . that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." In the opening chapter of this epistle, at the 17th verse, he says, "Christ sent me to preach the gospel", and adds in verse 23, "we preach Christ crucified". Christ sent me to preach the gospel, we preach Christ crucified: to Paul the two statements were equivalent. Again to the Corinthians he said, "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified". To the Galatians he wrote, "Far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ". "O foolish Galatians," he exclaims, "who did bewitch you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was openly set forth crucified?" Paul's addresses and epistles show how persistently and consistently he preached Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumblingblock and unto Gentiles foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

But there is no gospel in the death of Christ by itself considered. The death of Christ becomes good news only when related to us, articulated with our need. Paul preached that Christ died for our sins. He thus relates Christ's death to sin, our sin. All death in human experience is for sin. Death is penalty for sin, Christ's death is no exception. Christ's death was the penalty not for his sin, but for our sin. As death

is the word which sums up man's whole liability in relation to sin, when Christ undertook man's deliverance from sin he assumed man's responsibility for it and discharged it by dying in his stead. That this is the apostle's meaning is made clear by other statements of his. "Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf." Tremendous words, amazing words. They mean that God treated Christ as if he was loaded, identified with our sins, as, indeed, he was; for God "hath laid on him the iniquity of us all". "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us." Gal. 3:13. Mysterious and awful as the thought is this is one of the key verses of the New Testament. It is the same truth in another form as that just noticed from 2 Corinthians 5:21. The curse of the law is summed up in the word death. In dying the death for sin Christ annulled the curse of the law.

Thus Paul constantly defines Christ's death in relation to our sin and its annulment. "God commendeth his love toward us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Rom. 5:8. "In him we have our redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sin." Eph. 1:7. His death made forgiveness possible. He died for our sin in the sense that he died the death due to us for sin. Because he died we need not die. "Because we thus judge that one died for all, therefore all died"—died in him. 2 Cor. 5:14. This signifies the inclusive character of Christ's death. Because he died the death of all, all died in him.

Here is, indeed, a gospel, the gospel! Good news and glad. Our sin has been dealt with, expiated, satisfied for; our death has been died. No condemnation, therefore, no judgment, no death, for the man in Christ Jesus; instead, there is acquittal, freedom, life! Glad tidings these, gladder there could not be.

This, then, is the first part of Paul's gospel. He magnified and gloried in the ransoming death of Christ. He identified the gospel with the Word or message of the cross, and identified the message of the cross with the gospel. Though the first and fundamental thing in his gospel, yet the crucifixion was

not the dominant note in his preaching. The triumphant note in his preaching was the resurrection of Christ. This is the second great element of his gospel. "For I delivered unto you first of all . . . that Christ died for our sins; and that he was buried (this I pass by without discussion, for the burial has no value except as evidence of the reality of the death); and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures." To Timothy he wrote from the Roman prison, his last epistle of counsel and cheer: "Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, of the seed of David, according to my gospel." Or according to Moffatt, "Never forget Jesus Christ risen from the dead, descended from David—that is my gospel". Paul so emphasized the resurrection that the Athenians thought that Jesus and the resurrection were the names of strange gods which he was setting forth. Acts 17.18.

The second element of Paul's gospel conditioned the value of the first. There could be no efficacy in a dead Christ, no power of deliverance. Life, hope, joy are bound up with the living Christ. Preaching the death of Christ apart from the resurrection is a false and futile gospel. In that case the sacrament of the supper, the central symbol of the church, would be a funeral, not a feast. Dr. Charles Cuthbert Hall, in his book on *The Universal Elements of the Christian Religion*, points out how, in his Corinthian deliverance on the resurrection, the apostle's mind pours itself out in the channel of hypothesis, and portrays the desolation that enfolds the incarnation, the cross, and Christianity alike, if Christ be not risen. As if to exhaust the category of negation the apostle traces the fivefold catastrophe of an incarnation consummated in a death uncrowned by a resurrection. 1. Vanity of preaching: "if Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain." 2. Emptiness of belief: "your faith also is vain." 3. Falseness of testimony: "yea, and we are found false witnesses of God." 4. "Failure of redemption: "ye are yet in your sins." 5. Collapse of hope: "if we have only hoped in Christ in this life, we are of all men most pitiable." "But now hath Christ been raised from the dead!" The resurrection crowned the

death, converting it from apparent defeat into decisive victory. It was the resurrection that changed the grave from a blind alley into a thoroughfare—that brought life and immortality to light, into the light.

That Christ had been raised Paul had evidence. The evidence was sufficient to satisfy him, and he was not easily satisfied. To the Roman Christians and also to Timothy he said, "I am persuaded". When Paul first appears in history he was a man persuaded. His convictions were positive and powerful, determining his conduct. He lived in all good conscience even in those early days. He thought that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus Christ. What he thought he ought to do, he did. But his persuasions then were the exact opposites of his persuasions now. Paul is not the man to change his mind quickly and lightly, not the man to accept a new position or proposition without reasons sufficient and satisfying. Paul the scholar, the thinker, the apostle and martyr—Paul the brilliant, the magnificent, was sure beyond the shadow of a doubt that Jesus had been raised from the dead.

His faith rested on evidence, the evidence of testimony. The testimony was threefold. 1. The testimony of the Scriptures. 1 Cor. 15:4. With this we hope to deal in a future lecture. 2. The testimony of eye-witnesses. The apostle does not adduce all the witnesses, only the more important. He mentions Peter, and James, and the twelve, and above five hundred brethren, and all the apostles. He names the apostolic group twice, thus indicating that the risen Saviour appeared to them again and again.

It thus appears that the fact of the resurrection is amply attested. The testimony was not single, but manifold; not individual only, but conjunct and collective. We have the witness of the individual, of the group, of the mass, each and all competent and credible, and most of them alive at the time of Paul's writing. If events can be established by testimony, then this event should be regarded as established. If above five hundred persons, including such men as the authors and martyrs

of the New Testament, can be deceived, then any number and type of men can be deceived; and proof of events by testimony is impossible.

The third evidence of the resurrection of Christ is the testimony of experience, Paul's own and that of others. He himself had seen the Lord, the same face and form which the others had seen. He had heard his voice, and received his instructions and commands. The experience was real and powerful to the point of reversing and transforming his life. The grace of God manifested in revealing his Son to him and in him made him what he was. Not only Paul, but Peter and the rest of the apostles were made what they were by the fact and power of the resurrection. They were changed from cowards and weaklings into conquering heroes. Instead of explaining the gospel of the resurrection by the first disciples, their fancies, hallucinations, etc.; the first disciples, their visions, courage and achieving lives, must be explained by the resurrection—its reality and power.

Paul's gospel, then, consisted primarily and principally in the proclamation of two grand facts *and their interpretation*. The facts are, first, Christ crucified; second, Christ risen. The facts interpreted: first, Christ died for our sins, was delivered up for our offenses; second, Christ was raised for our justification. This is Paul's gospel reduced to its lowest terms.

II. Where did Paul get his gospel?

Not from himself, he assures us. Not from men, he insists. He received it, indeed. From whom? Jesus Christ. Paul's gospel was not an invention, or a speculation, or a discovery; but a disclosure, a revelation—something given and received. His was a supernatural gospel, supernaturally provided, conveyed and received.

Are we to understand Paul as meaning that he received the *facts* of the gospel by revelation from Christ? Did Paul assert entire independence of human sources of information? No, not altogether; the facts about Christ's life and ministry he knew from others before he met Jesus outside the gates of Damascus. But the bare facts about Christ do not constitute the gospel:

they are only the raw materials of the gospel. The story of Jesus of Nazareth becomes the gospel only when rightly interpreted and understood. There were two major facts about Christ which Paul learned from Christ, namely, the fact of his supernatural origin and the fact of his resurrection. These facts illustrated, vitalized and interpreted all the rest. These facts furnished Paul with the key to that marvellous One whom he had misunderstood and blasphemed. So it was literally true that Paul received directly from Christ the meaning and message of Bethlehem, Calvary and Olivet.

Yet Paul's gospel was not peculiar to him. He did not preach a different gospel from that of the rest of the apostles. In the eleventh verse of our text he says, "Whether then it be I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed". So while Paul did not get his gospel from Peter and the rest, he might have done so; and if he had done so, he would not have preached a different gospel. To the Galatians he was bold to say "though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema". The apostles, one and all, preached that Christ died for our sins and rose again. To preach the death of Christ apart from our sins, is no gospel. To preach the death of Christ apart from the resurrection, is no gospel. Let men so preach if they will, but let them not call their preaching the gospel of Paul or of Peter or of John or of any other apostle.

That other apostles preached fundamentally the same gospel as Paul can be proved by their addresses and epistles. Peter declares that Christ bore our sins in his own body on the tree, and that by his stripes we are healed. 1 Pet. 2:24. Thus Peter connects Christ's death with our sins, and our salvation with Christ's death, after the manner of Paul. He further assures us that we were redeemed, not with corruptible things . . . but with precious blood as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ: who was forsaken, indeed, before the foundation of the world, but was manifested at the end of the times for our sake, who through him are believers in God, that raised him from the dead, and gave him

glory. 1 Pet. 1:18-21. In these words Peter preached as clearly as Paul ever did, salvation by a redemptive death crowned by a vindictory resurrection.

As to John, he records, of course, with approval, the testimony of the Baptizer: "Behold, the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." How does a lamb take away sin? Sacrificially, the innocent dying for the guilty. In his first epistle John sets forth Jesus Christ as the propitiation for our sins, and declares both in his epistle and in the apocalypse that our sins are cleansed and our robes made white in the blood of the lamb.

So there is no room for doubt that Peter and the rest preached substantially the same gospel as Paul. If they had preached a different gospel, upon them would have fallen the anathema which Paul denounced upon any one who should preach another gospel. How impossible that Paul should have cursed any who were apostles of Christ before him!

III. What Was the Effect of the Gospel Which Paul Preached?

In one word, salvation. "By which also ye are saved." By which Paul also was saved. For it was by the gospel of the grace of God that he was what he was. Paul was a new creature in Christ Jesus because Christ died for his sins, and rose again. Hence Paul declared, "I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation". This Paul knew both from experience and observation. As often as he returned to Antioch or went up to Jerusalem from his missionary journeys, he rehearsed all things that God had done with him, and that he had opened a door of faith, that is, of salvation, unto the Gentiles. He told the Corinthians that they were the credentials of his apostleship: if of his apostleship, then of his gospel. They were samples of its saving power.

No preaching was ever more richly blessed unto salvation than Paul's. His gospel of redemption and reconciliation reached the hearts of men wherever he proclaimed it. For a quarter of a century in the cities of the Roman empire he

testified the gospel of the grace of God, as manifested in the curse-bearing, sin-atonement Christ; and thousands rejoiced in the forgiveness of sins and the life everlasting. And every converted soul, every changed life was a living testimonial to the truth and power of Paul's gospel. Judging it by its fruits we estimate Paul's gospel as the mightiest moral and spiritual dynamic that has ever been released on this planet. What other form of the gospel has been so productive of Christian experience these nineteen hundred years? What other message to mankind has made an equal appeal to and exerted an equal power over the hearts and lives of men? What heroism and devotion unto martyrdom have there been since Christianity began that were not generated by the tremendous appeal of the cross as Paul understood it? It was Paul's view of the transaction at Calvary that clothed the cross with its creative and recreative power.

This gospel of the blood is much spoken against in these days. That it *has been* a savor of life unto life, none can deny. Men blaspheme it now as if it had become a savor of death unto death! If this gospel is false or mistaken now, was it ever true? If never true, how are the blessed results of its preaching to be accounted for? "By their fruits ye shall know them." If the truth of a gospel is to be judged by its power to save—to rescue, restore and rehabilitate—lost and ruined men, then the Pauline gospel must be adjudged the truest gospel that has ever been proclaimed. What credentials of accomplishment, what record of salvation and service has the modern gospel which some propose to substitute for the ancient and accredited gospel of the apostle to the Gentiles?

Is it unkind or amiss to ask if the ancient anathema against those who preach another gospel has been revoked?

IV. On What Conditions does the Salvation Offered in Paul's Gospel Become Available?

The text names two: 1. Faith or believing. Verses 2 and 11. Elsewhere in Paul's epistles and addresses it is made clear that the faith that saves is faith in Jesus Christ the Lord. In our passage the deity of Christ is not named as among the

fundamentals of the gospel which Paul preached. It is taken for granted. To Paul the high efficacy of Christ's work is due to the exalted dignity and worth of Christ Himself. Back of all his performances is the person of the Redeemer. The cross has saving power because on it the Lord of glory died; and then rose and ascended, leading captivity captive, and giving gifts unto men. 2. The second condition of receiving the benefits of Paul's gospel is firmness, steadfastness. Verse 2 and elsewhere in the apostle's writings. Having faith and holding fast—these the conditions of receiving and keeping the blessings of the gospel. Paul might have required more, he could scarcely have required less; thus emphasizing the graciousness of salvation.

Now, let me sum up and conclude. This passage in First Corinthians preaches the primacy of the cross in Christian religion and in Christian experience. The gospel and experience of Paul take as their centre the death and resurrection of Christ. In verses three and four we are "at the centre of gravity in Paul's writings". Is this the centre of gravity also in our thought and experience? Let us not forget that the centre of Paul's gospel is the centre also of the gospel of Peter and the rest. Those who preach another gospel are not in the succession of apostles. Are those who believe another gospel in the succession of saints?

This is the gospel which Paul says is the power of God unto salvation, and history confirms the testimony. No other gospel has had or can have a tith of the power of the Pauline gospel. The cross as Paul read it inspires the utmost gratitude and imposes the utmost constraint. If it is our death that Christ died on the cross, there is in the cross the constraint of an infinite love. He who has done so tremendous a thing as to take to himself our death has established an infinite claim upon our life. We so understand the cross. Have we recognized and responded to its claim? Have we felt its constraint? Have we who name the name of the Crucified One been living to Him who died for us and rose again? Is it not time he was seeing in our life the fruit of his dying our death? Shall

we not let him see, help him see, of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied? Let us repent anew, believe again, and take afresh the cup of his salvation.

RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS AMONG MEN.

THIRD ARTICLE.

BY WILLIAM F. WEIR, D. D.,

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Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.*

Religious movements among men are normal. They exist in the very nature of things. Men associate together in movements or organizations in order to enjoy and promote their common interests. They do it outside of the Church on a large scale. It is to be expected that they will do it in the sphere of Religion and the Church, where their biggest interests are. These men's movements within the Church have been slowest in development, but have become highly efficient, as have religious movements among women and young people.

We have been experimenting with a variety of these men's movements over a period of years. It is reasonable to assume that we have learned a good deal from this experience. It is interesting and profitable to discover their origin and development and contribution to the work of the Church. Some of them have been short-lived and some seem to be permanent. The Protestant Church is giving thorough consideration to the whole great subject of Men and Religion and encouraging progress is being made. No subject is more laden with promise. It is of first importance to command the minds and means of men for the work of the Church. When men release in their churches their abilities which are so powerful in other institutions a wonderful new day will have come for the Church.