

UNION SEMINARY REVIEW

A Presbyterian Quarterly

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THE UNION SEMINARY REVIEW

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ORGANIC UNION AMONG PRESBYTERIANS.

BY REV. JAMES I. VANCE, D. D., LL. D.,
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“Do not hurry, we have no time to lose,” a great surgeon said to his assistant as he was starting to perform a major operation.

Two things are vastly important in approaching the consideration of organic union among Presbyterians. They are prayer and patience. Two classes of people are not disposed to give either. They are those who have made up their minds not to have union under any conditions, and those who have made up their minds to have it at any price. To pray and to wait with a closed mind is to find ourselves where we were.

If anything deserves earnest prayer in connection with the interests of the church, the consideration of organic union would seem to deserve it. But there can be no prayer that does not first say to God: “Thy will be done.” Some have been praying for light on this subject. How much longer is the waiting attitude to be maintained? Organic union was an acute question, as I well remember, when Dr. A. W. Pitzer, of Washington City, some forty years ago published his series of articles in the church papers advocating union, and brought down upon his head the lasting condemnation of some of the brethren. They said he was in advance of the times.

How much longer are we to wait for the times to catch up? Certainly until union, if it comes at all, shall come as a love

ber that he must learn to distinguish between his opinions and his convictions, that differences of opinion will remain forever in the best of churches, that some problems must remain always unanswered, that life is too short to learn everything. Finally, he needs to keep his heart close to the deep reality of religion as it is in Christ, remembering that His kingdom is one of truth, knowing how many difficulties fade into insignificance when on missions of love for Him, realizing that one can afford to say of many questions, "I do not know," if one can also say, "I know whom I have believed."

WHERE DID JESUS GET THE GOSPEL WHICH HE PREACHED?

BY REV. J. B. GREEN, D. D.,

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Seminary, Decatur, Ga.*

My first article was a study of the gospel which Paul preached. Paul tells us not only what his gospel was, but also where he got it. He says that he received it, and intimates that he received it from Christ. To vindicate the claim of Paul I presented in my second article the gospel which Jesus preached, showing that the elements which were central in Paul's gospel were central also in the gospel of Jesus. In this third article I wish to raise and undertake to answer this question, Where did Jesus get the gospel which he preached and passed on to Paul?

Did He originate it? He made no such claim, nor was such claim made for Him; but the contrary. Mark opens his narrative with these words, The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He refers, of course, to the ministry of John the Baptist. But the preaching of the Baptizer was not the first beginning of the gospel. In Gal. 3:8 Paul tells us that the gospel was preached beforehand unto Abraham. So the

beginning of the gospel antedates the ministry of Paul, of Jesus, and of John the Baptist. In the introduction and in the conclusion of his Roman letter Paul declares that the gospel of God concerning His Son was promised afore through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures. In Titus 1:2 the apostle dates the promise of eternal life long ages ago, even before times eternal. The absolute beginning of the gospel was with God in eternity, but the historic beginning is found in the Old Testament. The gospel has a definite meaning in Scripture, and the meaning is essentially the same, whether preached by prophets or apostles or the Son of God Himself. It means the announcement of the plan of salvation through Jesus Christ, and the offer of that salvation to every one that believes.

We have in 1 Cor. 15:1-11 "the accredited representation of the vital emphasis of the gospel in apostolic preaching". The emphasis was on the death and resurrection of Christ. The things emphasized by the apostles were the things emphasized by Jesus, as we have pointed out before. Now can we find in the gospel of the prophets these same points of emphasis anticipated and prepared for? This is the question before us in the present study.

If we accept the testimony of the New Testament we must answer that question in the affirmative. With the testimony of Paul we are already familiar. He preached that Christ died for our sins and rose again—both according to the Scriptures. So while he elsewhere intimates that he received his gospel from Christ, he here refers it to a source beyond Christ. Peter likewise bears witness that these great gospel facts and truths were known to the ancient Scriptures. He says that the Spirit of Christ which was in the prophets testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow them. 1 Pet. 1:11. Peter thus divides the prophecies into two parts: 1. The sufferings of Christ. 2. The glories that should follow them. Jesus recognized these major divisions of the prophetic writings as they relate to Him. To the two disciples on the way to Emmaus He said,

O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Behooved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into His glory? Luke 24:25-26. The sufferings and the glory. To the twelve He said, These are my words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning me. Then opened He their mind, that they might understand the Scriptures; and He said unto them, Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day. Luke 24:44-46. Here we have again the sufferings, but instead of the glory that should follow, we have the equivalent phrase, rising again from the dead. These three, Christ, Paul and Peter, bear witness that all the prophets, and the ancient Scriptures in their threefold division, are occupied with His sufferings and the glory that should follow them.

They refer to no specific passages. Who has not wished that they had given some Scripture references for the guidance of their hearers or readers? Who has not coveted the privilege which was the apostles' of following Jesus as He, beginning at Moses, led them through the Scriptures, showing how they testified of His death and resurrection? God in His wisdom has left us something to do. It has been left to us to search the Scriptures to find the places where the sufferings and the after-glory of the Christ are darkly hinted or plainly showed or declared. This is the task we set for ourselves now.

Take the first great element of the gospel as preached by Jesus and Paul. Surely it is not difficult to find in the Old Testament foreshadowings of the suffering and death of the Redeemer. The earliest passage bearing upon the subject is Gen. 3:15. This passage read in the light of the circumstances that called it forth is rich in redemptive meaning. Yet I cannot recall that I have ever heard this Scripture handled in a Bible study or sermon or address. In it there are three important points which are clear enough to be set down without fear of contradiction:

1. Doom is pronounced and deliverance is promised. Doom to the enemy of man—the serpent, the old serpent, the devil. “Cursed *art* thou”; “Bruised *shalt* thou be”. The enemy is cursed and *shall be* crushed. That, of course, involves the deliverance of man, who has sinned and fallen under an alien power. The death of the enemy means the end of his dominion. The end of the enslaver means the end of the slavery.

2. The agent of the doom and deliverance is to be the seed of the woman; not the seed of the man and the woman, but the seed of the woman. It looks like an intimation of the extraordinary character of the Coming Deliverer. It seems to be a hint of his superhuman origin.

3. The method of the deliverance is by struggle and suffering. “I will put enmity between thee and the woman,” and therefore hostility and conflict; “and between thy seed and her seed.” The serpent is to have a succession, a party animated by a devilish spirit. The woman likewise is to have a succession, a party characterized by a divine spirit. There is to be struggle between the two sufferings, mutual bruising. Bruisings shall come to both sides, but victory to one. The head of the serpent, the vital part, shall be bruised, while only the heel of the Son of the woman shall be bruised. “He, the Seed of the woman, shall bruise thy head, and thou, the seed of the serpent, shall bruise his heel.”

Here is the beginning of the Highway of the Seed, the Prophecy of the Bruisings; here is the Protevangelium, the Gospel in Genesis, the First Gospel—the Gospel overheard and rejoiced in by the very first sinners. The Son of the tempted and conquered shall conquer the tempter and conqueror at the price of wounds and suffering.

This truth that deliverance was to come at the price of suffering and sacrifice to the point of life laid down, sinner man was taught at the gate of Eden. For even before banishing our first parents from the garden, Jehovah took away the fig-leaf garments which they had made for themselves, and clothed them with coats of skins. We have here more than an investiture of the body. This act of God is symbolical of a pro-

vision for the soul in the nakedness of its sin and guilt. This is man's first lesson in the religion of redemption. For in the next chapter animal sacrifice is employed in the worship of Jehovah. That this method of approach was not an invention of man, but an institution of God, the record seems to show. "And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto Jehovah. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And Jehovah had respect unto Abel and to his offspring: but unto Cain and to his offering He had not respect." It has often been discussed whether Cain was rejected because he brought the wrong offering, or because he brought the offering in the wrong spirit. Some have concluded that Cain was rejected solely because of his attitude and spirit. Dr. W. T. Ellis, in one of his articles on Sunday-School lessons, said that a sheaf was as acceptable to Jehovah as a sheep. Strange statement for one of Dr. Ellis' intelligence and knowledge of Scripture and general soundness of belief. When did God ever appoint a sheaf as the basis of a sinner's approach unto Him?

The author of Hebrews says, By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. What does that mean? When is a thing done by or in faith? Is it not when it is done with the warrant of God's Word? The reason for the acceptance of Abel was double: he had the right offering and the right spirit. The reason for the rejection of Cain was also twofold: he had the wrong offering and the wrong spirit. The record says as much. "Jehovah had respect unto Abel *and* to his offering; but unto Cain *and* to his offering he had not respect." From Eden onward to Calvary the appointed means of approach to God, the required condition of divine forgiveness and fellowship, was bloody sacrifice.

The ritual of the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16) teaches the method of the sinner's escape and the method of the sinner's access. The access is through a priest, no access in person. The access is through a priest bearing blood. The blood was sprinkled upon the mercy-seat, Godward, showing that the serv-

ice terminated upon God, removing an offense to his character, an obstacle to his favor and blessing. The way of escape was through a substitute animal. The sins of the offerers were laid on the animal, and the animal, the innocent one, died for men, the guilty ones. Access through a priest, a high priest; escape through a victim substituted and slain for sinners, instead of sinners.

Such was the Jewish scheme of reconciliation. Was it typical of the Christian scheme of reconciliation? Were the Jewish procedures on the Day of Atonement symbolic of the atonement of the Redeemer? Compare Scripture with Scripture and see. Jesus is called a priest, a high priest, the true high priest "who hath been made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life". For it is witnessed of him both in 110th Psalm and in Hebrews, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Mechizedek. Now every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices unto God. Wherefore it is necessary that this high priest also have somewhat to offer. Jesus Christ, high priest after the order of Mechizedek, made only one offering, only one sacrifice, the sacrifice and offering of Himself! Wherefore He is called not only High Priest, but also the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. In Him were combined both priest and victim, both offerer and offering. Thus He was at once the way of escape and the way of access, the way of escape from sin and of access to God: the new and living way dedicated for us through His flesh.

Thus it is abundantly clear that Jesus suffered according to the Scriptures. That His sufferings were for our sins is equally clear. In that He is called the Lamb of God, which taketh away sin, He is intimately connected with the entire Old Testament system of sacrifice. Every lamb on Jewish altar slain had reference to sin and its forgiveness. No such lamb ever died for its own sins, but for the sins of those who shed its blood. That the lambs of sacrifice were types of Christ the Lamb of God no one can deny without denying Scripture. "For our passover also has been slain, even

Christ." He was the end of the long line of passover lambs. And He, like those lambs, suffered and died not for His own sins, but for the sins of others.

The whole vast ritual of Jewish sacrifices finds its interpretation in the fifty-third of Isaiah, the golden passional of the Old Testament. This famous evangelical passage teaches not only that the Messiah must suffer, but why He must suffer. "He was despised, and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." What is the explanation? Here is the answer: "Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows. . . . He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; . . . and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. . . . By oppression and judgment He was taken away; and as for His generation, who among them considered that He was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due? . . . Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise Him . . . and make His soul an offering for sin. . . . He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

These things being so, it is perfectly clear that one part of the gospel of Jesus and Paul was part also of the gospel of the Old Testament. Jesus died for our sins according to the Scriptures. Now what about the second part of the New Testament gospel? Can it also be found in the Old Testament? Was the Messiah to rise from the dead, according to the Scriptures? Jesus so affirms, but no Scripture is given in support of illustration of His statement. Peter and Paul, however, not only make this affirmation, but argue the point on the basis of Scripture. They both appeal to the Sixteenth Psalm as proving that the Scriptures foresaw that the Messiah should rise from the dead. "For thou wilt not leave my soul to sheol; neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption." This was not applicable to David; for David both died, was buried and saw corruption. So it must refer to another, even to great David's Greater Son, who, according to promise, should sit on David's throne forever. David's confidence was vindicated, his expectation was fulfilled in the resurrection of Jesus, "who was born of the seed of David according to

the flesh, who was declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead". Rom. 1:3-4. Of this Peter and all the apostles were witnesses.

Paul quotes also the Second Psalm in proof of the resurrection. It is written in the Second Psalm, "Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. This Scripture, according to the inspired apostle, refers not to the incarnation nor to the eternal generation of the Son by the Father, but to the new beginning of life from the dead. "Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee." "The point of time referred to," says Alexander McLaren, "is not the beginning of personal existence, but of investiture with royalty."

This interpretation the Psalm itself requires. For the situation painted in the Psalm is reproduced in the earthly history of Jesus. "In vs. 1-3 the psalmist records the combination of rulers of the earth against the Messiah, and their efforts to cast off His reign. This was actually done, and the Messiah was rejected. In vs. 4-5 the psalmist shows that their efforts should not succeed; that God would laugh at their designs; that their plans would fail. In vs. 6-7 he shows that the Messiah would be established as King; that this was the fixed decree, that He was begotten for this very thing. All this is represented as subsequent of the raging of the heathen and the counsels of the kings against Him, and must, therefore, refer not to His eternal generation or to His incarnation, but to something succeeding His rejection and death: that is, to His resurrection, and establishment at the right hand of God."

As part of his scriptural argument for the resurrection Paul uses Isa. 55:3. "I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." Now Isaiah was not speaking of the resurrection of the Messiah, and Paul does not say that he was. But Isaiah was speaking of a promise to David, whose fulfilment was conditioned on the Messiah's living forever. For what were the sure mercies of David? They were the kindness of God to David in the promise that he should never lack a son to sit on his throne. This promise was to be fulfilled in the Messiah, who was to be of the seed

of David according to the flesh. But the Messiah, as we have seen, was to be rejected and killed. How then could He receive the sure mercies of David and sit on His throne forever, unless He should rise again from the dead?

This leads me to make an argument or two not employed by the apostles in support of the assertion that Jesus rose from the dead according to the Scriptures. The resurrection of the Messiah is implied in all the glorious things which are spoken of His kingdom. Peter says that the prophets testified the sufferings of the Christ and the glories that should follow them. But how should there be any glories to follow, if the Messiah should die, and remain under the power of death? Shame, not glory, would be the portion of a Messiah whose adventure should end in defeat and death uncrowned by a resurrection. "He was despised and rejected of men." "He was cut off out of the land of the living." "He poured out His soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors." How, then, could it be written of Him that the government should be upon His shoulder; and of the increase of His government, and of peace there should be no end? If He is to uphold His government with justice and with righteousness, if His kingdom is to be an everlasting kingdom, and rule over all; then He must be not the victim but the vanquisher of death and all His foes.

This is the first of the two arguments for the resurrection of the Messiah which I would add to those of the apostles: That Messiah should conquer death and the grave is a grand implicate of the prophetic testimony to the glories that should follow the sufferings of Messiah.

The second of these arguments is an implicate of the Old Testament doctrine of resurrection in general. That man is immortal, that man has a future, the whole man, soul and body, the prophets were permitted to see. It is not the will of God that any part of the righteous should be left under the power of death. Even the body, though humbled to the dust for a season, is destined to triumph over the grave and be exalted to honor and glory. The immortality even of man's physical

being is strikingly intimated in the translations of Enoch and Elijah.

As one has pointed out, the ultimate grounds on which the prophetic doctrine of the resurrection rests are, first, the knowledge of the living God, who has power even over death and the regions of the dead. "Jehovah killeth and maketh alive: He bringeth down to sheol, and bringeth up." Deut. 32:39; Ps. 2:6. It rests, secondly, on the great worth and importance of human personality, which is called to communion with the living God. Knowing the power of God, Isaiah exclaims, Thy dead shall live; our dead bodies shall arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast forth the dead. Isa. 26:10. Do you say that is only a vivid figure of the revival and return to power of a people virtually dead civilly and nationally? Granted. "But how could the prophet draw a figure from what was unknown to his readers? As Isaiah could not talk about a resurrection if he had never known the idea and the words to express it, so he could not expect to be understood unless his readers were also familiar with it." "As touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is the God, not of the dead, but of the living." Matt. 22:31-32. So it cannot be denied that the power and purpose of God to raise the dead were known to the ancient Scriptures.

Now the point I am making is, that the resurrection of the redeemed presupposes the resurrection of the Redeemer, who dies to effect redemption. Surely it belonged to Him who was to procure the resurrection of a lost race, to exemplify and illustrate the resurrection in His own case. He who became dead in order to ransom and raise others from the power of the grave must Himself first rise up and live again in deathless life, ere He can become the resurrection and the life to others. By the sign of Jonah the prophet it was intimated that after three days in the darkness of the earth, He should

break the bands of death and come forth, bringing life and immortality to light.

So I say that one of the grand implicates of the ancient Scriptures, one of the grand truths that lie capsule, enfolded in the Law, Prophets, and Psalm, is the glorious truth that the Redeemer of men should rise from His redemptive death and lead a mighty exodus of ransomed souls into light and liberty.

We are now ready to conclude this series. In our studies we have gone through the Scriptures. Starting with the Epistles, we moved backward into the Gospels, and thence into the Old Testament, travelling up stream to the source. We have found that the gospel of the Epistles is fundamentally the same as that of the four Gospels, and the gospel of the gospel records is essentially the same as that of the ancient Scriptures. The message of the Apostles is the unfoldment and development of the fundamental realities of the Law and the Prophets. Is this equivalent to a denial of originality in Jesus? Not at all. Jesus' teaching was original in its authority; in its manner and method; in much of its matter; in its illustration and enforcement. Hence its unique sufficiency and efficacy. The gospel has not only a centre, but a vast circumference. The centre of the gospel has never changed. It has been essentially the same from the beginning, though it has been more and more clearly and fully revealed.

Not a few today are in profound disagreement with these findings. A writer in the *Atlantic Monthly* on "The Mind of the Master" expresses his mind thus: "That Christ offered a bloody sacrifice of Himself; that He paid a price; that sinners are lost eternally unless washed in the blood of Jesus; and that Christ is pre-eminently the Saviour through His own blood—this is the key message of Protestantism, as it is the basis of Catholic Sacraments. Yet absolutely nothing of all this appears upon the lips of the historical Jesus. It is a *direct* (italics mine) development of Old Testament teaching and not of His. The historical Jesus calls Himself a Light to reveal God; a Shepherd to lead a flock from an old pasture

to a new one; Bread for the soul's hunger; Water for the soul's thirst; Leaven to ferment the world's sodden life; Salt to keep life wholesome; the Physician of men's diseases; the Vine, the Door, the Strong Man, the Bridegroom—but He never calls Himself the World's Victim or the World's Priest."

This writer is true in what he affirms in this passage, and false in what he denies; except in one particular. He finds in the Master a different mind from that of the Old Testament and from that of the New, especially the Epistles. He says the teaching of Paul and of the church is a *direct* development of Old Testament teaching. This is his false statement. The gospel of Paul and of the church is a development of Old Testament teaching, but not *direct*; it is a mediated development, an indirect development *through* Christ.

We find one mind in the Bible in all its structural divisions. It possesses a grand architectonic unity; it is a harmonious temple of truth. The apostles built on Christ; Christ built on the Law and the Prophets; and the Law and the Prophets have their foundation in God. On what are we building? Other foundations can no man lay than that which is laid. Let each man take heed how he builds on that foundation. To ourselves and to those of the modern mind I would say, Repent, and believe in the gospel!

THE CHRISTIAN APPREHENSION OF GOD.*

BY REV. LEROY GRESHAM, D. D.,
Pastor Presbyterian Church, Salem, Va.

The publication of a book by Dr. Mackintosh is always an event. It is a theological and religious event of the first importance: for it comes not only as the utterance of a great scholar and of what may be justly ranked as the outstanding

*The Christian Apprehension of God. The James Sprunt Lectures for 1928. By H. R. Mackintosh, D. Phil., D. D., New College, Edinburgh. Harper & Bros. 230 pages. \$2.50.