

CANADIAN SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL STUDIES

BULLETIN

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I. Summary of the Minutes of the Ninth Annual Meeting

The Ninth Annual Meeting of the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies was held in Emmanuel College, Toronto, on May 12 and 13, 1941. About twenty-six members were in attendance at the opening session on the evening of May 12. The chief feature of this evening meeting was Professor J.H.Michael's presidential address, his subject being "Some Memories of Two Great Biblical Scholars".

The second session of the Society was held on the morning of May 13, the time being largely spent in the reading and discussion of the six papers noted below. The meeting concluded at noon with a luncheon at Burwash Hall, Victoria College.

The following persons were nominated and elected to membership in the Society:

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|------------------------|---------------------|
| Principal R.Armitage   | Mrs Hutchinson      |
| Chancellor W.T.Brown   | Rev. G.Luxton       |
| Rev. D.A.Burns         | Rev. G.P.McLeod     |
| Rev. T.Davies          | Principal J.McNicol |
| Professor C.R.Feilding | Rev. J.B.Rhodes     |
| Rev. J.S.Glenn         | Mr B.Wood           |

The following executive was elected for the year 1941-42:

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|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| Honorary president  | Sir Robert Falconer, K.C.M.G. |
| President           | Professor F.Beare             |
| Vice-president      | Professor N.H.Parker          |
| Secretary-treasurer | Professor W.S.McCullough      |
|                     | Rev. C.Currie                 |
| Without portfolio   | Professor F.D.Coggan          |
|                     | Professor F.V.Winnett         |

Items of interest from the report of the secretary-treasurer:

The treasury has a credit balance of \$12.15.  
The Society has a membership of 74, of which number 45 paid their fees for the last year (May 1940 to May 1941).

## II. Synopses of papers read before the Society

- A. Synopsis of Rabbi M. Eisendrath's presidential address delivered before the opening session of the eighth annual meeting of the Society held in Emmanuel College, Toronto, May 6, 1940.

### Maurice N. Eisendrath: THE BIBLICAL BASIS OF DEMOCRACY'S PRESENT STRUGGLE

While some of the causes of Naziism and its present threat to civilization lie in the realm of bitter and frenzied industrial and commercial rivalry between the nations, fundamentally this present struggle is a war of spiritual principles, a clash of ideas, the beginnings of which were first adumbrated in the Scriptures. For it is only after the totalitarian state has eradicated those ideas and ideals that are associated with the Judeo-Christian interpretation of life that it can attain its final triumph.

The term democracy is, of course, absent from the Bible. Indeed, democracy, as we know it to-day, is a comparatively modern development in man's political history. Nevertheless the democratic way of life is based upon certain axioms, and these are to be traced ultimately, not to the Greeks or the Romans, or even the French encyclopedists, but to the Holy Scriptures of Israel.

Professor Charles E. Merriam (in a recent book The New Democracy and the New Despotism) has named five assumptions of present-day democracy; these assumptions are indicated below in italics. The comments which follow each assumption are intended to suggest how closely this democratic society is associated with the teaching of the Hebrew Scriptures.

1. The essential dignity of man. Whether the first chapter of Genesis was written early or late is not germane to our particular point, but what is of great moment is the fact that the redactors of the Bible placed at the very beginning of that work the sublime conviction that man was created in the image of God, with the breath of His being breathed into his very nostrils. Not one particular race of men alone, nor one family or people only is designated as the divine creation, but Adam, the generic term meaning the whole of human kind. The later rabbis claimed that this term was used for the specific purpose of making Israel ever aware that all men were made of identical stuff, and that none might boast that he was better than his fellows. Here, then, stands the biblical rebuke to every manner of exclusive tribalism or narrow nationalism which is the antithesis of the democratic spirit.

2. Confidence in a constant drive toward the perfectibility of mankind. This second assumption of democracy was also shared by many of the biblical writers, and can be illustrated at random by a host of references from the prophetic literature. There is in the prophets no Fall of Man, and no degeneration of the human species, no decline of civilization, but only a continuous, though laborious, plodding onward and upward toward the best which is yet to be. God's plan, according to the spirit which composed the Scriptures, was not one of continuously straightening things out, but of continually pushing forward toward ever better ends.

3. The assumption that the gains of commonwealths are essentially mass gains and should be diffused (in an equitable manner) throughout the community. This means, in a word, economic righteousness and social justice, and on these points the teaching of the Scriptures is well known. As Dr. Salo Baron puts it (Religious and Social History of the Jews), "From Abraham's query 'Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?' through Moses and Job, the emphasis of the Hebrew spirit has been upon justice. . . . Deep in Israel's soul there appears to have been burned the memories of clan owned property which made them the arch opponents of private ownership and disdainful of the individual's interest in personal economic gain per se." Similarly, C.H. Kent said, "The Hebrews began their national life with a well developed social consciousness, with a thoroughly democratic conception of government, and an almost socialistic conception of property." So the pages of the prophets resound with vehement fulminations against oppression and injustice, and into the very law of Israel were written those restrictive measures which were designed to prevent the permanent perpetuation of poverty, and to establish, in so far as was possible, an egalitarian society.

4. The desirability of popular decision on basic questions of social direction and policy. In the days before the entrance into Canaan, the Hebrews were organized in a rude kind of democracy (akin to that of modern Arab bedouin), and the merits of this social system were never forgotten after the conquest of Palestine. The Book of Samuel (I Sam. 12:17-19) records the view that some regarded the demand for a king as an act of rebellion against God; the evils of an oriental despotism are fully appreciated (I Sam. 8:11-17), and in the book of Deuteronomy (17:14-20) an attempt is made to curb such evils in Israel. Israel's sovereign was made subject to the Lord's laws, and the royal conduct was open to prophetic criticism. This fact, along with the existence of the elders as defenders of the ancient rights and liberties of the people, saved the ancient Hebrews from what we to-day should call the evils of dictatorship. When, therefore, as a result of the Protestant Reformation, western Europe came to a fresh knowledge of the Old Testament, Israel's political experience exercised an

influence on European life, especially in England, that can hardly be exaggerated. The English Puritans are a good example of how the Scriptures strengthened the hands of those who were zealous for the liberties of the people.

5. Confidence in the possibility of conscious social change accomplished through the process of consent rather than by the methods of violence. In this final assumption of democracy it was the Bible which, as C.F.Kent puts it, "first conceived the idea of a world commonwealth which would comprise all the races of man, and of a loyalty to a common God, so broad and all-embracing, that it would bring together into one great brotherhood every people and nation." It was the Bible that first painted the picture of the day when the nations would submit their disputes to the divine tribunal, and that first laid the foundation of the faith that social change, in the international sphere, even as in the civil, would take place "not by might, nor by power, but by the spirit".

More vital and pressing than ever before must be the labour of any Society dedicated to Biblical study, for in the face of this present crucial struggle between Democracy and Dictatorship, between the Bible and Mein Kampf, it is indispensable that we understand the basic derivation of the democratic way of life, its ultimate grounds and undeniable sanctions as laid down centuries ago in our sacred Scriptures. Then will we learn to value democracy anew, not merely for its material blessings and political efficacy, but for its spiritual and moral values. Then will we, who have taken democracy too much for granted, rededicate ourselves to its preservation and lay upon its altar all the sacrifices necessary to vouchsafe its survival and ever-widening influence in the conduct of human affairs.

#### B. Synopses of papers read at the 1941 meeting

##### 1. The Presidential address

The subject of Professor J.H.Michael's presidential address was "Some Memories of Two Great Biblical Scholars". The men in question were Professors J.H.Moulton and G.G. Findlay, and Mr Michael's reminiscences of them were both humorous and informative. It is only because of its author's desire that this address does not appear in the Bulletin.

#### 2. Rev. C.Oke: THE PARABLES OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN AND THE PRODIGAL SON

Two suggestions were made. The first was that Luke 10:29, with its reference to neighbourliness, was a rather carelessly prepared editorial introduction for the Parable of the Outsider (Parable of the Good Samaritan). The latter, following directly after 10:28, enforces the same duty as that verse, viz., the necessity of translating religious profession or interest into concrete action.

The second suggestion was that two verses in Luke 15, viz., verses 7 and 10, with their stress upon repentance or returning rather than upon being recovered, do not fit their context. They are, as it were, artificial links, intended to give unity to the whole chapter. The verses belong, in sentiment, to the parable of the Repentant and the Dutiful Sons in the last half of the chapter; they draw the conclusion that while the faithful receives confidence and appreciation, the penitent awakens joy.

#### 3. Professor R.B.Y.Scott: THE OBLIQUE REFERENCE TO JERUSALEM IN GENESIS 22

This paper made two proposals. First, that the name Moriah in verse 2 is a feminine participle corresponding to the masculine Moreh three times used as a place-name, and is not a corruption here but the origin of the association of the name Moriah with the temple mount. Second, that in verse 14 the place-name, Yahweh yir'eh (i.e. Yahweh sees) should read Yahweh yireh (i.e. Yahweh sets, founds). Turned into a passive place-name this would be Yeruiah (cf. Yeruel in II Chr. 20:16); this in turn suggests Yerushalem, since the assimilation of Shalem (Shelem) to Yahweh is witnessed to by the name Shelemiah (Neh. 3:30; Jer. 36:14, etc.).

#### 4. Professor F.Beare: PAPYRUS NUMBER TWELVE OF THE BEATTY COLLECTION

The publication of this codex by Professor Campbell Bonner (Studies and Documents, ed. by K.Lake and S.Lake, vol.8, 1938, and Vol.12, 1940) completes the issue of the Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri. This manuscript consists of fourteen leaves and three fragments, and contains three separate works. (1) The last chapter of Enoch in Greek, hitherto known only in an Ethiopic translation. The fifth and final division of the book here appears alone, under the title Epistolè Enoch, and this suggests that in Greek our book of Enoch circulated in the form of five separate books--an Enochian library. This find is of considerable importance for New Testament studies, for as Professor Burkitt said, "It is when you study Matthew, Mark and Luke against the background of the Book of Enoch that you see them in their true perspective."

(2) A homily on the Passion, by Melito of Sardis, the only sizable writing of this second-century Father extant.

(3) Prophetic fragments, tentatively identified as from an apocryphal book of Ezekiel. Fragment 1 includes the passages cited in Clem. Alex. Paed. 1:84:2-4--the language being akin to Ezekiel 34.

5. Professor F.W.Dillistone: BAPTISM IN THE NEW TESTAMENT: FOUR STRANDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

No one meaning is to be found attached to the rite of baptism in the New Testament, but four main strands of significance can be discerned corresponding to the particular way in which the Church itself was regarded at successive stages of its history.

1. The Church was regarded as the new Israel, the Messianic community of which Jesus is the Lord. Baptism was the means of entrance into this community--it was baptism into the name of Jesus. Cf. Acts 2-4, I Corinthians 10.

2. The Church as it moved out into the Gentile world came to be regarded as a militant community, pledged to the conflict with the powers of sin and darkness and death. So baptism tends to signify a declaration of war upon, a complete renunciation of all the forces opposed to God and His Christ: it marks an identification with Christ in the new holy life of the Spirit. Cf. Romans 6, Colossians 2: 11-15, I Peter 3:18-22.

3. The years pass and the Church becomes less the Jewish Messianic community, more the religious and cultural group holding its own peculiar status amongst other such groups which surround it. In this milieu, the fundamental religious requirement is purity and it naturally comes about that the emphasis changes and baptism is regarded as a means of purification, a necessary preliminary to any access to God himself. Cf. Ephesians 3:26, Hebrews 10:21-22.

4. The Church is not so much now the Messianic community or even the cult-group--it is quite simply the home of the faithful. And baptism signified the birth into a new family, the household of God. Cf. John 3, Titus 3:5.

So for a strong and satisfying doctrine of baptism it would seem to be necessary to emphasize these four strands--baptism as a sign and seal of allegiance, baptism as a death to sin and resurrection to righteousness and glory, baptism as a purification from all that would defile, and baptism as a new birth into the eternal family of the sons of God.

6. Rev. J.Smart: THE DEATH AND REBIRTH OF OLD TESTAMENT THEOLOGY

Only a synopsis of this paper was read before the Society. Its full text is to appear shortly in the Journal of Religion, published by the University of Chicago Press.

7. Professor T.C.Young: A STUDY IN THE GENETICS OF PROPHETIC ECSTASY

Ecstatic phenomena, related to primitive culture, are probably best illustrated in Shamanism, where they are linked with healing, divination and prophesying. Fundamentally Shamanism is communion with the world of spirits, good and bad; with only the Shaman able to deal with the one Great Spirit controlling all others. Included among these spirits are always to be found the souls of the dead. These are contacted by the Shaman, or medium, on behalf of relatives, in order to secure varied information; the contact is generally effected in a trance or ecstatic state, often artificially induced. Media generally die young, their successors being determined by the transference of the spirit-power. Such consultation of the dead is witnessed among the Ural-Altai peoples, the Battaks of Sumatra, in Uganda, Nigeria, and a number of other places in Africa. Recurrent motifs connected with ecstasy are noticeable: music, dancing, drinking liquor or smoking a drug, drum-beating, or chanting. Associated with it are to be found dreams, visions, nocturnal auditions, incubation, and the like, all of which are also connected with the Cult of the Dead.

In the Near East many facts point to the Pelasgian, archaic age of the old "Mediterranean" peoples as the originators of ecstasy; and in most instances it seems to be connected with the ancient Cult of the Dead.

The least positive evidence is from Egypt, yet here the facts are tantalizingly suggestive. Necromancy in Babylonia is to be associated "with the earliest period of Babylonian religion" (Jastrow). The Dravidians of India--to go afield a bit--are to be linked with the "Mediterranean" peoples of the Near East, and among them, even to the present, are to be found ecstatic phenomena connected with Shamanism and the Cult of the Dead. In Iran the Magians, who continued the aboriginal traditions of "Caucasian" peoples prior to both "Semetic" and "Aryan" (linguistic, not racial designations), had a cult of the dead and of ancestors, still strong in that area in the time of Tabari (838-923 A.D.). Moreover, there are some usual concomitants, such as the sacred drink Haoma, linking it--and its resultant ecstasy?--with these cults. As for Asia Minor and the Aegean, ecstatic phenomena have since the work of Rhode and Miss Harrison been connected with the chthonic cults inherited from the archaic age.

There are some who would trace ecstasy from Thrace to Anatolia, hence to Palestine; or from Anatolia to Thrace and Palestine. But its origins would not seem to be so simple. It is likely that in both cultures the phenomena issued from very ancient beliefs and practices which they had in common, and developed to meet like needs.

This common, ancient and pre-Semitic, pre-Aryan culture of the Mediterranean peoples may well be linked with the megalithic remains, apparently evidencing an exaggerated mortuary cultus. In any case, we know, even apart from these remains, that the Cult of the Dead is to be found in Palestine from the Middle Stone Age on into historical times. Moreover, in Palestine and Syria this cult probably lies closer to the surface of history than in the great neighbouring cultures because of Palestine's early cultural lag. Therefore we are not surprised to find references in early Hebrew literature to prophetic ecstasy connected with this ancient cult of the dead. The examination of these references is not possible within our limitations of time and space.