CANADIAN SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL STUDIES

BULLETIN

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Contents

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I. Proceedings of the Twelfth Annual Meeting of the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies

The twelfth annual meeting of the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies was held concurrently with the sixth annual meeting of the Canadian Section of the Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis, in the Board Room of Trinity College, Toronto, on the evening of December 28, and the morning and afternoon of December 29, 1943.

First Session, Tuesday evening, December 28

The president, Professor N.H.Parker, was in the chair, eighteen members of the Society being present. The meeting was opened with prayer by the Rev.Principal John McNicol. It was agreed that the proceedings of the eleventh annual meeting of the Society, held in May 1943, and as published in the eighth annual Bulletin of the Society (October 1943), be accepted as the reading of the minutes of the last annual meeting.

The death on November 4, 1943, of the Society's honorary president, Sir Robert Falconer, K.C.M.G., was noted with deep sorrow. A Memorial Minute on Sir Robert, kindly prepared by Professor W.R.Taylor, was then adopted by the Society. The secretary was instructed to convey to Lady Falconer the Society's sympathy and its sense of great loss in the passing of Sir Robert.

The report of the secretary-treasurer:

(a) Regrets for absence were presented from: Principal H.A.Kent, Professors MacNeill, Scott, Taylor, and Winnett.

(b) The membership now stands at 69, of which number 44 have paid fees for the current year.

(c) 90 copies of the Eighth Annual Bulletin were published in October, at a cost of $33.98 (27 pages).

(d) The treasury: On May 10, 1943, the Society had a credit balance of $37.92. The present credit balance, as of December 28, is $41.13. The Rev. R. Harris was appointed to audit the treasurer's accounts.

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Nominations to membership. The following were nominated to membership in the Society:

Rabbi H.A.Fischel of St Catherines
Mr Herbert Oldfield of Pilot Mound, Manitoba

Professor W.E.Staples was appointed chairman of a nominating committee to bring in nominations for the executive for the coming year.

Welcome to Trinity College. Provost Cosgrave extended to both societies a warm welcome to Trinity College.

Professor N.H.Parker then delivered his presidential address, the subject of which was, "Teaching the Old Testament to Theological Students." After the discussion which followed, the members retired to the Provost's residence, The Lodge, where, through the kindness of Dr and Mrs Cosgrave, they enjoyed some refreshments.

Second Session, Wednesday morning, December 29

There were twenty-six persons present at this session, including four visitors.

Mr Harris reported that he had found the treasurer's accounts in good order.

Professor Staples brought in the following nominations for the executive for the coming year:

President: Professor S. M. Gilmour
Vice-president: Professor F.W.Dillistone
Secretary-treasurer: Professor W. S. McCullough
Other members of the executive: Professor F. Beare
Rev. M. T. Newby
Professor N.H.Parker

As there were no other nominations, the above were declared elected.

It was announced that the usual arrangements in respect to the Travel Pool would operate again this year, i.e., a contribution of 50¢ was expected from each member in attendance at the annual meeting.

Nominations to membership: The following were nominated to membership in the Society:

Rev. H. Mellow
Rev. C. Sauerbrei

The following papers, which had been planned to form a symposium on the Bible, were then delivered:

Chancellor G.P.Gilmour: Biblical Teaching in an Arts Curriculum
Rev.H.N.Watt: Bible Teaching in the Public Schools
Rev.M.T.Newby: Bible Teaching in the Pulpit
Rev.T.B.McDormand: The Bible and the Church School

At 12.30 o'clock, noon, the meeting adjourned. Twenty members of the two societies then had lunch together in the dining-hall of Trinity College.

Third Session, Wednesday afternoon, December 29

At two o'clock the programme was resumed with the reading of the following papers:

Rabbi H.A.Fischel: Some Remarks on the Rabbinic Background of I Corinthians 12-14
Professor W.E.Staples: "Profit" in Ecclesiastes

There was some discussion as to the best time of year for the Annual Meeting. It was finally decided, on motion of Rev.R.Harris, that the experiment of holding the Annual Meeting during the Christmas season be repeated.

The secretary was instructed to thank the Provost of Trinity College for the use of the College for the Annual Meeting.

The meeting was then adjourned.

The following members of the Society were present at one or more of the above sessions:

Coggan	Hiltz	Meek
Cosgrave	Hutchinson	Mellow
Dillistone	Lang	Michael
Dow	McCracken	Newby
Evans	McCullough	Parker
Fischel	McDormand	Sauerbrei
Gilmour, G.P.	McLennan	Shortt
Gilmour, S.M.	McLeod	Staples
Harris	McNicol	Stewart

II. Papers read before the Society

1. TEACHING THE OLD TESTAMENT TO THEOLOGICAL STUDENTS

Presidential address by
Professor N.H.Parker, McMaster University

Mr Chairman, Gentlemen of the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies. At our last meeting it was decided to place the emphasis of this session upon the practical theme of teaching the Bible. Tomorrow we shall hear papers on Biblical instruction in the public schools, in the church schools, in the pulpit, and in the arts curriculum of the University. For my own subject I have chosen the teaching of Old Testament to Theological students. What I shall say should apply equally well in most respects to the New Testament; but since I propose to draw largely upon personal experience for my remarks I prefer to keep them as close to my own special field as possible. Part of this paper is a critique upon the present-day pulpit, part of it is gentle satire upon the professorate in general and upon myself in particular; part of it is a review of my own experience in the attempt to make an effective teacher of myself; and all of it represents a deliberate effort to start discussions in which the cumulative wisdom of this body may reveal itself both by indicating higher ideals than I have chosen for myself and by suggesting more practical methods of attaining them.

I. Why discuss the status of Old Testament studies at all?

If perchance my major premise is false, then most of what I shall say hereafter is condemned in advance. Aware that my hearers may promptly pass such a judgment upon me, I hasten to raise the issue and be done with it. In brief, I have long been almost obsessed by the unhappy conviction that relatively few ministers of the Gospel in Canada and the United States ever attain to anything like a thorough knowledge of the Bible and that fewer still make intelligent use of it in their preaching and teaching. According to my observation of ministers during the last twenty-five years most of them are pathetically poor preachers and almost none are capable of teaching the Scriptures with point and purpose. I am also haunted by the suspicion that the reason for this unfortunate state of affairs may be found quite as much in their training as in themselves. That is to say, we professors may be largely to blame.

This pessimistic conclusion is based upon evidence from several sources. First, I have occasionally had my own old students confide in me, without complaint against anyone, that their theological studies failed to prepare them for a virile pulpit ministry. These men usually blame themselves

for having been dilatory as students, but they are also apt to mention some particular course as having been especially profitable, thereby casually indicating the kind of training they should have had in greater quantity and condemning the barren weeks spent upon sterile subjects. Second, numerous personal interviews with prominent ministers whom I have not taught have revealed that none of them really possesses a whole Bible. In every case I have found that vast sections of both the Old Testament and the New are as dead and fruitless for them as the mountains on the moon. I shall never forget my astonishment at hearing two brilliant ministers confess simultaneously that they knew nothing whatever about the book of Job except for a few catchy texts like "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him." The reference to this verse prompted me to say, "Then you may as well omit the exceptions, for the text you are quoting is a mistranslation." Third, frequent experience with ministerial conferences and retreats has taught me that no type of lectures on such occasions is so much appreciated as those which provide the hearer with homiletical material--what the men call "preaching values". And several book-sellers have told me that a good volume of sermons or sermon helps is sure of large sales to ministers. Many men preach more than eighty times to the same congregation in the runo of a year, and it takes a freely flowing well to provide so much for drawing; consequently, every minister must be constantly alert for pulpit material. With some this insatiable hunger for the stuff which sermons are made of may denote laziness; with all it is natural and understandable; but with many it denotes either mental and spiritual poverty or the fear of it. Fourth, as a sermon taster, it is my judgment that the preaching I have heard from Protestant pulpits during the past fifteen years is definitely inferior to what we have a right to expect. One seldom hears a really good sermon. Yet, it would be both unfair and inaccurate to explain the situation by ascribing a low average of intelligence to the preachers themselves; indeed I think the average mental capacity of the ministry to be quite high. Nevertheless, they commonly create the impression of having cudgeled their brains for something to say but with little success. The sanction of God is invariably invoked upon what is said, but God Himself has no chance to say anything because the sermons are so seldom drawn from the Bible. Their sermons seldom inform the mind, warm the heart, or bend the will. Like Mark Twain's mule, they have neither pride of ancestry nor hope of offspring. Fifth, according to my observation, the ministry in general has proved itself incapable of coping with elementary Biblical questions such as are raised by the exotic sects--British-Israelism for instance, and the charismatic groups who claim to possess extraordinary spiritual powers like glossalalia, and the gift of healing. It is a rare minister who knows enough Old Testament history to stand up boldly and say to a British-Israelite, "In the

first place there were not ten tribes in the northern Hebrew kingdom; and in the second no more than about ten per cent. of the northern population was ever deported by the Assyrians." Sixth, it is disturbing to see how ill-prepared the incumbent ministry is for teaching the Bible in the public schools, now that we have the opportunity. I fully realize that it is not always the best Bible teacher in a given town or district who receives the appointment--or has it thrust upon him--and that sometimes the most undesirable sort of man seeks and obtains the assignment. What distresses me is the sense of incompetence and fear of failure which causes numerous good men to evade the task. If those men had been trained to teach the Bible to their own congregations they would be equally prepared for teaching it to school children. Seventh, an examination of the curricula of numerous theological colleges convinces me that it is well nigh impossible for a student to complete the ordinary undergraduate course in any of them with reasonable chances of acquiring much Biblical knowledge in the process. Theological education is no longer Bibliocentric on this continent, nor has it been for a number of years. In order to avoid even the appearance of criticizing my colleagues or the sister institutions of my own university I shall cite illustrations from the published curricula of theological colleges and seminaries in the United States. I am not attempting to start either a fight or a reformation; at most I am only endeavouring to induce you to join me in a bit of serious self-criticism and, if needed, self-improvement. The following statistics are typical of what has happened to theological education in the States and provide a horrible example of what may yet happen to us. Naturally I am interested most in Old Testament studies.

College A: - Thirteen courses in Old Testament, exclusive of some in Aramaic. One course has to do with Hebrew inscriptions. One is offered only in the summer, and, as far as I can tell, covers everything offered in the field of wisdom and poetry.

College B: - Eleven courses in Old Testament, apart from some in Aramaic and Syriac. Casual attention to wisdom and poetry.

College C: - Fourteen courses in Old Testament, apart from some in the LXX, Syriac, Coptic, and Akkadian. One course deals with a single book--Daniel.

College D: - Eleven courses in Old Testament, of which four are seminars or graduate courses. The Psalms and Job are relegated to seminars. One course deals with the Hebrew family.

College E: - Ten courses, fairly well distributed, but with relatively slight attention to wisdom and poetry.

College F: - Twenty-one courses exclusive of one in Biblical Aramaic. One is based on the Old Testament text and canon; one on Deuteronomy; one on Daniel; two on the Psalms; one on the social teachings of the Old Testament; one on the great teachings of the Old Testament; and one, a minor, on the Old Testament as material for the preacher. Incidentally, the calendar names five professors in the department of Old Testament.

College G: - Twenty-three courses, of which three are in Hebrew, one in "research"--whatever that is--and quite a number on single books of the Old Testament.

All of these colleges offer what they call a well balanced curriculum with instruction in sociology, church management, and church music, as well as in the older fields of Biblical languages, English Bible, Theology, and Church History. Few give much attention to Hebrew wisdom and poetry or to anything in the post-exilic period of Old Testament history. And all offer a wide choice of electives. This means that only the specialists in Old Testament take as many as six of the courses offered in their respective colleges, while the average man takes two. In the college which offers only ten courses the specialist would at least cover half of his Old Testament, but in those which offer more than twenty even specialization must be merely a matter of sampling the professors. A survey published in 1934 under the title of "The Education of American Ministers" contains tables based upon the analysis of some fifty-eight theological curricula in the United States. Twenty per cent. of the courses offered in those fifty-eight colleges were in English Bible, while 17.7 per cent. were in Biblical Greek and Hebrew. That makes it look as if approximately 38 per cent. of the average American student's work is based upon the Bible. The same figures show that English Bible ranks highest everywhere amongst required courses. But there are two jokers in the figures. In the first place, the Greek and Hebrew courses include those in elementary grammar--which are not Biblical at all; and in the second place, the amount of Bible study undertaken would not be very great if all the required courses were in that field. To say that it outranks other required subjects is to say that it is the largest fraction of a fraction. Professor William Adams Brown, who assisted in making the survey and then published the results, has this significant comment to make:

"As a consequence of the multiplication of courses the elective system has been adopted by a large number of seminaries with the result that the time given to the older studies such as biblical interpretation, church history, and theology has been either curtailed in amount or divided into a number of detailed courses, no one of which covers the subject as a whole. In consequence many students are graduating from our seminaries who, in spite of the time they have given to the study of the Bible and of theology, have only the most superficial mastery of either."

It is at least gratifying to observe that students themselves have no hesitation in naming English Bible as the most profitable of their studies, for 78.2 per cent. of those canvassed by the survey assigned first place in importance to that subject.

Now, it is no matter of the pride and prejudice of a Hebraist, but a demonstrable fact that no man, however clever, can understand his Bible thoroughly without a knowledge of Greek and Hebrew; but that is a counsel of perfection; in the language of the psalmist such knowledge is too wonderful for them; it is high, they cannot attain unto it. Surely, however, it is possible to teach any normal man all that he really ought to know about the English Bible. Personally, I feel that for theological colleges to fail at this point is an injustice to the men themselves and to the churches they are destined to serve. What if a medical college were to send out young doctors with but a smattering of anatomy or pathology? Some subjects cannot be made optional. Education on this continent has elected itself into a state of scatterbrained half-ignorance. Canada has not gone as far as the United States in this respect, but we are guilty enough.

Never before has so much been known about the Bible either in volume or in value by the few who are specialists, but I doubt that less has ever been known about it by the rank and file of church membership. As recently as seventy-five years ago there was no such thing as an accurate map of Palestine, and the history of the ancient East was merely beginning to emerge from the fog of vacuous legend. Now, however, we possess a vast store of information which is both valuable and interesting for the layman--who is sublimely unaware of its existence. The only logical way to reach him is through his pastor; but, have we succeeded in teaching even the pastor? Is it not an indictment against us in the colleges that so little of the new knowledge about the Bible has ever broadened down to the laity? Who, may I ask, has proved that a hortatory oration is more edifying than a good Bible lecture, anyway? Certainly nobody has ever said it was more interesting.

If a man is unable to make use of his Bible in his pulpit and church school, then that is almost certainly the fault of his training. Lacking any desire to do so may be a personal eccentricity; yet, even this may suggest that his theological course failed to open his eyes upon the wealth of the Scriptures and grip his soul with a sense of their power. The question of why he feels no overwhelming sense of responsibility for a Biblical ministry may lead to the door of his teachers. We know that the church of Christ was built upon the Scriptures and those things of which they speak; so do we know that it will flourish only insofar as it continually draws its nourishment from the Scriptures. No substitute for the Bible has ever been found--except by the Roman Catholics. The Bible is demanded even by those who misinterpret it most egregiously. And if there is a more pathetic fraud than the pulpit which abuses the Scriptures it is the one which ignores them. For the professor of theology it must always be a solemn thought that the minister with no awesome reverence for the Word of God may have missed his burning bush experience while in college.

Before leaving this section of my paper I would also like to suggest that the insufficient and ineffectual use of the Scriptures by the clergy has some bearing upon two other problems now vexing the Church, namely, the scarcity of recruits for the ministry and the discouraging reports of church attendance in numerous places. Any profession, any calling or occupation which creates a popular impression of virility and effectiveness is ordinarily assured thereby of attracting sufficient young men to perpetuate itself. Why is the ministry of religion threatened with failure to do so? Does the explanation lie largely in the failure of those in the ministry to recommend their calling by their example? We have made serious attempts to improve the ministers by adding new and practical courses to their training programme. We have made advertising men of them, and philosophers, and psychiatrists, and sociologists; but have we not neglected to make of them the very thing which is first and most urgently demanded by the public, namely, expositors of the Scripture?

Insofar as dwindling congregations are concerned we do well to cease blaming the lure of secular interests. Like the poor, secular interests have always been with us. Men were no more anxious for spiritual light and leadership and consolation in years past than they are now. Let us grant that people demand more of a pulpiteer today than when the level of public education was lower and the rating of a religious service as entertainment was higher; but let us also be honest enough to confess that most of those who drift away from the church now do so for the same old

reason--they have found the services dull and unprofitable. The large and wealthy congregation may maintain a musical programme sufficiently attractive to guarantee good attendance, but the test is seldom applied because such a church usually has an excellent preacher also. The common run of churches depends almost entirely upon the drawing power of the pulpit. Brilliance in the pulpit alone may be no complete assurance of success, yet few men accomplish anything without it. Personal elements, like the now copyrighted ability to win friends and influence people, are little affected by formal discipline, but they play an important part in the minister's success or failure. Nevertheless, he is usually called to a new charge because of his reputation as a preacher, and he will stay there only until he becomes an intolerable bore.

The inevitable question arises immediately. How can we make a silk purse out of a sow's ear? How can we turn the intolerable bore into a spell-binder? The answer is that we may not be able to make any complete transformation at all. Fortunately, however, the congregations to be afflicted with the dull fellows would be delighted to compromise for reasonable improvements. The best we can do for such men is to teach them to preach the Bible. They ordinarily have the will to do that, if only for want of creative imagination enough to "go awhoring" after "issues of the day". Although obliged to talk, they have nothing to say; hence their chronic wool-gathering. They need both content and form, and we should give it to them. They might even become enthusiastic if we helped them to light up the grey drabness of their imagination.

Several years ago I saw an unforgettable cartoon in "Punch". It depicted a little man preaching in a village church. His congregation consisted of one tradesman (sound asleep), one sweet little old lady with an ear trumpet (somewhat bewildered), one bearded old gentleman who might have been a retired professor (obviously interested), and one small girl (busily arranging the loose leaves in a dilapidated hymn book). The preacher was leaning over the pulpit and saying with great animation, "Ah, I know what you are thinking; you are saying to yourselves, 'Now that is downright Sebellianism'." Well, I was thinking to myself, "If that lad could have been steered into the subject of the sacrifice of Isaac he might have accomplished something." I showed the cartoon to a ministerial friend. He simply grunted and said, "A professor of divinity supplying a vacant pulpit."

II. The sins which so easily beset us

I assume that this body would agree without argument that the comprehensive aim and purpose of theological colleges is to train ministers for the denominations which support and control them. Even those divinity schools which are entirely

independent or which form parts of large non-sectarian universities usually espouse the same ideal, only without the denominational emphasis. In our particular case we know, for instance, that the staff of the Orientals Department in University College are loyal churchmen who do not forget the claims of the future upon such of their students as are destined to serve the Church. The purely denominational divinity colleges make little or no attempt to train recruits for the professorate, give a minimum of attention to post-graduate study, and have no interest in the purely academic pursuit of learning for learning's sake alone. Strictly speaking, they are technical and professional training schools.

So much for the matter of aims. The point on which we may expect to differ both in outlook and experience is the reason why we fail--if fail we do--to achieve our aims. By no means all causes of failure can be charged against us as faults. The professor of theology is like the sower in our Lord's parable. Much of his seed falls by the wayside, and girls and parties, and athletics, and plays and operettas, and a whole flock of other "extra-curricular" fowl quickly come and devour it. Some falls upon the stony ground of dull minds, minds inadequately prepared by previous study--without Hebrew, or Greek, or Logic, or History, or even English Composition, alas--minds without imagination coupled with hearts devoid of passion. Conscious of their poverty such students receive the professor's words gladly--and sometimes try to use them the next Sunday as sermonic materials, whether appropriate for that purpose or not. Classroom notes on the date and authorship of the Decalogue have put more than one congregation to sleep. Some seed falls upon good ground, only to be choked by the domestic and financial worries of students who have foolishly got married before graduation, by the cares of student pastorates, and now by the demands of military training. Finally, there is that seed which falls upon good soil to bring forth a hundred-fold. During eighteen years in the classroom I have taught only two classes in which there was nobody at all of whom I could be justly proud. Yet other factors in the equation are as difficult to control as the quality of student timber. Some professors have more work than they can do well; and at best the time is short in which we must endeavour to conduct the student through an extensive course of instruction and discipline. I pass to a survey of the professional pitfalls which it is possible to evade.

1. There is the danger of losing intimate contact with the churches and the working ministry. Theological colleges are wise in recruiting their faculties from the active clergy; but some quondam parsons in the classroom are unlike the proverbial elephant: they soon forget; they remember not that they were once bondservants in the land of Egypt. Life

in the academic world is a sequestered existence. The professor is always in danger of becoming a sort of Saint Simeon Stylites, slowly raising his own little tower and himself with it above the heads of an increasingly indifferent world round about. If he be in theology it is a wholesome thing for him to go in and out amongst the churches as a preacher and to attend ministerial retreats and conferences. We at McMaster are exceedingly fortunate because Baptist churches have a well established custom of keeping us busy on Sundays. Seven of us--including the Chancellor--usually visit more than a hundred different churches in the run of a year. Some are not Baptist churches--which makes the situation all the more desirable. At my own old theological seminary in Kentucky some members of the faculty have always been pastors themselves. It tends to keep them on their toes. Cases have been heard of wherein a church seeking a minister has brazenly chosen a student and rejected a professor. Although temporarily embarrassing to all concerned, such incidents have invariably had a salutary effect upon the professorate.

2. There is the temptation to spend too much time and energy upon literary introduction. Now, literary introduction is quite necessary to a thorough understanding of the Old Testament, but like the young cowbird in the sparrow's nest, this "son of the law" often waxes strong and crowds out "the children of the covenant". As a form of analysis it is congenial to the tutorial mind and liable to monopolize it. Moreover, it has a pernicious habit of hardening into what someone has called "problemitis". Worse yet, it is a field in which fundamentalist factions in all churches have harrassed Biblical scholarship with charges of heresy and modernism; consequently, the professor finds himself working with students who are at best bewildered and at worst either biased or downright truculent about anything smelling of "higher cirticism". What could be more natural than for him to spend much time vindicating Biblical scholarship, straightening out mental kinks, and making sure that his students will not demean themselves by extremist attitudes in their ministry? I have had that experience constantly, but have learned, I hope, to prevent even Pentateuchal criticism from robbing me of a chance for proper attention to historical and religious values. Nor has it been a matter of Pentateuchal criticism alone. The Psalms, Second and Third Isaiah, Habakkuk, Daniel, and Ezekiel have all provided occasion for elaborate excursions into higher criticism. After reading each of the latest books on Ezekiel I have felt like the man who took the two mile running start to jump a twenty-foot ditch. About a year ago I picked up Pfeiffer's new book on the literature of the Old Testament and happened to open it at Ezekiel. For pages on end I waded through a summary of what has been thought and said about the subject by all and sundry. Eventually I arrived at the author's opinions and found them almost sufficiently good and

interesting to wake me up. I know of one course in Old Testament where that book was the only text. Alas, the present generation of Old Testament students has been introduced to the point of spiritual suffocation. I confess my part of the guilt. But it is time for someone with a loud voice to stand up and shout, "Son of man, prophesy unto these bones that they may live."

3. There is another danger which lurks in the sheer fascination of new discoveries. All fresh knowledge is interesting, some of it is highly important, and none of it ever appears in the fine old works of reference which our students are using--Ryle's commentary on Genesis, for instance, or Driver's on Joel and Amos. He is an extraordinary professor who can resist the temptation to add and digress and supplement, simply because most professors are themselves keen students, avidly interested in research, and consumed with a desire to know everything about their subject --and its neighbours. By the same test we are apt to become bored with repeating elementary lessons, precept upon precept. We are apt to send the students off to read up the religious teachings of the book of Judges, let us say, and forget that it is far easier for them to find out who the Midianites were or what kind of religion Gideon's Shechemite concubine had, than to prepare an intelligent and edifying sermon or Sunday School lesson on the story of Gideon selecting his chosen band of three hundred men. ~~(Incidentally, that story is in the International Series of Sunday School lessons for the summer quarter of 1944)~~. But start a discussion on the Ras Shamra texts or the excavations at Megiddo and we are like Saul amongst the prophets. We become wellnigh ecstatic when we take up the subject of Canaanitish cult objects or the possible connection between the Samson stories and the Gilgamesh epic. I know the situation from experience, for I have been through it--on both ends of the academic log. I also know that lectures under such conditions grow longer and longer by the endless process of adding details. Nothing is ever thrown away and every new acquisition is fitted on somehow or other until the course resembles the equipage of the white knight in "Through the Looking Glass". You will recall that the knight's horse was literally covered with everything from bee hives and mouse traps on up (or down) to fire tongs and bunches of green vegetables. All of these things had meaning and importance in his eyes, but they made no sense to Alice--Alice being the student. You will also recall that the knight was very chatty--just as we sometimes are in our lectures--and that he could not stay on his horse any better than a professor can stay on his subject. Alas, is it any wonder that some of us never finish our syllabi? I know of one man who sets out bravely to lecture on the Pentateuch and finishes only Deuteronomy, and another who has a course of lectures on the Fourth Gospel which seldom passes the second chapter. It is a good thing for us that

students are stupid; otherwise they might organize against us and demand their money's worth. They might put an end to the professorial custom of frittering away the precious time and opportunity of those for whom the day of preparation is already far spent and there is yet far to go. Students so taught may have a devastating knowledge of certain spots in the Bible, but on the whole they resemble the famous

> "---young man of devises,
> Whose ears were of different sizes.
> The one that was small was no good at all,
> But the other won several prizes."

The world of research and discovery has been too much with us Old Testament professors during the past twenty-five years. New knowledge about everything in our field has been rushing over us like the stratified tornado which Mark Twain describes in "Roughing It". The first and lowest stratum of our whirlwind was composed of very heavy objects which never quite left the ground but rolled along like a herd of elephants playing leapfrog and somersault. These were winged bulls with human heads, royal sarcophagi, obelisks, inscribed columns, temple walls with bas-reliefs, stelae, dolmens, and massebahs, with all manner of miscellaneous statuary weaving in and out. The stratum above that was composed of such whirling debris as clay tablets, human skeletons, bronze and stone implements, painted and unpainted pottery, kernos rings and incense altars, cylinder seals, figurines, and cult objects of all kinds. Still higher up the sky was filled with printed pages in all the languages of mankind--books, journals, museum publications, and the proceedings of learned societies. The whole maelstrom was peppered by a hailstorm of rings, scarabs, beads, jewels, and inscribed potsherds, and drenched with a rainstorm of drink offerings for the dead--all magical in one way or another. Who can blame a professor for losing his sense of proportion in the midst of weather like that?

III. <u>What can be done about it?</u>

Having glanced at the problems and difficulties which beset us as teachers of the Bible--and more especially of the Old Testament--I should like to speak now of my experience in the attempt to overcome them. I disavow in advance all prejudice in favour of my own methods; all I can say for them is that they are better than those to which I was subjected as a student, and better than those with which I began as an instructor.

About ten years ago our curriculum at McMaster was revised and the Old Testament courses were reconstructed according to the combined wisdom of the entire faculty. Since then I have incessantly sought means of improving both the choice of topics and the manner of presenting them. First,

I sought the advice of other men and got none whatever. Then I began experimenting cautiously and modestly, sometimes changing the lectures and sometimes the work demanded of the students. Like Qoheleth in the book of Ecclesiastes, I tried both wisdom and folly; but unlike him I did at least derive a profit. I have made no attempt to apply pedagogy as a science in itself; in fact I confess to a serious distrust of anything which smacks of "education" as the term is understood in American colleges. If I have learned anything worthy of recommendation to this society it has been a little about the arrangement of courses, something about teaching methods, and something about making the transfer from classroom to pastorate. Some of what I now proceed to say is self-evident and always has been; it represents common sense rather than discovery. With such a point I begin the summary:

<u>1</u>. The first and most important requirement for success in teaching the Bible to prospective ministers is the sincere self-consecration of the professor to a religious task, namely that of inflaming his students with devotion to the Scriptures and with zeal for preaching them. He must be able to impart the spirit as well as the letter of learning, otherwise he will kill more than he makes alive. Every classroom should resemble the tomb of Elisha; it should bring dead men to life when they are cast into it. The professor should feel himself responsible for answering the student's question, "What shall I preach?" Before he can accomplish this he must himself accept the Bible as the Word of God and be ready to teach it as such. In what sense the Bible is the Word of God and how to interpret it may be open questions; but one point admits of no debate: unless the professor approaches the Scriptures as a divine revelation he can never be anything more than a mere antiquarian classifying and exhibiting the curiosities of a faith which has no power over his own soul. Academic interest is not enough: a primarily religious interest is indispensable to him who would teach preachers. That is merely a way of saying that the instructor should be honest with his students and with the churches which have set him at his task.

<u>2</u>. The student should always be provided with syllabi and bibliographies which concisely indicate the work to be done, the manner in which it is to be done, and when. A proper syllabus is more than a term assignment; it is a guarantee against wasted time, barren reading, the use of secondrate reference matter, and the omission of important knowledge. It should be issued and thereafter treated as the text of a contract between professor and students to complete a reasonable piece of work in a satisfactory manner by a given date. Only by such a procedure can the most and best work be done in the short time available. Bibliographies should indicate what books may be useful in the preparation of the various topics. I count it no virtuous act to make

my students "search the library" as I was sometimes compelled to do. My students are studying Old Testament and not the contents of the library. I have found that in a course in Old Testament Theology (vary the name as you will) where I undertake to cover about twelve topics and make use of some twenty books, that I can seldom place more than four or five titles on the list which are really helpful on any given topic. Let us say that a man is preparing a seminar paper on Persian influence upon post-exilic Hebrew religion. Unless I foresee and forestall his mistake he is likely to apply at the reserve desk for such old standbys as Davidson, Smith, Peters, and Knudsen, wait a day or two to get them, and then spend another day finding out that they give him no help. I sometimes require my students to write a term essay on Jerusalem in the time of David and Solomon. Unless I delineate the field carefully and specify the references to be used, half of the class will fail to discover that the site of ancient Jebus now lies entirely outside the modern city walls and has been excavated, while the other half will locate the site on the western hill. I have also learned much from rebukes unconsciously administered in poor examination papers by men who have been wandering in a wilderness under the leadership of a negligent Moses. Except in rare cases the failure of the student is the failure of the professor.

3. Let introduction, and more especially that which we call "higher criticism", be reduced to a minimum. Let the professor be clear and be quick about it. Personally, I have found that the best way to approach the subject of Pentateuchal criticism, for instance, is by means of a lecture on methods of book-making in the ancient world. It always stimulates and enlightens a student to give him a harmony of the Gospels, for instance, and a Hebrew manuscript (or reasonable facsimile thereof) and say, "Now, how would you go about publishing that harmony in that sort of manuscript? How could your reader tell when he had passed from one document into the next? Where would you put footnotes and other subsidiary matter?" In dealing with the composition of the book of Isaiah I always begin by having the class calculate the number of pages in Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the Twelve, Isaiah 1-39, and 40-66 respectively--using whatever Bible they happen to have in hand. Then I reduce the figure for Jeremiah by one eighth to restore the length it had before its late expansion in the Hebrew text. In a wink the student can see that by adding the two pieces of Isaiah he gets a fourth roll almost exactly the size of his other three--and to make the bargain better has four rolls of latter prophets to match his four former prophets. I still resent being made to waste hours of time and effort trying to see some fancied doctrinal or stylistic basis for the union of Isaiah 1-39 and 40-66. Of course there is more than this to the composition of Isaiah; but what I have suggested does at least help the student over the main hurdle and that quickly. For supplementary reading in literary introduction my motto is "the simpler

the better." My standbys now are Simpson's "Pentateuchal Criticism", Kirkpatrick's "Divine Library of the Old Testament", and McFadyen's "Introduction to the Old Testament". Driver, Chapman, Pfeiffer, and other such meticulous works, I reserve for special students. Naturally, there are some Old Testament books which cannot be so lightly dismissed--Ezra-Nehemiah, for instance; and there are some which when properly "introduced" need little further by way of exposition--like Lamentations, Ruth, Jonah, Canticles, and Esther, and I am tempted to add Daniel.

4. Whatever the Biblical area being covered, be it legislation, history, prophets, or wisdom and poetry, let the professor be sure to make each book stand out as a unit in itself. It will seem artificial to him to think of Exodus apart from the rest of the Pentateuch, but he must remember that his students are going out to deal with congregations which never think in terms of the Pentateuch, or the post-exilic prophets, or Old Testament apocalypse. Such phrases are mere gibberish to them. They think in terms of Genesis and Exodus, of Amos and Isaiah, of the Psalms and of Daniel. Some Old Testament books will never be anything more than names to them--unless they happen to have a teaching pastor. So, let the student be taught to present each book by itself in a manner calculated to interest and edify a congregation, a youngpeople's society, or an adult Sunday School class. That is what every Bible college tries to do. Where is our vaunted superiority to such schools unless we do our work better? Never shall I forget hearing one of a series of Sunday evening "lecture-sermons" on the books of the Bible. The topic for that night happened to be Ezra. To put it mildly, it was an excruciating experience,--all the worse because the congregation was visibly grateful for the rubbish it received. I went away pondering the tale of the man who put green spectacles on his mule and fed him shavings. No student for the ministry should be allowed to leave the study of a Biblical book without a short and accurate introduction, a mastery of the contents in analytical outline, and a summary of the religious teachings--all memorized for at least once in his life and well recorded in notes to which he can return when he needs to. In addition to this he should have spent at least one or more lecture hours under the competent guidance of his professor in surveying the resources of that book for the pulpit. It is not necessary for him to store up enough corn to last through seven years of famine--and idleness--but it is important for him to learn that there is corn to be had for a price in every book in the Old Testament. The department of homiletics may teach a man the art of grinding, but the Bible departments should provide the grain.

5. Insofar as arrangement of courses is concerned, let the student begin with Old Testament history and literature. Historical knowledge is basic in Bible study; moreover it

may be easily and logically combined with literary introduction. What better time to explain the composition of the Pentateuch or Samuel than when the relevant history is under discussion? One can always come back to Deuteronomy and the Priestly document when he reaches the seventh century or the post-exilic period. And here, also, even though dealing with historical books, let us give time and thought to religious teachings and sermonic materials. Such an exercise is often the more easy in historical studies simply because the so-called "former prophets" are more like preachers than historians anyway. Finding moral sermons in J and D and the former prophets is like finding water in a river, one can hardly avoid it; E and P are more fruitful for theological topics. Incidentally, I always encourage my men to be expositors; rarely do I suggest a topical sermon except in teaching the book of Proverbs.

6. When he has had his course in history let the student proceed to a study of the prophets, and here let him be required to read extensively in reviewing the historical setting, personal characteristics, and religious teachings of each man. More important than parallel reading is the careful analysis of the text. I now require that each book be carefully read and analysed. In order to help the student along I furnish him an outline of my own making along with a resume of each prophet's teaching. I confine lectures to short introductions and the exposition of such passages as are not likely to be understood without assistance. Naturally, I am obliged to omit the leaner portions of the long books; yet in the course of a major I manage to cover most of the writing prophets pretty thoroughly. Instead of essays I prescribe written tests on the text of each book as soon as it is finished. Woe betide the student who is unable to read a given passage, give it a comprehensive title, and then point out what the prophet has said on the subject. After marking the test papers I go over them with the student--and vice versa.

7. The poetic and wisdom literature of the Old Testament presents difficulties in carrying out such a purpose as I advocate. The Psalms, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes have little or no unity, and it is difficult to preach from one text in Job without preaching from the whole book. Moreever, all of these books require more than a casual introduction. Yet, I have found that by judicious selection of parallel reading assignments I can reduce introduction to one lecture on the nature of Hebrew Poetry, one on Hebrew wisdom as such, and one for each of the separate Biblical books. Canticles and Lamentations are frequently omitted. For a first term essay I require the study of ten psalms in which the student prepares for each a short introduction, and outline, and the skeleton of an expository sermon (on the whole or a part thereof). Meanwhile I devote ten lectures to the exposition of as many more psalms. To Job I devote seven lectures in

which it is possible to analyze the book and make sure that the class understands it at least once in their lives. Incidentally, it is the pastor rather than the preacher who benefits most from Job, for it is a penetrating study of the religious phenomena related to suffering and misfortune--including the stupidity and asininity of which the narrow-minded and inflexibly orthodox minister can be guilty. Proverbs and Ecclesiastes fall into the second half of the academic year and receive only four lectures each, but I make amends for the slight by setting the second term essay on them. Choosing twelve topics which receive fairly frequent mention in Proverbs, I compile a list of from four to ten references for each. The student examines the references with a commentary and then constructs the outline of a sermon on each topic in which the three or four homiletical "points" are contributed by such of the proverbs as appeal to his judgment. Next in the paper I set a list of forty proverbs chosen at random. The student examines them with his commentary and decides upon a proper sermon topic for each of them. Finally, the essay requires that the outline of an expository sermon be prepared on each of five or six passages in Ecclesiastes. The boys moan at first, as only students contemplating an essay topic can moan, but when their work is done they turn and bless me. This final major which begins with wisdom and poetry is topped off by a resume in which we review the development of some twelve of the great religious ideas of the Old Testament. Parallel reading for that is some book on Old Testament theology. Frequently I choose Oesterley & Robinson's "Hebrew Religion".

In all of my teaching I labour for one supreme objective, namely, to make my men discover, appreciate and interpret the religious experiences of the Old Testament saints. Consequently we always seek to analyze the personality and evaluate the accomplishments of every great Bible character. And one other thing I do which time prevents me from discussing. I compel my men to buy as many standard commentaries as possible. No professor ever saw a commentary which suited him entirely--unless he wrote it--but if he is wise he will give hostages to necessity and make sure that his students spend their money for that which is bread. The man who does not learn to use and to respect good reference books in college will be like Balaam as long as he lives--wandering from one hilltop to another in search of enchantments--the hilltops being Guthrie, Boreham, Weatherhead, and all the rest who publish sermons.

Now, by way of conclusion, let me refer to something which is brewing in my courses. Several times during the last two years I have been approached by student preachers and pastors with requests for practical assistance in preparing difficult subjects for presentation to various church groups --the congregation as a whole, the young people's society,

or perhaps some advanced class in Sunday School. The result is that I am now seriously considering the wisdom of setting up an elective minor open to all second and third year students in which we shall do nothing but prepare vexatious topics for presentation to lay groups. It will require close co-operation with the department of Practical Theology. The topics have been suggested by the students themselves; I have merely recorded them. Here is the list up to date: the composition of the Pentateuch; the problems of Old Testament Chronology (and more especially the dates on the margin of the Authorized Version); the inferiority of the Authorized Version; the problem of ethics in the Old Testament (massacre of women and children, the law of blood vengeance, the ban, the solidarity of the family, etc.); the value of the liturgical sections of the Pentateuch; the literary beauty of the Bible as literature; the imprecatory passages in Psalms and Jeremiah; the opening chapters of Genesis; the puzzling fact that God should ever desire and require animal sacrifice. The men are not themselves troubled by any of these topics. What they want is practical assistance in removing them from the classroom to the local church. To whom should they go if their professor hath not the words of life?

The twentieth chapter of II Kings records a story which keeps intruding upon my thoughts. I hesitate about using it because it involves king Ahab, of evil odour; but the urge is insistent. Here is part of the story.

> "And behold, a prophet came near unto Ahab the king of Israel, and said, Thus saith the Lord, hast thou seen all this great multitude? Behold, I will deliver it unto thy hand this day; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord. And Ahab said, By whom? And he said, Thus saith the Lord, by the young men of the princes of the provinces. Then he said, Who shall begin the battle? And he answered, Thou. And he mustered the young men of the princes of the provinces, and they were two hundred and thirty and two."

The parallel I wish to draw is this. I do not pose as any sort of giant killer myself. I have no conceit about my prowess as a preacher or a teacher. I am only attempting to begin the battle by mustering "the young men of the princes of the provinces"--others more competent than myself. I hope to have started a discussion from which we all may benefit. In justice to the text I should remind you that Ahab attacked promptly in the heat of the day and capitalized upon the element of surprise. He also gained some advantage from the fortunate coincidence that Ben-Hadad was drunk, but that is a part of the tale which I am at a loss to apply.

N.H. Parker

2. BIBLICAL TEACHING IN AN ARTS CURRICULUM

Chancellor G.P.Gilmour, McMaster University

(Summary only)

Disregarding any legal questions and discounting certain popular prejudices, we can agree that the manifest spiritual illiteracy of the new generation makes careful Bible teaching at college level proper, if only to protect Christianity from the misunderstanding it endures alike at the hands of its foolish friends and its ill-informed enemies. Good teaching would, of course, in addition, do much to reach the large numbers of young people who are uninterested or bewildered rather than unfriendly and pagan. Granting the need, what of the method?

I am convinced that there are great advantages in making such courses obligatory. This is possible only in independent colleges. In my own, the Freshman has a required course of introductory studies and work in the Gospels; the Sophomore has a required minor in Old Testament; and those in the Senior Division must choose from among Comparative Religion, Science and Religion, Ethics, and further biblical studies. Obligatory prescription removes these courses from the realm of controversy, prevents silly pre-judgments or the election of supposedly "pipe courses". But it can be usefully preserved only if the work is as exacting academically as is other work in the curriculum. Standards of knowledge must be maintained, and piety as such can be given no premium.

I am convinced, further, that it is ineffective to stress the "literature-aspect" of the work. Students instinctively recognize that literary considerations are secondary, and that such work is important for its ideas rather than its style, however majestic. The work should therefore be frankly Christian in its interest: and, by a careful observance of the canons of objectivity, and the unembarrassed admission that "rightly or wrongly, this is the claim of the Christian faith", such an approach can be made to command respect.

Above all, there must be no monopoly of emphasis on "problemitis". The attempt by some to "treat the Bible as any other book is treated" easily develops into a treatment such as no other book could possibly receive from a sane and sensitive person. Of course, one must maintain the Gifford Lecture pose, and avoid the arbitrary use of the sanctions of revelation and inspiration, but it is not necessary to convey the impression that such sanctions are illegitimate or that the lecturer repudiates them. If he does, he has no business teaching in this field at all.

The aim should be to produce instructed Christians or, failing that, people who appreciate what an instructed Christian is supposed to know in the fields of history, introduction, interpretative canons, and basic attitudes. That such an aim is high in no way alters the fact that it is vital under our present conditions.

3. BIBLE TEACHING IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Rev. H. N. Watt

(Excerpts only)

A year of planned religious education in the public schools of the Township of East York was completed recently when in some of the schools a Christmas Service was conducted, either over the loud-speaker system or in the assembly hall. In one instance at least, a member of the Board of Education and the Inspector of Schools were present and expressed their satisfaction with the work being done.

It began in the fall of 1942 when a Ministerial Association was formed with the express purpose of appraoching the Board of Education regarding this work. The association was encouraged to present a plan of the work they wished to do; so a committee was appointed to prepare the course of studies with the seventh grade in mind. This course was prepared for the winter and spring of 1943. But in the spring of 1943 the committee met again to arrange for a full year's work. The committee gave a great deal of thought to the matter and spent long hours trying to arrange a schedule that would give a bird's-eye view of the Old Testament as a background for the New Testament, into which study the instructors were to be launched, at the last teaching period before Christmas, with the story of the birth of Christ.

At a joint meeting of the Board of Education and the Executive of the Ministerial Association in the early fall of 1943, a discussion was precipitated which led to a request by the Board of Education that the ministers teach in the eighth grade also. There was no time to prepare a new schedule, so during this past term and through the winter term, the same work is being covered in both grades; part of which course was taught last spring to those now in eighth grade. An effort will be made on the part of the committee to prepare a two-year teaching course before the beginning of the fall term this year. Those who have been teaching during the past year have found it a profitable year; the principals, without exception, have been most co-operative; the teachers eager to help; and the Board exceedingly favourable to the plan.

However, the committee who prepared the course of teaching are not satisfied that they have finished their job. Nor do we feel that ministers usually are sufficiently well acquainted with modern teaching methods to do the work as well as it should be done. We feel, as well, that to be vital religious instruction, it must be an integral part of the whole teaching programme, not just an adjunct.

In a survey taken in the fall of 1943 early in the course, a short questionnaire was given in two seventh and one eighth

grade on relatively simple New Testament material; this was before the New Testament studies began. The questions may not have been the best and might have been better worded but the results were revealing. Practically everyone knew the nationaltiy of Jesus. When asked to name five people who were friends or disciples of Jesus the average was three correct. We have a suspicion this was in many instances just a good guess for they put down the first four books of the New Testament and added Peter; nearly everyone knows Peter.

On the question "How would you know a Christian?" the answers were on the whole better than we expected. The reply expected was "He would go to church", but they went further that that--"He would be helping others", "He would be kind." There were some negative answers such as, he would not smoke or drink, etc., but not many.

Another question was worded so as to find out how many went to Sunday School. About fifteen admitted they did not attend any and by the wording of some of the others you could judge they did not go either. But the biggest revelation was that those who did not attend gave just as good answers as those who did. This is what leads me to say the Sunday School is not doing the job. Nor is the average Christian home doing the job, and if they were,there are still many children who do not come under the instruction of the influence of either of these.

Briefly a word about the future of the work in the schools. The ministers will never be able to do this work thoroughly, they have not the time and there are not enough of them. Religious education should be given in all the grades. In the Township of East York, with the use of every available minister, most of the schools have to have a grouping of two to four classes. Nor would it be wise to turn it over to the school teachers, they would have to be given a much more thorough course in Bible than at present in the Normal Schools. Even then there would be many to whom the churches would not care to trust a programme of religious education. We say that, realizing that there are at present many teachers who are already doing an excellent job in this field.

But what we need are specialists in the field of religious education who will devote their full time to this work much as in some communities a music teacher goes from room to room or school to school. With this difference, that the board of religious education of the various churches would make recommendations to the School Board or even appointments. Perhaps to be supported jointly.

4. THE BIBLE AND THE CHURCH SCHOOL

Rev. T. B. McDormand

(Excerpts only)

While recognizing that the Bible has not been entirely neglected in Church Schools of liberal tendencies, I would none the less make bold to suggest that for a number of years the Bible has been regarded as but one item in a diversified curriculum, and has not received the emphasis it deserves among the several teaching objectives of the Church schools. Christian Education a generation ago very properly recognized that the mere transmission of factual Bible knowledge by varying adaptations of the catechetical method represented an injustice both to the nature of the Bible and the nature of the personality needs of childhood and youth. So there developed an understanding of the true breadth and diversity of an adequate Christian Education curriculum such as is outlined by Dr George H. Betts in his standard volume, "The Curriculum of Religious Education". This broader, and certainly more adequate view of curriculum is designed to make the child the focal point of the goals of a religious education curriculum, and no reasonable person would deny the justice or wisdom of viewing the curriculum as created for the child, and of objecting to the austere tradition which regarded the child as made for the curriculum. Dr Betts affirms that "to be child-centered the curriculum must meet the three-fold spiritual need of the individual: (1) for intelligence based on knowledge; (2) for loyalties to persons, ideals, and institutions; (3) for skill in expressing r religious values in personal conduct and social relationships. The more comprehensive curriculum of Religious Education, represented by the graded lesson-helps, has served well the cause of a more adequate view of curriculum, but has erred in some measure in magnifying the experience-centered approach to the extent of implicitly discrediting a serious, systematic effort to instruct children in the subject-matter of the Christian tradition. There has been in some degree an underestimation of the carry-over of conduct motivation from the memorization of wisely selected portions of scripture, and from a warm appreciation of the text of scripture. Granting that memorized passages should be intelligently appreciated in terms of their immediate practical relation to life at the level of the learner, we should not forget that at no age level can the full meaning of a great scripture passage be grasped, and that passages once memorized may ever and again shed light in growing fullness upon a wide variety of emergent situations in the developing life of an individual. This means that careful attention to the first of Dr Betts' three-fold statement of individual needs which a well-balanced curriculum should serve, namely, "intelligence based on knowledge", will contribute more creatively than we possibly have supposed to the personality development comprehended in the remaining two

statements, that is, "loyalties to persons, ideals, and institutions", and "skill in expressing religious values in personal conduct and social relationships".

Leading educationalists, who would not yield to the mere pressure of ultra-conservative reaction, are in many instances ready to concede that Professor H. W. Fox speaks with the support of much evidence when, in his book, "The Child's Approach to Religion", he declares, "To learn the Bible for ourselves and to teach it to our children, line upon line, precept upon precept, remains, AS IT HAS EVER BEEN, the secret of vitality in the profession of the Christian religion, and the hope of the future for an ever-increasing conformation of human society with the will of God until we attain the Kingdom of God on earth."

If our thesis is tenable, it gives us authority to urge that the Christian Education of the years ahead make more direct and confident provision for instruction in Biblical truth. Such provision need not preclude loyalty to those invaluable pedagogical principles which several generations of scientific study of developing personality have established. Nor should it justify forgetfulness of the necessity for that Christian instruction in the broadest sense, which is implicit in guided activities, worship, mission study, and other extra-biblical elements of a comprehensive curriculum of Christian Education. In short, while we would warn against any return to the unwholesome "bibliolatry" of the Protestant absolutist who made the Bible an end instead of a means of Christian instruction, and who regarded as profane and presumptuous a scientifically critical examination of the form and content of Biblical literature, we would advocate renewed awareness of the fact that the Bible is an important means of sound training in Christian thought, judgment, and choice--a means more important than has often been assigned it in some quarters in recent years. LaMar Warrick in that illuminating little book, "Yesterday's Children", may imply this when she has Mrs Weaver defend her son, Randy, before the High School teacher who had found him something of a problem. In reviewing some of Randy's experiences which, in her opinion, had conditioned his behaviour ever after, the mother says, "When Randy was a little boy he went to Sunday School for a time. But he said he couldn't see any sense in it. All you did was to cut out pictures and have projects."

5. SOME REMARKS ON THE RABBINIC BACKGROUND OF I CORINTHIANS 12-14

Rabbi H. A. Fischel

(Summary only)

In I Corinthians 12-14, Paul expounds his opinion on prophecy to one of his Hellenistic congregations. A considerable number of his statements are closely related to the contemporary teachings of the Rabbis on this subject.

In 12:8-11, we find a list of the spiritual gifts which fits, as a whole, into the frame of first-century Rabbinic teachings. Prophecy comprised in the opinion of the Rabbis all the revelations, the wisdom and the practical activities of the prophets, i.e. of those men and women who were bearers of the "Holy Spirit". Paul's list enumerates as the works of the Spirit: Wisdom, knowledge, "faith, the power of healing, the working of miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, divers kinds of tongues and the interpretation of tongues".

Wisdom and prophecy had been identified at an early period in various Jewish writings, as early as Deuteronomy. The power of healing, the working of miracles and the prediction of the future are a standing feature of the Rabbinic conception of prophecy, the figures of Elijah and Elisha being considered the main examples. In the Midrash, faith leads to the Holy Spirit, but is not a consequence or a concomitant of the Spirit as with Paul; this idea may be a Christian novelty. The power of healing and the discerning of spirits belonged to the popular Jewish and Hellenistic conceptions of prophecy and were practised by the Rabbis, but the latter spiritual gift did not find a place in their conception of classical prophecy which recognized and dealt solely with historical, i.e. biblical, prophecy. "The word of knowledge" seems to be a concession to the Hellenistic (and also Hellenistic-Jewish?) conception of a supernatural, soteriological knowledge. Jewish popular thought believed the authoritative knowledge in the matters of the Law and theology on the part of the Rabbis to be inspired, i.e. prophetical, knowledge. Paul, however, in a letter to a Hellenistic congregation, seems to allude rather to the Hellenistic conception. "The speaking of tongues" seems also to be characteristic of Hellenistic beliefs. However, the interpretation of tongues, or better, the interpretation of any source of revelation, like the Divine Word, visions, signs and dreams, was an important component of the Rabbinic, Philonic and apocalyptic conception. All prophetic creativeness and activity goes back, according to Rabbinic and Pauline teachings, in the word of Paul: "to the same spirit", or, in the Rabbinic formulation: "whatever the saints did, they did in the Holy Spirit".

In 12.13, Paul uses the expression "to drink of one Spirit". In Rabbinic (but also in Philonic and Hellenistic) sources, the Spirit is frequently referred to as a fluid. Many

Midrashim allude to Joel 3.1 (2.28): "I will pour out my Spirit". It is quite possible, that there was also a remainder of a mythological conception which claimed that the Holy Spirit could be drawn at the Holy Rock in the Temple during the water libation on the Feast of Tabernacles.

13.8:..."But whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away". In this amazing statement, Paul either means that the prophetic capacity of the individual and prophecy as a whole may come to an end or that the validity of the contents of the prophetic message is limited. Both teachings are well-known to the Rabbis (but not to Philo). The prophetic power of many prophets was supposed to have suddenly ceased. According to the predominant Rabbinic teaching, prophecy as a whole had come to an end some time between the fall of the first Temple and Alexander the Great (or Jesus ben Sirach). As to the contents of prophecy, the Rabbis agreed that the teachings of the prophets were inferior to the law and that their validity would cease in Messianic times, having been taught on account of Israel's transgressions only. Paul's devaluation of prophecy is contrasted with a panegyric on love which seems to possess an eschatological colouring, thus being parallel to the Jewish idea that prophecies are obsolete in the Messianic age. Moreover, quite a few Rabbinic sources accuse the historical prophets of a lack of humility and love for Israel.

In 13.9, "for we know in part and prophecy in part", Paul challenges the perfection of prophetic power. There is a considerable number of Midrashim which similarly deny that the prophets possessed a far-reaching insight into the last mysteries, above all into God's true being and the mysteries of the "World to Come". The vision of the prophets was thought of as not penetrating enough or as blurred. A simile, very popular in Hellenistic literature, is frequent also in Rabbinic sources, the parable of the mirror, "aspark^{e}larya" in Hebrew, an adaptation of the Greek "speklarion" or the Latin "specularia". The literary use of the simile of the mirror in Rabbinic writings is, that the prophets looked into stained or into too many mirrors or gazed into a mirror but not upon reality itself. In 13.12, Paul uses such a simile: "For now we see in a mirror darkly" (in a riddle). The biblical phrase underlying Paul's statement as well as many Rabbinical passages is Num. 12.8. In Yebhamoth 49b, a first-century teaching, we find this combination of the Numbers passage with the simile of the mirror: "All the prophets gazed into a mirror which did not shine; only our teacher Moses gazed into a shining mirror. (Here, Num.12.8 follows as scriptural proof.) In Leviticus Rabba 1, we find similar early traditions featuring the simile and the Numbers passage. Paul's devaluation of prophecy, therefore, belongs to his Rabbinic, not to his Hellenistic heritage, in spite of the existence of a similar phenomenon with many thinkers of the Epicurean and Stoic

schools also as can be seen from the second book of Cicero's "De Divinatione".

Many first-century sources and our Pauline text contrast the imperfection of terrestrial prophecy with the perfect sight of the divine mysteries in the "Last Days" which will be without a blurring medium, but as Midrash and Paul emphasize: "from face to face".

14.3 offers us the Pauline definition of the subject or the contents of prophecy: "he that prophesieth speaketh unto man edification, "paraklesin" and consolation". If "paraklesin" means "exhortation", we would have a fine Rabbinical parallel in a controversy persisting for a long time in the Rabbinical schools on the question whether the contents of the prophetic message are predominantly "exhortation" or "consolation". This alternative would correspond to the two poles of the Pauline characterization of prophecy.

On the other hand, "paraklesin" may mean "comfort". In this case, we would have three nouns: "edification, comfort and consolation". For such an idea also, we possess a Rabbinic parallel in a stereotyped and frequently-used characterization of prophecy which as to its formal aspect (three nouns) and its contents (the favourable character of prophecy) is very similar to Paul's formulation: "all the good things, blessings and consolations".

In 14.3, Paul makes a most significant statement on the relationship of the prophet to his prophecy: "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets". This statement is in close conformity with the Rabbinic idea of the part of the prophet in his prophecy, but forms a sharp contrast with the predominant Greek, Hellenistic (and Philonic) idea which hold that all higher prophecy except the mere techniques of divination, is caused by ecstasy, thus excluding a rational participation of the prophet in his prophecy. The Rabbinic sources, however, in spite of their doctrine of verbal inspiration, almost unanimously affirm the full responsibility of the prophet for his work and the participation of his "ratio", his will and personality in the act of prophecy.

In conclusion, one could say, that Paul's view on prophecy is to a high degree parallel to that of the Rabbis (but only to a much smaller degree to Philo). It makes no difference that Paul speaks on contemporary Christian prophecy and problems of his Hellenistic congregations, whereas the Rabbis analyze mainly historical prophecy, for both conceptions of prophecy are modelled on biblical reports and even more on the observation and partial recognition of contemporary popular prophecy as well as, occasionally, on patterns of Hellenistic religion and literature.

6. "PROFIT" IN ECCLESIASTES

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(Summary only)

The word yithrôn is an abstract form derived from yāthar on the analogy of 'elyôn from 'alâ, killayôn from kalâ, bittahôn from batan. Since yathar means "to remain over", yithrôn would signify "something over and above", "a return over and above an investment", "profit". The qal participle is used in the same way.

In Ecclesiastes these words are used in two different ways. In some passages the author denies the existence of yithrôn or yôther. 1:3 may be taken as an example: What yithrôn has a man in exchange for all his toil at which he toils under the sun? This is a rhetorical question, and plainly asserts that man's labour nets him nothing. In the following verses the author compares the brevity of man's life with the various phenomena of nature: sun, wind and rivers which have endured since the creation. In short, our author says that the sun, wind and rivers have been carrying on their allotted tasks since the beginning of time and have netted no profit, hence how should man expect to add anything to the sum total of the world in the brief space allotted to him? Other passages in which the words yithrôn or yôther are used in the same way are: 2:11, 15; 3:9, 19; 5:15; 6:8, 11.

The idea that man derives no profit from his labour is bound up with the thesis that God directs every movement of the world according to the timetable of events of previous ages. Hence, since man is a creature of God like every other phenomenon his activities are directed in the same way. The motivating force in man is his rûah. It comes from God even before birth, 11:5; it returns to God at death, 12:7; man has no power over it, 8:8. It forces man to strive even against the judgment of his experience. It is through this rûah, evidently, that God directs human activities, hence whatever man does fits into the divine pattern, and is the work of Deity. It follows from this that a profit from human labour apart from God is out of the question. We may designate this usage of the word yithrôn as profit in an absolute sense, and is quite negative, since its chief characteristic is its absence.

On the other hand, these words are used in a positive sense. In 2:13, we learn that wisdom has a yithrôn over folly like the yithrôn of light over darkness. Other passages in which the word is used as though it had an actual content are: 5:8; 7:11, 12; 10:10, 11.

In the former passages man is considered as a being forced to act in conformity with a divine plan, and so without power of personal choice in any matter. In the latter passages the

author seems to take it for granted that man can choose his own line of conduct, and that he can evaluate the comparative worth of two lines of conduct. This marked contrast has led scholars to assume a difference of authorship.

Our author uses the word tôbh with a significance almost synonymous with yithrôn and yôther. If we compare 2:13 ff. with 6:8 f. we will see that the word tôbh in the second motif of the latter passage is used as an alternative word for yithrôn of the first motif of the former passage.

Tôbh is used absolutely, and in a negative sense in 2:24. That a man should eat and drink and cause himself to see good in his tôil is not tôbh. 'ên tôbh. He explains that these things are not tôbh because they are gifts of God. This use of tôbh seems to be synonymous with yithrôn in 1:3. A literal rendering of 3:22 is, There is no tôbh apart from the fact that one should rejoice in his work for that is his portion. 5:17 equates tôbh with the rightness of eating and thinking one's work productive. In other words there is no such thing as tôbh or yithrôn in an absolute sense. They are purely negative quantities. But there is such a thing in a relative sense.

2:24 and 3:13 state that eating and drinking and seeing good in one's work are gifts of God. Hence our author denies that man can accomplish a "good" or a "profit" independently, but he asserts that God has bestowed upon man the divine gift of thinking his work productive or profitable. This solution is quite in keeping with the thesis of Ecclesiastes that it is the spirit of God in man that directs his activities. It is a sort of divinely appointed illusion that man should feel that he actually accomplishes something himself, and thereby enjoy his life.

From a comparison of the wording in 2:1, 10; 3:12, 22 and 8:15 we may assume that "to see good in one's toil" is synonymous with "to rejoice in one's labour", or even "to rejoice". 5:17 f. re-iterates these ideas, but the passage ends with a pertinent statement: God answers (man's problems) with the joy of his heart. That is to say: He causes man to believe his work is productive. No compensation can be made for a lack of this feeling. Chap.6.

With this key to the solution of our problem, it seems perfectly consistent of our author to deny the possibility of profit, on the one hand, and to claim that one line of conduct is more profitable than another, on the other hand, for God causes man to think his work or his line of conduct is good or profitable.

Our author is at pains to discover the value of life to the individual in a world governed by the Deity. It is a world in which God brings about every change in the universe,

and the actions of God as well as of His creations are immutable. In this world, Man, a created thing, is personally impotent, yet strives with all his might to do things. To the rational mind, the mind led by wisdom, the position of man in this universe is, to say the least, difficult to understand. Man is simply a cog in the great wheel of the universe, and so must move along with the wheel in its inexorable course. In an absolute sense, therefore, the activities of the individual apart from God who turns the wheel have no value. However, God has bestowed upon man a divine gift, that of thinking his work productive. This idea entails the further idea that man is permitted to think of himself as an independent unit who plans and carries out his plans, who labours and produces, who can prefer one line of conduct to another line of conduct, and who can evaluate past experiences, and so make future plans in accordance with them.

It is because of the idea of this gift to man that our author can insist on the advantages of wisdom over folly, although the wise man and the fool will meet the same fate. It explains how our author can say in 7:11, 12, that wisdom is good in time of sickness (or with an inheritance) and an advantage for those who see the sun, and further, that the advantage of knowing wisdom is that it keeps its owners alive; and yet re-iterate in 8:8 that man has no power over the spirit to restrain the spirit; he has no power over the day of death, and there is no discharge in the war. Thus, while God has caused man to think that an application of wisdom may be beneficial to him, in reality man's allotted span will be run, no more, no less, whatever he may do.

This idea of God causing man to see good in all his toil may be extended to the greater good of wisdom over might, 9:16; or over weapons of war, 9:18; the greater good of a name over fine oil, the greater good of the day of death over the day of birth, 7:1; of going to the house of mourning over going to the house of feasting, 7:2; of vexation over laughter, 7:3; of the end of a matter over the beginning, 7:8; of patience over pride.

From 3:2-8 we gather that in the impersonal world of Ecclesiastes there is a set and proper time for being born and for dying; for one activity and for its opposite, and that these things do occur in their proper time to make a perfect world. It seems logical, then, to assume that our author would say that in the perfect world of God there is a proper time for mourning and a proper time for feasting, a time for vexation and a time for laughter, a time to begin a matter, and a time to end it; a time for patience and a time for pride. Hence, each taken by itself has a like value in its own time. In this way our author attempts to reconcile the two elements in the world: God and individual man.

In general the various parts of the Old Testament testify to the direct governance of the world by God, and to the freedom of man to choose his own line of conduct. No author, however, in the Old Testament, made any attempt to carry these two divergent elements in their thoughts to their ultimate implications, nor to reconcile them to form one consistent theory. I would not say that Ecclesiastes succeeded in his task, but he must be credited with a brave attempt.