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ENDEAVOUR

p6. Return to Jesus 2 Pet- 3

magazine



1981/2

30p

THE ENDEAVOUR MAGAZINE

No.64

1981/2

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PEACE

'Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ'. (Rom. 1:7).

This is the usual greeting of the great apostle Paul to the churches.

As we celebrate another Christmas we remember the Prince of Peace who established a new style of life - a style which condemned his contemporaries and revealed their hypocrisy and cruel nature.

Today violence still racks the earth and men are still capable of the most horrible deeds - What can be done? What can we do? Well we can at least be examples. We all have our own small worlds but, and it may be well that from time to time we look at it from outside rather than inside. Instead of what can I do for my own comfort and peace of mind? - What can I do for those around me? or in the words of Jesus - "He

who shall lose his life will find it".

Those nearest in our world will in most cases be the family. It is not so difficult to help here and there is often, but not always, an immediate return - grateful thanks returned with loving reciprocation.

It is not so easy when we look at the fringes of our world. Here the figures are less distinct, what help they need less known to us. Do they need material help or spiritual help or both - and are we fitted and willing to give it?

A good start may be to listen to the problems of others and then critically examine ourselves to see if we have anything to give that could be useful. If we have, the Master will say - "Don't be sparing".

If thou canst get but thither,
There grows the flower of Peace
The rose that cannot wither
Thy fortress, and thy ease.

(Henry Vaughan 1622-1695)

TRUTH AND ERROR.

3.1. The God seekers In the last section, I concluded that seeking God's will is the best statement of the aim of a godly man or woman; to put right something in our life or our knowledge of the world, we should refer back to God, who must be the source of all truth. This objective already divides mankind into two classes; those who are willing to reach outside and above themselves for truth and those who make no real attempt to self-criticism and who refuse to consider the existence of a higher source of truth or reality.

At the beginning of the series, I described man (the term embraces woman, of course) as having a memory, a will and a faculty for the assessment of appropriate action. Memory contains that knowledge of the world we have acquired, will represents our motivation and these together give rise to action. The limitation of being human affects all life and thought but particularly important is the weakness of memory and will.

Our knowledge is limited and sometimes in error and our motivation falls short through the "lusts of the flesh". We will consider the character of truth and knowledge and some limitations of their attainment.

3.2. What is truth? A common answer to the question is based on John 17 v 17, "thy word is truth". Truth is "every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4 v 4). We believed God has revealed himself in particular ways to achieve salvation for those who choose to respond. Inspired writers wrote down this truth from God. Does it follow though, that nothing outside of God's word (usually taken to refer to the Bible) has any part in truth? Clearly all that is true is not normally said to be God's word. We may, then, be driven to saying that there are two kinds of truth; God's truth, which some might call saving truth, supernatural in origin and man's truth, which is natural in origin. I think that distinction is misleading, at least as far as the nature of truth is concerned. Let me propose an alternative perspective.

We can distinguish between the nature or character of truth, its content i.e. what is true (knowledge) and how we know a thing is true (criteria of truth). These two aspects cannot necessarily be kept in well-tight compartments but the question 'what is truth' seems to be a question about the nature of truth itself. Greek and Hebrew ideas of truth are sometimes contrasted (1) In Greek thought truth is said to refer to the realm of eternal reality as contrasted with the realm of falsehood or mere appearance.

Plato, for example, thought of reality as existing in forms inaccessible to us; we see but the shadows, not the reality. In Hebrew thought, on the other hand, truth is faithfulness and reliability, strongly influenced by the Hebrew experience of acts of God which are trustworthy as opposed to arbitrary or capricious. Perhaps both of these are valid insights into the nature of truth and there are doubtless others.

Greek conceptions have been influential throughout the history of Western thought. In the modern era, the idea of truth has been even more strongly influenced by the success of the material sciences where criteria, demonstration and proof all seem easy to achieve. We shall note later that proof turns out to be much more difficult than anyone thought even 50 years ago. Today it would be acceptable to most people to start off with the definition :- "truth is a statement of what is, in fact, the case. The statement (or proposition) has given rise to the idea that truth in this form (propositional) is detached and different from the idea of personal truth. Descartes and the thinkers of the eighteenth century of enlightenment developed a conception of truth in which ideas and judgements of the mind corresponded in an objective way to the realities they represent. Although Descartes himself retained God in his system, his successors made truth independent and autonomous and so came the flowering of rationalism in which reason was exalted above all else. In the reaction of all this, thinkers through to the modern period emphasise the fact that man is not just intellect and reasoning power but a whole personality who doubts and hopes, believes and loves. Personal and propositional truth should not be set against one another; both are necessary.

It seems that, by its very nature, truth is a word or concept with many aspects. Thinking people, reflecting on the created world and their own experience see different aspects of existence. We have already noted different expressions of the nature of truth and when we consider what people accept as true (knowledge) a diversity is immediately apparent. Is existence then, merely a collection of diverse qualities, things, values etc. or is there an underlying unity?

3.3. The unity of truth. Knowledge covers all that is true. Perhaps the word knowledge conjures up a picture of endless shelves of dusty books. It does, or should, include personal knowledge (the things and people you and I know) and the knowledge of God's will. We sometimes contrast knowing about God with knowing God. By 'knowing about' we usually refer to a head knowledge of the facts but lacking commitment. By 'knowing God' we usually mean having a live, committed, experiential relationship with God. In practice, people happily combined intellectual knowledge and personal knowledge. Neither do they lack commitment but the subject of their commitment is not God the creator but some

lesser object or end.

The knowledge available in the world from books and people is immense and fantastically varied. We only need a fraction of it for particular purposes, though it is probably no exaggeration to say that all of it is of significance for some person or purposes; all of it is part of truth (or what is true) in the most general sense. If we believe that God is creator and sustainer of our universe, all truth must in some sense be God's truth. (2) All that can be shown to be true must make sense in the context of God's plan and purpose. Whilst we have to split things up, analyse and simplify to understand, continually approximating to what is true, from God's side these limitations disappear. From where God stands, everything that is, including past and future, must represent a coherent whole. Coherence and consistency, then, are basic criteria of truth. That all truth shall be regarded as God's truth and therefore valid or good or whatever affirmative word you want to use, is an assumption or a presupposition. It cannot be proved or demonstrated any more than the existence of God can be proved or demonstrated. It is, though, a basic perspective which can help us to stand against much falsehood and sloppy thinking in the world of today. We would want to argue, for example, that contrary to truth being relative to particular times and societies, if God and his wisdom are unchangingly the same, then truth should likewise be unchanging and universal. This does not mean that we, any of us, can tie everything together and understand fully but that an absolute standard of truth exists. The universality and the unity of truth are things we only approximate to in our present state of knowledge.

Clearly, this perspective that all truth is God's does not mean that all truth (in the general sense) is either contained in the Bible or is deducible from it. Historical Christianity has believed in the truthfulness of scripture as the inspired word of God but it is not an exhaustive revelation of everything man can know or want to know as true. Human knowledge in mathematics and science arose from other sources than the Biblical writings. They are, nevertheless, valid insights into the created world; perhaps in a way, revelations. "Whatever we understand about nature is ultimately about God's creative wisdom and power. Whatever we do in human art and science ultimately comes from the creative and rational potential that God invested in men by making us in his own image." (3).

The loss of a unified view of knowledge in our day is most obviously evidenced by the distinction between sacred and secular, especially amongst religious people. It is not uncommon for all learning, not directly associated with the Bible, to be dismissed as secular and by inference,

inferior or even worldly. Truth must be truth wherever it is found. The material sciences have discovered a complex world of order and beauty which could never have been imagined centuries ago. This must be part of the fabric of God's world, whether we understand the relationships between scientific knowledge and religious knowledge or not. By the same token, studies in the human sciences, psychology, sociology etc., must also be investigating aspects of God's world and truths discovered are just as much truths of the created order as are truths of the material sciences. It is much more difficult to get at the truth in the human sciences and often controlled experiment, the stock-in-trade of scientific method, is impossible with human subjects.

The point I wish to emphasise is that, viewed correctly, ie. from God's point of view, knowledge and truth must be one whole. As such, there must be an underlying unity in all things that spring from the creative hand of God. It is not a unity of similarity since even on the most superficial level, the world shows us the most remarkable diversity and complexity whether we look at the inner structure of the atom or the relationship between people. The conviction that such a unity exists, acts as a spur to further investigation of the diversity clearly seen amongst people.

to be continued

J. Maycock.

WILL CHRIST RETURN?

Paul Pearson. (from a talk given at the Summer School, July 1981).
From the first epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians (4:13-18).

'But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them that are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds,

to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words',

I would like to begin by making some general points. Many of us were no doubt brought up as Christadelphians. Whether in the family or in the ecclesia we were brought up to believe that Christadelphians had the truth, or, at least that the beliefs which were drummed into us were true beliefs. One of these beliefs was that Christ was to return to earth, and the Second Coming of Christ was considered to be, if not imminent, then very near. This was what the Bible taught, and arguments to support this teaching were marshaled from prophecies in the Old Testament and contemporary political events, particularly regarding Israel.

What one does not appreciate as a child is that adults are not so much expressing a real state of affairs in their preaching but are attempting to convey certain assumptions they hold about life and the nature of the world. Anyone from outside a religious or political group is very perceptive regarding the assumptions made by the members of that group. Believers, on the other hand, because of their commitment, often give the impression that they have closed their minds to arguments which may be as equally valid as the ones which lead them to their beliefs in the first place. Often they may be unaware of the assumptions they make in reaching a particular belief.

In my experience there is a long held assumption in the Christadelphian community that what concerned the first century believers, that is, the Second Coming, is applicable today. The whole of the Second Coming doctrine has been transposed lock, stock and barrel two thousand years to the twentieth century. In other words an implicit assumption has been made that when the Apostle Paul is writing to the Thessalonians, he is writing to us. I have often wondered what sort of a reply a visitor to the Sunday evening lectures would receive if he stood up when the speaker was in full flood and pointed out the apostle was not writing in 1981 but in the first century. The New Testament leaves us in no doubt that the Second Coming of Christ was expected within the lifetime of the early believers. The problem is, that it did not happen.

There have been two thousand years of anti-climax and I think that we have to seriously consider the implications of the Biblical evidence, for, if we applied our critical faculties to anything other than the Bible and this kind of prediction was not realised, at the very least we would wish to ask certain questions: What went wrong? Why was there no Second Coming in the first century? And, as a consequence of this, what can we

say about the nature of inspiration. Presumably what Paul was writing was divinely 'inspired' yet it turned out that he was wrong.

It seems to me that these questions demand an answer but I have yet to find one in Christadelphian writings. I have even to find 'the question' in Christadelphian writings.

Outside Christadelphianism this problem has, of course, long been recognised. Six years before the notorious 'Honest to God' John Robinson's book 'Jesus and his Coming' appeared. This book was republished in 1979, with very little changed. For a Christadelphian this is not an easy book to read since Robinson makes certain assumptions about the Biblical material which would be unpalatable to those who take issue with modern scholarship.

Robinson argues that the Parousia - or Second Coming - was not part of Jesus' expectation, but was an invention of the early Church, sometime between AD30 and AD50. Although Jesus shared the Jewish expectation of the Last Things we believed that the Indication and visitation were fulfilled in his own ministry and shortly afterwards. Robinson takes very much the view that things had not worked out as expected, that there was a tension in the early church, and that this was resolved by a compromise: part of it has taken place and part of it had not, the Christ had come and yet would come. Robinson follows in the tradition of C.H.Dodd seeing in the parables of the Kingdom not so much a 'realised eschatology' as an 'inaugurated eschatology'. In simple language his argument is that the future is now, and perhaps Robinson's views on the Last Things are best described in a book called 'In the End God' (1968) (part of which first appeared in 1950 and was written in the early 1940's - Robinson's earliest essay in the field of theology).

.....the same principles must govern consideration of the eschatological myths. The point of reference from which they start is the present. All the elements in the myth are first and foremost descriptions of 'present' realities within the life of the New Age. The Second Coming has happened in the return of Christ in the Spirit; the Resurrection of the Body has occurred in the putting on of the new man in the Body of Christ; the Millennium has been inaugurated in the reign of Christ in his Church on earth; the Anti Christ is a present reality wherever final refusal meets the Christian preaching; the Messianic Banquet is celebrated whenever the wine is drunk new in the Kingdom of God; Satan falls from heaven as each man decides for the Gospel, and in the finished work of Christ the Prince of this world has been judged; the Last Judgment is being wrought out in

every movement of choice and decision: Christ is all in all, since all things 'have been' reconciled in him.'

These arguments will sound strange, if not heretical to Christadelphian ears. I have introduced them to indicate that even if we do not agree with their conclusions New Testament scholars have tried to grapple with the problem of the failure of Christ to return.

To return to the problem at hand : How do we come to terms with the fact that Christ did not return as expected? There is, undoubtedly in Christ's own preaching, a sense of urgency : the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. There are also certainly some curious statements by Christ: 'But when they persecute you in this city flee into another; for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come' (Matthew 10 v.23). What does that mean?

Similarly before the Transfiguration : 'Verily I say unto you There be some standing here which shall not taste of death 'till they see the Son of Man Coming in his Kingdom (Matthew 16 v.28) and 'there be some of them that stand here which shall not taste of death 'till then have seen the Kingdom of God come with Power' (Mark 8 v.1). These verses are often explained by reference to the Transfiguration which follows - the question is whether the Transfiguration really does justice to what Christ is saying.

It may be that if we abandoned some of our preconceptions we may find that some of the more enigmatic comments in the New Testament which tend to be glossed over may afford new insights.

Theology used to be called the queen of the sciences. Every science needs a good theory, and it seems to me that what is needed here is a conceptual framework which embraces the inconsistent and disparate elements of the New Testament record.

What I have so far outlined may seem a counsel of despair. Just as the hopes of the early believers were not realised so our faith could be weakened: Christianity has left us not with a solution, but a problem.

If however the Christian gospel is anything, it is a gospel of hope. What I would suggest is that the point of religion is, it seems to me, the fact that someone, at a particular point in time, rose from the dead.

There was a conquest over the human condition - over pain suffering mortality - the thralldom of sin. This was a unique event in human history

and since that time men throughout the ages have been trying to make intellectual sense of it. We can say with the benefit of two thousand years of hindsight that it was such a momentous event, with such far reaching implications that for Christ to return only a few years from his resurrection would surely have weakened its significance. Perhaps, in that sense, the Apostles Paul and Peter were too close to the event to appreciate its meaning. This was not just some little local difficulty for Pontius Pilate but an event of cosmic significance, encompassing the past as well as reaching into the future.

In order to make coherent sense of some apparent inconsistencies it is important not only to be aware of the historical context in which the writings appeared but to be aware that human beings - not angels, or robots, wrote the Bible. Human beings learn by experience they develop in their thinking and are likely to change as they get older. The apostle who wrote to Timothy was expecting not so much the imminent return of Christ as the crown of righteousness. Over the life span of a Christian the emphasis of the Christian message may have different effects; an increasing awareness of one's own mortality may overrule an expectancy for the Second Coming.

It may be argued that just as the Apostle Paul was learning over the course of his life, so also was Jesus of Nazareth learning from his Heavenly Father. Some of the difficulties relating to Christ's teaching of the imminence of the Kingdom may be interpreted in this light; could it be that early in his ministry Jesus believed that quite literally the Kingdom would come, if the Jews had accepted him.....? But they did not and salvation was made available through his death - to the Gentiles, to you and to me. This line of reasoning suggests that what actually occurs is dependent on the response of individuals to the message. Is there then running through theological statements regarding the future a sense that although events are predetermined they are also conditional?

We have the same problem regarding predestination and freewill and it may well be that the Kingdom of Heaven and the Second Coming are subject to the same tension. Both may have occurred if certain elements had been present in the responsiveness of either firstly the Jews, or secondly the early Church.

When we come to the Book of Revelation that tension is quite marked: 'The Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto him to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass'. Note these things are shortly to come to pass. They are written to seven churches to be understood

by the seven churches in the historical context in which they were written. Is it therefore legitimate to take the Book of Revelations to be some kind of chronological guide to human history for the next two thousand years? One of the possible reasons why this Book is so subject to numerous interpretations is that it can only be understood in terms of the Jewish apocalyptic language of the time. Telescoped into it are his visions of the end of the world, which, as we have seen, was an event urgently expected.

But what of the last two thousand years? What of this protracted period of anti climax? Millennialism and expectations of the Second Coming have not been confined to Christadelphianism. Why do certain episodes in history lend themselves to an expectation of the Second Coming more than others? Sociologists might argue that the concept of socio-economic deprivation leads men to project their own unfulfilled aspirations on to some future golden age. Christadelphianism has been in existence for a century and it seems that it is only natural for a community which preaches the imminent return of Christ to lose a certain amount of impetus as well as credibility when events do not work out in the way anticipated. Jesus promised his disciples the comforter, the contemporary preoccupation of Christadelphians with the Holy Spirit may parallel the disappointment felt by the early Christians when Christ did not return - and signify a turning inwards towards a more mystical awareness - to an insistence that Christians have eternal life now - almost that the Kingdom of Heaven is within you. The signs certainly seem to be there, but how much religious beliefs are a product of social processes which we only dimly perceive and how much they have 'a reality' of their own is a critical question which may never be answered this side of eternity.

Paul Pearson.

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SALVATION IN PAUL

The Lost Condition of Man

To understand Paul's doctrine of Salvation it is first necessary to understand his concept of man and the terminology he uses to describe him. Paul uses many terms to encompass man's existence as a whole person or in his parts. To list the principle ones - Soma (body) Psyche (soul) Kardia (heart).

Rudolph Bultmann (1) has made an exhaustive analysis of these terms which we will endeavour to summarise.

Soma (body)

This is the most comprehensive term which Paul uses to characterise man's existence. Paul cannot conceive even a future existence without a 'soma' (albeit so different a Soma to the present one. This view contrasts with the ideas of some of those in Corinth who denied the resurrection (Gnostics?)

Thus - The Christian must present his 'whole person' (somata) as a living sacrifice (Rom.12:1) but 'Soma' also encompasses the corporeality of man. Paul describes scars from maltreatment as marks upon his soma (Gal.6:17). He regards the unnatural lust of homosexuality as a dishonouring of the soma (Rom.1:24)* At the resurrection the Christian hopes for a transformation to a Spirit - ruled soma as distinct from this present natural (psyche) soma. (1 Cor. 15:44).

Psyche (Soul)

Paul uses the term 'inner man' in Rom. 7:22 and in II Cor. 4:16 he contrasts it with the 'outer man' that is the physical body which is perishing. Does he identify the 'inner man' with any other of his terms? Psyche (soul) is used with Soma and Pneuma (spirit) to designate man in his entirety (1 Thess. 5:23) - However Bultmann remarks soul occurs relatively infrequently in Paul (6 times only) -

"He does not set body and soul in opposition to each other. Just as Paul does not know.....the conception of the immortality of the soul".(2)

It carries the meaning of life, lifeless instruments are classed as 'soul-less' (1 Cor.14:7). We cannot therefore in Paul's usage identify Psyche with the

* Other examples of Paul's usage of Soma - Rom. 6:12, 1 Cor.12:27, 1 Cor. 9:27.

inner man.

Pneuma (spirit)

When Paul speaks of the 'pneuma' of man he does not mean some higher principle within him... but simply man's 'self' ". Bultmann (3). In 1 Cor. 2:11 - "For what man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man which is in him?" Pneuma here is consciousness. In Rom.8:16 the divine Spirit "bears witness" to our spirit that we are God's children that it makes us conscious of it. It is apparent therefore that the meaning of pneuma departs from that of psyche and approaches that of nous. (mind).

Nous (mind)

Bultmann remarks that by 'nous' in Paul...." is meant, not the mind or intellect as a special faculty, but the knowing, understanding, and judging which belong to man as man and determine the attitude that he adopts. For example - as the opposite of speaking in a 'tongue' (glossalalia) Paul speaks of speech 'with the understanding' (nous) - namely, intelligent and understanding speech. 1 Cor. 14:14-15 illustrates this well.

For if I pray in a tongue (glossa) the spirit (pneuma) of me prays but the mind (nous) of me is unfaithful. What therefore is it? I will pray with the spirit, I will pray also with the mind'.

Examples of the use of nous - Rom. 12:2 exhorts "Be transformed by the renewal of your mind - Not a relearning but a renewal of the will. Rom.14:5 "Let everyone be fully convinced in his own mind". Bultmann says that the full meaning is to be found in Rom. 7:23 -

"But I see in my members another law at war with the law of my 'nous' - The term takes up the term 'inner man' or 'inmost self'. The 'nous' therefore is man's real self in distinction from his soma'.

Zoe

Bultmann observes - "the concept Zoe (life)....denotes the life that is man's in the nature of the case when he has 'psyche' - Man is given natural Zoe by God...which finds its end in death". However, Zoe (supernatural life) is also conferred upon man (the man who is accounted righteous). In a similar manner Paul, we remember, also uses Soma (body) both for the natural body and the eternal body.

Cardia

Bultmann says that Paul uses 'cardia' (heart) in the same sense as he uses nous to designate the self as a "willing planning intending self". In II Cor. 3:14 mind and heart are paralleled. Just as 'nous' can be detestable hardened blinded or corrupted (Rom. 1:28, II Cor. 3:14, 4:4, 11:3) so can 'the heart' (Rom. 1:21, 2:5, 16:18) and as the 'nous' must be renewed (Rom. 12:2) so must 'the heart' be illuminated (II Cor. 4:6).

Sarx

In O.T. anthropology sarx (flesh LXX) was completely neutral - 'All flesh is grass...'. In Paul it can have this meaning also. Rom. 4:1 - Abraham - our forefather according to the flesh. 'Jews' are Paul's kinsman according to the flesh. Thus it is stressing the natural side of man. However as Paul is convinced of the fallen state of man he also associates flesh with sin. 'In the flesh' is a state of reliance on Man rather than on God. Thus Paul enquires of the Galatians - Having begun in the Spirit are you now perfected in the flesh? When the self, which is distinguished from the soma is open to God's influence it is spirit ruled; when the self is opened to the influence of sin then the 'soma' becomes Sin-ruled, the two stand in antithesis. Because of sin sarx in one sense becomes a sinful power at enmity with God. Sarx and sin become almost interchangeable. Therefore Paul cries "Who will save me, from this 'soma' of death (Sin-ruled self)?" (Rom. 7:24) and - "So then I myself with the mind (nous) serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. (Rom. 7:25).

Finally, the 'works of the flesh' are :- fornication, impurity, indecency, idolatry, sorcery, quarrels,^a contentious temper, envy, fits of rage, self ambition, dissensions, party intrigues, jealousy, drinking bouts, orgies and the like. (Gal. 5:18-20 N.E.B.)

The University of Sin

Any theology of Pauline salvation must begin with the premises that man is not a free being, though the opportunity of his freedom exists, the powerful influence of his bitter enemy Sin has dragged him down and rendered him a 'fallen creature' - thus all men are the subjected slaves of their overlord Sin (Rom. 3:19, 23; 6:16; 7:6).

Man's goal is life, but - 'the very commandment which promised life, proved to be death for me, simply because this was the inevitable wage of the taskmaster Sin (Rom. 7:10; 6:23). Salvation is the realisation of that destined goal of 'life' and selfhood which are God's will for man and man's own real intention. Now is it then that man has not achieved his own ideal and God's

creative purposes for him? In a word man has encountered Sin. To explain man's dilemma Paul finds it necessary to give an account of the origin of death - this he does through the figure of Adam.

Paul described the natural man in two categories. He argues that the world is a creation and as such is limited and transitory, therefore man is weak, as a creature. The world is fallen from God and as a result is guilty. This implies that the world has been created good. Man does justice to this by acknowledging the Creator. (4). When Sin mishandles the good world It makes an idol of it instead of worshipping its creator - this is the argument in Romans, where Paul describes the depravity of abandoned man; 'God gave them up' (Rom.1:24,26,28) because 'they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator' (1:25). The nett result was that they abandoned themselves also to the passions of the sarx (1:18-32) Man surrenders to the demons of this aeon and becomes their victim - they, like Sin, have no power except what they can exercise through captive man. Though Christ has annihilated these powers the presence of Sin is still very real. Though Paul personifies Sin, he does not explain its effect, or defeat by demonology Sin is not the individual failure against the individual command, but a trans-subjective power - hence the singular form. Sin means that I stand in an environment which I can no more break out than I can from the state of being given over to death (5). Sin, for Paul, was a power that stood alien to him, which could dominate him, but was not fully able to contain him within its clutches - otherwise he would be a subject pre-determined to sin, controlled by fate and therefore without responsibility. Sin was a universal power which held Greeks - who worshipped the creature, and Jews, who transgressed the Law and made it the means of boasting, in captivity. Paul taught, that 'Sin came into the world by sinning'. He expounds the cause and continuance of sin in Romans (5:12-21 - 7:7-25), firstly by describing the situation of humanity, and secondly, the situation of the individual man; sin, how it entered the world; sin as it enters us. The sin of all men is attributed to the misdeed of Adam:

"Therefore as sin came into the world through one man
and death through sin....." (5:12)

The point being made here is that sin is inherited, and that man's death is as a consequence to one event of the past;

"One man's trespass led to condemnation for all men." (5:18)

"One man's disobedience many were made sinners." (5:19)

Paul has avoided the Gnostic tendency of seeking an original cause behind Adam's sin, Adam's transgression itself was the original cause (7:7f).

In an entirely different theological argument, Paul reaches a different conclusion from this Adam - typology Adam was a living soul (psyche), earthly and non-spiritual (1 Cor.15:45), therefore he could not be expected

to perceive God's will (1 Cor.2:14), because it is spiritual (Rom.7:14); Adam was doomed to death because he was made of 'dust', now, if death is the punishment for sin he must have been made of sinful nature (1 Cor.15:47) and death was his allotted portion irrespective of deed - here we must not assume that death always refers to the natural end of physical life. For Paul sin came by sinning. However, Bultmann reminds us that the theme of the Roman text is not of the origin of sin, but of the origin of death, or rather, the negative aspect of a positive theme is, the Christian hope (6). But here lies a problem, why should man feel guilt in himself if he was not personally responsible as with Adam's transgressing? And where is God's justice in condemning all men to sin? Paul moves on to include all mankind under sin because men have followed Adam's course;

".....and so death spread to all men because all men sinned." (Rom. 5:12)

Adam is the point in time at which sin entered the world; through him sin has continued to work in all men - Adam's children. Adam is the representative figure through which all men become identified when they take over his act in their own lives. Paul next enters an ambiguous exposition in history. Having already laid the principle that there is no sin without law:

"Where there is no law there is no transgression." (Rom.4:15)

And after having reasoned that man is punished as a consequence of his own sin, he is faced with a historical problem, namely, the Law was implemented by Moses long after Adam's transgression - as every Jew would attest, and yet, man was obviously dying before Moses' time: Paul acknowledges the problem;

"Sin (and its culminating effect of death) indeed was in the world before the Law was given,.....Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses." (5'13f).

The difficulty is resolved by the statement:

".....but sin is not counted (imputed) where there is no law." (5:13).

Bultmann addresses the problem, "What sort of sin was it if it did not originate as contradiction of the Law? And how can it have brought death after it if it was not 'counted'? Added to which, what possible meaning can 'sin not imputed' have if man still has to die? The only possible answer is to regard the death of "yet death reigned" (5'14) as physical cessation, and contrast this with "the wages of sin is death" (6:23) which may be continued cessation - oblivion. Though this is not a very satisfactory Paul stands by his earlier principle of the law for the existence of sin - he does not interject the forbidding command (Gen.2:17) to Adam as a forerunner to the Law (or any subsequent commands made by God in the Pentateuch prior to the Law). When however, Paul comes to continue this theme he ignores O.T.history and lays down a different principle; it is not the law that brings forth sin, sin, already present, is made active by the law"; (4).

"I was alive once apart from the law, but when the commandments came, sin revived and I died.....For sin finding opportunity in the commandment, deceived me and by it killed me."
(7:9-11) (5:20)

What limits any systematic theology of sin for Paul, is that his real interest is to give an account of death's origin and its subsequent inheritance for all men. The model of primal man and the fall (Bultmann sees as Gnostic influence (5) serves Paul's purpose only to set in antithesis to the obedience of Jesus Christ, his free gift and his reign in life. This life is not future, mythical or apocalyptic. "Death is not exhausted in the physical process of dying. It is the manifestation of loss of self.(Conzelmann 6) Christ liberates man from sin. Christ's obedience was not to bring about an inevitable effect as the text might imply;

"Then as one man's trespass led to condemnation to all men,
"so one man's act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men." (5:18).

Christ brought the possibility of life, for those who have faith;

".....those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness.....etc" (5:17)

".....many will be made righteous (5:19)

In parallel form, we may conclude that Adam - as the means of sin's entry - brought the possibility of sin to mankind. "A possibility that does not become reality until the individuals become guilty by their own responsible action." (Bultmann (7)

It is clear that sin, for Paul, meant failure to observe the law - as a Jew this he understood to be the Law of Moses the Torah.

D. Lines.

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- (5) Bultmann R . op.cit. p.174.
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ERRATUM

The last issue No.63 was wrongly dated 1981/2. It should have been
1981/1.

STUDY

There is no substitute for reading the Bible carefully - A university theologian was heard to say "I make my students read the N.T. in Greek - It is the only way to get them to read the N.T.!" Having read the Bible however we must not be satisfied in leaving matters there - Why not? - Well - by reading the Bible once or twice we are at least acquainted with the general background. We shall have noticed any plain statements regarding, say, our life now or our future destiny. Such observations may have been in line with our preconceived ideas or indeed they might have conflicted with them, but what we may be quite sure of is that even with a simple reading we shall be clear in our minds of the general tenor of Christ's teaching and in particular of the nature of the life that Christ would have us lead and again the relationship and care, which God has for his children. However many questions will remain largely unanswered. What did Jesus mean by the Kingdom of God? What is the nature of our future destiny? What is it of us that survives death? How did the early church formulate their creed? What was its concept of Jesus and indeed its concept of God? To answer these questions needs study.

Many may say this is too difficult. The O.T. was written in Hebrew and the N.T. in Greek. The author of this article only knows the Hebrew alphabet and a smattering of Greek. Though he cannot claim to be a theologian he does feel he is a student and has profitted thereby.

It is no doubt advantageous to know the original languages in which the Bible was written but in lieu of this we have many aids for which we should be very grateful to the devoted theologians and dedicated linguists of ancient languages that have made their knowledge available to us. What are these aids?

First the concordances of the Bible wherein are listed alphabetically all the occurrences of a particular word in the Bible. Cruden's is the most well known but Young's and Strong's have advantages in that under each English word is listed the various occurrences broken down under each Hebrew or Greek original word. Thus under hell we have in Young's Concordance:

- HELL 1) The unseen state, (Heb-Sheol)
2) Hades, The unseen world (Greek-hades)
3) Valley of Hinnom, Gehenna (Greek-geens)

So that without any knowledge of Greek or Hebrew we have some considerable idea of the original language due to the diligence of Hebrew and

Greek scholars.

But we may go a stage further. Young and Strong's concordances give a few words to translate the original Greek word. However if in English we differ with our friend on the meaning of a word we probably go to a comprehensive dictionary - the Shorter Oxford Dictionary, or if really pressed to the Oxford Dictionary itself in 10 volumes! Likewise to find the meaning of a word in the Bible; having found the original word from the concordances we may look this word up in a Hebrew or Greek Lexicon at the only expense of learning the Greek and/or Hebrew alphabet. This will give us more detail than the concordances illustrating the usage of the word and giving examples.

For Greek, the well known lexicon - Liddell and Scott. This lexicon is for classical Greek as typified by Plato. This does not differ much from N.T. Greek but N.T. Lexicons are also available and give examples of N.T. usage. A useful small lexicon is 'Manual Greek. Lexicon of the New Testament' by Abbott-Smith.

A Hebrew Lexicon is :-

Hebrew-English Lexicon by Langenscheidt.

A further help is a literal word - for-word interlinear translation of the N.T. of which there are several examples:

- 1) The Englishman's Greek New Testament.
- 2) The Emphatic Diaglott.
- 3) The R.S.V. Interlinear Greek-English New Testament.

The latter is probably the most helpful because it is based on a more up-to-date text of the Bible.

May we quote the famous sculler (not scholar!) Steve Fairburn who said 'We may learn to row by racing but we shall never learn to race by rowing' - So let us get down to a study. We have briefly considered basic aids we will pick more up as we go along.

For our subject we have selected the Kingdom of God.

Will some of our readers start us off by writing to the Editor giving their views on the subject and their reasons.

Do not please at this juncton use any commentaries just the Bible,

Concordances, Lexicon and literal translations, or if you are a Greek or Hebrew Scholar then the Greek or Hebrew Text.

Make your own approach but if you want a suggestion - one could start by comparing the O.T. concept with N.T. concept of Christ and Paul.

J.H.Weaving.

