



"Meditate
upon these things;
give thyself
wholly to them;
that thy profiting
may appear unto all"

I Timothy 4:15

Journal
of
Theology

Church of the Lutheran Confession

A MESSAGE TO OUR READERS

Our little journal continues to enjoy favor and a useful place in the theological landscape. The measure of the approval which it receives is not found in a large subscription list; nor is the number of new subscribers growing by leaps and bounds. Indeed, it would seem a bit unnatural if that were the case. The conservative theological stance of the journal does not recommend it to readers in most modern ecclesiastical circles. It is not particularly noted for its tendency to set forth something new and to say what nobody has ever said before. It offers no experimental essays, proposes no new hermeneutics, suggests no novel approaches to old problems. But it does indeed profess to proclaim the old truths in an apostolic spirit of love.

In this pursuit it has found its way to the hearts of readers geographically widespread and diverse in their origins. These look to it for instruction and inspiration, hoping always to hear men speaking as the oracles of God. In this we trust they have had no cause for disappointment, though sometimes perhaps the contents have been a bit meager in quantity or lacking in the polish of professional quality. Such failings, in any case, have not caused the journal to be rejected by those who understand its message with the heart as well as the mind.

That the journal has been permitted so to serve is, under God, due in no small measure to the devoted efforts of its former editor, who held it in his hands at birth and nurtured it until he found it necessary to retire from such labors. May the journal keep faith with him and with its readers by retaining a spirit both evangelical and firm in its Scripture-centered message.

The Pentateuch And Its Critics

Foreword: The following study of rationalistic Biblical text criticism is based largely upon a scholarly treatment published serially in the theological journal Lehre und Wehre, a publication of the Missouri Synod. The series of articles, entitled "Die Neuere Pentateuchkritik," as a modified and extended version of an essay read to a pastoral conference in the State of Missouri in 1902, began appearing in Volume 49 (1903) of that excellent magazine.

Our present effort, therefore, is not to be regarded as an original product. It rests heavily upon the work above mentioned, reproducing most of its sections in free translation, without, however, disturbing the reader by the intrusion of quotation marks or dotted lines. Other sources have also been consulted, such as Keil's "Einleitung ins Alte Testament," Wm. Green's "General Introduction to the Old Testament," and certain materials from the pen of Prof. Aug. Pieper in the Quartalschrift and articles by Edward Young in various publications.

Thus this presentation will offer nothing new, but purposes to make available to our pastors, especially to those who either do not have access to the fine products of our sainted theologians or are unable to read them profitably in the original language, professional material of the highest caliber in this technical area of Isagogics.

Modern negative textual criticism, fathered by Wm. De Wette (1780 - 1849), professor at Basel, flowered in the halls of the brilliant rationalistic theologians of the second half of the 19th Century. Their inventions remain the premises of those who today continue the attack upon the inspired scriptures, and every theologian ought to have a working knowledge of the root system of that poisonous tree which now supports such branches as the demythologizing of a Bultmann and the God-is-dead theology of the "Christian" atheists. It is

likewise highly desirable that our pastors be edified by the sound and thorough refutation with which our fathers met the pretentious and spurious arguments of the learned skeptics. Such work is fundamental and does not become dated by the passing years. It remains legitimate and relevant. It continues to refresh, strengthen, and inform us today.

Gottlieb Harless, the renowned German theologian of Erlangen, Leipzig, Dresden, and Munich, was not the sort of man in whom one would expect to find a poetic nature. But on at least one occasion his confrontation with the architects of so-called higher Biblical criticism inspired him to a reaction in ironic doggerel. Unmetered and without rhyme — since a translation in the original poetic form is well-nigh impossible — we let him speak in our tongue:

Biblical criticism is — what?
 The sundering of a seamless garment;
 The praise of shreds as complete;
 In the manner of a tailor of patchwork dolls
 To darn here and slit there;
 To tear apart whatever does not suit our fancy
 And to fuse with thread and stitch and heated iron
 All that fits into our scheme;
 To label as manifest facts the things that
 Roam about in our brain;
 Rejecting as a figment all which
 Does not conform to the prevailing notion;
 To recommend as digestible for sick stomachs
 The resultant goulash;
 And, ultimately, through pure theological artistry,
 To break one's own neck —
 That is Biblical criticism!

Dr. Harless was not, of course, castigating honest, genuine Biblical criticism, which is a legitimate theological discipline. The word criticism, when used to describe a human approach to the Bible, carries an unfortunate and unintended connotation. This is due to the ordinary meaning of the English word without reference to its derivation. Criticism as here used (*kritike techne*) is an investigation designed to distinguish between the genuine and the spurious and to establish fact. Such a procedure, when applied to the

questions of the origin and history of the Bible as we now have it, is not only proper but required. Certain of the orthodox fathers wrote books on the subject. We have Calov's "Criticus Sacer Biblicus," Carpzov's "Critica Sacra," Bengel's "Apparatus Criticus Novi Testamenti." And Johann Dannhauer in his "Hermeneutica Sacra" explains:

"Satan was not able to remove or set aside the entire Holy Scripture; but he could scatter foul seed between its lines, cast doubt upon the identity of the human writers, corrupt, disfigure . . . alter the reading, disrupt what belongs together, combine what must be kept separate, and thus make an understanding of Scripture complicated and difficult."

A distinction is made between higher and lower Biblical criticism. The latter concerns itself exclusively with the language of the sacred text, investigating its character and endeavoring to restore the original wording in instances where the errors of copyists have disrupted it. This is often called word- or text-criticism. Higher criticism, on the other hand, is occupied with questions of authorship, origin, genuineness, and canonicity of a given book or portions thereof.

In both areas of Biblical criticism Luther expressed himself frequently and deliberately. Commenting on I Peter 4:6, for example, he remarks: "Whether the text has come to us whole or whether something of it was lost, I do not know." (Walch, St. L. IX, 1068) Commenting on the discrepancy in the figures 30 and 20 in I Chronicles 23:3, 27, he says: "The Hebrew text appears to have suffered corruption here [v. 3]; for elsewhere we always find the number 20." (cf. Numbers 4:3) (St. L. VIII, 1719) The figure 450 in Acts 13:20 he considered a copyist's error (St. L. XIV, 600; VIII, 1852), and in the 1541 edition of his Bible he actually substituted the number 350 here. In his marginal note at John 18:15 he suggests: "v. 24 belongs here; the copyist misplaced it when he turned a page, as may easily occur."

Such remarks indicate that Luther recognized the propriety of textual criticism and claimed the right to exercise it. And when he makes his familiar observations about the so-called deuterocanonical books of the New Testament, we recog-

nize judgments which belong into the field of so-called higher criticism. Of Hebrews he claimed that "this epistle to the Hebrews is not of St. Paul's or any other Apostle's authorship." (St. L. XIV, 126) In an opinion concerning the Epistle of Jude he says that "no one can deny that it is a summary or reproduction of II Peter." (St. L. XIV, 131) The Old Testament Apocrypha, which for a thousand years had actually been treated as a part of the Bible, he distinguished from the canonical books, saying that "they are not to be regarded as equal to the Holy Scriptures." Of the Book of Job he stated: "It is both possible and probable that Solomon prepared this Book; for we find his style of expression here as in his other Books." (XXII, 1415)

Nevertheless in concert with our other sainted theologians Luther stands in fundamental contrast to the modern, notorious higher critics. For his first and last governing principle was: *Scripture saith!* And where scripture speaks, the issue is settled, also in the field of higher criticism. When in the Bible the Savior says: "Moses . . . wrote of me," (John 5:46), the fact was established for Luther: Moses *did* write of Christ; and the book which bears Moses's name is not literature bearing a pseudonym or patched together from half a dozen or a dozen sources, as some claim. When the Lord said: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad," (John 8:56) this made it certain for Luther that Abraham was an historic person and not a legendary figure as alleged by almost all the leading liberal critics today. For the Holy Scriptures are *God's inerrant word*, and not one word thereof may be circumvented (" . . . jedes Wort der Schrift muss einem die Welt zu enge machen."

That constitutes the firm, final axiom of Luther and all truly Lutheran teachers; it is the only correct, Lutheran, Biblical attitude. Rather than cite the many, indeed countless, relevant expressions of Luther on this point, we quote here but a single statement in which he enters upon historico-critical questions and lays down his principles. In the introduction to his "Chronikon" of 1541 he says:

"About Eusebius we have fewer complaints to make. He was indeed, as Jerome writes, an admirable and a very careful man. But concerning all the other historians we deplore the fact, and they deplore it among themselves, that they have no sup-

port for the exact reckoning of the years. So I set these writers aside and in this task sought to derive the count of the years from the Holy Scriptures upon which we can and should with confidence and certainty rely. . . . I rest my case wholly upon Holy Scripture. Therefore also it becomes necessary for me, however I regret the necessity, to reject Philo. . . . This matter has led me, not indeed to disregard the historians entirely, but to give preference to the Holy Scriptures. I use the historians in such a way as not to be compelled to contradict Scripture. For I believe that in Scripture the true God speaks, while in the history books good people have written according to their ability and demonstrated their industry and faithfulness as human beings; at the very least, their copyists could have erred." (XIV, 487, 490, 491)

The entire modern school of Bible critics have departed from this principle of Luther and the old Lutheran theologians not only in practice but as a matter of policy. Ever since the liberal French Catholic Richard Simon in his renowned "Critical History of the Old Testament," published in 1678 and shortly thereafter confiscated by church authorities, advanced the blasphemous proposition that Holy Scripture is to be treated exactly like profane literature, it has been the guiding principle for practically all modern higher critics that Holy Scripture is not God's inspired Word, not inerrant and without contradiction, and cannot be decisive for critical issues. It must be made subject to the critics by history and reason.

Herman Strack of Berlin (1848-1922), who is often rated as a positive theologian (cf. Lutheran Cyclopedia, Concordia 1954) expressed himself as follows in an article prepared for Herzog-Plitt's "Realencyclopaedie fuer protestantische Theologie und Kirche": "We must protest against the practice of adducing passages from the New Testament" (namely as evidence for the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch) . . . "for in offering such proof the debate is shifted from a critical-historical to a dogmatic basis."

John Weiss, the well known collaborator in the newer editions of Meyer's Commentary on the New Testament, lends explanatory support to Strack's objection by saying that "in

the process of originating the Gospels the most human and natural methods held sway, methods which have nothing whatever in common with even the mildest doctrine of Inspiration."

What abuse the Holy Scripture, the word of our God, has had to suffer and endure at the hands and mouths of the insolent modern critics operating with such principles may be demonstrated in the field of what is called the higher criticism of the Pentateuch. As space, time, and strength permit, we shall undertake to follow the author of the *Lehre und Wehre* article as he (1) investigates what scripture reports concerning the origin and the human author of the "Five Books of Moses"; (2) reviews historically the conclusions reached by the higher critics of modern times; and (3) examines certain objections which have been raised against the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.

I.

To the question, Who wrote the Pentateuch? Holy Scripture gives a clear and unequivocal answer: *Moses wrote the Pentateuch*. In view of the brashly confident pronouncements of the modern critics who almost unanimously reject this answer it will not be a superfluous exercise to review some of the principal expressions of scripture bearing on this issue.

As the first and most ancient witness we turn to the statements of the Pentateuch itself. Here we find, first of all, the assertion that Moses recorded several outstanding events. When the Children of Israel under Joshua had defeated the Amalekites, the Lord said to Moses: "*Write* this for a memorial in a book." (Exodus 17:14) Here we have the *impulsus ad scribendum*, the express command of God to Moses to write. And although the words say nothing more than that Moses was to report this particular victory over the Amalekites, the addition, "in a book," certainly suggests that Moses recorded also other great works of God. And we do indeed soon read that he wrote of other events. When at Sinai the Lord had given to the people all His laws and statutes and made a covenant with them, Moses "wrote [we are expressly informed] all the words of the Lord" — the laws and statutes just proclaimed and now recorded in the preceding chapters and verses — and then "took the book of the covenant and read in

the audience of the people." (Exodus 24:4, 7) This document was called book of the covenant because it contained the law of the covenant and the report of the covenant-making.

When after the idolatrous worship of the golden calf Jehovah renewed his covenant with Israel through Moses and listed its provisions in detail, He said at last: "Write thou these words; for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel." (Exodus 34:27)

As the two-score years of desert pilgrimage were nearing their close, we are given a detailed summary of Israel's journeys and bivouacs, which had already in part been mentioned in the historical reports of Exodus and Numbers. The summary is introduced with the words: "And Moses wrote their goings out according to their journeys by the commandment of the Lord: and these are their journeyings according to their goings out." (Numbers 33:2)

At the close of Moses's life, when the Lord predicted his imminent death and the subsequent defection of Israel, He commanded both Moses and his successor Joshua to write a hymn which was to stand as a testimony in Israel, and said: "Now therefore write ye this song for you and teach it to the Children of Israel." We find the song as an appendix to the book of the law in Deuteronomy 32.

What is said of the individual outstanding events and occasions in these passages, namely that Moses recorded them in writing, is ultimately also affirmed in regard to the entire written work of five books. Near the close of Deuteronomy, after Moses's farewell and the induction of Joshua, we read: "And Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and unto all the elders of Israel. And Moses commanded them saying: At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, when all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing." (Deuteronomy 31:9-11) After a few further directives have been given, there is another, even more comprehensive statement: "And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, that Moses commanded

the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, saying, Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee." (Deuteronomy 31:24-26)

Since that time the Pentateuch, under the titles "the book of the law," "the law of Moses," "the book of Moses," or simply, "the law," stands established as a fixed entity, is universally known, and is accepted without contradiction in Israel as the work of Moses, as we shall later see.

How does modern Bible criticism come to terms with this self-witness of the Pentateuch? By dismissing it out of hand! And so-called "positive" critics join forces with the negative theologians in this operation. Let us listen to some of their representatives. The afore-mentioned Strack says: "The self-witness of the Pentateuch has been cited without warrant."

(For example, by Keil, who writes: "In Deuteronomy 31:9-11, 24-26, when compared with Deuteronomy 17:18f; 27:2, 3, 8; 28:58, 61; 29:19f, 26; and 30:10, the composition of the entire Thora is ascribed to Moses in clear words. This witness cannot be challenged either by alleged unclarity of statements in Chapter 31 or with the objection that in his speeches to the people Moses could not, before these speeches were recorded, have referred to the book of the law as a completed document; nor can the witness be nullified by the argument that in all these passages 'this law' refers only to that contained in Deuteronomy." {Keil, *Einleitung*, Section 23})

Johann Volck (b. 1835), of Dorpat and Rostock, also considered a "positive" theologian and a noted author and contributor, wrote in an essay entitled "Scripture and Critique": "That the Pentateuch (or better, Hexateuch) grew out of several written sources is undeniable for anyone who reacts objectively to the impression which this history leaves with the reader. Just as certainly it cannot come from Moses. After all, in the form in which we have it the book nowhere claims to have been written by him. Only of certain specific items is it said that he recorded them (Exodus 17:14, 24:4, 34:27; Numbers 33:2; Deuteronomy 31:9, 22, .24)."

Wellhausen's disciple, the radical Cornill (*Introduction to the Old Testament*, Second Edition, pp. 16f) rather patron-

izingly observes: "It is easy to understand how the supposition could arise that Moses is the author of the Pentateuch; but for this the self-witness of the Pentateuch is lacking. Neither by superscription nor by way of introduction nor in any other manner does it raise the claim of Mosaic authorship. It speaks about Moses throughout in the third person, and the manner in which certain parts of the Pentateuch . . . are expressly mentioned as stemming from Moses's pen rather leads to the conclusion that the rest of it is not to be ascribed to him."

Dr. Wm. Nowack of Strassburg (b. 1850), as editor of a commentary devoted to higher criticism, argues a similar point: "Although more weight attaches to the effort of demonstrating Mosaic authorship by reference to certain passages of the Pentateuch (Exodus 17:24, etc.), such passages refer exclusively to isolated materials in the Pentateuch; and it is not legitimate to conclude from these, without further ado, that Moses wrote the *entire* Pentateuch. For it is entirely possible that individual writings of Moses were incorporated in the Pentateuch. . . . It is further contended that the Pentateuch is a composition of carefully designed and well planned structure and that therefore, since portions were written by Moses, the whole document must have come from his hand. But apart from the fact that there is no such careful plan or design evident one must ask whether even a well structured work may not also embody more ancient materials. Finally, it must be realized that the Mosaic authorship is contradicted by the very mention of portions as stemming from his hand. For why should the same not once be said of the whole work? And if it were to apply to the whole work, why should it be explicitly said of some of the parts?"

In more recent years leading negative critics, such as Robert Pfeiffer of Harvard and others, no longer trouble to argue in such detail against the Mosaic authorship. One looks in vain in their writings for precise, explicit, and quotable refutation or denial; for they proceed from the premise that Moses's authorship is a theory long since shattered by their predecessors and thus quite unworthy of further recognition.

It is evident that the arguments against the self-witness of the Pentateuch amount to this, that its references to Mosaic authorship are at best restricted to certain excerpts,

and that the summarizing testimony in Deuteronomy, "When Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book," (Deuteronomy 31:24) refers only to the law contained in Deuteronomy and not to the other four books.

Is such reasoning truly valid? Can the argument prevail? The next instalment will begin with a careful testing of the modern critical position on the touchstone of Holy Writ.

(To be continued)

E. Schaller



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The Editor

PAIDEIA

"DEAL WISELY WITH THEM"

Any educator worthy of the name purposes to deal wisely with the students given into his care. Between the purposing and the accomplishing, however, lies a great deal of ground. Some have thought that they had covered that ground and covered it well only to discover that the words of Goethe's Faust might well have come from their pen:

They call me Master, indeed I am known as Doctor,
For ten years I have led my students by the nose
This way and that, up and down;
Only to discover that we can [have learned] nothing.

How tragic for student and teacher alike to discover that they have spent long years in getting nowhere or in reaping but a peck when rich fields were waiting for the harvesting.

Ever and again educators need to evaluate themselves, their subject matter, and their methods in order that they might deal wisely with their students. This evaluation should begin with a look at the educator by the educator. If he is to deal wisely with the students, it must be the students' welfare that he has in mind and not simply his own welfare. This thought is not quite as obvious as it might seem.

Ever since the days of the pharaoh who uttered the words, "Let us deal wisely with them," yea, even before his time and down to our own day, many there have been and are who see in the words "deal wisely with them" an invitation to exploit others for their own benefit.

Pharaoh spoke the words (Exodus 1:10) when he viewed the increasing number of Israelites in his domain. He feared for his throne and for his future well-being. These people were to be kept at a manageable number that they might work for and not against Egypt and its ruler. Dealing wisely with them simply meant a selfish usage.

The pharaohs are not all dead. One still finds them in the classrooms, in the pulpits, in the positions of control in our day, too. But they should be dead in our CLC classrooms and pulpits. They should die each morning anew with the drowning of our old Adam.

When we, as called servants of the Lord, speak of "dealing wisely with them," it should be with the welfare of the student in mind. It is the thought of the Savior when He says, "I came not to be ministered unto but to minister." It is the thought presented by Luther in Part II of his *Treatise on Christian Liberty*. In that treatise he writes, "A Christian man is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all. . . . A man does not live for himself alone in this mortal body, so as to work for it alone, but he lives also for all men on earth, nay, rather he lives only for others and not for himself. And to this end he brings his body into subjection, that he may the more sincerely and freely serve others." (*Works of Martin Luther*, Philadelphia Edition, Vol. 2, p. 335)

To say that every teacher who is not a Christian teacher is a selfish pharaoh only interested in his own well-being would not be true. There are a good many who would want to deal wisely with their students in honest concern about the students' welfare. There are dedicated educators throughout the world deeply concerned about the future of the younger generation. But interested and concerned though they may be, this interest and concern lacks the solid and enduring foundation of Christ.

The Christian teacher has been renewed by the Holy Spirit to serve his neighbor (his students in this instance) in humble thankfulness for what the gracious Savior has done for him. What a tremendous difference such an approach makes. Here is the foundation for "dealing wisely with them." It is a service rendered by the educator unto the Lord and not unto man. It is a service which hears the gracious promise of the Savior, "Whatsoever ye have done unto the least of these my brethren ye have done it unto me."

R. Gurzel

== PREACHING THE WORD ==

FROM FEAR TO FAITH

Foreword: Last year we were encouraged to buy a small booklet by the above title, highly recommended by our former Book House manager. It was used as the basis for an adult Bible-study class. The material was so immediate in its applications and the response so enthusiastic that it was rearranged and reworked into a series of six sermon studies. Most of the ideas here presented, therefore, are a reworking of thoughts that issued from the powerful pen of the original writer, Dr. D. Martin Lloyd-Jones, preacher and minister of Westminster Chapel in London, England. We think you will agree that the material is worthy of wider distribution and consideration.

I.

The text: Habakkuk 1:1-11

It is not entirely our fault as consumers that we grow increasingly calloused to and suspicious of modern advertising. We have learned to ignore anyone who offers us free the world with the proverbial ribbon wrapped around it. Since, however, we are here dealing with another powerful portion of God's word to men, particularly His free offers and promises, it is no exaggeration to expect infinitely more than anything this old earth can deliver. A thorough ransacking of this Old Testament book will confront every Christian with immediate and "relevant" (the term is not inherently evil) answers to many of life's most persistently elusive questions.

For example: can we be enabled always to accept by faith all of the strange paths down which God directs our lives? Habakkuk presents that kind of faith for the taking in this first text. In the second one, we can contribute to true mental health by learning and showing how to overcome the nervous anxiety that is filling our hospitals and public institutions at an ever increasing rate. We learn further

from this ever modern prophet how to avoid killing off our own faith and with it the life of our congregations. Relearn again how any problem, once placed in God's hands, must be left there for once and for all. Because God is speaking through Habakkuk, we can with a rashness born of confidence in the Lord promise both the answers and the proof.

We proceed making good the first promise, namely, to present that kind of faith, free for the taking, which accepts all the strange paths down which the Lord directs every believer's life. We do so under the theme which an understanding of the text suggests:

TRUSTING IN GOD'S MYSTERIOUS WAYS

The name, Habakkuk, may have been taken from a Hebrew word meaning "to embrace," or it may have come from an Assyrian word for a garden plant, later taken as a name. All we know about the prophet himself is that he lived in Judah; that he was from the tribe of Levi, the temple-servers (in this case having something to do with music in the service); and that he was called by God to be His prophet. Habakkuk's first problem is one that persistently returns to plague and wear down the believer's confidence, that is: the righteous believers in this world appear to be going through a preview of hell, and the unbelieving wicked appear to be getting the best of everything and everyone. Of course, the only overall solution to the believer's life here on earth is stated in the second chapter, v. 4: "But the just shall live by faith." However, it will be in the individual examples of how the just live by faith in all phases of life that we shall take special interest by way of these sermon studies.

The first thing that we must not only learn, but again and again relearn in order to be ever gaining in faith-strength is to trust in God's mysterious ways.

Even God's prophet did not start out with anything approaching an unquestioning trust in God's mysterious ways. His obvious weakness looks so personally familiar. Habakkuk took a long look at what was happening in the world of his day and concluded, finally, that God was not really listening to his prayers. Hear him use the words that have stuck in our own mouths: "How long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear? . . . God, why aren't you listening to me? You made

me your prophet but you don't do anything with my testimony. There are only negative results. Look at most of your chosen people! What do you show me? [And the text records] iniquity . . . spoiling . . . violence . . . the law is slacked . . . the wicked overwhelm the righteous."

The logical end of such complaining is traditionally, "What's the use?" And every time we avoid Christian duty, the life of sanctification, or even join the wicked for a fling or two, aren't we just going the prophet one better in his what's-the-use hopelessness? Aren't these the actions of the selfish and subjective old Adam concluding, for the sake of self-indulgence, that the wicked are right after all and that the Christian's environment must be "broadened" by experience with sin? Isn't every half-hearted response to the call to faith and then good works in effect a way of saying, "Well, God isn't really listening anyway. What can He care or notice about my little faith, lost and hidden away among the earth's billions? Besides, look at conditions in the world today. [Here one may refer to the current upheavals in national as well as local governments and law enforcement.] If God is really listening to my prayers, why are positions of public trust filled with such corruption? The people who get ahead in our town are the 'back-slappers,' the 'lodge brothers,' and the 'boot-lickers.' Remember the old saying, 'If you can't beat 'em, join 'em.'"

When such thoughts arise and begin eating the heart out of our lives of faith, we may do well to recall first how Habakkuk here likewise got himself into the same funk with the same kind of shallow thought. The prophet says in the text, to paraphrase: "God, you don't seem to be doing anything, let alone anything right! Why don't you listen to me, as you promised to do? And if you're listening, why is the world in such a mess and why do you just leave it that way?"

But let us relearn with the prophet to trust in God's mysterious ways, even when He doesn't seem to be doing anything. We say, let us RElearn, because we really have learned better. God shows Habakkuk that the answers to his prayers are already on the way and that He had long ago been preparing a whole nation of people to turn the wicked and rebellious chosen people's world upside down. Recall also those numerous portions of holy writ which so definitely and certainly state

that God is always in complete control, not only locally, but throughout the nations of all the earth. What? We should question whether God is in control after Paul has written: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again. For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory forever." (Romans 11:33-36) What? We should question whether God is in control because our little church body isn't setting the world agog with impressive public ceremonies or by sheer force of numbers, as if God habitually used worldly might instead of the simplest of means to accomplish His purposes? The words of Paul must ring again in our ears and hearts: "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought the things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence." (I Corinthians 1:27-29) Here stand the words of Daniel for our review: "Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are His: And He changeth the times and the seasons: He removeth kings, and setteth up kings: He giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: He revealeth the deep and secret things: He knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with Him." (Daniel 2:20-22) Let us rest assured that our God always has been and always will be in complete control of all creation. That He may *seem* to be doing nothing is *His* business. He *seemed* to be doing nothing during the 120 years of grace allowed to man before the Flood to repent. He *seemed* to be doing nothing during the 400 years since the last Messianic prophecy of Malachi. But the Flood came. And when the fulness of time came for the Messiah, Jesus our Savior was born right on schedule — *His* schedule.

Secondly, let us be reassured to trust in God's mysterious ways when He brings about unexpected answers to our prayers and needs. We, like Habakkuk, usually have in mind a definite course of action for God to take in order to make things right again in our lives. But we just don't know

enough so that we ask for what we *ought* to have. Habakkuk complained about all the violence on every hand. The last thing the prophet was asking for as a solution was *more* violence. But that is exactly how the Lord answered in this case. Punishment was already on the way. God was already preparing the fierce Chaldean nation to overrun Judah and take God's rebellious people into 70 years of destruction and slavery. God says three times to emphasize: "Behold . . . regard . . . wonder marvelously." "Really listen to Me now, because you wouldn't guess and couldn't believe under ordinary circumstances that *I* am behind this solution!" And so it goes in the lives of us all: God may supply answers to our prayers and needs that seem worse than the original problem. God's answers may be totally unexpected. But trust in God's mysterious ways. Thank Him that He is the One in control. He makes no mistakes. Through the best and worst that life offers, His promises stand sure that all must work for the good of them that love Him. Can we believe it? Look at what happened to the Jews who despised His grace. They were overrun by the Chaldeans, that "bitter and hasty" people, fierce, impetuous. It is not at all far-fetched that the Lord could even now be preparing the hordes of people under Communist rule to cleanse what people commonly understand as the Christian church in our day. The Chaldeans "supped up" Judah, the text states — swallowed them up with unbelievable speed. Hardly did they "heap up dust" in order to run over the walls of one Hebrew stronghold than their "mind changed" and they went on to the next one.

But the Chaldeans were no more in control of what God had in mind for the world of their day than the French or Russians or Chinese or Americans are in control of this age. Mighty nations come and mighty nations go. This text almost says: "The bigger they are, the harder they fall." The Chaldeans fell. They conquered so easily and thoroughly that they ended up worshipping their own might. And then they were done. The Medes and the Persians ran over them in turn. So what? So God is in control; trust in His mysterious ways.

He may seem to be doing nothing to solve our problems. He may provide, in His own time and His own way, answers to our prayers that we do not expect and would never dream of. He has strange ways of correcting church and people, but He is in control. Always! And where do we fit into God's scheme

of things? Right in the center. God's world plans are carefully laid out to see us safely through this life of tribulation to the new heaven and the new earth. "Who shall separate us from the love of God?" (Romans 8:11) Far from being unanswered, unheard, or forgotten among the world's teeming population, we are to understand that God has run and shall continue to run all history and all nations in the interest of His children, for *our* eternal good. Trust in Him though His ways be mysterious. "If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:32-32) More personally yet: "The very hairs of your head are all numbered." (Matthew 10:30) Surely our God is in control. As He promised the children of Israel about to enter the promised land of Canaan, so He assures us along the road to our heavenly Canaan: no matter how remote this world of power and might and violence may seem at times from the wondrous still, small voice of God's all-powerful word, "Be strong and of good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God, He it is that doth go with thee; He will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. . . . Fear not, neither be dismayed." (Deuteronomy 31:6-8)

When further doubts assail us as to who is in control here and hereafter, let us read diligently and repeatedly Psalm 37. And then read it still again, trusting in God's mysterious ways.

II.

The text: Habakkuk 1:12-2:1

All the world loves a pragmatist. "If the maneuver results in victory," says the military strategist, "then it's the right move no matter what it takes." "If you have an angle to defeat the opponent," says the shady politician, "then by all means use it; the only thing that counts is the final vote." The world worships success, and how it is achieved can easily be rationalized away. Also the clergyman or church body which comes up with a new and successful method of gathering money and members is lauded and praised until the clamor drowns out the questionable or downright unscriptural method of collection. And so our souls are sick of the means behind almost every "result-oriented" success scheme.

Still, there is such a thing as a good method using wholly upright means which will result in assured success. Perhaps we are too reluctant at times to present the message of God's truth with the authority of assured success. For example, this text presents us with a fine opportunity to present a practical, working method for solving our separate, personal problems. Let us edge ourselves far out on a limb and promise from this portion of scripture God's ways and means for assured success whenever

A CHRISTIAN FACES LIFE'S PROBLEMS

Let us first of all look into the specific problems facing Habakkuk and see how he proceeded. Then let us apply the prophet's problem-solving methods to our own situations.

The point in time during which the prophet's specific problems were current was some 625 years before the birth of Christ. The Jews had first entered their promised land of Canaan about 870 years earlier. During all this time, the history of the Hebrews is one of repeated rebellion against Jehovah. He gave them the land of Canaan, a rich land "flowing with milk and honey," instructed them to serve the true God and await the Messiah, whose sacrifice would pay the world's debt of sin and guilt. But the Hebrews were human beings whose interests became more and more anchored in this world and less and less in the Person and world to come. God sent judges to reprove this people for their unbelief and for mixing up the true religion with the false. But the judges went largely unheeded, or they were killed. God's people returned His love with idolatry and murder. Not content with God's rule among them, they demanded kings like the nations around them. Faithful kings, like David and Solomon, were good ones. But some who followed were not so good and compromised with the surrounding heathen religions. Finally Canaan was split in two, with each kingdom having its own ruler. Less than a hundred years before Habakkuk wrote, the Northern Kingdom was conquered and never heard from again. But the Southern Kingdom did not learn from the history of their northern neighbors. Everywhere Habakkuk looked at what were supposed to be God's people and found among them only wickedness, violence, iniquity, strife, and contention. God's solution, referred to previously, was to make use of the

heathen Chaldeans to purify His people. The Chaldeans would overrun Israel and take them captive as though God were not in control at all. But in God's own time, the Medes and Persians, and then the Romans, would take over in turn, and Judah would return from captivity, and the Savior would be born in Bethlehem of Judea just as God had planned all along.

But Habakkuk, as do we all, had fleshly problems with divine solutions. The powers of the world go on as though there were no God, as though only weak women, small children, and gullible fools believe that there is a divine purpose behind all of history. Is there, then, a God to whom a Kosygin and a Mao Tse-tung and an LBJ are all subject? "There is indeed and without a doubt," answers the prophet implicitly. Must these all serve God's purposes and design? "They most certainly must and do," testifies Habakkuk. God is in control. "But," he asks, "why does God appear so weak and as though He has little to say in the face of the seemingly invincible Chaldeans?" The way in which Habakkuk goes about answering this problem-question is a method of approach which will help every one of us with every human problem. The reader will recognize here a rather far-reaching, if not almost rash, promise. But let us hear what the prophet's problem-solving method is and put it to the test.

What do *we* do when problems enter our lives? Our text has some very concrete suggestions about how to proceed. The first thing that Habakkuk did was to stop and think. If only we would first stop to think like Christians before we make some snap judgment, before we draw conclusions that are so obviously based on blind, human foolishness. For example, a believer struck with illness must not quickly conclude that God is angry with and punishing him. It is a memorable experience and a bit of a shock to scan the Psalms and note how many writers begin, *not* by thinking, but simply by listing and complaining about their problems . . . until they seem to catch themselves and take the next step.

That second step is to get away from the unsure footing of the immediate problem itself and to go back to solid footing in the more familiar territory of divine truth. Read for yourself how so many of the psalmists do what this holy writer directs. Note carefully the prophet's procedure.

When he begins to think that God must not be in control of the mighty, heathen Chaldeans, he retreats first to solid ground. "Art thou not from everlasting?" he asks. "I know this," says Habakkuk, in effect, "God is eternal; the Chaldeans are not. Worldly power comes and goes, but God is always the same."

Another solid truth away from the problem itself the prophet recalled as he said of the Lord, "Mine *holy* one." He knows God is holy, without sin or error; therefore he concludes that "What is happening here must be right and just."

The prophet also recalls the mighty power of God: "O *mighty* God." In doing so he continues to reason correctly: "Can the almighty God be overthrown or intimidated by the Chaldeans, or anyone else for that matter? Ridiculous!" is the logical answer, the only answer. There must be another conclusion to draw.

Habakkuk also remembers the solid truth of God's faithfulness: "We shall not die," he says. "How can the lives of the true children of Israel end when God's agreement which is to be fulfilled through them must stand forever?" The Savior had yet to be born of this people; they could not therefore simply be destroyed like the Northern Kingdom. God is faithful; though the believer must suffer here on earth, and even die, yet God's promise is to those who believe in Christ Jesus for free forgiveness of all sin. Death for us does not last; life with God is our eternal portion.

Now, what has Habakkuk accomplished by getting away from the vexing problem of God's not seeming to be in control? He is reassured and seeks another answer because He knows that God is eternal, holy, almighty, and faithful. He cannot be showing weakness, therefore; God is not being defeated. He is carrying out the judgment and correction of His people. And notice, in this case, that Habakkuk arrives at the answer to his problem by getting back on to solid ground, the solid ground of eternal truths about which he was already sure and certain because it was specifically laid in God's holy word.

But the prophet had still another problem. He could not see how the holy God could allow the horrors of war. He therefore returns immediately again to surer ground. Doubts cannot support faith. He reminds himself in v. 13: "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on ini-

quity." Or, to paraphrase once more: "Whatever else I *don't* know, I *do* know this, that God detests evil!" But as yet he had no answer, either, for his question. What does he do — throw up his hands in disbelief? No! Does he conclude that, since he cannot figure it out, his faith must be good for nothing? No! He does the very opposite: "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved." The prophet says, "I will take the unsolvable problem to the Lord, leave it with Him, and watch and wait patiently and attentively for His answer."

It is at this point that we fail so miserably, you and I. We recognize at times that we have a problem that has no *obvious* answer even when we go back to the solid truths of scripture and search. We then take it to the Lord in prayer. But we fail to watch and wait for *His* answer. We are quick to desert our Lord who has made us and nurtured us and brought us this far in a life of faith, and we conclude by actions if not words: "God, you are taking too long. Therefore I conclude that you either cannot or will not ever give an answer."

But Habakkuk shows the right way to proceed. He brings his problem to the Lord. And then he climbs a tower, so to speak. He gets out of the middle of the problem and up into a tower, high above it all, and waits, and watches. What for? To see and hear better the answer that the Lord most surely will supply in His good time.

Dealing with a problem that is causing us much anxiety should be like going to the hospital to get an infected appendix removed. The surgeon takes it out and puts it in a jar, and we go home and recuperate. But we really can't complain about another attack of appendicitis as soon as we get home, because there it is in the jar; it's out! Likewise, when we "cast all our care upon Him," we must not try to take the whole infected problem back again and bear the whole burden as if God did not actually remove the infection to allow us to regain our strength. Neither is Habakkuk saying, "When you have a problem, stick your head in the sand and it will go away." He says, rather, "Take it to God and leave the burden with Him. Then get up in your tower above the problem and watch the horizon very carefully and patiently for any movement, any sign of God's answer. Expect His answer at any moment."

And let us not forget to take our scriptures along with us into the tower. The commonest way in which God answers us is directly through His holy word. That is why He encourages us to "Search the Scriptures!" God may, through the word, give us some spiritual insight that can solve the whole problem on the spot. Or He may give us the answer to our problem by ordering our day-to-day lives in such a way that we gradually learn to understand God's will and way in a particular matter.

So we have questions and problems about the biggest issues of life: birth, marriage, death, eternity, and so on. Habakkuk speaks to us from another age today, proclaiming with God's authority that all our questions and problems are answerable. Here is the working method again:

1. Stop to think. Snap judgments usually result in unscriptural solutions.

2. Do not start with the problem when you are looking for a solution. Start by going backwards! Go back to the solid footing of the eternal truths about which you are sure, such as the eternity, the holiness, the almightiness, and the faithfulness of God. By this time you may have already gained your answer and solution. If not,

3. Take the problem to the Lord and await His answer watchfully and patiently. His answer comes most commonly through consistent and persistent searching of His word, and through the insights that such studies bring about. God's answers and solutions sometimes come very gradually; He may order our day-to-day lives to give us more and more light until we at last see clearly. But this much is certain: He promises answers and aid, perhaps immediately, perhaps after some time and education, perhaps fully only in eternity. But *He will always answer*, and His answer will always be right and just.

If we will use Habakkuk's problem-solving method because it is God's method, we will know, without a doubt, what St. Paul calls that "peace of God which passes all understanding."

B. J. Naumann

the thoughts of a creator are becoming fewer and fewer. The teaching of responsibility to a Higher Being, to a personal God eternal in the heavens, is passing by the board and is being supplanted with a teaching which makes man himself the deity whose superior mind has risen above the creation story and above the record of Adam and Eve, and the fall in the Garden of Eden. All of this is just too much for the modern mind with its space-age conditioning to accept. In the midst of all we do indeed need to be reminded to give thought to our creator, and to do it in the days of our youth. If we turn away from such remembrance then the result will be that the members of our body (created by God) will be given to the activities of lust after the fashion of the world, our eyes will be trained upon those things which give pleasure to the flesh, our minds will be filled with thoughts of self-aggrandizement and greed for material prosperity. This ends in destruction and dissolution with despair everywhere in evidence. It is all vanity. It is empty and void. It has no shape or form. There is no goodness in it.

From such enticing things turn away and let not the vigor of youth deceive you into believing that such fleshly thoughts are of any substance in the fabric of life. They end in tatters and rags. The true abiding values are those which have their center in the true remembrance of the creator. And this is possible alone through Jesus Christ of whom it is said, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." (John 1:1-5, 14) Only through Him will you have the correct perspective and preserve the right view of life. You will know that the only worthwhile service is one which extols the praises of Him who saved and redeemed poor sinners that they might turn to Him and be His own. The only worthwhile thing is to live unto Him, to conform our lives to His will by a godly conduct and to call upon others to remember their creator. God give grace to all in this call to remembrance. Amen.

== PANORAMA ==

VATICAN II AND THE JEWS

A PROBLEM IN AGGIORNAMENTO

It is strange how the word *aggiornamento* has become almost the trademark of the recent council at Rome. It is not from the formal and official Latin, but rather from the colloquial Italian. The thought was not new. Pope John had already expressed it when with lofty idealism he spoke in his opening address of his confidence that from the actions of the council the church would become greater in spiritual riches, gaining the strength of new energies therefrom and, by *bringing herself up to date* where required, would meet and solve the new issues with which it was faced. He spoke of the new conditions and new forms of life introduced into the modern world as having opened new avenues to the Catholic apostolate.

This was the keynote of the pope's opening address. Whether intended or not, the words raised high the hopes of those bishops, chiefly from America and Northern Europe, who believed the time had come to revise the image of a church that had fallen woefully behind the times and was encumbered by a mass of medieval customs and ideas, not only in its doctrine and practice, but even in its scholarly method. To bring the church up to date, this was the hope of the group. Had not the pope used those very words? Yet the idea of change was bitterly opposed by others, by the Spanish and particularly the Italian bishops, stubborn in their defense of the status quo. So the issue was joined. It was the traditional struggle between conservatives and liberals. And so, after two months, the first session ended "without any completed results" on December 8, 1962. Six months later John XXIII died, and a new pope, Paul VI, was elected, who opened the second session of the council September 29, 1963.

The new pope had inherited a sticky situation from his free-wheeling predecessor, and for a time his statements were vague and noncommittal. But when it became clear that the demand for change was not to be denied, the papal attitude seems to have changed into a rather graceful acceptance of the inevitable. The Italian term which had endured the buffetings of controversy to which the solemn Latin of John could not be exposed now gained recognition, was given respectability and supplied with a new definition when at the final session Pope Paul said: "From now on *aggiornamento* will signify for us a wisely undertaken quest for a deeper understanding of the spirit of the council and the faithful application of the norms it has happily and prayerfully provided." Thus dignity was restored and Rome's face saved.

So Vatican II becomes the council of the *aggiornamento*, of the updating. There have been some attempts to call it a reform council, but that is hardly the word. The one thing that might properly come under this latter heading is the new attitude toward scripture that has developed among Catholic scholars. But that was not brought about by the council. It was already there. The council merely recognized and sanctioned what had come to pass without its help. In a time that has witnessed a proliferation of Bible translations, Catholics had also become increasingly interested and involved. The work of Ronald Knox in England was outstanding, a retranslation of the Bible from the Latin vulgate in the light of the Hebrew and Greek. Members of the Catholic Biblical Association of America had already produced the CCD (Confraternity of Christian Doctrine) translation. Other changes are to be seen. No longer do Catholic scholars expose themselves to the devastating criticism Melsnchthon could aim at them for their quoting I Samuel 2:36 as a proof passage for the withholding of the cup in the sacrament. Even though the old errors had not been abandoned nor the parallel authority of tradition renounced, yet the use of scripture as it appears in the documents of the council is of an entirely different caliber, revealing an intensive study of the word, also in its original Greek and Hebrew, as well as a far more pertinent and skillful application of texts to the subject under discussion. It would be a grave mistake to underestimate these new developments. But if we consider the doctrinal content of these documents and the objectives which are there pursued, one can only say that such skill is worthy of a better cause.

Other examples of a new attitude might be cited, such as the permission granted by the council for the celebration of mass in the vernacular. Unless they were hidebound traditionalists, Catholics hearing the solemn words of the liturgy for the first time in their own language must have felt this to be a major step forward, bringing this central phase of their worship truly up to date. Yet the change is purely superficial. The language has been changed, but the thought expressed is still the same. The action is still the action of sacrifice, and is offered as an unbloody repetition of the sacrifice of Christ, trespassing on the sacred ground scripture has reserved for "this man," Christ, of whom it says that "after He had offered *one* sacrifice for sins *for ever*, He sat down on the right hand of God." And again, "For by *one* offering He hath *perfected for ever* them that are sanctified." (Hebrews 10:12, 14) Also the thought of human merit is still there, as well as the intercession of saints, though scripture bids us all to come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:16) What has been changed in the mass is therefore only the form; the substance, in this case the substance of error, is still the same. Rome is simply a prisoner of its own past, and it has added an additional padlock and thrown away the key when the First Vatican Council (1869-1870) confronted the world (even as it affronted many of its own outstanding leaders) with the doctrine of papal infallibility. That was the modern version of Augustine's *Roma locuta, causa finita*. It is the action by which Rome has officially confirmed and committed itself to the vehement anathemas hurled by the Council of Trent against the *sola gratia*, the very heart of the gospel as it was defined by the Augsburg Confession, Art. IV, with its reference to Romans 3 and 4. So Rome has created a situation from which there is no escape except by a total renunciation of its past, including a forthright repeal of the dogma of papal infallibility. Of this Rome hardly seems capable. So the anthropos tēs anomias will remain, until the Lord will deal with him at the brightness of His coming. (II Thessalonians 2:8)

This therefore is the real dilemma of the *aggiornamento*. Just as little as anyone else can Rome with one hand reach out for renewal and with the other cling tenaciously to its past, its tradition, particularly where the latter is so patently wrong. We find a perfect example of this in the council's

"Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions," particularly the section dealing with Judaism and the Jews. Our generation likes to think of itself as tolerant. Intolerance is denounced. Racism is abhorred. All this is carried to a point where tolerance itself becomes intolerant, not only of those who dare to differ, but often even of the truth itself. For our modern tolerance is a superficial thing, after all: witness the manner in which the keen enthusiasm for equal rights for Negroes (when that was a Southern problem) began suddenly to cool when the issue was raised in the North. It does seem to make a difference whose ox is gored!

While the issue is neither sectional nor one that involves the question of color, and while the modern attitude of tolerance has gone far to eliminate any overt manifestations of anti-Semitism, it would be fatuous optimism to conclude that therefore it no longer exists. For the excesses of a Hitler and the stench of Dachau and Buchenwald have produced a strong and widespread reaction against that sort of thing. While the original Henry Ford could still attribute the outbreak of the First World War to the evil machinations of a hypothetical council of elders (Jewish, of course), such sentiments are today voiced only by the most violent agitators. In this respect the ideological climate has changed, and so Rome finds it necessary to bring its image up to date also on this issue. But while the papacy has loved the word ecumenical (witness all the Ecumenical Councils), the ecumenicity currently sweeping the Protestant world is quite another thing. Yet it is popular and the accepted thing, so Rome in its *aggiornamento* must make its bows also in this direction. The Jesuit commentator to this particular declaration puts it well when he speaks of the church as "paying its respects to the spiritual, moral, and cultural values of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam." But the major part of this declaration is nevertheless devoted to a discussion of the Jewish problem. This sensitive subject is approached in the best diplomatic manner. The church "recalls the spiritual bond linking the people of the New Covenant with Abraham's stock." She professes that "all who believe in Christ, Abraham's sons according to faith (cf. Galatians 3:17), are included in the same patriarch's call." The revelation of the Old Testament is acknowledged as having been transmitted by the Jews.

Ephesians 2:14-16 is quoted to the effect that "Christ, our peace, reconciled Jews and Gentiles, making them both one in Himself." But that the apostle is here speaking of believing Jews and believing Gentiles, between whom there is no further wall of partition, that is carefully kept out of the picture. It might have sounded like a discordant note. And finally Romans 9:4-5 is cited, though again nothing is said about v. 6, nor a single line from the rest of the chapter, particularly vv 31-33. The fact that Jerusalem did not recognize the time of her visitation is recorded, also that the Jews did not accept the gospel in large number, that not a few opposed the spreading of it. But all this is tempered by a further reference to Romans 11:28, that "they are beloved for the father's sake." An almost millennialistic interpretation of the rest of the chapter seems to have enabled them to pass that critical point.

Now just one issue remained — the crucifixion of the Savior. Should that be called "deicide"? The question was debated. The very wording was proposed in an earlier draft, but then quietly dropped in the final version: "True, authorities of the Jews and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ (cf. John 19:6); still, what happened in His passion cannot be blamed upon all the Jews then living, without distinction, nor upon the Jews of today. Although the Church is the new people of God, the Jews should not be represented as repudiated or cursed by God, as if such views followed from the holy Scriptures." So the council isolated the responsibility for the death of Christ, restricting it to a few Jews then living. Thus the implications of Matthew 27:25 (His blood be on us, and on our children) are disposed of. Now the way was clear for the statement that "this sacred Synod wishes to foster and recommend that mutual understanding and respect which is the fruit of all biblical and theological studies, and of brotherly dialogues." Now it could be said that "The Church repudiates all persecution against any man [!] Moreover, mindful of her common patrimony with the Jews, and motivated by the gospel's spiritual love and by no political considerations [!], she deplors the hatred, persecutions, and displays of anti-Semitism directed against the Jews at any time and from any source." QED — quod erat demonstrandum! But, to borrow from Shakespeare, doth not the lady protest her innocence too much?

If this review of the council's maneuvers seems a bit caustic or to some perhaps even too critical, there are reasons, reasons to which we shall presently turn our attention. But we are certainly not critical of this conciliatory attitude as such. When the history of a church body shows so many instances of intolerance and persecution as does the record of Rome, the turning over of a new leaf is certainly to be commended. That is *aggiornamento* in the best sense of the word. Nor should we Lutherans set ourselves up in judgment over the misdeeds of others. It would be a grave mistake to assume an air of superiority at this point — or any other, for that matter. One winces at Luther's strictures against the Jews, particularly in what he said in his later years. In fairness one should consider that this was simply the manner of the day, particularly in the field of polemics. Unless a voice was strident it simply was not heard. And one should also remember that the book which caused Luther's sharpest utterances was an exceptionally scurrilous document, the *Shēm Hammephorash*, a book that pictured Jesus as the illegitimate son of a harlot, a charlatan who performed miracles by using the "distinctive name," the Tetragrammaton of the Old Testament name of Jehovah, as a sorcerer's magic formula. This is one part of the story. It goes far to explain the vehemence of the reformer's reaction. But for a fair estimate of Luther's attitude to the Jews one should not fail to read what he said at another time and in another context. Lecturing on Psalm 14:7 ("Oh, that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! When the Lord bringeth back the captivity of His people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad."), Luther had this to say about the barbaric treatment which nominal Christians so often inflicted on the Jews: "The fury of some Christians (if they are to be called Christians) is damnable. They imagine that they are doing God a service when they persecute the Jews most hatefully, think everything evil of them, and insult them with extreme arrogance and contempt amid their pitiable misfortunes, whereas, according to the example of this psalm and that of Paul (romans 9:1), a man ought to be most heartily sorry for them and continually pray for them. These folk ought certainly see to it that they listen to Paul (Romans 11:18): 'Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee.' And again (v. 20): 'Be not high-

minded, but fear.' But by this tyrannical attitude of theirs these godless people, who are Christians in name only, are inflicting no light injury on the Christian name as well as Christian people. And they are guilty and partakers of Jewish godlessness. By the example of this cruelty they are, as it were, repelling Jews from Christianity, whereas they ought to attract them by all manner of gentleness, patience, pleading, and care." (Plass, *What Luther Says*, Vol. 2, p. 683)

It were better if later Lutherans had taken their cue from this scripture-based statement of Luther rather than the others referred to above. True, Lutheranism has produced no Inquisition. But neither can it be denied that there have been far too many instances where Lutherans have not only joined in the prevailing vilification of Jews, but have sometimes made it seem as though there were some special theological virtue in so doing. Let us remember that when it comes to criticizing the record of Rome not only Lutherans but other Protestants also will do well to remember what, in a somewhat different situation, our Lord said as to who should throw the first stone. The result will be better vision on our part. (Matthew 7:3-5)

If we wish to be accurate in our evaluation of this Vatican declaration which has made such an impression on so many people, there is still something to be said, and something for which we need to keep our vision clear. We have described Rome as a prisoner of its past. Not as though there could not be genuine repentance for what lies behind. But is it repentance when the past is sometimes ignored, sometimes denied, sometimes defended? We have already noted the council's abbreviated reference to Ephesians 2, where the apostle speaks of Christ's having reconciled both Jew and Gentile unto God in one body by the cross. Now when the declaration simply presents this as "the teaching of the church" it blandly ignores the facts of the record. Nor does the editor's footnote improve matters when it is said that "in practice, at various times in the history of the Church, the facts set forth in this article have been neglected or obscured by some [sic!] Christians." Rome cannot so easily shrug off its direct responsibility for many a dark page in the history of its dealings with the Jews.

Another instance of remodeling history is this matter of persecution. We have already noted the passage where the council "repudiates all persecutions against any man" and particularly "deplores . . . displays of anti-Semitism directed against the Jews at any time and from any source." But here it will not do simply to fix responsibility on "some Christians." A footnote reveals that the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 (under Innocent III, no less!) enacted four canonical directives dealing with the treatment of Jews: forbidding their exacting high interest rates from Christian debtors; prohibiting their appearing in public during Easter week; compelling them to give tithes to the church, plus a yearly tax at Easter; ordering the wearing of distinctive dress; forbidding the holding of office under any Christian prince. The footnote ends with the bland assurance: "If there was anti-Semitism in these laws, it is here repudiated by the Second Vatican Council." How an infallible pope and his holy synod can be repudiated by another equally infallible pope and his council is explained in the next footnote: "The Fourth Lateran Council's four discriminatory canons on the Jews . . . were *disciplinary laws*. Disciplinary laws are changeable; the content of doctrinal statements is not changeable. The unfortunate laws of 1215 long ago fell into desuetude; the doctrinal statement of 1965, it is to be hoped, removes from the Church the remnants of the thinking that lay behind those laws." One wonders whether the troubles of those medieval Jews would have been less acute had they been told in 1215 that these four canons of that council were only disciplinary laws, and therefore changeable.

An interesting bit of information is supplied by the introduction to this section on non-Christian religions (by Robert A. Graham, SJ). Apparently there was sharp discussion over what was to be said about the Jews. Some bishops wanted the entire section dropped. Others demanded "a statement that would put an end to some Christians' appealing to Scripture for justification of persecution or hatred of Jews." We are further told, "They called also for condemnation of all persecutions, and for insertion of a request for forgiveness from those who had been wronged by Christian persecution." That would have been something! But the result of these discussions is then summed up: "In the final text, the statement on the use of Scripture was adopted (Article 4) and reinforced

by setting forth so clearly the relationship of the Church with the people of the Old Testament that every pretext for discrimination was excluded. The request for forgiveness was not forthcoming in the document; *instead of looking to the past, the document looks forward. . . .* [emphasis added]" A neat way of avoiding the indictment of history! As a final bit of information we are told that, of the 2,080 fathers voting on the proposition "that the Jews are not to be considered as repudiated or cursed by God," there were 1,821 affirmative, 245 negative, and 14 invalid votes. We quote this material from the introduction because of the bearing it has on our final point, the council's handling of the scriptures.

If one must take exception to the liberties the council has taken with the objective record of history, what shall we say about the following paragraph from the declaration: "True, authorities of the Jews and those who followed their lead pressed for the death of Christ (cf. John 19:6); still, what happened in His passion cannot be blamed on all the Jews then living, without distinction, nor upon the Jews of today. Although the Church is the new people of God, the Jews should not be represented as repudiated or cursed by God, as if such views followed from the holy Scriptures. All should take pains, then, lest in catechetical instruction and in the preaching of God's Word they teach anything out of harmony with the truth of the gospel and the spirit of Christ."

It is, of course, obviously true that what happened in the passion of Christ cannot be blamed upon all the Jews then living, without distinction. Scripture identifies two members of the Sanhedrin, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, as men who "had not consented to the counsel and deed of them." And that one should not blame the *Jews* of today is equally certain. Paul Gerhardt said it for us: "For it is *my* transgression which brought this woe on Thee." But it is a different matter when in the above quotation the council says that the Jews "should not be represented as cursed by God, as if such views followed from the holy Scriptures." Cardinal Bea was indeed right in explaining that "His blood be on us and on our children" (Matthew 27:25) was the cry of a Jerusalem crowd that had no right to speak for the whole Jewish people. But the argument breaks down when it is silent on the way subsequent generations of Jews have by their own rejection of

Christ identified themselves with those who first spoke those blood-curdling words. And does not scripture indicate that there *was* responsibility, collective responsibility for the death of Christ, something which in face *was* deicide? How else could Peter (whose successors Rome's bishops claim to be!) make those sweeping charges on Pentecost, saying of Jesus (a man approved by God among you by miracles . . . *as ye yourselves also know*) that they had taken Him and by wicked hands crucified and slain Him? Or on a subsequent occasion: "But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer be granted unto you; and *killed the Prince of Life*." (Acts 3:14-15) Mitigating circumstances are mentioned indeed, "that through ignorance ye did it," and the message of forgiveness was proclaimed: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that *your sins may be blotted out*." (Acts 3:19) But it was precisely the *refusal* to repent, the *rejection* of the gospel of forgiveness, by which the people at large (not those, of course, who heeded the call) placed themselves under the continued judgment of God. What the weeping Christ said of Jerusalem has to this day remained tragically true of the Jewish people at large: But *ye* would not!

Was the apostolic Paul perhaps wrong in Romans 11? He grants indeed that even at the time of his writing there was also a *remnant* according to the election of grace. (v. 5) But of Israel at large he says that it hath *not* obtained what it sought, but the election (the remnant!) hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded. Then the apostle quotes the terrible words that outline the tragic part of Isaiah's prophetic mission, to preach the hardening of hearts, even while he was to bring precious comfort to the remnant God had preserved for Himself.

That is the tragedy of Israel as a people: blessed beyond all other nations by what God had given them; cursed by their unbelief, their own rejection of the blessing that first was theirs; and yet — blessed *still* in the remnant God has preserved for Himself even now. To see and rejoice over the one, the manifestation of grace, and yet not deny the other, the obvious fact of a judgment, this alone constitutes a faithful use of scripture: to declare *all* the counsel of God. (Acts 20:27) These facts of scripture stand, beyond the power of any church council to change them, or to dismiss their implications. There is a strange irony in all this.

Rome, which has *added* so much scripture by way of the sheer and arbitrary authority of its tradition, now seeks to bring its image up to date by *taking away* something that scripture does state in unmistakable terms. It does this, in fact, in spite of Deuteronomy 4:2: "Ye shall *not add* unto the word which I command you, *neither* shall you *diminish ought* from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you." Or take the New Testament counterpart to this, "Teaching them to observe *all* things whatsoever *I* have commanded you."

It may seem that by this conclusion we are simply reopening the entire issue of anti-Semitism; that by our insisting that scripture does speak of Jews as objects of a divine judgment we are encouraging a new spirit of intolerance and condoning new acts of persecution. No one can deny that the truths of scripture have been so abused, many times. But that does not mean that therefore they are not true. There is an old saying that misuse does not abolish the proper use — and that there is in this case a proper use is indicated when, after his graphic recital of the judgment that has befallen the Israel after the flesh, the apostle turns to his non-Jewish Christians with the terse warning, "Be not highminded, but fear." (v. 20) Taking this to heart, true Christians will stand in awe as they recognize the facts of God's judgments. But if they are wise, they will refrain from making themselves instruments of His wrath. That is a harsh function, one that God does not press on His children when there have been so many others who were only too willing. We need not worry. God's judgments will, in His own good time, be carried out without fail. But in spite of all that, there is one thing we as Christians can do, namely to intercede, pray and work for the *conversion* of Jews. That is a service befitting the children of God!

E. Reim

Note: Except where it is otherwise indicated, the quotations are from The Documents of Vatican II, Walter Abbott, SJ, general editor, and Joseph Gallagher, translating editor. The general introduction by Lawrence Cardinal Shehan, Archbishop of Baltimore. An Angelus Book in paperback. The section dealing with our subject is covered in pp. 656-668.

A SEQUEL TO
AGGIORNAMENTO?

We have spoken at length about the problems encountered by the Second Vatican Council in its efforts to bring the image of Roman Catholicism up to date. An interesting question is whether anything has been gained by the process. It was, after all, rather a policy of expediency, and there are also among Catholics more than just a few who have been quick to see this. A recent issue of *Time* magazine (September 16) speaks of a take-it-or-leave-it attitude toward the doctrine and discipline of the church, claiming that this is a growing characteristic among Catholics in the United States. If, as *Time* says, more and more young members of the church are deciding for themselves whether a certain teaching is valid for them, and if, as *Time* also notes, this is happening *in spite of the renewal* represented by the council, then it is rather obvious that the policy has had an unexpected effect. If the council can change the position of a church that claims the charisma of infallibility for its head, and then nevertheless adapt its doctrine to the prevailing climate of thought, then why should the individual member not take a few similar liberties on his own account?

While this is indeed happening also in other churches, while this might be said to be characteristic of our times, yet through this action of its council Rome has undeniably set its own members an example of cynicism which now is bearing this unwholesome fruit. This, then, is the price of the *aggiornamento*!

E. Reim

SPEAKING OF LIBERALS
AND CONSERVATIVES

Yes, speaking as we have been of liberals and conservatives in our current article on the Second Vatican Council, the terms have been used as they appear in the official reports of that gathering, practically as names for opposing parties or schools of thought. There is a danger, however, in using them as absolutes, without thinking what they mean. Is it good or bad to be "liberal"? Is it good or bad to be "conservative"? The answers can be highly instructive.

With the anniversary of the Reformation already showing on the calendar, our thoughts quite naturally turn into the direction of Luther. Was he a conservative, or was he liberal? Well, if Luther had not proved himself an outstanding liberal by his fearless repudiation of the sheer authoritarianism with which Rome defended the sale of indulgences plus the many other errors of which it was guilty, if he had risked his very life in standing fast for the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free (Galatians 5:1), his work would have come to naught. Humanly speaking we might still be under papal rule. Yet, as we take a second look, we see that just by contending so stoutly for the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free Luther was in fact proving himself a true conservative, stoutly determined regardless of cost to conserve, preserve, retain what Christ has purchased for us with His life and blood and conferred on us as a free gift.

Yes, a true child of God not only can, but will be both liberal and conservative. But his constant concern will be to contend for liberty only where scripture assures us of our freedom. On the other hand, he will be truly conservative where scripture assures him that the objects of his concern are worth conserving, worth it because they are priceless and indispensable blessings of God's grace. Let us therefore learn to look carefully at these two terms which are used so much in modern theological discussion, not using them thoughtlessly as mere party labels, but looking carefully at the cause which is at stake. If that is clear and right, then we will know what we are being liberal, what we are being conservative *about*. We may even find ourselves, as we found Luther, being liberal and being conservative *about* the same thing — liberal against those who would deny a right, conservative against those who would take away the right, but *concerned* only about the *one* thing, that what we stand for *is* a right that *God* has given us.

E. Reim

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