



Dr. Hugh Nibley

DR. HUGH NIBLEY, whose current series of articles "The Way of the Church" begins in this issue of THE IMPROVEMENT ERA, has built himself an enviable position as an historian. His training has pointed him toward this work, for from the early age of seventeen he went to the Swiss-German Mission, ending his activities by going to Athens, to consolidate his studies in Greek and Anglo-Saxon which he had begun when he was very young.

He was graduated from the University of California at Los Angeles with highest honors in 1934; he then attended the University of California at Berkeley on a fellowship, earning his Ph.D. in ancient history. Following his graduation, Dr. Nibley taught history and languages at Claremont Colleges in California. In 1942 he joined the army, serving in Great Britain and Germany. After his service, he became professor of history and religion at Brigham Young University in 1946, where he has since remained.

Dr. Nibley is not content to teach in an ordinary way. He interests himself in the research on subjects that prove valuable to the general reading public.

His studies have led him into areas as "Lehi in the Desert," "The World of the Jaredites," but always behind these unusual studies has lain his dominant interest in the early Church. His sabbatical leave of 1953 was spent entirely at Harvard and at Berkeley, filling in the gaps for the present study, "The Way of the Church."

The events and discoveries of the years since World War II have given rise to an unprecedented amount of speculation on the nature of the Christian Church. New finds have required the readjustment of all the long-established and prevailing ideas on the subject. Of key significance in contemporary discussion is the problem of the expectations of the early Christian regarding his church: Was it to remain firm and steadfast on the earth, to convert Babylon and spread steadily and irresistibly to the end of time? Was Christ to come in glory in a few days? Was the final judgment expected momentarily?

All these and other questions are treated in this new series by Dr. Hugh Nibley. The author takes the texts in their chronological order and considers what each has to say about the future of the Church and the world. All the major periods into which the texts fall are today being reconsidered. The discovery of the Scrolls in Palestine and new discoveries in Egypt are playing significant parts in the complete reevaluation of the genuine and the spurious elements in teachings which anciently went under the Christian label. The purpose of this series is to answer questions in the words of the ancients themselves, in order that the reading may take its own bearings in the radically shifting scene of Church history.

Controlling the Past

(a consideration of methods)

by Hugh Nibley, Ph.D.

I. THE QUESTION

GRANTED that Jesus founded a church, was that church expected by its founder and members to remain upon the earth for a limited time only, to be removed and restored at a later date, or was the "apostolic church" the ultimate and final found-

dation of God on earth, destined "to remain firm and steadfast until the end of the world"? That is one of the most important questions that confront students of church history today.

Every day it becomes more apparent that on its solution depends the whole nature and history of the

Christian church. The solution is not far to seek: By the simple, almost mechanical, process of extracting from the literature of the ancient church those passages dealing specifically with the church's future, or what the saints thought would be its future, placing these passages in chronological order, and reading them over,

"THE WAY OF THE CHURCH"

anyone who has the requisite time and patience may discover the answer. That is what the present study intends to do.

It has not been done heretofore because when churchmen have found themselves confronted by the above question, with its alarming implication that all the churches of Christendom might conceivably be astray, they have dismissed the awful thought with a shudder. What! cries Tertulian, can all those martyrs have shed their blood for nothing?¹—carefully evading the declaration of the martyrs themselves, that the only reward they ever think of is a crown in heaven, where they have been repaid a thousandfold for their brief sufferings here below. Conventional church history is resolved never to raise the question of whether the church of Christ actually survived, as the best way to avoid a disastrous answer. Thus at the present time leading church historians would forestall any embarrassing questions touching the main issue by devising ingenious titles for their studies: "The Infant Church" (*L'Eglise Naissante*—Batifol), "A World Being Born" (*Un Monde qui Nait*—Daniel-Rops), *The Unquenchable Light* (Latourette), etc., titles as "loaded" as Neander's *Planting and Training of the Christian Church*.

They are "loaded" because they suggest and permit research only along one carefully channeled course. The mere title "Infant Church" as used by these authors fixes unalterably the whole course of church history in advance: If the early church was by very definition an infant church or a world being born, we can tell no other story than one of growth and advancement regardless of what happened—calamitous failures are merely setbacks; success in any direction is growth; the story can have only one outcome; within a thematic framework we can ask all the questions we want to, but the main question of whether the church really *was* an infant church and not something totally different, must never be raised. And what other tale can one tell of an "Unquenchable Light," again an expression of those authors, save that it never goes out?² That wonderful title has forestalled any embarrassing

questions as to whether the light was to overcome the darkness or the other way around—for merely to ask such a question is to remind oneself of John's terribly emphatic answer, that the "Unquenchable Light" was by no means to remain among men.

"The task of church history," writes the author of the latest large church history to appear, "is to give a clear, comprehensive, scientifically established over-all picture of the evolution of the visible institution of salvation founded by Christ."³

This is very much as if he were to say, "Our business is to describe the triumph of the church," as if that triumph were inevitable. Like the classic question, "Have you stopped beating your mother-in-law?" it cleverly avoids a very important question by asking a less important one resting on the assumption that the other has been answered. The assignment of describing the evolution of the institution established by Christ assumes (1) that there was such an institution, (2) that it remained on the earth, and (3) that it underwent an observable process of evolution. All this is taken for granted, yet until very recently the bulk of scholars have regarded the first proposition as unproven, and they have only just begun to think about the second. The third point is, thanks to the systematic avoidance of the second, never questioned.

2. THE NATURE OF THE EVIDENCE

The study of church history has in the past been of interest to but a few, and their interest has been a strenuously partisan one. Who writes church histories? Churchmen. Who reads them? Divinity students. It would be hard to find another branch of science or the humanities in which so few scholars ever engage in the study of the thing for its own sake. Even the rare researcher of disinterested motives must end up taking sides, for the nature of the thing requires it.

"Only one who is personally convinced of the truth of the gospel," writes Heinrich Bornkamm, "can fully grasp its historical manifestations and what is lasting or changing in them. There is no such thing as

pure objectivity in the history of thought, which in fact would be rendered sterile by such."⁴ In 1699 Gottfried Arnold published his *Impartial History of the Church and Heresy*, to show that the true church through age has been that of the persecuted mystics and heretics—whether his theory is right or not, it cannot by any effort of the imagination be called impartial.

Recently Professor Pfeiffer has vigorously deplored any side-taking at all in the study of religion; he thinks one can maintain perfect scientific detachment by "keeping facts and faith, history and revelation, historical research and theological speculation separate and distinct."⁵ But is not this appeal for a double book-keeping that shall "distinguish sharply between true facts and true doctrines"⁶ simply a device for placing one's own particular beliefs beyond the reach of objective investigation? Is it fair of the doctors to denounce with moral indignation those who have not yet given up those partisan strivings in which they themselves engaged for generations, and only gave up with reluctance when years of determined seeking led to unforeseen and embarrassing conclusions? It is altogether too convenient when one's own methods of soapmaking have failed, to declare to the world that soap simply cannot be made and heap contempt on those who are still trying and abuse on those who have succeeded.

When the professor finds that *his* facts do not square with *his* doctrines, then, but not until then, he announces to the world as a general moral principle that *no one* should ever try to compare facts with doctrines. That lets him out. But the escape is altogether so convenient; the cause of cool and scientific detachment is defended with such surprising heat and censure; and the announcement of these so liberal and so obvious principles has come so suddenly and so late (for until now church scholars have all admitted to a degree of partisan interest) that one is forced to the conclusion that all this pleading to keep religion out of religious studies is possibly just an extreme form of partisan pleading,

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CONTROLLING THE PAST

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an attempt to save face by the belated declaration that the rules do not hold any more—that religious and historical facts have absolutely nothing to do with each other. Since the rules no longer favor us, we will abolish them!

The modern scientific credo is thus no exception to the rule that an ulterior motive has marked the writing of church history from the very beginning. "It is dangerous to enquire after truth among later writers," wrote the great Baronius, "who are often found to write that which false rumors, vain imaginings, private affection and sometimes Flattery suggested to their Minds, to the great prejudice of Historical Truth."⁷ But what about the earlier writers? "The age was one of rhetoric," writes Harnack of the period from the fourth century on, "which did not draw back at artifice and unverity of every kind. . . . Forgery was the order of the day. . . . Already in the fourth century a spirit of lying prevailed mightily in the official documents . . . and in the fifth and sixth centuries it ruled the Church." At that time "no one any longer put any faith in any written record or official document or report."

After giving various examples of the use of falsification by the most illustrious fathers as a partisan weapon, and describing the controversial literature as "a morass of lies and rascality," Harnack concludes that "one cannot escape the fear that present-day historians are still altogether too trusting in their attitude towards this whole literature. . . . We stand almost everywhere more or less helpless in the face of a systematically fabricated tradition."⁸

Recently Walther Völker has shown that the great church history of Eusebius was actually a "tendentious" writing designed to prove a particular point.⁹ The events culminating in the riotous councils of the fourth century led thinking men of the time to doubt whether the church was still on earth or not: It was to silence his own doubts on this head that Eusebius undertook the researches that resulted in the ecclesiastical history. "By the simple process of excerpting . . . only what agreed with his fundamental thesis," Eusebius, according to Völker, "altered the appearance of

the old church history. All the tensions were removed, all the conflicts smoothed over. . . ."¹⁰ This work, which rightfully won for its author the title of "Father of Church History," laid down the line which church historians have followed ever since, namely the implicit and unquestioning defense at all times of the basic proposition that the Christian church of today is actually the "apostolic church" of the beginning, no matter how strangely and wonderfully altered. To this proposition all conventional church history is dedicated; it is the axiom which may never be questioned and which predetermines the direction of all research, the bed of Procrustes into which all the evidence must be made to fit, cost what it may.

Before we address ourselves to our proper task, which is (1) to set forth in order the early reference to the future of the church, and (2) to show what modern scholars have to say on the subject, it is necessary to get some idea of the nature of the documents with which we have to deal, and of the extent to which church historians have controlled those documents, actually inventing the past which they claim, and often sincerely, to be only discovering. The reader should be warned that the thesis of the present study runs counter to the massive consensus of church history for over a thousand years.

Long ago Socrates showed what a hollow thing consensus is. More recently, in 1932, Olaf Linton published his now famous study of what he calls "the Consensus" of church history in the nineteenth century. Therein he shows how the scholars when they think they are being most sound, most objective, and most scientific in their construction of church history, are actually doing little more than faithfully reflecting their own background and conditioning. As they are liberal, democratic, congregational, individualist, so must the "primitive church" be; if they like ritual, so did it; if they eschewed it, so did the early Christians.¹¹ But what the general public dreams not of, and even the experts underestimate is that the invention of history has been a major industry for many centuries, one of the primary concerns of scholars having been in

every age to *control the past*. This is a serious, but not criminal charge, for as we shall presently see, it is virtually impossible for anyone to handle ancient records without in some way having to control them; and so, as the records have been handed on from one generation to the next, there has been exercised over them a cumulative, all-pervasive, and thorough control.

3. HAND-PICKED EVIDENCE

To begin with, anyone who writes church history has the inescapable and dangerous obligation of deciding somehow just what evidence shall be made available to his readers and what shall not; obviously, he cannot include it all. Now anyone who takes it upon himself to withhold evidence is actually determining what the reader's idea of church history is going to be—he is controlling the past. And when the evidence held back is a thousand times more extensive than what is brought before the jury, it is plain that the historian is free to build up any kind of case he desires.

Is there no alternative to this commission of all but absolute power to a few notoriously partial authorities? There is none. The only completely fair presentation of church history would be a *full* display of *all* known evidence laid out before the public in chronological order—all the written stuff: histories, letters, sermons, tomes of philosophy, all the artifacts, ruins, and inscriptions, all the traditions, rituals, liturgies, and legends would have to be there, without any attempt on the part of the custodian to interpret or control. But such a corpus would be all but useless, an impenetrable jungle of stuff beyond the capacity of any reader. To be made available even to specialists it would have to be classified, broken up into departments that could be handled by one man and, as far as the general public is concerned, each of these would have to be further reduced by sampling or condensing. If one were to include in a source book but one-tenth of one percent of the writings in the old *Patrologiae* alone—and they are far from exhaustive, even in their area—the reader would be confronted by five hundred solid pages of

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THE IMPROVEMENT ERA

On the Bookrack

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authoritative way in which the subjects are discussed.

This is a book for every thinking Latter-day Saint.

THE WORLD AND THE PROPHETS

(Hugh Nibley. Deseret Book Company, Salt Lake City. 242 pages. \$2.50.)

DR. NIBLEY has done his usual scholarly work in this book which indicates how the world reacted to the prophets from the earliest time down to the present. The author tells what the characteristics and qualities of a prophet are and contrasts them with the qualities of a rhetorician, mystic, and philosopher.

This book is a challenging analysis of *The World and the Prophets*. It ends on a note of high hope since if people will live according to the word of God as revealed through his prophets they will find joy both here and hereafter.

THE CONTENTS, STRUCTURE, AND AUTHORSHIP OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

(J. N. Washburn. Bookcraft, Salt Lake City. 244 pages. 1954. \$3.00.)

THIS book is the result of long and careful study of, and thorough familiarity with, the Book of Mormon. The author considers the several books separately, with regard to inner complexity and consistency, literary criteria, language, setting, name patterns, and other factors. This study demonstrates strongly that, while there are similarities consequent on all the books having been translated by one man, there are also significant differences between the works of the many original authors, whose respective styles still shine through, even in the English translation.

Here is no perfervid defense of the faith—in fact, nowhere does the author go on the defensive. He avoids extremes, and states some of those extremes and why he avoids them. His work seems painstaking and thorough, but not so profound as to bog the reader down in technicalities. His cautious and patient assembling of the great mass of cumulative data is a skilful and convincing demonstration of the multiple authorship of the Book of Mormon.

—S. B. T.

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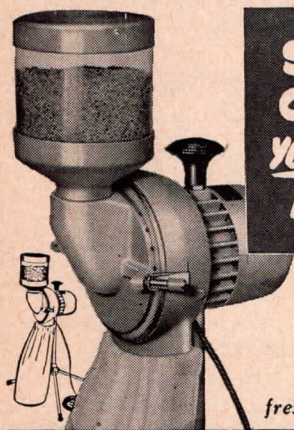


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Controlling the Past

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quotation. But how representative is a selection of one page in a thousand? One need only examine Kirch's *Enchiridion* for the answer.¹² Aside from all policy and prejudice, sheer necessity has brought it about that what has been handed on from generation to generation as standard church history is a growing accumulation of carefully hand-picked evidence.

But the business of control does not end with the *selecting* of evidence. Once our texts have been chosen for presentation, we discover that they are all without exception in an imperfect and fragmentary state, marred by scribal slips, emendations, interpolations, and deletions. Generations of careless, or (what is far more dangerous) careful and deliberate scribes have been busy day and night at the game of controlling the past by altering the texts they were supposed to be copying, and as often as not the alterations have been intentional. And what is the cure for this? More correction! The conscientious, modern editor proceeds to control his text by *reconstructing* it to say what he believes the original should have said. Such reconstructions are not always infallible. In fact, in the opinion of most scholars, the reconstructions perpetrated by most other scholars are pretty bad.

Once the church historian has picked out the most highly favored passages to call to the witness stand and, as a textual critic, carefully tidied them up and brushed their hair to make a favorable impression for his client (the client being the church of his choice—for most church historians are professional churchmen) a most effective control still remains; for before the evidence can be heard by the general public, it must be *translated*. Translation is a far more effective and aggressive way of controlling the past than most people suppose.

The business of selecting, restoring, and translating pertinent texts is one that calls for the constant exercise of judgment and the constant making of choices. To enable the scholar to choose between two or more equally authentic but conflicting passages, between equally plausible but conflicting readings of the passage chosen, and between equally grammatical but conflicting translations of the

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text thus selected and restored, he invariably adopts some rule or policy in the light of which one interpretation will always enjoy a clear priority, thus obviating the necessity of giving serious consideration to the others. Let us consider the well-established principles upon which the experts operate.

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¹Tertullian, *De praescript.*, c. 29.

²Regarding Latourette's church history, E. A. Payne writes in the *Journal of Theological Studies*, XLVII (1946), 151: "There is always danger of a metaphor once adopted becoming master instead of servant. One cannot escape the feeling that Dr. Latourette finds his diminishing periods of recession a little too neatly and easily."

³Karl Billmeyer, *Kirchengeschichte*, Pt. I, *Das Christliche Altertum* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1951), pp. 1f.

⁴Heinrich Bornkamm, *Grundriss zum Studium der Kirchengeschichte* (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1949), p. 14.

⁵R. H. Pfeiffer, "Facts and Faith in Biblical History," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 70 (1951), p. 10.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁷Caes. Baronius, Anno 1077, quoted in Thomas Comber, *Roman Forgeries*, etc. (London, 1695), p. 189.

⁸Ad. von Harnack, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1931), II, 63f.

⁹W. Völker, "Von welchen Tendenzen liess sich Eusebius bei Abfassung seiner 'KG' leiten?" *Vigiliae Christianae*, IV (1950), 157, 159f.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 180.

¹¹Olaf Linton, *Das Problem der Urkirche in der neueren Forschung* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1932), pp. 9-10 & *passim*.

¹²Conrad Kirch, *Enchiridion Fontium Historiae Ecclesiasticae Antiquae* (Barcelona: Herder, 1947). The six hundred pages of this famous handbook are taken up entirely with short, carefully chosen excerpts, obviously and sometimes violently forced into a prearranged historical framework. As soon as the reader begins to get interested—and curious—regarding a passage, the text is, as it were, snatched from his hands by the zealous editor.

We Are Not Alone in Life

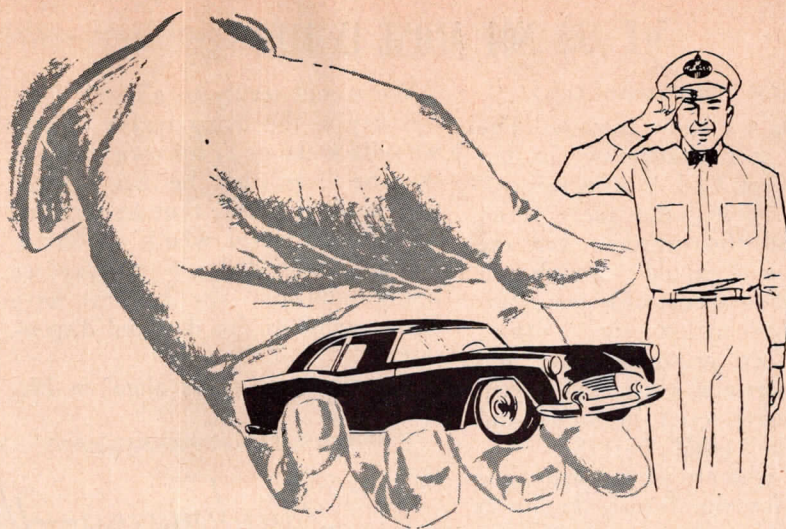
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You who have been hurt—hurt in your hearts, hurt in spirit, you who have been offended and have withdrawn yourselves and become a little aloof—you need not be alone. The door is open.

You who have unanswered questions (which all of us have); you who are torn between the teachings of contending teachers, who are confused by conflicting theories: Keep faith. Reserve judgment. Be patient. God lives. He is the source of all truth, and where there seem to be discrepancies, it is simply be-

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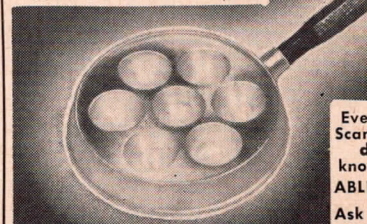
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cause we do not know enough. The theories of men change swiftly, but "The glory of God is intelligence," (D. & C. 93:36) and there is no truth in all the universe that the Father of us all would not wish you to seek and to accept—for man cannot be "saved in ignorance." (*Ibid.*, 131:6.) Keep an open mind and an open heart and a teachable spirit. "Seek learning, even by study and also by faith." (*Ibid.*, 88:118.)

And you who are young, who have ambitions for the future, but who face serious uncertainties: Go forward and live your lives with faith. Look far ahead; decide on some good goal. Study, work, and prepare yourselves. Make solid plans and pursue solid purposes and don't place undue emphasis on the passing, trivial pleasures. When the proper time comes, make your homes and have your families, and face your problems with faith. Your Father in heaven knows and understands you, and will help and lead you to happiness and usefulness here, and to your high destiny hereafter, if you will keep close to him and take him into your confidence.

And you who have lost your loved ones: You are not alone. God, who is the Father of the spirits of all men, has sent us here from his presence until he calls us to return. And our loved ones who have left us will always be themselves, and we may see and know and be with them again, always and forever—if we will but take the steps that lead to eternal family reunion. They are nearer to us than we know.

We are none of us alone in life. We belong to an eternal family. We belong also to one another—and God, who made us in his image, is the Father of us all. And there is justice and mercy and fair and adequate opportunity for all of us from him who is and has been mindful of us all, from birth and before—through death and beyond.

He is there and within our reach. He will guide and enlighten and lift. He is the source of truth, of comfort, of protection, and of the peace that passeth understanding, and the source of the sweet and satisfying assurance that life and truth are limitless and everlasting, and despite all problems and all perplexities we are not left alone in life.

We would testify to all who hear this day of the living reality of him who did make us in his own image—that he lives, that he has spoken, that he does speak; that he sent his Son into the world, who is our Savior and of whose divinity this day we testify; and that the heavens have been opened in this day and dispensation.

We are none of us alone in life,

but in the hands of him to whom his Son, our Savior and Redeemer, offered this sublime prayer:

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed by thy name.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen. (Matthew 6:9-13.)

Thanksgiving—the fruits of faith

Richard L. Evans

IN ITS own way, Thanksgiving is the evidence of the fruition of faith. It is, in fact, "the substance of things hoped for"¹—the symbol of the harvest that follows faith—with the fruits of the field before us, the things that give us sustenance, the rich, the bounteous blessings which are ours, by the goodness of God, because someone had the faith to plow and to plant and because God gave the increase. So now we have our harvest. And so much else we have also: life itself, for which each morning gratefully we should thank God as we wake to the wonder of a new day, and know that there is yet a little time to do some things we should have done, time yet to move once more among the beloved, familiar places and people that we sometimes see with unseeing eyes—and sometimes take too much for granted. When we see a photograph of something familiar, we sometimes see something we haven't seen in the thing itself. Or when we see through the eyes of an artist—a painting, perhaps, of something we have come to consider as commonplace—we find that the artist has found for us something we couldn't see for ourselves. And at this thoughtful season we well could turn our eyes to see many cherished things as if we hadn't seen them—to see, as if first seen, the goodness of all that God has given: life, our loved ones, food, work, and such surpassing blessings as freedom (which is not so common as some of us might have supposed), and the simple, wonderful, solid, sustaining things—with life to enjoy them, with loved ones and friends to share them, with freedom to use them, with grateful hearts to acknowledge them. Yes, Thanksgiving is the evidence of faith, and of the goodness of God, and of the blessing of willing work. God give us the good sense to step aside and see some things as if we had never really seen them—and give us the kind of gratitude that could never become bored with our blessings—and give us the grace to acknowledge humbly our dependence upon Providence, for "in nothing doth man offend God, or against none is his wrath kindled, save those who confess not his hand in all things. . . ."² Among the greater qualities of character, among men and before God, is the great gift of gratitude.

"The Spoken Word"

FROM TEMPLE SQUARE
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¹Heb. 11:1.
²D. & C. 59:21.

Controlling the Past

by Dr. Hugh Nibley
BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

4. ALL FOR THE PARTY

IN George Orwell's much cited and disturbing novel, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the tyrannical super-state of the future is operated by its masters on the proposition that "who controls the past controls the present, and who controls the present controls the future." That is the secret of power: If you can control people's ideas of the past, you control their ideas of the present and hence the future. The unhappy hero of the story works in a public relations office where the past is controlled. His task is to check all back newspapers kept in the official files of

the state for any piece of news, no matter how old, that might embarrass the government if brought to light—old promises and prophecies that have failed, glorious deeds of men now out of favor with the rulers, friendly alliances with governments now odious to the state, and so forth.

When he comes upon such an item, our hero immediately cuts it out and burns it, substituting in its place a revamped version of the same story of exactly the same length but so rewritten as to make it seem that the present government has always been right, infallibly vindicated in the unfolding of events. It is a careful, deliberate controlling of the past, a rewriting of history in retrospect to suit the present interests and support the present policies of the Party, whose authority is thus confirmed by the verdict of history.

All this seems to us very cynical and sordid, and yet, appalling as it seems, Mr. Orwell has given a very fair description of what has been going on for thousands of years in the learned world! Except in its cold-blooded mechanics, wherein does the operation described differ from that of the learned Hebrew *Meturgemen*? In his business of rendering ancient Hebrew into contemporary Aramaic "the most difficult passages were simplified, or explained, the incidents of the past conformed to the ideas of the present . . . and, finally, the laws expanded in accordance with the practice and teaching of later times . . . the Meturgeman did not scruple to transform the text before him in the boldest fashion. . . ." ¹³

His motive in this, we are told, was "to gloss over or to modify everything which seemed inconsistent with the accepted view of the history of the nation, to magnify and expound

everything which redounded to the credit of the heroes of the past . . . to explain away the unworthy and to emphasize the pious motive which guided their conduct."¹⁴ These learned men felt it their duty in presenting the message of an ancient prophet to the unlearned, to restate it in such a way as "to draw out its implicit teaching; to harmonize the teaching of the prophet with the current interpretation of the Jewish schools . . . to modify the language of the prophet where it seemed inconsistent with the traditional view of the nation's history and even, in certain cases, to reverse the plain meaning of the text."¹⁵

Whether or not all this busy re-vamping of the record is to be deplored as dishonest and unscientific does not concern us at the moment. What does concern us is the fact that the records have been manipulated in a deliberate attempt to control the past. For many years scholars were convinced that Ramses II was just about the greatest builder and warrior king that ever lived. Ramses planned it that way. While his stone-cutters conscientiously effaced from buildings and monuments the names of their real builder (that is, where other enterprising monarchs had not already beaten him to it) and substituted in their place the name of the ruling Ramses, his historians were busy writing up the accounts of battles that had turned out badly for the king in such a way as to transform them into glorious victories. That was controlling the past in the grand manner, a practice as old as Egypt itself. The Fifth Dynasty, for example, based its authority on an historical account of three brothers, which is a most palpable forgery.

By now some American college professors know that conventional Roman history is largely a pious party fiction, made-to-order history that bucks the evidence at every turn. Likewise the whole body of Greek literature that has come down to us has had to pass the scrutiny of generations of narrow and opinionated men: it is not the literature of the Greeks that we have inherited but a puree made from that fraction of their writings which the doctors



Ramses II. For many years scholars were convinced that he was just about the greatest builder and warrior king that ever lived. He planned it that way.

The Way of the Church



THE CHRIST by Klinke

—Photo by Camera Clix

have felt proper to place in the hands of students after much abridgment and revisal. In compiling their college omnibuses of "standard" plays, orations, and poems, and in preparing their College Outline Series of humanities and science, the professors of Alexandria effectively consigned to oblivion any writings not on the approved list: the Greek schoolmen destroyed the Greek heritage.¹⁶

Wherever we look in the ancient world the past has been controlled, but nowhere more rigorously than in the history of the Christian church. The methods of control, wherever we find them, fall under three general heads which might be described as (a) the invention, (b) the destruction, and (c) the alteration of documents. They deserve some attention.

a. *Fabrication*: Tertullian tells of a scholar in Asia Minor who "out of

love for the Apostle" composed a fantastic miracle and adventure tale called "The Acts of Paul," which did great damage to the church.¹⁷ He meant well. "We write these things," the Apostles are represented as protesting in the Apostolic Constitutions, "that you might get things straight, and not receive books which are falsely circulated in our name. . . . Simon and Cleobus have published books in the name of Christ and the Apostles, and there are all sorts of forgeries circulating in the names of the prophets and patriarchs."¹⁸ But the practice continued and grew: "Forgery was viewed by wide circles of the ancient Church not merely as an excusable fraud, but a thoroughly legitimate *oeconomia* (operation, administrative measure) in the war against the enemies of the faith. Origen, Clement of Alexandria, Hilary, and John Chry-

sostom all recommend and use the *kale apate* ("fair deception"), and justify it by Jeremiah 4:10¹⁹ "—Ah, Lord God! surely thou hast greatly deceived this people."

Just as physicians must sometimes tell fibs to patients to help them along, and as those tending small children or the feeble-minded can handle them and help them more effectively by making up stories as they go, so the Christian priest was to cultivate a useful deception as an essential tool in dealing with the laity according to John Chrysostom.²⁰ "When Jacob deceived his father," he explains, "that was not deception but *oeconomia*."²⁰

Jerome admits to employing "a sometimes useful deception," and admires others for the same practice: "how cunning, how shrewd, what a dissimulator!"²¹ And he cites Origen as teaching that "lying is improper and unnecessary for God, but is to be esteemed sometimes useful for men, provided it is intended that some good should come of it."²² But whoever lied with any other intent? In support of his contention, Origen appeals to Plato's doctrine of deception in the *Republic*—a thing which had shocked even the pagans.²³

It was common practice for Christian scholars in the Middle Ages both "without scruple to put forward older texts, with slight alteration, as their own compositions,"²⁴ and to put forth their own compositions without scruple as ancient texts. For centuries the Medieval Church rested its claims to temporal power on the false Isidorian Decretals, though recognized from the first as a forgery, and its doctrinal and ritual structure on the Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagiticus, a most obvious fake.

"Whoever knows and understands the men of the Middle Ages," Böhmér writes, "how many of them, though excellent bishops, abbots, clerics, and monks by the standards of the time, practised falsification of documents, (here follows a list of important names) . . . will answer with an unqualified affirmative" the question, "could Lanfranc have been a common forger?"²⁵ The common purpose of such forgeries was to control the past, specifically to make it appear that certain episcopal sees, especially that of Rome, had from the earliest times enjoyed more powers and prerogatives for which in fact no real evidence existed.²⁶

(Continued on page 104)

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CONTROLLING THE PAST

(Continued from page 87)

The zealous Thomas Comber finds that in the official editions of the Councils as in Baronius "there is such adding and expunging, such altering and disguising things in the Body of the Councils, and such excusing, falsifying, and shuffling in

the Notes, that a Judicious Reader will soon perceive these Venerable Records . . . do not favor them. But these Corruptions are carried on with such Confidence and Cunning, that an unexperienced and unwary Student, may be imposed on by this

(Continued on page 106)

The faith within us . . .

Richard L. Evans

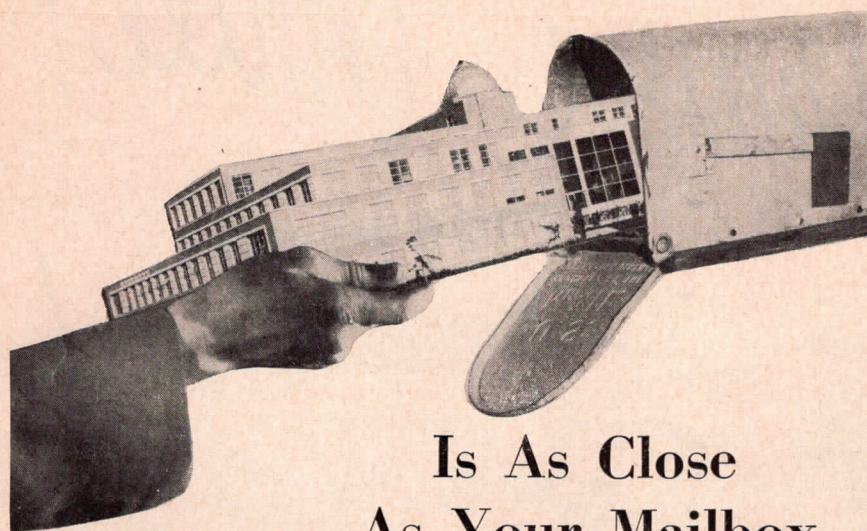
MAY we look further for a moment at a conclusion already arrived at: that every man has more faith within himself than he sometimes supposes—not only faith in tangible and touchable factors and forces, but faith also in the unseen, untouchable intangibles, and in the eternal future. It was meant that men should live in part by faith; and even the cynic has more faith than he himself sometimes supposes. One evidence of our faith is that all of us do some planning for the future. We do not, not any of us, do all our living altogether in the present or the past; and any thought for the future carries with it an element of faith. Another evidence is the inherent awareness within us of our own enduring identity, of the perpetuation of personality by which we are and always shall be distinguishable from all others. The evidence is within and all around us: We cannot imagine ourselves as being nothing. We cannot imagine ourselves as being anything except ourselves. All the yearnings we have, all the awareness within, all the reason, law, and order—our intelligence, talents, personality, character, and all the intimations of immortality within us—all give evidence, assurance, certainty, of the eternal plan and purpose of Him who made us in his image. And this faith inborn within us was placed there for a purpose: to help to give us an awareness of whence we came, and why we're here, and what we can become. And all the unessential things with which we sometimes so much load our lives, the fineries and fashions, the elaborate equipment of comfort and convenience, the many things which most men have never known, could all be missing, and still life would be meaningful beyond measure because the things that matter most, our lives, our loved ones, continue always and forever. It is this faith which is in fact, "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen";¹ it is this faith that sustains us in our failures and frustrations, in discouragement, in sorrow and sickness; it is this faith that assures us of the love and wisdom and fairness and justice of a loving Father, whose purpose is to bring to pass our happiness and peace and everlasting progress. It is this faith that gives us patience to wait for the ultimate, unseen answers. Thank God for faith which grows to greater faith, for faith by which men can and do endure in faithfulness and faith.

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¹Hebrews 11:1.

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Controlling the Past

(Continued from page 104)

specious show of Venerable Antiquity."²⁷

Now in such matters the general public shows no inclination to be either experienced or wary; even so, any faint stirrings of a critical spirit have been anticipated and forestalled by ample professional restrictions and taboos. On the whole the controlling of the past with the most reliable of all human traits, mental inertia, as its chief ally has been a strangely easy business. There is, as we have pointed out elsewhere, no such thing as a clever forgery—and there does not need to be, for while no forgery can succeed without public approval, no forgery (as the clumsy Piltdown hoax has proved) can fail if it has that approval. And public approval is as sure a thing as the mass ignorance and laziness that guarantee it.

A famous letter written by Innocent I of Rome to the Bishop of Gubbio in 416 provides a commentary on this theme, which is all the more enlightening for being unintentional. The pope is deploring the fact that the church of Gubbio (actually within the metropolitan authority of Rome) observes different rites for the mass from those found at Rome: "Where everyone feels free to observe not what comes by tradition, but whatever seems good to him," writes the Bishop of Rome, "we see established observances and ways of celebrating of diverse nature, depending on the location of the churches. The result is a scandal for the people who, *not knowing that the traditions have been altered by human presumption*, think either that the Churches are not in agreement with each other, or that the Apostles established contradictory things."²⁸

Whatever usage they find, the people naturally attribute to the Apostles. Why not?—are they not instructed to do so? How can they be expected to know "that the ancient traditions have been altered by human presumption"? On the ignorance and complacency of the general public the religious innovator can always rely. Sometimes, however, the public itself forces the scholars to go farther than they want to. This is especially so in the case of church history, where the demand for immediate and definite answers is constant and pressing. What is the poor

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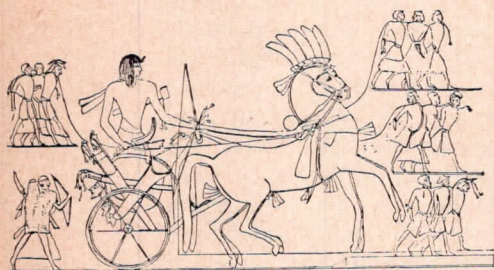
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researcher to do? "The sources were very scarce and fragmentary," writes Linton of the great days of "scientific" scholarship in the field, "in order to derive any definite information at all from them, it was necessary to interpret these sources and to fill them out. . . . From the very nature of the thing the passages were read with modern eyes."²⁹ The public could only be satisfied at the price of controlling the past.

b. *Censorship*: But forgery is a risky business. Much more safe and dignified, and equally effective, is the office of the censor. When the Septuagint was accepted by the Jews as the official text of the Old Testament it was declared to have been revealed from heaven, and all competing texts were officially destroyed. But later when "the Hebrew text was fixed again from old manuscripts rescued from the temple of Jerusalem," the Septuagint was found to disagree with this miraculous discovery and accordingly "was declared to be the work of Satan." So carefully was the order for its destruction carried out that "with the exception of . . . two little bits of papyrus with fragments of a few verses of Deuteronomy," to this day



Ramses II returning in triumph from Syria. (From the monuments of Karnak.)

"not a single line, neither of the 'Septuagint' nor of any other parts of the Greek Bible, written by a Jew, is so far known to be preserved."³⁰ But with the passing of time grave differences arose regarding the correct readings of this Hebrew Bible as those readings underwent constant change at the hands of copyists and emendators, and so it became necessary to restore the text to its ancient purity. This was the work of Masoretes, and since they "had no model of classical Hebrew to which they could adapt the pronunciation of Hebrew . . . they tried to create an ideal pronunciation which they be-

(Continued on page 110)

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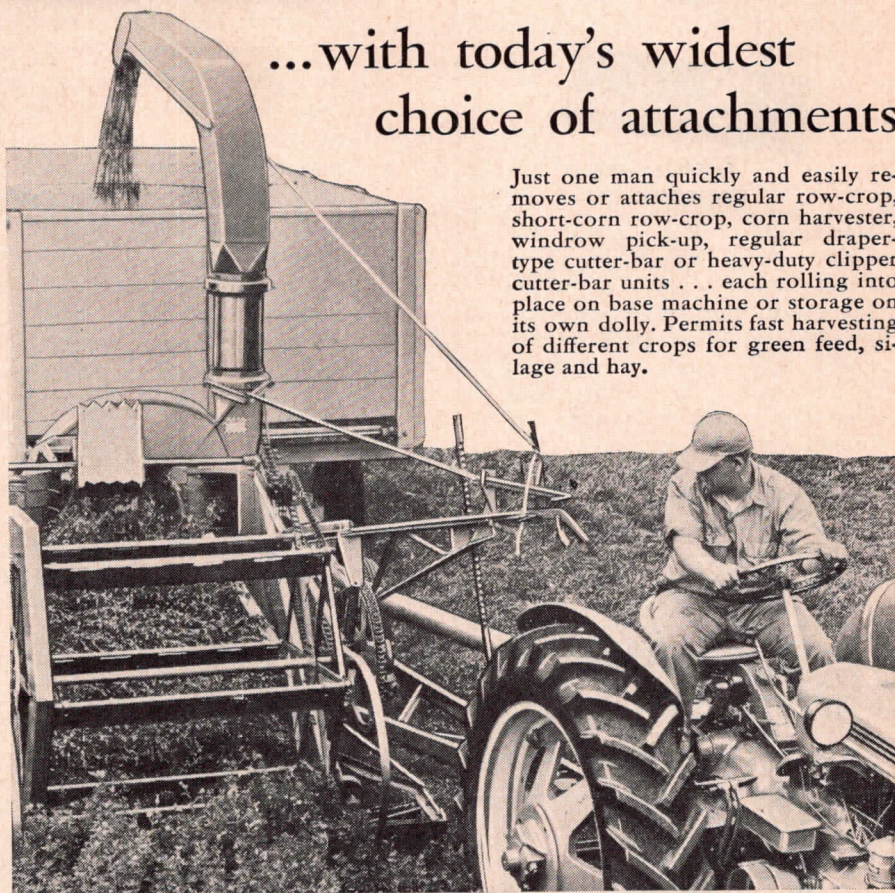
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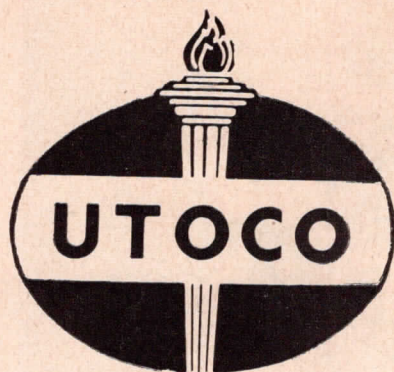
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Controlling the Past

(Continued from page 107)

lieved to be correct.³¹ To establish this new text all other—and older—Bibles were ordered destroyed, and before many years the fact that the Masorete text stood unchallenged was taken as clear proof that it must be the true and original version of the Bible, for people naturally forgot that the reason why it stood alone through the centuries was that its competitors had all been deliberately and systematically extirpated. Kahle compares this to the claims of the Roman church to pristine purity of doctrine in the Middle Ages: it was, or appeared to be, the oldest surviving doctrine only because the others had been suppressed or destroyed.³²

(To be continued)

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¹⁷Tertullian, *De Bapt.*, c. 17.

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²²*Apol. adv. Lib. Ruf.* in Migne, *Patrol. Latinae*, XXIII, 412. *Epist. ad Theophil.*, in *Patrol. Lat.* XXII, 740.

²³According to Jerome, in *Patrol. Lat.* XXIII, 412.

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²⁵H. Böhmer, *Die Fälschungen Erzbischofs Lanfrancs von Canterbury* (Leipzig, 1902), VII, i, in *Studien zur Gesch. der Theol. u. Kirche*, p. 126. For a fuller discussion see my article in *THE IMPROVEMENT ERA* 56 (Dec. 1953), pp. 919ff.

²⁶T. Comber, *op. cit.*, Intd.

²⁷In *THE IMPROVEMENT ERA* for November and December 1953.

²⁸Innocent I, *Epist.*, in *Patrol. Lat.* XX, 551f.

²⁹O. Linton, *Problem der Urkirche*, p. 10.

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³¹*Ibid.*, pp. 86, 108, 118, 127.

³²*Ibid.*, p. 85.

THE IMPROVEMENT ERA

WHEN Joseph Smith announced that the very first words of the Bible had been edited and their meaning changed by "an old Jew without any authority," he knew whereof he spoke.³³ Not that the manipulation of that particular passage has been definitely proven—there is not yet enough evidence, one way or the other—but that the common practice of such manipulation has of recent years become an established fact, thanks to the labors of Kahle and others. The work of the Masoretes, far from being, as it was meant to be, the final and definitive fixing of the sacred text for all time, simply laid the groundwork for new and daring "reconstructions."

For the Masoretic text in its turn suffered the usual process of deterioration until, in the sixteenth century, Jacob ben Chaiyim set himself to the task of rescuing it from the state of corruption into which it had fallen: "He was convinced that there was only one correct Masora—the Masora compiled by himself—and that the text arranged by him according to this Masora was the very text which had been established by the great Masoretic authorities of Tiberias. . . ."³⁴ And so scholars accepted Jacob ben Chaiyim's text as the one authoritative one; and when through the ensuing four centuries, older and better texts turned up and showed wherein ben Chaiyim had been wrong, what did the scholars do—correct him? Far from it: they corrected the ancient manuscripts to agree with ben Chaiyim! His hasty, superficial, and hopelessly out-of-date text "has been regarded as the only authoritative text up to the present day."³⁵ In the nineteenth century Baer made the most notable effort to restore the pure Old Testament. His method was simple and effective: from all the material before him he "selected . . . what he regarded as 'correct' and what differed he declared to be 'corrupt,' 'incomplete,' or 'in confusion.' . . . But Baer not only *selected* what he regarded as the 'correct' text from the material at his disposal, he also freely *altered* reading of his manuscripts when they did not give what he regarded as 'correct.'³⁶ So when confronted by valuable old manuscripts or even by texts corrected by the great ben Asher himself, Baer's disciples firmly rejected them, since

Controlling the Past

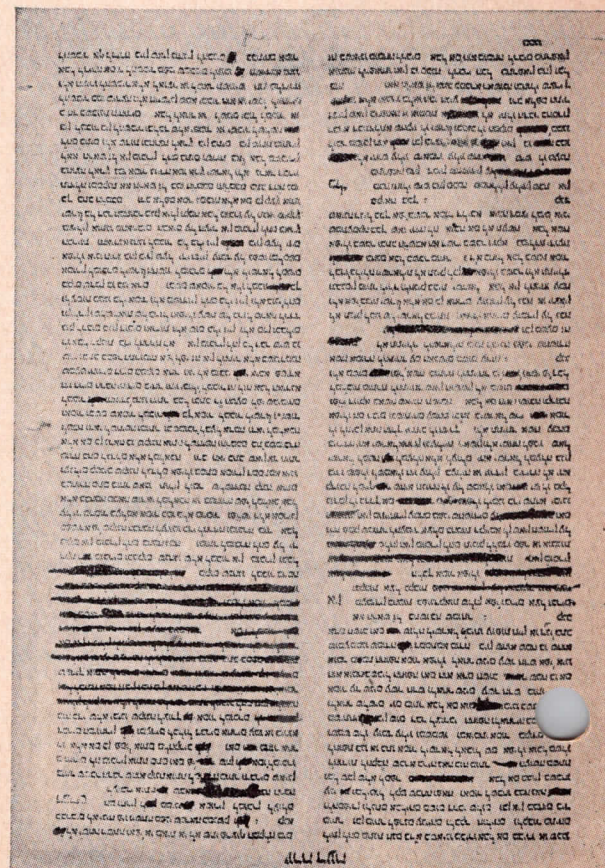
by Dr. Hugh Nibley
BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

PART III

they differed from Baer's hypothetical reconstruction of them.³⁷ It is not as one might suppose, the discovery of new and revealing manuscripts that controls and guides the thinking of the scholars; it is their thinking that controls the discoveries. "They approach the texts," wrote Father Deimel, the Sumerian expert, "with a preestablished and ready-made system, and then force them to conform to this bed of Procrustes."³⁸ Even when the scholars have "gnashed their teeth and accepted" new discoveries, according to Housman, they have been prompt to make it appear that such findings were no surprise to them, "and the history of scholarship is mutilated to save the face of those who have impeded progress."³⁹

Anyone who thinks Kahle may have exaggerated should consult Goldschmidt's introduction to his standard edition of the Babylonian Talmud. Over 400 years ago Daniel Bomberg brought out the first complete printed text of the Talmud. It was widely circulated and became the "standard text." But in the ensuing centuries, as might be expected, vast numbers of ancient Talmud manuscripts have been discovered, texts entirely unknown to Bomberg and differing very widely from his text as well as among themselves. Even without these discoveries it is apparent that the Bomberg text swarms with mistakes" obvious even to the

casual reader. In the face of this, one would expect all kinds of new and improved editions of the Talmud, since Bomberg claimed no more divine inspiration than any other editor. But not a bit of it! His text had been accepted by the doctors and that settled the matter forever. "All subsequent editions have been virtually stereotype copies of the first," Goldschmidt tells us, and so is his! He brushes aside all the great manuscript discoveries—out of respect for the received text he will not even consider them.⁴⁰ If even the most obvious blunder in the Bomberg edition can possibly be justified by any argument, Goldschmidt retains it without comment; if it cannot be justified he still lets it stand but makes a modest suggestion in a footnote. "The present



A CAREFUL CONTROL JOB: Comparison of this with less damaged copies of the same text shows that we have here a studious inking out of any passage or word that might possibly be construed to cast disrespect on the Christians or heighten the prestige of the Jews.

להודית תחלתו וסופו ושאר סגולות
במקראות הכתובים כנפולות כפי
הספרות והדעות המוקבלות לכל
אחד מהם:

פרק שנים עשר

אל

ועלה על לב שבימות המשיח
המשיח יפסל דבר
ממנהט של עולם כו' עד משלים
כתב האחד לו והלא כתוב
כעור והספתי מה רעה
מן הארץ פלל:

ואני

אומאלינו וכו' להקשות
היה לנו להקשות תשוק
לי דהא סתוב ולא יסא גוי אל גוי
מכר ולא ילמדו עוונותיהם
קרא ומשל שני למה לי שיהיה זה
הן ואין מוסיפין עליהן וכבר כתב
רמזל כזה הפקד שאין הדברים
מקובלין ולא יודע כדורן עד ש
סיבאו כהרה כמיוון ומן כמה
שהקפה האחד לו יש למד דוחים
רעה משל על אומה רכה וכמו ש
שדרשו לו מה רעה אכלתהו על
אשת ארצו וכבר הקדים רמזל
שכל מה שמפורש כנפולות הכל
דומה כעורה והוא מה שאמרנו לו
במנהג מי איכא מיד כנפולות וכעור
לא רשיו בדאורייתא: אמרו חכמי

דור השלמי והכשרי שטתו ולא היתה נהגת אלא לנס' בו רבים שזמן המשכילי' כשלו לצרופ בהן ולכרר
ולכן עד עת קץ בישת למסור

ורא ל
ח עברה
למסור

פרק שנים עשר

אל

ועלה על לב שבימות המשיח יכסל דבר כמנהגו של עולם או ידחה שם חידוש שמעשה בראשית
אז עולם כמנהגו נותן וזה שני בישעיה וגר ואב עם כבש וגמר עם גרי ירכז משל וחידה ענין הדבר
שהיו ישראל יושבין לכשת עם רשעי אומות העולם המשולים לאב וגמר שני ואב ערבות ישרדם
וגמר שוקר על עריהם ויחזרו בתשובה כולם לדת האמת ולא יגורו ולא ישחיתו לא יאכלו דבר המותר בנחת
עם ישראל ואריה כבקר יאכל תבן וכן כל כינא ברברי האלה הכתובי' בענין המשיח משל' הם ובימי המשיח
יודע לא זה דבר הנומשל ומה ענין רמזו בהן אמרו חכמי' אין בין העולם הזה ליסו המשיח לא טעבור מלכו'
בלבר יראת משפטן של רבתי הנביאים שבתחילת ימות המשיח היתה מלחמת גוג ומגוג ושקור' מלחמת גוג
ומגוג יעמד נשיא ישראל לחי' לבם שני חנה אנבי שולח לבם את אליהו הנביא לפני בא יום התגדול והגדור ואינו
בא לא למטא חמור ולסחר חטא ולא לפסול אנשי' שהם בחזקת כשרות ולא להכשי' אות' שתחזקו פסולין
אלא לשים שלום בעולם שני חשיב לב אבות על בניו וכן יש מן החכמי' שאומרי' שקורם ביאת המלך המשיח
יבא אליהו וכל אלו הדברים וכינא בהם לא ידע אדם היאך ידיו עד שהיו שרבים סתורי' הם אצל הנביא' גם
החכמי' אין להם קבלה ברברי' אלא לפי הכרע הפסקים ולפי' יש להם מחלוק' ברבים אילו ועל כל פנים אין
סודורי הווית דברי' אלו ולא דקדוקים עיקר ולא יתעסק אדם ברברי התגרות ולא יאריך ברברי חסרשות
האמורי' בעני' אלו וכינא בהם ולא ישימם עיקר שאינם מביאי' לא ליד אהבה ולא ליד יראת' וכן לא יחשב
הקיצים אמרו חכמי' תיפח דחם של שחשבי קיצים אלא יחכת ויאמין בכלל הדבר' כמו שכארנו: בימי

HEAVY-HANDED CONTROL OF THE PAST: An official censor inked out a passage in a volume of Maimonides (Venice, 1551). The Jewish owner of the book then wrote what he could of the passage from memory in the margin on the left. Later a surprise inspection by another censor inked out this reconstruction, and probably cost the offender a heavy fine.

edition," he announces with pride rather than shame, "is thus an exact reproduction of the first Bomberg edition; all other readings, even those which are obviously more correct, are put in footnotes as variant readings, the text itself remaining untouched." The official stamp of approval has so sanctified a text which the doctors themselves describe as extremely inaccurate and poorly substantiated that "no Talmud authority would accept as reliable any text 'improved' from the manuscripts or by scholarly judgment, or even recognize such as a Talmud text at all."⁴¹ Though it is hard for the layman to believe that such things can be, they are the rule rather than the exception.

The rigorous and arbitrary censorship of ancient texts belongs to the common heritage of all the "people of the book," being an established

routine in every age. Antiochus ordered all copies of the Jewish scriptures burned, and pronounced the death penalty on anyone guilty of possessing a copy.⁴² Diocletian passed a like law against all Christian writings, and Constantine followed his example by condemning to death anyone guilty of possessing writings by the heretics Porphyry or Arius.⁴³ In 449 Theodosius and Valentinian passed a law that "all that . . . any person may have written against the pious religion of the Christians be committed to the flames wherever found."⁴⁴ Accordingly Bishop Theodoret of Cyprus can boast of having collected and destroyed in his diocese more than two hundred copies of the diatessaron New Testament.⁴⁵ When it was officially decided (for party reasons) that Ephraim should be "regarded as the classical Syrian poet,

all older forms of Syrian poetry were regarded as imperfect and were destroyed."⁴⁶ The Arabs, raised up in the same tradition, upon fixing the final text of the Koran, so carefully destroyed all other texts that for 1200 years it was possible to maintain that the accepted text was the very one dictated by the Prophet, though today, we know that it was nothing of the sort.⁴⁷ In this wholesale destruction of texts to control the past, it is precisely the religious who are least troubled by qualms of conscience, "for how" asks Eusebius, "could a man who writes against the Christians do anything but lie?"⁴⁸

But usually the violent economy of wholesale book burning is not necessary to control the past. Skillful officials avoid it as the brutal and straightforward technique of soldiers and governors, and a risky business in the bargain—for there is no telling what slippery or forgotten pages might escape the flames, and the subsequent discovery of such has sometimes proved very embarrassing. The shrewd administrator can exercise an equally crippling censorship simply by condemning certain items

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wherever they appear, as when Theodosius ordered all his subjects to consider "any laws or rescripts alleged in the favor of heretics as either fraud or forgery."⁴⁹

To prove that an order is *fraudulent* one needs no further evidence than that the party doesn't like it: it is not distasteful to the party because it is a forgery, but is automatically declared a forgery because it is distasteful. Acting on this principle, modern scholars tried to decide whether the account of the Council of Sinuessa was spurious or not solely on the grounds of whether its acceptance would do the Church more harm than good.

One school accepted it as genuine because it said something they thought highly favorable to the Roman Church; the other school condemned it because it said something else which they thought very damaging. The whole problem was whether the story was more favorable to the Church than otherwise—in which case it would be automatically accepted as true. Hefele finds the damage greater than the benefit, and so declares it false.⁵⁰ With such principles to guide him, the clever scholar in his office of *editor* can make the past out to be pretty much what he wants it to be.

The voluminous writings of Ambrose are, according to Leander, full of things "that differ from the catholic sense," being "by no means in agreement with sound doctrine." Accordingly, every such statement was to be regarded automatically as apocryphal and removed from the text by a special committee appointed by the Pope in 1580.⁵¹ Does that sound naive? No less a sophisticated intellectual than Gilson begins his philosophical investigation of God with the announcement, "If we believe by faith that God has spoken, since what God says is true, all that contradicts the word of God can, and must, be at once excluded as false."⁵² Is it at all surprising then that M. Gilson ends up by proving his faith, since all his arguments *must* conform? He is in the position of a man who declares as an article of faith that any coin when tossed will always come down heads. This being the true faith, anything that contradicts it, such as those times when a coin comes down tails, "can and *must*

be excluded as false." The religious censor is thus not troubled by conscience, and, once he is thoroughly conversant with the party line, has a very easy time of it.

A subtle and very effective form of censorship is the *silent treatment*. "It is permitted," writes St. Augustine, "for the purpose of building up religion in things pertaining to piety, when necessary, to conceal whatever appears to need concealing; but it is not permitted to lie, of course, and so one may not conceal by way of lying."⁵³ The distinction is too fine, for silence can be very mendacious. The celebrated Duchesne, according to his biographer, M. Leclercq, was honest, open, and impartial in all the questions of church history *that he treated*, "but he would not handle all the questions: for example, he built a wall around the life of Jesus and the founding of the church, and he would not allow anyone to approach it. . . . He would not tolerate any discussion or any hesitation on that subject." Yet the whole labor of his life was "to prove the validity of the Church's historic claims,"—and the whole burden of the proof rests in the life of Jesus and the foundation of the Church, the two subjects of which he would tolerate no examination, even by himself!⁵⁴ Recently (1952) the *Knights of Columbus Foundation for the Preservation of Historical Documents in the Vatican Library* sent out a brochure announcing its admirable project of microfilming the entire contents of the Vatican Library and housing the films in a special building in St. Louis. Only not quite all of the mighty collection was to be thus preserved: "The documents which the Church has been collecting for nearly 20 centuries," reads the announcement, "include, of course, the ecclesiastical records from the earliest Christian era. These are housed separately in the Vatican Archives and are not to be microfilmed." Why not? one asks with surprise; and the answer is a shocker: ". . . as they are not of general interest to scholars."

Now anyone who consults the card index of any of our big libraries can quickly discover that precisely "the earliest Christian era" has been the subject of more books and studies than all the other centuries combined. If "the ecclesiastical records from the earliest Christian era" cast anything

like a favorable light on the case of the Roman Church, we could long since have expected to see them splashed on the covers of some national magazines, not "housed separately" and withheld from circulation. "Not of general interest to scholars," indeed! The editors of the *Patrologia* are more ingenuous when they explain their failure to include certain important texts in what purports to be a complete collection of sources: "The editors have not published these three letters because of certain calumnies against the pope."⁵⁵

The silent treatment is recommended however, only in dealing with powerfully unco-operative documents. It is usually possible to control a text simply by weeding out the objectionable matter here and there instead of condemning whole books. Why destroy all the letters of Cyprian because some of them refute Roman claims? You only need declare the unfavorable ones forgeries, as Archbishop Tizzani did, and accept all the others. When Rufinus of Aquileia, translating early Christian texts at the end of the fourth century, comes upon passages presenting the peculiar and unacceptable doctrines of the early Christians, especially concerning God, he simply leaves those passages out, as he explains with disarming frankness.⁵⁶ When he is translating Origen and finds his text saying something with which he does not agree, he just naturally assumes, he tells us, that Origen never wrote any such thing and either rewrites the offending passage or strikes it out altogether!⁵⁷ When Eusebius finds anything in the records of Constantine's life which might not make edifying reading (and there is plenty!), he deliberately omits such improper stuff, he explains, lest it detract from the glory of his subject.⁵⁸ In the same way, the biographers of Mohammed boast that they have eliminated all offensive passages and accepted into their histories only such material as will cast luster upon the name and reputation of the Prophet.⁵⁹

Sometimes, however, one can preserve an entire text almost intact simply by inserting a single syllable into it—the little word "not." Though a powerful censor, this tiny word comes so near to being nothing in itself, that editors apparently think

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little harm can be done by introducing it here and there where careless scribes seem to have a habit of leaving it out. Thus in the 127 *Canons of the Apostles* we read that the church has lost the power once enjoyed by the saints to drive out devils, raise the dead, and speak in tongues, though those powers were meant to be "signs to those who believe." This agrees perfectly with Mark 16:17, "... these signs shall follow them that believe," etc. but not with the conventional Christian thesis, that the loss of the signs was not serious since they were meant to impress only unbelievers.

And so our editor helpfully inserts the little word which the original writer somehow overlooked: "that they should be a sign to those who do not believe!"⁶⁰ In the same spirit of helpfulness, when Justin Martyr propounds the doctrine (to which he refers a number of times) that "God created the world out of unorganized matter," Lange, editing the text in the *Patrologia*, is good enough to oblige with a useful insertion: "... God created the world *not* out of unorganized matter," to which by way of clarification he adds a further interpolation, "but out of nothing."⁶¹ Why bother to condemn Justin as a heretic when his words can be so easily controlled?

c) *Emendation—the Rewrite Job*: The excision of annoying passages and the insertion of useful ones is, after all, a surgery of last resort. Most scholars prefer to display their skill and ingenuity in the more cultivated art of *emendation*, the correction of purely scribal errors. The object of the game is to make the greatest possible change in the reading of a text by the least possible alteration of the written word; the smaller the alteration and the more striking the change of reading it effects, the more "brilliant" the emendation is considered. This, however, is a three-dimensional chess game reserved for the elite: the art of rewriting texts is practised with little enough subtlety by most churchmen, whose prime concern has ever been to do a pious rather than a convincing rewrite job. At a very early period, "when anyone, Catholic or heretic, found a statement in the New Testament which appeared to be wrong," according to Kirsopp Lake, "it would seem to him

a moral duty to correct an obvious scribal error into a true statement. But who can say what are the limits of 'scribal errors'?"⁶² Those limits are set by any pious reader whose duty it is to alter the text whenever he feels the scribe is off the track. This is an unlimited license to control the past.

In one of the very earliest post-apostolic writings, Ignatius reprimands those Christians who won't believe anything that can't be proved from the archives, telling the Philadelphians, "My archives are Jesus Christ, and they can't be tampered with."⁶³ Which shows not only how soon the Church took to resting its case on documents, but also how soon those documents began to be controlled.

The original version of Josephus' *Jewish War* (II, 110) contained a very unflattering reference to Christ. For this reason the book was condemned. Yet the writings of Josephus had been raised to almost canonical rank by the Christians—how could this treasure be saved? In the oldest surviving manuscripts, the famous passage about Christ has been savagely inked out, rubbed out, or cut out, as if in hasty attempts to clear the owners of any charge of possessing illicit writings. In later manuscripts, however, this passage re-emerges, but this time wonderfully altered: by the changing of a few words and a little deft insertion and deletion the insulting paragraph has now become a glowing character reference for Jesus from the mouth of an infidel!⁶⁴

Coming down to our own time, we find the emendator still at work in the same old shop. When Père Batiffol reads in the *Odes of Solomon*, "Thou hast introduced thy person into the world," he asks, "How could God introduce his person into the world which belongs to him? Let us rather say that God introduces his 'countenance' instead: not *prosopon* (person), but *morphe* (face, form)."⁶⁵ Let us say, "indeed! And what has the author to say about it? 'This passage,' Batiffol obligingly explains, "calls for a rather energetic correction in order to have sense."⁶⁵ Sense for whom? The second-year Greek student is constantly running into passages that make no sense to him, and which he feels strongly urged to "correct." But when a text fails to make sense to a reader, or makes undesir-

able sense to his church, the last thing he may do is to alter it to some form that he and his party can accept. And that is notoriously the first thing that religious scholars do—just look through the footnotes of almost any early volume of the *Patrologiae*.

In all his extensive writings, it is axiomatic with M. Batiffol that anything not satisfactory to his church can only be nonsense. Armed with this supremely practical and convenient rule of thumb, he has no difficulty or hesitation in perpetrating his "energetic corrections" whenever an ancient writing refuses to cooperate with him or his party. The *Odes of Solomon*, for example, repeatedly speaks of "the worlds" in the plural. In one place it declares of Christ, "In Him the worlds speak one to another," making him the common Lord of many worlds. Such was early Christian doctrine; but not modern: "One is surprised," writes Batiffol, "to see 'the worlds' speaking to one another; one would expect rather that it would be *men*. . . . I would understand it to read 'men,' not 'worlds.'"⁶⁶ To what purpose, then, does an ancient author say "worlds" if an editor many centuries later can substitute any word that suits him in its place? Is a poet writing some eighteen-hundred years ago under any obligation to put down what "one would expect" him to write today? Apparently he is.

(To be continued)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

⁶⁰King Follett Discourse. Even the motive attributed to the scribe, that "they thought it too bad" to leave the text as he found it, is the authentic and conventional one.

⁶¹Kahle, *Cairo Geniza*, pp. 72, 77.

⁶²*Ibid.*, pp. 71f.

⁶³*Ibid.*, pp. 63-66.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, p. 66.

⁶⁵A. Deimel, *Sumerische Grammatik* (Rome, 1924), p. 8.

⁶⁶A. E. Housman, *Manilius V* (Cambridge, 1927), p. xxxiv.

⁶⁷L. Goldschmidt, *Der Babylonische Talmud* (Haag: M. Nijhoff, 1933), I, xiii.

⁶⁸*Loc. cit.* and xiv.

⁶⁹I Macc. I, 56f. 63.

⁷⁰Sozomen, *Hist. Eccl.* II, 38; Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* I, 9, 31. The pagan Diocletian was milder against the Christians than they were against heretics, Eusebius, *Ch. Hist.*, VIII, 11.

⁷¹*Codex Justinianus* (ed. P. Krüger), I, i, 3; and Novella 42, i, 2; lib. 3, de summa trinitate.

⁷²Kahle, *op. cit.*, p. 211.

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THOSE who hold ancient writers to modern standards, find their work immeasurably simplified by the use of certain favorite yardsticks. With the textual critics this yardstick is "the best manuscript." Among a dozen or more ancient manuscripts of a text, one is certain to have fewer mistakes in it, that is, to be nearer the original form, than any of the others. Having located this one, a critic will turn to it and it alone in every case of doubt, oblivious of the fact that the best authority may at times be hopelessly wrong, just as the worst authority may be surprisingly right.

That is another way of saying that there *are no authorities*. But the scholars insist on acting as if there were because if they had such to appeal to, their problem of constantly having to make decisions would be solved. And so they solve it by creating the authorities to which they then appeal! This procedure drives Mr. Housman to wrathful sermons: "By this time," he writes, "it has become apparent what the modern conservative critic really is: a creature moving about in worlds not realized. His trade is one which requires, that it may be practised in perfection, two qualifications only: ignorance of language and abstinence from thought. The tenacity with which he adheres to the testimony of scribes has no relation to the trustworthiness of that testimony, but is dictated wholly by his inability to stand alone. . . ." These gentlemen, he says, "use manuscripts as drunkards use lamp-posts—not to light them on their way, but to dissimulate their instability."⁶⁷

But relatively few men work with original manuscripts. Far more common are those other yardsticks, the pet hypothesis and the official party line. Mr. Toynbee uses pet hypotheses just as textual critics use pet manuscripts: "Toynbee's images," writes M. Frankfort, "betray an evolutionistic as well as moral bias which interferences with the historian's supreme duty," since he merely "projects postulates which fulfill an emotional need in the West [i.e., his own cul-

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by Dr. Hugh Nibley

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PART IV

tural standards] into human groups whose values lie elsewhere."⁶⁸ Taking his own culture as a yardstick, Toynbee has no difficulty at all in telling at a glance just how advanced or retarded everybody else has been.

This is one of the oldest and easiest games in the world, though it was not until the nineteenth century that its devotees had the effrontery to call it a science. The "evolutionistic bias" of modern scholarship has played havoc with ancient history, not only predetermining every reaction of the historian to his text, but also in most cases freeing him from any obligation towards the text at all. Many large college textbooks are brought forth by men who, it is painfully apparent, have never bothered to read through the documents on which their work is supposed to be based. Their confidence in a moth-eaten rule-of-thumb is simply sublime—why should one waste precious eyesight examining moldy evidence when everybody knows already what the answer is going to be? "Naturally," writes one of the better authorities of our time, speaking of the ancient world in general, "the earlier kingdoms were neither large nor firmly established."

What economy is here! Who would beat a weary trail to the stacks in search of early kingdoms when he can reconstruct them at will by the application of a simple and universal rule? If one knows from biological analogy that early states were *naturally* small and weak, why spoil the game by toying with evidence which might prove that *historically* they were nothing of the sort?⁶⁹

But more damaging to the past

even than the wilful and mechanical application of lazy hand-me-down "science" to its reconstruction is the *rule of vanity*. In the end, as Housman demonstrates at length, a scholar's right to reconstruct history or restore a battered text rests on the possession of personal gifts which escape analysis. Here is high art indeed! The expert feels in his bones that what he says is what is right, unaware that his bones have been undergoing constant conditioning since the day of his birth. He is trained and intelligent; he means to be perfectly scientific and detached; he is constitutionally incapable of wanton error; how then can he be wrong?

Answer: simply by being human! Purity of motive is no guarantee of infallibility; the greatest of errors are by no means intentional, and are often made by the ablest of scholars. Yet because Dr. Faugh *means* to write an honest, impartial, and objective history we are expected by his publishers to have the decency, or at least the courtesy, to believe that his history is honest, impartial, and objective. No scholar alive possesses enough knowledge to speak the final word on anything, and as to integrity, let us rather call it vanity.

After surveying the whole field of Ezekiel scholarship for the period 1933-43, W. A. Irwin came out with the flat announcement that "not a single scholar has succeeded in convincing his colleagues of the finality of his analysis of so much as one passage." Why not? Because "they have given only opinions, when the situation cries aloud for . . . evidence. . . . There is no clearly emerging recognition of a sound method by which to assault this prime problem. Every scholar goes his own way, and according to his private predilection chooses what is genuine and what is secondary in the book; and the figure and work of Ezekiel still dwell in thick darkness."⁷⁰ No common yardstick having been agreed on, every

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expert is his own yardstick, to which Ezekiel must conform. This we call the rule of vanity, when the scholar simply sets himself up as the final court of appeal.

There are, it is true, worse things than vanity, which is common to all men, and it often happens that the very pomposity of a scholar clears him of any suspicion of cynicism or intent to deceive. As Scaliger teaches us in his table talk, the principal weakness of the learned lies not in their slyness or vindictiveness but in their almost childlike simplicity and gullibility where their own gifts and talents are concerned.

Professor von Gall, for example, was perfectly sincere in his conviction that the doctrine of the Messiah could not possibly have been known to the Jews before the Exile; then when he found passages in the Old Testament that made it perfectly clear that that

doctrine was known to them, he solemnly accused such non-co-operative texts of "obscuring the clear line of thought" which he was following; and in all good faith he then removed those passages from the Bible: "If we remove these," he explains, "then almost everything falls into perfect order—unless the text is corrupt." If any lingering traces of the Messianic teaching remain in the text after von Gall has got through with it, he begs us to attribute such to lurking corruptions which he has overlooked. How disarming, and how naive!⁷¹

Neither can we charge with malpractice those students of history who, having become sincerely convinced that there was no organization in the primitive church, deftly remove as a corruption of the text anything in the New Testament that might imply that there was such an organization.⁷² Quite recently Professor Bultmann,

having decided that the message of John is a purely spiritual one, is, as it were, honor bound to remove from John 3:5 those crass physical words "... and of water," which for him can only be a later interpolation.⁷³

These people are honest and consistent in their operations, and one need no more accuse them of bad faith than one would condemn the faithful guide in the woods because he is going north when he sincerely believes he is going east. But that simple vanity which forbids us to condemn such guides also admonishes and excuses us from following them.

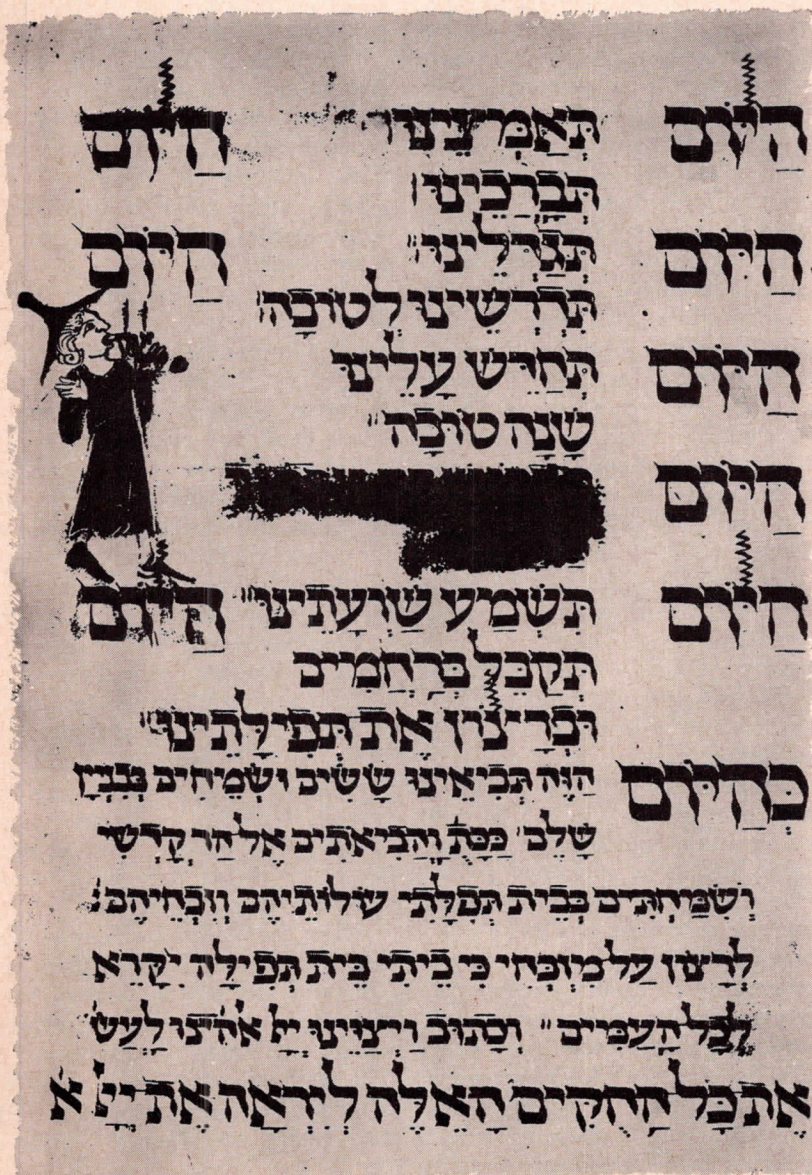
"What stamps the last twenty years with their special character," wrote Housman at the beginning of this century, "is . . . the absence of great scholars. . . . They now pretend that the relapse of the last twenty years is not a reaction against the great work of their elders, but a supplement to it. To the Lachmanns and Bentleys and Scaligers they politely ascribe the quality of *Genialitat*: there is a complementary virtue called *Umsicht* (circumspection, perspicacity) and this they ascribe to themselves. Why, I cannot tell."⁷³

Lest the reader think such charges of vanity are exaggerated, we reproduce herewith a certificate of supreme competence, written by a famous scholar in recommendation of himself to establish beyond a doubt the authority by which he does the amazing things described in the certificate itself. In his preface to his edition of the *Divans* of the earliest Arabic poets, the celebrated Dr. Ahlwardt writes (with our italics):

In this edition I have chiefly relied on some manuscripts of the text . . . but I have not abstained from adopting readings which appeared to me more appropriate, from other sources. *I think myself justified in claiming this privilege as a right.* As I would not hesitate, when a verse had faults in the metre or lacks its proper feet, to correct it as far as I am able to do so from the context, so likewise I do not

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Crippling the word of power: Under the Roman emperors, the original intent of book censorship was to render ineffective the magical power of the written word to do harm to the person of the emperor. The little figure on the left, wearing the peaked cap required of all Jews in the 14th century, is pronouncing a fervid "Amen!" to a prayer in which the words asking God to avenge the blood of the Jewish martyrs have been blacked out, either by a Christian censor or the Jewish owner who wanted to save his book. (After Eisler.)



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scruple to reject a reading that is not reconcilable with my appreciation of the sense, and to select another one or even to invent one.⁷⁴

Ahlwardt claims as a right the privilege of inventing a line of his own whenever the text before him offends his "appreciation of the sense." And to what remarkable personal gifts does Professor Ahlwardt attribute his infallible judgment of Arabic poetry? Not, surprisingly enough, to any superior knowledge of Arabic language or poetic idiom, but solely to the possession of a quality of superior acumen which only those trained in a modern university possess: "I readily concede," he writes, "that the feeling of the language which the native Arabian philologists possessed is in great measure wanting in us. . . . The faculty which is especially concerned in these matters, however, is one which was wholly, or almost wholly, denied to them . . . critical acumen."⁷⁴

This is that very *Umsicht* over which Housman makes merry. One would suppose that "the faculty which is especially concerned" with the business of reconstructing ancient verses would be that "feeling of the language" by which alone poetry can be produced or comprehended. But not so. *Umsicht* is the thing, and Ahlwardt proceeds to ascribe it to himself in lavish measure: "On this ground, as I judge, we have a right to reject readings even when they have been expressly sanctioned by them. I readily admit that we neither now nor ever can equal them in quantity of knowledge. I do not rate our knowledge high, but our power, our method of investigation, our critical treatment of a given subject."⁷⁵

And why is Herr Ahlwardt so frank and open in confessing limitations of knowledge? Because he cannot conceal them: any claim to intimate knowledge of a language may be quickly and easily put to the test, whereas in matters of "power, method, and critical acumen" every scholar is his own examiner and awards himself his own certificate: "Every scholar goes his own way, and according to his private predilection chooses what is genuine and what is secondary. . . ."

Ahlwardt claims training in a wonderful method by which the initiate

can bring forth knowledge of the past; this knowledge, he says, is far inferior to that possessed by the ancients themselves but is to be preferred to theirs, since their knowledge, though superior to it, was not derived by the approved method! Incredible as it seems, this is the normal attitude of scholars to records of the past, as Paul Kahle has demonstrated at great length. In the end, the mood, the method, the ripe assurance of the individual researcher, in a word, his vanity, has priority over all evidence.

But once a text has survived the ravages of the censor and received its final, "definitive" form at the hands of editors, it still had to face new and deadly perils before being placed in the hands of the general reader. For now comes the business of interpreting, a major factor where religious documents are concerned. Without adding, removing, or altering a single letter in a document one may by simply interpreting it as it stands effectively control its message. Here is the field in which the party can bring direct influence to bear. The Council of Trent "decrees that no one, relying on his own skill, shall . . . presume to interpret the said sacred Scriptures contrary to that sense which holy mother Church—whose it is to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the holy Scriptures—hath held and doth hold."⁷⁶ And there is no text on earth so clear, simple, and unequivocal but that some devout commentator cannot make it mean the very opposite to what it says. Thus Justin Martyr in the *Dialogue* (120) can demonstrate with ease that Genesis 22:17 is really a most terrible curse against the seed of Abraham!

There is an easy way of discovering in Mansi or the *Patrologiae* those texts which run counter to the claims of the Roman church: when the text suddenly gives way to long crowded columns of commentary, it is almost a sure sign that something has been said that has to be explained away, and the more clear and unequivocal the ancient statement, the more toilsome and extensive the commentary. Seventeen pages of Mansi are devoted to getting around the simply and clearly stated thirty-seventh canon of the Council of Arles (309) decreeing that paintings should be banned from the churches and explaining why. Schermann, in all seriousness, tells

us that the remark of Aristides, that the Primitive Christians rejoiced on the death of an infant "all the more, as for one that has left the earth in a sinless condition" proves the early Christians baptized babies!⁷⁷ Now to those reared in churches that teach and practise infant baptism the passage may prove just that, but to those reared in another tradition it seems to convey the very opposite meaning, identifying sinlessness with infancy as such, since Aristides says that though there was rejoicing at the death of any faithful member, for an infant that was something special. The point here is that what looks perfectly natural and logical to Schermann is, whether right or wrong, really the reflection of his partisan training.

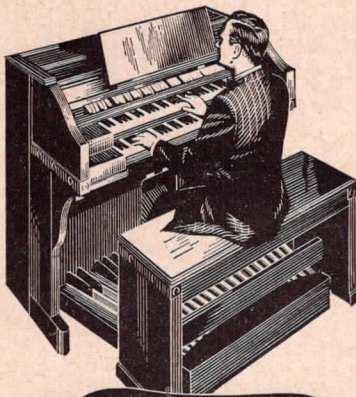
In a very early writing attributed to Peter, that Apostle is represented as complaining to James about "the varied interpretations of my words" enjoying currency in the Church: "They seem to think they can interpret my own words better than I can, pretending to report my very thoughts, when as a fact such things never entered my head. If they dare so much while I am still alive, what liberties will they not take after I am gone!"⁷⁸

The greatest handicap an ancient writer has in trying to tell his story against entrenched opinions of the scholars is that he cannot be present to defend himself. The master himself is dead, the public in ignorance, and the field is left clear to the servants of the household to make themselves magnificent at the expense of their lord; when the master does turn up unexpectedly, as did Ben Asher, he is promptly turned out-of-doors so the masquerade can continue. Already Tertullian complains of the technique of reading the scripture so that it says one thing and means another, as if it were all an allegory, parable, or enigma. "But this is to pervert the faith," he says, "not to believe plain evidence but to put in its place unfounded propositions—and then accept them."⁷⁹

Thus, the plain statement in Genesis 18, that the Lord visited Abraham and ate with him, may be explained in two ways, according to writing attributed to Athanasius: (1) If it really was the Lord, then there can have been no eating, and (2) if they really ate, then it could not

(Continued on page 258)
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THE LAMANITE



Street in Walpi, Arizona. A Hopi Indian unloads his burro outside the quaintly built stone and mud houses of the town. —Photo by Josef Muench

(Concluded from page 256)

sied hands and teach untutored minds and comfort broken hearts.

There are too many who "strain at a gnat and swallow a camel," and too few who have judgment and faith and mercy and kindness for the unfortunate. There are too many who pray on their knees for fulfilment of prophecy and too few who let their hearts be softened and become "nursing fathers and mothers" to the down-trodden. There are too many Levites who pull their robes about them and pass by with disdain, and too few who "take them to the inn" and give them tender treatment and care.

There are too many curiosity seekers and too few laborers. We are constantly reminded of the eloquent scripture given to the Nephites:

Wherefore, a commandment I give unto you, which is the word of God, that ye revile no more against them because of the darkness of their skins; neither shall ye

revile against them because of their filthiness; but ye shall remember your own filthiness. (Jacob 3:9.)

Again, there are too many who push down and tread under, and too few who lift up, encourage, and help.

There are too many goats and too few sheep. There are too many who exploit and profit by his misfortune, and there are too few who give the stranger meat and drink and clothe his nakedness and visit him in prison.

My good people: Accept the Lamanite as your brother. I ask for him, not tolerance—cold, calculating tolerance; haughty, contemptible tolerance; scornful, arrogant tolerance; pitying, coin-tossing tolerance. Give them what they want and need and deserve—opportunity and brotherliness and understanding, warm and glowing fellowship, unstinted and beautiful love, enthusiastic and affectionate brotherhood.

CONTROLLING THE PAST

(Continued from page 232)

have been the Lord.⁸⁰ In either case the scripture is adjusted to our ideas of what the Lord should do and under no conditions need we change our own opinions to agree with what the scripture tells us he does. Against

those scriptural passages (to cite another case) which tell us that Mary had other children besides Jesus "we give this argument," writes Pope Siricus, "she could not have, because that would be vileness and incon-

(Continued on page 260)
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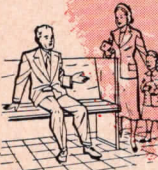
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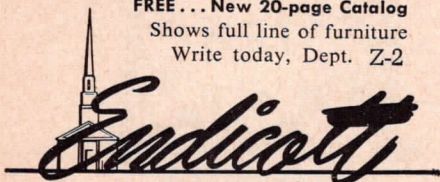


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CONTROLLING THE PAST

(Continued from page 258)
tineness."⁸¹ In vain does the scripture insist—the clergy has made up its mind.

(To be continued)

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⁸⁷A. E. Housman, *Manilius*, I, pp. xxx, xl, liii.

⁸⁸M. Frankfort, *The Birth of Civilization in the Near East*, p. 24, cf. pp. 28f: Toynbee, "the confessed 'empiricist' adheres to a preconceived system and disposes of the facts" to suit himself; for his "challenge and response" system he "must in each case invent a challenge to fit a historic reality which (he) labels response."

⁸⁹J. W. Swain, *The Ancient World* (N.Y.:

"and thou shalt be built up..."

Richard L. Evans

THERE comes to mind a phrase remembered from a childhood game of forfeits: "Heavy, heavy hangs over thy poor head." If we were to emphasize the negative side of the passing scenes, all of us could live fearful, trembling lives. Momentous forces and issues of ominous import do hang heavily over our heads—and rumors and reports of adverse events could well remind us of these words of the Master as recorded by Matthew: "And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars. . . . For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. . . . And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another."¹ So reads the scriptural record. But it also says that "he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."² Difficult problems aren't peculiar to our time. Men have lived through difficulties and discouragement in other days. And not for young or old is this a time for the trembling, timid living of life—but for pursuing it from day to day with work, faith, repentance, and prayerful purpose. No matter what hangs over our heads, life goes on, and we go with it—and children must have their chance, their happiness, their education, their opportunities. Youth must have faith and work and purpose and preparation for the future—for there will always be a future—and we can meet it knowing that men have met it before. The Lord God is still alive, and, as we are willing to keep close to him, will not leave us alone. Furthermore, there is the assurance of eternal continuance. The human spirit, the human soul, all and each of us as ourselves will always survive. And while we cannot be indifferent to what hangs over our heads, yet peace and quiet and satisfying purpose can and do come even in unsettled scenes. "Acquaint . . . thyself with him," counsels an Old Testament text: "and be at peace: . . . make thy prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee, . . . and thou shalt be built up."³ And finally, above the clamor and confusion, come the questions and the answering assurance spoken by our Savior: "Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith? . . . And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm."³

"The Spoken Word" FROM TEMPLE SQUARE
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¹Matthew 24:6-7, 10, 13.

²Job 22:21, 27, 23.

³Mark 4:40, 39.

Harpers, 1950) I, 65, reviewed by the present writer in *The Historian* XIII (Autumn 1950), 79ff. For a blunt statement and searching criticism of the common practice of prehistorians of giving full priority to the concept of evolution at the expense of the evidence, see respectively M. Jacobs, in *The American Anthropologist* 50 (1948), 565f, and W. D. Wallis, "Presuppositions in Anthropological Interpretations," *Ibid.*, pp. 560-4.

⁷⁰W. A. Irwin, in *Vetus Testamentum*, III (1953), 61. See our discussion of this in *THE IMPROVEMENT ERA* 57 (March 1954), 148ff.

⁷¹A. von Gall, *Basileia tou Theou* (Heidelberg, 1926), p. 14.

⁷²T. Schermann, *Allgem. Kirchenordnung* (II), 143.

⁷³R. Bultmann, *Das Evangelium des Johannes*, 1941 (*Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über d. N. T.*, begr. v. H. A. Meyer).

⁷⁴Manilius I, pp. xli f.

⁷⁵W. Ahlwardt, *The Divans* (London, 1870), p. viii.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, p. ix.

⁷⁷*Tridentinum*, Can. iv, in P. Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, II, 82.

⁷⁸Schermann, *op. cit.*, II, 269.

⁷⁹Clementine, Epistle in *Patrol. Graec.* II, 28.

⁸⁰Tertullian, *Scorpiacae* c. 11: *Sed haec est perversitas fidei, probata non credere, non probata praesumere.*

⁸¹Athanasius, *Dubia*, in *Patrol. Graec.* XXVIII, 1377-80.

⁸²In *Patrol. Lat.* XIII, 1177.

NAVAJOLAND

by Betty Zieve

NAVAJOLAND is a lonely country, an awesome masterpiece of today and yesterday. It is the place of sand, slick rock, mesa, mountain, canyon, butte, desert, and plateau, the wind-swept empire where the states of New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, and Utah meet. It is the place of busy hands skilfully weaving blankets of amazing beauty and intricacy. It is the place of sun and sage, piñon, and the distant spur of a volcanic cone.

It is the place of many nomads, lords of the desert, children of the sun and sand. They were Americans before the rest . . . they are Americans, still.

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It is the place of tinkling sheep bells and whining cries of newborn lambs. A gaily clad shepherdess sits watchfully on a heap of fragrant sage amid the running sweep of red scorching sand.

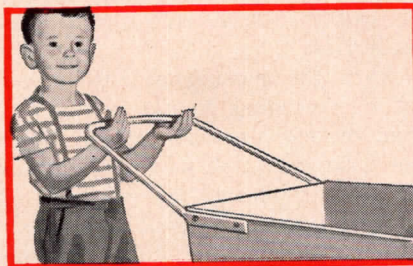
It is the place of round, earth-

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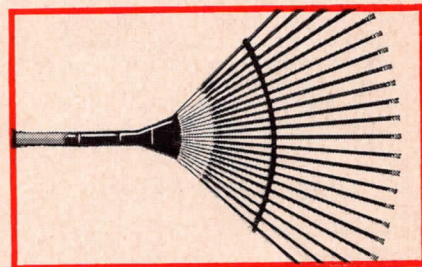
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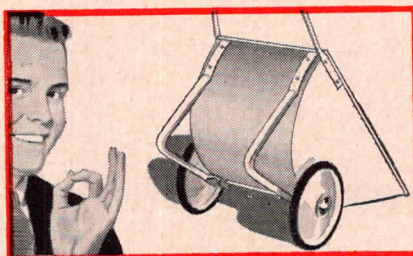
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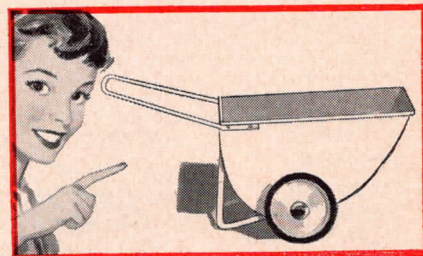
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Controlling the Past

PART VI

by Dr. Hugh Nibley
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Folly Number Four, continued:

IN DEALING with contemporary languages something like a one-to-one relationship may be detected in limited areas, such as sports and science. Today an Arabic, Greek, Russian, English, and French newspaper will all dutifully report that a meeting is going to "take place" at such and such a time, though the expression "take place" is not native to any of those languages but one. Still they all use it, for they speak an international idiom, the sophisticated language of world civilization. This was as true two thousand years ago as it is today, and every student has wondered why Greek and Latin seem so much alike—almost like one language with two alphabets—though fundamentally they are as different from each other as they are from English. Professor Albright has commented often on the amazing uniformity of the languages of four thousand years ago—they too had their own peculiar world-idiom.¹⁰² As Spengler observed, it is civilizations, not cultures, that keep records (*alle Geschichte ist Stadtgeschichte*); hence the language of the records is the language of civilization and at any given time reflects a fairly uniform equipment of ideas and things, which makes the translation of contemporary languages into each other comparatively mechanical and reliable.

It is when we want to translate between languages separated by a gap of thousands of years or even a few centuries that the trouble begins. So completely does any one-to-one relationship vanish between languages that reflect widely different cultures that it may be necessary to translate one line of a text by a whole page or a page by a single line!¹⁰³ So much for "literal" translation. Where a synthetic language must be translated into an analytic one or vice versa,

the idea of literal translation is completely annihilated, and the experts often declare any translation at all to be out of the question. A passage from Dieterici shows what we are up against:

In sentence structure the Semites employ short, disconnected utterances, expressed only by fits or starts, which reflect the subjective concept only in the most brief and sketchy form. The Indogermanic languages on the other hand move in well-ordered, easily-unfolding periods. The Semitic sentence is but the immediate reflection of a subjective idea (*Affekt*), it is only an opinion; the Indogermanic insists on the identity of the thought conveyed with actual reality. . . . At the institution of the sacrament, Christ cannot possibly have said anything but "this: my blood, this: my flesh," and no one present could possibly have misunderstood him. . . .

Such a nominal sentence (the usual thing in Semitic) is utterly untranslatable into Greek without the word "esti" (is) which of course in the original language never existed.¹⁰⁴

Yet on that *esti* rests the whole doctrine of transubstantiation. At the Marburg disputation Luther, it is said, silenced the opposition by writing upon the table with a piece of chalk: *Hoc est corpus meum*, with all the emphasis on the *est*, a word which in the language of Jesus had no equivalent! Only to one writing Latin do the fine theological distinctions between *est*, *ens*, *essens*, *essentia*, *esse*, etc., have a real, if any, significance, and when M. Gilson triumphantly defines God at the end of his search as "the pure act of being," he is uttering what, to vast numbers of the human race—in whose languages "being" is not an *act* at all and often does not even exist as a verb—would be the purest nonsense. The Latin fathers often express regret that the impossibility of rendering Greek expressions into Latin makes it impossible for them to convey a clear conception of the Godhead.¹⁰⁵

Folly Number Five: The Search for Shortcuts: Most of the energy and determination that should go into surmounting the language barrier between us and the past is at present being expended in ingenious efforts to circumvent it. A widespread recognition of the limitations of translation has, for example, produced a continual outpouring of bilingual editions, with the original text on one page and the English facing it on the other. Such texts are a pernicious nuisance; if one can read the original, the translation is an impertinence, if not, the original is a rebuke. But worst of all the double text is a fiendish design for crippling the mind. No one ever knows any language as well as his own, and when confronted by two texts the eye, following the law of least resistance, will infallibly gravitate to the more familiar idiom. I defy the best scholar alive to spend a week with a Loeb text without losing a good deal of his confidence and independent judgment, for the ready translation constantly anticipates and thereby conditions all one's reactions to the clues.

Then there are special handbooks and courses designed to reduce the language barrier to a minimum by confining all effort to an assault on one single book, typical offerings being *Biblical Aramaic*, *New Testament Greek*, *Homeric Greek*, *Legal Latin*, etc. In these special courses, special grammars and special dictionaries, we are told just what the text is going to say before we read it. If it does not say just that for us, we have learned our lesson badly. But if we know exactly what the original text is going to tell us before we open it, why bother to open it at all? We are told exactly how to react to every word, when the whole purpose of our study is to enjoy an independent reaction.

Hardly much better are standard grammars and dictionaries. They can get the student started on his way, but they accompany him only the first few steps of his journey. The excellence of the great scholars of the Renaissance and after, lay in their early discovery that there is no such thing as the correct dictionary meaning of a word. For the most part, grammars and lexicons are loaded dice: they are tip-offs on the clues, preconditioning the reader and precluding independent reaction to the text. Professor Gardiner shows us the limitation of all mechanical helps when he explains why the translation of Egyptian is so hard:

The meaning of the large majority of words employed is either already known, or else can be elicited through comparison with other examples; but not the precise nuances of meaning, its general direction and its approximate emotional quality. . . . The only basis we can have for preferring one rendering to another, when once the exigencies of grammar and dictionary have been satisfied—and these leave a large margin for divergencies—is an intuitive appreciation of the trend of the ancient writer's mind. A very precarious basis, all will admit.¹⁰⁶

IF LANGUAGE followed natural laws, then the area of intuition might be reduced to nothing and a machine for perfect translation be devised. But one of the greatest charms of language is that it may be used waywardly, wantonly, whimsically, ironically, subtly, inanely, or literally to any degree which a writer chooses—and it is the greatest masters of language that take the most liberties with it. The very purpose of literature is to annihilate boredom, and for most people the rules of grammar are a bore. The rigid rules of grammar infallibly suggest naughty tricks to the creative mind, which loves to crack the mold of usage upon which the whole regularity of language depends. And once the genius has struck off in a new direction the million promptly and gladly follow him, and in their dogmatic, unimaginative way turn the new grammatical felony into a law of grammar.¹⁰⁷ Thus in an endless antiphonal the spirit rebukes the letter, and the letter checks the spirit,

and by the time the machine has caught up with the mind, the mind is already two jumps ahead of it.

This endless game effectively disqualifies another device by which students have hoped to circumvent the language obstacle. This is the study of linguistics. The arbitrariness of language makes all the general laws subject to change without notice. In linguistics one is everlastingly discovering and demonstrating the two principles, (1) that people are very conservative, and (2) that in spite of that, rules *do* get broken. If the human race were absolutely conservative, we could have reliable rules of language.¹⁰⁸ But fortunately the very men and women who take the most liberties with language are those who have the most influence upon it: The people who make the rules are the people who break them.

A belated attempt to remove the language barrier is the invention of simplified languages, such as basic English, and of new international idioms such as Esperanto, Volapuk, and Interlingua. These languages prove what we should have known long ago: that the languages men speak today are much harder than they ever need to be, that people like it that way, and that they find language devoid of challenge to be tasteless to the point of nausea. After all, language, as its name tells us, is something that is on the tongue—it must have flavor, and a body, or we spit it out. This was even truer in ancient times: "What the evidence suggests," writes Lord Raglan, "is that the originators, not of language but of all known languages, were people of acute and fertile minds who took a pride and a pleasure in working out complex grammatical systems, systems which merely as a means of communication are quite unnecessary. . . ."¹⁰⁹ We may find such artificiality regrettable, but let us not forget that all language is artificial—there is no rule in speech, any more than there is in music, that genius must work with instruments that nature alone has created.

The language of Homer, Virgil, the Eddas, and the *Qasidas* is pure pro-

fessional jargon, about as artificial as a thing can be. While the evolutionists think of language as a tool, the human race itself resents functionalism in language as it does in dress.

THE VALUE of a language is not to be measured by its efficiency: The greatest languages are the hardest. The operation of a hard grammatical apparatus requires a certain minimum of mental effort, even of those who have grown up with the language (does the fact that English is our mother tongue make the spelling of English easy for us?); it guarantees a degree of cerebration which easier languages do not. The mere statement of a thing in some languages is a mental challenge. The Romans envied the superior difficulty of Greek and did their best to make their own language like it. Their writings display a conscious mental effort which they positively enjoyed and which is the chief stimulus of Latin to this day—one never misses a sense of exercise, of stretching one's mental muscles, which is disturbingly lacking in some less vertebrate languages. Looking at a page of Latin one can readily see that almost every word has a familiar root and that the story might be very simply and easily told as in Spanish or French. Yet superimposed over the whole page, like a complicated template over a map, is a grammatical pattern so laborious and arbitrary that the best scholars must spend hours trying to figure out simple sentences. And this tough and annoying apparatus is entirely unnecessary. It shows us that language does more than fill a need for elementary communication. It is mankind's other world, a dream world, the playing field, the parade ground, the shady retreat, the laboratory, the theater, the forum, the mirror of the cosmos; we must allow it infinite scope and infinite ambition. Along with that it is also a tool, a means of communication of man not only with his fellows but also with himself. This takes us

4. BEYOND THE GADGETS

TODAY we have machines that do most of our calculations for us.
(Continued on following page)

The Way of the Church

CONTROLLING THE PAST

(Continued from preceding page)

IBM machine "702" is now ready to take over all the functions of accounting and bookkeeping in a world which lives by those disciplines.¹¹⁰ At a total of only six percent of present capital outlay, it is estimated, all the big industry of the United States could be operated almost entirely by mechanical controls. Three cheers! What a machine can do, that a machine should do. But what remains for us? Science without gadgets! That we can do some things that no machine can or conceivably ever could do—therein lies our true dignity and destiny as human beings. The checking and ushering and bookkeeping, all the automatic and repetitious things that make up the day's work for most modern men, have no business being done by living people; some day they may be done as they should be by machines, and then men can really get down to business.

Yet for most of us such a prospect is simply terrifying. The busy work that rightfully belongs to the machine is the refuge of the timid mind, and it is to the gadgetry of scholarship—the pretentious secretarial tasks of compiling, annotating, copying, checking, abridging, and the rest—that the academic world clings today with a sort of desperation. Regiments of workers equipped with costly machinery are busy searching out, digging up, acquisitioning, classifying, cataloging, preserving, reproducing, disseminating, explaining, displaying, and even selling the documents of the past—doing every conceivable thing with the documents but reading them! They are waiting for the reading machine that will never come. Three hundred and fifty years ago Joseph Scaliger could read more ancient texts and comprehend what he read more clearly than any scholar in the world today. Scientists can stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before, but not humanists. The latest text in astronomy supersedes and supplants whole shelves of earlier textbooks, but the humanist must start with his ABC's and read on, page by page, through the very same literature that Casaubon and Lipsius had to wade through centuries ago. Summaries, condensations, and translations will help him not at all, for they are only opinions and bound to be out of date. A rapid skimming of

the stuff is out of the question. What a joyful thing to contemplate—the one boundless task left to man in the universe!¹¹¹

During the past century repeated attempts have been made to handle the vast and ever-growing bulk of stuff bequeathed us by the ancients by certain ingenious experiments in *repackaging*. Against a roar of protest Lord Acton introduced the study of history at Cambridge, but this did not reduce but only added to the amount of materials to be handled by the conscientious student. Today ambitious men would grasp the whole message of the human record by repackaging it in this or that social science: the packages are impressively tied and labeled—but there is very little in them, and nothing of the original source material that makes up the vast preponderance of the field notes and lab notes of the human race. A new school of archaeology is trying to grasp the same prize, claiming that they can discover the past simply by looking at pictures—which is much easier than reading texts. Leading archaeologists are loudly deploring this tendency, which is bound to become as popular as it is futile. While any text may be meaningful without pictures (though illustrations are always welcome), no picture can convey its real meaning without reference to some text: to abolish the text is to abolish archaeology, and to abolish the original language is to abolish the text. The glamorous package, a great aid to salesmanship, has no place in scholarship: it will do nothing either to surmount or circumvent the language barrier.

But you can't expect people to learn scores of languages to be able to survey the past! They don't need to. It is one of the delightful compensations to the student willing to go the hard way that Providence, as if taking pity on his plight and concerned lest the staggering accumulations of the past go neglected in an inextricable maze of hundreds of forgotten languages, had removed the difficulty by a most marvelous device: the world language.

One wishing to study twentieth century world civilization could do so knowing one language alone—English—and he would pretty well have to know that. But English still has serious competitors as a world lan-

guage, and it has only been on top for forty years. Imagine, then, how important our language would be if it had been the *only* world language without competitors, for a *thousand years*! What if for ten centuries everything of any importance that was thought or said in the western world had to be said and written down in English. Well, for a thousand years Latin actually was the one language of the West, while at the same time Arabic ruled the East. And before that for another thousand years—the most creative period of all—Greek was the common world language of East and West. And before that for yet another thousand years, a common Semitic idiom was the learned and diplomatic language of the world. The greatest and most significant works of the human mind, as well as the smallest and most insignificant efforts of the schoolmen, are almost all recorded in a few languages, and the records of the past run not into unnumerable linguistic puddles to be searched out and correlated but are conveniently channeled into a few vast, all inclusive reservoirs. This should make it clear why a knowledge of certain languages is absolutely indispensable to any serious study of the past, and why their neglect has led to a serious crippling of all our efforts to get a convincing picture of what men have really been doing and thinking through the ages. The gadgets will never answer that question for us.

But if scholarship is not a slide-rule science, it has certain controls which any science might envy. Antiquity is a romantic study; it has an irresistible appeal to the glamor hunter and the poseur; everybody wants to get into the act. The result is a chaos of clashing ambitions and waspish tempers, with amateurs and "professionals" everlastingly accusing each other of stupidity and humbug. Without a governor the humanities get completely and quickly out of hand. But in language we have perfect control: The man who can read off the ancient text you place before him is not likely to be an irresponsible crackpot. The rigid check on the scholar does not lie in the judgment of his fellows—scholars band easily together into groups and schools and conform their thinking to that of pre-

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queer peculiar. We don't want to appear funny or dowdy, neither do we want to look crude and vulgar. Why don't we create a style of our own? We may follow dame fashion in many ways, but if we are wise, I will wager dame fashion will be following us because our girls and women will be known as regal, smartly, modestly clothed women who have come to the realization that it really is smart to be a Latter-day Saint.

Controlling the Past

(Continued from page 386)

vailing movements with notorious servility—the perfect teacher of virtue is the text itself. The scholar with an ancient text before him may do with it as he chooses: He may insert any vowels he pleases if it is in a Semitic language; he may divide up consonants into whatever groups catch his fancy; he may punctuate to taste; he may give any word, allegorically, any meaning he wants to; in short, he can cheat to his heart's content. But how far will it get him? Every wrong and wilful reading must be supported by another one: If one word is arbitrarily treated, the next must be beaten into conformity with it, and the resulting sentence, all wrong, must match the next sentence, and so on. With every wrong reading the student gets himself deeper into the mud; the farther he carries the game the more humiliating it becomes; with every new syllable his position becomes more intolerable and the future more threatening. In the end he gives up and starts all over again—the text, unaided and alone, has won the day.

The more one considers the power of the written word, the more miraculous it appears. The determined and desperate efforts to control it which we have been describing are a remarkable tribute to its uncanny capacity to convey the truth regardless of designing men. Within the last decade a few simple scrolls have successfully overcome the solid and determined opposition of scholarly consensus and shattered all the fondest beliefs and firmest preconceptions of church historians. Church history must now be written all over again.

(Continued on following page)

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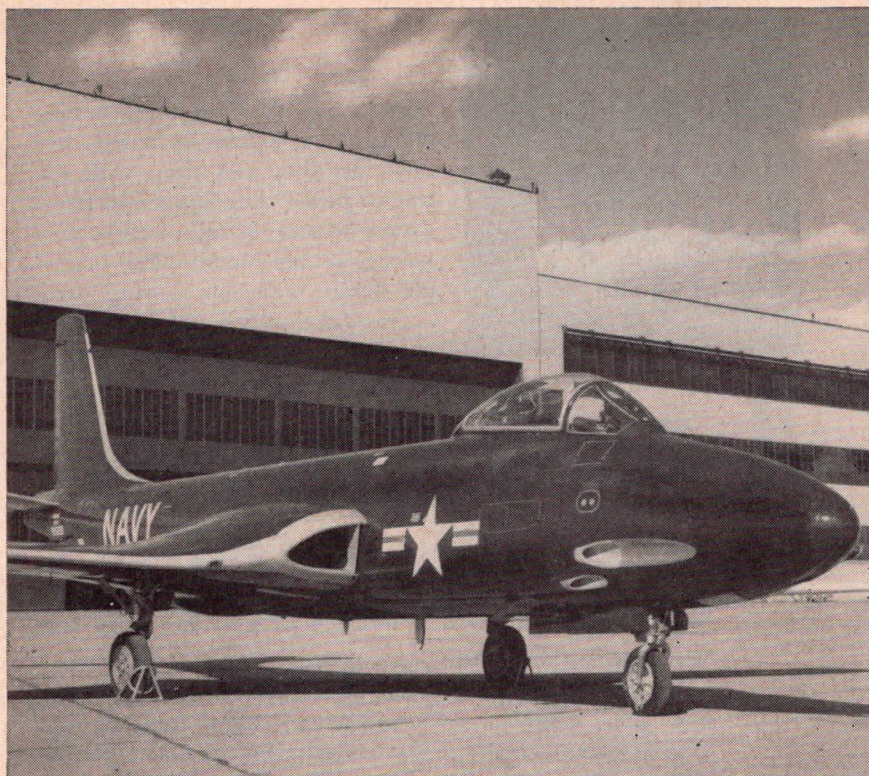
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Controlling the Past

(Continued from preceding page)

and it is to the most vital questions of that fascinating subject that we must now turn our attention.

(To be continued)

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Irma Had a Headache

(Continued from page 389)

Irma could imagine the inadequacy Brice was feeling. She wondered frantically if there was anything she could say that would get them to start talking. Maybe they'd be interested in her plans for the living room. She rushed into it, hoping she sounded enthusiastic. "So I think we should be able to start shopping for our new living room suite by this time next month. Anyone have a choice as to color?"

Still the three sat without speaking. She was afraid Brice's patience was beginning to strain at their lack of response. In desperation she began to tell them what the doctor had said today. Faye raised her head, and Irma was shocked at the almost hap-

THE IMPROVEMENT ERA

IN TIMES of world crisis and widespread calamity, those churchmen who normally exhibit a bland and easy confidence in the assured and inevitable triumph of Christianity through the ages find themselves pressed by the force of events to ask questions and indulge in reflections which in better times are left strictly alone. We have suggested already that the key to conventional church history is its fair-weather determination not to face up to certain unpleasant, nay, alarming possibilities, in particular the proposition that the church of Christ did not survive in the world long after the Apostles.

But today, as at other moments of great upheaval, such authorities, Catholic and Protestant, as D. Busy, Bardy, A. G. Herbert, and F. A. M. Spencer are moved to remind us that, after all, Christianity has never come anywhere near either converting or saving the world. Instead of the moral reform which the fourth-century fathers promised with such confidence if the empire would only turn officially Christian, came a disastrous deterioration of morals; instead of world peace (also promised), world war; instead of military victory for the Christian emperor, crushing defeat; instead of prosperity, economic collapse; instead of the promised intellectual certainty, violent controversy; instead of faith, speculation and doubt; instead of tolerance and love, ceaseless polemic and persecution; instead of trust in God, cynicism and power politics. The world once Christianized not only remained barbarian, but became also more and more barbaric as it passed from one century of Christian tutelage to the next. Contemporary scholars freely admit, since they can't deny it, that something went very wrong. A. G. Herbert, a Catholic writer, now even goes so far as to declare that defeat, not victory, is "the hall-mark of authenticity" for the church of Christ on earth.

So much being conceded, the only question is not whether God would allow his church to suffer—he has allowed it—but how far he would allow things to go? Some Christians when pressed will allow that the rule of evil reached the point of *almost* complete extermination for the church on earth; this is the Baptist "trail of blood" theory—that the church has been reduced from time to time to an almost imperceptible trickle but never allowed to go out entirely. The last inch, of course, they cannot concede,

Two Views of Church History

by Dr. Hugh Nibley

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

for that would be fatal to all their claims. To save at least the tattered remnants of the true church, modern claimants fall back on three main arguments. The first is the perfectly irrelevant "gates of hell" passage (Matt. 16:18) which we shall discuss later. The second is what they like to call "the simple fact" that the church has, for all its setbacks and troubles, persisted in the world unintermittently for nigh onto two thousand years. This is worth a moment's thought.

Actually that statement of survival merely assumes what it claims to prove, namely, that whatever has come through so many centuries must be the *true* church. But the fact that churches (*never* just one, and usually many) calling themselves Christ's have been found on the earth in every century since the apostles is no proof in itself that all or any of those churches really were Christ's. After all, did not the Lord himself predict a time when there would be many groups bearing his name and saying, "Lo, here is Christ, or there!" and did he not warn that at such a time *none* of those professing Christians would be authorized? (Matt. 24:23.) As the so-called Apostolic Fathers and the early apologists never tire of repeating, the *name* of Christian does *not* guarantee the Lord's approval of recognition of the individual or society bearing it, nor does its presence in the earth prove at any time that Christ's church has survived. So though we find in every age churches claiming to be the true heirs of the apostles, and though we are under obligation to investigate them all, we are by no means bound to accept any one of them simply because it is big or old—least of all, simply because it exists. Athanasius says the argument of bigness is preposterous; Justin Martyr says the argument of antiquity is vicious. The argument of mere existence is the weakest of all, when at no time since Christ have there failed to be numbers of Christian

churches all damning each other as impostors.

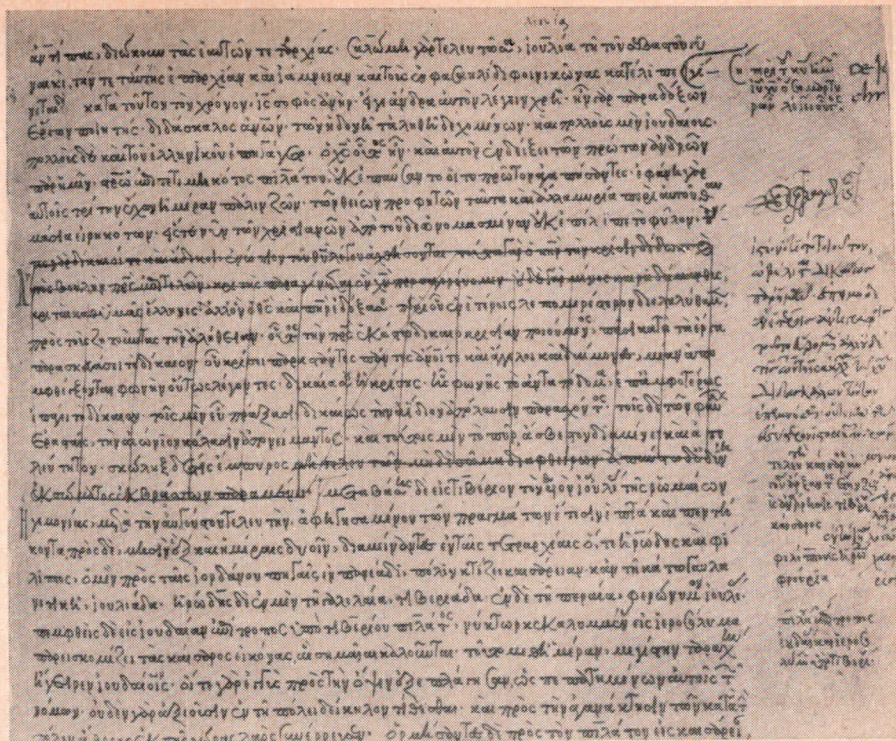
The third argument, usually delivered in shocked and outraged tones, is that God simply would not allow a complete dissolution of his church. "Can God fail?" cried an angry priest to the writer, with a great show of indignation. Well, God has "failed" to give the earth two moons or equip the human race with gold teeth—but is that *failure*? One can speak only of failure where an intended aim is not achieved; where desirable things are dispensed with, that is not failure but policy. "How often" would God have done things for the people—"and ye would not!" (Matt. 23:37.) To learn what God's intention and policy are in the matter, we must consult not our own common sense or emotions but the statements of his prophets: "My ways are not your ways!" The ancient pagans loved to charge the Christians with believing in a God who was either immoral because he knowingly allowed the existence of evil or weak because he could not prevent it. Their logical minds could not conceive how anything could happen in a universe ruled by an omnipotent God which was not the immediate and consummate expression of that God's desire and intention. Those Christians are guilty of the same vanity and impetuosity who insist that because they just can't see the point in taking the church from the earth, God would be foolish and unjust—a failure—if he permitted it. The solution of the problem lies not in men's feelings on a subject on which they are necessarily very ill-informed, but in God's expressed intention in the matter. Fortunately the New Testament contains full and explicit information.

The Three Acts of the Drama:—First of all, Christ knew and explained to others the nature and outcome of his own mission: what his purpose was in coming to earth, how he would be received here, and what would happen after he left. These points

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are all touched upon in a single parable—the only parable in the Bible to which the Lord himself has left us a full explanation. The parable might be called a drama in three acts. Act One is the Lord's earthly mission, in which he likens himself "unto a man which sowed good in his field" (Matt. 13:24, 37), the field being the world, (v. 38). In Act Two the villain enters: "But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat" (v. 25), and as a result the crop was spoiled: "... when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also" (v. 26). This sorry state of things, with wheat and tares indistinguishably mixed together, does not represent the state of the church, for we are explicitly told that the ruined field is the *world*, in which the good seed ("the children of the kingdom") have not yet been brought together (vv. 27-30). This time of confusion is a long one, lasting "until the harvest," which is Act Three, entitled "the end of the world" (v. 39). Here everything is set to rights again, and the wheat is finally gathered together out of the world and "into my barn" (v. 30). "A gathering out" happens to be the very meaning of the word *ekklesia*—"church." In the settling of accounts in the last act the tares are bound in bundles for the burning and, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (v. 43). (Italics author's.) "... so shall it be at the end of this world" (v. 40): It is a happy ending, indeed, but a delayed one: first the Lord, then the adversary, who is the devil (v. 39), and finally the Lord again.

The parable of the vineyard tells the same story. In Act One we learn that the master of the vineyard having been detained in a far country has in the past sent many servants—the prophets—to receive the fruit at the hand of those he had left in charge; but his messengers have all been roughly treated and thrown out. Now he has decided to send his Beloved Son, saying, "... it may be they will reverence him." (Luke 20:13; Matt. 22:37.) But in the second act we see



A problem in addition and subtraction:—This is the kind of adding and taking away to which John refers in Revelation 22:18-19. Into a text of Josephus' "Jewish War," a scribe has inserted the famous "Testimony of Jesus," taken in its revamped version from another writing, the "Antiquities of the Jews." To this he has added yet another excerpt from a work falsely attributed to Josephus. This was done with a view to making out a stronger case for the Christians, but a later scribe has scratched out the second addition and explained in the margin on the right: "It should be noted that the crossing-out we have done is justified, since we have not found this passage in any other copies of this text, and what is more not a single teacher (or doctor) of the Church of Christ remembers such." He also explains that the preceding passage, which he has not crossed out, is not from the "Jewish Wars," but from the "Antiquities." (After Eisler.)

the Son treated even worse than the others, cast out of the vineyard and slain by villainous men who say, "Let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance..." "let us kill him, that the inheritance may be *our's*." (Matt. 21:38; Luke 20:14.) So they claim the vineyard for their own and remain in possession until Act Three, when the lord of the vineyard comes to destroy the impostors and turns the vineyard over to authorized workers. (Luke 20:16.) It is the same three-act theme as the other parable: first the Lord's work, then the triumph of the impostor, finally the return and triumph of the Lord.

The first two of these acts are the legitimate subject of church history, since the third either has not happened yet or opens with the restoration of the gospel, which conventional church history does not recognize. Let

us consider the major steps of the drama as far as the New Testament is concerned. First of all, the Lord came into the world knowing full well that he and his message would be rejected: even as Elias had come "and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them" (Matt. 17:12); "for from the days of John the Baptist [Elias]... the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." (*Ibid.*, 11-12.) At the outset of his mission he was met by "two possessed with devils," who recognized him for what he was and hailed him as the Son of God, with the request that he leave them alone and not torment them "before the time," (Matt. 8:28-29.) Immediately thereafter a whole city of mortal men followed the lead of those evil spirits "and besought him that he would depart out of *their* coasts." (Matt. 8:34.) Neither devils nor men would accept his preaching nor did he expect them to:

Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word.

(Continued on following page)

The Way of the Church —II

TWO VIEWS OF CHURCH HISTORY

(Continued from preceding page)

Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. . . .

And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.

Which of you convinceth me of sin? And, if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?

. . . because ye are not of God. (John 8:43-47.)

He expected only hatred from a world who came to testify of it "that the works thereof are evil." (John 7:7.) "I know you," he said to his hearers, "that ye have not the love of God in you," (*Ibid.*, 5:42) for truly "he knew all men." He made no effort to wheedle, persuade, or meet the world halfway. Said his enemies:

. . . Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men." (Matt. 22:16; Mark 12:14; Luke 20:21.)

If Jerusalem refused to be gathered to him, no matter how often he would have gathered them, he would not force them. (Matt. 23:37.) If his hometown people put no faith in him, he could do no mighty works for them. (Mark 6:5; Matt. 14:2.) If they wanted to go so far as to "kill the Prince of life," (Acts 3:15), even then he would not resist them. (James 5:6.)

Either we have here a very weak character or else he has definite reasons for his behavior. The reason and purpose of his preaching he makes very clear; like the other prophets, he has been sent as a *witness* by the Father, "We speak what we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness." (John 3:11) "And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony." As in the days of Noah, the witness was given and rejected:

. . . The world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

He came unto his own, and his own received him not. (*Ibid.*, 1:10-11.)

Even as their ancestors did not believe in Moses, ". . . ye also have seen me, and believe not . . ." (*Ibid.*, 6:36); "For neither did his brethren believe in him." (*Ibid.*, 7:5.) "The world cannot receive the spirit of truth." (See *ibid.*, 14:17.) Why then bother to preach it? The answer is clear: "For judgment I am come into this world" (*ibid.*, 9:39); that judgment to

take place at a later date, "the Father . . . hath committed all judgment unto the Son:" (*ibid.*, 5:22), but during his earlier mission he did not judge. Men are free to accept or reject him as they will: "And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.

"He that rejecteth me . . . hath one that judgeth him [lit. "one to judge him"]: the word I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. (*Ibid.*, 12:47-48.) No judgment now, but "in the last day. . . ." "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come," writes Paul (I Cor. 4:5), "who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and *then* shall every man have praise of God." (Italics author's.) The time of Christ and the apostles was not to be the time of judgment, but of testing; without the opportunity of freely accepting or rejecting, there could be no judgment: "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but *now* they have both seen and hated both me and my Father. (John 15:24.) (Italics author's.) That was the purpose of his preaching to them—to give them the chance, not to convert them, no matter what,—"That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? . . .

"Therefore they could not believe," (*ibid.*, 12; John 39-41); ". . . their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, . . ." (Matt. 13:15.) The world is not going to be converted, but it is going to be judged. The first act of the drama is all a preparation, not for the second act, but for the last one—the second coming and the judgment; on that time and event all the apostles fix their gaze as the reward and vindication of all they are doing. In between lies the dark and dismal interlude of the second act about which the Lord and the apostles have a great deal to say.

Having been as completely as possible rejected by the world—cast out of the vineyard and slain—the Lord was to depart thence and leave the

stage clear to the adversary for the gloomy second act. This is a long period in which people go about seeking the Lord in vain and falsely but loudly proclaiming themselves to be the true heirs of the vineyard. First, the departure of the Lord, in no happy mood: "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you, and suffer you?" (Luke 9:41.) He is going to rise up and "shut the door." (See *ibid.*, 13:25.) ". . . the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast." (Matt. 9:15.) "Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." (John 14:30.)

Then, surprisingly enough, once he is gone everyone, the wicked as well as the righteous, will desire Christ and seek after him—but in vain. Just as the wicked world venerated the prophets and painted their tombs after they had been safely put to death (Matt. 23:29ff), so they would worship Christ—at a safe distance.

. . . Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me.

Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come. (John 7:33-34.)

. . . I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: wither I go, ye cannot come. (*Ibid.*, 8:21.)

Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say unto you." (*Ibid.*, 13:33.)

. . . The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it.

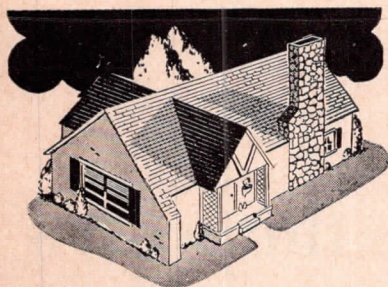
And they shall say to you, See here; or, see there: go not after them, nor follow them. (Luke 17:22-23.) (Italics author's.)

In these speeches the Lord is addressing not the wicked but his followers; even for them the quest will be vain; plainly there are conditions and time limits attached to the promise "Seek and ye shall find," and "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. 28:20.) In their search they are warned not to follow after *any* of the groups claiming to be the church—to have found Jesus. Those who are looking admit they have not found him—they are not the church; and all the rest are impostors! Once he has risen up and has shut the door, then all will call upon his name and clamor to be numbered among his followers—but then

(Continued on page 538)

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TWO VIEWS OF CHURCH HISTORY

(Continued from page 504)

it will be too late: he will refuse to recognize them. (See Luke 13:25-27.) In vain do they worship me," (Matt. 15:9) is not a denunciation of idolatry, but of those marching under the banner of Christ. There is a point of no return after which even repentance comes too late, as Esau learned to his sorrow: "For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no chance to repent [*metanoias topon*, 'place of repentance'], though he sought it carefully with tears." (Heb. 12:17.) He wants to repent sincerely and makes every effort to be reinstated in his inheritance, but it is too late; he is "rejected" even as those will be rejected who cry "Lord! Lord!" and try to get into the kingdom of Christ. (See Matt. 7:21.) The time is coming when vast numbers shall claim Christ for their own, and when that time comes, "... if *any* man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not." (*Ibid.*, 24:23. Italics author's.) And that time is not far off: "... the time draweth near [when many shall come *in my name*] ... go ye not therefore after them." (Luke 21:8.) It is true, the real church is going to be there for a time, but the story is one of constantly deepening gloom until, to use Poly-

carp's famous phrase, after the apostles "the lights went out."

The beautiful and much-quoted words, "I am the light of the world," are rarely given in full, since their purpose is to make clear that the light is *not* going to remain in the world:

I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. (John 9:4-5.)

It is not the night of death referred to here (the scripture knows no such expression), but a night that keeps *men* from doing a particular kind of work—"the works of him that sent me," the Father's work, the work of the church. What follows the Lord's mission is not victory but darkness: "The light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness comprehendeth it not." (*Ibid.*, 1:5.)

... Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you:

... While ye have light, believe in the light, ... (*Ibid.*, 12:35-36.)

"And this is the condemnation [literally, 'the process of judgment'], that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." (*Ibid.*, 3:19.)

(To be continued),

MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD

(Concluded from page 529)

Melchizedek Priesthood are charged with the words of eternal life and are commissioned to give them unto the world. They should strive continually in their words, actions, and daily deportment to do honor to the dignity of their priesthood callings. Brigham Young declared:

Until a selfish, individual interest is banished from our minds, and we become interested in the general welfare, we shall never be able to magnify our holy priesthood as we should.⁸

Fourth—Purity, an Indispensable Quality

In modern revelation, the Lord commanded Melchizedek Priesthood holders: "Be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord."⁹ In another

⁸Brigham Young, *Discourses of Brigham Young* (ed. John A. Widtsoe), p. 206.

⁹D. & C. 38:42.

revelation to the Latter-day Saints, God's commandments and promises are given as follows:

Let thy bowels also be full of charity towards all men, and to the household of faith, and let virtue garnish thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God; and the doctrine of the priesthood shall distil upon thy soul as the dew from heaven.

The Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, and thy scepter an unchanging scepter of righteousness and truth; and thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, and without compulsory means it shall flow unto thee forever and ever.¹⁰

This important revelation shows definitely that one must keep his heart clean and pure, abiding strictly by the law of chastity, if he expects the holy Melchizedek Priesthood to operate effectively in his life and the blessings of the priesthood to be his eternally.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 121:45-46.

THE IMPROVEMENT ERA

THE ROLE OF THE APOSTLES:—But aren't we forgetting about Christ's "successors"? A "successor" is one who comes after and takes the place of another. To be a successor it is not enough merely to outlive another or come after him, one must hold his identical office and function. Even a regent is not successor to a king—only a king can be that; when a vice president takes over on the death of a president, he does not become his successor until he, too, is president. The scriptures never call the apostles

By no means! "The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you, . . ." (*Ibid.*, 15:20.) "... If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?" (Matt. 10:25.) "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you." (John 15:18.) The mission of the apostles does not bring about a new and happy turn of events in the drama; where the master has "failed," we are told not to look

I have overcome the world." (John 16:33.) His victory was in the resurrection, and in that alone the apostles put all their hope of victory and expectation of reward,

Knowing that he which raised up Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, For which cause we faint not; . . . (II Cor. 4:14, 16.)

"... ye shall be betrayed . . . and some of you . . . be put to death. . . . "But there shall not an hair of your head perish." (Luke 21:16, 18.) Paul is more than willing to suffer "... the loss of all things, and do count them but dung. . . .

"If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. . . .

"I press toward the mark for the prize. . . ." (Phil. 3:8, 11, 14), the prize being "to know him and the power of his resurrection" (v. 10). So, at the conclusion of his missionary labors, Paul can claim for his work an unqualified success, and that immediately after noting that things are going to be much worse in the Church after his departure, (Acts 20:29), that "all they which are in Asia [the bulk of his converts] be turned away from me" (II Tim. 1:15), and that in a recent controversy "no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: . . ." (*Ibid.*, 4:16.) In what then does victory and success consist? "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown . . . which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: . . ." (4:8). It never occurs to him or any other apostle that his success is to be measured by the converts he makes. Even spiritual power on this earth was not their objective: "... rejoice not, that the spirits are subject to you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." (Luke 10:20.) That great institution towards which the Apostles are striving in no way resembles any later churches: "I appoint unto you a kingdom . . . that he may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (See Matt. 19:28.) "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, . . .

Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, . . . (Phil. 3:20-21.)

The heavenly kingdom, the second coming, the judgment, the resurrection—it is clear what these men were working for. Never once in the days of the early church does anyone so much as hint at great expectations for

THE IMPROVEMENT ERA

Two Views of Church History

by Dr. Hugh Nibley

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

PART 2

Christ's successors; there is only one successor to the Lord mentioned in the Bible, and that is the Holy Ghost, "... whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." (John 14:26.) Here is a true successor, coming expressly to take the Lord's place: "... if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." (*Ibid.*, 16:7.) Sent by the same authority, he will do the very same work, speak the identical words, be a witness for the judgment, and guide the apostles in all things exactly as the Lord had done (vv. 8ff).

As for the disciples, the famous passage in Mark (13:34ff) describes them as servants left behind with authorization to do special jobs: the Lord "left his house, and gave to his servants the authority, to each one his task, and commanded the porter to watch." There is no mention of supreme authority being given to anyone, but to each the authority for his particular work. The fact that every soldier in the army acts with the authority of the commander-in-chief does not give any one of them the fulness of authority that he possesses. But what about the servants? Were they expected to carry on the work and prosper where the master was rejected?

for success for the servants: "... behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves." (Luke 10:3, Matt. 10:16) He had gone as a lamb to the slaughter; their fate was to be no different. They are repeatedly told that they are to occupy a rear guard position in which they can expect no relief in this world: "... I think," says Paul, "that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: . . ." (I Cor. 4:9) and he describes the brethren as "... the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day" (v. 13). Are the apostles rejected like the master? They are cast off! Their orders were to endure to the end, and, as Tertullian reminds us, (*Scorp.* 10) there was absolutely no doubt in the mind of any early Christian as to what that meant: to endure to the end meant just one thing, "to suffer the end," to suffer death. "And ye shall be hated of all men . . ." (Luke 21:17), "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you. . . ."

But he that endures to the end shall be saved. (See Matt. 24:9, 13.) (*Italics author's.*)

In that last sentence we are given both the expected outcome and the reward of the apostolic preaching. As he went to his death, Christ said to his apostles, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer;

the church on this earth, never is its future success and glory suggested as a motive for their works or a comfort for their afflictions; even in the midst of the fiercest persecutions when the saints need "strong comfort" no one ever suggests the thought that relief is on the way, that the church will win out in the end, that it is their duty to stick it out so that generations yet unborn may call them blessed (a theme familiar to all of them from the example of *pious Aeneas*, but never used by the Christians), that they are building up the church which is to fill the earth and save mankind, etc. These are the noisy trumpetings of the fourth century which only make more significant the thundering silence of the earlier period on the future of the church. Either the apostles were remarkably mean and self-centered men, exclusively concerned with their individual salvation and a distant judgment, or else the victory for the church which they steadfastly refuse to promise or even mention and for which they express no yearnings and to which they dedicate no strivings, was simply not in the program. When Tertullian (*De Praecr.* 29) in a later age, sorely perplexed by the spiritual poverty of the Church, tried to comfort himself and quiet his misgivings with the thought that the church *could* not have been taken from the earth because in that case the martyrs would all have shed their blood in vain, he was forgetting two all-important things: first, that the virtues and sufferings of one man or generation do not accrue automatically to the advantage of another—it is quite possible, as Paul reminds the Galatians, for the church to suffer in vain; and secondly, that the martyrs have received the only reward they ever thought to get—if one wins eternal life and glory one can hardly be said to have "run in vain"!

The program of the apostles' mission was the same as that of the Lord's. Before they ever began to work, they were told that they would be "hated of all men" (Mark 13:13), betrayed and put to death as he was (John 16:2), allowed to preach for a

while, but then thrust out of the synagogues and put to death by pious souls who "think that they are doing God a favor," even as the "... devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, ... expelled them out of their coasts." (Acts 13:50.) "... Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: ..." (*Ibid.*, 28:26.) "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you." (*Ibid.*, 13:41.) "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; "Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed. ..." (II Cor. 4:8-9.) Whence this indomitable optimism—in the belief that the work is going forward and the church growing? Not a word of that: "Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also. ...

"For which cause we faint not. ...

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us ... eternal weight of glory;

"While we look not at things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: ... which are ... eternal." (II Cor. 4:14, 16-18.)

And what point was there in preaching to a world that would not listen to them? It is the same as with Christ and the prophets: "as it was in the days of Noah," the gospel of the kingdom was to be "preached in all the world *for a witness* unto all nations; and then shall the *end* come." (Matt. 24:14.) (*Italics author's.*) First the witness, then the end. "But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, ...

"And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are *witnesses*." (Acts 3:14-15.) (*Italics author's.*) Paul tells us why he bothered to preach to the Jews who he knew would not hear him, when "he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles." (*Ibid.*, 18:6.) To the Gentiles

he preached with the same expectations and for the same reason. Though these converts later fell victims to the wolves, turned against him en masse (II Tim. 1:15), and became his enemies because he told them the truth (Gal. 4:16), he can leave them with the same assurance of "mission accomplished" that he left the Jews: "... I know that ye all ... shall see my face no more.

"Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men." (Acts 20:25-26.) The concern of the apostles is not whether they are believed or not but only whether they bear testimony to all against the day of judgment. Those who hear and reject such a testimony are classed with Sodom and Gomorrah and reserved for "the day of judgment." (Luke 10:12.) The apostles are not to judge until they sit on thrones in the kingdom: "... judge nothing before the time, until the Lord cometh, ..." (I Cor. 4:5) is their instruction.

The apostles were not to spend time overcoming opposition and winning people by long-term programs, as a project of conversion demands; they were rather to bear their testimonies and be on their way in all possible haste. "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a *testimony against them*." (Mark 6:11.) (*Italics author's.*) The program outlined in Matthew 10 and Luke 9 is not that of founding solid institutions, but of last-minute emergency: "... I send you forth as lambs among wolves ... salute no man by the way." (Luke 10:3-4.) What is wrong with a little civil decency? What is wrong with purse and scrip, an extra cloak, or overnight visits? Nothing at all, save that there is no time left for the ordinary business and amenities of life, as Paul tells the Corinthians: marriage, mourning, celebrating, business, careers, all that must be forgotten now, for "the time (literally 'opportunity') is short: ..." (I Cor. 7:29), "for the fashion (*schema*: 'the system') of this world passeth away" (v. 31). Only for food and lodging were the missionaries to go to individual houses; otherwise, "Go not from house to house," (Luke 10:7), but "in that city that does not receive you, go your ways out into the streets of the same and say: Even the very

(Continued on page 599)

The Way of the Church —II

MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD

(Concluded from page 593)

light of it, to know everything which concerns himself and his individual duties, but it is not his right and privilege to dictate to a superior in office, nor to give him counsel, unless he is called upon to do so, then he may make suggestions.¹⁸

Also, President Joseph F. Smith made the following suggestions regarding elders:

It is the duty of this body of men [the elders] to be standing ministers at home; to be ready at the call of the presiding officers of the Church and the stakes; to labor and administer at home; and to officiate in any calling that may be required of them; whether it be to work in the temples, or to labor in ministry at home, or whatever it be to go out into the world, along with the seventies, to preach the gospel to the world.¹⁹

Defining some of the duties of elders, we read the following in the Doctrine and Covenants:

... which quorum is instituted for standing ministers; nevertheless they may travel, yet they are ordained to be standing ministers to my church, saith the Lord.²⁰

Fourth—Functions Rest on Jurisdiction and Authorization

Although an elder, through right of having received the Melchizedek Priesthood and having had bestowed upon him the office of an elder has the right to perform all the works pertaining unto that office, he cannot go ahead and perform those works pertaining unto that office unless he receives the proper authorization; for example, an elder has the authority to baptize, but in the ward of the

Church he may not perform this ordinance unless authorized by the bishop of the ward; while in the mission field he receives his authorization from the president of the mission. The authorization is necessary from those two parties because the bishop holds the keys of the priesthood in his ward—which keys are the directing power—while the president of the mission holds the keys of the priesthood in his mission. It is necessary for elders to receive authorization for each assignment from those who hold the keys. The presiding authorities or presidencies in priesthood quorums are the ones who hold the keys of priesthood of those quorums; thus, keys go with presidency. It is necessary to have only certain people in the Church possess directive power or keys so that order may be preserved in the numerous activities of the kingdom. President Joseph F. Smith explains as follows:

The leading fact to be remembered is that the priesthood is greater than any of its offices; and that any man holding the Melchizedek Priesthood may, by virtue of its possession, perform any ordinance pertaining thereto, or in connection therewith, when called upon to do so by one holding the proper authority, which proper authority is vested in the President of the Church, or any whom he may designate. Every officer in the Church is under his direction and he is directed of God. He is also selected of the Lord to be the head of the Church and so becomes when the priesthood of the Church (which includes its officers and its members) shall have so accepted and upheld him. (D. & C. 107:22.) No man can justly presume to have authority merely by virtue of his priesthood . . . for in addition, he must be chosen and accepted by the Church.²¹

²¹Joseph F. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

TWO VIEWS OF CHURCH HISTORY

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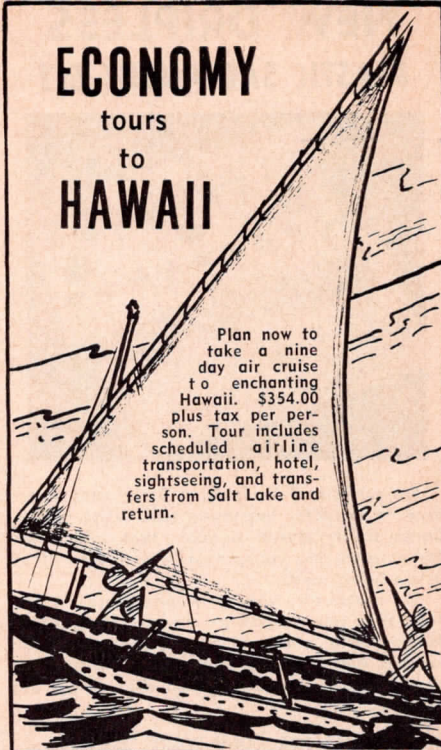
dust . . . we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." (See *ibid.*, 10:10.) After they have had their chance, the apostles' business with them is over. ". . . ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them . . . and ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: . . ." (Mark 13:9-13.) "Ye are witnesses for me . . . unto the uttermost part of the earth." (See Acts 1:8), for ". . . repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all

nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things." (Luke 24:47-48.) (Italics author's.)

THE PASSING OF THE CHURCH:—But even if the apostles were to suffer the same rejection and death as the master, is not the gloom of the "second act" relieved by the survival of the church? What of the "little children" whom they taught? Alas! they are given the same promise of extinction; they, too, are required to "endure to the end" and are given the same comfort and promise—eternal life. "If any man will come after

(Continued on following page)

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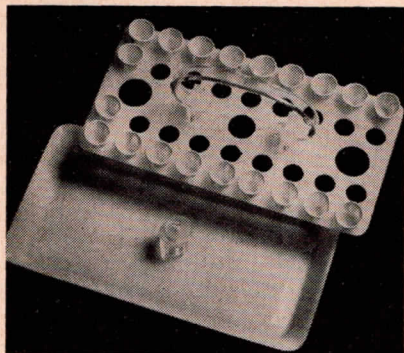
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TWO VIEWS OF CHURCH HISTORY

(Continued from preceding page)

me," he must lose his life. (See Matt. 16:24, 25; Mark 8:34, 35; Luke 9:23, 24.) The whole church—not just the apostles—are to be "partakers in Christ's sufferings" in a physical sense, and receive the incorruptible inheritance "reserved for you in heaven, and receive the end (reward) of your faith, the salvation of your souls." (See I Peter 1:5.) "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind. . . . (Ibid., 4:1.) What the saints can look forward to here is "necessities, distresses, stripes, imprisonments, tumults, fastings." (II Cor. 6:4-5.) The exhortation to the Saints is all for a last-ditch stand; they are to "take the prophets for an example of suffering affliction and patience," with the only hope of relief in the coming of the Lord. (See James 5:10.) They must work in the limited time they have here, "while it is called To day; . . . For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold . . . unto the end; . . ." (Heb. 3:13-14.) ". . . whose house are we, if we hold fast . . . firm unto the end" (v. 6). (Italics author's.) When the saints need a "strong consolation" what they get is the assurance that God will reward them if they "hope unto the end," (Heb. 6:11, 18), not a promise of relief or success or ultimate triumph for the cause.

The saints were not to put up a fight: "My kingdom is not of this world: if [it] were . . . then would my servants fight." (John 18:36.) They are to assemble themselves together not for "action" but to await the end—" . . . so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." (Heb. 10:25.) When the leaders went around "Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith," their specific instructions were " . . . that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." (Acts 14:22.) These people were already members of the church; it was another kingdom for which they strove. Why is it that none of the apostles wants to make the noble sacrifice and live for the church? Why (later churchmen ask with wonder) did they never bother to write out full instructions for the guidance of the church to come? The "foundation" which Paul lays he emphatically declares to have

nothing to do with this world. (I Cor. 3:10ff.) It is all too easy to say with the pagan philosophers and fourth century theologians that "leave the world" means only to lay aside the lusts of the flesh. It was Christ who served as the great example in this to the early Christians; all true believers knew that they "must suffer with him [Christ], that we may also be glorified together," (Romans 8:17)—but what can this have to do with turning from lust to philosophy? The Lord never indulged in either.

We learn from the Bible that the end of the church was to come in two ways. The first was the extermination of those who stood fast; that is, as we have seen, the very condition of proving oneself a true saint and winning eternal life, for one had to endure to the end to be saved. For centuries the belief persisted in the church that anyone not put to death for his testimony (*martyr* means "witness") had failed to achieve the fullest glory, so emphatic and deep-rooted were the teachings of the early church on the subject. The church were expected in all confidence to be in the most literal sense "partakers in Christ's sufferings."

But what of the rest? What of the vast majority that did not stand fast and "suffer the end"? They continued to profess Christianity, but a Christianity perverted to their own tastes:

But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached. . . . (II Cor. 11:3-4. Italics author's.)

There is no thought in these impostors of renouncing the name and claim of Christian: "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ" (v. 13).

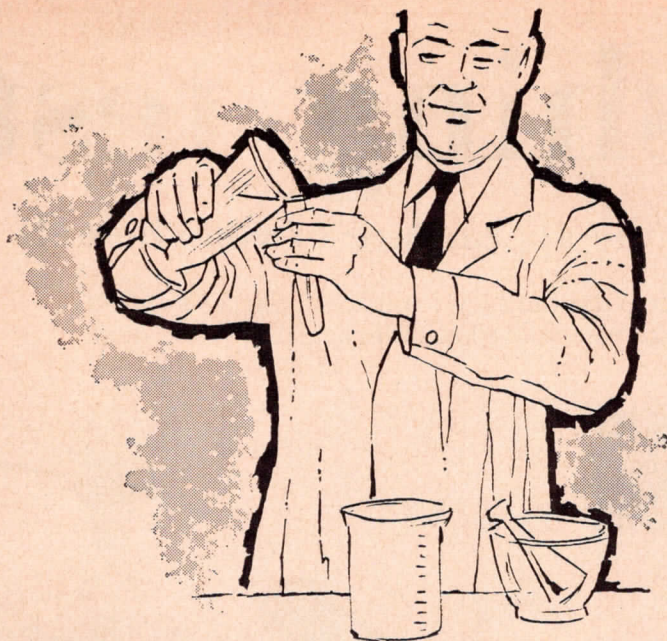
I marvel that ye are soon removed from him that called you unto the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

Which is not another; but there be some that . . . would pervert the gospel of Christ. (Gal. 1:6-7. Italics author's.)

What surprises the apostle in this case is not what is happening, but only that it should be happening so soon. The Lord himself had foretold what would happen:

(Continued on page 602)

THE IMPROVEMENT ERA



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Two Views of Church History

(Continued from page 600)

For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect (Matt. 24:24.)

Such a deception could be achieved (and the scripture says "they shall deceive"—using the infinitive of result—not "they would if they could") not by any pagan bluster or anti-Christian propaganda, but only by a very clever imitation of the real thing.

The danger that threatens the masses, according to the apostles, is *not* the same danger that threatens the true disciples: the latter are to lose their lives and win their glory; but for the rest there is another fate. They will go on as followers of "Jesus," but it is "another Jesus" they follow. In various ways they "pervert" the truth—not deny it. Some would "depart from the faith" by "forbidding to marry," (I Tim. 4:1ff); some would be fooled by the false Gnosis (*Ibid.*, 6:21); some would "err from the faith" out of "love of money," (*Ibid.*, 6:10); some would "overthrow the faith of some," by "denying the resurrection." (II Tim. 2:18.) But such people do not return to the profession of paganism—they would be horrified at the thought! How much simpler to do it this way:

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. (*Ibid.*, 4:3-4.)

Paul is greatly alarmed at this prospect which he knows is about to be realized: "Take heed unto yourselves and to all the flock," he says in his farewell to Ephesus, "over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." (Acts 20:28.) Here we have a test case: Could one ask for a more perfect assurance of permanence and invulnerability to a church than the pronouncement that it is the "church of God," that it has been "purchased by his own blood," and that it is led by the Holy Ghost? Yet this is solemn warning to take heed,

For I know this, that *after my departing* shall grievous wolves enter among you, not sparing the flock.

THE IMPROVEMENT ERA

Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things [the "perversion" motive again!], to draw away disciples after them.

Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. (vv. 29-31. Italics author's.)

Here we are told that apostolic guidance is to be withdrawn (Cf. Gal. 4:18), that as a result the wolves will attack, and that the attack will be successful—the flock enjoys no immunity from such, even though "purchased with his own blood."

Paul is warning the churches in no spirit of mild fatherly admonition; his is not the calm assurance of later church writers that the church of God cannot fail and all will be well: He knows differently—the salt *can* lose its savor and be thrown out. (See Luke 14:34.) His alarms have gone on for years, night and day, and with tears:

I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain, (Gal. 4:11) . . . I stand in doubt of you, (v. 20). . . Have ye suffered so many things in vain? (*Ibid.*, 3:4) . . .

there are contentions among you. . . .

Is Christ divided? . . .

I thank God that I baptized none of you. . . . (I Cor. 1:11, 13-14.)

What kind of winning talk is this? Is not the important thing to get people to join the church in numbers so they can be taught? Apparently Paul does not think so. Where the strong members are concerned we hear of nothing but being put to death, enduring to the end, partakers of Christ's sufferings, thinking only of the resurrection and hereafter, and counting all things but dross as far as this world is concerned. Where the weak ones are concerned, the prediction is all of perversion, corruption, and betrayal: these are not thrown to the lions; instead (in the words of the *Didache*) these sheep turn into wolves—but still claim to be sheep. As the Son of Man was betrayed, so would the apostles be: Betrayal is not the work of the heathen—it is an inside job:

And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. (Luke 21:16.)

Others died other ways, but the great danger comes from betrayal—the pagans can neither betray nor corrupt nor pervert the gospel; only members can do that. It was the Jews who betrayed and murdered the

(Continued on following page)

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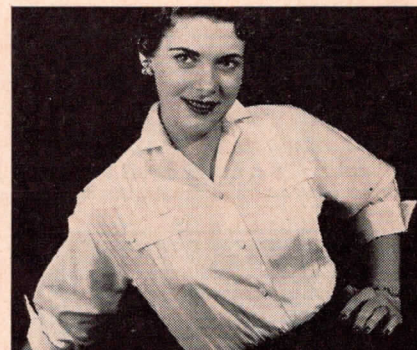


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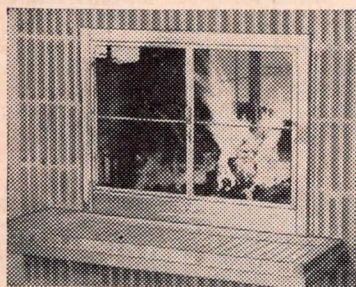
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TWO VIEWS OF CHURCH HISTORY

(Continued from preceding page)
prophets who later adorned their
tombs. (Acts 7:52f.)

Recently a Catholic writer has de-
clared: "The failure of the Mormon
spokesmen to explain when, where,
and how the present Catholic Church
was founded exposes the fatal weak-

ness of their accusation," (i.e., that
there was a Great Apostasy).¹ The
New Testament is only one of many
many sources that clearly "explain
when, where, and how" the Christian
church completely changed its nature

¹M. Poetzel, O. F. M., "Was there a 'Great Apostasy'?" (St. Paul: Radio Replies Press, 1955.)

"He Was Good to My Son"

Richard L. Evans

HAVE you ever heard a father say of someone: "He was good to my son"? If you have, you have no doubt sensed something that goes far deeper than any ordinary gratitude. It seems that a man will be everlastingly grateful to someone who "was good to his son." As parents we appreciate, of course, all the thoughtfulness and favors of our friends, all the kindnesses and courtesies that come from other people. We are grateful for every help, for every recognition, for every consideration that comes to us from others. But there is a special kind of gratitude, a fervent, deep, undying gratitude reserved for those of whom we can say: "He was good to our son." "He was good to our children." We are grateful to teachers who understandingly have eased them over difficult periods. We are grateful for friends who have helped them find their way into useful work. We are grateful to those who have taken time to listen to them, to understand them, to steady and encourage them. We are unspeakably grateful to those who have helped them over any awkwardness, to those who have helped them to adjust to life in any constructive way. Words cannot well express how grateful we are to anyone who takes the time and trouble to help a son or daughter of anyone of us. And since our hearts are so sincerely warm toward those who have been good to our children, would we not expect the Father of us all to turn his blessing and his kindly countenance toward those who have been good to his children? Would we not expect the Father of our spirits, with his infinite love and wisdom, to be grateful to those who are good to his children? If we want any day to mean much more than it could mean in any other way, we should do something for someone's son, for someone's daughter—for some of our eternal Father's sons or daughters, whom all men are and whom he made in his image—"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son . . ." for the benefit and blessing of all of us. "And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these . . . ye have done it unto me."² Blessed among men are those of whom it can be said by the Father of us all: He was good to my son.

"The Spoken Word"

FROM TEMPLE SQUARE
PRESENTED OVER KSL AND THE COLUMBIA BROADCASTING
SYSTEM, JUNE 19, 1955

¹John 3:16.

²Matthew 25:40.

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THE IMPROVEMENT ERA

and the present churches came to be what they are. To speak of a *founding* in a case like this is silly, since naturally no church claiming to have originated with Christ and the apostles (and they all claim that!) is going to go about proclaiming its foundation in this or that century *after* Christ! Even the Protestants will not admit a time and place of origin after the apostolic age; they are merely reformers of the old order—new things have been inaugurated from time to time, to be sure, and old things reformed—but it was really the same church all along. Every Christian church claims to go back to the first century: in the third century Origen admits the charge of Celsus, that already the church has long been “divided into sects, each of which claimed that it was the depository of the pure old original form of Christianity passed down from the beginning, while all the others were upstarts and innovators.” Whatever groups emerge from the squabble naturally go on claiming each that it is the one church founded by Christ; but in the horrible confusion of that and the following centuries, what are such claims worth?

“Let me ask,” writes Father Poetzl, “was the Catholic Church established in the 20th century? You must answer ‘No.’ If honest, you must say that the Church of today is the continuation of the Church which existed in the 19th century. Very well. Was the Church established in the 19th century? . . . The Church of the 19th century was the continuance of the Church of the 18th century. Go back farther, century by century. I defy the Mormon spokesmen to name any century in which the Catholic Church was established, any other century than the first.”¹ With equal propriety, and using the same words, Father Poetzl might ask: “Was the French language established in the 20th century? You must answer ‘No.’ If honest, you must say that the French of today is the continuation of the French which existed in the 19th century. Very well. Was French established in the 19th century? . . . The French of the 19th century was the continuance of the French of the 18th century. Go back farther, century by century. I defy Mormon spokesmen to name any century in which the French language was established other than the first.”¹ Thus it can be shown that Latin never ceased to exist as the vernacular of

(Continued on following page)

AUGUST 1955

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TWO VIEWS OF CHURCH HISTORY

(Continued from preceding page)

Gaul and that the great apostasy from the old Roman tongue which the purists so deplored never took place. It is the same with space as with time. Hugo Schuchardt showed that it is quite impossible to point to any spot, line, or area on the map at which Italian ceases and French begins. Is it Livorno? Milan? Nice? It is none of them or any other area you can name. "Very well," to quote Father Poetzl, how can you possibly maintain that different languages prevail in Paris and Rome? The failure of Mormon spokesmen to show when, where, or how the Italian language was founded is fatal to their argument that spoken Latin disappeared."¹ And yet it did.

The sophistry of the argument (a typical and shopworn school *demonstration*) lies in the well-known trick of confining the discussion to two alternatives only, and excluding all other possibilities: either a new church was *established* or else the old church *continued*. Only those two situations are considered—"have you stopped beating your mother-in-law"—a third possibility is not allowed. But formal establishment is *not* the only way to bring a church into being, and continuity by no means proves identity. In history actual establishments are extremely rare, and even then they are but the formal recognition of conditions that already exist, while the continuation of institutions is never without change. It is as if the white-haired Columbus were to argue that his hair was really red

since he was born with red hair and no one could name the date or place at which it became white.

Since Newman forced the Catholic to admit (albeit with extreme reluctance) that they have been changing things all along, they have fallen back on the argument that once the church had received divine authority there was no limit to the changes that might be introduced without danger of corruption, since the Church had the authority to make the changes. But it was precisely these self-initiated changes in the church that worried the apostles; "They went out from us," says John of the perverters. (I John 2:19.) It is entirely possible for important churchmen of high position (a number are pointed out by name in the New Testament) to "preach another Jesus" and to "pervert the gospel of Christ" and to "corrupt the word of God," (II Cor. 2:17), and to "wrest the scriptures." (II Pet. 3:16.) And it is quite possible for these to enjoy great success and become the leaders of the church after the apostles are gone. (II Tim. 4:2ff.) This is the process the apostles and the Lord predicted—and it takes place without any break in historical continuity (the impostors make a great to-do about being the legitimate heirs of the vineyard) and without the *establishment* of new churches: even Tertullian, the greatest authority of his day on the early church, was fooled into believing that the Montanists were the original church of Christ.

(To be continued)

THESE TIMES

(Continued from page 546)

8. The outlines of one approach (not without its hazards) are now visible in the slowly strengthening bonds between the Islamic world and the West. One of the world's best highways—the Mediterranean-Suez-Singapore-Manila air and water route—brings Islam, the West, and the Afro-Asian realm into juxtaposition and calls for imaginative policies.

9. Populous India, independent, proud, and neutral, stands astride this great route. American naval power, bastion of the Pacific peace and the NATO scheme, is less evident in the strategic Indian Ocean than elsewhere. As does Israel at the strategic Middle East end of

the Mediterranean, India represents an element which must receive great respect and consideration.

10. China may well hold the keys to much of the world's future. But with Germany once again a factor in Europe, with a magnetic-like attraction on Russia, China may well become less absorbed with her Russian ally. Foreign ideologies have made inroads in China in the past—Buddhism, for example. There is yet hope that communism may become less militant and be divested of some of its rancor in the vast sea of Chinese culture and institutions. Two new influences may shortly be felt on China, in addition to Russia, American

THE IMPROVEMENT ERA



—A Camera Clix Photo

Jesus said: "After my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock." (Acts 20:29.) The above picture portrays the martyrdom of 10,000 Christians under King Sapor of Persia.

Two Views of Church History

by Dr. Hugh Nibley

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

PART III

TO CLAIM that the true Church is immune to corruption no matter how much it changes is to hold all the warnings of the Lord and the apostles in contempt. They felt no such confidence: "For if God spared not the angels . . ." what guarantee of immunity can men expect? (II Pet. 2:4ff; Jude 5ff.) "For it is impossible," writes Paul, "for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come. . . ." (Heb. 6:4-5.)

At this point let us pause and ask any Christian, or, for that matter any thinking man, to finish the sentence for us: just what is impossible

for people so richly endowed? If the sixth chapter of Hebrews were a fragmentary text broken off at this place, any thoughtful individual could supply the conclusion: obviously Paul is reassuring the saints, telling them that it is quite impossible—unthinkable, in fact—for those who have already qualified for every earthly blessing plus the sure earnest of the world to come—it is impossible for such ever to be lost. "Reason itself" demands such a conclusion, but it is all wrong—the rest of the sentence administers a stinging rebuke to Christian complacency: It is impossible, the writer continues, for those so blessed "If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; . . ." (*Ibid.*, 6:6.) The falling away is a one-way process; it cannot be reversed. Heav-

enly powers and gifts once lost can only come again

. . . when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

. . . the times of the restitution of all things, . . . (Acts 3:19, 21.)

The heavenly inheritance *can* be lost, even to the saints; and no matter how they may seek it "carefully and with tears," once it is gone they shall "seek and not find."

The great apostasy did not happen consciously. The mentally ill ("O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you"? [Gal. 3:1]) do not know what is wrong with them or when it happened. What the apostles denounce most strenuously in their letters is the complete complacency and self-satisfaction of the perverters: ". . . lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud. . . . Traitors, heady, highminded, . . ." (II Tim. 3:2ff.) No lack of assurance here!

Like the slinging of a noose, the end comes silently, quietly, without warning, so that the victim never suspects what is happening, being the while wholly preoccupied with "the cares of this life." (Luke 21:34.) It is not a process of founding new institutions that the scriptures describe, but one of becoming: "love shall turn to hate," "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse," (II Tim. 3:13), "iniquity shall increase," "the sheep of the fold shall turn into wolves," (*Didache*)—but go right on calling themselves sheep! The false claimants never give up "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof. . . ." (II Tim. 3:5.) The end was never formally declared (heaven forbid!); in the words of Polycarp, "the lights went out."

What, then, was "the end"? The Bible has a good deal to say on the subject, and scholars have had a great deal more. At present we are considering only the former. On the mountain of the transfiguration Peter, James, and John, having just beheld Elias in conversation with the Lord and Moses, were told that Elias would at some time come and "restore *all things*," though he had already come and been rejected. (Matt. 17:11-12.) It was further explained that the Son of Man would suffer the same rejection; and later on Peter declares in a sermon that Christ would come again at "the times of the *restitution of all things*." (Acts 3:21; italics author's.) Some time after that the same Peter announces to the church that "the

THE IMPROVEMENT ERA

end of all things is at hand." (I Pet. 4:7; italics author's.) Here we have "all things" brought to earth, "all things" coming to an end, and "all things" restored again. "All *what* things?" we ask, for the world itself seems to go on. Peter gives us the answer: "... all things which God hath spoken through the mouths of his holy prophets since the world began," (Acts 3:21, italics author's); "According as his divine power hath given unto us *all things* pertaining unto life and godliness." (II Pet. 1:3, italics author's.) "All things" means the fulness of the gospel. That is what passes away when "the end of all things is at hand."

The apostles speak of their own times as the end of the world, and yet they talk of more history to follow: "Just now in the end of the world hath he appeared . . . and unto them that look for him shall he appear a second time. . . ." (See Heb. 9:26, 28.) Now is here "the end of the world," and yet it is to be followed by a time of waiting and expectation, after which the Lord will appear again. Plainly with "the end of the world," the whole story is not told. Literally "end of the world" here means "consummation of the periods, or aeons." The word *aeon* appears over a hundred times in the New Testament, nearly always as the equivalent of the Hebrew *'olam ha-zeh*, "the age in which we live." An *aeon* is, strictly speaking, a world period, and hence was sometimes loosely employed to refer to this world of ours, our times, the wicked world, etc. But never is the sense of a limited span of time completely absent when this word is employed: one can stretch a point and translate "the completion of the *aeon*" as "the end of the world," but only if it is understood that the "world" referred to is not necessarily the physical earth or the physical universe but the present age of men.

When Christ met with the eleven by special appointment on a mountain in Galilee (Matt. 28:16), he sent them out with instructions to "teach all nations . . . to carry out all the instructions he had given them," and gave his messengers the promise, "be-

hold I am with you every day until the completion of the period" (see vv. 19-20). The "Great Commission" is *not* an unlimited call to everyone, but specifically and privately to the eleven; it is *not* an order for them to tell all men whatever they had heard, but simply to instruct them to carry out certain specific orders (the language is technical and military); above all, it is *not* a promise that the Lord is going to stay in the world forever and ever or, as John Chrysostom desperately translates it, "for ages without end"; *aeon* is here in the singular; a definite limit is placed on the Savior's personal support, which is to be enjoyed until the apostles have finished their work: "until the completion (*syntelesis*) of the *aeon*, or period." There is going to be an *end*: the Lord said he would send his apostles out to preach to all the world for a witness, that they would carry out that assignment, "and then shall the *end* come." (*Ibid.*, 24:14.) Their mission, like the Lord's, was indeed at the end of the world. There is no more firmly established belief or more ancient tradition in Christendom than the conviction that the apostles themselves actually did carry out their mission, the Lord, as he promised, "working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." (Mark 16:20.) When every man on Pentecost heard the gospel preached in his own tongue, Peter announced that this was actually the fulfilment of

that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;

. . . in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh. . . . (Acts 2:16-17.)

These were the last days, the gospel actually had been preached to all flesh, the prophecy was fulfilled, and the end could come. For the prophecy was that *before* the apostles could be put to death, "the gospel must *first* be published among all nations." (Mark 13:9f, italics author's.) The apostles themselves complete the whole work of the dispensation; after them comes not the beginning—but the end. The clear statement of the Lord, that "... This generation shall

not pass away, till all be fulfilled" (Luke 21:32), is enough in itself to settle the issue: either Jesus was a false prophet, or the end did come.

WHY DID the early Christians express the keen and anxious concern they did for "signs of the times"? Why did they diligently study the times and seasons and everlastingly ask the Lord and the Apostles, "When will it be?" (Cf. Acts 1:7.) It is because they were expecting an end and had been instructed to watch even until the end. Their attitude would have been hard to understand if they had ever been given reason to believe that the church had been established, once and for all, to remain firm and steadfast until the end of the world.

It has often been noted that the ancient Christians professed two expectations: one an expectation of bliss, the other an expectation of woe. In their calendar the woe was to come first. Paul explains the situation when he reminds the Thessalonians that they must indeed look forward to "the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him," but not be deceived into thinking "that the day of Christ is at hand," since before that could come there must come "a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." (II Thess. 2:1ff.) And Peter reminds the church, "first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts," and only later will the Lord come, being meanwhile "not slack concerning the promise," since "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years. . . ." (II Peter 3:3ff.) The joy is coming, but first the woe. There are ends and other ends. The "signs of the times" are significant because things follow a pattern: "Whenever you see these events," says the Lord, stating a general rule in a present general condition, "you know that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand . . ." (See Luke 21:31); for example, "you look at the trees, and *whenever* they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand" (See vv. 29-30, italics author's.) It is a characteristic and repeated event, this "end of all things" and "restitution of all things," which we shall discuss in the next

(Continued on following page)

TWO VIEWS OF CHURCH HISTORY

(Continued from preceding page)

section. Whose coming was expected by the saints? The Lord's, according to some accounts, the adversary's, according to others. Why should this be a cause (as it has been) of ferocious controversy? Plainly they expected *both*; and not at one and the same time, but first the deceiver, and then the Lord.

After the Lord left the world, who came next? "The prince of this world, and hath nothing in me." Who is to follow up the work of the Apostles if they are "sent last" and "the end" is to come when they have completed their work? Who indeed: "... after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock." (Acts 20:29.) Those are the only "successors" mentioned. Who is to take over the place when Peter leaves it? "The devil . . . abroad as a ravening lion," completely on the loose. When John announces, "Little children, it is the last time," is he expecting the Lord? On the contrary: "... even now there are many antichrists; *whereby* we know that it is the last time." (I John 2:18.) You know the last time is here because "the mystery of iniquity doth already work," and his work is only temporarily held up by an opponent who is presently to be "taken out of the way." (II Thess. 2:7.)

As modern scholars, Catholic and Protestant, are beginning to realize (we shall discuss them later), the prospects were not brilliant: "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8.) It was a dark interval that lay ahead, "the Wintertime of the Just," they called it in the ancient church. There is a real element of tragedy here; the tears of the Lord and the Apostles were genuine. Paul does not warn constantly and with tears for the sake of a few inevitable crackpots and backsliders: the "wicked one" is "coming with all powers and signs and lying wonders," (II Thess. 2:9); the night is coming when no man can work, the time which the closing lines of *Didache* describe as the long ordeal of the human race. There is no doubt that the early Christians were convinced that the glorious final act of the drama would not be played "before the time." No city ever had a better chance of hearing the gospel

than Capernaum; no city ever rejected it more completely; accordingly, "in the day of judgment" Capernaum "shall be thrust down to hell." But meantime, what is the status of the cursed city to be? Quite magnificent: "exalted to heaven." (Matt. 11:23-24, Luke 10:15.) That "meanwhile" is the second act of the drama, and it lasts until the judgment.

If one is determined to believe that the primary intent and purpose of the missions of Christ and the Apostles was the setting up on the earth of a mighty institution of sure salvation for all, "to remain firm and steadfast until the end of the world" (to use the proud formula of 1870—in the absence of any appropriate scripture!), then the negative course of things so clearly indicated in the Bible was a terrible mistake. Common sense rebels against the dismal prospect of the whole earth being given into the hands of "the one who leads the world astray," (as the *Didache* puts it)—it is a hard thing to take. And that is exactly why all the prophets of the New Testament urge the saints continually *not* to take the common sense point of view in the matter: "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer!" Is that common sense? "Now is the day of salvation," Paul cries joyfully, describing the day as one of afflictions, necessities, distresses, stripes, imprisonments, tumults, labors, watchings, fastings—"as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing." (II Cor. 6:10.) It seems like anything but fun or good sense. As to the things that common sense values, Paul says, "I count them but dung, just so I win Christ." Worldly standards are utterly misleading. Hear what Peter, James, and John have to say:

Note the emphasis in *Peter's* epistles on the evil times ahead and the postponement of blessings for a definite interval: "[Ye] are kept . . . unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness . . . (expecting) praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. . . ." (Cf. I Peter 1:5-7.) "Be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ (*Ibid.*, 1:13.) . . . Pass the time of your so-

journing here in fear (*Ibid.*, 1:17.) . . . Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

"But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's suffering; that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad. . . ." (*Ibid.*, 4:12-13.)

"... the God of all grace . . . hath called us unto his eternal glory . . . after that ye have suffered a while. . . ." (*Ibid.*, 5:10.)

"... Humble yourselves . . . that God may exalt you in due time (*Ibid.*, 5:6);" etc. The unpleasant interval is not to be taken seriously, "For all flesh is as grass, . . ." (*Ibid.*, 1:24); we are merely "strangers and pilgrims" here (*Ibid.*, 2:11); it is a frightening prospect, but "if you will it shall be as nothing." Peter preaches a thoroughgoing exchange of earthly values for heavenly values.

James (4:4) does not mince words: "Know ye not, that friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." Nor does John: "Love not the world neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world . . . is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lusts thereof. (I John 2:15-17.) Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. . . ."

"We are of God: he that knoweth God, heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth not us. . . . And we know that we are of God, and the world lieth in wickedness. . . ." (*Ibid.*, 3:13; 4:6; 5:19.)

These were truly the disciples of the Lord who said, "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets." (Luke 6:26.) There is no place here for a popular program. The whole consolation of the saints is in the resurrection and glory to come, "... whether we wake or sleep. . . . Wherefore comfort yourselves. . . ." (I Thess. 5:10-11.) There is a complete disconcert for the possible success or failure of the church on earth, and a total silence on the subject of future generations—never a thought of that "inevitable triumph" which later church historians were to insist

THE IMPROVEMENT ERA

should have been their chief consolation. "... The foundation of God standeth sure," not in a visible institution of salvation, but "having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his." (II Tim. 2:19.) Every opportunity to play up the church is passed by in silence.

The values of the early Christians were *not* common sense values. The translators of the King James Version use the word *lusts* for the Greek *epithumia*, which means "desire, interest, value," in the broadest sense, and thus make it appear that all that John is condemning is vice and depravity, whereas actually he is renouncing all earthly values good and bad. The Christian point of view was not that of another philosophy; it administered a severe shock to intelligent people—"a slap in the face," to use Karl Holl's apt expression. Thinking people were not just amused, they were "scandalized" (a favorite word) and enraged, sickened, and disgusted; Tacitus, Celsus, Caecilius, and the Jewish and pagan professors cannot think of words strong enough to express their loathing and alarm.

Here we have two systems of values totally and hopelessly opposed to each other. The things Jesus talked about were entirely outside the range of normal human thought and experience; in time their reality was to be made manifest to all, but meanwhile their rejection was to be emphatic and complete, and pagans could embarrass Christians by chanting about "Jesus the King who never ruled!" A triumphant rule and a triumphant church were not on the program, but the world would settle for nothing less, and of course the world got what it wanted—a church modeled after *its* idea of what a church should be. Such an institution was as clearly prophesied as was the passing away of the true church.

(To be continued)

INNER SIGHT

By Janet Moore

LOVE is not blind as slander claims
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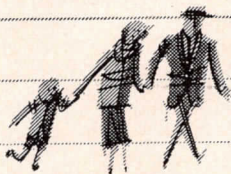
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Two Views of Church History

by Dr. Hugh Nibley
BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

PART IV

ONE ACT OR THREE?—Few historians at the present time will maintain that the Christian church today is the result of a smooth and unbroken transmission of institutions and doctrines without change or shadow of change since the days of the Apostles. Since no one doubts the necessity and convenience of making certain major divisions in church history, we would strongly urge that the most meaningful and logical division is that so clearly indicated by the New Testament itself. To accept those clearly marked periods of (1) revelation, (2) darkness, and (3) restoration, however, is to reject the whole conventional concept of church history as one long unbroken, irresistible victory campaign.

Yet even conventional church history is now being forced to spoil the simplicity of the accepted plot of the growing admission that the early church was something very special. It would be hard to find a history of the church that does not honor the "primitive church" with a section all of its own; but of recent years the uniqueness and peculiarities of that church have become objects of the most intense research, which is showing more and more how totally different the original Church of Christ was from any of the churches claiming to be derived from it or from any of the ideas which scholars have hitherto entertained concerning it.

The term "primitive church" is itself revealing. The early Christians, far from thinking of themselves as primitive, tell us often that they are living at the end of an aeon in a world ripe for destruction. Though they lived by prophecy, no allowances or provisions were made by them for greater refinements or improvements in their own institution in the years ahead. The church of the Apostles was ready for the end, coming as it did at "the end of the aeon," not at the beginning of a long period of progress.

Still the designation and idea of a "primitive church" are necessary to later generations both as a salve to conscience (this is very clear in Chrysostom) and a sop to vanity (equally ditto in Jerome), for if the glaring differences between the original and the later churches could not be denied, they would have to be explained; and the only explanation that could save the face of Christianity—let alone make it look good—was that which decided with patronizing indulgence that the early church was just "primitive" and its disappearance a necessary and inevitable phase in the growth and progress of an institution.

The folly and vanity of a theory that looks upon the church of the Apostles with patronizing superiority and glories in the irrelevant and highly suspect virtues of size and sophistication as proofs of progress, needs no comment. A basic lack of conviction in the argument may be seen in desperate attempts to dress the primitive church up to look like modern churches; serious students know better, of course, but that does not keep the producers of movies and television from assuring the general public that the church really has changed hardly at all, and showing, to prove it, ancient Apostles dressed up as eighth-century bishops or mouthing the sentimental commonplaces of the schools through the whiskers and robes of traveling sophists.

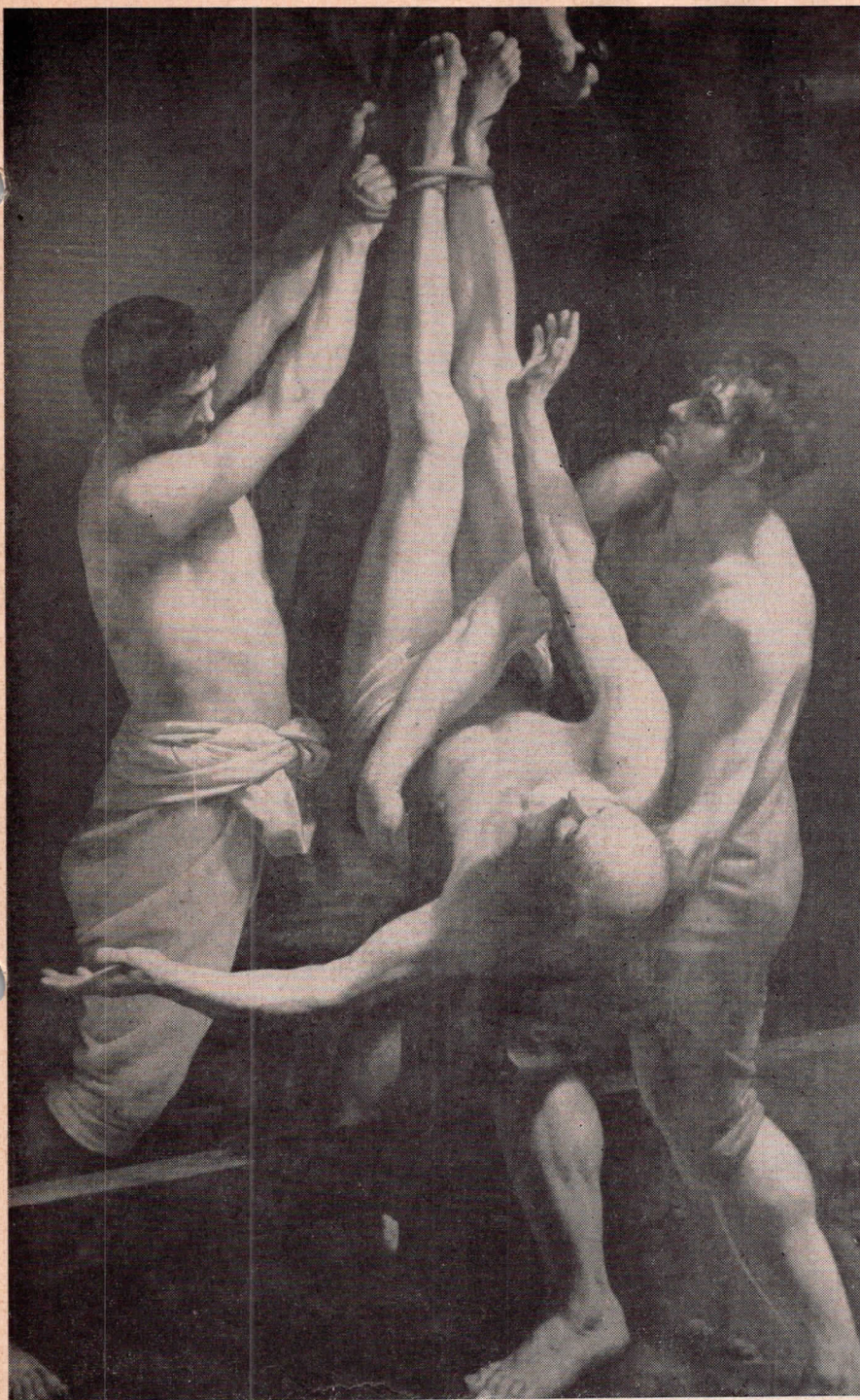
But looking behind such flimsy tricks, we find that earnest investigators of church history, Catholic and Protestant alike, are discovering as it

were for the first time the great gulf that lies between the ancient church and conventional Christianity, and being surprisingly frank in their comments. More and more they are forcing themselves also to face up to the dark interval of the second act, though most of them still cling desperately to the old rewrite interpretations of "Advance through Storm," "Struggle and Progress," "The Certain Victory," etc.

This interpretation so deranges the plot that the third act must either be dropped out entirely or completely rewritten: naturally we can't have a "restitution of all things" if all things have been carefully preserved and steadily improved through the centuries. And so we have the third and final act, the great culminating events of world history, studiously effaced by church historians: what we have to reckon with, we are now told, was a "spiritual" second coming which has already taken place; it was "the Easter experience," some suggest—Pentecost, according to others; it was all a mistake, a tragic miscalculation, according to another school; it is fulfilled in the Real Presence, to follow another; others have maintained that since the crucifixion was the supreme event of all time, all that followed was mere anticlimax; others have made the second coming a mystical experience. And so they go: whatever it is, that third act, as we have called it, is not the great event predicted by the scriptures. Acts two and three are out!

What, then, did happen after the Apostles? Do we have reliable reports for the years following? Was it all bad? How did the Christians continue to think of the world and their position in it? Did they expect the lights to go out? Were they surprised when they did? Were they disappointed when the Lord failed to come? Did they believe that what was happening actually was the end? Such questions are the special food of church history in our day. The mere fact that they are being asked now as never before is an invitation

The Way of the Church —II



—Photo by Camera Clix from the painting *Crucifixion of Peter* by Reni Guido

With the removal of the apostles, there came a long period of darkness, ending with the restoration of the gospel.

to Latter-day Saints to enter the discussion which seems at last to be turning to their own point of view.

The history of the church is not a one-act play, a single, long, protracted happy ending from start to finish, with a baffled and frustrated villain vainly trying to score a telling point against a cause that is always assured of success and never in any real danger. Yet such a fantastically wishful and unreal plot is the only alternative to the one set forth in

the Bible which places the happy ending at the end—"when his glory shall be revealed and all made glad"—with a time of heaviness preceding it, during which the prince of this world holds sway and all the promised glories to come are forgotten in a tragic preoccupation with the things which please men. The story of the church is unfolded not in one act but three.

This is not the discovery of modern scholars or the private hypothesis

of Latter-day Saints—through the centuries the church fathers have been aware of it, and it has worried them a great deal. It is very important to understand that the fate of God's people on earth, specifically, the course of "the church" through the ages (for the idea of "the church" is a very ancient one) has been a subject of vital concern to certain men in every period of history.

From the most ancient prophets to the latest monograph, men have not ceased talking and speculating on this theme. As the Lord was not the first prophet sent into the vineyard, neither was his Church without precedent in the world. Church history does not begin suddenly one day in Palestine, any more than the story of the redemption begins with certain shepherds watching their flocks. The mighty drama goes back to the very beginning and leaves its mark in the documents of every age. It is a far bigger thing than the seminarists and schoolmen realize.

IN THE preceding articles we first indicated the strong and undeniable bias which has controlled the writing of conventional church history since the days of Eusebius. Next we offered a brief preliminary sketch, based on the New Testament, of another view of church history. That view may be thus briefly summed up: the original followers of Christ sought their reward and placed all their hopes in the other world and the return of the Lord in judgment, believing that as far as this world is concerned the work of the church would not prosper but soon come to a close, being followed by a long time of darkness that would end only with the restoration of all things in preparation for the coming of the Lord. Such in barest outline is the substance of "the other view" of church history. It will be readily admitted that it is *not* the conventional view, and it remains for us now to show from the early sources that it most certainly was the true authentic view of church history held by the members of the Early Church in Apostolic times and after. We shall also show the present trend among students of church history towards the recognition of glaring defects in the conventional picture and increasing awareness of the existence and the validity of the earlier concept.

(To be continued)

i. THE ESCHATOLOGICAL DILEMMA

IN ANY bibliography of present-day studies on the Christian religion, historical or doctrinal, the word *eschatology* looms large. For the Christian, we are told, "... any real understanding of history is only possible in connection with eschatology."¹ And what is eschatology? According to Gressmann, one of the fathers of modern eschatological studies, it was originally whatever had to do with the end of things, whether of the world, the society, the age in which we live or merely of the individual—his death and resurrection.² But in the 1880's the German scholars began using the word in a special sense, applying it specifically to doctrines—Jewish, Christian, or heathen—dealing with the end and renewal of the earth.³ Immediately and inevitably the discussion of such teachings became involved in the terms and problems of messianic, apocalyptic, mythical, mystical, historical, and prophetic nature. Whereas formerly Messianism and eschatology had had nothing to do with each other, the new speculations brought them ever closer together, until Mowinckel was able to announce that they were one and the same.⁴ Eschatology and apocalyptic were identified in every conceivable degree of relationship: one of the latest studies insists that they be sharply separated, since eschatology "according to my terminology [Lindblom speaking] is the prophesying of a new and totally different age to come."⁵

According to an equally recent and authoritative study, eschatology is just the opposite of that: "Eschatological thought I take [S. B. Frost speaking] to be a form of expectation characterized by finality. The *eschaton* is the goal of the time-process, that after which nothing further can occur: it is the climax of teleological history. . . . It cannot even in thought be superseded by a subsequent event. . . . The *eschaton* is that beyond which the faithful never peers."⁶ So much for the new age—and this sort of thing has been going on for seventy-five

The Apocalyptic Background

by Dr. Hugh Nibley

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

years! While one school holds that eschatology is necessarily a late development in Jewish thought, a product of the captivity and quite unknown to the prophets (Lagrange), another maintains that prophecy itself "rests from the very beginning on a . . . fully developed eschatology."⁷

Again, while some (e.g., R. H. Charles) have held that the eschatological ideas of heathen nations were first borrowed by Jews, and hence Christians, as an anchor to faith when their own darling prophecies, especially those concerning the Messiah, failed to go into fulfillment, others regard the Jews themselves as the true originators of those ideas. Today some are claiming that apocalyptic writing is simply a combination of eschatology with myth, and Mr. Frost issues the resounding statement: "Whether apocalyptic is to be dismissed as merely myth eschatologized, or whether it is to be taken seriously as eschatology in a mythological dress, is perhaps the most urgent problem confronting the Christian Church today."⁸ Personally, I am glad it does not confront my church, since Frost is saying in effect: "The most urgent problem confronting the court is whether the accused forged his name to the check or merely changed the amount on it."

Forty-five years ago Father Lagrange distinguished five different eschatologies, and, in view of the completely baffling nature of the evidence, wisely refused to attempt arranging them in any of those evolutionary or developmental patterns which the scientific scholarship of the age found so irresistible. He listed: 1, a temporal cosmic eschatology without a Messiah; 2, a transcendent cosmic eschatology without Messiah;

3, a historic Messianic eschatology; 4, a transcendent Messianic eschatology; and 5, a transcendent cosmic eschatology embracing a less transcendent but historic Messiah.⁹

In such a way the eschatological discussion from the first fused and intermingled a wealth of related and conflicting terms, periods, and peoples, and the game of deciding just how and to what degree, if any, each element or combination of elements was related to the others offered inexhaustible opportunities for learned debate: the endless variety of changes, the nice shades and dainty nuances of meaning, the license of bathing forever in the tepid waters of pure terminology or spinning spider-like, from the substance of one's own esoteric secretions, lovely fragile webs of definition without end—it was all the schoolmen asked of life, and the eschatological discussion might have gone on like the Trinitarian debate for untold generations had not a series of great and unforeseen events given a wholly new orientation to things within the last two decades.

But behind this great outpouring of words, and what keeps it going, is the inescapable conviction that eschatology, that is, what people really believed about their place in the universe, holds the key to the genuine original Christian view of life—that it represents the unique, the peculiar, the essentially different element that sets Christian thinking apart from all other thinking. Those very scholars, such as Harnack and Albert Schweitzer, who insist most emphatically on the hopeless inadequacy of the evidence, are the most reluctant to leave eschatology alone. There is some thing big and portentous hiding here if we could only grasp what it is. The vague and twittering host of broken fragments and wraith-like traditions for all its mazy confusion is definitely trying to tell us something, and the voices are growing louder and clearer every day. The whole eschatological issue can best be explained, we believe, by a

(Continued on page 835)

The Way of the Church —III

The Apocalyptic Background

(Continued from page 817)

brief diversion into one of those little variables for which we have always had a weakness.

Imagine, then, a successful businessman who, responding to some slight but persistent physical discomfort and the urging of an importunate wife, pays a visit to a friend of his—a doctor. Since the man has always considered himself a fairly healthy specimen, it is with an unquiet mind that he descends the steps of the clinic with the assurance, gained after long hours of searching examination, that he has about three weeks to live. In the days that follow, this man's thinking undergoes a change, not a slow and subtle change—there is no time for that—but a quick and brutal reorientation. By the time he has reached home on that fateful afternoon, the first shock of the news has worn off, and he is already beginning to see things with strange eyes. As he locks the garage door, his long ambition to own a Cadillac suddenly seems unspeakable puerile to him, utterly unworthy of a rational, let alone an immortal being. This leads him to the shocking realization, in the hours that follow, that one can be rich and successful in this world with a perfectly barren mind. With shame and alarm he discovers that he has been making a religion of his career. In a flash of insight he recognizes the truth of the old Greek doctrine that seeming and being are two wholly different things, and on his knees discovers that only his Heavenly Father knows him as he is. Abruptly he ceases to care particularly whether anybody thinks he is a good, able, smart, likable fellow or not; after all, he is not trying to sell anyone anything any more.

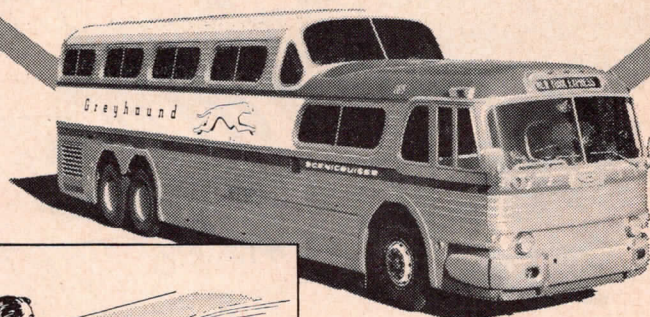
Things that once filled him with awe seem strangely trivial, and things which a few days before did not even exist for him now fill his consciousness. For the first time he discovers the almost celestial beauty of the world of nature, not viewed through the glass of cameras and car windows, but at the very element in which he lives; shapes and colors spring before his senses with a vividness and drama of which he never dreamed.

The perfection of children comes to him like a sudden revelation, and he is appalled by the monstrous pervers-

(Continued on following page)

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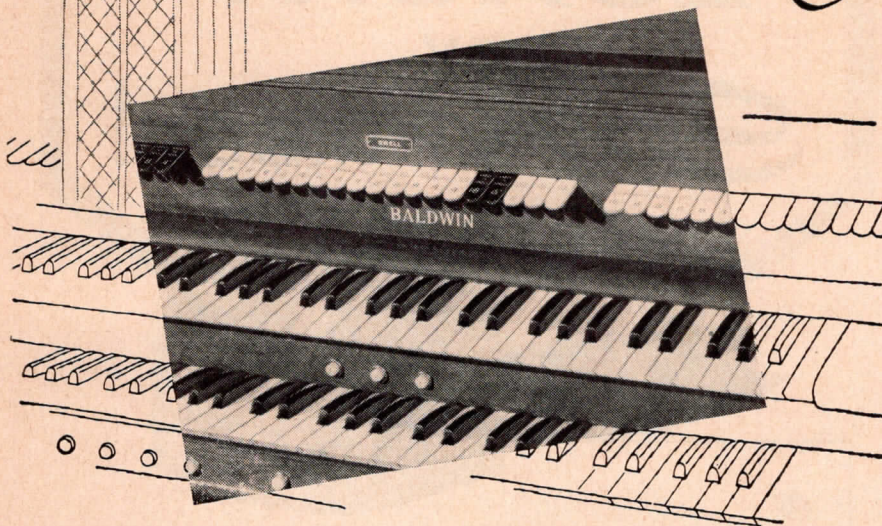
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(Continued from preceding page)

sion that would debauch their minds, overstimulate their appetites, and destroy their sensibilities in unscrupulous plans of sales promotion. Everywhere he looks he gets the feeling that all is passing away—not just relatively because he is saying goodbye to a world he has never seen before, but really and truly: he sees all life and stuff about him involved in a huge ceaseless combustion, a literal and apparent process of oxidation which is turning some things slowly, some rapidly, but all things surely to ashes. He wishes he had studied more and pays a farewell visit to some friends at the university where he is quick to discover, with his new powers of discernment, that their professional posturing and intellectual busy-work is no road to discovery but only an alley of escape from responsibility and criticism.

As days pass, days during which that slight but ceaseless physical discomfort allows our moribund hero no momentary lapse into his old ways, he is visited ever more frequently by memories, memories of astonishing clarity and vividness—mostly from his childhood, and he finds himself at the same time slipping ever more easily into speculations, equally vivid, on the world to come and the future of this world. The limits of time begin to melt and fuse until everything seems present but the present. In a word, *his thinking has become eschatological.*

"What has happened to our solid citizen?" his friends ask perplexed. He has chosen to keep his disease a secret; it would be even more morbid, he decides, to parade his condition. But he cannot conceal his change of heart. As far as his old associates can see, the poor man has left the world of reality. Parties and golf no longer amuse him; TV and movies disgust him. He takes to reading books, of all things—even the Bible! When they engage him in conversation, he makes very disturbing remarks, sometimes sounding quite cynical, as if he didn't really care; for example, whether peppermint was selling better than wintergreen or whether the big sales campaign went over the top by October. He even becomes careless of his appearance, as if he didn't know that the key to success is to make a good impression

THE IMPROVEMENT ERA

on people. As time passes, these alarming symptoms become ever more pronounced; his sales record drops off sharply; those who know what is good for their future begin to avoid being seen with him—like Lehi of old, he is hurting business, and dark hints of subversion are not far in the offing. What is wrong with the man?

As we said, his thinking has become eschatological. He lives in a timeless, spaceless world in which Jack Benny and the World Series simply do not exist. His values are all those of eternity, looking to the "latter end" not only of his own existence but of everything and everybody around him. As he hears the news or walks the streets, he sees, in the words of Joseph Smith, "destruction writ large on everything we behold." He is no longer interested in "the things of the world." The ready-smiling, easily adjustable, anxious-to-get-ahead, eager-to-be-accepted, hard-working conformist, who for so many years was such a tangible asset to Nulb, Incorporated, has ceased to exist.

Now the question arises, has this man been jerked out of reality or into it? Has he cut himself off from the real world or has cruel necessity forced him to look in the face what he was running away from before? Is he in a dream now or has he just awakened from one? Has he become an irresponsible child or has he suddenly grown up? Is he the victim of vain imaginings or has he taken the measure of "Vanity Fair"? Some will answer one way, some another. But if you want to arouse him to wrathful sermons, just try telling the man that it makes no difference which of these worlds one lives in—that they are equally real to the people who live in them. "I have seen both," he will cry. "Don't try to tell me that the silly escapist world of busy-work, mercenary back-slaps, phoney slogans, and maniacal 'careers' has anything real about it—I know it's a fake, and so do you!"

It will be noted that this eschatological state of mind does not bear the mark of just one school of thought: once it gets in the blood, all the aspects and concepts of eschatological thinking enter with it. Our businessman, for example, begins to wonder about certain possibilities: What about the hereafter? Will he ever really see the face of the Lord? Is

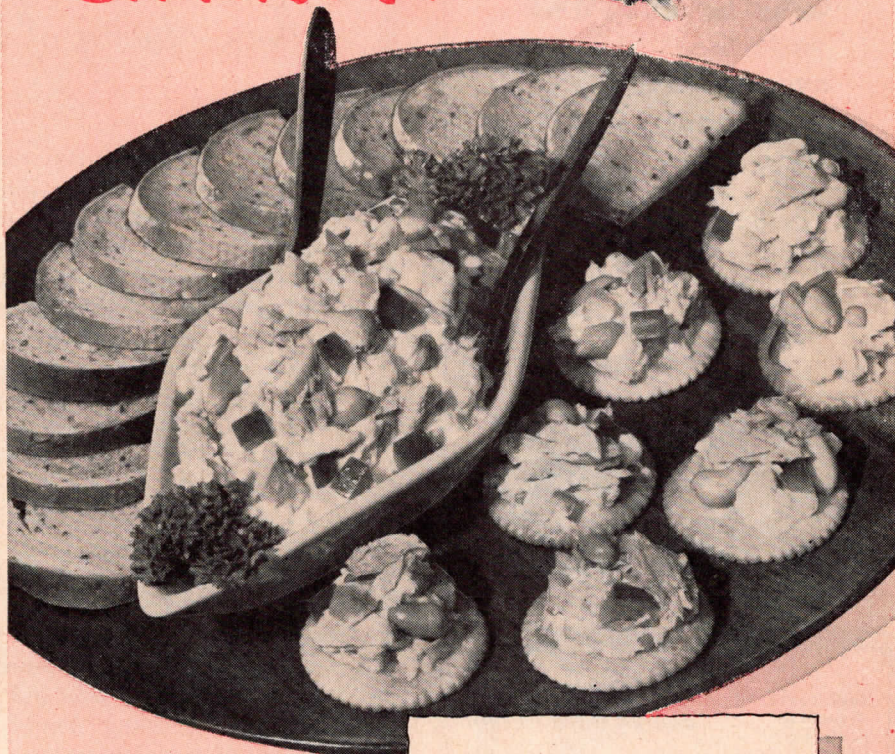
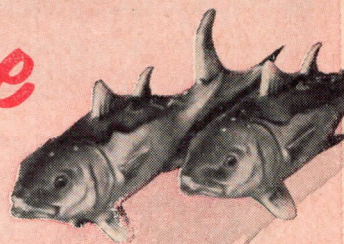
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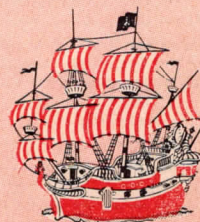
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THE APOCALYPTIC BACKGROUND

(Continued from preceding page)

there going to be a judgment? He almost panics at the thought which has never bothered him before because he has been successful. He becomes preoccupied with history and prophecy, aware for the first time that his whole life is linked not only with

D Division of Nulb, Incorporated, but, for better or for worse, with all that happens in the universe; he belongs to history and it to him—"the solemn temples, the great globe itself" are as much his concern as any man's. These ideas that come to him

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The Agony of Indecision

Richard L. Evans

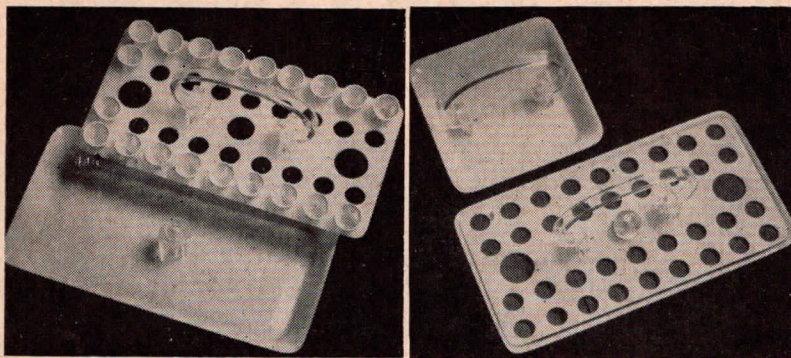
AS WE look back upon the plight of Hamlet with all his problems, one of the things for which he was most to be pitied was his inability to make up his mind. But Hamlet wasn't the only one who has hung between "to be or not to be." Even in the lesser things of life, most of us wrestle with ourselves in the agony of indecision. We wonder whether to go or whether to stay; whether to buy this or to buy that; whether to accept this proposal or another one; whether to take this job or some other; whether to go back to school and finish what we started, or to postpone our preparation, or to give it all up. Sometimes decisions are made by default; that is to say, sometimes we simply sit and wait and worry until time takes the choice out of our hands. That's one way of deciding—simply deciding not to decide. But if we do this too often, we live our lives in the agony of indecision. All of us have to make choices every day, every hour, sometimes it seems almost every instant—some serious and some superficial. And if all of the right factors are on one side and all of the wrong factors are on the other, deciding should be a very simple matter. In matters of principle or morals or ethics or honesty there is really one choice—or should be. But in other matters, sometimes it isn't so simple. Often there are things to be said on both sides of a decision. Often we have to weigh one side against the other and give up something either way—and these are difficult decisions. But we need to decide—because hanging between two alternatives does much to waste time and nullify effectiveness. When we seem to hang in uncertainty, there are some things that may help to settle us: One is a set of sound principles. We all urgently need a sound set of principles by which to measure everything. We need to know the rules, the laws, the commandments. Another thing we often also need is someone we can trust to talk to. And beyond our own wisdom and the wisdom of others we need faith—and a prayerful approach to all our problems. Some things we have to decide—and after we have done our very best to decide and to do what is best and right to do, we have some reason to expect the peace that comes with settled assurance. God grant that we may have the wisdom and the faith to save ourselves from wasting life away in the agony of indecision.*

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*Revised.

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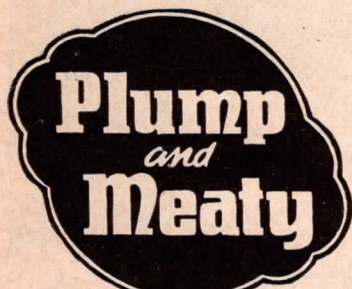
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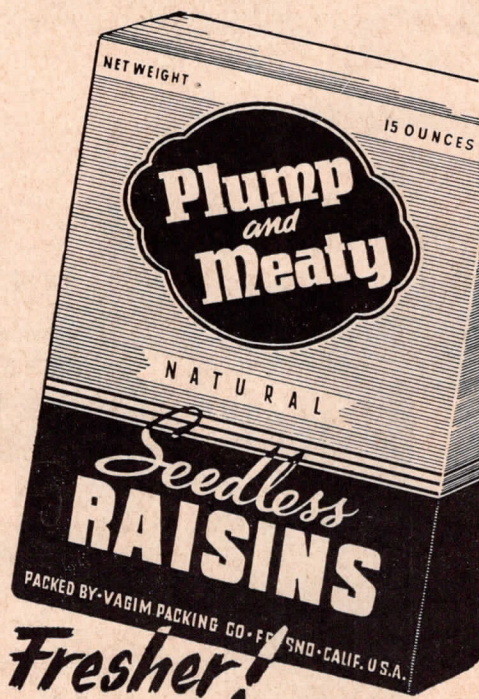
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The Apocalyptic Background

(Continued from page 838)

are all essential parts of the same picture in which one can descry inextricably joined and intermingled apocalyptic, prophecy, millennialism, Messianism, history, and theology—all belong to the same eschatology.

But where is *myth*, the thing that the scholars tell us is "the very essence of eschatology"?¹⁰ That is there, too, but you will find it only in the minds of his friends and associates: they, wide-awake and practical people, know perfectly well that the man is suffering from delusions; they know that the things which have become so real to him are all just imagination. To anyone who does not experience it, the eschatological view of things is pure myth—an invention of an overwrought mind desperately determined to support its own premises. Only what they fail to consider is that those who have had both views of the world interpret things just the other way around: it is after all eschatology that looks hard reality in the face; lazy and timid people take refuge in the busy-work of everyday; only strong and disciplined minds are willing to see things as they are, and even they must be forced to it! No wonder the scholars have agreed that whatever else eschatology is, it is not real!

To conclude our parable, what happens to our man of affairs? A second series of tests at the hospital shows that his case was not quite what they thought it was—he may live for many years. Yet he takes the news strangely, for instead of celebrating at a night club or a prize fight as any normal healthy person should, this creature will continue his difficult ways. "This," he says, "is no pardon. It is but a stay of execution. Soon enough it is going to happen. The situation is not really changed at all." So he becomes religious, a hopeless case, an eschatological zealot, a Puritan, a monk, a John Bunyan, a primitive Christian, an Essene, a Latter-day Saint. In every age such people with their annoying eschatological beliefs have disturbed the placid ("perfectly-adjusted") waters of the slough of custom and paid dearly for their folly.

And that leads us to the *eschato-*
THE IMPROVEMENT ERA

logical dilemma which confronts the Christian world today.

(To be continued)

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⁸S. B. Frost, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

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¹⁰Gressmann, *op. cit.*, p. 152 "Das Mythische . . . ist das Wesentliche an der Eschatologie."

With the President in Europe

(Continued from page 800)

Bennett, Elder Robert F. Bennett, branch president of the Edinburgh district, took charge of the street meeting held by the missionaries. They have such outstanding talks that they drew by far the largest crowd of any group assembled.

A short sight-seeing trip permitted us to visit Edinburgh Castle, Sir Walter Scott's monument on Princess Street, the birthplace of John Knox, the porch of the house from which he preached his sermons against the wishes of Mary, Queen of Scots. We also saw the St. Giles Cathedral where John Knox preached.

That evening President McKay was speaker at the meeting of the Church members in the Glasgow District.

The next morning at 7 o'clock we left for London, England. We missed the missionaries who were to meet us, and took a terminal bus from the airfield to the hotel, which is situated just across the street from Hyde Park.

Later, we walked over to the park to see whether the elders were holding a street meeting. Unfortunately they were not, so we walked around and listened to other preachers who were speaking to the groups gathered around them. The right of free speech prevails in England. We were intensely interested in what we saw and heard.

(Continued on following page)

NOVEMBER 1955



The Rage For Built-ins

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