

*INTEGRITY is published each month and seeks to encourage all believers in Christ to strive to be one, to be pure, and to be honest and sincere in word and in deed, among themselves and toward all men.*

## Integrity

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# Integrity

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### SAMSON'S RIDDLE

by Elton D. Higgs

"Out of the eater came  
something to eat,  
out of the strong came  
something sweet."  
(Judges 15:14)

How strange that honey could grow  
In the carcass of a lion,  
Lying broken by Samson's hands.  
And now those hands are full of sweetness  
Where before they dealt out death.  
The breath of God blew here,  
And yet the strong man shares not yet  
The transmutation God has wrought.  
The day will come when One  
Who gave him more than lion's strength  
Will make him brim with honey, too;  
There will occur a true encounter  
With the Source of that sweet lion:  
When all is ripe and strength has run its course,  
An empty Samson will be filled once more,  
And God will scoop the honey of His vengeance  
From the broken bones of a lion-hive.

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### A NEW DEVELOPMENT

Because we always try to be perfectly honest with our readers and supporters, we feel compelled to say something in this issue regarding my status as editor-in-chief.

I am now in the process of changing jobs (looking is the word), and I am not yet able to say whether my new employment will permit me to devote the necessary time to this work.

In the hope that I will be able to continue, each member of the editorial board (except Dave Graf, who will be in Jordan for several months yet) has promised to edit one issue on an interim basis—with the understanding that we may fall behind somewhat and make up delays by combining issues (as we have with this one).

Of course, we will have to job out our printing from now on, and that means an increase in cost. If, because of concern about our future, our financial supporters desert us, we will be in real trouble, but we are confident that they will not do so.

We are convinced that *Integrity* is making a significant contribution to the thinking of our communion, and we have included in the letters section several recent comments from readers who share that opinion.

We ask your prayers for all of us that we will continue to serve our Father according to his will and direction.

—Hoy

An Extended Review of *God and the Astronomers* by Robert Jastrow

## God in the Twentieth Century

JOHN M. SCHRADE

Fayetteville, Arkansas

### An Old Question Restated

Why is there something here instead of nothing? This old question is now attributed to Jean-Paul Sartre, a French existentialist philosopher. However stated, the question is old, but the answer is still important, for it must color all thinking about the nature of the universe and man's place in it.

### The Sixteenth Century Answer

To a 16th century Christian, the question would have been regarded as nonsensical. He was sure that the earth was the center of the universe. Did not all the stars of heaven circle around it? Was not man created in the image of God, and had it not all been created for him? He would have answered in one word, "God." So sure was he of his answer it would not have occurred to him to even try to think of any other.

Then four men upset this neat system. Nicolas Copernicus (1473-1543) showed that the earth and the planets revolved around the sun, not the earth. Galileo (Galileo Galilei, 1564-1642) turned the newly invented telescope toward the sky and began to reveal the immense size of the universe, at the same time confirming the observations of Copernicus. Johannes Kepler (1571-1630) discovered that the earth and planets did not move in circles at all, but that their orbits were in the form of an ellipse. And finally, Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727) related all these movements to natural causes. The cosmology (or concept of the nature of the universe) as 16th century man understood it was shattered. And to the extent that his religious convictions were rooted in his cosmology, his religious faith was weakened.

### Ensuing Developments

During the ensuing years, the telescope was greatly increased in size, power and accuracy. The spectroscope, first applied to starlight by Newton, became a refined instrument capable of determining the chemical composition of far distant light sources. Means were contrived for measuring the distance of those light sources. The camera was invented and astronomers could record their observations on photographic film for all to see and evaluate. More recently the radio telescope has been added, and still more recently a High Energy Astronomical Observatory, a satellite known as HEAO-1.

### The Nineteenth Century Answer

Deeper penetration into the laws governing the universe revealed that the force of gravity was universal. It was even discovered that far distant stars were composed of the same materials found on earth. Gradually the concept developed that the universe was a gigantic machine which could be understood by applying the known laws of physics and chemistry to it. Between 1830 and 1833, Sir Charles Lyell had published his *Principles of Geology* and introduced the concept of the machine into the field of geology. By 1859, Charles Robert Darwin published his famous work, *The Origin of Species by Natural Selection*, bringing the machine concept to the field of biology. It soon came to be assumed that everything, including man, could be accounted for by the operation of natural laws, plus time, plus chance. The belief in a personal God, so comforting to the 16th century man, was replaced in the minds of many educated persons by an impersonal God, one who had set the universe in motion and then left it to operate according to the laws He had established. However, this concept of God was too small to meet human needs and began to yield to outright materialism and atheism. By the year 1900, if someone had asked Sartre's question it would have again been regarded as nonsensical, but this time because it was "impossible of solution," or he might have been told that matter has "always been there." God had become a minor or a wholly nonexistent factor in the minds of many educated persons.

### The New Twentieth Century Cosmology

Then, during the second decade of the present century, a whole new series of discoveries began to be reported, destined to have as much impact on the cosmology of the 19th century as Copernicus had had in 1543. These discoveries have been delightfully described by Robert Jastrow in his book *God and the Astronomers*, published in 1978. Arranged in chronological order, they are, briefly, as follows:

1914—An astronomer, Vesto Slipher, presented to the American Astronomical Society, meeting in Evanston, Illinois, slides showing that about a dozen galaxies were moving away from the earth at speeds ranging up to two million miles per hour. At this time, this was not recognized as the first whisper of the new cosmology. Instead, the movements were attributed to the movement of the earth itself.

1917—Albert Einstein published a set of equations, based on his theory of relativity, which, after certain corrections had been made, indicated that the universe was expanding.

1920s—Edwin P. Hubble and Milton Humanson undertook a systematic study of a large number of galaxies and found all but two were receding from the earth at velocities which increased in direct proportion to their distance. This came to be known as "Hubble's Law."

It was also realized that astronomers were not observing these galaxies as they are today, but as they were when the light the astronomers were observing left the galaxy. Therefore, if a galaxy of 70 million light years away was receding at a speed of 3 million miles per hour, while another galaxy of over a billion light years away was receding at a speed of 126 million miles per hour, it would indicate that objects in the far distant past were receding faster than those nearer in point of time.

This presented a real problem. What event, or combination of events, could possibly account for the operation of Hubble's Law? Several fanciful theories were ad-

vanced. One hypothesized that all the matter and energy in the universe had, at one time, been severely compressed into a single package. This package then exploded, hurling its contents into space in all directions. There was no way to verify any of these theories; they remained just theories.

1948—Ralph Alpert and Robert Herman, working under the direction of George Gamow, developed a set of calculations, based on classical physics, which showed that, if such an explosion had actually occurred, the heat and radiation would have been so intense that echoes could still be detected in the universe today. However, there were no instruments capable of detecting such weak signals available at that time, and their report was all but forgotten.

1965—Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson, while doing research on static for the Bell Laboratories, and quite by accident, did discover just such echoes and on the wave length predicted by Alpert and Herman in 1948.

Since 1965, the explosion theory (facetiously known as the "Big Bang theory") has been considered as a verified hypothesis. But this brought up another problem. Would all of the galaxies, including our own, continue to move away from each other until they were all lost in the infinity of space, or was there enough matter and energy in the universe to create enough gravity to brake the impetus of the explosion and eventually cause the universe to fold back on itself in another great fireball? In 1978, the answer to the second part of this question was in the negative, and it was concluded that the galaxies would continue to expand forever.

Shortly after Jastrow's book was published two additional dramatic discoveries were announced. They were:

1979—In January of this year, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration announced that the High Energy Astronomical Observatory (HEAO-1) had discovered a massive cloud of gas and dust enveloping the universe. Studies of these findings show that this cloud may contain more mass than all of the mass known in the universe until now. It is estimated that if all the matter contained in this cloud were assembled it would be equal to a million-billion suns, and its weight may halt the universe from expanding and cause it to fall back on itself. (*Tulsa Daily World*, January 13, 1979.)

1979—In August, the National Science Foundation reported work done by Dr. Phillip Solomon and David B. Sanders of the State University of New York, and Dr. Nicholas Z. Scoville of the University of Massachusetts. Using large radio telescopes they were able to measure clouds of gas and dust in the Milky Way. Unlike the clouds reported by HEAO-1, these clouds had been known to exist, but never before had been measured. It was found that there were about 5,000 of them. A few were as large as 100 million suns in mass. The average was equal to the mass of some 500,000 suns. Moreover, these clouds are not just floating in space but are being controlled by the force of gravity. (*Tulsa Daily World*, August 8, 1979.)

### The Twentieth Century Answer

The two discoveries reported in 1979 indicate that the prediction made in 1978 was premature. As more and more matter is discovered in the universe, it becomes increasingly probable that the final end will come when the force of gravity causes all matter, including all the galaxies with their billions of suns, to be drawn again into a single package. The result is as difficult to imagine as the original explosion itself. But

there is a brief description of just such an event in Second Peter: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Pet. 3:10).

However, since the advent of the machine concept, which has now invaded not only the natural sciences but all fields of learning, not entirely excluding theology, it has become unpopular to mention the supernatural. The series of developments which started in 1914 would seem to put a new face on the matter. During the past four centuries, it has been the glory of science to observe the effect and then seek the cause. This process comes to a dead end with the great explosion. All evidence of anything existing before that tremendous event has been completely obliterated by the heat and radiation of the event itself. It is evident that any attempt to answer Sartre's question must transcend the machine itself. William James seems to have suggested the only possible answer: "Anything short of God is not rational, and anything greater than God is impossible" (*Faith and Morals*, p. 116).

Not all scientists are happy with these discoveries, nor with the conclusions drawn from them. Einstein, himself, was unwilling to accept the idea of an expanding universe until he had examined the slides of Hubble and Humanson personally. Astronomer Allan Sandage, with the Palomar Observatory, is quoted as saying, "It is such a strange conclusion . . . it cannot possibly be true." Phillip Morrison of MIT once said, "I find it hard to accept the Big Bang theory. I would like to reject it."

But there are others. Edmund Whittaker, in his book *The Beginning and the End of the World*, said, "There is no ground for supposing that matter and energy existed before and was suddenly galvanized into action. . . . It is simpler to postulate creation ex nihilo—Divine will constituting Nature from nothingness." A British theorist, Edward Milne, is quoted as having written, "As to the first cause of the universe, in the context of expansion, that is left for the reader to insert, but our picture is incomplete without Him" (Robert Jastrow, *God and the Astronomers*, pp. 111-113). And Robert Jastrow, himself an astronomer and an avowed agnostic in religious matters, concludes by saying, "For the scientist, who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries" (*Supra*, p. 116).

### Conclusion

In 1811, the poet William Cullen Bryant wrote:

To him who in the love of Nature holds  
Communion with her visible forms, she speaks  
A various language . . . (*Thanatopsis*)

Today those visible forms encompass billions of stars and extend some 10 or 15 billion light years into space, but the language is hardly comforting to the human race. C.S. Lewis once wrote, "If Good = whatever Nature happens to be doing, then surely we should notice what Nature is doing as a whole, and Nature as a whole, I understand, is working steadily and irreversibly towards the final extinction of all life in every part of the universe" (*The Abolition of Man*, p. 50 fn.).

Robert Jastrow is right. So far as logic and present evidence can show, the story of

man ends like a mad dream. C.S. Lewis is right in pointing out that it is not just man involved, but any intelligence existing anywhere in the universe. Edward Milne is also right when he states that the picture is not complete without Him. Indeed, without Him, the saga of man becomes what Shakespeare once described as ". . . a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing" (*Macbeth*, Act V, Scene V). For without Him, any thought of escape to another planet, or even to another galaxy, is no more than an empty dream; as is also the spirit of optimism based on the theory of evolution inherited from the enlightenment. And Allan Sandage may be justified in saying, "It is such a strange conclusion . . . it cannot really be true."

The only thing that can make it untrue is something that transcends the machine itself. The 20th century has seen the concept of the machine pushed to its extreme limits. The end is death. 16th century man, whether he knew it or not, was aware of just such a transcendence. As for today, there is no logical reason to doubt that:

The heavens are [still] telling of the glory of God  
And their expanse is [still] declaring the work of His hands.  
(Psalm 19:1 NAS)

Only the creator can transcend His own creation. So, the answer to Jean-Paul Sartre's question, in this the 20th century, is still "God"; but His glory and the work of His hands has now been shown to exceed by multiplied billions anything that could possibly have been imagined by the 16th century man. □

## How to Maintain Spirituality as Single, Widowed and Divorced Parents

CAROLYN J. THORNTON

Troy, Michigan

This paper is written following a seminar at the Troy Church of Christ. We as a congregation wanted to look at how to build spirituality in our lives and in the lives of our children. We knew that there were differing needs within our congregation and in other congregations in our Christian brotherhood. We knew that a growing number of Christians were divorced or widowed, and some had never married but still had children, either naturally or through adoption. All these single parent families have the same need for building spirituality into their families as those who are married.

Spirituality is evidenced when a person walks according to scripture, takes his stand on the word of God, is filled with the Holy Spirit, and is led by the Spirit in daily life. In prayer the spiritual person has power, for he is the "righteousness of God in Christ Jesus." The spiritual person is yielded to God's will for his life and leans on God for his direction; he believes God's promises and appropriates them for himself. He has the faith that moves mountains and stands on the fact that God who has started a good work in him will bring it to completion (Phil. 1:6).

The experiences of single, widowed and divorced persons are dissimilar in many ways, but in some major ways they are quite similar. In all three situations the indi-

vidual lacks a spouse. These individuals are sometimes lonely, and frustrated about their condition. They may be angry at God, themselves or others for the situation they are in. They are many times economically distressed. Not only do they have singleness in common, but most have similar emotions. Single people may feel like misfits, unlovely and unloved. Many are angry about their condition. They may desire marriage but cannot find suitable or acceptable spouses. Frequently they feel rejected, hurt, angry, and depressed because they are not married. This situation can be exaggerated when the single person is a parent. If one is a parent by choice, through adoption, the emotions may be more subtle and less accessible to consciousness. If the person is a parent by accident through a premarital conception, the feelings of anger, hurt and rejection are usually more acute.

### Widowed and Divorced Persons

In the case of widowed persons, feelings may be similar to those of single and divorced people, but for a different reason. A widowed person may have been in a stable marriage, in which there was love and companionship. When a spouse dies, shock is usually followed by some form of denial, then anger, which may show up as depression. Widows commonly experience feelings of abandonment (rejection) by the spouse, guilt for still being alive, or for not doing enough for the dead spouse before his/her death. Questioning anger may be directed toward God: "Why did You do this to me?" Anger can be directed at the spouse who died "and left me alone." It may be directed toward the self and show up under the guise of depression. Widows may learn at this point that they are financially disadvantaged. Insurance policies, pension plans, social security and other savings may not provide adequately. This usually comes as a surprise and at a time when the person is least able to deal with financial reverses. The life style also changes. The survivor has been a part of a couple for years, but now the marital relationship no longer exists, and married friends may feel uncomfortable around the surviving spouse. It may be somewhat easier for the widowed male, because he is rarer and social attitudes of married couples, relatives, and friends may be more accepting. For the female widow social life is harder and the adjustment period will be more prolonged.

The divorced person probably has almost as much difficulty as the widowed in adjusting to single life. In this situation there usually is a rejected and a rejector. This being the case, the rejected person is likely to feel hurt, anger, guilt, and bitterness. The rejector is likely to feel a good deal of guilt, covered up with anger, hurt, depression, or bitterness. It depends on the reasons for the divorce.

So the major factors these three groups have in common are: (1) singleness in a married society, (2) financial deprivations, and (3) feelings of hurt, rejection, pity, guilt, denial, anger, rage, revenge, bitterness, depression, sadness, and sympathy. All of these feelings and reactions are normal. They are part of a natural grief process, whether the grief is for self or others. The problem arises when these feelings are nursed for long periods of time. When one is rejected, it is natural to feel hurt and angry. It is also natural to desire revenge, to have feelings of depression because love is lost or never found, to experience guilt because of one's own contribution to the situation, and to wonder about what could have been done differently.

When these normal feelings are acknowledged and dealt with adequately, they can

be dissipated, the healing process can begin, and spiritual growth can be effected. If the feelings are held onto they become self-destructive. Natural grief can become pathological mourning; anger, revenge, and bitterness can turn into consuming hatred. In this way the past controls the present and most likely the future. The person never seems to get out of the past and consequently lives with all the negative emotions of his or her own choosing. This is a choice not to live, only to exist; never to look forward, only backward; never to progress, only to regress. In the immediacy of grief these emotions are normal, but in the long perspective they are destructive because they are against growth. To stay in the "slough of despondency" is basically anti-spiritual, while dependency upon the Spirit and power of God is to assume spiritual growth and victory.

### The Children of Single Parents

The children of single parents may experience these emotions as well as the adults; and they also feel "different." They will see how their parents handle their situation and will make many of the same adjustments. To maintain or reaffirm spirituality the child must also grieve the missing parent and be allowed expression of anger, hurt, guilt, rejection, and worthlessness. This is why the Holy Spirit directed us to confess our sins one to another and to pray for each other. It is why God enjoined us to confess our sins to Him, assuring that He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. However, it is not just our sins we are to confess. We are also told to cast our burden on the Lord because He cares for us. He shares our experiences with us, because He became one of us and because He now indwells us. As human beings we are not adequate to live under burdens. We are not created to live under sin; we die from it. We need forgiveness from God, from ourselves, from others and for others. We cannot keep negative emotions bottled up inside ourselves without being destroyed. They are enemies to spirituality. They are enemies to our physical bodies. They are enemies to our minds.

Every individual needs appreciation, acceptance and love. We need community, sharing with others. We need both to receive and to extend forgiveness in order to live. Forgiveness removes the barriers that divide us from each other and from life. After a death has taken place, or a divorce is final, each surviving spouse has to continue living and providing an atmosphere of acceptance and growth. If the parent can accept himself or herself with faults, accept the situation, and forgive those who need forgiveness, while giving the children the same right to vent feelings and to come to terms with their own emotions, then the children also can both forgive and accept their parents.

In our seminar much discussion focused on the need to share with the child the deeply-held religious beliefs of the custodial parent. When the other parent has different beliefs or no active faith at all, this can cause problems and raise anxieties as the Christian parent feels a responsibility toward the child's growth and destiny. God states in Proverbs that if a child is trained in the way he should go, "when he is old he will not depart from it." The scripture also commands that the father should teach his children God's word "when sitting down, when rising up, when lying down, and when walking in the way." If a parent teaches by word and action the value system that will benefit the child, then the results should be left with the Lord. His word does not re-

turn to Him void. The word is active and, if planted in the child, it will bring forth a harvest.

Every person ultimately makes his own choice regarding Jesus Christ; God has given us that right and responsibility. If the children see us as forgiving, loving, accepting human beings, then they will probably choose to be likewise and to see God in a similar light. If they see bitterness, anger, unforgiveness, judgment and revenge, they will likely see God in that light and possibly reject what they see as an unlovely religion. □

## Riches of His Glory

### PART THREE

#### J. DWIGHT THOMAS

*Elizabethtown, Kentucky*

Paul said to the Corinthians, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God . . ." And to the Galatians he said, "Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; *what counts is a new creation.*" Jesus declared to Nicodemus: "I tell you the truth, unless a man is born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Would it not be tragic if we had no better conception of the new birth than did Nicodemus? As you recall, he had difficulty grasping spiritual truth. And for this reason he was chided by our Lord:

You are Israel's teacher and do not understand these things? I tell you the truth, we speak of what we know and we testify of what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony.

But aside from the absurdity of a man entering his mother's womb a second time to be born again, what was wrong with Nicodemus' understanding of the new birth? It appears from Jesus' answer that his fundamental misconception was that of attributing to man and natural law what could be accomplished only by God through His Holy Spirit. Jesus said:

I tell you the truth, unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. Flesh gives birth to flesh, *but Spirit gives birth to spirit.* You should not be surprised at my saying, "*You must be born from above.*" The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound but cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So is everyone *born of the Spirit.*

There is no doubt that Nicodemus held a belief in the living God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; but nevertheless the boundaries of his thinking were apparently delimited by natural law. Jesus was talking about a radical rebirth from above—a spiritual regeneration—but the only thing Nicodemus comprehended was the absurdity of a man being born a second time. After all, would that not violate natural law? It appears that he could think only in terms of man's action and man's accomplishment. There was apparently no conception of God's interacting with man to effect a rebirth. Possi-

bly because of preconceived ideas, God's personal interaction with man, separate and apart from natural law, was not a viable option to Nicodemus at that time.

### A Mere Christian Humanism

But much more important than the previous speculation is our personal understanding of the new birth. I fear that many of us have no more accurate conception of salvation in Christ Jesus than did Nicodemus. Though we would not readily admit this, our conception, like that of Nicodemus, tends to be couched in naturalistic terms. For example, many of us begin with the premise that all miracles have ceased with the first century. If this is true, everything must be explained in terms of natural law and, as one preacher proclaimed to a group of college students, "God hasn't done anything in two thousand years." The act of salvation, then, cannot be viewed as an act of God and certainly not as a miracle. So, like the Deists and to some extent the Gnostics of old, there can be for us no personal and direct interaction between God and man separate and apart from natural law. It is solely a matter of our obtaining a higher form of knowledge and attempting to transform ourselves thereby. In this respect our grasp of truth is not better than that of the humanist.

In practice this point of view, which is often hailed as "sound doctrine," is no more than a mere Christian humanism which allows no room for the man and woman of faith to be effected or affected by God's Spirit. Our new birth becomes a matter of remission of sins in Jesus' name (and that conceived in humanistic terms) and a didactic process by which we are influenced by the Bible. It is therefore solely a matter of human diligence and one's ability to learn. While the content is certainly different, the process of behavior change is akin to some of the conditioning techniques used by Mao in his attempt to effect a cultural revolution in mainland China. The "bottom line" is a humanistic approach to Christianity which fosters a "form of godliness" but denies the power of God separate and apart from man's commerce with natural law.

Is this teaching not at variance with the very words of the Bible? And is it not one of our Adversary's biggest lies, which he promulgated to foil the power of God among His people?

When Paul wrote about the person in Christ Jesus, he spoke of a *new* creation. "The old has gone." Yes, he is freed from sin and his enslavement to Satan. But it doesn't stop there. If it did, he would be left to his own devices and would be ultimately entangled again and be defeated, despite the fact that he perchance may have memorized and fully comprehended the entire New Testament. We must realize that the superiority of the new covenant scriptures does not rest in the notion that they are a better set of laws. Neither physical nor mental possession of them, per se, can save anyone. For the weakness of the old covenant was not in the quality of the law but in man. Paul said the law and commandment of the old covenant was "holy, righteous, and good." The problem centered in the fact that the law *was* spiritual but man was unspiritual and enslaved to sin. So God did through Jesus what the old covenant could not do. *He changed man.* He made him a "new creation" by putting within him His very own Spirit. And as Paul said, "This is all from God." Those in Christ have truly been "born from above"—"born of the Spirit"—and by that same Spirit have been raised to walk in newness of life. "The old has gone!" "The new has come!"

### The Necessity of Faith

But so what? Of what practical value is this treatise? In this day of science and human logic, what benefit is there in some hypothesized indwelling Spirit? I must answer, "None, unless it is by faith." Paul's prayer for the Ephesians was that: "He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man; so that *Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.*" Christ does not move in and take over, unless it is by our consent. And our consent implies our trust in His faithfulness to actualize His promise within us, despite the fact that we may not be able to see, feel, or quantify His presence. Let us remember Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus and His analogy of the wind and realize there are many things that we cannot fully comprehend, and yet by *trusting* in them, we can experience the results thereof.

Yes, in our modern world this great truth remains: "The righteous will live by faith." There is no substitute for it. The only way man can relate to God is by faith. This is not an arbitrary dictate of God. It is necessitated by the very essence of God as infinite Spirit as opposed to man who is finite and fleshly. Man, by his frail and erring mind, cannot fully grasp and reason God as He has been revealed to us by Christ Jesus; nor can he do so by his senses. But by faith he can become one with God's Spirit and be transformed into the likeness of Jesus who Himself is the very image of the invisible God. Let us not despair. God is faithful, and He has always worked through men and women of faith.

So let us not be conformed to this world and make human reason or empiricism an idol by which we judge all things. We have been called to live on a new plane of life and that being a life characterized by faith in Christ Jesus. It is disturbing when brethren want "proof" of a direct and personal indwelling of the Spirit. One may as well ask for proof of a direct and personal indwelling of the human spirit or immediate proof of the resurrection of Christ. If one means by "proof" Biblical teaching, then such has been put forth. But if by "proof" one means immediate empirical evidence, there can be none. Empiricism, by definition, can have nothing to say about matters that cannot be sensed and quantified. Now I ask, "Can we measure the spirit of man, much less the Spirit of God?"

The original question, therefore, can prove nothing except that the inquirer is thinking as the world has subtly conditioned him to think. Notice the basis upon which Jesus declares the world will reject God's Spirit: "The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him" (Jn. 14:17). So in this matter let not the church of God also be carnal in its thinking, for then there is no difference between it and the world. The "salt" will have truly lost its "saltiness"! And such thinking will preclude our knowledge of the "communion of the Holy Spirit." Furthermore, let us not be like the "man without the Spirit" for he "does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14). But rather let us aspire to be men and women of faith. For it is only by faith that Christ may dwell in our hearts and only through the Spirit that we can personally derive the blessings of that communion.

And what are the blessings? It would be difficult if not impossible for this writer to discuss them all. But let us look at a few of them as revealed by the new covenant scriptures. The all encompassing blessing of the "communion of the Holy Spirit" is

"Christ in you the hope of glory." Though it will take faith for us to walk in this, think about what it means. Paradoxically, the fact that Jesus was glorified and went to the Father means that we have greater access to Him and He to us. For by the Spirit we are now in Him and He in us. And this makes all the difference. Notice Jesus' words to His disciples:

I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. . . . But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

And as he has promised, He has not left His disciples orphans. He has now made His abode with us through the Spirit He gave us. We have become sons and daughters of God, not by genetic transmission nor by the will of man, but by the "Spirit of sonship," by whom we cry, "Abba, Father." In Christ Jesus we now stand in full assurance. For God's indwelling Spirit is our guarantee that we are children of God and if children, then heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ (2 Cor. 1:21-22; Eph. 1:13-14; and Rom. 8:17).

Since it is by the Spirit that we become children of God, it is also by the Spirit that we partake of the "divine nature." For we are being transformed "with ever increasing glory" into the likeness of our blessed Lord by the "sanctifying work of the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:17-18; 2 Thess. 2:13). We no longer have to anxiously force ourselves to be good and live in despair with our painful imperfections. If we will but trust in Him and be led by His Spirit, we will be conformed to the image of our Lord and will be made fruitful, as the "fruit of the Spirit" will be manifested in our lives (Rom. 8:21; Jn. 15:1-8; and Gal. 5:22).

Paul indicates additional blessings of the Spirit in 2 Timothy 1:7, where he states we have received a "Spirit of power, of love, and of self-discipline." We can now love as we have been loved, for God has poured out His unconditional love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit whom He gave us (Rom. 5:5). We can now live victorious lives of power, because greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world (1 Jn. 4:4). Through the Spirit we can now live disciplined lives, making our time count, for the days are truly evil (Eph. 5:15-20).

And finally, it is by God's indwelling Spirit that we know that we have ultimate victory over death. The head of the serpent has truly been crushed! We are persuaded that "if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who lives in you" (Rom. 8:11).

### Loud Praises in Order!

So shout victory, my brothers and sisters, for victory is yours! Shout praises unto God! For it is his faithfulness that has made it so! Do not live as orphans. God is with us! Do not walk in fear. If God be for us, who can stand against us! Do not despair. "In all things, God works for the good of those who love him!" But draw near unto God and He will draw near unto you! Trust Him in all things for He is eternally faithful! And be filled with the Spirit and be led thereby, submitting to one another in love. Then we will be able to maintain the "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"—and thereby will the world know that we are *His disciples!* □

## REVIEW

### ONE-ELEVENTH OF A BOOK REVIEW HOY LEDBETTER

*Essays on New Testament Christianity: A Festschrift in Honor of Dean E. Walker* edited by C. Robert Wetzel. Cincinnati: Standard Publishing, 1978. 151 pp., \$12.95.

Because I cannot do justice to the work of the other ten contributors (Fred Norris, Robert Fife, Toyozo Nakarai, Earl Stuckenbruck, Edwin Hayden, William Richardson, Henry Webb, Orvel Crowder, James Van Buren, and Robert Wetzel) in a short review, I will concentrate on one essay in this book which, because of the subject it treats, will undoubtedly be read with great interest. When I first read Scott Bartchy's "Power, Submission, and Sexual Identity Among the Early Christians" in manuscript form, I thought it would make a good little book by itself, and I would still like to see it published separately, perhaps in enlarged form, to assure wider circulation; but for now I would pay the price of this book in order to have it.

It is easy to wonder *why* people who appear to be so much alike in other respects will read the New Testament passages regarding women and come to very different conclusions about their meaning for us today. The reason is not that one is obtuse and the other intelligent, but that we tend to view texts relating to sexual identity as confirming our childhood lessons. When we hear a point of view which is consistent with our childhood impressions regarding what it means to be male and female, we automatically "feel"

that it is right. In other words, "When I was a child, I learned to speak like a male, to think like a male, to reason like a male; when I became a man, I could not give up my childish ways." It is extremely difficult for me to see in the Bible any opposition to my long-standing way of looking at myself as a sexual being. And if I am a translator, my sexual bias will tend to show up in the passages I translate.

Such is Bartchy's reasoning. He has a knack for making us come to grips with the way society has fashioned our thinking about ourselves and made it possible for us to be "respectable" while being disobedient to the Lord. He stresses that Jesus rejected his society's definition and practice of what it meant to be normal, and that we must do so in order to view ourselves in a truly Christian way.

Biblical passages regarding women are categorized by Bartchy as *normative* (that is, stating how things are to be at all times), *descriptive* (simply reporting the activities of Christian women with no value judgments on what they do), and *problematic* (dealing with special problems in the early church caused by misunderstanding by Christian women of the nature and limits of freedom in Christ). His assignments are not made arbitrarily, but are supported by reasonable argument. This approach is important to making sense out of passages which appear to be in conflict with each other.

His essay contains some discussions of Greek words which would be hard to find elsewhere. This is especially true of *authentain* ("have authority over," RSV), which is given scant attention in the lexicons and theological dictionaries, and *diakonos* and *prostatis* as applied to Phoebe in Romans 16.

Bartchy is obviously familiar with the whole range of current literature on his subject. He is a scholar who speaks with great clarity and piety. He has made an important contribution to all of us who wish to have our position regarding sexual roles determined by the Bible only. □

## LETTERS

### SOME KIND COMMENTS FROM OUR READERS

Thanks . . . for "Answers for Conservatives" in the September issue. I find myself agreeing with most all of your positions—and I also have found that I am considered hopelessly conservative in liberal circles and hopelessly liberal in conservative circles. Whether that makes me a Christian I don't know, but it does make me look forward to each issue of *Integrity*.

—Tennessee Minister

I have just been introduced to *Integrity* magazine and am very encouraged with what I see. Please put me on your mailing list.

—University of Kentucky Student

Please add me to your mailing list. It is so refreshing to hear your words ring out of the brotherhood. Having been in the Churches of Christ for my entire life, I can say that you truly have a biblical grasp on what the church is and what it is to be about.

—Dental College Student

In this day and age when many seem to be throwing intellect to the winds it's refreshing to read a magazine that causes one to think and think deeply.

—Indiana Minister

This is a simple thank you for a great publication. I enjoy your publication, especially your November, 1979 issue "Building Spirituality in Family Life." The things said were certainly relevant and need to be listened to and followed. I appreciate especially your honesty with the Word and your speaking the truth.

—Another Indiana Minister

I appreciate your timely articles and the contribution that you are making toward greater freedom in the Lord's body.

—Southern Psychiatrist

My husband and I have been enjoying *Integrity* for several years, and especially did we appreciate your recent articles "Creed and Cruelty" and "Answers for Conservatives."

—Louisiana Helper

Bless you all for your work! When we first saw *Integrity*, it was nice, but we were rich then—we could not possibly appreciate its depth, its worth. Now, we are in a spiritual desert, an

arid, dusty place, filled by small men with even smaller minds. *Integrity* has been vital to us as we labor to keep from being swallowed, snatched from the church of Christ back into the Church of Christ.

Still, we are fortunate. We have four other couples nearby who will offer us oasis, anytime day or night. We are encouraged to know that in other places, good things are still happening. We are strengthened by our fellowship "from house to house," but we still long to be more than clandestine. We still long to share.

—From the Vanishing Desert

Thank you for your labor of love, *Integrity*. May the Lord continue to bless your efforts.

—Speech Pathologist

I want to tell you that I appreciate all the efforts, thinking and printing, and other kinds of extra duty you have put into producing *Integrity*. For several years I have read it. Sometimes I duplicate articles from it for reading and discussion in my classes on Church Leadership.

—College Dean

This is just a note to let you know that we still enjoy receiving *Integrity*, and we really haven't forgotten your needs. So, enclosed, you'll find a check.

—Springdale Reader

Throughout the time I have received it, I have found *Integrity* to be interesting, informative and enlightening. I am proud to be able to support this very worthwhile effort.

—Cape Girardeau Contributor

We *very much* like *Integrity*. . . . We are on Social Security, but if you send out notices occasionally—or state in the magazine—the need, I will try to help, as occasion permits.

—San Jacinto Saint

Enclosed is a small token of our appreciation for your uplifting magazine. Thank you for many years of integrity at its best.

—Ripley Reader

We appreciate your efforts toward "integrity." We do now ask God to bless your efforts to help us to be a more obedient, loving people.

—Albuquerque Reader