



THE GENEVA REVIEW

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF GENEVA MINISTRIES

No. 24

NOVEMBER, 1985

The Jeremiad -The Nehemiad

by GEORGE GRANT

Jeremiad. Definition: an elaborate and prolonged lamentation; a cry of woe; an expression of righteous indignation.

Nehemiad. Definition: an elaborate and prolonged humiliation; a cry of **grief**; an expression of righteous repentance.

Well might we plead the case for an outpouring of **Jeremiads** from evangelical pulpits in our day. What with inhuman humanism and patronizing pietism launching a tandem. assault upon all that is near and dear, such a **prophetic** stance seems all too appropriate. Expose the evils. Demonstrate the inconsistencies. Broadcast the hypocrisies. Mourn the barbarities. Set forth with zeal the clear consequences of God's wrath, God's retribution, and God's judgment. Hurl upon the land **Jeremiad** after **Jeremiad** like unto none that manor beast has ever seen.

As fitting as all that may seem to be, the church is in no position to carry it out. **Trivialized** and crippled by **praisalluia** poppycock, **hermeneutical**

hot-dogging, and intellectual hedge-podgery, evangelical pulpits are incapable of anything more than braggadocio balderdash and **eschatological** bosh.

Jeremiads are beyond the realm of possibility. Our obsession with brainless bric-a-brac and business meeting bilge has made our ineffectiveness and unproductiveness a foregone conclusion. **Jeremiads?** No way.

So, how should we then live? What can we then do?

Instead of attempting that which we are ill-equipped to do, instead of unleashing upon an unsuspecting pagan culture our righteous indignation, instead of venting our grievous **jeremiads** upon deafened ears, perhaps we ought to consider the possibility of taking the alternate course of the **nehemiad**. In contrast to the **jeremiad**, the **nehemiad** does not rip into those who flaunt ungodliness. Its concern is our own repentance. Unlike the **jeremiad**, the **nehemiad** does not have a negative, **indictive** tone. Its concern is restorative. **Again, as** opposed to the **jeremiad**, the **nehemiad** is not inescapably tied to a critical spirit. Its concern is constructive.

The **jeremiad** was modeled by the prophet Jeremiah when he cried out, "This is what the Lord says about this people: They greatly love to wander; they do not restrain their feet. So the Lord does not accept them; He will now remember their wickedness and punish them for their sins" (**Jer. 14:10**).

The **nehemiad**, on the other hand, was modeled by the cupbearer to **Artaxerxes**, Nehemiah, when he cried out, "O Lord, God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant of love with those who love Him and obey His commands, let Your ear be attentive and Your eyes open to hear the prayer Your servant is praying before You day and night. . . . I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father's house, have committed against You. We have acted very wickedly toward you. For we have not obeyed the commands, decrees, and laws You gave Your servant Moses. . . . O Lord, hear, O hear this prayer and give Your servant, who delights in revering Your Name, success" (**Neh. 1**).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Jeremiad—The Nehemiad by George Grant	1
The Doctrine of the Word of God (No. 6) by John M. Frame	2
Baal Busting at the End of the 20th Century by Gary DeMar	3
Gleaning on the Sabbath by Ray R. Sutton	4
"The Present Heavens and Earth . . . Resewed for Fire" by David Chilton	5
Studies in Genesis One: An infinity of Time by James B. Jordan	6
Recent Bible Study Aids Reviewed by James B. Jordan	7

Undoubtedly, our corrupt culture is in dire need of the work of zealous **jeremiad-spouting** churches, but comprehending that our **piffle** spewing pulpits are unfit at present for the task, the place of the **nehemiad** is all the more prominent. The walls are down. The rubble is nigh unto impassible. All is in a shambles. So let the **nehemiads** begin.

Let the **nehemiads** take a priority place in our liturgy. Let the **nehemiad** mark our heretofore **paucituous** preaching. Let the **nehemiad** replace Sunday School swill and **Training Union tatter-nasters**. Let the **nehemiad** proceed from our life and work so that in time our vocabulary may be once again expanded to include the **jeremiad**.

Only when the haughty church comes to grips with its theological, cultural, and intellectual impoverishment, does humiliation open the door for hu-

mility. **And** that is a position of vulnerability that churchmen are none too anxious to embrace, which explains why humility is an evangelical commodity in desperately short supply, and why the **nehemiad** is to us an alien concept. But, considering the crisis that girds us round about, no risk is too great, no commitment too bold. Let the **nehemiad** begin. And quick on its heels, may the land again hear the **jeremiad**. For such is the need of the hour.

(George Grant is one of the pastors of Believers Fellowship: Reformed Bible Church, Humble, Texas. This essay is a transcript from Rev. Grant's daily radio broadcast, "The Christian **Worldview**." For information concerning this program and how you might get it broadcast in your area write to The Christian Worldview, 410 South Ave. D, Humble, TX 77338.)

The Doctrine of the Word of God (No. 6)

by JOHN M. FRAME

(Professor Frame teaches at Westminster Theological Seminary in California. These outlines are from his "course on the Doctrine of the Word of God. Prof. **Frame** has graciously consented to our making these notes available to a wider audience through *The Geneva Review*. They are not to be regarded as a published work, but as notes on a "work in progress.")

(I. Concept of the Word of God.

- A. Powerful
- B. Meaningful
- Co Self-expression)

3. Parallel with "the name of God."

- a. God's "name" is his whole self-revelation, and thus is more or less equivalent to "word." Cf. Josh. 7:9, Ezek. 20:9.
- b. "Naming" in Scripture has three functions, which correspond roughly to A-C above:
 - i. Naming is an exertion of **power** or **control**: the controller names the one under his control (Adam names Eve, the parent names the child, the conqueror names the city which he conquers, etc.). Gen. 4:17, 11:4, Ps. 49:11, II Sam. 12:28.
 - ii. Naming is a **characterization**: the namer tries to say something significant about the one named - cf. God's naming of Abraham, Israel, etc. Gen. 17:5, etc.
 - iii. Naming is a way of **locating**, of picking someone out of a crowd. We can locate someone by calling his name, for wherever his name is, he is. To admire his name is to admire him; to disparage his name is to disparage him, etc. Thus the

person is one with his name (see references below).

- c. Union between God's name and God **himself**: Ex. 3:14, 33:19, 34:6f, Ps. 7:17, 9:10, 18:49, 68:4, 74:18, 86:12, 92:11, Isa. 25:1, 26:8, 56:6, Zech. 14:9, Mal. 3:16.

- i. Union between name and angel of the Lord, Ex. 23:31, Gen. 16:7ff, 21:27ff, 22:11ff, 31:11ff, Ex. 3:2ff, Judg. 2:1ff (Ex. 33:14, Isa. 63:9).

- ii. The name and the sanctuary (where God dwells), Gen. 28, 31:13, 35:1, 7, Deut. 12:5, 11, 21, 14:23f, 16:2, 6, 11, 26:2 (Ex. 20:24).

- iii. The name and the glory (God's presence), Isa. 59:19, Ps. 102:15, Ex. 33:18ff.

4. Summary and Implications

- a. Speech ("word") is an attribute to God. God is a **speaking** God, by his very nature, as over against all of the "dumb idols."

- i. It is not that "word" is purely and simply a synonym of "God," the two cannot be simply substituted for one another in every context.

(A) God does things "by" the word.

(B) Scriptural references to the "name" also sometimes distinguish the name from God himself: Ps. 54:1, 89:24, 20:5, 44:5, 118:10-12, 124:8, 20:1, 54:6f, 148:13, Prov. 18:10, Jer. 10:6, Mal. 1:11, 14, 2:5.

- ii. Although there is mysteriousness about the unity and difference between the word and God himself, a mystery reminiscent of that of the trinity and perhaps related to the trinity, we do not want to make

“word” or “name” a person of the trinity, parallel with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It would, perhaps, not be wrong to equate “word” in a particular way with the second person (John 1:1); but Jesus also *speaks* the word. Relations among these are evidently complicated, and perhaps beyond our knowing.

- iii. Thus, it is probably best to describe “word” as an *attribute* of God. **All** divine attributes exhibit the remarkable unity and difference with God himself that we have noticed in this case.
- b. As an attribute of God, “word” is “**coterminous** with the divine essence.”
 - i. For this concept of “**coterminous**,” see theology texts on the Doctrine of God or “Theology Proper,” on “the relation between the divine attributes and essence.”
 - ii. My own (somewhat simplified) account of this:
 - (A) Divine attributes are not “parts” of God. They are inseparable aspects of

his being. **You** cannot cut off one attribute and still have the God of the Bible. God without his righteousness, or omnipotence-or word!- would not be God.

- (B) Each attribute applies to each of the other attributes: his holiness is wise, his wisdom is infinite, etc. So that if you lose one attribute, you lose them all, and if you have one attribute, you have them all. Thus, again, each is inseparable from the others.
- (C) Yet the attributes are not **all synonymous**. We cannot simply say “righteousness” when we mean “infinity.” Thus the attributes are diversified ‘as well as **unified**.’
- (D) The relationship is best pictured this way: each attribute is a “perspective” on the divine being. It is as if the attributes were speaking of the same thing (God’s nature), but viewing it from different angles. Hence diversity in unity.

Baal Busting at the End of the 20th Century

by GARY DEMAR

During the period of the judges God raised up Gideon to be a “savior” of the people. The problem? Israel succumbed to the devices of **Baalism**. **Baalism** is simply humanism in Canaanite jargon. It was Gideon’s job to confront the secular and materialistic spirit of the age. For too long Israel had jettisoned God’s view of the world and adopted a **Baalistic** view of the world. If the nation was to survive, however, **Baalism** would have to be eradicated in thought, word, and deed.

God gave instructions to Gideon to “pull down the altar of **Baal** . . . and build an altar to the LORD your God on the top of this stronghold . . .” (Judges 6:25, 26). Gideon, in effect, became a **Baal-buster**. The Canaanite god, **Baal**, was impotent when it came up against the truth. What **Baalism** hoped to accomplish could not be accomplished with its ideological foundation of sand (cf. Matt. 7:24-29). **Baalism**, when it is exposed for what it is, crumbles under its own ideological weight: “If he is a god, let him contend for himself, because someone has torn down his altar” (Judges 6:32; cf. 1 Kings 18:1-40; Dan. 2:40-45; 2 Tim. 3:8, 9).

There is a two-step process here. First, expose the idol for what it is – an impotent ideology destined for extinction. Abortion is a perfect example of the self-destructive nature of contemporary **Baalism**. Abortion destroys **Baal’s** next generation. **Baalism** “loves death” (Prov. 8:36). Second, build a Biblical moral order to replace the contrary ideology. While contemporary **Baalism** goes down

inflames, Christians ought to be rebuilding a **civilization** on the sure foundation of God’s Word. Churches, schools, hospitals, Congress, the courts, radio, television, and every other institution should be seen as an area of dominion.

An often neglected tactic of **Baal-busting** is the use of the government of the church. The church can perform its prophetic, priestly, and judicial task by disciplining those members who participate in any phase of abortion traffic. Excommunication is the church’s way of directing the rebellious to follow the law of God and restoring them to full membership into God’s kingdom. Pro-abortion politicians, doctors, owners of “clinics,” and pro-abortion activists who are church members should come under the discipline of the church. If they fail to repent, then they must be excommunicated (see Matt. 16:19; 18:15-20).

“It has been said (and it is at least debatable) that the church that can no longer excommunicate no longer knows what it believes. Enter the Orthodox Church of America, a small group but one that happens to have two members in the US Senate, Paul Tsongas (**D-Mass**) and Paul Sarbanes (**D-Md**). Both voted against measures to limit abortion. An Orthodox clergy fellowship sent them a message rather pointedly titled: ‘To the Pro-Abortion Orthodox Congress: Anathema!’ The message continues: ‘When self-consciously Orthodox public figures display disregard for the ancient, universal, unyielding Orthodox moral sanc-

tions against abortion as willful murder of innocent human life, it is time for conscientious Orthodox citizens to call their wayward brothers to task for betraying one of the most crucial truths proclaimed by the Church—namely, the sanctity of each human life created in the image and likeness of God from the moment of conception.” (“Senators Censured,” *The Religion & Society Report*,

August 1984, Vol. 1, No. 3, p. 6). Well, it’s a beginning.

Baal-busting is not an option. All the means of “crushing **Satan** under our feet” are at our disposal.

(For more on **Baalism** and Gideon, see James B. Jordan, *Judges: God’s War Against Humanism*; available from Geneva Ministries for \$13.95 [list price: \$16.95].)

Gleaning on the Sabbath

by RAY R. SUTTON

“And it came about that He was passing through the grainfields on the Sabbath, and His disciples began to make their way along, picking heads of grain. . .” (Mark 2:23)

Gary North has made a significant observation about the Industrial Revolution and “traditional” **sabbatarianism**.¹ He has noted that the Puritan view of the Sabbath led to the Protestant work ethic. If one had to finish his work in six days, he generally worked harder and faster. This **Sabbath**-oriented work ethic produced the Industrial Revolution.

Here is the problem. The Industrial Revolution created steel mills that required the furnaces, and still do, to be kept running *seven days*. And, it is the same with many other “post Industrial Revolution” innovations as well, such as modern electricity and almost all centralized powers of resource. Dr. North concludes that **sabbatarianism** placed itself in double jeopardy. It caused an industrial revolution that made it virtually impossible to keep the Sabbath, at least as Medieval and Protestant theologians had understood it.

This situation put modern **sabbatarians** in a serious compromise. How so? The traditional answer to Dr. North’s observations is that the use of these modern conveniences falls in the category of “acts of necessity.” These are acts that are “necessary” because one’s “ox is in a ditch,” etc.

But how does this principle apply to Dr. North’s points? The issue is: Does one *have* to use modern technology on Sunday? Clearly, the answer is “no.” Electricity does not “have” to be used, and Christians do not need air-conditioning or any of the **modern** features of an highly industrialized society. Strictly speaking, the use of modern technology is not “an act of necessity.”

Moreover, in my opinion this particular brand of **sabbatarianism** is one of the reasons that traditional Presbyterianism has lost its force. It maintains a view in its confessions that not only will no Presbyterian denomination discipline for (meaning

it is not taken seriously), but also is a position that is culturally and economically impossible to apply. The “act of necessity” clause just does not have the elasticity to stretch over the practical problems. What’s the solution to this dilemma?

Jesus provides the principle of *gleaning* (Mk. 2:23 ff.). One Sabbath day while out with His disciples, Jesus walked through a field and began *gleaning* it.² The Pharisees promptly rebuked Him for breaking the Sabbath. Jesus responded by referring to David’s “gleaning” the “**shewbread**” from the Tabernacle, thus proving that the gleaning principle was an Old as well as New Testament idea. To catch the significance of this principle, we should look at the symbolism of the “field” that Jesus gleaned.

This “**field**,” actually a cornfield, was a symbol of the “world” (Matt. 13:38). Jesus gleaned the world the way David gleaned the Tabernacle. What’s the **connection**? The Tabernacle **was a miniature** “cosmos,” a picture of the way the world is supposed to be: Ordered space around the throne of God. So, both Jesus and David gleaned the world in order that they might eat with God. In both cases, gleaning was justified because Eucharist is at the heart of all that man does.

One significant change stands out. In the Old Covenant, the Tabernacle was sacred and the source of communion bread. With the Advent of Jesus, the “world” is transformed into this source, explaining why “field” is used to represent both the “world” and the “Kingdom of God” (Mk. 4).

Now we come to two applications.

One, Christians have the right to “glean” the world in order to facilitate their worship of God. The steel mills can stay open and other modern technology can be utilized. There is no problem or compromise involved. The world belongs to God

1. North’s remarks are found in R. J. Rushdoony, *Institutes of Biblical Law* (Nutley, NJ: Craig Press, 1973), pp. 824ff.

2. The New American Standard translation cross references this passage back to Deut. 23:25, a passage concerning the use of a neighbor’s field. This would not be gleaning in the strict sense. But, M. D. Goulder, *The Evangelist’s Calendar* (London: SPCK, 1978), pp. 254-256, traces the passage back to Lev. 19:9-10, clearly making a connection to “gleaning” activity. Regardless, both references are related to some sort of “gleaning” function, and the **principle** would hold true in either case.

and His people so they can use it to *their* benefit—"The Sabbath was made for *man*" (2:27).

Two, "gleaning" is a process of judging. For the 'corn' to be picked, it had to be ready for harvest. To harvest something is **to** kill and judge it. Since Paul argues that Christians are the "judges" of the world (1 Cor. 6:2), we can apply Sabbath gleaning to mean a process of judging the world. To take ad-

vantage of the world on the **Lord's** Day is to render an early judgment, and to use the world to bring it under the dominion of Christ.

It was no coincidence that the very next healing after the "gleaning" incident was the restoration of a man's hand (Mk. 3:1ff.). Significantly, this too took place on the Sabbath. Jesus restores humanity to judge the world on the new Sabbath day of history.

"The Present Heavens and Earth . . . Reserved for Fire"

by DAVID CHILTON

According to St. Peter's second epistle, Christ and the apostles had warned that apostasy would accelerate toward the end of the "last days" (2 Pet. 3:2-4; cf. Jude 17-19) – the forty-year period between Christ's ascension and the destruction of the Old Covenant Temple. As Peter made clear, these **latter-day** "mockers" were **covenant apostates**: Familiar with Old Testament history and prophecy, they were Jews who had abandoned the covenant by rejecting Christ. Upon this evil and perverse generation would come the great 'Day of Judgment' foretold in the prophets, a "destruction of ungodly men" like that suffered by the wicked of Noah's day (2 Pet. 3:5-7; cf. the same analogy drawn in Matt. 24:37-39; Luke 17:26-27). Just as God destroyed the "world" of that day by the Flood, so would the "world" of first-century Israel be destroyed by **fire** in the fall of Jerusalem.

St. Peter describes this as the destruction of "the present heavens and earth" (v. 7), making way for "new heavens and a new earth" (v. 10). Because of the "collapsing-universe" terminology used in this passage, many have mistakenly assumed that Peter is speaking of the **final** end of the physical heaven and earth, rather than the dissolution of the Old Covenant world order. The great **seventeenth-century** Puritan theologian John Owen answered this view by referring to the Bible's metaphorical usage of **heavens and earth**, as in Isaiah's description of the Mosaic Covenant:

But **I** am the LORD thy God, that divided the sea, whose waves roared: The **LORD** of hosts is his name.

And I have put my words in thy mouth, and **I** have covered thee in the shadow of mine hand, that I may plant the **heavens**, and lay the foundations of the **earth**, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people. (Isa. 51:15-16)

Owen writes: "The time when the work here mentioned, of planting the heavens, and laying the foundation of the earth, was performed by God, was when he 'divided the sea' (v. 15), and gave the law (v. 16), and said to Zion, 'Thou art my **people**'—that is, when he took the children of

Israel out of Egypt, and formed them in the wilderness into a church and state. Then he planted the heavens, and laid the foundation of the **earth**—made the new world; that is, brought forth order, and government, and beauty, from the confusion wherein before they were. This is the planting of the heavens, and laying the foundation of the earth in the world."

Another such text, among many that could be mentioned, is Jeremiah 4:23-31, which speaks of the imminent **fall** of Jerusalem (587 B.c.) in similar language of **recreation**: "**I** looked on the **earth**, and behold, it was formless and void; and to the **heavens**, and they had no light. . . . For thus says the **LoRD**, the whole land shall be a desolation [cf. Matt. 24:15], yet I will not execute a complete destruction. For this the **earth** shall mourn, and the **heavens** above be dark. . . . "God's covenant with Israel had been expressed from the very beginning in terms of a **new creation**; thus the Old Covenant order, in which the entire world was organized around the central sanctuary of the Jerusalem Temple, could quite appropriately be described, before its **final** dissolution, as "the present heavens and earth."

John Owen continues: "**And** hence it is, that when mention is made of the destruction of a state and government, it is in that language that seems to set forth the end of the world. So Isaiah 34:4; which is yet but the destruction of the state of Edom. The like is also affirmed of the Roman empire, Revelation 6:14; which the Jews constantly affirm to be intended by Edom in the prophets. And in our **Saviour** Christ's prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem, Matthew 24, he sets it out by expressions of the same importance. It is evident then, that, in the prophetic idiom and manner of speech, by 'heavens' and 'earth,' the civil and religious state and combination of men in the world, and the men of them, are often understood. So were the heavens and earth that world which was then destroyed by the flood.

"On this foundation **I** affirm that the heavens and earth here intended in this prophecy of Peter, the coming of the Lord, the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men, mentioned in the

destruction of that heaven and earth, do all of them relate, not to **the** last and final judgment of the world, but to that utter desolation and destruction that was to be made of the **Judaical** church and state" (*The Works of John Owen*, Vol. 9, p. 134).

This interpretation is confirmed by Peter's further information: In this imminent 'Day of the **Lord**' that was about to come upon the first-century world "like a thief" (cf. 'Matt. 24:42-43; 1 Thess. 5:2; Rev. 3:3'), "the elements **will** be destroyed with intense heat" (v. 10; cf. v. 12). What are these *elements*? So-called "**literalists**" will have it that the apostle is speaking about physics, referring the term to atoms (or perhaps subatomic particles), the actual physical components of the universe. What these "**literalists**" fail to recognize is that although the word *elements* is used several times in the New Testament, it is *never* used in connection with the physical universe! The term is *always* used in connection with the Old Covenant order (see Gal. 4:3, 9; Col. 2:8, 20). The writer to the Hebrews chided them: "For though by this time you ought to be

teachers, you have need **again** for someone to teach you the *elements* of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food" (**Heb. 5:12**). In context, the writer is clearly speaking of Old Covenant truths - particularly since he connects it with the term *oracles of God*, an expression generally used for the provisional, **Old Covenant** revelation (see Acts 7:38; Rem. 3:2).

In summary: As St. Peter was writing, the Old Covenant era was drawing to a close. These "last days" of the Jewish age would be increasingly marked by apostasy and opposition to the Christian faith. Peter therefore wrote to strengthen and encourage the Church, reminding his audience that these distressing events had been repeatedly foretold; the heretics would not succeed in overthrowing God's plan, but rather would actually bring it to pass. The fiery Holocaust of **A.D. 70** would make a clean sweep of the Old Covenant world-order, revealing in its place the world-order of the New Covenant Temple: the New Heavens and Earth.

Studies in Genesis One: An Infinity of Time

by JAMES B JORDAN

"In the beginning. . ." (Genesis 1:1a).

The Bible does not start with such a phrase as "from all eternity." Rather, the first phrase in the first book in the Bible asserts that time has a beginning. Time is not a line, extending infinitely in both directions. Nor is time a circle, **closed oroborotically** upon itself. Time, to continue these geometric analogies, is a ray, having a beginning point but extending infinitely in one direction.

Infinite time is an image of the eternity of God. God, being timeless, exists in an "eternal now." God is infinite, and His infinity is independent of anything outside of Himself. The creation, being made outside of God and in interaction with Him, has a dependent infinity, and that dependent **infinity** is expressed in part by the fact of time.

Man was made as God's image, to understand and to reveal Him. Since, however, God is infinite, man cannot ever exhaustively understand or reveal Him. Man's **creaturely** infinity means, however, that man will progressively more and more understand and reveal God. Since God is infinite, this process of growth can never end, for there will always be new depths, heights, and breadths in God for us to comprehend.

The world also, being made to reveal and glorify God, is destined for a never-ending future of progressive glorification. To be sure, the **first** creation will come to an end, but only in the sense that it will be transfigured into the world to come. Because God is infinite, there is no limit to the ways in which

His glory can become manifest in the creation.

Similarly, when man rebels against God, there is no limit to the depths to which his depravity can take him. There is always something new to discover in God, to **rebel** against. Depravity, then, can never become absolute, for man can never totally rebel against God. Man's depravity is radical (at his heart), comprehensive (**affecting** every aspect of his being), and progressive (becoming more and more thorough over time). This is why hell is everlasting: because the rebel's hatred of God will progress evermore for eternity, and so will God's corresponding punishments.

This means that, for the Bible, time is the foundation of **creaturely** infinity. Time is the catchword for growth or decline, for development or degeneration. Because of the interface between God and man, man can never remain neutral or static. He responds to God either positively and grows, or negatively and declines.

This interface between God and man is what freedom is. When God and man come face to face, man can either submit or rebel. This freedom is a reflex of the God-man interaction. Another way of saying the same thing is that time is the foundation for freedom. At each instant of time, there are forks in the road. We may take either road. Time provides choices. Thus, the flow of time, instant by instant, makes human freedom possible.

In rebellion against God, pagan man avoids any interface between himself and his Maker. The idea of progress and decline inescapably points to a

Standard, to judgment and blessing, to the God with whom we have to do. After all: progress or decline in terms of what? By what standard? The idea of linear time places too thin a veil between the rebel and his Judge. Sinful man thus seeks a preferable philosophy.

It might do to deny linear time altogether, but that would deny the reality of motion, and goes against common sense. The universal solution of paganism, in ancient and modern times, is the idea of the cosmic cycle (today: the oscillating universe). The universe is infinite, they say, only in the sense a circle is. It is self-dependently infinite. **Time** bends with space and forms a "circle" (or, a four-dimensional Kline bottle). Progress and decline are mere oscillations between yin and yang, and there is no judgment, no standard.

While to the Christian sensibility, the idea of eternal **cycles** seems horrible bondage, to the ancient pagan it was a joy, a liberation from judgment. To attune themselves to these supposed cosmic cycles, ancient man created cyclical liturgies of birth and rebirth, and prayers of vain repetitions. As **Bouyer** has written, "This was only the impossible ideal of Greek wisdom, the ideal of the **divinization** of man through his identification with perfect limitation. The sad reality was, of course, that through the apparently invariable and recurrent cycles of natural time, man progressed toward decay and finally death."

He goes on to write, "The true universe- which is always both naturally and supernaturally the universe of God-from the very impulse of its creation by Him tends to open itself out to God. Alas, from the impulse given by sin, it has tended to close in upon itself and move toward death. But now, in the Cross of Christ, through death itself, it once again opens to God and to the fullness of life in Him" (*Liturgical Piety*, p. 197).

Biblically speaking, time is both linear and cyclical. The linear aspect of time is its "non-rational" element, for time always presents new opportunities. The cyclical or rhythmic element is the "rational" aspect, giving us things we can count on,

the basis for building **into** the future (cf. **Gen. 8:22**). Indeed, time could not be measured without cycles. Genesis 1 gives us both linear development over a week, and also two cycles (evening and morning, and the sabbath week itself).

For pagan man, both aspects of time present horror. Linear time implies judgment, and future events are anticipated with fear. The cyclical aspects of time are not mere foundation stones to build on; rather, the cycle is the last word, the inescapable wheel from which one can never escape except through the eradication of personal consciousness. In his hatred of God, pagan man **is** desperate indeed to prefer such an alternative!

A circular universe is a **closed** universe, not an infinite one; and a man bound to cycles of time is not **infinite** but finite. Thus sinful man, seeking a false infinity "like God," renounces his true infinity and becomes no more than a beast trapped in a cage. Only Biblical faith provides true dignity to man and to the creation, as infinite copies of an **infinite** God.

Bibliography: There are many studies of the difference between Christianity and **heathendom** on this point. I have found the following to be helpful. C. S. Lewis has some good observations on time as the foundation for freedom in *The Great Divorce*. **Stanley Jaki** discusses the role of linear time in the birth of true science, while thoroughly surveying the cyclical dreams of ancient paganism, in *Science and Creation: From eternal cycles to an oscillating universe* (London: Scottish Academic Press, 1974). More insight into the pagan modes of thought is provided by **Mircea Eliade** in many of his works, especially *The Myth of the Eternal Return* (in paperback, *Cosmos and History*; New York: Harper & Row, 1954). Louis **Bouyer** has a number of helpful observations, particularly relevant to the Church Year question, in *Liturgical Piety* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame U. Press, 1954; esp. chapter 14). **Gary North** discusses implications for economics in *The Dominion Covenant: Genesis* (Tyler, TX: ICE, 1982; esp. chapter 11) and *Moses and Pharaoh* (Tyler: ICE, 1985; esp. chapter 17).

Recent Bible Study Aids

Reviewed by JAMES B. JORDAN

Eerdmans has issued three more volumes in its series on the Forms of the Old Testament Literature. They are George W. Coats, *Genesis: with an Introduction to Narrative Literature* (355 pp.; \$21.95); Roland E. Murphy, *Wisdom Literature: Job, Proverbs, Ruth, Canticles, Ecclesiastes, and Esther* (200 pp.; \$12.95); and John J. Collins, *Daniel: with an Introduction to Apocalyptic Literature* (132 pp.; \$14.95). Each is a paperback.

This series in general illustrates the vanity of attempting to **assess** the form of Scriptural passages apart from a consideration of theological content. To take

Coats on *Genesis*, for instance, we find that he **repeatedly** misses the formal structure of passages because he does not see the fall-expulsion pattern (**Gen. 3,4,9, 11**) or the enslavement-exodus pattern (**Gen. 13, 20, 26, 29-31**). Moreover, in terms of sheer formal structure, he misses the magnificent chiasms of Genesis **6:10 - 9:19** (analyzed by Gordon Wenham in *Vetus Testamentum* 28) and of the entire Jacob section (**25:19b - 37:2a**).

It is possible, of course, for form critics to make some good observations concerning the arrangement of the text. Finding the wheat among the chaff, however, is

not always worth the effort. There are some interesting observations on Proverbs in Murphy's volume. Being a Roman Catholic, Murphy is a bit more conservative, open to numerical and acrostic features, and provides a summary of some recent interesting continental thought. The rest of his volume, however, is not particularly useful. When preaching through Daniel, Ray Sutton found Collins of some help, particularly in pointing to the theme of court **contest** between **Daniel** and the other wise men.

Eerdmans has also initiated a series of more popular commentaries, the International Theological Commentary series. The first two volumes are Robert A. Anderson, *Daniel: Signs and Wonders* (176 pp.; \$7.95); and E. John **Hamlin**, *Joshua: Inheriting the Land* (230 pp.; \$8.95). Both are paperbacks. Ray Sutton did not find Anderson helpful on Daniel. **Hamlin** on Joshua, however, makes a number of interesting and worthwhile theological comparisons. His comments are generally practical, though his approach is not always textually orthodox. **Hamlin** writes with an eye on practical problems in the "third world," and while we do not agree with all his applications, they are stimulating. Those who understand Van Til, and who have read Gary North and David **Chilton**, will be able to sort through **Hamlin** on Joshua and find good food for thought.

Westminster Press has issued two new volumes in its Daily Study Bible Series. They are J. G. **McConville**, *I & II Chronicles* (280 pp.), and Peter C. **Craigie**, *Twelve Prophets, vol. 1* (249 pp.; Hoses through Jonah). These are available in both hardcover and paperback. This series is directed at the layman, and is designed to be practical and devotional. There is precious little on the books on Chronicles, and **McConville** does a good job of expounding and applying the text. His comments are generally conservative, and helpful. **Craigie** also is generally useful, though his approach to Jonah (viewing it as fiction) negates the place of the book in redemptive history (the raising up of Assyria to be the arm of the Lord).

Westminster has also issued a new volume in The Old Testament Library, David L. Peterson on *Haggai and Zechariah 1-8* (320 pp.; \$24.95; hardcover). Though infected with liberal, critical errors at some points, Peterson's comments are generally quite felicitous. His discussion of the unclean condition of the Temple in **Haggai** 2 is particularly worthwhile, and he provides a good summary of leading lines of symbolic interpretation for the night visions of **Zechariah**. Students of these two sections of scripture will find good food for thought here.

The latest **Tyndale** Old Testament Commentary from Inter-Varsity is Joyce G. Baldwin on *Esther* (126 pp.; available in both hardcover and paperback). Anything by Baldwin is worth getting, and this is no exception. The particular value of this work is Baldwin's discussion

of the details of the text. •

Inter-Varsity has also issued a detailed study of Genesis 1-3 by **Henri Blocher**, *In the Beginning: The Opening Chapters of Genesis* (240 pp.; \$6.95; paperback). This is a quite valuable study, despite the fact that **Blocher** comes down in favor of the framework hypothesis to interpret the days of Genesis 1. This defect, together with a very unsatisfactory Appendix on the Bible and science, are more than outweighed by the wealth of scholarly, devout, conservative interpretative discussion found in the book. All things considered, this is probably the most valuable and comprehensive study of these chapters available.

The latest Word Biblical Commentary is Ralph W. **Klein**, *I Samuel* (340 pp.; \$19.95; hardcover). For the most part, this is a useful book. Unfortunately, apparent contradictions in the text are resolved by appeals to literary criticism and tradition history. At the same time, however, the student will find useful observations, particularly on details of passages discussed.

Readers of *The Geneva Review* will be interested in the publication by **Dorrance** & Company of Duane Spencer's *Ephesians for the Family: A Daily Devotional Guide* (400 pp.; \$12.95; hardcover). This work consists of 365 chapters, each taking a section of **Ephesians** and discussing a "key word." Those who have found Spencer's *Holy Baptism* of help will doubtless find this of real value also.

Finally, the University of Alabama Press has issued a fascinating study by Aaron **Wildavsky**, *The Nursing Father: Moses as a Political Leader* (274 pp.; cloth \$25.00, paper \$11.95). The Bible teaches us that God intends for us to mature in wisdom and dominion, and **Wildavsky's** study of Moses is along these lines. This book is simultaneously a study of types of political regimes: slavery, anarchy, equity, and hierarchy. These form the four stages of Moses' political situation, as **Wildavsky's** chapter titles set it out:

1. Slavery: Passive People, Passive Leader
2. From Slavery to Anarchy: Learning from **Pharoah** What Not to Do
3. From Anarchy to Equity: Leadership in the Golden Calf, the Spies, and the **Akedah**
4. From Equity to Hierarchy: The Institutionalization of Leadership
5. The Leader Disappears into the Book: Why Moses Does not Get to the Promised Land

This is a fascinating study. There is much to agree with and much to disagree with (such as **Wildavsky's** grotesque misreading of the fall of man). **Wildavsky** basically draws upon traditional Jewish commentators, and his book is useful in presenting their observations to us. Always stimulating, this book is of value for the critical reader.

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