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"So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused [them] to understand the reading." (Neh. 8:8)

The Current Crisis in Christian Publishing – Part II

By Pastor James Parker

"So they poured out for the men to eat. And it came to pass, as they were eating of the pottage, that they cried out, and said, O [thou] man of God, [there is] death in the pot. And they could not eat [thereof]."
(2 Kings 4:40)

In Part one, we considered the godly principles and aspirations that marked the founders of those Christian publishers known as the "Big Four" (Baker, Eerdman, Zondervan, and Kregel). In this article, we will document the sad departure from those principles and aspirations, not only by the above named publishers, but others who falsely describe themselves as "evangelical".

The major evidence of the shift of these "Christian" publishers (?) away from Christian doctrine and practice is their endorsement of Roman Catholicism. Eerdmans publishes 'Karol Wojtyla: The Thought of the Man Who Became Pope John Paul II', by Rocco Buttiglione. On the Erdman's web site, we read, *"The achievements of John Paul II in recent years cannot be overstated. Led by this man and his profound contribution to Catholic social thought, the Catholic Church has become the world's single greatest voice for democracy and human rights. Protestants, too, have found in Pope John Paul II a brave and steadfast Christian pastor."* (emphasis ours).

Not only is this "man of sin" (i.e. The Pope) celebrated by Eerdmans, Baker (not to be outdone!) currently celebrates the apostasy of former evangelical author Francis ("Frank") Beckwith, from evangelical faith, back to the damnation of Romanism ('Return to Rome', Brazos/Baker pub. 'Brazos' was actually begun by Baker, as an outlet [\$\$] for Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and "Liberal Protestant" heresy).

As a sure consequence of imbibing Romanist error, these publishers have now thrown any discernment to the winds, as shown by their willingness to print and distribute virtually any heresy. From Baker ('God of The Possible'), we have the tortured "interpretations" of heretic Gregory A. Boyd

who attempts (from Scripture [?]) to "prove" that God does not know the future (cf. Eccl. 3:14, 15; Isa. 46:9, 10; Acts 15:18; Eph. 1:11). Though Scripture calls Christianity "pure religion and undefiled..." (Jas. 1:27), the "Christian" publishing of our day continues their conspiracy of denial on this point, with their endless (unscriptural) mantra, "Christianity is a relationship, not a religion". Thus, the Navigators publish 'The End Of Religion', authored by "Emergent" wannabe Bruxy Cavey ("Sick of religion? So was Jesus", the author enthuses).

Furthermore, truth itself gets the "pretzel" treatment from Zondervan, via Roger E. Olsen's 'How to be Evangelical Without Being Conservative'. In the chapter, 'Truth Without Certainty', Olsen lets the "cat out of the bag" as to where his sin-darkened heart is really at: *"My point is not at all that none of the Bible is historical, but I am arguing that some of it can be history-like without necessarily being historical. I have used Jonah as an example of a biblical character who may not have lived and yet can serve as a great example to us. But Abraham, for example, is a different matter. I have talked to people who claim to take the Bible seriously but who do not believe Abraham ever existed; to them he is a mythical or legendary figure in the Old Testament. That's harder to accept than Jonah! Abraham is a (if not the) key covenant figure in the Bible other than Jesus himself. With whom did God make a covenant to bless the nations of the world if not with someone named Abraham? The historicity of Abraham is crucial to the biblical drama in a way the historicity of Jonah is not."*

This is nothing short of infidelity, and arbitrary infidelity, at that! According to Olsen's pontificating, Abraham is "real", but Jonah is not. The question then becomes: "Did Christ really rise from the grave?" Since, biblically, Jonah and Christ "stand or fall" together (cf. Matt. 12:38-45), Olsen and his ilk cannot answer the question.

Thus, these attacks upon religion and truth are really attacks upon Christ

Himself. B. Cavey actually dares to pit James against Jesus in his anti-religion diatribe! After quoting James 1:27, where the Apostle confirms Christianity as "religion" (Gr. "threskeia"), Cavey unbelievably declares, "Jesus never calls people to threskeia religion..." (op. Cit. P. 232)

As Romanism turns a blind eye to sin and ungodliness, so these publishers, following Rome's lead, now provide a platform for the ungodliness of our age. Navigators founder Dawson ("Trots") Trotman would literally turn over in his grave, if he were to read Matthew Paul Turner's perverse, childish, ungodly work, 'What You DIDN'T Learn from Your Parents About Sex' ('THINK', published by NavPress). Besides the titles obvious violation of parental authority (cf. Eph. 6:1-4; Col. 3:20, 21), the shamefully perverse content of this book actually caused it to be removed from certain Christian bookstores and distributors. Infinitely worse, are the 'Biblezines', 'Cosmopolitan'-esque "bibles", geared for and catering to, young people who are thoroughly tainted with the ways of this ungodly world. Though multiple examples of shallow, insipid silliness could be culled from these productions, we will let one suffice from Thomas Nelson's 'Align' biblezine ('The Complete New Testament For Men'), which declares on its cover: "Sexcess: Success With The Opposite Sex"

In this article, we have only "scratched the surface" of the mountain of perverse, unbiblical, Christ-dishonouring "poison" currently being spewed forth by these ungodly, profit-driven "publishers", into the "pot" of Christian publications. Truly, the response of the godly to all this mess is, "we cannot eat thereof!"

Over the next two months, we will consider the causes of the current crisis in Christian publishing.

The Manifest Witness of Jesus Christ – Part I

By Chad Stewart

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen [it], and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship [is] with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.”

(1 Jn. 1:1-3)

Though many today (and countless throughout history) have mocked Christians and the veracity of the Scriptures, we have observed that through our study, Scripture is literally replete with *intrinsic evidences* throughout that testify to its truthfulness. One such evidence is presented at 1 John 1:1-3.

The Apostle John, writing his three epistles probably near the end of his life (in the latter part of the 1st century) seemed to be very concerned to strengthen the faith of the saints to whom he was writing. In so doing, he also offered up correctives to Gnosticism and godless living. Indeed, he states that his *primary* purpose in writing his first epistle was to give the saints confidence that they, *“...may know that [they] have eternal life...”* (1 Jn. 5:13). What better way, therefore, for John to open an exposition to explain aspects of the faith then to begin with *evident facts* regarding the reality of Jesus Christ?

He states at the outset that there were witnesses to testify of the *realness* of Christ. He says, *“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life”* (1 Jn. 1:1). There are a few salient points we need to

observe in looking at this text. First, we notice that John describes a *time frame* when this “Word of life” was manifested to them (i.e. those who “saw” “looked upon” and “handled”). He says that this was “from the beginning”. What beginning is John speaking about? It could be that John had in mind the prophetic utterances made of Christ in the Old Testament (Gen. 3:15; Isa. 7:14; Isa. 9:6; Mic. 5:2, etc). This *could* be the meaning, as it is entirely true that Christ is spoken of throughout the entire scope of the Old Testament. This was proven by our Lord Himself while on the road to Emmaus, when He, *“...beginning at Moses and all the prophets...expounded unto them* (i.e. two of His disciples) *in all the scriptures the things concerning himself”* (Lk. 24:27). Though the Old Testament testimony of Christ is indisputable, it is certain that John, in his letter, has a *more specific* “beginning” in mind.

Mark, in his Gospel, points out this more specific time-frame when he states, *“The **beginning** of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God”* (Mk 1:1). In like fashion, Mark uses language similar to John in referring to the earthly origin of Jesus and His ministry. John states that at the beginning, “we” (i.e. himself and the other witnesses) “heard”, had “seen”, “looked upon”, and “handled” the Son of God who came in the flesh. This is very important for us to take note of, as one of John’s primary objectives in writing this epistle was to combat the Gnostic heresy.

Gnosticism, generally, was a belief that ***matter is evil*** and that ***spirit is good***. Furthermore, Gnosticism was *Syncretistic*; that is, it was a religion that accepted *all* other religions into its fold and modified them accordingly to line up with their distinct beliefs. It is not surprising, therefore, that when Gnostic philosophy was introduced into the

ranks of the Church via false teachers, they developed the belief that Jesus Christ did not *really* come physically. He was, rather, a spiritual “emanation” called the “Logos” (i.e. Greek for Word). If He was truly physical then He would, therefore, according to their philosophy, be evil. To them this was untenable so they created this idea of the “Logos”. John, on the other hand, states that Christ was “heard”, “seen”, “looked upon”, and ***“handled”***.

As a further corrective, John rebukes this heresy by saying, *“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that [spirit] of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that is should come; and even now already is it in the world”* (1 Jn. 4:1-3).

John states, therefore, that in “the beginning” when Christ was manifested to the apostles (and many others as we will observe later), He “came in the flesh”, was “heard”, “seen”, “looked upon”, and “handled”.

Next time we will look further into John’s statements at 1 John 1:1 and the import of them.

The Reformer is a monthly Newsletter dedicated to preaching sound Christian doctrine. It is published by Grace Gospel Church (Calgary), 208 30th Ave. NE, Calgary, AB, T2E 2C9. For a free subscription please write to us, or go to www.gracegospelchurch.ca. For information on Reformed theology, please call Pastor James Parker at (403) 398-3596. All Scripture is taken from the King James Version (AV) unless stated otherwise.