

Christ a representative not a substitute

Christendom believes that Christ died instead of us, using texts such as Hebrews 2:9, "that he [Jesus] by the grace of God should taste death for every man", an idea that is part of the 'renunciationist' theory. Brother Roberts contends against this by an examination of scriptures such as Luke 1:69: "[God] hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David". Obviously God did not raise up the horn instead of us, but for us.

There follows one of those succinct sentences typical of Brother Roberts, and also Brother Thomas: "Begotten of God in the channel of Adamic and Mosaic condemnation, he [Christ] died on our account, that we might escape, but on his own account as the first-born of the family as well; for, in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren" (p. 23).

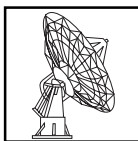
Conclusion

In the reviewer's opinion, this lecture is important for several reasons. In its historical context,

the outcome of controversy was a clearer understanding in the Brotherhood of the sacrifice of Christ. Thus *The Slain Lamb* contributes to our understanding of this matter, and prepares us against any similar attack on the Truth that might arise in our day.

It is a useful exercise to read through the *Birmingham Amended Statement of Faith* from time to time, and it is interesting to note how certain words and phrases were chosen to counter heresies such as those mentioned in this review. For example, Clause VIII reads: "That these promises had reference to Jesus Christ, who was to be raised up in the condemned line of Abraham and David, and who, though wearing their condemned nature, was to obtain a title to resurrection by perfect obedience, and, by dying, *abrogate the law of condemnation for himself and all who should believe and obey him*".

Finally, a consideration of Brother Roberts' grasp of the Scriptures and his continual exertions against error are a valuable exhortation to us all.



Science

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The stretching of the heavens*

Dennis Glover

A FEW YEARS ago, when searching for the answer to a Scripture problem, the writer had occasion to consult a commentary on Zechariah. Turning to chapter 12, he began to read the whole chapter, starting at verse 1: "The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, Which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him". The original problem was forgotten as the commentator's notes below the verse caused new and exciting thoughts to flood in, leaving the old to be dealt with another day. The comment of the author, A. R. Fausset, was read and reread, lest it had been misunderstood.

The words which had caught his attention referred to the second line of this first verse of

Zechariah 12: "the LORD, Which stretcheth forth the heavens". Fausset's comments on this line are simple but emphatic, as he writes in bold print: "**The LORD, Which stretcheth forth the heavens**": present: now; not merely 'hath stretched forth', as if God only created and then left the universe to itself". Fausset concludes by pointing out that these were God's own words, given to remove all doubts as to whether He could deliver Israel by reminding them, and us too, of His creative and sustaining power.

* Previous articles on the expansion of the universe have appeared in *The Testimony*. See "The Hubble Constant", Andrew McFarland, Jun. 1995, p. 190; "The stretching of the heavens", Nigel Bernard, Nov. 1995, p. 438.

Anticipating future discoveries

Now if we isolate this one line of Scripture from the verse and examine it in the light of Fausset's comment, we may come to understand something about Scripture we had never considered before, and we may also come to respect the thinking power of the commentator and even consider him with some wonder. For in rather an amazing way he was considering things that the world at large was not to come to an understanding of for at least another two generations. The preface to the commentary on Zechariah, along with some other works, is dated 1866—by way of interest, the same year that Brother Thomas wrote his sixth and final preface for *Elpis Israel*. It seems it was a good year for Biblical works of an expository nature.

Now Fausset's comments on the heavens have a touch of wonder, even though he could not have realized the full implications of his own words. For it was to be over sixty years after he had written his commentary on Zechariah, and some nineteen years after he died, that scientists by observation and theory were to come to the conclusion that the universe is expanding, so that God is indeed 'stretching the heavens'. It was the astronomer Edwin Hubble who, in 1929, produced the evidence and the proposal that the universe is expanding. Hubble must have expended much effort and time to reach his conclusions. However, that night this writer could think only of this other man, who over sixty years before Hubble, and without the aid of the great 100 inch and 200 inch telescopes of Mount Wilson and Mount Palomar, believed that God was indeed 'stretching the heavens' of the expanding universe.

Meditating upon this discovery, it came to mind that, 380 miles above, in the heavens, orbiting the earth, was the most expensive crewless spacecraft ever made, the Hubble Space Telescope. The thought occurred that the credit given to Hubble should perhaps have gone to Fausset, so that the space telescope could have been more aptly named after him! But why stop at Fausset? Why not consider Zechariah, or any one of possibly half-a-dozen characters in Scripture, who speak of God 'stretching the heavens'? What of David, who, according to the Septuagint translation, wrote Psalm 104, where verse 2 addresses God as the One "Who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain"? Now while this may be considered simply a poetic description of one of the creative acts of God, it does not follow that

it lacks substance or reality. That God stretches out the heavens is true, while the description of it being 'like a curtain' means exactly what David says it is, a *likeness*.

Consider what a well-known astrophysicist says in one of his books when he compares the universe to an imaginary rubber sheet marked with ink blobs, representing the galaxies. As the rubber sheet representing space is stretched, the ink blob galaxies move apart from one another, as do the real galaxies in the expanding universe. They do not move *through* what the scientist calls the fabric, and we call the heavens, of the universe, but move *with* space, with the heavens as they expand, and as they stretch. The scientist is telling us little more than David did, for his stretching of an imaginary sheet of rubber, to represent the expanding universe, he calls 'a common analogy', in other words, a well-used *likeness*. So David declared, when he spoke of God "Who stretchest out the heavens *like* a curtain", and that was some three thousand years before Edwin Hubble found the universe to be expanding.

God's power in Creation

The same astrophysicist also tells us that the creation of all things was "triggered by some energetic process". However, some 2,600 years ago, Jeremiah the prophet made known the LORD'S ways, declaring: "He has made the earth by His power [energetic process?]; He has established the world by His wisdom, and stretched out the heaven by His understanding" (51:15, NKJV). The words of both the scientist and Jeremiah seem to have in common the idea of an energetic process and power.

When Hubble first made his findings known, many scientists found them hard to accept, for they were to lead to more than one conclusion: they strongly implied that there must also have been a *beginning*. Those scientists who had preferred to believe that the universe had always existed had to fall in line with Hubble's findings, substantiating the concept that all things had a beginning, which also by implication strengthens our belief in the Creation. So maybe Hubble's name does deserve recognition and some form of tribute as the great telescope orbits the earth.

As for the thoughts provoked by the comments of Andrew Robert Fausset, this writer continues to be amazed at the insight revealed in words that could only spring from the conviction that God is still stretching the heavens.