

copies should be available at youth groups and gatherings, and also family Bible schools. The only, and minor, criticisms would be that the title is not very attractive, and that the names of two of the principal female characters may seem to some rather improbable. By UK standards, with a competitive book market, it is probably slightly overpriced.

But all in all it is a splendid attempt at engaging our young people in a contemporary way, and is warmly recommended to all the young and young in heart in the Brotherhood. The reviewer is purchasing copies for his family and friends, and is looking forward to having his copy of the sequel that Sister Tikvah is proposing to write, called *A Door to Knock On*.

The Law given through Moses*

29. Conclusion

Islip Collyer

IN ATTEMPTING to summarise the thoughts which arise from our consideration of the Law, one is conscious of how much more might be written on both the legal code and ritual prophecy. There comes a time, however, when we must reach a conclusion.

We may make mental notes of one or two remarkable features which could not well be classified as either legal or ritual, and which have not received much attention in previous articles. One is the essential idea of a tabernacle. This suggests the thought that the Law was not intended as something fixed and eternal. A tent or tabernacle can readily be taken down. It has not the permanence or solidity of a temple. This thought is presented in a particularly beautiful passage of prophetic poetry regarding the restoration of Israel and their capital city:

“Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. But there the glorious LORD will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby. For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our king; He will save us” (Isa. 33:20-22).

If stakes and cords remain secure the tent will stand, but it still remains a tent to be taken down and removed when it has served its turn. So with Israel after the flesh. There will be a restoration and there will be no further overthrow, but the flesh is not to endure for ever. At its best

and when it is most secure, it is still like a tabernacle.

ANOTHER remarkable feature of the Law is that, although God is always represented as near and all-powerful, there is little hope offered to man of a life beyond the grave. There is no suggestion of a soul able to live apart from the body. The idea was popular in Egypt, even in very early times, but it finds no place in the writings of Moses. There were definite promises of national blessings for righteousness, and warnings of national disaster to follow disobedience. Men who obeyed the commands could live in them, and their days might be long in the land, but there was no definite promise of individual life beyond the grave.

There were some indirect hints, just as there had been in the earlier promises to the fathers. The preservation of the manna kept in the holy place was such a hint, and is taken up in the book of Revelation with this meaning. For those who overcome, to eat of “the hidden manna” (2:17) expresses the hope of a future life. This meaning is rendered more definite by other promises to other victors in the struggle. To be permitted to eat of “the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God” (v. 7) quite clearly implies the gift of eternal life. Man, through sin, was not permitted to eat of the tree of life in Eden lest he should have that eternal life for which in a sin-stricken condition he was quite unfit. The way to the tree of life was barred

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to him, but the fact that it is mentioned as being somewhere beyond that guarded gate suggested the hope that sometime, through the promised 'seed of the woman', the way might be opened.

By similar reasoning, Jews might foster the hope that there would come a time when human beings might be preserved after the type of the hidden manna. The ritual connected with the cleansing of the leper suggests a similar hope, as we noted when dealing with that phase of the Law.¹

THE continual insistence on human uncleanness is another remarkable feature of the Law, not at all flattering to human pride—the very reverse, in fact, of all that the natural man would desire. This point was emphasised in the article dealing with ceremonial uncleanness,² but apart from the legal code the same thought is continually to the front in the history.

Human efforts to cooperate and help were approved, as, for instance, the suggestion of Jethro to ease the burden falling on Moses. Mere human ambition, however, was utterly condemned. The proud aims of Korah and others were ended by drastic judgement. Almost any sin is more readily purged than that of pride. It is worthy of note that the Old Testament ends with a declaration regarding fiery judgement, in which "all the proud . . . shall be stubble" to be consumed, "leav[ing] them neither root nor branch" (Mal. 4:1). The New Testament ends with a similar declaration concerning liars (Rev. 22:15). It is a sobering thought for humanity if all who are proud and all who tell lies will be destroyed. One might echo the question of the disciples, "Who then can be saved?" (Mt. 19:25).

Hebrew poetry reveals a keen appreciation of the works of God in nature and of the beauties all around. Under the Law, however, the messages of God came in the tent, where men would have expected only thick darkness. The Divine presence was there, not in any of the material objects, but above the mercy seat, between the cherubim. In the open country around, and in the heavens above, the glory of God was revealed, but the messages which could give guidance to men were in the tabernacle, from which very little natural light would emerge to the outside world.

THERE was no room in the Law for the preservation of relics which would appeal to human sentiment. The symbols kept by Divine instruc-

tion were designed to sustain the remembrance of certain lessons calling to a higher life. The rod that budded was a symbol of Divine choice, and the tables of testimony bore laws which were designed to be written on human hearts. These were symbols reminding the people of God's judgements, but in no way exalting man. The idea of venerating the relics of saints is natural to human beings, but it finds no place in the Law.

It seems that matters were so designed as to prevent any reverence being shown for the tomb of Moses. He was taken to a mountain remote from the camp. There he died, and we read that the Lord buried him, and "no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day" (Deut. 34:6). This was an effective way of preventing the children of Israel from attaching a superstitious importance to the tomb of their great leader. Moses received honours from God such as have not been given to other men. The people were called upon to recognise his authority as one to whom the Lord spoke in a direct way not granted to other prophets. But when he was dead he had no further power to help them, and it was well that no one should know where he was laid to rest.

WE have noted the way in which the Law of Moses favoured the poor and needy.³ Ordinary human laws have been framed by powerful and wealthy men and with regard for the interests of the legislators. In an earlier article we took note of the fact that for many years in England there were severe laws designed to protect property.⁴ There is an extraordinary contrast between these savage cruelties of later times and the merciful provisions of the ancient Mosaic code. The contrasts were mentioned by Mr H. L. Hastings in his book *The Wonderful Law*. Then Mr Hastings put a series of questions, which may well be quoted to bring this series of articles to a conclusion:

"What other nation ever had a law compelling men to lend to the poor without interest? What other nation ever had a law allowing the poor and the traveller to eat and fill their hands with fruit from any vineyards and or-

1. See ["The leper"](#), Nov. 2003, p. 406.

2. See ["Cleanliness"](#), Nov. 2001, p. 421.

3. See ["The general nature of the Law"](#), Jul. 2002, p. 259.

4. See ["Capital punishment"](#), Mar. 2002, p. 78.

chards which they passed, only prohibiting their taking any vessels or bags with them to carry fruit away? What other law ever forbade the taking of a pledge from a widow for her indebtedness, or required a pawned garment to be returned to a poor man at night? What other nation ever had laws requiring that the wages of the workman should be paid, not quarterly, monthly or weekly, but before sunset every night? What other nation ever had a law forbidding men to curse the deaf or to put stumbling blocks in the path of the blind? What other nation had a law forbidding the husbandman to reap the corners of his fields or gather the gleanings of his harvest or the scattering grapes of his vineyard, but commanding him to leave them for the poor and the stranger?

“What other people had a law which forbade the muzzling of the ox as he was treading out the corn, or which protected the birds upon their nests, and which commanded men to show kindness to beasts in distress even though they belonged to their enemies? What other nation had a law which required them to love their neighbours as themselves, and forbade them to cherish grudges against them, and prohibited malice, tale bearing and

revenge? What other nation ever had a law which gave every man an inheritance of land, and so secured it that even the king on his throne could not take it from him, and so arranged it that if he himself was compelled to part with his land, he could not sell it outright but could redeem it any time when able, and if not, at the end of the jubilee period his children could go and claim the ancient inheritance?

“What nation outside the influence of the Law of Moses ever had a law which sacredly reserved every seventh day for rest, and forbade people to require or permit their servants or their beasts to do any servile work on that day? Surely if ever there was a law which was emphatically a law for the poor, the Law of Moses was that law. We might search the records of all ages from the beginning to the present time without finding another law so favourable to the poor, so full of sympathy, righteousness and truth as this law”.

We may add the question, What other nation ever had a law with a ritual so full of hidden meanings, which have assumed new significance in the light of later events, and which in their completeness speak so eloquently of Divine foreknowledge and Divine purpose?

(Concluded)

Sin-proneness (2)

Andrew Perry

IN THE PREVIOUS article we gave an analysis of James’s statement about the nature of temptation, desire and enticement in relation to sinful human behaviour. Our objective is to explain human proneness to sin. In Romans, Paul personifies ‘sin’ as a master or ruler. If sin is comprised of wrong behaviour, why is it personified as a master? Our answer to this question will be that Paul is personifying human proneness to sin.

Romans 5

Paul’s treatment in Romans 5 of Adam’s sin is a tightly drawn argument that begins in verse 12 with the proposition that “sin entered into the world”, and concludes in verse 21 with the statement that, “as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness”.

Exactly when Paul begins to personify sin is a matter of interpretation. We shall take verse 21 as the starting point and consider that it continues here and there through Romans 6–8. We shall take the figure of *sin entering the world* earlier in Romans 5 to be a simile rather than a personification, and we shall take it to be characterising the phenomenon of sin in the world.

The AV represents the Greek fairly well in Romans 5:12-21, but the structure of the argument can be brought out more clearly if we retranslate one or two words. Verse 12 is an unfinished comparison:

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death went about to all men, for that all have sinned ...”.