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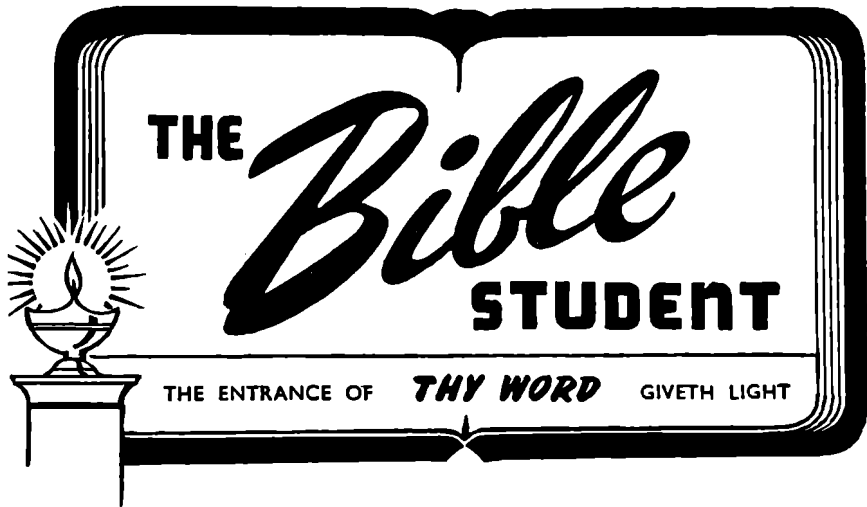
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A table of contents for *The Bible Student* can be found here:

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CONTENTS

'A NEW CREATION'	1
PROPHECY OF EZEKIEL	4
CONSCIENCE	14
ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL	20
SEVEN OLD TESTAMENT FEASTS	26
BIBLICAL HEBREW WORDS	33
THE APOKALYPTIC LETTERS	37
THE COMPENSATING GRACE OF GOD	39
N.T. GREEK WORDS	44
'MINE OWN VINEYARD HAVE I NOT KEPT'	47

Editor: A. McDONALD REDWOOD

interpret, and I.C.C. may be correct in suggesting that it may have been called forth by some particular incident in the last desperate straits of the city. In our ignorance of these circumstances the oracle ceases to be luminous. It clearly stresses, however, that the outcome of political entanglements and faithlessness to Jehovah is idolatry and the worst forms of pagan worship. Why both the sisters should appear here does not seem to be clear.

Some have found difficulty in two sisters being depicted as Jehovah's wives, for this was prohibited in the law (Lev. 18:18). But we have the same picture in Jer. 3:6 ff. The simple answer seems to be that when the Israelite used metaphor and simile of God and His relations to His people, they were never carried away by them and always remembered that they were no more than convenient approximations to the truth. That Israel was Jehovah's bride was a common prophetic picture from Hosea onward. Since both Israel and Judah were His, it was looked on as natural to speak of both of them as God's wife. But behind the picture of the dual marriage was the firm knowledge that it was only as part of 'all Israel' that either kingdom could claim any such relationship to Jehovah. In other words this allegory chooses a picture to serve a purpose, but it makes no claim that this picture is in all respects a theologically true one. We may never in Old or New Testament stress the *subsidiary* points of allegory or parable.

(To be continued)

WAS THE WORD MERELY DIVINE?

(John 1:1)

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A flagrant specimen of biased translation meets our eye in Moffatt's rendering of the last clause of the opening sentence of John's Gospel: 'The Logos was *divine*'. It is the more wanton because (*Theos*) God here stands in the most prominent relief, placed first and foremost in the clause. Moreover, some of the best Greek writers have themselves carefully discriminated between the substantive *THEOS* and its derivative *THEIOS*. Plato has drawn that distinction in His *Philebus* and *Sophist*, and Plutarch in a passage in his

(Continued on page 19)

this world where good and evil prevail we are constantly called to face ever-recurring crises. May these solemn tests of heart and character ever find us men who honour conscience and who thus prove true to ourselves and to our God.

EDITORIAL NOTE

[In his letter to the Corinthian church the apostle Paul makes reference also to a *weak conscience* (i Cor. 8: 7 ff., specially v. 12), which would appear to be a grade *midway*, as it were, between the two categories of conscience indicated in the article. We can hardly do better than quote from Mr. Davison's Lecture mentioned in our last issue: 'The *weak conscience* of 1 Cor. 8: 7 must be interpreted in connection with verse 10, where we read that the man himself is 'weak', i.e. unduly dominated by the conception of idols to which he had been accustomed in his heathen state, and unable entirely to throw it off when he became a Christian, and so enter into the full liberty of those who know that an idol is 'nothing in the world'.

The use of the phrase shows how closely conscience is connected with *character*; for it is not precisely ignorance which causes the 'weakness' in such cases, but a certain feebleness in *the habit of mind*, which keeps a man unduly under the influence of associations and prejudices, the erroneousness of which *in theory* he may acknowledge.

At present, however, the conscience is weak only: if, while thus deficient in Christian vigour, the temptation to eat that which he knows he should not eat comes upon him and if yielded to, the conscience becomes *defiled* (ver. 7), stained with conscious guilt, for 'it is evil for that man who eateth with offence' (Rom. 14: 20 cf. A.V. and R.V. specially v. 20). Strictly speaking, however, what the hesitant conscience needs is the discernment to base all action on the principle laid down by the apostle in his epistle to the Romans, chap. 14: 13-23—'*whatsoever is not of faith is sin*'.]

(Continued from page 13)

Morals (685), wherein he mentions certain parties who held the Earth to be not merely divine (*theios*) but actually a deity (*theos*).

Now John wrote his Gospel that we might 'believe on the Son of God', his Lord and God as much as the God and Lord of his brother-apostle Thomas; not that he might set forth a quasi-divinity or crowning sample of apotheosis, but a veritable theophany. Nor would any reflective mind be in danger of confounding the titular or abusive employment of the word 'god', exemplified in the abject flatteries tendered to the Ptolemies or the Caesars, with John's solemn ascription of essential Deity to the only-begotten Son. When Bacon styles man 'the god of the dog', we do not

(Continued on cover page 3)