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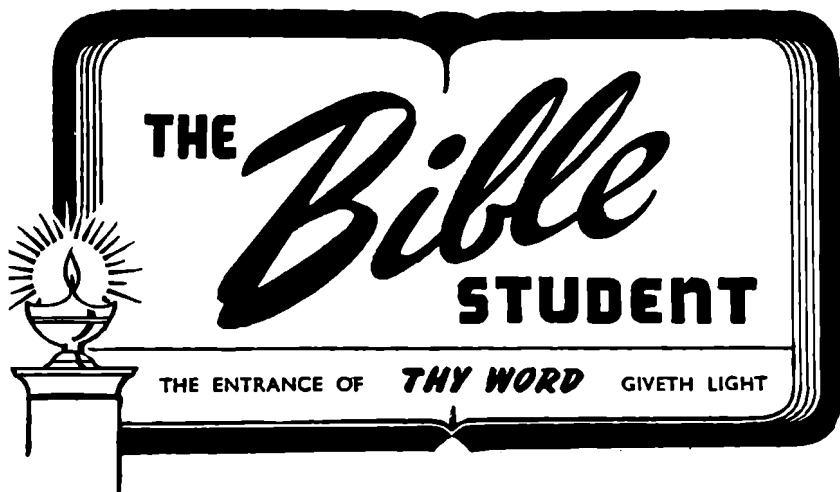
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Editor: A. McDONALD REDWOOD

may be translated 'wind', 'breath' or 'spirit' as best suits the context, some take the first part of this verse to refer to the Spirit of God Himself: 'The Spirit breathes where He will, and thou hearest His voice, but knowest not whence He comes or whither He goes.' (They point out that *pneuma* means 'spirit' everywhere else in the N.T.) But it is much more likely that the wind is referred to here as a picture of the Spirit's work in regeneration, especially in view of the passage from Ezek. 37 mentioned in the note on v. 5, where the wind is the vehicle of the life-giving Spirit.

(In Ezek. 37 one and the same Hebrew word, *ruach*, and one and the same Greek word in the LXX, *pneuma*, correspond to English 'wind' and 'breath' in vv. 9 and 10 and 'spirit' in v. 14.) We cannot control or see the movement of the wind, but we hear its sound, and its other effects as it blows are equally plain to our senses. So we cannot control or see the hidden work of the Spirit in the human heart, but in every one who is begotten anew by the Spirit the effects give unmistakable evidence of His operation.

(*To be continued*)

## BIBLICAL HEBREW WORDS

H. L. ELLISON, B.A., B.D.

**Man in Society** (*continued*)

Alongside the words already dealt with in this section we must study *na'ar*, used 239 times, and its feminine *na'arah*, used 62 times.\* The fact that they are translated babe, child, lad, servant, young man, damsel, maiden suggests forcibly that we have to deal with words expressing an outlook which we no longer possess.

\* In the Pentateuch, in fact Gen. and Dt., except for Dt. 22:19, *na'arah* is written *na'ar*, 21 times in all. It used to be claimed that here we have the original epicene form, and hence it is a proof of the antiquity of the Pentateuch. Seeing that the feminine is already found in Ugaritic, i.e., early Canaanite, before the time of Moses, and the regular feminine plural form is found in Gen. and Ex., it is more likely that we are dealing with 'defective' writing. Allis: *The Five Books of Moses*, Young: *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, and Aalders: *A Short Introduction to the Pentateuch*, all ignore the point.

Their etymology is uncertain; the only suggestion I think likely is Albright's that *na'ar* is derived from the Egyptian *na'arma*, armed retainers. As we shall see, all the uses have in common the connotation of dependency. It is easy to see how the meaning could spread from those that were dependent on a lord to those that were dependents in the home because of age. The fact that it is only used in Canaanite as well as Hebrew is some small support of an Egyptian origin.

It seems to be used of slaves of any age, of armed retainers without special rank and of young men before they have gained a fixed place in society, probably up to the age of marriage and starting their own home. Though it is used of children, this is always when the context makes it clear, and the cases of *na'ar qatan* (see below) suggest that any such meaning is really alien to the word.

The translation 'babe' (Ex. 2:6) is merely to find a synonym to 'child' (*yeled*); 'boy' (Gen. 25:27) is equally for convenience, and it may well be misleading. Of the cases listed in Young's *Analytical Concordance* under 'child' or 'children', apart from the cases mentioned later, the translation is really only justified by the context, boy or lad being equally suitable.

In 1 Sa. 2:11, 18, 21, 26; 3:1, 8 RSV 'boy' is distinctly preferable, and no one will doubt that RSV 'sons' is an improvement in 1 Sa. 16:11. 1 King 14:13, 18 demand that Abijah was old enough to have impressed his character on the people, and so the translation 'child' in vv. 3, 17 is obviously misleading, even though he is called *yeled* in v. 12. This may well be an example of where *yeled* is used affectionately as in Gen. 34:4. Is. 65:20 is another case where we can hardly justify the translation; Moffatt gets the sense by rendering, 'He who dies youngest . . .'. In Jer. 1:6, 7 'child' is worse than misleading, for Jeremiah will have been at least in his late adolescence; the LXX rendering followed by Moffatt, 'I am too young', hits off the meaning very well.

The contention that *na'ar* does not really mean child, unless the context demands it, is born out by the use of *na'ar qatan*—*qatan* = small or young. Whatever Solomon's age at his accession, he was no child, for he already had a son, so even allowing to the full for Oriental exaggeration 'young lad' seems as far as we can

go in 1 Kings 3:7. Some such rendering seems to suit 1 Kings 11:17 best—there is no justification for Moffatt's rendering of the passage. This applies to 2 Kings 2:23 as well; RSV 'small boys' is much better than 'little children', but it probably minimizes their age. However attractive at first sight the traditional rendering of 2 Kings 5:14, a little thought of the incongruity of the Syrian commander-in-chief with the bodily softness of a little child may make us pause. It seems most likely that in Is. 11:6 a lad old enough to drive the cattle to pasture is intended. Note also 1 Sa. 20:35 where it is translated not unreasonably 'little lad'. If then *na'ar qatan* hardly means a child, it is obvious that child cannot be the real meaning implied by *na'ar* by itself.

This is made quite clear by the passages where *na'ar* is reasonably translated 'lad'. Ishmael was about seventeen (Gen. 21:12 etc.). Whatever the age of Isaac (Gen. 22:5, 12) he was old enough to carry the no slight burden of the wood for the offering up the hill; the Bible allows us to think of him as being about thirty—*na'ar* would still be applicable, for he was not yet married. Joseph was seventeen (Gen. 37:2). Benjamin (Gen. 48:16 etc.) was the father of a family, Manasseh and Ephraim (Gen. 48:16) were going on for twenty. In Jdg. 16:26, 1 Sa. 20:21 etc., 2 Kings 4:19 'servant' would probably be a better translation.

Better than the rendering 'young man' would be 'servant', e.g., Gen. 14:24; 18:7 (so RV); 22:3 etc., Ruth 2:9 etc., 1 Sa. 25:8 etc., 2 Kings 6:17, or 'retainer', especially with reference to those without a special position, e.g., Jdg. 9:54; 1 Sa. 14:1, 6; 21:4f; 25:5 etc.; 26:22; 30:17; 2 Sa. 1:15; 2:14, 21; 4:12; 13:34; 16:2; 18:15. Unless Pharaoh's butler wished to stress Joseph's youth for such unexpected knowledge, his calling him *na'ar* in Gen. 41:12 at the age of thirty suggests that he was a nobody.

The passages where *na'ar* has been translated 'servant' only call for our attention in that in no case would we get the impression of extreme youth.

The picture given by *na'arah* is the same. It is used of a girl (Rebekah and Esther) who has just reached marriageable age, or of a bride (Dt. 22), or of a young widow (Ruth), or of a woman servant without reference to age.

I have gone into such detail, not merely because the standard English versions make no effort to deal with the word systematically, but also because it helps us to see what a role both age and freedom played in early Hebrew thought. It is significant that the later we reach in Bible history the more seldom is *na'ar* used of the servant. The monarchy gradually taught men to consider it an honour to be the servant ('*ebed*) of the king.

(*To be continued*)

## 'THE MYSTERY OF GOD, EVEN CHRIST'\*

T. NORTON STERRETT, TH.M.

The mysteries of the New Testament are an important part of the New Testament revelation, and yet have been neglected to a great extent by many Bible scholars. The particular phase of the subject which is to be treated in this paper is, like the others, full of difficulty, and yet too important to be ignored. 'The mystery of God, even Christ' is mentioned clearly in Paul's letter to the Colossians, chapter two, verse two, and perhaps in other Scriptures. Before turning to the Scriptures, however, some general definitions must be made.

The New Testament word 'mystery' is almost a transliteration of the Greek *μυστήριον*. This Greek term had in classical usage the meaning of religious secrets 'confided only to the initiated, and not to be communicated by them to ordinary mortals'.<sup>1</sup> Such were the Eleusinian and Babylonian mysteries. Adopted into the New Testament, the word is used differently. Thayer lists three main variations of usage. (1) A secret thing, not obvious to the understanding, as in 1 Cor. 13:2; 14:2. These are perhaps the only passages of this usage, and do not at all govern the meaning of the word in most of its occurrences in the New Testament. (2) A hidden purpose or counsel. When used of God, Thayer says, 'In the New Testament, God's plan of pro-

\* From *Bibliotheca Sacra*, Dallas Theo. Seminary, U.S. by kind permission.

<sup>1</sup> J. H. Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the N.T.*, p. 420.