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## BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

J. G. VOS, Editor and Manager

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**BLUE  
BANNER  
FAITH  
AND  
LIFE**

VOLUME 10

JANUARY-MARCH, 1955

NUMBER 1

**None other Lamb, none other Name,  
None other Hope in heaven or earth or sea,  
None other Hiding-place from guilt and shame,  
None beside Thee.**

**—Christina G. Rossetti**

A Quarterly Publication Devoted to Expounding, Defending and Applying the System of Doctrine set forth in the Word of God and Summarized in the Standards of the Reformed Presbyterian (Covenanter) Church.

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J. G. Vos, Editor and Manager

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## OUR FATHERS — WHERE ARE THEY?

By William McComb

Our Fathers, where are they—the faithful and wise?  
They are gone to their mansions prepared in the skies;  
With the ransomed in glory, forever they sing,  
All worthy the Lamb, our Redeemer and King.

Our Fathers, who were they? Men strong in the Lord,  
Who were nurtured and fed with the milk of the Word;  
Who breathed in the freedom their Saviour had given,  
And fearlessly waved their blue banner to heaven.

Our Fathers, how lived they? In fasting and prayer,  
Still grateful for blessing, and willing to share  
Their bread with the hungry, their basket and store,  
Their home with the homeless that came to the door.

Our Fathers, where knelt they—Upon the green sod,  
And poured out their heart to their covenant God;  
And oft in the deep glen, beneath the wild sky,  
The songs of their Zion were wafted on high.

Our Fathers, how died they? They valiantly stood  
The rage of the foeman, and sealed with their blood,  
By faithful contendings, the faith of their sires,  
Mid tortures, in prisons, on scaffolds, in fires.

Our Fathers, where sleep they? Go search the wild cairn,  
Where the birds of the hill make their nests in the fern;  
Where the dark purple heather, and bonny blue bell,  
Deck the mountain and moor, where our forefathers fell.

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### From THE STRANGER

By John Clare

His presence was a peace to all,  
He bade the sorrowful rejoice.  
Pain turned to pleasure at his call,  
Health lived and issued from his voice.  
He healed the sick and sent abroad  
The dumb rejoicing in the Lord.

The blind met daylight in his eye,  
The joys of everlasting day;  
The sick found health in his reply;  
The cripple threw his crutch away.  
Yet he with troubles did remain  
And suffered poverty and pain.

Yet none could say of wrong he did,  
And scorn was ever standing by;  
Accusers by their conscience chid,  
When proof was sought, made no reply.  
Yet without sin he suffered more  
Than ever sinners did before.

### NO SCAR? NO WOUND?

(Author Unknown)

Hast thou no scar?  
No hidden scar on foot, or side, or hand?  
I hear thee sung as mighty in the land,  
I hear them hail thy bright ascendant star:  
Hast thou no scar?

Hast thou no wound?  
Yet I was wounded by the archers, spent,  
Leaned Me against a tree to die; and rent  
By ravening beasts that compassed Me, I  
swooned:  
Hast thou no wound?

No wound? No scar?  
Yet, as the Master shall the servant be,  
And pierced are the feet that follow Me;  
But thine are whole; can he have followed far  
Who has nor wound nor scar?

## THY KINGDOM COME

*Thy kingdom come.*

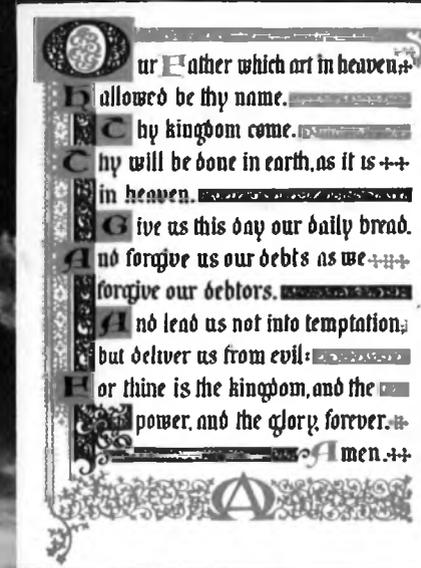
MATTHEW 6:10

Why pray this prayer? Does not God rule the universe? How else could it operate? How else would it exist? The Lord has established His throne in the heavens, and His kingdom rules over all. He does as He pleases in the armies of heaven and on the earth. Why, then, pray, "Thy kingdom come"?

God is Lord of all. And yet it is His will that within the bounds of His control a lesser kingdom, rebellious against His will, should be permitted for a time. With much longsuffering, God allows the forces of evil to work their pleasure until His own designs are fulfilled. Then He will call a halt to the forces of evil and will banish them. And all things will submit to His rule. Christ, the Prince of Peace will cast out the prince of darkness. Chaos will give place to order. Joy will banish sorrow. Freedom and relief will replace oppression and suffering. This is the day for which creation groans. It will break with the dawning of the Sun of righteousness.

The kingdom of God is future to the extent that the rule of God is yet to assert itself against the reign of evil so as to destroy it for ever. It is the time of the undoing of the works of the devil through the work of Christ.

We are to pray for the coming of God's kingdom because it pleases God to fulfil His plans partly through the cry of His people—in response to it. He wills to be received by them gladly. He wills to be honored by their ready admission that the kingdom of hell was the heaviest of burdens and the most galling of yokes; that sin was not liberty but slavery; that we can come to our own only in that submission to the Creator for which we were designed. We turned from Him willingly. Heartily we must once more own His rule. And if we truly believe in the blessings of His kingdom, we will join in the chorus that for centuries has echoed the cry, "Thy kingdom come!" It will show that we have had enough of wandering and going astray.



THE LORD'S DAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1962

THE MORNING WORSHIP 11:00 AM

Prelude  
\* Call to Worship - Doxology  
\* Invocation - Salutation  
Responsive Reading: Selection 51  
\* Hymn No. 111  
Reading of the Law: Response  
Morning Prayer - Lord's Prayer  
Announcements - Offering - Dedication  
Scripture Lesson: LL Chron. 5  
\* Hymn No. 125  
Sermon: "THE RETURN OF GOD'S POWER"  
\* Hymn No. 102  
\* Benediction - Postlude  
Silent Prayer

THE EVENING WORSHIP 7:00 PM

Prelude  
\* Call to Worship - Hymn No. 540 (vs 183)  
Songs of Praise - Hymns Nos. 78 & 188  
\* Apostles Creed - Gloria Patri  
Scripture Lesson: II Cor. 5:1 thru 10  
Evening Prayer  
Announcements - Offering - Dedication  
Hymn No. 581  
Sermon: "AN ETERNAL HOUSE"  
\* Hymn No. 569  
\* Benediction - Postlude  
Silent Prayer

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Our guest speaker for today's Morning and Evening Worship Services is Mr. Ronald Nickerson. It is always a pleasure to make him welcome. Bring someone with you when you come this evening to share his message.

Mrs. Edith Urban is accepting your subscriptions for the next year's issues of The Presbyterian Guardian. Be sure to see her before you leave.

Remember to pray for the members of our congregation who are not able to worship with us because of illness, advanced age, or other infirmities. Also pray for those who have turned their faces from the house of God. Your prayers mean a great deal to them.

Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is because my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. And in that day shall ye say, Praise the Lord, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted. Sing unto the Lord; for he hath done excellent things. This is known in all the earth.  
Isiah 12

# BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

VOLUME 10

JANUARY-MARCH, 1955

NUMBER 1

## *Sketches of the Covenanters*

By J. C. McFeeters

### CHAPTER XIII

#### Renewing the Covenant — A.D. 1638

King Charles believed in the divine right of kings, and the Presbyterians believed in the eternal right of Christ to rule kings. The two beliefs could not be reconciled; hence the great struggle. The attacks on Presbyterianism came in rapid succession and with increasing violence. The Covenanters sternly resisted these attacks. The nation seemed to be on the verge of civil war.

The leading Covenanters saw in the war-cloud, that which blinded eyes could not see—the hand of the Lord lifted up against the nation. Henderson, Rutherford, Dickson, and others of penetrating mind discovered the moral cause of the troubles and trembled for their country. The Lord was meting out judgment against sin. Divine wrath was falling upon the people. Judgment had already begun at the House of God. The King of Righteousness was girding His sword on His thigh for action. Who will be able to stand when He arises in wrath to vindicate His own royal rights? These men feared God and trembled at His word.

A day of humiliation and fasting was appointed, many came together for prayer. There were deep searchings of heart followed by pangs of conscience and cries for mercy. God gave an alarming view of sin. The defection of the Church and perfidy of the nation seemed to fill the sky with lurid flames of divine vengeance. The former Covenants had been broken; the oath was profaned, the obligations denied, the penalty defied; the Lord had been provoked to pour out His wrath upon the land. The day of reckoning seemed to have come. The sense of guilt and the weight of wrath bowed many souls to the earth. One supreme desire seemed to prevail—that they arise and return to Him, from whom they had so deeply and shamefully revolted.

"The Covenants! The Covenants!" This was now the national cry. The Covenants have ever been Scotland's hope, strength, and glory. The cry went from house to house, from church to church, from earth to heaven. It was on the lips and in the prayers of men, women, and children. Hope revived, enthusiasm spread like flames, the

nation was rapidly prepared for the high honors that were awaiting her. The people in large numbers were fired with a passion to renew their Covenant with God!

The Holy Spirit fell mightily upon many, causing a flood-tide of spiritual life to sweep the country. The leading Covenanters were endowed with wisdom and courage to direct the holy enthusiasm into the right channel. It had to be turned by prompt action to present use, and conserved for the generations to come, or its strength and volume would soon be lost. On Sabbath February 25, 1638, the ministers preached on Covenanting. Next day the people met in their churches and received notice that, on Wednesday following, their Covenant with God would be renewed in Edinburgh. The announcement struck a responsive chord. The country was astir early on the morning of the appointed day. Doubtless many had spent the preceding night with the Lord Jesus Christ in prayer. While the stars were still shining, many households, we may be assured, were called around the family altar, that the father might bless his house and hasten to Edinburgh. The commissioners who had been appointed to lead the people in Covenanting were on the ground at break of day.

The Covenant of 1581 was chosen for the present occasion. Two generations had passed since that solemn bond had lifted the kingdom into holiest relation with God. Nearly all the Covenanting fathers of that event had finished their testimony and were gone; only here and there a patriarchal voice was heard telling of that solemn day and deed. The grand-children had lost much of the fervor, power, purpose, holy enthusiasm, dread of God's majesty, fellowship with Jesus Christ, and raptures in the Holy Spirit—had lost many of the countless and unspeakable blessings descending from the sure Covenant made with God and kept by their fathers. Fifty-seven years had elapsed and many changes had occurred. Henderson, by appointment, added to the Covenant what was necessary to make it applicable to their times.

The Holy Spirit came in great power upon thousands and tens of thousands on that eventful morning; the day was bringing heaven's best blessings to the Church and the nation. It was still winter; but not frozen roads, nor drifting snows, nor lowering clouds, nor biting winds, could stay the people. Many men and women, old and young, were far on their way before the sun had softened the rasping air. They came on foot and on horses, in carriages and in wagons, through the valleys, over the mountains, along the highways and the lanes, pouring into the jubilant city from all directions as rivers of enthusiastic life. It has been estimated that sixty thousand came that day to take part in the renewing of the Covenant, or to give countenance and influence to the solemn deed. To these spirited people the winter was over and gone, though February still lingered; the time of the singing of birds had come, though the earth was clad in her mantle of snow. The season had lost its rigor upon these Covenanters; their cheeks were red, but not so much with wintry blasts as with holy animation. It was a summer day to them.

At the appointed hour, Greyfriars' Church and churchyard were crowded "with Scotland's gravest, wisest, and best sons and daughters." Alexander Henderson constituted the meeting with prayer. His earnest words were deeply felt, they seemed to bring the Lord of glory out of heaven. The Earl of London made a solemn address, appealing to the Searcher of motives. Archibald Johnston unrolled the vast parchment and read the Covenant in a clear voice. Silence followed—a dreadful pause during which the Holy Spirit was doing great work on all present. The Earl of Rothes broke the silence with a few well-chosen words. Another solemn pause ensued, while all eyes watched for the next act in the sublime programme. The Covenant was ready for signatures. What name will have the honor of heading the list on that white parchment? At length the Earl of Sutherland, an aged elder, with much reverence and emotion, stepped forward and taking the pen with trembling hand subscribed his name. Others rapidly followed. The heart went with the name, the blood was pledged with the ink, the Covenant was for life even unto death. When all in the church had subscribed, the parchment was carried to the churchyard and placed on a flat tombstone, where the people outside added name after name till there was no room, no, not for an initial letter. The scene was impressive beyond description; the people gave themselves willingly unto the Lord. Many wrote through blinding tears and with throbbing hearts; some added the words, "Till death", some drew

blood from their own veins for ink. Then as the sun was westering in the cold sky, they lifted up the right hand to Almighty God, the Searcher of hearts, avowing allegiance to Him with the solemnity of a most sacred oath. Surely this was Scotland's greatest day. The Church may now be called Hephzibah, and her land, Beulah. Immanuel is the name of her Covenant Lord. "Glory, glory, in Immanuel's land!"

The evening drew on; the spirited demonstrations of that eventful day, like a glorious sunset, melted away; but the Covenant, in all its sacredness, substance, obligations, and strength, remained for the next day, and the next generation, and all generations to come. Thus was Scotland's Nation Covenant renewed in 1638.

Let the children of these Covenanters not forget, nor lightly esteem their Covenant inheritance and obligations. How great the honor! Remember the accountability, withdraw not from the bond. Relation to the Lord Jesus Christ by means of the Covenants of the fathers loads descendants with heavy duties, endows them with bountiful blessings, entrusts them with the welfare of coming generations, crowns them with high honors, and brings them into judgment to account for all these advantages and obligations. Let the children of the Covenants take heed lest they forget the duties, forfeit the blessings, prove themselves untrustworthy, and trample their heavenly crown in the dust. Let them fear lest being exalted to heaven they be cast down to hell. The Covenants of the fathers bind the children.

#### Points for the Class

1. What new danger was now threatening Scotland?
2. In what way did the Covenanted ministers explain the trouble?
3. To what did they resort for deliverance?
4. How were the people prepared for Covenanting?
5. How was the nation stirred at the prospect of renewing the Covenant?
6. Describe the great gathering of people in Edinburgh on the appointed day.
7. Describe the solemn act of Covenanting.
8. What obligations descend from that Covenant upon the present generation of Covenanters?

## The Covenant-Idea in Scripture

By the Rev. Frank D. Frazer

(Continued from last issue)

### 24. The Covenant of Jehovah and Man's Dealing with Man.

God's way of dealing with men has always been by His Covenant, which comprehends all their purposes and actions. No man has ever devised a better way of dealing with his fellowman than by the closest possible concord with God's perfect way of dealing with both of them. The entire book of Scripture is concerned with the "**b'rith Jehovah**" between God and man; its development and working; how it was broken by Adam, and its curse fell upon him and upon his children after him; how God then more fully revealed what was basic to His whole covenant plan, namely, His love and compassion for His creature. He did this by a new covenant promise of salvation from death unto eternal life. Then there followed the confirmation and proclamation of this Covenant of Grace, making plain the way for sinners' return to God through the Substitute Sacrifice which satisfied the broken law of the Covenant. Then came the history of how many turned and were graciously received to the blessedness of life.

Scripture also informs us that, as early as the time of Abraham, (Gen. 14:13), it was an established custom among men to "**make covenant**" between themselves; that is, to make **promises** to each other, which it became their **obligation** to fulfill, with oaths by both parties, in the "**presence,**" of the **name of Jehovah.**" This assumed, of course, that the end in view and the promises made harmonized with the promise and law of the Covenant of Jehovah, and that they would be realized by the **grace of Jehovah,** in accordance with His order of things. The **curse** and its execution remained with God according to His will, the ordinary formula being, "God do so to me and more also" — (if I fulfill not my obligations.)

In the record of such covenants, the **sacrifice** is frequently mentioned, but even where not specified, it is always implied in the descriptive words, "**karath b'rith**" (see BBF&L, Vol. 9, p 65,) "**they made, mediated** the covenant by the **sacrifice;**"—the same word for covenant, "**b'rith,**" and the same kind of action putting it into effect, "**karath.**" Hence, what men did, when they made covenant between themselves, was to enter together into the Covenant of Jehovah, which Jehovah had "**made,**" "**mediated by the Sacrifice**" for them; that in the peace of God they might have peace between themselves. But, whenever a man would enter into the Covenant of Jehovah, it is necessary

that he come by the way provided for him, and that he do not seek entrance some other way. The typical sacrifice, therefore, had its significance, not as furnishing a meal for men covenanting, but as their acknowledgment of entire dependence on the grace of God for the realization of their purposes. This explanation of the origin and usefulness of "**man's covenant**" is

1. **Confirmed directly** by Scripture, as for example, by the covenant made between Abimelech and Abram, (Gen. 21:22-23); Abimelech said to Abram, "Swear now to me by God." Abram answered, "I will swear." "And there they swore, both of them." And Abram took sheep and oxen, "and they two made (sacrificed) the covenant." And Abram called the name of the place, Beer-sheba (Well of the Oath,) and there he proclaimed the name of Jehovah, the Everlasting God. Similarly, the covenant between Abimelech and Isaac, (Gen. 26:26-33); also the covenant between Laban and Jacob, (Gen. 31:44-54.)

Entrance into the Covenant of Jehovah was sometimes symbolized by "passing between the pieces" of the sacrifice. This symbolism was followed by the people of God from Jehovah's example shown to Abram, (Gen. 15:17,18,) until the time of Zedekiah, the last king of Judah, who "made a covenant with all the people that were in Jerusalem," (Jer. 34:8-10,18,19.) When Israel renewed the Covenant on the plains of Moab, "they passed into the Covenant of Jehovah and into His oath," (Dt. 29:12.) Similarly, on other occasions, "they entered into the Covenant," (II Chron. 15:12;) "they entered into the curse, and into the oath," (Neh. 10:29.)

The **sacrifice** marked the way into the Covenant of Jehovah, and the **oath,** in the name of Jehovah, **bound** both parties within His Covenant. This effect is clearly expressed in the case of the covenant between Jonathan and David, (I Sam. 18:3,) where David said to Jonathan, "Thou hast brought thy servant into the Covenant of Jehovah with thee," (I Sam. 20:8.) When Ruth, the Moabitess gave her pledge to Naomi, "Jehovah do so to me and more also, if aught but death part thee and me," she did so as one who had found her way into the Covenant of Jehovah.

2. **Confirmed indirectly,** and even more strikingly, by the fact that when a man breaks his covenant with another man, he is judged for having broken the Covenant of Jehovah. For example,

King Zedekiah made a covenant of submission with the king of Babylon, and gave his oath; then

broke it. Jehovah said, "Shall he break the Covenant and yet escape? He shall not escape. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, As I live, surely Mine oath that he hath despised, and My Covenant that he hath broken, I will even bring it upon his own head." (Ezek. 17:11-21.)

Again in the days of king Zedekiah, all the princes and people of Jerusalem entered into a covenant to do a thing that was in accord with the Covenant of Jehovah, to free their Hebrew slaves. But afterwards when this proved to be somewhat of a hardship, they changed their minds and broke their covenant. For this God charged them with transgressing His Covenant, and profaning His name, and pronounced His curse upon them. (Jer. 34:11-22.)

By Gen. 2:24, the marriage covenant is not merely a matter between husband and wife; not merely a "man's covenant," or civil contract; for God designates the unfaithful wife as one that "forgetteth the Covenant of her God," (Prov. 2:17;) and He indicts the unfaithful husband at His bar for "dealing treacherously with the wife of thy covenant," which God had confirmed by making them one, (Mal. 2:14-16.) Compare Mt. 19:6.

In the case of the covenant made by Joshua and the princes of Israel with the Gibeonites; because king Saul, a long time afterwards, had violated it, Jehovah sent a curse upon the whole nation of Israel, even in the days of king David, which was not removed until the satisfaction demanded by the Gibeonites was made. (Josh. 9:15. II Sam. 21:1-14.)

Time is not of the essence of the Covenant of Jehovah. It is everlasting, inviolable. God does not forget. Here lies the tremendous import and deep seriousness of **covenant fidelity**, on man's part, for the stability, peace, and welfare of society, in the home, the church, and the state, not only locally, but in the whole sphere of national and international relationships. Here rests the principle of the **descending obligation of covenants**, which the fathers of the church acknowledged with reverence and fear, but which today is so lightly set aside and forgotten.

Since his fall, having broken faith with God, man is more or less unreliable; his word uncertain. In order to gain the highest possible degree of assurance that a promise would be kept, as between themselves, men have resorted to the procedure here described. They have entered together into the Covenant of Jehovah. For, when a man sincerely makes a promise in the fear of Jehovah, believing it to be right according to the revealed will of God, he is ready to put his dependence on the enabling grace of God so freely offered in His everlasting Covenant. But when modern liberals increase, as they are increasing today, refusing to acknowledge covenant obligations, counting the Blood of the Covenant an unholy thing, and

doing despite to the Spirit of Grace, we are in gravest danger. We see homes being broken up by the thousands. We see confusion and disunity prevailing in the nation by the propaganda of lies and political chicanery, and the bold demands that no wickedness be interfered with. We witness, in the so called "World Council of Churches," what threatens to become the largest and deepest foundational break that has ever occurred in the church, and this in the name of "unity!"

Hereby is emphasized the true Scriptural view of the origin of the covenant between man and man, as an immemorial and universal custom. A number of man-made theories have been proposed to account for it: Several Kinship, or Brotherhood theories, and the Identity theory (identity, i.e., of interests, purpose, and action) take their cue from the use of blood and of a common meal in covenanting. The Conditional theory regards the matter from the standpoint of the alternative good or evil in the outcome. But, it is admitted that none of these theories will account for all the facts. Formed by induction from the more or less corrupt social and religious rites of men, they have failed to explain, satisfactorily, an idea that did not originate in the mind of man, but came to him by revelation from God. Taking due account of the corruptions introduced into the worship of God by the will of man ever since Cain, and the loss of the true meaning of the sacrifice, the above explanation from the Scripture, we believe, does account for all the facts. And the existence of the covenant cultus, in some form, among all peoples, proves that the knowledge of the way of salvation and righteousness was at one time the common possession of all mankind.

#### 25. Some Providential Preparations for the "New" Covenant.

1. While the true people of God were waiting in faith for the fulfilment of God's promises, the Jews, nationally, by their unfaithfulness, had lost their earthly inheritance and temporal power. Their religion had degenerated into the formalism of the Pharisees and the skepticism of the Sadducees. As God had warned, they were dispersed among all other nations, but, their scattered synagogues furnished a place and audience for the first preaching of the new covenant.

2. The Roman Empire had gained almost universal sway over the civilized world. Under "Pax Romana" society in general was enjoying an extraordinary state of peace and quiet. There was free access to all peoples under protection of Roman law and order.

3. Greek civilization had attained an excellence beyond any before known in the world. Its culture and literature were stimulating other peoples to higher standards of thinking and living. The Greek language was fast becoming a universal medium for exchange of thought.

4. The general condition of the Jewish people made inevitable a rapid decrease in the use of their Hebrew language. In the time of Christ it was scarcely spoken at all, having been displaced by cognate dialects of the Aramaic, or Assyrian, and by the Greek. This allowed the old Hebrew words to become crystalized and their meaning fixed, no longer subject to the modifying influences of popular usage. Thus it was provided that God's revelation of His Covenant should be preserved in its original sense, without corruption.

The importance of this appears when, for example, we consider that the word "b'rith" itself was already used in a sense adapted from its original sense of God's unilateral covenant, to name a bilateral agreement among men. Although a "man's covenant" was enacted within the Covenant of Jehovah, yet, wherever knowledge of the true God should be rejected, corrupted, neglected, the same would inevitably happen to knowledge of His Covenant. Consequently, only the bilateral sense of "covenant" would remain, and religion, to a large extent at least, would be considered as a matter of man's own choice and determination. This, in fact, had already happened among pagan peoples, and continues extensively today. It is therefore basic to the true religion that the Scriptures be kept perfectly clear at this point.

5. Nearly three centuries before Christ, the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek, as being generally understood among the nations, to the end that all might have knowledge of God's Covenant. This version (called "the Septuagint," abbreviated the LXX,) rendered the Hebrew "b'rith" by "diatheke," literally, a "put-between," or "disposition." There was another Greek word, "suntheke," commonly used in the sense of our "contract" or "compact" which the LXX translators used for certain other Hebrew terms, but according to the best manuscripts, **not once** for "b'rith;" the reason no doubt being that it embodied the idea of a mutual arrangement on equal terms, which has no place in "b'rith." Thus any notion that the "b'rith Jehovah" was a two-party contract was excluded.

The Hebrew "karath b'rith," (BBF&L, Vol. 9, p 65,) described God's way of putting His Covenant of Grace into effect between Himself and man, who had broken the former covenant (of Works,) and thereby brought upon himself its curse of death. Man being absolutely helpless to save himself, God in mercy provided a Mediator, a Substitute to be "cut off," the Sacrifice, that His covenant law might be satisfied, and that man might live again. The LXX, with practical uniformity, rendered this expression by "dietheto diatheken," "he disposed a disposition," "he put a put-between (covenant) between." For God had said to Abraham, "I put my covenant between me and thee," (Gen. 17:2.) Saying this, of course, implied that He did so in the only way He had or-

ained, by **the sacrifice**, as is made perfectly plain in chapters 15, 17 & 22. This word of Jehovah justifies the rendering "dietheto diatheken" with the same necessary implication to be kept in mind. "Dietheto," being in the middle, or reflexive form of the verb, indicates that Jehovah acts in a way that primarily concerns Himself; He acts for Himself, independently, with full power. The prefix, "dia" equals "between," indicates both the act and its objective as of a **mediation**.

As we have seen, by former revelations and confirmations of His covenant God had summed up all His promises in the promise of an "everlasting inheritance" for His people, secured by the absolute certainty of His word, through the mediation of an everlasting priesthood, and under the rule of an everlasting kingdom. In other words, the "b'rith Jehovah" is, comprehensively, His promise of a disposition of the riches of His grace to His people, whom He calls "My sons and My daughters," (Is. 43:6, &c.)

Now this Greek word "diatheke" was commonly used for a man's "last will and testament," a legally secured disposition of property by **one party**, the owner, according to his own will and determination, to another party, his heir or heirs, primarily his children, for their inheritance **after his death**. The death here involved was not sacrificial death, but it was **death**, the death that had "passed upon all men, for that all sinned." And there is plenty of ancient literary evidence to prove that this usage of "diatheke" as man's testamentary-disposition was **technical**, and **derived** from its previous more general usage as a covenantal-disposition. (See Johannes Behm, "Der Begriff DIATHEKE im Neuen Testament," Leipzig, 1912; a thorough exegetical investigation of the linguistic and conceptual background of "diatheke" in history.) Hence, this word "diatheke," uniting in itself the two connotations, testamentary-disposition according to **law** and covenantal-disposition according to **promise**, was well fitted to take the place of the Hebrew "b'rith." When we take time to let its meaning sink into the mind, it describes for us the purpose and plan of the one sovereign will of heaven and earth, according to His own perfect **law** and unalterable **promise**, in unspeakable love, for the benefit of His own children, at the infinite cost of the precious blood of Jesus Christ, the Son and Lamb of God.

That it was chosen of God in His own providence is proved by the fact that it was used, under the control of the Holy Spirit, by the writers of the New Testament Scripture, exactly as they found it in the LXX version of the Old Testament. Behm, as above referred to, p 106f, states his conclusion thus: "The dominant meaning of diatheke in the New Testament is **unilateral disposition, arrangement, declaration of will**." As a religious term, diatheke had this sense exclusively. More accurately defined, diatheke is **God's Disposition**,

the powerful demonstration of the sovereign will of God in history, through which He controls the relationship between Himself and mankind in conformity with His plan of salvation; the authoritative divine regulation of the world; . . . a witness

to the majesty of the God of the Bible in the absolute sovereignty and independent efficiency with which He brings to consummation His Gospel dispensation."

(To be continued)

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## *Who is to be King?*

By the Rev. Samuel E. Boyle

**A criticism of the World Council of Churches suggested by the reading of Dr. G. K. A. Bell's recent book, "The Kingship of Christ," reviewed in this issue of "Blue Banner Faith & Life."**

Dr. G. K. A. Bell, Bishop of Chichester, and honorary president of the World Council of Churches, chose to give his brief story of the origins, organization and achievements of the World Council the title, "The Kingship of Christ." Taking as his opening paragraph in this book a quotation from Ruskin, Dr. Bell fastens on one little question in that quotation, "**One kingdom; - but who is to be king?**" "The answer to which the Christian Church is committed," answers the Bishop, "is that the true King is Christ."

Some readers may recall a small book published a few years ago on the subject of "The Kingship of Christ," written by Dr. Visser 't Hooft, General Secretary for the World Council. The same tricky ambiguity of language which characterized that book seems to mark the discussion by Dr. Bell of the "Kingship of Christ" in relation to the ecumenical movement of which he is the ardent defender.

"The Kingship and a Divided Church" is the subject of Chapter One, and the author gives a rather painstaking statement of what he means by the Kingdom and the Church. Probably any orthodox reader would be tempted to accept this discussion as Biblically sound, and hence not objectionable. As, for illustration, in this statement: "The Church, then, is not itself the realization of the Kingdom of God on earth. It serves the Kingdom, and is not an end in itself." (Page 14.) But when we think of the subtle counterfeits current in Protestantism on this difficult subject of the Kingdom of God on earth, we are wise to scrutinize the World Council's use of the sacred term with the utmost caution.

In brief, Dr. Bell makes the customary application of his theme by saying that the Church's duty is to bear witness to "the Kingdom" until all the world comes under the "Kingship of Jesus Christ." That is the church's main task. In the pathway of our successful obedience, however, lie the scandalous divisions among Christians. The "sin of schism" and the "scandal of our divisions" keep the Church from going forward in her task of building the Kingdom of God on earth. Therefore

we must labor to heal those divisions so that the **united church** may bring the whole world into subjection to Christ the King.

"There is one body and one spirit . . . one Lord, one faith, one baptism. (Eph. 4:4-5," shows that the original plan of Christ was that of an undivided Christian Church. "It is now divided." Dr. Bell traces hastily the history of this division. He speaks of the first great schism as the "Great Schism" between the East and the West. On July 16, 1054 A.D. the Roman Church's legates laid an excommunication in writing on the high altar of the great church of Sancta Sophia (Constantinople) and departed, shaking the dust from their feet and crying, "Let God look and judge."

Then comes a rather astonishing statement, "**The second great breach was the Reformation in the sixteenth century.** It was the revolution within Western Christendom against the authority of the See of Rome . . ."

After summarizing the continued course of schism in post-Reformation Protestant churches, Dr. Bell exclaims: "No wonder that a movement which seeks to overcome the divisions within the Church, and to draw the various Christian communions together, should be a matter of the highest importance to Christendom as a whole. No wonder that Archbishop William Temple should acclaim this 'world-wide Christian fellowship, this Ecumenical Movement as it has been called, as the great new fact of our era." (Page 18)

### **What About the WCC "Kingdom of God"?**

It is urgently necessary to ask ourselves when hearing World Council talk of honored Christian terms, "Do these words mean what the historical Christian Churches have thought they meant when they used such terms? Or is the WCC language designed to mask Biblical bluntness, to gloss over the offence of revealed Truth so that men who do not accept the infallibility of the Bible can go along with those who do?"

No more difficult a topic for Christians exists than this "Kingdom of God" concept, or its corollary, "The Kingship of Christ." Differing explanations are legion. What does the WCC mean by it? Dr. Bell has tried to give his answer in pages 11-14 of the book now under review. Before accepting at face value his words, it might be well to get a

book such as Dr. L. Berkhof's **The Kingdom of God** (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Mich, 1951,) and study Dr. Berkhof's explanation of the distorted uses of the term "Kingdom of God" made by famous but unorthodox scholars such as Albrecht Ritschl, Seeley, Maurice, Shailer Matthews, Rauschenbusch, Gladden, etc., of the social gospel and humanitarian school, or by Barth, Brunner and other neo-orthodox advocates in recent years.

Dr. Berkhof points out that the Reformed theologians derived their doctrine of the Kingdom from the Bible. Ritschl and other brilliant philosophical theologians, though claiming also to build on the revelation and authority of Jesus, actually followed **human** speculation.

There is no intent here to accuse Dr. Bell of heresy on this point. He is an Anglican and the Anglicans still show a remarkable stability of language, at least, in their discussions. The rigid Biblical language of the Book of Common Prayer keeps a rather orthodox crust on the Church of England, no matter what sort of rationalist "filling" exists under that crust. But our criticism of Dr. Bell's hasty definition of "The Kingdom" is that it seems designed to cover with ambiguous generalities the furiously hostile points-of-view on "The Kingdom of God" which are known to be held by leading theologians inside the World Council.

This question is raised only to warn readers that when liberal spokesmen for the World Council talk of "The Kingship of Christ" it is no proof that they are in agreement with the Bible on this point. A warning is necessary for Covenanters, we believe, for our people are much too prone to receive with uncritical joy any book or any oratorical boost to "the Kingdom of God" or "the Kingship of Christ," that which we call distinctive emphasis of our church. The doctrine which brought our denomination into being, and which still makes us a crusading body for constitutional acknowledgement of Christ in the Constitution of the United States, was derived from the Bible. It came from stern Calvinists who believed in the possibility and necessity of a literal Christian State built not only on the Bible as the Divine Law of the land, but also on defending a Presbyterian state church. That we in the United States have diluted and altered the original Covenanter concept in the course of 300 years still does not enable us to join hands today with liberals and World Council propagandists in their talk of "Christ the King."

The modernistic concept of "the Kingdom" will be found couched exclusively in terms of humanitarian reforms; it is less concerned with theological matters governing the personal relation of man to God than with the practical social and economic problems of wages, social justice, poverty, war, etc. Always the modernist talks of Jesus, and the "principles of Jesus," instead of applying Biblical righteousness taken from the Bible studied as a complete and infallible Guide to men. Their

"Kingdom" becomes merely another name for the ethical state of affairs in which men will all adopt and obey the teachings of Jesus in personal and social life. This Kingdom can be brought in by our human efforts in living a life of "love" and in exhorting men to change from self-centered individualism to bring in a socially beneficial revolution of our "sinful" social order.

This modernistic Kingdom neglects the urgency of man's sinful nature and of our utterly hopeless state as fallen sons of Adam. It spiritualizes the cross into moralistic self-sacrifice, talks of vague "social regeneration" and belittles the importance of life after death in Heaven or Hell, depending on a sinner's acceptance of or neglect of Jesus Christ the only Saviour from eternal torment.

Under such a view of the Kingdom, the church is little more than a religious "cell" to be used in bringing in the social Utopia by human efforts. Religion itself, by more extreme teachers, is only valued as an emotional aid to the battle for a better social order. The goal of this agitation is the perfect earthly order which is called by its devotees, "The Kingdom of God on earth."

An interesting development which has come into the World Council more recently is the unwelcome intrusion of the eschatological interpretation of the Kingdom of God. At Evanston that was central battle. Yet with Barthianism rampant among its delegates even that "new look" of the World Council must be discounted. The confusion and disagreement over this problem caused **Life Magazine** (Aug. 30) to write, "Not only were the delegates at Evanston miles apart on such unifying questions as baptism, communion and the ordination of ministers, but they could no even agree on the meaning of the assembly's main theme, 'Christ the Hope of the World.'"

Nevertheless, we, too, need much to deepen our own understanding of God's Word on this question of the Kingdom of God on earth and the Kingship of Christ. But I think we shall not find much help in such study from the uncertain sound which came out Evanston, Illinois WCC Assembly last August, nor from Dr. Bell's book, "The Kingship of Christ."

#### **The Ecumenical Problem**

Prof. Dr. G. Ch. Aalders has raised the question in **The Reformation Review** concerning the right use of the word "ecumenical" by the World Council movement people. As is known, the Greek word from which "ecumenical" is derived means the whole inhabited world. Luke 2:1 uses it "And it came to pass that in those days there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world (**pasan ten oikoumenen**) should be taxed."

The word is defined thus by Dr. Bell: "The word 'Ecumenical,' as we shall use it, means both 'world-wide' (literally 'the inhabited earth') and

'that spiritual traffic between the Churches which draws them out of their isolation and into a fellowship of conversation, mutual enrichment, common witness and common action.' (P. 18)

The original sense of the word in Christian history was that of occasional ecumenical meetings of the unified church, embracing the whole world-reach of the church. Delegates would meet for conference on the problems of the local churches, but all agreed on a common basis of faith.

The new use of the term introduces a different idea, that of getting churches with different doctrines and irreconcilable views on the question of church authority or worship, to come together to resolve their differences and to form one movement or one united church. The desirability of reaching unity, and the need for such unity may be admitted, but the World Council's device of ignoring or toning down the objective criterion of Bible truth in a rush to wipe out serious historical differences does not meet that need. It will fail. *Time Magazine*, September 13, reported: "Greek Orthodox Archbishop Michael said: 'We cannot speak of the repentance of the church, which is intrinsically holy and unerring. . . . We believe that the return of the communions to. . . the pure, unchanged and common heritage of the forefathers . . . shall alone produce the desired reunion. . . . The Holy Orthodox Church alone has preserved in full and intact 'the faith once delivered to the saints.' "

The Greek Orthodox Church holds itself as much an infallible church as does the Church of Rome, and takes the opportunity at each session of the World Council to call the rest of the churches back into the fold. At least the Orthodox Church recognizes the need of a standard.

"Ecumenical," then, has gotten a new meaning today. Even in a town of 2000 inhabitants, if the local churches can be persuaded to unite on a picnic, or a series of revival meetings, or in some released time religious training program, this is welcomed as evidence of something "ecumenical." Needless to say, this is not the accurate meaning of the term, yet it has now become current usage and is understood.

#### The Basis for World Council Unity

One expression often heard from World Council spokesmen is that Christian groups must meet together **"to manifest our essential oneness."** (Dr. Bell's book, page 105.) This peculiar idea is possibly the genius of the whole WCC movement. Start with the groups which now exist. Get them together, get them to talking and loving one another (no matter what outrageous disagreements may have existed to separate them in past denominational history,) and so we **"manifest our essential oneness."** One might almost say that

the chief desire of such meetings is usually that of seeking to cover up fundamental disagreements.

Some may object that the WCC has a creedal basis. Dr. Bell gives us the WCC creed on page 74, **"The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which accept our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour."** He hastens to explain, though, **"It is not a creedal test to judge Churches or persons. . ."** Many cases of the violation of the slender creedal faith adopted by the WCC in actual admission of some churches which deny the deity of Christ can be cited. I quote from an address by Dr. L. Prasmmsma, the Netherdands, given at the I.C.C.C. Plenary Congress in Philadelphia last August:

"...I speak of my own country, the Netherlands. Among the churches which participate in the World Council of Churches is the Fellowship of Remonstrants, a liberal church union. This fellowship has criticized the word 'God' in the basis-formula of the World Council of Churches. They hold it should not be, 'Jesus Christ as God and Saviour,' but rather 'Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.' This objection has been delivered to the World Council of Churches. It was an objection to the divinity of Christ. What did the secretary, Dr. Visser 't Hooft, answer? He did **not** answer that a church which attacks or rejects the divinity of Christ cannot be a member of the World Council of Churches. He answered, 'The basis-formula is not a confession, in the same manner as the World Council is not a church.' He answered, too, that the Council does not concern itself about the manner in which the churches wish to interpret the basis-formula. Here again we have relativism, and we stand before a riddle.

"Churches come together on a basis. That basis is, 'Jesus Christ as God and Saviour.' But these churches do not **confess** this; they do not proclaim this throughout the world. But if we say, 'Oh, I now understand the matter. The World Council of Churches is not a communion of believers; it is only a conference of churchmen who can speak with one another,' then the World Council of Churches replies that we are mistaken, and declares that they **are** a communion of believers. And we read in the messages which are launched by the World Council, 'We are one in the faith of Jesus Christ.' "

Dr. Bell also admits this principle of concession to unbelievers in his sixteenth chapter, "National and Local Action." Describing the National British Council of Churches, he states that the basis of membership in it is exactly the same as that of the World Council, with "the exception that two bodies, belonging to one or three amalgamating agencies, which had not accepted the basis, viz, the Unitarians and the Friends, also belong." (P. 159, 160.)

A Christian magazine recently stated that the Norwegian Bishop Berggrav attempted to have the Evanston Assembly insert some phrase in their brief creedal statement such as "according to the Holy Scriptures," but the motion was lost on a technicality; the time for introducing such changes had already passed. Since my Norwegian friends in Japan have always described Bishop Berggrav as a "liberal," it is hardly probable that even his motion represented a step toward a Biblical basis for the World Council of Churches.

#### Conclusion

In another article I wish to discuss some of the practical attempts made by the World Council in seeking to bring the Roman Catholic Church into their fellowship, as well as their friendliness to the Russian Orthodox Church and to certain pro-Red theologians in "Iron Curtain" countries. Another interesting report will be made on the little known but constantly powerful political lobbying done by the World Council through the World Council's "Commission of the Churches on International Affairs," and their refugee service in co-operation with the United Nations.

My next report will deal also with the fruits of the World Council on the mission fields of

China, India and Japan, as well as other Asian countries.

In February, 1950, I walked into the General Headquarters of the Supreme Command for Allied Powers in Tokyo to get permission for our mission to enter Japan. A clerk of our United States Government directed me to a gentleman seated at a desk on the other side of the room. There were two desks. One was occupied by a Roman Catholic priest, the other by a Protestant minister who had formerly been a missionary to Korea. He represented the World Council of Churches service through the National Christian Council of Japan and other such bodies, and had a job with General MacArthur's office to pass on the application of every mission wishing to enter Japan. This gentleman told me to my face that if our mission wished to enter Japan, we must clear all papers through him. I found later that this was not necessary. American freedom of religion never binds its citizens to such necessities. A Bible Presbyterian mission in Tokyo approved our entry applications and they were granted without trouble. Neither the Pope of Rome nor the WCC got to help our mission. Hallelujah!

(To be continued.)

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## *The Importance of Christian Scholarship*

By J. Gresham Machen, D. D., D.Litt.

**Note:** This series of articles by the late Dr. J. Gresham Machen, comprising his lectures before the Bible League of England, is reproduced here by permission of the William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. — Ed.

It seems to me, as I stand here before you to-day, that there is one blessing in these days of defection and unbelief which we have come to value as we never valued it before. That is the blessing of Christian fellowship in the presence of a hostile world, and in the presence of a visible Church which too often has departed from the Word of God. To-day, during the three meetings of this League, in the portion of the meetings which has been allotted to me, I am to have the privilege of delivering three addresses on the subject, "The Importance of Christian Scholarship."

It is no doubt unfortunate that the person who speaks about this subject should have so limited an experimental acquaintance with the subject about which he is endeavouring to speak; but in these days of anti-intellectualism you may be willing to hear a word in defence of the intellect, even from one whose qualifications for speaking on that subject are so limited as mine.

There was a time when the raising of the question as to the importance of Christian scholarship might have seemed to be ridiculous; there was a time when a man who does so much talking as a minister or a Sunday School teacher does, and as no doubt every Christian ought to do, in the propagation of the Faith to which he adheres, would have regarded it as a matter of course that he ought to know something about the subject of which he undertakes to talk.

#### Modern Teaching

But in recent years we have got far beyond all such elementary considerations as that; modern pedagogy has emancipated us, whether we be in the pulpit or in the professor's chair or in the pew, from anything so irksome as earnest labour in the acquisition of knowledge. It never seems to occur to many modern teachers that the primary business of the teacher is to study the subject that he is going to teach. Instead of studying the subject that he is going to teach, he studies "education"; a knowledge of the methodology of teaching takes the place of a knowledge of the particular branch of literature, history or science to which a man has devoted his life.

This substitution of methodology for content

in the preparation of the teacher is based upon a particular view of what education is. It is based upon the view that education consists primarily, not in the imparting of information, but in a training of the faculties of the child; that the business of the teacher is not to teach, but to develop in the child a faculty which will enable the child to learn.

This child-centred notion of education seems to involve emancipation from a vast amount of drudgery. It used to be thought necessary to do some hard work at school. When a textbook was given to a class, it was expected that the contents of the textbook should be mastered. But now all that has been changed. Storing up facts in the mind was a long and painful process, and it is indeed comforting to know that we can now do without it. Away with all drudgery and all hard work! Self-expression has taken their place. A great pedagogic discovery has been made — the discovery that it is possible to think with a completely empty mind.

It cannot be said that the results of the discovery are impressive. This child-centred notion of education has resulted, particularly in America, where it has been most ruthlessly applied, in a boundless superficiality of which we Americans certainly have little reason to be proud; but it has probably not been confined to America by any means. I wonder when the reaction will come. I wonder when we shall have that revival of learning which we so much need, and which I verily believe might be, in the providence of God, as was the Renaissance of the fifteenth century, the precursor of a Reformation in the Church. When that revival of learning comes, we may be sure that it will sweep away the present absurd over-emphasis upon methodology in teaching at the expense of content. We shall never have a true revival of learning until teachers turn their attention away from the mere mental processes of the child, out into the marvellous richness and variety of the universe and of human life. Not teachers who have studied the methodology of teaching, but teachers who are on fire with a love of the subjects that they are going to teach are the real torch-bearers of intellectual advance.

#### "Religious Education"

Certainly the present view of education is, when it is applied to the work of the preacher and of the teacher in the Church, sceptical to the core. It is summed up in what is called "religious education." I wonder sometimes at the readiness with which Christian people — I do not mean Church-members, but real Bible-believing Christians — use that term; for the ordinary implications of the term are quite opposed to the Christian religion. The fundamental notion underlying the ordinary use of the term "religious education" is that the business of the teacher in the Church

is not to impart knowledge of a fixed body of truth which God has revealed, but to train the religious faculty of the child. The religious faculty of the child, it is supposed, may be trained by the use of the most widely diverse doctrinal content; it may be trained in this generation, perhaps, by the thought of a personal God; but in another generation it may be trained equally well by the thought of an ideal humanity as the only God there is. Thus the search for objective and permanent truth is given up, and instead we have turned our attention to the religious faculties of man. In other words, men have become interested to-day in religion because they have ceased to believe in God.

As over against such scepticism, **the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, presents a body of truth which God has revealed;** and if we hold the Biblical view, we shall regard it as our supreme function, as teachers and as preachers and as Christian parents and as simple Christians, to impart a knowledge of that body of truth. The Christian preacher, we shall hold, needs above all to know the thing that he is endeavouring to preach.

But if knowledge is necessary to preaching, it does seem probable that the fuller the knowledge is, the better the preacher will be able to do his work. **Underlying preaching, in other words, is Christian scholarship;** and it is in defence of Christian scholarship that I have thought it might be fitting to say a few words to you to-day.

Christian scholarship is necessary to the preacher, and to the man who in whatever way, in public or in private, endeavours to proclaim the gospel to his fellow-men, in at least three ways.

#### I. THE IMPORTANCE OF CHRISTIAN SCHOLARSHIP FOR EVANGELISM

In the first place, it is necessary for evangelism. In saying so, I am perfectly well aware of the fact that I am putting myself squarely in conflict with a method of religious work which is widely prevalent at the present time. Knowledge, the advocates of that method seem to think, is quite unnecessary to faith; at the beginning a man may be a Fundamentalist or a Modernist, he may hold a Christian or anti-Christian view of Christ. Never mind; he is to be received, quite apart from his opinions, on the basis of simple faith. Afterwards, indeed, he will, if he has really been converted, read his Bible and come to a more and more correct view of Christ and of the meaning of Christ's death. If he does not come to a more and more correct view, one may perhaps suspect that his conversion was not a real one after all. But at the beginning all that is thought to be unnecessary. All that a man has to believe in at the beginning is conversion: he is saved

on the basis of simple faith; correct opinions about God and Christ come later.

With regard to this method, it may of course be said at once that the "simple faith" thus spoken of is not faith at all; or, rather, it is not faith in Christ. A man cannot trust a person whom he holds to be untrustworthy. **Faith always contains an intellectual element.** A very little knowledge is often sufficient if a man is to believe, but some knowledge there must be. **So if a man is to trust Christ he must know something about Christ;** he may know only a very little, but without some knowledge he could not believe at all.

What these advocates of a "simple faith" which involves no knowledge of Christ really mean by "simple faith" is faith, perhaps, but it is not faith in Christ. It is faith in the practitioners of the method; but it is not faith in Christ. **To have faith in Christ one must have knowledge of Christ,** however slight; and it is not a matter of indifference whether the opinions held about Christ are true or false.

#### **New Testament Evangelism**

But is this modern anti-intellectualistic view of faith in accordance with the New Testament? Does the New Testament offer a man salvation first, on the basis of a psychological process of conversion or surrender — falsely called faith — and then preach the gospel to him afterwards; or does the New Testament preach the gospel to him first, set forth to him first the facts about Christ and the meaning of His death, and then ask him to accept the One thus presented in order that his soul may be saved?

That question can be answered very simply by an examination of the examples of conversion which the New Testament contains.

#### **Pentecost**

Three thousand were converted on the day of Pentecost. They were converted by Peter's sermon. What did Peter's sermon contain? Did it contain merely an account of Peter's own experience of salvation; did it consist solely in exhortation to the people to confess their sins? Not at all. What Peter did on the day of Pentecost was to set forth the facts about Jesus Christ — His life, His miracles, His death, His resurrection. It was on the basis of that setting forth of the facts about Christ that the three thousand believed, confessed their sins, and were saved.

#### **Philippi**

Paul and Silas were in prison one night at Philippi. There was a miracle; the prisoners were released. The gaoler was impressed and said, "What must I do to be saved?" Paul and Silas said: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Did the gaoler believe then and

there; was he saved without further delay? I think not. We are expressly told that Paul and Silas, after that, "spake unto him the word of the Lord." Then and not till then was he baptised, and I think we are plainly to understand that then and not till then was he saved.

#### **Christ and the Woman of Samaria**

Our Saviour sat one day by the well. He talked with a sinful woman, and laid His finger upon the sore spot in her life. "Thou hast had five husbands," He said; "and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband." The woman then apparently sought to evade the consideration of the sin in her own life by asking a theological question regarding the right place in which to worship God. What did Jesus do with her theological question? Did He brush it aside after the manner of modern religious workers? Did He say to the woman: "You are evading the real question; do not trouble yourself about theological matters, but let us return to the consideration of the sin in your life"? Not at all. He answered that theological question with the utmost fulness as though the salvation of the woman's soul depended on her obtaining the right answer. In reply to that sinful woman, and to what modern religious workers would have regarded as an evasive question, Jesus engaged in some of the profoundest theological teaching in the whole New Testament. A right view of God, according to Jesus, is not something that comes after salvation, but it is something necessary to salvation.

#### **Paul's Missionary Preaching**

The Apostle Paul in the First Epistle to the Thessalonians gives a precious summary of his missionary preaching. He does so by telling what it was to which the Thessalonians turned when they were saved. Was it a mere programme of life to which they turned? Was it a "simple faith," in the modern sense which divorces faith from knowledge and supposes that a man can have "simple faith" in a person of whom he knows nothing or about whom he holds opinions that make faith in him absurd? Not at all. In turning to Christ those Thessalonian Christians turned to a whole system of theology. "Ye turned to God from idols," says Paul, "to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivereth us from the wrath to come." "Ye turned to God from idols" — there is theology proper. "And to wait for His Son from heaven"—there is Christology. "Whom He raised from the dead"—there is the supernatural act of God in history. "Even Jesus" — there is the humanity of our Lord. "Which delivereth us from the wrath to come" — there is the Christian doctrine of sin and the Christian doctrine of the Cross of Christ.

So it is in the New Testament from beginning to end. The examples might be multiplied

indefinitely. The New Testament gives not one bit of comfort to those who separate faith from knowledge, to those who hold the absurd view that a man can trust a person about whom he knows nothing. **What many men despise to-day as "doctrine" the New Testament calls the gospel;** and the New Testament treats it as the message upon which salvation depends.

But if that be so, if salvation depends upon the message in which Christ is offered as Saviour, **it is obviously important that we should get the message straight.** That is where Christian scholarship comes in. Christian scholarship is important in order that we may tell the story of Jesus and His love straight and full and plain.

### **The Simplicity of the Gospel!**

At this point, indeed, an objection may arise. Is not the gospel a very simple thing, it may be asked; and will not its simplicity be obscured by too much scholarly research? The objection springs from a false view of what scholarship is; it springs from the notion that scholarship leads a man to be obscure. Exactly the reverse is the case. Ignorance is obscure; but scholarship brings order out of confusion, places things in their logical relations, and makes the message shine forth clear.

There are, indeed, evangelists who are not scholars, but scholarship is necessary to evangelism all the same. In the first place, though there are evangelists who are not scholars, the greatest evangelists, like the Apostle Paul and like Martin Luther, have been scholars. In the second place, the evangelists who are not scholars are dependent upon scholars to help them get their message straight; it is out of a great underlying fund of Christian learning that true evangelism springs.

### **Life Founded on Truth**

That is something that the Church of our day needs to take to heart. **Life, according to the New Testament, is founded upon truth;** and the attempt to reverse the order results only in despair and in spiritual death. Let us not deceive ourselves, my friends. Christian experience is necessary to evangelism; but evangelism does not consist merely in the rehearsal of what has happened in the evangelist's own soul. We shall, indeed, be but poor witnesses for Christ if we can tell only what Christ has done for the world or for the Church and cannot tell what He has done personally for us. But we shall also be poor witnesses if we recount only the experiences of our own lives. Christian evangelism does not consist merely in a man's going about the world saying: "Look at me, what a wonderful experience I have, how happy I am, what wonderful Christian virtues I

exhibit; you can all be as good and as happy as I am if you will just make a complete surrender of your wills in obedience to what I say." That is what many religious workers seem to think that evangelism is. We can preach the gospel, they tell us, by our lives, and do not need to preach it by our words. But they are wrong. **Men are not saved by the exhibition of our glorious Christian virtues;** they are not saved by the contagion of our experiences. We cannot be the instruments of God in saving them if we preach to them thus only ourselves. Nay, we must preach to them the Lord Jesus Christ; for it is only through the gospel which sets Him forth that they can be saved.

### **How to be Saved**

If you want health for your souls, and if you want to be the instruments of bringing health to others, do not turn your gaze forever within, as though you could find Christ there. Nay, turn your gaze away from your own miserable experiences, away from your own sin, to the Lord Jesus Christ as He is offered to us in the gospel. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up." Only when we turn away from ourselves to that uplifted Saviour shall we have healing for our deadly hurt.

It is the same old story, my friends — the same old story of the natural man. Men are trying to-day, as they have always been trying, to save themselves — to save themselves by their own act of surrender, by the excellence of their own faith, by mystic experiences of their own lives. But it is all in vain. Not that way is peace with God to be obtained. It is to be obtained only in the old, old way — by attention to something that was done once for all long ago, and by acceptance of the living Saviour who there, once for all, brought redemption for our sin. Oh, that men would turn for salvation from their own experience to the Cross of Christ; oh, that they would **turn from the phenomena of religion to the living God!**

That that may be done, there is but one way. It is not found in a study of the psychology of religion; it is not found in "religious education"; it is not found in an analysis of one's own spiritual states. Oh, no. It is found only in the blessed written Word. There are the words of life. There God speaks. Let us attend to His voice. Let us above all things know the Word. Let us study it with all our minds, let us cherish it with all our hearts. Then let us try, very humbly, to bring it to the unsaved. Let us pray that God may honour not the messengers but the message, that despite our unworthiness He may make His Word upon our unworthy lips to be a message of life.

(To be continued)

# *The Song of One Who Has Found Refuge in God, the Righteous Judge*

The Seventh Psalm

By the Rev. Frank D. Frazer

This song is entitled "Shiggaion," a term no longer understood. The ancient Greek version renders it simply "Psalm," for it was "sung to Jehovah." It was occasioned, as the heading explains, by "the words of Cush, a Benjamite."

Words are not deeds, but if untrue they hurt. They deceive others and incite to deeds hurtful to the cause of truth and righteousness in the age-long conflict with falsehood and wickedness. King Saul, the arch-enemy of David, was himself a Benjamite, and Cush may have been one of his tools.

At any rate David had been falsely accused, was being persecuted without cause. He was not a traitor; he was a servant of God. Like wolves, enemies gathered around to take his life. But he had already found a refuge; he had entered into the covenant of Jehovah. He could call Jehovah "my God," and as long as he was with Jehovah, Jehovah was with him. So,

## 1. He Cries for Deliverance. (v. 1,2.)

**"O Jehovah, my God, in Thee I have taken refuge; Save me from all that pursue me, and deliver me! Lest, like a lion he tear my soul, Rendering in pieces while there is no deliverer."**

Jehovah's Covenant of Grace was first formulated in terms of conflict, of defeat and victory. Its protective strength has ever since been demonstrated in the battle between right and wrong. David knew by experience the blessedness of "all who take refuge in HIM," (Ps. 2:12.) Of this blessedness we find expression in no less than 26 of the Psalms by the same word; the verb translated "take refuge in" or, "put trust in" God the LORD, and the corresponding noun, "refuge," in the Almighty, or under the shadow of His wings. Also, in many other Psalms by words of the same import, such as "high tower," "fortress," "rock", "hiding place," etc. This is one of the principal themes of the Psalms both for the individual and for the church. "God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble."

David in his experiences often appears as a type of Christ. "They hated me without a cause." (Jn. 15:25.) And Christ is still saying to His disciples, "A servant is not greater than His Lord; if they persecuted me, they will also persecute you." "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." Can it be that one reason the church has so largely discarded

the use of these psalms in praise to God is that it no longer feels the need for such expression? And, why does it not feel the need of so large a part of the Book of Praises? They were not written for an armistice; they have nothing to do with compromise or appeasement of the forces of evil and deceit. Will there have to come another time of great persecution before the church will regain its stand in fidelity to God and His Word?

God is to be found on the ground of His everlasting covenant. That is where we shall have to take our stand, if we have deliverance from the enemies of our souls. Beside Him there is no Saviour. He has put righteousness before peace, and no power of earth or hell can reverse His order.

Yet anyone who takes his stand with God for truth and righteousness in this world may expect to be pursued by the hypocrites and compromisers with their calumnies and half-truths. He will be shouted down and maligned by those who for some selfish reason seek to appease the evil powers. They will, if possible, drag him from the witness stand and discredit his testimony. This goes on both in church and in state today.

Child-like acceptance of God's provision finds peace and safety in the refuge of God. And whosoever loves righteousness and hates wickedness, whose enemies are not merely personal, but primarily enemies of God and righteousness,

## 2. Confidently Submits His Case for Trial. (v. 3-5.)

**"O Jehovah, my God, if I have done this; If there be iniquity in my hand; If I rewarded evil to him that was at peace with me, — (In fact, I delivered him that without cause was mine enemy) — Let the adversary pursue my soul and overtake it; And let him tread down my life to the earth, And lay my glory in the dust."**

We know that David, on more than one occasion, when Saul was in his power, let him go free, (I Sam. 24 & 26;) he saved the life of Shimei, who had thrown stones and curses at him, (II Sam. 16 & 19.)

Jesus submitted to the authorities, but challenged the threat of the Roman Governor, "Thou wouldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above."

And Paul, "If I am a wrong-doer, and have done anything worthy of death, I refuse not to

die; but if none of those things is true whereof these accuse me, no man can give me up to them, I appeal ... (to a higher court.)' " So the psalmist here

### 3. Appeals to the Judgment of the Righteous God. (v. 6-9.)

**"Arise, O Jehovah, in Thine anger; Lift up Thyself against the fierce attacks of mine enemies; And awake for me! Thou hast commanded judgment! So let the assembly of the peoples gather around Thee; And over them do Thou return on high. Let Jehovah judge the peoples: Let justice be done for me, O Jehovah. According to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity, so let it be to me. O let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end, but do Thou establish the righteous! Even Thou who triest hearts and minds, — the Righteous God!"**

The Supreme Court exists to hear and uphold the righteous cause. It is provided to safeguard the rights and liberties of all the people. God is the final Judge. He has ordained judgment. And when appeal is made to Him, He will return to His judgment-seat above all the peoples, that all may have the benefit of His decisions, to the end that the wickedness of the wicked be brought to an end, and the righteous be established. Wickedness in the abstract can do no evil; as far as this world is concerned, its effects are accomplished only by the work of men who have sold themselves to be the slaves of sin. They are the ones responsible, and therefore the judgment is justly upon them according to their deeds. Righteousness as a mere ideal accomplishes no good. It finds its effectiveness in the obedient acts of the servants of God, who shall be established according to their deeds.

This suppliant is not asking for indulgence or favoritism, but for judgment according to the law and the facts. His is not the complaint of a Pharisee, who boasts that he is always right, but a sincere request for the decision of the Righteous Judge, that there may be no "if" in the matter. He knows that God tries heart and mind, to expose the motive behind the act, but his heart is open toward God. "Search me, O God, and know my heart: Try me and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me." He knows the law of God and loves to keep it. He knows his covenant rights, and will use them, not only for his own vindication, but rather for the glory of God and the good of all the people. Immediately,

### 4. He Sees God Seated for Judgment. (v. 10-13.)

**"My shield is with God, who saves the upright in heart. God is the Righteous Judge, Yea, the God who is angry every day. If (a man) turn not, He sharpens His sword; His bow He hath bent, and made it ready. Yea, for that man He hath**

**prepared the instruments of death; He maketh His arrows burning shafts."**

"God hath prepared His throne for judgment." On one side He holds the shield for the protection of the righteous; on the other are the weapons for destruction of the wicked. His everlasting covenant has set life and death before all men, and urges all to choose life. He saves those whose hearts are right with God, — made right by His almighty Spirit. "In the secret of Thy presence Thou wilt hide them from the plottings of men; Thou wilt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues."

But those who will not repent "shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power."

The psalmists, under the guidance of God's Holy Spirit, were realists, not pietists. They recognized the fact that sin cannot be removed from this world except by the removal of all persons who love their own wickedness and hate the perfect righteousness of God. If there were no Righteous Judge of all the earth, able to execute His sentence, the whole earth would be hell. Those who sanctimoniously abhor judgment are the very ones who persecute the righteous, and accuse the Judge. So the modern Liberals put the faithful servant of God out of the Church, and make peace with the atheists. But the singer of this Psalm,

### 5. Sees the Downfall of the Wicked. (v. 14-16.)

**"Behold, (that man) travaileth with iniquity; Yea, he hath conceived mischief, and brought forth lies. He digged a pit, and made it for a grave; And is fallen into the hole which he made. His mischief returns upon his own head, And upon his own pate his violence falls."**

That man was receptive to an idea that offered a way to by-pass his duty to God and man. It seemed to be good; pleasant to think about; "to be desired to make one wise." But it developed, after its kind, into a monstrous evil thing, with malice toward God and man, and at last upon himself. He has been deceived, but will not acknowledge it. "Lust when it hath conceived bringeth forth sin; and sin when it is fullgrown bringeth forth death." He digged a pit to be the grave of one he hated, but stumbled and fell into it himself. Then all the malignity and cruelty he had heaped upon others fell on him.

Thus the psalmist reviews the earthly course of the sinner as it is run against the warnings and restrictions of God's merciful rule. Sooner or later retribution overtakes the wicked. It may be delayed, for God is long-suffering and compassionate, "not willing that any should perish." He gives time and inducements for repentance, for He rules to establish truth and righteousness. Controlling all existence are the operations of His providence, "His most holy, wise and powerful

preserving and governing all His creatures and all their actions." There is no limit to His power to accomplish "the thing that is good and acceptable and perfect." A finite god is merely the imaginary creation of sinful desire. Jehovah so overrules the sinful acts of men that they occur only by His permission; they may go so far, but not farther. He will use them to further the accomplishment of His own purposes. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee: the remainder of wrath Thou wilt restrain."

If we read history; if we are alert to what goes on around us today, we may see that thus God is always working. Therefore, any man in trouble or danger for righteousness' sake, anywhere, at any time, may find refuge in the living and faithful God. He may call for help, and God will do for him more than he was able to ask. Then in the new experience of God's marvelous grace and power,

**6. Thanksgiving and Praise Burst from His Heart to God.** (v. 17.)

**"I give thanks unto Jehovah according to His righteousness, And sing praises to the Name of Jehovah Most High."**

"In the day that I called, Thou didst answer me . . . For though Jehovah is high, yet hath He respect unto the lowly." "Thou are my hiding place; Thou preservest me from trouble: Thou surroundest me with songs of deliverance."

But how can a sinful man give thanks to God "according to His righteousness" which is "very high," "like the mountains of God;" infinite like His holiness and justice? Only by His grace in providing for us by His Holy Spirit, such thoughts and words as are in harmony with His righteousness. He has given us a Book of Praises According to His Righteousness.

How can sinful men sing praises to the great and dreadful Name of Jehovah Most High? Only by coming in HIM whom God sent into the world to be GOD WITH US; whose name, whereby HE is called, is THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS; "the name that is above every name, to the end that in the name of JESUS every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that JESUS CHRIST IS LORD, to the glory of God the Father." In HIM the praise of sinners saved by grace shall never cease.

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## *Reviews of Religious Books*

The favorable reviewing of a book here is not to be understood as necessarily implying an endorsement of everything contained in it. Within the limits of the editorial policy of Blue Banner Faith and Life each reviewer is solely responsible for the opinions expressed in his reviews. Please purchase books from your book dealer or direct from the publishers; do not send orders to the manager of this magazine.

**STORY OF THE OLD WORLD**, by John De Bie, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 1954, 409 pp. \$4.95.

This book was prepared by the National Union of Christian Schools for use at Junior High School level. Assisted by a staff of six thoroughly qualified Christian educators, Mr. De Bie has produced a scientifically arranged and developed book, written in language easily understood by the pupil and in a style interesting and stimulating. The study helps are prepared by H. J. Kuiper. It is the only textbook presenting the Christian philosophy of history.

The sovereign God working out His will in the lives of men and nations produces the drama of history. "God has from the beginning directed and controlled the happenings. Only at the end of time, and from the clear light of Heaven, shall we be able to see the complete picture as it is planned by God, and understand its full meaning." (p. 13) Through the sovereign action of God, His

love and grace is revealed. "When God created the first man and the first woman, He gave them a beautiful garden to live in." (p. 17) "So we see that although God does not send rain to Egypt, He does send water and fertile soil by means of this annual flood." (p. 49) "The Spirit of God enabled Renaissance men to do things that today seem truly amazing." (p. 304) The sad effects of man's sinfully turning away from God are pointed out throughout: "But as the people grew in numbers and as they made more and more discoveries and inventions, they thought less and less about God. Their needs and desires and pleasures filled their hearts and minds . . . Because of the great wickedness on the earth God in His holiness decided to destroy the people with a great flood." (p. 19) "As man began to enjoy the good things of the earth more and more and as they grew in knowledge . . . the things of the present world crowded out any interest in the future world. One of the sad results of the Renaissance was that men began to think they could live without their Creator." (pp. 312, 313). So

history is not merely the interplay of cause and effect.

The author is a true historian and a sound educationalist. He has a clear grasp of the pattern and movement of history, and of what he must present that students may grasp the mainstream and watch it develop without getting lost in all the eddies and bays along the side. He does not weigh the pupil down with a mass of details, names, dates which make history a drudgery to many a student. His sentences are weighted and pungent. A few sentences may give the essential features of a century. He does, however, provide the skeleton in suggestive language inducing research, an essential element in the correct approach to history. For example, the Punic Wars are not mentioned by name, nor the fact that there were three of them, but the account of the struggle of Rome for supremacy over Carthage in its three distinct phases is so interestingly presented that the good student will surely find out that there were three "Punic Wars." The careful use of short sentence or topical outline summaries at the end of the chapters is a very effective aid in following the main thread. The use of many carefully chosen illustrations and maps helps to make the book interesting and effective. The material covered is from the "beginning of time. . . when God created the earth . . ." to the beginning of the 17th Century.

We thank God that a text book which definitely opposes the materialistic and evolutionary theory of life has come onto the market. We hope that it may have wide acceptance, but even though it may not be widely accepted as a text in public schools, it is available for Christian parents to have for the use of their children at home. The caliber of the book is such as to recommend the Christian interpretation of life to any who may be wavering between it and the evolutionary interpretation.

— E. Clark Copeland

ARTHUR RENDLE SHORT, SURGEON AND CHRISTIAN, by W. M. Capper & D. Johnson. Inter Varsity Fellowship, 39 Bedford Square, London, W.D.1, England 1954, 208 pp. Eight shillings six pence (\$1.20.)

By this biography, the Inter Varsity Fellowship has paid fitting tribute to one of the first promoters of the Fellowship of Evangelical Unions in English universities. Dr. Short's encouragement was not merely verbal; he often met expenses of worthy young people otherwise unable to attend summer conferences, and on a number of occasions met the deficit on the treasurer's books at the end of the year.

It is very refreshing and stimulating to meet a leader in the scientific world whose word, activity and spirit is a clear testimony to the claims

of Christ upon every phase of life. The biographers of Dr. Short have sought to preserve for us a rare example of such a man. Dr. Short was pre-eminently Christian in all his thought, aspirations, and activities. He first aspired to be a medical missionary, but when that door did not open to him, he spent his life laboring for missions in the home land. Through personal contacts, through Missionary Societies, some of which he personally organized, he was continually creating interest in, labor and support for missions. Missionaries in many countries have witnessed to the influence of Dr. Short in determining finally their missionary career.

Professionally Dr. Short ranked high. As a skilled practitioner, a professor of surgery at Bristol University Medical College, and a writer of several works of importance, he has left his mark in the medical world. His work, "The New Physiology in Surgical and Medical Practice" was a pioneer in the field of the application of the results of physiological research to practical surgery and medicine; it was soon translated into German.

Though his profession kept him fully occupied, calling him far and wide for consultation, surgery, and lecturing, Dr. Short never let it interfere except in extreme cases with his attendance at morning worship either at the Plymouth Brethren meeting place in Bristol or some other meeting in a locality where he was on the Sabbath, nor with his weekly Bible study at the Mission Hall in Bristol. He was a popular preacher at Plymouth Brethren Chapels, as well as at churches of other denominations.

His influence reached men of every class and walk of society. Besides his work among British university students and Evangelical Unions, he was called to lecture to similar groups on the Continent. His work at the Shaftsbury Workman's Institute and Public Hall in a slum district of Bristol was unique for a man of his talents and professional position. He not only taught a Bible class on the level of the "down and outer," he endeared himself to many by his practice of visiting in the homes of the members of the class. His books in the field of religion have won the hearty commendation of such men as F. F. Bruce, head of the Dept. of Biblical Studies, University of Sheffield. Some titles are, "THE HISTORIC FAITH IN THE LIGHT OF TODAY" (written in collaboration with B. Colgrave,) "THE BIBLE AND MODERN RESEARCH," "MODERN DISCOVERY AND THE BIBLE," "WHY BELIEVE," "ARCHEOLOGY GIVES EVIDENCE." Dr. Short was a clear thinker. His mind ran along apologetic lines, and he had an unusual talent in this direction. He maintained that men should examine the foundations of their faith, and that for many stable faith was impossible unless they could say that they had not followed cunningly devised fables. Also "he had no time for the

unfounded notion that our faith must be believed in the teeth of proved facts to the contrary." (p. 117) His biography should be a stimulus to young and old alike.

— E. Clark Copeland

**THE FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST**, by Alan M. Stibbs. Tyndale Press, 39 Bedford Square, London, W.C.1, England 1954, 40 pp. paper. One shilling six pence (25c.)

The Christian world both lay and clerical is deeply indebted to the Inter Varsity Fellowship for the publication of their "Monograph Series" of lectures by Evangelical authorities on various timely subjects of Christian life and doctrine. This monograph was the Tyndale Biblical Theology Lecture delivered by the Vice-Principal of Oak Hill College, London, at Cambridge, July 8, 1952.

After examining the erroneous views of such writers as Bishop A. M. Ramsey, Prof. D. M. Baillie, R. C. Moberly, E. J. Bicknell, F. C. N. Hicks, W. Norman Pittinger, and others describing an eternally continuing work of reconciliation, Professor Stibbs presents Scriptures' clear evidence that Christ had already completed the work of securing (1) man's complete deliverance from the wrath of God and (2) his free access into the divine presence when He cried, "It is finished." (p. 9.)

The evidences examined are (1) Christ's attitude towards His death as seen in His own words, such as His references to His "hour," (2) Christ's teaching concerning the nature and necessity of His death and resurrection, in which the idea of "ransom" played a most important part, (3) the witness of the sacraments, (4) the teaching of the apostles, especially Paul, on the death and resurrection of Christ. These prove that the shedding of Christ's blood and breaking of His body on the cross completed the work of remission of sin and of redemption from sin, and the essential work of reconciliation and priesthood.

The exegeses of the passages in Hebrews speaking of Christ's "ever making intercession for us" are clear, refreshing and decisive in showing the error of those who hold the doctrine of a continuing reconciliation. In examining Hebrews 7:25, 27 it is pointed out that the Greek word "entugchanein" does not mean specifically "to offer petition" but rather to undertake a person's affairs, to look after his interests, or to intervene in his favor (p. 32.) Christ is thus not "offering" himself again and again to God in heaven, but speaking by virtue of an offering which was completed and had been accepted as sufficient.

The final appeal for the validity of the doctrine of the finished work of remission and reconciliation is found in the fact that on the historical evidence of the rent veil and the empty tomb the evangelists give the Great Commission, and Paul

(II Cor. 5:18-21) finds the constraining power of his ambassadorship of Christ in the fact that God had already reconciled "us" to Himself. (Note the tense in Greek.)

Such a Biblical exegesis should be stimulating to every minister and Bible teacher whose chief concern is the accurate presentation of Biblical truth to their people that they may not be ignorant of the great hope of eternal life nor cast about by every wind of doctrine. The language and style is not too technical to be of use to the lay Bible teacher.

— E. Clark Copeland

**THE EPISTLE OF JAMES**, by Robert Johnstone. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Michigan 1954, 433 pp. \$1.25 (as part of a set: \$3.40.)

This book is one of twelve books presented by the Baker Book House and called THE CO-OPERATIVE REPRINT LIBRARY. This set may be purchased as a set at a discount. THE EPISTLE OF JAMES is a series of sermons on the book of James. Each verse of the Epistle is commented upon in the course of the book. The comments are scholarly and comprehensive. The minister will find the book helpful in his study and will welcome the critical notes on the Greek. However, you do not have to be a scholar to appreciate the book; anyone can read it and find new light on the practical book of James.

A study of the book will yield good fruit. The author is no respecter of persons and is only interested in properly interpreting the book. You will find the book stimulating reading, and the author continually brings out new lessons from the words of James.

— R. W. Caskey

**THE BOOK OF ISAIAH**, by George L. Robinson. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1954, 175 pp. \$2.50.

This handbook on Isaiah, which was originally published in 1910, is particularly well suited for Bible Study groups and for textbook use. It presents a clear, compact survey of the prophecy as a whole.

This volume will help the reader to gain a new appreciation of the breadth and beauty of Isaiah's writings. "No prophet of the Old Testament combined more perfectly than Isaiah earthly wisdom and sagacity, courage and conviction, versatility of gifts, and singleness of purpose, on the one hand, with clear vision and spiritual intuition, a love of righteousness, and a keen appreciation of Jehovah's majesty and holiness, on the other." With regard to Isaiah's literary genius and style, we read, "For versatility of expression and brilliancy of imagery Isaiah had no superior, not even a rival . . . . No other Old Testament writer uses so many beautifully picturesque illustrations."

The purpose of these studies in Isaiah, however, is not so much to make us admirers of the prophet as students of the prophet's message. It is important, first of all, that this message be treated, not as a heterogeneous mixture, but as an organic whole. "Perhaps no book of the Old Testament has suffered more from commentary interference than that of Isaiah." Dr. Robinson devotes much of his introduction and one chapter in his book to a careful discussion of "The Critical Problem," and does not hesitate to defend the unity of Isaiah. One great purpose dominates the prophet throughout; and one great theme — salvation by faith — binds all parts of this great prophecy together. "Isaiah is the Saint Paul of the Old Testament."

Two generations have passed since these studies in Isaiah were first written. The author, now retired, has appended to this new edition an interesting discussion of "The Dead Sea Scroll." He calls attention to the fact that in this ancient manuscript of Isaiah, believed to have been written during the first century B. C., chapter 40:1 is written close to the last verse of chapter 39, the scribe actually writing it on the last line of space left on the page. There is certainly no support there for the idea that these verses were written centuries apart! It is still the author's conviction that to deny the unity of The Book of Isaiah, as a whole, creates more difficulties than it explains.

In order to appreciate the force of Isaiah's message, we need some understanding of the times in which he lived, and the political conditions which existed in Judah and the surrounding nations. Valeton is quoted as saying, "Never perhaps has there been another prophet like Isaiah, who stood with his head in the clouds and his feet on the solid earth, . . . with his spirit in the eternal counsel of God and his body in a very definite moment of history." This book gives a clear picture of the historical setting for Isaiah's prophecies. At the same time, the author brings out the fact that **prediction** is the very essence and core of Isaiah's entire message. He is pre-eminently a prophet of the future.

This little volume does not attempt to tell us all we need to know about Isaiah, but it should stimulate the reader to engage in a reverent study of the book itself. The outlines which are given for the various sections of Isaiah will present an excellent framework on which such a study may be built.

— John McMillan

**THE GOD-CENTERED LIFE: THE PROVERBS OF SOLOMON, TOPICALLY ARRANGED AND BRIEFLY ANNOTATED**, by Martin A. Hopkins. Published by the author, P.O. Box 351, Athens, Georgia. 1954, pp. 92, pocket size, paper cover. 35 cents per copy; 3 for \$1.00.

This handy pocket-sized booklet presents an excellent topical arrangement of the Book of Proverbs. The contents of the book are divided into twelve chapters, as follows: I. God in the individual life of man—putting God first. II. God in the family life of man—making the home. III. God in the family life of man—maintaining the home. IV. God left out of the family life—wrecking the home. V. God in the intellectual life of man—wisdom and knowledge. VI. God in the social life of man—treatment of others. VII. God in the inner life of man—the heart and its issues. VIII. God in the ethical life of man—the righteous and the wicked: the wise and the foolish. IX. God in the commercial life of man—as the invisible Senior Partner. X. God in the national life of man—kings and rulers. XI. God in the spiritual life of man—the soul winner. XII. God in the little things of life where men think He is not concerned.

This would be an excellent booklet to give to any young person going away from home. Any Christian will benefit by studying it. We recommend it heartily.

—J. G. Vos

**WHY I AM NOT A ROMAN CATHOLIC**, by Charles B. LeFevre. Bible Truth Depot, Swengel, Pa. 12 page pocket size booklet. 7 cents each; 75c per dozen; \$5.75 per 100.

This booklet is a brief but effective answer to a Roman Catholic newspaper advertisement entitled "Why I am not a Protestant." It provides an excellent summary in brief form of the unscriptural errors of the Church of Rome. It is recommended as a tract to give those who think that the Roman Catholic system differs only slightly from the evangelical faith revealed in the Bible.

—J. G. Vos

**THE REVISED STANDARD VERSION**, by E. J. Poole-Connor. The Evangelical Book Shop, 15 College Square East, Belfast, N. Ireland. 14 page booklet. 4½d. per copy; 2s. 6d. per dozen, post-paid.

This booklet presents an appraisal of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible. The author is Vice-President of the Bible League of England, and the material was originally given as an address at the Bible League Annual Meeting in 1953. The author ably and convincingly shows that the liberal theology of the RSV translators has adversely affected the product of their work. Instance after instance of the operation of liberal theological bias is cited. The conclusion is drawn that the general adoption of the RSV would be "a signal triumph for Modern Liberalism" (p. 14).

—J. G. Vos

**THE RESURGENCE OF ARMINIANISM**, by Kenneth A. Macrae. The Northern Chronicle, Inverness, Scotland. 1954, pp. 32, paper cover. 1s. 6d. This booklet sounds a trumpet call to Chris-

tians of the Reformed or Calvinistic faith to be on guard against the prevailing Arminian character of much present day revivalism and evangelism. The author is a minister of the Free Church of Scotland and writes from the standpoint of the Reformed theology as set forth in the Westminster Standards. He deplores the fact that many present-day churches, though nominally Calvinistic in faith, are quite unaware of the differences between Calvinism and Arminianism, and seem even to be unaware of the meaning of the terms.

Following a brief and clear exposition of the distinctive doctrines of the Arminian system, the author takes up the historical development of Arminianism in Scotland. It is shown that Moody and Sankey introduced a mild form of Arminianism into Scottish Christian circles. Later more extreme forms of Arminian belief followed. Incidentally, the hymn singing which Moody and Sankey introduced proved to be "almost a death-blow to the Psalm-singing which hitherto had been almost a universal feature of public worship throughout Scotland" (p. 13).

The author gives a very interesting and highly informative account of the recent revival in the Isle of Lewis, showing its decidedly Arminian character, and asserting that in world-wide publicity about this revival there have been "gross exaggerations, unscrupulous distortion and absolute falsehood." The author states — and supports his statement by detailed facts — that "The Faith Mission story of the former godlessness of Lewis can only be characterized as a cruel and wicked slander, in which there is not even a semblance of truth" (p. 26).

This booklet is heartily recommended to all who want to know the real character of Arminian revivalism in the light of our acceptance of the Reformed Faith as the Biblical system of truth.

—J. G. Vos

**CAN WE TRUST BIBLE HISTORY?** By Albertus Pieters. Society for Reformed Publications, 1519 E. Fulton St., Grand Rapids, Mich. 1954, pp. 119. \$1.50.

How can we be sure that the events related in the Bible really happened? How do we know that the words in our Bibles are really what the original author wrote down? Are the facts recorded in the Bible in harmony with what we can learn from other sources? Is the Bible partially legend, or is it true history? How do we know this? These are questions asked by many people, not so much out of doubt, as out of an earnest desire to know the truth about the Bible. This little volume presents clear and simple answers to such questions.

Such a book is badly needed today when it is commonly taken for granted that the great flood in Noah's time, the person of Abraham, the crossing of the Red Sea, etc., are mere fiction or folklore. The author gives his reply to unbelieving

writers and teachers who talk about the "discrepancies" which are supposed to be found in the four Gospels, and who speak of the bodily resurrection as a "myth" and explain away the miracles of the Bible.

The book contains a discussion of the Canon and other related matters—who selected the books or writings and assembled them to form our Bible, and by what authority? Following this general introduction the book is divided into two parts, one dealing with Old Testament History and the other with New Testament History. The author's method in defending the trustworthiness of Old Testament history is to present some of the more important discoveries of archaeology which are said to confirm the Biblical record. The author states that we are chiefly persuaded of the trustworthiness of the Bible by "the testimony of the Holy Spirit," and that with the man who has experienced the work of the Holy Spirit in his life, "there is no further need to argue about the divine character of the Bible." He says that for the non-Christian this kind of testimony is regarded as subjective and has no meaning. Perhaps he should have stated further that there is no use in arguing with a non-Christian about the divine character of the Bible on the basis of archaeology. For it is only on the basis of a presupposition of Christian theism revealed in the Bible that archaeological discoveries have any meaning at all. The real question, then is this: Does archaeology throw light on the Bible, or does the Bible throw light on archaeology? Do archaeological discoveries help us to interpret the Bible, or does the Bible help us to interpret the facts discovered by archaeology? The non-Christian may be convinced by archaeology that the Bible relates true historical fact, but this will never convince him that the facts are a revelation of the mind and will of God, or that the Bible is a "heilsgeschichte" (history of redemption, pp. 31, 119).

The author defends the trustworthiness of the New Testament record by means of the historical method. That is, he examines the Epistles of Paul, the Gospels and the Book of Acts, not as the record of Christianity as a religion, but "merely as history written in good faith by competent men who had access to the facts" (p. 79).

Dr. Pieters makes an undue concession to the concept of theistic evolution, thereby assuming a semi-rationalistic position. "If it should be found to be true that man has evolved from the lower animals by a gradual and strictly natural process, does that exclude divine activity in and through the said natural process?" (p. 43). Evolution, he says, "is not so inconsistent with the Christian faith as was at first supposed," although he admits that "scientists are not nearly so certain that the theory is correct" (p. 43).

Similarly, he states that "the days of Genesis are not twenty-four hour periods, but days of God, long periods of time, during which the geologic

changes manifest in the rocks took place" (p. 39). There are strong arguments, based on exegetical considerations, for regarding the "days" of Genesis as literal twenty-four hour periods (see "Blue Banner Faith and Life," January-March 1954, p. 32).

This book should be profitable reading to ordinary church members, especially college students, and might serve as the basis of a study by a young people's group or some other church organization. It furnishes us with additional confirmation that the Bible is true, and it should give the Christian a greater appreciation of the Bible's accuracy.

— Joseph A. Hill

**A THEOLOGY OF GRACE: AN INQUIRY INTO AND EVALUATION OF DR. C. VAN TIL'S DOCTRINE OF COMMON GRACE,** by James Daane. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1954, pp. 160. \$3.00.

It may surprise some readers of "Blue Banner Faith and Life" to learn that for some time there has been a rather sharp controversy in Reformed theological circles over the subject of common grace. Simply stated, the debate centers around the question: Does God maintain an attitude of favor toward all men in general, reprobate as well as elect? As soon as this question is answered in the affirmative, numerous other questions arise to complicate the issue. To mention a few of them: What is the nature and extent of God's attitude of favor toward the unsaved? Is there a divine attitude of common wrath corresponding to common grace? Is the general proclamation of the Gospel a bona fide offer of grace to the reprobate? Is there a neutral territory in the realms of thought and ethics which Christians and non-Christians can be said to have in common, and on which they may stand together and cooperate? Is the thinking of an unbeliever basically true because of common grace, or is it basically false because of sin (total depravity)? That these questions are not easily answered and that the entire subject is extremely difficult and complex may be readily seen from the numerous attacks and counter-attacks delivered recently in publications issuing from the Christian Reformed Church.

Thirty years ago the Synod of that Church formulated in "Three Points" a brief statement of its position on common grace, over against a denial of common grace by the Rev. Herman Hoeksema. Dr. Daane, who is a pastor in Los Angeles, is fully committed to the traditional view as set forth by his church in 1924. He regards Prof. C. Van Til's formulation of the doctrine of common grace as another denial of the reality of common grace, albeit different from the denial of Hoeksema. He deems it so serious a departure from the truth that he has written the present volume as a critique of Van Til's views as set

forth in **Common Grace**, published in 1947. Daane's contention is that Van Til's view of common grace is not only a repudiation of the "Three Points" of 1924, but is also a compound of Hegelian rationalism and modern dialectical existentialism. Daane makes some very outspoken statements charging Van Til with "unbiblical thought," "pure determinism," "abstract logic," "rationalism" and "irrationalism" (pp. 27, 46, 49, 127).

Dr. Van Til, a professor in Westminster Theological Seminary, approaches the problem of common grace from a philosophical rather than a theological viewpoint. He shows that there is philosophical justification for the doctrine of common grace. It is the philosophical principles underlying Van Til's construction of common grace that Daane subjects to a searching test. And he comes up with the conclusion that Van Til's position is undergirded by non-biblical presuppositions borrowed from rationalistic philosophy. To prove his point he goes off on a "philosopher's holiday," taking his readers with him into a jungle of highly speculative and abstract reasoning.

One cannot help wondering whether Daane really understands Van Til. For in the Preface he admits that some "difficulty confronts the student of Van Til's thought." And numerous times throughout the book he complains that Van Til uses ambiguous terms and loose expressions; that he lacks precision of thought and even makes contradictory statements. There is the possibility that it is Daane who is confused in his thinking rather than Van Til.

Daane criticizes Van Til for saying that the Christian and the non-Christian have everything in common, and yet they have nothing in common (pp. 22, 55). What Van Til actually says is that metaphysically they have everything in common, while epistemologically they have nothing in common. That is neither mere dialecticism nor sheer nonsense; it is a real insight into the problem of common grace and it is based on biblical principles.

Daane also criticizes Van Til's statement that common grace is earlier grace, that is, grace which was bestowed before the Fall. What Daane wants to know is: how could God show favor toward men in general before the Fall when they did not exist as real men? Only Adam (and his wife) existed before the Fall. But is it not a necessary implication of covenant theology that mankind in general *did* exist before the Fall — they existed in Adam as their common representative — and hence God in showing unmerited favor to Adam was bestowing grace upon mankind in general? Daane accuses Van Til of being an existentialist because Van Til says that men did not exist as historically real individuals in pre-Fall time, yet they did exist as a generality in Adam, their covenant head. Is this the meaning of existentialism? Daane insists that in Van

Til's thought mankind as a commonality is correlative to mankind as non-existent. This, I believe, is a serious and basic misunderstanding of Van Til's thought.

In spite of these and other weaknesses, one will readily acknowledge Daane's keen ability to reason, and will heartily thank him for many penetrating insights into the problems of the common grace doctrine. If Dr. Daane has no objection to the idea that common grace has a philosophical as well as a theological basis, perhaps he should render greater service to God in a positive way by favoring the Church with a truly Christian formulation of the doctrine, purged from all the remnants of "neutral" philosophy which he imagines he discovers in Van Til's thought, and laid squarely on the foundation of pure Biblical philosophical thought.

— Joseph A. Hill

**THE LAND AND THE BOOK**, by William M. Thomson. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Michigan. 1954, pp. 718. \$4.95.

This book is a photolithoprinted reprint of a well-known work on the geography and customs of Palestine, originally written some decades ago by a man who spent thirty years as a missionary in Syria and Palestine.

Because of the fact that the author lived before the real development of modern archaeology, the material in this book is somewhat "dated." Moreover, it was written when Palestine was still subject to the Ottoman or Turkish Empire, and contains frequent references to the Turkish rule and the conditions resulting from it. The British Mandate which followed World War I and the still later partition of Palestine into the independent nations of Israel and Jordan produced many changes which, of course, are not even hinted at in this book. The viewpoint throughout is that of a missionary in Palestine in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

In spite of the limitations mentioned in the preceding paragraph, this is a very useful book. It sheds a great deal of light on the Bible, especially with regard to the life and customs of the people of the Holy Land. Moreover, it is written in a very pleasing and readable style. It can be read with great profit by any Bible student.

— J. G. Vos

**OUCH! MY CONSCIENCE**, by W. Maurice Hurley. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1954, pp. 96. \$1.50.

In the opinion of the reviewer, this book ought to have been given a more conventional title, and one which would more adequately describe the contents of the book. The book is a brief and popular discussion of the psychology of

religious experience, written from a truly evangelical point of view. The author is a minister of the Southern Baptist denomination, who has taken advanced work in psychology in two universities.

The material is divided into eight short chapters, which are entitled: 1. Christianity and our Sense of Guilt. 2. Ouch! My Conscience. 3. The Way to Maturity. 4. What conversion is. 5. What to do with our Fears. 6. You can't escape Responsibility. 7. Why men Hate. 8. The Meaning of Love.

In our day when dabbling in psychology and psychiatry is the latest popular fad in religion, and it is to be feared that some prominent clergymen are helping people to overcome their feeling of guilt without being saved from their real guilt before God, this book is most welcome, for it deals with psychological problems from a truly Christian viewpoint. There is here no mere attempt to help people escape the feeling of guilt. The author believes in real guilt and that it can be cleansed away only by Christ's redemption.

Time and again the author shows most helpful insight into the real problems of human behaviour. The reviewer ventures to offer one criticism: In Chapter 4 ("What Conversion Is") there should be presented a clear and Biblically supported distinction between regeneration ("the new birth") and conversion. American evangelical thinking is vague and confused on this matter. There should be a clear distinction between God's act of regeneration, and man's response in conversion.

This book is heartily recommended to our readers.

— J. G. Vos

**ARE THE NEW TESTAMENT DOCUMENTS RELIABLE?** by F. F. Bruce. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Michigan. 1954, pp. 122. \$2.00.

This volume by the scholarly Head of the Department of Biblical History and Literature in the University of Sheffield, England, provides a clear and accurate defence of the integrity and trustworthiness of the books of the New Testament. Though the author ranks high as a Biblical scholar, the book is not at all difficult to read. The author first takes up the question "Does it matter whether the New Testament documents are reliable or not?" and clearly shows that it does matter very much, for the truth of the Christian religion depends upon the answer to this question.

Next the author takes up the New Testament documents, and presents the evidence for their early date and genuineness. There is an informative chapter on the Canon of the New Testament, in which it is brought out that the books are not

authoritative because included in the canon, but rather they were included in the canon because they were recognized as authoritative.

There is material on archaeological evidence, and on the evidence provided by early Jewish writings and by early Gentile writers.

This is an excellent book for ministers, theological students, and especially for college and university students who are faced with confident and sweeping denials of the integrity and truthfulness of the New Testament. It should confirm and strengthen the faith of anyone troubled by doubts on this subject. The reviewer recommends it heartily.

— J. G. Vos

**THE KINGSHIP OF CHRIST**, by G. K. A. Bell. Penguin Books, Inc., 3300 Clipper Mill Road, Baltimore 11, Md. 1954, pp. 181. 50 cents.

Many readers in British lands will know already of the famous Penguin and Pelican pocket classics. One of the latest new numbers is a "Penguin Special" by Dr. G. K. A. Bell, Bishop of Chichester, England, entitled "The Kingship of Christ: The Story of the World Council of Churches."

Dr. Bell is a famous champion of Protestant ecumenism, and is now honorary President-elect of the World Council of Churches. In his preface he explains that "the purpose of this book is to give an account of a remarkable movement towards Christian unity which has grown rapidly during the past forty years; and, in particular, to tell the story of how the World Council of Churches (on which all the principal Christian communions except the Roman Catholics are represented) came into being, and of its far-reaching work today."

The book consists of seventeen chapters, all rather short, and various useful appendixes. The headings of the chapters are: The Kingship and a Divided Church; Looking Towards Unity; The Test of the Second World War; The Early Post-War Years: 1945-1948; The World Council Starts: Amsterdam, 1948; The Orthodox Churches and the Absence of Russia; The Refusal of Rome; How the World Council Works; The First Six Years: 1948-1954; Faith and Order; Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees; Actions for Justice and Peace; The Race Question; Missions and Unity; Study the Basis of Action: The Layman; National and Local Action; Christ the Hope of the World.

Included in the Appendix are: a glossary of the names of the churches, diagrams illustrating religious statistics of the world, a short bibliography of World Council literature, and a list of addresses of World Council offices.

For any person who wants a handy, scholarly and concise history and explanation of the World Council of Churches at a low cost, here is a good opportunity. The book is written, of course, from the sympathetic viewpoint of one who strongly favors the World Council, but the author does not evade issues nor cover up points on which the World Council has been attacked. The reviewer would recommend this small volume as a useful source of accurate information for those who, seeing the fundamental error which plagues the World Council movement, wish to equip themselves for further study of the ecumenical problem. By this book it will be easy to get all the essential facts concerning the Council, or, if the book is too condensed to provide a full report, it may serve to inform the reader where he can send for additional and more detailed books or documents.

However, if the reviewer thus recommends the purchase of this book, he might also advise that the volume be filed with source material concerning the Seventh Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Science, and other current enthusiasms of Christendom which fall in the category of contemporary organized heresy. For that is what he is convinced the World Council ecumenical movement really is — **organized heresy**.

That such a condensed story of the World Council is needed may be indicated by a recent news story in the Buffalo, N. Y. **Courier-Express** (September 25, 1954). The announcement was made that a World Council team would come to Buffalo from the Evanston Assembly to "interpret the ecumenical movement of the churches" to Buffalo Protestants. Six members of this team were to hold meetings at 19 places during three days. The six team members were: The Rev. Rajah B. Manikam of India, since 1951 a "roving ambassador" for the WCC in East Asia, Executive Chairman of the Christian Council of India and Pakistan, Chairman of the Bangkok Conference of the International Missionary Council of 1949, and in 1950 Joint Secretary for Asia of this organization; the Rev. Philip Potter, Methodist minister at Cape Haiten, Haiti, and Chairman of the World Council's Youth Department; Bishop Ellis Gideon Gulin, Lutheran Bishop of Tampere, Finland; the Rev. Mrs. James D. Wyker of Mt. Vernon, Ohio, an ordained lady minister of the Disciples of Christ Church and President of the United Church Women under the National Council of the Churches in the United States; Mrs. Ruby Manikam, wife of Dr. Manikam and an active Lutheran women's worker who recently visited churches of Burma, Thailand, Indo-China and other countries under the auspices of the General Department of the United Church women.

The topic on which the team spoke in 19 meetings was: "Christ Calls to Mission and Unity,"

which is also the theme of Dr. Bell's fourteenth chapter in "The Kingship of Christ."

As the flood of WCC propaganda rises higher and higher around our local congregations and our church members, it is wise to have a much more informed understanding of World Council

ecumenicism than we have thought necessary, perhaps, in the past.

— Samuel E. Boyle

Note: For a further discussion of Dr. Bell's book on "The Kingship of Christ," the reader is referred to Mr. Boyle's article entitled "Who Is To Be King?" in this issue of "Blue Banner Faith and Life" — Ed.

## *Books Received*

The announcement of the books listed below should not be construed as a recommendation. A review of those found in this list which we regard as having value for our readers will be given, D. V., in a later issue.

### **Publications of Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich.**

PRINCIPLES OF SACRED THEOLOGY, by Abraham Kuyper. 1954, pp. xxv, 683. \$6.95.

COURSE OF STUDY FOR CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS, by National Union of Christian Schools. Second edition, revised. 1953, pp. 377. \$5.00.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF REVELATION, by Herman Bavinck. 1953, pp. x, 349.

THE SELF-DISCLOSURE OF JESUS, by Geerhardus Vos. 1954, pp. 311. \$4.00.

GENIUS OF GENEVA: A POPULAR ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JOHN CALVIN, by L. Penning. 1954, pp. 392. \$3.00.

THE PERSON OF CHRIST, by G. C. Berkouwer. 1954, pp. 368. \$1.00.

STUDIES IN ISAIAH, by Edward J. Young. 1954, pp. 206. \$2.50.

BASIC CONCEPTS IN CHRISTIAN PEDAGOGY, by Jan Waterink. 1954, pp. 139. \$2.00.

J. GRESHAM MACHEN: A BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIR, by Ned B. Stonehouse. 1954, pp. 520. \$5.95.

THE MESSIANIC PROPHECIES OF DANIEL, by Edward J. Young. 1954, pp. 88. \$1.50.

YE SHALL BE MY WITNESSES: A CHALLENGE TO BASHFUL CHRISTIANS, by John H. Kromminga. 1954, pp. 84. \$1.50.

THE BOOK OF THE ACTS, by F. F. Bruce. 1954, pp. 555. \$6.00.

BENEDICTE'S SCRAPBOOK, compiled by William B. Gamble. 1954, pp. 252. \$3.95.

ANCHOR OF HOPE, by Preston J. Stegenga. 1954, pp. 271. \$3.50.

THE DIVINE ECONOMY, by A. C. Conrad. 1954, pp. 169. \$2.50.

OF LAW AND LOVE, by Peter H. Eldersveld. 1954, pp. 85. \$1.50.

THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF SCIENCE AND SCRIPTURE, by Bernard Ramm. 1954, pp. 368. \$4.00.

HOW TO ACHIEVE PERSONALITY THROUGH PRAYER, by Simon Blocker. 1954, pp. 121. \$2.00.

A PASTOR SPEAKS TO THE SOUL OF THE CITY, by J. D. Eppinga. 1954, pp. 93. \$1.50.

### **Publications of Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich.**

A HISTORY OF PREACHING, Vol. I, From the Apostolic Fathers to the Great Reformers, A. D. 70-1572, by Edwin C. Dargan. 1954, pp. 591, \$7.95.

THE STUDENTS' HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE HOLY LAND, by William W. Smith. 1954, pp. ix, 101. \$2.25.

THE SEVEN LAWS OF TEACHING, by Gregory. 1954, pp. 120. \$1.75.

DEVOTIONS AND PRAYERS OF JOHN CALVIN, compiled by Charles E. Edwards. 1954, pp. 120, pocket size. \$1.00.

NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY: THE GOSPEL OF JOHN, VOLUME II, by William Hendriksen. 1954, pp. 507. \$6.50.

THE DIRECTORY OF THE DEVOUT LIFE, by F. B. Meyer. 1954, pp. 191. \$2.00.

LECTURES ON HEBREWS, by Joseph A. Seiss. 1954, pp. 408. \$3.40.

THE CHURCH IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE BEFORE A. D. 170, by William Ramsay. 1954, pp. 510. \$4.20.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT, by Thomas Crawford. 1954, pp. 538. \$4.00.

**Publications of the Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 147 N. 10th St., Philadelphia 7, Pa.**

CHRISTIANITY AND EXISTENTIALISM, by J. M. Spier. 1953, pp. 140. \$3.00.

A NEW CRITIQUE OF THEORETICAL THOUGHT, Vol. I, The Necessary Presuppositions of Philosophy, by Herman Dooyeweerd, translated by D. H. Freeman and Wm. S. Young. 1953, pp. 566. Sold in sets only. \$36.00 per set of 4 volumes.

PRELIMINARY BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR THE STUDY OF BIBLICAL PROPHECY, by Wilbur

M. Smith. W. A. Wilde Co., Boston, Mass. 1952, pp. 44, paper cover. No price stated.

ISRAEL AND THE NEW COVENANT, by Roderick Campbell. 1954, pp. 336. \$3.75.

**Publications of other Firms**

SCHEEBEN'S DOCTRINE OF DIVINE ADOPTION, by Edwin H. Palmer. J. H. Kok N. V., Kampen, Netherlands. 1953, pp. xi, 202. Florins 5.90.

THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH: WHICH IS IT? by Thomas Witherow. Publications Committee of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, c/o Mr. J. Grant, 4 Millburn Rd., Inverness, Scotland. 1954, pp. 91, pocket size, paper cover. 2s. 6d. postpaid. U.S.A. and Canada, 50c postpaid.

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## *Blue Banner Question Box*

Readers are invited to submit Biblical, doctrinal, and practical questions for answer in this department. Names will not be published with questions.

### **Question:**

When a young minister begins his work as a preacher ordained to preach in a Covenanter pulpit, what would be a good program to follow to cover the well-rounded Gospel and church doctrines? One could spend years on a single phase of Bible teaching.

### **Answer:**

In view of the pressing demands made on the minister for observance of special "Sundays," backed by attractive propaganda sent free through the mail—which, if used could reduce the time required in study to an hour or two—and with the impression urged that if he doesn't observe this special day he is out of step and uncooperative, some such program as that suggested in this question is necessary if the congregation is to be fed and grounded in the faith. What follows is only intended as suggestion. Certainly particular congregations would require adaptation.

Central in our system of faith is the death of Jesus Christ. Its importance in our understanding of, and obedience to, the Gospel is emphasized by God's institution of the Lord's Supper in commemoration of His death. We are accustomed to think of the Sabbath preceding this observance as "preparation Sabbath." It might be well to have the Communion time in mind for two or three Sabbaths preceding, for in so doing the most basic and strengthening and comforting doctrines of the faith will be expounded. Then the whole circle of doctrine can be touched on by using the thirty-three chapters of the **Testimony** of the Church as a guide. This gives the needed leeway in the for-

ty or more Sabbaths of the year when the pastor delivers the sermon, for attention to matters of special need.

In most Covenanter churches the evening attendance is somewhat smaller than in the morning, and the message may with profit be of a more expository nature, covering larger passages of Scripture than a verse or two or three. Even though visitors, brought by members that they may hear the gospel, may be more apt to be present in the evening, the direct exposition of the Scriptures is powerful to convict and persuade. Biblical series tend to maintain interest and to instruct in a manner that helps to relate and connect, and of course better apply, our information. One series that I would strongly urge, though it may be well to take a few books then change to something else for a few Sabbaths, is one that gives a survey of the single books of the Bible in succession: an evening on Genesis, one on Exodus, and so on. Some books are better suited to such treatment than others, but I can assure you that the minister himself will grow in his knowledge of the Word if he will outline the book himself before going to summaries prepared by others, such as Halley's, Morgan's, or Hendriksen's. Such a series is almost certain to be of interest and to bring out truths unnoticed before. Other series will suggest themselves to the pastor: ten commandments, parables, character studies, one on the cults, etc.

Helpful and more complete suggestions along this line may be found in an article in the Covenanter Witness of August 26 1953, "A Teaching Ministry," by Walter McCarroll, D. D.

— Lester E. Kilpatrick

**Question:**

What happens to the millions of non-Christians when they die? Must non-Christians who think and act conscientiously according to their beliefs go to hell because they were not Christians?

**Answer:**

This is a matter generally admitted to be one on which observable facts and human wisdom give us no information. If we are to get any dependable instruction it must come by revelation. The answer of the Christian Scriptures is plain with regard to the destiny of unbelievers, that that destiny is hell. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." Ps. 9:17 "And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." Matt. 5:29 "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat." Matt. 7:13 "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Matt. 10:28

However, it is not because they are not Christians that sinners are punished in hell, but because of their sins. "He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is **condemned already**, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." John 3:18 "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom. 6:23

We cannot wholly satisfy human reason on this question, especially with regard to the non-Christian who has never heard the gospel. Here we must say with Abraham, "Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?" trusting that He will. And we have no hesitation in trusting the God who gave us the Bible when we observe what the natural conscience of men prompt them to. As between the unaided conscience and the Bible, the former is changeable, uncertain, and often manifestly wicked; the latter is sure, enduring, holy.

— Lester E. Kilpatrick

**Question:**

The apostle Paul often warned against divisions among Christians. Why do not the leaders of the different Christian churches obey Paul's teaching by uniting, instead of keeping up divisions which are contrary to the Bible?

**Answer:**

The Christian Church is today giving more attention to getting rid of organizational divisions than it has for centuries. At this moment the World Council of Churches is meeting in Evanston,

Illinois, with the avowed purpose of uniting the Christian Church. Dr. W. A. Visser 't'Hooft, General Secretary of the WCC insists that the goal of unity must include all professing to be Christians, even Roman Catholics and those in Communist countries. "To deny the admission of these communist clergy would as truly deny the very **raison d'etre** of our movement." Four Eastern Catholic churches are members of the WCC and the Roman Catholic Church was courted with overtures almost fawning for their attendance at the Evanston meeting. (At its first meeting at Amsterdam in 1950 some Roman Catholic priests attended as observers.) The Roman Church rejected the invitation in a public statement. At the same time, of course, the Roman Church claims to be itself the only true Church, and that unity must be attained by all those claiming to be Christian by joining with them.

The WCC is the largest union movement, and has in effect no doctrinal basis whatever—churches being free to interpret the avowed basis, a "fellowship of the churches that accept the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior," in any way they please. Even on the basis of expediency, compromise, and the human reasoning that "in union there is strength," the WCC has found union impossible at the present time. Property rights, positions of honor, prestige, seniority and financial advantage lie in the background of all discussions.

But even those seeking evangelical Protestant union find that it is not so simple as some suggest. Those who are obedient to the Word know that the Church of Jesus Christ can never drop to such worldly principles, even in seeking unity. The Word of God makes the Church a witnessing body. It is the "pillar and ground of the truth." Come life or death, though all men turn away, the Church must witness to the truth as it is revealed in God's Word.

There are differences of interpretation of the Word in vital matters. While many are members of this denomination or that because of personal, material advantage, there are many others who maintain their membership in a particular church because persuaded that it is nearest to the Scriptural pattern. Denominations, some more, some less, have been indoctrinated by a trusted succession of scholarly exegetes, and are buttressed by traditions sometimes difficult to isolate from exegesis. These believers in the revealed authoritative Word of God—and they are the only ones worthy the name Christian—know that our profession and testimony must stand firmly on the Word of God. "It is neither safe nor right," said Martin Luther, "to go against conscience." Now if Christians are conscientiously persuaded that the Bible teaches predestination, for instance, or infant baptism, it would be sin to yield to some alternative doctrine in order to achieve church union. "And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever

is not of faith is sin." Rom. 14:23 "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." James 4.17.

Church union "on the basis of truth and scriptural order," (Covenant of 1871, Sec. IV, R. P. Church) is a goal far more difficult of attainment than on the basis of compromise, give and take, bargaining as it were in religious truth. But it is the only basis worthy of consideration. And those who follow any other course, regardless of the success they may seem to achieve, will find their efforts end in failure or apostasy.

The Reformed Presbyterian Church took a notable step toward seeking to fulfill our duty in this regard at the recent meeting of Synod, when a permanent committee was appointed to take steps toward doctrinal discussion with other denominations, starting with those doctrinally nearest our testimony.

Although there is a real spiritual unity of all true believers, we can never hope that an earthly organization will include them all, while being entirely free of all who are not true believers. But it should be the primary purpose of the Church to be faithful to its appointment as "pillar and ground of the truth." In so doing it is fulfilling "the great commission," and at the same time is making a contribution toward a visible unity of the Church that pleases God.

— Lester E. Kilpatrick

**Question:**

What is the meaning of II Peter 2:1, "even denying the Lord that bought them"—? Can this be translated, "Even denying that the Lord bought them," i.e., denying the substitutionary atonement of Christ? Does this verse apply to the modernists of today?

**Answer:**

The Greek text will not permit of this construction, since "Lord" is in the objective case, being the object of the action of denying. Actually, the suggested reading would not greatly alter the meaning, except to restrict it. As it stands in all the common versions, it means that these false teachers will deny Jesus Christ, Himself, and that includes His work in the substitutionary atonement. Certainly this verse does apply to the modernists of today.

— Lester E. Kilpatrick

**Question:**

Are there degrees of glory in heaven?

**Answer:**

Dr. Louis Berkhof (Systematic Theology, p. 737) states that "It is also evident from Scripture that there will be degrees of bliss in heaven, Dan. 12:3; 2 Cor. 9:6. Our good works will be the measure of our gracious reward, though they do

not merit it. Notwithstanding this, however, the joy of each individual will be perfect and full."

I Cor. 3:9-15 teaches that some will receive only salvation, with no added reward, while others will receive salvation and in addition a reward for faithful service during their life on earth. For a further discussion of this subject the reader is referred to A. H. Strong, Systematic Theology, p. 1030; John Gill, Body of Divinity, pp. 692-3.

—J. G. Vos

**Question:**

At what point or period in the history of the Church did "pictures of Christ" become popular?

**Answer:**

There was a long controversy about the use of pictures in worship in the early Middle Ages, especially in the Eastern Roman Empire, the capital of which was located at Constantinople. The use of pictures in Christian churches impressed Jews and Mohammedans as idolatry. To avoid this offence, the Emperor Leo III in A. D. 726 forbade the use of pictures in worship. But those who favored the pictures were encouraged by pope Gregory III of Rome, under whose leadership a Roman synod in the year 731 decreed that those who opposed the use of pictures should be excommunicated. A long and heated controversy followed. Those who favored the use of pictures finally won. The last of the general councils, meeting at Nicaea in 787, decreed that the use of pictures in worship was legitimate, because the reverence shown is not meant for the picture but for the person represented by the picture. We may conclude, then, that "pictures of Christ" became popular in the eighth century. Opposition to them was persistent and was only overcome after long controversy. The reader is referred to D. H. Kromminga, History of the Christian Church (Eerdmans, 1948), pp. 89, 90; Kidd, Documents Illustrative of the History of the Church, III, pp. 70-76.

—J. G. Vos

**Question:**

Should women teach in the Church, and if so, to what extent?

**Answer:**

Although opinions in evangelical circles differ sharply on this question, it is the present writer's opinion that 1 Cor. 14: 33-36 and 1 Tim. 2:11-15 imply that women should not preach, nor teach classes of men. In our opinion it is proper for women to teach classes of women, children and young people. The explanation often given that Paul's injunctions in these two passages were "temporary" and "local" does not impress us as sound exegesis. There is nothing either temporary or local about the reasons the apostle gives for his injunctions; they are perfectly universal in nature: (1) the practice of all the churches (1 Cor. 14:33, "as in all the churches of the saints"; most

scholars take this clause as properly belonging with verse 34; (2) man's priority in the order of creation ("for Adam was first formed, then Eve", 1 Tim. 2:13); (3) woman's priority in transgression ("but the woman being deceived was in the transgression", 1 Tim. 2:14). These statements are as true today as they were in Paul's day; they are in no sense peculiar to Corinth, or to the Greek and Roman world, or to any particular period of history. We are not concerned to discuss whether Paul's instructions on this subject are popular or not. Our only concern is as to the true meaning of the Biblical text.

—J. G. Vos

**Question:**

In the July-September 1948 issue, page 129, you hold that it is legitimate for a Christian to be a member of a consumer's co-operative association. Do you still hold the same view?

**Answer:**

Yes. We believe that the rather long answer given in the issue referred to is an adequate answer to this question. In particular cases there may be special circumstances which would make it wrong for a Christian to be a member of such an organization. We hold, however, that membership in a consumer's co-operative association is not a sin in itself. The test in any particular case would be the question of whether the association possesses features which necessarily involve the individual member in moral responsibility for sin.

—J. G. Vos

**Question:**

A popular radio preacher stated in a broad-

cast that all of the Ten Commandments are in force today except the Fourth (Sabbath) Commandment. He said that Christ left the Fourth Commandment out but re-affirmed all the others. What should we think of this interpretation?

**Answer:**

We should regard this interpretation as incorrect on at least two grounds. (1) The statement implies that nothing in the Old Testament is permanently valid unless expressly reaffirmed in the New Testament. But what warrant is there for this notion? The Old Testament is the Word of God in itself; it does not depend on the New Testament for its divine authority. The Sabbath Commandment is part of the moral law, which was written on stone, a permanent, imperishable material. It is therefore permanently valid and binding.

(2) It is not true that Jesus "left the Fourth Commandment out." He definitely taught the obligation of the Sabbath commandment, when He said "The sabbath was made for man" (Mark 2:27). He did not say, "The sabbath was made for Israel" nor "The sabbath was made for the Jews," but "The sabbath was made for man." If the Sabbath was made for man, then it is binding on man as man, and is intended for the true welfare of man as man, regardless of distinctions of time, place and dispensation. Jesus added, "Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath" (Mark 2:28). If Christ is **Lord of the Sabbath**, then surely those who acknowledge Him as their Lord should remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

—J. G. Vos

## Questions Received

The following questions have been received from readers of this magazine. Answers to them will be published, D.V., in future issues.

1. Please publish something on the question of the limited atonement, which was discussed in the Blue Banner Question Box in 1946.

2. In what sense may God be said to have free will? Did God in creating the universe and all it contains choose from among many possibilities as He saw fit, or was God limited by His nature to only one possible kind of universe to be created and that "all very good"? Could God have chosen or desired to do otherwise than He actually has done?

3. The Westminster Confession of Faith (II.2)

says that "God hath all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of Himself." If this is true, how could God create the universe and man for His own glory, and how can it be possible for man to glorify God? If God has all glory in His own being, how can the created universe or anything in it add to His glory?

4. What is your view of what some old divines used to speak of as "the work of the Holy Spirit preparatory unto regeneration"? Were they right in speaking of it as "preparatory work"? Or should it rather be spoken of as what follows regeneration?

## *People and Places in the Psalms*

**MOAB.** 60:8. 83:6. 108:9. Moab was the country of the Moabites, who were descendants of Lot, Abraham's nephew. They were related to the Ammonites. Their country was located east of the Dead Sea, north of Edom and south of Ammon. In Psalm 60 Moab is spoken of as a region properly belonging to the Promised Land. In Psalm 83 Moab is mentioned as in league with other nations against the people of God. We may regard Moab as a sample of those people and nations who ought to be on the side of God and His people but who actually seek to weaken and frustrate God's cause and people.

**MOSES.** 77:20. 99:6. 103:7. 105:26. 106:16, 23, 32. Moses was the first and in a very real sense the greatest of the Old Testament prophets, enjoying as he did a special nearness and intimacy with God. The references to Moses in the Psalms commemorate God's deliverance of Israel under his leadership, and point out his high distinction as a recipient of special revelation. It is not too much to say that Moses is the mediator of the Old Testament, that is, that as a mediator between God and Israel he served as a type of Christ, the true Mediator between God and man.

**NAPHTALI.** 68:27. One of the twelve tribes of Israel. The tribe's territory was located west

and north of the Sea of Galilee. Thus this tribe was located far from Jerusalem, and could be regarded as a border tribe. It is mentioned in Psalm 68 to show that the religious celebration being described was national in scope, not limited to the tribes near Jerusalem.

**OG.** 135:11. 136:20. Og was king of Bashan, a region located north and east of the Sea of Galilee. This was an Amorite kingdom conquered by Israel under the leadership of Moses (Num. 21:32-35). This victory of God's people over a powerful foe is celebrated in the Psalms as a sample of God's gracious and powerful conquest of the realm of evil.

**OPHIR.** 45:9. A region from which gold was anciently obtained, the location of which is unknown. It is clear from 1 Kings 22:48 that Ophir was reached via the Red Sea, not via the Mediterranean Sea. It is possible that Ophir was somewhere on the east coast of Africa, or somewhere in southern Arabia, or somewhere on the coast of India.

**OREB.** 83:11. One of the Midianite princes conquered and killed by Gideon. In Psalm 83 Oreb is mentioned as a specimen of those powerful and wicked men who are destroyed by the righteous judgments of God in behalf of His people.

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## *Religious Terms Defined*

**CANON.** The list of books recognized as Holy Scripture.

**CENSURE.** The act of judging and blaming others for their faults. Censure may be private or official, and it may be just or unjust.

**CHEERFULNESS.** A state of mind free from gloom or dejection. It is the duty of every Christian, by faith in the goodness, power and love of God, to cultivate a cheerful frame of mind.

**CHRISTIAN.** One who believes on Christ as his Saviour from sin, and obeys Christ as the Lord of his life. It is improper to speak of Jesus as a Christian.

**CHRISTIANITY.** The system of faith and practice revealed in the Word of God, in which Jesus Christ occupies the position of Mediator between God and sinners.

**CHRISTOLOGY.** That branch of Christian doctrine which sets forth the truth about Christ, His Person and work.

**CHRONOLOGY.** The science of calculating periods of time, and dates of historical events.

**COMMENTARY.** A book giving a continuous exposition of the Bible, or of some portion of it.

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## *Some Noteworthy Quotations*

**Bringing Up Children.** "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. Isa. 1:2."

"In too many homes in America today the

heartbreaking cry of this verse could be echoed. Juvenile delinquency seems to be still on the increase. Not merely from broken homes or homes where the parents themselves are delinquents, but from so-called respectable homes come young peo-

ple who rebel against their parents and other authority. It is not merely the aftermath of war and the by-product of divorce. More and more it seems to be well-nigh universal in America. More and more we are reaping the fruit of an educational system that leaves God out of the picture. How can we expect children to obey and respect constituted authority when they are given no basis for obedience other than the arbitrary word of the parent or other person in authority? By excluding religion completely from the school, God-ordained authority cannot be taught, and ethics are left hanging in the air. Rebellion follows as a matter of course. The only remedy is a school where every hour sees each subject in its proper relation to the Triune God, and commands are to be obeyed because God has ordained it. Merely adding the teaching of the Bible to a pagan system is not sufficient. Each subject must be seen in its true relation to God's government of the universe, otherwise the correct impression cannot be made on the mind of the student. No sacrifice is too great to organize and support the Christian school.

—Rev. Floyd E. Hamilton in Daily Manna Calendar

"Who need fear men who is in league with God?"

— John Trapp

"If our liberality and charity are wider than the Bible, they are worth nothing."

— J. C. Ryle

"A Jew lives in you and me and in every human heart by nature."

— Geerhardus Vos

"Wheels are tapped with a hammer on the railway that their soundness may be tested. Not only does affliction thus try our characters, but prosperity does the same."

— Charles H. Spurgeon

"An awakening by mere natural conscience is very different from an awakening by the Spirit of God. No man ever fled to Christ from mere natural terror. 'No man can come to me,' saith Christ, 'except the Father which hath sent me draw him.' Seek a divine work upon your heart."

— Robert Murray McCheyne

"There are many among us who live in the daily practice of sins, some who carry on small dishonesties, or occasionally use small minced oaths, who walk in the counsel of the ungodly. O brethren! if this be your case, it is quite plain that you have never had a divine awakening. When a man is made anxious about his soul, he always puts away his open sins."

—Robert Murray McCheyne

## *Studies in the Book of Genesis*

### LESSON 46

#### II. History of the Human Race from Adam to Abraham. 2:4 to 11:26, continued

#### 8. Divine revelation to and through Noah. 8:20 to 9:29

"And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord." This is the first mention in the Bible of an altar. No altar is mentioned in connection with the offerings brought by Cain and Abel in chapter 4, though of course there may have been an altar without it being mentioned in the Bible record. It is therefore uncertain whether altars originated in the time of Adam and Eve, or in the time of Noah. The word translated "altar" means literally "place of slaughter."

The statement that Noah "took of every clean beast" may properly be translated "took one of every clean beast." It will be recalled that the clean animals were taken into the ark by sevens, presumably meaning three pairs plus one odd specimen. The seventh or odd specimen would probably be used for the sacrifice. Leupold comments that if the definition of clean and unclean animals was the same in Noah's day as later in

the law of Moses, as was probably the case, "this must have been a generous sacrifice and in proportion to the number of creatures extant the most liberal sacrifice ever offered" (Exposition of Genesis, I, p. 322). At any rate, one-seventh, or about 14%, of the cattle, sheep, goats, etc., in the world were offered to God as a sacrifice. As Leupold adds, "never was there a man who had greater occasion to render hearty thanks to God" (p. 322).

This offering a liberal sacrifice to God is an evidence of Noah's faith and true piety. "And the Lord smelled a sweet savor" (8:21). This statement informs us of God's acceptance of the offering and the offerer. The language used is of course anthropomorphic; it speaks of God in human terms to teach a truth about God. The word here translated "sweet" means "pleasant," "restful." God was pleased with Noah's act and with the motives which prompted the act.

"And the Lord said in His heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth: neither will I again smite any more

every living thing, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease" (8:21, 22). Here God promises that the regular uniformity of nature in its normal processes will continue until the end of history. There shall be summer and winter, seedtime and harvest. Nature will be dependable, so that human life can exist and human history can continue.

It should be noted, however, that the promise is limited to the duration of history: "while the earth remaineth." God has also planned an end of history, at which time this promise will no longer hold good. When the judgment day comes, history will be at an end. Then again a wicked world will be destroyed by the righteous judgment of God. Read in this connection 1 Pet. 3:20; 2 Pet. 2:5.

In verse 21 God gives the reason why He will not again destroy mankind as a whole until the end of history: "for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." A similar statement was made before the flood, 6:5. There it was a reason why there must be a flood; now in the end of chapter 8 it is given as a reason why the flood would not be repeated. This may seem to be a contradiction. The explanation, however, is to be found in the words "from his youth" which are added in 8:21. In 6:5 the statement describes the climax of a historical process of degeneration and increasing wickedness, which necessitated divine judgment. But in 8:21 the natural sinful condition of the human heart ("from his youth") is being described, quite apart from particular historical developments of evil. It is true of all mankind everywhere and always, that his heart is evil from his youth. "Because the evil is thus deep-seated, no judgment can cure it. Therefore other means must be resorted to, and these other means would become impossible of execution, if repeated, catastrophic judgments of

this nature in the sequel interfered with the ordinary unfolding of history" (G. Vos, *Biblical Theology*, pp. 63, 64). In other words, man is deeply sinful by nature. Therefore judgment cannot cure sin; it can only punish the sinner. To cure sin, what is needed is divine redemption by a Mediator. This divine redemption requires a historical process. This historical process requires orderly conditions under which human life is possible. God therefore holds His absolute judgment in abeyance until the Judgment Day, in order that there may be time for human history, including the working out of the plan of redemption.

#### Questions:

1. Where in the Bible is an altar mentioned for the first time?
2. What is the literal meaning of the word translated "altar"?
3. What proportion of the existing clean animals did Noah offer in sacrifice to God?
4. Why should Noah offer such a liberal sacrifice to God?
5. What was God's response to Noah's offering?
6. What is the meaning of the word "sweet" in 8:21?
7. What promise did God make after Noah's sacrifice?
8. What limitation was placed on the permanence of this promise?
9. What event will bring about the end of human history?
10. What is the difference in meaning between Gen. 6:5 and 8:21b?
11. Why must judgment in the absolute sense be deferred until the end of history?

### LESSON 47

#### II. History of the Human Race from Adam to Abraham. 2:4 to 11:26, continued

##### 8. Divine revelation to and through Noah. 8:20 to 9:29, continued

"And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth" (9:1). This command of God to Noah and his sons parallels the mandate given to Adam and Eve in 1:28. It is a blessing, accompanied by a command to fill the earth with people.

This mandate to fill the earth with people is accompanied by certain divine ordinances pertain-

ing to the protection of human life and the sustenance of human life. These ordinances were necessary for the carrying out of the program of redemption through the course of history. We must bear in mind that the human race had at this time been reduced to the number of eight people. In a real sense the human race is beginning over again with Noah and his family.

The command to be fruitful and multiply is specially important, as shown by the fact that after being stated in 9:1 it is repeated with emphasis in 9:7. Next, our attention is called to the fact that man's life was to be protected from destruction by animals. "And the fear of you and

the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered" (9:2). To this is added the statement "And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it. . ." (9:5).

At the creation (1:26,28) man was made supreme over the animals, but at that time the creatures were willingly submissive to man — a state of affairs symbolically mentioned by the prophets as to exist in eternity, after the final removal of sin (Isa. 11:6-8). But during the time of sin, it is necessary that human life be protected by making the animals afraid of man. Moreover, God promises to avenge man where devouring animals destroy his life. "It is not possible to tell with certainty how this law works itself out; it has been suggested that every species of carnivorous animals is doomed to ultimate extinction" (G. Vos, *Biblical Theology*, p. 64).

Along with the statement that the animals are to be afraid of man, there is permission granted to man to eat animal food. This permission is granted, however, with a restriction: "But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat" (9:4). "This being coupled with the promise of vengeance from animals reveals the point of view. Since the animals are not to devour man after a carnivorous fashion, man also is not to eat the animals as wild beasts devour their living prey. He must show proper reverence for life as a sacred thing, of which God alone has the disposal, and for the use of which man is dependent on the permission of God" (G. Vos, *Biblical Theology*, pp. 64, 65).

Not only must man's life be protected from destruction by the animals; it must also be protected from destruction by his fellow man. We should recall, as the background of this divine command, the conditions which existed in human society just before the flood. The earth was filled with violence; crime existed on every hand. Now that humanity is making a new start, God expressly and with strong emphasis forbids murder. Moreover, God specifies the punishment for murder, namely the death penalty. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man" (9:6).

At this point we should note that death as the penalty for murder is required by divine commandment. Those who in our own day oppose the death penalty for murder often forget this, and regard the death penalty as a mere human law. It is astonishing how many Christian people, who profess to believe in the Bible as the infallible Word of God, dare to say that they are opposed to the death penalty as the punishment for murder. They seem to forget that this is not just a

human law or custom, but has back of it the command of God. The nation or state which abolishes the death penalty for murder is itself sinning against God and may expect His judgment in some form.

Modern arguments against the death penalty for murder are almost always based on one or more of three mistakes: (1) they may be based on mere sentiment — a mere shrinking from the idea of the state putting an end to an individual's life in this world. (2) They may be based on a false notion of law and justice, which holds that the only purpose of punishment is the reform of the offender. Obviously a murderer cannot be reformed by putting him to death. (3) Or they may be based on the false notion that the teachings of Christ, or the Sermon on the Mount, has repealed this divine law given at the time of Noah.

It is not true that the only purpose of punishment is the reformation of the offender. Nor is the purpose of punishment merely to make an impression on other people, so as to warn them against committing murder. The true purpose of punishment is **justice**; it is a manifestation of God's attribute of retributive righteousness, by which sin and suffering are inseparably linked. A murderer is executed, not merely to warn other people against committing murder, but because it is right that he be executed. The character of God demands it.

Nor is it true that the teachings of Christ, or the Sermon on the Mount, have repealed the law of capital punishment given in the days of Noah. Many people make sweeping statements of this kind, by which they attempt to get rid of anything in the Old Testament which does not please them. Jesus teaches rather that in addition to all penalties for sin suffered in this life, there remains the eternal punishment of sin in hell (Matt. 5:21,22).

The record in Genesis assigns as the reason for the death penalty in the case of murder, "for in the image of God made he man" (9:6). Man is not just another kind of animal; unlike all the animals, man was created in the image of God. He bears the image of his Creator. Therefore he who destroys the life of man destroys that which bears the image of God. Murder is not only an awful injury to one's fellow man, but also an insult to God. He who murders his fellow man affronts God by destroying God's image bearer.

"The argument so frequently met with, that capital punishment adds but a second murder to the first is an argument based either on total ignorance of the facts of Scripture or on open denial of the obligatory character of what the Bible teaches. How can that be characterized as a duplicated murder that professes to rest on the most explicit command of God, and over against which men have nothing to put except sentimental

objections, and an unproven theory about the meliorating efficacy of forms of discipline which from their very nature exclude the punishment of death," (G. Vos, *Biblical Theology*, p. 66).

#### Questions:

1. On what two occasions did God command the human race to be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth with people?
2. How many people existed at the end of the flood?
3. How was man's life to be protected from destruction by wild beasts?
4. What was the difference between man's supremacy over the animals at the creation, and after the flood?

5. What is the possible meaning of the statement that God will require the life of man at the hand of every beast?

6. When was mankind given permission to eat flesh?

7. What restriction was placed on this permission by God?

8. What was the reason for this restriction on the permission to eat flesh?

9. What authority lies back of the death penalty for murder?

10. What errors are involved in modern objections to the penalty of death for murder?

### LESSON 48

#### II. History of the Human Race from Adam to Abraham. 2:4 to 11:26, continued

##### 8. Divine revelation to and through Noah. 8:20 to 9:29, continued

Next we must consider the covenant which God established with Noah. "And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you. . . ." (9:8,9). Before the flood, God had informed Noah, "With thee will I establish my covenant. . ." (6:18). God's covenant is a religious bond between God and His people, by which they receive life and blessing. To be in covenant with God is the opposite of perishing. God established His covenant with Noah and Noah's family; therefore they did not perish in the waters of the flood. Those who are in a covenant bond with God are saved unto eternal life; those without this covenant relationship to God will perish eternally in hell.

We should note that God took the initiative in establishing this covenant relationship. This is very strongly emphasized in the text we are considering: "And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you." This covenant was not established by Noah, and it was not established by God and Noah jointly. **It was established by God acting alone.** Noah was the recipient and beneficiary of this covenant, but he was not in any sense the originator or author of it. It is important to emphasize this because we live in a day when it is common to debase God and exalt man in religious thinking. Many people today talk of "making" a covenant with God, when in reality, of course, they can do no such thing. The idea commonly met with that God's covenant is a kind of "contract" or "bargain" or "agreement" between God and man is based on the notion that God and man can be equal contracting parties to such an

arrangement. The Bible, on the other hand, represents God as the establisher of the covenant, and man as the recipient and beneficiary of it. God and Noah did not mutually discuss this matter and come to agreement on having a covenant with certain provisions; God imposed the covenant and Noah accepted it.

The man-centered view of religion which is so prevalent on every hand today is not found in the Bible. Let us make sure that we derive our religious ideas from the Bible, not from the philosophy of Immanuel Kant. Democracy is a good form of government for the state, but it has no place in the religious relationship between God and man.

God, then, established His covenant with Noah, his family and their seed after them. Never again would there be a flood of such magnitude as to destroy the whole earth, or the entire human race. As token of this covenant promise, God appointed the rainbow (9:13, 14). This does not necessarily imply that there had never been a rainbow before this time, but only that at this particular point in human history, the rainbow was appointed as the token or pledge of God's covenant promise.

"And the bow shall be in the cloud; and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth" (9:16). The idea is not that the rainbow will remind man of the promise, but that God Himself will be reminded of His promise by seeing the rainbow. This is anthropomorphic language; it speaks of God as if He were a man, but this very fact serves to bring out and make impressive the truth that is taught. It is worth noting that the rainbow itself is connected with the force of nature against which it is a pledge of protection (rain and consequent

flood). "It is produced against the background of the very clouds that had brought destruction to the earth. But it is produced upon these by the rays of the sun which in the symbolism of Scripture represent the divine grace" (G. Vos, *Biblical Theology*, p. 67).

It should be noted that the divine promise of security from any future world-wide flood included not only mankind but also the entire animate creation (9:10, 15). This is in keeping with the teaching of the Bible that the whole animate creation exists for the service and benefit of the human race. It is involved in this that, as the animals perish when man perishes in the flood, so also the animals are guaranteed protection when man is guaranteed protection after the flood.

#### Questions:

1. What is the essential meaning of God's covenant?

2. At what point in the narrative do we first read of God's covenant being established with Noah?

3. What benefits came to Noah and his family by reason of the covenant?

4. What benefits come to people by God's covenant today?

5. What will be the final destiny of those who are outside of God's covenant?

6. Who took the initiative in establishing the covenant relationship?

7. Why is it wrong to speak of the covenant relationship as a "contract" or "agreement" between God and man?

8. What token did God give to pledge that there would never again be a total flood?

9. What is the true idea of the rainbow as token of the covenant?

10. Why did the promise of future security from a total flood include the animals as well as mankind?

### LESSON 49

#### II. History of the Human Race from Adam to Abraham. 2:4 to 11:26, continued

##### 8. Divine revelation to and through Noah. 8:20 to 9:29, continued

We now come to the prophetic utterances of Noah. After mentioning the names of the sons of Noah, and stating the fact that the entire world was populated from their descendants, the record related that "Noah began to be a husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: and he drank of the wine, and was drunken. . ." (9:20,21). In discussing this somewhat mysterious passage of Scripture, we should avoid speculating beyond what is written. Some have speculated as to whether Noah was the first man in history to make intoxicating wine, as to whether he made it accidentally, as it were, and drank it without realizing its intoxicating properties, etc. On all such questions we should refrain from making pronouncements for which there is no basis in the Bible. Some have labored to clear Noah of all blame and responsibility in connection with this incident. It is not necessary to attempt this. The facts are as stated. Noah drank wine and was drunken. It is an evidence of the strict accuracy and truthfulness of the Bible that it does not attempt to idealize its heroes, nor to picture them as better than they really were. Other ancient books smooth over the faults of their heroes, or even omit discreditable facts altogether. The Bible tells the truth about its great men. Noah's drunkenness, Abraham's untruthfulness, David's adultery, Peter's denial of Christ — all these and others are recorded, not because they were legitimate, but because the Bible tells the real truth about people.

This whole incident is quite evidently included in the record especially as an introduction to the prophetic utterances of Noah which followed in verses 25-27. In spite of Noah's wrongdoing, he was a true servant of God and a prophet, as well as a preacher of righteousness.

The incident recorded in verses 22-24 is of a rather mysterious nature. Evidently the record is intended to bring out a different attitude on the part of Shem and Japheth from that of Ham. It would seem that Ham took an improper and disrespectful delight in his father's shame. Shem and Japheth, on the other hand, were sorry about their father's disgraceful condition, and took steps to conceal his shame so far as possible. Ham was apparently amused at his father's shame; Shem and Japheth were saddened by it. Note that twice in the record it is stated that Ham was the father of Canaan (9:18, 22). This obviously affects the meaning. The sensual character of Ham is continued and intensified in his son Canaan and Canaan's descendants.

When Noah awoke from his drunken stupor, he realized what had happened (9:24). Just how Noah knew what had happened while he had been unconscious, we do not know. Presumably none of his three sons would have told. It has been suggested that he noticed the garment which Shem and Japheth had laid on him—either that this was not a garment he was accustomed to use, or that it was laid on him in an unusual way. The record states that Noah "knew what his younger son had done unto him" (9:24). Some have thought that he knew this by prophetic inspiration, though the record does not state this. It

may be that, knowing his three sons as he did, he realized that Ham, rather than Shem and Japheth, would be the one to be involved in misconduct. As the Bible does not provide the information, we cannot speak positively about it.

At any rate, Noah pronounced a curse, not upon Ham, but upon Canaan, the fourth son of Ham (10:6). It may be inquired why the curse was pronounced on Canaan rather than on Ham himself. The explanation of this is to be found in the fact that Canaan and his descendants evidently reproduced and continued the sensual character of Ham. "Ham was punished in one of his sons because he had sinned against his father, and he was punished in that particular son, because Canaan most strongly reproduced Ham's sensual character" (G. Vos, *Biblical Theology*, p. 69). It should be observed that only the descendants of Canaan, not all the descendants of Ham, are included in the curse pronounced by Noah. As a matter of fact it is well known that sensuality was a dominant characteristic of the Canaanites, which perverted not only their life but also their religious worship.

The curse pronounced on Canaan is: "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren" (9:25). This statement of Noah cannot be rightly understood unless we bear in mind that it was predictive prophecy. Leupold states that we do Noah an injustice if we suppose him to have been actuated by personal resentment or ill will in uttering these words. Noah feared God and he would not lay great disabilities on portions of his posterity of his own will (Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, I,p.349). Concerning Noah's words on this occasion, Leupold states: "Being so accurate a delineation of the future of the three branches of the human family. . . it approves itself to the thinking man as a truly prophetic utterance" (Leupold, I,349). "The event took place at a critical juncture where no significant event could fail to influence history for ages to come" (G. Vos, *Biblical Theology*, p. 68).

The notion, often advocated in the slavery

controversy in the previous century in America, that Gen. 9:25 involves a curse upon the Negro race, or even affords a divine warrant for keeping the Negro race in a condition of servitude, is wholly untenable. Apart from other considerations, this theory is shown to be wrong by the simple fact that it was not all the descendants of Ham but only the Canaanites that were included in the curse. The Canaanites formed only a fraction of the Hamitic stock of mankind. They were inhabitants of Palestine before that land was conquered by Israel under Joshua. The African Negroes are not Canaanites and never were, so far as known. The Canaanites are cursed; the rest of the Hamites are neither blessed nor cursed; blessings are pronounced upon Shem and Japheth.

#### Questions:

1. What sin did Noah commit soon after the flood?
2. Was Noah responsible for what he did?
3. What does the account of Noah's conduct show concerning the reliability of the Bible?
4. What was the attitude of Ham toward his father's shame?
5. What was the attitude of Shem and Japheth in the same matter?
6. Why was Canaan cursed rather than his father Ham?
7. What trait was characteristic of the Canaanites?
8. How should we regard Noah's utterance, as a private statement of personal opinion, or as a prophetic statement?
9. Why is it incorrect to say that Gen. 9:25 applies to the Negro race?
10. What wrong use was often made of this verse in the slavery controversy of the last century?

### LESSON 50

#### II. History of the Human Race from Adam to Abraham. 2:4 to 11:26, continued

##### 8. Divine revelation to and through Noah. 8:20 to 9:29, continued

Next we come to the blessings pronounced by Noah on Shem and Japheth. "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant". (9:26,27). Noah is moved to praise the Lord because of the great blessings that are to be granted to Shem. Jehovah is called "the God of Shem." Jehovah is the name of God especially

associated with His plan and work of redemption. "Jehovah, the God of redemption, gives Himself to this part of the race for religious possession and enjoyment" (G. Vos, *Biblical Theology*, p. 70). It has been through the descendants of Shem that God has provided redemption from sin. Through them came Abraham, Israel and finally Jesus Christ. We have inherited art and science from the Greeks, law and organization from the Romans. But the religion of redemption—Christianity—came to us from Israel, which means from Shem.

The third part of Noah's prophecy concerns Japheth. "God shall enlarge Japheth, and he

shall dwell in the tents of Shem. . . " (9:27). This statement contains a play on words in the Hebrew. The verb translated "enlarge" is "japht" which is similar in sound to "Japheth." But what is the meaning of God "enlarging" Japheth? Is this to be understood literally, meaning that God will grant Japheth and his descendants increasingly large territories to live in, or is the meaning figurative, meaning that God will grant prosperity to Japheth and his descendants? It is probable that the literal meaning of "enlarge" is intended. The meaning, then, would be that God will enable the descendants of Japheth to occupy large portions of the world.

In the clause "he shall dwell in the tents of Shem," we take the pronoun "he" as referring to Japheth, although some scholars hold that the reference is to God dwelling in the tents of Shem. It seems more probable that the meaning is that Japheth shall dwell in the tents of Shem. This would involve the Japhethites conquering territory of the Semitic peoples. "But ultimately such physical conquest will have for its result the coming of a religious blessing to Japheth. Occupying the tents of Shem he will find the God of Shem, the God of redemption and revelation, there" (G. Vos, *Biblical Theology*, p. 71). This prophecy was fulfilled in later history when the Greeks and the Romans conquered and ruled Semitic lands. By means of this the true religion came to be spread widely through the ancient world. As Delitzsch put it, "We are all Japhethites dwelling in the tents of Shem." God's revelation and redemption have been mediated to us through a Semitic channel.

We may note in passing that all the elements of Noah's prophetic utterances have been fulfilled. The blessing of salvation has indeed come to the world through the Semites, and the descendants of Japheth—the Indo-European or Aryan peoples—have occupied vast territories, stretching from India clear across Europe to the Atlantic, only to

overflow to North America, South America and Australia.

"And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years. And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years: and he died" (9:29). Noah is the last of those recorded to have lived nearly a thousand years. Shem lived 600 years, Arphaxad lived 438 years, and so on. We see no valid reason for denying or questioning the truthfulness of the statements about the great ages of these ancient men. We take the statements as literally, historically true. No doubt the true explanation of their extreme longevity is that mankind was still new, and endowed with a large measure of that physical vigor and vitality which man possessed at his creation.

#### Questions:

1. Why was Noah moved to praise the Lord?
2. What special meaning is associated with the name Jehovah?
3. What special blessings have come through the descendants of Shem?
4. What is meant by the statement that God would enlarge Japheth?
5. What is meant by Japheth dwelling in the tents of Shem?
6. How was the prophecy of Japheth dwelling in the tents of Shem later fulfilled?
7. How was the prophecy of God enlarging Japheth historically fulfilled?
8. What parts of the world were occupied by the descendants of Japheth?
9. How old was Noah at the time of his death?
10. How can the longevity of these early people be explained?

## LESSON 51

### II. History of the Human Race from Adam to Abraham. 2:4 to 11:26, continued

#### 9. The repopulation of the earth from the family of Noah. 10:1-32

Chapter 10 is called the Table of the Nations. This chapter is regarded by Biblical scholars as authentic and extremely ancient. Probably it was written long before the time of Moses, and incorporated by Moses in the Book of Genesis when he wrote or compiled that book. This chapter speaks of some nations, tribes, etc., the origin of which is not mentioned until chapter 11. The Semites are mentioned last in the list. This is because they are important for the history of redemption. The method of Genesis is to mention other branches first, discuss them briefly, and then

drop them, continuing with the detailed history of that particular branch of the human race that was important for the working out of the Plan of Redemption—the Semitic branch, and finally the people of Israel.

The descendants of Japheth are mentioned first, in 10:2-5. The names given doubtless stand not only for the actual individuals but for the tribes or nations descended from them. Thus "Javan" stands for the Ionians, originally a part of the Greek race, but later used as a name for all Greeks. The same word is translated as "Javan" in several places in the Old Testament, but translated as "Greece" or "Grecia" in Daniel 8:21; 10:20; 11:2; Zech. 9:13; Joel 3:6.

Several of the names cannot be positively

identified, or only with doubt. Others, however, are clear as to their historical identification. Thus "Madai" means the Medes; "Kittim" refers to Cyprus. In general, we may say that the Indo-European peoples, occupying western Asia and all of Europe, are descended from Japheth.

Turning now to the sons of Ham, we note that there were four main branches of the Hamitic race, descended from his sons Cush, Mizraim, Phut and Canaan. "Cush" means Ethiopia or Nubia, located south of Egypt; however there were Cushites also in Arabia, in southwestern Asia. "Mizraim" certainly means Egypt. The form "Mizraim" is dual, meaning "the two Egypts," doubtless because Egypt was divided into two parts, Upper and Lower Egypt. As for "Phut," its identification is not certain; it may have been an ancient nation located where Somaliland is today (east coast of Africa), or it may have been in northern Africa where Lybia is today. "Canaan" certainly refers to the land of Canaan, and the Canaanites who inhabited it.

The sons of Cush which are mentioned must have been Ethiopian tribes. Some of them may have been located in southwestern Arabia. "And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord" (10:8,9). This reference to Nimrod is a sort of parenthesis in this chapter which consists mainly of a list of the various descendants of Noah. The statements made are of a rather mysterious nature. The word translated "mighty" may mean either "hero" or "tyrant" (Leupold). "Hunter," again, may have either a good or a bad meaning. It may mean someone who hunts lions or other wild animals, or it may mean someone who hunts and enslaves his fellow men. The added expression, "before the Lord," does not of itself imply either approval or disapproval of Nimrod's activities. Leupold states that the name "Nimrod" literally means "let us revolt," and adds that this meaning of the name gives the key to the meaning of the passage. "The tendency of this Cushite must have been to rise up against, and to attempt to overthrow, all existing order" (Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, I, 366). This being the meaning of the name "Nimrod," the expression "mighty hunter" must be understood in a bad sense. "So this inciter to revolt (Nimrod) came to be the first tyrant on the earth, oppressing others and using them for the furtherance of his own interests" (Leupold, I, 266).

As to the expression "before the Lord," this is literally "in the face of Jehovah." But what does this mean? Of the various meanings that have been proposed, the most probable seems to be that Jehovah took notice of and remembered Nimrod's evil deeds. So evil was Nimrod, and so successful in his exploits, that his very name gave rise to a proverbial expression used of others in

later times: "Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the Lord" (10:9). Mere fame as a hunter of lions, etc., could hardly account for the language used.

"And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar" (10:10). We have here the first statement in the Bible about the origin of the nation later known as Babylonia. What is remarkable is the fact that the Bible — alone among ancient records — speaks of Babylonia as having a Hamitic origin. History and archaeology have shown that in very ancient times there were two races in the Babylonian plain — the Sumerians and the Akkadians. The Akkadians were of Semitic stock, spoke a Semitic language, and probably entered the Babylonian plain from Arabia. The Sumerians, on the other hand, were non-Semitic, and secular history and archaeology have not been able to discover who they were nor where they came from. It is probable, however, that the earliest inhabitants known to history were the Sumerians, and the Akkadians came in later. On the basis of the statement of Gen. 10:10 we may properly conclude that the Sumerians were of Hamitic stock.

The "land of Shinar" means the Babylonian plain in the Tigris-Euphrates valley. The cities (Babel, Erech, Accad, Calneh) are well known, and the region has been extensively excavated by modern archaeological expeditions. Babel or Babylon is mentioned as the beginning of the kingdom of Nimrod. It is possible that this city had already been built and that Nimrod took it over for the beginning of his domain. Chapter 11 which in the Tower of Babel incident describes the building of Babylon may actually look back to a time even before what is mentioned in 10:10.

#### Questions:

1. What is the subject of chapter 10?
2. When was the material in this chapter probably written?
3. Why are the descendants of Shem mentioned last in the list of peoples in this chapter?
4. Besides the actual individuals descended from Shem, Ham and Japheth, what do the various names given stand for?
5. What is the meaning of "Javan"?
6. What is the meaning of "Madai"?
7. What is the meaning of "Mizraim"?
8. Where was Cush located?
9. Who was the most famous son of Cush?
10. What are the possible meanings of the word "mighty" in verse 9?

11. What is the meaning of the name "Nimrod"?

12. What is meant by the statement that Nimrod was a mighty hunter "before the Lord"?

13. What verse in chapter 10 gives the Bible's first statement about the origin of Babylonia?

14. Who were the Akkadians? From which of Noah's sons were they descended? What kind of language did they speak?

15. Who were the Sumerians, and what is known about their racial affinities?

16. Where was the "land of Shinar" located?

## LESSON 52

### II. History of the Human Race from Adam to Abraham. 2:4 to 11:26, continued

#### 9. The repopulation of the earth from the family of Noah. 10:1-32, continued

"Out of that land went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh, and the city of Rehoboth, and Calah, and Resen between Nineveh and Calah: the same is a great city" (10:11,12). This is the King James Version of these verses, but there is reason to believe that it is inaccurate. Young's Literal Translation reads: "From that land he hath gone out to Asshur, and buildeth Nineveh, even the broad places of the city, and Calah, and Resen, between Nineveh and Calah; it is the great city." The American Revised Version (1901) reads: "Out of that land he went forth into Assyria, and builded Nineveh, and Rehoboth-Ir, and Calah, and between Nineveh and Calah (the same is the great city)". Leupold's translation is similar to this. We believe that these translations, rather than the King James, are correct at this point, and that the "Asshur" mentioned in verse 11 is not an individual, but the name of the country Assyria, which formed Nimrod's second venture in empire building.

The statement "the same is a great city" refers to the city of Nineveh. The other places mentioned are to be regarded as suburbs or adjacent towns, which taken together made Nineveh such a great city. Verses 11 and 12 have given us some valuable information about the beginnings of world politics.

Next the other peoples of Hamitic stock are mentioned, starting with Egypt (Mizraim). The names given in verses 13 and 14 are all plural in form, and therefore mean not merely individuals, but nations. In the Hebrew the plural of a masculine noun is formed by adding -im, just as in English the plural is formed by adding -s. Among those mentioned, the Philistim and Caphtorim are of special interest. Amos 9:7 shows that the Philistines came from Caphtor, which means the island of Crete in the eastern Mediterranean Sea. In verse 14 the Philistim or Philistines are said to have come out from the Casluhim. The Casluhim have not been positively identified, but it is possible that a region east of the Nile delta is meant. Even if this is the correct meaning, this does not

necessarily involve a contradiction between Genesis and Amos. Crete was the original home of the Philistines. If the Casluhim were located near Egypt, still they could have come originally from Crete.

The Canaanites are mentioned next, including the Phoenicians (Sidon) and others. The Phoenicians were of Hamitic stock, but came to speak a Semitic language. They were located on the Syrian coast just north of Palestine. "Heth", mentioned in 10:15, was apparently the ancestor of the Hittites, who formed a great empire in the second millennium before Christ. It has been proved that the Hittites spoke a language with affinities to the Indo-European family of languages. This however is not inconsistent with the fact that their founder was a man of Hamitic stock. Language and racial stock are two different things. There are millions of Negroes in North America whose language is English — a language of the Indo-European (Japhetic) family — yet they are of the Hamitic race and their use of the English language goes back only 400 years or so at most. There are numerous known cases of whole nations changing their language to an entirely different one, while the racial stock remains largely unchanged.

From 10:21 the chapter takes up the descendants of Shem, that branch of the human race which was to be religiously important, for through them the divine promise of redemption was to be fulfilled. Here again the names given are not merely the names of individuals, but the names of the nations or tribes descended from them.

Shem is stated to be "the father of all the children of Eber," that is to say, he was the ancestor of all the Hebrews. The name "Eber" means "across," and refers to the region across the Euphrates River. All Israelites were Hebrews, but not all Hebrews were Israelites. Abraham is called a Hebrew, that is, he was a member of this particular tribe or group. The Hebrew language, or something very close to it, was spoken by various countries besides Israel.

"Elam" is a country located east of the Tigris River. "Asshur" in the Bible sometimes refers to the nation of Assyria and sometimes to the individual from which this nation sprang. "Aram" stands for the Aramaeans, who lived to the north-

east of Palestine. In the Bible they are commonly spoken of as "Syrians." They were akin to but not identical with the Hebrews. "Uz," mentioned in 10:23, is of interest because it was the home of Job (Job 1:1). The location is not known, but it was certainly the home of part of the Aramaean race, and possibly located somewhere in Arabia.

Other Semitic tribes are listed in the verses which follow. As far as Peleg (10:25) this forms part of the genealogy of Abraham, which is repeated in fuller form in chapter 11. Chapter 10 continues with Joktan, Peleg's brother, and lists the various Semitic tribes descended from him. Most of these seem to have been located in various parts of Arabia.

The statement of 10:25 that in the time of Peleg "was the earth divided" is of interest. A statement such as this, that in the days or lifetime of Peleg the earth was divided, indicates that these various names listed are the names of individual persons, not merely the names of tribes descended from them. A tribe would live on for centuries; it could hardly be said that during the days of a tribe or nation the earth was divided. It could not be said, for example, that in the time of Spain America was discovered. Spain has a known history of at least 2500 years, so the statement that in the time of Spain America was discovered would be so indefinite as to be practically meaningless. But it would be very proper to say that in the lifetime of Columbus America was discovered.

But what is meant by the statement that in Peleg's days the earth was divided? The probable answer is that the confusion of languages at the Tower of Babel, described in chapter 11, is meant. We know nothing more about Peleg. His brother Joktan, however, was the ancestor of many Arabian tribes. Verse 30 states that their territory "was from Mesha, as thou goest unto Sephar, a mount of the east." Both Mesha and Sephar are thought to have been in the southern part of Arabia, though the exact location is unknown.

The last verse of chapter 10 (verse 32) summarizes the entire contents of the chapter. It is clearly stated that the entire population of the post-flood world came from the three sons of Noah and their descendants. This fits in with what is known about human ethnology, though it leaves some unsolved problems in our hands.

Many questions cannot be answered; for example, how are the Chinese, the Eskimos and the North and South American Indians to be classified? Are they descended from Shem, Ham or Japheth? We must bear in mind that races which exist today are not necessarily descended wholly from any one of Noah's sons. There is certainly the possibility and even the high probability that the various branches intermarried and mingled.

How many descendants of Noah are listed in chapter 10? Delitzsch holds that there are 70. Others give a slightly different total varying from 68 to 71.

#### Questions:

1. What was Nimrod's second venture in empire building?
2. What question exists as to the translation of 10:11?
3. What is meant by the statement "the same is a great city" in 10:12?
4. What is indicated by the ending -im on a Hebrew noun?
5. What was the original home of the Philistines?
6. From whom were the Hittites descended? What kind of language did they speak?
7. What was the racial stock of the Phoenicians, and to what family of languages did their language belong?
8. Why are the descendants of Shem mentioned last in the list?
9. What is the meaning of the name "Eber"?
10. Were the Israelites the same as the Hebrews? What was the difference?
11. Where was Elam located?
12. What famous man lived in the land of Uz?
13. What great event took place in the lifetime of Peleg?
14. Where were the descendants of Joktan located?
15. About how many descendants of Noah are listed in chapter 10?

### LESSON 53

#### II. History of the Human Race from Adam to Abraham. 2:4 to 11:26, continued

##### 10. Arrogant humanism frustrated by divine judgment at Babel. 11:1-9

We now come to the incident of the Tower of

Babel. "And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech" (11:1). What this original language of the human race was, is of course unknown. The suggestion that it was Hebrew is of course without foundation. The fact that the first book of the Bible is written in Hebrew does not

prove that the first people of the world spoke Hebrew.

"And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there" (11:2). The center from which the human race began to spread over the world after the flood was the region of Ararat, that is, probably, the mountains of Armenia. There is some question as to whether the Hebrew word used in 11:2 should be translated "from the east" or "eastward." The identical Hebrew word is translated "eastward" in Gen. 2:8; cf. also 3:24; 12:8 and 13:11, in all of which the same Hebrew term is used. It seems evident, therefore, that it should be translated "eastward" in 11:2. The Babylonian plain (Shinar) is located southeast of the Ararat range, so it could properly be reached by journeying eastward. In those ancient days the Babylonian plain was extremely fertile and it is not surprising that the people who first reached it decided to settle there permanently.

"And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar" (11:3). In ancient Babylonia and Assyria, there were two kinds of bricks, both of which have been uncovered in tremendous quantities by modern excavation. One kind of brick was dried in the hot sun. The other kind was fired in a kiln or furnace, producing a much more durable and permanent type of brick. It was this permanent type of brick that is mentioned in verse 3. Evidently the structure being built was to endure permanently. The "slime" mentioned was bitumen, which was to be used for mortar. The second sentence of verse 3 is obviously something inserted by Moses in order to make the meaning clear to people of his own day and afterwards. In Palestine, as well as in Egypt, large structures would be made of stone, which occurs abundantly in those lands. But in the Babylonian plain stone is scarce and hard to get. This note in verse 3 explaining about the unusual building materials used at Babel is perfectly in harmony with the idea that Moses wrote Genesis while living among a people who had only recently come out of Egypt.

"And they said, Go to, let us build us a city, and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth" (11:4). The purpose of this tower and city was to form a center of unity for the human race, that would serve to keep the race together. This in itself was in defiance of the command of God to mankind to fill the world with people (9:1). It was God's will that the human race be spread abroad over the face of the earth, not that people remain concentrated and huddled together in one locality.

But behind the purpose of maintaining a center of unity, there was an even more sinister purpose. "Unity was to afford the possibility for founding a gigantic empire, glorifying man in his

independence of God" (G. Vos, *Biblical Theology*, p. 71). They wanted to make themselves a name, that is, a reputation for fame and greatness. "God interferes with the execution of this plan, not so much, or at least not only, from opposition to its impious spirit, but chiefly from fidelity to His promise, that the sinful development of humanity will not again issue into a repeated catastrophe on the scale of the deluge. If this were not to happen, the progress of sin had to be checked. If the whole of humanity had remained concentrated, the power of sin would likewise have remained united, and doubtless soon again have reached stupendous proportions. Hence it was necessary to break up the unity of the race" (G. Vos, *Biblical Theology*, pp. 71, 72). The power of sin is greatly increased when it is unified and concentrated; it is greatly diluted and weakened when it is divided up between many rival kingdoms and rival religions.

The unity of the human race, is of course the true ideal. If it had not been on account of sin, the original unity of the race would have never been broken. When sin shall have finally been abolished, in the absolute and perfect kingdom of God, the redeemed humanity will again be a unity, without divisions, for the divisions will no longer be needed to checkmate and frustrate the power of sin.

But during the continuance of human sinfulness, it is absolutely necessary that sin be checked and limited by being divided up into many political units and many false religions. It is contrary to the will of God that the human race, while still sinful, be united in one single political sovereignty. The Old Testament prophets condemn all attempts at world-empire as contrary to the will of God; the very idea is pagan and immoral. God therefore maintains the divided condition of humanity, of which the division of human language is an important factor, as a way of preventing the concentrated development of sin under a single power.

Those who think that world government is the answer to the present day's pressing problems of war and peace, should stop and ponder seriously the lesson of the Tower of Babel. We can think of no more terrible opening for tyranny and oppression than a world-government set up on a secular or non-Christian basis. Those who seriously suppose that a single world government would be a blessing are far too optimistic about the moral condition of human nature; they fail to realize the deep sinfulness of the human heart. A secular or non-Christian world government might indeed bring world-wide peace, but it would be the peace of a world-wide prison or a world-wide cemetery. We have a prophetic picture of something of the kind in Revelation 13. Note that the blasphemous power there described is bitterly opposed to the Kingdom of God (verses 5-7), that it holds absolutely world-wide dominion over the human race (verse 7), that it maintains universal,

world-wide, absolute peace (verse 4), and that it persecutes true Christians unto the death (verse 10). May God grant that we may never in our time have to face such a humanistic tyranny! Terrible as it indeed is, the threat of atomic warfare is not the worst threat that hangs over the human race. There is one thing even worse. May God grant that the free nations may not as blind men stumble into that worst of all evils!

#### Questions:

1. What is known about the original language of the human race?
2. From what center did the human race spread after the flood?
3. How should the expression "from the east" in 11:2 be translated?
4. What two kinds of bricks existed in ancient Babylonia?
5. What kind was used for making the Tower of Babel?
6. How were the bricks joined together?
7. Why would the second sentence of verse 3 be included in the record?
8. What was the primary purpose of building the city and tower?
9. How did this purpose contradict the will of God?
10. What deeper purpose can be discerned behind the plan to build the Tower of Babel?
11. Why did God find it necessary to frustrate the purpose of building the city and tower of Babel?
12. When will the original true unity of the human race be restored?
13. Why would world-wide unity of the human race while man is still sinful be an evil rather than a good?
14. How do human divisions check the power of sin?
15. What should Christians think of present-day proposals for a world government?

### LESSON 54

#### II. History of the Human Race from Adam to Abraham. 2:4 to 11:26, continued

##### 10. Arrogant humanism frustrated by divine judgment at Babel. 11:1-9, continued

"And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded" (11:5). The language here is, of course, anthropomorphic. God did not need to leave heaven to see what was going on at the scene of the Tower of Babel. The record speaks of God in human terms, to teach us truth about God. God, of course, is everywhere, and sees and knows all things always. The meaning of the statement in verse 5 is that God was deeply concerned about what was going on. He was fully aware of it and prepared to take whatever action was required to frustrate man's plans and to fulfill His own plans and purposes.

"And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do" (11:6). Human sin always leads man to try to become independent of God. This was the case even back in the time of Adam and Eve; they aspired to be "as God." Verse 6 shows the true spirit which was behind the architectural construction work going on at Babel in the plain of Shinar. The Tower of Babel was only the beginning. Once let this succeed, and one thing would follow another without any limits. What was really involved was man's atheistic desire to be independent, to be a law

unto himself, to do that which was right in his own eyes, to stand on his own feet, to give answer to no higher Person or Power. Therefore we may properly describe this spirit as arrogant humanism. God fully discerned that this city and tower were only the entering wedge. If allowed to succeed, man would soon be started again on a career of atheistic wickedness such as had existed in the period before the flood.

Therefore God stepped in to frustrate man's purposes. The real issue at Babel is God versus man—the sovereign, gracious, wise, almighty God versus proud, haughty, godless and united humanity. God checked man's efforts by causing such differences of language that mutual communication became impossible. No more effective way could be thought of. Of course, God could have killed the people who were defying His will, but that would have frustrated the purpose of divine redemption, which required that the human race live on throughout the ages of history. So God confounded their languages, which cause no bodily harm to anyone, yet made the continued unity of the human race impossible. From now on they would have to go their separate and several ways, thus fulfilling the divine purpose to fill the earth with people. "So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth; and they left off to build the city" (11:8).

A good deal of ridicule has been heaped upon this story in Genesis 11. It has been represented as incredible, as a myth invented to explain dif-

ferences of language, etc. All this scorn is heaped on the narrative simply because it involves a miracle, a direct action of God in human history, apart from the operation of the forces of nature. To those who believe in a God who can and does work miracles, the story of Babel presents not the slightest difficulty.

The present world-wide differences of language are well-known. The science of philology has attempted to trace existing languages back to their parent languages, and so to trace all languages back to their original source. This study has been carried on with remarkable results. Human languages have, in general, been shown to belong to several great families of languages. Then there are a number of separate languages which are unclassifiable. For example, the Basque language of the Pyrenees mountains between France and Spain is unclassifiable; it cannot be proved to belong to any of the great families of languages. One of the great families of languages is the Indo-European family, extending from India on the east to Ireland and Iceland on the west. All the languages of this family have come from a common parent language, called Primitive Indo-European. If we could trace them back far enough, we would come to a point where English, Russian and Sanskrit were identical. Another great family is the Semitic family of languages, extending in a broad belt across northern Africa and southwestern Asia, including Hebrew, Arabic, Aramaean, Phoenician, Assyrian-Babylonian and several others. These are all closely related, more or less, and must all have come from a common parent language. Another great family of languages is found in eastern Asia, including Chinese, Burmese and several others. Scholars have done remarkable work in showing these affinities between various languages. But it has always proved impossible to trace all languages back to one single source or parent language. The most that can be done is to establish definite groupings or families of languages. The search for a single parent language has proved fruitless and baffling.

We submit that no better explanation has been offered than that given by the Bible in Genesis chapter 11. God intervened by divine power to diversify man's languages, thereby frustrating the building of the tower, and also checking the more sinister purpose which lay back of the building of the tower.

## LESSON 55

### II. History of the Human Race from Adam to Abraham. 2:4 to 11:26, continued

#### 11. The line of descent from Noah to Abraham. 11:10-26

From among the various branches of the human race, God chose the Semitic branch to be the channel of redemption from sin and the channel

"Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth" (11:9). The name Babel is commonly and properly taken to mean "Gate of God." That is, that is the meaning put on the name by the Babylonians themselves. (Babylon is simply "Babel" with a Greek ending added). But the original meaning of the name, as given in Gen. 11:9, is "confusion." The Hebrew verb "balal" means to confuse. From this verb the form "balbel" is derived, and this again is contracted into "Babel." From this incident the noun "Babel" has become a synonym for confusion and unharmonious, conflicting noise at the present day. A confused and noisy meeting is spoken of as "a Babel of confusion" or "as disorderly as Babel."

#### Questions:

1. What is meant by the statement that the Lord came down to see the city and tower which men were building?
2. What wrong desire does sin always lead people to have?
3. How may the spirit back of the building of the Tower of Babel be described?
4. What would be the result if the builders were allowed to succeed?
5. What was the real issue at Babel?
6. How did God frustrate man's plans and purposes?
7. Why have some scholars ridiculed the story of the Tower of Babel?
8. What effort have scholars made to trace the history of languages?
9. To what extent have these efforts in the study of language succeeded?
10. What attempt in the study of languages has always failed?
11. What is the Babylonian meaning of "Babel"?
12. What was the original meaning of "Babel", as shown by Genesis chapter 11?
13. What is the origin of the name "Babylon"?

of revelation of divine truth to mankind. We may inquire as to what special qualifications the Semites may have had which led God to choose them for these functions. Two special qualifications have been pointed out. First, the Semites had a passive and receptive psychology, rather than an active and productive one. (G. Vos, Biblical Theology, p. 73). This fitted them to receive revelation

from God in a unique way. In the second place, the Semites tended to make religion central in their life. This was true both in the case of the false, pagan religions and in the case of the true religion of Jehovah. "The Semites have become leaders in the world of religion, because religion was the leading factor in their life, no matter whether for good or for evil" (G. Vos, *Biblical Theology*, p. 75). Of course, the Semites possessed these traits of character just because God had made them so. Just as God prepares a man—a Moses or a Paul—for a special work, so God can and does prepare a family, nation or race for a special function in His redemptive purpose. He molds and fashions them to meet His requirements for a particular purpose. God made the psychology and religious characteristics of the Semites what they were, in order that from them God could choose a certain group to be the channel of revelation and redemption.

Chapter 11:10-26 gives the line of descent from Noah to Abraham through the line of Shem. "These are the generations of Shem" (11:10). This formula, as we have already noted, means the introduction of a new subject or the treatment of something from a new point of view. It means a new start in the book. As always in the Book of Genesis, the subject matter is so narrowed down from the more inclusive to the more particular. In chapter 10 we read of the descendants of Shem in general; here in chapter 11 the subject is that particular line of the descendants of Shem from which Abraham came. We shall not take time to discuss these names of Abraham's ancestors in detail. Some of these names have known meanings and can be translated; others remain mysterious to scholars.

One fact that should be noted is the gradual decline in the human life-span. Noah lived 950

years; Shem 600; Eber 473. With Peleg the life-span of man suddenly drops to 239. Terah lived to the age of 205; Abraham 175; Isaac 180; Jacob 130; Moses 120.

The list ends with a man named Terah, who had three sons, namely Abram, Nahor and Haran. There is a rather remarkable resemblance here to the history of Adam and Noah. Adam had three sons, Cain, Abel and Seth (that is, these three whose names are recorded; later he had other sons and also daughters); Noah had three sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth. Terah had three sons, Abram, Nahor and Haran.

#### Questions:

1. Which branch of the human race did God choose to be the channel of revelation and of redemption from sin?
2. What psychological trait of the Semites fitted them to be the channel of revelation?
3. What religious characteristic of the Semites fitted them to hold a unique place in the history of redemption?
4. How can we explain the fact that the Semites possessed this special type of mind and this special attitude toward religion?
5. What is the meaning of the formula "These are the generations of Shem" in 11:10?
6. What can be said about the meanings of the names listed in this passage?
7. What does the genealogy of Abraham show as to the life-span of the human race?
8. What were the names of the three sons of Terah?

### LESSON 56

#### III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26

##### 1. Abraham and his kindred in Ur of the Chaldees. 11:27-32

"Now these are the generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor and Haran; and Haran begat Lot" (11:27). Though the heading indicates that the history of Terah begins at this point, comparatively little is said about Terah, and the narrative presently becomes the history of Abraham. We note in Joshua 24:2 that Terah "served other gods." It is possible, as Leupold suggests, that at the time of leaving Ur, Terah broke with idolatry, and that this break with idolatry become complete in the case of Abraham, so that Abraham could be said to complete what Terah began, thus explaining how the story of Abraham could be called "the generations of Terah."

The three sons of Terah were mentioned in

11:26, and now in the very next verse, 11:27, they are mentioned over again, the obvious reason being that a new division of the narrative has begun, shown by the formula "These are the generations of. . .". Haran died after the birth of his son Lot, in Ur of the Chaldees. It is stated that "Haran died before his father Terah". The Hebrew says literally "Haran died in the face of his father Terah," the obvious meaning being that he died during his father's lifetime. The place, Ur of the Chaldees, is also specifically mentioned. Formerly very little was known about this city, but between 1922 and 1934 the site was extensively excavated by a joint expedition of the British Museum and the University of Pennsylvania, under the leadership of Sir Leonard Woolley. Most remarkable and astonishing discoveries were made, showing that Ur was the seat of an ancient and highly developed culture and civilization going back to about 3,000 B. C. Ur might be described as the London or Paris of Abraham's day. Al-

ready ancient in Abraham's time, it was a great center of human life. The jewelry and other objects — many of pure, solid gold — which were found deep in the soil at Ur, show a very high degree of artistic skill, and some would require the most expert craftsmanship to reproduce today, even with modern equipment. Among other things, Ur was famous as the principal location of the worship of the moon-goddess Nin-gal. This idolatrous character of the great city may have been one reason why the Lord commanded Abraham to go out from it to another country.

Those who are interested in reading for themselves the amazing story of the discoveries at Ur of the Chaldees are referred to Sir Leonard Woolley's book entitled "Ur of the Chaldees." This 160 page book, illustrated with photographs and drawings, can be obtained in a paper-bound edition for 50 cents plus 5 cents postage from Penguin Books, Inc., 3300 Clipper Mill Road, Baltimore 11, Maryland. The catalog number of the book in the Penguin series is A-27. A reading of this book will give an excellent idea of the place from which Abraham set out on his journeys.

"And Abram and Nahor took them wives: the name of Abram's wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife Milcah, the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah" (11:29). The name of Abraham's wife was Sarai, which means "princess." She was presumably a woman of social standing and importance. We know from Gen. 20:12 that Sarai was Abraham's half-sister; in other words, she was a daughter of Terah by a different wife from Abraham's mother. Nahor married Milcah, who was his niece, sister of Lot and daughter of Haran. Milcah reappears in the history in 22:23. Who the Iscah mentioned in 11:29 was, we do not know, beyond the fact that she was a sister or half-sister of Milcah.

These marriages between close relatives would be regarded as both illegal and immoral today. We should, however, avoid the error of judging these early people by the standards that are valid at the present day. It was God's plan that the human race be descended from a single human pair — Adam and Eve. Obviously this plan made it necessary for close relatives to marry for a time. The laws against incestuous mar-

riages are founded upon sound biological reasons, but evidently those reasons did not exist at the beginning of human history nor for a considerable time afterward. It is well known that marriage of close relatives greatly increases the tendency to inherit any bad characteristics of the parents. But at the beginning of human life on the earth, there was no accumulation of bad heredity that would be intensified by close marriages. As a matter of fact, there is no reason to believe that the marriages of Abraham and Nahor were regarded as improper in any way — on either social or religious grounds. There is no suggestion in the record that it was wrong for them to marry these women.

#### Questions:

1. What new history begins at this point in the book of Genesis?
2. What do we learn about Terah from Joshua 24:2?
3. What is the meaning of the statement that Haran died before his father Terah?
4. Where was Haran born, and where did he die?
5. When and by whom was Ur of the Chaldees excavated?
6. What kind of culture existed in Ur?
7. What form of religion was prominent in Ur?
8. What book tells the story of the discoveries at Ur?
9. What is the meaning of the name "Sarai"?
10. Besides being Abraham's wife, what was the relationship between Sarai and Abraham?
11. Whom did Nahor marry, and what was her relationship to him?
12. What would be the status of such marriages today?
13. Why were such marriages of close relatives not forbidden in the early times of the human race?

### LESSON 57

#### III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26, continued

##### 1. Abraham and his kindred in Ur of the Chaldees. 11:27-32, continued

"But Sarai was barren; she had no child" (11:30). The fact that Sarai was barren became important later in the history, which explains why attention is called to this fact here at the be-

ginning of the story of Abraham. The point is emphasized by the Hebrew parallelism: she was barren, she had no child. This use of parallel statements is common in Hebrew literature; for example "Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad". These are not two different statements, but one statement repeated in different words for the sake of emphasis.

The meaning of the name "Abram" is "Ex-

alted Father" or some similar expression such as "My Father is Exalted." "Haran" may mean "mountaineer"; the meaning of "Nahor" is unknown.

"And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came into Haran, and dwelt there" (11:31). We should note that not all the clan or tribe of Terah accompanied him out of Ur. Nahor and Milcah are left behind in Ur, although later on they went to upper Mesopotamia (Gen. 24:10). The fact that part went out, while part remained behind, would seem to suggest that there was a religious reason for the departure. It is possible that those who were ready to give up idolatry went out, while those who were willing to compromise with idolatry remained behind.

The first stage of the journey was a trip from Ur to Haran, a distance of about 600 miles. Haran was located northwest of Ur, not far from the great bend of the Euphrates River. Why the party settled down in Haran, and how long they remained there, we are not told. We know from Joshua 24:2 that Terah served other gods "beyond the river", and this evidently means at Haran, which is located beyond the Euphrates. Perhaps the facts are that Terah did not completely break with idolatry, so that it became necessary eventually for Abraham to part company with him and go with Sarai and Lot to the land of Canaan.

"And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran" (11:32). The facts of the record indicate that Terah died 60 years after Abraham departed from Haran. Terah was 70 years old when Abraham was born (11:26); Abraham was 75 years old when he left Haran (12:4). Adding these two figures, we see that Terah was 145 years old when Abraham left Haran. But Terah was 205 years old when he died. Therefore he lived 60 years after Abraham left Haran.

This fact involves a serious difficulty, for in the Book of Acts, 7:4, Stephen in his speech before the Council states that Abraham left Haran "when his father was dead". How can this be

reconciled with the fact that the Genesis record represents Terah living on for 60 years after Abraham left Haran? Stephen spoke by special inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:55). Moreover it is inconceivable that so good and accurate a Bible student as Stephen could have committed such a blunder as to contradict the Genesis record about Abraham and Terah. So we must reject the idea that Stephen was simply mistaken. But what then is the explanation? Of the various suggestions that have been offered, the best is that commended by Leupold, namely that Stephen meant "dead" in the sense of "dead to him." "Because of Terah's adherence to idolatry he was as good as dead for Abram, and so Abram could leave him behind, sorry, indeed, for his father's lot but separated from him already as from one dead" (Leupold, Exposition of Genesis, I, 401-2).

#### Questions:

1. Why is it stated at this point that Sarai was barren?
2. Why does the Hebrew say the same thing over again in different words?
3. What is the meaning of the name "Abram"?
4. What is the meaning of the name "Haran"?
5. What members of Terah's clan remained behind in Ur?
6. What may have been the reason why these were left behind?
7. What was the first stage of the journey?
8. About what distance was travelled in this stage?
9. What may have been the reason why Abraham parted company with his father Terah?
10. How long did Terah live after Abraham left Haran?
11. How old was Terah when he died?
12. What difficulty concerning Abraham and Terah is involved in Stephen's speech in Acts 7?
13. What is the most probable solution of this difficulty?

### LESSON 58

#### III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26, continued

##### 2. The history of Abraham after leaving Ur. 12:1 to 25:12

At this point there is a decided change in the character of the narratives in Genesis. The first eleven chapters cover long periods of time and many generations of people in barest outline,

only the most important facts being related. From the beginning of chapter 12, on the other hand, the narrative becomes detailed. The next 39 chapters—chapters 12 to 50—are largely the story of the lives of four men, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. Whereas the entire period from the creation to Abraham took up only 11 chapters, the history of Joseph alone occupies 12 chapters. From the beginning of chapter 12 we have a detailed history

of the covenant people of God, instead of the universal history of mankind which is given in chapters 1-11.

"Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee" (12:1). The original call of God to Abraham came to him while he was still in Ur of the Chaldees, as is definitely proved by Acts 7:2. This must be accepted as true even though there is no actual record in Genesis of a call of God coming to Abraham while he was still in Ur. Stephen's speech, and the Book of Acts, are part of the inspired and infallible Word of God as truly as is Genesis.

The call related in 12:1, however, came to Abraham in Haran, not in Ur. This is shown by the fact that he was to leave his father's house. On the departure from Ur his father accompanied him; when he left Haran he left his father behind. Note that Abraham was commanded by God to leave three things behind him: (1) his country; (2) his kindred; and (3) his father's house. This involved a triple sacrifice of what men hold dear, for the sake of obedience to the will of God.

"Unto a land that I will show thee" (12:1). From Hebrews 11:8 we know that Abraham went out, "not knowing whither he went." But just what does this mean? The original departure from Ur was a departure "to go into the land of Canaan" (11:31). Therefore Abraham must at least have known the general direction in which he was to go when he left Haran, and that he was headed for the land of Canaan. He did not, however, know definitely that Canaan was to be his final destination. Actually he went clear through Canaan to Egypt, and back into Canaan again. It was only later that he learned exactly what land was to be his inheritance; on leaving Haran this was not told him.

As the Epistle to the Hebrews points out, Abraham's leaving Haran was an act of faith. For the final and permanent destination, he had to depend on faith in God's promise, not on information already given him.

Before closing this lesson, we should consider briefly the importance of regarding the stories of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as historical. Many people today, influenced by modern religious unbelief, are ready to say that large elements of these stories are not historical; that is, that they are mere stories or folklore, and not really true. A prominent school of Bible interpretation, which is becoming increasingly popular today, holds that stories such as these in the Bible can be historically false and religiously true at the same time. They regard the stories as historically false, at least in part, but at the same time

as religiously true. This is a subtle sophistry in religion which was unknown in former times; it was left for the twentieth century to invent it. In former times people either believed the Bible or they disbelieved it, but it did not occur to people to say that it could be both true and false at the same time. The present writer is opposed to this modern tendency. We believe that the Bible is either historically true, or it is religiously worthless.

And there is perfectly good evidence that the stories of the patriarchs are historically true. No good reason exists for denying this, even though some people have a sinful zeal for finding things to object to or contradict in the Bible. Moreover, the inspiration and infallibility of the New Testament, and the teachings of Jesus Christ, are at stake in this question. The New Testament as a whole, and Jesus Christ in particular, treat and regard the patriarchs as historical. Therefore to deny the historical truthfulness of the patriarchal history is to deny the trustworthiness of Christ as a teacher of truth. And that means to destroy the Christian faith.

#### Questions:

1. What change in the character of the narratives of Genesis takes place at the beginning of chapter 12?
2. Where was Abraham when the original call of God came to him?
3. How can this be shown to be true?
4. Where was Abraham when the call related in 12:1 came to him?
5. What statement proves that this was the case?
6. What is the meaning of the statement in Hebrews 11:8 that Abraham went out "not knowing whither he went"?
7. According to Hebrews, what was Abraham's principle in going out from his country?
8. What is the attitude of many modern people to the stories of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob?
9. What is the attitude of the New Testament, and the teachings of Christ, to the stories of the patriarchs?
10. What distinction between historical truth and religious value is made by some popular teachers of the present day?

(To be continued)

## Announcement

You can share in "Blue Banner Faith and Life's" wide witness to Bible truth by contributing to the expense of publishing the magazine. Less than half of the amount required is obtained from subscriptions and sale of back issues. For the balance we are dependent on contributions. Numbered receipts are sent promptly for all contributions. Financial reports are submitted to the Board of Publication of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America quarterly.

Sets of back issues for the years 1950, 1952, 1953 and 1954 are available at \$1.00 for each year, postpaid. Pressboard binders which will conveniently preserve two years' issues are available at 75 cents each, postpaid. Subscriptions for the current year are \$1.50 for single subscriptions and \$1.00 for each subscription in clubs of 5 or more to be mailed to one address. All subscriptions must begin with a January-March issue and run to the end of a calendar year. We regret that we cannot do the extra clerical work involved in

having subscriptions start and stop at different times through the year.

The Agent for Britain and Ireland is the Rev. Adam Loughridge, B.A., Glenmanus Manse, Portrush, County Antrim, Northern Ireland. Annual subscription rate for Britain and Ireland is 7s. 6d.

We are happy to announce that the Rev. Alexander Barkley, B.A. has very kindly offered to act in the capacity of Agent for Australia and New Zealand — an offer which has been gladly accepted. His address is 20 Fenwick Street, Geelong, Victoria, Australia. Annual subscription rate for Australia and New Zealand is 10 shillings.

Please note the change of address of the Editor and Manager of "Blue Banner Faith and Life" to that given below.

J. G. Vos, Editor and Manager, 415 31st Street, Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, U.S.A.

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## What Then?

By J. Whitfield Green (adapted)

When the great plants of our cities  
Have turned out their last finished work;  
When the merchant has sold his last yard of silk  
And dismissed his last tired clerk;  
When the banks have rolled in their last dollar  
And paid out their last dividend;  
And the Judge of the world says:  
"Close for the night,"  
And calls for a balance —  
What then?

When the choir has sung its last anthem,  
And the preacher has made his last prayer;  
When the people have heard their last sermon,  
And the sound has died out on the air;  
When the Bible lies closed on the altar,  
And the pews are all empty of men;  
And each soul stands facing his record,  
And the Great Book is opened —  
What then?

When the actors have played their last drama,  
And the mimic has made his last fun;  
When the movie has flashed its last picture,  
And the billboards displayed their last run;  
When the crowds seeking pleasure have vanished,  
And gone out into darkness again;  
And a world that rejected its Saviour  
Is asked for a reason —  
What then?

When the bugle dies out in the silence,  
And the long, marching columns are still;  
When the millions of earth are gathered  
From ocean and valley and hill;  
When the day that has no morrow  
Has come to the last, last end;  
And the voice of God from the heaven  
Says, "It is done" —  
What then?



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**Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty. The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down; and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.**

**Isaiah 2:10, 11**

A Quarterly Publication Devoted to Expounding, Defending and Applying the System of Doctrine set forth in the Word of God and Summarized in the Standards of the Reformed Presbyterian (Covenanter) Church.

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## ***Blind Bartimeus***

By Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Blind Bartimeus at the gates  
Of Jericho in darkness waits;  
He hears the crowd—he hears a breath  
Say, "It is Christ of Nazareth!"  
And calls, in tones of agony,  
"Jesus, have mercy now on me!"

The thronging multitudes increase;  
Blind Bartimeus, hold thy peace!  
But still, above the noisy crowd,  
The beggar's cry is shrill and loud;  
Until they say, "He calleth thee!"  
"Fear not, arise, He calleth thee!"

Then saith the Christ, as silent stands  
The crowd, "What wilt thou at my hands?"  
And he replies, "O give me light!  
Rabbi, restore the blind man's sight!"  
And Jesus answers, "Go in peace,  
Thy faith from blindness gives release!"

Ye that have eyes, yet cannot see,  
In darkness and in misery,  
Recall those mighty Voices Three,  
"Jesus, have mercy now on me!  
Fear not, arise, and go in peace!  
Thy faith from blindness gives release!"



## ***Mock On, Mock On***

By William Blake

Mock on, mock on, Voltaire, Rousseau;  
Mock on, mock on; 'tis all in vain!  
You throw the sand against the wind,  
And the wind blows it back again.

And every sand becomes a gem  
Reflected in the beams divine;  
Blown back they blind the mocking eye,  
But still in Israel's paths they shine.

The Atoms of Democritus  
And Newton's Particles of Light  
Are sands upon the Red Sea shore,  
Where Israel's tents do shine so bright.

## ***The Sea of Galilee***

By Robert Murray McCheyne

How pleasant to me thy deep blue wave,  
O Sea of Galilee!  
For the glorious One who came to save  
Hath often stood by thee.

Fair are the lakes in the land I love,  
Where pine and heather grow,  
But thou hast loveliness above  
What nature can bestow.

It is not that the wild gazelle  
Comes down to drink thy tide,  
But He that was pierced to save from hell  
Oft wandered by thy side.

Graceful around thee the mountains meet  
Thou calm reposing sea;  
But ah! far more, the beautiful feet  
Of Jesus walked o'er thee.

Those days are past—Bethsaida, where?  
Chorazin, where art thou?  
His tent the wild Arab pitches there,  
The wild reed shades thy brow.

Tell me, ye mouldering fragments, tell  
Was the Saviour's city here?  
Lifted to heaven, has it sunk to hell,  
With none to shed a tear?

O Saviour! gone to God's right hand,  
Yet the same Saviour still,  
Graved on thy heart is this lovely strand,  
And every fragrant hill.



## ***Prayer***

By Christina G. Rossetti

Lord, grant us eyes to see, and ears to hear  
And souls to love, and minds to understand,  
And confidence of hope, and filial fear. . . .  
Lord, grant us what Thou wilt, and what Thou wilt  
Deny, and fold us in Thy peaceful fold;  
Not as the world gives, give to us Thine own;  
Inbuild us where Jerusalem is built  
With walls of jasper, and with streets of gold,  
And Thou, Thyself, Lord Christ, the corner-stone.

# BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

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## *Sketches of the Covenanters*

By J. C. McFeeters

### CHAPTER XIV

#### The Covenanters at Work — A.D. 1638

Wednesday, February 28, 1638, was one of Scotland's greatest days. No victory on any battlefield is more worthy of anniversary honors. No birthday of statesman or warrior, no discovery in science or geography, no achievement in ancient or modern civilization, is more entitled to a yearly celebration. The notable event of that day is the high water mark of true greatness and moral grandeur in national life; nothing exceeds it in the world's history.

As the evening drew on, the vast multitude that had congregated in Edinburgh melted away. The sublime transactions in which they had been engaged had filled them with awe; the shadow of the Almighty had overspread them, the glory of heaven had descended upon them, and, being filled with the peace of God and joy unspeakable in the Holy Spirit, they departed from the city as quietly as they had come and returned to their homes. The stars were again out while many were yet traveling, but the great light that fell upon them was the glory of the Lord, as they carried the brilliant scenes of the day in their hearts. Every heart-beat had the solemnity of a vow, a prayer, a song of praise, a psalm of thanksgiving. What devout worship in those homes that night when the fathers told the touching story of the Greyfriars' Church and of the Covenant.

Within a short time the delegates had reached their respective churches, in which they rehearsed the renewing of their Covenant with God. The people were deeply moved, the Holy Spirit fell upon them. The interest became intense; the fires arose into flames; a Covenanting passion swept the kingdom; the enthusiasm knew no bounds. The Covenant was studied, accepted, and subscribed by ministers and magistrates, men and women, old and young, throughout the four quarters of the kingdom. There was a voice heard throughout the land, as the "voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia; for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth." The Lord Jesus Christ was glorified in His people, honored by His Church, and exalted supremely above the nation's haughty monarch.

Yet the Covenant had its enemies; but they

were apparently few and for a while very quiet. These anti-Covenanters stood with the king in his effort to foist Prelacy upon the people. These he repaid with political preferments. Hitherto they had claimed to be in the majority and therefore assumed the right to rule over the Presbyterians. But the year of Jubilee had come; the Covenant proclaimed "liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof." This Covenant with God revealed to the people their dignity, privileges, rights, power, and freedom in Christ Jesus, KING OF KINGS and LORD OF LORDS. In that light which fell like the glory of heaven upon Scotland, Episcopacy appeared in its real strength, or rather in its weakness; in comparison with Presbyterianism it was a mere faction.

King Charles ruled Scotland from his throne in London. The Covenanters were his most loyal subjects, devoted to him on every principle of truth and righteousness; yet by no means would they permit him to assume the rights of Jesus Christ without their earnest protest. They hastened to report the Covenant to the king at London; their adversaries sent delegates with equal haste. Both sides tried to win the king. As might have been expected, the Covenanters failed. He was exceedingly wroth. He branded the Covenant as treason and the Covenanters as traitors. "I will die," said he, "before I grant their impertinent demands; they must be crushed; put them down with fire and sword."

The king appointed the Marquis of Hamilton to represent his majesty in Scotland, and to subdue the Covenanters. Hamilton accepted the commission and entered upon his stupendous task. He was authorized to deceive and betray, to arrest and execute, to feign friendship and wage war—to use discretionary power; the manner would not be questioned if the Covenanters were subdued.

Hamilton announced his intention to enter Edinburgh, as the king's High Commissioner, on the 19th of June. Less than four months previous, the Covenant had been renewed in that city amid transports of joy; must it now be trampled in the dust? The effects of the Covenant had fallen upon the kingdom like spring showers that fill the land with songs and flowers; must the glory be blighted

ere the fruitage be matured? The day set for the commissioner's coming was perfect. The bright sun, clear sky, blue sea, green fields, purple hills, soft winds, fragrant blossoms, tuneful birds—all united to make the coming of his majesty's commissioner a delight. Nature was in her gayest attire.

The road chosen for his journey to the city lay along the strand. He came in a stately carriage. His official dress was brilliant and imposing. His associates followed, while a strong military guard added dignity and a tinge of terrible-ness to the procession. It was Hamilton's day of high honor. The proud sea rippled its welcome; the mellow winds floated the national emblem from many a window; the city was gaily decorated. The king's sympathizers had done their best for the occasion, but the Covenanters had excelled them all.

The Covenanters were by no means ignorant of Hamilton's power and purpose; yet they recognized him as the king's representative, and therefore they would do him honor. They were truly loyal. No taint of treason had ever mingled in their blood. They resolved to give the commissioner every opportunity to do his duty as ruler, yet stood ready to resist if he did wrong. They came to the city in force; their number was estimated at sixty thousand. The thronged the road over which Hamilton passed, banked the hillsides with earnest faces, raised their caps in sincere respect for the commissioner, and lifted up their voices in prayer for their king and their country. When Hamilton saw the great-heartedness of the people, whom he came to crush, he wept.

The Covenanters had requested two things: a free General Assembly and a Parliament. The Church must have the first; the nation must have the second. The commissioner, in the name of the king, refused both. King James had abolished the General Assembly in 1618; there had been none for twenty years. The Covenanters, braving the king's wrath and the commissioner's power, appointed a meeting of ministers and elders to be held in Glasgow, November 21, 1638, five months hence, to re-organize the General Assembly. A cloud of war immediately darkened the heavens. Had the king's wrath been lightning, the meeting-place would have been struck; but his rage was impotent.

When the day for the re-organization of the General Assembly arrived, the delegates from the Covenanted churches were on the ground. The house was filled with able, earnest, resolute men, true servants of the Lord Jesus Christ. They had come in His name at His call to do His work. Each breathed deeply the spirit of reverence; they felt the presence of God; holy dignity rested on every

brow. They had come in the strength of the Lord and were ready for duty and its consequences.

Hamilton with his friends also appeared. He immediately began the work of obstruction. Alexander Henderson was chosen moderator, and Archibald Johnston, known also as Lord Warriston, clerk, both of whom had taken an active part in the renewing of the Covenant. Hamilton made certain demands all of which were refused. He then attempted to dissolve the meeting but failed. In a storm of passion and with vigorous threats he withdrew, leaving the Assembly to pursue its own course. Can we conceive of sublimer courage than these Covenanters exhibited in standing by duty, conviction, and principle, owning their Covenant and honoring Christ Jesus, in the face of the king's wrath? The Assembly continued its sessions one month. The work was stupendous, and it was thoroughly done. The Church was cleansed, the ministry purified, true worship restored, and enactments adopted for the protection of the Reformed religion. After pronouncing the final benediction, the moderator said, "We have now cast down the walls of Jericho; let him that rebuildeth them beware of the curse of Hiel the Bethelite."

Behold how these fathers stood at the risk of their lives for the sovereignty of Jesus Christ! What devotion, what courage, what self-immolation! How great the moral grandeur of those lives, lifted up in the service of Christ far above the fear of man! They felt deeply the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, giving them wisdom, peace, joy, and success, in their tasks! Had we the same endowment of the Spirit of God, surely the Lord's work would prosper in our hands! May God grant it.

#### Points for the Class

1. In what spirit did the people retire from the Covenant Convention in Edinburgh?
2. How was the Covenant received by the nation?
3. How did King Charles regard it?
4. How did he attempt to counteract its power?
5. In what manner did the Covenanters receive his commissioner?
6. When and where was the General Assembly reorganized?
7. With what interference did it meet?
8. What good work did it accomplish?
9. What trust did it commit to future generations?

## The Covenant-Idea in Scripture

By the Rev. Frank D. Frazer

(Continued from last issue)

### 26. The Covenant Confirmed for All Nations: The Everlasting Gospel.

The original form of the promise of the Covenant of Grace implied the shedding of the blood of the "SEED" of the woman, to the end that the works of the devil, sin, and death, might be destroyed. The typical sacrifice was continued among the people of God, wherever they were, as the acceptable acknowledgment of faith in God's covenant word that He would take away their sins. Let Abel, Noah, Job, Melchizedek, Abraham be witnesses. As man's understanding, clouded by sin, required, this basic promise was expressed with increasing plainness in the successive revelations of the covenant in history. The sacrifice was ordained for Israel in these simple words of Jehovah, "The life (soul) of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the life (soul)." (Lv. 17:11.) The promise of the "new" covenant is unmistakable, "I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more." (Jer. 31:34. Heb. 8:12; 10:17.)

But the promise demands fulfillment; the type demands the Antitype. Through the years the sighing of the prisoners of hope was heard; the crying of the poor and needy, and of those under cruel bondage; the longing of the faithful, "I have waited for Thy salvation, O Jehovah." The necessity for the new covenant lay in the truth and faithfulness of God. Its proximate goal was the offering, once for all, of the Sufficient Sacrifice, sufficient for the pardon and removal of all the sins of the people of God, that the covenant itself might stand sure forever against any attack of its adversaries. And certainly, no new covenant could be put into effect without God's forgiveness of the sins committed under the former covenant.

When the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that He might redeem them that are under the law. He was found in fashion as a man, the son of David, the son of Abraham, the promised "SEED." Then the old covenant began to appear, according to the prophecy of Jeremiah, in the distinctness and completeness of the new. The old symbols, and types, and ministry, necessary for their time, were ready to vanish away as the eternal realities took their places.

Here was the ONE whom God said He would give for a covenant of the people, to confirm on earth, to make known to all people, the Covenant of Jehovah by His mediatorial work; to be seen

and heard and testified by faithful witnesses to all the world. His identity was established beyond the shadow of a doubt. Those who were waiting and watching recognized Him even as a babe; for example, Simeon and Anna. (Lk. 2:25, 38.) As soon as His disciples could bear it, He instructed them concerning His death; Mt. 16:21-23, and Lk. 22:37, "I say unto you that this that is written, And he was numbered with the transgressors, (quoting Is. 53:12,) must be fulfilled in me, for that which concerneth me hath complete accomplishment." In His institution of the covenant memorial, He said, "This bread is my body broken for you . . . This cup is my blood of the new covenant poured out for many unto remission of sins." The word here translated "poured out" is the word used in the LXX for the mediatorial act of the high priest in presenting the blood of the sacrifice before God. It implies violent, vicarious, sacrificial death.

"He was led as a lamb to the slaughter." "And they crucified Him." "And one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and immediately there came out blood and water." Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; He was buried; and He was raised from the dead on the third day according to the Scriptures." "He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God," henceforth to rule the nations of the earth, the inheritance He received from the Father. (Ps. 2:7-9.)

The Epistle to the Hebrews is largely concerned with a comparison of the old diatheke under the typical priesthood, and the new diatheke under the priesthood of Christ. The old was but a partial, preparatory revelation of the new. Since the new is now revealed in its full perfection by the work of the Mediator, we may learn from it all that is essential to the covenant idea. We have not space here for analysis of the epistle, but we may consider briefly its "sum," or rather its "summit," its crowning peak in chapters 8 & 9, where the glorious superiority of Christ is to be seen in His highpriestly mediation.

Consider especially the latter part of chapter 9, where the historic fact of Christ's priesthood in the flesh is stated (vss 11 & 12,) and shown by closely reasoned argument (vss 13 & 28,) to have been **necessary** for the mediation and establishment of the Covenant of Jehovah. Here is open to view the very heart and life of the covenant working out the marvelous love of God through the transaction on the Cross of Calvary. Jesus Christ "once for all . . . put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (vs 26.) "He was **cut off** . . .

for the transgression of my people" (Is. 53:8) to confirm and put the NEW DIATHEKE into effect.

Our English versions translate "**diatheke**," sometimes by "covenant," sometimes by "testament." E.g., the American Revision of 1901 has "covenant" in vs 15; "testament" in vss 16 & 17; then "covenant" again in vss 18 & 20, although the alternative word is placed in margin. Let us here translate a portion from vs 13, retaining "diatheke" wherever it occurs in the original just as the ancient Syriac version did, merely transliterating this word in familiar letters:—

13 "For, if the blood of goats and bulls and ashes of a heifer sprinkling them that are unclean, sanctifieth unto cleansing of the flesh, 14 how much rather shall the blood of Christ, who, through the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse our conscience from dead works, that we may serve the Living God! 15 And on this account, He is Mediator of the new diatheke, that, death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions in violation of the former diatheke, they that have been called may receive the promise of the everlasting inheritance. 16 For, where a diatheke is (in force,) death is of necessity present as evidence, (the death, that is) of him who put the diathêke into effect. 17 For a diatheke is sure (warranted) upon (the evidence of) dead bodies, since he who put the diatheke into effect is never able to do so while he lives. 18 Wherefore, not even the former diatheke was inaugurated without blood. 19 For, when every commandment had been spoken according to the law of Moses to all the people, he, having taken the blood of the calves and of the goats, with water, and scarlet wool and hyssop, sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, 20 saying, This is the blood of the diatheke which God commanded for you. 21 Also the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry he sprinkled in like manner with the blood. 22 Indeed, speaking in general, all things are cleansed with blood according to the law, and apart from the pouring out of blood, there is no forgiveness.

23 "Therefore, it was necessary that the patterns of the things in the heavens should be cleansed with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 24 For Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands representing the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear before the face of God on our behalf. . . . 27 And inasmuch as it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment; 28 so Christ also, having been once offered to take away the sins of many, shall appear a second time, without sin, to them that wait for Him, unto salvation."

Here consider: —

1. That "**diatheke**" comprehends the entire "**b'rith Jehovah**," old and new. That diatheke called the "former," or first," (8:7,13. 9:1,15,18,) is

definitely the diatheke "made" by Jehovah, typically mediated between Jehovah and Israel at Horeb by the ministry of Moses with the sacrifice. (Ex. 24:1-8.) And that diatheke called "second," (8:7;) "new" in the sense of more fully manifested, (8:8,13. 9:15,) and "new" in the sense of recent, (12:24;) and said to be "better," (7:22. 8:6,) is the diatheke foretold in Jer. 31:31-34, as quoted in 8:8-12 & 10:15-17.

2. The necessity for sacrificial blood for the validity of the "former" diatheke is deduced from the pouring out of the blood of Jesus Christ, Jehovah's Mediator; not conversely as one might expect. The argument, for man's information, is not from the old to the new, but from the new to the old, because God's eternal plan is more fully and clearly revealed in the new, especially in the **mediation** of the new.

3. Hence the argument is centered about the **mediation**. The implication that the former diatheke was not faultless, (8:7,) and the statement of 8:13, "In that he (God) saith, A new diatheke, He hath made the first old; but that which is becoming old and aged is nigh to vanishing away," could not apply to the structural promise-oath-law-curse which are perfect and unchangeable. Such could apply only to the temporary mediation with animal sacrifices which never did, never could take away sin. But since the taking away of sin was basic to its purpose, the "old" covenant was real and effective through faith, because, as was so often stated, God Himself had spoken the words of the covenant and put them into effect. He did so according to His own determinate counsel and knowledge that "the Lamb of God was slain from the foundation of the world," (Rv. 13:8,) though not fully revealed to men until Christ died on the cross.

4. In verses 16 & 17, "**diatheke**" is generic only to the extent of including the old and new diatheke of Jehovah. A man's covenant, or testament, although dependent on Jehovah's Covenant as the only sufficient guarantee in man's dealing with man, yet is in no sense a species of Jehovah's Covenant; therefore is excluded here. The word "**death**," in vss 15, 16, 17, means penal, sacrificial death. No other kind of death is in view. "**Blood**," meaning sacrificial blood, occurs 4 times immediately before these verses and 6 times immediately after. The plural "**dead bodies**," or "**corpses**" is appropriate whether with reference to the many sacrifices of the former diatheke, or to the many believers "crucified with Christ," "dead in Christ," whose dead body was buried.

5. The word translated "he put the diatheke into effect," (vss 16 & 17,) is the masculine singular participle of "**dietheto**," popularly used for the "**testator**," the **father** whose death put the testament into effect for his children. Here it is used in place of the word for "mediator," (vs 15.) It is grammatically equivalent to the participle

of the Hebrew "karath" as used in Ex. 34:10, (BBF&L, vol 9, p. 152. cf p. 65,) where Jehovah says, "I am ever the MAKER (MEDIATOR) of THE COVENANT;" also in Dt. 29:12-14, where Moses, the typical mediator, declares that the covenant he was "making," putting into effect on the ground of the sacrifice, was in reality put into effect by Jehovah as always. For God holds life absolutely in His own control. God alone gives and sustains life, the blessing of His covenant; God alone executes the death curse of His covenant. What His appointed mediator does in His name, at His command, God Himself does.

6. Since the blood of Christ is abundantly sufficient to take away sin, "on this account," vs 15, "He is Mediator of the new diatheke, that, death having taken place for the redemption of the transgressions in violation of the former diatheke, they that have been called may receive the promise of the everlasting inheritance." On mention of this promise, the writer immediately uses "diatheke" as involving it. For, from the time of Abraham, the Covenant of Jehovah has been revealed as the medium for conveying the everlasting inheritance. And the word "diatheke" was then popularly used in the same sense as we use our word "testament" today, that is, as the medium for conveying an inheritance. Therefore, the Covenant of Jehovah is properly described as the Testament of Jehovah. The two words "covenant" and testament," though not synonymous in common usage, do coincide at the point of providing for "the everlasting inheritance," made sure by the sacrifice of the Mediator, that is, by the death of the Testator. "Him who knew no sin was made sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Cor. 5:21.) And God, in His administration of His Covenant, acts both as Supreme Judge in pardoning sin and giving eternal life, and as Gracious Father in providing an inheritance for the abundance of that life for his children.

"In these last days God hath spoken unto us by His Son, whom He appointed Heir of all things." (Heb. 1:2.) "God sent forth His Son . . . that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts crying Abba, Father. So that thou art no longer a bondservant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God." (Gal. 4:4-7.) And "the Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ." (Ro. 8:16,17.)

Hence it appears that our word "testament" describes an essential aspect of the b'rith-diatheke of Jehovah more accurately than "covenant." This is important because "testament" emphasizes the unilateral nature of Jehovah's Covenant and helps

to guard us from thinking we can make our own terms with God. The Jews did not have to make "wills," and were not in the habit of doing so, until they had lost their earthly inheritance by the Roman conquest. Their word "b'rith" never occurs in the sense of "last will and testament" in the Scriptures, but the one-party nature of "b'rith" was sufficiently clear in its own right, until men, more and more sought to usurp the prerogatives of God. It is God's diatheke; not man's, but it was put into effect by the death of the "Man Christ Jesus," who is at the same time "God manifest in the flesh." He was manifested to take away sins. (I Jn. 3:5.)

When Christ came, He explained Himself by what He did "in my Father's name." "As my Father gave me commandment, even so I do." "I and the Father are one." "The Father abiding in me doeth His works." "That ye may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father." Thus the "Man Christ Jesus" proved His right to the mediatorial name given Him in prophecy, "and his name shall be called . . . EVERLASTING FATHER . . ." (Is. 9:6.) This accords with the historical fact that the mediatorial functions of prophet, priest, and king were combined in the father of the family. As "Father," Jesus had a right to say, "Behold I and the children God hath given me." "Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, He also Himself in like manner partook of the same, that through death He might bring to nought him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." "And it became Him, in bringing many sons into glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings." (Heb. 2:9-18.)

7. Since the Covenant of Jehovah and all that pertain to it are everlasting, the office of the Mediator is everlasting, and the Mediator Himself is the EVERLASTING FATHER. Beside Him there is no mediator between God and man. (1 Tim. 2:5.) As our Great High Priest, He not only offered Himself as the Sacrifice, but entered into the presence of God with His own blood, thereby securing redemption of the sins of all whom He represented, and returns again to them without sin, but with the salvation He had purchased with His own blood. (vss 24-28.) Accordingly, Jesus said, "I lay down my life to the end that I might take it again. No one taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment I received from my Father." (Jn. 10:17, 18.) That He had power to take again the life He laid down, He proved by doing it. He did it not for Himself alone, but for all those who are crucified with Him. So that "If we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection. . . And if we died with Christ, we believe that we

shall also live with Him" (Ro. 6:5-11) in the blessedness of the inheritance "incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away."

As for the present, if with the help of the Holy Spirit, promised to those who ask, we take

the whole Word of God, the Scriptures of both the Old and the New Testament, we shall not miss the vital truth of the Covenant of Jehovah.

(To be concluded)

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## *Who is to be King? II*

By the Rev. Samuel E. Boyle

**Continued study of the World Council of Churches, based largely on Dr. G.K.A. Bell's book, "The Kingship of Christ: The Story of the World Council of Churches," (London, 1954.)**

In our first study the doctrinal basis and general character of the World Council were described. In this installment and a third one, the practical activities of the World Council in three main fields will be discussed: in relations with the Roman Catholic Church; relations with churches behind the Iron Curtain; and World Council political lobbying through the "Commission of the Churches on International Affairs," (C.C.I.A.)

### I

#### **The World Council and the Vatican**

Ever since 1925 Protestant ecumenical leaders have been trying to tempt Rome into some association of an ecumenical nature, but in vain. Dr. Bell tells the story of these attempts in his 7th Chapter, "**The Refusal of Rome.**" The Protestants sent invitations to Rome in 1925 and 1927. Both were refused. Then the Pope released an Encyclical in 1928 attacking the Protestant ecumenical movement and giving in the usual arrogant form a demand that Protestant schismatics come back into the fold of the "One True Church of Christ."

Undismayed by this rebuff, the ecumenical leaders continued cautiously to work on individual Romanist bishops and other leaders, with some success. In 1937 some friendly Roman priests and laymen actually attended the Edinburgh Conference by special permission of the Roman Bishop of Edinburgh. At this time a "Provisional Committee" was appointed to make plans for the formation of the World Council. In 1939 Archbishop Temple, the chairman of this committee, "as an act of courtesy informed the Holy See that the World Council was being established. He was in turn informed by the Cardinal Secretary of State, through the Apostolic Delegate to Great Britain, that, while the Roman Church was not desirous of formally associating itself with the World Council, there was no obstacle in the way of consultation with the Bishops and the Apostle Delegate, or an exchange of confidential information with Catholic theologians." (pages 69,70.)

This encouragement quickened efforts of the

ecumenicists to open a new "peace offensive" to win Rome. Friendly Bishops and Catholic leaders in Europe were interested in the coming Amsterdam meeting and some wrote asking to be invited. The Provisional Committee finally selected ten Romanist personages who were to be invited as unofficial observers at the organizational meeting of the WCC at Amsterdam in 1948. Then, just before the assembly was to gather on June 5, 1948, the Vatican suddenly warned that all Catholic priests and laymen were forbidden to take part in ecumenical meetings without the permission of the Holy See. This ended the plans for Romanist representation and the only Roman Catholics at the Amsterdam meeting were reporters from the papal press.

Dr. Bell admits that not all members of the WCC "Provisional Committee" approved this wooing of Rome: "The strongest objection was based on the ground of the denial of religious freedom to Protestants in Italy, Spain, and certain countries in South America, denial in some cases accompanied by physical violence."

One would imagine that any real Protestant would agree that there must be no compromise with persecution, but in the sentence following the above quotation the author says: "**At the same time the large majority of the representatives of member churches desire that the way to cooperation with Rome be kept open, so that the fellowship of Christians might be complete.**" (Page 71)

In December, 1949 the Vatican issued a "cat-playing-with-the-mouse" type of ambiguous statement which Dr. Bell believes may indicate a desire of the Roman Church to keep the door to cooperation open a tiny bit. One cannot help wondering how much of this proud bullying from the ancient Papal See is to be endured by these modern ecumenical leaders. Just what is to be achieved by such weak begging on the Vatican's doorstep? How remote from the sturdy Protestant faith and courage of Luther, Knox, and Calvin are these World Council overtures!

### II

#### **The World Council and Pro-Communist Churches**

Chapter Six, "**The Orthodox Churches and the Absence of Russia,**" contains a discussion of the

World Council's attempt to bring in the entire Eastern or "Orthodox" wing of Christendom to their ecumenical fellowship. Of course the Orthodox Churches **outside** of Communist control are already in the World Council. They use the WCC as a sounding board for their own peculiar claim to infallible authority as the Only True Holy Church. It might be questioned, indeed, whether any Protestant ecumenical movement can rightly include in its fellowship a church holding some of the anti-Biblical errors of the Orthodox Church; and certainly when the Greek Orthodox Church is persecuting evangelicals in Greece there is no justification for their inclusion in the World Council.

Our interest here, however, is in the efforts made by the World Council to draw the **Russian** Orthodox Churches into their fellowship. Readers will recall the sufferings of the Russian Orthodox Church after communism won control of Russia. Many priests were liquidated and church properties were seized and put to secular uses by the atheistic State. The anti-god movement constantly agitated against the churches and made every effort to extinguish religion from the life of the Russian people.

When Hitler attacked Soviet Russia, Stalin called on the church to come to the aid of the Motherland, and in a patriotic response, the Russian Orthodox Church did come to his aid. As a result of the part played by the churches in the war of survival against the Germans, the Russian Christians have since that time been allowed much better freedom than before to follow religious worship. Nevertheless, the position of communism has never changed with respect to religion. The Russian Orthodox Church has not been allowed full independence, and from complaints of the Orthodox clergy outside of Iron Curtain countries we learn that the Russian and Balkan Orthodox Churches have come under the State's control in a slavish manner. The top leaders are those who will do as the Soviet rulers bid them, and the principal interest of the State is to use these churches as instruments of communist propaganda.

We may assume, therefore, that the Russian Orthodox Church is hopelessly bound to the communist State. It is **necessarily** a servant of world communism and cannot be otherwise unless the leaders of the Church revolt. It is with such Iron Curtain churches, then, that the World Council is persistently seeking to establish correspondence and even cooperation.

In 1946 the World Council began to explore ways of bringing the Russian Orthodox Church into the ecumenical fold. In Dr. Bell's narrative of steps taken we see a striking similarity between this effort to win the Russian Orthodox Church and the attempt to woo Rome. First came pious correspondence professing friendly concern for the interests of Christian unity. Next came arrange-

ments for a conference, which the Russians suddenly cancelled. In Moscow there was a big national conference of the Russian Orthodox Churches at which one of the delegates read a paper attacking the Western ecumenical movement of the World Council. Afterwards the Patriarch of the Russian Church sent word that the Russian Orthodox Churches would not cooperate with the World Council of Churches. Five main objectives were given and these can be read on pages 64-65 of Dr. Bell's book. The World Council leaders protest that the Moscow meeting had been greatly misinformed about the true nature of the WCC! Efforts still go on to persuade the Russian Orthodox Churches to change their minds.

Other communist countries have sent pro-communist churchmen to the World Council meetings, including Dr. T. C. Chao of China and Hromadka, Bereczky, Peter and others from Europe. Dr. T. C. Chao of China was one of the first presidents of the World Council in 1948, and used the channels of the WCC to praise communism in China after the victory of the Reds in 1949. However, when the communists of North Korea attacked South Korea in 1950 a regional meeting of the WCC condemned it as aggression. From China in April, 1951 came T. C. Chao's angry resignation: "As a patriotic Chinese I must protest against the Toronto message, which sounds so much like the voice of Wall Street . . . I can no longer be one of the Presidents of the World Council . . ."

I have not yet seen any condemnation of Chao by the World Council. That resignation has never been answered by any statement of disagreement with Dr. T. C. Chao. Nor has the World Council since then "put its neck out" in condemning communist aggression so bluntly as the Toronto group did. Possibly they learned from Dr. Chao not to attack communism too sharply.

The European pro-communists have exploited the World Council to win favor in the West for their masters. Their visit to America last summer to attend Evanston made much propaganda capital for the Soviet bloc of nations. I have translated Chinese articles from magazines published in Communist China which carried in them propaganda by these pro-communist church leaders, praising the work of communism in Europe. The tragic error of these pro-communists who pass for Christian scholars is that they have forgotten our Lord's word: "**Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.**" (Matthew 7:16 ff.) World Council leaders need to study this text, too.

In the Christian approach to Romanism, Orthodox Churches and the communistic slave churches behind the Iron Curtain, what must we do? Is the method followed by the World Council what

Jesus Christ would do? Is it the Bible way? Obviously not!

An inclusivist policy which refuses to discriminate on the basis of Scripture between truth and error; a tolerant policy which, for sake of superficial unity, is ready to lump persecutor and persecuted together in one "ecumenical fellowship" without any repentance from the guilty side; an apostate Protestantism, which woos arrogant Rome with sweet reasonableness and submissive entreaty instead of hammering fearlessly against the paganism and cruelty of this wicked church as Martin Luther and other Reformers did, can-

not be the **true** church. Rather, it resembles a synagogue of Satan.

In the next and concluding installment we shall study the growing political influence of the World Council through its lobby, the C.C.I.A. ("The Commission of the Churches on International Affairs.") Since much of this material will be of close interest to Covenanters, the decision was made to extend these articles to a third chapter in order to give space for a fuller treatment of the problem involved in the World Council's political activity.

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## *The Excellence of God's Name in the Earth*

— THE EIGHTH PSALM —

By the Rev. Frank D. Frazer

**"O Jehovah our Lord,"** — our sovereign LORD, our covenant GOD! Here the name rendered "LORD" is an intensive plural. **"How excellent is Thy name in all the earth!"** The Psalms are written for the congregation of the people of God, who keep His covenant; who trust and obey Him only. They know Him and joyously praise Him for all that by which He makes Himself known. The theme which runs through the first eight Psalms, **The Blessedness of All Who Put Their Trust in the Lord**, reaches its culmination here.

**"O Thou who extendest Thy glory above the heavens!"** Yet even there one seraph calls to another, "Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah of Hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory!" And a chorus of righteous on earth reply, "The earth is full of the lovingkindness of Jehovah!" "His praise has filled the earth!" For, though the glory of His name is everywhere, He selected the earth as the stage for a surpassing display of its excellence. Though "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork," yet He has provided Him witnesses to new and transcendent facts on earth.

In the councils of eternity God agreed and determined to make **man** in His own image, according to His likeness, capable of strength, and of ruling to the glory of God as he should be given authority in the kingdom of God. Such was God's purpose (Gn. 1:26,27); and by His first recorded word to man, commanded him to subdue the earth, and take dominion over it, and "over every living thing moving upon it." (vs 28.) Though assured of life within the terms of the Covenant of Life, Adam began his rule by basely surrendering to the enemy of God, and rashly disobeying the covenant commandment. So he lost his life, his likeness to God, his capacity to rule righteously,

his place in the kingdom of God. The king-elect of earth, by ignoring God his Maker and Lord, became a slave, unable to help himself. Yet God's purpose in creating man shall not fail. God never gave a law or command to any creature without determining the way in which His will should be accomplished. He made known His determinate will to His fallen creature by His Covenant of the New Life, revealing His unspeakable grace.

The earth, as well as everything belonging to it, is made of little things of various kinds. How little, and yet how powerful, we are only beginning to learn. He made them to be witnesses to His greatness.

**"Out of the mouths of little children, even sucklings, Thou hast provided (ordained, established) strength, Because of Thine adversaries, That Thou mightest still the enemy and the vindictive."** From the weakest, most incompetent of Thy creatures, those drawing the small beginnings of strength from their mothers' breasts, Thou hast ordained strength; made it ready. In such little ones there is provided unanswerable testimony to the lovingkindness of God, which no enemy can deny. (Notice that this is an **established ordinance** in the kingdom of God. Who can change it?) And who are His enemies? The proud, self-willed, unthankful, who insinuate that God is not good, or boast that there is no God able to help. But, no matter how much they may hate and resent the truth, they are helpless before a power they do not understand and cannot resist. They despise little things, therefore are doomed to defeat.

He who gathers His storm-cloud of infinitesimal particles and hurls it by invisible wind, can muster any force He desires to use from the inex-

haustible supply of little things He made and controls.

Many, many times Christ surrounded Himself with the glory of God by a demonstration of power men could not account for, but which accomplished His purposes in spite of their wrath. One day when He came to Jerusalem, as Zechariah said He would come, King of Zion, "meek and riding on an ass," a multitude of despised, "unlearned and ignorant" disciples began to rejoice and to praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen, shouting, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest!" Apart from this spontaneous outburst, there was little or nothing to mark Jesus as King. But His enemies were on hand, and some of them, irritated and angry, said, "Teacher, rebuke thy disciples." Jesus replied, "I tell you if these should keep silent, the stones would cry out." He had not left Himself without witness. Then the next day, having entered the temple, as a King in His own House, He drove out the money-changers and all who were buying and selling there. He did it quietly by His word of irresistible power. "But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the wonderful things He did, and the little children that were singing, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were moved with indignation, and said to Him, Hearest thou what these are saying? And Jesus said to them, "Yea, have you never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast provided praise?" (Mt. 21:15,16.)

He quoted these words of the Psalm from the Greek version which has the word for "**praise**" in place of the word for "**strength**." He thus confirmed as correct the interpretation of "**strength**" as **the strength of true testimony**. And in applying these words to Himself, He implied nothing else than that He was Jehovah. This implication was not lost on His enemies watching for any thing they might use against Him, so with renewed vindictiveness, they "sought how they might destroy Him." "But they could not find how they might take Him, (until He gave Himself up to them,) for they **feared the multitude**" of the common people who believed on Him.

Be sure to read Mt. 11:25,26 and 1 Cor. 1:18-31, for further light on this established ordinance of the kingdom of God, and for help in understanding why Jesus said, "Verily, I say unto you, Whosoever will not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein." (Mk. 10:15.)

"**When I see Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, The moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained,** —" On a cloudless night, away from city smog, the vast expanse of the heavens outlined by innumerable, far-distant stars, gives an awe-inspiring realization of the immensity of the kingdom of God. It is good for a man to take this view from time to time, and to let reality

deflate his pride. He can then begin to appreciate what David saw and felt when he was keeping his father's sheep by night in the open.

Yet probably, even David did not comprehend very much of what he saw and felt, but, being a prophet, 'he searched diligently what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ who was in him (2 Sam. 23:3,) did point to when He (the Spirit) testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories in connection therewith.' (1 Pet. 1:10-12.) Much more do we need the help provided for us by the same Spirit in the second chapter of Hebrews, where verses 4-6 are quoted, (again from the Greek version.) Please read this chapter through.

We might think this quotation is introduced rather vaguely, "One has somewhere **testified**, saying, . . ." But the word for "**testified**" is a word of heavy import in the Greek version of the Scriptures with which they to whom the epistle is addressed were familiar. They would know at once the origin and authority of the words quoted. For the subject of this verb, as ordinarily used in the Old Testament (and elsewhere in the New,) is **God**, One of the three Persons of the Godhead, either immediately, or mediately by one of His agents. It implies, not common testimony, but specially solemn, conclusive testimony, unquestionably the very word of God. Therefore, in these verses of the Psalm we have God's own confirmation of His original decree for man, that "not unto angels did He subject the world to come whereof we speak," — but, as anyone who reads the second chapter of Hebrews will understand, to Jesus Christ, in whom men united to Him by faith shall reach their highest destiny.

The **time** here pointed to by the Spirit of God is the time of "the world to come," or more literally, of "the inhabited earth that is to be," that is, "the new earth" with its inhabitants, and "the new heaven," for which we look, which is equivalent to saying, "the kingdom of Christ that is coming." Thus we are furnished with the proper point of view from which we should consider this Eighth Psalm.

Verse 4. "**What is man that Thou art mindful of him, And the son of man that Thou visitest him?**" "visitest him" in love and mercy; in judgment only after love has been refused. The Hebrew here has two different words for "man" in the sense of humankind in general. The first is often, if not always, used with an implication of weakness and mortality; the second is "son of Adam," Adam who fell and in whom all men die. The same words occur in the same order in Job 25:6, "man that is a worm, and the son of man that is a worm." "A worm," feeble and despised. Compare Ps. 22:6 & 144:3.

"**Yet Thou hast made him but little inferior to angels.**" Or, "**Thou hast let him be lower than**

**angels for a little while.** For the word translated "little," both in the Hebrew and the Greek, expresses either degree or time, or both, according to the requirements of the context. Here the meaning "for a little while" seems to be demanded by its application to Jesus.

The Hebrew word here translated "angels" is the usual word for "God." (See American Revision.) It is a Hebrew intensive plural which takes a singular verb. However, it is also used as a numerical plural for creatures closely associated with God, as His angels, i.e., His messengers, agents, servants, holy creatures of different ranks, acting in His name, by His authority, to do His will; even including men such as judges, as in Ps. 82:1,6.

**"And Thou hast crowned him with glory and honor. Thou makest him to have dominion (to be king) over the works of Thy hands; ALL (THINGS) Thou hast put in subjection under his feet; Sheep and oxen, all of them, Yea, and beasts of the wild, birds of heaven and fish of the sea, (Everything) passing by the paths of the seas."** Here "all things" is defined, as originally in Gn. 1:28, by certain classes of animals immediately in view. And the inclusiveness of these classes is indicated by "Everything passing by the paths of the seas" as it had before been indicated by "every living thing that moveth upon the earth."

Today the newly invented **bathyscope** enables men to explore the paths of the seas as they never did before, and to discover the vast hordes of living things of marvelous forms and exquisite coloring that are continually passing there. The microscope enables us to begin to realize the countless myriads of living motes going their own ways in air, land, and sea. "ALL of them, great and small, Thou hast put in subjection under his feet." "For in that He subjected all things unto him, He left nothing that is not subject to him."

"But now we see not yet all things subjected

to him (i.e., to man.) But we see HIM who, for a little while, was made lower than angels, even **JESUS crowned with glory and honor** because of His suffering of death, that, by the grace of God He should taste death (i.e., should die) for every man." So that a man (any man) might be delivered from condemnation to death for sin, since "there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." So that a man (any man) might have the new life promised in the Covenant of Eternity for all who, laying hold of God's grace, enter anew into the fulfillment of God's purpose and of their high destiny in Jesus Christ. For man's failure and utter incapacity could not frustrate the purpose of God. "He raiseth the poor out of the dust; He lifteth the needy out of the dunghill." (Ps. 113:7.) The despised and rejected Man Christ Jesus, upon whom Jehovah laid the iniquity of us all, "having offered one sacrifice for sins forever," was raised from the dead; He ascended to the throne of the heavens, where He now sits **crowned with glory and honor**; all authority in heaven and earth being in His hand. "And He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be abolished is death." And "when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory: . . . Thanks be to God who giveth us utterly unworthy men the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

Thus the words with which we started are filled with new and glorious meaning, and who can help repeating them over and over again?—

**"O Jehovah our LORD, How excellent is Thy Name in all the earth!"**

Note: Mr. Frazer's studies in the Psalms will be continued, D.V., in future issues of "Blue Banner Faith and Life". — Ed.

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## ***The Importance of Christian Scholarship***

By J. Gresham Machen, D. D., D.Litt.

(Continued from last issue)

**Note:** This series of articles by the late Dr. J. Gresham Machen, comprising his lectures before the Bible League of England, is reproduced here by permission of the William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. — Ed.

### **II. The Importance of Christian Scholarship for the Defence of the Faith**

In speaking of Christian scholarship before the Bible League, I am somewhat in the position

of bringing coals to Newcastle, but perhaps you will take what I am saying as being an expression of hearty agreement with that scholarly work which your League has been carrying on so successfully for many years. This morning we considered the importance of Christian scholarship for evangelists. The gospel message, we observed, is not brought to a man after salvation has already been received, but it is brought to him in order that salvation may be received; and the fuller and

plainer the message is, so much the more effective is it for the saving of souls.

#### **The Need for the Defence of the Faith**

But Christian scholarship is also necessary, in the second place, for the defence of the faith, and to this aspect of the subject I invite your attention this afternoon. There are, indeed, those who tell us that no defence of the faith is necessary. "The Bible needs no defence," they say; "let us not be forever defending Christianity, but instead let us go forth joyously to propagate Christianity." But I have observed one curious fact—when men talk thus about propagating Christianity without defending it, the thing that they are propagating is pretty sure not to be Christianity at all. They are propagating an anti-intellectualistic, non-doctrinal Modernism; and the reason why it requires no defence is simply that it is so completely in accord with the current of the age. It causes no more disturbance than does a chip that floats downward with a stream. In order to be an adherent of it, a man does not need to resist anything at all; he needs only to drift, and automatically his Modernism will be of the most approved and popular kind. One thing needs always to be remembered in the Christian Church—**true Christianity, now as always, is radically contrary to the natural man**, and it cannot possibly be maintained without a constant struggle. A chip that floats downwards with the current is always at peace; but around every rock the waters foam and rage. Show me a professing Christian of whom all men speak well, and I will show you a man who is probably unfaithful to his Lord.

#### **The Importance of Argument**

Certainly a Christianity that avoids argument is not the Christianity of the New Testament. The New Testament is full of argument in defence of the faith. The Epistles of Paul are full of argument—no one can doubt that. But even the words of Jesus are full of argument in defence of the truth of what Jesus was saying. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" Is not that a well-known form of reasoning, which the logicians would put in its proper category? Many of the parables of Jesus are argumentative in character. Even our Lord, who spake in the plenitude of divine authority, did condescend to reason with men. Everywhere the New Testament meets objections fairly, and presents the gospel as a thoroughly reasonable thing.

Some years ago I was in a company of students who were discussing methods of Christian work. An older man, who had had much experience in working among students, arose and said that according to his experience you never win a man to Christ until you stop arguing with him. When he said that, I was not impressed.

It is perfectly true, of course, that argument alone is quite insufficient to make a man a Christian. You may argue with him from now until the end of the world; you may bring forth the most magnificent arguments: but all will be in vain unless there be one other thing — the mysterious, creative power of the Holy Spirit in the new birth. But because argument is insufficient, it does not follow that it is unnecessary. Sometimes it is used directly by the Holy Spirit to bring a man to Christ. But more frequently it is used indirectly. A man hears an answer to objections raised against the truth of the Christian religion; and at the time when he hears it he is not impressed. But afterwards, perhaps many years afterwards, his heart at last is touched: he is convicted of sin; he desires to be saved. Yet without that half-forgotten argument he could not believe; the gospel would not seem to him to be true, and he would remain in his sin. As it is, however, the thought of what he has heard long ago comes into his mind; Christian apologetics at last has its day; the way is open, and when he will believe he can believe because he has been made to see that believing is not an offence against truth.

#### **The Place of Christian Apologetics To-day**

Sometimes, when I have tried—very imperfectly, I confess—to present arguments in defence of the resurrection of our Lord or of the truth, at this point or that, of God's Word, someone has come up to me after the lecture and has said to me very kindly: "We liked it, and we are impressed with the considerations that you have adduced in defence of the faith; but, the trouble is, we all believed in the Bible already, and the persons that really needed the lecture are not here." When someone tells me that, I am not very greatly disturbed. True, I should have liked to have just as many sceptics as possible at my lecture; but if they are not there I do not necessarily think that my efforts are all in vain. What I am trying to do by my apologetic lecture is not merely—perhaps not even primarily—to convince people who are opposed to the Christian religion. Rather am I trying to give to Christian people—Christian parents or Sunday School teachers—materials that they can use, not in dealing with avowed sceptics, whose backs are up against Christianity, but in dealing with their own children or with the pupils in their classes, who love them, and long to be Christians as they are, but are troubled by the hostile voices on every side.

It is but a narrow view of Christian apologetics that regards the defence of the faith as being useful only in the immediate winning of those who are arguing vigorously on the other side. Rather is it useful most of all in producing an intellectual atmosphere in which the acceptance of the gospel will seem to be something other than an offence against truth. Charles Spurgeon and D. L. Moody, in the latter years of the nineteenth century, were

facing a situation entirely different from that which faces the evangelists of to-day. They were facing a world in which many people in their youth had been imbued with Christian convictions, and in which public opinion, to a very considerable extent, was in favour of the Christian faith. To-day, on the other hand, public opinion, even in England and America, is predominantly opposed to the Christian faith, and the people from their youth are imbued with the notion that Christian convictions are antiquated and absurd. **Never was there a stronger call of God than there is to-day for a vigorous and scholarly defence of the faith.**

I believe that the more thoughtful of the evangelists are coming to recognise that fact. There was a time, twenty-five or thirty years ago, when the evangelists regarded the work of Christian apologists as either impious or a waste of time. Here are souls to be saved, they said; and professors in theological seminaries insist on confusing their students' minds with a lot of German names, instead of preaching the simple gospel of Christ. But to-day a different temper often prevails. Evangelists, if they be real evangelists, real proclaimers of the unpopular message that the Bible contains, are coming more and more to see that they cannot do without those despised theological professors after all. It is useless to proclaim a gospel that people cannot hold to be true: no amount of emotional appeal can do anything against the truth. **The question of fact cannot permanently be evaded.** Did Christ or did He not rise from the dead; is the Bible trustworthy or is it false? In other words, the twelfth chapter of I. Corinthians is coming again to its rights. We are coming to understand how many-sided is the work of Christ; the eye is ceasing to "say to the hand, 'I have no need of thee.'" Certainly one thing is clear—if Christian apologetics suffers, injury will come to every member of the body of Christ.

But if we are to have Christian apologetics, if we are to have a defence of the faith, what kind of defence of the faith should it be?

#### Controversy in the Church

In the first place, it should be directed not only against the opponents outside the Church but also against the opponents within. The opponents of Holy Scripture do not become less dangerous, but they become far more dangerous when they are within ecclesiastical walls.

At that point, I am well aware that widespread objection arises at the present time. Let us above all, men say, have no controversy in the Church; let us forget our small theological differences and all repeat together Paul's hymn to Christian love. As I listen to such pleas, my Christian friends, I think I can detect in them rather plainly the voice of Satan. That voice is heard, sometimes, on the lips of good and truly Christian men, as at Caesarea Philippi it was heard on the

lips of the greatest of the Twelve. But Satan's voice it is, all the same.

Sometimes it comes to us in rather deceptive ways.

I remember, for example, what was said in my hearing on one occasion, by a man who is generally regarded as one of the leaders of the evangelical Christian Church. It was said at the climax of a day of devotional services. "If you go heresy-hunting for the sin in your own wicked hearts," said the speaker, as nearly as I can remember his words, "you will have no time for heresy-hunting for the heretics outside."

Thus did temptation come through the mouth of a well-meaning man. The "heretics," to use the term that was used by that speaker, are, with their helpers, the indifferentists, in control of the church within the bounds of which that utterance was made, the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, as they are in control of nearly all the larger Protestant churches in the world. A man hardly needs to "hunt" them very long if he is to oppose them. All that he needs to do is to be faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ, and his opposition to those men will follow soon enough.

But is it true, as this speaker seemed to imply, **that there is a conflict between faithfulness to Christ in the ecclesiastical world and the cultivation of holiness in one's own inner life?** My friends, it is not true, but false. A man cannot successfully go heresy-hunting against the sin in his own life if he is willing to deny his Lord in the presence of the enemies outside. The two battles are intimately connected. A man cannot fight successfully in one unless he fights also in the other.

#### Prayer and Theological Differences

Again, we are told that our theological differences will disappear if we will just get down on our knees together in prayer. Well, I can only say about that kind of prayer, which is indifferent to the question whether the gospel is true or false, that it is not Christian prayer; it is bowing down in the house of Rimmon. God save us from it! Instead, may God lead us to the kind of prayer in which, recognising the dreadful condition of the visible Church, recognising the unbelief and the sin which dominate it to-day, we who are opposed to the current of the age both in the world and in the Church, facing the facts as they are, lay those facts before God, as Hezekiah laid before Him the threatening letter of the Assyrian enemy, and humbly ask Him to give the answer.

#### Controversy and Revival

Again, men say that instead of engaging in controversy in the Church, we ought to pray to God for a revival; instead of polemics, we ought to have evangelism. Well, what kind of revival do you think that will be? What sort of evan-

gelism is it that is indifferent to the question what evangel is it that is to be preached? Not a revival in the New Testament sense, not the evangelism that Paul meant when he said, "Woe is be unto me, if I preach not the gospel." No, my friends, there can be no true evangelism which makes common cause with the enemies of the Cross of Christ. Souls will hardly be saved unless the evangelists can say with Paul: "If we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel than that which we preached unto you, let him, let him be accursed!" **Every true revival is born in controversy, and leads to more controversy.** That has been true ever since our Lord said that He came not to bring peace upon the earth but a sword. And do you know what I think will happen when God sends a new Reformation upon the Church? We cannot tell when that blessed day will come. But when the blessed day does come, I think we can say at least one result that it will bring. We shall hear nothing on that day about the evils of controversy in the Church. All that will be swept away as with a mighty flood. A man who is on fire with a message never talks in that wretched, feeble way, but proclaims the truth joyously and fearlessly, in the presence of every high thing that is lifted up against the gospel of Christ.

#### **The Holy Spirit and Doctrine**

But men tell us that instead of engaging in controversy about doctrine we ought to seek the power of the living Holy Spirit. A few years ago we had in America, as I suppose you had here, a celebration of the anniversary of Pentecost. At that time, our Presbyterian Church was engaged in a conflict, the gist of which concerned the question of the truth of the Bible. Was the Church going to insist, or was it not going to insist, that its ministers should believe that the Bible is true? At that time of decision, and almost, it seemed, as though to evade the issue, many sermons were preached on the subject of the Holy Spirit. Do you think that those sermons, if they really were preached in that way, were approved by Him with whom they dealt? I fear not, my friends. A man can hardly receive the power of the Holy Spirit if he seeks to evade the question whether the blessed Book that the Spirit has given us is true or false.

#### **Positive Preaching!**

Again, men tell us that our preaching should be positive and not negative, that we can preach the truth without attacking error. But if we follow that advice we shall have to close our Bible and desert its teachings. The New Testament is a polemic book almost from beginning to end. Some years ago I was in a company of teachers of the Bible in the colleges and other educational institutions of America. One of the most eminent theological professors in the country made an address. In it he admitted that there are unfortunate controversies about doctrine in the Epistles of Paul;

but, said he in effect, the real essence of Paul's teaching is found in the hymn to Christian love in the thirteenth chapter of I. Corinthians; and we can avoid controversy to-day, if we will only devote the chief attention to that inspiring hymn. In reply, I am bound to say that the example was singularly ill-chosen. That hymn to Christian love is in the midst of a great polemic passage; it would never have been written if Paul had been opposed to controversy with error in the Church. It was because his soul was stirred within him by a wrong use of the spiritual gifts that he was able to write that glorious hymn. So it is always in the Church. Every really great Christian utterance, it may almost be said, is born in controversy. **It is when men have felt compelled to take a stand against error, that they have risen to the really great heights in the celebration of truth.**

#### **The Method of Defence**

But in defending the faith against the attack upon it that is being made both without and within the Church, what method of defence should be used?

In answer to that question, I have time only to say two things. In the first place, the defence, with the polemic that it involves, should be perfectly open and above board. I have just stated that I believe in controversy. But in controversy I do try to observe the Golden Rule; I do try to do unto others as I would have others do unto me. And the kind of controversy that pleases me in an opponent is a controversy that is altogether frank.

Sometimes I go into a company of modern men. A man gets up upon the platform, looks out benignly upon the audience, and says: "I think, brethren, that we are all agreed about this"—and then proceeds to trample ruthlessly upon everything that is dearest to my heart. When he does that, I feel aggrieved. I do not feel aggrieved because he gives free expression to opinions that are different from mine. But I feel aggrieved because he calls me his "brother" and assumes, prior to investigation, that I agree with what he is going to say. A kind of controversy that pleases me better than that is a kind of controversy in which a man gets up upon the platform, looks out upon the audience, and says: "What is this? I see that one of those absurd Fundamentalists has somehow strayed into this company of educated men"—and then proceeds to call me by every opprobrious term that is to be found in one of the most unsavoury paragraphs of Roget's "Thesaurus." When he does that, I do not feel too much distressed. I can even endure that application to me of the term "Fundamentalist," though for the life of me I cannot see why adherents of the Christian religion, which has been in the world for some nineteen hundred years, should suddenly be made an "-ism." and be called by some strange new name. The point is that that speaker at least does me the

honour of recognising that a profound difference separates my view from his. We understand each other perfectly, and it is quite possible that we may be, if not brothers (I object to the degradation of that word), yet at least good friends.

### A Scholarly Defence of the Faith

In the second place, the defence of the faith should be of a scholarly kind. Mere denunciation does not constitute an argument; and before a man can refute successfully an argument of an opponent, he must understand the argument that he is endeavouring to refute. Personalities, in such debate, should be kept in the background; an analysis of the motives of one's opponents has little place.

That principle, certainly in America, has been violated constantly by the advocates of the Modernist or indifferentist position in the Church. It has been violated by them far more than by the defenders of God's Word. Yet the latter, strangely enough, have received the blame. The representatives of the dominant Modern-indifferentist forces have engaged in the most violent adjectival abuse of their opponents; yet they have been called sweet and beautiful and tolerant: the defenders of the Bible, and of the historic position of the Church have spoken courteously, though plainly, in opposition, and have been called "bitter" and "extreme." I am reminded of the way in which an intelligent American Indian is reported (I saw it in the American magazine, "The Saturday Evening Post," a few months ago) to have characterised the terminology used in histories of the wars between the white men and the men of his race. "When you won," said the Indian, "it was, according to your histories, a 'battle'; when we won, it was a 'massacre.'"

Such, I suppose, is the treatment of the unpopular side in every conflict. Certainly it is the treatment which we receive to-day. Men have found it to be an effective way of making themselves popular, to abuse the representatives of so unpopular a cause as that which we Bible-believing Christians represent.

Yet I do not think we ought to be dismayed. If in these days of unbelief and defection in the Church we are called upon to bear just a little bit of the reproach of Christ, we ought to count ourselves honoured, and certainly we ought not to mitigate in the slightest measure the plainness either of our defence of the truth or of our warnings against error. **Men's favour is worth very little after all, in comparison with the favour of Christ.**

But certainly we should strive to keep ourselves free from that with which we are charged. Because our opponents are guilty, that is no reason why we should make ourselves guilty too.

### Knowledge of Truth and Error

It is no easy thing to defend the Christian faith against the mighty attack that is being brought against it at the present day. Knowledge of the truth is necessary, and also clear acquaintance with the forces hostile to the truth in modern thought.

At that point, a final objection may arise. Does it not involve a terrible peril to man's souls to ask them—for example, in their preparation for the ministry—to acquaint themselves with things that are being said against the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ? Would it not be safer to learn only of the truth, without acquainting ourselves with error? We answer, "Of course it would be safer." It would be far safer, no doubt, to live in a fool's paradise and close one's eyes to what is going on in the world to-day, just as it is safer to remain in secure dugouts rather than to go over the top in some great attack. We save our souls, perhaps, by such tactics, but the Lord's enemies remain in possession of the field. It is a great battle indeed, this intellectual battle of to-day; deadly perils await every man who engages in that conflict; but **it is the Lord's battle, and He is a great Captain in the fight.**

There are, indeed, some perils that should be avoided—particularly the peril of acquainting ourselves with what is said against the Christian religion without ever obtaining any really orderly acquaintance with what can be said for it. That is the peril to which a candidate for the ministry, for example, subjects himself when he attends only one of the theological colleges where the professors are adherents of the dominant naturalistic view. What does such a course of study mean? It means simply this, that a man does not think the historic Christian faith, which has given him his spiritual nurture, to be worthy of a fair hearing. That is my only argument in advising a man to study, for example, at an institution like Westminster Theological Seminary, which I have the honour to serve. I am not asking him to close his eyes to what can be said against the historic faith. But, I am telling him that the logical order is to learn what a thing is before one attends exclusively to what can be said against it; and I am telling him further, that the way to learn what a thing is is not to listen first to its opponents, but to grant a full hearing to those who believe in it with all their minds and hearts. After that has been done, after our students, by pursuing the complete course of study, have obtained something like an orderly acquaintance with the marvellous system of truth that the Bible contains, then the more they listen to what can be said against it, the better defenders of it they will probably be.

Let us, therefore, pray that God will raise up for us to-day true defenders of the Christian faith. **We are living in the midst of a mighty conflict**

against the Christian religion. The conflict is carried on with intellectual weapons. Whether we like it or not, there are millions upon millions of our fellow-men who reject Christianity for the simple reason that they do not believe Christianity to be true. What is to be done in such a situation?

#### Past History of the Church

We can learn, at this point, a lesson from the past history of the Church. This is not the first time during the past nineteen hundred years when intellectual objections have been raised against the gospel of Christ. How have those objections been treated? Have they been evaded, or have they been faced? The answer is writ large in the history of the Church. The objections have been faced. God has raised up, in time of need, not only evangelists to appeal to the multitudes, but also Christian scholars to meet the intellectual attack. So it will be in our day, my friends. The

Christian religion flourishes not in the darkness but in the light. **Intellectual slothfulness is but a quack remedy for unbelief; the true remedy is consecration of intellectual powers to the service of the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Let us not fear for the result. Many times, in the course of the past nineteen hundred years, men have predicted that in a generation or so the old gospel would be forever forgotten. Yet the gospel has burst forth again, and set the world aflame. So it may be in our age, in God's good time and in His way. Sad indeed are the substitutes for the gospel of Christ. The Church has been beguiled into By-path Meadow, and is now groaning in the dungeon of Giant Despair. Happy is the man who can point out to such a Church the straight high road that leads over hill and valley to the City of God.

(To be continued)

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## Reviews of Religious Books

The favorable reviewing of a book here is not to be understood as necessarily implying an endorsement of everything contained in it. Within the limits of the editorial policy of Blue Banner Faith and Life each reviewer is solely responsible for the opinions expressed in his reviews. Please purchase books from your book dealer or direct from the publishers; do not send orders to the manager of this magazine.

**GENIUS OF GENEVA**, by L. Penning. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids 3, Michigan. 1954, 392 pp. \$3.00.

It is always a pleasure to recommend to others that which has brought pleasure to oneself. **Genius of Geneva** was one of the reviewer's most enjoyable literary treats in recent weeks. Without a doubt this is the most inspiring account of the life and work of John Calvin ever brought to my attention.

This biography professes to be a popular account. It is just that. The book reads like a novel. The first chapter sets the rapid pace which keeps the reader's interest leaping from page to page. It is true that the action slows a little at times, but never for long. It would be asking too much of human skill to require the quality of some passages to be maintained throughout.

The author is plainly and without apology an admirer of Calvin. Only such a man could ever understand the genius of Calvin. Nevertheless, Penning is no blind idol worshiper. Indeed, on several occasions one feels that he is leaning over backwards in his efforts to be objective. It is obvious that the author is a competent historian. He knows the facts of the period and can follow the myriad turns of a very confused time.

The account of the dealings of Calvin and

Servet is informative. Covenanters could not accept all of the author's opinions on the matter without reserve. Beyond a doubt, Calvin's conduct in respect to this matter is open to adverse criticism, but it is hardly proper for us to meekly accept as true all the black lies that Calvin's enemies have circulated.

Other items of interest to Covenanters concern the exalted place the psalms held in the life of Calvin and in the churches of which he was spiritual father. Also the dealings between John Knox and John Calvin hold our interest.

One does not need to be an historian to gain much good from this biography. However, it is only fair to say that the person who has a good general knowledge of the political and religious history of the Reformation period will gain even more. We who are the spiritual descendants of John Calvin ought to revere his memory. Every sincere Christian ought to acquaint himself with the life and works of Calvin. Among the great hosts of witnesses which are around us on every side, we hear no voice since that of Paul speaking more true and clear than John Calvin.

—Harold Harrington

**A CHRISTIAN APPROACH TO PSYCHOLOGICAL MEDICINE.** The Inter-Varsity Fellow-

ship, 39 Bedford Square, W.C. 1, London, England. 1954, 52 pp. Paper. Two shillings.

"These notes have been compiled for the Christian Medical Fellowship by a Medical Registrar with the generous cooperation of several consultant Physicians and Psychiatrists. The questions which are answered in the later chapters of this memorandum were selected from those suggested by medical students in their final years of study." (Back of title page.) No names of contributors are given.

The preface recognizes the inability of arriving at definite and final answers to many of the questions raised in this field, and states general principles which may be helpful in trying to answer them, as well as to provide a more detailed discussion of certain problems on which advice has been sought. We believe the goal has been accomplished in an exceptionally fine manner, gratifying to the Christian, and commanding the respect of the scientist.

The work consists of eight sections. The first three deal with the scope of Psychology and of the Bible, and their relation the one to the other. The rest of the work consists of the answers to questions raised by medical students taken up in the following subject groups: Guile and Responsibility; Psychological Explanations of Religious Phenomena; The Infirmities of Christians; Christianity and Psychotherapy; and Conclusions. At the end there is a helpful bibliography given under headings of general works, psychology, psychotherapy, psychiatry, and books written from the Christian standpoint.

The Memorandum takes the position that there is no more complete and accurate description of human nature than that given in Scripture. "The psychologist is an authority in his own subject, yet when he leaves his own field and commences to propound a philosophy of life, he ceases to be an expert. . . . The Christian believes that the Bible contains profound principles to which human psychology, as all other branches of knowledge, must defer for their basic view of life and the world. The Bible certainly contains the most penetrating analysis of man's personality which we know. The Christian will ordinarily be grateful for the contributions to knowledge and for the new armamentarium which modern psychology has brought. Where, however, psychological theory is in conflict with the plain teaching of the Bible, he will naturally hold to the latter." p. 19.

The conflict between psychology and the Bible is credited to the failure by psychologists to recognize the distinctions between hypothesis, theory, and fact. The warning is also given that we must keep in mind that there are limits of observation. "Any suggestion that the soul will one day yield all its secrets to the methods of scientific investigation implies a misunderstanding both

of the scientific method and also of the nature of man." p. 7.

The discussion in Chapter 2 on the Biblical picture of human nature fully satisfies the Reformed theologian. It is enlightening to the pastor, the personal worker, and the evangelist as to the particular slant of the psychiatrist. The Christian worker needs to be conscious of how human nature works, about which Scripture has a lot to say, as well as of the fact that man is totally depraved.

The theories of Freud, Behaviourism, and Gestalt psychology are briefly examined and their limitations and errors are analyzed. "A Christian cannot accept Freud's facile dismissal of sin and human responsibility before God." p. 22. The findings of psychology concerning the importance of heredity, environment, etc., are gratefully acknowledged, but the Christian is unable to be so optimistic as the Behaviourist Watson who claimed that if he had a healthy, well-formed child and could control his environment fully, he could turn out a perfect human being. "What is needed is not an ideal environment, but a new heart." p. 22.

The questions taken up are very common ones: Is conversion merely a violent emotional upheaval? Is religion merely suggestion or self-delusion? What is conscience? Is a feeling of guilt pathological? In what way does conversion change a person's psychological anatomy? What accounts for the failure of self-control, persistent ill temper, and other undesirable traits in a Christian? How does it happen that a Christian can commit suicide? Replies command respect for the Word of God and help to remove prejudices on both sides of the Science vs. Scriptures antithesis.

In the conclusion it is regretted that so much modern psychological interpretation is in terms of an atheistic philosophy. "Many of the modern views . . . are part of rebellious man's defences against the claims of God in Christ Jesus. Their acceptance relieves man intellectually from the otherwise humiliating alternative of admitting his sinful state before God." p. 51.

This work is highly recommended for young people in any line of scientific study because of the sound interpretation of the relationship between finite science and infinite, inerrant Scripture.

—E. Clark Copeland

LAW AND GRACE, By J. N. D. Anderson. The Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 39 Bedford Square, W.C. 1, London, England. 1954, Paper, 22 pp. Sixpence.

Mr. Anderson says that this subject has always been of special interest to him as a lawyer, but as a Christian he has often found it bewildering. This bewilderment, he says, is a common ailment, damaging not only to the understanding,

but to the whole spiritual life. His hope in this message (presidential address, Inter-Varsity Conference, March, 1954) is to clarify his own thinking and perhaps thereby to help some others to a clearer understanding. We believe that he has done a very worthy piece of work in that direction.

Mr. Anderson approaches the subject analytically as a lawyer presenting his case in court. He tackles the subject in paragraph two with this sentence, "Now it seems to me that there are three chief dangers which beset us in this connection." He immediately states, defines, locates, and proceeds to solve them.

Danger one: a false synthesis, "a salient danger of an exaggerated dispensationalism" (p.3.) regarding the Old Testament as all law and the New Testament as all grace, and considering the Jew as "under law" with no place for grace, and the church as "under grace" with the inference that there is now no place for law. He defines three serious consequences: a) misunderstanding and misuse of Scripture; b) denial of continuity and consistency in the character, attitude and dealings of God; c) antinomianism in doctrine and practice. In solution, two New Testament statements on the relation between Christ and the Old Testament are examined. He gives a very thorough and clear, though brief discussion of how Christ fulfilled the law, as He said He would in Matt. 5:17, 18. He states that the Mosaic Law is made up of "three main but largely distinct elements," the moral, ceremonial, and the social law (p. 5.) The moral law "in its essence, is both eternal and immutable." (p. 5, 6.) Christ fulfilled it in His sinless life and in His atoning death, and also "by reinforcing its demands on His disciples—that is, on use. For He said, 'Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.' (Matt 5:20) Thus the value of the moral law for the Christian can hardly be exaggerated." (p. 7)

The ceremonial law represented, "in essence, the way of grace." (p. 8) Sin affronts the very nature of our holy God and separates from Him; but from the very beginning, God revealed that the way was open to come back to Him through the blood atonement. The law gave an elaborate typical system incorporating previous revelation. Christ fulfilled it by shedding His blood as the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world. Type was therefore gone forever. The ceremonial law is of value to the Christian by impressing on his understanding the wonder of Christ's atonement.

The social law was a "temporal government of the nation of Israel, God's chosen race," though except for the believing remnant it was a very earthly and largely unspiritual race. It governed the relations between men, and was therefore

adapted to the worldly and unbelieving in the nation. It often fell far short of the moral law, as Jesus said, because of "the hardness of your hearts." Mr. Anderson says that the social law has fulfilled its purpose and been done away because the kingdom of God was taken away from Israel and given to the church. (See Mat. 21:34 and p. 11) As God's people is no longer an earthly theocracy, but a redeemed company from among all nations, upon whom the moral law in all its fullness is incumbent, there is no more need for the ordinary laws of human government.

The second New Testament passage examined in Gal. 3:24 where the law is called a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. The moral law convicts of sin, reveals the essential sinfulness and rebellion of the human heart so that the sinner is driven to Christ for cleansing and pardon, and the Christian driven to Him continually for sanctifying grace.

Danger two: a false synthesis, legalism, or the seeking of salvation "not through Christ alone, but through Christ plus something else. (p. 4) Grace alone is entirely adequate and effective. The law can only drive us to complete abandonment to Christ; it cannot define and enable a way of righteousness acceptable to God. Christ at the cross paid the penalty for sin and vindicated the law; sin was judged and the sinner justified. God can therefore receive the sinner without violating His holiness.

Danger three: a general confusion, revealed particularly in the field of comparative religion in the matter of the position, responsibility and hope of those who never hear the Gospel and who earnestly follow some other faith. "This may not only befog our message, but even vitiate our apprehension of the essential nature of sin on the one hand, and of salvation on the other. (p. 4) To answer the question, What of the devout Muslim, Confucianist, Buddhist? our lawyer-theologian outlines very simply the way of Salvation: (1) God has not left Himself without a witness (Acts 14:17,) but has made known something of the moral law to all. He has promised eternal life "to all who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality." (Rom. 2:7.) (2) All men always and everywhere fall short, and so, regardless of religion or moral condition, they "stand in urgent—equal—need of a Saviour." (p. 18) (3) There is only one Saviour; no one else could ever meet human need, except God Himself in the Person of His incarnate Son. But, he says, it does not necessarily follow that those who have never heard the Gospel have no hope. (p. 18) Men are not saved by membership in a Christian church nor by their good works, but "on the grounds of their 'fear' of God and their consequent abandonment of themselves to His mercy." (p. 19) Such a position is an imperative to evangelization, and an accentuation of responsibility on those who have accepted Christ to witness to it by practical obedience to the moral law. (p. 20)

It is indeed gratifying to get such a clear, sound, and analytical examination of the Scripture's teaching on the subject of law and grace from a Christian layman. In its general method, system, and explanation, we think it could hardly have been done better, and we do not hesitate to recommend it. There are, however, three statements which seem questionable to the reviewer.

In discussing the social law on p. 11, Mr. Anderson states "It was God-given, indeed, in the sense that He specifically allowed its promulgation in the form found in the Pentateuch and its enforcement for the daily government of a very imperfectly disciplined theocracy. . . ." This statement seems to present a questionable view of the inspiration of the Scriptures. The author's use of Scripture throughout the article, however, points to a firm stand on the doctrine of plenary inspiration; this statement, therefore, seems to be a contradiction of his position. God not only **allowed** Moses to **promulgate** and **enforce** the law of divorce (which, as the author says lower down, Christ said was given for the hardness of men's hearts, but that from the beginning it had not been so) God dictated it to Moses along with all the rest of the Mosaic Law on Mt. Sinai.

The second is similar and is found on p. 16 in the discussion of the necessity for a complete abandonment to Christ as the way of grace. "For just as no man can be saved by the moral law, so none can now be saved by the ceremonial—whether Mosaic or sacramentalist." It is the use of the word **now** that seems questionable. In his discussion of the ceremonial law above there was no indication that the author believes that the ceremonial sacrifice was efficient for the pardon of the offerer. Since that idea is bound up in the dispensational position he is so well disproving, we wish he had said that there was never salvation by ceremony. This would seem to give the dispensationalist some ground, which it is not the author's desire to do.

The third is the conclusion drawn on page 11 that the ceremonial law has fulfilled its purpose and been done away. The opening sentence of the paragraph is "Then Christ came, and fulfilled the social law." It is one thing to say that Christ fulfilled the social law, and another to say that the law fulfilled its purpose. The whole consideration of the ceremonial law lies around the parts of it that "fell far short of the moral law." No notice is taken of those truly godly laws on soil conservation, crop rotation, provision for the poor, kindness to animals, money lending, preservation of the family heritage, care of the sick, segregation for protection from contagious disease, etc., all of which are the civic expression of eternal moral obligation. True, the nature of the kingdom race creates problems as to how this may be applied to God's chosen people in this dispensation, but it does not seem that it has been done away. The author recognized that though the ceremonial

law had been completely fulfilled by Christ, and the types done away completely; however, he says that it serves "to impress upon him (the Christian) the wonder of Christ's salvation." (p. 10) Do not the details of the social law reveal to the Christian his utter disability to love his neighbour as himself and thus throw him upon Christ just as the moral law convicts of sin and throws the Christian on Christ for sanctifying grace, as the author states? The argument seems weak at this point.

We trust that the discussion of these objections will not be considered derogatory of the booklet. It is well worth careful study.

—E. C. Copeland

**THE STUDENT'S HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE HOLY LAND**, by William Walter Smith. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1954, pp. ix, 101, \$2.25.

This photolithoprinted edition of Smith's descriptive geography is a handy pocket sized book with clear print, except certain maps taken from color in the original.

There is a wealth of material for the busy student of the Bible, and the handy size compensates somewhat for the lack of clarity in maps.

—D. Ray Wilcox

**AN INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY**, by J. M. Spier. The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., P.O. Box 185, Nutley, N. J. 1954, 261 pp. \$3.75.

Religion is not limited to worship, but rather it spans the entire life of man. Man is called upon to serve God with his whole heart in every area of his life. Although Christianity is expounded in terms of theology, it may also be expressed and applied in every other scientific sphere. There is a Christian biology as well as a non-Christian biology, a Christian and a non-Christian economics, and so forth. No science is ever neutral; it either serves the Kingdom of God or the kingdom of darkness. This is because man's heart, the religious center of his whole existence, is either God-centered or apostate.

This is the starting place of a Christian philosophy, according to the author of this volume. Every philosophy is based on a transcendental Idea embodying the thinker's central religious motive. A truly Christian philosophy cannot be merely a synthesis of biblical thought with traditional philosophy, but must take its presuppositions solely from the Word of God. Christian philosophy is an expression of covenant keeping in science.

This volume is an exposition of the main tenets of a school of Christian philosophy, developed in the Free University of Amsterdam by Professors Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd, and

known as "The Philosophy of the Cosmomic Idea," or "The Philosophy of the Idea of Law" (*Cosmomic* means "law-order.") This work is a condensation of the system of thought developed fully by Prof H. Dooyeweerd in his four-volume work, **A New Critique of Theoretical Thought**. This philosophy is in harmony with the Reformed Faith. It presents an intellectual challenge to the entire body of humanistic and quasi-Christian philosophical thought. It comes as a welcome change from the Kantian and post-Kantian dialectic which has often found expression within the scheme of Christian thought. Instead of assuming the autonomy of theoretical thought, as does every immanence philosophy, Christian philosophy regards man's thought as derivative in the sense that all of man's knowledge is revealed by God the Creator.

This philosophy is based on the Idea that the universe is a created order comprising fourteen different spheres, each with its own specific laws governing it according to the appointment of God. Although each sphere is "sovereign" or independent of the others, they are all interrelated into a totality, a cosmos whose order is determined by the sovereign God who is Himself absolute order. This thesis is discussed at length in Chapter II, entitled, "The Theory of Cosmic Modalities or Law-Spheres."

Next, the author discusses the Christian theory of knowledge, dealing with the problem of how the logical aspect of human experience can combine with the non-logical aspects so as to yield knowledge. The author places his theory of knowledge over against that of Kant.

In Chapter IV, "The Theory of the Structures of Temporal Things," Dr. Spier deals with the "permanent foundation" or reality, subjecting the concept of "substance" to a well-deserved criticism. He also analyzes the structural principle of an individual thing in its relation to the totality, and concludes: "All creation is sustained by God's Omnipresent and Omnipotent power and in this sense it possesses a created independence which is not in any way self-sufficient. The structure of a thing is anchored in the Divine world order and its structure guarantees its identity" (p. 165.)

Following this is a chapter on the theory of the structure of human society in which the author discusses the individual structure of societal relations, viz., marriage, family, state, church, "free" associations. The individual structure of each societal relation is said to be determined by the divine world order and not, as is commonly supposed, by human expediency or culture. Each sphere of society is governed by its own laws, and none can impose its laws on any other sphere; each is sovereign under God.

Of special interest to Reformed Presbyterians is the author's conception of the church. The visible church is broader than an organization. It

includes "all of temporal society insofar as it derives its life from Jesus Christ and employs its energy to advance His Kingdom. A Christian marriage, a Christian family, state, school, or any other Christian relationship which acknowledges Christ as King of heaven and of earth, belongs to the visible church" (p. 223.) Another item of special note is the conception of a Christian state, strongly favoring a political acknowledgment of the sovereign Kingship of Jesus Christ.

The final chapter shows how all the elements of human society are interrelated and interwoven into a structural, ordered whole, created by God for His own glory.

This fine work, published originally in Dutch, now in its fourth Dutch edition, was translated by David Hugh Freeman, Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Wilson College. An expression of thanks and appreciation should be extended to him for so readable a translation. To those who are familiar with the terminology and basic issues of philosophy, this book will be of real value in constructing a God-centered life-and-world view.

—Joseph A. Hill

**THE LIVING CHRIST AND DYING HEATHENISM**, by Joh. Warneck. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1954, 312 pp., \$3.95.

Time was when a missionary, going to a foreign land, had to explore an unknown land, struggle with a strange tongue, and try and fathom the mind and customs of a peculiar people with little previous help. Now geographical surveys have discovered and described nearly every country, the study of linguistics has given a key which unlocks the intricacies of difficult speech, while the science of anthropology gives an account of the religion and thought-forms of "primitive peoples," as they are called.

This book comes under the latter category. But it does not suffer from a common defect of many works of this kind. For anthropologists are not always sympathetic with the missionary cause and often study natives as interesting specimens to be preserved in their present condition. Mr. Warneck, however, was himself a practical missionary who spent many years with the Rhinish Mission in inland Sumatra. (This is an English translation from the third German edition of his work.)

With German thoroughness he examines animistic heathenism, analyses its basis which he shows to be a most complicated system of philosophy, and describes its characteristics. Unlike some modern writers, he does not see in heathenism some kinship to Christianity or a preparation for it, but something entirely antagonistic. However, he does detect some remnants of a primitive revelation, though sadly perverted and obscured, and a sense of need, of which paganism is the

expression but which only the Gospel can satisfy. He gives the lie to the notion, sometimes expressed as an argument against foreign missions, that the heathen are happy as they are and therefore we should leave them alone. He shows that heathenism is a dark system of ignorance and lies, bondage and selfishness, estrangement from God and submission to the devil, perversion of morality and utter worldliness.

Having painted this black picture, which gives no hope of itself, the author goes on to enumerate various factors which help to clear the way for Christianity and dispose pagan people in its favor, as the heathen's sense of misery and need, his desire for education, the superiority of Christian races, the personality of the missionary, the influence of Christian colonial powers, as well as preparatory interpositions of God by dreams, visions, and prophecies, of which he gives some examples, and also individual truth-seeking souls who seem specially prepared of the Holy Spirit for the message and receive it immediately. However, he acknowledges that it is the Gospel alone which wins triumphs, and warns against the danger of thinking that mere educational work can take the place of faithful preaching of the Word.

In dealing with "the victorious forces of the Gospel" he gives a very clear analysis of the distinctive features of Christianity, and shows how they appeal to the heathen heart and lead many to a saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and to a life of liberty and holiness. Sometimes the author seems to suggest that a heathen may be truly converted and then fall away finally. Such lapses certainly illustrate the difficulties and discouragements that missionaries meet. The author also fails to distinguish between heathen fatalism and a true determinism which recognizes the sovereignty of God behind all second causes though not eliminating human responsibility.

This book is no kindergarten study, for it is no child's play to wrestle with the powers of darkness, but it should prove most rewarding to all who master its contents. Prospective missionaries, especially those going to animistic peoples, will find it most enlightening. Indeed, all missionaries would profit by a study of the principles of missionary evangelism with which it also deals. The church at home, too, would benefit by being prompted to more intelligent prayer for the heathen and by seeing how the Gospel meets the need of the human heart in other lands. As the author beautifully says in the Introduction, "When the home flowers are yielding little, missions gather fresh honey for theology." Incidentally, this English translation may correct the impression that many seem to have that English speaking people have supplied nearly all foreign missionaries. For not only does the author draw from his own experience, but he quotes the experiences of others, mostly German and Dutch, in various missions in many lands.

There is also an apologetic value. Here is refuted the prevalent assumption that mankind in its religious conceptions has risen from animism to polytheism, and thence to monotheism, and it is shown that the process has been in the reverse direction. The author also insists that it is only the Gospel of the grace of God, which declares that God came to earth in the person of His Son to destroy the works of the devil and put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, the Gospel revealed in the Bible, which is the power of God unto salvation to the heathen, and only the missionary who is fully persuaded of the certainty of that message will make an effective soul-winner among them.

A very full Table of Contents at the beginning and an index at the end greatly add to the value of this volume as a study book. And for a translation from German to English, it is wonderfully clear, while some passages are really very fine.

—W. R. McEwen

COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLES OF JAMES AND JOHN, by Alexander Ross. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids 3, Michigan. 1954, 249 pp. \$3.50.

This is the fourth volume to appear in "The New International Commentary on the New Testament" series; the fifth volume is, however, already off the press. The general editor is Ned B. Stonehouse, who writes concerning the author: "For many years Ross has held an influential and highly respected place among the ministers of the Free Church of Scotland. From 1937 to 1952 he was Professor of New Testament Exegesis in the theological seminary of that Church, the Free Church College of Edinburgh. But Ross has always loved preaching and the work of the pastorate in general, and in 1952 he resigned his post in Edinburgh to respond to an urgent call that had been extended to him by the congregation of Burghead in Morayshire." "Among his writings are articles on 'The Life of Christ,' 'The Teaching of Christ,' and 'The Epistle to the Hebrews' in the **New Bible Handbook** published by the Inter-Varsity Fellowship of Great Britain in 1947. He is also the author of a commentary on The Epistle to the Galatians in the **New Bible Commentary** recently published in England by the same organization and issued by Eerdmans in America."

The Scripture text used in the commentary is that of the American Standard Version of 1901. The text is printed in full for those who do not read Greek, but the expositions are based upon the Greek text. The Greek words do not appear in the commentary itself, but are explained in the many footnotes throughout the book.

The introduction to the Epistle of James is short, but informative, the largest discussion being given to the authorship of the Epistle; and the evidence which he gives supports James, the Lord's

brother. The Epistle of James is divided into thirteen sections, each discussed verse by verse. The author speaks often of the supposed conflict between James and Paul, and by comparison, shows that the conflict does not exist.

The second portion of the book regarding the Epistles of John is taken up in the same fashion, with particular attention on the value of the Second and Third Epistles. He writes with clarity on those portions which have caused some to go astray in times past. One reference will suffice, with regard to 1 John 3:6, where he writes in part. "This strong statement seems to contradict what John has already written (1:8-2:2,) but the contradiction is only in appearance. Grammar has been enlisted here in the service of exegesis and of sound doctrine, and justifiably so. John has recognized the fact that a child of God may commit an act of sin (2:1.) Here he used present tenses. **Every** one who abideth in Him sinneth not, does not sin habitually and deliberately: **every** one who **goes on sinning**, sinning habitually and deliberately, has not seen Christ in His sinlessness and purity and has never really known Him with the knowledge of those who are in spiritual kinship with Him." (Italics his)

It is refreshing to read this commentary by one who regards the Bible as the Word of God, wholly and completely; and the book is recommended without reserve both to pastors and laymen. The comments, while not long, are very suggestive and illuminating. The book is printed clearly, and the page headings make any portion of it easily accessible.

—J. D. Carson

THE PASTORAL EPISTLES, The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary, by E. K. Simpson, The Tyndale Press, 39 Bedford Square, W.C. 1, London, England. 1954, 173 pp. 15 shillings net. (\$2.10.)

In the editorial of the October 15th, 1954, issue of THE EVANGELICAL QUARTERLY, F. F. Bruce recounts a conversation with Prof. G. T. Thompson of Edinburgh, and the late Prof. A. Souter, in which reference was made to Mr. Simpson's unusual acquaintance with the vocabulary of Hellenistic literature, especially in its bearing on the vocabulary of the Greek New Testament. Souter said, "That's the man who should make a critical examination of P. N. Harrison's PROBLEM OF THE PASTORAL EPISTLES." Prof. E. K. Simpson was actually at that time engaged on this commentary in which he was paying special attention to the diction in the light of Dr. Harrison's arguments. The Oxford professor has thus given us a well ripened work, as one readily sees in using it.

The dust jacket calls the author "a doughty defender of the Pauline authority of the Pastoral

Epistles." In his introduction he gives a thorough exposition of their genuineness, and throughout the commentary he calls attention to words, phrases, thought forms and expressions which are distinctly Pauline. His thorough knowledge of the Greek classics and Hellenistic Greek enable him to cast much light on the New Testament Greek, and to speak with authority on matters of vocabulary and style. Such statements as this on p. 94 are frequent, "The lowly title **God's bondservant**, not altogether equivalent to our term **slave**, which Paul here places in the foreground, occurs nowhere else at the head of his Epistles, and would be most unlikely to be set in such relief by any ecclesiastical puppet wearing his mask." (See Titus 1:1) Or, "The demand for a sample of undeniably Pauline theology from the Pastorals is fully met by this 'Gospel in a nutshell.'" p. 115 (See Titus 3:4-7.)

Not only is the author a master of the Greek language so that he provides an accurate translation, he is a clear thinker, a child of God by faith in Jesus Christ; and his masterful use of English makes his work delightful reading of sound theology clearly and succinctly expressed. His expositions are inspirational works of art truly adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour.

The value of the work may best be demonstrated by an examination of the position taken on some crucial points:

1. The concord between divine sovereignty and human free will is both clearly and persuasively presented. He is reverently cautious: "It is not for us to reconcile the antinomy between divine sovereignty and human free agency. That abyss mocks our sounding-lines. Those, however, who firmly believe in the effectual sovereignty of the Most High will always shrink from the assumption that the issues of His redeeming course are suspended on the contingent pliancy or obstinacy of the rebels to whom salvation is tendered, or withdrawn from His entire control." p. 41 on I Tim. 2:4. Sovereign grace entails human responsibility (on I Tim. 4:15, 16): "That (salvation) is wholly of grace; yet the fullest assurance of God's power to keep the fire burning on the 'mean altar of our hearts' does not release us from the duty of tending the languishing flame; for the purposes of sovereign grace are accomplished through the instrumentality of second causes. The saving of Timothy's hearers was, as far as he was concerned, dependent on his exemplary carriage." pp. 71, 72. Divine sovereignty is the source of comfort and security for the people of God in the face of the power of Satan and the perversity of human nature and the apostacy of men. On II Tim. 2:19 we read, "What is their final guarantee? That the living stones are an essential part of God's spiritual building, indispensable to the completeness of the structure, and so compacted with it that they cannot be shaken out of their place. . . . The Lord

knows His spiritual children and they know Him; that is their hallmark. And this bond of union moves them to sever themselves from unrighteousness. The proper sequel and evidence consist in a life of godliness purged from complicity with evil." p. 139.

2. In the passage, I Tim. 2:1-8, the clauses "Who will have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth" "marks an old battle field between the followers of Calvin and Arminius." p. 41. We have already quoted a part of his statement on page 41 on this passage in the preceding paragraph. He suggests that the solution to the problem may not be altogether exegetical, but linguistic, and says that the correct translation here may well be, "who will have all men to be **preserved** and to come to the **recognition** of the truth." His argument is that although the Gospel has greatly enriched the meaning of the Greek verb **sozein**, it may be here translated in its ordinary meaning of "preserving," as it must be in Matt. 14:30, John 11:12, John 12:27. "Lower down in this very Epistle (iv.10) Paul styles God the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe. And it **may** be so used in this verse. The ordination of prayer for rulers accords with the willingness that all men should be preserved from lawless misrule. What chiefly recommends this version is that it makes the ensuing clause, 'come to the recognition of the truth,' fall into its proper place; for peaceful conditions give scope for the propagation of the gospel." p. 42. He goes on to say that the inclusive aspect of the Gospel is being stressed in this passage, and that now "in the fulness of time" the Gospel "has a world-wide reference and the Church's prayers must take a corresponding sweep. The crowning message of revelation, redemption by the blood of the Lamb, must be published abroad as the supreme panacea for all the ills that flesh is heir to." p. 44

3. The position of women in the Church is taken up under I Tim. 2:13-15. It is stated that Christianity's liberation of woman from her degraded position is quite a different matter from that discussed here. Paul is here speaking primarily of married couples, and that as "the husband is the head of the wife, he pronounces it most unseemly and a virtual betrayal of his trust, that he should sit publicly at his wife's feet." p. 48. He stresses what is commonly overlooked, that "home life represents an enviable field of influence, woman's normal sphere of influence, where she sits queen. 'The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world' (Lowell.) It is allowed that there are Deborahs, Huldahs, and Priscillas who are exceptions to this general rule, and must be considered as special circumstances as David's seizure of the shewbread. Woman missionary pioneers may have to perform many tasks not strictly feminine. "But the Head of the Church allots the posts of the members of His body as His wisdom wills; and those who quit that appointed station for

one of their own affecting flout His prerogative of choice to their certain harm and loss." (p. 49.)

4. On the terms **episkopos** and **presbyteros** the author says that it is indisputable in the light of evidence supplied by the papyri that the word **episkopos** embraced a variety of meanings circling round that of **supervisor**, and that although its New Testament usage agrees with this meaning, it "falls far short of diocesan episcopacy. Candid inquirers of very diverse schools of thought . . . have assented to the proposition that **episkopos** and **presbyteros** are coincident terms, the one expressive of function, the other of office." p. 54.

5. Professor Simpson contends that Alford and others are in error in finding "the material apparatus of baptism" in Titus 3:5. p. 114. "The use of the term **justification** . . . corroborates the impression that far profounder issues than a sacramental observance engross the apostle's mind. That baptism has a symbolic reference to cleansing we do not deny; but a spiritual economy cannot be tied to a material agency as an indispensable channel of grace. How can a sign engross the virtue of the thing signified? . . . Who can deny that a **radical** change of heart and life is here predicated, paramount and permanent in its character." pp. 115, 116.

6. Four sound objections are given on page 150 to the R. V. rendering (marginal in the R.S.V.) of II Timothy 3:16. "every scripture inspired of God is profitable . . . etc."

7. On I Tim. 3:2 which the R.S.V. translates, "married only once," Mr. Simpson says, "The obvious sense would lead us to regard it as a prohibition of polygamy, practiced not uncommonly among the Jews of later days, and of course, excessively rife in pagan circles. We know that Paul treats the nuptial tie as dissolved by death (Rom. 7:2) and he was the last man to institute a clerical ban inapplicable to the laity, as some have construed it."

The examples should be sufficient to demonstrate the sterling worth of this small volume. It should be a first on the minister's new book purchase list. Though it is a comment on the Greek text, it may be used with profit and great blessing by the layman who has never done Greek. We are deeply indebted to Professor Simpson for this classic work. Scholarship, language mechanics, and erudite English are evident, but they are the effective tools bringing home to our hearts the precious Gospel of God's grace to be found in the Pastoral Epistles, and to stir up God's servant to a more diligent exercise of that which God has entrusted him, as they have evidently stirred the author of this work.

—E. C. Copeland

A HISTORY OF PREACHING, by Professor Edwin Charles Dargan, with introduction by Prof.

J. B. Weatherspoon, Second Edition. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1954. Vol. I, 577 pp., both volumes bound in one. \$7.95.

The place of preaching in the history of the world can scarcely be overestimated, and yet in some textbooks it is scarcely mentioned. The effect of Christianity upon the world cannot be understood without some appreciation of the place played by the declared word of God.

The author of this standard work on the history of preaching, for this is a republication, was professor of homiletics in the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary at Louisville, Kentucky from 1882 to 1907. He became the successor to his teacher, Dr. John A. Broadus, whose classic work on homiletics has been a standard textbook for many years.

Volume I, which covers the history of preaching from the beginning of the Christian era to the Protestant Reformation, was originally published in 1905. Volume II covers the history of preaching in Europe from the Reformation to 1900. It was Professor Dargan's purpose to commit the writing of a third volume "beginning near the end of the 19th Century" to some future historian.

The sheer mass of historical materials forces the average reader to catch only glimpses here and there of the great movements of the Christian world. Introductory studies of church history present names and dates and places of crucial acts and decisions in the development of the beliefs and activities of the Christian community. However, it is well to be reminded of the influences of lesser known men and places, valiantly seeking to understand and preach something of the gospel message in the peculiar situations of their own day and generation. The comprehensiveness of Dr. Dargan's summary of preachers and preaching is a valuable reference work in any appreciation of the proclamation of the word to a dying world. But an understanding of the real place of preaching lies not in the human personalities alone, but in the message they bear. "From its origin preaching has a two-fold character-proclamation and teaching. It proclaims the gospel of Christ to men with a view to their acceptance of him as their Saviour and Lord; and it teaches to those who have so accepted him the lofty morality and the inspiring hopes and consolations which that gospel includes." (Page 553.)

The history of preaching is no narrow survey. It inevitably is intertwined with the life and times of the people to whom it is addressed. It becomes one of the media through which that culture is influenced either to accept or reject the message given.

The author concludes the first volume with these words: ". . . True to its double mission of proclamation and instruction, the modern preach-

ing will delight to recall the Founder's words: 'Ye shall be witnesses unto me. . .,' nor will it faint before its sublime task as outlined by its greatest representative among the Apostles. 'And he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.' " (Page 564.)

One can only hope that the present-day rekindling of interest in the Scripture and the great doctrines of the Word may indicate that the pulpit will mean more than a traditional fixture of church architecture, and may be devoted anew to the great work of "proclamation and teaching."

— S. Bruce Willson

**BIBLE DOCTRINE.** A Junior High Workbook on the Westminster Shorter Catechism. Unit One, Book One, by Dorothy Partington. The Committee on Christian Education, The Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Phillipsburg, New Jersey, 1954.

This is the first of a series of four workbooks designed to be used as aids in the study of the Shorter Catechism. It may be used in Pastor's classes, in Sabbath schools, or in the home under the direction of the parent. The plan of study is patterned on the best teaching methods used in either public or Christian schools. Each workbook is divided into fifteen lessons, in which the pupil may use his Bible as a direct text in working out each lesson.

This first workbook sets a high standard for those which are to follow in the near future. It includes lessons on the first twenty questions in the Catechism. Completion questions, multiple choice, true-false, and essay type forms are used for pupil development of the subject. No fixed lectures are supplied, but more than enough material is included to encourage helpful discussion. Each lesson is preceded by a separate "teacher-suggestion" page, which may be taken out of the copies used for the pupil. If these books are to be effective, each student should have his personal copy.

The perspective is thoroughly Biblical and, in modern language, presents the Covenant theology which is the strength of the Reformed faith. It is specifically pointed to the Junior High or Senior High student who is being subjected to many subtle criticisms of the Bible. The author has taken this into consideration in the consideration of the questions on the "creation." She suggests a **choice** of reference texts as to Christian concepts of the days of creation. I would recommend this work to pastors for their careful study, with a view to adoption for use in congregations.

— S. Bruce Willson

**COURSE OF STUDY FOR CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS.** Prepared and published under the direction of "The Board of Directors of the National Union of Christian Schools." Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1953, \$5.00.

The Covenanter Church has been typical of the churches of the Reformed tradition in demonstrating a genuine concern for a Christian education for their own and the nation's children. A growing uneasiness as to the secularism of the public school system is leading to two types of solution. On the one hand, there is the attempt to supplement the teaching of the public school with the reading of the Bible, which is a worthy effort in the existing situation. On the other hand, there have been Christian parents who have felt that this does not go far enough in the demands of a thoroughly integrated education.

This book is the result of the study and experience of the latter group, who have formed associations for the carrying on of private Christian schools. It is designed to do three things.

1. In clear-cut fashion it seeks to clarify the philosophy of Christian education. There is no attempt to defend a purely negative position of criticism of secularism. It does attempt to point out essential differences of objectives and methods which cannot be secular and Christian at one and the same time.

2. It suggests, in detail, courses of study in various subject fields as they may be dealt with from the uniquely Christian perspective. Any parent who takes the time and effort to examine text-books used in many public schools will be startled to find not only omission of a soundly Biblical concept of the world in relationship to God, but certain assumptions of scientism which discredits any source of truth or value other than can be demonstrated by scientific method. This textbook shows in detail the objectives, curriculum, texts, and procedures in a graded system of education with an avowedly Christian point of view.

3. The third section of this text deals with the practical problems faced and met in the formation of local Parent-Society Christian Schools.

By far, the most helpful parts of this study for the average Christian where the local situation in a community does not make a Christian school system feasible are the first two. Pastors, Sabbath School leaders, public school teachers, and parents would find the reading of this symposium stimulating in evaluating the Christian values in our present educating processes in the church, the school, and the home.

— S. Bruce Willson

**YOU SHALL BE MY WITNESSES**, by John H. Kromminga. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids 3, Michigan. 1954, 84 pp. \$1.50.

Professor Kromminga gives his book the subtitle: "A Challenge to Bashful Christians." "Bashful" is a mild term to apply to Christians who are not carrying out the commission of their Lord, but the challenge is well-put.

The Lord needs witnesses, says the Author, so He makes them Himself. He makes them out of those whom He chooses and calls to be His people. His witnesses are all the members of His body. All of life is a preparation for this witness. In demonstration of this the Author cites the statement of Paul; "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me. . ." And that, after all, is the essence of Christian Witness—the revelation of Christ in us.

The primary witness of the Christian in his life. But hand-in-hand with a Christ-dominated life goes a verbal witness. Paul testified that God had revealed His Son in him that he might preach Him among the Gentiles. "How can we keep silent," asks Mr. Kromminga pointedly, "if Christ is revealed in us,"

"What we are really afraid of, I suppose, is to be accused of being fanatics. . . (but) if we cannot be just a little bit beside ourselves for the sake of Christ, isn't there something lacking in our preparation, our call, or the revelation within us? But then are we really Christians? I am not quite so much concerned about the question whether we are perfect Christians as about this question; are we really on the way to becoming perfect Christians?" Obviously Professor Kromminga feels that witnessing is a natural and essential aspect of the Christian life.

This book by a professor in Calvin Theological Seminary is timely and profitable. It is written in the language of laymen, and I would suggest that pastors read it and then recommend it to their people. It deals effectively, though briefly, with the what and why of Christian witness. The reviewer, for one, would like to hear more on this subject from such exponents of the Reformed faith as is this author; especially since the followers of the Reformed theology have gained more of a reputation for defending the faith than for propagating it through an aggressive and positive witness.

— Willard McMillan

**PRINCIPLES OF SACRED THEOLOGY**, by Abraham Kuyper. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1954, pp. xxv, 683. \$6.95.

This volume contains the main part of Abraham Kuyper's original three-volume work, **Encyclopedia of Sacred Theology**. The term **encyclopedia** exactly describes the content of this type of theological exposition. The term is used by Kuyper as a technical term referring to that special science whose field of investigation is science itself and whose task is to discover the principles which

govern science as an organism, i.e., as an ordered whole. It is the author's contention that Theology is a particular science which has its place within the organism of science. Like all other particular sciences, Theology has its special encyclopedia. But, unlike all other sciences, Theology has a distinctive governing principle, which consists in the self revelation of God to the human race as embodied in Holy Scripture.

The abandonment of this basic antithesis between theological and non-theological science in present day colleges and universities has resulted in the degeneration of the Department of Theology into a "Department of Religious Education" devoted to the study of "religion," i.e., religious phenomena such as the psychology of religion, history of religion, the Bible as literature, etc. The science of Theology has given its place to a "science of Religion."

On the other hand, the denial of the revelation-principle of knowledge has led to secularism in education and science, in which it is assumed that man's natural reason is sufficient to furnish the norms of truth. Kuyper, to the contrary, shows in a convincing and original way that no such "neutral" science is possible, since the results of all scientific study are governed by the basic religious commitment of the investigator. Since there are two kinds of people in the world — those whose faith is in God and His Word and those whose faith rests on human reason (darkened by sin) — there are two kinds of science, Christian and non-Christian. A clear grasp of this basic issue would be a remedy for the superficial notion that the Bible furnishes us with **religious** truth, but that biblical principles have nothing to do with "**secular**" fields of investigation such as history, biology, etc. At the same time Kuyper's realistic thought would eliminate much of the current shallow optimism which has set its hopes in a kingdom of God built by man, based on man's efforts to promote human welfare, social betterment, etc.

Another basic antithesis in Kuyper's thought is his organic view of Scripture over against an aphoristic view of Scripture. The rather prevalent notion that the Bible is a collection of commandments, sacred history, poetry, prophecy, doctrines, holy ideals, etc., from which we are to select a few pithy sayings to commit to memory does violence to the organic nature of revelation.

The third and largest part (453 pages) contains a complete analysis of the science of Theology. Because of its clear formulation of the basic issues of biblical thought, this work should be required study for all seminary students.

The Introductory Note by Benjamin B. Warfield presents a view of the versatile work and the gigantic mind of Abraham Kuyper and should not be omitted.

— Joseph A. Hill

**STUDIES IN ISAIAH**, by Edward J. Young. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids 3, Michigan. 1954, 206 pp. \$2.50.

The character of this book is indicated by the fact that it contains eight articles originally published in **The Westminster Theological Journal**. It is written, therefore, primarily for scholars, but in such a clear style and with such painstaking explanations and summaries that those who make no pretensions to erudition will find much that is illuminating and stimulating.

Almost half of the book is taken up with a history of the study of Isaiah during the past hundred years since the issue of Joseph Addison Alexander's two volumes on **The Prophecies of Isaiah**, and in these pages Professor Young gives a most competent account and evaluation of the commentaries on and studies of Isaiah during the last century. His conspectus includes a discussion of the origin and growth of the theory of the composite authorship of the Book of Isaiah, and he gives clear evidence for the unity of the book.

In all Professor Young's study his emphasis on careful exegesis comes out again and again, not only in his own discussion of controversial passages, but in his assessment of the value of the contributions made by the writers whose work he considers. The greatest praise he can give Alexander himself is, "In Alexander's work exegesis is upon the throne. Here is manifest a conscious striving to discover the true meaning of the prophet, and all else is made subservient to the accomplishment of this one high end." Bernard Duhm, to whose work he devotes several pages of careful and detailed study is seen as the **reductio ad absurdum** of the tendency to divide up the Book of Isaiah among a multiplicity of authors. This explains Professor Young's paradoxical statement at the close of his first chapter that the course of events which followed Duhm's revolutionary hypotheses is "one of the strongest evidences that Alexander had not written in vain. . ." for the chaos into which the widespread acceptance of Duhm's views precipitated later study has sent faithful ministers of the Word of God back to the works of the great masters of the nineteenth century, Alexander, Drechsler, Hahn, Stier, and Delitzsch. Duhm's views are rejected, among other reasons, because they lead inevitably to the decline of exegesis. To take another example of Professor Young's stress on the importance of exegesis, his assessment of George Adam Smith, whose influence on the study of Isaiah has been so widespread, and whose work "has been the salesman par excellence of the second Isaiah" finds that his interpretation of Isaiah 9.5 betrays "a profound lack of exegetical ability." But Professor Young's characteristic fairness makes him go on to say, "Happily, when the author is dealing with less controversial questions, he exhibits a better exegetical sense." Even the adherents of

the school of form-criticism, with whose basic principles Professor Young is in profound disagreement are commended where in some instances they exhibit a correct exegetical insight that was lacking in some who wrote from the standpoint of the older liberalism. Professor Young's whole concern is that the Word of God should be discovered, and all study is of value only as it contributes to that end.

Professor Young's valid criticism of much of the later study of Isaiah is that it leaves no room for divine revelation. The basic flaw. . . is that the writings of the prophets are regarded as similar in nature to other writings of antiquity and are to be studied apart from the basic question of the special inspiration of the prophet and his place in the history of God's redemptive revelation."

Professor Young, in concluding his conspectus of the study of Isaiah since Alexander underlines the need for a new commentary on Isaiah, written along the lines which Alexander followed. "It should understand clearly the position of the prophets in Israel's history. It should recognize in these prophets not merely men who thought that they had a revelation from God, but men who as a matter of fact actually did have such a revelation. . ." On reading which, I am reminded that Dr. James Black of St. George's, Edinburgh, once in a series of lectures on preaching suggested a series of studies that might profitably be taken up, and, finding some years later that his suggestion had fallen on stony ground, proceeded to take it up most competently himself. Might one express the hope that Professor Young's suggestion might meet with no better fate, so that he himself might give us a commentary which, in the words describe his own ideal, "might then be used of God to turn the hearts of the men of our day once again from the vagaries of vain speculation to place their trust in the One who "was wounded for our transgressions, who was bruised for our iniquities," the One who alone is. . . "an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.' "

The remainder of Professor Young's book deals with specific problems of Isaianic interpretation — the Suffering Servant, the Immanuel Prophecy in Isaiah 7.14, and the meaning of "He shall sprinkle many nations" in Isaiah 52.15. The second of these problems is of special interest in view of the Revised Standard Version's dogmatic substitution of "young woman" for "virgin" in this familiar passage. Professor Young's thorough investigation of the use of the word "almah" both in non-Biblical material and in the Bible leads compellingly to the conclusion that it is always applied to an unmarried woman. "In all history there is but one fulfillment of Isaiah's strange words, and that took place when the virgin Mary

brought forth her first-born Son and laid Him away in the manger."

This book is a masterly treatment of the specialized subject with which it deals and cannot be ignored in any consideration of the problems of the Book of Isaiah.

— Hugh J. Blair

THE DOCTRINE OF THE ATONEMENT, by Thomas Crawford. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Michigan. 1954, 538 pp. \$4.00

This book, issued by the Baker Book House, is one of a set called the Co-operative Reprint Library, which, as listed on the cover, include such classics as History of the Jewish Nation by Edersheim; Church in the Roman Empire by William Ramsay; Medical Language of Luke by Hobart. This comprehensive study of the doctrine of the Atonement, by Thomas Crawford, one time Professor of Divinity in the University of Edinburgh, is well worthy of its place in the series.

It was first published in 1871, but since it is first and foremost an attempt "to ascertain and vindicate the doctrine of Holy Scripture with respect to the mediatorial work and sufferings of Jesus Christ" it cannot be said to be dated. Crawford begins with a careful study of the passages in the New Testament which are relevant to the subject, follows this with an investigation of the prophetic intimations and sacrificial institutions of the Old Testament which bear on the doctrine, and then, having drawn the conclusion that the teaching of Scripture shows that Christ's death was a vicarious atonement for sin, reviews the various other doctrines of the Atonement and answers objections to the orthodox view.

A detailed table of contents, a full index, and marginal summaries make the book very easy to refer to, and the style throughout is clear and lucid.

The names attached to the various theories of the Atonement are those of a former generation, but the theories seem to find a new lease of life in every generation, and Crawford's careful investigation of the Scriptural passages is as necessary today as ever. Crawford's view that all the theories which he considers contain a portion of truth, which has unhappily been neglected or overlooked by the orthodox doctrine, but is incapable of being maintained apart from it, is a salutary reminder that the redemptive wisdom of God on our behalf is a many-sided thing.

When Crawford wrote about the use of "huper" to imply substitution, he could derive his illustrations only from the New Testament and from classical literature, but the discovery of the papyri since his day has provided abundant evidence that the koine, the everyday Greek of the New Testament, constantly used "huper" to de-

note substitution. The papyri, particularly the business documents, show again and again that Paul is following current usage when he prefers "huper" to "anti" for the idea of substitution. More recent evidence, therefore, in this instance has merely confirmed the results of a careful Scriptural study of more than eighty years ago.

The Baker Book Company are to be congratulated on making this standard work on the Atonement once again available to students of Biblical Theology.

—Hugh J. Blair

**THE MESSIANIC PROPHECIES OF DANIEL**, by Edward J. Young. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids 3, Michigan. 1954, 88 pp. \$1.50.

The Book of Daniel has suffered many things at the hands of many expositors, some of whom have sought to fit an admittedly difficult and often obscure book into the framework of preconceived theories and hypotheses. It is, therefore, most refreshing to take up this book of Professor Young's and to find in it a clear and coherent exposition of the Book of Daniel, not as the textbook of a misguided divination of future ages, nor as a merely historical study, but as part of the Divine Revelation, which is a unity and which finds its consummation and fulfilment in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. In this study Professor Young undertakes to show that Christ is the very heart of the book, and succeeds so admirably that a scholarship which confirms the author's high place in the ranks of Old Testament scholars is found to be the handmaid of devotion.

No "finding" of modern Biblical criticism is more dogmatically maintained than the late date and historical inaccuracy of the Book of Daniel, which is generally assumed to contain not prediction but the history of events which had already taken place. The scholarly exposition contained in this book of Professor Young's is an effective answer to such a position.

The emphatic word in the title of the book is "Messianic." And by "Messianic" prophecy Professor Young means every setting forth of the Person and work of Christ in the Old Testament. What is stressed most compellingly in this book is what might be called "the regal aspect of Messianic prophecy," the triumph of the kingdom of the Messiah over all earthly powers and kingdoms, but it is carefully noted that this sovereignty is based on the Messiah's work as Deliverer.

In his discussion of the four world empires which are followed by the kingdom of the Messiah, Professor Young shows the weaknesses both of the theory which sees in the fourth empire Alexander and his successors, and of the dispensationalism — popularly set forth in the footnotes

of the **Scofield Reference Bible** — which sees the Christian Church as a "parenthesis in God's dealings with His covenant people."

Professor Young's interpretation of the symbolism of the Book of Daniel is never harshly dogmatic, but is so firmly based on careful exegesis of the passages concerned as to be completely satisfying. A detailed study of the much-debated prophecy of the "Seventy Sevens" culminates in the thrilling conclusion that the prince "who will cause a covenant to prevail" is none other than the Messiah Who will make effective a covenant, already made but only in Him brought into force — the Covenant of Grace.

One cannot do better than quote the Conclusion of the book: "Although the mention of the personal Messiah in Daniel is quite infrequent, at the same time He is the very center and pivot upon which the entire book and its message hangs. To Daniel in Babylon it was revealed that the kingdom under which he lived would perish. Nation would rise after nation until the time would come when God Himself would establish an everlasting kingdom. Thus, in grand, broad outline, the promised salvation is pictured. . . .

"In the ninth chapter . . . the very foundation of all appears, namely, that the nations as such recede into the background, and the emphasis is placed upon what the personal Messiah will do. . . . It is because He is cut off and has nothing, that the wondrous prophecies of the earlier chapters can be fulfilled. The kingdom of the Son of Man is eternal and universal, but the 'anointed one a prince' — the royal priest — must be cut off through death. Thus in Daniel we are brought face to face with Calvary. It is in the light of Daniel nine that we must really interpret the other passages. Here is the heart and here is the center, for here is the atoning death of the Messiah."

The only criticism that the present reviewer can make of the book is that, while it is produced in a very attractive form, the printing has been a little careless. There are too many misprints within the comparatively short space of 88 pages— e.g., "high" for "night" on p. 38, "ws" for "was" on p. 41, "succesfully" for "successfully" on p. 74, and a word left out altogether in the third line of p. 66 — and the use of quotation marks is neither customary nor consistent. But these are merely superficial blemishes in a thrilling book, — I use the word advisedly — the reading of which has been a delight and an inspiration.

— Hugh J. Blair

**THE SEVEN LAWS OF TEACHING**, by John Milton Gregory. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1954, 120 pp. \$1.75.

The author of this volume was a pioneer in

the field of education in this country, having served as a teacher, writer, school administrator, college president, and founder of the University of Illinois. This little handbook on teaching, first published in 1884, and again in 1917, is entirely worthy of being reprinted and widely read today.

Educational theories and practices have suffered many changes in recent years; nevertheless, the first principles of pedagogy remain the same and thus the present volume fills a real need today. Although it was not written with Sabbath School teachers alone in mind, the book contains a number of applications to teaching in the Sabbath School. Every teacher and pastor would profit immeasurably from a study of the basic laws of teaching analyzed here. It would serve as a fine manual or syllabus for a teacher training course for Sabbath School teachers.

The seven laws of teaching are as follows: 1. The teacher must know that which he would teach. 2. The learner must attend with interest to the material to be learned. 3. The language used in teaching must be common to teacher and learner. 4. The truth to be taught must be learned through truth already known. 5. Excite and direct the self-activities of the pupil, and as a rule tell him nothing that he can learn himself. 6. The pupil must reproduce in his own mind the truth to be learned. 7. The completion, test and confirmation of the work of teaching must be made by review and application.

Among the various motives for learning given by the author, viz., "love of country, love of one's fellows, aspirations for a noble and useful life, love for truth" (p. 87,) love for God is not mentioned. The highest level of motivation for all learning is the Christian's desire to know God and to serve Him in the world.

The reviewer highly recommends this little guidebook to all young teachers beginning their career, and to experienced teachers who feel a need for a "refresher" course on the basic laws of effective teaching.

— Joseph A. Hill

**BASIC CONCEPTS IN CHRISTIAN PEDAGOGY**, by Jan Waterink. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1954, pp. 139. \$2.00.

In examining an annual catalogue published by a purportedly Christian university of long standing in the United States, it is interesting to note that among the listings of the College of Education not a single course is offered dealing with the subject of Christian Education. Behind this omission lies a basic and serious misunderstanding of the real nature of Christian education. It is assumed that Christian (or religious) education means Bible study and training in morals, etc.,

and that these areas of study belong to the College (or department) of Religion. Education in general then proceeds along neutral or non-religious lines, while "religious education" is regarded as "optional equipment at extra cost."

The same erroneous dualism is implied in the current trend toward "moral and spiritual values in public education." It is often taken for granted that children can be taught morals without religion, or that "religious principles" can be inculcated without any connection with Christianity and the Scriptures.

Furthermore, when the Church learns what is really involved in Christian pedagogy, it will realize that "the Bible in the public schools," "weekday religious instruction," etc., do not begin to compensate for the naturalism which governs the rest of the public school curriculum. No school is a Christian school until its whole curriculum is made subject to the norms of Holy Scripture. Christian Education begins with this basic concept.

The author of this study (The Calvin Foundation Lectures for 1954) is Professor of Education and Psychology at the Free University of Amsterdam. He lays stress upon the fact that every area of education lies within the orbit of Christian pedagogy. All true education — in whatever field — is Christian education. "The significance of education is primarily religious" (p. 120.) This is because no area of man's life stands outside of his relationship to God. Man is called to serve God with his whole life. It is the object of education to equip man so that he may fulfill this mandate (pp. 41, 50.) Man must learn how he may glorify and serve God not only in the Church, but in society, in science, in culture. This defines the task of Christian education.

Another basic concept discussed by the author is that of authority in education, which is derived not from society or the state, but from God. He further states that the responsibility of parents to educate their children is not based on biological or sociological considerations, but on the ordinance of God. The responsibility for educating our children is covenant-responsibility, because it is implied in God's Covenant, which includes both parents and children.

There are six lectures, dealing with such basic issues as the relation of love-authority to discipline; the "duality" of divine sovereignty-human responsibility and its role in education; character formation (willingness to fulfill our God-given place in life, making full use of our endowments); the meaning of morality for education; the Christian view of culture.

In the reviewer's opinion, the Church needs to take her educational mandate much more seriously than she has in the past. In order to

do this, the ministry must familiarize itself with the basic concepts of Christian pedagogy and the synod must be willing to study and apply these principles in our own educational institutions at home and abroad. The reviewer therefore highly recommends Dr. Waterink's series of lectures to the ministers and educators of the Covenanter Church.

— Joseph A. Hill

**OF LAW AND LOVE**, by Peter H. Eldersveld. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 1954, pp. 85. \$1.50

A book that emphasizes the power and the obligations of the moral law in these degenerate days should be readily welcomed. Peter H. Eldersveld, one of America's best known preachers with wide experience in broadcasting and television as the Radio Minister of the Christian Reformed Church, holds before man in this short book the mirror of God's Law. In a brief preface to this short volume of sermons on the Ten Commandments the writer states his purpose. "The confusion and immorality and despair of modern man make it plain that he is not familiar with the Word of God as it is given on Mount Sinai and fulfilled on Mount Calvary. So the Christian Church has the solemn responsibility of taking him to those two high places of divine revelation, where he may find the God whose law exposes human sin, and whose love expels it. He must be confronted with the Commandments and the Cross, if he is to discover the cause and the cure of what ails him." In the thirteen chapters that follow it may be fairly said that the author achieves his aim. He exposes the weakness of much present day so-called evangelical preaching that sees only one theme, — the Love of God for sinners. Men have no sense of sin, and no fear of God, and so religion is sickly and sentimental. He shows that the way of conviction of sin is the way that leadeth to Life.

There is a grave tendency in many quarters today to contrast the God of Sinai and the God of Calvary as though they were two very different beings. Eldersveld shows that there is one God who is both righteous and gracious, who condemns sin by His Holy Law and redeems the sinner by the blood of His Son, Jesus Christ.

The author shows a keen sensitiveness to the peril of Communism and gives a faithful exposure of it in his chapter on the eighth Commandment and expresses his firm conviction that its atheism, materialism, and humanism can be defeated, not by guns and bombs, but by the truth of God's Word, the power of God's Spirit, and the work of God's grace in the human heart.

The book manifests the racy, pithy, gripping style of the spoken word. Occasionally the author exaggerates in giving spice to his comments, and

in one particular instance, he is guilty of ascribing to Christ a sinful human characteristic. He surely speaks most unwisely when he says on page 70 of the Lord Jesus, "Evidently His temper was short when he had to deal with men who had to cover up their evil hearts with pious talk." Jesus certainly dealt faithfully and severely with hypocrites, but he did so in righteous wrath. Surely "short temper" in the sense in which we use the term had no place in the character of Christ.

The book is challenging, many of its statements arresting, and altogether it gives us a stimulating and suggestive application of the moral law and the Cross of Christ, bearing out the truth of the apostle's words when he said, "The Law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ."

— Adam Loughridge

**A PASTOR SPEAKS TO THE SOUL OF THE CITY**, by J. D. Eppinga. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 1954, pp. 93. \$1.50.

Here is an unusually refreshing book with a message suited to the bustling, busy age in which we live. It is evidently a record of the spoken word, for the sentences are short, and the style just a little jerky. The book is a forthright assessment of conditions in a large modern city. The author has probably an American city in mind, perhaps indeed his own city of Grand Rapids, Michigan, but that does not really matter, for the message he brings is applicable to any city in any land. The reader will appreciate the clever satire of the corruptions of modern society of the benefits and burdens of 20th Century civilization. The author's intention is to challenge the careless and worldly minded in presenting to them the Gospel of Saving Grace as the only solution to their problems and the only means of satisfying their need. In an atomic age walls no longer defend a city. Its enemies are not guns and spears but fog and flood and disease and sin. Nineveh was saved, not by skilful strategy, but by repentance.

Pastor Eppinga condemns the secularism, the Sabbath desecration, and the neglect of spiritual values that are so prevalent in the modern city. He sees secularism as the city's main product, the source of all worldliness and cynicism. He takes us behind the scenes to study the craft and scheming that go to make up life in the city's business. He shows his concern for this materialistic atmosphere in which God is not so much denied as He is ignored. Material gadgets and pursuits have given the citizens a horizontal look, so that they cannot see the sky. Their concern for this world is a practical denial of the next. Engineering and science have brought civilization to a very high level in our large cities, but their children are no better in spite of all their advantages. Pro-

vision is made in the school and on the playground for the mind and the body, but the soul is neglected. There is no place in the curriculum for God. Civilization can do much for a man, but it cannot do away with the need for a work of grace in the soul.

Every chapter is full of challenging material. We are stirred by his comments on the decay of home and family life, on the barriers and fences in a city's social structure that wound the heart and on the multitudes who tramp the streets and are lost in sin. There is a brilliantly suggestive chapter on the worldly-wise proverbs that dominate the thinking and the action of business men today, and the book ends on a high note by directing our attention to the City of God of which "the Lamb is the light thereof." The book is practical, pithy, readable. The reader's regret is that it is all too short, but its ninety-three pages inspire our thought in a way that many a larger and more profound work has failed to do. We are reminded as we read of the stirring words of the prophet Isaiah in Chapter 26 where he says, "We have a strong city; Salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in."

— Adam Loughridge

NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY: THE GOSPEL OF JOHN, VOLUME II, by William Hendriksen. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 1954, pp. 507. \$6.50.

Dr. Hendriksen has completed the Gospel according to John in the second volume of his Commentary. He hopes to cover the New Testament in a series of fourteen volumes. The book under review deals with chapters seven to twenty-one. It is more than double the size of the first volume, and one feels that by making the break at chapter ten instead of chapter seven, he could have had the volumes of equal length. However, that is a mere detail and does not detract from the merit of the work that he has done in bringing to us the meaning and message of this precious Gospel.

It follows almost exactly on the lines of the former volume. There is the new translation from the Greek, the concise summary of each section, and the verse by verse exposition and application of the Word. The general theme that the commentator pursues is entitled "Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God." The fifteen chapters are divided into six sections. Chapters seven to ten deal with the public ministry of Christ in

which He urges sinners to repent; chapters eleven and twelve, Christ manifesting Himself by two mighty deeds: the raising of Lazarus and the triumphal entry into Jerusalem; chapter thirteen, illustrating the new Commandment; chapters fourteen to seventeen, a private ministry of instruction for the disciples; chapters eighteen and nineteen, Jesus dying as a substitute for His people; chapters twenty and twenty-one, Christ triumphing gloriously. In these divisions Dr. Hendriksen attempts to establish a contrast between the public and the private ministry of Christ. This leads to a certain amount of confusion and does not really help in the understanding of the Gospel. For instance, the section that covers chapters eighteen and nineteen is headed "During His Private Ministry. Dying as a Substitute for His People." The word "private" used in connection with the work of Atonement is most ambiguous. While the substitutionary death of Christ on the Cross was limited in its application to the elect of God, it was a very public demonstration of the judgment of God upon sin.

We feel that the theory that is favored by Dr. Hendriksen regarding the authorship of the twenty-first chapter is unnecessary and unproved. He accepts the idea that another leader at Ephesus, possibly a disciple of John, with John's approval and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit wrote the closing chapter of the Gospel. He suggests a number of thoughtful and ingenious explanations for this opinion. There is, however, no evidence on the grounds of grammar or vocabulary or continuity for the acceptance of this theory. This Dr. Hendriksen very fairly concedes. Where differences of opinion are possible he is never dogmatic but always tries to give as practical a conclusion as possible.

The Commentary will be very useful for the average reader who is not acquainted with the Greek Language. It will give him the actual meaning of the text verse by verse and will stimulate his thought and his devotional application of truth by summarizing the main teaching of each chapter. The excellent footnotes are continued, and a useful list of appropriate books is given to help the student who wishes to pursue a more intensive course of study.

Dr. Hendriksen has put Bible students in his debt by this thorough and useful work and has given to them in a simple and practical way the benefits of his wide scholarship and spiritual insight. The volume is attractively produced by the Baker Book House, and a preliminary review disclosed no errors or omissions.

— Adam Loughridge

## *Books Received*

The announcement of the books listed below should not be construed as a recommendation. A review of those found in this list which we regard as having value for our readers will be given in a later issue.

### **Publications of Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich.**

THE SELF-DISCLOSURE OF JESUS, by Geerhardus Vos. 1954, pp. 311. \$4.00.

THE PERSON OF CHRIST, by G. C. Berkouwer. 1954, pp. 369. \$4.00.

ANCHOR OF HOPE, by Preston J. Stegenga. 1954, pp. 271. \$3.50.

THE BOOK OF THE ACTS, by F. F. Bruce. 1954, pp. 555. \$6.00.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF REVELATION, by Herman Bavinck. 1953, pp.x,349.

BENEDICTE'S SCRAPBOOK, ed. by Wm. B. Gamble. 1954, pp. 252. \$3.95.

THE DIVINE ECONOMY: A STUDY IN STEWARDSHIP, by A. C. Conrad. 1954. pp. 169. \$2.50.

THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF SCIENCE AND SCRIPTURE, by Bernard Ramm. 1954, pp. 368. \$4.00.

J. GRESHAM MACHEN: A BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIR, by Ned B. Stonehouse. 1954, pp. 520. \$5.95.

COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLES OF JAMES AND JOHN, by Alexander Ross. 1954, pp. 249. \$3.50.

450 TRUE STORIES FROM CHURCH HISTORY, by J. Vernon Jacobs. 1955, pp. 147. \$2.50.

HOW TO ACHIEVE PERSONALITY THROUGH PRAYER, by Simon Blocker. 1954, pp. 121. \$2.00.

### **Publications of Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich.**

THE DIRECTORY OF THE DEVOUT LIFE, by F. B. Meyer. 1954, pp. 191. \$2.00.

DEVOTIONS AND PRAYERS OF JOHN

CALVIN, ed. by Charles E. Edwards. 1954, pp. 120, pocket size. \$1.00.

THE CHURCH IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE, by William M. Ramsay. 1954, pp. 510. \$4.20.

LECTURES ON HEBREWS, by Joseph A. Seiss. 1954, pp. 408. \$3.40.

THE MEDICAL LANGUAGE OF LUKE, by William Kirk Hobart. 1954, pp. xxviii, 305. \$3.60.

### **Publications of Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Box 185, Nutley 10, N. J.**

CHRISTIANITY AND EXISTENTIALISM, by J. M. Spier. 1953, pp. 140. \$3.00.

ISRAEL AND THE NEW COVENANT, by Roderick Campbell. 1954, pp. 336. \$3.75.

A NEW CRITIQUE OF THEORETICAL THOUGHT, Vol. I, The Necessary Presuppositions of Philosophy, by Herman Dooyeweerd, translated by D. H. Freeman and Wm. S. Young. 1953, pp. 566. Sold in sets only. \$36.00 per set of 4 volumes.

### **Publications of other Firms**

SCHEEBEN'S DOCTRINE OF DIVINE ADOPTION, by Edwin H. Palmer. J. H. Kok N.V., Kampen, Netherlands. 1953, pp. xi, 202, paper cover. Florins 5.90.

THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH: WHICH IS IT? by Thomas Witherow. Publications Committee of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, c/o Mr. J. Grant, 4 Millburn Road, Inverness, Scotland. 1954, pp. 91, pocket size, paper cover, 2s. 6d. postpaid. U.S.A. and Canada 50c postpaid.

AN EXPOSITION OF HEBREWS, by Arthur W. Pink. Bible Truth Depot, Swengel, Pa. 1954, 3 volumes, pp. 504, 414, 405. Per set, \$17.95.

PRELIMINARY BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR THE STUDY OF BIBLICAL PROPHECY, by Wilbur M. Smith. W. A. Wilde Co., Boston, Mass. 1952, pp. 44, paper cover. No price stated.

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## *Some Noteworthy Quotations*

If Christ were not truly God, begotten of the Father before all worlds and the Creator of all creatures, we would be lost.

— Martin Luther

Sin has many secret ways of insinuating: it

is like a Delilah; it is like Jael to Sisera. Sin is a sweet poison, it tickleth while it stabbeth. The first thing that sin does is to bewitch, then to put out the eyes, then to take away the sense and feeling. As Joab came with a kind salute to Abner, and thrust him under the fifth rib, while

Abner thought of nothing but kindness, so sin comes smiling, comes pleasing and humoring thee, while it gives thee a deadly stab.

— Anthony Burgess

Satan will use any means to keep the soul from Christ; he loveth not an awakened frame of spirit. Security, blindness, darkness and error are the very kingdom and habitation of the wicked one.

— John Bunyan

Nothing worse can happen to any man than to be left to himself. To be wholly and finally and eternally forsaken of God is hell.

— W. S. Plumer

Men appoint walls and bulwarks for salvation: God appoints salvation for walls and bulwarks.

— Robert Venning

Hyper-Calvinism is all house and no door; Arminianism is all door and no house.

— John ("Rabbi") Duncan

Cursed be that love and unity for whose sake the Word of God must be put at stake.

— Martin Luther

There are many among us who live much in the neglect of the means of grace; some who very seldom read the Bible when alone, or never but

on Sabbath days; some who do not pray regularly, nor with any earnestness; some who are very careless about the house of God, contented if they attend it only once on the Sabbath day; who make no conscience of being up betimes, and ready for the house of God in the morning; who allow the silliest excuses to keep them away; who loiter about on the Sabbath day; who devote it to the most unhallowed visiting, or walking in the fields; making it the most unholy day in the week. Oh! dear souls, if this be your case, then it is quite plain you have never been laid hold on by God. You are as dead and unawakened as the stones you walk upon. You are living in the very heart of Sodom, and the wrath of God abideth on you.

— Robert Murray McCheyne

All the promises of God are yea and amen; that is, they are true. He always fulfills His promises. But the same Scripture says they are "yea and amen in Christ Jesus." And God's promises are made to Christ, and to sinners that cleave to Christ. I believe that it is impossible, in the nature of things, that God would make a promise to an unconverted man. Accordingly, all God's promises are made to Christ, and to every sinner that cleaves unto Christ. But unconverted persons are those who never come to Christ; therefore, there are no promises made to them. God nowhere promises to make them anxious. He nowhere promises to bring them to Christ. He nowhere promises to keep them one moment out of hell. Should they then make mirth?

— Robert Murray McCheyne

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## *People and Places in the Psalms*

**PHARAOH.** 135:9. 136:15. The word Pharaoh is not a name but a title used as a general designation of the ruler of Egypt, either with or without adding the personal name of the ruler. Several Pharaohs are mentioned in the Bible. The two references in the Psalms are to the Pharaoh of the time of the Exodus of Israel from Egypt. They call attention to the almighty redemptive power of God which saved His chosen people from Egypt, a realm of evil typical of the kingdom of sin and darkness dominated by Satan.

**PHILISTIA.** 60:8. 87:4. 108:9. Except for these three occurrences in the Psalter, this same Hebrew word is translated Palestine or Palestina in the King James Version. Properly it means the southwest coast of the land of Canaan, from the border of Egypt to about the location of Joppa. In this region lived the Philistines. Our modern usage of the word Palestine to mean the entire land of Canaan is derived from the ancient term Philistia.

**PHILISTINES.** 83:7. The Philistines are first mentioned in Genesis 10:14. It is believed that they came originally from the island of Crete, and that they were comparatively late comers to the land of Canaan. Inveterate enemies of Israel during the early part of the nation's history, they are mentioned in Psalm 83 as one of a number of nations or tribes that are banded together in opposition to God's people. Thus they represent the powers of the world that are in conflict with the kingdom of God.

**PHINEHAS.** 106:30. "Then stood up Phinehas, and executed judgment: and so the plague was stayed." The reference is to Numbers 25:1-18. The children of Israel were involved in the sin of fornication in connection with the idolatrous worship of Baal-peor. Phinehas, grandson of Aaron, noted a specially flagrant case of such sin, involving an Israelitish man and a Midianitish woman. Phinehas took a javelin and killed both of the offenders. "So the plague was stayed from

the children of Israel. And those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand." God thereupon pronounced a blessing upon Phinehas, promising him God's covenant of peace, "even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood." We do well to recall this incident and God's statement about it, in our modern day when any attempt to exercise church discipline according to righteousness is almost certain to be blocked by those who propose an issue-obscuring compromise in the name of Christian love.

**RAHAB.** 87:4. 89:10. The name Rahab is used in the Bible with two meanings: 1. the woman of Jericho who concealed the spies; 2. a poetical name for Egypt. It is this latter meaning that occurs in the Psalter. In Psalm 87 Rahab (Egypt) is mentioned along with other nations as lands which people counted it an honor to be native-born citizens of. This is then contrasted with the greater honor of being a citizen of Zion, the king-

dom of God. In Psalm 89 Rahab (Egypt) is mentioned as a powerful nation broken by the almighty power of the God of Israel.

**RED SEA.** 106:7,9,22. 136:13,15. The long, narrow body of water which extends northward from the Indian Ocean, between Arabia and Africa. It is about 1500 miles long and about 150 miles wide. The references in Psalms 106 and 136 are to the passage of the children of Israel across the northern extremity of the Red Sea, and the destruction of the Egyptian pursuers in the same body of water. Thus they call to mind the supernatural, redemptive power of God who saved His people from powerful enemies.

**SALEM.** 76:2. Salem means peace, and is an abbreviation of Jerusalem. In Psalm 76 it is spoken of as the place of God's tabernacle. Thus it represents the dwelling of God with His people on the basis of an accepted sacrifice for sin.

## *Religious Terms Defined*

**COMMUNION.** Communion means sharing or mutual participation. It is used in this sense in the phrase "the communion of saints." In 1 Cor. 10:16 the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper are spoken of as the communion of the body and blood of Christ; that is, the Lord's Supper involves a sharing or mutual participation in the benefits of Christ's atonement. From this text the Lord's Supper has come to be called the Communion, or the communion service.

**CONSCIENCE.** That aspect of the human personality which registers disapproval when the person violates his moral code, and approval when he acts in harmony with his moral code. Conscience itself is not the standard of right and wrong; it only registers the person's relation to whatever moral code he believes in. Conscience needs to be enlightened by the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. It is wrong to speak of Christian people as living "according to the dictates of their own conscience." Conscience is not to be a dictator. Christians are to live according to the dictates of God revealed in Scripture.

**COVETOUSNESS.** Violation of the tenth commandment; a sinful, inordinate desire for something which is our neighbor's, not our own.

**CREED.** A formal statement of religious belief. Creeds may be long or short; they may be orthodox or erroneous. The word creed is used today chiefly in a contemptuous and disparaging

sense, as if creeds are necessarily bad and to be shunned. But there can be no real Christianity without creed, either written or unwritten. There are great advantages—such as clarity and definiteness or precision—in having a written creed. When we hear people speak contemptuously of creeds, we should realize that they are treating precise statement of truth as something contemptible.

**EXEGESIS.** The drawing out of the meaning of a text of Scripture by a painstaking, accurate study of its words, grammar, context, historical background, etc. The too-common usage of the word exegesis as if it meant opinion or subjective personal preference is entirely wrong. The exegesis of a text of Scripture is not a matter of personal preference or subjective opinion any more than the solution of a problem in mathematics is a matter of personal preference or subjective opinion. Every text of Scripture means just what it means, neither more nor less. Exegesis is a scientific method of finding out what it means.

**EXPIATION.** The canceling of sin through a sacrifice offered to God, involving the shedding of blood and the death of the victim. Under the Old Testament ceremonial law expiatory sacrifices were offered to God as an atonement for men's sins. These, however, could not in themselves be effective to cancel sin. Their effectiveness was due to the fact that they prefigured Christ's sacrifice of Himself, which truly and effectively cancels sin.

## *Studies in the Book of Genesis*

### LESSON 59

#### III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26, continued

##### 2. The history of Abraham after leaving Ur. 12:1 to 25:12, cont.

We come now to the great promises made by God to Abraham. These are repeated later in fuller form; in chapter 15 they are confirmed by a covenant of God made with Abraham. In chapter 12 where the promises are first made, they

are as follows: 1. Abraham will be blessed and will become a great nation. 2. God will bless those that bless Abraham, and will curse those that curse him. 3. In Abraham shall all the families of the earth be blessed. All of these promises, of course, were to be fulfilled in the future. The third promise, that in Abraham shall all families of the earth be blessed, is definitely Messianic. It is through Jesus Christ, the true Seed of Abraham, that all the families of the earth shall receive blessing. "All families of the earth" does not necessarily mean every particular household or family circle. The meaning is that the redemption which shall come through the Seed of Abraham shall not be limited to those literally descended from him, but shall be world-wide, transcending all barriers of race and geography. That "families" here means races, tribes or nations is shown by the usage of the word in 10:5,20, 31. The "families" of the world were divided by sin; they shall now be blessed by redemption. God's calling of Abraham to be the founder of a special, separated people had for its background the universal purpose—the plan of God to provide a world-wide redemption. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son".

Next we may inquire as to the meaning of the promise, "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee." This promise was not made because of Abraham personally, but because of his unique place in the divine plan of redemption. Because, in that plan, Abraham is what he is, to bless Abraham is to bless the God of Abraham, and to curse Abraham is to curse the God of Abraham. To be really in favor of Abraham is to be in favor of the plan of redemption in which he had such an important part. To be opposed to Abraham is to be opposed to that plan of redemption, and to the God whose plan it is.

In the Hebrew two different words are used for "curse" and "curseth". One word describes God's righteous act of cursing; the other is used for man's sinful cursing. Those who object to the Old Testament idea of God, alleging that the Old Testament portrays a God of wrath whereas the New Testament speaks of a God of love, forget that the wrath of God is not the same thing as human anger, and God's cursing is not the same as man's cursing. Everywhere the Bible takes care to guard the righteousness of God. It is true that God is a God of love, but nowhere does God's love cancel His righteousness.

"So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him; and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran" (12:43). Here Abraham's obedience to the will of God is emphasized. He departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him. Whether it was difficult for him to do this, whether or not it in-

involved an inward struggle, we are not told. The important fact is that when Abraham knew what the will of God was, he acted accordingly. How Abraham felt about it is not specially important. In our own day and age, religion has become far too subjective. People say that they "feel" they should do this or that, or they "do not feel" that they should do this or that. Or they "feel" that they should accept a certain doctrine or principle, or they "do not feel" that they should do so. Nowhere does the Bible encourage us to go by our feelings. Back of this idea of believing or doing as we "feel" we should is the error that all religious truth and all moral standards are derived from within the human personality. This is an idolatrous, man-worshipping, man-centered age that we are living in. People object bitterly to the idea of a standard of faith and life imposed on them by the authority of God, external to their own personality and binding whether they like it or not. Even ministers in preaching sermons sometimes say "I feel that such-and-such is the case", where they should say "The Word of God says that such-and-such is the case." Many who have this manner of speaking are no doubt true believers, but they have been unconsciously influenced and swept along by the man-centered, subjective spirit of our times. At bottom this attitude is rebellion against the authority of God.

#### Questions:

1. What promises did God make to Abraham in chapter 12?
2. Which of these promises is definitely Messianic?
3. What is the meaning of the word "families" in 12:3?
4. What is the meaning of the promise that all the families of the earth shall be blessed in Abraham?
5. Why will God bless those who bless Abraham, and curse those who curse him?
6. What is the difference between God's cursing and man's?
7. What truth about Abraham is emphasized in 12:4?
8. Why is it wrong to believe and act according to our feelings?
9. What false idea lies back of the common notion that we should believe and act as we feel like believing or acting?

## LESSON 60

**III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26, continued****2. The history of Abraham after leaving Ur. 12:1 to 25:12, cont.**

Lot went with Abraham when he left Haran. Like Abraham, Lot was a believer in Jehovah, the living and true God. The fact that Lot went with him would doubtless make it easier for Abraham to leave his kindred and his father's house. Even though we later learn that there was a wide difference in character between Abraham and Lot, this does not appear at the time of leaving Haran. We note that at the time Abraham was 75 years old. While he would be rated an old man today, he was actually only in middle life when measured by the life span of his time.

"And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran, and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came" (12:5). We note here that Abraham was a wealthy man. The term "substance" means all kinds of personal property or movable possessions. The language used indicates that there was much property, and also a great number of people attached to the clan of which Abraham was the chief or patriarch. The word "souls" here means simply "persons." These persons doubtless included servants, born to the household or purchased, and their children.

The events of the journey from Haran to Canaan are not related, so we may conclude that nothing important for the purpose of the history occurred during the trip. In due time the clan arrived in the land of Canaan, or Palestine.

"And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land" (12:6). The place here referred to as Sichem is that commonly called Shechem, the first important stopping place of Abraham on his trip into the land of Canaan. This place, unlike others where stops had been made, became important because in this place God revealed Himself to Abraham. Shechem was in central Palestine, west of the Jordan River, about halfway between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea, and about halfway between the Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea. It was located between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, near the location of the present-day town of Nablus.

"The plain of Moreh" should be translated "the oak of Moreh" or "the terebinth of Moreh." "Moreh" means "teacher" or "instructor". Why this spot was named "Moreh" we are not informed. But at any rate it was a well-known landmark. Leupold suggests the idea that in ancient days some worshipper of Jehovah "had under this oak

admonished and instructed the people." Of course, this is only possible, not certain.

In writing this history, Moses adds: "And the Canaanite was then in the land." This statement has been taken by some scholars as written, not by Moses, but by some later scribe or editor living after the Canaanites had been conquered and destroyed. However it is not necessary to hold this, as the expression can be explained on the supposition that Moses wrote it. God is about to promise Abraham that he will inherit this land of Canaan. In order to realize what a great promise this was, and what a challenge it was to Abraham's faith, we must remember that at the time of speaking this was no empty country waiting to be claimed, but one already owned and filled with the Canaanites. Abraham is asked to believe that the power of God will take this land of the Canaanites and give it to his descendants.

"And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him" (12:7). This promise is in addition to those given in verses 2 and 3. There Abraham was promised that he would become a great nation; here he is promised that the land of Canaan shall be possessed by his seed. This promise, of course, was not fulfilled during Abraham's own lifetime, nor, indeed, until the time of Joshua centuries later. Abraham believed and accepted by faith what could not be seen nor proved by reason.

"And there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him." An altar was a place of slaughter for the offering of sacrifices. Though it is not stated that Abraham offered sacrifices, this is clearly implied by the mention of an altar. In fact, the offering of sacrifices was what made a pile of stones an altar. Here we see that Abraham believed in the religion of salvation by divine grace. The heart of his religion was the shedding of the blood of a substitute for man's sin. He is moved to offer sacrifice by gratitude to Jehovah for the gracious promises given to him.

**Questions:**

1. What was the relationship between Lot and Abraham?
2. How old was Abraham when he left Haran?
3. At what stage of life was Abraham at this time?
4. What is meant by "substance" in 12:5?
5. What is meant by "souls" in 12:5?
6. What was the economic status of Abraham on leaving Haran?
7. Where was Shechem located?
8. Why is Shechem specially mentioned, where-

as other stopping places on Abraham's journey are passed by in silence?

9. What is the correct translation of "the plain of Moreh"?
10. What does "Moreh" mean?
11. Why should the record mention the fact

that the Canaanite was then in the land?

12. What new promise did God give to Abraham at Shechem?

13. What is implied concerning Abraham's religion by the fact that he built an altar unto the Lord?

### LESSON 61

#### III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26, continued

##### 2. The history of Abraham after leaving Ur. 12:1 to 25:12, cont.

"And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord" (12:8). Bethel is some 20 miles south of Shechem and about 12 miles north of Jerusalem. We note that Abraham and his clan lead a nomadic life, moving from place to place. From 28:19 we learn that the name Bethel was not given to this place until the time of Jacob, Abraham's grandson. It was not called Bethel in Abraham's time, but Moses in writing the history gives it the name by which it later came to be known. "Moses diligently records such well-authenticated events of Abram's life in order to awaken an anticipation for the land in the hearts of the Israelites who are journeying toward this land, as well as to let historic spots be vested with sacred memories after Israel has come into possession of the land" (Leupold, Vol I, pp. 420-1). Once more Abraham builds an altar and (it is implied) offers sacrifice unto the Lord. This offering of sacrifice would of course be a public act and thus would constitute a public witness to Jehovah, the living and true God.

"And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the south" (12:9). The Hebrew verb used here means literally "pulled up stakes", meaning the taking down of the tents for a move. The south is the dry region of southern Palestine called the Negeb. While it may have had more water in Abraham's time, four thousand years ago, today it is very arid and of little use except for pasturing sheep.

Next, in verses 10 to 20, we have the record of Abraham's journey to Egypt. In this story we see Abraham definitely in a bad light. Yet it is one of the evidences of the divine inspiration and truthfulness of the Bible that it does not idealize its heroes and great men, but tells the plain truth about them, even when the truth is discreditable to them. Other ancient records tend to tell less than the whole truth about their heroic characters; the Bible tells the bad along with the good. In chapter 20 and again in chapter 26 we have similar situations. The presence in the sacred

writings of Israel of three such instances of cowardice and untruthfulness cannot be accounted for except by realizing that the Bible is divine truth and describes people as they really were, not as later generations might wish them to have been. The narrative is strictly objective and unbiassed.

There was a famine in southern Canaan, so Abraham went to Egypt "to sojourn there", that is, to stay there until the famine would be over. Upon entering the territory of Egypt, Abraham becomes fearful that the Egyptians will kill him in order to gain possession of Sarai his wife, who was very beautiful. Abraham asks Sarai to tell people that she is his sister. While this was literally true, in that Sarai actually was Abraham's half-sister (see 20:12), still Abraham's intention was to deceive, therefore he asked Sarai to tell what was a lie in intention.

Abraham realized, of course, that foreigners entering a country may be badly treated. He realized, also, that beautiful women would be coveted, and that the husbands of such might be killed. There is no doubt that his estimate of Egyptian morals and social standards was correct. Still, it was certainly wrong for Abraham to seek to avoid trouble by resorting to untruthfulness. And we cannot avoid concluding that there was an element of base cowardice in the patriarch's plan. To save his own life, he was proposing to pose as Sarai's brother, not her husband, so that if some Egyptian wanted Sarai, he could have her without the necessity of killing Abraham. He was proposing that Sarai make all the sacrifices and meet all the dangers, in order to save his own life. While Abraham is a hero of faith, there is no faith and no heroism displayed in his conduct at this time.

The question has been raised how Sarai could be considered "a fair woman to look upon" at this period of her life when she was already 65 years old. That she was that old is proved by a comparison of 12:4 with 17:17. When Abraham was 100 years old, Sarah was 90. Therefore she was ten years younger than he. At the time of leaving Haran, Abraham was 75 years old. Therefore Sarai was 65 at the time. She lived to the age of 127 years (see 23:1). Leupold points out that at 65 Sarai was only middle-aged, and had never borne any children, so it is not at all incredible that she may have been very beautiful.

**Questions:**

1. Where is Bethel in relation to Shechem? to Jerusalem?
2. When was the name Bethel actually given to this place?
3. Why should Moses carefully record such details as the exact names of places in the life of Abraham?
4. What did Abraham do near Bethel?
5. What is the literal meaning of "journeyed" in 12:9?
6. What is the character of the region called "the south"?
7. Why did Abraham go to Egypt?

8. How can we explain the presence in the record of a story which is discreditable to Abraham?

9. As he approached Egypt, what fear preyed on Abraham's mind?

10. What solution of his problem did he decide to adopt?

11. What two criticisms can be made of Abraham's conduct here?

12. How old was Sarai at this time? How do we know this?

13. Why is it not incredible that a woman of this age should be regarded as very beautiful?

**LESSON 62****III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26, continued****2. The history of Abraham after leaving Ur. 12:1 to 25:12, cont.**

Sarai evidently agreed to Abraham's proposal that she tell the Egyptians she was his sister. The Egyptians note her beauty and she is commended to Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and then taken into Pharaoh's household. Pharaoh then begins to regard Abraham as his brother-in-law. "And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels" (12:16) These evidently were partly gifts from Pharaoh to Abraham. It seems strange that menservants and maidservants are mentioned between he asses and she asses. We would think it more natural to list all the kinds of animals first, and then the humans. A possible explanation of the peculiar order of listing may be that Abraham acquired these various kinds of possessions in this order. The language used does not imply that all that is listed was given by Pharaoh to Abraham; it only means that he came to possess all these.

"And the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues, because of Sarai, Abram's wife" (12:17). This development was the result of God's grace toward Abraham. As a matter of fact, Pharaoh was in the right, for he had acted honestly, while Abraham was in the wrong, for he had been dealing in falsehood. We do not know what the plagues or afflictions were that came on the house of Pharaoh. But clearly they were sent by God to lead to getting Sarai out of Pharaoh's palace and back to Abraham, her husband. It must be remembered that in God's plan Abraham and his wife were to be the ancestors of the people of Israel, and of Jesus Christ.

"And Pharaoh called Abram, and said, What is this that thou hast done unto me? why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife? Why saidst

thou, She is my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife: now therefore behold thy wife, take her, and go thy way" (12:18,19). How did Pharaoh come to understand that the plagues that were troubling his house were on account of his having taken Sarai into his establishment? It may have been conscience; it may have been that Sarai herself finally told the truth. In speaking to Abraham Pharaoh seems rather self-righteous; at least, he places his own conduct in as favorable a light as he can. Abraham might have replied, in answer to Pharaoh's question about why he had used deceit, that he had good reason to fear he would be killed on account of his handsome wife. But, so far as the record indicates, Abraham did not make this reply. Instead, he accepts Pharaoh's rebuke, and is rather hastily dismissed from the king's presence. Leupold remarks that Abraham's silence shows that he realized he deserved the king's rebuke.

"And Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him: and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had" (12:20). Apparently these men appointed by Pharaoh were to go with Abraham to the border of Egyptian territory. Pharaoh is evidently afraid of further plagues, so he is careful to appoint men to get Abraham safely out of the country. We may say that Abraham was rebuked by Pharaoh, and Pharaoh himself was rebuked by God. Psalm 105:14,15 may be intended as an inspired comment on the incident we have been studying.

**Questions:**

1. What was Sarai's attitude toward Abraham's proposal to use deceit?

2. What happened to Sarai after she and Abraham entered Egypt?

3. Of what did Abraham's possessions consist at this time?

4. How may some of these possessions have been acquired?

5. How can the peculiar order of listing Abraham's possessions be explained?

6. Who did the greater wrong, Abraham or Pharaoh?

7. Why was it important, from God's point of view, to get Sarai out of Pharaoh's palace?

8. How may Pharaoh have come to find out that Sarai was a married woman?

9. What rebuke did Pharaoh administer to Abraham?

10. After discovering that Sarai was Abraham's wife, what action did Pharaoh take?

11. What Psalm may be an inspired comment on this incident?

### LESSON 63

#### III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26, continued

##### 2. The history of Abraham after leaving Ur. 12:1 to 25:12, cont.

"And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south" (13:1). This was following Pharaoh's dismissal of Abraham after the incident involving Sarai his wife. "Into the south" of course means "into the south of Canaan"; it cannot mean "into the south of Egypt." Though Abraham was journeying northward, he entered into the south. That is, he entered the region called "the Negeb" or "the southland."

"And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold" (13:2). Again it is emphasized that Abraham was a very wealthy man. This may serve to remind us that it is not money, but the love of money, that is sinful.

"And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai; unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first; and there Abram called on the name of the Lord" (13:3,4). "On his journeys" means by stages, making stops from time to time. Again Abraham worships Jehovah, perhaps especially because he felt the need to repent of his untruthfulness, and also to express thanks to God for getting Sarai back safely.

We come next to the separation between Abram and Lot (13:5-13). Like Abraham, Lot was a man of great wealth, having flocks, and herds, and tents. "And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together" (13:6). We must remember that Abraham and Lot lived a nomadic life which required abundant grassland for pasturage. The combined flocks and herds of Abraham and Lot required more pasture for grazing than could be found in one area. Therefore a separation became inevitable.

"And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelt then in the land" (13:7). Though Abraham and Lot themselves maintained cordial relations, their ser-

vants became mutually hostile. There began to be disputes about pasture rights. Moses in writing the history reminds the reader that the Canaanites and Perizzites were then in the land. That is, it was not an empty, uninhabited country with plenty of room; it was already for the most part claimed and held in possession by the Canaanites and the Perizzites. Newcomers such as Abraham and Lot, therefore, could not move wherever they might choose, but would have to content themselves with land not already possessed or utilized by the earlier inhabitants.

The mention of the Canaanites and Perizzites is important for another reason also. These two nations were heathen idolaters, of course. Abraham and Lot were worshippers of the true God. For contention to arise between two chiefs who were worshippers of Jehovah would be a shame and dishonor to the name of the Lord in the presence of the pagan inhabitants.

It is thought that the Canaanites were those who lived for the most part in walled cities. Just who the Perizzites were we do not know. They may have been people who lived in villages or in the open country. Or they may have been earlier inhabitants than the Canaanites.

"And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren" (13:8). We note here that the initiative in preventing strife was taken by Abraham, not by Lot. Luther comments that in chapter 12 (where Abraham obeys God's command to leave his country) we have an example of Abraham's faith, while here in chapter 13 we have an example of Abraham's good works, which were the result of his faith. Abraham, as the older man, and the one whom God had especially commanded to go to the land of Canaan, certainly could have claimed prior rights over Lot and simply insisted that Lot take whatever land was left. After all, God had promised the whole land to Abraham, not to Lot. But Abraham seeks peace and good will, so he takes the initiative in dealing generously with Lot.

"Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left" (13:9). We note here that Abraham was very

courteous in speaking to Lot. Twice he says "I pray thee", which we might translate by "please." Realizing that God has promised him the whole land, Abraham is willing to be generous with Lot, who after all is a close relative of his. He gives Lot his choice of the available areas. Abraham himself will take whatever is left after Lot has made his choice. "Brethren" here, of course, means simply "kinsmen" or "relatives."

#### Questions:

1. Where did Abraham go on leaving Egypt?
2. Why was it not sinful for Abraham to be a rich man?
3. What is meant by the expression "on his journeys"?
4. Why would Abraham specially want to worship the Lord at this time?
5. Why was it not possible for Abraham and Lot to continue living together?
6. What incident prepared the way for the separation between Abraham and Lot?
7. What is the point of the statement of 13:7 that the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelt then in the land?
8. Why would a dispute between Abraham and Lot be specially dishonoring to the name of God?
9. Who took the initiative in preventing further strife?
10. What expression twice used by Abraham indicates his courtesy in speaking to his nephew?
11. What fact shows Abraham's generosity?
12. What is meant by "brethren" in 13:8?

### LESSON 64

#### III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26, continued

##### 2. The history of Abraham after leaving Ur. 12:1 to 25:12, cont.

Abraham was generous and gave Lot the first choice of territory. "And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar" (13:10). At this point begins a gradual deterioration in the character of Abraham's nephew, Lot. Lot's decision has sometimes been misinterpreted, as if he left Abraham nothing but barren country that could not support livestock. This was not the case. What Abraham received was also good, though Lot took the more desirable land for himself.

"The plain of Jordan" means, not the entire Jordan valley, but the southern end of it, perhaps from the region of Jericho southward and extending as far as Zoar, which was just south of the Dead Sea. Moses in writing the history states that this region was well watered every where "before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah," a statement which certainly implies that after the destruction of these cities it was different. The vivid description of the area as resembling the garden of the Lord and the land of Egypt is in sharp contrast to the present-day appearance of the region. Accordingly, we are to understand that in the time of Abraham this was a fertile and beautiful area. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah changed it to a barren waste.

Lot journeyed eastward, leaving Abraham alone. "And Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan,

and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom" (13:12). So the separation between these two men was made complete. The land of Canaan becomes Abraham's habitation, while the Dead Sea region becomes Lot's. "And Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom." This can be translated "pitched his tent as far as Sodom." Although Lot originally chose this region because of its abundant water supply and good pastures, it now becomes clear that the city life of Sodom and Gomorrah had some attraction for him. He moves his tent nearer and nearer to Sodom, until he is at the very gates of the city. When we next see him, he has left off living in tents and is situated in a permanent house inside the city of Sodom.

"But the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly" (13:13). It is evident that Lot was actuated by material rather than spiritual considerations. He is attracted by the fertility of the region, but is not deterred by the spiritual perils involved. God's opinion of the inhabitants of Sodom was that they were exceedingly sinful and wicked. What Lot thought about them we are not told at this point, but at any rate he evidently did not think their wickedness was serious enough to keep him from living near them. In the New Testament we are informed that Lot was a righteous man, and that he was deeply grieved by the wickedness of Sodom which surrounded him (2 Peter 2:7,8). Lot, therefore, is an example of a righteous man who trifles and compromises with sin. Without himself committing the sins that made Sodom so evil, he nevertheless associates himself with the city and citizens of Sodom. He certainly was not thinking of how best to glorify God, nor of a wholesome spiritual and social environment in which to raise his family, when he moved to Sodom. It is too often

true at the present day that material gain and worldly advantages blind even Christian people to spiritual perils and the evil of the world. What God thought of Sodom and what Lot thought of Sodom were two different things. What a spiritual contrast there was between Abraham and Lot!

“And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever” (13:14,15). Probably Abraham was saddened by Lot’s attitude and departure from him, even though the separation was unavoidable. Now God steps in to comfort and reassure his servant Abraham. Though he has lost a little through Lot’s selfish choice, he will gain much more through the gracious promises of God. So the whole land of Canaan is promised to Abraham’s seed, “for ever.” The Hebrew word translated “for ever” is *olam*, which can have various meanings. Sometimes it means “to eternity,” sometimes “for an unlimited but long time.” Sometimes, as in Exodus 21:6, it means only for the rest of a person’s natural lifetime. Here in Gen. 13:15, we may understand it as meaning “permanently,” not in the sense of “eternally,” but in the sense of “for an unlimited but long time.”

This promise of the land of Canaan to Abraham of course implies the condition of faith on Abraham’s part and on the part of the descendants of Abraham. As long as their attitude toward God was one of faith and obedience they possessed the land of Canaan. When they had broken God’s covenant and repudiated their obligations to Him, they lost possession of the land and were carried into captivity. Again, when the Jews rejected and crucified Jesus Christ, they lost possession of their land and were destroyed and scattered. It follows that this promise of God to Abraham is not an unconditional promise that

the natural descendants of Abraham shall perpetually possess the land regardless of their faith. There is no promise in the Bible that guarantees possession of Canaan to an unbelieving and Christ-rejecting Israel.

#### Questions:

1. At what point can deterioration in Lot’s character first be noted?
2. What is meant by “the plain of Jordan”?
3. What was the character of this region in Abraham’s day?
4. What historical event changed the character of the region?
5. What is the character of this region of the world today?
6. Besides the water supply and fertility, what seems to have attracted Lot toward Sodom?
7. What was the character of the people of Sodom?
8. What does Lot’s moving to Sodom reveal concerning his character?
9. What does the New Testament say about Lot in relation to Sodom?
10. To what perils was Lot evidently blind?
11. What effect would Lot’s choice have on Abraham?
12. What is the meaning of the word translated “for ever” in 13:15?
13. What condition is implied in God’s promise of the land of Canaan to Abraham’s seed?
14. How can it be shown from history that this promise of the land of Canaan to Abraham’s seed was not an unconditional promise?
15. Does the Bible guarantee that an unbelieving and Christ-rejecting Israel has a right to the land of Canaan?

### LESSON 65

#### III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26, continued

##### 2. The history of Abraham after leaving Ur. 12:1 to 25:12, cont.

“And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered” (13:16). Here the Lord promises to Abraham a very numerous posterity. The language used is of course not to be taken literally. It is a hyperbole, that is, an exaggeration for the purpose of emphasizing a truth. The point is not that Abraham’s descendants will literally be as many as the particles of dust on the surface of the earth, but rather, that just as the dust of the earth cannot be number-

ed, so Abraham’s posterity will be innumerable—past human ability to count.

“Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee” (13:17). Here God invites Abraham to travel through and inspect the land of Canaan which shall be given to him for an inheritance. Abraham’s obeying this command of God would serve as an evidence or proof of his living faith in the Lord. Although at the time the land was possessed by the Canaanites, by faith Abraham knew that eventually it would belong to his seed. We should realize that he had this knowledge only by faith in the promise of God. There was nothing in the existing circumstances or situation to lead him to

think that his descendants would inherit this land for their own.

"Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the Lord" (13:18). Lot moved his tent toward Sodom, but Abraham moved his to the plain of Mamre. Apparently this was after the trip of inspection of the land which God had commanded him to undertake. Who Mamre was we do not know; he may have been a prominent man of that day. More important is the fact that at this place Abraham built an altar unto the Lord. This was not only an act of devotion to God, expressing faith and gratitude, but also a public witness to everyone that Abraham's religion was very different from the idolatry of the Canaanites. Abraham's building of the altar was not only an act of worship, but also a public profession of faith.

We now come to the fourteenth chapter which records the first battle mentioned in the Bible. Here we see Abraham in a different light—not merely as a man of faith but as an active and highly competent head of a clan. Indeed, we could almost say that in this chapter Abraham ranks as a king, for he deals with kings on a basis of equality. Also, this chapter reveals Abraham as a very able military leader, and as a very wise man in his dealings with his fellow men.

"And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations; that these made war with Bera king of Sodom, and with Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboim, and the king of Bela, which is Zoar" (14:1,2). Here we have the names of nine kings, four of them from the Tigris-Euphrates region and five of them from the region around the lower Jordan valley and the Dead Sea.

Some scholars have held that the Amraphel mentioned here is identical with the great Babylonian lawgiver and king Hammurabi. This identification however is doubtful and involves serious problems both of spelling and of chronology. Arioch king of Ellasar may be Eri-Aku king of Larsa, the latter being identified with Rim-Sin king of Lar-

sa. With regard to Chedorlaomer king of Elam, we are not able to make any positive identification. Elam is south of Assyria and east of the Tigris river. Nor do we know just who Tidal king of nations was.

With regard to the five kings of the Dead Sea region, Sodom and Gomorrah probably were located where the waters of the southern part of the Dead Sea are today. Admah and Zeboim were cities of the same region and presumably destroyed at the same time as Sodom and Gomorrah. Bela or Zoar was located just south of the present southern limit of the Dead Sea.

#### Questions:

1. What did God promise Abraham concerning the number of his descendants?
2. Is the statement about Abraham's seed to be taken literally?
3. What did God command Abraham to do at this time?
4. What action on Abraham's part would afford evidence of his faith?
5. How could Abraham be sure that his descendants would inherit the land of Canaan?
6. After moving his tent to the plain of Mamre at Hebron, what act did Abraham perform which showed his devotion to God?
7. Besides being an act of devotion to God, what purpose was served by Abraham's building an altar?
8. What new light does chapter 14 throw on the personality of Abraham?
9. How many kings are named in 14:1,2?
10. From what two regions did these kings come?
11. What is known or thought as to the identity of some of these kings?
12. Where were Sodom and Gomorrah probably located? What may be the reason why archaeologists have never found the ruins of these cities?

### LESSON 66

#### III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26, continued

##### 2. The history of Abraham after leaving Ur. 12:1 to 25:12, cont.

"All these were joined together in the vale of Siddim, which is the salt sea" (14:3). Does "all these" mean the kings from the east, mentioned in verse 1, or the kings of the Dead Sea region, mentioned in verse 2, or does it mean both groups together? According to the grammar of the passage,

it is probable that the kings of verse 1 are meant. Leupold translates: "All these allied themselves for an expedition to the valley of Sidim (that is, the Salt Sea)" (Leupold, Vol. I, p. 449). Probably the vale of Siddim means the southern end of the Dead Sea. This southern end was presumably not under water in the time of Abraham, before Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed; but in the time of Moses who wrote the history, it was already part of the Dead Sea.

"Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer, and

in the thirteenth year they rebelled" (14:4). Here we have a brief statement about how the war started. For a dozen years Babylonian and Elamite power had been dominant over Palestine. Chedorlaomer was himself an Elamite but was at the time ruler over Babylonia (Shinar). Through this period of twelve years the kings of the Dead Sea region regularly paid the required annual tribute. Then for reasons not stated, at the end of the twelve year period, they decided to refuse payment. When he learned of this rebellion, Chedorlaomer decided that it was time to force the rebellious kings to submit.

"And in the fourteenth year came Chedorlaomer, and the kings that were with him . . ." (14:5). Twelve years the tribute was paid. In the thirteenth year the revolt took place. Then it took Chedorlaomer some time to prepare for a military expedition to bring the rebels into line. Accordingly, this punitive attack took place in the fourteenth year. Chedorlaomer had made careful preparations, lining up three other kings — Amraphel, Arioch and Tidal — as his allies.

"And . . . Chedorlaomer . . . smote the Rephaim in Ashteroth Karnaim, and the Zuzim in Ham, and the Emin in Shaveh Kiriathaim, and the Horites in their Mount Seir, unto El-paran, which is by the wilderness" (14:5,6).

This expedition is not mentioned in the Babylonian records that have been discovered. This, however, need cast no doubt on the historical truthfulness of the record as we have it in Genesis. It is a well known fact that ancient kings were not in the habit of having records made of military expeditions in which they were defeated. They wanted to be remembered for their successes, not for their failures. And this particular war turned out very badly for Chedorlaomer and his allies.

The route taken by the kings from the east is remarkable. They did not take the shortest and most direct route to the Dead Sea region nor did they take the customary and most travelled route. The shortest route would be to start from Babylon and cut straight west across the desert. That way however was not practicable in ancient times because of the scarcity of water. The customary route was to follow the fertile crescent, up the Euphrates valley, across to the Mediterranean, and down the Syria-Palestine coast toward Egypt. Chedorlaomer and his allies entered Palestine from the north, as customary, approaching from the area of Damascus. Then they turned eastward and campaigned through what is today called Transjordan — the part of the land located east of the Jordan River — until they reached a point considerably south of their objective, which was the southern end of the Dead Sea. From this point, they returned to attack Sodom and Gomorrah.

As they marched southward through Trans-

jordan, they subdued in turn the Rephaim, the Zuzim and the Horites. We do not know exactly who these peoples were, though we do know something about them. The Rephaim were of the earlier inhabitants of the land of Canaan, who held it prior to the Canaanites. The place called Ashteroth Karnaim seems to have been located in Bashan, some twenty miles east of the Sea of Galilee. The Zuzim are thought to be the same as the Zamzummim who are mentioned elsewhere (Deut. 2:20). The Emim were also very early inhabitants of Palestine. Shaveh Kiriathaim means "the Plain of the Twin Cities." The exact location is not known; it may have been north of the Arnon, on the east side of the Jordan.

From Shaveh Kiriathaim the eastern kings marched in a wide curve, eastward, southward and westward again, arriving at a point straight south of the Dead Sea — the mountains of Seir, and El-paran" which is by the wilderness." Here they attacked the Horites or "cave dwellers." The exact location of El-Paran is not known, but it may have been Elath on the Red Sea, or it may have been on the northern border of the Sinai peninsula.

"And they returned, and came to En-mishpat, which is Kadesh, and smote all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites, that dwelt in Hazon-tamar" (14:7). En-mishpat means "well of judgment" or "fountain of judgment." The later name, which Moses inserts in the record, was Kadesh, that is, Kadesh Barnea, which was an important place in the wanderings of the Israelites from Egypt to Canaan. It was located about 100 miles southwest of the present southern limit of the Dead Sea. Moses states that the eastern kings smote the **country** of the Amalekites; he does not say that they smote the **Amalekites**. This is important, for as we know from Gen. 36:12 that the Amalekites were descended from Esau, Abraham's grandson, there could not have been any Amalekites in Abraham's time. What is meant is that Chedorlaomer and his allies smote the people living in the region which later became the country of the Amalekites.

#### Questions:

1. What kings were probably included in the expression "all these" in 14:3?
2. What was the probable location of the valley of Siddim?
3. How long did the kings of the Dead Sea region pay tribute to Chedorlaomer?
4. What decision did they make?
5. What was Chedorlaomer's reaction to the news from Palestine?
6. What is remarkable about the route followed by Chedorlaomer?
7. What would be the most direct route from

Babylonia to the Dead Sea? Why would this route not be a practicable one to take?

8. What was the usual route between Babylonia and Egypt?

9. From what direction did the eastern kings enter Palestine?

10. What region did they attack first?

11. What is known about the Rephaim and the Zuzim?

12. Where was Ashteroth Karnaim located?

13. What is the meaning of the name Shaveh Kiriathaim?

14. How far south did the eastern kings go?

15. What is the meaning of the name En-misphat?

16. What is meant by "the country of the Amalekites"?

17. Why is it impossible that there were Amelekites there in Abraham's time?

### LESSON 67

#### III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26, continued

##### 2. The history of Abraham after leaving Ur. 12:1 to 25:12, cont.

Last of all, before attacking Sodom and Gomorrah, the eastern kings attacked and defeated the Amorites who lived in Hazezon-tamar. "Amorites" was sometimes used as a general, inclusive name for the pre-Israelite inhabitants of Canaan. Sometimes it means the most important tribal division of the Canaanites. They lived in various areas, both north and south. Hazezon-tamar means "pruning of a palm" or perhaps "the sandy region of palms." 2 Chron. 20:2 proves that this place was identical with En-gedi, which was located on the western shore of the Dead Sea, almost directly east of Hebron. Now the eastern kings thought that they had disposed of all minor enemies that were worth conquering. Accordingly, from En-gedi they proceeded to their main objective, namely Sodom and Gomorrah.

"And there went out the king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admah, and the king of Zeboim, and the king of Bela (the same is Zoar;) and they joined battle with them in the vale of Siddim; with Chedorlaomer the king of Elam, and with Tidal king of nations, and Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar; four kings with five" (14:8,9). Why did the kings of Sodom, Gomorrah and the neighboring cities wait until so late before actually taking the field against the invading kings from the east. Certainly they must have known of what was going on, and that the real cause of the war was their own refusal to pay the usual annual tribute to Chedorlaomer. It is possible that the evil, dissipated mode of living which was characteristic of these cities made them reluctant to fight until they absolutely had to. Even then it was only a token defence; they were not strong enough to resist the powerful force from Babylonia. If they had been sensible they would have paid the tribute year by year, rather than risk attack by powerful forces which they could not expect to overcome.

The battlefield was the valley of Siddim. This apparently means the area which is today covered by the waters of the southern third of the Dead Sea. Evidently in those days it was not yet inundated.

"And the vale of Siddim was full of slime pits" (14:10). Here slime pits means pits of bitumen. This bitumen or "pitch" was a natural mineral found in the region. This substance resembles asphalt and when warm would be gummy or sticky.

"And the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, and fell there; and they that remained fled to the mountain" (14:10b). This statement cannot mean literally that the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fell into bitumen pits and there died, for in verse 17 we see that the king of Sodom survived the battle. Rather, the meaning seems to be that when the battle began to go against them, some of the Dead Sea kings took the cowardly way of escape by hiding in some of the bitumen pits, while the rest of their forces, as far as possible, escaped to the hills.

"And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and went their way. And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed" (14:11,12.) The defeat of the kings in the valley of Siddim had of course left the cities defenceless. All defending forces had been defeated and scattered. Accordingly the victorious eastern kings now proceed to loot the cities, Sodom and Gomorrah. Everything that they considered worth carrying away they took, together with all available food supplies. When the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah and the scattered remnants of their army would return later, they would find a very distressing situation.

The eastern kings also took numerous prisoners, as is shown by verse 16. Among these, they took Lot, Abraham's nephew. Presumably Lot's wife and daughters were also taken captive at this time. Then the conquering forces took their departure.

**Questions:**

1. What is the meaning of the term Amorites?
2. Where was Hazezon-tamar located, and what was it later called?
3. What may be the explanation of why the kings of the Dead Sea region did not go out to fight sooner?
4. Where was the crucial battle fought?

5. What is meant by slime pits?
6. How did the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah escape death at the hands of the conquering army?
7. What happened to the rest of the defending forces?
8. What did the eastern kings take from Sodom and Gomorrah?
9. What relative of Abraham was taken captive by the eastern kings?

**LESSON 68****III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph, 11:27 to 50:26, continued****2. The history of Abraham after leaving Ur. 12:1 to 25:12, cont.**

Lot, Abraham's nephew, had been taken prisoner. Presumably he would be taken to Babylonia and there sold as a slave. It would be a sad and painful way of returning to the land where he was born. And if it had not been for Abraham, and the God of Abraham, that is what would no doubt have happened to Lot. Though Lot compromised with the world, and did not serve God as he should have done, still it was through the mercy of God, implemented by prompt action on Abraham's part, that Lot was rescued.

"And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew; for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner: and these were confederate with Abram" (14:13). An escaping soldier of the Sodomite army brings news of the battle and the looting to Abraham. Abraham is called "the Hebrew," a term which means "man of the other side", that is, a man from beyond the Euphrates. Later the term Hebrew came to be used as a designation of nationality in contrast to other nationalities, such as the Amorites who are mentioned in this same verse.

Apparently Chedorlaomer and his allies had not attempted to conquer these local chiefs mentioned in verse 13. Perhaps they thought them not numerous or important enough to be worth a battle. However, they were to learn later that Abraham was considerably more of a military leader than were the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Mamre, Eshcol and Aner, local Amorite chiefs, are mentioned as being "confederate with Abram." This fact has been cited by some as justifying religious fellowship and co-operation between Bible-believing Christians and modernists who are really unbelievers or adherents of a false religion (Unitarianism). If Abraham was confederate with these Amorite chiefs, who of course held a false religion, then why cannot Bible-believing Christians of the present day participate in the ecumen-

ical movement of the National and World Councils of Churches, even though it is known to be dominated by men who are apostate from the Christianity of the Bible?

In answer to this question, it should be said that there is no evidence whatever that Abraham participated in any religious fellowship with these local Amorite chiefs. The league or confederation between them was of a civil nature, pure and simple. He did not join in their sacrifices, nor they in his. It was a civil league for mutual defence against military foes. Christian people can properly co-operate with unbelievers in civil matters, but religious fellowship between Christians and unbelievers is strictly forbidden by the Word of God (I Cor. 10:21,22; 2 Cor. 6:14-18). A Bible-believing Christian may join a sheriff's posse to apprehend kidnappers, even though other members of the force are unbelievers; he may not have religious fellowship with unbelievers.

"And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan" (14:14). Here Lot is called Abraham's brother, which of course means his kinsman; actually, Lot was Abraham's nephew. Abraham took immediate action. Here is the great hero of faith, showing on this occasion that faith can be a very practical thing and can lead to very decisive action.

Abraham might have reasoned that Lot was not worthy of being rescued. The rescuing expedition would of course involve considerable danger, as well as great hardship and expense. He might have reasoned that what had happened to Lot had served him right for his selfish, worldly attitude. But Abraham is a truly great man and does not let such considerations stand in the way of his doing the right and generous thing under the circumstances. Accordingly, he immediately organized a relief expedition and pursues the eastern kings.

The record speaks of 318 trained men, born in Abraham's household. The fact that they were born and reared in his household would mean that Abraham could depend on them in case of critical emergency. If Abraham had 318 men

that could immediately serve as soldiers, his entire establishment — men, women and children — must have numbered a thousand or more.

**Questions:**

1. What happened to Lot when the eastern kings entered Sodom?
2. If Abraham had not intervened, what would probably have been the final fate of Lot?
3. Who brought Abraham news of the battle and of what had happened to Lot?
4. What is the meaning of the term "Hebrew"?
5. What local Amorite chiefs were allied to Abraham?

**LESSON 69**

**III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26, continued**

**2. The history of Abraham after leaving Ur. 12:1 to 25:12, cont.**

Abraham pursued the withdrawing eastern kings as far as Dan. This raises the question of what Dan this was. The place commonly called Dan, as in the expression "from Dan to Beersheba", was at the northern limit of Palestine, about ten miles north of the Waters of Merom. It has been commonly supposed that it was this Dan to which Abraham pursued the eastern kings. However, Leupold points out that there was another Dan, mentioned in 2 Samuel 24:6 as Dan-jaan, and perhaps referred to in Deut. 34:1. This Dan-jaan was located in Gilead, that is, the region east of the Jordan, considerably south of the other Dan. Dan-jaan would be perhaps 20 miles from the southern end of the Dead Sea (Leupold, I, p. 459). It is possible that Abraham pursued the fleeing kings to this Dan-jaan. However, Dr. Nelson Glueck (*The River Jordan*, pp. 73-78), is of the opinion that it was the northern Dan, near one of the sources of the Jordan River. He thinks it probable that Abraham's pursuit was a lightning northward raid up the Jordan valley.

"And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus" (14:15). Abraham here shows his ability as a military strategist. Of course his 318 men could not compare in numbers with the forces of Chedorlaomer and his allies. Therefore Abraham must make up in some other way what he lacks in strength of numbers. He decides upon a surprise attack, and divides his force against the enemy. "One can visualize the manner in which the victorious army returning back home lay scattered about, secure in the thought of having none to attack them, flushed with victory and, perhaps, with drink; no sentinels posted; nothing farther from the thoughts of all than an attack" (Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, I, p. 460).

Abraham's bold strategy was successful. Chedorlaomer and his allies were taken complete-

ly by surprise. It had apparently never entered their thought that, after all their successful conquests, Abraham the Hebrew might take them by surprise as they were returning home to Babylonia. We are not given the details of the battle, but it must have been swift and certainly it was decisive. Here we see the hand of God revealed in history. Man proposes, but God disposes. These mighty kings now discover that a few people by faith in the true God can accomplish wonders.

6. Why does Abraham's alliance with these Amorite chiefs not justify Bible-believing Christians joining the National and World Councils of Churches?

7. What action did Abraham take when he learned of what had happened at Sodom?

8. What does this action show about Abraham's character?

9. How many men did Abraham take to pursue the eastern kings?

10. What does the number of the men indicate as to the total size of Abraham's establishment?

"And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people" (14:16). Lot, Abraham's nephew, was alive and well, and even his property was recovered. Abraham also freed the women who had been captured. "The people" may mean soldiers of Sodom and Gomorrah who had been taken prisoner.

The question has been raised whether Abraham was justified in undertaking this expedition. In answer to this it may certainly be stated that he was fully justified in doing so. Certainly Sodom and Gomorrah were wicked cities, and certainly Lot was doing wrong in living in Sodom. But on the other hand, by what right did Chedorlaomer and the other eastern kings claim sovereignty over, and annual tribute from, cities located far from their own country in the land of Canaan? This claim of Chedorlaomer was nothing more than inexcusable imperialism and was based on no higher consideration than the old lie that "might makes right." Whether Sodom and Gomorrah were wicked cities or not was not the question at issue at the time. That came up later and God indeed destroyed these cities because of their wickedness. But at the time we are considering, Abraham was defending people, including his own nephew, against selfish aggression.

**Questions:**

1. What was Abraham's first stopping place in his pursuit of the eastern kings?

2. What two possibilities exist as to the location of the Dan mentioned in verse 14?

3. What route did Abraham probably follow in his northward trip?

4. Where did Abraham finally overtake the fleeing kings?

5. What was Abraham's strategy for the attack?

6. What was the outcome of the encounter?

7. How can Abraham's success be explained?

8. Was it right for Abraham to go on this expedition?

9. Besides the people who were rescued, what was recovered?

### LESSON 70

#### III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26, continued

##### 2. History of Abraham after leaving Ur. 12:1 to 25:12, cont.

"And the king of Sodom went out to meet him, after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlamer and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale" (14:17). Abraham now returns triumphant from the expedition. The king of Sodom, who had saved his life by hiding in a bitumen pit, now comes out publicly to welcome the returning hero Abraham. Just what place is meant by the valley of Shaveh is not known. Presumably the added identification of it as "the king's dale" made it clear to ancient readers of Genesis. It is thought that it may have been the valley of the brook Kidron, to the northeast of Jerusalem. If this is correct, the king of Sodom travelled a considerable distance to welcome the returning Abraham. Presumably he had already received advance news of what had happened in the far north.

Next we are introduced to Melchizedek, one of the most remarkable and mysterious characters of Scripture. "And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine; and he was the priest of the most high God" (14:18). The name Melchizedek means literally "king of righteousness" (cf. Hebrews 7:1,2). The word Salem means peace, but is here used as the designation of the city over which Melchizedek ruled. Salem is an abbreviated form of the name Jerusalem. So his name was "king of righteousness" and his title was "king of Jerusalem." In addition to this, it is stated that he was the priest of the most high God (El Elyon). Thus this man combined in his own person the two offices of kingship and priesthood — something unknown among the Israelites, where these two divine institutions were always kept distinct and separate. In this respect, as is explained in the Epistle to the Hebrews, Melchizedek typifies Christ, who is both king and priest in one person.

Who was Melchizedek? How does it come that a king of a city located in a country given over to idolatry is priest of the Most High God? Later we find Jerusalem inhabited by a strong tribe known as the Jebusites, who are finally conquered by king David, almost a thousand years after the time of Abraham. Just who the inhabitants of Jerusalem were in the days of Abraham we do not know. However, it is safe to say that Melchizedek was a believer in and worshipper

of the true God. He is one of those who had maintained the original monotheism from the time of Noah. Another example of the same adherence to primitive monotheism may be seen in the case of Job, though we do not know exactly when he lived. Melchizedek is proof that at the time of Abraham belief in the one true God had not been completely and universally extinguished by pagan polytheism.

Melchizedek brought forth bread and wine. This was a gift to Abraham and his men, returning from the far north. Melchizedek "expresses his friendship and perhaps his religious kinship with Abram by offering the most common form of meat and drink" (Leupold, exposition of Genesis, I, pp. 463-4). It was a public token of support and approval. Some Bible students have treated this offering on the part of Melchizedek as a type of the Lord's Supper, because of the mention of bread and wine. However, there is no basis for this idea. This was not a sacrament but rather a token of honor, friendship and support.

Leupold mentions an extra-Biblical Jewish tradition to the effect that Melchizedek was none other than Shem, the son of Noah, and states that there is no reason to accept this. If we accept Usher's chronology, it would follow that Shem was still living at the time of Abraham. But the notion that Melchizedek was the same person as Shem must be rejected as a Jewish fable.

#### Questions:

1. Who came out to meet Abraham as he returned home?

2. What may have been the location of the valley of Shaveh or the king's dale?

3. What is the meaning of the name Melchizedek?

4. What was Melchizedek's official position?

5. What is the meaning of Salem?

6. What is the full form of the name Salem?

7. Besides being king of Salem, what official position did Melchizedek hold?

8. In what special way does Melchizedek typify Christ?

9. How can we explain the existence of a king in a city of Palestine who believed in and served the true God, at a time when idolatry was prevalent everywhere?

10. What did Melchizedek present to Abraham?
11. What was the meaning of this presentation?
12. What should be thought of the idea that

Melchizedek's gift typified the Lord's Supper?

13. What should be thought of the Jewish tradition that Melchizedek was the same person as Shem the son of Noah?

### LESSON 71

#### III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26, continued

##### 2. History of Abraham after leaving Ur. 12:1 to 25:12, cont.

At this point we must mention another mistaken idea concerning Melchizedek. The Epistle to the Hebrews (7:3) speaks of Melchizedek as "Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; . . .". This language has been interpreted to mean that Melchizedek was literally without father, mother, etc., and therefore that he was more than a human being, and was in fact a theophany, or a manifestation of Christ, the second person of the divine Trinity, before our Lord's incarnation.

This view has been held by many sincere Christians, but it must be rejected as a mistaken interpretation. The point of the passage in Hebrews is not that Melchizedek was Christ, but that he **resembled** Christ in certain respects. If he actually was the Son of God, it could not be said of him that he was "made like unto the Son of God." The Epistle to the Hebrews treats Melchizedek as a type of Christ. But if he was a type of Christ, then he cannot have been Christ Himself. The connection between a type and its antitype is not identity, but similarity.

Actually, the language used concerning Melchizedek is not to be taken literally. The statement that he had no father or mother, etc., merely means that his genealogy, birth, death, etc., are not recorded in the pages of Scripture. Concerning Abraham, we know his genealogy, his birth and also his death; concerning Melchizedek, we know none of these things. He appears suddenly in the pages of Old Testament history, and as suddenly vanishes again. Except for a single mention in Psalm 110, we do not meet him again until we come to the Epistle to the Hebrews. So, as far as the written record was concerned, he was without father, without mother, etc.

This fact that, so far as the written record was concerned, Melchizedek was without parents, beginning or end of life, peculiarly fitted him to be a type of Christ, the Son of God in His office of priest. That is why Psalm 110 speaks of Christ as a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. Christ is an eternal priest. His priesthood has no end. The Israelite priests of the tribe of Levi could typify Christ's priestly office in some respects, as, for example, his offering a sacrifice to atone for human sin. But the Jewish priests

could not typify Christ's perpetual or eternal priesthood, for the simple reason that none of them held the office of priest very long. Each in turn died and was succeeded by someone else. But Christ continues permanently as priest. Hence Melchizedek, who, so far as the record goes, is a timeless figure, could typify Christ as a timeless or eternal priest. This interpretation of the statements about Melchizedek is quite in line with the rest of the Epistle to the Hebrews in its treatment of the Old Testament. We may conclude, then, that Melchizedek was only human, and actually had parents, was born, died, etc., though these facts are not recorded about him in Scripture. He was in certain respects like Christ, but he was not identical with Christ.

"And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth, and blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all" (14:19,20). No doubt Abraham would always remember this scene. Here is Melchizedek, the honored priest of God Most High, pronouncing a solemn blessing on Abraham. The Epistle to the Hebrews uses this incident to prove that Melchizedek's priesthood is higher than that of Aaron, and therefore that Christ's priesthood (being after the order of Melchizedek) must be higher than that of the Jewish priests. For it is a recognized principle that blessing is bestowed by superiors on inferiors, not the other way around (Hebrews 7:7). Here Melchizedek blessed Abraham; therefore Melchizedek was greater than Abraham. But the Jewish priests, from Aaron on down, were descended from Abraham. Therefore their priesthood was of a lower order than that of Melchizedek.

"And he gave him tithes of all." This means, of course, that Abraham gave Melchizedek one tenth of all the loot that had been recovered from Chedorlaomer and his allies. Here we have a clear recognition, on Abraham's part, of the valid religious office and high religious dignity of Melchizedek. This is the first mention of the practice of tithing in Scripture, and it is a very interesting one. It is mentioned again in the life of Jacob (Gen. 28:22).

#### Questions:

1. What does Hebrews 7:3 say about Melchizedek?
2. How has the statement that Melchizedek was "without father, without mother", etc., sometimes been interpreted?

3. Why is it impossible to hold that Melchizedek actually was Christ?

4. What is the real point of the statements in Hebrews 7 about Melchizedek?

5. After Genesis 14, where do we next meet Melchizedek in the pages of Scripture?

6. How could Melchizedek specially typify Christ's priesthood?

7. What blessing did Melchizedek pronounce on Abraham?

8. What truth does the Epistle to the Hebrews draw from the fact that Melchizedek blessed Abraham?

9. What did Abraham give to Melchizedek?

(To be continued)

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## *Blue Banner Question Box*

Readers are invited to submit Biblical, doctrinal and practical questions for answer in this department. Names will not be published with questions.

### Question:

The terrible place of hell is described in part by the expression "where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:48). Jeremiah speaks of "His word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones" (Jer. 20:9). I wonder whether there is anything which causes more suffering in this world than mental anguish?

### Answer:

Certainly mental anguish can be the most terrible form of suffering. How far the language of the Bible about hell is to be interpreted literally

and how far figuratively is a problem in Scripture interpretation. However, the fact that the lost in hell will have bodies as well as souls rules out the idea that the sufferings of hell will be exclusively mental. Very likely the expression "where their worm dieth not" is figurative and refers to the eternal remorse of the lost, who will to all eternity realize that it is their own fault that they went to hell. On this subject we refer the reader to the Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter XXXII, and the Larger Catechism, Q. 89.

— J. G. Vos

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## *Note*

The editor regrets that it has not been possible to include in this issue of Blue Banner Faith and Life answers to several questions that have been

sent in by readers of the magazine. It is our hope, D.V., to publish answers to most if not all of them in our next issue.—Ed.

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## *Announcement*

You can share in the wide witness of Blue Banner Faith and Life to Bible truth by contributing to the expense of publishing the magazine. Less than half of the amount required is obtained from subscriptions and sales of back issues. For the balance we are dependent on contributions. Numbered receipts are sent promptly for all contributions. Financial reports are submitted to the Board of Publication of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America quarterly.

Sets of back issues for the years 1950, 1952, 1953 and 1954 are available at \$1.00 for each year, postpaid. Pressboard binders which will conveniently preserve two years' issues are available at 75 cents each, postpaid. Subscriptions for the current year are \$1.50 for single subscriptions and \$1.00 for each subscription in clubs of 5 or more to be mailed to one address. All subscriptions must

begin with a January-March issue and run to the end of a calendar year. We regret that we cannot do the extra clerical work involved in having subscriptions start and stop at different times through the year.

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J. G. Vos, Editor and Manager, 415 31st Street, Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, U. S. A.



# BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

VOLUME 10

JULY-SEPTEMBER, 1955

NUMBER 3

**The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are  
the everlasting arms: and He shall thrust out the enemy  
from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them.**

**Deuteronomy 33:27**

A Quarterly Publication Devoted to Expounding, Defending and Applying the System of Doctrine set forth in the Word of God and Summarized in the Standards of the Reformed Presbyterian (Covenanter) Church.

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# *The Wigtown Martyrs*

(Author unknown)

On Solway sands the tide flows fast,  
The waters swiftly rise;  
Alas for him whom lingering there  
The rushing waves surprise!  
Full quickly must he hurry thence,  
Full swiftly must he ride,  
Who tempts his fate on Solway shore  
And races with the tide.  
Past Wigtown Borough to the sea  
The Blednoch River goes,  
With many a pool and shifting shoal  
Across the sand it flows.  
Ah! Blednoch's stream and Wigtown bay  
Have sights of sorrow seen,  
When ships were stranded on the shore,  
And boats have shipwrecked been.  
There many a time has woman wept,  
And wrung in grief her hands,  
When loved ones she longed for have been  
Found dead on Solway's sands.  
But sight so strange was never seen  
As when those martyrs died,  
And gave their life on Wigtown shore,  
And perished in the tide.  
For many years ago 'tis now,  
'Twas in the month of May;  
The level sands were smooth and dry,  
The tide out in the bay:  
'Twas then the brother of fierce Graham  
Of Claverhouse rode down,  
With Winram, Strachan, and with Cultron  
The Provost of the town.  
And cruel Grierson of Lagg  
The persecutor came,  
To do that day by Blednoch's bank  
A deed of sin and shame.  
At ebb of tide two stakes of wood  
Were driven in the sand,  
And fastened there two prisoners were,  
At Grierson's command.  
An aged widow one of them,  
And one a maiden young;  
And thus amid the rising waves  
The virgin martyr sung:  
"To Thee I lift my soul, O Lord,  
My God, I trust in Thee;  
Let me not be ashamed; let not  
My foes triumph o'er me."  
The aged widow was the first  
Drowned by the rising tide.  
"What think you of her now?" in scorn  
The persecutors cried.

"What think I of her? In that saint  
Whose soul is on the wing  
I see but this", the maid replied:  
"My Saviour suffering."  
Still ever deeper flowed the tide;  
The billows higher rose,  
As there that young defenceless girl  
Was tempted by her foes  
To buy her life by breach of faith  
To Him who was her Lord;  
Ah, she was young, and life is sweet,  
And it was but a word.  
Yet was temptation vain. She chose  
For Christ to suffer wrong;  
And still amid the rush of waves  
The men could hear the song:  
"Let not the errors of my youth,  
Nor sins remembered be.  
In mercy, for Thy goodness, Lord,  
Do Thou remember me."  
By this the waves rose to her lips;  
The voice that sung was still.  
They raised her head: "Pray for the King!"  
"God save him if He will",  
She answered. Then they dragged her forth  
Half drowned amid the tide.  
"Will you renounce the Covenant?  
Abjure your faith!" they cried.  
She raised her eyes nigh dimmed in death:  
"Renounce my Saviour? No!  
I'm one of Jesus' little ones.  
I pray you, let me go!"  
They let her go. The waters closed  
Above her youthful head.  
One of the glorious martyr throng,  
One of the deathless dead,  
Her name shall never be forgot,  
While Blednoch's waters run,  
And Solway kindles into gold  
Beneath the setting sun.  
They speak it oft in Scotland's homes;  
'Tis told in far-off lands,  
How in the bloom of youth she died  
Upon the Solway sands.  
And souls are thrilled, and hearts beat high  
To hear the story told,  
How nobly she maintained her faith  
In days that now are old;  
And how she kept her trust in God,  
And how she scorned the foe,  
And how she lived, and how she died,  
So many years ago.

**Note:** Margaret MacLachlan, a widow aged 63, and Margaret Wilson, a girl of 18, were drowned in the tide at Wigtown, Scotland, in the year 1685, because of their loyalty to Christ, His Crown and Covenant.

# BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

VOLUME 10

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NUMBER 3

## *Announcing A New Series of Articles on Calvinism*

By solemn covenant vows the Reformed Presbyterian Church as a body, and its membership as individuals, are pledged to the profession and practice of the Reformed Faith, otherwise known as Calvinism. In view of this official position of the Church, it is important that the membership understand what Calvinism is, and its implications for the life and program of the denomination. It is with pleasure that we announce a new series of articles on this subject by the Rev. Joseph A. Hill, Pastor of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Walton, New York. The first of Mr. Hill's articles on Calvinism appears in this issue, immediately following this announcement. The titles of the entire series will be as follows:

1. **The Reformed Faith and the Covenanter Church**
2. **What is the Reformed Faith?**
3. **The Reformed Faith and Evangelism**
4. **The Reformed Faith and Arminianism**
5. **The Reformed Faith and Education**
6. **The Reformed Faith and Foreign Missions**

It is hoped that Mr. Hill's articles will be widely read and will enable many to gain a clearer view of the meaning of Calvinism and its tremendous relevancy to the world of our day.

—Editor

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## *The Reformed Faith and the Covenanter Church*

By the Rev. Joseph A. Hill

A group of Covenanter church members was asked recently to state, in writing, why their denomination is called The Reformed Presbyterian Church. The prevailing notion of the group was that their church is a branch or offshoot of "the Presbyterian Church," a **reformed** Presbyterian Church. Two members of the group vaguely connected the term Reformed with the Protestant Reformation, while only one stated clearly the significance of the church's official title, namely: **Reformed**—referring to the Reformed Faith or Calvinism, formulated during the Protestant Reformation; **Presbyterian** — referring to the Scriptural principles of church government.

The present series of articles, of which this is the first, is being written in the hope that a greater awareness of the nature, content and relevance of the Reformed Faith will inspire greater love for truth and loyalty to the church's great Faith, so that the name Reformed Presbyterian will not be mere tradition.

### **Our Official Faith**

In the "Brief Covenant", sworn and signed by many members of the Covenanter Church in 1954, we profess to "believe in and accept the standards of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North

America as being in agreement with and founded upon the Scriptures." Then it is stated that "in particular **we believe in the Reformed Faith. . .**" Thus it is implied that the Reformed Faith is embodied in the standards of the Reformed Presbyterian Church which we profess to believe in and accept. If the Reformed Faith is embodied in the official standards of the Covenanter Church, **then the Reformed Faith is the official Faith of the Covenanter Church.**

### **Reformed Standards**

Even a hasty survey of the Westminster Confession of Faith (hereafter abbreviated WCF), the Larger Catechism (LC), the Shorter Catechism and the Reformed Presbyterian Declaration and Testimony (RPT) should make it clear that these doctrinal standards of the Covenanter Church contain the system of truth known as Calvinism or the Reformed Faith. The following are some of the strands of the Reformed Faith woven into the fabric of truth as set forth in the standards of the Covenanter Church.

**1. The Reformed view of Revelation.** The Reformed Faith is based upon the acknowledgment of the authority of Holy Scripture as a fixed body of revealed truth containing "a complete system

of faith, and a perfect rule for our direction in all the duties of life" (RPT, III.4). Our standards include a clear statement of the doctrine of inspiration of Scripture and the relation of reason to revelation. The Reformed View of revelation is shown to stand opposed to Rationalism, which subordinates the Bible to human reason (WCF, I; LC, 2,3-6; RPT, III,IV).

**2. The Reformed doctrine of Divine Sovereignty.** The truth of God's "working all things according to the counsel of His own immutable and most righteous will, for His own glory" (WCF, II.1) runs through the entire Reformed system of truth. Every phase of redemption, both on the objective side (what God has done FOR man) and on the subjective side (what God does IN man) proceeds from the **sovereign grace** of God. This includes **Regeneration, Justification, Adoption, Sanctification, Saving Faith, Repentance, Good Works**; these all proceed from God's sovereign grace.

While emphasizing the truth of divine sovereignty, our standards do not deny human responsibility. The Reformed Faith stresses the truth that salvation is wholly a work of God; sinners are saved by pure grace, "yet are they not hereupon to grow negligent, as if they were not bound to perform any duty . . . but they ought to be diligent in stirring up the grace of God that is in them (WCF, XVI.3; cf. III.6, XV.3, XVII; RPT I, VI, XII-XVIII; LC, 12-20).

**3. The Reformed doctrine of Predestination.** "By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others fore-ordained to everlasting death" (WCF, III.3). This doctrine, while not by any means the sum and substance of Calvinism, is nevertheless an essential part of the system of truth taught in God's Word and set forth in the doctrinal standards of the Covenanter Church.

Several other doctrines are interrelated with the truth of predestination, as follows:

(a). The **total inability** of the sinner to take even the first step toward salvation (WCF IX.3; LC, 25; RPT V.4).

(b). The **unconditional election** of some sinners to eternal life, solely on the basis of God's immutable decree (WCF, V,VI; LC, 13; RPT, VI).

(c). **Limited redemption**, the truth that Christ's atoning death has reference only to the elect (WCF, III.6; LC, 59,68; RPT, X.3).

(d). **Effectual calling**, sometimes called "**irresistible grace**", by which sinners are regenerated and enabled to accept salvation as offered in the Gospel (WCF, X; LC, 67; RPT, XII).

(e). **Perseverance in grace**, or eternal security

of believers (WCF, XVII, XVIII; LC, 79-81; RPT, XVIII).

The doctrine of predestination does not deny free will (WCF, IX) or human responsibility. "Every true believer shall most certainly be saved . . . nevertheless . . . it is his duty to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure" (RPT, XIII.5).

**4. The Covenant-conception of religion.** Central in the Reformed Faith is the truth that religion is possible only because God has condescended to bridge the gulf between God and man by a covenant (WCF, VII.1). Through the Covenant of Grace God is pleased to bring about the redemption of the human race. The Arminian view, by contrast, makes salvation dependent on faith and evangelical obedience, or a covenant of works.

The Reformed covenant theology involves an **organic** concept of Holy Scripture (WCF, VII.5,6) as over against the **disjunctive** view of Dispensationalism, held by most "Fundamentalists", in which Scripture is divided into a sequence of unrelated segments. The covenant conception also stands opposed to the evolutionary theory of religion, viz., that man throughout history has been progressing from more primitive forms of religion to more intelligent and truer religion. (See WCF, VII, VIII, XIX; LC, 20,22,30-36; RPT, V.2,3,IX.)

Mention might also be made of the **Reformed conception of sin**, which stands in opposition to the Pelagian view of sin, which dominates modern thought (WCF, VI, XV.2; LC, 24; RPT, V, XVI); and the **Reformed view of the Church**, as opposed to the common evangelical view (closing chapters of WCF and RPT).

This brief survey is not by any means exhaustive, but it is sufficient to prove that the doctrinal standards of the Covenanter Church are not merely evangelical but definitely Reformed. Thus, the official faith of the Covenanter Church is the Reformed Faith.

### Calvinism for Everyone

All over the church people are praying for revival, while neglecting the means by which revival must come. Revival, to many people, merely means enthusiasm or "inspiration", increased churchgoing, more church activities, etc. But real revival means revival of **true religion**, and such a revival can come only through loyalty to **truth**. The rediscovery of truth (the Reformed Faith) in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries brought about the greatest revival the world has ever known. And revival today can come only through faithful witnessing to divine truth in its integrity.

There are, however, certain attitudes toward the Reformed Faith which are blocking revival today. One such attitude is that the Reformed Faith

is an optional matter — members of the Covenanter Church can take it or leave it, as they prefer. But the Reformed Faith is not only the official faith of the Covenanter Church, but the **personal profession of faith of every member of the Covenanter Church**. The third Term of Communion, to which every member of the Church has subscribed is “an acknowledgment that the system of doctrine contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, and the Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, is agreeable unto and founded upon the Scriptures.” Thus we are all solemnly pledged to uphold the Reformed Faith in its fullness. Yet, many members of the Covenanter Church do not even own a copy of these doctrinal standards, and some have never even read them, with the possible exception of the Shorter Catechism. Until the membership of the Covenanter Church begins to take the Reformed Faith seriously, prayer for revival in the church is hypocrisy.

Another rather prevalent notion is that Calvinism is all right for ministers, while being “too deep” for ordinary church members. As one church member put it: “The important thing for us is to get the main truths of Christianity; then if anybody wants to dig deeper, he should study Calvinism.” Of course, ordinary church members are intelligent enough to understand some of the intricate theories of nuclear physics or aerodynamics or gynecology, when explained in simple, popular style in “The Reader’s Digest” (May, 1955, p. 121ff., p. 131ff.; Feb., 1955, p. 133ff.); but for people of average intelligence, the Reformed doctrine of Justification and the truth of Christ’s two natures are “too deep”! We should realize that if Calvinism is truth, then Calvinism is for everybody; if it is not truth, then nobody should study it.

A third harmful attitude appears in the tendency of many Covenanters to regard the Reformed Faith as a religious “movement” in the church, and to regard those who are contending for the Faith as a clique or faction in the church. The study and defense of Calvinism is regarded as a hobby for a certain minority of ministers, while the rest of the church is supposed to get along very well with the old “evangelical faith”. It will appear from what is stated above that

Calvinism or the Reformed Faith is the system of faith to which **THE CHURCH AS A WHOLE** is bound, and therefore cannot be a clique or faction, even if only a very small minority adheres to it.

#### A Mandate for the Church

How seriously should the Covenanter Church take the Reformed Faith as her official faith? And how seriously should each member of the Covenanter Church take the Reformed Faith as his own personal profession of faith?

The answer is to be found in the Terms of Communion to which we are all bound in a uniform testimony: “. . . that in loyalty and obedience to Him (Jesus Christ), it is our duty to follow the noble example of the faithful confessors and martyrs of Jesus in their witness for divine truth, and in their sacrifices and labors to establish the Kingdom of God on earth.” The “faithful confessors and martyrs of Jesus” referred to were men and women who contended for the truths of the Reformed Faith during the Protestant Reformation. They took the Reformed Faith seriously as life itself; they **labored**, made great personal **sacrifices**, and some even **died** because they believed and loved the truths of the Reformed Faith.

In the Covenant of 1871, an **official** confessional document of the Covenanter Church, we vow “that after careful examination, having embraced the system of faith . . . revealed in the Holy Scriptures, and summarized . . . in the Westminster Confession and Catechisms, and Reformed Presbyterian Testimony . . . we do publicly profess and own this as the true Christian faith and religion . . . and, by the grace of God, we will sincerely and constantly endeavor to understand it more fully, to hold and observe it in its integrity, and to transmit the knowledge of the same to posterity” (Sec. 2). Thus, the covenant-task of our Church is defined by the Covenant of 1871 as an energetic propagation of “the great principles of the Protestant Reformation” (*ibid.*). It is our duty not merely to **tolerate** the Reformed Faith, but to **defend** and **propagate** the Reformed Faith as “the true Christian faith and religion.”

This is the divine mandate for the Covenanter Church in all her departments — her publications, her schools, her foreign missions as well as her local congregations.

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## Sketches of the Covenanters

By J. C. McFeeters

### Chapter XV

#### The King Wages War — A.D. 1639.

The year of our Lord, 1638, exalted the Covenanted Church into prominence and power. The Covenant in the beginning of the year, and the

General Assembly at the end, were achievements that arose in sublimity and moral grandeur like mountains, and all the months between, being

filled with spiritual refreshing, were like table lands covered with the glory of the Lord, and shaking like Lebanon with prosperous fruit. "The light of the moon was as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun sevenfold, as the light of seven days."

During the next ten years the Church experienced rapid growth. The Covenant always seemed to give the Church about ten years of extraordinary prosperity. The Holy Spirit descended in power, multiplying the ministry and membership exceedingly. New congregations sprang up in the towns and in the country, and were shepherded by faithful ministers. True religion bringing peace, comfort, and gladness, entered the homes of the people and lodged with them. The melody of joy and health was heard in their dwellings. The family altar made the humblest house the Holy of Holies where God was enthroned on His Mercy Seat, and the lowliest family was a royal priesthood ministering unto God in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Yet all this time the Church suffered violence. She had become a bright target upon which Satan concentrated the fire of his heaviest artillery. One onslaught followed another with vengeful malice. The gates of hell opened wide and the floods dashed fiercely against her; but she was built upon a Rock, and that Rock was Christ. She was in alliance with the Lord. Her people were steadfast in their Covenant; they were united, full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; therefore the distresses resulted only in her growth.

When the king heard that the General Assembly was in session contrary to his will and acting directly in violation of his decree, he was filled with wrath. Having sent Hamilton to use policy and craftiness, and thereby gain time, he mustered an army of nearly 50,000 men, with which to punish the Covenanters. He also sent a fleet to cooperate with the land forces. Absolute subjugation was determined. These people must be despoiled of conscience, liberty, divine worship, religious rights—all that is most sacred to the human heart. The army is coming. Men, women, and children must feel the weight of the horses' hoofs and the warriors' boots, just because they have joined themselves to the Lord in a Covenant, and are living the life of faith on the Son of God.

The Covenanters were not dismayed, yet they hesitated to accept war. Would it be right to take up arms against the government? Ought they to go forth against their king in battle? Should they use the weapons that are carnal, and engage in the shedding of blood? Such questions lay heavy upon their hearts. They pondered, prayed, and fasted, that they might reach a decision in the fear of God. Finally they resolved to make their defense by force of arms. Their cause was just. Momentous issues were involved; their Covenant with God, the supremacy of Jesus Christ, the indepen-

dence of the Church, the liberty of conscience, the purity of Divine worship, the rights of citizenship, the heritage of future generations, the progress of Christian civilization—all this appealed to the Covenanters for defense. The trumpet of war sounded, and the sturdy sons of the Covenant quickly responded.

General Alexander Leslie was at the head of the Covenanted army. He led his forces with rapid marches to meet the king. Friendly troops converged upon him on the way from all parts of Scotland till his command numbered 24,000 men. They presented a formidable array. These soldiers of the Covenant were marching to victory or to death. Courage in the countenance and firmness in the step told of an unconquerable purpose. Onward moved the resolute columns. Every day brought them nearer the royal hosts that would test their strength. The sight was thrilling; solid ranks of infantry, sword-girded cavalry, stalwart cannoneers, and floating banners. The Psalms reverberated among the hills in worship morning and evening. Well might King Charles pause ere he strike against this host of God.

One day the Covenanters from an eminence beheld their enemy at a distance of six miles. General Leslie halted, arranging his troops on sloping grounds facing the foe. There he prepared for action. Forty pieces of cannon bristled along the oval summit; the musketry and swordmen were placed on the hillside and outstretching plain. The encampment presented an appearance unusual in warfare. At the tent-door of each captain the ensign of the Covenant was unfurled. On the banner was inscribed in letters of gold the soul-stirring motto:

#### FOR CHRIST'S CROWN AND COVENANT.

As the flag rose and fell on the soft summer winds, the men were reminded of the sacred cause which they loved more than their lives. A chaplain of highest character was assigned to each regiment. Every morning and evening the men were summoned by the beat of drum for the worship of their God. Such were the Covenanters as they waited in the presence of their foes for a sanguinary struggle. How often they sang the 3rd Psalm, the 27th, and the 72nd, we know not. The Psalms were the lion's marrow upon which these lion-hearted heroes fed.

The Covenanters did not want to give battle; they were merely on the defensive. They loved peace and longed for it. They shuddered at the horror of civil war and would avoid it if at all within their power. They sent an embassy asking for a conference. The king, knowing the spirit and power of the men with whom he had to deal, consented. During the negotiations for peace, the king hesitated to grant the Covenanters their demand. They would have nothing less than a free General Assembly and a Parliament. The king

would not consent. Gen. Leslie replied by announcing his intention to advance his army within gunshot of the king's camp. This persuaded the king to come to terms, and a treaty of peace was ratified, by which the Covenanters received, on paper, all they asked. The Covenanters returned to their homes rejoicing in their Covenant Lord, who had given them the victory without the cost of blood, and in their homes profound gratitude arose to God in their morning and evening service of worship.

The people continued steadfast in their Covenant, enjoying the rights and privileges of the children of God for a time. The Lord showered His blessings upon them. Their increase in power and numbers was marvelous. The king again became alarmed. He resolved on war once more, and within a year was at the head of another army, determined to reduce the Covenanters and bring them into subjection to his arbitrary will.

The Covenanted fathers would surrender nothing in which the honor of the Church and the glory of Christ were involved. They were very jealous concerning all moral obligations and religious truth. They had convictions, conscience, intelligence, and the fear of God, and dared to fight for the right. They distinguished pillars of granite

from columns of brick, and were not confused. They knew that gold dust was gold, and saved the dust as well as the ingots; they would sacrifice nothing. Can not we get a lesson here that will make the heart throb and the cheeks burn, as we view the faithfulness and heroism of these Covenanted ancestors?

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#### Points for the Class

1. What two great events in the Church transpired in 1638?
2. What growth did the Church experience in the next ten years?
3. What new danger loomed up?
4. How did the Covenanters meet the king's army?
5. Describe the army of the Covenanters.
6. How was this struggle ended?
7. How did the king keep his promise?
8. What lessons may we derive from the fathers?

(To be continued)

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## Who Is to be King? III

By the Rev. Samuel E. Boyle

Concluding article in a study of the World Council of Churches, based on the book "The Kingship of Christ," by Dr. G. K. A. Bell. London, 1954.

In this reviewer's personal judgment, the most ominous development in the rapid growth of World Council power during its brief organized history is to be found, not in the field of religion or ecclesiastical influence, but in its entry into the field of world politics.

The Roman Catholic Church long ago discovered the way to earthly power in international circles, and even today, with its world-wide nervous system of secret or public diplomatic channels between the Vatican and all parts of the world, the Pope is a grim reality with which every national government must reckon.

Because Protestantism developed in an increasingly diverse multiplication of national and denominational churches, there has not been that unity which could make any united front of political influence felt in the affairs of the world. It is now becoming evident that the World Council of Churches, by recovering to some degree a Protestant unity of voice and action, has reaped

as an important fruit of this unity a new power to form organized religious opinion in the world, capable of influencing governmental circles in various nations and in the United Nations itself. Thus we see in this new approach to world problems by the World Council of Churches an historical innovation similar in some respects to the method used in the past by the Vatican in Rome. The World Council's "Commission of the Churches on International Affairs" (CCIA) has now become an important agency to bring the ecumenical Protestants into an effective relation of power to the secular governments of the world.

#### Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees

As the World Council has now entered this important place of world power, it is interesting to trace the gradual rise of the organization to its contemporary influence. This political importance came, we are convinced, chiefly through the economic and political results of a centralized world relief program which has grown up since the close of World War II. In Chapter Eleven of Dr. Bell's little book this story of world relief is told. Citing the Apostle Paul's exhortation to the Greek churches of his day to send aid to impoverished churches in Jerusalem, Dr. Bell explains the World Council Inter-Church Aid as follows:

"The principle may be simply described as that of Inter-Church Aid. It was first applied as between Protestant Churches helping Protestant Churches in another country, by the organization founded by Dr. Adolf Keller in 1922, and known as the Central European Bureau of Inter-Church Aid. This had its headquarters in Geneva, and offices in New York; and it did invaluable work between the two World Wars. When the Second World War came, the officers of the Provisional Committee of the World Council, as we have already observed, felt that a large-scale plan involving the member Churches generally should be set on foot" (P. 105).

In this quotation may be observed the characteristic trait and slogan of the ecumenical movement under the World Council. The main driving idea is that a BIG organization can do Christian work much better than a great many LITTLE units. This, of course, is sometimes true, but is far from sufficient as the only reason for centralization in Christian organizations and activity. One is forced to notice how the "big organizers" of the World Council move in hungrily to take every existing Christian activity into their one grand world scheme. In such centralization we must ask, "Who is to be King?" The King and Head of the Church? Or some upper bracket of modernist churchmen who substitute for genuine evangelical faith and obedience mere worldly success and power?

According to Dr. Bell's bare outline of the growth of this humanitarian service of the World Council, three main stages have been passed since the end of World War II. The first was the emergency need right after the war ended. Restoration of ruined churches and relief for war-impooverished pastors occupied most of the attention at this stage. From May, 1945 to August, 1948 a total sum of \$3,905,500 was administered in Europe in this relief work.

Phase two of the relief program is called the stage of "permanent obligation" to needy churches in Europe. In four years, from 1948 to 1952, Inter-Church Aid applied a total sum of \$8,500,000 (of which \$7,333,678 came from American contributors) to the needy in Europe.

The third and most recent phase of this program is significant most of all because it linked the World Council relief machinery with that of the International Missionary Council to form one world-wide charitable and humanitarian agency for administration of relief to needy people of the world. Evangelical missionaries know well the doctrinal influence of the International Missionary Council. It is the leading exponent of modernistic theology and destructive ecumenicism on the mission fields of the world today. Although it includes in its membership churches and individuals who may be orthodox, the leadership of

the IMC is undoubtedly in the hands of denominations and leaders who do not stand for the historic Gospel supernaturalism of true Protestant Christianity.

In this merger of the WCC relief work which began in Europe with the vastly wider activity of the International Missionary Council in the whole world we see two growing giants joining hands in the use of millions of dollars for the material aid of needy people of the world. If this centralization of organization and money is linked with bad theology and unscriptural ideas of church unity, do we not see in this another threat to pure Biblical Christianity? Our zeal is not inspired by jealousy. Nor do we suspect that the funds administered by the WCC and IMC have been in any way badly used. We feel sure that honesty and efficiency rule in their administration of money and that many people have been helped. Our only fear is that with the prevailing doctrinal character of the administering bodies what it is, the use of these large sums in the name of Christ by unorthodox churchmen will eventually harm rather than aid the souls of those needing material aid.

The WCC-IMC relief program has attracted other funds and new responsibilities as it has gained a world reputation for efficient action. The secular post-war agencies, UNRRA and IRO, disbanded their work, and their funds were turned over to the World Council agency. In 1952 the Ford Foundation gave to six agencies, one of which was the World Council, a sum of \$2,900,000 to be used in pilot projects for the rehabilitation of agriculture in needy areas. In Asia, Africa, India, and all other areas which have not gone under the communist enslavement, the reach of the World Council's relief program may be found. This is power, for money is power. It is natural, then, that the next chapter in Dr. Bell's book is entitled:

#### **Action for Justice and Peace**

This chapter tells of the formation of the World Council lobby, "The Commission of the Churches on International Affairs." This is a 45-member agency for keeping member bodies of the World Council informed about world events, gathering opinions on these world events from the member bodies, and then applying needed pressure in the United Nations or elsewhere to direct world events along those paths which seem to the CCIA to be morally desirable. One statement made is: "**It is the Kingship of Christ over the kingdoms of the world which is the supreme aim of the World Council of Churches**" (P. 124). Lest we become enamoured of mere words, let us recall that the Roman Catholic Vatican seeks exactly the same goal, "the Kingship of Christ over the kingdoms of the world. . .". We must carefully ask both the Vatican and the World Council,

"Who is to be king? The Christ of the Scriptures, or someone else?"

### World Council Technique of Politics

As words go, much of this chapter in Dr. Bell's book will sound strangely similar to Reformed Presbyterian doctrine. For example, Dr. Bell quotes several resolutions passed at the Amsterdam meeting of the World Council in 1948. He points out three principles adopted there: (1) The world is in God's hands; (2) War is a sin against God; (3) The State is subject to God. Of this last point it was stated:

"Our Lord Jesus Christ taught that God, the Father of all, is Sovereign. We affirm, therefore, that no State may claim absolute sovereignty, or make laws without regard to the commandments of God and the welfare of mankind. It must accept the responsibility under the governance of God, and its subordination to law, within the society of nations" (P. 121).

After reading these broad principles of the World Council, Covenanters may feel like shouting, "Amen!" But if we so shout, be assured that we shall have made fools of ourselves in so doing. These words, in the context of World Council personnel, doctrine and action, cannot possibly mean what the Bible teaching of the Covenanter Church means. **"The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau."**

How does the World Council work in influencing politics? What was their reasoning when they set up the CCIA (Commission of the Churches on International Affairs), After adopting the broadly Christian principles just quoted, the next step of the WCC was to implement their principles by suitable voice and action at a particular place and time. Dr. Bell says, "At the same time, if the World Council is to give adequate expression to its convictions at a particular moment, any statement it makes must be addressed to a particular situation, and take account of the actual conditions. Hence the World Council would require the assistance of those with special knowledge of international affairs" (P. 121).

As "the C.C.I.A. is the expert body dealing with general and particular situations, and problems, it is important that it should be recognized as the instrument of the World Council (and the International Missionary Council) by inter-governmental organizations and by national governments. This applies not only to political, but also to economic questions, and to questions which have a wide social bearing" (P. 122).

Dr. Bell quotes from one Sir Alfred Zimmern a passage of importance to the understanding of World Council political technique:

"Between the things of Caesar and the Kingdom of God there is a perpetual tension that is at

its highest when, as in the case of Africa (Note: This was when Mussolini invaded Ethiopia. — S.E.B.), Caesar's power is least subject to control. In order to play his part in Caesar's world, the Christian needs, on the one hand, to arm himself with an understanding of Caesar's problems — he must be able, so to speak, to out-Caesar Caesar on his own ground — and, on the other hand, the military metaphor may be excused, to keep open his own spiritual base" (P. 121).

It must be noted carefully here that the idea of the above-quoted writer is that Christian Churches ought to become experts in the affairs of State, and "out-Caesar Caesar on his own ground." This will be seen a little later, when compared to our Covenanter doctrine of church and state, as a quite different idea and one which is highly debatable.

The CCIA (Commission of the Churches on International Affairs), then, is a lobby, set up to bring action in "the sphere of Caesar" **according to the notions held by World Council experts** as to the wise and Christian thing to be done in a given situation. The CCIA professes to be supra-national, not international. That is, it is above all national and local loyalties, and is concerned only with abstract justice based on the Bible. **". . . out of obedience to the will of God as revealed in the Bible, the book that speaks of the Justice of God in relation to world affairs.** Therefore the prime target for the C. C. I. A. is the realization of justice" (P. 124).

### Is This Covenanter Doctrine or Not?

"Well, what is the matter with THAT statement?", do I hear some reader say? This, then, is the proper time to evaluate the statements quoted thus far. Look carefully at the statement quoted directly above. It seems to be flawless orthodoxy, and for me to question it may seem to be extreme hair-splitting. But look! If you knew that the town was flooded with counterfeit five dollar bills, would you count your change without careful scrutiny of each five dollar note? Or if you learned that rat poison had accidentally been dropped in the show-case of the meat market where you had bought the pork chops for your evening meal, would you cook and eat that meat without an attempt to learn whether or not there was poison in it? It is only common sense to use due caution and suspicion when danger exists, and today in the churches there is much poison abroad, and many counterfeit teachings are current. Look, then, at the statement just given from Dr. Bell's book:

**". . . out of obedience to the will of God as revealed in the Bible, the book that speaks of the Justice of God in relation to world affairs. . .".**

Suppose this statement were presented to an outstanding scholar of Europe, one of the "Crisis

Theology" writers. Could he agree? Obviously he could. This European scholar has written in one of his published books that the Bible contains the Word of God but that the Book itself cannot be called the Word of God. "That book" (the Bible) lying on the table is similar to the radio beside it. Out of the radio comes much sweet music, much valuable information, and yet there are also ugly sounds of static and interference which have to be tuned out of the instrument in order to get the proper message from the radio. So, this man and all his school of new theologians would say, the Bible as a book contains God's Word but it also contains much of man's error and bad music. We must select the Word of God and reject the bad.

Now could famous theologians who think of the Bible in this faulty manner adopt the statement which we have quoted from Dr. Bell's book? Read the statement once more:

**". . . out of obedience to the will of God as revealed in the Bible, the book that speaks of the Justice of God in relation to world affairs."**

It is apparent after contrasting these two things, the Barthian notion of an imperfect Book, with the broad and vague WCC statement, that no Barthian would have the least difficulty with this quotation. It does not force him to reject his heretical idea of the Word of God. Nor would Fosdick or any other famous modernist find trouble accepting the above statement about the Bible. Most World Council utterances seem to be framed purposely to allow such men room to take their places inside the Council along with simple, honest Bible Christians. This is the fundamental danger of the World Council and its ecumenical method.

To avoid deception and confusion when reading such fine sounding statements as the World Council is always releasing to the world, we Covenanters must remember what we believe and teach. We teach the infallible authority of the Bible. We do not flinch from a full assent to the verbal, plenary accuracy of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. This is our personal and church rule of faith. This, we believe, is the only Divine rule book for nations and for all mankind. Our source of Truth, then, is God's own written Word, and that alone.

We therefore do not offer the world of sinful men and warring nations a modernistic "eye-wash" of sweet ethical behaviour. We present our Gospel to a world under the wrath of God for human wickedness and rebellion against God and His Christ (Psalm 2). We call all nations to repent, to kiss the Son lest in His ire we perish from the way.

The Covenanter doctrine of the Kingship of Christ is in every way, from root to branch, totally and eternally different from this World Council

brand. We teach that only a Bible religion held by Bible-believing and truly Reformed Churches, which are striving together for conformity in Word, sacraments and church discipline, can hope to call nations to repentance and faith in Christ the King. We believe that the root of national morality and world peace is a truly Reformed Church in a truly godly nation, with Church and State in free co-operation under God's mediatorial King, Jesus Christ. Toward this end we are seeking a revival of true Bible religion in all churches. We are asking other churches to join us in calling our own nation and all other nations of the world to repent, put away their false gods, and, depending on God's Word for wisdom, to turn to the Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son, lest the cup of God's impending wrath fall on all nations of the earth.

In contrast with our Biblical emphasis the World Council movements distill away the essence of Christian truth about Church and State, and offer the nations talk of "ethics" and "social justice" totally apart from objective obedience to Christ the Mediatorial King and true dependence on the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the law-book for nations. The Covenanter Church teaches nations to repent and turn to the Mediatorial King, and to make the Bible the supreme law-book of every land. The World Council leaders when approached by the Christian Amendment petition in this nation have gone out of their way (e.g., correspondence between G. Bromley Oxnam and the writer of this article eight years ago) to ridicule and spurn the notion of any such remedy for man's international ills. The Kingship of Christ does not mean to World Council leaders what the term means for us, and we cannot work with such people.

#### Separation of Church and State

Another subtle distinction must also be made. We believe in the separation of Church and State under one common, covenant-bound allegiance to Christ the King. We believe that the State has its duty to God and to Christ the anointed King. We believe that Jesus Christ is the King and Head of the Church and no governmental officials have any right to intrude on the spiritual rule of the Church. We believe, too, that any message, petition or legislative effort coming from the Church to the State is to put the actual responsibility for reform by the State squarely in the hands of "Caesar". The Church is never to take a position of trying to "boss" the State.

The CCIA, the World Council's lobby, seeks by the close observation of problems which arise in the world from day to day, and by adequate action through political channels to influence political decisions by political leaders of the world in the direction of what the CCIA believes is "the Kingship of God."

The Covenanter Church, by faithful Gospel

preaching to all men, and by urging rulers to become obedient to Christ in their sphere of duty as governors, seeks to encourage nations to turn to Christ and be saved.

In matters of national reformation, as in the alcoholic and narcotic traffic, or gambling and other vices, the church has a duty to rebuke the rulers, and to demand righteousness when the rulers are negligent or wicked. But to maintain a permanent lobby to pass judgment daily in matters of State rightly belonging to ordained rulers of the State seems highly unbiblical and dangerous. It is not far from this type of action to the "supra-national" tyranny of Church over State which has been the fault of the Roman Catholic Church for hundreds of years.

#### What Has the C. C. I. A. Done?

Last September 7 (1954) a clipping from the New York Times came to my attention. I quote it here as a case in point:

"The Greek delegation hailed today the recent stand of a group of prominent church leaders supporting the right of the people of Cyprus to decide the island's future.

"Greece, which insists that Cypriotes want union with Greece instead of the present control by Britain, has asked the United Nations General Assembly to reconsider the issue at its ninth session September 21.

"Christian X. Palamas, Greek delegate, commended the resolution adopted last month by the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs at a meeting in Chicago. This commission, a joint body of the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council, represents members in 163 church bodies in forty-eight countries."

The CCIA is now a member of the United Nations Department of Public Information, and has some official relationship to UNESCO. Dr. O. Frederick Nolde is head of the lobby. The organization has been active in proposing methods for United Nations truce teams in Korea and elsewhere. Many declarations have been issued about atomic weapons and peace and peaceful co-existence with communism. Dr. Bell's book tells an intensely significant story of the long-drawn out correspondence between the World Council and the communist World Peace Council (pages 132-135). Only recently the World Council has come out in the world press with a declaration tending to soften President Eisenhower's stern warning to Red China. The big drive of the Methodist Bishops for world peace, sparked by Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam and Dr. Ralph W. Sockman is a subtle appeal for appeasement of world communism by spurious calls for "justice" and "peace" — on communist terms. When we remember the close fellowship between World Council leadership and

pre-Red churchmen behind the Iron Curtains, or when we read in Dr. Bell's book (pp. 132-135) of the tantalizing, uncertain and weak dealings between the World Council through its CCIA and the communistic "World Peace Council," it should strike fear into every American's soul to know of the growing political power in high places, both in the United States and in the United Nations, now exercised by the modernistic World Council machine.

The World Council of Churches is an inclusive, worldly church organization. It relies on machinery and monopoly rather than on truth and reformation of the church for success. Its flimsy creed is always nullified by its open announcement that the WCC does not require any investigation of the interpretation of that creed by members. The unchallenged presence in its highest leadership of modernists who deny the historic Protestant faith; the unwillingness of the WCC to take a Scriptural position against Romanist persecution and error; the neglect by the WCC of needed rebuke of communist atheism and tyranny by refusing pre-Red churchmen membership until they separate from their communist regimes; the World Council's assumption of worldly power in the councils of the United Nations — all these things point to trouble. The experts in the CCIA can be nothing but "blind leaders of the blind" for they do not offer nations the Wisdom of God nor the Mediatorial Reign of the Christ of the Bible. They only cover the wisdom of fallible men with a whitewash of Christian terminology and idealism.

How tragic, though, to see Protestantism gaining the attention of the troubled nations of the free world today, and yet to find them by reason of unbelief and apostasy within their own ranks unable to help a world drifting into atomic war and utter moral ruin. Jesus said long ago: "**If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness.**"

The Covenanter Church should, in the interests of retaining its holy message of Christ the Saviour and King of nations, avoid all contacts with the World Council of Churches or its network of related councils on the national, regional, state or local levels. Any World Day of Prayer program, any town or county council of churches, or any otherwise commendable activity in the name of Christ should be carefully guarded from falling into the snare of this new false religion of ecumenicity. Difficult as this isolationism may seem to be, the way of blessing lies in seeking with other Bible Christians a true unity based on the infallible Word of God in the Scriptures. To that end it is highly important that our people give more prayerful attention to the Covenant of 1871 in its entirety as the proper commentary on our Article 4 of that covenant:

"That, believing the Church to be one, and that all saints have communion with God and with one

another in the same Covenant; believing, moreover, that schism and sectarianism are sinful in themselves; and inimical to true religion, and trusting that divisions shall cease, and the people of God become one Catholic church over all the

earth, we will pray and labor for the visible oneness of the Church of God in our own land and throughout the world, on the basis of truth and Scriptural order. . . .”

The End

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## *The Importance of Christian Scholarship*

By J. Gresham Machen, D.D., D.Litt.

(Continued from last issue)

**Note:** This series of articles by the late Dr. J. Gresham Machen, comprising his lectures before the Bible League of England, is reproduced here by permission of the William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company. — Ed.

### III. THE IMPORTANCE OF CHRISTIAN SCHOLARSHIP FOR THE BUILDING UP OF THE CHURCH

We have been discussing to-day the uses of Christian scholarship. It is important, we showed this morning, for evangelism; it is important, in the second place, as we showed this afternoon, for the defence of the faith. But it has still another use. It is important, in the third place, for the building up of the Church.

#### The Apostolic Practice

At this point, as at the first two points, we have the new Testament on our side. At the beginning of the Church's life, as we are told in the Book of Acts, the Apostolic Church continued steadfastly, not only in fellowship and in breaking of bread and prayers, but also in the apostles' teaching. There is no encouragement whatever, in the New Testament, for the notion that when a man has been converted all has been done for him that needs to be done. Read the Epistles of Paul, in particular, from that point of view. Paul was the greatest of evangelists, and he gloried particularly in preaching the gospel just in places where it had never been heard; yet his Epistles are full of the edification or building up of those who have already been won; and the whole New Testament clearly discourages the exclusive nourishment of Christians with milk instead of with solid food.

#### Doctrinal Preaching

In the modern Church, this important work of edification has been sadly neglected; it has been neglected even by some of those who believe that the Bible is the Word of God. Too often doctrinal preaching has been pushed from the primary place, in which it rightly belongs, to a secondary place; exhortation has taken the place of systematic instruction; and the people have not been built up. Is it any wonder that a Church

thus nurtured is carried away with every wind of doctrine and is helpless in the presence of unbelief? A return to solid instruction in the pulpit, at the desk of the Sunday School teacher, and particularly in the home, is one of the crying needs of the hour.

I do not mean that a sermon should be a lecture; I do not mean that a preacher should address his congregation as a teacher addresses his class. No doubt some young preachers do err in that way. Impressed with the truth that we are trying to present tonight, they have endeavoured to instruct the people in Christian doctrine; but in their efforts to be instructive they have put entirely too many points into one sermon and the congregation has been confused. That error, unquestionably, should be avoided. But it should be avoided not by the abandonment of doctrinal preaching, but by our making doctrinal preaching real **preaching**. The preacher should present to his congregation the doctrine that the Holy Scripture contains; but he should fire the presentation of that doctrine with the devotion of the heart, and he should show how it can be made fruitful for Christian life.

#### Modern Preaching

One thing that impresses me about preaching to-day is the neglect of true edification even by evangelical preachers. What the preacher says is often good, and by it genuine Christian emotion is aroused. But a man could sit under the preaching for a year or ten years and at the end of the time he would be just about where he was at the beginning. Such a lamentably small part of Scripture truth is used; the congregation is never made acquainted with the wonderful variety of what the Bible contains. I trust that God may raise up for us preachers of a different type; I trust that those preachers may not only build upon the one foundation which is Jesus Christ, but may build upon that foundation not wood, hay, stubble, but gold, silver, precious stones. Do you, if you are preachers or teachers in the Church, want to be saved merely so as through fire, or do you want your work to endure in the day of Jesus Christ? There is one work at least which I think we may hold, in all humility, to be sure to stand

the test of judgment fire; it is the humble impartation, Sunday by Sunday, or day by day, of a solid knowledge not of what you say or what any man has said, but of what God has told us in His Word.

Is that work too lowly; is it too restricted to fire the ambition of our souls? Nay, my friends, **a hundred lifetimes would not begin to explore the riches of what the Scriptures contain.**

Some years ago, when I was still at Princeton Theological Seminary, before the reorganization of that institution, we received one of the countless questionnaires which in America have become, with one's neighbour's radio, one of the nuisances of modern life. The man who sent out the questionnaire, was threatening, I believe, to write a book on theological education; and afterwards he carried out his threat. The questionnaire begged the question as many questionnaires do; it was not, if I remember rightly, in the slightest interested in the question whether a high scholarly standard was maintained in the study of the Bible; it did not seem to be much interested in discovering whether the students were or were not required to know the languages in which the Bible is written: but there were all sorts of questions about courses in hygiene and the like. In short, one prominent purpose of sending us the questionnaire seemed to be that of discovering whether Princeton Theological Seminary was or was not a medical school.

I am no longer connected with Princeton Theological Seminary, since its reorganization in 1929, and so cannot speak for that institution. But I may say that Westminster Theological Seminary, which I now have the honour to serve, is not pretending to be a medical school at all. We are not striving to train experts in hygiene or in first-aid; we are not trying to make specialists in sociology or even specialists in religion. But what we are trying to do is to make specialists in the Bible, and we think that that is a large enough speciality for any man to give to it his life.

**What a world in itself the Bible is, my friends!** Happy are those who in the providence of God can make the study of it very specifically the business of their lives; but happy also is every Christian who has it open before him and seeks by daily study to penetrate somewhat into the wonderful richness of what it contains.

#### **The Revelation of God in the Bible**

A man does not need to read very long in the Bible before that richness begins to appear. It appears in the very first verse of the Bible; for the very first verse sets forth the being of God: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

We are told today, indeed, that that is

metaphysics, and that it is a matter of indifference to the Christian man. (With what follows compare the treatment by the lecturer in "What is Faith," 1925, pp. 46-66.) To be a Christian, it is said, a man does not need at all to settle the question how the universe came into being. The doctrine of "fiat creation," we are told, belongs to philosophy, not to religion; and we can be worshippers of goodness even though goodness is not clothed with the vulgar trappings of power.

But to talk thus is to talk nonsense, for the simple reason that goodness divorced from power is **a mere abstraction which can never call forth the devotion of a man's heart.** Goodness inheres only in persons; goodness implies the power to act. Make God good only and not powerful, and you have done away not only with God, but with goodness as well.

Very different from such a pale abstraction, which identifies God with one aspect of the universe, is the God whom the first verse of Genesis presents. That God is the living God; it is He by Whom the worlds were made and by Whom they are upheld.

No, my friends, it is altogether wrong to say that the Christian religion can do perfectly well with many different types of philosophy, and that metaphysical questions are a matter of indifference to the Christian man. Nothing could be farther from the truth. As a matter of fact, everything else that the Bible contains is based upon the stupendous metaphysic that the first verse of Genesis contains. That was the metaphysic of our Lord Jesus Christ, and without it everything that He said and everything that He did would be vain. Underlying all His teaching and all His example is the **stupendous recognition that God is the Maker and Ruler of the world;** and the Bible from beginning to end depends upon that same "philosophy" of a personal God.

#### **The Revelation of God in Nature**

That philosophy ought to have been clear from an examination of the universe as it is; the Maker is revealed by the things that He has made. "The Heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth His handiwork." "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead." Natural religion has, therefore, the full sanction of the Bible; and at the foundation of every theological course should be philosophical apologetics, including the proof of the existence of a personal God, Creator and Ruler of the world.

I know there are those who tell us today that no such study is necessary; there are those who tell us that we should begin with Jesus, and that all we need to know is that God is like Jesus.

They talk to us, in that sense, about the "Christ-like God." But do you not see that if you relinquish the thought of a personal God, Creator and Ruler of the world, you are dishonouring the teaching of Jesus from beginning to end. Jesus saw in the lilies of the field the weaving of God; and the man who wipes out of his consciousness the whole wonderful revelation of God in nature, and then says that all that he needs to know is that God is like Jesus, is dishonouring at the very root of His teaching and of His example that same Jesus whom he is purporting to honour and serve.

#### The Need for Fuller Revelation

The existence of a personal God should have been clear to us from the world as it is, but that revelation of God in nature has been obscured by sin, and to recover it and confirm it we need the blessed supernatural revelation that the Scriptures contain. How graciously that revelation is given! When we rise from the reading of the Bible, if we have read with understanding and with faith, what a wonderful knowledge we have of the living God!

In His presence, indeed, we can never lose the sense of wonder. Infinitesimal are the things that we know compared with the things that we do not know; a dreadful curtain veils the being of God from the eyes of man. Yet that curtain, in the infinite goodness of God, has been pulled gently aside, and we have been granted just a look beyond. Never can we cease to wonder in the presence of God; but **enough knowledge has been granted to us that we may adore.**

#### The Revelation of Man in the Bible

The second great mystery that the Bible presents is the mystery of man. And we are not allowed to wait long for that mystery. It is presented to us, as is the mystery of God, in the early part of the first book of the Bible. Man is there presented in his utter distinctness from the rest of the creation; and then he is presented to us in the awful mystery of his sin.

At that point, it is interesting to observe how the Bible, unlike modern religious literature, always defines its terms; and at the beginning, when the Bible speaks of sin, it makes clear exactly what sin is. According to the Westminster Shorter Catechism, if you will pardon an allusion to that upon which your speaker was brought up, "**sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.**" I do not remember, at the moment, what proof-texts the authors of the Westminster Standards used to support that definition. But they need hardly have looked farther for such proof-texts than to the early part of Genesis. "Ye shall not eat of the tree," said God; man ate of the tree and died. Sin is there presented with the utmost clearness as the transgression of law. So it is presented in the whole

of the Bible. Sin and law belong together. When we say "sin," we have said "law"; when we have said "law," then, man being what he now is, we have said "sin."

At the present time, the existence of law is being denied. **Men no longer believe that there is such a thing as a law of God;** and naturally they do not believe that there is such a thing as sin. Thoughtful men, who are not Christians, are aware of the problem that this stupendous change in human thinking presents to the modern world. Now that men no longer believe that there is a law of God, now that men no longer believe in obligatory morality, now that the moral law has been abandoned, what is to be put in its place, in order that an ordinarily decent human life may be preserved upon the earth. It cannot be said that the answers proposed for that question are as satisfactory as the way in which the question itself is put. It is impossible to keep back the raging seas of human passion with the flimsy mud embankments of an appeal either to self interest, or to what Walter Lippmann calls "disinterestedness." **Those raging seas can only be checked by the solid masonry of the law of God.**

#### What is Wrong with the World?

Men are wondering today what is wrong with the world. They are conscious of the fact that they are standing over some terrible abyss. Awful ebullitions rise from that abyss. We have lost altogether the sense of the security of our Western civilization. Men are wondering what is wrong.

It is perfectly clear what is wrong. **The law of God has been torn up,** as though it were a scrap of paper, and the inevitable result is appearing with ever greater clearness. When will the law be re-discovered? When it is re-discovered, that will be a day of terror for mankind: but it will also be a day of joy; **for the law will be a schoolmaster unto Christ.** Its terrors will drive men back to the little wicket gate, and to the way that leads to that place somewhat ascending where they will see the Cross.

Those are the two great presuppositions of everything else that the Bible contains; the two great presuppositions are **the majesty of the transcendent God and the guilt and misery of man in his sin.** But we are not left to wait long for the third of the great mysteries—the **mystery of salvation.** That, too, is presented at the beginning of Genesis, in the promise of a redemption to come.

The rest of the Bible is the unfolding of that promise. And when I think of that unfolding, when I try to take the Bible, not in part, but as a whole, when I contemplate not this doctrine or that, but the marvellous **system** of doctrine that the Bible contains, I am amazed that in the presence of such riches men can be content with that other gospel which now dominates the preaching in the Church.

### The Gospel Unfolded in Scripture

When I think again of the wonderful metaphysic in the first verse of Genesis—"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth"—when I think of the way in which throughout the Old Testament the majesty of that Creator God is presented with wonderful clearness, until the presentation culminates in the matchless fortieth chapter of Isaiah—"It is He that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers, that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in"—when I think of the way in which in that same chapter the tenderness and the gentleness of that same awful God are represented, in a manner far beyond all human imagining—"He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young"—when I think of the wonderful gallery of portraits in the Old Testament, and compare it with the best efforts of men who have sought to penetrate into the secrets of human life and of the human heart; when I think of the gracious dealings of God with His people in Old Testament times, until the fulness of the time was come, and the Saviour was born into the world; when I think of the way in which His coming was accomplished, by a stupendous miracle indeed, but in wonderful quietness and lowliness; when I think of the songs of the heavenly host, and the way in which the infant Saviour was greeted in the Temple by those who had waited for the redemption of Jerusalem; when I stand in awe before that strange answer of the youthful Jesus, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?"; when I try to keep my imagination at rest, as Scripture bids me do, regarding those long, silent years at Nazareth; when I think of the day of His showing to Israel; when I think of the sternness of His teaching, the way in which He pulled the cloak from human sin, the way in which, by revealing through His words and His example the real demands of God, He took from mankind its last hope of any salvation to be obtained through its own goodness; when I think again of the wonderful kindness of the Saviour;

when I read how He forgave where none other would forgive, and helped where all other helpers had failed; when I think, above all, of that blessed thing which He did not only for men of long ago, who saw Him with their bodily eyes, but for every one of us if we be united with Him through faith, when He died in our stead upon the Cross, and said in triumph at the moment when His redeeming work was done, "It is finished"; when I enter into both the fear and the joy of those who found the tomb empty and saw the vision of angels which also said, "He is not here: for He is risen"; when I think of the way in which He was known to His disciples in the breaking of bread; when I think of Pentecost and the pouring out of His Spirit upon the Church; when I attend to the wonderful way in which the Bible tells us how the Saviour may be our Saviour to-day, how you and I, sitting in this house to-night, can come into His presence, in even far more intimate fashion than that which was enjoyed by those who pushed their way unto Him as He sat amidst scribes and Pharisees when He was on earth; when I think of the application of His redeeming work by the Holy Spirit:

"Be of sin the double cure,  
Cleanse me from its guilt and power";

when I think of the glories of the Christian life, opened to us, not on the basis of human striving, but of that mighty act of God; when I read the last book of the Bible, and think of the unfolding of the glorious hope of that time when the once lowly Jesus, now seated on the throne of all being, shall come again with power—when I think of these things, I am impressed with the fact that the other gospel, which is dominant in the Church to-day, preached though it is by brilliant men, and admirable though it might have seemed if we had not compared it with something infinitely greater, is naught but "weak and beggarly elements," and that the humblest man who believes that the Bible is the Word of God is possessed of riches greater by far than all the learning of all the world and all the eloquence of all the preachers who now have the ear of an unfaithful Church.

The End

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## *Thanksgiving and Praise for the Judgments of God*

—THE NINTH PSALM—

By the Rev. Frank D. Frazer

The first eight Psalms tell the blessedness, by the mercies of God, of all who take refuge in Him. Psalm 9 begins a new octave of songs in which the judgments of God come more prominently into view, maintaining the honor of His law and delivering those who put their trust in Him from the enemy. Bishop Wordsworth compared this

second octave with the seven seals of the Apocalypse opened for revelation of what is coming, the seven trumpets sounded for warning, and the seven bowls of wrath poured out upon the earth, together with the thanksgivings and hallelujahs that followed. Here the culminating point is reached in the everlasting joy of Psalm 16.

These two octaves form the overture to the whole round of the Songs of Salvation. They set forth the truth of God's government in all its dimensions of law and grace, sure mercies and certain punishment for sin. The Ninth Psalm recounts facts and recurring events that challenge the attention of all men and call out thanksgivings and praises from those who understand and give their testimony for the truth.

David, a man who, in adversity, had found refuge and put his trust in Jehovah, now opens his heart to his great Benefactor and Lord. In the first half of his song he is

**I. Telling His Personal Experience and Observations. (vss 1-10).**

**"I give thanks to Jehovah with my whole heart; I will recount all Thy wonderful works. I will be glad and rejoice in Thee; I will sing praise to Thy name, O Most High." (vss 1,2).**

Not with lips only, but with a heart vibrant with melodies of understanding and gratitude, he will recount "all Thy wonderful works". The word translated "wonderful works" is commonly used in Scripture for God's works of providence, which, while they cannot be counted for multitude, yet may be comprehended in the two categories, works of mercy and works of judgment.

He looks out from his safe retreat in the heights, and sees enemies that had been pursuing him turn back, and stumble, and fall, when they saw lightnings flash and heard thunders crash out of dark clouds that mark the presence of the Judge of all the earth, pronouncing final decisions according to unalterable law. There is no higher court of appeal, and beside this Judge there is no Saviour.

**"When my enemies turn back, they stumble and perish at Thy presence. Thou hast maintained my right and my cause: Thou sittest on the throne judging righteously." (vss 3,4).**

The psalmist is an individualist, but not an isolationist. He is a realist who knows where and to what purpose he stands. He takes account of circumstances and what is going on. He sees what is of vital importance to all people. He tells what he sees, as John did on Patmos, and preaches the same gospel that John preached, the same gospel that Moses preached to Israel, (Dt.30:1-20), the same gospel that Paul preached to Jew and Gentile. There is one, but only one gospel for sinners:—God is on His throne judging righteously, according to His perfect law, and in perfect love, the love that "rejoices not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth". (1 Cor.13:6). In wrath He remembers mercy, remembers the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world. In pity He does not forget to exact the full penalty

of sin. He is not indulgent of sin, contradicting Himself, for He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all,—in other words, He laid down His life for His sheep.

**"Thou hast rebuked the nations. Thou hast destroyed the wicked. Their name Thou hast blotted out forever and ever. The enemy has come to the end,—ruins perpetual: Even their cities Thou hast demolished; Their remembrance is perished, as they themselves." (vss 5,6).**

He tells what he sees for the praise of the glory of the name of God, and at the same time, for the information, warning, and invitation of men everywhere on earth.

"Nations" here, as the parallels indicate, are "the wicked", "the enemy", the "many" enemies of Psalm 3, the rash revolutionists against God and His Christ, who imagined they could usurp all authority to themselves. Their monuments, built to perpetuate their names, are leveled with the ground that hides their own dust. Only the children continue to do their fathers' deeds. "They are perished, but Thou remainest".

**"And Jehovah sitteth King forever: He hath prepared His throne for judgment; And HE, none but HE, shall judge the inhabited earth in righteousness. He will minister judgment to the people in uprightness. Moreover, Jehovah will be a high tower for the oppressed, a high tower in time of trouble. And they who know Thy name shall put their trust in Thee. For Thou, Jehovah, hast not forsaken them that seek Thee." (vss 7-10).**

"The people", are chiefly the common people, oppressed, afflicted, robbed, and enslaved by proud hierarchical and political tyrants. All who seek for God, who know His name and put their trust in Him, are included. He will not disappoint them, but will be their Liberator and Defender. "He hath prepared His throne for judgment", for judgment of "the whole inhabited earth". "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne" His judgments and His mercies continually add to the refulgent glories of His name.

"They who know Thy name shall put their trust in Thee." These are they who sought for Jehovah and found Him, and learned to know Him by His gracious revelation of Himself in His words written for men to understand, and in His works wrought in the presence of all the inhabitants of the earth, so that, if any do not know Him, they are without excuse. Yet there are so many who do not know Him. They can find none but themselves in whom to put their trust. They call a conference of the nations and peoples. When gathered, they cannot agree, except on one thing, rebellion against Jehovah and against His Christ, saying, "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast

away their cords from us." They attempt to form a United Nations founded on deliberate rejection of Jehovah, the God of the Bible. They attempt to form a United Church without the Christ who said He would come again to sit on the throne of His glory, all the nations being gathered before Him, and then to separate them, the righteous from the wicked, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, receiving the righteous into the blessedness of everlasting life, and removing the wicked into eternal punishments, according to the unchangeable law of the covenant made known from the beginning.

God deals with all nations, peoples, and individuals as He said He would do. His grace is offered to all on the only terms that can at once provide for the glory of God and the eternal happiness of men. He has proved to be a high tower for me. He will be the same for you, whosoever and wheresoever you may be, if only you know Him as He is, and put your trust in Him. This is the testimony of a prophet and king of a small nation long ago. Today God speaks and rules in His Anointed Son, the Christ, whom He appointed Heir of the nations, the raging, rebellious nations. To Him He committed all judgment, all authority in heaven and on earth. "Thou shalt break them with a sceptre of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces as a potter's vessel". "His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and His dominion over all".

This Ninth Psalm recalls to mind "the decree" written in Psalm 2, which every reader should now ponder again. Let no Christian confuse himself and others by trying to separate between Jehovah and His Son in their essential deity and reciprocal unity. "The decrees of God are His eternal purpose" determining whatsoever comes to pass in this world today. "Jehovah" is the incommunicable name of God belonging both to The Father and His Son. Let us search the Scriptures and wait for the promise of the Spirit of the Truth bringing to our remembrance the things that Christ said. "I and the Father are one". "I in the Father and the Father in me". "Abiding in me, the Father doeth His works". "I am come to do the Father's will".

Christ was "manifested to take away sins". Sin exists only in the hearts, minds and wills of persons, where it is entrenched and stubbornly held in defiance of God. Of itself sin has no power; it must have willing personal servants to do its evil work. It is from persons, therefore, that sin is to be removed. If a man will give up his sin, confess and forsake it, he shall have mercy. If he will not give up his sin, he himself must be put away with it. Every cell of the infection of sin shall be put away. It is a matter of greatest thanksgiving and praise to God, by all the people, that Christ is accomplishing this by His grace and power, in His own good time and perfect way. Accordingly, the psalmist, in the second part of his song, is

## II. Calling All People to Praise God for His Just Judgments. (vss 11-20).

**"Sing ye praises to Jehovah who dwelleth in Zion: Declare among the people His doings. For He who maketh requisition for bloodshed, hath remembered them; He hath not forgotten the cry of the afflicted". (vss 11,12).**

Let all who seek the Lord know that He dwelleth in Zion; there is the place of refuge; there His doings are told and His praises sung. "And unto the place which Jehovah hath chosen to put His name there, even unto His habitation shall ye seek, and thither shalt thou come". The call is to all people, and no individual is overlooked. Here is the prayer suited to every one who seeks the Lord:

**"Have mercy upon me, O Jehovah; Look on my affliction (which I suffer) from those that hate me; O Thou who raiseth me up from the gates of death, to the end that I may tell all Thy praise. In the gates of the daughter of Zion I will rejoice in Thy salvation". (vss 13,14).**

He must realize where he is, in "the gates of death", the gates of the city where the haters of God and man have their gathering place. He must beg for mercy, for deliverance from death. He has heard, if he have ears to hear, of another city whose Builder and Maker is God; and whose people, fair and gracious, dwelling with God in the City of God, are known as the "Daughter of Zion". Having found refuge there, they gather at the gates to sing praises to God for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men.

But can Christians sing these old Psalms today? They have been raised up for that very purpose; they have been given a place of safety and a position for testimony, "to tell all Thy praise". "All" the praise of God cannot be told without telling of His judgments, for they most clearly reveal His perfect justice. They make a way for His mercies.

**"The nations are sunk in the pit which they made: In the net which they hid is their own foot taken. Jehovah hath made Himself known: He hath executed judgment, Snaring the wicked in the works of their own hands. The wicked are turned away into Sheol. All the nations that forget God. But the needy shall never be forgotten; the hope of the afflicted shall never perish". (vss 15-18).**

If God makes Himself known by the judgments which He executes, even by removing wicked nations into "Sheol", i.e., "Destruction", "the land of forgetfulness", (Ps. 88:10-12); and also by gathering to Himself those who put their trust in

Him and be His witnesses, then it cannot be denied that the judgments of God form not only an acceptable, but an imperative theme of praise to His name. The judgments of God cannot be separated from His mercies. This explains why so many of the Psalms make mention of His judgments. And, in particular, it not only justifies but requires, in the congregations of God's people, the use of all those Psalms ignorantly or maliciously called "imprecatory". Psalms which declare the facts of God's administration of justice in the earth are not "cursing" Psalms, but warning that sinners may escape impending wrath by taking refuge in the Judge who still offers mercy.

"Arise, O Jehovah, let not weak, mortal man be proud: Let the nations be judged in Thy presence. Put them in fear, O Jehovah, Let the nations know themselves to be but frail mortals!" (vss 19,20).

Men are frail and mortal only because of their sins; the sentence of death is already being executed upon them. But, when in mercy that sentence is not executed speedily, but opportunity given for repentance, their deceitful hearts embolden them to continue in sin. It is human pride that resists God's mercy. However, when the judicial punish-

ments of God fall upon nations and communities, war, famine, pestilence, storm, flood, some will consider and turn to the Lord, and it becomes apparent that these terrible things of God are parts of His mercy.

The testimony of the Psalms is given in the light of history, experience, and God's written revelation of Himself. They are the provision of the Spirit of God for believers in Christ, that when He will manifest His power in them, He will convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. So this Psalm closes in the prayer of one who knows God, who realizes that it may not yet be too late, and who is moved by the same Spirit who moved Paul to the end that "by all means, some might be saved". Remember the malefactor with the pride not merely of a political insurrectionist, but of the hierarchical mob that dared to revile Christ after He had been nailed to the cross. Yet in the lowest depths of his fall, even this man learned to know Christ as He is, and put his trust in Him who is able to save unto the uttermost.

Note: Mr. Frazer's studies in the Psalms will be continued, D.V., in future issues of this journal. — Ed.

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## *The Covenant-Idea in Scripture*

By the Rev. Frank D. Frazer

(Continued from last issue)

### 27. The Only Infallible Rule of Faith and Life.

The Scriptures of the Old and New Testament together are the **written** Covenant of God's Grace for men, for their salvation from sin. Written under the immediate control of the Spirit of God, it is the truth concerning God's way of dealing with sinners. Here are the terms according to which a sinner, under condemnation of death by the curse of the broken Covenant of Works, (Gn. 2:16,17), may have life and peace with God. Could there be anything of greater importance to any man?

It is offered as a "**covenant**", through a Mediator, Christ Jesus, the Son of God, for man's acceptance in faith and obedience. By the oath of Jehovah, the Mediator was made **Surety of the Covenant**, "Jehovah sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek". (Ps. 110.4. Heb. 7: 15-22). In this is revealed the absolute permanence and unchangeableness of the Covenant. Its perfect and complete fulfillment according to the purposes of God is absolutely guaranteed. The Surety, being of the same nature and in the same position as God, is able and willing to do whatever may be necessary to this end. As Priest, He will offer the "**sacrifice**" sufficient to take away sin and bestow

the blessing of life to be manifested in faith and obedience toward God.

In the full light of the Mediator's work now being perfected, the Covenant appears also to have the form of a "**testament**", thereby emphasizing the unilateral determination of the will of God, and the fact that the promised inheritance is a free gift of grace, not earned, nor purchased, nor to any extent deserved by the sinner, but made sure to every child of God by the death of the Testator, the "Everlasting Father", and the administration of the Holy Spirit.

As commonly used in Scripture, "**covenant**", meaning the Covenant of Grace, and "**testament**", meaning the New Testament of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, have certain essentials in common: (1) The independent sovereignty of God determining their content. (2) The Mediator and the Testator are one and the same Person, the Lord Jesus Christ. (3) The necessity of the death of a competent person to put them into effect. The validity of the "covenant" depends on the poured-out blood of the sacrifice of the Mediator, according to the principle, "without the pouring-out of blood there is no remission". The validity of the "testament" depends on the fact, established by open evidence, of the death of the Testator.

Sacrificial (i.e., vicarious) death does not belong to the essence of either the covenant or the testament idea. The Covenant of Works required no sacrifice to put it into effect, for man had been created "in righteousness and true holiness"; the way was clear for it. But when man broke the Covenant of Works by his disobedience, no covenant between God and man could be in effect unless and until the death penalty, incurred by man, had been paid in full. **The Sacrifice**, therefore, is the supreme proof of the infinite love and perfect justice of God in His dealing with men, and the absolute assurance that no promise of His word can ever fail.

In the Lord Jesus Christ all the promises of God have full affirmation and complete accomplishment. (2 Cor. 1:20). As "Everlasting Father", He took the place of the father that sinned, paying the penalty of sin with His own blood, and bequeathing to the sons whom God gave Him, the riches of the **everlasting inheritance**. These sons constitute the lasting **brotherhood of man** in Christ; the original brotherhood having been broken, at its inception, by the murder of brother by brother, and has remained broken, outside of Christ, as all the murders and wars of history to the present day so tragically attest. In spite of all the "peace tables" and "peace talks" among men without Christ, there can be no real peace on earth until there be peace with God in the only way He has provided. Thus the unilateral action of God is required in every detail of His covenant administration. It is all of His grace; all for His glory.

The "covenant" embodies the promise of eternal life. The "testament" provides for the abundant fullness of that life. The "covenant" holds the warning of death according to the immutability of God's law. But God so loved man made in His image, that He took upon Himself the penalty of man's sin, and endorsed the covenant (His own covenant), with a certification that the death penalty was so executed, paid in full, and that the promise of life, with all its abundance, holds good in the resurrection, according to the greatness of His grace and power. Thus the Old Covenant and the New Testament are one written document. They are inseparable. "The Scripture cannot be broken".

"Covenant" further declares the whole duty of man. It makes plain the way of forgiveness of sin, the way of righteousness, the way of eternal life and peace with God. Therefore, the true religion is not an uncertain thing, but is clearly defined as over against the vague generalities labeled "spiritual" by those who reject the Bible as a whole, or in part, lowering it to the level of the books of the false religions.

Within the Covenant, there is agreement with God as to terms and conditions, but this becomes

possible only after the man has received the promised Spirit of God to make him understand and willing to accept the will of God. There is a **real coming together** of God and man in blessed fellowship, but only in Christ. It cannot be explained by a man's covenant with man, for the validity of any man's covenant depends on God's Covenant of Grace as put into effect by the sacrifice of Christ. No man has anything to do with making terms with God; neither does a man of himself fulfil the terms: they are fulfilled **for him** by Jesus Christ, and **in him** by the Spirit of God. It can be understood from its original Hebrew name, "b'rith", as clarified and emphasized by its Greek name, "diatheke"; each of which, in its own way, declares God's sovereign determination of **all things**, — all material and physical, all moral and spiritual things. If God controls all the lower things for His own glory, much more does He control the higher to the same end. The absoluteness of His control is confirmed by all human investigation and experience with what have evasively been called "**laws of nature**". And God's challenge to break His covenant of the day and night, or to change His ordinances of heaven and earth has never been met. (Jer. 32:35-37; 33:20-26). Why then should any weak, mortal man imagine that he can, with impunity, violate the revealed will of God?

Yet, ever since Cain took his own way of being at peace with God, men have followed suit, picking and choosing, among the terms which God made, what pleases them and rejecting the others, for "the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked". They often go to any extreme of madness and folly to find another way that in the end proves disastrous. Here is to be found the origin of all forms of "will-worship", false religion, and of those sects, professedly Christian, which do not accept the entire Bible as the only infallible rule of faith and life. Some accept the New Testament, but reject the Old, without which the New cannot be properly understood. Some accept the Bible as a rule to be changed to suit changing times and circumstances as they regard them. Some claim the largeness of God's bounty to be squandered for their own selfishness.

Hence, to speak of the Christian religion as a "**covenant**" without proper safeguard, is to expose it to the false teachings of Pelagianism and Arminianism, to the effect that God's grace is not necessary or sufficient for man's salvation, so that man must save himself, at least in part. Speaking of the word "**diatheke**", in "Light from the Ancient East", p. 337f, Deissmann says plainly, "To Paul the word meant what it meant in his Greek Old Testament, a '**unilateral enactment**'! in particular, a '**will**' or '**testament**'. This one point concerns more than the merely superficial question whether we are to write 'New Testament', or 'New Covenant' on the title page of the sacred

volume; it becomes ultimately the great question of all religious history, Is the revealed religion a religion of grace, or of works?"

On the other hand, to speak of the Christian religion as a "testament" without due safeguard, is to expose it to the half-truths of Antinomianism and Dispensationalism, which attempt to divide God's covenant into two contradictory parts, making it appear that law and grace are at odds with one another, instead of being complementary; each in its own place necessary to the salvation of sinners. The Testator made sure the delivery of the rich inheritance to the children of God by fulfilling the law even unto His own death. But a false Fundamentalism teaches that God is indulgent of sin, and accepts something less than His law demands, as if neither His love nor His justice were perfect, but changeable. It refuses the covenant separation, and seeks to live in "peaceful co-existence" with the doctrines and practices of evil men and their organizations. At the same time it often boasts of superior piety, adding items of self-righteousness, commandments and traditions of men, while omitting weighty matters of the law, so making the Word of God of none effect. The curse of the New Testament on any man who adds to or takes from its words, (Rv. 22:18,19), is the same as that of the Old. (Dt. 4:2-4; 12:28-32).

Thus it is obvious, in view of the limitations of human language, and the pride, selfishness and rebelliousness of the human heart, that there is need for both the words, "covenant" and "testament" to make fundamental truth unmistakable.

All this emphasizes the importance of clear definition of the words, and adequate knowledge of the Covenant as a whole. For, it is the age-old policy of Liberalism, taking advantage of changes in the outward circumstances of life, to confuse the terms and so obscure the truth. It is an outstanding fact of history that whenever and wherever the true religion has been corrupted and lost, knowledge of the Covenant of Jehovah has failed. The people of Israel, in the time of Jeremiah, had become so confused by listening to the false prophets and priests that they would believe nothing but what pleased their own evil hearts. This also explains the strange failure of the later Jews to recognize their Messiah when He came to them. They believed certain parts of the Scripture, certain texts taken out of their context, as they were taught by false teachers. They believed what they liked to believe without searching the Scriptures whether these things were so. They wanted the grace and the glory without any suffering and death, but that is impossible for sinners, by the unchangeable order of things.

Western Catholicism kept the Scriptures from the common people, as beyond their understanding, and unnecessary in view of an infallible hierarchy. Eastern Catholicism silenced the testimony

of Scripture by a dead and rigid Formalism. The Protestant Reformation of the 16th and 17th centuries declared afresh the truth of the Covenant. But now again the true religion is passing out of the thought and life of the people because the Covenant is not attended to, is not taught in its purity and completeness. In spite of the fact that the Bible is within reach of almost every one, the people are falling prey to the deceitful adversaries of God and man. Men reputed to be scholars presume to teach that parts of the Bible are not true; that the Covenant is an outmoded device in religion. And an easy, superficial Evangelism, seeking popularity for itself, quotes a few important texts out of their context, and so satisfies the mind and heart with false hopes. "The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so; and what will ye do in the end thereof?" (Jer. 5:31).

The laws of the Covenant comprehend the whole life of every man, defining his duty, first to God; second to fellow men as made in the image of God. The Covenant includes the children as well as the parents. Parents, therefore, in the home, are responsible before God for their own children, to be supplemented by the authorities of church and state, for instruction, example, and administration of the laws of God. The present tragic flood of **juvenile delinquency** has been let loose on society by the covenant infidelity of the elders. The home is being broken up by the infidelity of husband and wife to their own marriage covenant. In many cases the covenant is wickedly offered by the authorities and accepted without any acknowledgment of responsibility to God; easy divorce being provided for. The children are denied their rights and left to wander on the streets and highways in the dark.

The appointed sign of the Covenant, the keeping of the Sabbath holy to the worship an service of God, is rapidly disappearing from the witness of professing Christians the world over. The standards of Covenant truth and righteousness are being discarded, thrown down and trampled upon. If there be covenant infidelity in the homes, there is the same in both church and state, for the home is the structural unit of both. The widespread confusion and clashing of selfish interests in all social, economic, and political relationships is the immediate result of wilful ignorance and rebellion against the laws of the Covenant. The modern ethical, or social gospel, (falsely called "gospel"), which ignores, or openly denies the necessity of the death of Christ, thus striking at the heart of the covenant religion, is the most dangerous enemy the church has to deal with today. It is a camouflaged "front" for Socialism, which in turn is the principal "front" for Communism and the Communists, the cruel and loud-mouthed enemies of God and mankind.

The Church of Christ, "the pillar and ground of the truth", the representative of God to the world, has basely failed, in its largest groups, by reason of its covenant infidelity. For revival of the true religion, a repentant return to the Covenant of Jehovah, **as written**, is absolutely required. There is no other way. "Intimate fellowship with Jehovah is for them that fear Him; and His covenant to make them understand". (Ps. 25:14). Honest men are most urgently called for, who know the Covenant, having entered into it themselves, and are able to teach. Such are not everywhere available today. But the great Spirit of the Truth is available to all who ask for Him through Jesus Christ. Therefore no one is deprived of the privilege, nor exempt from the duty of making much more earnest searching of the Scriptures of the Covenant, to know the truth for himself, and to be able to give a clear and faithful testimony to others.

Our continual responsibility is expressed in the covenant formula, "I AM YOUR GOD, and YE SHALL BE MY PEOPLE". Also, the other way around, "YE ARE MY PEOPLE, and I WILL BE YOUR GOD". The first clause, in each case, has the verb in its "perfect" form; the second clause in the "imperfect". The force of this may be indicated thus, "AS LONG AS I AM YOUR GOD, YE SHALL BE MY PEOPLE", and, "AS LONG AS YE ARE MY PEOPLE, I WILL BE YOUR GOD". The reciprocity of the Covenant could not be more definitely expressed.

God's constant faithfulness is expressed in the formula comprehending the fulness of His promises, "I AM WITH YOU", or, "I AM FOR YOU", to save, to protect, to guide, and to bless.

For, "WITHOUT ME YE CAN DO NOTHING". In JESUS CHRIST the whole glory and blessedness of the Covenant is realized. For He is IM-MANUEL, GOD WITH US. And, by the grace of faith and obedience given to us, we are IN HIM WITH GOD. Moses pleaded with God for Israel, "How shall it be known that I and Thy people have found grace in Thy sight? Is it not that Thou goest **with us**, so that we are **separated**, I and Thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth?" (Ex. 33:16). But when Israel sinned and acted presumptuously in compromising the truth and righteousness of Jehovah, the word came to them, "Because ye are turned back from following Jehovah, therefore, Jehovah is **not with you**". (Nu. 14:43). Yet prophets continued to be sent to Israel, that all who were the people of God might be kept, saying to them, "**I am with you**, saith Jehovah of Hosts, according to the word which I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remains continually among you; fear not". (Hag. 2:4,5). Thus God expressed His maintainance of His Covenant even in times of greatest apostasy among men. He keeps saying to His own people, "I will never leave you nor forsake you".

So also shall the closing prayer of the great Covenant Epistle be answered on behalf of the faithful church today: "May the God of peace who brought up from the dead the Shepherd of the sheep, the Great Shepherd, by the blood of the everlasting covenant, even our Lord Jesus, make you perfect in every good thing to do His will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be the glory forever and ever, Amen." (Heb. 13:20).

The End

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## *Reviews of Religious Books*

The favorable reviewing of a book here is not be understood as necessarily implying an endorsement of everything contained in it. Within the limits of the editorial policy of Blue Banner Faith and Life each reviewer is solely responsible for the opinions expressed in his reviews. Please purchase books from your book dealer or direct from the publishers; do not send orders to the manager of this magazine.

**CALVINISM**, by Ben A. Warburton. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1955, pp. 249. \$3.00.

The sub-title of this splendid book on Calvinism — "Its History, Basic Principles, Its Fruits, and Its Future, and Its Practical Application in Life" — is indicative of the popular approach of the author to his subject. In a day when there is so much ignorance and misunderstanding of what Calvinism really is — even among members of officially Calvinistic churches — this book should be given wide

circulation. The author, an English student of Calvinism, writes in a clear, interesting style which renders his book a very readable one which any conscientious Christian should be able to understand without much difficulty.

In the **historical** section of the book the author gives an account of the two principal controversies in the history of the Christian church which brought about a precise formulation of the system of truth known today as Calvinism. He shows, however, that the term "Calvinism", as

used to designate the particular principles embodied in this system, is a misnomer, since the teaching in question existed many centuries before the days of Calvin, going back, according to historical evidence, to the earliest days of the Christian church.

The **doctrinal** section of the book is an excellent exposition of those particular areas of truth which formed the battleground of the Arminian controversy in Holland in the early seventeenth century. Arminius and his followers attacked the historic doctrines of the faith at five points. The Synod of Dordt, meeting in 1618-19 answered this attack by formulating a statement of faith reaffirming the historic position of the church with respect to these five points, namely: total inability, sovereign election, particular redemption, invincible grace, and perseverance in grace.

It is an unpleasant duty for the reviewer to find fault with a volume of such high merit as this one, but unfortunately the book lends some support to the common notion that the "Five Points" are a condensed summary of Calvinism; or to state the error in its worst form, that Calvinism is chiefly concerned with the doctrine of predestination. Although the author is careful to prevent such a narrow construction of Calvinism in the minds of his readers (p. 63), he frequently refers to the "Five Points" as "the basic principles of the Calvinistic system" (p. 11). Since there are other basic principles — as for example the doctrines of justification and of the covenant of grace — which are essential to the integrity of the Calvinistic system but which are not included in the "Five Points", the latter cannot be regarded as THE basic principles of the Calvinistic system. In reality the book is a survey, not of Calvinism as a whole, but only of Calvinism's answer to the Arminian heresy; yet the title of the book is **Calvinism**. This tends to give the impression that Calvinism is chiefly a rebuttal of Arminianism. Calvinism, of course, is much more than a contradiction of Arminianism. It cannot be summarized in five principles, for it includes the whole system of truth revealed in the Scriptures.

Mention must also be made of the author's somewhat one-sided construction of the doctrine of predestination itself. He develops only the side of predestination which concerns the elect, while passing by the predestination of the non-elect. Since some of the chief difficulties with the doctrine of predestination arise in regard to the unsaved, there is a call for an account of the doctrine of reprobation corresponding to the doctrine of election.

It should also be noted that the author's view of the constitutional nature of man is that of trichotomy, i.e., the view that man has a threefold nature consisting of body-soul-spirit (footnote, p. 101). This theory has its roots in Greek philosophy, is not a part of the Calvinistic system and in fact has been held by comparatively few Calvin-

ists. The weight of Scripture is rather on the other side, namely, that man's nature is twofold, being a body-soul unity. The words "soul" (**psyche**) and "spirit" (**pneuma**) which occur frequently in Scripture are interchangeable terms referring not to two distinct substances but to different aspects of the one substance of man's spiritual nature.

The foregoing criticisms do not detract from the great value of the book, for there is today a real need for such an exposure of the false teachings of Arminianism. The book is not merely a refutation of certain heretics who have been dead for more than three hundred years. For the errors they propagated did not die with them; indeed, these errors are held more widely than ever before and, together with modern liberalism, almost completely dominate the religious thought of the present day.

The arguments presented by Warburton are unanswerable. His words will stop the mouths of those who think that Calvinism denies human responsibility and free agency, makes God the author of sin or makes God unjust because He saves only the elect. These and many other common objections to Calvinism are subjected to the acid test of Scripture and shown to be false and wrong.

Finally, the **practical** section of the book shows that Calvinism is not merely a creed or academic profession, but the heart and life of the believer's personal religion. Those who think of Calvinism as a form of cold intellectual narrow-mindedness would do well to read the chapter on "Calvinism in the Inner Life". Those who regard Calvinism as a mere "religious movement" in the remote past and as having little significance in the enlightened twentieth century would learn from the final chapter that Calvinism, far from being a mere school of thought on the sidelines, has been in the sovereign providence of God the moving spirit of the mainstream of history and is today the heart and soul of the world's progress.

This is Calvinism, or true Christianity — for the terms are synonymous — that will commend itself to any truth-seeking child of God.

—Joseph A. Hill

**J. GRESHAM MACHEN: A BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIR**, by Ned B. Stonehouse. William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1954, pp. 520. \$5.95.

Traditional book reviewing probably calls for a preliminary anaesthesia of praise, followed by a sharp, pricking "BUT" when the needle of disagreement is inserted to enable the reviewer to pump his own views or criticisms into the trembling body of the author. I shall fall short of this traditional type in reviewing Dr. Stonehouse's delightful memoir of his honored teacher and friend, the late Dr. J. Gresham Machen. Dr. Stonehouse,

it seems to me, has wonderfully used the intimacy of his acquaintance with Dr. Machen to give us ". . . a narrative expressing the more personal and intimate aspects of his life" (p. 328), and yet has avoided that usual bias of close friendship which would idealize instead of actually describing a subject so greatly loved and admired.

Many reviews have already appeared in religious journals. These leave me little to report of any original impression received from this book. Many have remarked concerning the unexpected disclosure in this book of a serious struggle with doubt which troubled Dr. Machen for years after his study in Germany. Others have expressed admiration of the matchless beauty of the relationship between mother and son as shown by Dr. Stonehouse's quotations from letters between the two. **The Christian Beacon** has come out with a rather bitter accusation that Dr. Stonehouse has not accurately told the story of the internal difficulties which led to the split between Dr. Machen and certain close friends in the separationist movement which broke away from the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Undoubtedly there are problems on which good men will always differ.

To me, however, the greatest value of Dr. Stonehouse's work is that he has put in attractive and lasting form the most important aspects of the life and work of one man who, under God, had a great part in the clarification of issues within the American Protestant churches during his lifetime. First, the book is most valuable as a primary document in contemporary church history. Second, it is a stirring apologetic contribution to the exaltation of Christ and the defence of the Scriptures. Chinese often use the proverb, "When the water goes down the rocks will appear." When the flood of unpopularity and hatred provoked by Machen's heroic struggle for God's Truth in the Presbyterian Church has subsided, the true greatness of this man and his witness will be seen. Dr. Stonehouse deserves our gratitude for giving us this important memoir in the lasting interests of Divine Truth.

One who reads this book will not find any false halo about the portrait drawn of Dr. Machen. Favorable though Dr. Stonehouse's picture is, he has drawn Machen "wart and all." Even the inflammable point that Dr. Machen was not attached as a **matter of principle** to total abstinence from liquor and tobacco is openly documented. Dr. Stonehouse even gives quite a "commercial" for tobacco on page 85, where he quotes a jocular statement about tobacco made by Machen when he was an undergraduate at Princeton; part of the statement is: "When I think what a wonderful aid tobacco is to friendship and Christian patience I have sometimes regretted that I never began to smoke." For the sake of those shocked by such a confession, there ought to be the reminder that in this attitude Machen spoke as a true Southerner,

a son of the aristocratic society of an area where tobacco is the pay-crop.

I am glad to call attention to one important service of Dr. Stonehouse in dispelling that slander so often echoed in our own circles by members who assert that Machen's money — and he was a man of wealth — came from the liquor trade, from manufacture of strong drink. On page 392 of his book Dr. Stonehouse says:

"And as for the charges concerning the source of Machen's income, it can confidently be asserted that they were pure inventions. Though no worthwhile purpose would be served by presenting the observation in detail, the biographer, having through the courtesy of the family been given access to the wills and documents that bear upon the subject of the Machen wealth, can testify that the inventories show that among the family assets there has never been a single share of brewery or distillery stock."

This reviewer holds to the Biblical principle of total abstinence, and holds to prohibition of the manufacture, sale and use of alcoholic beverage as a necessary and just means of controlling the evils of the liquor trade, but Dr. Stonehouse belongs — and Dr. Machen belonged — to those Christian groups who do not hold this position. We may in all charity, I believe, admit our differing views without rancor, and honor Christian faithfulness in doctrine and life without introducing absurd slander or extreme criticisms of those with whom we must conscientiously disagree on this point.

It was in the closing years of Machen's short life that his Christian humility and true greatness rose to conquer all former doubts and even to go serenely through some of the worst malice and hatred and false accusation that any prophet of God ever had to face. To me personally the figure of Machen standing against the powerful machinery of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. remains one of the greatest inspirations I have for my own faith. So far as Machen's immediate goal was concerned — to save his own church from apostasy — there seems to me to be little evidence that his witness bore the expected fruit. But in the long sweep of Christian history there is no doubt whatever that the courageous testimony of J. Gresham Machen has borne a world-wide harvest which will yet bring blessing back to a repentant and refreshed Visible Church.

The story told by Dr. Stonehouse is one which warms one's heart and brings new dedication of our lives to God. That Dr. Machen was also a man of like passions with ourselves; that he, too, was encompassed about with many infirmities — personal, sectional and chronological — none would be more ready to admit than the biographer. Dr. Machen's death at the relatively early age of 55 years came as a direct result of over-exertion while

he was already ill on a speaking trip in defence of the Truth in North Dakota. His last message sent to Professor John Murray of Westminster Theological Seminary by telegram included these words: "I'm so thankful for the active obedience of Christ. No hope without it."

The memory of this worthy witness of Christ will long outlive his numerous critics and enemies, and Dr. Stonehouse has done the whole Christian Church a real service by providing this informative and thrilling biography.

—Samuel E. Boyle

THE DIRECTORY OF THE DEVOUT LIFE, by F. B. Meyer. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1954, pp. 191. \$2.00.

This book is a photolithoprinted reproduction of one of the fine books by F. B. Meyer. Baker Book House is doing the Christian public a great service in thus reprinting many old masterpieces in their Co-operative Reprint Library and selling them at a substantial saving.

In these days when so many are preaching the grace of God to the exclusion of the absolute kingship of Christ over our lives, this book is very welcome. "There is too much of mere sentiment and emotion in what goes by the name of religion, and too little practical Christian living. The tree is not good, the inward parts are not thoroughly cleansed, the rule of Christ is not absolutely dominant in speech and life. People are willing enough to accept freely a forgiveness which He purchased by His blood, but are slow to believe that He is a King, whose law must be obeyed in its jots and tittles" (opening paragraph of the preface of the book). How much truer these words are today! This needed theme colors the whole book.

The gifted author here gives twenty practical, Spirit-filled messages on the Sermon on the Mount. It is not an exhaustive study of the Sermon on the Mount, but a series of devotional meditations designed to strengthen our Christian daily life. "His (Jesus') own soul was fragrant with the beatitudes which He uttered for His disciples. He possessed in living human experience all that he inculcated. . . . From the heights He was calling to men in the lowlands of error and sin, to summon them to His own standpoint" (p. 12).

Picturesque and pointed language drives the lessons of this great sermon of our Lord deep into our hearts. "If you sin, it is not your body that sins, but **you** through your body; and you are transforming into a pigsty what God made for His palace and temple. . . . The Holy Spirit, if we entrust Him with the sacred task, will make us very sensitive when the tiniest speck of evil is floating toward us, and will remind us to shelter

under the Blood. Men may shrink from our using that mystic word, but, believe me, there is no other infallible talisman of Victory. 'They overcame by the blood of the Lamb.' " (p. 65).

This book has many excellent qualities to recommend it to every child of God, but like every other man-made book there are some unfortunate statements in it. The following is an example: "The idea of Christiana and her family is truer in the realm of fancy than in fact" (p. 184). We rejoice in the myriads of families which illustrate the truth of Acts 2:39 and 16:31.

Are you desirous of living more like our Saviour? This book will bear re-reading. "We need not work for forgiveness; this is ours by the free grace of God. We are not to work for salvation, but from it. We do not work to be saved; but being saved, we work" (p. 185). May we each be filled with all the fullness of God.

— Philip W. Martin

BENEDICTE'S SCRAPBOOK, by William B. Gamble. William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1954, pp. 252. \$3.95.

In this book by Mr. Gamble we have many very fine illustrations which come from the past and also from the present. This book is the result of years of collecting and compiling scrapbooks, and now taking the best of these and putting them into the present edition.

It is quite true that the "illustration" gives flavor to the sermon or speech. This book is not only for ministers, but is also for public speakers in general, so do not expect all the illustrations to be suitable to the pulpit. I do not mean this in any derogatory way. There are no illustrations that are morally questionable, but not all of them are of the tone which would enhance a spiritual message, and there are quotations from some whose theology we might question. However, there is a wealth of good illustrative material which anyone might use. The editor reveals his pleasing disposition and honest humor. The book is sprinkled generously with terse humorous thoughts which would enhance any speech.

For the sermon, "no illustration or quotation must be introduced for its own sake, but only to explain the truth or enforce the duty being taught" (Garvie, **A Guide to Preachers**). Many of the nearly 2,000 illustrations in this collection might well be used to buttress a statement of truth or duty. The illustrations are generally quite concise, and so do not detract from the general thought and purpose of the message.

The book is well written, and has a great variety of subjects and sub-topics. The price seems a little high. However, if through the use of this book we might happen to find the right illustra-

tions which seem to "make" the sermon, it would be well worth the price.

—M. W. Martin

**THE MEDICAL LANGUAGE OF LUKE**, by William Kirk Hobart. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Michigan. 1954, pp. xxviii, 305. \$3.60.

This attractively bound book is one of the twelve volumes of scholarly studies, devotional classics and expository studies already presented by The Co-operative Reprint Library of the Baker Book House. It may be purchased on very advantageous terms.

In this book Dr. Hobart, who before his ordination was an honored and outstanding scholar at Trinity College, Dublin, sets out to supply a highly fascinating and enlightening study of the medical words and phrases common to the third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles.

The purpose of this work, as stated in the Introduction, "is to show, from an examination of the language employed in the third Gospel and the Apostles, that both are the works of a person well acquainted with the language of the Greek Medical Schools — a fact which, if established, will strongly confirm the belief that the writer of both was the same person, and was the person to whom they have been traditionally assigned by the Church, who is mentioned by St. Paul (Coloss. iv:14) as 'Luke, the beloved Physician' — an identity which some have doubted or denied."

At the end of the book there is an unusually extensive Index with a ready guide to every word or phrase treated. There is also an interesting Note appended at the end of the book on the probability of the employment by St. Paul of St. Luke's professional services.

It is really a profound work especially recommended for the Greek scholar or the expert; but it seems to me that the intelligent ordinary student of Scripture should not miss it for I am sure he will find it profitable in his advanced studies.

—C.C. Christou

**PROVOKING ONE ANOTHER**, by Michael C. Griffiths. Inter-Varsity Fellowship (Tyndale Press), 39 Bedford Square, London, W.C. 1, England. Paper-covered booklet, 3d.

This pocket-size booklet presents a comprehensive but brief survey of practical suggestions for helping young Christians to grow up in unwavering faith and love and good works (Heb. 10:23,24).

No doubt one of the most common failures of Christians older in the faith is the failure to recognize, or at least to apply, the importance of personal friendship and guidance in the life of the

new Christian. Ananias and Barnabas filled a very important need in the life of the convert, Paul. Paul brought up his "son in the faith," Timothy, in sound doctrine, and by word and example urged him on in zealous labor. He took Priscilla and Aquila into his life and labor, when he left them at Ephesus they found Apollos and "took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly" (Acts 18:1-3, 24-28). "Provoking one another" personally is a Scriptural method of bringing up the babe in Christ.

In answer to the question, "How can I help?" the author suggests prayer, friendship, example, letter writing, lending books. The suggestion is made that we would do well to study Paul's letters for his converts, and seek the same blessings for ourselves and for our friends.

"What must I encourage?" A realization of what has happened, a sense of assurance, daily Bible reading and prayer, a consistent Christian life, a mature understanding, church membership, an active witness, regular giving, a sense of vocation, and fellowship. The suggestions are all clear-cut, most practical, supplied with Scripture references.

This brief work is most heartily recommended, first, to Christian leaders — personal workers, S.S. teachers, etc.; and second, to Christians young in the faith to whom it will prove a practical guide into a fruitful life as a child of God.

—E. C. Copeland

**ISRAEL AND THE NEW COVENANT**, by Roderick Campbell. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., P.O. Box 185, Nutley 10, N.J. 1954, pp. 336. \$3.75.

This penetrating work comes from the pen of a lay theologian, an earnest and active Christian, a successful business man. Distressed at heart by the moral and spiritual degeneracy of the twenties and early thirties accompanied by social, industrial and political confusion, Mr. Campbell began to search the Word of God for the causes and cure of the dilemma: "Why has the Church failed to meet the situation?"

The first draft was drawn up in 1941, but because his views differed widely from the majority trend of present day Evangelical thought, the author set about an intensive search of the literature on the subject, seeking corroborative support for his views from the great exegetes known to be faithful to the Scriptures. His thoroughness is seen in the Index of some 140 authors of all schools of thought which are either referred to or quoted, besides reference works. In addition, Mr. Campbell says that he has available enough of material to publish another volume of equal size consisting mainly of quotations from well-known authors, commentators and evangelists in support and am-

plification of the views he has expressed in the chapter entitled "The Assurance of Victory." The author is ready to make this material freely available to any competent person who will undertake to publish it in appropriate form; he suggests the title "He Must Increase." Mr. Campbell has done a truly prodigious work.

In his preface to the book, Dr. O. T. Allis summarizes Mr. Campbell's solution to the question raised thus: "The Christian Church has for centuries failed to take seriously and carry out fully the Great Commission." Mr. Campbell is convinced that the Christian task is to be ascertained from the Abrahamic, Mosaic and Davidic covenants and the New Covenant of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The promise "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" is the Old Testament prediction of the Great Commission. Mr. Campbell refuses to accept what he calls the "easy explanation" that the failure of the Church to succeed in winning the world to Christ is proof that this is not her task, but the task to be accomplished by Christ Himself by His personal presence and visible reign upon earth. He declares that the Church's task as fixed by the Great Commission is definitely the expansion of the Kingdom which Christ has already established, over which He even now reigns in full power and glory; the Church cannot expect to hear the Lord's "Well done" until she had accomplished that task.

Mr. Campbell very rightly finds the solution to the problem within the bounds of the Covenant theology, and he has done a most excellent job of opening up the meaning of the covenants for the Church of today. The covenants must be seen "as significant landmarks in the history of the human race. . . . They must be seen as the basis of a framework of redemptive revelation into which every vital detail of Scripture will neatly fit. . . . The Covenants are events, or transactions in history. The documents which we call 'Testaments' contain a record of the events and of the movements which followed them. The two great covenants which are associated with the points in history known as Sinai and Calvary are the two great mountain peaks of history, of revelation, and of the one true faith" (Preface, pp. xi,xii).

Out of this conception comes the vigorous challenge of the book, often repeated, well stated here, ". . . the church must be aroused to the truth that the greatest hindrance to the completion of her appointed task is her unbelief and inconsistency in regard to the far-reaching implications of the supernatural element in history, in Scripture, and in the Christian faith. The gospel is the truth which will make men free, but it must be proclaimed and put to work by men who truly believe that it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, whether he be Jew or Gentile. It must be proclaimed by men who speak as the mouthpieces of an enlightened and conse-

crated church. When God has spoken, it is the church's duty to obey, however difficult the task may seem, and however much it may conflict with the wisdom of men. . . . Every denomination of Christians . . . may participate in the evangelization of the world, or a part of it, in the assurance that as Christian men and women, God will accompany the pure Word of the gospel with efficacious converting power. Where these effects are not in some measure being realized, we may well suspect that necessary conditions are not being fulfilled" (p. 309). Read the last sentence again!

Evangelism is here described as the task of the corporate body, the Church; the evangelist is the spokesman for that body. Again he says, "Redemption is more than a personal matter between the individual and his Maker" (p. 257). It is our firm conviction that if all who call themselves evangelists today would keep this command of the Lord in mind, there would be greater unity and power in evangelism, and far fewer spurious conversions.

The covenants guarantee to us the unchangeableness of our God, and therefore the consistency of His dealings with men, the continuity of His purpose and work in history, and His provision of all the means necessary for the accomplishment of that purpose. The true Israel of God were those who consciously lived in obedience to the Old Covenant (Mosaic). This body, called the believing Remnant, accepted Christ as the promised Messiah and became the "seed" of the New Covenant Church. The Messiah came to establish a Kingdom of which there should be no end. That Kingdom He did establish by His death and resurrection; it was fully in operation on the Day of Pentecost. The object of that Kingdom is the spiritual emancipation and perfection of men (see p. 81). This redemptive Kingdom is temporal, having as its immediate purpose the establishment of righteousness, peace and joy over all the earth, and for its ultimate purpose the gathering of all the redeemed into the eternal Kingdom of God the Father which has existed from the beginning. Its method and power of operation are illustrated by the parables of the mustard seed, the leaven and the dragnet. The Church, as the instrument of the Kingdom, gathers in of every kind, but only the good is preserved and delivered into the eternal Kingdom of the Father; she is illustrated by the parables of the vine and the olive tree from which unfruitful branches are from time to time cut off and cast away (pp. 138,139). The goal of the Church is nothing less than a "Christianized world." "This phrase does not mean that every living person will then be a Christian, or that every Christian will be a perfect Christian. It does surely mean that the righteous rule and authority of Christ the King will be recognized over all the earth. It will mean **liberty** in every land under the righteous Law of Christ, **equality** of every race as loyal citizens of Messiah's Kingdom, and **fra-**

ternity within the world-wide community of the new and better Covenant" (p. 298).

"The function of Christ's redemptive Kingdom in history and time will have been fulfilled when the 'last trump' sounds. Christ will then be manifested in visible power and glory, and will put an end to history and time on this earth (1 Cor. 15: 24,25; Isa. 9:6,7)" (pp. 137,138). Thus Mr. Campbell declares plainly that the work of redemption, far from being enlarged, will cease with the personal, visible return of Christ to this world in power and glory. We heartily congratulate the author on his able, clear presentation of these salient features of God's eternal purpose and method.

This reviewer finds objection to one idea prevalent throughout the book, namely, that the ultimate triumph of the Kingdom is to be realized in time and history (see especially paragraph 2, p. 136). It is one thing to say that the Church will complete its work of gathering in all whom God has chosen before the last trump sounds, and another to say that the ultimate triumph of the Kingdom has been realized in time and history. "Ultimate triumph" must mean the achievement of its purpose and "the spiritual emancipation and perfection of man" (p. 81). It must mean being "perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect," "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing." This becomes a bit confusing when Mr. Campbell says, as quoted above, on page 298 that the "Christianized world" which is to be realized before the last trump sounds is not a perfect one, thus admitting that the climax is the resurrection of the body, the judgment and the inauguration of the eternal state by the Lord Jesus Christ on that day. This is yet more confusing when one realizes that the author has insisted (pp. 145-147) that the descriptions of future perfection in Isaiah, and of the cities of Ezekiel's and John's visions are applicable "to the Messianic age and the New Covenant, and not, as many suppose, to the sphere of eternity or future glory." This, of course, is the position taken by the late Dr. W. J. McKnight in his book **What is Bound to Happen**, as well as by many others, as shown by Mr. Campbell in this volume. It is very difficult to get away from the fact that only the last trump can awaken the dead, cause them to put on immortality, when only can all tears and crying, sin and wickedness be put away. The last trump is not blown by the church, but by the Lord at His coming; then men are no longer in time but in eternity.

The author has admirably accomplished his purpose of arousing the Church to watchful obedience of faith in Him whose promises are Yea and Amen to them that believe. The book is most heartily recommended to all thoughtful Christians in the confidence that it will be a blessing to all who will take the time to study its clear presenta-

tion of God's purpose in history and the means He is employing to bring that purpose about.

—E. C. Copeland

THE UNBELIEF OF BARTHIANISM: A CRITICISM OF THE VIEWS OF DOCTORS BARTH AND BRUNNER, by W. J. Grier. Evangelical Book Shop, 15 College Square East, Belfast, N. Ireland. 1955, pp. 12, paper cover. 3d. Per dozen by post 2/8.

This timely little booklet presents an address given by the Rev. W. J. Grier of the Irish Evangelical Church at the annual meeting of the Bible League, London, England, October 11, 1954. The booklet takes up, first, the views of Barth and Brunner on Inspiration, then their views on other fundamental Christian doctrines, including the bodily resurrection of Christ, His second coming, His virgin birth; the doctrines of creation and the doctrine of the Trinity. In each case it is shown that while the Crisis theologians may use seemingly orthodox terminology, it is clear that what they mean by it is something very different from the historic faith of the Church. The booklet next discusses "The Foundation Error of the 'Dialectical Theology'", namely, their teaching on the doctrines of sin and atonement. It is brought out that this new theology uses such terms as "atonement" only as "limiting concepts," nor as "constitutive concepts." That is, such terms as "atonement" are merely symbols or landmarks pointing in the direction of the truth, they are not really statements of the truth. Mr. Grier asserts that the Dialectical Theology of Barth, Brunner and their followers is founded on a philosophical absurdity and an epistemological fallacy. That is, its basic assumptions concerning reality and human knowledge are wrong.

The booklet closes with the following paragraph, which we heartily endorse:

"Both Doctors Barth and Brunner may make use of traditional church language; they may quote Luther and Calvin; they may refer to the Heidelberg Catechism and the Scots Confession; yet there is in their teaching a root-and-branch departure from traditional theology, from the Reformers and the Creeds. They profess allegiance to the Bible; they claim to furnish a 'theology of the Word'; yet they do not scruple constantly to deny its clearest teaching. Their manner of dealing with the great dogmas of Scripture is such as to dwarf into insignificance even the errors and dangers of the allegorising exegesis of Origen. We cannot but express our solemn conviction that we may apply to them the saying of the prophet Jeremiah — 'They have rejected the Word of the Lord, and what wisdom is in them?'"

—J. G. Vos

**THE DOCTRINE OF RIGHT AND WRONG IN THESE TIMES**, by Chester E. Tulga. Conservative Baptist Fellowship, 2561 N. Clark St., Chicago 14, Ill. 1954, pp. 64, pocket size, paper cover. 25 cents.

Modern religious Liberalism, in distinction from orthodox historic Christianity, has sometimes been called "ethical." The meaning of course is that Liberalism is interested in ethics rather than in salvation, that is, that Liberalism is really not Christianity at all, but only what used to be called Moralism. But we are conceding too much if we call Liberalism "ethical" without qualification. For in spite of its emphasis on life as more important than creed, Liberalism itself is anything but ethical. Not only have liberals and modernists been guilty of unethical practices in the machinery of church government time and again, but Liberalism, by rejecting the orthodox doctrine of God and of Scripture, has actually destroyed the very foundation of true ethics.

Dr. Tulga's excellent booklet points out the deadly weakness of Liberalism and Neo-orthodoxy in that very matter in which they claim to be strongest. He calls men back to the Biblical view of distinction between right and wrong. The tendency of our day to regard compromise as a principle is exposed as the deadly error which it really is. The rather common notion that the end justifies the means is shown to be essentially evil. This booklet should be widely read and circulated.

—J. G. Vos

**A PRELIMINARY BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR THE STUDY OF BIBLICAL PROPHECY**, by Wilbur M. Smith. W. A. Wilde Company, Boston, Mass. 1952, pp. 44, paper cover. 75 cents.

In this bibliography Dr. Smith has presented the Christian public with an extremely useful tool. Books are not merely listed but the nature of their contents stated, with some indication as to the viewpoint of the authors. In the judgment of the reviewer Dr. Smith has done this very fairly and objectively. His own eschatological viewpoint is premillennial, as is well known. This bibliography, however, includes books of all schools of prophetic interpretation.

We venture to call attention to one error of fact which appears on page 42, where the late Professor D. H. Kromminga of Calvin Seminary, Grand Rapids, is referred to as "an antimillennialist." Actually Dr. Kromminga held a premillennial view, though his view differed from the more common form of premillennialism. In a private letter Dr. Smith has assured the reviewer that this will be corrected in any future edition of the booklet.

It may be suggested that this booklet be brought down to date and published in a new edition.

—J. G. Vos

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## *Books Received*

The announcement of the books listed below should not be construed as a recommendation. A review of those found in this list which we regard as having value for our readers will be given in a later issue.

**Publications of Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.,  
Grand Rapids 3, Mich.**

**THE SELF-DISCLOSURE OF JESUS**, by Geerhardus Vos. 1954, pp. 311. \$4.00.

**THE PERSON OF CHRIST**, by G. C. Berkouwer. 1954, pp. 369. \$4.00.

**ANCHOR OF HOPE**, by Preston J. Stegenga. 1954, pp. 271. \$3.50.

**THE BOOK OF THE ACTS**, by F. F. Bruce. 1954, pp. 555. \$6.00.

**THE PHILOSOPHY OF REVELATION**, by Herman Bavinck. 1953, pp.x, 349.

**THE DIVINE ECONOMY: A STUDY IN STEWARDSHIP**, by A. C. Conrad. 1954, pp. 169. \$2.50.

**THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF SCIENCE AND SCRIPTURE**, by Bernard Ramm. 1954, pp. 368. \$4.00.

**450 TRUE STORIES FROM CHURCH HISTORY**, by J. Vernon Jacobs. 1955. pp. 147. \$2.50.

**HOW TO ACHIEVE PERSONALITY THROUGH PRAYER**, by Simon Blocker. 1954, pp. 121. \$2.00.

**LOVE THE LORD THY GOD**, by Herman Hoeksema. 1955, pp. 290. \$3.00.

**Publications of Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6,  
Mich.**

**DEVOTIONS AND PRAYERS OF JOHN CALVIN**, ed. by Charles E. Edwards. 1954, pp. 120, pocket size. \$1.00.

**THE CHURCH IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE**, by William M. Ramsay. 1954, pp. 510. \$4.20.

**LECTURES ON HEBREWS**, by Joseph A. Seiss. 1954, pp. 408. \$3.40.

**THE FUTURE OF THE KINGDOM IN PRO-**

PHECY AND FULFILMENT, by Martin J. Wyn-gaarden. 1955, pp. 211. \$3.50.

THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION, by Buchanan. 1955, pp. x, 514. \$4.95.

THE LIFE OF DAVID, by Alexander Mac-laren. 1955, pp. 262. \$2.40. After Dec. 31, 1955, price \$3.00.

**Publications of Presbyterian and Reformed Pub-lishing Co., Box 185, Nutley 10, N. J.**

CHRISTIANITY AND EXISTENTIALISM, by J. M. Spier. 1953, pp. 140. \$3.00.

A NEW CRITIQUE OF THEORETICAL THOUGHT, Vol. I, The Necessary Presuppositions of Philosophy, by Herman Dooyeweerd, translated by D. H. Freeman and Wm. S. Young. 1953, pp. 566. Sold in sets only. \$36.00 per set of 4 volumes.

REVELATION TWENTY, by J. M. Kik. 1955, pp. 92. \$2.00.

#### **Publications of Other Firms**

SCHEEBEN'S DOCTRINE OF DIVINE ADOP-TION, by Edwin H. Palmer. J. H. Kok, N. V., Kam-pen, Netherlands. 1953, pp. xi, 202, paper cover. Florins \$5.90.

THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH: WHICH IS IT?

by Thomas Witherow. Publications Committee of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, c/o Mr. J. Grant, 4 Millburn Road, Inverness, Scotland. 1954, pp. 91, pocket size, paper cover. 2s 6d post-paid. U. S. A. and Canada 50c postpaid.

AN EXPOSITION OF HEBREWS, by Arthur W. Pink. Bible Truth Depot, Swengel, Pa. 1954, 3 volumes, pp. 504, 514, 405. Pet set, \$17.95.

THE DOCTRINE OF SANCTIFICATION, by Arthur W. Pink. Bible Truth Depot, Swengel, Pa. 1955, pp. 206. \$3.00.

CHRISTIAN FAITH TO-DAY, by Stephen Neill. Penguin Books, Ltd., 3300 Clipper Mill Road, Baltimore 11, Md. 1955, pp. 272, paper cover. 65 cents; postpaid 70 cents.

PRAYER, by John Bunyan; THE RETURN OF PRAYERS, by Thomas Goodwin. The Sovereign Grace Book Club, 446 South First St., Louisville, Ky. 1955, pp. 60, paper cover. \$1.00.

TITHING, by Arthur W. Pink. Bible Truth Depot, Swengel, Pa. No date, pp. 32, pocket size, paper cover.

THOMAS JONES OF CREATON, by J. S. Reynolds, in The Evangelical Library Bulletin, 78a Chiltern St., London, W. 1, England. 1954, pp. 4, paper cover.

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## **Blue Banner Question Box**

Readers are invited to submit Biblical, doctrinal and practical questions for answer in this department. Names will not be published with questions, but anonymous communications will be dis-regarded.

### **Question:**

The Westminster Confession of Faith (II.2) says that "God hath all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of Himself." If this is true, how could God create the universe and man for His own glory, and how can it be possible for man to glorify God? If God has all glory in His own being, how can the created universe or anything in it add to the glory of God?

### **Answer:**

The Bible teaches that God is the unchange-able Being. While constantly in control of all change in the universe, God Himself ever remains unchanged. Neither the created universe nor anything in it can actually add to the glory of God. As the Triune Being, God is self-contained, self-sufficient and self-existent. "God is concrete self-existence" (C. Van Til). God created the uni-verse, and controls it, for the **manifestation** of His own glory. By His sovereign choice He created the universe of time and space. At every point of time and space the universe is absolutely de-

pendent on God for its existence. If it were not for the purpose of God, no part of the universe could exist for one instant. It does exist, merely because God has so purposed for the manifestation of His own infinite glory.

To speak of the universe or anything in it add-ing something to the glory of God is to think of the universe as having some sort of existence of its own, apart from the purpose and power of God. If we think of God and the universe as parallel or correlative, then we may entertain the idea of the universe "adding" something to the glory of God. But if we regard the universe in Scriptural terms, as being absolutely dependent on God for its very existence and its moment-by-moment continuance, then clearly the universe cannot really add any-thing to God's glory.

Perhaps a simple illustration may help us to grasp this rather difficult idea. The invention of the electric light did not add anything to the in-ventive genius of Thomas A. Edison; it merely manifested the inventive genius which Edison al-

ready possessed. Yet the illustration is not really adequate, for Edison had to make use of tools, materials and physical forces which existed independently of himself. In the case of God, on the other hand, there are no tools, materials or forces existing independently of Him. In giving realization to His own sovereign, eternal purpose, God created all the tools, materials and forces that were to be involved. Since everything proceeded from the power and purpose of God, nothing created could really add to His glory; it could only manifest the glory which He already had. Avoiding the abstractions of modern thought, we should seek to cultivate truly Biblical thinking, remembering that only God is truly independent and self-existent.

— J. G. Vos

**Question:**

In reading the answer to the first question in *Blue Banner Faith and Life* for July-September 1954, I note the statement that "In hell the reprobate will not have a single godly or unselfish thought or desire." But in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, found in Luke 16:27,28, we read that the rich man (in hell) was concerned about his five brothers still in his father's house. How can this be reconciled with the statement that the reprobate in hell will be completely selfish?

**Answer:**

In interpreting parables in the Bible, we must be careful not to find doctrinal truth in every detail of a parable. Each parable was told to clarify or emphasize some one particular point of truth. As the parables are in story form they contain various elements of circumstances, local color, etc., which are part of the stage-setting of the parable, and not to be interpreted literally. For example, the point of the Parable of the Prodigal Son, in Luke 15, is that God receives and welcomes sinners who return to Him. Modernists have pointed out that there is no Christ, no atonement, no Holy Spirit, etc., in the parable of the Prodigal Son, therefore we do not need anything except just a decision to return to God. But this is not correct. The parable of the Prodigal Son was not told to outline an entire system of theology, but only to emphasize the truth that God welcomes repenting sinners. Again, the parable of the treasure hid in the field states that the man who found the treasure went and sold everything he possessed and bought the field. This only teaches that the kingdom of heaven is the supreme value, to be prized and sought above all others; it does not imply that we must literally sell all our possessions in order to become Christians. Again, in the parable of the Lost Sheep, the shepherd left 99 sheep in the sheepfold, while he went out in the wilderness looking for the one that was lost. This does not imply that there are 99 righteous people in the world for every one sinner, nor even that there are any righteous

people who do not need to be sought by the Shepherd. It only emphasizes the great concern of the Shepherd about one lost individual, and His great joy when that one lost individual has been reclaimed.

Similarly, in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, part of the parable is merely furniture or stage-setting, not to be regarded as teaching special doctrinal truth. For instance, the parable states that the soul of the beggar was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. This expression, Abraham's bosom, is not to be taken literally. It simply means heaven. Again, in this parable conversation is carried on, back and forth, between the rich man in hell and Abraham in heaven. This occurs in the parable, but actually there cannot be any such communication between heaven and hell. It only occurs in the parable in order to bring out more strongly the fact that people's destiny in the life after death may be just the reverse of what they have experienced in this present earthly life.

In the same way, the rich man's concern for his brothers is not to be taken literally. It occurs in the parable in order to teach that the Bible is God's last and only Word to the lost; those who will not listen to Moses and the prophets would not be convinced even by the miracle of one rising from the dead to preach to them. This saying of the rich man in the parable does not imply that the lost in hell will be moved by compassion on others; it only teaches that for those who reject the Gospel, God has no other way of salvation.

— J. G. Vos

**Question:**

In what sense may God be said to have free will? Did God in creating the universe and all it contains choose from among many possibilities as He saw fit, or was God limited by His nature to only one possible kind of universe to be created, and that "all very good"? Could God have chosen or desired to do otherwise than He actually has done?

**Answer:**

God is the most free of all beings. He alone is absolutely free, for He alone is absolutely independent. But when we say that God is absolutely free, this does not mean that God may do anything whatsoever. The Bible mentions certain things that God cannot do. God cannot lie; God cannot deny Himself. That is, God cannot do anything which is contrary to His own nature. It is wrong to think of the will of God as free in the sense that it is unlimited by the nature of God. When we say that God has free will, we mean by this that God can do anything that is in harmony with His nature. The will of God cannot branch off and make decisions which are contrary to the nature of God. God is not limited by anything out-

side of Himself; He is limited by Himself. In other words, God is what He is; if He were to be different from what He is, He would not be God. God cannot be God without being God.

With regard to God in relation to the universe, according to Biblical teaching the creation of the universe was in no sense necessary. While God's will in creating the universe was free, still this free will involved an expression of God's nature. This involves a logical difficulty which human reason cannot solve. "The idea of creation was present to God from all eternity, but the actual accomplishment was not. And this is as far as our finite minds can reach. At this stage, we are in danger of inserting our temporal categories into the eternal" (C. Van Til).

Pantheism holds that all that is possible has actually been realized. This is an error which is contrary to the freedom of God. Dr. C. Van Til in his classroom Syllabus entitled "An Introduction to Systematic Theology" states that not all that is possible to God is actually realized, citing in support of this the following Scriptures: Gen. 18:14; Jer. 32:37; Zech. 8:6; Matt. 3:9; 26:53. Those who are interested in a further study of this fascinating but difficult subject, we refer to the above mentioned classroom Syllabus of Dr. Van Til, in the chapter on the communicable attributes of God. The present writer has received much help from Dr. Van Til's discussion of the subject.

— J. G. Vos

**Question:**

What is your view of what some old divines used to speak of as "the work of the Holy Spirit preparatory unto regeneration"? Were they right in speaking of it as "preparatory work"? Or should it rather be spoken of as what follows regeneration?

**Answer:**

The **Testimony** of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, XII.5, speaks as follows on this question:

"No previous discipline, of any kind whatever, can so prepare the sinful soul as to give it any bias toward holiness; regeneration is supernatural and instantaneous." The same chapter of the **Testimony** rejects as erroneous the proposition "That any preparatory work can predispose the soul for Regeneration." The present writer is in agreement with this position, which seems to follow necessarily from the Scriptural truth that regeneration is supernatural and instantaneous. There can be no middle ground between death and life. A person is either absolutely dead in trespasses and sins, or he is a new creature in Christ Jesus. Since regeneration is a creative act of the Spirit of God, it cannot be in any way dependent on preparatory work, but must be an instantaneous act of almighty supernatural grace. This is not to deny that what is called "common

grace" has a meaning and purpose in the lives of those who eventually are regenerated; it is only to deny that those operations of "common grace" which they experienced for a greater or less period of time could really prepare the soul for regeneration. Augustine, the great bishop of Hippo, in his well known **Confessions** which tell the story of his conversion to Christ, says to God, "Thou wast with me, but I was not with thee." Augustine lived in sin for some thirty years before he experienced the saving grace of God. After he was saved, he realized that God had been watching over his life through all those years of sin; God had a gracious purpose concerning Him, of which he himself had been unaware through those years of sin. But this does not imply that God's dealings with Augustine prepared his soul for regeneration. Rather, God's dealings with him through those years caused him later to realize the futility of all religion which falls short of supernatural regeneration. Until a person is regenerated, he is only "flesh" and "flesh" cannot be prepared for receiving spiritual life. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

God is sovereign and works when, where and how He pleases. John the Baptist was regenerated even before his birth (Luke 1:15); Saul of Tarsus and Augustine were regenerated in adult life. No preparation can contribute anything to a miracle. There may be dealings of God with a person prior to his regeneration; what we are concerned to deny is that such divine dealings are necessary to regeneration, or in any way contribute to regeneration, or make the soul fitter to receive regeneration.

The learned divine John Gill in his **Body of Divinity** speaks as follows:

"Regeneration . . . is . . . sovereign grace and mercy, not excited by any motives or conditions in men, or by any preparatory works in them; what were there in the three thousand, some of whom had been concerned in the death of Christ, converted under Peter's sermon? what were in the jailor, who had just before used the apostles in a cruel manner? what was there in Saul, the blasphemer, persecutor, and injurious person, between those characters and his obtaining mercy? . . ." (p. 533).

—J. G. Vos

**Question:**

Please publish something on the question of the limited atonement, which was discussed in the Question Box in 1946.

**Answer:**

The **Testimony** of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (X.2) sums up the teaching of Scripture on this subject as follows:

"Christ did not in any sense suffer for the sins of all mankind, nor did he lay down his life

to make an atonement for an indefinite number of sinners. There is indeed an infinite sufficiency in his sacrifice to save the whole world, had it been designed to produce that effect; but in the purpose of God, and in the undertaking of Christ, it was not contemplated that he should make atonement for any except those who were elected in him to everlasting life; these only he represented, and these only shall be saved through his redemption."

In support of this position the **Testimony** cites the following Scriptures: John 10:14, 15, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30; Isaiah 42:21; Rom. 3:25; Acts 20:28; John 17:9,10; Rev. 5:9.

The **Testimony** adds (X.4) that "The reprobate world, by means of their connection with God's elect, who live among them, or may descend from them, are partakers of some benefits which flow from Christ's death; the Gospel revelation meliorates the state of society; Divine judgments are sometimes averted for the sake of the saints; the peace and prosperity of nations are furthered by the providence of God over his people; benevolence and temperance are promoted by ecclesiastical discipline; the world is continued under its present economy until all the elect are brought to salvation. These, and similar benefits, of which the ungodly partake, are necessary consequences of Christ's purchase and care of his Church, foreseen by God, in forming the system of grace, having been predestinated from eternity."

The **Testimony** also rejects as erroneous the following propositions:

"3. That Christ died equally for all mankind."

"4. That Christ died for no person in particular, but that the atonement is indefinite."

"7. That Christ purchased any benefit for the reprobate."

Those who are interested in a full discussion of this subject are referred to the standard works on Reformed theology, such as Charles Hodge's **Systematic Theology**; A. A. Hodge's **Outlines of Theology**; Louis Berkhof's **Systematic Theology**. For a discussion in simple, non-technical language, we refer the reader to **Studies in Theology** by Lorraine Boettner (section on **The Extent of the Atonement**, pages 315-327.) A careful reading of what Dr. Boettner has to say on the subject, with study of the Scripture passages he cites, will do much to clear up misunderstandings of this matter in the minds of Christian people.

Dr. Boettner points out that Arminian theology limits the atonement as truly as does Calvinism. Calvinism regards the atonement as limited **in extent** (Christ died, not for all mankind, but for the elect of God); Arminianism regards the atonement as limited **in efficacy** (Christ's atonement does not actually save anyone, but only gives all men a chance to be saved, on a "take it or leave it" basis). The real question is, which of these

representations fits the Scripture data on the subject. Unquestionably Arminianism is much more pleasing to human reason than is Calvinism. But the question is not which of these systems is more palatable to sinful man, but which of them best accords with the data of God's revelation in the Bible.

It may be worth while to consider briefly the reasons why people tend to object to the Reformed doctrine of a limited or particular atonement. The present writer would suggest that these reasons may be summed up as follows:

1. A belief that God owes salvation — or at least "a chance" for salvation — to every human being. This is manifestly untrue. What God "owes" to people is simply justice; but salvation is a matter of mercy, and God does not owe mercy to anyone. As soon as we speak of mercy, the idea of debt or obligation on God's part must drop out of consideration.

2. A belief that if Christ died only for the elect, then the Gospel cannot really be preached to all mankind, for none but the elect can really accept the Gospel. This notion involves seriously confused thinking. Since only God knows who the elect are, the Gospel is to be preached to all mankind without distinction; the elect will believe and be saved; the non-elect will perish in their sins, but will be even more guilty at the Judgment Day because of their rejection of the Gospel which was preached to them. We are not saved by believing that we are of the elect; we are saved by believing on Christ as our Saviour. God's decree of election and Christ's atonement for the sins of the elect constitute the foundation of the house of salvation; Christ is the door of the house. You enter a house, not through the foundation, but through the door.

3. A belief that the idea of the limited or particular atonement represents God as being harsh or unloving. This again is a misunderstanding. There is indeed a sense in which God loves all mankind. But there is a deeper sense in which God loves only the elect. This deep, redemptive love of God provides all things necessary, objectively and subjectively, for the eternal salvation of those persons who are thus loved by God. That God has chosen to bestow on some a kind of love which He does not bestow on all does not imply that God is lacking in love. It only means that God is sovereign and acts according to His own will, not according to our human ideas.

4. A very inadequate and incomplete induction of Scripture passages, and a very superficial treatment of those Scriptures which are actually considered. How often we have heard someone cite John 3:16 or some similar text of Scripture with an air of finality, as if the mere citing of this or that text could solve the whole problem and forever dispose of a question on which volumes have been written by godly men who have

spent their lives in diligent and patient study of the Word. This superficial, cursory text-citing by people who have never taken the trouble to read what has been written by godly, believing scholars on this subject, is not an evidence of insight into the Scriptures, but rather of ignorance and shallowness. It is very easy to cite several texts which seem to favor one side of a debated question. But that sort of procedure does not establish truth. What is required is a patient, scholarly study of all the Scriptures which relate

to the subject. That doctrine is to be accepted as true which best accords with a **complete** induction of the Scriptures on the subject. A person must not only cite Scripture for his own side of the controversy, but he must deal with the Scripture cited by the other side, and must show how both are related to the true doctrine on the subject. "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him" (Prov. 18:13).

—J. G. Vos

## *People and Places in the Psalms*

**SALMON.** 68:14. This name is correctly spelled Zalmon, and means "shady." The reference is to a forested mountain located near the town of Shechem; see Judges 9:48. Psalm 68:14 reads: "When the Almighty scattered kings in it, it was white as snow in Salmon." The allusion here is to the land of Canaan, which is described as being "white as snow in Salmon" following God's scattering of the kings who are referred to. "It is not known why the snow of that mountain is particularly alluded to here, as if there were any **special** whiteness or purity in it. It is probably specified by name only to give more vivacity to the description. There is much difference of opinion as to what is the meaning of the expression or in what respects the land was thus **white**. The most common opinion has been that it was from the bones of the slain which were left to bleach unburied, and which covered the land so that it seemed to be white. . . . Others suppose it to mean that the land was like the dazzling whiteness of snow in the midst of blackness or darkness. Tholuck supposes it to mean that, when war was waged on the kings and people, they fell as fast as snowflakes on Mount Salmon; and that the idea is not so much the **whiteness** of the land, as the fact that they fell in great numbers, covering the land as the snowflakes do. It is perhaps not possible to determine which of these explanations is correct" (Albert Barnes).

**SAMUEL.** 99:6. In this text Samuel is listed along with Moses and Aaron as among those who called upon the name of the Lord and were answered by Him. Samuel, who lived about 1050 B.C., was the first of the prophets, if we exclude Moses who was greater than any of the prophets. The Psalm goes on to say: "He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar. . . ." Thus the Psalm speaks of Samuel as one who experienced supernatural intercourse with God. We should bear this in mind in our modern day when it is common to regard the Old Testament prophets as merely men with a religious genius, who spun ideas out of their own inner consciousness and then gave them to the people with a formula such as "Thus saith the Lord." This modern subjectivized notion of pro-

phesy is essentially false and tends to undermine the authority of the Bible as divine revelation.

**SATAN.** 109:6. "Set thou a wicked man over him: and let Satan stand at his right hand." The New Testament (Acts 1:20) proves that the primary reference of this Psalm is to Judas, the betrayer of our Lord. The word Satan means literally "an adversary." Satan, or the devil, is the great adversary of God and man. In this day when people all around us have given up their belief in a personal devil — as they have given up belief, often, in a personal God — we need to remember that in the Bible the devil or Satan is not a mere abstract principle of evil, but a living, personal being. For a truly sound theology we must believe not only in a personal God, but also in a personal devil.

**SEBA.** 72:10. "The kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts." This occurs in the 72nd Psalm which is one of the Messianic Psalms. Seba is mentioned in Gen. 10:7 as a Cushite, and therefore Hamitic, people. It is probable that this people lived in southern Arabia. Seba is associated with Sheba, both evidently being regarded as remote regions to the south of Palestine. The import of the statement in Psalm 72 is that even remote nations shall bear gifts of tribute to the Messiah.

**SHEBA.** 72:10,15. See preceding note on Seba. Like Seba, Sheba is listed in Gen. 10:7 as a Cushite, therefore Hamitic, people. Sheba is also classified as a Semitic people (Gen. 10:28; 25:3) descended, in part, from Abraham. The location was in southwestern Arabia. The history of the Queen of Sheba who visited Solomon is well known. "It is readily conceivable that in their dispersion they became mingled with other tribes by intermarriage or attached to them by political relations, and hence they might trace their descent by different lines and might be classed variously in a genealogy" (Davis Bible Dictionary).

**SHECHEM.** 60:6; 108:7. "I will divide Shechem. . ." Shechem was a walled city in central Palestine, near Mount Gerizim. It is first mentioned in Scripture at Gen 12:6 (spelled Sichem).

"David here applies the same language to **Shechem**, and the valley of **Succoth**, as portions of the land, meaning that he would accomplish the original purpose in regard to the land by placing it in possession of the people of God. . . . Shechem . . . became a central place, a representative spot of the whole land, and to say that that was con-

quered or subdued, was to speak of that which implied a victory over the land. David speaks of having secured this, as significant of the fact that the central point of influence and power had been brought under subjection, and as in fact implying that the land was subdued" (Albert Barnes).

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## *Some Noteworthy Quotations*

"My friends, those of you who are unconverted are in the very same situation as Jerusalem was. In the years that are now fled, like the mists of the morning, how many messages have you had from God? How many times has He sent His messengers to you, rising up early and sending them? His Bible has been in your houses, a silent, but more mighty pleader for God; His providence has been in your families, in sickness and death, in plenty or poverty, all, all beseeching you to flee from the wrath to come; all, all beseeching you to cleave to the Lord Jesus Christ, the only, the all-sufficient Saviour. All these messages have come to you, and you are yet unconverted, still dead dry bones, without Christ and without God in the world; and you are saying, Soul, take thine ease, eat, and drink, and be merry."

—Robert Murray McCheyne

"The place in hell is quite ready for every unconverted soul. When Judas died, the Scriptures say, 'he went unto his own place.' It was his own place before he went there, being quite prepared and ready for him. As when a man retires at night to his sleeping room, it is said he has gone to his own room, so a place in hell is quite ready for every Christless person. It is his own place. When the rich man died and was buried, he was immediately in his own place. He found everything ready. He lifted up his eyes in hell, being in torments. So hell is quite ready for every Christless person. It was prepared, long ago, for the devil and his angels. The fires are all quite ready, and fully lighted and burning."

—Robert Murray McCheyne

"Reproach is a branch of that persecution which all that will live godly in Christ Jesus must count upon; and we must submit to it, behaving ourselves quietly, and with a due decorum, not only when princes sit and speak against us, but

even when the abjects gather themselves together against us, and we become the song of the drunkards."

—Matthew Henry

"It is for want of meekness that there are in the church so many pulpit and paper-quarrels, such strifes of words, and perverse disputings: that there are in the state such factions and parties, and between them such animosities and heart-burnings: that there are in neighborhoods such strifes, and brawls, and vexatious law-suits; or such distances, and estrangements, and shyness one of another: that there are in families envies and quarrels among the children and servants, crossing and thwarting, finding fault one with another; and that brethren that dwell together do not, as they should, 'dwell together in unity.' It is for want of meekness that we are so impatient of contradiction in our opinions, desires, and designs; that we must have our own saying, right or wrong, and everything our own way; that we are so impatient of competitors, not enduring that any should stand in our light, or share in that work of honor which we would engross to ourselves; that we are so impatient of contempt, so quick in our apprehension and resentment of the least slight or affront; and so quick to imagine injuries where really there are none or none intended. They are not only loud and professed contentions, that evidence a want of meekness, but also those silent alienations in affection and conversation which make a less noise; little piques and prejudices conceived which men are themselves so ashamed of that they will not own them: these show the spirit disturbed, and wanting the ornament of meekness. In a word, the wilful doing of anything to disquiet others, slandering, backbiting, whispering, tale-bearing, or the like, is too plain an evidence that we are not ourselves rightly disposed to be quiet."

—Matthew Henry

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## *Religious Terms Defined*

**FALL.** The historical event by which the human race, which God had created morally good, became evil.

**FLESH.** The term "flesh" is used in Scrip-

ture in various senses, as: (1) a part of the bodily organism of man, Gen. 2:21. (2) Man in his human weakness, in contrast to the power and permanence of God, Isa. 40:6. (3) Man in his present

mortal condition, in contrast to the immortality of the resurrection, 1 Cor. 15:50. (4) Man as totally depraved and corrupted by sin, man in his condition of enmity against God, man's sinful nature, Rom. 8:8. When the term "flesh" is used with a bad meaning, it does not mean the human body, but the entire sinful nature of man, including the soul or spirit.

**GENTILES.** Literally, "nations"; used in the Bible to designate all people who are not Jews.

**GILEAD.** A mountainous district east of the Jordan River, occupied by the tribes of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh. In later times it was called Perea.

**HAMATH.** A city of northern Syria, in the valley of the Orontes River, often referred to in the Old Testament.

**HOLINESS.** God's holiness is (1) His infinite separation from all created being; (2) His infinite separation from all moral evil. Man's holiness consists in separation from evil and conformity to the image of God, in which he was originally created.

**HORN.** In the Bible, a symbol of power, or of vigorous, flourishing health and growth.

**INTERCESSION.** A plea or prayer for another, especially a prayer to God for benefits or blessings to be granted to another.

**INTERPRETATION.** A clear statement of the meaning of something. The common notion that we may interpret the Bible in any way we see fit is wrong. An interpretation is valid only so far as it sets forth the true meaning of the text being interpreted.

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## *Studies in the Book of Genesis*

### LESSON 72

#### III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph, 11:27-50:26, continued

##### 2. History of Abraham after leaving Ur. 12:1 to 25:12, cont.

The remaining verses of chapter 14 record the conversation between Abraham and the king of Sodom, after Abraham's successful completion of his rescue mission. In verse 17 we are told that "the king of Sodom went out to meet him, after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer and of the kings that were with him at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale." It is probable, but not certain, that this was the same king of Sodom as the one mentioned earlier, who fell in the slime pits of the vale of Siddim (verse 10). In verse 21 the king of Sodom addresses Abraham, saying, "Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself." This was a reasonable proposal, as Abraham had gone to much trouble and expense and had incurred no little danger in his rescue expedition. The king of Sodom could expect to get his people back but he could not lawfully claim the return of all the looted goods. So the king of Sodom, recognizing his great indebtedness to Abraham, is prepared to let Abraham keep the goods.

Abraham, however, refuses to keep the goods which had been recovered. He replies to the king of Sodom, "I have lifted up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth that I will not take from a thread even to a shoe-latchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich." Abraham was not a covetous man, and he had not undertaken this expedition

from motives of material gain. But there was an even more important consideration. "Abram desires to stand out clearly as a man who prospers only because of God's blessing . . . Least of all could Abram accept a generous bestowal from a man of the calibre of the king of Sodom, a purely sensual materialist and idolater" (Leupold). Calvin comments that it was useless for the king of Sodom to try to show due gratitude to Abraham, as long as he remained ungrateful to God, "by whose severity and clemency he remained alike unprofit-ed."

Abraham mentions having sworn an oath: "I have lifted up mine hand unto the Lord." This is the first reference in the Bible to the swearing of an oath. Evidently swearing an oath was something already ancient and well known; there is no reason to suppose that this is the first oath sworn in human history. Abraham speaks as if the king of Sodom would readily understand his meaning. Note that even in this ancient day the manner of swearing an oath was by lifting the hand towards heaven, "to show that we appeal to God as a witness, and also as an avenger, if we fail to keep our oath" (Calvin).

Some have wondered why Abraham should consider this occasion important enough to warrant swearing a solemn oath by the name of the Lord. Calvin states that two reasons may be given why Abraham acted as he did. First, to convince the king of Sodom that he really meant what he said; the king of Sodom, being a heathen and therefore accustomed to a low standard of truthfulness, might not have been convinced without a solemn

oath in the name of Abraham's God. Second, it was important to Abraham to make it clear to everyone that his motives in waging war were not mercenary or selfish ones. Abraham's refusal to keep the goods was not caused by pride but by principle.

In swearing, Abraham called the Lord "God Most High" (**El Elyon**), the same divine name used by Melchizedek in verse 19. Thus a testimony was borne that Abraham's God was the same as the God worshipped by Melchizedek king of Salem.

There was one exception to Abraham's refusal to accept any of the recovered loot. The chiefs who had accompanied Abraham were to take their portion. Aner, Eshcol and Mamre, Abraham's allies, were not bound by Abraham's oath, and they were of course free to make whatever settlement or arrangement they might see fit between themselves and the king of Sodom.

Leupold comments that the close of chapter 14 shows that Abraham was not only courageous but also extremely considerate of the honor of the Lord, and that his faith was utterly unselfish.

### LESSON 73

#### III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26, continued

##### 3. History of Abraham after leaving Ur. 12:1 to 25:12, cont.

We now come to chapter 15 which records God's covenant with Abraham. The word "covenant" has appeared earlier in Genesis, at 6:18 and several times in chapter 9, in connection with the history of Noah. The provision made by God for Adam and Eve to come into full religious communion with Himself was truly a covenant, having all the elements of such a provision, yet the word "covenant" is not used of it in the Genesis record. In the history of Abraham the term "covenant"—Hebrew *berith*—is now introduced. This is one of the great concepts of the Bible, and without a grasp of its meaning, it is impossible truly to understand the message of the Scriptures. The student is referred to the series of articles on **The Covenant-Idea in Scripture** in this magazine, starting in the April-June 1953 issue and coming to a conclusion in the present issue (Vol. 8 No. 2 through Vol. 10 No. 3). Mr. Frazer shows that the covenant-idea is rooted in the sovereignty of God, and that the rather common notion that the covenant is simply an agreement is wrong.

"After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward" (15:1). The vision here mentioned is the fifth recorded revelation of God granted to Abraham.

#### Questions:

1. What proposal did the king of Sodom make to Abraham?
2. Why was this a reasonable and natural proposal to make?
3. What was Abraham's reply to the king of Sodom?
4. What may have been Abraham's reasons for replying as he did?
5. In what way was Abraham's statement to the king of Sodom specially solemn?
6. Where is the practice of swearing an oath first mentioned in the Bible?
7. Why is the hand lifted up in swearing an oath?
8. Why was Abraham warranted in using a solemn oath on this occasion?
9. What name of God did Abraham use in his oath?
10. What special testimony was borne by the use of this name?
11. What exception did Abraham specify in his refusal to accept any of the recovered property?

The question may be raised why this revelation of God came at this particular time. One possibility is that Abraham was somewhat fearful that Chedorlaomer and his allied kings would come back later to take vengeance on him. The fact that God's statement opens with the words "Fear not" and goes on to add "I am thy shield" seems to fit in well with this idea. Another possibility is that now that Abraham was remarkably successful, he might expect to be envied by local kings and chiefs. Calvin suggests the foregoing possibilities. Leupold admits that there is some probability in them, but adds that the rest of the chapter indicates that the fear which Abraham was to avoid was not a fear of military enemies, but a fear of remaining childless.

Abraham is not to fear, precisely because God is his shield and his exceeding great reward. The word "shield" conveys the idea of protection. Those who are shielded by God are always perfectly safe. "In calling Himself his 'reward' He teaches Abram to be satisfied with Himself alone. And as this was, with respect to Abram, a general instruction, given for the purpose of showing him that victory was not the chief and ultimate good which God had designed him to pursue; so let us know that the same blessing is promised to us all, in the person of this one man" (Calvin). Calvin adds that "since God ascribes to Himself the office and property of a shield, for the purpose of rendering Himself the protector of our salvation; we ought to regard this promise as a brazen wall, so that we

should not be excessively fearful in any dangers.”

God declares that He Himself is Abraham's exceeding great reward. It is not merely that those who belong to God shall have a reward; it is that God Himself is their reward—He is their everlasting portion and possession. Here we see the God-centered character of the Biblical religion. People today speak of religion as a matter of values. Religion is wanted today for the benefits that can be expected from it—it can check crime, curb juvenile delinquency, prevent a third world war, promote social justice. Yet if we want religion only for such reasons as these, actually we are not religious at all. To serve God for what can be gotten from God (by the individual or by society) is not really to serve God at all. Really to serve God, we must serve Him for His own sake. The greatest benefit that God can give His own is the possession of Himself in the covenant bond. “Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever.” Much that is called religion today is really only selfishness or at best humanistic concern for the welfare of society. Only when God is known and loved for His own sake does religion really exist.

This revelation of God came to Abraham in the form of a vision. The word used is not the ordinary word for vision, but a rare word which occurs only three times in the Bible (Gen. 15:1; Num. 24:4,16; Ezek. 13:7). Visions were something like dreams yet different from the latter. A vision was a supernaturally induced state in which God caused the person to see certain things. The person would know definitely and without any doubt that the source of the vision was God. Sometimes in visions actions took place, both on the part of God and also on the part of the recipient of the vision. This is the technical meaning of the term “vision.” Later in the Old Testament the term “vision” came to be used also in a more general sense, as equivalent to “special revelation”, regardless of the exact mode of revelation. The modern, purely metaphorical use of the term “vision” is not found in the Bible. This purely modern usage regards “vision” as equivalent to “intelligent and imaginative foresight”, as when someone says: “By voyaging westward across the Atlantic, Columbus showed himself to be a man of vision.” Endless confusion and harm results from the all too common importing of this modern

usage into the Bible, and interpreting the word “vision” in the Bible as having this wholly modern meaning. Countless sermons have been preached on the text “Where there is no vision the people perish,” which completely miss the real meaning of this text and read into it a modern meaning which is really foreign to the Bible. The text really means that without the gracious, special revelation of God the people perish. It has nothing to do with the idea that the local merchants and professional people ought to be community-minded.

#### Questions:

1. Where does the word “covenant” first appear in the Bible?
2. Why is the provision which God made for Adam and Eve to enjoy religious fellowship with Himself rightly called a covenant?
3. In what fact is the Biblical covenant-idea rooted?
4. What may have been the reason why God revealed Himself to Abraham at this particular time?
5. Taking chapter 15 as a whole, what is the fear which God warned Abraham against?
6. What is the idea conveyed by the word “shield”?
7. What is the importance of God's promise in 15:1 to us today?
8. What reward was promised to Abraham?
9. How is religion often wrongly regarded today?
10. What is man's chief end, or real purpose in existence?
11. What is meant by the term “vision”?
12. How is the word “vision” used later in the Old Testament in a broader sense than that of Gen. 15:1?
13. How is the word “vision” often used today?
14. How does this modern usage of the word “vision” differ from the Biblical usage of the term?

### LESSON 74

#### III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26, continued

##### 2. History of Abraham after leaving Ur. 12:1 to 25:12, cont.

“And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and,

lo, one born in my house is mine heir” (15:2,3). God first give Abraham an opportunity to express the thoughts that were troubling him, before revealing to him the promises which would afford new comfort and hope. Abraham wonders what God could give him; he is going on through life childless; as a runner approaching the goal in a race, he thinks of himself as having only a little distance yet to go.

The patriarch adds that his only heir is "this Eliezer of Damascus." In the Hebrew it is "my heir is Damascus Eliezer." This seems to imply that Eliezer originally came from Damascus. From this statement of Abraham grew the entirely un-historical tradition that he once lived in Damascus and even was king of that city. "One born in my house" may be translated "one belonging to my household"; in the Hebrew it is "a son of my house." That is, Eliezer was not Abraham's son but his servant or slave. Leupold remarks that though this was tragic for Abraham, it shows the comparatively good treatment accorded to servants at that time, and in Abraham's establishment, for in the absence of children of the master, the children of the chief servant were regarded as heirs.

As to the problem of how Eliezer could be both a Damascene and also one born in Abraham's house, (1) he may be said to be "of Damascus" merely because his father or ancestors came from there; or (2) he may be called "son" of Abraham's house merely because he was attached to that household, not because he was really born in it.

"And, behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir" (15:4). This statement of God indicates that He approved of Abraham's wish to have a child of his own. The word "behold" in this verse, and the similar usage of it elsewhere, calls attention to the fact that something very remarkable and important is about to be related. A special, direct revelation of God is always a fact of outstanding importance, so attention is called to it by the word "behold" (sometimes translated "lo"). The language used proves to Abraham that God's promise that he would have a son is to be taken literally: "he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir."

"And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be" (15:5). This, of course, is still in the vision. Abraham is directed to look at the starry heavens and see if he can count the stars. The point of the comparison is the impossibility of counting either the stars or the descendants of Abraham. All allegorical meanings, such as the notion that this verse proves that the descendants of Abraham shall be a heavenly people, are unwarranted. The only point of comparison is innumerability.

We must now consider the question as to the meaning of "thy seed" in this promise of God to Abraham. Calvin states that the posterity of Ishmael and of Esau cannot be counted, because the legitimate seed of Abraham was limited to those descended from Isaac through Jacob; yet even many of the descendants of Jacob became covenant breakers and cut themselves off from the divine redemptive promise and became aliens from

the faith of their fathers. Calvin concludes that the term "seed" in this verse means "the whole people whom God has adopted to Himself. But since many were alienated by their unbelief, we must come for information to Christ, who alone distinguishes true and genuine sons from such as are illegitimate. By pursuing this method, we find the posterity of Abram reduced to a small number, that afterwards it may be the more increased. For in Christ the Gentiles also are gathered together, and are by faith ingrafted into the body of Abram, so as to have a place among his legitimate sons."

"And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness" (15:6). Here we have the first occurrence of the word "believe" in the Bible. "None of us would be able to conceive the rich and hidden doctrine which this passage contains unless Paul had borne his torch before us (Rom. 4:3)" (Calvin). Here at this early point of the Bible we find taught the doctrine of free justification by faith. All forms of human works and character as grounds of a right standing before God are excluded. Man gets a right standing before God in one way alone, by faith which grasps God's redemptive promise.

The Bible never regards faith from the psychological sense which is so common at the present day. Today we are told by many people that it is the attitude of faith that is important, regardless of who or what is believed. People speak of faith as if it meant something like "morale" or "self-confidence" or "courage", and they say that a man's theology is not important, so long as he has an attitude of faith. Nothing of this sort is to be found anywhere in the Bible. In the Bible it is not the act or attitude of faith that is important, but the **object** of faith—the doctrine that is believed, or the Person in whom one believes. Let us not be deceived by the many references to "faith" in the liberal religious propaganda of our day.

"And he counted it to him for righteousness." In New Testament terminology this might be paraphrased: "And he justified him through it." "Righteousness" means conformity to the moral requirements of God. By reason of his faith Abraham is regarded as a righteous person by God. The idea is not that God accepts faith as a substitute for real righteousness, but that when a person has true faith, God "imputes" or credits the perfect righteousness of Christ to that person.

The Pharisees were quite blind to this truth that Abraham was justified by faith, and the Jews have been blind to it ever since. And even in nominally Christian circles, nothing is more common than to find the Biblical truth of justification by faith denied or distorted. Calvin remarks that "in all ages, Satan has labored at nothing more assiduously than to extinguish, or to smother, the gratuitous justification of faith, which is here expressly asserted. . . . Just as we understand that

they to whom iniquity is imputed are guilty before God; so those to whom He imputes righteousness are approved by Him as just persons; wherefore Abram was received into the number and rank of just persons, by the imputation of righteousness."

#### Questions:

1. What thought was troubling Abraham at this time?
2. Who was Abraham's only heir at this time?
3. What is the meaning of the expression "one born in my house"?
4. What may be the reason why Eliezer is said to be "of Damascus"?
5. What is the importance of the word "behold" in 15:4?
6. Why did God command Abraham to look at the stars?

7. What is meant by "thy seed" in God's promise to Abraham?

8. What important Bible word occurs for the first time in 15:6?

9. How did Abraham come to be counted righteous before God?

10. How is faith often wrongly regarded at the present day?

11. In distinction from modern religious thought, how is faith regarded in the Bible?

12. What important doctrine, fully revealed in the New Testament, is illustrated by the history of Abraham at this point?

13. Why has Satan always labored to abolish or distort this particular doctrine?

14. How is justification defined in the Shorter Catechism?

### LESSON 75

#### III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26, cont.

##### 2. History of Abraham after leaving Ur. 12:1 to 25:12, cont.

"And he said unto him, I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it. And he said, Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?" (15:7,8). This is still part of the vision. God has yet more to reveal to Abraham. By reminding him that God is the one who brought him out of Ur of the Chaldees, God causes Abraham to realize that his whole life is part of a divine plan. This plan is only partly completed; but God will carry it all to completion. So He promises Abraham that He will give him the land of Canaan to inherit it. The patriarch naturally asks for some token whereby he shall be fully assured of this inheritance. This request on Abraham's part is not to be regarded as indicating doubt, or lack of faith in God's promise, but rather the desire for an even fuller conviction than he already had. There are various analogies in the Bible, such as Gideon's request for a sign (Judges 6:17 ff.) and the question asked by Mary (Luke 1:34). Such requests proceed not from unbelief but from faith. Calvin states that the protracted delay in fulfilling the promise was a difficulty to Abraham's faith, so that his request for a token was not an improper one. "The more certainly Abram was persuaded that God was true, and the more he was attached to His Word, so much the more familiarly did he disburden his cares into God's bosom" (Calvin). Calvin adds that the instances in the Old Testament of some of God's saints requesting signs or miracles (as Hezekiah and Gideon) does not constitute any warrant for us in this New Testament dispensation to do the same;

rather, he says, "let it suffice us to seek for such confirmation only as the Lord Himself, according to His own pleasure, shall judge most eligible."

"And he said unto him, Take me a heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon. And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not. And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away" (15:9-11). What is stated here is the procedure for establishing a covenant. At this point we shall quote from the series of articles on **The Covenant-Idea in Scripture** by the Rev. Frank D. Frazer as found in the April-June 1954 issue of this magazine, page 65 (Vol. 9 No. 2):

"On that day Jehovah **made a covenant** with Abram.' This is the first occurrence in Scripture of the expression '**karath b'rith**,' translated in our English version, '**made a covenant**.' The verb, **karath**, in its simple active form always means 'cut off'; as, for example, a piece of anything, a limb of a tree, a tree from its roots; hence, 'cut down' a forest, etc. In effect, it means 'cut in two'; therefore as applied to a living body, it implies a **violent death** and a **shedding of blood**. In its passive and causative forms usually applied to persons, it means 'cut off' from the presence of God, from the covenant people, from the land of the living, by the act of God. It is often used for the execution of divine judgment; the death penalty; the curse of the covenant for disobedience. Yet this heavy and awful significance of the word has been obscured by an inadequate and confusing translation, '**make a covenant**.' In our English usage, 'make a covenant' refers to the composing, and agreeing to certain terms, and the sealing of

these by the parties. Here the reference is to a symbolic transaction by which Abram was to know **how** God Himself **mediated**, and so validated and put into effect, His own unilateral Covenant of Grace. . .

"There it is, pictured in symbols. See the heifer, the she-goat, the ram, the dove and the pigeon; **dead, cut in two, their blood poured out.** For Jehovah had said to Abram 'Take **for Me . . .** and he took **for Him** all these and divided them in the midst.' 'Take for Me,' since God Himself would provide the mediating victim. Here are not five victims, but all the kinds of animals afterwards used in sacrifice, each an appointed symbol of the one mediating victim, who would vicariously suffer the death demanded by the first covenant.

"Then, as the sun was setting, a manifestation of the divine presence appeared to Abram in his sleep. God told him his seed should be sojourners in a land not theirs, subjected to the oppression of evil; but that God would in due time, by judgment of their oppressors, separate them and bring them forth to possess their own inheritance. When it was dark, 'Behold a furnace of smoke, even a torch of fire, that **passed between those pieces.**' (Here were not two symbols, but one: the verb 'passed' is singular, whence we are to understand that the furnace and torch are one; the furnace appeared to be both smoking and blazing with fire.) 'For our God is a consuming fire' (Deut. 4:24. Heb. 12:28). He is also 'the Light of the World,' 'the Light of Life' (John 8:12). Compare 'the flame of the sword' (Gen. 3:24).

"Thus, in symbol, the curse of the broken covenant was executed; not upon the guilty sinner, but, by the determinate counsel of God, upon a clean, sinless **substitute** which God Himself provided; and then, by His visible presence and action sanctioned the whole procedure as a true picture of how His covenant promises are made good, according to the greatness of His love and the exactness of His justice. 'On that day' Jehovah showed Abram **how** he was to know of a surety that the covenant was mediated, validated and put into effect for him and for his seed forever. This true

symbolism of the sacrifice was kept by the faithful seed of Abraham until the fulness of the time had come, when **in reality** 'the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world,' 'was manifested in the flesh, and offered Himself without spot to God, to bear the sins of many—one sacrifice forever.'"

#### Questions:

1. What may be the reason why God reminded Abraham that He had brought him out of Ur of the Chaldees?
2. Why would Abraham naturally want a token or explanation from God as to his inheritance of the land of Canaan?
3. What Bible analogies exist to Abraham's request?
4. What would be the effect on Abraham's faith of the long delay in the fulfilment of God's promise?
5. In response to Abraham's request, what instructions did God give?
6. What is the literal meaning of the Hebrew word translated "made" in the expression "made a covenant"?
7. What is the significance of the fact that the animals and birds were killed?
8. Why were these five kinds of living creatures specified by God?
9. What revelation as to the future of Abraham's descendants was given by God at this time?
10. How was the divine presence manifested to Abraham in his sleep?
11. How can it be shown that the "furnace of smoke" and the "torch of fire" were one and the same symbol of God's presence?
12. Since the certainty of Abraham's inheriting the land of Canaan depended on a blood atonement provided by God, what does this teach concerning all blessings which we receive from God?

### LESSON 76

#### III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26, cont.

##### 2. History of Abraham after leaving Ur. 12:1 to 25:12, cont.

The record states that when the birds of prey came down upon the bodies of the killed animals, Abraham drove them away. The question may be raised, was this still a part of the vision, or was Abraham now awake and did he drive away real birds? We may further ask, was the bringing, killing and arranging of the animals and birds act-

ually done with real animals and birds, or was all of this part of the vision only? These questions are easy to ask, but very difficult to answer. We shall quote from G. Vos, *Biblical Theology*, pp. 84-5:

"In Gen. 15 . . . the night-time is repeatedly spoken of (vs. 5, 12, 17); and undoubtedly vss. 12-17 describe a real visionary experience. In vs. 1 the word 'vision' occurs: 'The word of Jehovah came unto Abram in a vision, saying. . .'. Now the question arises: how much of the following occurrences does this cover? Does it relate to vss.

1-12 or is it used by way of anticipation of vss. 12-17? The latter is difficult, because the participle 'saying' links what immediately follows it closely to the expression 'came in a vision' (vs. 1). And a chronological difficulty also arises if vss. 2-12 are to be understood as plain unvisionary discourse. The marking of the points in time at which the several items happened is such as to be hard to conceive in ordinary waking experience. In vs. 5 it is night, for stars are shining. In vs. 12 the sun is 'just going down.' In vs. 17 'the sun went down.' In a vision the ordinary laws of the sequence of time do not hold good. Consequently to place the whole disclosure in a vision removes the chronological difficulty, and enables us to consider the whole as a continuous narrative, the discrepancies of time notwithstanding. On this view the vision does not begin with vs. 12; the seeing of the starry heavens in vs. 5 already belongs to it. And yet the 'deep sleep' and the 'horror of a great darkness' (vs. 12) so unmistakably describe the phenomena of a vision coming on, that we shall have to speak of a vision within a vision, something like the play within the play in 'Hamlet.' Still, the difficulty is not decisive. The sleep and the horror of a great darkness may perhaps stand for a heightened abnormal psychical state within the already abnormal visionary state as such. If the above, however, should appear too complicated, a simple, though drastic, remedy is afforded by understanding the word 'vision' in vs. 1 as meaning generic revelation. To be sure, this does not remove the chronological difficulty between vs. 5 and vs. 12; for this it will be further necessary to place an interval of at least one day between the two points mentioned."

The above quotation will be sufficient to show the great difficulty of deciding just how much of Gen. 15 was included in the vision experience, and how much, if any, was experienced by Abraham while awake. There is, however, no question about verses 12-17 being a vision experience.

In this deep and mysterious supernatural vision it is revealed to Abraham that his descendants shall suffer for a long time in a foreign land. We should remember that the starting point of all this was Abraham's complaint about being childless. Before Abraham has any descendants at all, it is revealed to him by God that his posterity shall suffer much and long. "It is, however, to be observed, that before one son is given to Abram, he hears that his seed shall be, for a long time, in captivity and slavery. For thus does the Lord deal with His own people; He always makes a beginning from death, so that by quickening the dead, He the more abundantly manifests His power" (Calvin).

God adds that He will later judge the nation that oppresses Abraham's descendants, and the people shall be brought out with great substance. Moreover, Abraham himself shall die in peace in a good old age, before these events take place. The expression "thou shalt go to thy fathers" is prop-

erly understood as meaning more than merely the fact that Abraham would die and be buried. For his ancestors were not buried in the land of Canaan at all. "So we find here a clear testimony to belief in an eternal life in the patriarchal age" (Leupold).

"But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full" (15:16). The Amorites were the most important tribe of the Canaanites. Because of this fact, the term "Amorites" is frequently used in the Bible as a general term for the inhabitants of the land of Canaan before its conquest by Israel. These Amorites were very wicked, but their guilt had not yet reached its extreme development. The language used, however, indicates that they were already, in Abraham's time, approaching the point at which divine judgment must fall upon them. God in His goodness allows them a few more generations in which to repent of their wickedness. In his divine foreknowledge He realizes that they will not repent, and must therefore be destroyed. But this is not to be done until they have had the additional opportunity to repent.

We may wonder how a period of about 400 years can be regarded as four generations, as we are accustomed to regard a generation as about 30 years. We should realize that Abraham lived to the age of 175 years old, Isaac to the age of 180 years, Jacob to the age of 147 years, and Joseph to the age of 110 years. In view of these facts, it is not at all unnatural that the time of Israel's return from Egypt should be spoken of as "the fourth generation."

When we meet people who say they cannot believe that a good God would command the extermination of the Canaanites, we should remember that this extermination was an act of divine judgment executed only after long opportunity for repentance had been abused, and the people had only become worse.

#### Questions:

1. What difficulty exists as to the interpretation of the statement of 15:1 that "the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision"?

2. If we regard the vision as beginning at verse 12, what chronological difficulty is involved in the reference to the stars (verse 5) and the sun (verse 12a)?

3. If we regard the vision as beginning at verse 1, then what must we believe about the experience related in verses 12-17?

4. What great fact about Abraham's descendants was revealed to him in the vision?

5. What truth about life after death is implied by the statement that Abraham should go to his fathers in peace.

6. Who were the Amorites? Besides the actual

Amorite tribe, how is the term "Amorites" used in the Old Testament?

7. What was the moral condition of the Amorites in the time of Abraham?

8. How could a period of about 400 years be

regarded as four generations?

9. Why did God decree the extermination of the Amorites?

10. Why was the extermination of the Amorites not contrary to the goodness of God?

## LESSON 77

### III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26, cont.

#### 2. History of Abraham after leaving Ur. 12:1 to 25:12, cont.

The "smoking furnace" and the "burning lamp" which passed between the pieces of the sacrificial animals, represented the presence of God passing between them, for establishing the covenant. Leupold rightly reminds us that covenants made by God with men are not mutual agreements as between man and man. They proceed wholly from God, who takes the initiative and the responsibility for putting the covenant into operation and carrying it out completely.

"In that same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: the Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaim, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites" (15:18-21). Ten tribes or nations are enumerated here. We shall say something about them presently.

The term "the river of Egypt" in the Old Testament usually means, not the Nile, but a small stream which marked the boundary between Canaan and Egypt, running into the Mediterranean Sea about 50 miles south of Gaza. This small stream or wady is usually dry, but contains water after a period of rains. But in Gen. 15:18 the expression "the river of Egypt" can hardly mean this small brook, for it is contrasted with the Euphrates, which is one of the great rivers of the world. Therefore in Gen. 15:18 it must be the Nile which is meant. The promise that Abraham's descendants would inherit territory from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates need not be understood as meaning that Israel's inheritance would extend to the actual water's edge of the Nile River. It is simply a way of saying that Egypt would constitute the southwestern border of the promised land. "These two major rivers were the easiest way of designating within what limits Israel's boundaries should lie" (Leupold). In much the same way we often say that Philadelphia and Washington are cities on America's east coast and Los Angeles is a city on America's west coast, while actually each of these cities is located miles from the ocean.

We sometimes meet with the statement that the promise made to Abraham in Gen. 15:18 has never yet been fulfilled, therefore the fulfillment must be still future. This, however, is not in accordance with the historical facts. As a matter of fact Israel twice in its history possessed all the territory promised to Abraham: first during the reign of Solomon (1 Kings 8:65), and again during the reign of Jeroboam the Second of the Northern Kingdom of Israel (2 Kings 14:25). The failure of Israel to hold this territory permanently, of course, was due to religious apostasy from God.

The listing of precisely ten tribes or nations here may be symbolic, indicating that a complete land was to be given to the posterity of Abraham. Actually there were other tribes, such as the Hivites, which are not mentioned in this verse. Moreover, some of those which are mentioned seem to overlap (Amorites and Canaanites).

The Kenites were originally inhabitants of the southern region, but later they lived also in the northern part of the land. Judges 1:16 informs us that Moses' father-in-law was of this people. About the Kenizzites little is known; possibly they too lived toward the south of Canaan. The name of the Kadmonites is derived from the word meaning "east", therefore it is thought that they lived toward the east of Canaan. The Hittites are well known. Their main territory was in Asia Minor, or what is today Turkey. But there were also Hittites in Palestine. It was from Hittites or "sons of Heth" that Abraham purchased the field and cave of Machpelah for a cemetery. The Perizzites have already been mentioned in Gen. 13:7, along with the Canaanites. The name Perizzites may perhaps mean something like "village dwellers", thus distinguishing them from those Canaanites who lived in fortified cities. Next the Rephaim are mentioned (the ending -im indicates the plural of a masculine noun in Hebrew). The Rephaim were evidently of the earlier inhabitants of Palestine, holding the land before the Canaanites came. The Amorites were mountain-dwellers, and a principal tribe of the Canaanites. Practically nothing is known about the Girgashites, except that they were a tribe of the land of Canaan. The Jebusites were a people living in and near Jerusalem, which they held until the time of King David, nearly a thousand years after the time of Abraham.

**Questions:**

1. What was the significance of the "smoking furnace" and "burning lamp" which passed between the pieces of the sacrificial animals?

2. What is the main difference between covenants made by God with men, and covenants made between man and man?

3. In God's promise to Abraham, what boundaries of the land to be possessed by his descendants were specified?

4. What is the ordinary meaning of the term "the river of Egypt" in the Old Testament?

5. Why can "the river of Egypt" not have this common meaning in Gen. 15:18?

6. At what periods in the history of Israel was the promise of Gen. 15:18 literally fulfilled?

7. How can we explain the fact that Israel did not permanently hold all the territory promised in Gen. 15:18?

8. What may be the significance of the fact that exactly ten tribes or nations are listed in verses 18-21?

9. What is known about the Hittites?

10. Where did the Jebusites live?

**LESSON 78****III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26, cont.****2. History of Abraham after leaving Ur. 12:1 to 25:12, cont.**

We now come to the birth of Ishmael (chapter 16). Abraham and his wife Sarai being yet childless, Sarai proposes a plan by which a true heir may be provided. This is a history of deviating from faith in God's promise by the use of human methods out of harmony with the will of God. The action taken indicates a defect in the faith both of Abraham and of Sarai. The aim or end sought was good, namely, to provide a true heir of Abraham through whom the divine promise could be fulfilled; but the means used to attain the end were wrong and blameworthy.

At this time Abraham had been in the land of Canaan for about ten years (16:16 compared with 16:3 and 12:4), and he was 86 years of age. We might think Abraham already a very old man, but when we remember that he lived to the age of 175 years, we will realize that he was just about at the mid-point of his long life, for he still had 89 years to live.

According to common ancient custom, in a case like that of Abraham and Sarai, the wife could give her maid to her husband as a secondary wife, in the hope of begetting offspring. The children born would, of course, be claimed by the mistress as her own. Though such a procedure was certainly sanctioned by common custom and involved no social stigma or disapproval, still it cannot be pronounced right from the moral point of view, as it is not in accordance with the original institution of marriage. However, it is not surprising that Sarai thought of this method and apparently did not hesitate to adopt it.

"Now Sarai, Abram's wife, bare him no children: and she had a handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar" (16:1). As Hagar was an Egyptian, she had no doubt been obtained when Abraham and Sarai were in Egypt (chapter 12).

"And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the Lord hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. An Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai" (16:2). This proposal involved some self-sacrifice on Sarai's part, which may perhaps partly explain the fact that Abraham so readily agreed to her proposal. Leupold suggests that Hagar herself may have been a true believer and have piously wished to help in fulfilling the divine promise to Abraham. This is possible, of course, yet it cannot be shown to be true. When all that can be said in favor of the course adopted by Abraham and Sarai has been taken into account, it remains true that what was done was wrong and sinful. It was wrong because it was contrary to the true institution or marriage as ordained by God at the creation; and it was wrong because it was an attempt to prop up the divine promise by the use of human expediency.

"And Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife. And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes" (16:3,4). The statement that Abraham "hearkened" unto Sarai his wife, implies that he approved of her proposal. No doubt the patriarch was impressed with his wife's unselfishness; this may indeed have blinded him more or less to the moral wrongness of what she had proposed.

As the plan works out, it becomes evident that Hagar is to bear a child. Now the real evil of polygamy begins to be evident. Envy and jealousy play a part. Leupold well remarks that "each of the three characters"—Abraham, Sarai and Hagar—"now appears to disadvantage." First Hagar appears to disadvantage. "Her mistress was despised in her eyes." This statement implies that Hagar regarded Sarai with contempt or a lofty disdain which Sarai would of course notice and resent. After all, Sarai was the proper wife of

the chief of the clan, while Hagar was only a slave woman from Egypt.

“And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong be upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the Lord judge between me and thee” (16:5). Sarai’s statement, “My wrong be upon thee” probably means “You are to blame for the wrong I am suffering.” This charge of Sarai against her husband was absolutely false and groundless. The whole business of making Hagar Abraham’s secondary wife was Sarai’s own idea, but now that some bad results are beginning to appear, she tries to put the blame on Abraham. Her offended pride has blinded her eyes to the real facts in the case, so that she follows the natural sinful impulse to blame someone else. Sarai was evidently very angry, as shown by the strong expression: “the Lord judge between me and thee.” Here we see that a sinful adoption of polygamy has put a barrier between husband wife, who were in harmony previously.

It is remarkable that Abraham did not become angry in turn, when accused in this angry and unjust way by Sarai. With remarkable emotional control he suggests the obvious remedy for the bad situation which has developed: “Behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee” (15:6). That is, Hagar is still Sarai’s maid, and therefore under her authority. Sarai can therefore take what measures she sees fit to correct her maid’s contemptuous attitude. What Abraham says here is not a proposal that cruelty or injustice be resorted to. It is merely a reminder that Hagar is still Sarai’s maid.

“And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face” (15:6b). “Dealt hardly with her” does not necessarily imply physical cruelty. It may only mean that Hagar was made to live with the servants or to perform more menial tasks than previously, in order to correct the haughty spirit by which she despised her mistress. But Hagar, instead of admitting and correcting her

fault, prefers to run away. So here we see the second actor in this drama in an unfavorable light.

#### Questions:

1. Whose birth is recorded in chapter 16?
2. What was right and what was wrong about the plan proposed to Abraham by Sarai?
3. How old was Abraham at this time?
4. How long had he already been in the land of Canaan?
5. Why is it incorrect to think of Abraham as a very old man at this period of his life?
6. How would Sarai’s proposal be regarded from the standpoint of the common social customs of that day?
7. How must Sarai’s proposal be regarded from the standpoint of God’s will?
8. What is implied by the statement that Abraham “hearkened” to his wife?
9. What may have blinded Abraham to the moral wrongness of the proposed plan?
10. What wrong attitude did Hagar begin to display when she realized that she would have a child?
11. What was Sarai’s reaction to Hagar’s attitude?
12. On whom did Sarai try to blame her trouble?
13. What statement of Sarai shows that she was very upset?
14. What was Abraham’s reaction to his wife’s accusation?
15. What remedy for the situation did Abraham suggest?
16. How did Hagar respond to Sarai’s treatment of her?

### LESSON 79

#### III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26, cont.

##### 2. History of Abraham after leaving Ur. 12:1 to 25:12, cont.

Our last lesson ended with Hagar choosing to run away from the household of Abraham rather than submit to the reproofs or corrections of her mistress Sarai. “And the angel of the Lord found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur” (16:7). Shur was located in the desert, south of Palestine and east of Egypt. The exact location is unknown, but it is thought to have been connected with the

fortresses on the Egyptian frontier. See Gen. 25:18. It appears, therefore, that Hagar was going in the direction of Egypt, her original home. The record does not state that she had reached Shur, but that she was at a place “in the way to Shur.”

The angel of the Lord found her there. The expression “the angel of the Lord” in the Old Testament usually means, not a created angel but a veiled manifestation of God Himself to someone. Some have thought that “the angel of the Lord” means a manifestation of the Second Person of the divine Trinity, God the Son. In a very strange and mysterious manner “the angel of the Lord” is identified with God and yet also distinguished

from God. Note the language used in Exodus 13 and 14: "And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light . . ." (Ex. 13:21). "And the Angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them" (Ex. 14:19). Here the "angel" is clearly identified with the Lord Himself. But in Exodus 23:20-23, the "angel" is distinguished from God: God sends the "angel"; the "angel" is sent by God: "Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him" (Ex. 23:20,21). Here the "angel" is not only distinguished from God as one sent by God, but it is added that God's name is in the angel. We believe the facts warrant us in saying that "the angel of the Lord" was based on the truth of the divine Trinity, yet was not intended as a premature revelation of the doctrine of the Trinity. Before the doctrine of the Trinity could safely be revealed to men, the lesson that there is only one God had to be thoroughly learned; this is a good reason why the doctrine of the Trinity is not fully revealed until we come to the New Testament. During the Old Testament period the appearances of the "angel of the Lord" served to teach and remind the people of God's nearness to them and His loving concern for them. At the same time the truth of the oneness of God was not endangered. Those who are interested in a further study of this fascinating subject are referred to **Biblical Theology**, by Geerhardus Vos, pages 85-89 (published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids 3, Michigan).

Coming back to the story of Hagar, the angel of the Lord found her by a fountain of water in the wilderness. In our land with its abundant water supply we can scarcely realize the vital importance of water in a more or less arid region such as the south of Palestine. The fact that the angel of the Lord appeared to Hagar would seem to indicate that she was a woman who had a true faith in the Lord. Possibly Hagar in her trouble had been praying. Luther suggests that after Hagar's departure, Abraham and Sarai may have been troubled about the affair and may have been praying to the Lord for Hagar. At any rate, Hagar is enroute from the Promised Land to Egypt. The Angel of the Lord appears to her at exactly the right time to check this wrong intention before it could be fully carried out. Hagar would by this time be far enough away from Abraham's establishment, and enough time would have passed, to enable her to look at matters more calmly and with better judgment.

"And he said, Hagar, Sarai's maid, whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go? And she said, I flee from the face of my mistress Sarai"

(16:8). The record does not tell us how Hagar knew who was speaking to her, nor in what form or appearance the Angel of the Lord manifested Himself to her. But the manner in which the Angel addressed her was calculated to remind Hagar that she was out of the path of duty, for she is addressed as "Hagar, Sarai's maid." Clearly the questions that follow this were not asked to obtain information, but rather to cause Hagar to think soberly about her course of action. And presently Hagar admits that she is fleeing from Sarai, and that Sarai is indeed her mistress. "By the use of that title for Sarai Hagar admits that the original relation is not canceled" (Leupold).

Some in discussing this passage have argued that Hagar had a perfect right to run away from Sarai if she chose to do so. But the Lord evidently did not think so, for Hagar is presently commanded to return to her mistress: "And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands." The subject under discussion is not the abstract right or wrong of the institution of slavery, but the duty of Hagar in this particular concrete situation. Her duty is to return to Sarai. We should realize that more was involved in this than the mere question of personal liberty. To return to Abraham's household meant to return to the worship of Jehovah, the God of grace and salvation; to go back to Egypt meant, presumably, to go back to Egyptian paganism and idolatry. Even though it might involve some hardship or unpleasantness, it was much better for Hagar to return to Abraham's establishment than to go to Egypt. It is better to be a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.

#### Questions:

1. When Hagar ran away from the household of Abraham, in what direction did she go?
2. Where did the Angel of the Lord find her?
3. How can it be proved that "the Angel of the Lord" in the Old Testament is not a created angel but a manifestation of God Himself?
4. What is the relation of "the Angel of the Lord" to the Trinity?
5. What was the purpose of appearances of "the Angel of the Lord" during the Old Testament period?
6. Why was it necessary that the full truth of the Trinity be not revealed in the Old Testament, but only in the New Testament?
7. Why would Hagar be near a fountain of water?
8. What difference in Hagar's feelings and state of mind may have existed at this time, in contrast with her attitude when she left Abraham's place?

9. How did the Angel of the Lord address Hagar?

10. What is implied in His addressing Hagar as "Sarai's maid"?

11. Why was it better for Hagar to return to Sarai than to go on to Egypt?

12. What words used by Hagar constitute an admission that she was out of the path of duty?

### LESSON 80

#### III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26, cont.

##### 2. History of Abraham after leaving Ur. 12:1 to 25:12, cont.

"And the angel of the Lord said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude" (16:10). Three distinct statements came from God to Hagar, each of them being marked by the phrase "And the angel of the Lord said unto her" (verses 9, 10 and 11). The first statement is that it is her duty to return to her mistress, Sarai. The second statement is that she is to have a numerous posterity. The third concerns her son, Ishmael. Looking now at the second of these divine messages, we note that in the Hebrew it is "multiplying I will multiply." This is a common Hebrew way of making a very emphatic statement, just as in Gen. 2:17 the warning "thou shalt surely die" is in the Hebrew, "dying thou shalt die." The numerous descendants promised to Hagar became known as the Ishmaelites, who eventually, no doubt, became part of the Arabic speaking branch of the Semitic race. We should note that while a numerous posterity is promised, no accompanying spiritual blessings or privileges are mentioned.

"And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the Lord hath heard thy affliction" (16:11). Hagar already knew that she was to have a child, but now it is revealed to her that this will be a son. The name of this son is appointed by God. It is Ishmael, which means "God hears." This appointment of the name implies that Hagar had cried to God for help. The expression, "hath heard thy affliction" means, naturally, "hath heard the cry occasioned by thy affliction."

"And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him: and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren" (16:12). This statement would not be so pleasant to Hagar as what had gone before. However, we may suppose that it was not made for the purpose of grieving or humiliating Hagar but rather that she might know how to guide and train this son, in order to restrain his wild and contentious nature. "He will be a wild man" is translated by the American Revised Version (1901) as "He shall be as a wild ass among men." Leupold translates it, "He will be a wild ass of a man." For a description of the nature of the wild asses of the Arabian desert, see Job

39:5-8. "Ishmael's descendants, the Arabs, roving over the wide expanses of the desert lands adjacent to Bible lands, are still characterized by this trait" (Leupold). The aggressive, contentious spirit of Ishmael is further described by the prediction that "his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him." Thus it is predicted that Ishmael, and by implication his descendants also, will be distinctly uncooperative. "And he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren." This is more clearly translated by the ARV as "And he shall dwell over against all his brethren," that is, in isolation from or hostility against them.

"And she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?" (16:13). This is translated by the ARV thus: "And she called the name of Jehovah that spake unto her, Thou art a God that seeth: for she said, Have I even here looked after him that seeth me?" The Hebrew for "a God that seeth" is *El Roi* ("a God of seeing"). For a time Hagar had thought that God had cast her off. But now she realizes that God is helping and caring for her after all. So in her surprise and gladness she declares that God is a God that sees. Hagar was greatly surprised, as is shown by her question, "Have I even here looked after him that seeth me?" She realized, of course, that such theophanies (appearances of God) are granted to mortal men only on the rarest occasions; hence, she realized that she had been very highly honored and privileged. Note that Hagar speaks of "looking after" God, not of looking "at" or "upon" God. No one could gaze directly upon a manifestation of God and live. In this connection see Ex. 33:20, and also Ex. 3:6.

"Wherefore the well was called, Beer-lahai-roi: behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered" (16:14). Earlier in the chapter this source of water was called a "fountain", that is, a spring. Here it is called a well. It may have been a spring that had been walled in to form a deep reservoir of water. Because of the revelation of God to Hagar at this place, it came to be known as Beer-lahai-roi. This Hebrew phrase means "the well of the living one who sees me." The statement is added, for readers of Genesis, that this "well" is located between Kadesh and Bered. Kadesh here means the place usually called Kadesh Barnea, about 40 miles south of Beersheba, in the southern desert. The location of Bered is unknown at the present day. Some scholars believe that Hagar's spring or well exists today at a caravan inn some 12 miles west of Kadesh.

"And Hagar bare Abram a son: and Abram called his son's name, which Hagar bare, Ishmael. And Abram was fourscore and six years old, when Hagar bare Ishmael to Abram" (16:15,16). The fact that Hagar obeyed the Lord's instructions and returned to the household of Abraham and Sarai is not stated, but is implied in the narrative. In obedience to the Lord's command to Hagar, Abraham names the son Ishmael. This of course indicates that Hagar, on returning, told the story of her experience by the well near the road to Egypt.

#### Questions:

1. How many distinct statements came from God to Hagar?
2. By what formula is each of these statements introduced in the record?
3. What promise is given to Hagar concerning her descendants?
4. What fact is revealed to Hagar concerning the child she is to have?

5. What is the meaning of the name Ishmael?
6. What prediction was made by the Lord concerning the character and temperament of Ishmael?
7. Why would this unpleasant information be revealed to Hagar?
8. How are the wild asses of the Arabian desert described in the book of Job?
9. What name did Hagar use to describe God?
10. What question asked by Hagar indicates that she was surprised?
11. Why did Hagar have reason to be surprised at her experience?
12. Why did Hagar "look after" God instead of looking "at" God?
13. What name came to be given to this spring or well?
14. What is the meaning of the Hebrew words Beer-lahai-roi?

### LESSON 81

#### III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26, cont.

##### 2. History of Abraham after leaving Ur. 12:1 to 25:12, cont.

Chapter 17 brings us to a new and further revelation of God's covenant to Abraham, and a confirmation of that covenant relationship which had been established by God. At the end of chapter 16 Abraham was 86 years old. When chapter 17 opens, thirteen years have passed, and the patriarch is 99 years old. Again the Lord appears to him introducing the revelation with the statement: "I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect" (17:1). The Hebrew name of God used here is **El Shaddai**. This name was most appropriate for use in a revelation to Abraham who had waited long and was still waiting for the fulfilment of the divine promises. God is Almighty; therefore the promises shall be fulfilled. Abraham is further commanded to walk before God, and be perfect. How different this is from the kind of religion which existed among the peoples by which Abraham was surrounded! Only the true religion of Jehovah sets absolute moral perfection before people as the true ideal toward which they must strive. All man-made religions place before mankind an ideal low enough for sinful man to attain. The true religion of Jehovah, on the other hand, evidences its truth and divine origin by placing before man an absolute moral ideal. To "walk before God" means to live a life of communion with God. So here we see true religion enjoined, and its proper fruit of moral uprightness commanded along with it. There will never be real moral uprightness and integrity except as the fruit of true religion. All modern

man's efforts at "character building" on a secular or humanistic basis are doomed to failure. It is union with God that produces truly good character.

"And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly" (17:2). Already in Gen. 15:18 we saw that God's covenant had been made with Abraham. Therefore 17:2 cannot refer to an establishment of the covenant in the sense of constituting the relationship for the first time. Rather, it must mean confirming, or putting into execution, the covenant relationship which already existed between God and Abraham. It is God's way of informing Abraham that the program will not longer be delayed, but will be put into active operation from this time. This implies, of course, that the time has come for the son to be born who shall be Abraham's true heir.

"And Abram fell on his face. . . .". Note the utter reverence which marked the patriarch's reaction to the manifestation of the divine presence. How different was Abraham's attitude from the rather irreverent spirit of modern religion! Men today often forget God's holiness.

". . . and God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations" (17:3,4). In verse 1 the divine name is "the Lord" (Jehovah); then in the second part of verse 1 it is "God Almighty" (El Shaddai); now through the balance of the chapter the divine name used is simply "God" (Elohim). Elohim is the name which stresses God as Creator; Jehovah stresses the idea that God is the God of grace and salvation; El Shaddai stresses

the divine power of God. The use of Elohim ("God") through the rest of the chapter may perhaps be occasioned by the fact that "the Creator is about to do a creative work in enabling Sarai to bring forth" (Leupold).

"Thou shalt be a father of many nations" (17:4). This revelation is connected with the change of the patriarch's name from Abram to Abraham. (In these lessons we have been using the name "Abraham", except in quotations, because this is the name by which he is historically known, just as we right say, "When President Eisenhower was a young man, he graduated from West Point," although as a matter of fact he was not President Eisenhower at the time when he graduated from West Point). The name was changed in token of the fact that the patriarch would be the father of a multitude of nations. There is some question as to just what the difference in meaning is between "Abram" and "Abraham." "In Hebrew, Abram denotes exalted father; the change to Abraham appears to consist merely in strengthening the root of the second syllable, in order to place increased emphasis on the idea of exaltation" (Davis Bible Dictionary). Not all Hebrew scholars are in agreement with this explanation, however. We shall not attempt to solve this difficult problem, but shall be satisfied with the knowledge that the new name in some way betokened Abraham's position as ancestor of a multitude of nations.

#### Questions:

1. How many years elapsed between chapter 16 and chapter 17?
2. How old is Abraham at the beginning of chapter 17?

### LESSON 82

#### III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26, cont.

##### 2. History of Abraham after leaving Ur. 12:1 to 25:12, cont.

"And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee" (17:6). This requires no special comment. It has been abundantly fulfilled through history. Not only were the kings of Israel and Judah descended from Abraham, but there have been numerous kings of the Arab peoples descended from him.

"And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee" (17:7). Here we have one of the great divine promises of Scripture. This verse may be regarded as the Magna Carta of the Old Testament Israel and of the Christian Church. Several features should be noted.

First, note the divine initiative in establish-

3. What divine name introduces the revelation of chapter 17?

4. In view of this name of God, what two commands are given to Abraham?

5. How does the moral standard of the true religion of Jehovah differ from that of all man-made religions?

6. What is the relation between true religion and upright living?

7. What should we think of efforts at "character building" upon a secular or humanistic basis?

8. What is the source of truly good character?

9. Why can the statement of 17:2 not mean that God's covenant is now for the first time established with Abraham?

10. What is the meaning of the statement of 17:2 that God will make His covenant with Abraham?

11. What was Abraham's reaction to this appearance of God to him?

12. Why is true reverence often lacking in modern religion?

13. Why was the patriarch's name changed from Abram to Abraham?

14. What is the meaning of the name Abram?

15. According to Davis' Bible Dictionary, what is the difference between Abram and Abraham?

ing the covenant. "I will establish my covenant between me and thee. . .". God takes the initiative. Establishing the covenant is an act of God, not an act of man nor an act of God and man jointly. This divine initiative is greatly obscured by the common idea that the covenant is essentially an agreement or contract or compact. This idea seems to lead naturally to the notion that God and man are in some sense on an equality in establishing the covenant relationship. But no such idea can be admitted. God is the Maker and Establisher of this covenant; man is only the recipient of it. Abraham is not even consulted as to his likes or dislikes, his preferences or objections. The terms and provisions of the covenant are all stipulated by God. The covenant, therefore, proceeds from God's sovereignty. This is especially important in our own day when there is a constant emphasis on man's part in religion, with a corresponding depreciation of God's part.

Second, the covenant is not merely made with Abraham, but with his posterity, generation after generation. It is an everlasting covenant, made with Abraham's seed after him in their genera-

tions. This implies that God claims the children of believers as His, and that God's ordinary way of maintaining His covenant people (or church) on earth is by maintaining the covenant relationship with the descendants of believers, generation after generation. This truth is greatly neglected at the present day and needs to be stressed, over against the excessive individualism of much present-day evangelism. The children of believers have a covenant standing from their birth, and are not to be regarded as if they were exactly the same as the children of the world. Incidentally, this truth of the continuance of the covenant relationship down through the generations is the true basis for infant baptism. It would be a great gain if arguments for and against infant baptism could be diverted from the attempt to prove or disprove that infants were baptized in the apostolic church, to a consideration of what is involved in the covenant promise of Genesis 17:7. What is needed today is an organic study of the Bible, in place of the atomistic or piecemeal study that is so common. Many people who oppose infant baptism do not admit that God's covenant with Abraham is the charter of the Christian Church; they regard it as having significance for the Jews only. It is therefore at this point that we should concentrate our efforts to convince opponents of infant baptism. Until they are ready to admit that the Christian Church is the true and proper heir to the covenant established with Abraham, all arguments based on this or that text in the Book of Acts or the Epistles will be useless in most cases.

Third, the essence of the covenant relationship is stated here: "to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee." That is, it is designed to bring the recipients of the covenant into a truly religious relationship with God, a relationship of religious communion in the highest and most real sense. This includes, of course, all the means that may be necessary to bring this result about, such as the revelation of God in the Bible, Christ's work of atonement, His resurrection, the outpouring of

the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and so forth. We note here the priority of religion over all other considerations in the life of man. People today speak of religion as a means to an end—we need religion to curb crime, we need religion to prevent war, etc. But to speak of religion as a means to an end is really to be irreligious. Everything else exists for the sake of religion; religion exists for the sake of God, and for man's glorifying and enjoying of God, alone. And the essence of religion is union and communion with God. Benefits in human society are by-products of religion, not the main reason for being religious. It is not too much to say that a great deal of modern religion is really not religious at all, simply because it is concerned about man and society rather than about God.

#### Questions:

1. What kings have been descended from Abraham?
2. How may Genesis 17:7 be regarded, as to its importance?
3. What is meant by "the divine initiative in establishing the covenant"?
4. Why is it improper to regard God's covenant with man as being essentially a compact, contract or agreement?
5. With whom, besides Abraham himself, was this covenant made?
6. What is the relation of Gen. 17:7 to infant baptism?
7. What is the relation of Gen. 17:7 to the Christian Church?
8. What is the essence of the covenant relationship?
9. What is meant by the statement that much of modern religion is really irreligious?

### LESSON 83

#### III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26, cont.

##### 2. History of Abraham after leaving Ur. 12:1 to 25:12, cont.

Besides the promise of a numerous posterity, God reaffirmed to Abraham at this time the promise of inheritance of the land of Canaan. "And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God" (17:8). Two questions have been raised concerning the fulfilment of this promise. First, what is meant by "everlasting"? And second, what is meant by "thy seed after thee?" The word for "everlasting" is the Hebrew

word **olam**. This word is used in the Old Testament with various meanings; it by no means always means "eternal" in the strict sense. For example, in Deut. 15:17 its meaning is limited to the earthly lifetime of a single individual: "Then thou shalt take an awl, and thrust it through his ear unto the door, and he shall be thy servant for ever." Here the meaning clearly is "permanently" but not "eternally." It is also used to mean a long time, as in Psalm 143:3, "as those that have been long dead" where the word "long" is a translation of the Hebrew word **olam**. In Gen. 17:8 Leupold translates it thus: "in the hidden future" or "into the hidden future," adding that there is no warrant for the idea that Canaan is guaranteed as the inalienable possession of Israel

to eternity. The word does, however, convey the meaning of possession for a long time.

As to the question of who is included in the "seed" of Abraham to whom this promise is made, we hold that it includes only the believing, covenant-keeping descendants of Abraham. There is no reason to suppose that it guarantees the permanent possession of Canaan to an apostate and unbelieving Israel lacking Abraham's faith. There is therefore no basis for the idea that this promise is applicable to the present-day Zionist movement, which is largely secular and in any case lacks the faith in Christ which Abraham had. To claim that this promise of Gen. 17:8 gives a warrant for taking Palestine from Arabs whose ancestors have lived there for centuries and giving it to Jews who are recent arrivals, seems both unreasonable and unjust. The truth is that in keeping with the promise of God, Israel possessed the land as long as Israel remained faithful to God. When Israel became apostate from God, they were cast out of their land and taken into captivity by foreign powers. This happened to the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 721 B. C. when Samaria was captured by the Assyrians, and to the Southern Kingdom of Judah in 586 B. C. when Jerusalem was captured by the Babylonians. Certainly the Bible teaches that those who have the faith of Abraham are the children or seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:9, 29). The notion that people who are without saving faith and who are not reconciled to God by the blood of the cross, can yet claim blessings and privileges as heirs of divine promises, is one of the grievous errors promoted by some popular religious teachers of our day.

"And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you

shall be circumcised" (17:9,10). This section prescribes circumcision as the external sign of the covenant relationship. The person who remained uncircumcised was a covenant-breaker: "that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant" (17:14b). This sign or token of the covenant was, of course, intended for the Old Testament dispensation only. We believe that under the New Testament it has been replaced by Baptism.

#### Questions:

1. Besides promising Abraham a numerous posterity, what promise did God reaffirm to Abraham at this time?
2. What are some of the ways by which the Hebrew word **olam** may be translated? How can it be shown that it does not necessarily mean "eternally"?
3. How does Leupold translate the word **olam** in Gen. 17:8?
4. Who are included in the "seed" of Abraham mentioned in 17:8?
5. What should be thought of the idea that Gen. 17:8 constitutes a divine endorsement of the present-day Zionist movement?
6. How long did Israel actually retain possession of the land?
7. What does the Epistle to the Galatians teach as to who are the children or "seed" of Abraham?
8. What was the external sign or confirmation of the covenant appointed by God for the Old Testament period?
9. What ordinance has replaced this sign under the New Testament?

### LESSON 84

#### III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26, cont.

##### 2. History of Abraham after leaving Ur. 12:1 to 25:12, cont.

"And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be" (17:15). Sarai's name is at this point changed to Sarah, which means "princess." This was apparently also the meaning of Sarai. The change in spelling and pronunciation of the name however would mark a new dignity in view of the fact that Sarah was soon to bear the son who would be the long-awaited heir.

"And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her" (17:16). This promise must include the nation of Israel with its kings of the northern and

southern kingdoms, as well as the race descended from Esau. The Ishmaelites and the various tribes sprung from Abraham's marriage with Keturah (Gen. 25:1-3) cannot be regarded as included, for these were not the offspring of Sarah. Perhaps we should regard the spiritual descendants of Abraham as included also—the Christian believers of the New Dispensation.

"Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is a hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?" (17:17). It is evident here that Abraham's attitude was not sinful as some have maintained. His falling upon his face was an act of reverence or worship of God. His laughter was not the laughter of scorn or unbelief or derision, but of joy and astonishment. His attitude is one of joyful wonder at the marvellous promise of God, rather than an attitude of unbelief.

"And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!" (17:18). Many people in reading this chapter have regarded this plea of Abraham as a substitute or alternative proposal for what God had promised in verse 16. There is no reason, however, for so regarding it. Abraham's plea for Ishmael in no way implies a desire on his part that Ishmael might have the place God had planned for Sarah's son. Rather, we are to understand that Abraham truly loved Ishmael and naturally wanted divine blessings for him also. This is clear from the content of God's answer to Abraham's plea, as found in verses 19-21. God has "heard" Abraham's prayer concerning Ishmael; that is, God has accepted this prayer and will answer it. Therefore the prayer did not involve a plea that Ishmael might be the promised heir. For in the same answer to Abraham, God states both (1) that He will grant Abraham's request for Ishmael, and (2) that Isaac is to be the promised heir.

"And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shall call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year. And he left off talking with him, and God went up from Abraham" (17:19-22). Here the promise that Sarah shall bear a son is plainly stated, together with an affirmation that the covenant shall be established with that son. It is also stated that the son shall be named Isaac. Isaac means "he laughs" or "laughing one."

Next God promises certain things concerning Ishmael. He will be fruitful and will have a numerous posterity, including twelve princes. The Ishmaelite rulers or kings are of course referred to here. Ishmael's descendants shall become a great nation. We should note that while God promised much concerning Ishmael, no covenant or redemptive promises are involved. The promises to Ishmael concerned worldly or temporal blessings alone.

(To be continued)

With Isaac, on the other hand God's covenant will be established. That is, Isaac is to carry on the covenant line that shall ultimately be the channel of redemption. This involves, of course, that in the fulness of time the Christ shall be born of the descendants of Isaac.

Lastly, we are told that God "went up from Abraham." Whether Abraham saw God rising up, we cannot say. The words at least imply that God, being transcendent above this earthly realm, and having condescended to meet with Abraham on the earthly level, must thereafter withdraw once more to that transcendent realm which is commonly called heaven.

#### Questions:

1. What change was made in the name of Abraham's wife at this juncture of the history?
2. What is the meaning of the name Sarah?
3. What special promises are made concerning Sarah?
4. How should we regard Abraham's act of falling on his face, his laughter, and the questions he asked in 17:17?
5. What request does Abraham make of God in 17:18?
6. How can it be shown that Abraham was not requesting that Ishmael be the heir instead of the son to be born of Sarah?
7. What name did God specify for the son to be born of Sarah?
8. What is the meaning of the name Isaac?
9. What promises did God make concerning Ishmael at this time?
10. What element is absent from the promises concerning Ishmael?
11. What special blessing or distinction is promised to Isaac?
12. What is implied in the statement that God "went up from Abraham"?

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## *Christ's Commission*

"FOR THE SON OF MAN IS COME TO SEEK AND TO SAVE THAT WHICH WAS LOST."  
Luke 19:10

Zacchaeus the publican had climbed a tree to see Jesus, and at Jesus' call he came down from the tree to begin a new life as a Christian. Then Jesus was harshly criticized for going to Zacchaeus' house, to be the guest of "a sinner". But our

Lord answered this criticism by saying that He had come to seek and to save that which was lost.

#### "THE SON OF MAN"

This was the title by which our Lord commonly referred to Himself. The title "son of man" is not a mere designation of our Saviour's humanity; such is a very common but erroneous and superficial view of the title "Son of man". Rather,

it designates the divine Messiah, as shown by Daniel 7:13,14 where the Messiah is first called "Son of man"; the emphasis of this passage in Daniel is not on the humanity of Christ but on His exaltation and eternal glory. The title "Son of man" designates Jesus as the Saviour, who though truly human, is truly divine and came from the glory of heaven.

#### "IS COME"

"For the Son of man is come". This tells us of the Incarnation. Our Saviour came from heaven to earth for a specific purpose. He is not a product of this earth; He came from beyond this earth; He is the Lord from heaven. Note that Jesus did not merely say "was born", but specifically "came". Other men are born; Jesus came from heaven. He came as the Mediator of the Covenant of Grace to save His people from their sins (Matthew 1:21).

#### "TO SEEK THAT WHICH WAS LOST"

To be "lost" implies not merely misery and woe, but that man is missing to God. He is lost to God. When man fell into sin, God lost man. In the state of sin, man could no longer have communion with God; he could no longer fulfil the purpose for which God created man. Man, God's creature, has become lost to God so that God no longer benefits by His possession of man as He did before sin came in. Man is missing to God. Therefore man is completely deranged and broken. All the factors of man's spiritual life and health are broken and out of joint.

The first thing the sinner needs is to be sought by the Saviour. Christ must seek the sinner, in

order to restore him to a right relation to God. Christ sought and found Zacchaeus of old; He is still seeking and finding sinners today. Being divine, Christ is the perfect and almighty Seeker of the lost.

#### "TO SAVE THAT WHICH WAS LOST"

As sinners, we need not merely finding, but salvation. We are not merely missing to God; we are on the road to hell. The person who is unsaved is on the way to eternal perdition; he is not merely lost; he is under the wrath of God; the wrath of God abideth on him (John 3:36). But we can be saved from the wrath of God by Jesus Christ, who came to save that which was lost. Christ saves sinners by becoming their Substitute. In His sufferings and death on the cross, He suffered the wrath of God as the sinner's Substitute. The righteous judgment of God was visited upon Jesus Christ, so that God can forgive and justify the believer in Christ without denying His own perfect justice. (Romans 3:26)

#### "HAS CHRIST SOUGHT AND SAVED YOU?"

The Christian is a person who was lost but has been sought, found and saved by Jesus Christ, the Son of man who came from heaven to earth to seek and to save that which was lost. Is this your personal experience? Have you realized that by nature you were a lost sinner, missing to God and on the way to hell? Have you been found and saved by Jesus Christ? If you have not, repent of your sins and believe on Him immediately. Those that come unto Him He will in no wise cast out (John 6:37).

—J. G. Vos

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## Announcement

You can share in the wide witness of Blue Banner Faith and Life to Bible truth by contributing to the expense of publishing the magazine. Less than half of the amount required is obtained from subscriptions and sales of back issues. For the balance we are dependent on contributions. Numbered receipts are sent promptly for all contributions. Financial reports are submitted to the Board of Publication of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America quarterly.

Sets of back issues for the years 1950, 1952, 1953 and 1954 are available at \$1.00 for each year, postpaid. Pressboard binders which will conveniently preserve two years' issues are available at 75 cents each postpaid. Subscriptions for the current year are \$1.50 for single subscriptions and \$1.00 for each subscription in clubs of 5 or more to be mailed to one address. All subscriptions must

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shall we see light.**

**Psalm 36:9**

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# *The Deathbed of Rutherford*

By Harriet Stuart Menteth

Tread lightly through the darkened room, for a sick man lieth there,  
And, 'mid the dimness, only stirs the whispered breath of prayer;  
As anxious hearts take watch by turns beside the lowly bed,  
Where sleep the awful stillness wears—that soon must wrap the dead!

Hours hath he known of fevered pain — but now his rest is calm,  
As though upon the spirit worn distilled some healing balm:  
It may be that his dreaming ear wakes old accustomed words,  
Or drinks once more the matin song of Anwoth's "blessed birds!"

Oh! green and fresh upon his soul those early haunts arise,  
His kirk — his home — his wild wood walk — with all their memories —  
The very rushing of the burn, by which so oft he trod,  
The while on eagle wings of faith his spirit met its God!

A smile hath brightened on his lips — a light around his brow —  
Oh! surely, "words unspeakable" that dreamer listeth now —  
And glories of the upper sky, his raptured senses steep,  
Blent with the whispers of His love — who gives His loved ones sleep!

But hark! — a sound! — a tramp of horse! — a loud, harsh, wrangling din!  
Oh! rudely on that dream of heaven this world hath broken in —  
In vain affection's earnest plea — the intruders forward press —  
And with a struggling spasm of pain, he wakes to consciousness!

Strange lights are streaming through the room — strange forms are round his bed —  
Slowly his dazzled sense takes in, each shape and sound of dread:  
"False traitor to thy country's law — and to thy sovereign lord,  
I summon thee to meet thy doom, thou felon Rutherford!"

Feebly the sick man raised his hand — his hand so thin and pale,  
And something in the hollow eye made that rude speaker quail:-  
"Man! thou hast sped thine errand well! — yet it is wasted breath,  
Except the great ones of the earth can break my tryst with death!

"A few brief days — or briefer hours — and I am going home,  
Unto mine own prepared place, where but few great ones come!  
And to the judgment seat of Him, who sealed me with His seal —  
'Gainst evil tongues, and evil men, I make my last appeal!

"A traitor was His name on earth! a felon's doom His fate!  
Thrice welcome were my Master's cup — but it hath come too late!  
The summons of that mightiest King, to whom all kings must bow,  
Is on me for an earlier day — is on me even now!

"I hear — I hear the chariot wheels, that bring my Saviour nigh,  
For me He bears a golden crown — a harp of melody —  
For me He opens wide His arms — He shows His wounded side —  
Lord! 'tis my passport into life! — I live — for Thou hast died!"

They give his writings to the flames — they brand his grave with shame —  
A hissing in the mouth of fools becomes his honoured name;  
And darkness wraps a while the land, for which he prayed and strove,  
But blessed in the Lord his death — and blest his rest above!

(Note: See sketch of the life of Rutherford on back cover.)

# BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

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## *Ten Years of Publication Completed*

The present issue marks the completion of ten years of publication of "Blue Banner Faith and Life." The magazine was begun as a monthly in January 1946. The first four issues were mimeographed. The first printed issue was that of May-June 1946. Since July 1946 the magazine has been issued as a quarterly in printed form. Two thousand pages of reading material have been published, containing 520 weekly Bible studies, 294 reviews of religious books, and other articles and features. We wish to express praise and thanks to God for his faithfulness which has made this witness to Biblical truth possible. At the same time we wish to express hearty appreciation to all who by financial contributions, acting as congregational agents, writing articles or book reviews, or in other ways, have helped to make this publication worth while and successful. We look forward to the future with faith and confidence in God.

At this time we deem it appropriate to repeat some statements concerning the aims and editorial policy of this magazine which were published in a previous issue. The aims and editorial policy are still the same as when the first issue appeared ten years ago. We hope to adhere to them consistently in the years to come, if God in His good providence renders the continued publication of this magazine possible.

As stated on the cover of every issue, "Blue Banner Faith and Life" is "A quarterly publication devoted to expounding, defending and applying the system of doctrine set forth in the Word of God and summarized in the Standards of the Covenanter (Reformed Presbyterian) Church". This publication is, therefore, an organ, not a forum. It exists for the propagation of a definite body of truth, not for the publication of views contrary to that body of truth. To "Blue Banner Faith and Life" the truth and Scriptural character of the system of doctrine set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith and other official standards of the Reformed Presbyterian Church is not an open question. We accept that system, and those standards, as true and Scriptural, and will not knowingly publish any views contrary to them except in order to distinguish between truth and error, defending the truth and refuting the error.

In every denomination the doctrinal status quo always, inevitably, lags behind the ideal represented by the church's official standards. There

is always some failure to grasp the truth, some dissent from the truth, some indifference to the truth. It is, therefore, always wrong and sinful to regard the doctrinal status quo as ideal. It is even sinful to regard the doctrinal status quo as legitimate. Just as every Christian must continually strive after more perfect holiness, so every Christian, and every church, must continually strive after more perfect orthodoxy, a fuller, deeper, more consistent knowledge and confession of the truth. It would be sinful to single out the status quo of 1560, or of 1643, or of 1951, and say, "Thus far, but no farther." Reformation is not an act but an endless process. To Augustine of Hippo is attributed the saying: "Every lesser good involves an element of sin". This is certainly true of the doctrinal condition of every church on earth. The status quo is always a sinful status quo — there is always room for improvement, and that room for improvement is sinful, it constitutes a falling short of the divine ideal.

Therefore it is not the purpose of "Blue Banner Faith and Life" to reflect the doctrinal status quo of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, or of the generality of its readers. We have a higher aim. We are not particularly concerned about what majorities think, or believe, or favor. Our concern is rather to call our readers to true progress in reformation along lines in harmony with our accepted doctrinal standards. True progress in reformation can never be revolutionary; it must always involve building on the solid foundations laid in the past. We are indeed called upon to advance beyond the men who formulated the Westminster Confession of Faith, but we can never advance beyond them until we first stand on their shoulders. The Westminster Confession of Faith is assuredly not the final word in reformation, but it is a monument of true progress and we cannot advance beyond it until we first stand firmly on that platform.

The first half of the Twentieth Century was a period of the ebb tide in knowledge and confession of Christian truth. Theology was in ill repute, while the Liberal notion that Christianity is not a matter of doctrine but of life gained wide popularity. There are some signs today that the tide is turning and that knowledge of Christian doctrine is coming to its rights again. But a tremendous amount of ground was lost during the half-century that has just closed. Today, instead of being in a position to advance beyond our ac-

cepted doctrinal standards, we are rather in need of catching up to them again. Before there can be any real new progress in knowledge and confession of the truth, there must be a recovery of the old knowledge which has been lost through neglect and indifference. There must be a general return to doctrinal preaching, teaching and reading if the lost ground is to be recovered. Inspiration and enthusiasm will not do it; there must be information. To regard the present status quo in doctrinal knowledge as normal or legitimate would be to let the real progress of the past remain buried in oblivion, and to sin against the God of Truth. The aim of "Blue Banner Faith and Life", therefore, is not to reflect the doctrinal status quo, nor to echo the opinions held by the majority of the church's membership, but to expound, defend and apply Christian truth in consistency with our accepted standards. We will not knowingly deviate from this.

"Blue Banner Faith and Life" is published, too, with the conviction that every individual Christian ought to have a constantly growing knowledge of Christian truth. Just as the Church may not complacently accept the status quo as legitimate, so the individual Christian may not say: "I now know enough. From now on until I die I need not add anything more to my stock of Christian knowledge." Perhaps no one would make such a statement explicitly. But many show by their attitude that they make it implicitly. There are many Christians of adult age who have not added a new truth or a new idea to their store of Christian knowledge in the last ten years. Their pitifully meager stock of Christian doctrine consists of a few bare "essential truths" that they learned when they first professed faith in Christ. They are inhibited from acquiring anything more by a foolish — and certainly sinful — notion that anything beyond these few bare "essential truths" is necessarily "too deep" for them.

The spiritual condition of such Christians is similar to that described in Hebrews 5:11-14. They are always afraid of the "strong meat" (ARV, "solid food") and always want to receive nothing but the "milk" which is really a baby food. They will complain that their minister's sermons are "too deep", and never suspect that the real trouble may be their own condition of arrested spiritual development which causes them to put up a mental barrier against learning anything new.

If the contents of "Blue Banner Faith and Life" were to be limited to what all readers could understand without effort, the result would be stagnation. It would mean an endless moving around and around in a circle, saying the same things over and over again and never adding anything new. If the paper is to serve its intended purpose, it is inevitable that some readers will find some parts of the contents hard to under-

stand. But there would be no point in devoting money and effort to publishing a paper which would only repeat what all the readers already know. What is "too deep" for one, another will take in his stride. What is new and interesting to one, another will regard as without special value or interest because he has been familiar with it for years — perhaps even from childhood.

Among the readers of "Blue Banner Faith and Life" are young Christians in Japan, Hong Kong, Syria, Cyprus and other mission lands, church members in the United States, Canada, England, Ireland, Scotland, Australia and other countries, missionaries, ministers and others. Our aim in publishing the paper is to provide something for all readers. To provide material all of which will be equally suitable for all readers is manifestly impossible. No paper can be equally suitable for all readers; and any paper which contains nothing "too deep" for any of its readers is suitable only for beginners in Christian truth — babes in Christ.

However, "Blue Banner Faith and Life" is not intended to be a technical journal for experts. Some have referred to it as a "theological journal." Such is not its intended character or purpose. It is meant for Christian people in general. The aim is to make the main body of the contents suitable for Christian people in general. We hope that the occasional use of a technical term will not frighten any of our readers. After all, ideas have to have handles to pick them up by.

In past issues, many definitions of religious terms have been published. The use of an ordinary English dictionary is also helpful. Why not learn some new words from time to time? You will not find "Blue Banner Faith and Life" filled with such difficult technical terms as epistemology, metaphysics, supralapsarianism, trichotomy, soteriology, for such are for the most part carefully avoided for the benefit of the reader who is without a technical knowledge of theology. Some technical terms, such as justification, atonement, Trinity, inspiration, regeneration, repentance, dispensationalism, Arminianism, are used, because they are necessary for dealing adequately with the doctrines of the Bible or with the religious situation of our day. To avoid all use of such terms as these, it would be necessary in every case to use a long, roundabout detour. Instead of saying "justification" it would be possible to say "divine judicial pronouncement that a person is righteous in relation to the law of God." But think how cumbersome this would be if used over and over again. Try reading Romans chapters 3-5 substituting this 15-word formula every time the word "justified" or "justification" occurs, and you will see how helpful a technical theological term can be. For our part, we think it is far better to learn the meaning of the word "justification" — and, after all, it is a Bible

term. In short, we wish to encourage our readers to make an effort to learn something new, to keep up a steady progress in Christian knowledge.

Finally, we are aware that humility is most necessary, because the Editor of "Blue Banner Faith and Life" is keenly conscious of being himself involved in the very evils which it is sought to correct. No more than anyone else can he lift himself above everything involved in the present doctrinal status quo. We are all products of the

past and conditioned by the present. We cannot look upon the status quo as if we were not ourselves a part of it. Our only real hope is that the Spirit of Truth, whom our Saviour promised and gave to His Church to guide His people into all truth (John 16:13) will lead us forward in sound knowledge and faithful confession of His Truth. "Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly" (Heb. 13:18).

J. G. Vos

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## *What is the Reformed Faith?*

By the Rev. Joseph A. Hill

"... It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." — Jude, 3.

The Reformed faith is another, and preferable, name for Calvinism. It is so-called because the Reformation of the sixteenth century had its basis in those principles which form the Calvinistic creed. Calvin, of course, was not the originator of those principles. Eleven centuries before John Calvin lived, Augustine, bishop of Hippo, advocated, and to some degree summarized the principles which lie behind the Calvinistic system of truth. The Reformed faith might, with almost equal propriety, be called Augustinianism. Or we might go back still farther into history and call the Reformed faith Paulinism, since the underlying truths were taught by the Apostle Paul. Thus Calvinism or the Reformed faith, takes us back to the Source of truth and brings us face to face with Holy Scripture.

### **The Reformed Faith and Calvin**

The name Calvinism as applied to the system of faith formulated by John Calvin, has led to serious misunderstandings, such as the notion that being a Calvinist means loyalty to a human teacher, or reverence for Calvin himself. Warburton, an English student of Calvinism, says that we might just as appropriately call gravitation "Newtonism" because the principles of gravitation were first clearly demonstrated by the great philosopher Newton. He points out that men had been fully conversant with the facts of gravitation long before Newton was born. Those facts had been visible ever since creation, inasmuch as gravitation was one of those laws which God ordained for the governing of the universe. But the **principles** of gravitation were not known and the effects of its power were not clearly understood until they were discovered by Sir Isaac Newton. The same is true of what men call Calvinism. The inherent principles of it had been in existence

long before Calvin was born. They had been revealed as the truth of God from the earliest of times. But inasmuch as it was Calvin who first formulated these truths into a complete system, that system of faith came to bear his name (L. Boettner, **The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination**, p. 4).

Calvin, then, was not the inventor of a new order of doctrine, but he simply brought forth into clearer light those truths which had existed in the Christian Church from its earliest days, but which had been obscured by the darkness of paganism which had come to pervade the Church during the Middle Ages. As a young preacher and student of theology Calvin journeyed about as a fugitive from persecution, preaching the gospel and inculcating those principles which lay at the foundation of the Reformation. During this time his mind conceived the plan of that great work which will continue to stand as a monument to him throughout the ages to come. In 1536, when Calvin was only twenty-seven years old, he published in Latin his immortal **Institutes of the Christian Religion**. The first edition of this masterpiece embodied Calvin's entire system of thought, in brief form. Later he expanded his work, with very little modification, into four books containing eighty chapters, the form in which it stands today.

Obviously the clearest and best exposition of Calvinism is to be found in Calvin's **Institutes**, and it is to this work that we must turn if we are to obtain a clear view of the Reformed faith.

A mere glance at the Contents of this greatest of all theological treatises will reveal the systematic character of Calvin's treatment of Christian doctrine. Another glance will show that Calvin with his great mind arranged in systematic order and relationship the entire range of biblical truth. In his arrangement he followed the order of the Apostles' Creed, that well known outline of basic Christian doctrine. The four books

comprising the **Institutes** correspond, in their general content, to the four parts of the Apostles' Creed. The first treats of God the Father; the second, of God the Son; the third, of the Holy Spirit; the fourth, of the Church (**Institutes**, Eerdmans, 1949, p. 41).

### The Reformed Faith and the Bible

The fact cannot be over-emphasized that Calvinism covers the whole range of biblical truth. In the popular mind Calvinism is all too often regarded as being synonymous with predestination. The doctrine of predestination, however, forms only a small, though important, part of the system. Much of the prejudice against Calvinism is due to the false notion that predestination is its central doctrine. Dr. B. B. Warfield states that predestination is not the formative principle but the logical implication of Calvinism. "It is not the root from which Calvinism springs; it is one of the branches which it has inevitably thrown out. And so little is it the peculiarity of Calvinism that it underlay the whole Reformation movement. There was accordingly no difference among the Reformers on this particular point; Luther and Melancthon and the uncompromising Bucer were no less zealous for absolute predestination than were Zwingli and Calvin" (**Calvin as a Theologian and Calvinism Today**, p. 19).

The root principle of Calvinism lies, not in predestination, but in **the majesty of God**. "It is the vision of God and His majesty, in a word, which lies at the foundation of Calvinistic thinking" (Warfield, *loc. cit.*). Calvinism is often wrongly limited to a doctrine of salvation, as though the Bible and the Reformed faith had nothing to do with science. The truth is that the religion of the Bible is concerned with every sphere of man's life. God's infinite majesty is revealed, not only in his work of salvation, but in his appointment of all things, for his own glory. Dr. A. Kuyper, in his Stone Lectures given at Princeton Theological Seminary in 1898, defined the formative principle of Calvinism as "the Sovereignty of the Triune God over the whole Cosmos, in all its spheres and kingdoms, visible and invisible."

Thus Calvinism or the Reformed faith is God-centered, standing above all other formulations of the Christian religion, which are more or less man-centered. "Calvinism comes forward simply as pure theism, religion, evangelicalism, as over against less pure theism, religion, evangelicalism. It does not take its position then by the side of the other types of these things, it takes its place over them" (Warfield, *loc. cit.*). Calvinism is not just a particular brand of Christianity; it is Christianity in its purest and fullest expression.

Much of the confusion which exists in regard to Calvinism has arisen from a failure to grasp

this point. Sometimes Christians are heard to remark: "Never mind Calvinism; just give me the Christianity of the Bible." This type of statement is based on a misunderstanding of the relation of theology — of Calvinism in particular — to the Bible. Calvinism is not a humanly devised scheme which has been artificially superimposed on the Bible; it is rather the consistent formulation of the teaching of the Bible itself. Calvinism is not a postscript supplementing the truth of the Bible; it is a transcript of the truth of the Bible. Far from being a novel set of doctrines introduced into the life of the Church long after its establishment, the Reformed faith is identical with "the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints", and embodied in Holy Scripture.

### The Reformed Faith and the Christian Life

Sometimes the objection is made by the opponents of Calvinism that the doctrines of predestination, spiritual inability, final perseverance, etc., nullify all human responsibility to God and lead, not only to carelessness of life and conduct, but also to open and deliberate sin.

If a person is elected to eternal life — so the objection runs — then no matter how he lives or what his conduct may be, he is certain to go to heaven. This, of course, is not the teaching of Calvinism, but is only a burlesque of Calvinism created by its opponents. On the other hand, any professed Calvinist who might be inclined to use his Calvinistic creed as a license for careless and sinful living is not a real Calvinist, any more than a counterfeit coin is a genuine coin.

Underlying this misrepresentation of the real teaching of Calvinism is the assumption that Calvinism is merely a creed to be professed, a system of doctrine which calls only for an intellectual assent. It is true that Calvinism is a system of doctrine which stands firmly upon the unerring testimony of the Word of God. But Calvinism is more than a system of doctrine; it is a way of life. It is not merely a formal profession, but a living experience. Genuine Calvinism exists only where its doctrines are translated into life and conduct — not as a matter of formal obedience, but as the result of a vital experience of their power and truth. The Reformed faith must issue in the Reformed life.

The mistake of the opponents of Calvinism, and the mistake of those who ignorantly pervert its teachings leaves out of sight vital principles which lie at the very heart of Calvinism. The Reformed doctrine of sovereign grace or effectual calling does not mean merely an external influence on man's outward life and conduct. Nor does it consist in a mere changing of a person's views or opinions on doctrinal issues. It means rather a vital experience of the power of the sovereign God, touching the very nerve center of a person's

whole existence, transforming the believer into a new creature in Jesus Christ.

Apart from this regenerating work which is accomplished by the sovereign grace of God, Christianity is only a name and a creed. A person may profess to be a Calvinist, and his life may be marked by moral conduct, but if he has not experienced the saving power of the Holy Spirit, he is not a Christian and he is not a Calvinist. On the other hand, if any person walks deliberately in a sinful course of life, no matter how strong a supporter he may be of the doctrines of Calvinism, and no matter how frequently his mouth may be filled with talk of predestination, particular redemption and perseverance in grace, it is certain that that person has no real knowledge of that principle of divine life which Calvinism holds to be an absolute necessity for the faith and life of every true Christian. At the heart of the Reformed faith lies the confession of the psalmist, "Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts" (Psalm 51:6).

Far from being merely an intellectual framework, the Reformed faith is the very substance of

our personal religion. The Reformed faith does not call for faith which rests in a system, or in a professed knowledge of doctrines, or in the practice of true religion; it calls rather for faith that rests in the Triune God who is central in the Reformed faith, who is sovereign over all his works, and for whose glory all things exist.

The battle which rages in the ecclesiastical world today makes it imperative that those who love the truth should stand together for its defense. This is no time for the Covenanter Church to be divided into two camps, one stressing Calvinism as a system of doctrine, and the other stressing Calvinism as a way of life. What is needed in the Covenanter Church is not a mere balance between the intellectual and practical aspects of the Reformed faith, but an emphasis of both aspects. When the Covenanter Church attains to this ideal, then Christianity will have come to its full rights within the Church. Then it will be clear to all that those who are zealous in their defense of sound doctrine are not "extreme Calvinists", any more than those who are zealous in their advocacy of godly living are "extreme Christians".

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## *God's Judgments and the Prosperity and Pride of Atheism*

— THE TENTH PSALM —

By the Rev. Frank D. Frazer

The Ninth Psalm reminds us that "Jehovah sitteth KING forever: He hath prepared His throne for judgment. . . . Jehovah is a high tower for the oppressed, a high tower in times of trouble." But, when times of trouble come again, are we within the protecting walls of this tower, or are we wandering about? Do we know where it is, and how to reach it? Or, do we cry,

**"WHY, O Jehovah, standest Thou afar off? (WHY) hidest Thou Thyself in times of trouble?"** (vs 1).

Man is shortsighted and selfish, lacking in understanding; liable to be presumptuous and impatient. Yet this question may be, not so much complaint as desire for better understanding, and that God may speedily show His presence and power. It may be of little faith, but not altogether of unbelief. It acknowledges that God is not complacent nor unconcerned, but "stands" ready for such action as His will determines. It is urged insistently with pressing facts of experience as they appear to one who is failing to make right use of "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

For, "Verily, Thou art the God who hidest Thyself, the God of Israel, the Saviour". (Is. 45:15). "He makes darkness His hiding place". "Clouds and darkness are round about Him." God has gracious purposes in everything He does. He sometimes withdraws Himself to try men's hearts in a furnace of affliction. He allows sin to run its course, that it may be known to be what it is, and that its inevitable consequences, in some measure, may be seen and felt as warnings, here and now. When He comes out of hiding, He comes with marvelous judgments and mercies that make for His salvation in glorious perfection. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!" — except as He Himself reveals them.

**I. What Goes On When God Hides Himself from Man's View? (vss. 2-13). "In the pride of the wicked the poor are put to fiery trial: They are being taken in the plots which (the wicked) devised. For the wicked boasteth of his soul's desire; Yes, the robber he hath blessed; Jehovah he hath despised. The wicked saith, - so haughty is his scorn - He will never**

**punish. There is no God in all his plans.**  
(vs. 2-4).

Thus the proud persecute the humble, and despise the Most High. "There is no fear of God before his eyes." Though the devils believe and tremble, and though the heavens and the earth never cease to declare the glory of a present, working God, yet the wicked goes on his own way, as if there were no God. Atheism is the wishful thinking of a heart inflated with pride by the devil's lie; the vain hope of a stubborn sinner who is afraid to die.

The word here translated "**poor**", is also frequently rendered "meek", "humble", "afflicted", "oppressed". In contrast with the wicked, it describes those who suffer wrong rather than do wrong. Its dominant sense is that given by the word of Christ, "**poor in spirit**", that is, those who, with deep concern, realize their own poverty in righteousness.

But "all unrighteousness is **sin**," and "To him who knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is **sin**." "There is none righteous, no, not one." "There is none that doeth good, no, not so much as one." So there come "times of trouble", times of suffering and sorrow, frustration, destruction, and death, for **sin** is the cause of all man's trouble. Both the mercy and the justice of the Lord require that **sin** be punished according to His law. Yet, "He hath not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities, For as the heavens are high above the earth so great is His lovingkindness to them that fear Him." But He administers chastisements in such kind and degree that men may repent. The fullness of neither the woe nor the weal is executed in this world, but awaits the eternal world to come.

The Ninth Psalm deals chiefly with the nations that forget God; the Tenth is concerned particularly with individuals, and the two great classes of humankind to which they belong, those who have no fear of God, and the poor in spirit. It shows how God uses the wicked as a rod or sword in His hand. (Ps. 17:13,14), though they do not mean it so. He uses them to turn such as have some fear of God, but have proved to be forgetful and unfaithful; to turn them back to truer and fuller repentance. Then it may seem as if the wicked man was having his own way, free to do as he pleases, no God being in his sight.

**"His ways are at all times prosperous; Thy judgments are far above out of his sight. Of all his opponents he is contemptuous. He has said in his heart, I shall not at all be disturbed; To all generations (I am the one) who shall never be in adversity. His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and violence; Under his tongue there is perversity and iniquity.**

**"He sitteth in the lurking-places of the villages; In secret corners he strikes down the**

**innocent. His eyes are set against the helpless. He lurks within his hiding-place as a lion in his lair; He lurks to catch the poor; He doth catch the poor by drawing him in his net. Therefore he croucheth, he boweth low; Then he falleth, with his full strength, upon the helpless ones. He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten; He hideth His face; He hath never seen it."** (vss. 5-11).

Thus the wicked man prospers in his God-defying schemes. Yet he cannot get the thought of God out of his mind, determined though he be. He hopes that, if there be a God, he is only a finite God, and can be avoided or out-maneuvered. But wherever he goes, or whatever he does, God is there; and when God says, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further", his evil course comes to the end. Every sinner, in every sin, hopes he will somehow get by without punishment. But God keeps His judgments always in evidence, so that no man is without excuse for ignoring plain facts. The judgments of God are out of sight only to those who will not see and will not learn, who look down and not up, refusing to acknowledge God as He reveals Himself. They carry out their cruel, beastly, devilish designs as far as permitted to do so and, because not immediately punished, conclude that God did not see, or does not care. Only a fool says in his heart, There is no God.

But the singer of the Psalms knows that "He hath not forgotten the cry of the afflicted", "The needy shall never be forgotten; the hope of the afflicted shall never perish." (Ps. 9:12,18). He knows that "Behind the dim unknown standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above His own." He therefore prays:

**"Arise, O Jehovah God, lift up Thine hand; Thou dost not forget the humble ones. WHEREFORE doth the wicked despise God? (WHEREFORE) doth he say in his heart, Thou wilt not punish?"** (vss. 12,13).

WHEREFORE does the omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent God allow Himself to be despised and reproached by the wicked in their pride? It is because He remembers His humble ones, and some of them have not yet been humbled by His mighty hand; some of them have not yet been born. God is longsuffering, and His lovingkindness very great. "Jehovah is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works. All Thy works shall give thanks unto Thee, O Jehovah; and Thy saints shall bless Thee." (Ps. 145:9,10). "He humbleth Himself to behold the things that are in heaven and on the earth." He hides Himself that He may perfect His great salvation. "As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die, O house of Israel." (Ezek. 33:11).

He has made Himself known and spoken to all on earth in the Person of His Son, who is "the effulgence of His glory and the very image of His substance", yet "was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him. He was oppressed, yet when He was afflicted He opened not His mouth." (Is. 53). To understand God, we must know the Son of His Love, and to know the Son of His Love we must learn from His promised Spirit of the Truth.

## II. What Is God Doing While He Seems to be in Hiding? (vss 14-18).

He not only "stands" ready to maintain the right of the poor, but is constantly working out His great salvation and the complete fulfillment of all His covenant promises.

**"Thou hast seen; for THOU THYSELF takest account of perverseness and wrong, to take them into Thine own hand: The helpless leaveth his cause with Thee. As for the orphan, THOU even THOU hast been his Helper. Break Thou the arm of the wicked; And, as for the evil man, Thou art searching out his wickedness (till) Thou find none at all.**

**JEHOVAH IS KING forever and ever! Nations have perished from His earth. The longing of the humble Thou hast heard, O Jehovah; Thou makest their heart strong. Thou makest Thine ear attentive to them, That there may be judgment on behalf of the orphan and the oppressed; (That) weak, mortal men of the earth shall never again put them in fear."**

"Thou hast seen!" "All things are naked and open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." There is nothing hid from His eyes. He keeps the whole situation in His own control. There is no evil thing that shall not be rooted out and destroyed. The helpless leave their cause with Thee. "O Jehovah of Hosts, who judgeth righteously, who triest the heart and the mind, I shall see Thy vengeance on mine enemies; for unto Thee I have revealed my cause." (Jer. 11:20). And, "**Thou hast heard!**" Thou hast been the Helper of the fatherless and the Deliverer of the oppressed. Do

as Thou hast always done, Lift up Thine hand. Show Thy power. Break the arm of the wicked. Make his strength useless. Whole nations have perished from His earth, by His judgments, because of their wickedness. He is always the Judge and the Saviour.

**JEHOVAH IS THE ETERNAL KING!** His dominion is over all. He keepeth covenant and mercy forever, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against His covenant people. He watches over them, as a shepherd his sheep, providing for them, delivering them from all their enemies, leading and keeping them in the paths of righteousness, for His name's sake. "Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now I observe Thy word. It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn Thy statutes. I know, O Jehovah, that Thy judgments are righteous, and that in faithfulness Thou hast afflicted me." (Ps. 119:67,71,75). Wherever there is sin, the judgments of God are certain. Only the time and the form of their execution are determined by infinite love and perfect justice. There shall be no mistake, no failure. Those who put their trust in God alone shall be saved; those who despise Him shall perish. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake, for great is your reward in heaven."

"God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time: casting all your care upon Him; for he careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that you have suffered a while, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you. To Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." (1 Pet. 5:5-11).

Note: Mr. Frazer's studies in the Psalms will be continued, D.V., in future issues of this journal. — Ed.

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## *The Promise of His Coming*

By the Rev. W. R. McEwen

One of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith is the personal Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing gives such meaning and purpose to life or helps us to see life in its true perspective as this great doctrine. It enables

us to realise that there is a goal in history "towards which the whole creation moves." Yet in the sceptical mood, so prevalent today, many cast doubt upon this doctrine and even deny it, while many preachers ignore it altogether.

### THE CERTAINTY

Such scepticism is nothing new. It found expression in the first century. There were some then who dismissed belief in the Second Coming with the question, "Where is the promise of His coming?" and pointed to the uniformity of nature and the continuity of history as precluding such a possibility. "Since the fathers fell asleep," they said, "all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." Although Christ had promised to return, and the apostles had proclaimed that promise and the church had believed it, everything went on as usual. The fathers died, the children grew up and took their places. Year followed year in quick succession, filled up mostly by the common round and daily task. Events happened in endless monotony, and nothing took place to upset the regular routine.

If there was force in that objection then it has equal force today. But Peter quickly swept it aside. There were some facts in history which it ignored. He pointed to the fact of the Flood. It is interesting to note that Christ also referred to the Flood in this connection, and drew an analogy between it and His Second Coming. (Both Peter and our Lord accepted the historicity of the Flood.) But the point of comparison is not the wickedness of the world before the Flood and before the Second Coming, though that is a patent fact. But what Christ stressed was the normalcy of events. "They were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage"—not very wicked deeds—but the very fact that life went on as usual blinded them to the danger they were in, and they "knew not till the flood came, and took them away." There was no warning but the faithful preaching of Noah, backed up by his faithful building of the Ark. But that should have been enough. The Word of God, which had called the earth out of nothing and compacted it out of liquid and sustained it, had spoken in judgment and was as able to destroy it. That very earth carried in it the potency of its own destruction by water. It also carries in it the potency of its destruction by fire, as the latest researches of scientists are demonstrating.

But the certainty of Christ's Second Coming and the destruction of the world do not rest upon the discoveries of science, but upon the revelation of God. We have the assurance of Jesus Christ to His disciples: "I will come again and receive you unto Myself" (John 14:3). We have His faithful testimony before Caiaphas: "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matt. 26:64). We have the message of the two men in white apparel to the disciples on Olivet: "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). And the whole apostolic church bears witness to its faith in this great event. To those who believe the Bible there is no event in the future more sure

than this. Just as God interposed in history in the past, so He will interpose in the future. As He came the first time in the person of His Son so He will come the second time. The fact that the predictions regarding His first coming were so perfectly fulfilled should convince us that the predictions of His Second Coming will be equally fulfilled.

### THE CHARACTERISTICS

But while the Second Coming will be personal, visible, and literal, as was the first coming, there is also a contrast between the two comings. He came first in humiliation; He will come again in glory. During the days of His flesh His glory was veiled, and men saw no beauty that they should desire Him. Instead, they despised and rejected Him, and put Him to death. The last the world saw of Him was hanging on a criminal's cross. But before His death He had prayed to the Father to glorify Him. That prayer has been partially answered in His resurrection and ascension, when He received of the Father glory and honour. And it is answered as He is received into believing hearts and honoured in obedient lives. But it will be fully and finally answered "when the Son of Man shall come in His glory and all the holy angels with Him." As His first coming was heralded by angels much more will His Second Coming be: "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God."

But His glory would not be complete if He had only the angels with Him. "He shall come to be glorified in His saints." He suffered humiliation and death to save them. But that gracious work will only be fully accomplished when not only their souls are redeemed from sin but their bodies from death. So at His coming the bodies of the dead saints shall be raised and those of the living saints shall be changed, and all shall be glorified together. The church shall be presented as a pure and spotless bride to be for ever with the Lord, enjoying His fellowship and praising His Name.

That is an aspect of the Second Coming of Christ to which believers may well look forward. But there is another characteristic of the Coming essential to His glory. He not only comes to consummate salvation for His redeemed, but to exercise judgment upon the wicked. "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power" (1 Thess. 1:7-9). "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation"

(John 5: 28, 29). So when the Son of Man shall come in His glory and judge all nations the wicked shall "go away into everlasting punishment but the righteous into life eternal" (Matt. 25: 31-56).

Thus there are two characteristics of the Second Coming. It is a day of glory, which Christ will share with His redeemed. But for others it is a "day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men," a day of wrath and anguish which may well strike terror into the hearts of unbelievers, unprepared to meet the Lord.

### CONCLUSIONS

This is no impractical theory divorced from reality. In the apostolic church this doctrine was a most potent point of appeal. Paul, knowing the terror of the Lord, sought to persuade men to turn from sin and seek God's mercy ere it was too late. He warned the Athenians that God "hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man Whom He hath ordained." And all true preachers have likewise warned men to flee from the wrath to come.

This doctrine is also, to believers, a great motive for holiness. The great bane of the Christian life is worldliness. Our worldly environment hems us in and keeps our thoughts and aspirations earth-bound. But when we see that all these things shall be dissolved, what a motive to holy living and godliness. Surely, too, it should counteract worldliness in our lives when we remember that our citizenship is in heaven from whence also we look for the Saviour Who shall change the body of our humiliation that it be made like unto the body of His glory. The fact that these bodies are to share in His glory should lead us to present our bodies living sacrifices to Him, while the thought that we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ to give an account of the deeds done in the body should make us careful about every act.

And when we remember that our Lord, Who is as a man in a far country, will one day return to call us to account for our stewardship, it should surely made us faithful to our trust. Truly, "He that hath this hope in Him (the returning Redeemer) purifieth himself even as He is pure" (1 John 3:3).

Again, this doctrine gives us ground for hope. Hope is a great factor in ordinary life. It prompts us to heroism, inspires to great tasks, and enables many to carry on noble service and endure severe trials. But the hopes which fill most hearts are bounded by the horizon of earth and time. Even Christians are inclined to limit their hopes to the present scene. They hope for present perfection in the attainment of holiness in their personal lives. And they hope to usher in a reign of righteousness and peace on a world scale in the present order. Such hopes are doomed to disappointment. But the Christian should not be discouraged while endeavouring after holiness; we should look forward to the time for the Lord to come to remove us from this scene of sin, and transform us so that we shall be like Him when we shall see Him as He is. And when we feel our labours in His service yield little fruit and the cause of God makes little progress, we should remember that Christ is not defeated but will yet come in triumph, bringing His cause to a glorious consummation and presenting His Church unto Himself "a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but . . . holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:27). And, while we should oppose evil in every form, we should not hope to set up a perfect kingdom on this earth, but rather "according to His promise, look for a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwell eth righteousness" (2 Pet. 3:14).

Note: For the above article we are indebted to **Evangelical Action** (Australia), of which Mr. McEwen is the Editor and Publisher. — Ed.

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## *Sketches of the Covenanters*

By J. C. McFeeters

### Chapter XVI

#### **The Solemn League and Covenant — A. D. 1643.**

The Solemn League and Covenant touches a tender chord in the heart of every Covenanter. It is a solitaire of statesmanship; a precious jewel of international law, unique and alone, there is nothing like it in the world. The historical setting of this lustrous stone is intensely interesting. Out of what mine did the precious diamond come? By whose skill was it so admirably cut and polished? By whose hand was it set in its own historic foil? Such questions are worthy of serious and earnest thought.

King Charles' war flurry against the Covenanters, in 1639, brought him no honor. Out-matched on the field, out-done in diplomacy, and utterly defeated in his purpose, he returned to London greatly humiliated. The journey was long and dreary, even though he rode in his stately carriage and behind swiftest horses, for he was chafing over his failure to reduce the Covenanters. In his palace also he found no comfort, his magnificent apartments brought him no restfulness. He brooded over his ill-fortune till his blood was tintured with acid and his heart soured; a malignant spirit spread its dark wings over him. He had failed in his military operations; the Covenanters were

stronger and more independent than hitherto; his Prelatic friends were aggrieved with his treaty of peace; his power to tyrannize over the public conscience was waning. Such thoughts racked his brain and wrecked his peace of mind. He grew sullen, miserable, desolate. It was this passionate and despotic temperament that carried him into the second war with these Covenanters whom he so thoroughly hated.

The Covenanters were yet truly loyal to their king. Their loyalty was high-principled and self-sacrificing, yet at the same time discriminating. They bound themselves by their Covenant to be true to their king and their country. The Covenant recognized the king and the people to be equally under the law of God, subjects of the moral government of Jesus Christ. While he occupied his rightful place and exercised legitimate power, they would stand by him till their blood and treasures were alike exhausted. Such was their oath of loyalty, and it was kept with sacred care. But they resisted his authority at the point where he attempted to crush conscience, rule the Church, and usurp the royal prerogatives of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is King of Kings. There they drew the line, and drew it so clear, that all the world might see it, and the blindest king might pause, consider, and not pass beyond. There they uttered their solemn protest with the Bible in one hand and the sword in the other. Such encroachments on their rights and liberties, and upon the honor and supremacy of Jesus Christ, they met on the battlefield, when peaceful measures had failed. While these interests were at stake they counted not their lives dear.

The king on this second occasion collected an army of 21,000 men — all he could then muster — and hastened to punish the Covenanters. He was not able at this time to rally the hosts of England; that kingdom was not in sympathy with his enterprise. His haughty will and arbitrary measures had alienated the strength of England from his support. The English Parliament was like a trembling volcano, ready to break out and involve his throne in ruins. A revolution from monarchy was sending its advance swell over the land like a tidal wave.

The Covenanters, ever loving peace and hating war, had exhausted all honorable measures to avoid a conflict with their king on the battlefield. Their efforts however having failed, again the call to arms resounded through their peaceful glens and over their granite hills. The shepherd again left his flock, the workman closed his shop, the plowman released his team, and the minister took leave of his people to follow the fiery war-cloud. Again the banner was unfurled FOR CHRIST'S CROWN AND COVENANT; the silken folds rose and fell on the breeze; the golden letters and sacred motto flashed upon the eyes of the men who were willing to follow where it led.

General Leslie was again in command. He boldly crossed the Tweed and hastened to give battle on English soil. The armies having come within range of each other, the usual lull before the battle ensued. The Covenanted columns, standing under their colors and gleaming with arms and armor in the bright August sun, struck terror once more to the king's heart. He dreaded to meet this sea of living, fiery valor, rolling its waves into his very camp. He saw, as on the first occasion, that a treaty was the better part of valor, and offered peace. The terms being concluded, the Covenanters returned to their homes, not knowing how long the peace would last.

England, too, was at this time greatly agitated. She was making a desperate effort to throw off the galling despotism of King Charles. The spirit of progress, enlightenment, and liberty was deeply stirring the people; they were eagerly reaching after a higher and nobler life. The grand possibilities of improvement and happiness filled them with visions of better things, and they grew desperate in their purpose to obtain freedom. Continued subjection to the heartless autocrat became intolerable.

There was public indignation likewise against Prelacy, for by it the king was inspired and upheld. In the State the revolt was from monarchy to democracy; in the Church, from Episcopacy to Presbyterianism. The king, as the head of the Episcopal Church, not only exercised jurisdiction over her, but used her as an instrument to enforce his arbitrary will over the people. The king mounted his war horse once more. This time it was English against English. Strong armies were mustered on each side. For four long years a civil war swept the unhappy kingdom, victory perching alternately on the opposing banners. This was a war of the Parliament against the king, British rule against brutish rule, humanity against despotism. Scotland watched the struggle of her sister kingdom with deepest interest. On the one side she was attached to her king, notwithstanding his incorrigibility; on the other, she was devoted to the principles involved including the independence of the Church.

While the war-cloud was thickening, the English Parliament sent a delegation to Scotland to consult with the Covenanters in expectation of receiving aid. The question was entrusted to a Joint Commission. The deliberations were deep and far-reaching; the men in council were among the wisest and best in the two kingdoms. They weighed the momentous interests involved in the pending war, that eventually convulsed England and watered her soil with fraternal blood. The liberty of both kingdoms, the progress of the Gospel, the purity of religion, the independence of the Church, the inheritance of the Covenants, the onward movement of Christianity — yea, their own homes, possessions, liberties and lives — all

were at stake in the crisis that darkened the land. These men turned to God in prayer to meet the task that burdened their hearts and taxed their wisdom.

Dangers, too, were thickening around Scotland as well as England, like storm-clouds concentrating for a destructive outburst. The king was planning to restore the Scottish Prelacy to power; he still hoped to fight his way victoriously into Edinburgh; he had hired an army of 10,000 men to invade Scotland; he had watched with apparent complacency, we will not say his sanction, the slaughter of 200,000 Protestants in Ireland by the Papists. Such were the conditions in both kingdoms, which these counselors had to face. Dark were the days when this Joint Commission was in session. Scotland was harrassed by internal foes, and poor Ireland lay bleeding from a thousand wounds. But there was a band of men whose hearts reached up to God for counsel, and they were made equal to the occasion. They knew how to take hold upon Omnipotence and secure the help of heaven. They had access to the Eternal Throne, and were able to call into service God's chariots and angels, and fill the mountains with armies which, though invisible to mortal eyes, were invincible in the presence of all the hosts of the king, and all the legions of Satan. Listen to the cry that goes up from that Council Chamber — "The Covenants! The Covenants!"

Scotland had a beaten path up the mountain

of God, leading to the ever-available Covenant. Again she climbs the heights, and this time leads her two trembling sisters, England and Ireland, by the hand. And there, on the top of the mountain where the glory of the Lord shines like the sun in his strength, the three kingdoms, Scotland, England and Ireland, enter into THE SOLEMN LEAGUE AND COVENANT.

We would appreciate our Covenanted privileges more highly, if we considered more carefully the difficulties our ancestors overcame in reaching the Covenant heights. Let us take heed lest, like a foolish heir squandering his father's wealth, we waste our inheritance, which is more precious than gold, more priceless than life.

#### Points for the Class

1. How did the Covenanters meet the king's second appeal to arms?
2. How was England disturbed at this time?
3. What Joint Commission was then created?
4. What was its purpose?
5. What did it accomplish?
6. What was the intention of the Solemn League and Covenant?
7. Why should we appreciate our covenanted inheritance?

(To be continued)

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## Christian Certainty

By the Rev. A. Barkley

A CONTEMPORARY tells the story of Henry Drummond, great scientist and lecturer of Glasgow University, who, at 46, was dying of a mysterious disease. He was "weary of the jungle philosophy of evolution, and tired of rattling the dried bones of dead monkeys as a means of finding the origin of life." So he said to Sir William Dawson, also a scientist and devout Christian, "I am going back to the Bible to believe as I once did. I can no longer live in uncertainty."

To live in uncertainty is a trial for any soul. The person who, in working out a problem in mathematics, is not certain of the various steps taken, can have no confidence in the final solution. It may be right, and it may just as readily be wrong. In the spiritual realm uncertainty can prove a very distressing burden, and while we must try and guard against a false confidence, there should be the humble desire to say with the apostle Paul, "I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day" (II Tim 1:12).

Let us look at these words for a few minutes. A slight alteration in the translation makes the meaning more discernable. "I know Him Whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that He is able to guard that which I have committed unto Him against that day."

#### Knowledge

Paul, first of all, speaks of his knowledge of Christ. "I know Him." It is the knowledge of experience, an experience that commenced in reality on his journey to Damascus when he was apprehended, or arrested by Christ. The knowledge continued to grow and there seemed to be a longing in the apostle's heart that he might know more. "That I might know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings."

Knowledge is essential if there is going to be certainty. When John the Baptist sent messengers to Jesus with the question, "Art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another?" Jesus answered, "Go and shew John again that those

things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them." The knowledge of the wonderful things which were happening would be sufficient to remove from the mind of John any doubts that might exist.

There are at least two things necessary for such a knowledge of Christ. The illumination of the Spirit is vital. Christ promised this when He said, "Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth . . . He shall glorify Me; for He shall receive of Mine, and shall shew it unto you." It is possible to know something of the historical facts concerning the Son of God through the natural power of the mind, but to know the Christ, the Saviour of the soul, there is need for the work of the Spirit. "Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable and perfect will of God."

Dr. Chalmers, a great saint and preacher in Scotland a century ago, in the early days of his ministry, preached the law. His hearers were overawed by his massive knowledge of science and astronomy, but were somewhat bewildered because of the absence of the Gospel. But it pleased God, after allowing Chalmers to labour for eight years, to bring him through a time of serious affliction and then cause the truth to shine into his heart. As a result of this Chalmers counted all other knowledge as second rate in comparison with the knowledge of Christ. This knowledge did not come through the genius of his intellect, it came through the working of the Holy Spirit in giving insight into the truth.

But with the illumination of the Spirit there is the study of the Word of God. "The entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple." Christ said of the Scriptures that "they testify of Me." Those who would truly know Christ must therefore search the Scriptures, for in the Old Testament and the New there are written the things concerning Himself. Christ as revealed in the Scriptures is the One we must know in order to be a partaker of the benefits of salvation. To read the Scripture as a mere mechanical exercise is not enough; the great purpose should be, that we might know Him. The Ethiopian eunuch was reading from the prophecy of Isaiah when Philip joined him in his chariot. He did not understand what he was reading, but when Christ was preached there was all the difference in the world, and he went on his way rejoicing.

#### Faith

Closely allied with knowledge there is faith. "I know Him, Whom I have believed." This was

no blind trust, but faith founded on knowledge. "How shall they call on Him in Whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of Whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" Some have the strange idea that you trust in a person and therefore they despise doctrine. You should think that Christian doctrine was some kind of poison designed to kill the soul. How can you really know Christ and his work unless you know doctrine? The saintly Robert Murray McCheyne attributes his first clear perception of the way of salvation to the reading of a little doctrinal treatise entitled **The Sum of Saving Knowledge**. If faith is to grow it must be nourished on the increasing knowledge and understanding of the whole doctrines of salvation. Such is the faith of which Paul writes in the words, "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." Paul prayed for the saints at Ephesus in these words. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."

#### Conviction

Where there is faith and knowledge so closely allied there will most surely follow the conviction expressed in the words, "I am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." Note in particular the words "am persuaded." The word in the Greek is used often by Paul, and here it means "I stand persuaded." There is no going back or wavering with such a background. That is the anchorage that is needed today as much as in the first century. Canon Guy King says, "In Timothy's day there would be many temptations to drift, and there would be many such also in our day — a danger of cutting adrift from the old moorings; a danger lest the tempestuous circumstances of our experience may loosen our hold upon the old realities."

These are not days when we can indulge in uncertainties; as Christians we must be prepared to speak with conviction, and this conviction must be deeply rooted. What an impression it would make if those who professed to be believers could say, "I know Him Whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day."

Note: For the foregoing article we are indebted to **Evangelical Action**, official organ of the Bible Union of Australia. The Rev. A. Barkley, author of the article, is a minister to the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland and is the Agent of Blue Banner Faith and Life for Australia and New Zealand.—Ed.

## *People and Places in the Psalms*

**SIHON.** 135:11; 136:19. A powerful Amorite king ruling on the east side of the Jordan who was conquered by the Israelites under the leadership of Moses. The history is recorded in Numbers 21. Israel's God-given victory over Sihon reminds us that the Kingdom of God is in conflict with an objective realm of evil over which absolute victory will finally be attained.

**SINAI.** 68:8, 17. A mountain, located in the interior of the Sinaitic peninsula, near which the people of Israel camped and where God revealed the Ten Commandments. The traditional Mount Sinai, which is today called Jebel Musa ("Mount of Moses") is 7363 feet above sea level. The Psalm refers to the earthquake which took place at the time of the giving of the commandments at Sinai. The terrifying phenomena caused even Moses to tremble with fear (Heb. 12:21). The name Sinai should always call to our minds the terrible majesty of the law of God. This is especially true in our own day when the fear of God is so largely absent from our religion.

**SIRION.** 29:6. Sirion is the name which was given by the Sidonians to Mount Hermon. The same mountain was called Hermon by the Israelites and Senir by the Amorites. It is the highest mountain of the Holy Land, the summit being 9166 feet above sea level. The summit is snow-capped and is visible from many parts of Palestine. This mountain is the source of the Jordan River, and was probably the scene of our Lord's Transfiguration. It is located at the extreme northern limit of Palestine. Psalm 29 in poetic imagery describes the effects of a violent thunderstorm. Lebanon and Sirion are said to skip like a young "unicorn" (wild ox).

**SISERA.** 83:9. The commander of the army of Jabin, a powerful Canaanite king who oppressed Israel in the period of the Judges. The history is found in Judges 4 and 5. Sisera's forces, with 900 iron chariots, had a tremendous advantage over the Israelites. Under the leadership of Deborah and Barak, Israel won a remarkable victory over the forces of Jabin and Sisera, the latter finally meeting death at the hand of Jael the wife

of Heber the Kenite. Psalm 83 refers to the doom of Sisera as a sample of the divine wrath and judgment which is in store for all unrepentant enemies of God and God's people.

**SUCCOTH.** 60:6; 108:7. A place east of the Jordan River, near the Jabbok River. In Psalms 60 and 108 this is referred to as a region properly belonging to the Promised Land, and thus claimed by David.

**TABOR.** 89:12. A mountain located southwest of the Sea of Galilee. Though mentioned along with Mount Hermon in the Psalm, it is much smaller than Hermon, being only 1843 feet high whereas Hermon rises to 9166 feet above sea level. There is a tradition, dating from the second century, that Mount Tabor was the scene of our Lord's Transfiguration. It is unlikely, however, that this is correct, for in the time of Christ there was a town on the summit of Tabor. The Psalm mentions Tabor and Hermon as rejoicing in God's name. The meaning of this statement is all parts of the earth, including the prominent geographical features of the Promised Land, manifest the glory, majesty and power of God—the God who is Redeemer as well as Creator, the God of grace as well as the God of nature.

**TARSHISH.** 48:7. The reference is to ships of Tarshish which are broken by a powerful east wind sent by God. The location of Tarshish is uncertain, but the Book of Jonah at least proves that Tarshish was located at a distance from Palestine and across the waters of the Mediterranean Sea. The most probable location is southern Spain near Gibraltar. "Ships of Tarshish" means not only ships actually sailing to Tarshish, but any ships large and strong enough to make such a voyage. Psalm 48 describes the safety of Jerusalem after the menace of Sennacherib had passed. Obviously the safety of the city depended on the almighty power of God, not on human planning or resources. This almighty power of God which is active on behalf of His covenant people is figuratively represented by a powerful east wind which wrecks even ships of Tarshish.

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### *Some Noteworthy Quotations*

"The best Christians are in general those who not merely from restless activity of natural disposition, but from love to Christ and zeal for His glory, labor most and suffer most in His service."

—Charles Hodge

"The clearer sight we have of the sovereignty and power of heaven, the less we shall fear the calamities of this earth."

—Matthew Henry

"Those that will not fear God He can make to fear at the shaking of a leaf."

—Matthew Henry

"Conscience may convict men of ordinary sins, but never of the sin of unbelief. Of the enormity of this sin no man was ever convinced but by the Holy Ghost Himself."

—George Smeaton

"Alas, that so many are carried with the times! As if their conscience rolled upon oiled wheels, so do they go the way the wind bloweth them."

—Samuel Rutherford

"The thing that we mistake is the want of **victory**; we hold that to be the mark of one who hath no grace. Nay, I say, the want of **fighting** were a mark of no grace; but I shall not say the want of victory is such a mark."

—Samuel Rutherford

"Error often borrows the terminology of truth for its own ends."

—Arnold of Rugby

"The great want of our day is want of principle."

—Charles H. Spurgeon

"That is always best for us which is best for our souls."

—Philip Henry

"The death that Christ suffered had **not** lost its sting."

—John Bunyan

"The Sabbath is the signature of God's holiness on time."

—Patrick Fairbairn

"It is dangerous dressing for another world by the looking-glass of this world."

—William Secker

"The wish for a new Gospel is a sufficient sign that the old one is not understood."

—James Hamilton

"Romanism advances in proportion as Protestantism degenerates or neglects its duty."

—Philip Schaff

"If we have the kingdom at last, it is no great matter what we suffer by the way."

—Thomas Manton

"Whatever is good for God's children, they shall have it, for all is theirs, to further them to heaven. If crosses be good, they shall have them; if disgrace be good, they shall have it, for all is ours, to serve for our main good (1 Cor. 3:21-23; Shorter Catechism Q. 11)."

—Richard Sibbes

"Many men would be in Canaan as soon as they are out of Egypt, they would be at the highest pitch presently. But let us rather magnify the mercies of God that works in us any love of good things, and that He vouchsafes us any beginnings (1 Pet. 5:6; Larger Catechism Q. 105)."

—Richard Sibbes

"Christ's dying for us is as much in God's account as if we had twice over borne the eternal agonies of hell."

—Robert Murray McCheyne

"A holy minister is an awful weapon in the hand of God."

—Robert Murray McCheyne

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## *Religious Terms Defined*

**JUDAISM.** The Jewish faith as it exists today and has developed since the Jews rejected Jesus as the Messiah. Judaism must be carefully distinguished from the religion of the Old Testament, which was a religion of grace, whereas Judaism is essentially legalistic, or a religion of human merit or self-salvation.

**KENOSIS.** The false theory, based upon a misinterpretation of Phil. 2:5-8, which holds that the eternal Son of God, in becoming incarnate in human flesh, emptied Himself of the attributes of His deity, including such attributes as omniscience and omnipotence, so that during "the days of His flesh", Christ was only abstractly divine, while His actual powers and characteristics were merely human. The Kenosis theory is a futile attempt to bridge the chasm between the divine Christ of the Scriptures and the merely human Christ of modern liberal theology. The word Kenosis comes from the Greek verb which is found in Phil. 2:7 and is translated by the King James Version as "made . . . of no reputation" but has sometimes been literally translated as "emptied." The King James Version's rendering is correct, and

the literal translation "emptied" in this verse is unnecessary and improper.

**MACCABEES.** A family descended from a man named Mattathias, which led the Jews in regaining virtual independence from the Syrian successors of Alexander the Great in the second century B. C. This history is found in the First and Second Books of Maccabees in the Apocrypha, and in the writings of the Jewish historian Josephus. The derivation and meaning of the word Maccabees are unknown; it is possible that the term is derived from the Hebrew word for a hammer.

**MASSORETES.** Jewish scholars who edited the Hebrew text of the Old Testament from the 7th century A.D. and after. The original text of the Old Testament in Hebrew was composed entirely of consonants; the person reading had to know what vowel sounds were to be pronounced in reading. The Massorettes added a system of vowels by small dots and marks above, below and between the consonants. The Hebrew Old Testament as we have it today is called the Massoretic text. The evidence indicates that the Massorettes

were extremely careful and accurate in their work. Thus we are greatly indebted to them for their part in transmitting the Bible to us.

**NAZIRITE.** This word is wrongly spelled Nazarite in the King James Version. The term means a man or woman who was specially consecrated to God by a vow. This vow might be for the entire lifetime of the person, or for a limited period of time. Certain specific things were forbidden to the Nazirite, including the eating or drinking of any product of the grape vine, shaving of his head, cutting the hair, and touching a dead body. Samson was a Nazirite, though he did not always keep the laws involved. John the Baptist was a Nazirite from his birth. The vow taken by the apostle Paul (Acts 21:20-26) was apparently a Nazirite vow.

**PAPYRUS.** A material used extensively for writing before the invention of paper. Produced from a large plant by pressing together crossed strips of the pith, papyrus formed a serviceable writing material. It was an important article of commerce in the ancient world. Owing to its perishable nature, most papyrus manuscripts perished in ancient times, but in Egypt, where the climate is extremely dry, many of them have survived to the present day in a good state of preservation.

**PARABLE.** A story told to bring out or emphasize some point of religious truth. Parables differ from fables in that everything in a parable could occur in real life, whereas in fables things occur which could not take place in real life.

## *Studies in the Book of Genesis*

### LESSON 85

#### III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26, continued

##### 2. History of Abraham after leaving Ur. 12:1 to 25:10, cont.

The next statement of the record concerns Abraham's obedience to the divine command concerning the ordinance of circumcision. It is recorded that Abraham executed the command of God immediately—"the selfsame day." This compliance of Abraham with the divine command is related in 17:23-27, where we are also informed that at the time Abraham was 99 years old and Ishmael was 13.

The fact that Ishmael was circumcised raises a problem, inasmuch as he was not the promised seed through whom the covenant blessings were to descend. With regard to this question, we should note that the command of God included not only the seed of Abraham through whom the covenant salvation would be accomplished, but also all the males of his entire household, including those purchased with money, who were not of Abraham's seed (17:12,13). Therefore obedience to God's command required the circumcision of Ishmael. Calvin does not even mention this problem. Leupold says concerning it, that while Ishmael was excluded from being the one from whom the Saviour should be descended, this does not imply that he was excluded from the blessings to be derived from the promised Saviour.

The question of why Ishmael was circumcised was discussed by the Rev. Frank D. Frazer in the October-December 1954 issue of this magazine (page 174). Those wishing a fuller discussion of the question than is possible in the present lesson, are referred to Mr. Frazer's treatment of it. Among other things, Mr. Frazer says:

"The fact that circumcision, as the sign and seal of the covenant, was put upon ALL the members of Abraham's household, regardless of nationality, shows plainly that the benefits of the covenant are not restricted to the lineal descendants of Abraham and Sarah, but are extended to all those for whose instruction in the things of God they, as parents and masters, were responsible. That parents and masters are thus responsible is implied in the fact that circumcision was to be performed on the infant of eight days, when he could be only a passive recipient of the sacrament. But the sign would remain in and before him as long as the life of his flesh lasted, as a constant reminder of the Covenant of Jehovah of which he was informed, and an inducement to lay hold of the benefits thereof for himself. The promise could not be annulled but by his own willful rebellion or neglect."

The question, of course, is not whether Ishmael was an ancestor of the Messiah, nor is it whether Ishmael was eternally saved. The real problem is only that as to the ground of Ishmael receiving circumcision. Concerning this, it is at least clear that he received the rite in compliance with the divine command recorded in 17:12,13.

Abraham is now almost a hundred years old, and the divinely promised son and heir has not yet been born. But the time is drawing near, and accordingly it is revealed to Abraham in the next chapter (chap. 18).

"And the Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day" (18:1). This Mamre seems to be the friendly Amorite mentioned previously (14:13). The word "plains" should be translated "terebinths" (a kind of tree). A grove of such trees

would be highly desirable as a camp site on account of the shade which they would afford. Abraham was resting, according to the common custom, during the hottest part of the day.

We are informed that "the Lord" (Jehovah) appeared unto Abraham. This statement of 18:1 must be borne in mind as it has a bearing on the identity of the three visitors mentioned in the next verse. The meaning is not merely that God sent three human messengers to Abraham. What is described is, rather, a real theophany (appearance of God), and the three "men" come from the supernatural realm. From verses 13 and 22 it is clear that one of three mysterious visitors was God Himself. That the other two were angels is proved by 19:1 and Hebrews 13:2.

The supernatural visitors are at first called men, however, because they at first appeared to Abraham to be such. Had he at the first known them to be supernatural beings, he could not have invited them to partake of food as he did. At a later point in the story, presumably at verse 10, Abraham must have recognized the true nature of his guests.

Still believing his visitors to be men, Abraham presses upon them his hospitality in true Oriental manner. The visitors stood still, a short distance from Abraham's tent door. Custom required that strangers not approach closer until definitely invited to do so. Abraham therefore ran to meet them, and prostrated himself toward the ground before them. This act in itself does not involve religious worship, except when performed before God. In the case we are considering, it was an expression of courteous welcome. Next, Abraham requests the visitors not to proceed further on their journey without stopping, that he may bestow hospitality upon them. Very humbly he calls himself "thy servant." Water is provided to wash their feet—the first necessity for making guests comfortable. They are invited to rest themselves under the tree, that is, under the tree by which Abraham's tent was pitched. This rest in the shade would be welcome after travelling in the sun during the heat of the day.

Abraham next invited his visitors to partake of a meal, which he in true Oriental self-depreciation refers to as "a morsel of bread"—as we might say, "a bite to eat." "For therefore are ye come

to your servant." This is, Abraham regards their arrival as a providential opportunity for him to perform the duties of hospitality. The visitors reply, "so do, as thou hast said," thus accepting Abraham's courteous invitation.

At this point in his commentary on Genesis, Calvin has some very interesting observations concerning the duty of hospitality. Among other things he deplors the large number of hotels which existed in his day, saying, "the great number of inns are evidence of our depravity, and prove it to have arisen from our own fault, that the principal duty of humanity has become obsolete among us," and also that "the right of hospitality has been held most sacred among all people, and no disgrace was ever more detestable than to be called inhospitable."

#### Questions:

1. How soon did Abraham obey God's command concerning the rite of circumcision?
2. Why was Ishmael circumcised?
3. How old was Abraham at this time? How old was Ishmael?
4. Who was Mamre?
5. What is the true meaning of the word translated "plains" in 18:1?
6. Why would a grove of trees be desirable as a camp site?
7. What time of day was it when mysterious visitors approached Abraham's tent?
8. What was Abraham doing at the time?
9. What verses show that one of the visitors was God?
10. How can it be shown that two of them were angels?
11. How can it be shown that Abraham at first supposed all three of the visitors to be men?
12. How did Abraham welcome his guests?
13. How does Abraham refer to the meal to which he invites his guests?
14. What did Calvin say about the duty of showing hospitality to strangers?

### LESSON 86

#### III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26, continued

##### 2. History of Abraham after leaving Ur. 12:1 to 25:10, cont.

Next, we see what preparations Abraham made for the meal to which he had invited the three visitors. Note that Abraham acted quickly—"hastened" (18:6); "quickly" (18:6); "hasted"

(18:7). First Sarah is asked to take three measures of fine flour, and make bread. This quantity has been calculated to be 4½ pecks, or a little more than one bushel. We may wonder why such a large quantity should be prepared for three guests. Abraham is honoring his guests by preparing food for them in rich abundance. Of course much would be left over and this would not be wasted, since it would undoubtedly be given to some of Abraham's

many servants. We should realize that in Bible times bread was not made in advance and stored until used as is the case today; it was always baked immediately before being eaten. Also the bread prepared by Sarah on this occasion could not have been leavened bread such as we are accustomed to, for there was not time for the preparation of such. Rather, it was probably unleavened bread in the form of large, thin wafers or sheets, which could be used to wrap around a piece of meat and hold it for eating. The bread is called "cakes" in verse 6.

Next, Abraham selects a calf, which is immediately killed and dressed by a servant. We should realize that the eating of meat was uncommon, so that what Abraham set before his guests was truly a feast. With the bread and meat, Abraham provides "butter," which really means sour milk or perhaps buttermilk, and "milk," that is, ordinary sweet milk, which may have been of camels, cows or goats.

Abraham does not himself partake of the meal with his guests, but stands near them under the tree while they eat and drink. This may seem strange to us today, but probably surprised no reader of Genesis in ancient times.

Bearing in mind that Abraham's visitors are not really men but beings from the supernatural realm, it is truly wonderful that they are said to have eaten the food placed before them by Abraham. The human form in which they appeared was of course not theirs by nature, but was a form assumed for the occasion of appearing to Abraham. Actually they can have had no need of food, nor would Abraham have offered them any if he had at once discerned their true nature. But they really ate, no doubt in order to manifest appreciation and acceptance of Abraham's hospitality, and also to conceal their supernatural character until the proper moment had come for disclosing it.

The fact that Abraham's guests partook of the food which he placed before them calls to our minds the remarkable parallel in the New Testament, where the risen, glorified Christ, who certainly had no need of earthly nourishment, ate a piece of broiled fish and a honeycomb in the presence of His astonished disciples. (Luke 24:42).

The meal being finished, the moment has come to reveal to Abraham that the long-promised heir will soon be born. This subject is introduced by a question: "Where is Sarah thy wife?" (18:9), to which Abraham replies simply, "Behold, in the tent." The mere inquiry of the strangers concerning the whereabouts of Abraham's wife was sufficient to show that they possessed extraordinary authority. We should realize that under ordinary circumstances such an inquiry, except on the part of a very close friend or relative, would be regarded as highly improper.

From this point one of the three visitors becomes outstandingly prominent and is the speaker, this obviously being the Lord. The revelation now given concerns Sarah as well as Abraham, and Sarah, behind the curtains of the tent, would be able to hear it. The Lord said, "I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life: and, 10, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him" (18:10).

There is some difficulty here as to the meaning of the expression "according to the time of life." Leupold explains it as meaning "when this time of the year returns," that is, "after a year." Various other suggested translations are quite artificial and unnatural, and some are quite impossible.

"And Sarah heard it . . .". The Hebrew here means literally, "And Sarah was listening to it. . .". The open tent door where Sarah stood was behind the speaker, so that she was not visible to him. This proves that the statement presently made by the Lord, to the effect that Sarah had laughed, proceeded from His divine omniscience, not from ordinary observation.

It is next stated that both Abraham and Sarah were old, so that in the ordinary course of nature the birth of a child could not be expected (18:11). In view of the natural impossibility of the birth of a child, Sarah "laughed within herself" (18:12), that is, she suppressed a laugh, she laughed, not aloud, but silently. Sarah's laugh, and the question which passed through her mind (18:12b) are an expression of unbelief. She took this attitude because she did not believe it possible that she should bear a child. Sarah must have repented later of this sinful unbelief, because we read in Hebrews 11:11, "Through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed. . .". A proper conclusion would seem to be that her first reaction was one of incredulity, which later after the Lord's reproof was changed to an attitude of faith.

At this point Sarah is like multitudes of people of the present day who can think only in terms of what is possible according to natural law. The supernatural is, of course, outside the realm of natural law, just because it is supernatural. But we live in an age when men have been conditioned to think of the natural order as all that exists. Even God has been "naturalized" in modern thought, and is regarded as bound and limited by "the nature of the universe." This modern naturalism differs but little, actually, from downright atheism. Atheism says that there is no God; modern naturalistic thought says that there is no REAL God, no God like the God of the Bible. If there is anything modern man needs, it is to stop thinking about nature long enough to think about the Person behind nature,

who started the natural order in the first place and keeps it functioning, and can step in and act directly in history if it is His will to do so.

Instantly the Lord challenges and then rebukes Sarah's unbelief. "And the Lord said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh. . ." (18:13). "Is any thing too hard for the Lord?" And then the promise of a son is explicitly repeated. By this time Sarah has begun to be afraid, and makes a foolish, desperate attempt to defend and justify herself, which of course she can do in one way only, by telling a lie. So Sarah tries to lie to God, saying "I laughed not." But the Lord contradicts this claim, saying, "Nay; but thou didst laugh" (18:15). We see in Sarah's conduct here how one sin leads to another. First it is incredulous unbelief, which is followed immediately by a brazen attempt to justify self by resorting to untruth. How much better it would have been for Sarah to confess her sin and ask forgiveness! The passion for self-justification is deeply imbedded in our sinful nature. Only the almighty grace of God can deliver us from it. Augustine of Hippo in his Confessions tells how this lust for self-justification had been one of his besetting sins, but how finally by the grace of God he had gotten over it.

#### Questions:

1. Why would Abraham hurry in providing a meal for his guests?

2. Why should such a large quantity of food be prepared?

3. What kind of bread was probably prepared by Sarah?

4. What is the correct meaning of the "butter" mentioned in 18:8?

5. Why is it remarkable that Abraham's guests partook of food?

6. What New Testament parallel exists for Abraham's guests eating?

7. What fact about Abraham's visitors is suggested by their inquiry as to the whereabouts of his wife?

8. What promise is given to Abraham in 18:10?

9. What is the probable meaning of the expression "according to the time of life" in 18:10?

10. What was Sarah's first reaction on hearing the promise?

11. How can it be shown that Sarah must have later repented of her wrong attitude?

12. How does Sarah's attitude at this time illustrate the attitude of many modern people?

13. How does Sarah attempt to justify herself?

14. Instead of attempting to justify herself, what should Sarah have done at this particular time?

### LESSON 87

#### III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26, continued

##### 2. History of Abraham after leaving Ur. 12:1 to 25:10, cont.

We have come to the end of the revelation given at Abraham's tent door, in connection with the meal partaken of by his supernatural guests. "And the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom; and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way" (19:16). Mamre was at or near Hebron. The exact location of Sodom is unknown, but the most probable location is near the southern end of the Dead Sea, the site being today covered by the water. From Hebron to the present southern limit of the Dead Sea is a straight-line distance of a little more than 30 miles, with a drop of 4332 feet in altitude from Hebron (3040 feet above sea level) to the surface of the Dead Sea (1292 feet below sea level). The men "looked toward Sodom": very likely the city walls and towers of Sodom may have been visible in the distance. This is confirmed by 19:27,28 where Abraham is pictured as standing where he had stood the day before, and viewing the smoke rising from Sodom and Gomorrah.

With true Oriental courtesy, Abraham escorts

his guests for a certain distance. This is a common custom in Oriental countries even today. A host will see his departing guest to the railway station, and sometimes may even board the train and ride with the departing guest to the next station, then bid him farewell and return home. In the New Testament we see the Ephesian elders accompanying Paul to his ship (Acts 20:38), and again the Christians of Tyre, accompanied by their wives and children, escorting Paul outside the city to the seashore where he was to embark on his ship (Acts 21:5,6).

Next follows the revelation about the impending destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. "And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him" (18:17-19). The Lord is represented here as speaking to Himself, but certainly the words spoken were intended for Abraham to hear and heed. These verses give two reasons why the Lord would reveal His

plan concerning Sodom to Abraham: (1) God had already granted to Abraham the remarkable honor and privilege stated in verse 18; (2) what is about to be revealed would be useful to Abraham in instructing his posterity after him (Calvin). As the recipient of covenant grace and promises, Abraham is the Lord's special and close friend; and as the father of the chosen people, he would transmit the truth to them faithfully. The meaning of course is not that the Lord was undecided as to whether to reveal the truth to Abraham. Rather, the Lord is stating reasons for not concealing it from the patriarch.

The true account of what happened to Sodom and why it happened would be of permanent importance to the Old Testament Israel and the New Testament Church. This truth must therefore be revealed to Abraham, who would pass it on faithfully to his posterity, whence it would come ultimately to its place in the Bible as an inspired record for all time. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah must make an indelible impression on the minds of God's people, and this impression must be truly interpreted.

"And the Lord said, because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous, I will now go down, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know" (18:20). This language is, of course, anthropomorphic; it speaks of God in human terms, in order to teach a certain truth about God. God, of course, is everywhere and He knows everything. God does not need to go to a place to see what is being done there. But the Lord's manner of speaking to Abraham is calculated to impress the patriarch with the Lord's deep concern about sin and righteousness among men, and with the fact that God will not inflict judgment without full knowledge of all the facts of the case.

"And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the Lord" (18:22). From this verse we learn definitely that one of the supernatural visitors was God Himself. The two angels have now departed to go to Sodom; Abraham remains alone with the Lord. This is followed by the very remarkable conversation between Abraham and the Lord about the destruction of Sodom.

### LESSON 88

#### III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26, continued

##### 2. History of Abraham after leaving Ur. 12:1 to 25:10, cont.

We are considering Abraham's prayer concerning the impending destruction of Sodom. Two explanations must at once be ruled out as impossible. In the first place, in speaking to the Lord as he did, Abraham did not mean to imply

"And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?" (18:23). That the population of Sodom was wicked was not open to question. The events related in the next chapter bring it out with shocking clearness. But Abraham is evidently thinking of his nephew Lot, whom he knows to be righteous, and he ventures to hope that the city may be spared from destruction because of the existence of some righteous persons in it. In view of Lot's recorded conduct, both before and after the time we are studying, we might be disposed to question whether he really was a righteous man. But the New Testament leaves no room for doubt about this matter. Peter speaks of him as "just Lot" (that is, "righteous Lot") and "that righteous man", adding that his righteous soul was vexed from day to day, with the lawless deeds of the wicked among whom he lived (2 Peter 2:7,8).

#### Questions:

1. Where was Sodom probably located?
2. About how far was it from Mamre (or Hebron) to the probable location of Sodom?
3. What difference in altitude existed between Mamre and Sodom?
4. What New Testament incidents are similar to Abraham's act of escorting his guests a certain distance as they leave him?
5. What two reasons are given to explain why the Lord revealed to Abraham the impending doom of Sodom?
6. What truth about God is taught by the statements of 18:20?
7. What righteous man, living in Sodom, was Abraham evidently thinking about?
8. Why does it seem somewhat difficult for us to think of Lot as a righteous man?
9. What New Testament passage pronounces Lot to have been a righteous person?
10. What does this New Testament passage tell us about Lot's attitude toward the wickedness of the people of Sodom?

that God might perhaps act unjustly. His statement in verse 25, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" is a rhetorical question implying the answer "Yes." He is convinced that God's action cannot be otherwise than righteous.

In the second place, Abraham is not suggesting that he himself may be more kind and merciful than God. Many people of the present day have an irreverent notion that they are more lov-

ing and merciful than God; they say that if they were God they would not send anyone to hell. All such presumptuous and irreverent thoughts were far from Abraham's mind. What he is doing, rather, is to plead God's own mercy on behalf of Sodom. "There will, however, be no absurdity in saying, that Abraham, having good hope of the repentance of the wicked, asked God to spare them; because it often happens that God, out of regard to a few, deals gently with a whole people." (Calvin). Calvin adds that God, in promising to spare Sodom if ten righteous persons were found there, did not in any way bind Himself to spare other wicked cities or nations because of the presence in them of a minority of righteous persons; for what was granted in the case of Sodom was refused in the case of Jerusalem (Matt. 11:24), where there were many more than ten true children of God.

Behind Abraham's prayer lies an absolute conviction both of the righteousness and of the mercy of God. With this conviction settled in his mind, he is amazingly bold in addressing God, first suggesting that possibly fifty righteous persons may be found in Sodom, and then by several steps lowering the number until at length he elicits from the Lord the promise that if ten righteous persons are found in Sodom, the city will be spared.

Surely we can learn a lesson about prayer from this prayer of Abraham. In it we see not irreverence nor yet presumption, but the boldness of a God-given faith. Some might think that Abraham went too far in his request to God. But the fact that God granted the request (18:32) shows that God was not displeased with Abraham's attitude. This holy boldness of faith and this freedom of access to God in prayer has as its background a life of reverent faith in God. Those with Abraham's faith and fear of God may also have Abraham's freedom and boldness in access to God's throne of grace.

Abraham's reference to God as "the Judge of all the earth" is noteworthy. Against modern liberal critics who assert that at this early stage of Israel's history Jehovah was thought of only as a tribal divinity—the special God of that particular tribe or clan—we see here a clear faith in God as sovereign over all the earth. This of course does not fit in with the popular modern evolutionary view of the development of Israel's religion, which holds that only centuries after this time did Israel's great prophets rise to the conception of "ethical monotheism"—one God who rules in righteousness over all. But the record is clear and must stand: Abraham believed that Jehovah (1) is the Judge of all the earth; (2) that Jehovah is immutably righteous in His acts.

We note that Abraham's repeated addresses to God are accompanied by the most profound self-abasement in the divine presence. Abraham says "I have taken upon me to speak unto the

Lord, which am but dust and ashes" (18:27); "Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak. . ." (18:30); "Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord" (18:31); "Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once. . ." (18:32). Bold as was Abraham's faith in seeking something from God, it was far removed from the almost flippant familiarity with God which is so offensive in some modern prayers. Abraham's faith did not lead him to regard himself as equal with God. At every point he is keenly conscious of the vast distance that exists between mortal man and the living, eternal God. He is fully aware, both of his limitations as a creature, and of his unworthiness as a sinner.

The question may be raised why Abraham stopped with the number ten. Apparently he supposed that there might be as many as ten righteous persons in Sodom. Lot and his family would make up perhaps half of this number, and it might be supposed that there would be five or six others in so large a city who at least were righteous in the sense of being separated from the horrible vices of Sodom and living an outwardly moral life, according to the light they had. We must bear in mind that it was not on account of the common sin of mankind, of which all men are guilty, that Sodom was destroyed, but on account of the fearful immoralities and vices which are touched upon in the next chapter. Calvin says that Abraham "sees men created after the image of God" and "persuades himself that, in that immense crowd, there were, at least, a few who were upright, or not altogether unjust, and abandoned to wickedness."

Had Abraham continued and requested that Sodom be spared for the presence of a lower number of righteous persons than ten, he would have been praying for his own relatives only. But it is apparent that Abraham's prayer was not of this character. Calvin holds that Abraham was moved by a "sense of humanity" which was pleasing to God. It should be noted that Abraham prays, not for the rescue of the righteous from Sodom, but for the sparing of the city from destruction because of the presence of righteous persons in it.

The divine promise is given that if ten righteous persons are found in Sodom, the city will not be destroyed. This language is of course anthropomorphic. God speaks of Himself in human terms for Abraham's sake. For God of course knew from the beginning exactly how many righteous persons there were in Sodom, and He did not need to wait to learn by investigation what the number might be. God, but not Abraham, knew how many there were.

"And the Lord went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place" (18:33). Nothing is said as to where the Lord went when He "went his way," for it is entirely clear that, the theophany

being over, the Lord withdrew from visible presence in the world of time and space, into the supernatural realm which we call "heaven." Abraham returns to his tent. The abrupt ending of the chapter accentuates the suspense. This is one of the crises of history. A terrible calamity is hanging over Sodom and the rest of the cities of the plain. This brings us to the beginning of chapter 19.

#### Questions:

1. What statement of Abraham indicates that he did not consider it possible that God might act unjustly?

2. Why is it improper to think of Abraham as more kind or merciful than God?

3. What city in which there were many more than ten righteous persons was destroyed by a judgment of God?

4. How can we explain Abraham's boldness and freedom in prayer?

5. What does Abraham's reference to God as "the Judge of all the earth" show concerning his idea of God?

6. How does Abraham's idea of God differ from that which modern liberal criticism attributes to Israel at this early period?

7. How does Abraham speak of himself in the presence of God?

8. Why is too great familiarity improper in prayer?

9. What may have been the reason why Abraham did not pray that Sodom be spared for less than ten righteous persons in it?

10. What is the meaning of the word "anthropomorphic"? What is meant by saying that God's answers to Abraham were anthropomorphic?

### LESSON 89

#### III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26, continued

##### 2. History of Abraham after leaving Ur. 12:1 to 25:12, cont.

Chapter 19 deals with the destruction of Sodom and the escape of Lot from that city. First of all, the two angels who departed from the presence of Abraham at 18:22 appear at Sodom at evening of the same day. The King James Version is incorrect in translating "two angels." It should be "the two angels" (with definite article), that is, the two angels mentioned as "men" in 18:22.

"At even" is also definite in the Hebrew—THE evening; that is, the evening of the day that has been described in the previous chapter.

Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. In those days the gate of a city served something of the same purpose as is served by a courthouse today. In the open space within the gate meetings were held and legal business was transacted. For an illustration of this fact, see Ruth 4:1-12. In the gate of the city news would be heard, politics discussed, business transacted, and lawsuits decided. The question arises as to what Lot was doing in the gate of Sodom. He did not, of course, know in advance about the arrival of the two angels, so he cannot have gone to the city gate on purpose to meet and welcome them. Nor can he have gone there because of the general possibility that strangers might arrive and need entertainment.

The record does not tell us why Lot was in the gate of Sodom at this particular time. It would seem, however, that his presence in the gate indicates a too-great interest in the affairs of the city. When Lot separated from Abraham (13:12) he "pitched his tent toward Sodom" quite

regardless of the fact that "the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly" (13:13). The next time we meet Lot, in chapter 19, he is no longer living in a tent, but has taken up dwelling in a house within the city of Sodom. Thus Lot has become increasingly identified with the city of Sodom, even though we know from 2 Peter 2:7,8 that he was shocked by the outrageous wickedness of the people of the city.

Whatever may have been Lot's reasons for being there, when the two strangers appeared he immediately "rose up to meet them" and greeted them courteously. Moreover, he invites them to take advantage of the hospitality of his home ("tarry all night, and wash your feet"). At this point we see Lot manifesting the same sincere courtesy as Abraham manifested in the preceding chapter.

The strangers, following characteristically Oriental custom, at first decline Lot's kind invitation, and only when urgently pressed did they accept it. At this point, of course, Lot does not know that his visitors are supernatural beings, but thinks of them as human guests. The strangers state that it is their intention to "abide in the street all night"—that is, to spend the night, wrapped in their robes, lying on the ground of the plaza just inside the city gate. Such a course was doubtless common enough, and would be made tolerable by the mild climate of the region.

But Lot presses the strangers, with the result that they finally accept his hospitality and accompany him to his home (19:3) where he entertains them with a meal. It is now late in the evening, and time to retire for the night. But at this point the wickedness of the men of Sodom enters the picture.

Verses 4 and 5 describe the surrounding of Lot's house by the men of Sodom. The King James Version describes this mob as "the men of Sodom. . . both old and young, all the people from every quarter." Leupold translates this "the men of the city, men of Sodom that they were. . . young men and old, all the folk without exception." The phrase "men of Sodom" seems to be used intentionally, in addition to "the men of the city" to call attention to the unnatural vice which has received its name from the city of Sodom. That this vice of Sodomy or homosexuality quite dominated the city is shown by the fact that even old men gathered in the mob about Lot's house, and that people from all parts of the city were there.

The mob demands of Lot that the strangers who are his guests be turned over to them to become the victims of their shameful lusts. That even strangers and guests should be so treated shows the utter depravity of Sodom. Nothing more could be needed to show that Sodom was ripe for divine judgment and destruction. We may wonder whether at this point Lot may have realized at last what a terrible mistake he had made in pitching his tent toward Sodom and finally living in the city.

Faced with this terrible crisis, Lot makes a desperate effort to defend his guests. First he goes out of the house to face the mob, shutting the house door behind him. Then he pleads with the mob not to insult his guests, seeing that they have

accepted his hospitality and he is therefore under obligation to insure their safety. It is clear here that Lot is not a coward. He faces the mob alone and tries to reason with them. Leupold remarks that Lot's calling the men of Sodom "brethren" can hardly have been entirely sincere. Whether sincere or not, at any rate it was wasted on the men of Sodom; so far as having any influence on them is concerned, he might as well have called them wild beasts.

#### Questions:

1. How should the phrase "two angels" in 19:1 be translated?
2. What purposes were served by a city gate in Bible times?
3. What may have been Lot's reason for being in the gate of Sodom at this time?
4. How did Lot welcome the strangers who appeared at Sodom?
5. What was their first response to Lot's invitation?
6. What hospitality did Lot manifest to them?
7. What classes of people composed the mob which surrounded Lot's house later in the evening?
8. How did Lot attempt to protect his guests in this crisis?

### LESSON 90

#### III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26, continued

##### 2. History of Abraham after leaving Ur. 12:1 to 25:12, cont.

At the close of the last lesson we saw Lot standing, with his back to the closed door of his house, facing a raging mob and trying to reason with them. At this point Lot makes a proposal which impresses us as truly shocking. He proposed, in short, to turn over his two unmarried daughters to the lusts of the mob, in order to protect the strangers who have become his guests. This terrible proposal gives us an idea of how the obligation of a host to protect his guests was regarded in those days.

The best that can be said for Lot at this point is that his motive was a worthy one—he felt under obligation to protect his guests at whatever cost to himself and his family. Luther attempts to clear the character of Lot, which we do not believe can be done. Calvin, on the other hand, states clearly that Lot's proposal was unlawful and cannot be justified. What Lot was proposing was to fight evil with evil—to do evil that good may come. As this is a very common tendency in human nature, and a temptation which comes to

all of us under much less tragic circumstances than those faced by Lot, we shall quote Calvin's comments at some length here:

"As the constancy of Lot, in risking his own life for the defence of his guests, deserves no common praise; so now Moses related that a defect was mixed with this great virtue, which sprinkled it with some imperfection. For, being destitute of advice, he devices (as is usual in intricate affairs) an unlawful remedy. He does not hesitate to prostitute his own daughters, that he may restrain the indomitable fury of the people. But he should rather have endured a thousand deaths, than have resorted to such a measure. Yet such are commonly the works of holy men; since nothing proceeds from them so excellent, as not to be in some respect defective. Lot, indeed, is urged by extreme necessity; and it is no wonder that he offers his daughters to be polluted, when he sees that he has to deal with wild beasts; yet he inconsiderately seeks to remedy one evil by means of another. I can easily excuse some for extenuating his fault; yet he is not free from blame, because he would ward off evil with evil. But we are warned, by this example, that when the Lord has furnished us with the spirit of invincible fortitude, we must also pray that He may govern us by the spirit of

prudence; and that He will never suffer us to be deprived of a sound judgment, and a well-regulated reason. For then only shall we rightly proceed in our course of duty, when, in complicated affairs, we perceive, with a composed mind, what is necessary, what is lawful, and what is expedient to be done; then shall we be prepared promptly to meet any danger whatever. For, that our minds should be carried hither and thither by hastily catching at wicked counsels, is not less perilous than that they should be agitated by fear. But when reduced to the last straits, let us learn to pray, that the Lord would open to us some way of escape. Others would excuse Lot by a different pretext, namely, that he knew his daughters would not be desired. But I have no doubt that, being willing to avail himself of the first subterfuge which occurred to him, he turned aside from the right way."

Lot's proposal to surrender his daughters to the wicked mob was not only wrong—it was also ineffectual. The cry of the mob, "Stand back!" in 19:9, is translated by Leupold "You just come here!" This is followed by extremely disrespectful and abusive language concerning Lot himself. "This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee than with them. . . ." (19:9). The reference to Lot being "a judge" does not mean that Lot had held the office of a judge in Sodom, but that he had ventured to reprove the people of Sodom for their wicked ways. Until now, apparently, little attention had been paid to Lot's remonstrances, but now the mob is not inclined to put up with him any longer. "And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door" (19:9b).

At this point Lot is helpless in the presence of the mob. Only the intervention of God can help him now. Accordingly, the angels in the house at this point take direct action. First, they open the door and pull Lot back into the house, shutting the door again. Meanwhile the mob continues to surge around the house outside. Next, by a miracle the men of Sodom are smitten with blindness, so that "they wearied themselves to find the door" (19:11). This is evidently no ordinary blindness. Keil calls it "mental blindness" adding that it came as a punishment for moral blindness. These men could see, but they could not see the door of Lot's house. Calvin comments:

"Whereas, Moses says, that the men were smitten with blindness, we are not so to understand it, as if they had been deprived of eye-sight; but that their vision was rendered so dull, that they could distinguish nothing. This miracle was more illustrious, than if their eyes had been thrust out, or entirely blinded; because with their eyes open, they feel about, just like blind men, and seeing, yet do not see. At the same time, Moses wishes to describe their iron obstinacy: they do not find Lot's door; it follows, then, that they had laboured in seeking it; but, in this manner, they furiously wage war with God. This, however, has happened, not once only, and not with the men of Sodom lone; but it is daily fulfilled in the rebroate, whom Satan fascinates with such madness, that when stricken by the mighty hand of God, they proceed with stupid obstinacy to advance against Him. And we need not seek far, for an instance of such conduct; we see with what tremendous punishments God visits wandering lusts; and yet the world ceases not, with desperate audacity, to rush into the certain destruction which is set before their eyes."

#### Questions:

1. How did Lot propose to appease the mob which milled about his house?
2. What can be said in extenuation of Lot's conduct at this point?
3. Why can Lot's conduct here not be justified?
4. What, according to Calvin, should Lot rather have endured?
5. In addition to courage, what virtues does a Christian need to meet the crises of life?
6. How may the expression "Stand back" in 19:9 be translated?
7. What is the force of the reference to Lot wanting to be a judge?
8. How did the angels save Lot from the mob?
9. What was the nature of the blindness with which the men of Sodom were smitten?
10. How is the blindness with which the men of Sodom were smitten parallel to the "mental blindness" of wicked people of the present day?

### LESSON 91

#### III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26, continued

##### 2. History of Abraham after leaving Ur. 12:1 to 25:12, cont.

The men of Sodom milling about the closed door of Lot's house have been miraculously smitten with blindness and are wearying themselves

in a fruitless effort to locate the door. Now the scene of the narrative shifts to the inside of Lot's house. Lot is asked concerning his relatives in the city, and is commanded to remove them from Sodom (19:12). Lot is to be permitted to give advance warning to any persons in Sodom related to him by ties of blood or marriage. In particular, son-in-law, sons and daughters are specified

as eligible for escape from the doomed city. Presumably relatives more distant than sons-in-law would not be included. "Whatsoever thou hast in the city" may possibly be understood as including servants, and also of course includes Lot's wife.

Next it is announced plainly that the city is to be destroyed. "This place" (19:13) may include not merely Sodom itself, but the region, including the five cities of the plain. "We will destroy this place" stresses the divine causation and initiative. It is not a mere calamity or natural misfortune that is to overtake Sodom, but specifically an execution of divine judgment.

In obedience to this warning of the angels, Lot goes out to attempt to warn his sons-in-law. Apparently the mob had by this time dispersed from the locality of his house. These sons-in-law are not merely the husbands-to-be of Lot's daughters, but are already married to some of his daughters. The expression "which married his daughters" (19:14) is to be taken literally and is best translated "which had married his daughters." These daughters, therefore, are not the same as the ones mentioned later (19:15) and described as "thy two daughters which are here." How many daughters Lot had, we are not told. It is however evident that at least two of his daughters had already married men of Sodom, while two daughters remained at home unmarried.

At this point the character of Lot appears in sharp contrast to that of Abraham. We recall the careful solicitude with which Abraham provided that his son Isaac should not marry a woman of the Canaanites, but one from his own kindred in Mesopotamia (24:1-9). But Lot took no such pains concerning his daughters. They have been permitted to marry men of Sodom. And as it turned out, this being unequally yoked with unbelievers also occasioned their perishing in the destruction of the city.

Lot approaches his sons-in-law with an urgent plea to leave Sodom immediately (19:14), but the plea is a total failure, for he seems to his sons-in-law as one that mocked. They treat the warning as a joke. We see in Lot's sons-in-law a sample of the hardening and spiritual callousness produced by sin. Presumably Lot's daughters, married to these men, were of the same mind with their husbands, for they did not flee from the doomed city. Lot returns to his house during the night, having failed in his mission to his sons-in-law.

As the morning dawns, the angels hasten his

departure: "Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city" (19:15). One would think that after such a warning Lot would leave Sodom immediately. Yet he hesitated ("lingered"), whereupon the angels laid hold upon his hand, and the hand of his wife, and the hands of his two daughters, "the Lord being merciful unto him," and escorted him outside of the city. What a weak character Lot appears here! And how many like Lot have dallied and hesitated when they were called upon by Scripture and conscience to make a clean break of separation from evil!

"The Lord being merciful to him." Here we see salvation by grace exemplified. It was by the grace of God that Lot and his wife and two daughters escaped Sodom. If salvation were by works, no doubt Lot would have perished. He was saved, not because he was worthy, but because God is gracious. Lot escaped destruction in Sodom, not because he was a good man, but because God accounted him, by grace, a righteous man. We may regard Lot as a sample of a weak and compromising believer, who is saved, yet "so as by fire".

#### Questions:

1. To what class of persons in Sodom was Lot permitted to give advance warning of the impending doom of the city?
2. What phrase in the record shows that the destruction of Sodom was not merely a natural calamity?
3. What is meant by "sons-in-law" in 19:12, 14?
4. How many daughters, at least, did Lot have?
5. How does the character of Lot contrast with that of Abraham, with respect to marriage of his children to unbelievers?
6. What was the reaction of Lot's sons-in-law to his plea?
7. What characteristic of sin is illustrated by the sons-in-law?
8. Why was it necessary for the angels to lay hold upon Lot and his wife and daughters?
9. To what place did the angels escort Lot and his family?
10. How is salvation by grace illustrated by Lot's history?

#### LESSON 92

**II. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26, continued**

**2. History of Abraham after leaving Ur. 12:1 to 25:12, cont.**

Lot and his family having been escorted out of the city of Sodom, he is now commanded: "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain,

lest thou be consumed" (19:17). Lot has already delayed too long; now haste is necessary. The need for haste is further emphasized by the command "Look not behind thee." Moreover they must not stop anywhere short of the mountains. No place in the plain will be safe for them to tarry in.

But Lot is still reluctant to go completely away from the region of Sodom. He craves permission to go to Zoar, the smallest of the five cities of the plain, located just south of the present southern limit of the Dead Sea. The name Zoar means "littleness" or "smallness." Lot expresses fear that he cannot reach the mountains safely; some evil may overtake him, and cause his death. He pleads also the smallness of Zoar as a reason why he should be permitted to go there (19:18-20). This entire speech of Lot gives us a very poor impression of his character. Instead of being deeply grateful for the deliverance that has been graciously granted to him, and immediately rendering implicit obedience to the instructions of the angels, he ventures to argue with them and to render something less than a full and whole-hearted obedience. Lot should have gotten as far as possible from Sodom as fast as possible, instead of trying to think up reasons for not going very far away. It is as if a man of the present day were to insist upon remaining within a convenient distance of a place that is sure to be atom-bombed within a few hours. We marvel at the divine mercy bestowed upon Lot. But the record does not indicate that Lot himself marveled at it very much.

Still, Lot's rather disgusting plea is granted. He is promised that Zoar shall be spared from the impending destruction. He must hurry, though, and escape to Zoar with all possible speed, for nothing can be done until he has reached there safely. This may serve to call to our minds the truth that the Judgment Day cannot come until all of God's elect are in Christ. We would not be warranted in calling Lot's escape to Zoar a type of the believer's fleeing to Christ for safety, but we may affirm that it illustrates the principle that divine judgments, including the Last Judgment, are held in abeyance for the benefit of the elect.

It is after sunrise when Lot enters Zoar (19:23). Once he is safely in the city, the divine wrath is no longer restrained. Judgment descends upon the cities of the plain. Only Sodom and Gomorrah are mentioned here, but two other cities were destroyed at the same time, namely Admah and Zeboiim (Deut. 29:23; Hos. 11:8). The fifth of the cities of the plain, namely Zoar, was of course spared on account of the presence of Lot in it.

"Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out

of heaven; and he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and all that which grew upon the ground" (19:24, 21). Brimstone means sulphur. Thus the record states that the Lord rained sulphur and fire upon the cities. It has been suggested that a volcanic eruption took place; another suggestion is that there was an earthquake. Perhaps the "fire" was lightning. One possible explanation, suggested by Leupold, is that there occurred an explosion of highly inflammable materials, including sulphur, deposited in the ground, which resulted in flaming sulphur being hurled high into the air and then falling on the cities. The mention of bitumen pits in the area (14:10) is interesting in this connection. Leupold adds that it seems probable that once the fires got well started, the very site of the cities (having combustible materials such as bitumen underground) may have been literally burnt away to a considerable depth, and then been covered by the waters of the Dead Sea. It is a fact that while the water of the northern end of the Dead Sea reaches a depth of 1300 feet, the southern end is only ten or a dozen feet deep, and in some places only three to four feet deep. Leupold's view of what probably happened seems very plausible. No archaeologist has ever found a trace of Sodom or Gomorrah; it would seem probable, therefore, that the site of these cities is now beneath the waters of the southern end of the Dead Sea. The fact that Zoar, which escaped destruction, existed in Old Testament times just south of the present southern tip of the Dead Sea, fits in well with this supposition.

The form of the statement "The Lord rained . . . brimstone and fire from the Lord . . ." is remarkable, and has caused much discussion as to its precise meaning. One of the ancient Church Councils held this to be an allusion to the Trinity, interpreting the statement as "God the Son rained . . . brimstone and fire from God the Father . . .". Luther commented that this verse shows two persons in the Godhead.

Destruction was total over the entire area, as is shown by the closing words of verse 21, "and that which grew upon the ground."

#### Questions:

1. What command was given to Lot after he had been escorted out of Sodom?
2. What was Lot's response to this command?
3. What reasons did Lot give for not wanting to flee to the mountains?
4. To what place did Lot wish to flee instead of to the mountains?
5. What is the meaning of the name Zoar?
6. Where was Zoar probably located?
7. What does Lot's plea for permission to go to Zoar indicate concerning his character?

8. What principle concerning divine judgment is illustrated by the angels waiting to destroy Sodom until Lot reached Zoar?

9. What time of day was it when Lot entered Zoar?

10. What happened immediately after he entered Zoar?

11. Besides Sodom and Gomorrah, what two other cities were destroyed at the same time?

12. What is meant by brimstone?

13. What may have been the source of the flaming sulphur which fell on the cities?

14. What is the probable reason why no archaeologist has ever discovered the remains of Sodom and Gomorrah?

15. What covers the probable site of the cities today?

16. What remarkable expression is found in 19:24? What may be its explanation?

17. What statement shows that destruction was total over the whole area?

### LESSON 93

#### III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26, continued

##### 2. History of Abraham after leaving Ur. 12:1 to 25:12, cont.

We must now consider what happened to Lot's wife. She did not enter Zoar with her husband and daughters. At some point on the way between Sodom and Zoar she turned around and looked back on the blazing city of Sodom (19:26). The record states that she was behind Lot at the time. Therefore Lot would not realize what had happened to his wife until later, for he was obeying the command not to look behind him. Had he looked behind him, he would not only have seen what had happened to his wife, but the same thing would no doubt have happened to him.

"She became a pillar of salt." It is not necessary to suppose that the body of Lot's wife was instantly and miraculously converted into salt. The text does not imply that she became a pillar of salt instantaneously. It is possible that at the moment when she looked back, she was overcome by deadly fumes from the conflagration. It is also possible that she was suddenly overcome by the intense heat radiating out from the area of destruction. Once prostrated, whether from poisonous gases or from heat, her body would remain where she fell and would no doubt soon be covered by layer after layer of salt from the vapors of the Dead Sea. The notion that Lot's wife remained standing upright as a statue made of solid salt is hardly warranted by the statements of the record, though such a representation is sometimes seen in pictures intended to illustrate the Biblical story.

Lot's wife has become a proverb on the sin of looking back toward the pleasures of the world. The New Testament commands us to "remember Lot's wife" (Luke 17:32).

The scene now shifts from Zoar to Mamre. "And Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the Lord; and he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and beheld, and, lo, the

smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace" (19:27,28). How Abraham felt during the night just preceding this, we are not told. His faith is evident, however, in his proceeding early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the Lord. He is fully convinced that the cities will be destroyed. It must be remembered that the location of the cities was perhaps 30 miles from where Abraham was, and that he was more than 4,000 feet above the site of the cities. Thus he would be able to obtain a sweeping view of the region that had suffered destruction.

"The smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace." Leupold suggests that petroleum deposits near the surface may have caught fire and added to the conflagration. If so, it would help to account for the dense smoke that is mentioned. The word for furnace here means "smelting furnace."

Next we have a summary of what had happened, in relation to the prayer of Abraham. "And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt" (19:29). So Abraham's prayer was answered, though not in the way in which he had anticipated. Sodom was not spared, but Lot was saved out of Sodom before the destruction took place. This reminds us of the effectualness of the prayers of the righteous. Who shall say what might have happened to Lot, but for the prayers of Abraham? The New Testament assures us that Lot was a righteous man. But except for Abraham's prayers, might he not have perished in the destruction of Sodom, even though his soul would be saved?

The next topic taken up by the record is the disgraceful and shameful conduct of Lot and his two surviving daughters. After a stay in Zoar, presumably of brief duration, Lot decided to go to the mountains after all, "for he feared to dwell in Zoar" (19:30). "And he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters." So Lot has become a "cave man", though not in the sense in which this term

is commonly understood. This is the man who, when he separated from Abraham, selfishly chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, which was so advantageous and promised so much profit and prosperity. Now he and his two daughters are refugees living in a cave out in the wilderness.

What follows is a story of shameful conduct in which both Lot and his two daughters are to blame—Lot for drunkenness and the daughters for shameless incest. We see here very little evidence of faith in God or separation from the sins of the world. At best, the ethics of Lot's daughters rises no higher than doing evil that good may come. Lot, dead drunk from the wine with which his daughters have plied him, does not realize what is going on (19:33,35). The result is that both daughters were "with child by their father" (19:36). From the two children that were born, the Moabites and Ammonites were descended. These two peoples, therefore, were related to the Israelites through Lot, the nephew of Abraham.

#### LESSON 94

### III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26, cont.

#### 2. History of Abraham after leaving Ur. 12:1 to 25:12, cont.

Having finished our study of Sodom and Gomorrah, and of Lot and his family, we come to chapter 20, which relates the relations between Abraham and Abimelech king of Gerar.

"And Abraham journeyed from thence toward the south country, and dwelt between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourned in Gerar" (20:1). Gerar was a city located about six miles south of Gaza and slightly inland from the shore of the Mediterranean Sea. "The south country" is the Negeb, the comparatively arid part of Palestine that borders on the Sinai Peninsula. The record seems to indicate that Abraham first went quite far to the south, for Kadesh and Shur were located 50 miles or more south of Gerar; then he turned northward again and went as far as Gerar, where he settled.

The king of Gerar is called Abimelech, which means literally "father of the king," or perhaps "my father is king." This was Philistine territory and Abimelech was evidently a king of some of the Philistines. There were Philistines in Palestine at this early period, even though the main body of them arrived in the land later. There is some uncertainty as to whether "Abimelech" is to be regarded as a personal name or as a title. It may be a title of kings of Gerar, just as "Pharaoh" was the title of kings of Egypt and "Caesar" of emperors of Rome. On the other hand, it may have been a personal name. Later on Isaac had

#### Questions:

1. Why did not Lot see that his wife had dropped dead on the way to Zoar?
2. How should the statement "She became a pillar of salt" be understood?
3. What command of Christ mention's Lot's wife?
4. Where did Abraham go on the morning when Lot entered Zoar?
5. What did Abraham see from that point?
6. What may have added to the smoke that rose from the plains?
7. What was the importance of the prayer of Abraham in connection with Lot's life being spared?
8. Why did Lot not continue to dwell in Zoar?
9. Where did he live after leaving Zoar?
10. What two ancient peoples were descended from the incestuous union between Lot and his daughters?

dealings with a king called Abimelech at Gerar (26:1-33). The fact that a later king was also called Abimelech does not prove that "Abimelech" was necessarily a title, any more than the fact that several kings of England were called "George" proves that this was a title rather than a name.

Abraham is afraid that he may suffer harm on account of Sarah his wife, so he informs people that she is his sister, with the result that Abimelech king of Gerar sends and takes Sarah. This is remarkably repeated the incident of Gen. 12:10 ff. where Abraham in Egypt passed Sarah off as his sister. There is a similar incident in the life of Isaac, which is recorded in 26:1 ff. The liberal higher critics are so astonished that there should be three such similar incidents in two generations of patriarchal history, that they assert that these three accounts are just three variations of the tradition which arose from one single event. The critics, however, fail to realize the complexity and unpredictability of real history. There are not only important resemblances between the narrative of chapter 20 and that of chapter 12, but also important differences between the two. Moreover, there was a period of something like 20 years between the two incidents. There is no real reason whatever for doubting that the two incidents are distinct and that both are truly historical. Abraham of course should have learned his lesson from the incident of chapter 12 and should never have fallen into the same form of wrongdoing again, but what people ought to do and what they actually do are often two entirely different things. It is certainly quite true to human nature, and entirely credible, that Abraham

in chapter 20 repeated his foolish wrongdoing of chapter 12.

The statement that Abimelech "sent and took Sarah" does not necessarily mean that he actually married her. It may only mean that she was taken into his harem, along with numerous other women. That this is indeed the meaning here is indicated by verses 4-6.

But the woman whom God has chosen to be the mother of the seed from whom the Saviour of the world is to be descended, cannot be permitted to remain in the harem of Abimelech. Therefore God intervenes and reveals the truth to Abimelech by a dream. It is possible, of course, that Abimelech may have had some suspicions as to the real status of Sarah, and perhaps his conscience may have bothered him. Yet we are not to regard this dream as simply a product of his subconscious mind. Rather, it was a genuine, objective divine revelation to Abimelech.

In the dream the word of God comes to Abimelech, saying, "Behold thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife" (20:3). Abimelech is one of several non-Israelite kings in the Old Testament to whom God revealed Himself by means of dreams. Mention may be made of the Pharaoh of Joseph's day, and of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon in Daniel's day. Just what was the religious faith of Abimelech is not entirely clear. He seems to have some knowledge of the true God and a clear sense of the distinction between right and wrong, yet there is nothing to indicate that he was a monotheist, or in the same class as Melchizedek king of Jerusalem, who was "priest of the Most High God." Luther regarded Abimelech as a true believer. We believe, rather, that the matter is doubtful.

In the dream, Abimelech is told by God that he deserves to die, because he has taken into his establishment a married woman. We may wonder why Abimelech took Sarah. As Sarah was already

90 years old (17:17) her beauty could hardly have been a great attraction any more. Perhaps a more probable explanation is that Abimelech, by marrying Sarah, wished to gain Abraham as an ally, thus increasing his political power.

#### Questions:

1. What is meant by "the south country"?
2. Where was Gerar located?
3. What is the meaning of "Abimelech"?
4. By what fear is Abraham influenced at this point in his life?
5. What statement does he make about Sarah?
6. To what previous incident in Abraham's life is this parallel?
7. What similar incident occurred in the life of Isaac?
8. What is the attitude of the liberal critics toward these three incidents?
9. Why is the attitude of the critics not justified?
10. What is implied by the statement that Abimelech sent and took Sarah?
11. Why could God not permit Sarah to remain in Abimelech's establishment?
12. How did God reveal himself to Abimelech?
13. To what other non-Israelite kings did God send dreams?
14. What can be said about the religion of Abimelech?
15. What did God tell Abimelech concerning what he had done?
16. What may have been Abimelech's reason for taking Sarah?

### LESSON 95

#### III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26, cont.

##### 2. History of Abraham after leaving Ur. 12:1 to 25:12, cont.

"But Abimelech had not come near her" (20:4). Sarah has only been taken into Abimelech's establishment; he has not actually married her. Accordingly, in the dream he answers the Lord: "Lord, wilt thou slay also a righteous nation? Said he not unto me, She is my sister? and she, even she herself said, He is my brother: in the integrity of my heart and innocency of my hands have I done this" (20:4,5). Abimelech here shows faith in the justice of God: "Wilt thou slay

also a righteous nation?" Further, he protests that he has been deceived, and that by both Abraham and Sarah. Therefore, he asserts, he has acted in good conscience in this matter. The question of the lawfulness of polygamy is not raised here, either by God or by Abimelech. While we know that polygamy is wrong, because contrary to the original institution of marriage by God, yet that issue is not raised in the conversation between God and Abimelech. The only issue raised is that Abimelech has done wrong in taking Sarah who was already married to Abraham.

God in His reply to Abimelech recognizes the truth of his claim to have acted in the integrity of

his heart. Even though what Abimelech had done was objectively wrong, still he had not realized what he was doing, which obviously made a difference in the moral quality of his action. In view of this God had providentially prevented Abimelech from going too far: "for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her" (20:6).

Abimelech is commanded by God to restore Sarah to Abraham. It is added that Abraham is "a prophet" and that he shall pray for Abimelech, as a result of which the sentence of death revealed in verse 3 shall be revoked. But if Sarah is not restored to Abraham, the sentence will be carried out: Abimelech and all that are his shall die (20:7). As we see at the end of the chapter (20:17,18), a disability which prevented the birth of children had been visited upon the household of Abimelech. Although this is not mentioned until the end of the chapter, still it evidently happened earlier and was known to Abimelech at the time of the dream mentioned in verses 3-7.

In the morning following the experience of the dream there is a great stir in the household of Abimelech. Rising early in the morning, the king calls a meeting of his servants or officials, and tells them of the dream. The result of this was immediate fear: "and the men were sore afraid" (20:8).

Abimelech immediately summons Abraham, and roundly accuses him of wrongdoing (20:9,10). It must have been very humiliating to Abraham to be thus righteously rebuked by a man whose spiritual opportunities and privileges had been far less than his own. It is always a shame to Christians when they are involved in wrongdoing which even the world, by reason of God's common grace, condemns as wrong. Apparently Abraham did not reply to Abimelech's charge in verse 9, so the king presses him further by asking, "What sawest thou, that thou hast done this thing?" (20:10) — we might paraphrase this as "Whatever made you do it?"

Abraham is really without excuse, but as so often happens in the case of sinful human beings, he seems to feel that a poor excuse is better than none, so he tries to extenuate his conduct by two statements: (1) he had been afraid because he thought that the fear of God was not in the place, therefore his life would not be safe; (2) there was a shadow of truth in the claim that Sarah was his sister, for she was indeed his half-sister. As to the first claim, Abraham had been mistaken, for Abimelech evidently had a higher religious faith and moral code than Abraham had realized. As to the second claim, though technically it was true that Sarah was his half-sister, still this was really a lie, because Abraham intended by it to deceive Abimelech into thinking that Sarah was not his wife.

Abraham adds that he and Sarah had a standing arrangement that this brother-and-sister evasion was to be resorted to whenever there might be occasion to fear that Abraham's life might be in danger because someone might want to take Sarah. We can only comment on this that it was wrong, and also cowardly on Abraham's part. It is one of the moral inconsistencies of a truly good man. It is useless to try to justify Abraham's conduct in this matter. We can only say that he yielded to temptation and did wrong.

Abimelech, wishing to make sure that everything is straightened out properly, not only restores Sarah to Abraham, but gives him in addition presents of oxen, sheep, menservants and women-servants. Besides this, Abraham is invited to dwell wherever he pleases in Abimelech's territory. It is evident that Abraham did stay there some time as we read in 26:18 of his digging wells there. It is possible, of course, that these wells were dug before, not after the incident related in chapter 20.

Abimelech also has something to say to Sarah as he dismisses her: "Behold, I have given thy brother a thousand pieces of silver." There is no mention of silver among the gifts listed in verse 14, so it may be that this "thousand pieces of silver" was the value of the gifts there enumerated. It is possible, though, that this silver was in addition to the rest.

Note that Abimelech says to Sarah, "Behold, I have given thy brother. . .", not "Behold, I have given thy husband. . .". There seems to be in this use of the word "brother" a touch of gentle irony, in view of the evasion used by Abraham and Sarah by which they claimed to be brother and sister instead of husband and wife. It appears that Abimelech was gently "rubbing it in" a bit.

The rest of verse 16 is rather obscure in the King James Version. We believe it is more accurately and clearly translated in the American Revised Version (1901), as follows: "behold, it is for thee a covering of the eyes to all that are with thee; and in respect of all thou art righted." That is, Abimelech's gift to Abraham was to be "a covering of the eyes" to Sarah. Leupold well says that the most probable meaning of this is that the "covering of the eyes" was intended, as a handsome gift, to counteract any embarrassment caused Sarah within her own household because of what had happened. The valuable present would show Abimelech's high esteem for Abraham and Sarah. The King James Version's translation of the last clause of verse 16, "thus she was reproved," seems to be incorrect. Leupold translates this clause: "in all respects thou art justified." The meaning seems to be that complete restitution has been made, all wrongs have been remedied, and Sarah has no cause for grievance remaining.

After this Abraham prayer for Abimelech, and in answer to the patriarch's prayer, God healed Abimelech and his household of the affliction which had been laid upon them (20:17,18).

**Questions:**

1. How does Abimelech, in his dream, answer the Lord's charge that he has taken a married woman?
2. Would it have been right for Abimelech to take Sarah if she has not been Abraham's wife?
3. Why had God providentially prevented Abimelech from touching Sarah?
4. What is Abimelech commanded to do?
5. What happened the next morning in Abimelech's palace?

6. Why must Abimelech's rebuke have been humiliating to Abraham?

7. What explanations or excuses did Abraham offer to the king?

8. What should be our judgment on the conduct of Abraham and Sarah?

9. What presents did Abimelech give to Abraham?

10. How does Abimelech describe Abraham in speaking to Sarah? What does this manner of speaking show?

11. What was the gift given to Abraham intended to do for Sarah?

12. How was the affliction which God had laid upon the household of Abimelech finally removed?

**LESSON 96**

**III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26, cont.**

**2. History of Abraham after leaving Ur. 12:1 to 25:12, cont.**

Turning now to Genesis chapter 21 we have the record of the birth of Isaac. The promise made to Abraham and Sarah is at last fulfilled: the child is born at the appointed time, and is named Isaac. This name means "he laughs" or "the laughing one." In view of the fact that Sarah was over ninety years old, the birth of Isaac must be regarded as involving a supernatural element. This is brought out by the text which says that the Lord "visited" Sarah and "did unto Sarah as he had spoken" (21:1). While such language might indeed be used of a non-miraculous providence of God, in this particular case it designates an event involving a supernatural factor, for the birth of Isaac cannot be accounted for in terms of the ordinary working of God's providence within the order of nature.

In accordance with the divine command recorded in 17:12, Isaac is circumcised at the age of eight days. Although we know from 17:17 that Abraham was 100 years old, the fact is repeated at 21:5 for the sake, no doubt, of emphasis.

"And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me" (21:6). The last time we read about Sarah laughing, it was a laugh of unbelief (18:12). But now the laughter of unbelief is changed into the laughter of joy. To appreciate this fully we must realize something of the Semitic point of view which regarded children as the greatest of blessings and the lack of them as the most bitter of calamities. By the miraculous act of God Sarah has been relieved of the reproach which she has borne all her life—it is no wonder that she felt like laughing for joy.

"And she said, Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck? for I have borne him a son in his old age" (21:7). Sarah's joy, of course, was not merely the natural joy of a mother over the birth of a long awaited child, but the special joy occasioned by the birth of the promised covenant heir or "seed" through whom in process of time all the families of the earth should be blessed.

We can imagine the joy and gladness which would be felt among the entire clan of which Abraham was the chief. All would rejoice with Abraham and Sarah; all would now be more convinced than ever that Abraham was indeed called of God for a unique purpose in the history of the world.

"And the child grew, and was weaned: and Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned" (21:8). No doubt it was a common custom to have a feast on the occasion of the weaning of a firstborn son. In accordance with Oriental practice, Isaac may have been as old as three years at the time when he was weaned.

This scene of happiness and rejoicing is soon marred by a discordant note. Ishmael, the son of Abraham and Hagar the Egyptian maid, is overheard by Sarah mocking. Obviously the object of this mocking must have been Isaac. We know from 16:16 that Abraham was 86 years old at the time of the birth of Ishmael, and from 21:5 that he was 100 years old at the birth of Isaac. Therefore Ishmael was perhaps 16 or 17 years old at the time when Isaac was weaned. That Ishmael's "mocking" was not merely innocent fun but rather a sinful scoffing at the sacred destiny of Isaac is shown by the New Testament (Gal. 4:29) which says: "As he that was born after the

flesh persecuted him that was born after the spirit. . .". Leupold rightly says that Gal. 4:29 stamps Ishmael's attitude as "descriptive of the constant attitude of the carnal-minded over against the spiritually minded."

Sarah therefore complained to Abraham, demanding of him that he expel Hagar and Ishmael from the clan: "Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac" (21:10). This demand on Sarah's part is not to be interpreted as proceeding from mere wounded pride or cattish spitefulness. Rather, Sarah's demand was based on sober reflection and good judgment. Better than Abraham, she realized the real tendency of Ishmael, and realized that separation was inevitable. However we note perhaps an element of race prejudice in Sarah's reference to Ishmael, not as a son of Abraham, but as "the son of this bondwoman," namely, Hagar the Egyptian.

Naturally this demand of Sarah was very hard for Abraham to agree to. "And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son" (21:11). He would perhaps have hesitated to yield to it, except for the fact that divine revelation made the will of God unmistakably clear. "And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called. And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed" (21:12,13). This guided by divine revelation, Abraham makes the decision to do what his natural feelings of paternal affection disinclined him to do — to send Hagar and Ishmael away permanently.

The promise of God to make a nation of Ishmael would reassure Abraham; he need have no doubt that Ishmael would survive.

It has been objected to the conduct of Abraham and Sarah in this matter that their action was unjust, contrary to natural affection, anti-social and undemocratic. And indeed it would have to be so adjudged if measured by the modern popular theory that all men have equal rights in the sight of God and that one man's religion is as true as another's. But it will not do to estimate Abraham's conduct by the standards of modern democratic equalitarianism. Room must be allowed for the sovereignty of God, which chooses one

and rejects another. And in God's plan of history, which was the reason for his calling of Abraham in the first place, grace must always have priority over nature. Abraham was not concerned about maintaining a democratic equality of all mankind, but rather about conformity to the divine will by which the gracious redemption of the world would ultimately be accomplished.

#### Questions:

1. What is the meaning of the name Isaac?
2. Why must the birth of Isaac be regarded as involving a miraculous element?
3. What is the difference between Sarah's laughter in chapter 21 and her laughter in chapter 18?
4. What reason for joy did Sarah have, beyond the natural joy of a mother who is no longer childless?
5. How did Abraham celebrate the occasion of weaning Isaac?
6. How old was Abraham when Isaac was born?
7. How old was Ishmael at the birth of Isaac? How old may he have been at the time when Isaac was weaned?
8. What discordant note soon marred the happiness of Abraham's household?
9. What New Testament passage shows that Ishmael's mocking of Isaac was not mere innocent fun or joking?
10. What attitude did Sarah take toward Hagar and Ishmael?
11. What demand did she make on Abraham concerning them?
12. How did Abraham feel about Sarah's demand?
13. What divine revelation made the will of God clear to Abraham concerning this problem?
14. What promise of God would reassure Abraham concerning the future of Ishmael?
15. What objections have been raised against the conduct of Abraham and Sarah in this matter? How can they be answered?

#### LESSON 97

### III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26, cont.

#### 2. History of Abraham after leaving Ur. 12:1 to 25:12, cont.

"And Abraham rose up early in the morning,

and took bread, and a bottle of water, and gave it unto Hagar, putting it on her shoulder, and the child, and sent her away; and she departed, and wandered in the wilderness of Beersheba" (21:14). This must have been extremely hard for Abraham to do, yet he did it in obedience to the clear revela-

tion of the will of God. Some have raised the question why Abraham sent Hagar and Ishmael away with such meager provisions. To this it may be replied that the silence of Scripture does not prove anything. Very possibly, even probably, Abraham also gave Hagar a generous provision of money, though this is not mentioned by the record.

It can plausibly be argued that Abraham would have given Hagar money also, and that the food and water given her would have been sufficient to supply her and Ishmael's needs until they could reach an inn, if they had not lost their way. Hagar's feelings on this occasion are not recorded, but can easily be imagined. No doubt she left Abraham's household in an emotional turmoil, which resulted in her becoming confused and losing her way across the desert. Being lost, progress was not made, and so the water was soon drunk up.

"And the water was spent in the bottle, and she cast the child under one of the shrubs"(21:15). The bottle, of course, was not what we would call a bottle, but one made of the skin of an animal, which would hold a considerable amount of water. The question may be raised why Ishmael, who was a lad of sixteen or seventeen years, should weaken and collapse before his mother. Yet this is quite true to life, for while young people often seem to have more energy than their parents, they not infrequently fall behind them in endurance of hardships. So Ishmael has collapsed from heat and thirst, while Hagar is still able to walk about. She lays the lad under a bush, which would provide a little scanty shade from the burning sun.

"And she went, and sat down over against him a good way off, as it were a bowshot: for she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against him, and lifted up her voice, and wept" (21:16). But God is the Helper of the helpless, and He has not forgotten Hagar and Ishmael. "And God heard the voice of the lad." This may mean that Ishmael had been consciously praying, but perhaps the more probable meaning is that the cries and moans of Ishmael were themselves a cry of distress heard by God. Hagar is not left long in her desperate plight. The angel of God calls to Hagar out of heaven: "What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not; for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is" (21:17). Everything is under control, everything is working out according to God's plan, everything will turn out all right. "Arise, lift up the lad, and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation. And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went, and filled the bottle with water, and gave the lad drink" (21:18,19). "God opened her eyes" may refer to a miracle, or it may mean that God providentially guided her so that she found a source of water. Leupold re-

marks that such wells in the wilderness would usually be covered to prevent too much evaporation, but would be marked by some sign so that people could locate them. Hagar fills the skin-bottle and gives the languishing Ishmael the water which means the difference between death and life.

"And God was with the lad; and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer. And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran: and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt" (21:20,21). The statement that "God was with the lad" implies that God through His providence was fulfilling the promises made to Abraham and to Hagar concerning the future of Ishmael. The statement does not imply anything concerning covenant blessings or spiritual privileges. The wilderness of Paran was located in the northeastern part of the Sinai Peninsula, southwest of Kadesh-barnea.

The fact that Hagar took a wife from Egypt for Ishmael indicates the spiritual difference between Hagar and Ishmael on the one hand and Abraham, Sarah and Isaac on the other. It is not surprising, of course, that Hagar took an Egyptian wife for Ishmael, seeing she was an Egyptian herself. Yet this Egyptian wife would not be a believer in the true God, and therefore would increase the separation between Ishmael and the covenant posterity of Abraham.

Some seventy-five years later we see Ishmael again (25:8,9) as he joins Isaac in the task of burying Abraham in the cave of Machpelah. In 25:17 we are informed that Ishmael lived to the age of 137 years.

#### Questions:

1. What may be said in answer to the question why Abraham sent Hagar and Ishmael away with so little provision for their needs?
2. What was the probable reason why Hagar lost her way in the wilderness?
3. Why would Hagar cast Ishmael under one of the shrubs?
4. Why was it natural that Ishmael would weaken before Hagar?
5. What reassuring message came to Hagar from heaven?
6. What was she commanded to do?
7. What promise concerning Ishmael is repeated to Hagar on this occasion?
8. How was Hagar enabled to find a supply of water?
9. Where was the wilderness of Paran located?
10. What was Ishmael's occupation as he grew to manhood?

1. From what country did Hagar obtain a wife for Ishmael? What does this indicate concerning her religious attitude?

12. On what occasion did Ishmael and Isaac meet many years later?

(To be continued)

## **Blue Banner Question Box**

Readers are invited to submit Biblical, doctrinal and practical questions for answer in this department. Names will not be published with questions, but anonymous communications will be disregarded.

**Question:**

Is the Rev. Billy Graham a Calvinist?

**Answer:**

A 16-page pocket size booklet by the Rev. Billy Graham, entitled "Partners with God," contains much Bible truth, but at the same time has a definitely Arminian viewpoint and emphasis. It teaches the Arminian doctrine of universal atonement, and also teaches that the sovereignty of God is limited by the free will of man. Mr. Graham says: "Legally you belong to God! He created you and redeemed you, but He cannot possess you until you consent to His divine ownership. . . . Spiritually, His work cannot be accomplished without man either." This is clearly and definitely Arminian theology and is contrary to the Reformed Faith which we believe is revealed in God's Word.

We do not believe that the verb "cannot" is proper to use when God is the subject of the sentence. According to the Bible, the only thing that God cannot do is to deny Himself. The free will of man is not parallel to the sovereignty of God; man's free will is subordinate to the sovereignty of God, and God is able to renew and change man's will. It is incorrect to regard God as impotent and waiting until the all-important decision is made by man. Man's decision is itself the product of a prior work of God in the human heart.

Arminian theology holds that the purpose of God can be permanently frustrated by the will of man. The Reformed Faith teaches, on the contrary, that the purpose of God shall certainly be accomplished. Arminian theology teaches that Christ has redeemed all mankind by His death on the cross, but this redemption is ineffective except where man's free will makes a decision to "accept Christ." The Reformed Faith teaches, on the contrary, that Christ has redeemed only the elect, and that this redemption is effective without fail because it includes the purchase of the Holy Spirit's almighty operation to change the heart and produce repentance and faith in each elect person. In the April-June 1956 issue of Blue Banner Faith and Life we hope, D.V., to publish an article on the subject of "The Reformed Faith and Arminianism," by the Rev. Joseph A. Hill.

The Rev. Billy Graham has been called "a

moderate Calvinist." The booklet we have cited seems to indicate that he holds the Arminian theology, perhaps without clearly realizing just what the issue really is. While we rejoice in whatever good has been accomplished by Mr. Graham's work, still we cannot approve of what we believe to be unsound doctrine.

Those who are interested in a thorough and carefully documented examination of the theology of the Rev. Billy Graham are referred to the August and September 1955 issues of "The Contender," edited by the Rev. Malcolm R. Mackay, and published by Mrs. A. E. Fraser, 53 Robertson St., New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, Canada. Price of each issue is 10 cents.

—J. G. Vos

**Question:**

In Lesson No. 78 of "Studies in the Book of Genesis" (Blue Banner Faith and Life, July-September 1955, page 141) you say: "Leupold suggests that Hagar herself may have been a true believer and have piously wished to help in fulfilling the divine promise to Abraham. This is possible, of course, yet it cannot be shown to be true," etc.

How can this even be possible, when viewed in the light of Galatians 4:22 ff., and especially verses 24 and 25?

**Answer:**

The passage in Galatians 4:22-25 reads as follows: "For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a free woman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the free woman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children."

We were of course not dogmatically endorsing Leupold's suggestion as truth, but only mentioning it as a possible interpretation. While not inclined to accept the idea as fact, still we think it worthy of further investigation.

The apostle Paul in Galatians 4 by inspiration of the Holy Spirit draws an allegorical meaning

from the history of Hagar and Ishmael. It would seem that the allegorical lesson set forth by Paul, and the literal meaning of the historical facts themselves, should be carefully distinguished. In the allegory as presented by Paul, Hagar, being a bondwoman, is regarded as representing Mount Sinai in Arabia, "which gendereth to bondage," and thus as representing the legalistic Judaism of Paul's day. We should note that it was not Hagar's lack of saving faith, nor her legalistic theology, that renders her suitable material for an allegorical representation of legalistic Judaism, but the fact that she was a **bondwoman**. In other words, Paul bases the allegorical lesson, not on Hagar's personal type of religion, nor on her notions of the way of salvation, nor on anything in her subjective personality, but simply on the objective fact of her status as a slave or bondwoman. The literal status of a bondwoman makes Hagar suitable for an allegorical representation of the spiritual bondage of Jewish legalism. But the literal status of a bondwoman was not in itself contrary to personal saving faith and inheritance of eternal salvation. We are not asserting that Hagar had saving faith nor that she was eternally saved, but merely that her status as a slave woman, on which Paul bases the allegory, does not rule out the possibility of her having personal faith and salvation.

There is also another distinction which we believe ought to be observed in the study of questions of this kind, namely, the distinction between (1) being an heir of the promise in the sense of being a link in the chain of descent between Abraham and Christ, the Messiah; and (2) participating personally in the gracious, spiritual benefits which were bestowed on individuals in the Old Testament because they would, in the fulness of time, be purchased by the work of the Messiah. Of all Abraham's household and offspring, Isaac alone was heir of the promise in the first sense; that is, Isaac alone was a link in the direct line of descent from Abraham to Christ. But all male members of Abraham's establishment, including the servants, and specifically including Ishmael, received the ordinance of circumcision, which was certainly the sign and seal of participating in the benefits of the Messiah's work. The reader is referred to the discussion of the circumcision of Ishmael in Lesson 85 on the Book of Genesis, in this issue of *Blue Banner Faith and Life*, and also to the fuller discussion of why Ishmael was circumcised in the October-December 1954 issue (p. 174).

The question may be broadened: of all the household and offspring of Abraham, was only Isaac saved? Were the sons of Abraham by Keturah (Gen. 25) necessarily all reprobates and devoid of saving faith? Of the more than 300 people (Gen. 14:14 with 17:23-27) who received circumcision—the sign and seal of the covenant of grace—all at one time, how many (then or

later) possessed personal faith in the gracious promise of God, and were ultimately saved? We do not believe that any positive statements can properly be made in answer to this question; but as circumcision was assuredly the sign and seal of the covenant of grace, we must regard it as at least **possible** that those who received the outward sign, possessed (then or later) the inward spiritual grace which it signified.

In conclusion; we regard it as improbable that Hagar and Ishmael had true saving faith. But, on the other hand, we do not believe we are warranted in asserting positively that they did not have it, or that they could not have had such faith. The question is admittedly a most difficult one, and we do not believe that Scripture provides data for a conclusive answer to it.

—J. G. Vos

**Question:**

Who wrote chapters 40 to 66 of the Book of Isaiah?

**Answer:**

This question was occasioned by a recent Sabbath School lesson taken from a chapter near the end of the Book of Isaiah. Modern negative critics of the Old Testament hold that only the first 39 chapters of Isaiah were written by Isaiah himself. It is held that chapters 40-66 were written more than 100 years after the time of Isaiah by an unknown prophet during the Babylonian Captivity of the Jews. Some critics have held that chapters 40-66 were written by two or even more unknown writers. Thus some critics spoke of a "Second Isaiah" and some spoke of a "Second Isaiah" and a "Third Isaiah".

It should be realized that critics who deny Isaiah wrote the entire book are naturalistic in their theology and tend to regard the Bible as a mere human book. The arguments commonly advanced as reasons for denying that Isaiah wrote the entire book are summarized by Professor Edward J. Young (*An Introduction to the Old Testament*, Eerdmans 1953, page 206) as follows: "The name of Isaiah is not mentioned in these chapters (chaps. 40-66); these chapters do not suit the time of Isaiah, and they are written in a different style of Hebrew from the genuine prophecies of Isaiah." These arguments are ably answered by Dr. Young. The New Testament time and again quotes from chapters 40-66 of the Book of Isaiah and specifically names Isaiah as the author. The New Testament passages which quote from the Book of Isaiah and specifically name Isaiah as the author are listed on page 203 of Dr. Young's book cited above. Those which quote from chapters 40-66 of Isaiah are as follows: Matt. 3:3; 8:17; 12:17; Mark 12; Luke 3:4; John 1:23; 12:38,39,41; Acts 8:28,30,32; Rom. 10:16,20.

In view of this clear, definite testimony of the

New Testament, to deny that Isaiah wrote the entire book of Isaiah is to deny the infallibility of the New Testament, and to attribute to the Lord Jesus Christ either (a) ignorance as to the real facts about the Book of Isaiah; or (b) dealing in untruth by "accommodation" to the prevalent ideas of His day. To this kind of charge, the critics usually reply that Jesus, Paul, etc., were merely citing a Scripture reference and not implying anything as to the actual authorship of the book in question. This reply does not impress us as valid. We do not believe that the critics who deny that Isaiah wrote the entire book bearing his name, can be cleared of regarding Jesus Christ as either ignorant or dishonest.

Those interested in a further study of this matter are referred to the following books:

**An Introduction to the Old Testament**, by Edward J. Young, pp. 199-207.

**The New Bible Handbook**, edited by G. T. Manley (Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship), pp. 211-213.

**The Unity of Isaiah**, by Oswald T. Allis

**Studies in Isaiah**, by Edward J. Young

We have seen some books and articles which claim that the question of who wrote the last 27 chapters of Isaiah is a purely academic or technical question, without any religious or doctrinal significance. What does it matter (they ask) who wrote these chapters? After all, we have them in our Bible and can get the benefit of them no matter whether they were written by Isaiah or by someone else. To this type of statement we would reply that it matters a great deal who wrote them. It is not as if Isaiah were an anonymous book like Job or Hebrews. It is a book which claims to be by Isaiah and which the New Testament—and the Lord Jesus Christ—attributes definitely and repeatedly to Isaiah. Under these circumstances, to deny that Isaiah was the author of the book as a whole is a rejection of the truthfulness of the New Testament and of Jesus Christ as a Teacher of infallible truth.

—J. G. Vos

## Reviews of Religious Books

The favorable reviewing of a book here is not to be understood as necessarily implying an endorsement of everything contained in it. Within the limits of the editorial policy of Blue Banner Faith and Life each reviewer is solely responsible for the opinions expressed in his reviews. Please purchase books from your book dealer or direct from the publishers; do not send orders to the manager of this magazine.

**GENERAL REVELATION**, by G. C. Berkouwer. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1955, pp. 336. \$4.00.

This is one of nineteen studies in dogmatics by the Professor of Systematic Theology in the Free University of Amsterdam. This theological project may be regarded as the contemporary Reformed answer to Karl Barth's **Church Dogmatics**.

The subject of general revelation has been brought up for a new discussion in recent times by Barth, who rejects the idea of a general revelation because in his opinion it denies the unique, exclusive and "once-for-all" character of God's revelation in Jesus Christ. According to Barth, God is revealed only in Jesus Christ. Revelation is therefore Christomonistic (Christ only), there being no revelation of God in His works. Dr. Berkouwer points out the basic error in Barth's thinking concerning general revelation: Barth identifies the objective knowability of God with the subjective knowledge of God. He assumes that general revelation must lead to natural theology because he fails to take account of human sin and the deafness and blindness resulting from it, which disables man for receiving God's general revelation.

Over against this Barthian rejection of general revelation, Emil Brunner and Paul Althaus have defended general revelation. But Dr. Berkouwer warns that "we must not rejoice too quickly when general revelation is stressed over against those who have rejected it" (pp. 50, 51). For in Brunner and Althaus general revelation is bound up with natural theology, "the knowledge of God which belongs to human nature as such" (Brunner), a God-consciousness in man's immediate experience" (Althaus).

Next, Dr. Berkouwer evaluates the natural theology of Rome, which he defines as "a natural knowledge (of God) or theology derived from the created things by means of reason" (p. 64). His criticism of Roman Catholic natural theology is that (1) it is based on an unscriptural view of man "which lifts the so-called rational soul out of the sin-depraved life of man, and then by way of this non-corrupt reason considers man capable of a true knowledge of God" (p. 67), and (2) it leads to an "empty, abstract, and formal God-concept" which is isolated from the covenant God revealed in Scripture (p. 71ff).

Following this the author devotes an entire

chapter to the question whether Christ alone reveals God in an absolutely exclusive sense (as Barth holds). He points out that "Christ only" applies to salvation but not to revelation. The pivotal point in this discussion is that we have no right simply to conclude from the exclusive salvation in Christ to the exclusive revelation in Christ (p. 93). Dr. Berkouwer says that we cannot limit God's revelation to the incarnation because on the basis of Christ's birth, death and resurrection our eyes must be opened toward **the whole of God's deeds of revelation.**

In a chapter on "Revelation and Knowledge", the author discusses general revelation in relation to heathen religions. This is especially significant today when it is commonly taken for granted that Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, etc., are all roads leading to God alongside of Christianity. This is the viewpoint of the recent articles on the religions of the world in *Life*. General revelation is supposed to be the common basis of all the various forms of religion. The author states that such is not the case at all, but that every heathen religion is a **reactive** to divine revelation, and that the common point of departure for all false religion is man's corrupted natural knowledge of God (p. 166).

The chapter on "Revelation and Fulfillment of the Law" deals with the "natural morality" referred to in Romans 2:14, where it is stated that the Gentiles "do by nature the things contained in the law" even though they do not have the Law of God through special revelation. In this connection there is a lengthy discussion of the question of natural law — whether there is a general law-consciousness among men, such as a universal idea of right and justice. The author points out that the concept of natural law, which underlies the modern struggle to preserve human rights and freedoms, is far too optimistic in its outlook concerning man's destiny in this world.

Two other chapters deal with the relation of revelation to illumination, and of universal (general) revelation to particular (special) revelation. Of particular interest to Psalm-singing churches is a chapter dealing with the "nature Psalms" (Psalms 8, 19, 65, 104, etc.). These have nothing to do with any form of "nature religion", in which God is identified with nature (pantheism). Never are these Psalms sung for the glorification of nature, but only to the glory of God the Creator. The Lord's people can sing with understanding of the power and majesty, the wisdom and glory of God, because they have experienced his saving love and grace and mercy.

No pastor or seminary student can afford to neglect Dr. Berkouwer's important contribution to the theology of our times.

— Joseph A. Hill

**CHRISTIAN FAITH TO-DAY**, by Stephen Neill. Penguin Books, Ltr., 3300 Clipper Mill Road, Baltimore 11, Md. 1955, pp. 272, paper cover. 65 cents; postpaid 70 cents.

Stephen Neill was educated at Cambridge University and for twenty years served as an Anglican missionary in India. He taught theology at Cambridge from 1944 to 1947 and has been active in the ecumenical movement of the World Council of Churches. He is now giving his time entirely to the production of a series of popular books on numerous Christian subjects.

Although unsound at several points, this book is a stimulating study of Christianity that is worthy of the student's time and thought. The author's thesis is that "the faith of Jesus Christ is a faith for reasonable men" (p. 7), and his book is an attempt to make Christianity reasonable, in the sense of being worthy of acceptance by serious-minded men.

The main issues discussed are as follows: 1. Christianity as an historical phenomenon, rather than a mere set of ideals. 2. General or universal revelation and prophetic "insight". 3. The place of Jesus in the Christian religion. 4. The problem of sin in the human race. 5. Reconciliation through the substitutionary atonement of Christ, acting "representatively on behalf of the whole human race." 6. The visible Church, with emphasis on the societal nature of the Church. 7. The prospects of Christianity as a world religion. 8. The relation of time and eternity in the life of the Church today.

There are no platitudes in this book. Every chapter is packed with invigorating insights and new slants on old truths. The author is most versatile, drawing illustrations from the Greek classics, the Patristic writings (the early Church fathers), the English literary classics and numerous other sources. At no point can the reader feel that the Christian faith is something remote from real life.

There are several weaknesses which must be mentioned. First, the author holds an unsound view of revelation. For him there is no clear distinction between general and special revelation. Special revelation is not an immediate **given** (supernatural), but only a special **insight** (natural), according to the author. The characteristic of the Old Testament prophet, he says, is insight. "He sees further into the nature of things than ordinary men" (p. 57). Special revelation means merely particular revelation, that is, given to the Hebrews in a special measure and in special clearness. This leads him to the observation that the expression, "The Lord said unto Samuel" merely means "Samuel thought" (p. 72). Thus he rejects the supernatural character of the Biblical revelation. Revelation is the "special" legacy of

the Hebrews in the same sense in which jurisprudence was the legacy of the Romans and oratory and sculpture were the gifts of the Greek culture to the human race. This view of special or particular revelation does not have a place for the Biblical idea of inspiration, which is so essential to Christianity.

The author takes for granted the dual authorship of the Book of Isaiah (pp. 63, 70, 78) and regards the early chapters of Genesis as religiously true but historically false; the account of the Fall in Genesis 3, for example, is a setting forth of religious truth in story form. It does not explain the origin of evil in the world, but offers "a quite extraordinarily penetrating analysis of the whole process of wrongdoing and of its consequences" (p. 132). The author acknowledges his indebtedness to Reinhold Niebuhr for this view of the early chapters of Genesis as "myth".

His denial of the historical character of the Fall of man in Adam leads him to a Semi-Pelagian view of original sin. His statement that "in Adam all die" (p. 133) is of course only a poetical symbol meaning "In Adam nobody dies." What happened to Adam "is happening every day among men. Every man is to some extent his own Adam and his own Eve" (p. 133). The author conceives of original sin (he does not like the term) only as inherited pollution, and fails to take account of imputed guilt. Mankind is not only corrupt but guilty; he has received Adam's nature by inheritance, and Adam's guilt by imputation. Neill would take exception to this last statement.

Although the author clearly accepts the historic view of the person of Christ (two natures in one person, the Word became flesh, etc.) he confuses the issue by expounding the meaning of the Incarnation in terms of the dialectical crisis theology. He speaks of Christ as the "link between time and eternity" (p. 250), and makes use of Paul Tillich's idea that "Jesus of Nazareth was the concrete which was also of universal significance" (p. 252). Such terminology is shrouded in vagueness and weakens Neill's testimony to Jesus Christ.

This book is meant for intelligent laymen and students, and by bypassing the above unsound views, any reader will be amply rewarded.

— Joseph A. Hill

THE PERSON OF CHRIST, by G. C. Berkouwer. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1954, pp. 368. \$4.00.

This is the fourth volume to be translated of Berkouwer's (Professor of Systematic Theology, Free University, Amsterdam) contemplated nineteen-volume series on the great Christian doctrines. Recalling that Abraham Kuyper early in his life found Modernism "bewitchingly beautiful," the author seeks to expose the seductive poison

of humanist theology at its source. Kuyper found his way back to the saving faith by observing that the Christology of Modernism does violence to the Saviour revealed in the Scriptures. This volume, then, is a key to all the rest. "Here we feel, more than anywhere else, that theology is not practised in a corner apart from the faith of the church, from the religion of faith, prayer and adoration."

Berkouwer believes and demonstrates that the careful and precise statement concerning this subject is no quibbling over theological niceties far removed from a practical Christian life and witness. He finds these deep truths concerning the two natures of Christ a constant and persuasive call to a holy life, and to a humble and obedient walk. ". . . in scientific analysis Christ cannot be made the 'object' of a neutral interest. The pre-commitment of faith or unfaith has always determined the Christological conflict. And this pre-commitment brings about also that in Christology there will be implicitly audible a Christian admonition, even when theological discussion does not change into preaching" (p. 11).

Unless the reader has in mind the meaning of such terms as Nestorianism, Docetism, monophysitism and such, it would pay to refresh one's memory, for these standardized terms are used constantly. The discussion accepts Chalcedon's "very God and very man," tracing the defense made both of the Deity and of the humanity of Christ. The heresies that threatened these truths, he shows, arose out of an attempt to explain the mystery of the Incarnation. As to the way in which the Church has defended these truths of the Gospel, here is a thought found often repeated: "The solution consists in its submission to the Holy Scriptures. . . ." (p. 196). The author shows how various heresies, such as the kenosis theory, impose their own schemes on the Scriptures, citing finally the "crisis" theology. With regard to Brunner's rejection of the virgin birth, for instance, he says, "Here system rules and assumes a critical function even toward text-critically inviolable passages" (p. 348.)

We are reminded also that the answer popularly given to problems of the Incarnation, namely, that it is a "mystery" and therefore we must not expect to know it, is sinful in that the riches of the revelation God has given us of His Son and of the redemption He accomplished, are despised. This popular attitude, none the less, has powerful intellectual leadership in the crisis or neo-orthodox school. Berkouwer gives thorough treatment to this idea in his final chapter under the heading "Christ Incognito?" which is a term much insisted on by Brunner.

It is true that Berkouwer cites several modern European authors and deals with their contribution to this question, whose names and work are

virtually unknown to American readers. For instance, "Korff" is listed in the index more times than any other author — John Calvin comes second. But this does not make even those parts of the book without value.

It would be of real benefit if not only pastors, whose preaching might be greatly strengthened, but also elders and Sabbath School teachers would take hold of this book. It would be a great aid in wrestling with the problem of making Christ known to men.

— Lester E. Kilpatrick

**LECTURES ON HEBREWS**, by Joseph A. Seiss. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1954, pp. 408. \$3.40.

This is one of the books included in the Cooperative Reprint Library of the Baker Book House, and so is reduced from the regular price of \$4.25. Mr. Seiss wrote over a century ago, and has a style characteristic of that time. But his comments upon the book of Hebrews are valuable, and the style is not distracting. Here is a sample, taken from the last chapter:

"I will now make a few admonitory remarks, suggested by this epistle, which will bring this series of discourses to a close. 1st. Be careful not to neglect the study of the Old Testament, when you study the New. . . . 2nd. Endeavor to magnify the character and office of our blessed Redeemer. . . . 3rd. Beware of unbelief and apostasy. . . . 4th. Finally, ever cherish a lively gratitude to God for the magnificent manner in which he caused the Gospel to be prefigured, and a still livelier and higher gratitude to him for that sublime system of which the Jewish, in all its splendor, was but a shadow."

This indicates the premise of the book, the object of its preparation, and the emphasis given by the lectures. These are a good example of expository preaching, and were first given as lectures to his congregation, then printed by request of those who heard them. The 13 chapters of Hebrews are covered in 36 lectures, each an exposition of several verses of text. They are not isolated, but each passage is shown to have a relation to the rest of the book. The outlining is splendid.

The approach of the author is devotional, rather than exegetical. For instance, it is taken for granted that Paul wrote Hebrews, without any mention of the possibility of a different author. Each lecture closes, as it was originally delivered, with an appeal to believe, or obey. There is not only learning here, but a warmth of heart and a desire that the apostle's message will take effect.

The theology in general is evangelical. His appeal is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. Seiss identifies the Sabbath rest men-

tioned in 4:1-11 with the millennium, as the last of seven periods of the world's history. The laying on of hands mentioned in 6:2 he feels supports the ordinance of confirmation. And his interpretation of 9:24 is unusual. That lecture he calls "The Atonement of Christ," and defines atonement as "The official presentation of the blood of Jesus Christ at the throne of God by our great high priest in heaven." This he distinguishes from the suffering upon the cross, as a continuing program. The Hebrew priest, he says, after the sacrifice was slain, had a special rite of presenting the blood for atonement. Seiss believes in a general atonement: that Christ died for everyone; but that His blood is presented only for those who accept it. On page 267 he says, "His death, though it was undergone that we might have everlasting life, will not save us unless the blood which he shed is presented at our instance." Then he repeats in italics, "I say at our instance" He there emphasizes his dissociation with Calvinism.

He speaks in one place where the Scriptures are silent. He asserts, "That children, and all children are saved, is not to be doubted." This is a less judicious conclusion than the statement of the Larger Catechism, ". . . infants descended from parents, either both or but one of them professing in Christ, and obedience to him, are, in that respect, within the covenant, and to be baptized."

One lecture is on 12:1-4, "The Christian Race." There is some significance in the fact that though usually each phrase is given consideration, he does not comment on "Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" except to show that Jesus is an example of what our faith should be like. We may wish he had given more attention to the words "Author and finisher."

— T. R. Hutcheson

**A NEW CRITIQUE OF THEORETICAL THOUGHT**, Vol. I, The Necessary Presuppositions of Philosophy, by Herman Dooyeweerd, translated by D. H. Freeman and William S. Young. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Nutley, N.J. 1953, pp. 566. Sold in sets only. \$36.00 per set of four volumes.

Somewhere I heard Bernard Baruch quoted as saying that Reason is his god, being the dominant force in the universe. This is what philosophers have been saying since the time of Parmenides (5th century B.C.), who regarded reason as the ultimate judge of truth. Traditional philosophy from the time of the Greeks down to the present day has assumed the autonomy of theoretical thought, i.e., the ultimate self-sufficiency of human reason. This amounts to a deification of one aspect of the created cosmos. It is against this form of idolatry that this four volume work is directed.

The first volume, entitled **The Necessary Pre-suppositions of Philosophy**, lays the groundwork for the development, in Vols. II-IV of a radically new philosophy known as the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea. This is a truly Christian philosophy built upon its own foundational basic Idea (that God, the sovereign Creator, has placed his creation in a **cosmic law order**), and separate from the structure of traditional philosophy with its supposed autonomy of theoretical thought.

The main argument of the first volume is that no synthesis of Christian philosophy with traditional philosophy is possible, since each has its starting place in a radically different ground-motive. The author begins by laying down a fundamental principle: that every philosophy is based on a prescientific assumption concerning the origin and fulfillment of meaning of reality. This starting place or a **priori** Dooyeweerd calls a transcendental basic Idea. Just as Archimedes the Greek physicist (c. 250 B.C.) said that he could move the world if he had a place to stand outside **the world**, so the philosopher assumes a fixed point which transcends the temporal diversity of the world, from which he is able to view the diversity as a cosmos, i.e., an ordered totality of meaning. Dooyeweerd calls this starting point of philosophy the Archimedean point.

Traditional philosophy finds this ultimate point of reference within philosophic thought itself, that is, within the cosmos. It speaks of a "transcendental-logical subject of thought." But the logical aspect is not really transcendental, but immanent, since it is itself a part of the modal diversity of meaning of the cosmos. This gives rise to a basic antinomy or contradiction in immanence philosophy at the outset.

It is Dooyeweerd's contention that philosophy does not really begin in self-sufficient scientific thought, but in a prescientific assumption which proceeds from the religious depths of the thinker. Only in man's heart is there a point which transcends the diversity of the cosmos. Out of the heart are the issues of life. In our heart, where our relationship to God is determined, we give answers to the ultimate questions concerning God and the cosmos. But the heart of man is never neutral. It loves God or else it is hostile to him. It is either renewed or apostate. This fact gives rise to two different kinds of philosophy, Christian philosophy that is grounded in an acknowledgment of God and the authority of his revealed Word, and non-Christian philosophy that rejects God's Word and deifies scientific thought, which is a part or aspect of the diversity of the cosmos. The apostate heart tries to find rest in a created aspect which it deifies. It should be noted, however, that non-Christian philosophy refuses to acknowledge its religious starting place. Dooyeweerd points out that by this refusal non-Christian philosophy reveals its uncritical character even though it may

take pride in being critical. Non-Christian philosophy is uncritical because it does not give an account of its prescientific assumptions. Dooyeweerd's critique of theoretical thought is directed against this type of dogmatism.

The major part of this first volume is taken up with a critical evaluation of the Humanist philosophy, as this has found expression in the systems of Descartes, Hobbes, Leibnitz, Locke, Hume, Kant, Fichte and others. Dooyeweerd's contention is that all these systems, however they may differ in structure, have one thing in common: they all have their starting point in the basic ground-motive of nature and freedom. This dualistic motive comes to expression in a conflict between two humanistic ideals, the ideal of science and that of personality. To explain: Philosophy has a goal or ideal for which it strives. Since it is religiously determined (either for or against God) it follows one of two courses which correspond to the two states of the human heart. It is renewed by Christ and leads to God, or else it remains apostate and leads away from God. Both Christian and non-Christian philosophy have a goal. The former moves toward God and seeks its ideal in him; the latter moves away from God and finds its ideal within the created cosmos. Because of its starting point, immanence-philosophy rejects God and Christ, and seeks the honor of sovereign man. Dooyeweerd calls this attitude of humanistic thought **the ideal of personality**. Originally modern philosophy tried to achieve the sovereignty of man by following an **ideal of science** (Descartes, Hobbes, etc.). It was believed that man could rule the world of nature by an all-powerful science until the deification of science resulted in man's degradation and he became an insignificant atom in a great universe. And since this was intolerable to man, he sought to limit science to the phenomenal (visible) world of nature and let man rule supreme in the realm of moral freedom (Kant). Thus there is a continual conflict between these two irreconcilable opposites struggling for supremacy, the ideal of science and the ideal of personality. This conflict can never be resolved in immanence philosophy, because the human heart is restless until it finds rest in God.

This same conflict is carried over into contemporary theology where nature and freedom are held in a dialectical tension, and a sharp distinction is made between the objective realm of science and the existential realm of religious truth. One significant contribution of Dooyeweerd's critique is its exposure of the basic error of dialectical thinking, namely, its false absolutization of one aspect of the cosmos, or the deification of human reason. Another significant contribution of the Philosophy of the Idea of Law is its emphasis on the sovereignty of Christ over all spheres of life, including science. It rejects the possibility of a Kingdom of God built by sovereign man by

means of apostate science, and opens up the way for a Reformed science grounded in biblical truth and devoted to the service of the sovereign God.

Obviously this difficult work is intended for advanced students of philosophy. For a simple approach to the study of the Philosophy of the Idea of Law, the reader is referred to **An Introduction to Christian Philosophy**, by J. M. Spier (same publisher). One final thing should be made clear: philosophy is not just a hobby for a few high-brow scholars, but it concerns the common man as well, most of all the Christian common man. Science is not elevated above the masses. And no Christian can afford to assume a so-what attitude toward philosophy, any more than he is justified in pooh-pooing scientific thought in the field of atomic energy. Ordinary Christians are concerned with science because science is from God and when renewed and redeemed, science serves God and glorifies him. Christ is sovereign, not only over the Church, but over all things. Christ is sovereign in science. But if we are not interested in Christian philosophy which points beyond itself to God the Origin of all things, then we will abandon science to the enemies of God who will employ it to advance the sovereignty of man.

—Joseph A. Hill

**THE BOOK OF THE ACTS**, by F. F. Bruce. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1954, pp. 555. \$6.00.

This commentary is one of the volumes in **The New International Commentary on the New Testament** of which Dr. Ned B. Stonehouse is the general editor. The author is head of the Department of Biblical History and Literature in the University of Sheffield.

Surely with the publication of this volume Professor Bruce has established himself as a notable student of primitive Christianity. For previous to this he has had published a **Commentary on the Greek Text of Acts** and an excellent trilogy on the rise and progress of Christianity (**The Dawn of Christianity**, **The Growing Day and Light in the West**) published last year by Eerdmans in one volume entitled **The Spreading Flame** — these in addition to his earlier writings: **Are the New Testament Documents Reliable?**, **The Speeches in the Acts of the Apostles** and **The Books and the Parchments**.

Bruce's previous commentary on the Greek text of Acts is, by his own description, "devoted to the critical study of the linguistic, textual and historical aspects of Acts." The present volume is of a more popular nature, being an exposition of the English text. It is a commentary which any Bible student without a knowledge of Greek will find very lucid and instructive. The text used is that of the American Standard Version of 1901,

which is printed and expounded paragraph by paragraph. In addition, extensive footnotes of a more technical nature give much added light.

Professor Bruce's exposition is founded upon scholarly exegesis. His attitude toward the Bible is the Reformed view, which regards the Scriptures as "the word of God and the only infallible rule of faith and life." He is, therefore, a trustworthy expositor.

The thrilling account of the rapid spread of Christianity is vividly traced by Bruce. He points out as others have done that Christ's commission to His followers recorded in Acts 1:8, "Ye shall be my witnesses," may be regarded as the theme of the book. He calls special attention to the form of the New Testament "kerygma," or primitive apostolic preaching, as it is continually encountered throughout the Acts. It included, says Bruce, "(1) the announcement that the age of fulfilment has arrived; (2) a rehearsal of the ministry, death and triumph of Jesus; (3) citation of Old Testament Scriptures whose fulfilment in these events proves Jesus to be the Messiah; (4) a call to repentance." And Luke's history ends, he points out, on this triumphant note: "The kingdom of God and the story of Jesus are openly proclaimed and taught in Rome itself under the complacent eye of imperial authority" (p. 535). And Bruce's commentary ends with this quotation from J. A. Bengel: "The victory of the word of God: Paul at Rome, the culmination of the Gospel, the conclusion of Acts. . . . It began at Jerusalem; it finishes at Rome. Here, O church, thou hast thy pattern; it is thy duty to keep it, and to guard thy deposit" (pp. 535-6). Surely all who are concerned for the victory of the Church would do well to make use of such helps as Bruce's commentary in studying and re-studying the Acts of the Apostles that the pattern might be followed.

—Willard G. McMillan

**OBEYING GOD'S WORD** by A. M. Stibbs. Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 39 Bedford Square, London, W.C. 1, England. Pp. 79, paper cover. 2s. 6d. Obtainable in U.S.A. from Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, 1444 N. Astor St., Chicago 10, Ill.; in Canada: Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, 30 St. Mary St., Toronto 5, Ont.

This booklet is an appropriate companion to **Understanding God's Word** by the same author and publishers, produced some two years ago and reviewed in this magazine (July-September 1953, p. 150).

The Bible, says Professor Stibbs in the preface, is "a divinely provided handbook for the use of His people, (and) it is intended by God to promote knowledge of Him, understanding of His ways, enjoyment of His grace and salvation, and active cooperation in the doing of His will." For man "life is to be found only in conscious depend-

ence on God and sustained devotion to God" (p. 9). The true way to enjoy life is therefore to trust and obey. We must be doers of the Word and not believers only, is the appeal which falls upon the reader with all the force that clear, faithful exposition of the Scriptures can muster.

Subjects taken up are: The importance of Obedience; Temptation and Defeat (Gen. 3:1-6); Temptation and Victory (Matt. 4:1-4); True Discipleship; Perils in the Way; The Practice of Obedience; and The Ultimate Issues. The approach is through the exposition of the Scriptures. The reader is advised by a note in italics at the bottom of the preface page that for understanding and profit, the book is to be read alongside an open Bible. In this way the Scriptures themselves are made to urge obedience upon us.

We shall comment on the chapter entitled *Perils in the Way*, as it is typical of the author's method and ability. Two perils are mentioned, (1) Adding to the Word of God, and (2) Taking away from the Word of God. Quoting Deut. 4:12, the truth is set down that God revealed Himself "not in visible form, but in intelligible utterances" (pp. 44-5). It is therefore God's pleasure to make men aware of His presence in their midst and to call forth their worship and adoration through the preaching of the Word (see 1 Cor. 14:24,25). "We need to be ware, therefore, lest in our Christian congregations, out of a natural desire to help worship, we wrongly add what God has not ordained" (p. 45). This danger besets especially those fervent and active in the works of religious devotion. Tradition destroys the plain sense and wonderful gospel of divine grace, making it of none effect.

We heartily recommend this book as being true to the inspired Word, well fulfilling its purpose of leading men into active obedience to God. It would make an excellent guide for a study class.

— E. Clark Copeland

*THE WAGES OF SIN*, by Leon Morris. The Tyndale Press, 39 Bedford Square, London, W.C. 1, England. Pp. 30, paper cover. 1s. 6d. Obtainable in U.S.A. from Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, 1444 N. Astor St., Chicago 10, Ill.; in Canada: Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, 30 St. Mary St., Toronto 5, Ont.

This new addition to the Monograph series was the Tyndale Lecture for 1954, given by the vice-principal of Ridley College, Melbourne. The sub-title, "An Examination of the New Testament Teaching on Death," is a good summary of the contents.

This article is a systematic, concise presentation of the New Testament picture of Death's intrusion into God's world through sin, of its unnatural place in God's creation, and of the final swal-

lowing up of Death in victory. Dr. Morris points out that though Scripture has much to say about death, the majority of the passages in which death is mentioned are concerned primarily with life, the resurrection from death. "The Bible is interested in life rather than death, and death must be thought of not so much as having existence in its own right as being the negation of eternal life, the life which is proper to man (pp.22-3). "Death is not only an evil, it is a means of expiating sin" (p. 24). ". . . the New Testament . . . makes it clear that in His death Christ was waging decisive war with death. By death He overcame death, and those who are His are associated with Him in His death, so that what that death achieved, it achieved for them" (p. 25). "The important teaching of the New Testament is not that death is an evil, or that man cannot overcome it, but that death has been decisively defeated in the atoning death of the Saviour who 'abolished death, and brought life and incorruption to light through the Gospel' (2 Tim. 1:10). On this we rest our hope" (p. 30).

In a very fine work such as this it is disappointing to find the author seeking support from Paul Tillich, Reinhold Niebuhr, Karl Barth, Kierkegaard, Bultman and Brunner. Rather than add authority, they tend to cast doubts on the orthodoxy of the author who uses them. I must hasten to say that I do not detect any unorthodoxy in Dr. Morris' work, and it concerns one of the most vital of evangelical doctrines, the atonement. To speak authoritatively in the field one should know the position of these men and make reference to them, but it is regretted that they are quoted in the manner used in this work.

—E. Clark Copeland

*LIGHT ON THE WAY: NOTES ON SELECTED PASSAGES*, by H. M. Carson. Inter-Varsity Fellowship Press, 39 Bedford Square, London, W.C. 1, England. Pocket size, paper cover. 3d. Obtainable in U.S.A. from Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, 1444 N. Astor St., Chicago 10, Ill.; in Canada: Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, 30 St. Mary St., Toronto 5, Ont.

Designated for the new convert, this 28-day Bible reading aid gives selected New Testament passages with short, illuminating, thought-provoking notes, one or two questions aimed at application, a prayer suggestion connected with the passage read, an occasional verse to be memorized, and a passage from the Psalms for evening reading. Page 1 gives some helpful suggestions on how to read the Bible effectively.

The passages are selected to lead the reader to examine his own experience, and to recognize that his salvation was wrought by God upon the person and work of Christ as Redeemer and Giver of victory through His indwelling Spirit, to lead him to active obedience and turning from sin that he may bring forth fruit that will remain.

The value of this aid is its design to get the young Christian to read the Bible thoughtfully, to store its precepts on the tables of his heart, and to make vital connection between Bible reading and prayer. Very wisely it does not give a prayer, but makes suggestions which readily become a part of one's quiet time, such as, "Thank God for the great truth of verse 16" (of John chapter 3); "With verse 19 (of Romans 14) in mind pray about your attitude to your fellow Christians." It urges the user to follow it by a course of consecutive Bible reading.

This is Number One of a series of Bible reading and study helps published by the Inter-Varsity Fellowship. The second is **Holding the Faith**, covering Mark, the Acts, Philippians, Colossians and First Peter in consecutive reading with thought-provoking questions aimed at application to daily life. The price of **Holding the Faith** is one shilling six pence. Number Three of the series is **Search the Scriptures**, a three-year course of reading covering the whole Bible, with introductory notes and questions over the daily passages. Price 15 shillings. A companion to this study is **The New Bible Handbook**, a compilation of up-to-date information valuable as a background to Bible study. Price, 12 shillings six pence. Another source book is **The New Bible Commentary**, edited by Davidson, Stibbs and Kevan; price 35 shillings. (All of these works can be obtained in U.S.A. and Canada from the Inter-Varsity offices listed at the beginning of this review, except **The New Bible Commentary**, which is published in U.S.A. by the Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids 3, Michigan). The reviewer has all these books and finds them most helpful as reference works and for use with young Christians. They are all most heartily recommended.

— E. Clark Copeland

**THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE GOSPEL**, by F. Colquhoun. The Evangelical Alliance, 30 Bedford Place, London, W.C. 1, England, 1955, pp. 60, paper cover. 2 shillings (28 cents).

A question of primary importance to Evangelicals today is the question of the basis and bounds of Christian fellowship. The Council of the Evangelical Alliance asked the Rev. Frank Colquhoun to prepare this booklet to provide a Biblical study of the problems of Christian fellowship and cooperation. The author is vicar of Christ Church, Woburn Square, London; has been editorial secretary of **Evangelical Christendom**, the official organ of the Evangelical Alliance; and is one of the co-editors of **Crusade**, the new magazine of the Alliance first issued in June of this year, and replacing **Evangelical Christendom**. The Foreword is written by Lt. General Sir Arthur F. Smith, the Chairman of the Alliance.

Sir Arthur Smith quotes 1 John 1:7, "We have fellowship one with another, and the blood of

Jesus Christ . . . cleanseth us from all sin," and says, "This surely emphasizes that the basis of fellowship is the cross. It follows that whatever the shade of churchmanship and whatever the particular denominational allegiance, those who have a knowledge of personal salvation through the Cross of Jesus Christ should enjoy fellowship with one another in Him. This does not mean that co-operation in Christian work necessarily follows; but it certainly gives the words 'workers together with God' a wider meaning."

The author sees the problem as two-fold: to what extent ought Evangelicals to enjoy fellowship with professing Christians who do not share their evangelical insights in matters of faith and practice? and, How far is it the duty of Evangelicals to separate themselves from such so as not to compromise their own distinctive witness? He warns against the danger of manufacturing a false unity by going beyond the boundaries of truth. "There is a price too high to be paid for unity, and a price which must never be paid, namely compromise with error and unbelief. . . . There is no real possibility of spiritual unity and concord apart from a prior acknowledgment of the truth of the Word of God. The fellowship of the gospel must be built four-square upon the faith of the gospel" (p. 8). On the other hand a warning is sounded against an over-emphasis of the duty of separation, often accompanied by a proud, intolerant and pharisaical spirit. The only antidote to both these dangers is a "balanced outlook that takes into account all that the Word of God has to say on this subject" (p. 9). The main body of the work consists of an examination of the New Testament teaching on the subject of fellowship, then on the subject of separation, followed by a chapter on conclusions.

We very much appreciate the effort made to draw up a study of all the New Testament has to say on the subject and then apply it to the present-day situation. If such an approach had been made from the very beginning by all those interested in having fellowship, no doubt we would be much farther ahead. It has too often been approached from an organizational or loose credal basis, the result being that even among the parties joined in fellowship there was not complete satisfaction with the product.

This reviewer, however, does not find this work a satisfactory study of the subject. In the first place there is faulty analogy drawn. On page 11 and following, there is a warning against "protestant pharisaism in our dealing with those of our fellow-Christians who do not fall into line with our own ideas in matters of secondary, as distinct from matters of primary, importance" drawn from Christ's association with publicans and sinners. Christ's mingling with sinners to save them does not seem to have any analogy to fellowship among professing Christians. Nor is

there analogy between the unity of the Godhead, though it consists of distinct personalities, and the unity of the church though there be a variety of doctrine. The Godhead possesses one will; the lack of this very thing is the cause of separation in the visible body of Christ. The fourfold Gospel record is no justification for a multiple doctrinal interpretation of the Gospel. The one Holy Spirit inspiring the writers produced a fully harmonious record of the life of Christ. It cannot be said that the Holy Spirit has produced the doctrinal and practical differences existing among Evangelical Christians today.

In the second place, the reviewer believes that a faulty principle is set forth. It is suggested on page 12 and elsewhere that there are matters of primary and secondary importance. This is very similar to the all-too-common idea that there are essentials and non-essentials in Scripture. There can be matters of primary and of secondary importance only in the sense that the primary things are basic to the secondary; that the secondary are impossible without the primary; but once the primary have been realized, the secondary **must** follow (not **may follow if we like**). Whatever God reveals in His Word as His will for the life of His people is essential to the full development of the individual and of the Church. Paul insists that ALL Scripture is inspired and is profitable for the development of the perfect man (2 Tim. 3:16, 17).

There seems to be faulty exegesis of Phil. 2:1-4 where it is concluded that "love and love alone, is the key to Christian unity—in that spirit of true humility, compassion consideration, and unselfishness which reflects the mind 'which was also in Christ Jesus' " (p. 30). It is correct that the apostle is seeking to stir up the Church to imitate Christ's humility in self-sacrifice. But love and compassion for man was not the motivating cause. The passage rather shows that Christ humbled Himself, sacrificed His position in heaven, suffered on earth even unto death, because He desired to be obedient to His Father. Our love for our fellow men is likewise a by-product of our devotion to the will of God.

In the chapter on Separation it is stated that the New Testament emphasis is on separation from evil more than on separation from error; in support of this 1 Tim. 4:1-5, 2 Peter 2, and Jude 5-19 are cited. A careful study of these passages reveals that in each case it is pointed out that moral delinquency follows doctrinal error. Very often departure from sound doctrine is detected first in moral delinquency. But the Holy Spirit accurately reveals the order of operation.

We hasten to express appreciation of the author's stress throughout of the fact that " 'Christ Jesus Himself' is the corner-stone around which the unity of the church is built: not some particu-

lar doctrine of Scripture or some theory of inspiration; and it is only when we learn to put Christ at the centre — and at the same time to honour the Holy Spirit, whose mission it is to glorify the Son and unify the Church — that we shall achieve in actual life the wonderful harmony so strikingly portrayed here (in Eph. 2:19-22)" (p. 28). His insistence upon the recognition of the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures as the guide of faith and practice is gratifying. He also insists upon what is often overlooked in this matter of fellowship: that character and conduct must be in harmony with profession of faith and proclamation of doctrine.

As a first work in the field, this book will provide a helpful study guide and should help to provoke thoughtful examination of the subject.

— E. Clark Copeland

REVELATION TWENTY: AN EXPOSITION, by J. Marcellus Kik. The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., P.O. Box 185, Nutley, N. J. 1955, pp. 92. \$2.00.

This exposition of Revelation 20 was written, says the author in his preface, to answer the question, What is the Millennium? He says that he writes without feeling of responsibility to any school of prophecy, but with the sense of responsibility to interpret the Word of God correctly; and he hopes the reader will judge his work by the Word. There are few direct quotations from or references to other writers, but twenty-six authors are mentioned by name besides "a number of recent writers on prophecy" from whom the author acknowledges that he received help. Otherwise there is no bibliography and there are no footnotes.

Mr. Kik's interpretation is described by Dr. O. T. Allis as "Augustinian." It is commonly called Postmillennial, and may be summarized as follows: Christ (the angel) bound Satan by His cross, and through the preaching of the Gospel (the chain) Satan's power over individuals and nations will be completely destroyed, though we are warned that we are not to expect absolute righteousness in this world. The thousand year period during which Satan is bound so that he cannot deceive the nations, keeping them in darkness as he had previously been permitted to do, is the period from the first advent of Christ to His return; this is the duration of His Messianic Kingdom. The saints share the throne — the power and authority — of Christ through the declaration of the Gospel which dispels the darkness, frees believers from the authority of Satan, and directs and governs the Church. The extent and power of the Kingdom will increase gradually until it will involve the majority of men in every nation. Then Satan will be loosed for a short time so that again he can deceive the nations, and the Church will

suffer persecution from which she will be delivered by fire from heaven, when Christ returns. The dead, both the righteous and the wicked, will then be resurrected and judged; the devil and his angels and wicked men will be cast into hell where they will suffer eternal torment; those whose names are written in heaven are preserved for eternity with Christ.

Millennial promises, says the author, are promises of spiritual blessing and victory to be realized wholly and fully within this age of the Kingdom. The warning against the error that the binding of Satan means the complete cessation of his activity is supported by a fine exegesis. However we find it difficult to agree with the statement that it is an error to await the cataclysmic event of Christ's return to bring about the fulness of the promised blessings of the Kingdom. True, the return of Christ will not release men in the flesh from the powers of Satan which we now experience so that there can be absolute obedience to the will of God by men in the flesh. If, as Mr. Kik holds — and we believe he is correct — there is not to be absolute perfection in this life, and the promises of spiritual blessings are to be realized wholly and fully in this life, then these promises are to be only partially fulfilled. This cannot be. The author is driven to this conclusion by his rejection of the possibility that these promises may have a relative fulfilment in this life and an absolute fulfilment in the Kingdom of Glory.

There is a strong warning against the hope of a materialistic kingdom with literal, earthly thrones for Christ and His saints from which they will send forth armies of men wielding steel swords and rods of iron. We agree that the Holy Spirit interprets such terms as spiritual expressions of power of the Kingdom that far exceed the powers of such material things. Along with this error he rejects as a like error the interpretation of Revelation 21 which finds there the description of the Kingdom of Glory. This chapter, says Mr. Kik, is but a figurative description of the fulness of the powers of the Spirit realized in the Church in the Kingdom Age. To reject a future New Heaven and New Earth brought about by a change which Peter describes as a "melting with a fervent heat" as an unworthy material concept would seem to be an error similar to the rejection of the resurrection of the body. Surely the New Heaven and the New Earth is a mysterious new creation having some relation to this present heaven and earth, as the resurrected body has some relation to and identity with the material body which it once was. Rationalism must not be allowed to shape our ideas of the fulfilment of prophecy and the shape of the future kingdom.

The author seems to be on uncertain ground in finding the incarnation of the Beast in pagan Rome and of the False Prophet in ecclesiastical

Rome. There have been other "beasts" and other "false prophets" just as worthy of the identification. To find these enemies of Christ recurring from time to time would seem to be a more accurate interpretation of the vision.

The reviewer believes that Mr. Kik misinterprets Dr. G. Vos when he says that Dr. Vos identifies the first resurrection of verse 5 with the passage of the souls of the martyrs into heaven. Having chosen Dr. Vos as one of two spokesmen for amillennialism, Mr. Kik imputes this view to all amillennialists. It is true that some do hold this view, but not all. Dr. D. H. Elliott, for example in his book on Revelation holds the same view which Mr. Kik so ably exegetes here, namely, that the first resurrection is regeneration. To interpret Dr. Vos by his brief article on eschatology in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* alone hardly seems fair in view of the fact that he wrote at least two other complete books related to the subject (see statement in the Preface).

Though differing with Mr. Kik in the views mentioned above, I would hasten to express my gratitude to him for this fine work. The style is clear, direct, and appealing. The exegesis is straight-forward. The interpretation is spiritual; but we believe that it falls short in its failure to find in the return of Christ an essential cataclysmic act ushering in the era of complete perfection foretold in the Kingdom prophecies, even though the author himself finds this perfection impossible in this world. The work is recommended to every earnest reader of the Word as one containing much food for thoughtful meditation and inspiration.

—E. Clark Copeland

**THE FUTURE OF THE KINGDOM IN PROPHECY AND FULFILMENT**, by Martin J. Wyngaarden. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1955, pp. 211. \$3.50.

The sub-title, "A Study of the Scope of Spiritualization in Scripture," describes the particular approach of this work to the subject of the future of the Kingdom. By determining first how prophecy is to be interpreted, the author is in a position to know more accurately what the future of the Kingdom is to be. Dr. Wyngaarden, professor of Old Testament Interpretation at Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, presents in this volume the results of more than twenty-five years of study on this subject. Some of the chapters were previously published in various religious magazines or given as addresses. The book is a simple, straightforward, well organized work. In it Scripture is allowed to speak for itself. It will be of great service to the layman as well as to the theologian as an aid in keeping them true to the Word in this very important subject of the Kingdom, where so many easily go off on tangents.

Spiritual interpretation or spiritualization is

defined as "the interpretation that the Holy Spirit gives to the various items connected with this (the Old Testament typical) kingdom" (p. 85). "It includes any special import, or broadening meaning, or figurative usage, or richer implication that the Holy Spirit gives to this item, with a view toward realizing the fulfilment of the typical, Old Testament kingdom, in the antitypical, New Testament kingdom, as identified with the church, both here, and in eternity, hereafter. . . . An item, then, is spiritually interpreted, in this sense, because its literal meaning has been enriched, in some way, by the Holy Spirit, and because the specific evidence for that enrichment can be adduced, from Scripture" (p. 86). Though more evidence might be presented, the author takes pains to present only that Biblical evidence which is perfectly clear (p. 87).

An exhaustive study is made of the prophecies concerning the prophetic, priestly, and kingly offices of Christ. It proves convincingly (see especially chapters VIII and IX) that "the Scriptures interpret spiritually Jerusalem, the Promised Land, Israel, even all the abiding features connected with the typical Old Testament kingdom (twelve are listed) that reappear in Christ's kingdom" (p. 87). Also, "there is a latency of spiritualization in the O.T. and an evident spiritualization in the N.T. of the permanent elements connected with the Typical Kingdom that recur in the Kingdom of the Son of God" (p. 88). For example, **Zion** and **Jerusalem** stand for the people of God in Isa. 49:14; 53:1,2, not for a geographical place; in Gal. 4:26 it stands for the Church of Christ, including Gentiles. These are not isolated cases; the Church forms an organic unity running throughout Scripture towards which the Holy Spirit points a spiritual interpretation of these items.

The last chapter takes up "The Biblical Scope of Spiritually Interpreted Prophecy and of Literal Fulfillments." This, of course, is a most important subject. A principle may be discovered, but how far is it to be used? Several guideposts are suggested: if the prophecy fits into the organic unity of the Church and a spiritual interpretation is given in Scripture we should not look for a literal fulfilment. God, being sovereign, may give a literal fulfilment, but we have no warrant to expect it. Not all prophecies concerning these abiding features of the Typical Old Testament Kingdom reappearing in the New Testament Kingdom of Christ fit into the organic unity represented by the Church; they, therefore, must not be spiritualized; they have their literal fulfilment.

The author and the publishers have done a great service in providing this very enlightening work. The simplicity of the language, the well organized form of the presentation, the complete index of topics and Scripture references make it a

reference work of great value to every Bible student and teacher. It should be in every church library for the use of Sabbath School teachers.

—E. Clark Copeland

**THE ROCK BENEATH**, by A. Rendle Short, edited by W. Melville Capper and Douglas Johnson. The Inter-Varsity Fellowship. 39 Bedford Square, London, W.C. 1, England. 1955, pp. 144, paper cover. 3s. 6d. In U.S.A.: The Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, 1444 N. Astor St., Chicago 10, Ill. In Canada: Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, 30 St. Mary St., Toronto 5, Ont.

This collection of twelve interesting and helpful messages, articles and private notes presented by the authors of Dr. Short's biography (**Arthur Rendle Short, Surgeon and Christian**, by W. M. Capper and D. Johnson; reviewed in *Blue Banner Faith and Life*, January-March, 1955, p. 18), gives us a fine sample of his versatility, spirituality, scholarship wit, devotion to the Lord's work, and practicality — to mention but a few of his many fine attributes. It makes delightful and instructive reading.

The titles are: I. Danger Zones. II. Ambition—Vice or Virtue? III. The Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ. IV. Why did Christ Die? V. The Divine Authority of the Bible. VI. Problems of Inspiration. VII. Scientific Difficulties of the Bible. VIII. The Christian's Attitude to Social and Political Problems. IX. The Importance of Church Membership. X. New Testament Missionary Methods. XI. The Use of Time. XII. Praying and Giving. There are three Appendices of private papers: *My Teachers*; *An Open Letter to a Young Preacher*; *George Mueller: An Appreciation*.

The "Open Letter to a Young Preacher" was found in Dr. Short's briefcase and is thought to have been written during his last train journey. I wish every minister could read it. It is most instructive and practical. After commending his knowledge and use of the Bible, his earnestness, Dr. Short says, "The pity is, that having such valuable wares to offer, you market them so badly." You might find it helpful, as I did.

Dr. Short was a physician, a man of unusual talents, of keen insight into human nature because he was close to God, intensely interested in youth and its possibilities for the Kingdom of God, an ardent supporter of missions, and a most able writer both in the medical field and in the field of Christian apologetics. This book helps us to see the measure of the man. Read it and give it to your friends.

—E. Clark Copeland

**STEWARDSHIP SERMONETTES**, by Richard V. Clearwaters. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1955, pp. 120. \$1.50.

This book is a collection of sermonettes on stewardship which Mr. Clearwaters prepared and gave to his congregation on Sabbath mornings just before the morning offering. The effectiveness of these sermonettes in instruction in "storehouse tithing" is seen in the fact that in a "ten-year period the church budget has gone from \$20,000 to \$75,000 per annum. This fact recommends the book to laymen and pastors alike.

No attempt is made here to give a systematic study of stewardship. This is simply a collection of sermonettes, not even placed in any order of progressive thought. It is well documented with Scripture texts, current facts, figures and illustrations. The style of the author is such that it appeals to the heart as well as the mind of the child of God, so that he is moved to be faithful in his stewardship. One would desire that it had been written from a Reformed theological point of view rather than from the current "fundamental-independent" position.

— Philip W. Martin

**THE LIFE OF DAVID AS REFLECTED IN HIS PSALMS**, by Alexander Maclaren. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1955, pp. 261. \$2.40. Price after 1955, \$3.00.

This 1955 edition of *The Life of David* is reprinted by the Baker Book House for its Co-operative Reprint Library from the 1888 printing by Hodder & Stoughton, London. We are more than grateful to the publisher for this kind and timely service to the Christian Church in reprinting this timeless book. In these days when it is so popular to discredit the Sweet Singer of Israel and the titles to the Psalms, this book comes as an oasis in a desert. The author takes his place with the defenders of the Truth of the Word of God, and with true scholarship defends the authenticity of the Hebrew titles of the Psalms.

Maclaren was a great English Baptist preacher and writer of the past century. In this volume he combines his devout learning, knowledge of the Word of God, love of the Psalms, with a masterful as well as a picturesque command of the English language, and an insight into human frailties and temptations to give us a rare volume of devotional and inspirational reading.

There are many fine qualities of this book, but probably the outstanding value and virtue of it is the lessons which he teaches from the trust which David has in our Covenant God. This can be best shown by a few quotations. "The Psalmist knew that all being and action had their origin in God. He saw the last links of the chain, and knew that it was rivetted to the throne of God, though the intermediate links were unseen; and even the fact that there were any was not present to his mind" (p. 36). "In the past he has sheltered

his soul in God, but no past act of faith can avail for present distresses. It must be perpetually renewed. The past deliverances should make the present confidence more easy; and the true use of all earlier exercises of trust is to prepare for the resolve that we will still rely on the help we have so often proved" (p. 123). "Communion with God has its moments of restful blessedness, when desire is stilled, and expires in peaceful fruition" (p. 257).

— Philip W. Martin

**THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY IN THE ACTUAL WORDS OF CHRIST AND HIS INSPIRED APOSTLES**, by Ernest M. Wadsworth. Great Commission Prayer League, 808 N. La Salle St., Chicago 10, Ill. No date, pp. 16, paper cover. No price stated.

This booklet is an interesting arrangement of Scripture topics and references under the following heads: The Supremacy of the Ministerial Office; General Revival Duties of Ministers; God Tests His Ministers; The Minister's Trials and Temptations; Perils of Ministry; The Christian Minister's Preaching Code; The Minister's Ten Stumbling Blocks to a Real Spiritual Awakening; The Perfect Minister.

Although the title describes the book as setting forth the actual words of Christ and His apostles, a considerable number of the Scripture references are to the Old Testament. This does not lower the book in the reviewer's estimation. However, many of the texts cited, especially the Old Testament ones, do not deal specifically with "The Christian Ministry" but rather with all of God's people in all the relationships of their life, though no doubt they can properly be applied to the Ministry. The author warns against facetiousness, but perhaps commits a little of it himself in such statements as: "Souls must be won, not put on the run" (p. 13); "By authority of the King, make the ears of people ring" (p. 12). On the whole, we consider this booklet a good piece of work.

— J. G. Vos

**THE LORD'S DAY**, by John Nieuwsma. Society for Reformed Publications, 1519 E. Fulton St., Grand Rapids, Mich. 1955, pp. 32, paper cover. 35 cents or 3 for \$1.00.

This booklet gives in brief form a survey of Biblical teaching about the Sabbath, together with an earnest plea to Christians to keep the Lord's Day holy. With most of the booklet we are in hearty agreement. A statement on page 17 impresses us as confusing: "Christ did not come to destroy the purpose of the sabbath, but, through His atoning work, He abolished the law of the sabbath." The reader is told that Sabbath observance is a most necessary Christian duty, yet

he is also told that the law requiring it has been abolished. How can this be? There is no duty but what the law of God requires of us, and what His law requires is precisely that we do our duty. If the law of the Sabbath has really been abolished, it would seem to follow necessarily that Sabbath observance is no longer a necessary duty, but optional. This confusion appears further on page 18: A child who has reached manhood "is no longer legally bound to obey his father, but his desire is still to please his father because of the motive of love." This seems to us to involve a confusion between (1) the content of our duty; and (2) the motive which impels us to do our duty. Love is not a substitute for the commandment, it is a motive for obeying the commandment. The commandment tells us what we ought to do; love makes us willing to do it. The fact that love makes us willing to keep the Lord's Day holy, does not mean that keeping it holy is not a binding moral obligation.

In spite of the criticisms registered above, we consider this a good booklet and hope it may accomplish much good in calling Christian people to a more faithful Sabbath observance.

— J. G. Vos

**A DEFENCE OF CALVINISM**, by C. H. Spurgeon. Bible Truth Depot, Swengel, Pa. 1955, pp. 20, paper cover. 15 cents; 2 for 25 cents.

This booklet is reprinted from Chapter 16 of Spurgeon's *Autobiography*. On the cover is a noteworthy quotation from Spurgeon: "The old truth that Calvin preached, that Augustine preached, that Paul preached, is the truth that I must preach today, or else be false to my conscience and my God. I cannot shape the truth; I know of no such thing as paring off the rough edges of a doctrine. John Knox's gospel is my gospel. That which thundered through Scotland must thunder through England again."

Spurgeon in this booklet shows how we are Arminians by nature, and only by the grace of God do we become Calvinists. Spurgeon believed in the truth of free and sovereign grace wholeheartedly. Incidentally, Spurgeon carefully states wherein he differed from the Hyper-Calvinism which has been characteristic of many English Baptists. Unlike Arminians and Hyper-Calvinists, Spurgeon held the truly Biblical position of not attempting to solve the paradox (apparent contraction) between God's sovereignty and man's free agency.

— J. G. Vos

**THE SHEPHERD'S CARE**, by William Gouloze, Society for Reformed Publications, 1519 E. Fulton St., Grand Rapids, Mich. 1955, pp. 24, paper cover, pocket size. 25 cents; special prices on quantities.

This is a booklet for presentation to those who are ill or suffering. It contains a presentation page with spaces for writing in the name of the giver and the recipient, and the date. The booklet is light and will be easy even for hospital patients to hold and read. Each page gives a brief message, followed by texts of Scripture bearing on the topic. The subjects, page by page, are: Why am I Sick? Does Jesus Care? Does God answer Prayer? Can Faith Heal Me? How Can I Take Suffering? Why Do I Fear Death? What Shall I Do With Jesus Christ? These are followed by some selections of religious poetry and three or four pages of very practical advice on such subjects as Preparing to Enter the Hospital, Entering the Hospital, Doctors and Nurses, Before the Operation, Pain and Discomfort, Visitors, Facing the Cure, Growing in Grace.

The doctrine is Scriptural and the arrangement very good. This booklet should be very useful for pastors and very helpful to the sick and suffering.

— J. G. Vos

**WHY CATECHISM**, by Henry Van Dyke. Society for Reformed Publications, 1519 E. Fulton St., Grand Rapids, Michigan. 8 page paper booklet, for free distribution.

This booklet by a minister of the Reformed Church in America concerns especially the affairs of that denomination, yet it conveys a message which is relevant to all truly Christian Churches. The author is deeply concerned about the prevalent ignorance of Christian truth and the widespread doctrinal indifference. He shows the fact and bad results of this state of affairs, and pleads for a systematic program by which the Church shall impart catechetical instruction to its children and youth.

— J. G. Vos

**THE DOCTRINE OF SANCTIFICATION**, by Arthur W. Pink. Bible Truth Depot, Swengel, Pa. 1955, pp. 206. \$3.00.

The writings of the late Arthur W. Pink are always well worth reading and study, for they show a remarkable insight into the Scriptures and an uncommon gift for making their meaning clear to the reader. Moreover Pink's writings are orthodox on the great issues that are matters of controversy today, such as the sovereignty of God and the infallibility of the Bible.

The present volume is a thorough study of the subject of Sanctification. The author steers a safe and true middle course between the twin errors of Perfectionism (the idea that the Christian can in this life become sinlessly perfect) and Antinomianism (the idea that since Christ has satisfied the demands of the law of God, the Christian is not bound to obey its commandments).

In holding that sanctification is a necessary Christian grace, and yet cannot be absolutely attained in this life, the author is within the stream of orthodox Christianity from the time of the apostles to the present.

The author quotes from various sound writers, especially such Puritan divines as John Owen, Thomas Boston, Stephen Charnock and others of like stature in the Faith. The plan of the book is developed in twenty-two chapters, the first of which is an Introduction. Following this, the chapters take up sanctification by considering successively its meaning, necessity, problem and solution, nature, Author, Procurer, Securer, rule and instrument. The book would, in our judgment, have been improved by the addition of an index of subjects and especially an index of Scripture texts treated. To prepare such an index involves of course considerable labor but it greatly increases the usefulness of such a book as this.

As a sample of the quality of this work, we shall quote a paragraph in which the author places his finger upon the common present-day error of regarding regeneration or the new birth as practically the sum-total of Christian experience:

"One of the chief defects of modern teaching on this subject has been in regarding the new birth as the summum bonum of the spiritual life of the believer. Instead of its being the goal, it is only a means to the end. Regeneration must be supplemented by sanctification, or otherwise the soul would remain at a standstill — if such a thing were possible: for it seems to be an unchanging law in every realm that where there is no progression, there must be retrogression. That spiritual growth which is so essential lies in progressive sanctification, wherein all the faculties of the soul are more and more brought under the purifying and regulating influence of the principle of holiness which is implanted at the new birth, for thus alone do we 'grow up unto Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ' (Eph. 4:15)" (pp. 89,90).

Though we are in hearty agreement with most of the teaching of this book, we regret the author's criticism of the definition of sanctification given in the Westminster Larger Catechism (pp. 113-115), which he pronounces to be "altogether inadequate" and also "faulty and misleading" in its wording. We believe that at this point in the book Mr. Pink to some extent confused sanctification with justification. Yet elsewhere in the book the author is perfectly clear and satisfactory on the distinction between justification and sanctification (cf. for instance pages 16,17). We believe that the author's difficulty with the Larger Catechism definition arises from the paradox that sanctification is both (a) a completed fact from

God's standpoint in eternity; and (b) a continuous and ever-incompleted process from the believer's standpoint within historical time. Admittedly the Catechism places the emphasis upon the latter, for it treats of sanctification as an experience in the life of the believer. When the Bible speaks of sanctification from the standpoint of eternity, obviously a different type of definition will be required. Mr. Pink attempts to solve this by giving a three-fold definition. "Sanctification is," he says, "first, that act of God whereby He set the elect apart in Christ before the foundation of the world that they should be holy. Second, it is that perfect holiness which the Church has in Christ and that excellent purity which she has before God by virtue of Christ's cleansing blood. Third, it is that work of God's Spirit which, by His quickening operation, sets them apart from those who are dead in sins, conveying to them a holy life or nature, etc." This, however, is not a definition: it is three definitions strung together in a series. In other words, the term sanctification is used in Scripture in various senses, so that a single definition cannot properly cover them all. We do not hold that the Westminster Larger Catechism is perfect or infallible, but we are not in agreement with Mr. Pink's criticisms of its definition of sanctification.

This book contains a great wealth of precious and edifying truth and should be a great help and encouragement to any Christian who studies it carefully. We are confident that it will be used to bring blessing to many.

—J. G. Vos

**THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH: WHICH IS IT?**  
by Thomas Witherow. Publications Committee of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, c/o Mr. J. Grant, 4 Millburn Road, Inverness, Scotland. 1954, pp. 91, paper cover, pocket size. 2s. 6d. postpaid. U.S.A. and Canada 50c postpaid.

The sub-title of this little book is "An Inquiry at the Oracles of God as to whether any existing form of Church Government is of Divine Right." The book was originally written a century ago (1856) and is now reprinted by the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. It is a well-written defence of the Presbyterian form of church government as appointed in Scripture for the New Testament Church. The author shows convincingly that the Presbyterian system of government as historically known exemplifies the principles of government seen in the Apostolic Church more fully than any of the various existing systems of church government. A concluding chapter deals with the practical benefits and values of the Presbyterian system. This is an excellent booklet which we are happy to recommend heartily.

—J. G. Vos

## *Books Received*

The announcement of the books listed below should not be construed as a recommendation. A review of those found in this list which we regard as having value for our readers will be given in a later issue.

**Publications of Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.  
Grand Rapids 3, Mich.**

THE SELF-DISCLOSURE OF JESUS, by Geerhardus Vos. 1954, pp. 311. \$4.00.

ANCHOR OF HOPE, by Preston J. Stegenga. 1954, pp. 271. \$3.50.

PHILOSOPHY OF REVELATION, by Herman Bavinck. 1953, pp. x, 349. \$3.50.

THE DIVINE ECONOMY: A STUDY IN STEWARDSHIP, by A. C. Conrad. 1954, pp. 169. \$2.50.

THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF SCIENCE AND SCRIPTURE by Bernard Ramm. 1954, pp. 368. \$4.00.

450 TRUE STORIES FROM CHURCH HISTORY, by J. Vernon Jacobs. 1955, pp. 147. \$2.50.

HOW TO ACHIEVE PERSONALITY THROUGH PRAYER, by Simon Blocker. 1954, pp. 121. \$2.00.

LOVE THE LORD THY GOD by Herman Hoeksema. 1955, pp. 290. \$3.00.

THE GOSPEL OF THE SPIRIT, by Samuel E. Pierce. 1955, pp. 104. \$1.50.

THE EPISTLES OF PAUL TO THE PHILIPPIANS AND TO PHILEMON, by J. J. Mueller. 1955, pp. 200. \$3.50.

**Publications of Baker Book House,  
Grand Rapids 6, Mich.**

DEVOTIONS AND PRAYERS OF JOHN CALVIN, ed. by Charles E. Edwards. 1954, pp. 120, pocket size. \$1.00.

THE CHURCH IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE, by William M. Ramsay. 1954, pp. 510. \$4.20.

THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION, by James Buchanan. 1955, pp. x, 514. \$4.95.

CHRISTIANITY IN THE APOSTOLIC AGE, by George T. Purves. 1955, pp. xx, 343. \$3.00.

I AND II THESSALONIANS, by William Hendriksen. 1955, pp. 214. \$4.50.

LEADERS OF ISRAEL: A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE HEBREW PEOPLE, by George L. Robinson. 1955, pp. x, 246. \$2.75.

**Publications of Sovereign Grace Book Club,  
413 S.E. First St., Evansville, Indiana**

SONGS OF SOVEREIGNTY: THREE SERMONS EXTOLLING THE SOVEREIGNTY OF CHRIST, by John Owen. 1955, pp. 119. No price stated.

EXPOSITION OF THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, CHAP. 1-3, by Robert Haldane. 1955, pp. 159. \$2.00.

PRAYER, by John Bunyan; THE RETURN OF PRAYERS, by Thomas Goodwin. 1955, pp. 60, paper cover. \$1.00.

KEEPING THE HEART, by John Flavel. 1955, pp. 96, paper cover. 75 cents.

**Publications of Presbyterian and Reformed  
Publishing Co., P.O. Box 185, Nutley, N.J.**

CHRISTIANITY AND EXISTENTIALISM, by J. M. Spier. 1953, pp. 140. \$3.00.

THE DEFENSE OF THE FAITH, by C. Van Til. 1955, pp. viii, 436. \$4.95.

**Publications of Other Firms**

SCHEEBEN'S DOCTRINE OF DIVINE ADOPTION, by Edwin H. Palmer. J. H. Kok, N.V., Kampen, Netherlands. 1953, pp. xi, 202, paper cover. Florins 5.90.

AN EXPOSITION OF HEBREWS, by Arthur W. Pink, Bible Truth Depot, Swengel, Pa. 1954, 3 volumes, pp. 504, 514, 405. Per set, \$17.95.

THOMAS JONES OF CREATON, by J. S. Reynolds. In The Evangelical Library Bulletin, 78a Chiltern St., London W.1, England. 1954, pp. 4, paper cover.

THE FREE OFFER OF THE GOSPEL, by John Murray and Ned B. Stonehouse. Lewis J. Grotenhuis, Belvidere Road, Phillipsburg, N.J. 1955, pp. 27, pocket size, paper cover. 25 cents.

THE FIVE POINTS OF CALVINISM, by Edwin H. Palmer. The Men's Society of the Christian Reformed Church, 422 E. Exchange St., Spring Lake, Mich. 1955, pp. 88, paper cover. \$1.00.

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## *None Other Lamb*

By CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI

None other Lamb, none other Name,  
 None other Hope in heaven or earth or sea,  
 None other Hiding-place from guilt and shame,  
 None beside Thee.

My faith burns low, my hope burns low  
 Only my heart's desire cries out in me  
 By the deep thunder of its want and woe  
 Cries out to Thee.

Lord, Thou art Life tho' I be dead,  
 Love's Fire Thou art, however cold I be:  
 Nor heaven have I, nor place to lay my head,  
 Nor home, but Thee.

## Samuel Rutherford

Samuel Rutherford was born about 1600 and died in 1661. After studying theology he was installed as pastor of the church of Anwoth in Kirkcudbrightshire, Scotland, in 1627, and it soon became clear that Rutherford was destined to be a leader in the Church of Scotland. In 1636 he published, in Holland, a treatise against the errors of Arminianism. This championship of Calvinism soon got Rutherford in trouble with the bishop, Thomas Sydserf (for at that time the government of the Church of Scotland was partly episcopal). Charges were filed against Rutherford before the High Commission Court; he was deposed from his pastoral charge at Anwoth, and sentenced to banishment in the northern city of Aberdeen. This forced separation from his beloved congregation of Anwoth was a great affliction to Rutherford, but he bore it patiently. He was confined in Aberdeen for about a year and a half, until February 1638.

Rutherford was one of those present at the signing of the National Covenant of Scotland in Edinburgh in 1638. By the action of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, which met the same year in Glasgow, he was restored to his pastoral office at Anwoth. Soon Rutherford's reputation as a scholar and theologian became more widely known. In 1639 he was made professor of divinity at St. Andrews. Later, in 1643, he was chosen as one of the eight commissioners from the Church of Scotland to the Westminster Assembly of Divines in England, where he attended the Assembly's sessions day after day for

over three years. With the Scottish minister George Gillespie, Rutherford was one of those who had great influence on the decisions and formulations of the Westminster Assembly.

Perhaps Rutherford's most famous book was "Lex Rex, a Dispute for the Just Prerogative of King and People" (1644), a plea for constitutional government, against the idea that the king has arbitrary power above the law. Rutherford is best known today, however, by his "Letters", most of which were written during his banishment in Aberdeen, and which have become one of the devotional classics of Christendom. Their true spirituality, earnestness, and portrayal of the preciousness of Christ, our duty to forsake all for His sake, and the glorious future that awaits His people, make them one of the books that will never grow old.

After the Restoration of Charles II in 1660, his book "Lex Rex" was publicly burnt by order of the government. Following this Rutherford was deposed from all his offices, and summoned to appear before the parliament of Scotland to answer to a charge of treason. When this summons was issued he was, however, already a sick man, and before he could be tried for treason by earthly rulers he was summoned by the King of kings and left this earth for the realm of glory and endless light. His summons to appear on the charge of treason forms the theme of the poem "The Deathbed of Rutherford" which appears on the inside front cover of this issue of "Blue Banner Faith and Life". — J.G.V.

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## Announcement

You can share in the wide witness of Blue Banner Faith and Life to Bible truth by contributing to the expense of publishing the magazine. Less than half of the amount required is obtained from subscriptions and sales of back issues. For the balance we are dependent on contributions. Numbered receipts are sent promptly for all contributions. Financial reports are submitted to the Board of Publication of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America quarterly.

Sets of back issues for the years 1950, 1952, 1953, 1954 and 1955 are available at \$1.00 for each year, postpaid. Pressboard binders which will conveniently preserve two years' issues are available at 75 cents each, postpaid. Subscriptions for 1956 are \$1.50 for single subscriptions and \$1.00 for each subscription in clubs of 5 or more to be mailed to one address. All subscriptions must begin

with a January-March issue and run to the end of a calendar year. We regret that we cannot do the extra clerical work involved in having subscriptions start and stop at different times through the year. When subscriptions are received during the year, the back issues beginning with the January-March issue of that year will be sent.

The Agent for Britain and Ireland is the Rev. Adam Loughridge, B.A., Glenmanus Manse, Portrush, County Antrim, Northern Ireland. Annual subscription rate for Britain and Ireland is 7s. 6d.

The Agent for Australia and New Zealand is the Rev. Alexander Barkley, B.A., 20 Fenwick St., Geelong, Victoria, Australia. Annual subscription rate for Australia and New Zealand is 10 shillings.

J. G. Vos, Editor and Manager, 3408 7th Avenue, Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, U.S.A.