
BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

J. G. VOS, Editor and Manager

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VOLUME 12

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NUMBER 1

**Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that
liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for ever-
more, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.**

Revelation 1:17, 18

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When I Read the Bible Through

By Amos R. Wells

I supposed I knew my Bible, reading piecemeal
hit or miss,
Now a bit of John or Matthew, now a snatch of
Genesis,
Certain chapters of Isaiah, certain Psalms (the
twenty-third!):
Twelfth of Romans, first of Proverbs — yes, I
thought I knew the Word!
But I found that thorough reading
Was a different thing to do.
And the way was unfamiliar
When I read the Bible through.

Oh, the massive mighty volume! Oh, the treasures
manifold!
Oh, the beauty and the wisdom and the grace it
proved to hold!
As the story of the Hebrews swept in majesty
along,
As it leaped in waves prophetic; as it burst to
sacred song.
As it gleamed with Christly omens,
The old Testament was new,
Strong with cumulative power,
When I read the Bible through.

Oh, imperial Jeremiah, with his keen coruscant
mind!
And the blunt old Nehemiah, and Ezekiel refined!
Newly came the Minor Prophets, each with his
distinctive robe;
Newly came the song idyllic, and the tragedy of
Job;
Deuteronomy, the regal,
To a towering mountain grew
With its comrade peaks around it,
When I read the Bible through.

What a radiant procession as the pages rise and
fall!
James the sturdy, John the tender — oh, the
myriad-minded Paul!
Vast apocalyptic glories wheel and thunder, flash
and flame,
While the Church Triumphant raises one Incom-
parable Name,
Ah, the story of the Saviour
Never glows supremely true
Till you read it whole and swiftly
Till you read the Bible through.

You who like to play at Bible, dip and dabble, here and there,
Just before you kneel, weary, and yawn through a hurried prayer,
You who treat the Crown of Writings as you treat no other book—
Just a paragraph disjointed, just a crude, impatient look—
Try a worthier procedure,
Try a broad and steady view;
You will kneel in very rapture,
When you read the Bible through!

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Somebody

Somebody did a golden deed;
Somebody proved a friend in need;
Somebody sang a beautiful song;
Somebody smiled the whole day long;
Somebody thought " 'Tis sweet to live";
Somebody said "I'm glad to give";
Somebody fought a valiant fight;
Somebody lived to shield the right;
Was that "somebody" you?

(Author unknown)

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.

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Roadblocks Limiting Church Effectiveness

By J. G. Vos

IV. THE ROADBLOCK OF STAGNATION, OR REGARDING THE STATUS QUO AS NORMAL

Church reformation according to Scripture is a continuous process.

Ecclesia reformata reformanda est ("The church, having been reformed, is still to be reformed"). This follows from the fact that Scripture is an absolute and perfect standard, while the church at any point in its history on earth is still imperfect and involved in sin and error.

This process of reformation must be continuous until the end of the world. At no point may the church stop and say, "I have arrived. Thus far but no farther!" Only in heaven can the church triumphant say that.

In this process of reformation there are certain historical stages and certain outstanding landmarks of progress achieved. For instance, the great historic creeds and confessions of the church are such landmarks of progress. The Westminster Confession of Faith, for example, marks true progress in the reformation of the church up to the time when that Confession was formulated.

Reformation Always Incomplete on Earth

We may never regard this process as completed in our own day, or at any point in the earthly history of the church. We must always forget the things that are behind and press on to the things that are in the future; we must always strive to apprehend that for which we are apprehended of Christ Jesus. The church's doctrine, worship, government, discipline, missionary activities, educational institutions, publications, and practical life—all these are to be progressively reformed according to Scripture.

Reformation has always been a step-by-step process, and it must necessarily be such. Zealots would attempt to achieve everything at one fell swoop, but they only smash their head against a stone wall. God works by historical process—a gradual, continuous process—and we must conform to God's way of working.

Scriptural church reformation requires a searching self-criticism on the part of the church.

Not only is advance in study of the Scriptures required, beyond the landmarks of the past, but searching self-criticism on the part of the church is called for.

The church's subordinate standards must always be subjected to examination and re-examination in the light of Scripture. This is implied in our confession that only Scripture is infallible. If only Scripture is infallible, then everything else must be constantly tested and re-tested by Scripture.

Not only the church's official standards, but its life, its programs, its activities, its institutions, its publications, must be subjected to a searching self-criticism on the basis of Scripture. These must always be tested and re-tested in the light of the Word of God. Such self-criticism on the part of the church is the corporate counterpart of the self-examination to which God in His Word calls every individual Christian.

Absolute Loyalty to Scripture Required

Such self-criticism on the part of the church is difficult. It calls for effort, intelligence, learning, sacrifice, very great humility and self-denial, and absolute honesty. It requires loyalty to Scripture, a loyalty that is willing to go to any length in order to be true to the Word of God—a truly heroic and radical loyalty to Scripture.

Such self-criticism on the part of the church may be embarrassing, and even painful. It may mean that the church, like Christian in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, may find itself in By-path Meadow, and will have to retrace its steps humbly and painfully until it is back on the King's Highway again. Such self-criticism on the part of the church may be devastating to the special interests or projects of particular individuals or groups in the church. It may demonstrate that particular features of the church's standards, life or program, are not fully in harmony with the Word of God, and should be re-considered and brought into harmony with that Word.

Past Reformation Attained by Self-Criticism

For these and similar reasons self-criticism on the part of the church is often neglected, and even strongly opposed. Those who advocate it or seek to have it undertaken are likely to be represented as extremists, fanatics, enthusiasts, visionaries, trouble-makers, and the like. Yet it is by such self-criticism that the reformations of the past have been achieved. Men like Luther,

Calvin, Knox, Melville, Cameron and Renwick were concerned only about the judgment of God in His Word. They were not deterred by the adverse judgments and attitudes of men.

When the church has dared really to look at itself in the mirror of God's Word, in dead earnest, the church has been at its greatest, and has been influential in the world. It has gone forward with new life and vigor.

On the other hand, when the church has hesitated or refused to look at itself intently in the mirror of God's Word, it has been weak, stagnant, decadent, ineffective and uninfluential.

Constant denominational self-criticism on the basis of Scripture is a duty implied and recognized in our First Term of Communion. But is this really taken seriously? How much zeal, how much concern—I will even say, how much tolerance—is there for it today?

The roadblock of stagnation regards the status quo as normal.

There is a constant tendency in every church to regard the status quo as normal. In the physical and biological sciences, what is normal is determined by averages of a great many individuals. What is the normal temperature of the human blood? A book on hygiene will tell you that it is 98.6 F. Your fever thermometer may have a little red line at that point. But did you wonder how that figure of 98.6 was determined? As a matter of fact, healthy people do not all have the same temperature. And any individual varies in temperature from one time of day to another time of day. A variation of one degree or less within the 24-hour period is considered normal. You may have a temperature one degree higher at 3 p.m. than you had at 3 a.m., and still be perfectly healthy. How, then, did the scientists arrive at 98.6 as the "normal" temperature of the human blood? Simply by averaging the actual temperatures, at various times of day and night, of a great number of apparently healthy people. There is nothing particularly sacred about the figure 98.6. It is just a convenience, determined by averaging. The same is true of people's rate of heart action, blood pressure, breathing, height, weight, and so forth. All are determined by averages.

Regarding Averages as Normal

In social matters the tendency is to decide what is normal by an appeal to the public—by polls, questionnaires, statistics—again just a matter of averages. Kinsey's notorious books on sex behaviour are gotten up on this basis: what is most common is regarded as normal.

The same thing is coming to be true in religious matters. Issue a questionnaire, take a secret poll or ballot, to find out what the majority thinks or wants or believes. Thus Scriptural standards tend to be lowered to a mere observation or "read-

ing" of present conditions, whether in the world or in the church. Principle passes out of the picture; it comes to be treated as if it were mere convention or human custom, having only the authority of usage or popular approval. Meantime what is in reality mere custom, comes to have virtually the force and influence of principle. Try arranging a communion service for Sabbath evening sometime, instead of Sabbath morning, and see what happens.

The sanction of past or present usage is regarded as sufficient to establish a matter as right, legitimate or even necessary. And conversely, the lack of past or present usage is regarded as sufficient to prove that a matter is wrong and improper.

Shutting the Door Against Reformation

This kind of stagnation, this attitude of regarding the status quo as normal, shuts the door against all true progress in church reformation. For the status quo is always sinful. It is always a falling short of the requirements of the Word of God. It is always something less than what God really requires of the church. Since the status quo is sinful, it may never be regarded with complacency, far less may it be regarded as the ideal for the church. It is a sin to absolutize the status quo.

The status quo always needs to be repented of. No matter how fine it may be, still it is sinful and needs to be repented of. To regard the status quo with complacency is one of the great sins of the church in our day—a sin which must grieve the Holy Spirit, and a sin which certainly prevents the church from making its true and proper progress in reformation according to Scripture. A church dominated by this idea cannot really move forward. It can only stand still. It may indeed slide backward in defection and apostasy. At best it will only move in a fixed circle, always coming back to where it started from.

The Pattern of American Church History

The churches of America, by and large, have moved in a fixed circle through their past history. We might also say, they have moved in a vicious circle. The pattern has been a slump followed by a revival followed by a slump, and so on. True progress is not made. The best that can be done, it seems, is to manage to get out of one pit after another. Nothing is more prevalent than this kind of stagnation in the church. Nothing is more difficult than to get any feature of the church's structure or activity really examined and reformed in the light of the Word of God.

True progress means building on the foundations laid in the past. But true progress does not mean being held in check by the dead hand of the errors and imperfections of the past. There is only one legitimate check on true progress, and that is the check of Scripture itself. The true reformation

of the church is a reformation on the basis of Scripture, it is a reformation within the bounds of Scripture, not a reformation beyond Scripture.

God Calls us to Reform the Church in our Day

Are the church's official agencies, publications and institutions to reflect a cross-section of opinion as it actually exists in the church, like Mark Twain's "English as she is spoke"? Or are they to take their stand on the existing official standards of the church and maintain that line in confronting the public? Or are they to pioneer in denominational self-criticism on the basis of Scripture? Are they to blaze a new trail, going forward into new territory in the light of the Word?

These are difficult and serious questions. The tendency is to by-pass and ignore such questions as these. These questions are seldom faced. The tendency is rather to regard the status quo as normal. Or if not the present status quo, then at any rate the achievements of the past are regarded as normal. If we could just get back to the way things were in "the good old days" and maintain that standard, we are told, then everything would be fine.

But would it? Where have we been? This is 1957. How are we to be excused for having failed to advance beyond our forefathers in understanding the Scriptures? How can we say that the reformation of the church was completed in 1560 or in 1638 or in 1806 or even in 1950? What have we been doing since then? Has our talent been buried in a napkin?

It is not difficult to admit that there are some evils in the church which need correction. But the tendency is to say that if we could just get back to the sound basis of a generation or two ago, everything would be as it should be. What more could anyone ask? We could just hold that line for all time to come.

But that would not be doing our God-given duty. Our forefathers reformed the church in their time; God calls us to reform it in our time. We cannot rest on their laurels; we must strike out for ourselves, by faith, on the basis of the Word of God.

True Reformation seeks God's Honor and His Truth above all other Considerations.

We live in a pragmatic age, an age impatient of truth, and concerned mostly about practical results. It is an age impatient of those who rate truth above results. Our age wants results and is quite willing to believe that figs grow on thistles, if it thinks it sees the figs.

Is the Time Opportune?

I have heard, when someone sought to bring

some feature of the church under the critical judgment of Scripture, the objection that the time was not opportune. "You may be right," the objector would say, "but is this an opportune time to bring up such a matter?" Now, we should realize that truth is **always** timely, truth is always in order, and that if we wait for an opportune time to bring up truth that opportune time may never come. That more convenient season may never arrive. Always there will be some reason that can be urged for not undertaking the reformation of the church according to the Word of God.

God is the God of truth. He is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. Christ is King of the Kingdom of truth. To this end was He born, that He might bear witness to the truth. He that is of the truth heareth His voice.

Accepting the Status Quo is Sinful

The too-ready willingness to accept the status quo as normal is one of the great roadblocks in the way of the real reformation and progress of the church today. This attitude is sinful because it is blind to the real sinfulness of the status quo. It fails to realize that the status quo always needs to be repented of, always needs to be forgiven by divine grace, and always needs to be reformed by the church on earth. It fails to realize the truth of the statement of Augustine that every lesser good involves an element of sin.

God's Holiness and Truth Require Continued Reformation.

At bottom, this complacent acceptance of the status quo as normal proceeds from a wrong idea of God, an idea which fails to reckon with His holiness and His purity; and from a wrong idea of Scripture, an idea which fails to realize the **absolute** character of Scripture as the church's standard.

To place God's truth and honor first, above all other considerations whatsoever, requires great moral great consecration. In this matter it is true of the church as it is of the individual, that he that saveth his life shall lose it, but he that loseth his life for Christ's sake shall find it.

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Sketches of the Covenanters

By J. C. McFeeters

Chapter XXIII

Resisting Unto Blood — A. D. 1661

King Charles had put Argyle to death. The head of the martyred nobleman had been placed above the prominent gate, called the Netherbow Port of Edinburgh. There it remained four years, meeting the public gaze in the glare of day and in the gloom of night. And yet the sight had its charms. The broad brow and beneficent countenance still retained the expression of goodness and greatness. The sun-browned features and the wind-shaken locks, the motionless face and silent lips, made a touching appeal to the passers-by as they filed through the gateway. Many hearts were softened, many eyes were moistened, many serious thoughts were awakened.

The death of Argyle only fired the ferocious spirit of the king. The tiger had tasted blood; now he must drink deeply of the crimson flood and satiate his cruel heart. With vengeful hatred he reached for Samuel Rutherford, the venerable minister of Anwoth. Neither feeble health nor gray hairs could elicit the king's compassion. A rock never pulsates with kindness. But ere the officer could lay his hand upon this man of God, his Lord and Master took him home to heaven.

James Guthrie of Stirling, a distinguished minister of Christ, was the next upon whom the king set his cruel eyes. He seized and thrust into prison to await trial for "high treason." High Treason! What was high treason in those days? What had Guthrie done to merit the king's mortal displeasure? Here is the sum of his crimes:

James Guthrie had preached, spoken, written, voted and protested against the "Resolution" and the "Resolutioners," because they had approved of the suspension of the Moral Test for office.

He had written and published a message to the nation, entitled "The Causes of God's Wrath," pointing out the many breaches of the Covenant, and pleading for repentance.

He had declined the king's authority, when cited to be tried for ministerial services which his enemies accounted treasonable.

He had advocated Christ's supremacy over the Church and over the nation, and had disputed the king's authority in ecclesiastical matters.

For pursuing this course of action, James Guthrie was charged with "high treason." But the rudest terms of the world and the basest charges made by men are often turned into heaven's fairest badges. The iron chains that manacled Rutherford he called "gold;" he called his prison "The King's Palace."

How could Guthrie have done otherwise, as a faithful minister of Christ Jesus, in the high calling of the Gospel? Was he not responsible for the honor of the Church? Was he not entrusted with the truth and claims and glory of Christ? Was he not accountable for the souls that awaited on his ministry?

Guthrie had an exalted view of the Gospel ministry. He had the eagle's eye to take in a wide horizon, and the lion's heart to meet dangers and difficulties. He took his instructions from the Lord, and stood above the fear of man. He lived with the open Bible in his hand; his soul delighted in the deep, broad sublime truths of salvation. The ministers of the Covenant in those days dwelt in the bosom of Jesus Christ, breathed His spirit, saw His glory, pulsated with his love, and were irresistibly carried forward in the discharge of the duties of their high office. They served as the ambassadors of the King of heaven. Only by dishonoring their office, vitiating their conscience, shrivelling their manhood, disowning their Lord, and imperiling their souls, could Christ's ministers do less than James Guthrie had done. Yet he was charged with "high treason."

The trial was set for April 11, 1661. Guthrie came before the tribunal, full of peace and comfort. He answered for himself in a masterly speech. His pleading was deeply felt; some members of the court arose and walked out, saying, "We will have nothing to do with the blood of this righteous man".

He was urged to retract. He was offered a high office in the Episcopal Church if he would accede to their terms. Such inducements he held in contempt. Neither threat nor reward could weaken his loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ and the Covenant. The closing sentence of his defense was tender, fearless, and sublime:

"My lords, my conscience I cannot submit; but this old crazy body and mortal flesh I do submit, to do with it whatever ye will, whether by death, or banishment, or imprisonment, or anything else; only I beseech you to ponder well what profit there is in my blood. It is not the extinguishing of me, or many others, that will extinguish the Covenant and the work of Reformation. My blood, bondage, or banishment will contribute more for the propagation of these things, than my life or liberty could do, though I should live many years."

The death sentence was passed upon him. He was condemned to be hanged, his head to be placed above the city gate beside Argyle's. He

received the sentence with great composure. The execution was fixed for the first day of June. To those who sat in judgement on his case, he replied:

"My lords, let this sentence never affect you more than it does me; and let my blood never be required of the king's family."

In such cases doubtless the wife through sympathy is the greater sufferer. But Mrs. Guthrie was strong in the Lord, and had courage equal to her trials. She was her husband's faithful helper in the difficult places. Once when duty imperiled his life, and he was in danger of halting, she urged him on, saying, "My heart, what the Lord gives you light and clearness to do, that do." Noble words! nothing wiser or greater could come from consecrated lips.

Just before his death Guthrie was permitted to see his son, Willie, at that time five years old. The father tenderly fondled his child, so soon to become an orphan, and spoke words adapted to the innocent heart. So little did the child comprehend the terrible tragedy, that he could scarcely be restrained from playing on the street while his father was dying. But the meaning soon dawned upon him with melancholy effect. It is said that he never played again.

The execution was public and the streets were thronged. Guthrie mounted the scaffold with a cheerful spirit. He spoke with great deliberation and earnestness for one hour to the immense throng that crowded close to hear his last words. He then yielded himself to the executioner, who placed the death cap over his face. But, as the light of that June day was shut out from his eyes, a vision of entrancing joy seemed to break upon his soul. In that flash of inspiration he saw Scotland: The land was covered with the glory of Christ; peace filled all her borders, and prosperity crowned her industries; churches and schools adorned her hills and valleys; the mountains and moors were filled with devout worshipers; the Sabbath poured forth its weekly blessings; the Psalms arose with solemn music in praise to the Lord Jesus. The Covenanted Reformation, in that vision, was triumphant. Lifting the cap from his eyes, he exclaimed with the rapture of a prophet, and with the shout of a conqueror:

"The Covenants, the Covenants shall yet be Scotland's reviving."

Thus he died in the full assurance of victory. His head was affixed over the gate, where it remained many years. The sun bronzed the face, the storms smote it, the rains drenched it, the snows dashed against it, the winds swirled the white locks, the stars looked down in silence, the people looked up in sadness, but James Guthrie was heedless of all. The soul was mingled with the redeemed in heaven and rejoicing in the presence of God. Guthrie had gone home to be forever with the Lord.

Little Willie often came and sat near the gate, gazing up at the silent motionless head. He would stay there till night veiled the sombre features of his father. He seemed to be communing with the spirit that now lived above the stars.

"Where have you been, Willie?" his mother would say, on his return. "I have been looking at father's head," he would sadly reply. The intense strain sapped his vitality and he died in early manhood.

Have we a conscience like that of the Covenanted fathers? a conscience that cannot submit to a man? a conscience that can take instructions only from God? The surrender of conscience to man imperils the soul.

Points for the Class

1. How did Argyle's death seem to affect the king?
2. Whom did he seize next?
3. What charge was preferred against Guthrie?
4. What was the nature of the "high treason?"
5. How did he defend himself in court?
6. What sentence did he receive?
7. How did he reply?
8. Relate an incident about his wife; his child.
9. What was his death cry?
10. What lesson here regarding a pure conscience?

Chapter XXIV

Source of the Covenanters' Power — A. D. 1661

The death of Marquis Argyle was the signal for the utter overthrow of the Covenanted Church in Scotland. He was chief among the nobles who in those days stood by the Covenant, and James Guthrie was chief among the ministers. These mighty men followed each other in watering God's vineyard with their own blood.

The issue now between the king and the Covenanters was clear, direct, unmistakable, beyond the possibility of evasion. Both parties set themselves for the desperate struggle; henceforth compromise was out of the question.

The king was determined to abolish the Covenant, obliterate Presbyterianism, establish Episcopacy, and assume to himself the place, power, and prerogatives of the Lord Jesus Christ, as head of the Church.

The Covenanters disputed his right to these pretentious claims at every point. Especially did they challenge his authority over the Church, and testify against his blasphemous presumption.

They looked with horror upon his attempt to grasp the crown of Christ; that he himself might wear it. This they resented and resisted as treason against the King of Kings. They could not submit to the man who clothed himself with Christ's supremacy; that robe of royal priesthood must not be worn by mortal man.

The Covenanters grew very spirited and fearless in defense of the independence of the Church. When these two leaders, Argyle and Guthrie, had been sacrificed, their enemies doubtless thought the people would be as sheep scattered upon the mountains without a shepherd. But the Good Shepherd was ever with them and gave them faithful ministers, who fed the flock amidst their wintry desolations. The Covenanted Church had noble sons to lift up the head of their fainting mother even when persecution was at its worst.

The Church of Christ was very dear to these Covenanters. They gazed with rapturous eyes upon her high origin, her mysterious character, her indescribable glory. She dwelt in the very heart of God; she was the Bride of the Son of God; she was clothed with the righteousness of God; she was adorned with all the excellencies of character God could lavish upon her. The Church was the habitation of the Holy Spirit. The Covenant was the marriage bond joining her to her Lord and Husband. The love of the Covenanters for the Church of the Lord Jesus arose in flames of jealousy when they saw a mere man, a dissolute and sinful man, attempt to woo her heart and alienate her affections from her Lord and King. They could not endure it. Her honor and purity were worth more to them than life itself.

The testimony of the Covenanters against the wrongs done the Church was both pathetic and vehement, ranging all the way from tender tearful supplication, to pointed fearless denunciation. At times they spoke with meekness and hope, as if standing on the Mount of Beatitudes; again with severity and sadness, as if the voice came from the fiery summit of Sinai. Their eloquence in the sacred office matched the tenderness of the dove and the terribleness of thunder; distilled like the dewdrop and smote like pointed lightning. The sword of burnished steel they wielded to good purpose in self-defence, and the sword of the Word they used with telling effect in the spiritual warfare for their Lord and His Church.

The strength which the Covenanters possessed and employed in battling for the rights of the Church, and the prerogatives of their Lord, amazes the contemplative mind. Their power was always sufficient, new every morning, fresh every hour, inexhaustible under the most excessive strains, and mighty to win moral victories everywhere. Whence the power? What was its source?

Explain as we may the fortitude, inspiration, enthusiasm, exalted purpose, indestructible hope,

and unconquerable faith of the Covenanters under the cruel treatment and prolonged persecution they endured, we must reach the conclusion that their strength lay in their Covenanted union with the Lord Jesus Christ. Being thus united, the God's strength was theirs.

Their Covenant they cherished with holy awe; its sacredness lay heavy upon their hearts. It lifted the conscience up into the presence of God. His throne of judgment was continually flashing its brightness upon their eyes. A deep consciousness of God's presence, power, and approval, grew upon them. The dreadful majesty of God overawed them. The sacrificial love of Jesus Christ set their hearts on flames. The Bible to them was teeming with promises, shining with doctrines, and terrible with fiery warnings. They walked on the border line, being often times even more in the other world than in this. The glory of the Lord fell upon them, till some of them were compelled to cry out, "Withhold, Lord; it is enough." Their trials drove them into the arms of their Father; and, oh, how sweet it is to lie on His bosom when cold and hungry, weary and sobbing, amidst the sorrows of this world!

But was this the happy condition of many, or merely of a few, in those days of sad adversity? How with the 100,000 Covenanters while suffering in their homes, or roaming through the mountains, or hiding in the caves? We have a record of a few only, but we are persuaded that many others enjoyed an equal portion of the abounding love of Christ. The promise of God is ever sure: "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." Terrible days insure extraordinary strength. The Lord had a great harvest in those times, ministers and people, men and women, parents and children—a generation of honored worthies.

Samuel Rutherford was one of the mighty host. His life reveals the secret and source of the Covenanters' strength. He was of a fair complexion, denoting gentleness and a tender heart. He was roughly tossed from his earliest years upon the billows of trouble. An invalid wife claimed his kindest attention and received it with utmost care. The children were laid in short graves, one after another till only a little daughter remained. The persecutor drove him from home, and Church, and people, to live an exile in an unfriendly city. At the age of sixty-one the wrath of King Charles fell upon his and his life was demanded, but God sheltered him from the gallows.

Through all these trials the heart of this little fair man, with shrill voice, rapid step, and quick eye, was ever an overflowing well of joy and praise. He seemed to live in the very heart of God, walking hand-in-hand with Jesus Christ, and was continually wrapped in the flames of holiest love. It is said that he rose at three in the morning to have five hours of prayer and study of the Word in preparation for the day's work. He seemed to be

always among his flock, yet was he ever ready for the pulpit.

This minister, like his blessed Master, could be seen, early and late, "leaping upon the mountains, and skipping upon the hills," in his eagerness to visit his people who were scattered widely over the country.

As he walked, his head was erect and his face heavenward; his eyes were feasting on the glory above the sky. His musings cast him into transports of joy in Christ. His Covenant with God exalted his soul into sweetest familiarity with the Lord. The Holy Spirit came upon him in great power and with superabundance of gifts.

Rutherford, having a high-keyed voice, was a poor speaker; but that did not prevent him from holding multitudes spell-bound. They came from afar to hear him tell of the love of Christ. He gazed upon visions of Christ's loveliness, arose in raptures of joy as he discoursed on Christ's glory, and seemed at times as if he would fly out of the pulpit in his animation. He was so full of life, of power, of heaven, of glory, and of God, that his words and thoughts and teachings were pictures, revelations, inspirations, apocalypses, scenes in the eternal world, glimpses of the glory of Immanuel and Immanuel's land.

Here are some of his spiritual chromos as they took color and language from his soul:

"My one joy, next to the flower of my joys, Christ, was to preach my sweetest, sweetest Master, and the glory of His kingdom."

"I would beg lodging, for God's sake, in hell's hottest furnace, that I might rub souls with Christ."

"Were my blackness and Christ's beauty carded through other, His beauty and holiness would eat up my filthiness."

"Christ's honeycombs drop honey and floods of consolation upon my soul; my chains are gold."

When Rutherford was on his deathbed, his enemies sent for him to stand trial for treasonable conduct. His treasonable conduct was his fearless preaching of the Gospel and heralding the royal glory of Christ, which included severest denunciation of the king's arrogant claim of authority over the Church. He replied, "Tell them I have got a summons already before a Superior Judge, and I behoove to answer my first summons; and ere your day come, I will be where few kings and great folks come." As he lay dying, he opened his eyes, and his familiar vision of Christ and the world of glory breaking upon him with unclouded luster, he exclaimed: "Glory, glory in Immanuel's land." With this outburst of joy on his lips, he joined the white-robed throng to take up the heavenly song.

The same source of strength is yet available. Power comes through holy familiarity with God, personal relation to Christ, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Are we full of power in the Lord's service?

Points for the Class

1. What event intensified the issue between the king and the Covenanters?
2. Wherein lay the moral strength of the Covenanters?
3. How did they show their love for the Church of Christ?
4. What aroused their jealousy for the Church?
5. How numerous were the Covenanters at this time?
6. Give the character of Rutherford as a typical Covenanter.
7. Quote some of his sayings.
8. Relate his triumphant death.
9. On what condition may we expect to be strong in the Lord?

(To be continued)

Who are Safe in the Refuge of Jehovah?

Psalm Fifteen

By the Rev. Frank D. Frazer

After hearing the sweeping indictment of mankind in Psalm 14, and knowing it to be true, the question rises, "Who then can be saved? Life is impossible for any man except in perfect obedience to God's covenant law. Now all have sinned. "And so death passed to all men for that all sinned." Dead men are incapable of saving themselves, or others. But what men cannot do for

themselves, God can do for them. To this end His covenant was framed. It, therefore, contains not only laws binding men to obedience, but also promises binding God to fulfil them. There are warnings of death; there are promises of life. If His covenant and His sovereignty are to stand, not only shall His judgments for sin be executed,

but also His promises of grace shall be made good, even at infinite cost to Himself.

Further from Psalm 14, we know that God is here on earth, "God is in the generation of the righteous". This is confirmed by many other Scriptures: God is in "His tabernacle with men", at the place He chose for it, on His holy hill of Zion. If there be righteous men on earth with God, we know they "must" (John 3:7) have been "born again," "born of God", and clothed with His righteousness. And, not only "Hath Jehovah prepared His throne for judgment, and is judging the world in righteousness", but Jehovah is also a high tower for the oppressed, a high tower in times of trouble; And they that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee." (Psalm 9:7-10). And, "Blessed are all who take refuge in Him, — i.e., in Him who God called "My Son". (Psalm 2:12). He is the shelter from overwhelming judgments, and a safe retreat for all who flee from the enemies of their soul. But, **who** are these that have here found peace and safety? Who are the children of God? Who are they that "know Him that is true, and are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ"?

The One who arranged this octave of Judgment Psalms beginning with Psalm 9, happily put Psalm 15 immediately after Psalm 14.

I. The Question. (vs. 1).

The psalmist directs this question to Jehovah, who knows His own and cares for them. And His word is truth.

"Jehovah, who abides in Thy tabernacle? Who dwells on Thy holy hill?"

In view of God's unchangeable covenant, and of all present circumstances on earth, this is a most urgent question, of vital importance to all. Every right thinking person will earnestly desire to know the true answer.

II. The Answer. (verses 2-5b).

The answer is given first in general terms, comprehensively, (vs. 2) — **"He who keeps walking as a perfect man: That is, who keeps doing what is right, And keeps speaking, in His heart, what is true."**

In the original, the three verbs of this verse are three Hebrew participles; therefore describing continuous, habitual action in the direction indicated. Here the direction indicated is toward perfect righteousness and perfect truth, which are inseparable, the end and aim of both faith and works.

God made man after His own image, in knowledge, righteousness and true holiness, and made covenant provision for him so to live. But Adam sinned and fell from his first estate. In him also sinned and fell all his children, all his posterity. God immediately opened His covenant way of

recovery to all who would walk in it. For example, He said to Abram, "Walk before Me and be thou **perfect**, and I will put my covenant between Me and Thee." Moses, speaking for God, said to Israel, "Thou shalt be **perfect** with Jehovah thy God." "Ye shall be **holy**; for Jehovah thy God is **holy**." Jesus Christ said to His disciples, "Be ye **perfect**, as your Father in heaven is **perfect**." So he that dwells with God in the secret place, under the shadow of the Almighty, is the one who keeps walking as a perfect man, in the perfect way, with a perfect heart.

The word here translated: "as a perfect man". ("uprightly" in the English versions of 1611 and 1901), is most frequently used in Scripture as the requirement for the sacrifices typical of the sinners' Substitute, that they be "**without blemish**," "**without spot**". Only such could be accepted on the altar in place of sinners. Our English word "perfect", as also the corresponding Hebrew and Greek words, are used in Scripture, sometimes in an absolute sense, sometimes in a relative sense. As applied to a man in this present world, they are not used in the absolute sense at all. A Christian is commanded to be "**perfect**" here and now, but not in the sense taught by Perfectionism and the so-called "Holiness" sects. He is "**perfect**" as being renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and enabled more and more to die unto sin and to live unto righteousness. He is accepted as righteous in the sight of God, only for the righteousness of Christ, imputed to him. He is received into the number of little children, not as yet a fullgrown man. The whole matter is clarified by the testimony of Paul:

"Not that I have already obtained, or am already made **perfect**: . . . but one thing I do, forgetting the things that are behind, and stretching forward to the things that are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as are **perfect**, be thus minded: and if in anything ye are otherwise minded, this also shall God reveal to you: only, whereunto we have attained, by that same rule let us go on walking." (Phil. 3:8-16). Compare Rom. 7:14-25. Then Gal. 6:14-18: "Far be it from me to glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ through which the world has been crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For neither is circumcision anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. As many as shall walk by this rule, peace be on them, and mercy . . . Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, Amen."

The word translated "walk" in the two quotations above, is not the most common word, but one describing a deliberate step by step progress toward the goal. Every one who is walking "as a perfect man" is doing so by the grace of God, upon which he depends for every step. The command is, "Abide in Me, and I in you . . . for apart from Me ye can do nothing." (John 15:4, 5).

For additional light, let us turn to John's

First Epistle, and note particularly his use of the Greek continuous present tense, as indicated in the following quotations:

"Whosoever keeps on abiding in Him, does not keep on sinning. . . . He that is keeping His commandments is abiding in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that He is abiding in us by the Spirit He gave us." (1 John 3:6, 24). Again, "Whosoever is born of God does not keep on committing sin, because his seed abideth in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever does not keep on doing righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." (1 John 3:9, 10). He that abides in Him who was "manifested to take away sin", is **not as yet a sinless man, an absolutely perfect man**, but he is leaving sin behind and moving forward in the perfect way. No man can be in different places, or go in opposite directions at the same time. If he is **inside** the refuge and fortress of God, — if he continues abiding there "hid with Christ in God", he is **not outside**. If he is moving toward the goal of God's righteousness and truth, he is not sinning against God; he is not deceiving himself, or others. But it takes the energy of the new life, from God, for "patient continuance in well-doing"; for constancy of purpose, and constancy of dependence on the grace of God. Paul encourages us by his testimony, "I can do all things in Christ who keeps on strengthening me."

Moreover, the dweller in Zion "**keeps on speaking, in his heart, what is true.**" He is watching and guarding his heart with all diligence, "for out of it are the issues of life." (Prov. 4:23). "This above all: to thine own self be true. And it must follow, as the night the day, Thou canst not then be false to any man." (Hamlet, Act I, Scene iii).

And now further, he who abides in the refuge of Jehovah is not only keeping the commandments of God **in general**, as matter calling for no special effort, but conscious of the searching eye of Jehovah upon him, he is carefully keeping the particular points of the law. "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all." Hence the answer to our question adds some specific examples of this man's obedience of faith, to show that he is leaving sins behind and making progress by the sanctification of the Holy Spirit; that he is growing in grace and in knowledge of Christ, putting off the old man and putting on the new, and therefore, that he is not falling back into the old ways of disobedience.

1. (Verse 3). As for his fellowmen: He does not bear false witness against his neighbor.

"**He hath not slandered with his tongue;**" To "**slander**" is to misrepresent, or distort the truth about a neighbor; to injure him by a false report. There is nothing of that kind in his heart, so there is none on his tongue.

"**He hath done no wrong to his friend;**" He could do no wrong to his friend, or companion, except on some false pretence, by hatred in his heart, by some diabolical desire to hurt him. But, in his heart, he loves him and wishes him well, for he is his friend.

"**He hath taken up no reproach against his neighbor.**" A "**reproach**" is some cause, or occasion of blame, discredit, or disgrace. To take up a reproach against another, is, on one's own initiative, to make a false accusation, or repeat an unconfirmed report against a neighbor. The neighbor may bring reproach upon himself, but the righteous man is not the cause or author of it.

2. (verse 4). As for God: He does not take the name of Jehovah his God in vain.

"**Always despised in his eyes is the reprobate.**" A "**reprobate**" is one whom God has rejected, given up to his defiantly held wickedness, because he had exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for corruptible things, and the truth of God for a lie; and refuses to acknowledge God, or give Him thanks.

"**But them that fear Jehovah he honoreth.**" He is very jealous for the name, the honor and glory of God, and rejoices when that NAME is held in reverence by other men.

"**Hath he sworn to his own hurt? — he changes not.**" An oath is in the name of God. If by ignorance, or deceit he have used the name of God for any dishonor to God, or hurt to his neighbor, he will confess and renounce it, for it was his sin; but, if the hurt be to himself alone, he will bear the loss, for the name of God is holy.

3. (verse 5). As for Himself: He has not made money (or property) another God for himself, nor worshipped it.

"**He hath not loaned his money on usury, Nor taken a bribe against the innocent.**"

He has not put his trust in riches. He does not increase his wealth by unlawful means; by robbing nor by wronging another in any case.

III. The Truth of This Answer Confirmed by the Eternal Power and Faithfulness of Jehovah. (vs 5c).

"**He who keeps on doing these things shall not be moved forever.**"

"Walk before Me, and be thou perfect, and I will put My covenant (the Covenant of Everlasting Life) between Me and thee."

"They that trust in Jehovah are as Mount Zion which cannot be moved, but abideth forever." "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness, for His name's sake, . . . and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

(Note: Mr. Frazer's studies in the Psalms will be continued, D.V., in future issues of this magazine. — Ed.)

The Second Commandment

The Principle that God is to be worshipped only in ways prescribed in Holy Scripture and that the Holy Scripture prescribes the whole content of worship — Taught by Scripture itself

By William Young, Th. D.

Before inquiring into the Scripture warrant for the principle in question, it may be in the interest of clarity and accuracy to attempt a more precise formulation of the principle than that provided in the sub-title of this paper. We may first state the principle positively, then set it in contrast to other views, then mention certain qualifications of the principle.

The statement of the principle in the sub-title of this paper is redundant. That God is to be worshipped only in ways prescribed in Holy Scripture is implied in the statement that the Holy Scripture prescribes the whole content of worship. The principle in question may then be stated simply by the latter proposition, i.e., "The Holy Scripture prescribes the whole content of worship." By this is meant that all elements or parts of worship are prescribed by God Himself in His Word. This principle has universal reference to worship performed by men since the fall. In other words it has equal application to the Old and the New Testament. It is also universal in that it is regulative of all types of worship, whether public, family or private. It is in order to observe the universality of the principle, although our special concern is with public worship under the New Testament.

This principle has been formulated in contrast to other views, particularly to the principle that anything not expressly forbidden in the Word of God is allowable in the worship of God. *QUOD SCRIPTURA NON VETAT, PERMITTIT* (What Scripture does not forbid, it permits): This is the principle of the Romish Church, also of Lutherans and Anglicans embodied in the 20th Article of the Church of England: "The church has power to decree rites and ceremonies . . . and yet it is not lawful for the church to ordain anything contrary to God's Word written". The doctrine of the Calvinistic churches clearly formulated in the Westminster standards is sharply opposed to this: *QUOD SCRIPTURA NON IUBET, VETAT* (What Scripture does not command, it forbids). "The silence of Scripture is as real a prohibition as a positive injunction to abstain."

We may also contrast this principle with the ambiguously stated principle that God is to be worshipped according to His Word. Of course it is true that God is to be worshipped according to His Word, but it is also true that the civil magistrate should administer his office according to the Word. In this sense, the worship of God

would not be in principle regulated by the Word more directly than the conduct of civil government. Such is not the Calvinistic view of the character of the worship of God. Neither may we say that God's Word provides us with general principles of worship, but leaves the particulars of practice to the discretion of the Church. The whole content of worship includes the specific acts of worship as well as the broad principal basis of these acts. The Word of God, moreover, obviously prescribes specific acts of worship even in quite minute detail, in addition to laying down the general principles of worship. This principle may not be construed as admitting that Scripture itself opens up in the New Testament economy an area of liberty in the worship of God within which area nothing is prescribed by God and everything left to the judgment of men. The admission of such an area of liberty is tantamount to asserting the un-Reformed principle that anything not expressly forbidden in Scripture is allowable in the worship of God. On the Reformed principle no part of the content of God's worship can be regarded as belonging to the *adiaphora*, to the class of actions neither required nor forbidden by Divine commandment. Whatever has not been commanded is *IPSO FACTO* prohibited.

That no misunderstanding may exist with respect to this principle it is necessary to make two qualifications, both of which are stated in Sec. 6 of the first chapter of the Westminster Confession of Faith. First, that which may be derived by good and necessary consequences from the express statements of Scripture is no less binding than an express command itself. Approved example has equal validity with a direct command, and even where approved example and express command may both be lacking or uncertain, as in the baptism of infants, necessary inference from the doctrine and commandments plainly set forth in Scripture may sufficiently warrant a practice of worship. Secondly, there are "some circumstances concerning the worship of God . . . common to human action and societies, which are to ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence according to the general rules of the word which are always to be observed."

That these circumstances constitute no part of the content of worship is clear from the following quotation from Gillespie, who writes of the conditions "requisite in such a thing as the church hath power to prescribe by her laws." "First, it must be only a circumstance of divine worship; no

substantial part of it; no sacred, significant and efficacious ceremony. For the order and decency left to the definition for the church, as concerning the particulars of it, comprehendeth no more but mere circumstances."

Again he writes, "We say truly of those several and changeable circumstances which are left to the determination of the church, that, being almost infinite they were not particularly determinable in Scripture; for the particular determination of those occurring circumstances which were to be rightly ordered in the works of God's service to the end of the world, and that ever according to the exigency of every present occasion and different case, should have filled the whole world with books. But as for other things pertaining to God's worship which are not to be reckoned among the circumstances of it, they being in number neither many, nor in change various, were most easily and conveniently determinable in Scripture." (*Dispute against the English Popish Ceremonies in Presbyterian's Armoury*, Vol. I, pp. 130, 131).

An even more precise definition of the circumstances that may be ordered by the church in connection with God's worship is given by John Owen in his "Discourse Concerning Liturgies." Owen distinguishes circumstances "which follow actions as actions from circumstances which do not of their own accord, nor naturally nor necessarily attend them." The former kind of circumstances "not determined by divine institution may be ordered, disposed of and regulated by the prudence of men." "As the action cannot be without them, so their regulation is arbitrary, if they come not under some divine disposition and order, as that of time in general doth. There are also some things which men call circumstances, also that no way belong of themselves to the actions whereof they are said to be the circumstances, nor do attend them, but are imposed on them, or annexed to them, by the arbitrary authority of those who take upon them to give order and rules in such cases; such as to pray before an image, or toward the East, or to use this or that form of prayer in such gospel administrations, and no other. These are not circumstances attending the nature of the thing itself but are arbitrarily super-added to the things they are appointed to accompany. Whatever men may call such additions, they are no less parts of the whole wherein they serve than the things themselves whereunto they are adjoined. The schoolmen tell us that which is made so the condition of an action, that without it the action is not to be done, is not a circumstance of it, but such an adjunct as is a necessary part. But not to contend about the word, such additional that are called circumstantial, are made parts of worship as are made necessary by virtue of command to be observed." (*Owen's Words*, Goold's Ed., Vol. XV., pp. 35, 36).

The qualification with respect to circumstances far from weakening the force of the regulative principle of worship rather sets in the sharpest focus the position that everything properly belonging to the content of worship must be the matter of divine commandment, not of human devising.

Having attempted a precise formulation of the principle regulative of worship, we may now turn to inquire as to the Scripture warrant for this principle. Before appealing to particular texts in which the principle is asserted, we should observe that it is a principle involved in several cardinal doctrines of the Word of God. The case for this principle rests not on a string of isolated proof texts, but upon the central concepts and doctrines of the Word of God. We shall content ourselves with stating five fundamental articles of our faith, from which this principle follows as a good and necessary consequence.

First: The Scriptures are the only infallible rule of faith and practice, and are therefore sufficient for all the needs of the church. II Tim. III, 16, 17. It clearly follows from the accepted Reformed doctrine of the authority and sufficiency of Scripture, that Scripture is the sole and sufficient rule for worship, particularly the worship of the Church. If the prescriptions of worship contained in Holy Writ are sufficient, why add ordinances of worship for which there is no need?

The attempt to avoid the force of this argument by the assertion that Scripture itself opens up an area of liberty in which it prescribes nothing as to the content of worship is vain. Such a position is a virtual denial of the sufficiency of Scripture and is certainly not the view of Scripture on which the Calvinistic reformation in Geneva, France, the low countries, and the British Isles proceeded. Just such an area of liberty would make allowance for Romish ceremonies retained by Lutherans and Anglicans but rejected universally by the Calvinists. The Calvinistic conception of the sufficiency of Scripture, which I trust my readers are prepared to acknowledge to be the Scriptural conception, thus involves the regulative principle of worship. It is no accident that the regulative principle of worship makes its first appearance in the Westminster confession in connection with the discussion of the sufficiency of Scripture.

Second: The sole object of worship is the absolutely Sovereign God. The basic conception of Calvinism, God's absolute sovereignty, excludes worship of human devising. In anthropocentric systems of doctrine like Lutheranism or Arminianism, the human will may be allowed to define the content of worship at least in part, even as it contributes in part to man's salvation. But in the theocentric system of Calvinism, the autonomy of man's will is rejected in the face of God's abso-

lute sovereignty. This is true at every step of the way, with respect to worship as well as to the plan of salvation. Man's will may contribute nothing more to God's worship than to God's plan of salvation, and it is no accident that will worship and rejection of the doctrine of salvation by grace alone flourish together. As Sovereign, God is the supreme Law-giver. As His sovereignty extends to His worship, so it is His sole prerogative to appoint the laws of His worship, to command of His subjects the way they ought to worship Him. Can it be anything other than presumption in a subject of the absolute Sovereign to offer as worship anything which has not been commanded? Can the inventions of the human will be set on the same level as the commands of the Divine Will as proper material of worship? That God shall allow worship other than what He has commanded is contrary to reason itself. Gillespie writes "How absurd a tenet is this, which holdeth that there is some particular worship of God allowed and not commanded? What new light is this which maketh all our divines to have been in the mist, who have acknowledged no worship of God, but that which God hath commanded? Who ever heard of commanded and allowed worship?" (op. cit. 118). The question raised by the Lord in Isaiah 1:12 thus applies to all worship offered to Him: "When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand . . . ?"

Third: The total corruption and deceitfulness of the human heart disqualifies man from judging what is to be admitted into the worship of God. It may be that before the fall, our first parents had written on their hearts the law of worship and by looking within the depth of their own beings, could read off the commandments of God. Yet even then, they were not without direct external communication of the will of Him who walked and talked with them in the garden.

Since the fall, however, though the human conscience still witnesses in all men that worship is due to the supreme Being, no information can be gained from the heart of man as to how God is to be worshipped. The idolatry and superstition not only of the heathen in their blindness but of the professing Christian Church enjoying the full light of God's Word sufficiently demonstrates this to be the case. It goes without saying that the unregenerate consciousness, blind to spiritual things, is unfit to determine matters concerning the worship of God. Worship that is the invention of the heart of men, every imagination of the thoughts of which is only evil continually, in the nature of the case cannot be acceptable to a holy God.

What requires, however, to be emphasized is that the regenerate consciousness is no more fit than the unregenerate to decide what may be introduced into God's worship. The regenerate, it must be remembered, ever groan under the

burden of sin that dwells in them, and therefore should well know that their understanding and will are not to be trusted to determine what is acceptable worship before God. The enlightened understanding is content to learn God's precepts and the renewed will to walk in them, but the regenerate heart as such cannot desire to make the slightest addition to God's commandments. Whenever true believers have acted inconsistently in this respect, they have invariably allowed great corruption to be introduced into God's sanctuary.

Fourth: Christ is the sole Head and King over His body, the church. In the exercise of His headship and Kingship, the Lord Jesus Christ has appointed the ordinances of His house. This applies in particular to the public worship of the New Testament Church. How may a minister of Christ with a clear conscience administer any rite or ceremony of worship in the Lord's house without warrant from his Lord and King? To add human inventions to Christ's express commands is to usurp an authority which is not ministerial, but which is tantamount to placing the doctrines and commandments of men upon the same level as the commands of the Lord Jesus. The pretense that the humanly invented modes of worship are optional, whereas Christ's commands are mandatory, is to no avail. We have already noted the absurdity of distinguishing two kinds of worship, prescribed and allowed.

It is also worthy of note that in practice no difference is made between the two types of worship. Hymns of human composition and divinely inspired psalms are sung the one after the other, as if the one were offered to God in obedience to the Lord's appointment as much as the other. Furthermore, the people are led to feel that the one type of worship is of the same character as the other and that they are no less bound to engage in the one than in the other. Quite apart from the evil of singing the word of man alongside of God's Word, we would now stress the inevitable binding of the conscience of the ordinary worshipper by the inventions of men, as soon as those inventions are given the same place as Divine institutions which truly bind the conscience.

In this connection it should be observed that the regulative principle of worship, far from abridging the scope of genuine Christian liberty, is the preeminent safeguard of Christian liberty in matters of worship. It is this principle that has again and again liberated Christ's little flock from the impositions of man in the worship of God. Deliverance from human tyranny and complete subjection to Christ's commands are involved in one another, and these two are but the negative and positive elements of Christian liberty in the worship of God.

Fifth: In the same connection the character of the Church's constitution should be kept in view. Even as the doctrine, government and discipline of the Church have been prescribed by

Christ, so also has its worship. May any doctrine be taught which the great Prophet has not revealed? May any new office or function be added to the government of the Christ's Church that the Head of the Church has not provided for? May anything be counted an offense but that which Christ has declared to be such in His Word? So also may anything be added to the content of His worship that He has not prescribed?

We may sum up the above argument from the central teachings of Scripture in the words of William Cunningham: "The truth of the principle, as a general rule for the guidance of the Church, is plainly enough involved in what Scripture teaches concerning its own sufficiency and perfection as a rule of faith and practice, concerning God's exclusive right to determine in what ways He ought to be worshipped, concerning Christ's exclusive right to settle the constitution, laws and arrangements of His kingdom, concerning the unlawfulness of will-worship and concerning the utter unfitness of men for the function which they have so often and so boldly usurped in this matter."

In adducing Scripture warrant for the regulative principle of our Reformed worship, we will not confine ourselves to inferences, as good and necessary as these inferences are. The inferences prove the principle by bringing to light that it is part and parcel of the Calvinistic system. But that system itself rests on Scripture revelation and so also does this principle which we may defend by direct appeal to Scripture passages. Let us first consider a number of passages expressly asserting this principle and then observe certain Scripture examples confirming it.

The first passage we may consider in this connection is the Second Commandment, Ex. XX, 4, 5. It might be said that the Second Commandment contains an express prohibition of idolatry and nothing more and thus has no bearing upon the question. From the point of view of historic Presbyterianism, however, this is not the case. Our Larger Catechism states, among other rules to be observed for the right understanding of the ten commandments "that under one sin or duty, all of the same kind are forbidden or commanded, together with all the causes, means, occasions, and appearances thereof, and provocations thereunto." (Q. 99). The Larger Catechism further includes among the sins forbidden in the second commandment, "all devising, counselling, commanding, using and any wise approving any religious worship not instituted by God Himself . . . all superstitious devices, corrupting the worship of God, added to it, or taking from it, whether invented and taken up of ourselves, or received by tradition from others, though under the title of antiquity, custom, devotion, good intent, or any other pretense whatsoever." (Q. 109).

The prohibition of idolatry is thus understood to involve the regulative principle. As John Knox expressed the matter pointedly: "All worshipping,

honoring, or service invented by the brain of man in the religion of God, without his own express commandment, is idolatry." (Works, Vol. III, p. 34). One might view the matter this way. Idols are the work of men's hands. Men make them unto themselves for the worship of God as fit means for the worship of God. Deeper even than the fact that the idol is unfit to represent the invisible God, is the fact that it is the product of man's own brain and hand. And every product of man's brain and hand introduced into God's worship is, in the very nature of the case, an idol.

The correctness of the historic Presbyterian doctrine of the Second Commandment is verified by several other passages of the Mosaic Law, in which the Church is expressly forbidden to add anything to the commandments of God respecting His worship and service. (Deut. IV, 2; XII, 32; cf. Proverbs XXX, 6). When Moses was about to make the tabernacle, he was admonished by God, "And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was showed thee in the mount." (Exodus XXV, 40; Heb. VIII, 5).

The minuteness of detail in the divine prescriptions as to the construction of the tabernacle and as to the practice of worship to be performed in it made it perfectly plain to God's ancient people that whatever was not commanded was forbidden. Those who, contrary to such clear light, worshipped God with their own inventions, as we shall see, became the object of the fearful vengeance of a jealous God. In this connection observe that the jealousy of God is revealed to idolatrous corruptions of and superstitious additions to His worship. Meditation on this much forgotten attribute of God should impress us with the grave importance of the purity of God's sanctuary. The Lord will not suffer His bride to seek after her own heart and eyes, after which she is accustomed to go a whoring (Numbers XV, 39, 40), but visits such faithfulness with the severest rebukes.

A most remarkable passage bearing on the question is Jer. VIII, 31: "They have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the Son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart." How clearly does this passage show that God does not view sin as does man. Man would revolt at the unnatural and inhuman cruelty of the burning of the fruit of one's own body before an idol. But in God's mind this is but secondary, the essential evil being that it is worship which He did not command, neither came it into His heart.

Owen writes in this connection: "Moreover to testify what weight He laid on the observance of these general prohibitions, when men found out other ways of worship that what He had appointed, though the particulars were such as fell under other special interdictions, yet the Lord was pleased to place the great aggravation of their sin in the contempt of those general rules

mentioned. This is that He urgeth them with, that they did things by Him not appointed; of not observing anything in religion but what He requires, that He presseth them withal. The command is general, 'Ye shall add nothing to what I have instituted.' And the aggravation of the sin pressed by Him relates not to the particular nature of it, but to the general command or prohibition, 'ye have done what I commanded you not.' That the particular evil condemned was also against other special commands of God, is merely accidental to the general nature of the crime they were urged withal. And whereas God hath given out these general rules and precepts, 'you shall do whatever I command you, and according as I command you; you shall add nothing thereunto, nor take anything therefrom,' can the transgression of this rule be any otherwise expressed but this, 'They did the thing which He commanded not, nor did it ever come into his heart?'" (op. cit. p. 41). As Gillespie puts it briefly, "howsoever manifold wickedness might have been challenged in that which they did, yet if any would dispute with God upon the matter, He stoppeth their mouths with this one answer: 'I commanded it not, neither came it into my heart.'" (op. cit. p. 136).

The objection may be raised that, while it became the state of the Church in the Old Testament to have all ordinances of worship prescribed even in minute detail, the New Testament economy is free from such restriction. The Church, it may be said, has passed from childhood to years of maturity where it can exercise discretion and liberty in determining its own worship.

In reply, it must be said that this would be contrary to the identity of the Covenant of Grace in both the old and the new dispensation. The principle regulating the worship of God's people belongs to the substance of the covenant of grace. With reference to the heavenly Father, the most mature saint remains a covenant child, and the most mature state of the Church itself remains subject to the ordinances imposed by the Church's Head and Lord. Notwithstanding the changes involved in abrogation of the ceremonial law, there is no change in the Divine prerogative of appointing the worship to be rendered by the Church. The teaching of our Lord and His apostles on this matter is quite express. In condemning the Pharisees for their tradition as to eating bread with unwashed hands, the Lord quotes the words of Isaiah: "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Mk. VII, 7) and comments "For laying aside the commandments of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do." (vs. 8). The Lord goes on to show that human traditions added to God's Word have the effect of making that Word of none effect. Additions to the Word of God in worship will not allow the Word itself to stand. Professor Petticrew observes: "Laying aside the commandments of God,

that they may keep their own tradition! Is there not a close likeness between this action, thus condemned by Christ, and the action of those in modern times who lay aside the Divine Ordinance of the singing of the Psalms that they may keep their own man-appointed ordinance of the singing of uninspired hymns in the place of the Psalms? (In Psalm Singers' Conference" p. 73).

Observe also the terms of the Great Commission: "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." (Mt. XXVIII, 20). Here there is to be found authority for worship in the New Testament Church by the means appointed by the Church's Lord. But there is no authority for anything besides those appointed means. Observe the Lord does not give authority to His disciples to teach man to observe what He has not forbidden, but only what He has commanded them. The charter of the New Testament Church at this point is expressed in identical terms as those of the Mosaic economy which we have seen so expressly to exclude the inventions of men from the worship of God. No addition to or subtraction from Christ's commands may be allowed in the New Testament any more than with respect to the commands given on Mount Sinai in the Old. As we read concerning Moses again and again that he did all as the Lord commanded him, so the Apostles organized the worship and government of the Christian Church according to Christ's commands. We have no more right to alter that Divinely instituted pattern of ordinances for the New Testament Church than Nadab and Abihu, Saul, Jeroboam, or any others in the Old. The apostle Paul expressly condemns will worship, worship according to the doctrines and commandments of men. (Col. II, 22, 23). The will of God, not the will of man, is the rule of the worship of the New Testament Church.

The examples by which Scripture enforces this principle may occupy our attention briefly. First: The sacrifices of Cain and Abel. Though Abel was accepted as coming in true faith which was lacking in the case of Cain, yet it would appear that Abel's offering was also intrinsically more excellent than his brother's. True faith will bring to God the offering of penitence and praise that He has appointed as He has appointed, while unbelief brings an offering of its own choosing in a perfunctory manner. Cain appears not to have brought the best of what he had as did Abel. (Gen. IV, 3, 4). Equally striking is the reference to the atoning blood in Abel's offering for which he had the precedent of the animals slain by the Lord's own hand to provide coats of skin to cover the nakedness of our parents. (Gen. III, 21). From the beginning, acknowledgement of the imputed righteousness of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world and meticulous observance of Divinely instituted methods of worship appear to be yoked inseparably.

Second: If there be doubt as to the case of Cain and Abel, there is no obscurity in the least in the instance of Nadab and Abihu. (Lev. X,

1, 7). The strange fire they offered before the Lord "Wherefore God had given to them no charge" was "a common fire and not of that fire which God had commanded to burn day and night before the altar of burnt sacrifice, which only ought to have been offered unto God." (John Knox). Nadab and Abihu were Aaron's Sons, priests next to himself. They seem to have had no unworthy motive in their offering, they desired no earthly gain but only to honor God, and that in a way he had not expressly forbidden. They did nothing more than substitute fire of their own for that which the Lord had commanded. Yet for this act they were instantaneously consumed by fire from the Lord.

John Knox comments further: "Whereof it is plain, that neither the pre-eminence of the person of man that maketh or setteth up any religion, without the express commandment of God, nor yet the intent whereof he doeth the same is accepted before God. For nothing in his religion will he admit without his own Word, but all that is added thereto doth he abhor, and punisheth the inventors and doers thereof, as you have heard in Nadab and Abihu, by Gideon and diverse other Israelites setting up something to honour God, whereof they had no express commandment." (op. cit. p. 38). Can the Lord be pleased with the fire of strange praise on the lips of men, which He has not commanded, any more than with the strange fire offered by Nadab and Abihu? Disrespect for His command and neglect of His own provision in the interest of our inventions cannot but provoke His indignation.

Third: Reference may be made also to (a) Korah, Dathan and Abiram, Numbers XVI; (b) Moses smiting the rock at Kadesh, Numbers XX; (c) The rejection of Saul, I Sam. XIII; (d) The handling of the ark, I Chron. XV, 13, as a few instances chosen from among many.

We may conclude this discussion with the following quotation from Dr. James Begg: "The

first thing necessary is to fix the principle which regulates New Testament worship. There is a tremendous emphasis in the question of the king of Moab, 'Wherewithal shall I come before God, and bow myself before the Most High?' To hear many speak at present, one would suppose that there was nothing less solemn than an act of worship, and that, instead of raising the question, 'What in worship is pleasing and acceptable to God?' they have simply to consider, 'What is pleasing and acceptable to themselves and each other?' They perfectly well understand that they must study the most minute rules of the court before they can dare to be permitted to approach an earthly sovereign; but they presumptuously imagine that it is, and ought to be, the easiest thing possible to enter into the presence of the King of kings, before whose awful majesty angels veil their faces whilst they adore. They forget that it is in connection with His own worship that God proclaims Himself in the second commandment to be 'a jealous God,' and that it has been in the same connection with His worship that this jealousy has most frequently flamed forth in the past history of the Church — in the case of Cain, of Korah, of Uzzah, of the buyers and sellers in the temple. Corruption here is corruption at the fountain head, fitted to cause the withdrawal of the Holy Spirit of God, and thus to leave the Church to sink under deeper and more hopeless evils; whilst, if we consider the relation of the thrice holy God to fallen sinners, the wonder is not that our mode of access into His presence is strictly regulated, but that any such access is permitted to us at all" (James Begg, "The use of organs and other instruments of music in Christian worship Indefensible," pp. 11, 12).

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The Master's Master Plan

A Convocation Sermon Preached in the Chapel of Geneva College

By the Rev. D. Ray Wilcox, D. D.

Scripture Reading: 2 Timothy 2:1-26; Revelation 21: 10, 11, 24a.

"And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and

her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it:"

The view of the City of God is Scripture imagery of the sovereign dominion of our Triune

God, which has been set before us as the pattern after which God is re-making a lost world. It is the glorious Master Plan which is set before us, let down from heaven, that we may realize what is here idealized!

When you gather your family together at the family altar to read God's Word and pray, you are realizing the Master's plan for a Christian home.

When you erect a house of public worship for the preaching of God's Word and for the administration of His sacraments, you realize His plan for the Church.

When you go forth to carry out the Lord's commands to feed the hungry, open blind eyes, clothe the destitute, and fight for justice in courts and open fields, you begin to realize the ideal of the Master's Master Plan in that area of life.

And when you organize a system of schools to study the natural and spiritual laws of God's creation you are beginning to bring into concrete form the part of the great Master Plan which will occupy our attention tonight.

We will consider the part that is to be played in the realizing of God's Master Plan by **the Christian College**. Even more specifically we will think of the plan for a college such as Geneva College, historically **Reformed or Calvinistic in heritage**.

The large majority of early American colleges were founded by people of the Reformed Faith. We are told that "of 119 colleges established east of the Mississippi, 104 were founded as Christian colleges" (H. J. Long, Ph. D., in *The Free Methodist*, April 19, 1955). Dr. Long continues, "As late as 1900 there were five times as many church-related colleges in America as tax-supported ones, with twice as many students. Today, however, out of 1889 institutions of higher learning, 773 are church-related, 643 are tax-supported, and 513 are free from both church and state."

A Christian college is **one which has for its unifying principle the historic Christian view of God, man and the universe in their mutual relations; Christian administration and faculty; a preponderant body of Christian students, and a vital impact for Christian life in its community near and far.**

Christian colleges have come in for their share of criticism by those evaluating higher education. T. M. Benson of Colorado Springs, Colorado, writing in *The Calvin Forum* of November, 1954, gives some scathing rebukes to the independent Christian colleges. He states that most of their graduates are immature educationally, with large deficiencies in languages, mathematics, the arts and the disciplines; that in many subtler ways they foster prejudice, intolerance, pride and other evils that go with ignorance and meager intellectual curiosity. Benson quotes Dr.

Frank E. Gabelein of the Stony Brook School, who says: "Nothing short of the best in higher education is demanded by the urgency of the age. The hour is past, if indeed there ever was one, when religious zeal can make up for intellectual shallowness."

Again, he quotes A. W. Tozer, Editor of the *Christian and Missionary Alliance* magazine, who writing in *His Magazine* said: "There is, unfortunately, a feeling in some quarters today that there is something innately wrong about learning, and **that to be spiritual one must be stupid**. This tacit philosophy has given us in the last half century a new cult within the confines of orthodoxy. I call it **the cult of ignorance**. It equates learning with unbelief and spirituality with ignorance, and, according to it, never the twain shall meet."

Arthur E. Bestor in his book **Educational Wastelands** has severe criticism for state schools as well. He and other educators have indicted the educational system in general for superficiality and shoddiness as a result of concessions made to the shallowness and materialism of American life.

Many Christian colleges, along with the rest, have made no attempt to limit their enrollment policy, feeling obligated to crowd in every possible student the constituency forces upon them. "There is no evidence that they consider their first or even their second responsibility to give a superior education," says Mr. Benson. He continues: "The pressure applied by the Christian public has forced Christian colleges in the direction of vocationalism, triviality and mediocrity." And finally he says: "For the glory of God the Christian college must dedicate itself to the restoration of the strength and character that evangelicalism once had. To do so they will have to pursue relentlessly the deeper purposes of education. And for Christian education no purpose is more urgent than the need to combine God-given intelligence and personal holiness."

This criticism of Christian colleges comes from their own leaders. They recognize the sickness and call for the remedy.

Certainly the historic Biblical view of education offers us a well balanced system of faith and reason. It recognizes the value of a thorough study of the two realms of God's revelation: the natural and the spiritual.

I. A Thorough Education

The Scriptures nowhere give any backing for ignorance or lazy, shoddy work.

Moses is most certainly not condemned for being "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" (Acts 7:22). Solomon is praised by the Lord for his prayer, "Give me now wisdom and knowledge" (2 Chron. 1:10). His great learning in the realm of the natural sciences is stated with

approval: "And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt. He spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes" (1 Kings 4:32, 33).

Nor does Scripture look with disfavor upon Solomon's enterprises in industry and commerce. His literary attainments, with three books of the Old Testament to his credit, and three thousand proverbs and a thousand and five songs mentioned, are God's reward for his seeking wisdom and knowledge. Even the riches bestowed upon him through his successful endeavors are said to be God's reward.

Solomon's turning away from the only source of wisdom in his old age wrecked his kingdom, and the danger from knowledge, as from riches, is expressed in the apostle Paul's words: "knowledge puffeth up" (1 Cor. 8:1), and in our Lord's many warnings about riches. But these are not wrong *per se*. They are right when they are brought under the law of love and obedience to God.

Daniel and his three Hebrew friends in Babylon form the third great Old Testament example of the Bible's approval of the pursuit of earthly knowledge in all the realms of specializations.

In the history of the Church there has been a constant battle between two extreme views concerning **faith and reason**. Qualben's **History of the Christian Church** presents a diagram showing the swing of the pendulum in the emphasis, first on faith and then on reason. The mystic movements represent extremes of one kind, and the exalting of human reason as the final touchstone in rationalism represents the opposite extreme.

Dr. Henry Schultze, former president of Calvin College, in defending the place of science in a Christian College, refers to the following examples from church history.

(1) In the early church the tendency to separate from the world led Tertullian, a great lawyer of North Africa, to insist that all the developments in the non-Christian world were foolishness before God. Its philosophy and science were vanity, and only fit for the scrap heap. Tertullian and those who agreed with him insisted that they had their all in Christ. They needed nothing more than the teaching of Jesus. Their attitude is exemplified today by those people who do not believe in an educated ministry.

(2) Another group in the early church, the Alexandrian School, led by Clement and Origen, inclined toward the rationalistic position, and regarded science as well as culture as definitely associated with faith as a source of knowledge. In fact, they believed science was determinative. Being believers in the Word, they found it necessary

to twist the meaning of the Scriptures by allegorical methods of interpretation, so that the Bible was compelled to support general culture. This tendency also we know in modern liberal circles.

(3) It was Augustine who, by the grace and providence of God, brought an end to this apparent impasse. He agreed with neither extreme. He assumed the twofold source of knowledge, variously called authority and experience, faith and reason, special and general revelation, and so on.

"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork" (Psalm 19:1). Christ Himself used the flower of the field, the grain, the vine, and men, as sources of knowledge, if men but have eyes to see. Paul went so far as to declare that from general revelation one can find certain attributes so clearly revealed that even the unbeliever is without excuse.

Anyone who supposes that a Christian education must neglect the broad cultural pattern of a sound education should read again, not only Scripture, but the writings of great Christian educators like John Calvin.

The five chapters of Calvin's **Institutes** entitled **The Christian Life** were published for centuries by the Dutch as a separate little book with the title: **John Calvin's Golden Booklet about the True Christian Walk**. This booklet corrects the influence of several mystical works such as Thomas a-Kempis' **Imitation of Christ** and Menno Simons' **Foundation Book**. There is much good in the **Imitation of Christ**, but certain chapters in it confuse **the natural with the sinful**. The book also emphasizes meditation almost to the exclusion of action. A modern fault is the reverse, I believe, but in the Middle Ages there was a great deal of withdrawal from the ordinary pursuits of life into monasteries, as though all ordinary physical pleasures must be sinful.

Calvin's teachings were based upon Scripture and helped to free men from a bondage to church laws which restricted men's life beyond the Scripture standard.

II. A Thoroughly CHRISTIAN Education

Christian education recognizes the merit of work done by the regenerate and the unregenerate alike in the field of scientific research, literary style, social injustices brought to light, and the like. Christian education can rejoice in the discovery of God's natural laws and glorify God for it, even though unbelievers making these discoveries may fail to glorify God for it.

A Christian should be even more sensitive to the beauty of God's creation, and to the skill and genius revealed in an oratorio or a powerful novel or a magnificent piece of architecture.

When we think of the individual differences

in people, we can rejoice at the variety of gifts God has given to men. I had a very uncomfortable dream not long ago. I was standing on a stairway, and up and down were marching an endless stream of men, each one exactly like the others, of a pale brown color, with cool impassive faces, greeting each other mechanically. Then I awoke. Christian education will certainly not attempt to produce people who are monotonously alike, though some secular educators have been accused of regarding this as an ideal to be sought after.

Christian education recognizes the infinite variety of experiences that come to the free man in Christ. It plans to allow as much freedom of expression as possible, as much freedom of thought and of work as possible. For if Christ "shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." Freedom at the piano comes only after long, hard practice. The same is true of freedom on the basketball court and in all other fields. **Freedom comes in and with discipline.** The discipline God has given us is the thorough grounding in the basic truth revealed from heaven; what freedom is there in **confusion**?

Look what happens to education which has lost the **key to knowledge!** Robert M. Hutchens and John Dewey may differ in many things but they seem to agree that education does not know where it is going, or why; and according to Robert Hutchens, "we have almost given up the attempt to find out." This confusion has come through the disagreement of educators as to: (1) **Ultimate reality**; (2) **The validity of knowledge**; and (3) **Man's origin, nature and destiny.**

Desperately needed today is an adequate **Philosophy of Education.** That, we know, can be found only in God's revealed Word.

Jesus said to the leaders of education in His day, the ones who accused **Him** of "having never learned" (John 7:15): "**Ye have taken away the key of knowledge.**" This is the knowledge for lack of which the people perish (Hosea 4:6), eternal in the heavens.

A Christian college is desperately needed in this modern world — a college with a faculty and administration which holds in hand **the key to knowledge** — the key which unlocks the secrets of the universe for the younger generation. Back-

ed up by Christian alumni and by Christian parents and boards, the Christian college teaches **the great unifying philosophy of life** which sends forth strong, eager chemists and physicists, dramatists and writers, doctors and statesmen, businessmen and clergymen, teachers and housewives — all dedicated to the tremendous task of advancing God's Kingdom.

They **all** have seen the vision and cannot turn back. They have seen the holy city, the new Jerusalem, descending from heaven. They rejoice to see the day of Christ approaching. They live for Christ in their professions and occupations. They have felt the regenerating power of the Spirit of God. They **know** that all things are the creation of God and for His glory. They **know** that God's hand controls the events of history. They **know** that man's whole life has been touched by the blighting hand of sin since the Fall, and they proclaim **the power of the blood** shed on the cross.

Whether they eat or whether they drink, they do all to the glory of their Redeemer. No other educational process produces this kind of result. This is **Christian Higher Education.**

H. J. Long, Ph. D., writing in **The Free Methodist** of April 19, 1955, says:

"The selection of a **deeply spiritual faculty** is a prime requisite for any Christian college. 'No stream will rise above its fountain-head.' No spiritual level will likely be attained above that of **the teaching and administrative staff.** Men and women of prayer, consecration and spiritual vision will tend to reproduce these traits in the lives of their students. One of the greatest tasks facing the president of any Christian college is the selection of a **well-trained spiritual faculty.**"

May we tonight — members of Geneva's staff, student body, boards and constituency — examine ourselves again, whether we be **in** the Lord, and **faithful** in our work. Do we have within our hearts that supreme love for Christ which passeth knowledge? Have we counted "all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus" our Lord?

The great Evaluator of Colleges, the Master of our Master Plan, will come some day to inspect our work. Will He find us **faithful**?

Religious Terms Defined

COVENANT OF GRACE. The covenant made in eternity between God the Father and God the Son as the representative of all the elect, by which the eternal salvation of the elect is fully provided for and infallibly guaranteed, and which was in time revealed to the people of God and

put into execution according to the divine plan.

SALVATION. The work of God by which the elect are delivered from sin and suffering and restored to the enjoyment of God's favor in fullness of life, righteousness and blessedness.

REDEEMER OF GOD'S ELECT. "The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continueth to be, God and man in two distinct natures, and one person, forever" (S. C. 21).

REDEMPTION. God's work of meeting all the requirements of God on behalf of the elect, by which He laid the sure foundation for their salvation.

MEDIATOR. The Lord Jesus Christ, who, as God and man in one person, and by His three offices of Prophet, Priest and King, brings about complete reconciliation between God and the elect, in accordance with the Covenant of Grace.

DIVINE NATURE OF CHRIST. Christ's deity, by which He existed from all eternity as the living and true God, of the same substance with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit.

HUMAN NATURE OF CHRIST. Christ's human soul and body which He took unto Himself when He came into this world to redeem His people, and which will remain to all eternity united with His divine nature in one Person.

OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST. Christ's perfect fulfilment of all demands of God's law, not only for Himself as a human being, but also all demands of the law involved in the redemption of His people.

ACTIVE OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST. Christ's fulfilment of the requirements of God's law by His perfect life on earth.

PASSIVE OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST. Christ's suffering the penalty of the broken law of God on behalf of His people, including all His sufferings, but especially His suffering and death on the cross.

ATONEMENT. The satisfaction of the justice of God that was necessary for sinners to be forgiven.

SATISFACTION OF CHRIST. Christ's offering up of Himself a sacrifice to satisfy the justice of God in the stead of each of His elect, so that they can and shall be reconciled to God. (Also called **VICARIOUS ATONEMENT** and **SUBSTITUTIONARY ATONEMENT**).

FALSE THEORIES OF THE ATONEMENT. All doctrines of the Atonement which regard the essential nature of Christ's sufferings as something other than a sacrifice offered to God to satisfy His justice on account of human sin.

RESURRECTION OF CHRIST. Christ's rising from the tomb on the third day following His death, according to the Scriptures, in the identical body in which He suffered, but glorified.

CHRIST'S ESTATE OF HUMILIATION.

"Christ's humiliation consisted in his being born, and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross; in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time" (S. C. 27).

CHRIST'S ESTATE OF EXALTATION. "Christ's exaltation consisteth in his rising again from the dead on the third day, in ascending up into heaven, in sitting at the right hand of God the Father, and in coming to judge the world at the last day" (S. C. 28).

REGENERATION. The creative act of God the Holy Spirit upon the inmost personality of a sinful human being, by which the governing disposition of the "heart" is made holy, so that the person can and will repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. (Also called **THE NEW BIRTH**).

EFFECTUAL CALLING. "Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel" (S. C. 31). (Note: **EFFECTUAL CALLING** is a broader term than **REGENERATION**; it includes the Spirit's use of the Word to produce conviction, plus regeneration itself, plus conversion or the sinner's response to regeneration).

CONVICTION OF SIN. The troubled state of mind produced in a sinner by the Word and Spirit of God, wherein the sinner is profoundly conscious of being under the wrath of God, morally unclean, and unable to save himself.

REPENTANCE. "Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience" (S. C. 87).

FAITH. An attitude of belief and trust, founded upon evidence which is regarded as adequate.

SAVING FAITH. "Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel" (S. C. 86).

TEMPORARY FAITH. A kind of faith which has the appearance of saving faith, but endures for a time only, and then passes away, because it does not spring from a heart that has been regenerated by the Holy Spirit. (Matt. 13:5, 20, 21).

HISTORICAL FAITH. A kind of faith which has the element of intellectual belief but lacks the element of personal trust; believing in Christ merely as a historical person, not as one's own Saviour. (James 2:19).

CONVERSION. The sinner's turning from sin to God, which is the effect of the Holy Spirit's act of regeneration. (Note: **CONVERSION** always includes repentance; the term **CONVERSION** is sometimes used in a broad sense to include both the Spirit's act of regeneration and the sinner's response to that act in turning to God).

FORGIVENESS. God's act of canceling the guilt of a person's sin, and remitting its legal penalty. (Also called **PARDON**).

JUSTIFICATION. "Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone" (S. C. 33). (Note: **JUSTIFICATION** is a broader term than forgiveness or pardon; it includes not merely the remission of guilt and penalty, but also the placing of a positive righteousness to the person's credit, and on this basis pronouncing him to be a righteous person. To be declared "righteous" is more than to be declared "not guilty.").

ADOPTION. "Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God" (S. C. 34).

SANCTIFICATION. "Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God,

and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness" (S. C. 35).

GOOD WORKS. Those acts of a Christian which are commanded by the law of God, and performed by faith as a matter of obedience to the will of God, from a motive of love and devotion to God.

ASSURANCE. The consciousness of the absolute certainty of his own present and eternal salvation, to which a believer may attain in the course of time by a right use of the means of grace and by the witness of the Holy Spirit in his heart.

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT. The many-sided holiness of life which is gradually produced in every true Christian by the Holy Spirit's work of sanctification, and which attains its complete perfection at the Christian's death. (Gal. 5:22, 23).

GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT. The capacities or aptitudes for various forms of Christian service which are bestowed upon true Christians according to the sovereign disposition of the Holy Spirit. (I Cor. 12).

GLORIFICATION. The final stage of the salvation of God's children, by which they are (at death) removed from an environment of sin, and (at the resurrection) delivered from all the consequences of sin. (Rom. 8:23, 30).

Some Noteworthy Quotations

"Attendance at Synods can . . . be a disillusioning experience. The experience of disillusionment brings a deeper hurt to a man's spirit, and cuts a wound that stays in the soul of the delegate long after his return home. Synod, you see, is the organized Church in action, and the behavior of the organization is often hard on a man's ideals and idealism. It is possible for a man's faith to be more sorely tried at a Synod than it is in the world — for a Synod, like any organization governed by institutional interests and subject to institutional pressures, can kill high hopes, unspirit one's aspirations, and grind high ideals into the ground."

— Dr. James Daane in
THE REFORMED JOURNAL

"The clearer sight we have of the sovereignty and power of heaven, the less we shall fear the calamities of this earth."

— Matthew Henry

"Give me the plenary verbal theory with all its difficulties, rather than the doubt. I accept the difficulties, and humbly wait for their solution; but while I wait I am standing on a rock."

— J. C. Ryle

"We are indebted to God for the good works we do, and not He to us."

— Belgic Confession

"He that will go as near the ditch as he can, will at some time or other fall in; so he that will take all liberty that possibly he may lawfully, cannot but fall into many unlawful things."

— Augustine of Hippo

"If you find yourself loving any pleasure better than your prayers, and any book better than the Bible, any house better than the house of God, any table better than the Lord's table, any person better than Christ, any indulgence better than the hope of heaven — TAKE ALARM."

— Thomas Guthrie

"It requires much courage to be alone with God. It is then that all of self, all subtle egotism, is searched and hunted out of the soul. It cannot live in His presence. The praise of men becomes as dust beneath the feet, and the soul trembles even to receive any honor of men, or to be recognized in this world as of any worth."

— Amy Carmichael

"Harmless mirth is recommended to us as that which contributes to the health of the body, making men more lively and fit for business, and to the acceptableness of the conversation, making the face to shine and rendering us pleasant to one another. A cheerful spirit, under the government of wisdom and grace is a great lustre upon the beauty of holiness and makes men the more capable of doing good."

— Matthew Henry

"The day of the Lord is likely to be a dreadful day to them that despise the Lord's Day."

— George Swinnock

"If the Lord's plough make furrows in my soul, it is because He purposeth a crop."

— Samuel Rutherford

"Trample on thy own credit and reputation, and sacrifice it, if need be, to God's honor."

— Thomas Boston

"No philosopher has ever been able to solve the riddle of the universe, nor has any been able to find a remedy for sin."

— Dr. Loraine Boettner

"What a solemn thought it is — that every child born into this world is a spiritual being who will go on living forever either in heaven or in hell!"

— Dr. Loraine Boettner

"Ordinary politics sometimes has its sordid side; politics in church affairs always has."

— Herman Bavinck

Studies in the Book of Genesis

LESSON 150

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

8. The history of Joseph continued. 39:1 to 50:26, cont.

In our study of the Book of Genesis we have reached chapter 41 verse 46. The last incident considered was the marriage of Joseph to Asenath. In verse 46 we are informed that Joseph was 30 years of age when he was released from prison and stood before Pharaoh the king of Egypt. Thirteen years have passed since Joseph, at the age of seventeen, took care of his father's sheep (37:2). As Joseph lived to the age of 110 years (50:26), more than two-thirds of his life was still before him.

In 41:46 we read "And Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt," and then in the next verse we read "And Joseph went . . . throughout all the land of Egypt." It might seem at first sight that the second statement is a mere repetition of the first, and therefore superfluous. However, there is a difference. Note that in verse 45 in the English Bible the word "all" is printed in italics, indicating that it is not in the Hebrew, but was added by the translators, whereas in verse 46 the word "all" is not printed in italics, therefore it is in the Hebrew text. Both this fact and the word "throughout" in verse 46 indicate that the second statement covers a larger field than the first.

Joseph is not an armchair official who merely sits at a desk and issues directives. He travels throughout all the land of Egypt and personally inspects the operation of the food conservation program. The statement of verse 46 that Joseph went throughout all the land of Egypt doubtless

implies much more than a single trip of inspection. No doubt Joseph repeatedly travelled through Egypt supervising the program. As we know from earlier incidents in the life of Joseph, he was a careful and thorough person, possessing that "almost infinite capacity for taking pains" that is necessary for true success in a complex and difficult undertaking.

During the seven years of plenty which ensued, the soil of Egypt produced abundant crops of grain. The surplus was stored in cities in all parts of Egypt, each city serving as a storage center for the grain produced in its area. The supply stored eventually reached such an enormous quantity that the officials gave up keeping a record of the amount in storage. Leupold suggests that in Joseph's day the knowledge of arithmetic was not sufficiently advanced to handle such large quantities. This suggestion seems far-fetched, for the people that built the great pyramid of Khufu at Gizeh more than a thousand years before Joseph's time must have known a good deal of mathematics beyond simple addition.

The next fact reported is the birth of Joseph's two sons (41:50) who of course were half Hebrew and half Egyptian. It is recorded that these two sons of Joseph were born "before the years of famine came." The record also specifically states that these sons were born to Joseph of Asenath, thus reminding us that Joseph adhered to God's ordinance of monogamous marriage.

The naming of Joseph's sons is significant. Joseph named the first son Manasseh, "For God hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house" (41:51). The name Manasseh means "making to forget." The basic idea is that of forgetting.

Ephraim, Joseph's second son, was named Ephraim, "For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction" (verse 52). The name Ephraim means literally "double fruit." Egypt was the land of Joseph's affliction, not only because it was a land of exile from his true country and from his father and brethren, but also because of the bitter experiences of slavery and imprisonment which had come to him in Egypt.

Next we learn of the coming of the seven years of famine (41:53,54). This famine affected not only Egypt but the surrounding countries also. The cause of the famine is not stated, but presumably it was caused by drought. Canaan, a land with marginal rainfall, often suffered drought and resulting famine. Egypt, with even less rainfall than Canaan — so little, indeed, as to be practically negligible — ordinarily did not suffer famine because the Nile river afforded an abundant water supply. But sometimes the water in the Nile is too low to be used effectively for the irrigation of Egypt's fields. The cause of this occasional occurrence of low water in the Nile is said to be a stoppage of the White Nile (one of the rivers which form the sources of the Nile) in central Africa by the thick growth of vegetation which impounds the waters in vast stretches of marshland until the river finally clears a new channel for itself. Leupold mentions a similar case about 900 years ago (A. D. 1064-1071) when famine was so severe in Egypt that "the people ate corpses and animals that died of themselves" (Exposition of Genesis, II, 1039).

When the record states that the famine was "in all lands" this does not necessarily imply that it was world-wide. Rather, the plain meaning would seem to be that there was famine in all the lands surrounding Egypt. It is not necessary to suppose that at this time there was famine in Scandinavia, North America, New Zealand or other remote parts of the world. When the record states (41:57) that "all countries came into Egypt" to purchase grain (41:57) this again must be regarded as limited by the context to countries in that part of the world where Egypt is located; it would be quite absurd to suppose that grain was imported from Egypt to Britain, China or other distant countries at this time.

The story as it is narrated in Genesis obviously reports only the essential facts, and these in a very simple manner. Certainly there must have been many details about this grain program and its administration which are not reported.

The record states that the people of Egypt were "famished", whereupon they cried to Pharaoh for help, and in reply were told to apply to Joseph and follow his instructions. Joseph opened all the storehouses and issued grain to the Egyptians, for which they paid money.

Not only Egyptians, but people from other lands, applied to Joseph for grain (41:57). It seems noteworthy that Joseph did not attempt to limit the grain to Egyptians, but was willing for others also to share in the benefit.

We should note, too, that Joseph did not begin to ration out the grain until after the people had become "famished." Vast as the stored-up supply was, it was not unlimited; it must be issued carefully, for it had to last through seven years of famine. Joseph's great ability as a wise administrator appears in this matter. Nor was the grain issued in unlimited quantities, for we are told that even after the issuing of grain had been commenced, still "the famine waxed sore in the land of Egypt" (41:56b).

Questions:

1. How old was Joseph when he was released from prison and stood before Pharaoh?
2. How old was Joseph at the time of his death? How much of his life was still before him when he stood before Pharaoh?
3. How can it be shown that the statement about Joseph's travels through Egypt in verse 46 is not a mere repetition of the somewhat similar statement in verse 45?
4. What does Joseph's travelling through Egypt show concerning his competence as an administrator?
5. Why was the attempt to keep a record of the amount of grain in storage abandoned?
6. When were Joseph's two sons born?
7. What were the names of Joseph's two sons? What is the meaning of each name?
8. What is the significance of the statement that Joseph's sons were born of Asenath?
9. Why did Egypt very seldom suffer famine?
10. What possible explanation has been suggested as to the cause of the seven years of famine in Egypt?
11. When did a similar famine of several years' duration take place in Egypt?
12. What is meant by the statement that the famine was "in all lands"?
13. What statements of the record indicate that the grain was not issued too soon nor in unlimited quantities?

LESSON 151

III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26, cont.**8. The history of Joseph continued. 39:1 to 50:26, cont.**

Chapter 42 opens with Jacob sending his sons to Egypt to purchase grain. We may wonder why Joseph has done nothing to get in contact with his father during the time that has passed. For about nine years have passed since Joseph became the ruler of Egypt — seven years of plenty and two years of famine (45:6). We can only speculate as to the reason why Joseph (as far as we know) made no effort even to inform his father that he was still alive. Perhaps he felt it would be better to wait for developments in the providence of God rather than to take such a matter into his own hands.

Jacob asks his sons why they are looking one upon another. Evidently they all realize that the food problem has become acute, yet each expects some one of the others to be the first to propose a remedy. At length the initiative is taken by Jacob himself: "Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt: get you down thither, and buy for us from thence, that we may live, and not die" (42:2).

In accordance with Jacob's instructions, Joseph's ten older brothers go to Egypt to get food. Benjamin, the youngest, who like Joseph was a son of Rachel, is kept at home with his father, "lest peradventure mischief befall him."

Verse 6 tells us that it was Joseph that sold to all the people of the land. This can hardly mean that all applicants for grain from all parts of Egypt were required to interview Joseph personally. Presumably in ordinary cases Egyptian applicants obtained the grain from local administrators near where they lived, the entire nationwide program being under Joseph's control and supervision. Apparently, however, special cases required a clearance from the head administrator himself, and it evidently was the practice to require applicants from foreign lands to appear at headquarters for approval by Joseph himself.

Thus Joseph's ten brothers arrive and appear before Joseph, prostrating themselves respectfully before him. "And Joseph knew his brethren, but they knew not him" (42:8). As they were all considerably older than Joseph, their appearance would have changed but little in the intervening years. Joseph, on the other hand, has grown up from a lad of seventeen to a man of thirty. Moreover, Joseph was naturally wearing the dress of an Egyptian and speaking the Egyptian language. It would hardly even occur to the brothers that this powerful Egyptian official could be their own brother. While Joseph has not forgotten his

native Hebrew, by this time he has doubtless learned to speak the Egyptian language fluently. If he had a trace of foreign accent in speaking Egyptian, this would not be noticed by his brothers who knew no Egyptian at all.

The record states that Joseph "made himself strange unto them," that is, he deliberately sought to prevent their immediate recognition of him as their brother. He "spake roughly unto them", not because of anger, but rather because he proposes to test his brothers' attitude toward himself in preparation for a full reconciliation with them. Leupold states that any anger toward his brothers which Joseph may have had at the time when he was sold into Egypt, would have vanished by this time through his tribulations in prison in Egypt. And there is no indication anywhere in the narrative that Joseph was acting in anger; rather, we get the impression that he maintained a most remarkable self-control and even-tempered calm through everything until he finally broke down and revealed his identity to his brothers.

It is reported by ancient writers that the Egyptians were regularly suspicious of foreigners entering their country from the northeast, the direction from which hostile invaders usually came. In harmony with this quite natural pattern Joseph asks the men whence they are and they reply that they are from Canaan, and wish to buy food. Verse 9 says that "Joseph remembered the dreams which he dreamed of them" — the dreams of their bowing down before him. Now they are prostrated before him with their faces to the ground. Part of the dreams, at least, has already come true! This would lead Joseph to conclude that their coming into Egypt was part of a special providence of God.

Harshly Joseph accuses his brothers of being spies: "Ye are spies; to see the nakedness of the land ye are come" (42:9). No country looks with favor on espionage carried out by a possible invader; at this particular time Egypt, weakened by the famine, could not tolerate anything that might lead to foreign invasion. So Joseph's charge that the men are spies would sound natural enough not only to the Egyptians but even to the brothers themselves.

Very likely, too, Joseph wonders why there are only ten brothers before him. Where is the eleventh? Have they done something to Benjamin too as they did to Joseph? Have they possibly murdered Benjamin, or sold him also as a slave?

In reply to Joseph's charge, the brothers insist on their innocence. They have come only to buy food; they are not spies; they are all the sons of one father. Perhaps their appearance would confirm the truth of this claim. If they could get

Joseph to believe that they were all sons of one father, this would help to clear them of the charge of being spies. A father might easily send ten sons to purchase grain; the king of an enemy country would not be likely to pick ten brothers to send out as spies.

As the interview proceeds the brothers volunteer the information that originally there were twelve brothers, of which the youngest is still with their father in Canaan, while "one is not." This last statement seems rather vague, though of course the brothers have heard nothing about Joseph during all the years that have passed since he was sold to the Ishmaelites. Their vagueness in speaking about the one brother who "is not" may have led Joseph to doubt the truth of their statement that the youngest was at home with his father.

At any rate, Joseph resolves to test them as to their truthfulness. Repeating the accusation "Ye are spies" (42:14), he swears an Egyptian oath, "By the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go forth hence, except your youngest brother come hither." Was it right for Joseph to swear by the life of Pharaoh? Calvin says not; Leupold, following Luther, feels that the oath by the life of Pharaoh was legitimate. He holds that while using the name of Pharaoh, Joseph was really thinking of the God who punishes perjurers. There is no doubt that the use of a common Egyptian oath would give a very realistic Egyptian touch to Joseph's words in the minds of his brothers. As to the morality of his using this form of oath, the present writer agrees with Calvin in holding that it cannot be justified. This is one of the compromises of good men which the Bible faithfully records. Similarly, it records Abraham's untruthfulness, Noah's drunkenness and David's adultery. These things are recorded as matters of fact, without any implication of divine approval. Incidentally, it is one of the evidences of the truth of the Old Testament that it faithfully records the compromises and lapses of good men. If these stories were largely the product of the imaginations of later Jewish writers, all discreditable features would have been left out. People do not invent stories which show their national heroes in a bad light.

The fact that Joseph is portrayed as a pious and godly man does not imply that he was perfect. Nor is this Egyptian oath the only point at which Joseph seems to have compromised with moral evil. Later in the story he falsely represents himself as having powers of divination by the use of a silver cup (44:4, 5). It is futile to attempt to justify this use of deceit. It is always wrong to do evil that good may come.

Questions:

1. What may have been the reason why Joseph did not make any effort, during the years of plenty in Egypt, to get in touch with his father?
2. Who took the initiative, in Jacob's household as to the purchase of grain from Egypt?
3. Why was Benjamin kept at home by his father?
4. What is meant by the statement of verse 6 that it was Joseph that sold to all the people of the land?
5. Why would Joseph recognize his brothers, and why would they not recognize him?
6. What caused Joseph to remember his dreams when his brothers appeared before him?
7. What was Joseph's reason for treating his brothers roughly?
8. Why were the Egyptians usually suspicious of foreigners entering their country from the northeast?
9. Why did the brothers tell Joseph that they were all sons of one father?
10. In what way did the brothers mention Joseph?
11. What should we think of Joseph's use of an Egyptian oath?
12. What is implied by the fact that the Bible faithfully records the wrongdoing of good men?
13. On what later occasion did Joseph compromise with evil?

LESSON 152

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

8. The history of Joseph continued. 39:1 to 50:26, cont.

Next Joseph announces that one of the brothers is to be sent back to Canaan to bring the youngest brother as proof that the men are not spies. Upon announcing this, he puts all ten of his brothers in prison for three days. This would

certainly have a strong psychological effect on the brothers. They would not be told, of course, that the imprisonment was to be limited to three days. Naturally they would tend to think that it might continue much longer, or indefinitely. No doubt they would suffer some pangs of conscience, remembering what they had done to Joseph years before.

We may wonder why this imprisonment was precisely three days. It is possible, but not cer-

tain, that Joseph had spent three days in the pit; the record in chapter 37 does not necessarily imply that the dropping of Joseph into the pit and the selling of him to the Ishmaelites all happened on the same day, though it is possible that it did.

After three days the brothers are brought before Joseph again. Explaining that he is a man that fears God, Joseph now modifies his original decree. Only one of the brothers is to be kept in prison in Egypt; the rest may purchase grain and return to Canaan. When they bring back their youngest brother, they will be cleared of the charge of espionage and the brother left in prison will be released.

At this point the brothers engage in a conversation among themselves, not realizing that Joseph can understand them (42:21-23). We learn here that they feel guilty concerning their treatment of Joseph. It has been observed that this is the only acknowledgement of sin in the entire book of Genesis. "Therefore is this distress come upon us." Reuben, the eldest of the brothers, adds that he had been opposed to the mistreatment of Joseph, "and ye would not hear". "Behold, also, his blood is required" — that is, Reuben asserts that what is happening to the brothers is divine retribution for their crime against Joseph. The mention of "blood" may indicate that Reuben, at least, supposed Joseph to be already dead.

At this point Joseph's emotions get beyond his control. He turns away from them, presumably into another room, and weeps, then returns to them. Selecting Simeon from among the ten, Joseph has him bound before their eyes (42:24). We may ask why Simeon was selected. It is possible that Simeon was the one who actually manhandled Joseph when he was dropped into the pit and later sold to the Ishmaelites. We know that Simeon had a reputation for cruelty (34:25; 49:5-7). If it was indeed Simeon that manhandled Joseph, this singling out of Simeon to be bound and imprisoned would make a deep impression on the brothers. However, this is only a possibility, as the record does not state why Simeon was selected to be kept in prison.

The nine brothers are now sold grain and sent back to Canaan. At Joseph's command they are given provisions for use on the trip home. In addition to this Joseph secretly orders that their money be placed in their sacks. Thereupon they depart to return to Canaan.

Stopping in an inn on the way home, one of the sacks is opened and the money is found lying on top of the grain in the mouth of the sack. As they were given special provisions for the trip home, this probably was late in the journey after the special provisions had been used up, and they found it necessary to use some of the grain they had purchased to feed their animals. There is no

basis in the narrative for the notion that this discovery occurred the first night after their departure from the presence of Joseph. Nor does the record imply what some have inferred from it, that each brother had only a single sack of grain. As Leupold comments, for the trip to Egypt to be worth while, each brother would have to bring back several sacks of grain. Each man's money was placed in one of his sacks, but none was discovered till the incident in the inn mentioned in verse 27.

This strange discovery fills the brothers with wonder. They cannot understand the strange things that have been happening to them on this remarkable trip to Egypt and back. The very obscurity and uncertainty of the matter would cause them to be filled with apprehensions. The record states that "their heart failed them, and they were afraid, saying one to another, "What is this that God hath done unto us" (42:28). From this we note that the brothers not only believe in God, but they believe that He is the moral Ruler of men and administers retribution to men according to their desert. Though there is no evidence that they had personal devotion to God at this time of their life, it is clear that they hold to the theology of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, recognizing that what happens comes to pass by the hand of God. To this extent Joseph's ten brothers have a better and truer faith than many modern people who attribute what happens to chance.

Arriving home in Canaan, the brothers tell their story to their aged father Jacob. They do not, of course, tell of their own guilty feelings and consciousness of suffering the just retribution of God, for that would involve disclosing the truth about their crime against Joseph years before. Nor do they immediately inform their father about Simeon being left in prison in Egypt, though Jacob would of course soon notice the absence of Simeon from the group. Also they do not tell their father about their humiliating experience of being put in prison for three days. They do, however, tell of the charge that they were spies and of the demand that Benjamin be sent to Egypt to appear before the great food administrator there. Jacob's own feelings at this stage of the affair are not reported. We can only imagine the indignation and grief that he must have felt on hearing the report of his sons.

Next we are told that on emptying the sacks, each man's money was found in one of his sacks, and the "bundles of money" were seen both by them and by Jacob, with the result that "they were afraid" (42:35). Jacob, seeing money in the sacks, would naturally conclude that his sons had stolen the grain in Egypt, instead of honestly purchasing and paying for it; how else could they come home with both the grain and the money? Moreover, the brothers could offer no explanation

of the presence of the money in the sacks. Anything they might say would only tend to incriminate themselves.

Jacob is filled with fears and grief: "Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me" (42:36). Does Jacob suspect that his sons had something to do with the mysterious disappearance of Joseph. He accuses them of bereaving him of his children. Perhaps he had a strong suspicion that Joseph had met with foul play at their hands.

At this point Reuben, the eldest son, steps forward saying: "Slay my two sons, if I bring him not to thee: deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again" (42:37). This proposal is a personal pledge or guarantee. Reuben offers to bear full responsibility for the safe return of Benjamin. Of course Jacob would not think of killing Reuben's two sons in the event that Benjamin does not return. Grief over the loss of a son is not remedied by the murder of grandsons. But Reuben perhaps hopes by the very extravagance of his offer to move his father to give consent for Benjamin to go to Egypt.

Jacob, however, remains adamant in his refusal. "My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead, and he is left alone: if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave" (42:38). Jacob has already suffered much; he feels that another deep sorrow would be too much for him to bear.

Questions:

1. What did Joseph do to start the consciences of his brothers to working?
2. What may possibly be the reason why the

imprisonment of the ten brothers was for three days?

3. What statement of the brothers after their release from prison indicates their feeling of guilt?

4. Which brother was finally selected to be kept in prison until the arrival of Benjamin?

5. What may possibly be the reason why Simeon was selected?

6. In addition to the grain which they purchased, what was given to the brothers before their departure from Egypt to return to Canaan?

7. What happened when the brothers stopped at an inn enroute home?

8. At what stage of their homeward journey did this probably take place?

9. What was the effect on the brothers of the discovery of the money?

10. What does this incident show concerning the religious faith of the brothers at this stage of their life?

11. What did the brothers tell their father, and what did they not tell him, on their arrival at home?

12. What further discovery caused added dismay?

13. What would Jacob naturally conclude from the presence of the money in the sacks?

14. Of what does Jacob accuse his sons in verse 36?

15. What suspicion may have been in Jacob's mind?

16. What proposition is made by Reuben?

17. On what ground does Jacob flatly refuse to allow Benjamin to go to Egypt?

LESSON 153

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

8. The history of Joseph continued. 39:1 to 50:26, cont.

At the beginning of chapter 43 the famine still exists in Canaan and the food brought from Egypt has been eaten up. Jacob therefore urges his sons to make a second trip to Egypt to buy food. They reply that this can be done on one condition only, namely, that Benjamin accompany them to Egypt (43:1-5). Jacob asks them why they ever told the man in Egypt that they had a brother, and they reply that they could not avoid answering his pointed questions. This reply does not seem to fit what is recorded in chapter 42 exactly, for it appears there (42:13) that the brothers volunteered the information that they

had a younger brother. However, the statement in 43:7 that the man in Egypt had asked them whether they had another brother is not necessarily a lie. It is quite possible that much more was said between Joseph and the brothers than is recorded in chapter 42, and that what we have in chapter 42 is merely a very condensed summary of the main items of the conversation.

At this point Judah offers to assume entire responsibility for the safe return of Benjamin. He enforces his plea by the consideration that it is a life and death matter for the entire family: "that we may live, and not die, both we, and thou, and also our little ones" (43:8). Even Benjamin would suffer if food is not speedily obtained from some source. Judah offers to bear the blame for ever if he does not bring Benjamin safely back to his father. He adds that they

could already have completed the second trip if they had not been delayed (by Jacob's unwillingness to allow Benjamin to accompany them).

Finally Jacob's extreme reluctance is broken down by the force of sheer necessity. A suitable gift of the choice products of Canaan is to be taken along to placate this great Egyptian official who has Simeon in prison in Egypt. Considering the fact that Canaan was in the grip of a dire famine, the gift could not have been very lavish. The money is also to be taken back, along with new money for the purchase of more grain; Jacob suggests that it might have been an oversight that the money was returned in the sacks the first time (43:12). Leupold comments that the language used indicates that the money found in the sacks on the return from the first trip had been kept intact "in its original bundles, a kind of unlucky coin which no one dared to use" (Exposition of Genesis, II, 1066).

"Take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man: and God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin. If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved" (43:14). Thus the aged Jacob makes the decision and sends his sons off on the second journey to Egypt.

Note the faith of Jacob as shown at this point in his life. He has done what he could; now it is beyond human power and the issue is committed to the hands of God Almighty, the God of Abraham and Isaac. Those who think that the Hebrew patriarchs believed in a local or tribal God are mistaken. Jacob believes in a God of unlimited power who controls what happens everywhere. The acts of a great Egyptian official are not regarded as beyond the control of the God Jacob believes in. He is also a God of mercy to those who deserve no mercy. Modern liberal scholars tend to rate the religious conceptions of the early Hebrews much too low. They do this largely because of their artificial theory of the evolution or development of Israel's religion from early belief in a local or tribal God to the ethical monotheism of the great prophets such as Hosea, Isaiah and Jeremiah. It is true, of course, that there was development in Israel's religion, just because there was progress in God's revelation of Himself and His will. But there is no reason to hold that Abraham, Isaac or Jacob ever believed in a limited, local or tribal God.

Jacob's plaintive statement, "If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved" is not to be regarded as a grumbling complaint nor as an expression of doubt, but rather as an act of humble submission to the will of God in true faith. The thought expressed is: "If it is God's will for me to lose my children, then let God's will be done."

Accordingly, the nine brothers and Benjamin return to Egypt and appear before Joseph (43:15).

On seeing that they have their younger brother with them, Joseph issues an order for these men to dine with him the same day at noon. So they are conducted to Joseph's private residence, which no doubt was grand and spacious in a manner befitting his high office in the land of Egypt.

Joseph, of course, is greatly relieved to see Benjamin among the brothers. This proves, not only that they had done nothing evil to Benjamin, but also that their statements on other matters are true. This is a great day of rejoicing for Joseph after his long years of waiting in Egypt. He will have a feast suited to such a day of rejoicing. He orders the steward of his household to "slay," that is, to butcher an animal for the dinner.

As they enter Joseph's house, the brothers feel very apprehensive. After all, it was a very strange thing that ten men from Canaan who had come on a purely commercial transaction should be invited to be dinner guests of the highest official in Egypt next to the king. Their experiences in Egypt all seemed to have something strange and mysterious about them. What could this unexpected social invitation mean? Is this Egyptian official going to make an issue about the money in the sacks and use that as an excuse for imprisoning them all, making them slaves or possibly even condemning them to death? Verse 18 describes the thoughts of the brothers as they consider the possibilities together. They decide that there is possible danger and they consider it wise to forestall the peril if possible. Accordingly they address the steward of Joseph's household explaining that they have brought back the money which was mysteriously found in the sacks (43:20-22). The steward sets them at ease by replying that he had their money all the time; the money found in the sacks must have been placed there by the power of God. Though this statement of the steward may appear to be an untruth, it need not be regarded as such. The statement "I had your money" means "Your money came into my hands" (Leupold), which was strictly true. With regard to the statement that God had given them treasure in their sacks, this was true also, if it be rightly understood. Whatever benefits men enjoy, really come to them from God, who alone is the Giver of every good and perfect gift. If they found money in their sacks, this good fortune is to be attributed to the blessing of God. "The sum of his answer, however, amounts to this, that there was no reason for fear, because their affairs were in a prosperous state. And since, after the manner of men, it was not possible that they should have paid the money for the corn which was found in their sacks, he ascribes this to the favor of God" (Calvin).

But how does it come that this steward, an Egyptian, speaks of the true God? A possible explanation is that he is speaking as Joseph was

accustomed to speak. More probable is the explanation suggested by Calvin, who says: "I, therefore, do not doubt that Joseph, though not permitted openly to correct anything in the received superstitions, endeavored, at least in his own house, to establish the true worship of the one God, and always held fast the covenant, concerning which, as a boy, he had heard his father speak" (Commentary on Genesis, II, 359).

Calvin is also of the opinion that Joseph had probably taken this steward into his confidence, so that the steward knew that the men were Joseph's brothers. While this cannot be proved, it seems quite likely.

Water is provided to wash the guests' feet; the asses are given fodder. The gift from Canaan is prepared for presentation to Joseph at noon.

Questions:

1. Which brother assumed responsibility for the safety of Benjamin on the second trip to Egypt?
2. By what act did Jacob hope to placate the great Egyptian food administrator?
3. What was finally done about the money found in the sacks?
4. How does Jacob's religious faith appear in his sending his sons to Egypt the second time?

5. How does it appear that Jacob believed that God's power is universal?

6. What is the modern liberal theory about the religion of Israel?

7. Why is the modern liberal theory of the development of Israel's religion false and misleading?

8. How should we interpret Jacob's statement, "If I be bereaved of my children, I am bereaved"?

9. What order was issued by Joseph when he saw Benjamin with the other brothers?

10. What preparations were to be made for rejoicing?

11. What fear troubled the brothers as they entered Joseph's house?

12. What attempt did they make to avoid possible danger?

13. What was the reply of Joseph's steward to them?

14. How can we explain the fact that Joseph's Egyptian steward spoke about the true God?

15. What last minute preparation did the brothers make before Joseph's arrival at noon?

LESSON 154

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

8. The history of Joseph continued. 39:1 to 50:26, cont.

On Joseph's arrival at his residence at noon, the brothers first of all present their gift. The record does not state what Joseph's response to this gift was. No doubt Joseph felt that he must keep strict control over his emotions at such a time. In presenting the gift the brothers bow deeply, showing the highest honor and respect. Joseph, on his part, courteously inquires as to whether the lad whom he sees with them is their youngest brother, and addresses Benjamin with a blessing: "God be gracious unto thee, my son" (43:29). His calling Benjamin "son" implies merely the marked difference in age between himself and Benjamin.

At this point Joseph's long-restrained emotions get the better of him and he feels that he must weep. Hastening into his private room he weeps there, washes his face, returns to the company and orders the dinner to be served.

Here we note a striking reference to Egyptian customs. Three tables are set: one for Joseph alone; one for his brothers; one for the Egyptian

guests who were present. It is known that Egyptians were extremely strict about such matters, a taboo which is reflected by the statement of verse 32 that to eat a meal along with Hebrews would be "an abomination unto the Egyptians."

The brothers, to their own amazement, are seated according to their relative ages. This would be easy for Joseph to arrange, knowing as he did the ages of all his brothers, but it must have mystified the brothers, who "marveled one at another" as they wondered how this Egyptian official could possibly know their ages from oldest to youngest.

Joseph now carries out an additional test of his brothers. He bestows favoritism deliberately on Benjamin. If they have concealed resentment against Benjamin similar to what they once had against Joseph, it may show in their faces or actions when Benjamin is served five times as much food as the other ten brothers. Of course Benjamin could not possibly have eaten five complete dinners at one sitting, or at any rate we may be sure that he would not attempt to do so! Nor was it Joseph's intention that he eat all this food. Rather, the oversized portions were intended as a mark of distinction and honor. The por-

tions must have been very large, so as to be outstandingly conspicuous, to achieve the intended effect. The brothers could not help noticing what was happening. It could not be attributed to accident but must be the result of design. But Joseph's brothers meet this test satisfactorily; no resentment is betrayed by their words or looks. Thus far, Joseph has reason to feel confident that his brothers have a right attitude.

Chapter 44 opens with the dinner over. Joseph and his brothers separate and go their ways. Joseph secretly commands his steward, in filling the men's sacks with grain, to restore their money in the mouths of the sacks, and also to place Joseph's special silver drinking cup in the sack of the youngest, with his money. The brothers remain overnight, and depart on their homeward trip at daybreak the next morning.

Joseph had commanded the steward to fill the men's sacks to their full capacity. This involved generosity beyond a mere business transaction. The men would of course notice this generous treatment and be pleased by it. The money placed in the sacks was intended, as on the former occasion, to arouse a sense of mystery in the brothers' minds and so to lead them to think of the hand of God behind what was going on. This, in turn, should lead them to some qualms of conscience concerning their own past life. The special silver cup is "planted" in Benjamin's sack, of course, in order to make it appear that Benjamin is guilty of theft. This will afford a good opportunity to test the brothers as to how they will treat Benjamin in a crisis.

The brothers have not gone very far when they are overtaken by Joseph's steward on Joseph's orders. The steward is to charge them with ungrateful wrongdoing in stealing his master's silver cup and to inform them that this cup is used by Joseph in the practice of divination. It is known that cups or bowls were used in ancient times for divination, in various ways.

At this point we must face a real difficulty. How can Joseph, a believer in the true God, allow himself to practice divination? To do so is certainly heathenish and sinful. On the other hand, if Joseph did not really practice divination, but only claims to have that power, then how can he be cleared of the guilt of untruthfulness? Leupold suggests a third possibility, namely that God actually used some such means as this silver cup for granting special revelations to Joseph. This however is merely speculative and there is no evidence in its support. Calvin holds that Joseph only pretended to be a practitioner of divination, for the sake of making an impression on his brothers. He states that two sins were involved in Joseph's conduct on this occasion: the sin of professing divination, and the sin of untruthfulness. His judgment is that Joseph's conduct in

this matter cannot be defended: "By boasting that he is a magician rather than proclaiming himself a prophet of God, he impiously profanes the gift of the Holy Spirit. Doubtless, in this dissimulation, it is not to be denied, that he sinned grievously" (Commentary on Genesis, II, 369). Calvin adds, however, the fact that Joseph was acting the part of an Egyptian official to his brothers and the time had not yet come to disclose his real identity to them. Had he declared himself a prophet of the true God, the secret would have been let out prematurely. The brothers would expect an Egyptian official to hold the beliefs and superstitions of Egypt. Thus, comments Calvin, when Joseph once started out on a course of pretending not to recognize his brothers, thus allowing them to continue to think of him as an Egyptian official, he was acting a lie and really committing himself to a whole series of untruths. "Whence, we gather, that when any one swerves from the right line, he is prone to fall into various sins. Wherefore, being warned by this example, let us learn to allow ourselves in nothing except what we know is approved of God. But especially we must avoid all dissimulation, which either produces or confirms mischievous impostures. Besides, we are warned, that it is not sufficient for any one to oppose a prevailing vice for a time; unless he add constancy of resistance, even though the evil may become excessive. For he discharges his duty very defectively, who, having once testified that he is displeased with what is evil, afterwards, by his silence or connivance, gives it a kind of assent" (Commentary on Genesis, II, 369).

Questions:

1. How did the brothers show their respect for Joseph in presenting their gift to him?
2. What words did Joseph use in greeting Benjamin?
3. What did Joseph do when he could no longer restrain his tears?
4. How did the seating at the dinner illustrate Egyptian customs or prejudices?
5. What fact about the seating arrangement caused the brothers to marvel?
6. In what way did Joseph show favoritism toward Benjamin at the dinner?
7. What may have been Joseph's intention in showing this favoritism?
8. How long did the brothers remain as Joseph's guests?
9. What commands did Joseph give to his steward before the departure of the brothers?
10. What was the purpose of "planting" the silver cup in Benjamin's sack?

11. What did the steward say to the brothers on overtaking them?

12. What is meant by the term "divination" or "divining"?

13. What possibilities exist as to the explana-

tion of Joseph's claim to be a diviner?

14. What is Calvin's opinion as to the legitimacy of Joseph's claim to practice divination?

15. What ethical lesson may we learn from Joseph's conduct?

LESSON 155

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

8. The history of Joseph continued. 39:1 to 50:26 cont.

The brothers, of course, are utterly baffled by the steward's speech on his overtaking them. Note that everything is very mysterious. The steward has not actually mentioned the cup by name; he calls it only "this" and adds that his lord drinks in it and divines by it. The brothers repel the mysterious charge of wrongdoing, adding in support of their claim to innocence the fact that they had brought again the money found in their sacks on their return from their first trip to Egypt. They add that there is no motive why they should steal silver or gold out of the great official's house. Finally, they rather rashly state that if the cup is found in any of their sacks, the one in whose sack it is found, being guilty of theft, shall die, and the rest will be "my lord's bondmen." So confident are the brothers that the cup will not be found in any of their sacks.

The search is conducted, from the oldest brother to the youngest. The steward, of course, knows perfectly well that the cup will not be found until he reaches Benjamin's sack; but he builds up the suspense in the minds of the brothers by methodically conducting the search from sack to sack just as if he had no idea in whose sack it might be found — as if, in other words, he was acting on mere suspicion rather than on actual knowledge.

The cup is found, of course, in Benjamin's sack. What can the brothers say? They are speechless, only rending their clothes in their frustration and grief. There is no way out. They must return to the city and face a most serious charge.

What, if anything, did Benjamin say to the brothers as they made their way back to the city? Did he protest his innocence? Did the brothers really believe him guilty of having stolen the cup? Or did they perhaps suspect that this was one more mysterious fact in this wholly mysterious affair? Did they suspect that the cup had actually been "planted" in the sack with deliberate intent? And did they think of what the reaction of their aged father back in Canaan would be on learning that Benjamin had been put to death in Egypt as a thief? Certainly terrible thoughts must have raced through their minds.

Yet all this the narrative passes over in silence, reporting to us only the facts in a very objective manner.

They arrive at Joseph's residence. He is still there. They prostrate themselves to the ground humbly before him. He flatly charges them with wrongdoing, adding the question, "Didn't you know that such a man as I can certainly divine?"

Judah acts as spokesman for the group. "What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants: behold, we are my lord's servants, both we, and he also with whom the cup is found" (44:16).

Does the statement "God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants" refer to the theft of the cup, or is it a reference to the old guilt of the brothers in selling Joseph as a slave? Leupold's opinion is that the reference is to their guilt in selling Joseph. Calvin, however, is inclined rather to the view that they are referring to the guilt of stealing the cup, as if to say "It is no use to deny a thing which is manifest in itself," adding that even though they probably suspected fraud, yet they "choose rather to trace the cause of their punishment to the secret judgment of God" (Commentary on Genesis, II, 370).

They cannot, however, tolerate the idea of Benjamin alone remaining a slave or prisoner in the land of Egypt; rather than that, they will all remain as "my lord's servants." Leupold comments that this indicates a good sense of solidarity among the brothers; if one must suffer, they will all suffer with him. Perhaps it would be too painful to face Jacob with such bad news; they would prefer to remain in Egypt and leave Jacob to wonder what had happened to them.

Joseph, however, dismisses such an idea as that all the brothers should be punished. Only the one guilty of the theft must suffer the penalty. As for the rest, "get you up in peace unto your father." Joseph of course realized that there would be no "peace" connected with a return to Canaan without Benjamin. But he is here deeply testing the brothers' attitude toward Jacob and toward Benjamin.

At this point Judah speaks again. Using the most respectful and conciliatory language, he attempts to explain the situation. The great age of their father, his deep attachment to Benjamin,

the fact that Benjamin's only full brother was "dead", are presented in a most moving plea. Judah explains that the aged father will die if Benjamin does not return to him in safety. The whole history of the matter is presented in accurate and orderly fashion. Judah also explains that he has personally assumed full responsibility for the safe return of Benjamin. Finally, he pleads that he be allowed to remain as a slave in Egypt in place of Benjamin, and that the lad be allowed to return home with his brothers to his aged father. "For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest peradventure I see the evil that shall come on my father" (44:34).

Leupold says: "This is one of the manliest, most straightforward speeches ever delivered by any man. For depth of feeling and sincerity of purpose it stands unexcelled. What makes it most remarkable, however, is the fact that it comes from the lips of one who once upon a time was so calloused that he cared nothing about the grief he had caused his father" (Exposition of Genesis, II, 1086). Leupold's estimate of Judah's speech seems fully justified. It would be hard to find a more transparently sincere and moving plea anywhere in the field of literature. No wonder this speech of Judah broke Joseph down completely, as we learn at the beginning of the next chapter, so that he could not refrain himself, but burst out and "wept aloud."

LESSON 156

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

8. The history of Joseph continued. 39:1 to 50:26, cont.

Judah's earnest and eloquent plea that Benjamin be spared and that Judah be allowed to become a slave in his stead brought us to the end of chapter 44. Chapter 45 opens with Joseph overcome with intense emotion. No longer able to refrain himself, Joseph orders all except his brethren to leave the room. This means, of course, all the Egyptian guests and servants who may have been present during the dinner which preceded this scene. What is to follow is a private matter between Joseph and his brothers; the Egyptians had no right to know about it, and could not have understood it. Accordingly, the Egyptians one and all withdraw.

"And he wept aloud; and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard" (45:2). Leupold translates this: "Joseph raised his voice so loudly in weeping, that the Egyptians heard it, and even the house of Pharaoh heard it" (Exposition of Genesis, II, 1090). This does not mean that Joseph wept so loud that the sound of his voice carried all the way to Pharaoh's palace — how-

Questions:

1. How did the steward address the brothers on overtaking them?
2. How did they attempt to reply to the steward's charge?
3. What proposal did the brothers make in their confidence of their innocence?
4. Why did the steward start searching at the oldest brother's sacks?
5. What action did the brothers perform when the cup was discovered?
6. What may have been the thoughts of the brothers on their way back to the city?
7. Which brother acted as spokesman for the group as they appeared before Joseph?
8. What are the possibilities as to the meaning of the statement "God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants"?
9. Why could the brothers not tolerate the idea of leaving Benjamin alone in Egypt?
10. What was Joseph's response to the proposal that all the brothers remain in Egypt as slaves?
11. Give an outline of Judah's plea for Benjamin's release.
12. How does Leupold rate Judah's speech?
13. What was the effect of Judah's speech on Joseph?

ever near or distant that may have been — but rather the Egyptians who had just left Joseph's presence heard the loud weeping, and carried the report of this to Pharaoh's palace.

"I am Joseph; doth my father yet live?" (45:3). This marks the first time Joseph addresses his brothers in Egypt in the Hebrew language, without the aid of an interpreter. The inquiry as to whether his father is still alive may seem superfluous, inasmuch as the brothers have been speaking of their father all along and he was prominently mentioned in Judah's earnest speech. But all that time the brothers thought they were dealing with an Egyptian, and now he discloses himself as their own brother. The solicitous inquiry about his father would serve to moderate somewhat the sudden shock of the announcement "I am Joseph."

The brothers, however, are paralyzed by the sudden shock and the wave of fear that overwhelmed them an instant later. "And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence." It is not surprising that they feel thus. In addition to their own guilty conscience concerning the crime perpetrated against Joseph years before, this man who now says he is

Joseph has been treating them with rigorous justice. They could even consider him cruel and unfeeling.

Joseph, however, harbors no resentment. "Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near." Then Joseph tells them not to be grieved, nor angry with themselves that they had sold him into Egypt, "for God did send me before you to preserve life" (45:5; compare 50:19, 20). This is one of the classic passages of Scripture to illustrate the truth that even the sinful acts of men are foreordained by God and in God's wise plan work out in the end for the true benefit of His people. The purpose of the brothers in selling Joseph into Egypt was to give vent to their spite and hatred against him, which of course was deeply sinful. But a deeper purpose of God was at work in the same series of events, a purpose of grace toward His elect. We can even say that the brothers' wicked deed of selling Joseph into Egypt formed a necessary link in the historical development of God's plan of salvation. It had been promised by God that through the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob all the families of the earth would be blessed. This was a Messianic promise ultimately fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ. The fulfilment of this promise depended absolutely on the covenant seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob surviving the dire famine in the seven years of scarcity. If they had perished in the famine, the Messianic promise would have been frustrated. They were saved from perishing in the famine, however, by going to Egypt where there was food. There was food in Egypt because Joseph had been enabled by God to predict the seven years of famine and to store up grain for use in those years. Joseph's being food administrator of Egypt, in turn, depended on his being in Egypt, which in turn depended on his brothers having sold him into that country. Thus the wicked deed of the brothers formed an essential link in the chain of God's redemptive purpose. Those who irreverently speak of God's mysterious foreordination as if it were a mere abstract doctrine held by a few queer people called "Calvinists" should ponder the history of Joseph. Divine foreordination of all that comes to pass is no merely incidental feature in the Bible; it is deeply imbedded in the Scriptures, Old Testament and New, and cannot be removed from them without violently tearing many a historical narrative apart. God makes the wrath of man to praise Him, as the Psalmist said (Psalm 76:10). The present writer has often been impressed by the fact that those who vehemently object to the doctrine of divine foreordination almost never attempt to deny that it is taught in Scripture. Instead of trying to prove that the Bible does not teach it, they almost invariably bring up rationalistic objections to it. The usual attitude is something like this: "If I cannot reconcile God's foreordination with my own freedom in a way

that satisfies my reason, then I refuse to believe that God has foreordained what comes to pass." We have even heard of a church officer who was quoted as saying that it made no difference to him whether the Bible teaches foreordination or not; even if taught in Scripture he would not believe it. Needless to say, such an attitude proceeds not from a humble, reverent faith in God but from a proud, man-pleasing rationalistic bias. Those who speak so should realize that their real quarrel is not with John Calvin but with the God of the Bible. They are not willing for God to be really God.

Joseph continues, telling his brothers that the famine is to continue for five more years, during which no crops will be harvested. "And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt" (45:7, 8).

Joseph is not boasting here; he is simply telling the facts to his brothers; facts moreover which they had to know to understand what had really happened. He gives all the credit to God, taking none at all for himself. He is trying to lead his brothers to see what has happened in its true light, that is, in relation to the sovereign purpose of God. The fact that God's purpose was involved in all that had happened of course did not in any way cancel or lessen the brothers' guilt in selling Joseph. Joseph is not telling them that it was an act of God (verse 8) in order to minimize the evil of their deed, but rather to get them to see the entire series of events in its true perspective. For nothing is truly understood until it is understood in relation to God. It is only in God's light that man can really see light (Psalm 36:9).

Questions:

1. What effect was produced on Joseph by the speech of Judah in the last part of chapter 44?
2. Why did Joseph order the Egyptians to leave the room?
3. What may have been the reason why Joseph asked "Doth my father yet live?"
4. What attitude was displayed by the brothers on learning that they were in Joseph's presence?
5. What reasons can be assigned for the attitude of the brothers?
6. How did Joseph show that he harbored no resentment?
7. On what ground did Joseph tell his brothers not to be grieved or angry with themselves?
8. How does the history of Joseph illustrate the truth of God's foreordination?

9. What was the relation between the brothers' crime and God's plan of redemption?

10. What is the real reason why many people oppose the doctrine of divine foreordination?

11. How can it be shown that Joseph was not boasting in what he said to his brothers in 45:4-8?

12. What was Joseph trying to get his brothers to see in 45:4-8?

LESSON 157

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

8. The history of Joseph continued. 39:1 to 50:26, cont.

Having reassured his brothers and sought to lead them to think of the situation and its background in the light of God's foreordination and providence, Joseph next instructs them to return to Canaan to bring their father Jacob and their households down to Egypt. They are to explain to their father the high position which Joseph occupies in the land of Egypt. He and his kindred are invited to dwell in the land of Goshen. Goshen was in the region of the Nile delta in the northeastern part of Egypt. The entire group is to move to Egypt, with their families and possessions. Joseph adds that there remain five years of famine. Joseph undertakes to provide whatever is necessary for the entire establishment for the five years of remaining famine. Finally, they are to "haste" and bring Joseph's father to him in Egypt (45:9-13).

In this section we see Joseph's wisdom and his ability as a planner and administrator. Everything is considered and provided for. The plan is a wise one and had everything in its favor. Of course Joseph's great authority in the land of Egypt placed him in a position to make such lavish promises and also to carry them out.

Following this commission, Joseph falls upon Benjamin's neck and weeps, and Benjamin weeps on Joseph's neck. Formalities are dispensed with and brotherly affection is freely expressed. Only in the case of Benjamin is mutual weeping on necks mentioned. With regard to the other brothers, the record merely states that Joseph "kissed" them and "wept upon" them. Still, as Leupold points out, this was "all a truly oriental display of emotion" (Exposition of Genesis, II, 1097). Finally the brothers really feel at ease and talk with Joseph freely and naturally (45:15).

Such news as the arrival of Joseph's brothers and his identification of himself to them naturally could not be kept secret very long. Even though not officially published in any manner, the information would travel rapidly by the "grapevine" method. So we are informed in verse 16 that the news reached Pharaoh's palace, and that this "pleased Pharaoh well." Leupold remarks that the arrival of the brothers removed a kind of social stigma from the figure of Joseph, inasmuch as Joseph had been regarded as an ex-

slave. "Now proof is offered that Joseph comes of an honorable family of free nomads, who are generally held in high regard in those days" (Exposition of Genesis, II, 1098.)

Pharaoh himself proposes a plan which is identical with that previously formulated by Joseph, although Pharaoh does not mention Goshen. Rather, he states "I will give you the good of the land of Egypt . . . the good of all the land of Egypt is yours" (45:18, 20). Pharaoh also orders that Egyptian wagons be provided for moving Jacob's household to Egypt. These were not chariots, which were used only in war; rather they were carts, with either two or four wheels, used for any persons too old or weak to walk or mount a donkey. Such carts, it seems certain, were used only in Egypt.

We should note that Joseph is not merely offered the privilege of accommodating his father, his brothers and their families in Egypt, but is actually ordered by Pharaoh to do so. "Thou art commanded" is the language used. Possibly Pharaoh felt that Joseph might hesitate to use his office and authority so freely for the benefit of his own relatives, therefore he commands him to do these things, thus removing any objection or scruple on Joseph's part.

"Also regard not your stuff; for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours" (45:20). Jacob's family need not bother to pack and bring every last item of household goods. It was urgent that they get to Egypt without needless delay. Their needs would be amply provided for after their arrival there.

In accordance with Pharaoh's orders, Joseph issues wagons and travel provisions to his brothers. Each brother also receives "changes of raiment" — at least two extra garments. Benjamin, however, is given 300 pieces of silver and five "changes of raiment." Besides all this, a special gift is sent to his father Jacob: ten donkeys loaded with the good things of Egypt, and ten donkeys loaded with food for his father on the trip to Egypt. Considering the fact that Egypt was in the grip of a dire famine, this was extremely liberal provision for Joseph's kindred. Yet who shall say, in view of the tremendous debt that Egypt as a nation owed to Joseph, that the liberality was unwarranted?

We get a further intimation of Joseph's real wisdom in his parting counsel to the brothers: "See that ye fall not out by the way" (45:24).

Knowing his brothers and being a shrewd judge of human nature, Joseph realizes that once they are out of his presence and on their way home, they may begin to argue and quarrel — possibly as to who was most to blame for the crime committed against Joseph years before, possibly as to whether it was fair for Benjamin to have 300 pieces of silver and five changes of raiment when they themselves received less raiment and no silver. Joseph therefore cautions them against disputing and disunity while they are enroute home. And apparently Joseph's wise counsel was duly heeded, for verse 25 informs us that they arrived at the home of Jacob in Canaan. It is implied that they arrived there without untoward incidents.

"Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt!" Thus the brothers announce the glad news to their aged father who probably has long suspected that his ten older sons had something to do with the mysterious disappearance of Joseph years before. The news is almost too much for Jacob. "And Jacob's heart fainted" — Leupold translates, "his heart grew numb". Knowing well the character of his sons, Jacob not unnaturally suspects them of lying. The sons, however, continue to tell their story, repeating "all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them." We may wonder whether this "all" means strictly all that Joseph had said to his brothers. Did the brothers now actually tell their father what Joseph had said about their crime against him being part of a divine plan to preserve people alive? If so, this would involve disclosure of their own guilt in the matter. Obviously, Jacob must have learned the truth sooner or later. Possibly he already knew it; possibly he learned it definitely at this time.

What finally convinced Jacob that his sons were telling the truth was a sight of the wagons which Joseph had sent from Egypt. He well knew that his sons had not had money to purchase any such extensive equipment; therefore the presence of the wagons was real evidence that the son's story was true. On realizing this, Jacob's spirit revived. The sudden shock had passed, though he must still be very excited.

LESSON 158

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

8. The history of Joseph continued. 39:1 to 50:26, cont.

Chapter 46 relates the move of Jacob and his clan from Canaan to Egypt. The first stage of the journey is to Beersheba. We are not told what the point of departure was, but the residence of Jacob at the time of Joseph being sold was at Hebron (37:14). From Hebron to Beersheba is

"It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die" (45:28). We note that Jacob offers no comment on Joseph's exalted rank in Egypt. What really matters to him is the fact that Joseph is alive.

Questions:

1. What did Joseph instruct his brothers to tell his father?
2. In what part of Egypt were they to settle?
3. How many more years of famine remained?
4. What can be said about the wisdom of Joseph's plan?
5. How did Joseph express his affection for Benjamin?
6. How did Joseph express his affection for the other brothers?
7. What may have been the reason why the news of the arrival of Joseph's brothers pleased Pharaoh well?
8. What plan did Pharaoh propose?
9. What difference, if any, existed between the plan announced by Pharaoh and that already formulated by Joseph?
10. What was the nature of the wagons sent for Jacob's use?
11. What may have been the reason why Pharaoh issued a command instead of an invitation?
12. What gifts did Joseph give his brothers prior to their return to Canaan? How was favoritism shown to Benjamin?
13. What wise counsel did Joseph give his brothers just before their departure?
14. Why was this wise counsel advisable?
15. What was the effect on Jacob of his sons' announcement upon their arrival at home?
16. What finally convinced Jacob that his sons were telling the truth?

about 25 miles in a direct line, and Beersheba was on the direct route between Hebron and Egypt.

At Beersheba the company pauses and Jacob offers sacrifices "unto the God of his father Isaac". The God of Isaac is of course identical with the God of Jacob. The mention of Isaac at this point serves to remind the reader of Isaac's earlier offering of sacrifices at the same place. In this hallowed spot Jacob would think of the great divine promises to which he was heir. Another reason for offering sacrifices at Beer-

sheba may have been that this was the traditional southern limit of the Promised Land, and Jacob is about to take the serious step of going outside the Promised Land. He earnestly desires the clear guidance and approval of God before taking so serious a step.

God's answer to Jacob comes in the form of a vision seen during the night. The Lord addresses the patriarch at this time as "Jacob," not as "Israel," which may surprise us somewhat. The reason may be to recall to the patriarch's mind the kind of person he once was, or "to indicate that as long as he doubts and hesitates he is the old Jacob rather than the new Israel" (Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, II, 1107).

God reassures Jacob: "Fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation. I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again; and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes" (46:3, 4). Here we may raise the question, why should Jacob fear to go to Egypt? This could hardly be a fear of danger to his personal safety or that of his family, in view of the position of Joseph as supreme ruler of Egypt next to Pharaoh. It must have been a fear of acting contrary to the will of God. It will be recalled that Abraham's trip to Egypt (chapter 12) had some bad consequences, and that God specifically forbade Isaac to enter Egypt, commanding him on the contrary to abide in the land of Canaan (26:2). Moreover, God's warning to Isaac against entering Egypt came precisely in a time of famine. Jacob would naturally recall these facts and wonder whether perhaps a trip to Egypt might be contrary to God's will. Hence the divine revelation reassuring and instructing him was necessary at this time.

God also promises Jacob at Beersheba that he will make of him a great nation, and that this will be done precisely in Egypt (46:3). Jacob is also promised that God will bring him up from Egypt again — a promise fulfilled unto Jacob not in his own person but in his posterity centuries later in the time of Moses. For Jacob will die in Egypt (49:33) and only his mortal body will be brought up from Egypt for burial in the cave of Machpelah (50:13).

Thus reassured and encouraged, Jacob and his clan depart from Beersheba to go to Egypt. Jacob the aged father, rides in one of the Egyptian carts; so do the women and young children. The rest presumably walked or possibly rode by turns upon donkeys. We should not fail to note that the act of removal from Canaan to Egypt is represented in the narrative as an act of Jacob — "And Jacob rose up from Beersheba . . ." — the decision and the responsibility are Jacob's as the patriarchal head of the clan.

The narrative informs us that the entire connection ("all his seed") left Canaan to enter

Egypt. Specific mention is made of sons, grandsons, daughters and granddaughters. Though we know of only one daughter of Jacob by name — Dinah, 34:1 — we do know that he had "daughters," for we find mention of "all his daughters" in 37:35.

The record next presents a list of the members of Jacob's party entering Egypt. The sons of Leah, with their offspring, are mentioned first (verses 8-15). These total 33 persons not counting Dinah, the daughter of Jacob and Leah. Next are listed the sons and descendants of Zilpah; these are 16 in number not counting Asher's daughter Serah. Next come Rachel's sons and descendants, 14 in number. Of these, of course, Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim were not in the party entering Egypt, for they were already in Egypt.

There is a difficulty in connection with the listing of the sons of Benjamin. Ten sons of Benjamin are listed in 46:21. As the data presented in the narrative indicate that Benjamin at this time was a young man in his early twenties, it seems almost impossible that he could already have ten sons. The Septuagint (Greek translation of the Old Testament) lists only three of them as sons of Benjamin, the other seven being listed as his grandsons. This removes part of the difficulty, assuming that the Septuagint is correct over against the Hebrew text. But still a difficulty remains. If Benjamin is a young man of about 23 years of age on entering Egypt, how can he have grandsons at that comparatively young age? The conclusion seems inevitable that part, at least, of the descendants of Benjamin were born after the settlement in Egypt, just as we know that Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, were born in Egypt, even though they are included in the list of "the names of the children of Israel which came into Egypt" (46:8).

Last of all the sons and descendants of Bilhah are listed (verses 23-25), being seven in number.

This gives a total of 70, of whom 33 are descended from Leah, 16 from Zilpah, 14 from Rachel, and 7 from Bilhah. This reckoning of 70 however does not include Jacob himself, nor Dinah, nor the wives, nor (with the exception of Serah) the daughters.

The total given in verse 26, with the definite statement that the wives are not counted, is 66. But in verse 27, the total is given as 70. An added complication consists in the fact that in the New Testament (Stephen's speech, Acts 7:14) the number is given as 75. It is not certain that we can fully reconcile these apparently conflicting statements. With regard to Stephen's speech, it seems clear that he was following the Greek version of the Old Testament (Septuagint) which at this point varies from the Hebrew text. Ordinarily the Hebrew text is regarded as much more

reliable than the Greek version. Leupold suggests that perhaps Er and Onan (who died in the land of Canaan) are not to be counted in the list of Leah's descendants, but Jacob and Dinah counted instead. This would give the total of 70 including Jacob and Dinah. Thus one difficulty seems to be solved. As for the total of 66 given in verse 26, he suggests that Jacob, Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh are not counted in this figure, for the figure is for "all the souls that came with Jacob into Egypt" (Leupold, Exposition of Genesis, II, 1115).

A further matter that needs to be considered is what may have been the total counting all the wives and daughters. Clearly this must have been considerably more than 70, though not necessarily double that number. Also, should we not suppose that a considerable number of servants or slaves accompanied the household into Egypt? In Abraham's day, that patriarch was able to organize a private army of 318 men, at a moment's notice, from his own establishment (14:14), clearly implying a total establishment of several hundred or possibly even a thousand. Isaac also was very rich, with flocks and herds, and "great store of servants" (26:14). It would seem natural to suppose that Jacob's establishment, also, had numerous servants or slaves. What became of these if they did not enter Egypt with the patriarch? It has been suggested that he had liberated them on account of the famine, or had lost them in some way. However this is mere speculation, and it seems at least as reasonable to suppose that a considerable number of such persons entered Egypt along with Jacob. Since even the wives of Jacob's son are not listed or counted, it need not surprise us that no mention is made of the servants or slaves. Allowing for the latter class, it is quite possible that the total number of persons accompanying Jacob into Egypt was in the hundreds.

Questions:

1. What was the first stage of Jacob's journey to Egypt?
2. What is the distance from Hebron to Beersheba?
3. What religious act was performed by Jacob at Beersheba?
4. What religious associations did Beersheba have for Jacob?
5. Why would Jacob hesitate to go beyond Beersheba?
6. How did God reassure the patriarch at this point?
7. What promises did God give to Jacob at Beersheba?
8. Which of the company rode in the Egyptian carts?
9. What is known as to the number of Jacob's daughters?
10. How many descendants of Leah are listed as entering Egypt? How many of Zilpah? Of Rachel? Of Bilhah?
11. What difficulty exists concerning the sons of Benjamin listed in 46:21? What possible solutions have been suggested for this problem?
12. What problems exist as to the total number of people entering Egypt? What solutions can be suggested?
13. How many may have been in the company if we count the wives?
14. Why may it be regarded as probable that a considerable number of servants, not counted in the total, also accompanied Jacob into Egypt?

LESSON 159

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

8. The history of Joseph continued. 39:1 to 50:26, cont.

There is one matter in the listing of Jacob's party which still calls for some attention. In 46:10 among the sons of Simeon we find listed "Shaul the son of a Canaanitish woman." This specific mention of a marriage between one of Jacob's sons and a Canaanite woman seems to indicate that such was exceptional. We are not told where Jacob's sons got their wives but it may be assumed that they obtained them from Mesopotamia as Isaac and Jacob had, or possibly from other tribes which were not involved in the extreme religious and moral corruptions of the Canaanites.

As the party enters Egypt, Jacob sends Judah on ahead to inform Joseph of their imminent arrival, "to direct his face unto Goshen" (46:28). The party soon after arrives in Goshen, where they are met by Joseph in person, who has travelled there by chariot (46:29). On seeing his aged father again, Joseph "fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while." Jacob (here called Israel) on his part says to Joseph: "Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive" (46:30). Jacob's long pent-up and now at last released emotion is understandable. Actually, however, the patriarch lived seventeen more years (47:9 compared with 47:28).

Joseph next announces his intention to inform Pharaoh and his court of the arrival of his father and his kindred. He proposes to inform

Pharaoh that his brethren are shepherds by occupation, and have brought their flocks and herds with them. He coaches his brothers as to how they are to answer when Pharaoh inquires as to their occupation. They are to reply that they are and always have been "about cattle." This will make it suitable that they dwell in the land of Goshen. Joseph adds an explanation: "For every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians" (46:34).

The Egyptian antipathy to shepherds is confirmed by archaeological discoveries in Egypt. It included not only foreign shepherds but also Egyptian ones. They were regarded as an inferior and contemptible class of people. Exodus 8:26 indicates that not only shepherds but also sheep were an abomination unto the Egyptians.

Pharaoh, as the ruler of Egypt, would of course have to reckon with this Egyptian prejudice against the sheep industry. It will be recalled that it was Joseph, not Pharaoh, who had specified the land of Goshen as the place where his brethren should settle (45:10). Pharaoh had been much more general in his language, saying "I will give you the good of the land of Egypt" (45:18). Since Goshen was well suited to sheep and cattle, Joseph desires that Pharaoh confirm his plan that his brethren settle there. Hence his careful coaching of his brothers as to how to reply to Pharaoh's inquiries. Goshen would not only be suitable for live-stock raising, but it would also serve to isolate the Israelites from the Egyptians, and thereby would help to shield them from Egyptian race-prejudice. Also, as Leupold remarks, it was near the border of Canaan, which would facilitate their exit when the time came for that.

Joseph informs Pharaoh that his father and his brethren have arrived in Egypt, with their flocks, herds and possessions, and are at the moment located in the land of Goshen. It was certainly a wise move for Joseph to locate his brethren in Goshen first, and inform Pharaoh of it afterwards. The easiest course for Pharaoh to adopt would then be simply to give his formal approval or ratification to what Joseph had arranged.

Joseph has selected five of his brethren for presentation at the court of Pharaoh. We do not know which five these were, but presumably he selected the five that he felt would make the best impression at the court of the king. On their being presented, Pharaoh asks the question which Joseph had anticipated, and Joseph's brothers reply frankly and honestly, even though their honest reply might perhaps be expected to arouse prejudice. They state plainly that they are shepherds as were their fathers before them.

Joseph's brothers add an explanation as to their reason for coming to Egypt. It is "to so-

jour" — that is, to live there temporarily only. They explain that they were forced out of Canaan by the famine conditions and lack of pasture for their stock. For these reasons, they request that they be allowed to dwell in the land of Goshen.

We take the brothers' request for permission to "sojourn" — to dwell only temporarily — as honest and made in good faith. Even though as a matter of fact the Israelites remained in Egypt for centuries, that was not contemplated by Jacob or his sons at the time of their entering Egypt. It was regarded as a temporary expedient rendered necessary by the famine, with the presumption, of course, that when the famine was over they would return to the Promised Land of Canaan again.

In his reply Pharaoh says to Joseph: "The land of Egypt is before thee; in the best of the land make thy father and thy brethren to dwell; in the land of Goshen let them dwell . . ." (47:6). So the land of Egypt is at the disposal of these newcomers, and since Joseph has already located them in the land of Goshen, Pharaoh confirms this, making it an official decree not only of Joseph but also of Pharaoh himself.

Pharaoh adds: "If thou knowest any men of activity among them, then make them rulers over my cattle" (47:6b). "Men of activity" means "men of ability" or "competent men."

Questions:

1. What special fact is recorded concerning Simeon's son Shaul?
2. What seems to be implied by the mention of the nationality of Shaul's mother?
3. How did Jacob notify Joseph of his imminent arrival in Egypt?
4. Where did Joseph meet his father, and how did he get there?
5. What did Joseph do on meeting his father?
6. What did Jacob say on meeting his son Joseph?
7. How did Joseph coach his brothers concerning their appearance before Pharaoh?
8. What was the Egyptian attitude toward shepherds and sheep?
9. What reasons can be suggested as to why Goshen was a specially desirable place for Joseph's brethren to settle?
10. How many of his brothers did Joseph introduce to Pharaoh?
11. How did the brothers answer Pharaoh's inquiry?
12. What request did they make of Pharaoh?
13. How long did they intend to remain in Egypt?
14. What position did Pharaoh offer to any men of special ability among Joseph's brothers?

LESSON 160

III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26, cont.**8. The history of Joseph continued. 39:1 to 50:26, cont.**

Having introduced five of his brothers to Pharaoh, Joseph next presents his father Jacob to the king. With true and typical oriental courtesy Pharaoh asks Jacob the proper question under the circumstances: "How old art thou?" (47:8). Americans and Europeans who are getting along in years sometimes do not like to be asked their age, but it is evident that in ancient Egypt as in modern China it was considered the courteous thing to ask an older person's age, and considered a distinct honor to be of outstanding age.

Jacob's reply is both dignified and truly beautiful: "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage" (47:9). People took time to speak deliberately and gracefully in those days; what a contrast it forms to the constant rush and pressure of modern American life! Perhaps people who lived deliberately as Jacob did avoided nervous breakdowns of modern life with its stress and strain.

"And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh" (47:10). Since it is a recognized principle in Scripture that "without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better" (Hebrews 7:7), Jacob here appears as Pharaoh's superior in spiritual and human values. But what was involved in Jacob's blessing Pharaoh? Luther suggests that Pharaoh became a convert to the true God whom Jacob served. This, however, is an unwarranted inference. Nor should we suppose that Jacob's blessing bestowed in Pharaoh included any promises or predictions of his eternal salvation or participation in God's work of redemption. Rather it would seem that this was a blessing such as a truly godly person could invoke upon a ruler even though the ruler might be of another faith. For instance, Americans are accustomed to pray for God's protection and blessing upon the President of the United States, quite regardless of whether he is of the same faith with themselves or not. It is the exalted office that they have in mind, rather than the personal qualities of the man holding the office. Such prayer or blessing does not imply a bond of religious communion between the person blessing and the person blessed, but merely the recognition that it is the will of God that Christian people invoke the goodness of God on behalf of those who, in God's providence, are in positions of high authority in the state.

The presentation at court being finished, Joseph definitely settles his father and his brethren "in the land of Rameses, as Pharaoh had commanded" (47:11). The land was given to them

for "a possession" which seems to be more than they had asked for, and more than they had enjoyed in Canaan before entering Egypt.

The expression "land of Rameses" instead of "land of Goshen" is interesting. It seems clear that the region was not called "land of Rameses" in Jacob's and Joseph's day, but only later. Note the name of the store city Raamses in Ex. 1:11. Raamses is held to be the same as Rameses, only the spelling being slightly different. The explanation seems to be that Moses, the writer of Genesis, knew this region by the name of "land of Rameses", and here uses the name which was in common use in his own day, instead of "Goshen" which was the common name in Joseph's day.

As to the exact location of Rameses, it is said to have been located halfway between the Nile river and Lake Timsah.

"And Joseph nourished his father, and his brethren, and all his father's household, with bread, according to their families" (47:12). Here "bread" of course means food in general, not merely what we call "bread" today. The implication is that the precious food was rationed in proportion to the number of persons in a household, so that even though the supply was strictly limited owing to the famine, still all had enough and none suffered lack. This continued, of course, through the five years which remained of the famine.

Questions:

1. What did Joseph do after introducing five of his brothers to Pharaoh?
2. What question did Pharaoh address to Jacob?
3. What are the characteristics of Jacob's reply to Pharaoh?
4. What principle is recognized in Scripture concerning the relative standing of the person who blesses and the person who is blessed?
5. What does Jacob's act of blessing Pharaoh indicate concerning the human and spiritual stature of Jacob in comparison with Pharaoh?
6. What must we regard as not included in Jacob's blessing of Pharaoh?
7. What may we suppose to be included in Jacob's blessing of Pharaoh?
8. What name is given to the part of Egypt where Joseph settled his father and his brethren? Why is it not called Goshen?
9. Where is Rameses said to have been located?
10. What provision did Joseph make for his father and his brethren in the matter of food supplies? How long would this provision continue?

LESSON 161

III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26, cont.**8. The history of Joseph continued. 39:1 to 50:26, cont.**

From 47:13 to verse 26 the subject is Joseph's administration of the famine relief program in the land of Egypt. It is noted that the famine was very sore not only in the land of Egypt but also in the land of Canaan (verse 13). This indicates that Canaan was at this time regarded as a dependency of Egypt.

As the famine increases in severity, the people spend their available cash for food which is rationed to them by Joseph. The next stage of the rationing program is that in which Joseph issues food to the people in exchange for their cattle. Some have harshly criticized Joseph for making people give up their cattle instead of simply giving them the food free. We should realize, however, that the matter was not as simple as it might seem on the surface. Very likely even with the large reserve of grain accumulated during the seven years of plenty, there was not enough to tide all the people of Egypt and all their livestock over the entire seven years of famine. Not only would the reserve have to be carefully controlled, but a part — perhaps a large part — of the animals would have to be sacrificed in order to keep the people alive. At the same time, part of the livestock must be kept alive for breeding purposes to restock the land after the famine period was over. Such a program required the planning and administration of a government authority rather than every individual making his own plans and carrying them out. While the present writer has no sympathy with the idea of a government-controlled "planned economy" as a matter of general economic policy, it would seem that in times of dire emergency and national crisis such as the years of famine in Egypt, central planning and control by a firm hand may be absolutely necessary. It was the good fortune of Egypt, in the providence of God, to have a truly wise and competent man at the head of this emergency program, instead of a stupid, blundering bureaucrat who would occasion greater evils that he sought to remedy.

The third stage of the relief program came when the people had given up both their cash and their cattle. Now they sell their land in return for rations of food. It should be noted that the proposal to sell the land originated with the people of Egypt, not with Joseph (47:19). Leupold comments that in this whole program of expecting the people to pay in some way for what they got, Joseph was being very wise rather than harsh. The fact of payment enabled the Egyptians to keep up their self-respect and to avoid the breakdown of morale which would result from their accepting free relief over a period of years. Joseph wisely avoided the appearance of a dole.

Though it may be said that the people of Egypt were not in a very free bargaining position, owing to the pressure of the famine, yet all the way through the terms on which food is issued are agreed upon by both government and people.

"And Joseph bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for the Egyptians sold every man his field, because the famine prevailed over them: so the land became Pharaoh's. And as for the people, he removed them to cities from one end of the borders of Egypt even to the other end thereof" (47:20, 21). In return for food, the people turn in the title to their land. Then Joseph removes the people from the temporarily useless, drought-parched farm land to cities located throughout Egypt. On the famine-stricken farm land they could do nothing as long as the years of famine continued. Having the people dispersed through the country would only make the relief program more complicated and difficult to administer. So Joseph adopts the wise and very practical course of removing the people to cities. In this way the issuing of rations would be much simpler and easier. No doubt the people were concentrated in locations where the grain reserves had been stored.

It is recorded that the only class of people in Egypt not selling their land were the priests. These did not find it necessary to sell because they had a "portion which Pharaoh gave them." This indicates the high standing of the Egyptian priesthood. They were provided for without having to renounce title to their lands.

"Then Joseph said unto the people, Behold, I have bought you this day and your land for Pharaoh: lo, here is seed for you, and ye shall sow the land" (47:23). This must be understood as spoken near the end of the famine period, for Joseph provides seed for planting.

Joseph accordingly announces what the policy as to taxation is to be when the expected harvest is realized. One-fifth of the crop is to be for Pharaoh, and the remaining four-fifths are to be for seed and for food for the people (47:24). Leupold comments: "Twenty per cent is a high tax rate but quite moderate for the Orient where one third and one half have been demanded. . . Our tax-ridden age ought not to find reason for objection here" (Exposition of Genesis, II, 1138). It has been reported that farmers in the Yangtze valley of central China have sometimes been required to pay as much as 75% of their crop as taxes to the Communist government of China. Americans are getting accustomed to a 20% tax on their taxable income, and much more than that in the higher brackets. So perhaps we should think twice before pronouncing an adverse judgment on Joseph's taxation program for Egypt.

As a matter of fact, the Egyptians seem to have accepted the new policy readily: "And they said, Thou hast saved our lives: let us find grace

in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants" (47:25). This does not necessarily imply that there were no complaints or protests — very likely there were some. It only implies that the general reaction was one of willing submission to the conditions, in view of the fact that the program administered by Joseph had saved the people's lives. And this was indeed a great thing. How many famines have there been since Joseph's time, in various parts of the world, in which people have died by millions of starvation, although perhaps many if not all these lives might have been saved by a wise and firm program such as Joseph's, over a period of years.

Before leaving this subject of the Egyptian famine, we should consider whether Joseph acted rightly in what he did. Some have made bold to criticize Joseph in very harsh terms. We can imagine that present-day Communists would label Joseph as "an enemy of the people," yet Joseph saved the people from death by starvation, which Communist governments in Russia and China have sometimes notoriously failed to do. Even some without any sympathy for Communism have held that Joseph took an intolerable advantage of the plight of the people of Egypt. The writer of these notes does not agree with this criticism of Joseph.

In the first place, it would seem that Joseph's program of requiring something in exchange for the food issued enabled the Egyptians to preserve their morale and self-respect better than if the food had been issued as an absolutely free grant with no strings attached. Secondly, the whole matter must be viewed in its context and setting of the second millennium before Christ. It is very unhistorical and unrealistic to try to apply twentieth century concepts of democracy and what some people call "social justice" to a situation which existed between three and four thousand years ago. Democracy simply did not exist at that period of the world's history. Government by a powerful monarchy was universally accepted as the normal state of affairs. The kind of objections that an American or European, more or less influenced by the socialistic trend of the present day, may feel inclined to raise against Joseph's program and methods, probably never

entered the mind of the average Egyptian farmer who accepted the terms and received the benefits of Joseph's program.

Questions:

1. What subject is related in verses 13 to 26 of chapter 47?
2. Where was the famine sore besides in Egypt?
3. What was the first stage of Joseph's famine relief program?
4. Why may it have been a practical necessity that the people surrender their livestock to the Egyptian government?
5. What was the second stage of the relief program?
6. What was the third stage of the program?
7. What psychological benefit may have come to the people of Egypt from Joseph's requirement of payment for food?
8. Why did Joseph remove the people to cities throughout Egypt?
9. What class of people did not sell their land, and why?
10. Why must 47:23 be regarded as having been spoken toward the end of the famine period?
11. What was Joseph's taxation policy with regard to the new crop?
12. What can be said on the question of whether the tax-rate established by Joseph was excessive or not?
13. What was the reaction of the people of Egypt to Joseph's announcement about the new tax policy?
14. How would present-day Communists label Joseph?
15. Why is it improper to criticize Joseph and his program from the standpoint of modern democracy?

LESSON 162

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

8. The history of Joseph continued. 39:1 to 50:26, cont.

The last section of chapter 47 concerns preparations for the death of Jacob. "And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions therein, and grew, and multiplied exceedingly" (47:27). This general statement carries us beyond the end of the years of famine, and seems to cover the years

described from this point to the end of the book of Genesis. Although the famine is over, the people do not return to the land of Canaan, but remain in Egypt. As to the reason for this, we are not informed, but very likely it may have been because of great prosperity of the Israelites in Egypt. Of course God had a deeper reason in His plans and purposes, but we are inquiring as to the reason in the minds of the Israelites themselves.

As a matter of fact the Israelites were not totally out of contact with the land of Canaan

during this period. Not only did they make a trip back to the Promised Land at the time of the burial of Jacob (50:7-13), but there is evidence of at least one other trip of some of them to Canaan during the period. It is not mentioned in Genesis but comes up rather mysteriously in I Chronicles 7:20-22, where we read: "And the sons of Ephraim: Shuthelah, and Bered his son, Tahath his son, and Eladah his son, and Tahath his son, and Zabad his son, and Shuthelah his son, and Ezer, and Elead, whom the men of Gath that were born in that land slew, because they came down to take away their cattle. And Ephraim their father mourned many days, and his brethren came to comfort him." Comparison of the persons named with the listing in Numbers 26:35-37 indicates that part of the men mentioned were actual sons of Ephraim while part may have been descendants or grandsons. Ezer and Elead, therefore, may have been either sons or grandsons of Ephraim. Ephraim could be called their "father" in either relationship, according to common Old Testament usage. In any case, the cattle-stealing raid mentioned in I Chron. 7:21 must have been made from Egypt, for it is quite impossible to regard it as having happened before Jacob's entrance to Egypt, and of course it must have been long before the Exodus. It forms an interesting, if mysterious, sidelight on the dwelling of the Israelites in Egypt during the period of flourishing, before the onset of the Egyptian oppression of them. It would seem to indicate, also, that some of Jacob's descendants did not have very high ethical standards at this time, inasmuch as they were killed while engaged in what is today called "cattle rustling." Gath, the place of the incident, is in the Philistine area in southwestern Canaan.

"And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years: so the whole age of Jacob was a hundred forty and seven years. And the time drew nigh that Israel must die . . . (47:28, 29a). Realizing that his death cannot be far away, Jacob, here called by his new name "Israel", sends for his son Joseph. He requests Joseph to swear a solemn oath, promising that he will not bury his father in the land of Egypt, but will bury him with his forefathers in their burying-place. This means, of course, the cave of Machpelah near Hebron in southern Canaan.

Joseph readily swears the oath, promising to comply with his dying father's wishes. "And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head." We may raise the question why Jacob regarded it as important that he be buried with his forefathers in the cave of Machpelah in Canaan instead of in the land of Egypt. Leupold states that this cannot be regarded, in Jacob's case, as a mere matter of sentiment. "With men of strong faith, such as the patriarchs had, such petitions would have

a deep and worthy motivation" (Exposition of Genesis, II, 1140). "Jacob believed God's promises in reference to Israel, the land of Canaan, and the blessing of all the nations of the world through the Saviour to come. His deepest hopes were tied up with these promises of the Word of God. Jacob wanted even his burial to give testimony to this faith. But the only suitable land the patriarchs owned was the cave at Machpelah where Abraham and Isaac lay buried. Therefore he requests that he be laid to rest there" (Leupold, Exposition of Genesis, II, 1140).

"And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head" (47:31b). "By this expression, Moses again affirms that Jacob esteemed it a singular kindness, that his son should have promised to do what he had required respecting his burial. For he exerts his weak body as much as he is able, in order to give thanks unto God, as if he had obtained something most desirable. He is said to have worshipped towards the head of his bed: because, seeing he was quite unable to rise from the bed on which he lay, he yet composed himself with a solemn air in the attitude of one who was praying" (Calvin, Commentary on Genesis, II, 417-8).

Questions:

1. What is the subject related in the last section of chapter 47?
2. What general facts concerning the Israelites are stated in verse 27?
3. How can it be shown that the Israelites were not totally out of contact with the land of Canaan during the early part of their sojourn in Egypt?
4. What does I Chronicles 7:20-22 show about the Israelites during the early part of their Egyptian sojourn?
5. What did Jacob do when he realized he was soon to die?
6. What promise did Jacob request Joseph to make upon his oath?
7. Why should burial in the cave of Machpelah be important to Jacob?
8. How did Jacob show his appreciation of Joseph's oath and promise?
9. What act of Jacob indicated his reverence toward God?

(To be continued)

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.

CHRISTIANITY AND EXISTENTIALISM, by J. M. Spier; David Hugh Freeman, translator. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, P. O. Box 185, Nutley 10, N. J. 1953, pp. 140. \$3.00

Existentialism has been called the philosophical expression of the Twentieth Century mood of despair. It speaks of "anxiety and death, despair and failure, nullity, doubt, nausea, and guilt" (p. 113), with little, if any, hope of escape from frustration. The reader may well raise the question, "Why then discuss any relation between Christianity and Existentialism?"

J. M. Spier is introduced to the reader as "a prominent member of a school of philosophy known under the name 'philosophy of the Idea of Law' of which Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven are best known in this country . . ." In a former book, "an Introduction to Christian Philosophy", he summarizes the "philosophy of the Idea of Law." In this book under review, he proceeds from the same viewpoint to examine the relation between Christianity, which he assumes to be a "world and life view that is built upon the Biblical motive of creation, the fall, and redemption" (p. 99); and Existentialism, which is "a reaction against the rationalism which played such a great role in early humanist philosophy" (p. 101).

To the average Christian reader, Mr. Spier's treatment of this relationship should prove of value.

1. He furnishes a brief introduction to such divergent forms of Existentialism as exemplified in Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Jaspers, Heidegger, Marcel, Lavelle, Sartre, and Loen. This is in itself an important aid in understanding the complexity of the variety of expressions given to this philosophic movement.

2. In Part II, the author also briefly discusses the distinguishing characteristics of Existentialism.

3. His reasons for the Christian's rejection of Existentialism are worthy of thoughtful consideration by anyone who as a concern for those who have come under the influence of this modern denial of the faith.

— S. Bruce Willson

THE PHILOSOPHY OF REVELATION, by Herman Bavinck. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids 3, Michigan. 1953, pp. 350. \$3.50

Herman Bavinck, a contemporary of Abraham Kuyper, Benjamin Warfield, and James Orr, delivered the Stone Lectures at Princeton Theological Seminary in 1908-1909. This present volume contains the six Stone Lectures together with four other lectures delivered elsewhere about the same time.

Bavinck's point of view, which is ably presented throughout, is that the world is unexplainable without God. Physics, history, psychology and every other science and art presuppose some metaphysics, and that none of the subjects are intelligible or meaningful apart from the revelation of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Theology has tended to draw a sharp distinction between special and general revelation. But such a distinction, never wholly thought through, has opened the way for some modern scientific presuppositions to crowd out the Christian concept of the supernatural revelation of God. Bavinck argues that the retreat from a dependence on a philosophy of revelation has resulted in the fragmentation of human knowledge, and the loss of an underlying sense of purpose in life.

There has seemed to be a time-lag in the American reception of the contributions of European philosophers which brought the "period of the enlightenment" under critical scrutiny. Only after the soul-shaking experiences of the social and political revolutions as the aftermath of two world wars, have we witnessed a renewed interest in studies which re-evaluate all philosophy and science in the light of the revelation of God.

— S. Bruce Willson

MARK'S SKETCHBOOK OF CHRIST, by Helen J. Tenney. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids 3, Michigan. 1956, pp. 103, paper cover. \$2.00.

This is a workbook for young people beginning a serious study of Scripture. The 16 chapters mostly correspond exactly with those of Mark, each chapter containing numerous blanks to be filled in to answer questions or to expand on suggestions, as well as map work and special review assignments. In the words of Mrs. Tenney, "The present workbook is so planned that its users will go directly to the Bible for all the answers. Instead of endless disconnected words and phrases which seem to have no apparent relation with one another, answers will fit into an outline

of Mark's story of Christ. Thus, when the workbook is complete, the skeleton outline will be padded with 'meat', and will furnish a satisfying account of Jesus' ministry on earth." (p. 96, "Tips for Teachers")

On the whole the author accomplishes her purpose quite ably. However it seems that a few of the questions deal with such minute details that the purpose of their inclusion is not at all clear to this reviewer.

Several sections require the student to write certain short episodes, parables, and biographical sketches in his own words. This seems to be an excellent device in the hands of the Bible class teacher who wishes to determine what the words of Scripture mean to the student. The teacher, however, could be helped even more by the inclusion of specific questions which the student would be required to answer without using an open Bible. In this way the teacher would have an idea of how well the student is retaining that which has been taught from the Bible.

Mrs. Tenney has also included numerous short explanatory paragraphs interspersed with the sections which the student must fill in. Most of these are well handled. We might note, however, some of those not so well handled. Regarding the unpardonable sin, it seems rather unconvincing to say: "If they (the scribes) did not repent, there would be no forgiveness for them. But repentance is always possible . . ." (p. 19) We ought to note that while repentance is necessary for forgiveness of sin generally, this statement hardly helps one to distinguish the unpardonable sin. We might also ask whether repentance is always possible. Is it needless to mention that it is possible only when sovereignly bestowed by God?

There is also a rather prominent technical flaw in that we are told on page three that "ceremonial washings were commanded by Moses," while on page 38 we read that "the ceremonial washing was not required by the law of Moses, but was added later 'as the tradition of the elders' which became more binding than the 'original law.'"

While many good qualities characterize this work, this reviewer feels that more could be done to help the untrained teacher which the author has foremost in her mind and that there a few explanatory sections which lack precision of interpretation and expression.

— Joseph P. Duggan

PHILIPPIANS: THE GOSPEL AT WORK, by Merrill C. Tenney. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids 3, Michigan. 1956, pp. 102, \$2.00

Dr. Tenney of Wheaton College has rightly gained a reputation as one of the more prominent and capable contemporary evangelical scholars

and writers. Though this book is not ostensibly designed as a scholarly work, but rather as a "popular" study, nevertheless one can see in it the knowledge and ability of a scholar's mind brought to bear on this epistle as an integral part of the New Testament as a whole. More especially Dr. Tenney draws the reader's attention to those passages in the Acts which introduce us to the Philippian Church and shows that Philipians must be understood in the light of the teachings of the rest of the New Testament and the historical record of Acts.

The author strongly affirms the historical reality of the elements of the gospel, reminding us that "the gospel is not just an attempt to invent a new religion, but that the message is part of historical reality. History cannot be shaped to personal tastes; life must be adjusted to history." ". . . The death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ are objective occurrences which must be included in the overall view of the meaning of life." (p. 17) However, Dr. Tenney is not here interested in rehearsing the theological elements of the gospel, but rather in interpreting and illustrating that gospel as a working principle. He is primarily concerned with the gospel as that which must mold the believer's life and thought.

His method employs abundant illustrative material, both Scriptural and extra-Scriptural, designed to infuse the reader with an enthusiasm for personal participation in the life of the gospel. This is done within the framework of the epistle and thereby the reader is also supplied with a sketch of the nature and problems of the ancient Philippian Church.

The publishers are to be commended for the inclusion of a Scripture index.

— Joseph P. Duggan

VOICES FROM HEAVEN AND HELL, by J. Marcellus Kik. The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 147 North 10th Street, Philadelphia 7, Pennsylvania. 1955, pp. 192. \$2.50

This book by the minister of the Second Reformed Church of Little Falls, New Jersey, gives in monologue form the messages of sixteen Bible characters, speaking from Heaven or Hell. These messages are highly imaginative, but in every case Mr. Kik bases his treatment on careful research into either sacred or secular history and never goes beyond the limits of probability. Used very sparingly, this method of preaching could be used as a means of attracting the attention of those who are impervious to the normal preaching of the Gospel, but the book's greatest value is perhaps to give in very readable form something of the historical background behind the Gospels. The 'voices' include those of a Judean Shepherd, Simeon, Nicodemus, the Dying Thief, Felix, Herod Agrippa II.

— Hugh J. Blair

MAN OF SORROWS, by Herman Hoeksema. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids 3, Michigan. 1956, pp. 129, \$2.00.

This book, which is largely an exposition of passages from Isaiah 50 and 53, is a reverent and devotional treatment of the sufferings of Christ, written from a definitely Reformed standpoint. The doctrine of total depravity is unequivocally taught on p. 22 where the author, speaking of the preaching of the Word, declares, "Nor may it ever be presented as a sort of mere offer, which man can either accept or reject by His own free will. For man is in darkness. He is corrupt, and can never understand the things of the Spirit of God. He will not, and cannot and cannot will to hear the Word of the Servant of Jehovah . . ." Equally commendable is Mr. Hoeksema's insistence in chapter IX that the Cross was not merely man's doing but God's, and that Christ was bruised according to the good pleasure of the Lord. We note that in dealing with the difficult verse 9 in Isaiah 53 — "He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death" — Mr. Hoeksema strongly maintains, as did Delitzsch, that the two clauses must be taken antithetically — "they meant his grave to be with the wicked, but he was with the rich in his death" — but he is content to state his interpretation without discussing any other point of view.

In spite of the highly devotional tone and strongly orthodox position maintained throughout the book, several criticisms must be made. The style makes it evident that the chapters of the book were originally prepared to be spoken and heard rather than written to be read, and that there has been little revision for publication, for there is a good deal of repetition and sentences often read jerkily and unevenly. Certain phrases are over-worked; the reviewer lost count of the number of times the Cross is referred to as "the accursed tree;" in fact, it is seldom referred to in any other way. The word 'therefore' occurs frequently, and sometimes in places where it does not introduce a logical sequence. The interpretation of 'a tender plant' as a form of parasitic growth, suggested on p. 52, seems very farfetched. The titles Jehovah God, Lord Jehovah, Adonai Jehovah occur eight times in little more than as many lines on p. 45.

The last chapter, entitled ". . . And Peter" and dealing with the resurrection, since, as is stated in the Foreward, "the death of our Saviour and His resurrection belong inseparably together," seems very much an after thought, tacked on at the end. If Mr. Hoeksema wished to deal with the Resurrection, he could have done it much more effectively by continuing his exposition of Isaiah 53: verses 10-12 necessarily imply a resurrection from the dead. The work would then have been more of a unity, instead of suggesting, as it does to this reviewer, that the last chapter is another

sermon, which merited publication, but which has no direct connection with the rest of the book.

There is no doubt, however, that this book has real devotional value and will accomplish the design of the author, "to bring the Man of Sorrows a little closer to our mind and heart."

— Hugh J. Blair

THE PARABOLIC TEACHING OF SCRIPTURE, by G. H. Lang, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Michigan. 1955, pp. 400, \$3.50.

One has come to distrust the description of an author's work given by his publishers on a book's dust cover, and a reviewer's critical faculty is merely sharpened when a book on the parables is described as "the most important new work in this field in nearly one hundred years," that being the time which has elapsed since the issue of Trench's classic work.

Frankly, this book does not live up to its publishers' description. There is much that is valuable and inspiring in it, but the author has attempted too much, and is much too ready to pursue every red herring which he himself has drawn across his own path. It might have been wiser if the publishers had retained the title under which the book was published in Britain, **Pictures and Parables**, for Mr. Lang deals with a great many pictures and metaphors which are not strictly parables, e. g., John the Baptist's "generation of vipers," and Christ's words regarding 'living water' to the woman of Samaria.

On p. 35 Mr. Lang makes an unqualified assertion that "Ecclesiasticism is a wall to hinder free access to the Well and the Water of Life, to Christ and His Spirit," and again and again he returns to the distinction between Christ's Church and Kingdom, and on p. 45 he makes a much too sweeping statement on the decline of the work of the Reformation.

The author's aptitude for treating every subject exhaustively is illustrated by the fact that a mention of 'water' in John 4 sends him back to Jeremiah, to Israel in the wilderness and to Caleb's daughter Achsah and her desire for the upper and lower springs; and a reference to Christ's 'yoke' sends him back to every O. T. reference to the yoke. An extravagant exegesis of the parable of the mustard seed suggests that since the birds in the parable of the sower represent powers of evil, so the birds in the parable which come to lodge under the branches of the mustard tree must also be evil, and that in fact the Church, represented by the mustard tree, was never meant to grow too large, for size often breeds dissension and division! Those who accept the teaching of the Shorter Catechism that "the souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness and do immediately pass into glory," will be startled by the assertion on p. 107 that "this opinion that believers at death go to heaven and glory is worse

in its nature than the doctrine of the Assumption of Mary." Nor can Calvinists accept the view stated on p. 151 that "the redemptive death of Christ applies to all mankind." The parable of the prodigal son is treated as "the picture of a backslider and his restoration."

Yet, for all that the present reviewer finds much to criticise in this book, there is much teaching that is Scriptural and helpful. For example, there is on pp. 110 ff. an excellent exposition of the parables of the hidden treasure and the pearl of great price, showing that salvation is a free gift of grace, and yet it costs all that a man hath to enter into blessing of it; though even here, (p. 115), there is an erroneous distinction between the regenerate who enter the kingdom and "that limited company of the regenerate known as the church of God, for that company will have been completed and glorified at least a thousand years before these enter the kingdom." From such a book as this one turns back with relief and gratitude to Trench's sane and Scriptural exposition.

— Hugh J. Blair

THE SECRET OF THE LORD, by W. M. Clow. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Michigan. 1955, pp. 353. \$2.95.

It has been said that books of sermons are much less common than they were a generation ago, and that there is little demand for them. However that may be, there can be no doubt that the Baker Book House has done a useful service in reprinting this book of sermons by William M. Clow, written nearly fifty years ago. The book must be almost unique in the fact that it is confined to one particular segment of time recorded in the Gospels, and deals with "the sayings and doings of Jesus during the days of a religious retreat held in the neighbourhood of Caesarea." And the thought of the whole book is that "to His chosen disciples, in those days of seclusion, at the summit level of His ministry, Jesus disclosed 'The Secret of the Lord.'" A reviewer can indicate the tone and value of this book only by picking out a few of the gems that are scattered profusely through its pages. This, for example, on "the keys of the kingdom" — "These disciples, in common with every Jew, knew in a flash what Jesus meant by this figure of the keys. They would have mocked, and indulged in their quips of humour, had it been suggested that Peter was to sit beside the locked gate of God's great heaven The figure Jesus uses is that of a Jewish scribe whose symbols were always the keys The Jewish scribe kept the treasury of knowledge. His keys were his powers of reading and understanding and applying the law of God . . ." Or this on the Rock on which Christ would build His Church — "The obvious meaning of Christ's words is this: that the confession which Peter has now made is the rock on which the Church of Christ is built. Wherever there is a man who has risen to the height of seeing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, then and

there a Christian Church will be built." Or this, on the coming of the Son of Man — "There are, I believe, four marked fulfilments of this prophecy The first is: His coming in the glory of His resurrection. The second is: His coming in the glory of His judgment. The third is: His coming in the glory of His kingdom. The fourth is: His coming in the glory of His final appearing." And of irreverent attempts to date this final coming, Dr. Clow writes sane and necessary words: "We do not know the time of His final appearing. Those prophetic calendars, with their daring dates, are an irreverence. Jesus lifted His hand to forbid them when He said, 'Of that day and hour knoweth no man, not the angels, nor the Son of Man, but only My Father which is in heaven.' . . . He did not say that He would stand again upon the Mount of Olives, and He warned men against going out to look for Him, when they heard the cry of some misguided enthusiast, 'Lo! Christ is here, or lo! Christ is there.'" Here is Scottish preaching of a former generation at its best, expository and evangelical, and always driven home to heart and conscience.

— Hugh J. Blair

PELOUBET'S SELECT NOTES FOR 1957, by Wilbur M. Smith. W. A. Wilde Co., 131 Clarendon St., Boston 16, Mass. 1956, pp. 408. \$2.75.

It is hardly necessary to write a review of this book, since it is so widely used by Sabbath School teachers and scholars.

The 1957 edition is the 23rd prepared by Dr. Wilbur M. Smith. It is, indeed satisfying in this day of loose theology, to find an author who is as popular as Dr. Smith and yet sound in theology. He believes that the Bible is the Word of God and that God tells the truth when He speaks to us. There is no attempt to try to explain away the truths of God's Word concerning the important teachings of the Christian religion; viz. The Deity of Christ; His Virgin Birth; His death and resurrection; and the Atonement.

Since the lessons for the first quarter are from the Gospel according to Matthew, Dr. Smith's beliefs and teachings on these subjects are clear, and he makes no attempt to stand on middle ground in order to try to please everybody. He stands firmly for the truth of Biblical revelation.

This attitude toward Scripture shows up, also, in his treatment of Genesis 1, as he begins the study of Genesis for the second quarter. In the third quarter, his character studies are interesting and instructive. In the fourth quarter, a study is made of three of Paul's letters, I Corinthians, Philippians, and Philemon.

His style is simple, attractive and easy to read and understand. The work is largely a commentary on the Scripture portions, with an outline of the lesson and practical suggestions for

teachers, both of the younger and older classes. The helps also contain a paragraph, "The Lesson in Life, Literature and Archaeology," and "A Truth for the Class to Carry Away." These all go together to make the book a very valuable one both to the teacher and to the student of the International S. S. Lessons.

— Herbert A. Hays

LUKE THE PHYSICIAN, by William M. Ramsay. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Michigan. 1956 reprint, pp. 418. \$4.50.

The reprinting of this volume, which was first published in 1908, will be of special interest to seminaries and Bible schools. It contains twelve separate studies in the fields of New Testament research and Church History. Sir William Ramsay has long been recognized as an outstanding authority in these fields.

Included in the contents of the book are papers on the following subjects: The sources used by the writers of the Synoptic Gospels; the Chronology of the life of Christ; Paul's use of metaphors; and the date and authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The method most commonly used by the author is to review the writings of other men on these subjects. Other chapters in the book present the fruits of Professor Ramsay's travels and extensive archeological research in Asia Minor and Palestine.

The author speaks with refreshing candor of the critical method of the 19th century. He describes it in one word as "false", and goes on to say, "At present, as we are struggling to throw off the fetters which impeded thought in the 19th century, it is needful to free ourselves from its prejudices and narrowness." (pp. 8, 9). This is the kind of language which has often been misapplied to those who hold faithfully the doctrines of the Word, but Professor Ramsay rightly uses it to describe the "higher critics." He calls special attention to their bias against whatever is supernatural, and their method of approaching the Bible with preconceived theories.

We must observe, however, what the author is forthright enough to acknowledge, that he was himself influenced by this 19th century method. For example, while he strongly defends the general trustworthiness of Luke as a historian, he says that it is undeniable that there are some inconsistencies and inexactnesses in the book of Acts (p. 24). In another connection he states, "I cannot but think and maintain that there are later elements in the Gospels, showing the influence of popular legend, and reminding us that after all the picture of Jesus which stands before us in the New Testament has always to be contemplated through glass that is not perfect and flawless . . . The flaws can be distinguished, but the marvel is that they are so few and so unimportant" (p. 33). Thus the author clearly does

not believe in the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, as taught in the Bible and summarized in the standards of our church.

While we recognize and regret this error, it must still be recognized that Professor Ramsay pointed in the direction of a more honest approach to the Scriptures, and held high hopes for 20th century scholarship. We pray that his hopes will yet be vindicated. This book has real value as a reference work.

— John McMillan

GOD'S WORD TO HIS PEOPLE, by Charles Duell Kean. The Westminster Press, Walnut and Juniper Streets, Philadelphia, Pa. 1956, pp. 187.

The reviewer examined this recent publication of the official publishing agency of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. with increasing astonishment. How a denomination which professes to hold the Westminster Confession of Faith as its official interpretation of what the Bible teaches can sponsor a book which advocates a radically contrary view of what the Bible teaches, this reviewer cannot say. In its view of the nature and meaning of Biblical history, as well as in its view of the origin and character of the Bible itself, the present volume sets forth views which are utterly contrary to historic orthodox Christianity in general, and to the Westminster Confession of Faith in particular.

Though the author speaks of the Bible as "God's Word", it is evident that he does not mean this in the orthodox sense. The Bible is regarded as the product of Israel's experience rather than of God's revelation. "Once upon a time a nation wrote a book. That book is the Bible" (p. 15). The initiative in producing the Bible is ascribed to Israel rather than to God.

Throughout the volume, the modern "higher critical" view of the Bible is accepted. The author calls Genesis "the supposed writing" of Moses, adding that "the story is about Moses rather than by him" (p. 19). The human writer of the Book of Revelation is called "a representative figure rather than a real person" (p. 19). The Book of Deuteronomy is said to have been written in the time of King Josiah (p. 20), which of course was 800 years after the time of Moses, whom Deuteronomy itself claims as its author (Deut. 31:9, 24-26). The divisive criticism of the Old Testament is accepted as valid (p. 37). The Book of Daniel is declared to be a product of Maccabean times, and it is flatly asserted that "While the story refers to Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar, these Babylonian monarchs had not been concerned with religious persecution. Neither was King Darius of the Persian Empire. These people are really the Seleucid kings, particularly Antiochus IV" (p. 109).

Adam and Eve are called "the mythological

progenitors of mankind" (p. 76). The historical character of the Fall is brushed aside with the statement that the record in Genesis 3 "is a plain matter-of-fact, though pictorial, assertion that men have always been rebels against God's will since the very beginning of time" (p. 76). The account of Jacob going to Mesopotamia to take a wife is called "mythological" (p. 81). The writers of the books of Kings and Chronicles are said to have been given the Northern Kingdom (the kingdom of Israel founded by Jeroboam I) "rough treatment"; it is implied that the writers of Kings and Chronicles distorted history to suit their propaganda purpose: "The editors and compilers had some six hundred years of historical records to deal with, and they chose only those which fitted their thesis, and either neglected or slurred over those which seemed to contradict it" (p. 89). The author says: "Nobody reading the books of Kings and Chronicles would ever realize that Jeroboam II, King of Israel (the Northern Kingdom) 787-747 B. C., ruled an empire comparing favorably with that of Solomon" (p. 89). Why would the reader of Kings and Chronicles "never realize" this fact? It is stated plainly enough in 2 Kings 14:25-28.

The "Suffering Servant" of Isaiah 53 is said to be "the personification of a group, but a tiny group, which is willing to die in order that God might reach the majority" (p. 111; compare Acts 8:32-35).

Many more instances could be cited where the book under review expressly or by implication takes positions which cannot be reconciled with the orthodox view of the Bible as the fully inspired, inerrant and internally consistent revelation of God. This appears at so many points that it cannot be attempted to point them all out in a review. One more may be given, however: the author's view of the cross of Christ:

"What the cross stood for was this: The dream of the ideal society, on which the commonwealth of the Second Temple was founded, was fulfilled by one man in the moment of dying only. Here was Israel completely loyal to the Torah. Here was the faithful Remnant actually objectified in history, for one instant only. Here was the 'example' which would attract the nations — but not an example in the ordinary sense of an object lesson that others might copy as they were moved to do so, but an 'example' that none could ever hope to copy with completeness because it itself was complete fulfillment" (p. 155). So the death of our Lord on Calvary was the fulfillment of "the dream of the ideal society"! How strangely sad this sounds in comparison with the glorious truth that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3), "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24).

This book will no doubt be read by many who

will accept its statements as truth, not realizing that many of them are open to serious objection, nor realizing that the orthodox view of the Bible is capable of scholarly defence by men who accept it without reservation as the infallible revelation of God. It is deeply tragic that a great Church which a few decades ago suspended a seminary professor from the ministry because of his unsound views on the inspiration and authority of the Bible (Charles A. Briggs, 1893) today issues essentially similar heresy from its official publishing agency. Needless to say, the reviewer cannot recommend **God's Word to His People** as a help toward understanding the Bible. But it is to be hoped that it may serve to open the eyes of some of God's people to the reality of what is going on in one of the very large and influential denominations of our land today.

— J. G. Vos

GENES, GENESIS, AND EVOLUTION, by John Klotz. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis 18, Missouri. 1956, pp. 575. \$5.00.

This new book occupies a superior place among all the books yet produced on this subject. The writer has some thirty books or booklets on the subject of evolution and has had access to many others, but we do not know of any book which deserves as high a recommendation as this one by Dr. Klotz.

The writer, who holds his doctor's degree in biology, is thoroughly prepared in the scientific field and is a firm believer in the Word of God. He is careful to be accurate and fair to the scientists and their theories, but he is also discerning, logical and Scriptural in his reasoning and conclusions. He discusses the various scientific theories at length, but in a gentlemanly manner, shows their weaknesses and failure to prove the theory, and their lack of harmony with divine revelation. He believes in the creation of all kinds of life and that the creative days were of normal length. This book should be read by all teachers of science and high school pupils and should be a "must" for all college students. Dr. Klotz received his degree in biology from the University of Pittsburgh; is a minister in the Lutheran Church and a professor in Concordia College.

The book contains twelve chapters whose subjects are: Science and Scripture; History of Evolutionary Theories; the Species Problem; Days of Creation and Age of the Earth; Evidences for Evolution; Fossils and Geographic Distribution; Selection and Isolation; Suggested Mechanisms for Evolution; Human Evolution; Special Types and Various Forms of Evolution; Evolutionary History of Plants and Animals; Problems for the Evolutionist. It also has a glossary which defines all the technical terms used, and a complete index.

The author has documented his book thoroughly and for the most part the references are to

late books. At the end of the various chapters the references run from 14 to 160, which shows the exceptionally wide reading and study that he has done. There are many scientific terms and some sentences which puzzle the common reader, yet as a whole the style is splendid and the wording clear, so that anyone who can understand a current magazine article should be able, with occasional help from the glossary, to understand this book. It is also well illustrated.

In the Introduction to his book Dr. Klotz says: "Scientists pride themselves on being fair, objective, openminded and unprejudiced. Yet science also has its sacred cows, and today one of these is the theory of evolution. Any attack or criticism of the theory as such is regarded as a part of the cult of antisecularism. Scientists may point out weaknesses and defects and may attack parts of it, but the theory itself must remain unchallenged. It must always remain the great unifying principle of biology."

"It is the author's thesis that evolution in the generally accepted sense of the term has not taken place. He does not believe that life as we know it is the result of a gradual process of development, that man, for instance, is the descendant of simple, unicellular forms. He believes that, in general, organisms have remained relatively constant and have reproduced after their kind." He believes that changes have taken place, "but all of this change, so far as the organic world is concerned, has taken place within limits fixed by the Creator when He fashioned the different 'kinds' in the beginning."

In the first chapter, in which the author discusses Science and Scripture, he says concerning Scripture: "The Bible is true in its every word. Jesus, who declared that He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, said of the Bible, 'Thy Word is truth.' The Bible asserts that all its statements are true and correct, and this declaration applies also to historical, anthropological, sociological, and scientific statements. . . . Time after time the Bible has been vindicated and its critics put to shame."

He affirms that "Only relative truth is possible in science. . . . Mavor, for instance, points out that no law or principle of science can be regarded as absolutely proved. All laws and principles, he says, are subject to modification with the accumulation of more data and the increase of knowledge." He also states that "biology is the least exact of the natural sciences."

"The hold that evolution has on the scientific world has often been underestimated," says the author. "Repeatedly we meet people who have questioned the importance of discussing this topic, because, they insist, evolution is on the way out. Actually the very opposite is true. Some form of evolution is accepted by almost all biologists today."

He further states: "Most scientists. . . are not deliberately attacking our faith. They are not conscious tools of Satan, though they may, of course, be his unwitting agents."

Dr. Klotz discusses the various theories as to the age of the earth. He says that "the age of the earth is not connected directly with the problem of evolution. In a sense they are separate and distinct. It would be possible to have a very old earth and still have no evolution at all." Summing up this discussion he states: "Scripture seems to indicate clearly that the days of Genesis 1 were ordinary days. A careful study of the text also seems to preclude the possibility of a gap between Gen. 1:1 and Gen 1:2. . . . The older methods of determining the age of the earth have been found faulty and have been discarded. Some of the newer methods have also been found to be unsatisfactory. Today chief reliance is placed on the uranium time clock. There is reason for questioning the premises upon which these determinations are based. . . . Scripture indicates that the age of the earth must be measured in thousands rather than in millions and billions of years."

Our author concludes concerning fossils that there are problems which the evolutionist cannot explain and also problems which the person who does not accept evolution cannot explain. "The fossils are used to date the rocks. But how are the fossils dated? All too often the only basis for dating them is the rock in which they are found. This sort of reasoning is evidently a gigantic argument in a circle." "There are relatively few mammalian fossils from the entire Mesozoic era. All known Jurassic and Cretaceous mammalian fossils could be put into a small box. The fossil remains that we have are almost entirely tooth and jaw fossils."

Among the concluding statements of the book our author says: "As Christians we know that in the Bible we do not have a theory which is subject to all sorts of changes and modifications, a theory which has come about as the result of the restricted reasoning abilities of human beings, but we have the inspired account of the only Being who was present at Creation. True, there are still many things which we do not understand. There are some observations which at present are difficult to reconcile with the Biblical account of creation. It is quite possible that some of these problems will never be solved for us. But there are great difficulties also with the theory of evolution."

This book is a refreshing, helpful and satisfying study. If students will read it thoughtfully it will help to solve their problems and doubts.

— Frank E. Allen

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 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 EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS, by Robert Johnstone. 1875, reprinted 1955, pp. xii, 490. \$3.95.

PROPHECY AND HISTORY IN RELATION TO THE MESSIAH, by Alfred Edersheim. 1901, reprinted 1955, pp. xxiv, 391. \$3.75.

THE CHURCH IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE, by William M. Ramsay. 1954, pp. 510. \$4.20.

I AND II THESSALONIANS, by William Hendriksen. 1955, pp. 214. \$4.50.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, by David Thomas. 1955, pp. 493. \$3.95.

THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS, translated and edited by J. B. Lightfoot. 1891, reprinted 1956, pp. 288. \$3.95.

Publications of Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich.

ALL YE THAT LABOR: AN ESSAY ON CHRISTIANITY, COMMUNISM AND THE PROBLEM OF EVIL, by Lester DeKoster. 1956, pp. 128. \$1.50.

THE PERFECT PRAYER, by Herman Hoeksema (Vol. X of Exposition of Heidelberg Catechism). 1956, pp. 224. \$3.00.

HANDBOOK OF BIBLE HISTORY, BOOK II: OLD TESTAMENT FROM THE KINGDOM OF DAVID TO THE CLOSE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT PERIOD. By George Stob. 1956, pp. 142. \$1.50.

MAN IN THE PROCESS OF TIME, by J. Stafford Wright. 1956, pp. 192. \$3.00.

THE CHAOS OF CULTS, by J. K. Van Baalen (revised and enlarged edition). 1956, pp. 409. \$3.95.

OUR REASONABLE FAITH, by Herman Bavinck. 1956, pp. 568. \$6.95.

THE TRIUMPH OF GRACE IN THE THEOLOGY OF KARL BARTH, by G. C. Berkouwer. 1956, pp. 414. \$4.95.

THE TEACHING OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS, by Geerhardus Vos. 1956, pp. 124. \$2.00.

WITH JESUS ON THE NAVAJO ROAD, by Jacob and Christina Bolt. 1956, pp. 120. \$2.00.

HOLY FIELDS: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE HOLY LAND, by J. Howard Kitchen. 1955, pp. 160. \$2.50.

THE EPISTLES OF PAUL TO THE PHILIPPIANS AND TO PHILEMON, by J. J. Mueller. 1955, pp. 200. \$3.50.

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

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

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

Publications of the Committee on Christian Education of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 728 Schaff Building, 1505 Race Street, Philadelphia 2, Pa.

ARE YOU A CHRISTIAN? by Lawrence R. Eyres. 1954, pp. 38, paper cover. 25 cents.

THE FREE OFFER OF THE GOSPEL, by John Murray and Ned B. Stonehouse. 1955, pp. 27, pocket size, paper cover. 25 cents.

BIBLE DOCTRINE: UNIT ONE, BOOKS ONE AND TWO, by Dorothy Partington. 1955, two volumes, total about 325 pages, paper covers, plastic binding. Pupil's Workbook \$1.25. Teacher's Manual \$1.50.

Publications of Society for Reformed Publications, 1519 East Fulton St., Grand Rapids, Mich.

THE REFORMED PULPIT (SYMPOSIUM), VOLUME I. 1955, pp. 145. \$2.00.

WHAT IS CHRISTIAN BAPTISM? by M. Eugene Osterhaven. 1956, pp. 59, paper cover. 50 cents.

Publications of Sovereign Grace Book Club, 413 S. E. First St., Evansville, Indiana.

EXPOSITORY DISCOURSES ON FIRST PETER, by John Brown. 1956, three volumes, total pages 1411. Per set \$11.95.

EXPOSITION OF THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, by Robert Haldane. Vol. IV, chapters 9-11, pp. 148. Vol. V, chapters 12-16, pp. 163. 1956, reprint of 1839 edition. Each volume \$2.00.

Publications of The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., P. O. Box 185, Nutley 10, N. J.

WHAT PRESBYTERIANS BELIEVE: AN EXPOSITION OF THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION, by Gordon H. Clark. 1956, pp. 130, paper cover. \$2.00.

CALVIN AND AUGUSTINE, by Benjamin B. Warfield. 1956, pp. 507. \$4.95.

CHRISTIANITY AND IDEALISM, by C. Van Til. 1955, pp. 139, paper cover. \$1.80.

THE VOICE FROM CALVARY, by Marion G. Gosselink. 1956, pp. 49, paper cover. \$1.00.

THE DILEMMA OF EDUCATION, by C. Van Til. 1956, pp. 44, paper cover. 60 cents.

Publications of Other Firms

THE KING JAMES VERSION DEFENDED! A CHRISTIAN VIEW OF THE NEW TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPTS, by Edward F. Hills. Christian Research Press, 5011 Hickman Road, Des Moines, Iowa. 1956, pp. 158, paper cover. \$1.50.

CLOSER TO CHRIST VIA THE QUIET HOUR, by Caroline K. Sapsford. Inter-County Leader Publishers, Frederic, Wisconsin. 1952, pp. 81, paper cover. 75 cents.

NEW TESTAMENT MANUAL FOR HIGH SCHOOL BIBLE STUDY, by W. C. Rarick and C. R. Maxam. Standard Publishing Co., Cincinnati, Ohio. 1927, pp. 61, paper cover. 40 cents.

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 SATISFACTION OF CHRIST, by Arthur W. Pink. Bible Truth Depot, Swengel, Pa., 1955, pp. 313. \$3.95.

PROTESTANT BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION, by Bernard Ramm. W. A. Wilde Company, 131 Clarendon St., Boston 16, Mass. 1950, pp. 197. \$2.50.

WRITHER ISRAELI? MOSAIC RESTORATIONISM EXAMINED, by Cecil J. Lowry. Tabernacle Book Room, 425 10th St., Oakland, Calif. 1955, pp. 69, paper cover. 50 cents.

FAITH HEALING: A STUDY OF ITS METHODS AND AN APPRAISAL OF ITS CLAIMS, by Theodorse Graebner. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis 18, Mo. No date, pp. 36, pocket size, paper cover. No price stated.

THE CHRISTIAN ANSWER TO COMMUNISM, by Fred Schwartz. Great Commission Press, P. O. Box 727, Anderson, Indiana. No date, pp. 31, paper cover. 50 cents.

THE COMMUNIST INTERPRETATION OF PEACE, by Fred Schwartz. Christian Anti-Communism Crusade, P. O. Box 508, Waterloo, Iowa. No date, pp. 27, paper cover. No price stated.

THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE, by T. T. Shields. The Gospel Witness, 130 Gerrard St.,

East, Toronto 2, Ont., Canada. 1956, pp. 208. \$2.50.

RED DRAGON OVER CHINA, by Harold H. Martinson. Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis 15, Minn. 1956, pp. 328. \$3.50.

FAITH HEALING AND THE CHRISTIAN FAITH, by Wade H. Boggs, Jr. John Knox Press, Richmond, Virginia. 1956, pp. 216. \$3.50.

THE MODERN TONGUES AND HEALING MOVEMENT, by C. Stegall, Jr., and C. C. Harwood. Western Bible Institute, P. O. Box 4032, South Denver Station, Denver 9, Colorado. No date, pp. 56, paper cover. 50 cents.

READING THE BIBLE, A GUIDE, by E. H. Rece and W. A. Beardslee. Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N. J. 1956, pp. 188. No price stated.

THE EVANGELICAL LIBRARY BULLETIN, No. 17, Autumn, 1956. The Evangelical Library, 78a Chiltern St., London W. 1, England. Pp. 12, paper cover. 1s. 9d.

THE FAITH OF THE ENGLISH REFORMERS, by Iain Murray. The Evangelical Library, 78a Chiltern St., London W. 1, England. 1956, pp. 23, paper cover. 1s. 9d.

THE EVILS OF CALVINISM AS SEEN THROUGH THE EYES OF AN ARMINIAN, by L. R. Shelton. Old Puritan Press, P. O. Box 6057, New Orleans 14, Louisiana. 1956, mimeographed, pp. 60, paper cover. 35 cents.

THE HEART, MIND AND SOUL OF COMMUNISM, by Fred Schwartz. Christian Anti-Communism Crusade, P. O. Box 508, Waterloo, Iowa. No date, pp. 29, paper cover. 50 cents.

THE MYTHICAL BOOK OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST SEMINARY, by R. A. Waugh. The Harvester, P. O. Box 505, Louisville, Kentucky. 1953, pp. 150, paper cover. \$1.50.

CALVIN, A LIFE, by Emmanuel Stickelberger, translated by David Gelzer. John Knox Press, Richmond, Virginia. 1954, pp. 174. \$2.75.

As listed above, we have a backlog of 54 books of which reviews have yet to be published. All of these except a few recent arrivals have been assigned to reviewers who have very kindly promised to review them. However, some of these books have been in the hands of reviewers for more than two years. A considerable number have been in the hands of reviewers for more than one year. It would be deeply appreciated if those who have had books more than one year would make a special effort to send in at least a brief notice of same in time for our April-June 1957 issue (deadline March 1, 1957). The Editor wishes to express special thanks to those who responded to the appeal in our last issue by sending in reviews which are published in the present issue. Special thanks is also due to our overseas reviewers who have helped most willingly in writing reviews. — Editor.

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:

Do you approve of tracts or articles, written for a worthy purpose, which are intentionally written in a literary form or style which is an imitation of some portion of the Bible? The enclosed imitation of the Ten Commandments was handed to me at the church door on a recent Sabbath. I have also seen a wooden plaque entitled "A Fisherman's Prayer" and other parodies of the Lord's Prayer which definitely distress me.

Answer:

The tract submitted with the above query was entitled "Ten Commandments on Liquor." Though obviously written with good intention and for a good purpose, we do not deem it proper to imitate the literary form of the Ten Commandments of God in this way. It is likely to lead people to regard mere human composition as in some sense on a par with the inspired Word of God. Even among the many laws of God given through Moses, the Ten Commandments are unique in that they alone were written by the finger of God on tablets of stone. Why should any man, in his zeal to promote a good cause, seek to publish "Ten Commandments" other than the Ten Commandments given in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5? Why call a tract "Ten Commandments" if not to claim authority comparable to that of the Decalogue for it? The result of this practice is likely to be either regarding the word of man as on a par with the Word of God, or else regarding the Word of God as actually of no more authority than the word of man.

Parodies of the Lord's Prayer are very distressing to reverent Christians. There have also been parodies of the Twenty-third Psalm that are really profane. For the latter not even the excuse of good intentions can be allowed. Christian people should oppose all irreverent treatment of the inspired Word of God.

— J. G. Vos

Question:

In Paul's command to sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, would those to whom he wrote have interpreted that to include other "spiritual songs" of the Old Testament such as the song of Moses (Ex. 15), the song of Hannah (1 Sam. 2), that of Deborah (Judges 5), etc.? In connection with the song of Moses the same Hebrew word is used for "song" as in the titles of many of the Psalms. Further question is raised by Revelation 15:3 where the heavenly hosts are using the song of Moses in their praise of God.

Answer:

To answer the last part of the above query first, it is our belief that the question raised by

Rev. 15:3 is irrelevant to the issue of the proper material for praise by the Church on this earth. The principle of Scriptural worship applies to the Church on earth until the Lord's second coming. Scripture is the revelation of God's will for this present life. In eternity a new and more direct revelation of God and His will may be expected. It was for this reason that some of the seventeenth century Covenanter martyrs just before their death on the scaffold bade farewell to the Bible. They rightly discerned that the Bible is God's revelation for this life and will be superseded by a more direct revelation in heaven. Therefore what the heavenly hosts are represented as singing in Rev. 15:3 is no standard for what the Church should sing here on earth.

With regard to the portions of the Old Testament mentioned in the query, the present writer's judgment is that the Book of Psalms was intended by the Holy Spirit as the Church's book of praises, and that when other portions were intended for permanent use in praise, they were included in the Book of Psalms. Thus for example, David's "song" found in 2 Samuel 22 is repeated with slight verbal variations in Psalm 18. On the other hand, the poetical composition of David found in 2 Samuel 23 ("the last words of David") is **not** repeated in the Book of Psalms. The obvious inference is that 2 Samuel 22 is and 2 Samuel 23 is not intended by the Holy Spirit for the Church's permanent use as material of praise. There are many poetical portions of the Old Testament, and some also of the New, which would rank in poetical or literary quality with the Book of Psalms — for example the song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32, and his blessing of the tribes of Israel in Deut. 33, as well as many parts of Isaiah. Yet those were not included by the Holy Spirit in the Book of Praises of the people of God under the Old Covenant. It is our belief that that book — the Psalter with its 150 Psalms — was taken over by the New Testament Church from the Old Covenant Israel, and alone forms the proper manual of the Church's praise.

The reader is referred to the article by Dr. William Young on **The Second Commandment** in this issue of *Blue Banner Faith and Life*, and to the article by the Rev. Frank D. Frazer on "**Psalms and Hymns and Spiritual Songs**" in *Blue Banner Faith and Life*, April-June 1948, pages 83-85; October-December 1952, pages 164-166.

— J. G. Vos

Question:

Is it more in line with Scripture for a church member to turn all his tithe money and freewill

offerings over to the deacons to handle, or should he decide for himself where some of it should be given?

Answer:

Every Christian has a primary obligation to support the church congregation of which he is a member. It would be clearly improper for a church member to spread his tithe money and freewill offerings far and wide while his own church congregation is in need and he is not doing his share toward its proper support.

On the other hand, it is not the writer's belief that contributions should be limited to those given through the Deacon Board of one's local congregation. The Holy Spirit may lay a need beyond the local congregation upon a person's heart, in which case it may be proper to contribute toward that need, provided one's obligations to his own church have been duly met. The Kingdom of God is wider than a single church congregation and it is wider than any one denomination. There are worthy enterprises that are serving a real purpose in the Kingdom of God, yet are not officially under the auspices of any congregation or denomination. Such may be very worthy of the support of Christian people, and sometimes, indeed, may be really more effective in the Lord's service than some official organs of the Visible Church.

Sad to say, deacon boards and congregational business meetings sometimes seem to be somewhat lacking in imagination and spiritual discernment concerning the opportunities and needs that exist in the Lord's work. And it may not be possible to change this situation very quickly. The spiritual Christian, while not neglecting his own church congregation, may sometimes serve the Lord most effectively by making some of his contributions through other channels. The writer knows of no Scripture which teaches or implies that the New Testament believer's contributions to the support of the Kingdom of God must be limited to the channel of his own local congregation.

At the same time, we feel that a warning is in order against support of some organizations and agencies which are not doctrinally sound but put out very attractive publicity material. An enterprise is not better just because it is more glamorous or farther away. The writer has known of people who have contributed money to organizations propagating heresies such as Arminianism, Perfectionism, Dispensationalism, etc., apparently without realizing that these are contrary to the faith of their own church which they are solemnly pledged to support and promote. Let us be sure that we are promoting nothing but the truth of God. "Buy the truth, and sell it not" (Prov. 23:23).

— J. G. Vos

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. An annual financial report is published in the Minutes of Synod of the denomination.

Sets of back issues for the years 1955 and 1956 are available at \$1.00 for each year, postpaid. The supply of back issues of all other years is exhausted, except for a few odd copies that are available. 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 during 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 Street, Geelong, Victoria, Australia. Annual subscription rate for Australia and New Zealand is 10 shillings. (At present Mr. Barkley is on furlough in Ireland; therefore new subscriptions from Australia and New Zealand should be sent direct to U.S.A. for the time being).

J. G. Vos, Editor and Manager, 3408 7th Avenue, Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, U.S.A.



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NUMBER 2

**This then is the message which we have heard of
Him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in Him
is no darkness at all.**

I John 1:5

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 Burial of Moses

By Mrs. C. F. Alexander

By Nebo's lonely mountain,
On this side Jordan's wave,
In a vale in the land of Moab
There lies a lonely grave,
And no man knows that sepulchre,
And no man saw it e'er;
For the angels of God upturned the sod,
And laid the dead man there.

Amid the noblest of the land
We lay the sage to rest
And give the bard an honoured place,
With costly marbled rest,
In the great minster transept
Where lights like glory fall,
And the organ rings, and the sweet choir sings
Along the emblazoned wall.

That was the grandest funeral
That ever passed on earth;
But no man heard the trampling
Or saw the train go forth —
Noiselessly as the daylight
Comes back when night is done,
And the crimson streak on ocean's cheek
Grows into the great sun.

This was the truest warrior
That ever buckled sword,
This the most gifted poet
That ever breathed a word;
And never earth's philosopher
Traced with his golden pen,
On the deathless page, truths half so sage
As he wrote down for men.

Noiselessly as the spring-time
Her crown of verdure weaves,
And all the trees on all the hills
Open their thousand leaves;
So without sound of music,
Or the voice of them that wept,
Silently down from the mountain's crown
The great procession swept.

And had he not high honour —
The hillside for a pall,
To lie in state while angels wait
With stars for tapers tall,
And the dark rock pines, like tossing plumes,
Over his bier to wave,
And God's own hand in that lonely land,
To lay him in the grave.

Perchance the bald old eagle
On gray Beth-Peor's height,
Out of his lonely eyrie
Looked on the wondrous sight;
Perchance the lion stalking
Still shuns that hallowed spot,
For beast and bird have seen and heard
That which man knoweth not.

In that strange grave without a name,
Whence his uncoffined clay
Shall break again, O wondrous thought;
Before the judgment day,
And stand with glory wrapt around
On the hills he never trod,
And speak of the strife that won our life,
With the Incarnate Son of God.

But when the warrior dieth,
His comrades in the war,
With arms reversed and muffled drum,
Follow his funeral car;
They show the banners taken,
They tell his battles won,
And after him lead his masterless steed,
While peals the minute gun.

O lonely grave in Moab's land;
O dark Beth-Peor's hill;
Speak to these curious hearts of ours,
And teach them to be still.
God hath His mysteries of grace,
Ways that we cannot tell;
He hides them deep, like the hidden sleep
Of him he loved so well.

BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

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NUMBER 2

What Is Christian Education?

By J. G. Vos

"Bright as is the manifestation which God gives both of Himself and His immortal kingdom in the mirror of His works, so great is our stupidity, so dull are we in regard to these bright manifestations, that we derive no benefit from them. For in regard to the fabric and admirable arrangement of the universe, how few of us are there who, in lifting our eyes to the heavens, or looking abroad on the various regions of the earth, ever think of the Creator? Do we not rather overlook Him, and sluggishly content ourselves with a view of His works?" — John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book I, Chapter V, Section 11.

By Christian education is meant education of which the basis and unifying principle is the historic Christian view of God, man and the universe in their mutual relations. This historic Christian philosophy finds its most comprehensive and consistent expression in Calvinism, or the Reformed Faith; therefore the most comprehensive and consistent Christian education must be based on, and unified by, the Reformed or Calvinistic view of God, man and the universe and their mutual relations.

Why is Christian Education Needed?

Why must there be not merely education, but definitely Christian education? It is not primarily a matter of training up young people for Christian service as ministers and missionaries, or for other specialized vocations in what is called "full time Christian service." That is the task, rather, of Bible institutes and theological seminaries, not of ordinary Christian schools and colleges.

First of all, there must be Christian education for God's sake. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God . . . with all thy mind" (Matt. 22:37). This command implies that God must be recognized, honored and served in every field in which the human intellect operates. Above and prior to all considerations of human and social needs, there stands the primary obligation for man to love the Lord God with all his mind. This cannot be done through an education which regards God as irrelevant; it requires a frank and explicit recognition of the God of the Bible as the first premise of education. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Prov. 1:7).

In the second place, Christian education is required to give expression, in the educational field, to the radical difference which exists between the two classes of human beings in this world, namely, the regenerate and the unregenerate. The sin of the human race has had an adverse effect not only on man's spiritual and moral nature, but also on his intellect, his mind. The apostle Paul by inspiration of the Holy Spirit tells us what sin has done to the intellect of man. He states that although men knew God, "they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools . . ." (Rom. 1:21, 22). Sin, then, has darkened man's mind and has made man foolish, however much he may profess to be wise. Only by the miracle of regeneration or the new birth can this damage to man's intellect be removed.

The Holy Spirit's work in regeneration has an effect not only on man's spiritual and moral nature, but also on his intellect; it opens the eyes of his understanding (Eph. 1:18). He begins to see facts in the light of God (Psalm 36:9); that is, he begins to see the true meaning of facts. The unregenerate person, on the other hand, continues to maintain that facts can be understood and explained in the light of man; he recognizes no higher category than the human mind, and he will never admit that his mind has been darkened by sin.

This radical divergence or cleavage in the human race results in two radically different, irreconcilable philosophies of life. These two philosophies of life may be broadly termed the secular and the Christian philosophies of life. The former is man-centered and holds that man as he exists today is normal; the latter is God-centered and holds that man as he exists today is abnormal (his life having been blighted by sin). These two philosophies of life are as far apart as east is from west. Between them there is an unbridgeable chasm. There can be no compromise or harmony between them, for in the one God is regarded as irrelevant, while in the other God is regarded as all-important.

These two radically different philosophies of life, in turn, must inevitably find expression in two radically different types of education. Unregenerate humanity expresses its own inner

principle in secular education; regenerate or Christian humanity must express its own inner principle in Christian education.

The unregenerate person always takes for granted that the God of the Bible does not exist. He may have some idea of a reduced, limited, finite God; but he takes for granted that the God of the Bible and of historic Christianity is not real. He also assumes that man and the universe are self-explanatory — that they can be understood without reference to the God of the Bible. The Christian, on the other hand, must always take for granted that the God of the Bible does exist, and that He is absolutely meaningful for every fact in the universe.

The secular and Christian philosophies of life cannot be harmonized; both in their starting points and in their conclusions, they are irreconcilable. The one starts with man and the universe, and ends with man and the universe misunderstood; the other starts with the God of the Bible, and attains a genuine insight into the true meaning of reality. There is no area of life in which the difference between the regenerate and the unregenerate does not count. The three great doctrines of God, Creation and Providence must be accepted as the major premise of all study by the regenerate; these doctrines are rejected or regarded as irrelevant by the unregenerate.

There can be no real neutrality as to these three doctrines. The unregenerate person walks around in a dream world. He thinks that facts exist of themselves, and can be adequately explained by human reason alone, without reference to the God of the Bible. The Christian, on the other hand, knows that facts do not exist of themselves, and that they cannot be adequately explained on the basis of human reason alone. The Christian does not believe in what has been called the "just-thereness" of facts. They are created facts, not self-existent facts; therefore they can be really understood only by assuming the doctrines of God, Creation and Providence. God is the reason why facts exist; Creation is the source whence facts exist; Providence is the manner how facts exist.

The unregenerate person also assumes that the human mind is an uncreated mind which exists of itself and is competent to be the absolute and final interpreter of facts. The regenerate person, on the other hand, realizes that the human mind does not exist of itself; it is a created mind and is not competent to be the absolute and final interpreter of facts. The regenerate person recognizes that he is dependent on divine revelation for the ultimate interpretation of the meaning of facts.

Education, then, must be either on a secular, non-Christian basis, or on a Christian, God-

centered basis. To obscure this distinction amounts virtually to abandoning the field to the non-Christian philosophy of life. For the non-Christian philosophy of life is uncritically held—even automatically and unconsciously held — by the great majority of the human race.

The Christian philosophy of life, on the other hand, requires a revolution in a person's thinking — a revolution resulting from the miracle of the new birth. This comes only by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit in the deep personality of a human being. The tragedy is that even many who no doubt are born-again Christians fail to see the implications of Christianity for life as a whole, and continue to look at man and the universe (including the field of education) from the point of view of the secular or non-Christian philosophy of life. Many Christians, it would seem, have had their souls saved, but their minds remain tangled in the non-Christian view of life.

Mistaken Views of Christian Education

1. Christian education does not mean education limited to the field of religion. The idea that Christian education means education limited to the field of religion is held by many people, but it is too narrow an idea of Christian education. Such people seem to think that God is connected only with the salvation of people's souls, and has nothing to do with the world and life as a whole.

We must not limit Christian education to religion. For if we do that we will fail to glorify God in all of life and knowledge. There must be a Christian view of history and economics and politics and physics, as well as a Christian view of salvation and the religious life. God is God everywhere, or He is God nowhere.

2. Nor does Christian education mean secular education with some religious features externally added. This is a very common misconception of Christian education, even among earnest Christian people. The common idea of a Christian college, for example, is that a Christian college is just like any other college so far as the study of mathematics, chemistry or English literature is concerned, but that in addition to the regular curriculum the Christian college will have courses in Bible study, daily chapel services, seasons of evangelism, a religious emphasis week, prayer groups, Christian service organizations, and so forth.

These specifically religious features are certainly of great value and importance, but they do not of themselves make an educational institution truly Christian, any more than merely attending church and carrying a pocket Testament makes a man a Christian. By Christian education we do not mean secular education with Christian features added on externally; Christian education means education that is Christian in its essence

or inner character all along the line, not only in the chapel and Bible classroom, but in every classroom and every laboratory, as well as in the life and thinking of every teacher.

The Essence of Christian Education

In order to show how radically Christian education differs from that education which proceeds from the non-Christian philosophy of life, let us consider the essence of Christian education with respect to its source, its standard and its purpose.

1. The Source of Christian Education. The source of Christian education is not society as such, but Christian people, people to whom God means everything. Society being predominantly unregenerate and having a non-Christian philosophy of life, cannot produce truly Christian education. A stream cannot rise any higher than its source. Education which originates from the impulse of society, or the public in general, will not consent to take the God of the Bible seriously. It will not agree to the assumptions of God, Creation and Providence on which genuine Christian education must be based. For "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14).

Nor will education which originates from society as such assent to the truth of the damage done by sin to the human intellect, and the resultant need for regeneration, the recognition of which is absolutely basic to any truly Christian view of education. We must conclude, therefore, that the source of Christian education must be Christian people — the regenerate portion of society, who have received the new life-principle of regeneration by the special work of the Holy Spirit in their personality.

2. The Standard of Christian Education. A standard is a recognized authority by which something is measured, regulated or directed. The non-Christian philosophy of life finds this standard in society. It speaks of the needs of society, social pressure, social demand, and the like, as the standard by which the character and content of education shall be determined.

The true standard, on the other hand, is the Bible as the revelation of the mind and the will of God. This is the standard recognized by the Christian philosophy of life. To affirm that the true standard of education is the Bible as the revelation of the mind and will of God, does not, of course, mean that the Bible is to be regarded as a textbook on chemistry, mathematics or psychology. But it does mean that the relevant principles of the Bible are normative for every field of study. The Bible has a relationship to every field of life and knowledge, just because God is the real source of all life and knowledge.

The facts of science must never be treated as existing of themselves "in the nature of things;" they must always be regarded as created facts, existing only by the creation and providence of the God of the Bible. The laws of nature must never be regarded as existing of themselves "in the nature of things;" they must always be regarded as created laws, existing by the creation of God and functioning by the providence of God. The human mind must never be regarded as competent to be the absolute and ultimate interpreter of facts; it must always be recognized that in the end it is God who determines what facts means and how they are related to each other.

God must be the major premise of every textbook. God must be the great assumption in every classroom. God must be the Person whose handiwork is investigated in every laboratory. This means, of course, not some vague or distorted idea of God, but the living and true God, the God of the Bible. "In the beginning God" must be the watchword of all truly Christian education. In textbook, classroom and laboratory the student will learn to think God's thoughts after Him. Unlike the student in a non-Christian institution, he will learn that human thought is never really creative in the strict sense, but always derived from the prior thought of God — that human "creative" thought is really the unfolding, in man's intellect, of God's eternal decree by which He has, from all eternity, foreordained all that comes to pass in time. What is new to the mind of man is as old as eternity to the mind of God.

This function of the Bible as the standard for truly Christian education further implies two things: (1) Education is more than mere training; it is essentially a matter of enabling the student to attain a grasp of the real meaning of everything — the real meaning of God, man and the universe. (2) Truly Christian education will not be a miscellaneous assortment or hodge-podge of diverse principles and viewpoints, as non-Christian education usually is, but will have a single unifying principle, namely that **the God of the Bible is the sovereign, active Lord over all reality.**

To this unifying principle, everything will be related. Around this principle, everything will be arranged. The result of this unifying principle will be that the students will not merely acquire a mass of miscellaneous information and insights into various detailed fields, but will gain a consistent, unified view of God, man and the universe, a true and valid philosophy of life — a real insight into what everything is really about.

Secular education is continually groping around for such a unifying principle, but is never able to attain one; truly Christian education has the only really valid unifying principle; while its

students may sometimes not acquire as much detailed information as those receiving secular education, at least they will know what it is all about. They will come to realize that it is only in the light of God that man can really see light (Psalm 36:9); that it is only when related to the God of the Bible that anything really means anything. As a well-known Christian philosopher has said, "He who has physics without God will finally have religion without God." If God is not God in the laboratory, then He is not really God in the Church, nor anywhere.

3. The Purpose of Christian Education. The purpose of Christian education is the glory of God, and the true welfare of man in subordination to the glory of God. Thus its purpose transcends human society; it is something above and beyond the human race. Only when the glory of God is made the great aim can the true welfare and happiness of man be attained. Where merely human aims such as "social welfare" or "the development of the resources of personality" are substituted for the glory of God, human benefit and happiness will prove illusory.

This transcendent purpose of glorifying God means that the utilitarian demands of society for training in skills by which to earn a living will never be allowed to monopolize the character and content of the curriculum of a truly Christian college or university. The emphasis will always be on giving the student a valid, God-centered view of life as a whole. Courses of a utilitarian character may properly be included, of course. But a truly Christian college or university will not allow courses on such subjects as salesmanship, bookkeeping and radio broadcasting to crowd out history, philosophy, literature, pure science and religion. In other words, the main emphasis will always be on education rather than on training; the attainment of a unified view of life will be given priority over the acquisition of practical skills.

The purpose of Christian education thus consists in the mandate to glorify God in every sphere of life; every thought is to be brought into captivity to Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 10:5). This means consciously and intentionally to glorify God in every sphere of life, not merely to glorify God unconsciously and involuntarily as a bird or a blade of grass glorifies God. We are to aim at glorifying God in education, as in all other matters. This means that the God of the Bible must be frankly and explicitly recognized as the major premise and end of every educational function.

The Religious Features of Christian Education

Religious features such as Bible study and chapel exercises do not of themselves make education truly Christian. However they are essential to truly Christian education and they are of very great importance.

Religious Features Must be Integrated

In truly Christian education the religious features will be related to the rest of the curriculum and life of the institution not in an external but in an organic way. That is, they will not be merely something extra tacked on, but will be the crowning expression of the entire curriculum and life of the institution. In the history classroom and the chemical laboratory the student will learn to think God's thoughts after Him — those thoughts of God which have constituted history and chemistry what they are. In the Bible classroom the student will learn to think the same God's thoughts after Him, as those thoughts are revealed in His Word, the Bible. Here he will learn the relevancy of God's Truth for his own personal life, as well as for the human race and the world of nature. In the chapel services the student will worship the same God whose thoughts have been unfolded to him in the classroom and the laboratory.

Religious Features Must be Orthodox

The religious features of truly Christian education must always be orthodox. That is, they must be in harmony with the truth of God. In many traditionally Christian colleges today the teaching of the Bible has moved so far from orthodoxy that it is actually worse than useless; it is downright harmful, and would better be omitted altogether. Better not teach young people the Bible at all, than to teach them that the Bible is full of contradictions, forgeries and errors, a collection of ancient myths and legends, and so forth. Better leave the Bible out entirely than to teach it in the distorted form required by a non-Christian, evolutionary philosophy.

Orthodoxy, of course, implies a standard of orthodoxy. This is properly the standard held as valid by the denomination or group that controls the institution. This does not necessarily imply that all faculty members must be members of a particular denomination, but it does imply that the confessional standards of the denomination are to be regarded as normative in determining what is orthodox in religious teaching, worship and service in a Christian college or university.

Faculty Must be Active Christians

It should be needless to observe that what has been said in this article should not be regarded as a body of abstract ideas. For education to be truly Christian, these ideas must be embodied in the living personalities of teachers and students. The teachers, especially, should be living examples of what real Christian education means. No stream rises higher than its source, and it is not to be expected that an educational institution will rise higher than the life and loyalty manifested by its faculty and administration.

Every teacher and administrative officer of a Christian college or university should be, not merely a professing Christian or church member, but a spiritual, active Christian, a person to whom Christ is the object of faith and to whom the Triune God is all-important.

The writer once knew a medical missionary in Korea who had an immense influence. This doctor was the head of a hospital with a staff of doctors and nurses. Besides these there were other employees, including a Korean mechanic-chauffeur for the doctor's car and an old man who opened and closed the compound gate. The missionary doctor insisted that every person employed by the hospital, from the medical and nursing staff down to the chauffeur and gateman, must be a serious, active Christian, able to witness for Christ whenever opportunity might offer. The influence of this hospital was tremendous. Only eternity will tell the whole story.

But what might not be accomplished by the Christian colleges of America and the world if their teaching and administrative staffs were composed entirely of people whose great aim in life is to seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness? What might not be accomplished if every teacher, of whatever department or subject, were convinced that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge? And what establishment and stability in the faith might not be produced in the students if every teacher could be depended upon to give any student faithful, sympathetic counsel based upon the Christian view of life?

Note: The foregoing article was originally published several years ago, under the title **A Christian View of Higher Education, in The Covenanter Witness**. It is reproduced here after having been re-written and enlarged. — Ed.

When God Is Not God

The supreme and sovereign place given to God in the salvation of man is the distinguishing mark of Calvinism. It is not hard to discover it also as the distinguishing mark of the New Testament. In contrast with it, the God that is presented in much of present-day evangelism is no God at all. He has no great Divine purpose directing His activities, or if He has, He has no power to carry it out. He is thwarted at every turn by man's will and His purposes of mercy are rendered nugatory by man's unbelief. He resorts to expedient after expedient and in the end all seems stamped with failure. How different this is from the God of the Scriptures! There He is presented as a God of infinite intelligence who forms His own purposes independently of all that is outside Himself, a God of almighty power who is able to carry out His purposes, and a God of supreme wisdom who is able to carry out His purpose in His own time and in His own way. This vision of God in His power and sovereignty determines our approach to the Throne of Grace and our presentation of the Gospel of redeeming mercy to our fellow-men. It puts the creature completely at the disposal of the Creator, and leaves the sinner at the door of Divine mercy. How utterly different is the God who is impotent to act until men choose to make use of Him, whose benevolence waits upon man's pleasure, and whose hand, outstretched in mercy, is powerless to save. It is no exaggeration to retort that such a God is no God at all, but a creature of man's own fancy, a God whom man has made in his own image.

God is not God if His purpose to save is thwarted by man's will. Much is made of man's freewill, and it is commonly assumed that if man's

will does not yield to God, God is helpless in the matter; He must respect the freewill of men, since it is His own endowment to the creature He made in His image. Has man this freewill? It is undoubtedly true that man as created was endowed with a will that was free as long as it continued to move within the will of God — as free as a bird is in its native element of air. But it is not true that man's will was unaffected by sin. It were strange, indeed, if this one faculty, of all the human faculties, remained unaffected by sin! The will is free, at best, to do what the nature of man demands it to do, and when the nature is corrupt, the will is corrupt in its decisions, for it is under the influence of a darkened understanding, an evil conscience, and an unclean heart. But is God's will unable to come into contact with man's will and liberate it? In regeneration God not only renews the will, but recreates the nature in holiness and purity, and when that takes place the will carries out the desires of a regenerated nature in a new and holy obedience. Thus God respects the will of man in that He does not break or violate it, but He is God and by the miracle of regeneration He gives back to the will its lost freedom and its power to choose that which is good. A God who was powerless to do this were powerless to touch the springs of human life at all.

Again we must assert that God is not God if His love stands over its objects helpless to rescue or bless. This helplessness of Divine love is a feature of the present-day conception of God. God's love is declared to be universal, a fatherly love for all mankind, shared with all men equally and impartially, waiting for a response in the hu-

man heart. If the response does not come, it is agreed that the soul is given up and lost. In such a case Divine love is not only frustrated, but it is commuted into displeasure and wrath.

Little wonder that thoughtful hearts throughout the ages have recoiled from such an unworthy conception of Divine love, and have accepted gratefully the Scripture's revelation of God's everlasting love, so intensely personal and so all-absorbing that it cannot be shared or divided, but is bestowed in all its wealth upon the individual of its choice. This "love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" is an all-consuming and all-conquering passion that no man can make saving contact with except in the Mediator between God and man, Christ Jesus our Lord.

We assert again that God is not God if His atonement is ineffective to secure its object. If the Sacrifice of Calvary be represented as universal in its intention and embrace of the entire human race in its redeeming purpose, while it will be admitted that in reality it is falling far short of this, since many will be eternally lost, then there is a reflection cast upon God's justice as well as His love. Not only is it true that the gift of eternal life purchased for all sinners cannot be bestowed in very many cases, but it must also be true that many for whom the ransom-price has been paid will never be delivered but will bear the penalty of sin eternally. In their case God is exacting payment twice over, first at their Surety's hand and then at their own. And if countless souls for whom Christ died will be lost eternally, it is difficult to know how to read the promise that "He shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied."

How much wiser is it to accept the teaching of Scripture which in no way limits the atonement when it confines its efficacy to the objects of God's redeeming purpose. Though we dare not set limits to an atonement that is infinite, we do recognize that, quite consistent with the deep per-

sonal love of God, it is a particular atonement, having in view particular men and women who are purchased and redeemed and to whom the Holy Spirit is given to bring them into a state of salvation.

Then once more, we assert that God is not God if the sufficiency of His Grace is open to doubt. If it be true that many who hear the Gospel and believe are failing to continue and persevere in the life of faith, then the Grace of God has failed them, and the work of the Holy Spirit is undone by their instability or unbelief. It is commonly assumed that in all efforts of mass evangelism many are won and saved, who, for lack of "follow-up" work, eventually fall away. If this were so, the grace of God that brought them salvation is ineffective to keep them, unless it be supported by such follow-up work as instruction, fellowship, and opportunities for service. Or is it to be assumed that faith has been exercised without regeneration, and eventually will wilt and decay? If God the Holy Spirit is not able to carry on the work which He has begun, then the Apostle Paul was mistaken in his confidence that "He which has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." A confidence, however, resting upon the power of the Holy Spirit of God, will be seen to be not misplaced.

Thus it can be seen that many of our fears and much of our despondency in our Christian work are due to a conception of God that is not based on His self-revelation in His Word. If we trace His goings aright we shall assuredly find that the God of the Bible makes His own plans and carries them out in His own time and way unto our eternal salvation.

Note:

For the foregoing timely and discerning article we are indebted to a recent issue of **The Monthly Record of the Free Church of Scotland.** — Ed.

God's Word or Man's Tradition?

By J. G. Vos

"The supreme judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture". — The Westminster Confession of Faith, I. 10.

When human authority is placed on a par with Scripture, the next step will inevitably be that human authority displaces Scripture as the real authority that men live by.

The Jews paid lip-service to the authority of

Scripture, but in many matters they disregarded it in favor of human customs and traditions, for which the authority of various eminent rabbis could be cited.

In Mark 7:1-13 Jesus specifies various matters in which the Jews departed from Scripture in favor of human tradition.

First, they regarded what were mere human customs as if of divine authority. Jesus and His disciples are found fault with for failing to conform to the Jewish custom of washing before eating. This was "the tradition of the elders" but not commanded in the Old Testament. Though

not commanded in Scripture, the Jews regarded it as of divine authority. When it was disregarded, **they found fault**. In other words, they are pronouncing something a **sin** for which a person is **guilty**, even though it is not forbidden by God's Word, but only by the teachings of their rabbis. Thus human authority was placed on a par with divine authority.

They put this matter of washing hands, cups, etc., on a par with God's Law in the Ten Commandments, "Thou shalt not steal", "Thou shalt not bear false witness", "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy", etc.

When this is done, it is not long before something else follows. When human authority is placed on a par with God's authority, it is not long before God's commandments are regarded as having no more authority than man's commandments. Soon God's commandments are actually disregarded or violated, that men's traditions and customs may be kept. This is the second stage, which Jesus illustrates by citing the 5th commandment. "Honor thy father and thy mother", and "Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death". Those were commands of God in the Old Testament law. Therefore, they were of divine authority.

But the Jews did not like to obey this command as it should be obeyed. Rightly understood it involves financial support of a needy parent by children able to do so. But the Jews loved money, and so they had found a way to get around the fifth commandment. They just said, "This money that I might use to help my aged father or mother is **CORBAN**, that is, a gift to the Temple." Then they did not need to support their aged parent, and they also were not required to devote the money to religious purposes; they could **keep it** for their own selfish enjoyment, or payment could be deferred until death. The mere use of the phrase "It is Corban" — an offering — was sufficient to absolve a person from the duty of supporting an aged parent.

A very convenient arrangement, but a very wicked evasion of a requirement of God's law. What was so evil was not merely that there were Jews that did this, but that this practice was officially sanctioned by the religious leaders of the Jews — vs. 12, "And ye suffer him no more to do aught for his father or his mother." That is, "You religious leaders of the people let him follow this course without blame or reproof." Thus a specific, definite command of God was set aside and this was sanctioned on the basis of mere human tradition.

How God's Word is Discarded in Favor of Human Tradition Today By a Failure to Read and Study the Bible Seriously

It is possible to listen to the message of our Church and ministers and to accept it merely on

the basis of human authority, that is by an implicit or blind faith, just because a minister has said such and such things, or an article in the church paper says such and such things, without really searching the Scriptures to see whether these things are so.

Take, for example, the distinctive principles of the Covenanter Church. When some people come in contact with these they reject them off-hand, without any serious thought or study, just because they are different from what they are accustomed to.

What! Join a church that does not believe in singing hymns and does not allow a piano or organ in the church services? Who ever heard of such a thing? It is too queer, too peculiar, to be worthy of serious consideration. There are plenty of churches without any such queer and embarrassing requirements. Surely hymn singing and instrumental music, being sanctioned by 99% of the Christians in the world, must be all right!

So the matter is disposed of without any real study of the Scriptures, on the basis of human custom.

Others will **accept** the principles of the Covenanter Church just on the basis of human tradition without any real searching of the Scriptures. They have never really investigated the Bible basis of these principles. Ask one of them why we do not sing hymns or have organ music in our services, and the only reason they can give is that it is against the principles of our Church.

That is no reason at all. It is just another way of saying that we don't because we don't, like the old jingle, "We're here because we're here because we're here. . ."

Anyone who accepts the principles of the Covenanter Church on hymn singing, instrumental music, political dissent, secret societies, etc., and is not able to give Bible reasons for this position, is accepting them merely on the basis of human custom or tradition, not on the basis of the authority of Scripture.

It is easy, too easy; but it is not right.

If someone were to ask you why we do not vote in political elections, could you give them a valid reason from God's Word? Or would you have to say, "It's against our principles"?

If they are just "our principles" we had better give them up right away. We have no business to have any principles other than those taught in God's Word. If we cannot support them fairly and squarely from the Bible, we had better give them up and let it go at that. We should not be like the Jews who let God's Word go and clung to what their rabbis had written. But our principles can be supported from Scripture.

By a Clinging to What is Customary or Habitual in Spite of What the Bible Teaches.

There is a spirit of blind conservatism that is opposed to any change whatever — even to a change in the direction of greater faithfulness to the Bible.

Our forefathers in Scotland had a bad custom, that at the communion seasons only the older members would partake of the elements at the Lord's Supper. This became a time-honored custom but it was directly contrary to a specific command of God's Word — "Drink ye all of it". Yet it was difficult and took many, many years to get this bad custom changed.

The tendency is to make custom a fixed, unchangeable standard of conduct, while the Bible must be twisted and bent to fit what we are in the habit of doing or saying.

Several years ago our Synod decided that all baptized children should be counted as members of the church in reporting our church statistics. This was to bring the practice of the church into harmony with a clear teaching of the Bible, the doctrine of the covenant of grace. It is a recognized truth of the Bible, as set forth in the official standards of our church. "The Visible Church . . . consists of . . . those . . . that profess the true religion, AND OF THEIR CHILDREN". This has ALWAYS been the faith of the Covenanter Church and of all Presbyterian Churches. But in practice, alas — it has been all but forgotten. The almost universal practice has become to count only **communicants** as members of the church and to regard the children as outsiders and non-members until they "join the church" (as the phrase is) and are admitted to the Lord's Supper.

Now there is not the slightest question as to the Scriptural character of the change made by Synod. It was definitely a change in the right direction, the direction of a closer adherence to the Word of God. Baptism is a sign of membership in the Visible Church and if our children are baptized, they are members of the church; and if they are members, they do not have to "join" the church when they are 12 or 15 years old.

But was this change in our method of counting and reporting members easy to make? It was not. The old way, of counting only communicants as members, had only the sanction of custom. It had neither the Bible, nor the standards of the Church, nor the decision of Synod behind it. Yet there were and are many that seem to think that this business of counting baptized children as members of the church is simply absurd. Apparently some congregations did not even have a roll or record of the baptized children of their own membership. When the clerks of Presbyteries tried to compile the annual statistics of the different congregations to submit to Synod, there was confusion at first because the sessions could not seem to get used to counting the baptized children as members.

It would seem that in some matters we are more influenced by custom and habit than by the real teachings of God's Word. Some have opposed a new metrical edition of the Psalter, even though it might constitute real progress in faithfulness to the Word of God. In a previous generation many clung to the use of old-fashioned communion tokens as if they were of divine authority. Actually, the tokens were originally only used for a practical purpose and were no more of divine authority than a coal stove or kerosene lamp in a church building is of divine authority.

By Excusing Deviations from Scripture Because they are Common

The Jews condoned neglect of a needy parent by saying, "It is Corban." Some evils that exist today are treated almost as lightly.

When a congregation makes out a call to a minister, it seems to be fairly common for some members to try to find out the minister's attitude in advance. There may have been cases, indeed, where a minister was actually asked in advance whether he would accept a call. In other cases the question is more delicately phrased: "If we were to extend you a call, would you consider it?" Almost every minister has at some time been "sounded out" as to his attitude toward a possible call. We may recall the story of a young man who asked a young lady, "If I propose to you, will you marry me?" She properly replied, "WHEN you propose to me, I will tell you."

A call to a minister to become pastor of a congregation requires consideration and prayer. It also requires approval of the Presbytery before it is a valid call. Yet some members of congregations would like to shortcut all this proper procedure, and try to obtain a virtual pledge of acceptance in advance. In some denominations this practice is almost universal. In our own church it is much less prevalent, but it exists.

According to Bible principles no minister has a right to commit himself to acceptance of a call before the call is officially made. He cannot properly consider the matter until he knows all the factors that are involved. Yet some people cannot seem to see why a minister cannot commit himself in advance.

Another false notion is that a congregation ought not to call a minister who is pastor of another congregation. Of course this is without any Bible basis whatever. This notion seems to be passing, though. But perhaps the reason is not that we are more vitally Biblical in our thinking, but rather that there is a shortage of ministers.

The commands of Scripture are by-passed in favor of human custom, sometimes, when a bad situation, with considerable strife and unpleasantness has come to exist in a congregation. Instead of the courts of the Church facing the situation frankly and striving to set matters right according

to justice and sound Bible principles, the tendency is to expect the pastor to resign. Everything is smoothed over, but the issue at stake is not settled according to God's Word. This has happened time and again. It reveals the sinful tendency to go by human custom instead of by the real teachings of God's Word.

Sometimes human custom is honored more than Scripture in the matter of the worship of God. According to the Larger Catechism, the Second Commandment forbids "all corrupting the worship of God, adding to it, or taking from it, whether invented and taken up of ourselves, or received by tradition from others, though under the title of antiquity, custom, devotion, good intent, or any other pretense whatsoever" (Q. 109).

Yet some who have professed to believe that Scripture teaches that only the inspired Psalms of the Bible are to be sung in the worship of God, sing uninspired hymns when visiting in other churches. Some send their children to community Vacation Bible Schools where they will be taught

ways of worshipping God which are contrary to the teachings of the Bible. At Synod a few years ago a resolution cautioning parents against sending their children to Vacation Bible Schools where unscriptural worship is practiced was passed by a substantial majority. But it was a matter of surprise to note that a considerable minority of the delegates voted against the resolution. Yet presumably every one of these delegates had publicly professed acceptance of the principle of the exclusive use of the Psalms, without instrumental music, in divine worship.

The voice of Scripture is the voice of God. The Church is in a healthy condition when it regards God's Word alone as its supreme authority, not merely with lip service, but by really striving to act and live in accordance with the teachings of the Word.

"To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word" (Isaiah 66:2).

Trusting in God and Enjoying Him Forever

Psalm Sixteen

By the Rev. Frank D. Frazer

This Psalm is entitled "**Mictam of David**". The word "Mictam" has been found nowhere else except in the heading of each of five other Psalms, forming a group in Book II. 56-60 inclusive. Its meaning is not now understood. Dr. Robert Dick Wilson said of it, "Evidently, even when the earliest versions were made, the word was so old that it had passed out of use and its meaning forgotten. This argues for the antiquity of the headings." (Princeton Theo. Rev., July 1926). The LXX rendered it, "**Stele-writing of David**", i.e., a writing on a tablet or pillar of stone to preserve some personal witness of lasting public importance. The headings of each of the Psalms 56, 57, 59, and 60 state the occasion of the writing as the presence of some personal or national danger. Psalm 16 contains in itself indication of such occasion. David had found refuge in God from his enemies, and safety in being near to God when destroying judgments were falling round about upon the wicked. He had full assurance of his faith, and was filled to overflowing with the "blessednesses of all who take refuge in Him". (Ps. 2:12). It is a fitting finale to this octave of Judgment Psalms. It should be inscribed on the tablet of the heart of every one who has found the refuge that David found, and anchored his trust where the trust of the Man Christ Jesus was placed firm and unmoveable.

As psalmist and prophet, David was a repre-

sentative believer. He deals with the internal and external experiences common to all who strive to live godly lives in this present wicked world, with Christ as their Example. He is with them; they are with Him where He is, with God the Father.

I. In Blessed Fellowship. (vss 1-4).

"**Keep me, O God, for I have taken refuge in Thee**", or as often translated, "**for I have put my trust in Thee**". This is one of the most frequently repeated declarations of the Psalms; it occurs, with slight variations of wording 32 times in 28 Psalms. It is quoted in Heb. 2:1! as a word of Christ **witnessing to His real humanity**, "I will put my trust in Him".

"**I said to Jehovah, THOU, THOU alone art my Lord: the good I hold is not contrary to Thee**", i.e., "**not contrary to Thy will**." It is mine to **obey Thee**. He who in eternity "took the form of a servant", came into the world, and "being found in fashion as a man", said "Lo, I am come: in the book it is written of me: I delight to do Thy will, O my God." (Heb. 10:5-9. Ps. 40:6-10).

This is one of many Psalms in which there is apparently but one speaker, for the first person, singular pronouns, "I", "me", "my" are used throughout with no slightest indication of a change of speaker. So, when we find parts which we know were not true of David, we are puzzled.

There must be two speakers somehow united in one. The explanation of this mysterious peculiarity of the Psalms is given in David's "last words", in which he sums up what he doubtless realized was the greatest honor and accomplishment of his life, "The Spirit of Jehovah spake by me, and His word was on my tongue." Jesus Christ not only confirmed this saying of David, (Mt. 23:43. Mk. 12:36), but by His own last words to His disciples, promised the coming of the Holy Spirit to them, and "He, when He is come . . . shall not speak of Himself . . . He shall glorify me: for He shall take mine and declare it unto you." (Jn. 16:13, 14). "And ye shall be my witnesses . . . unto the uttermost part of the earth". He reminded them that all things written of Him in the Psalms, as well as other scriptures, must needs be fulfilled. "Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all nations . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always even unto the end of the world."

There can be no question as to the reality and intimacy of David's fellowship with this Lord, not only as prophet and king, but as a **type** of Him in humiliation, in conflicts, in suffering; in victories; and finally in the rest God gave him from all his enemies and the enemies of his kingdom. He desired to build a House for Jehovah. Though not permitted to do so, God gave him the pattern for the House to be built by his son, and permitted him to gather materials for it in great abundance to be for his son's inheritance and use. Solomon's temple, like the tabernacle of Moses was destroyed by enemies from within, destruction being completed by enemies without. But David gathered better than he knew. Under the guidance of the Spirit, he filled the treasury of the Psalter from the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden in Christ; — inexhaustible riches still being used by his greater SON in building His Church, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail.

Col. 3:16 with Eph. 5:17-21 plainly imply that all the Psalms are "the word of Christ"; that they are all "derived from the Spirit", and that their purpose and use are for the glory of God, and for "teaching and admonishing" men. Many of the Psalms, (e.g. 57, 67, 96, 98), declare this to be their purpose and use, not only for the people of Israel, but for all peoples and nations on the earth.

"As for the saints who are on the earth, They are also the excellent thereof; All my delight is in them", not "in" them objectively, but "in company with them". I love them because they love my Lord, keep His commandments, and rejoice in His salvation. Ps. 119:63. Col. 1:4,5.

Real fellowship requires a bond of common experience, common interest in that which gives enjoyment to all, a common purpose, and standard of life. Such can be found only with God in the bond of His covenant for mankind, and where

other believers are. But fellowship with God requires **separation** from every other god; from the worshippers and services of every other. Their joy is turned into sorrow.

"Multiplied are the sorrows of them that give gifts for another. I will not offer their drink-offerings of blood, Nor take their names upon my lips." I will have no part with them. "It is a shame even to speak of the things done by them in secret."

John, in his First Epistle, tells this experience in this fellowship, along with other disciples, desiring, "that ye also may have fellowship with us; yea, and our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ; and these things we write that your joy may be full."

II. In a Goodly Heritage. (vss. 5-7).

"Jehovah is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup: THOU, even THOU maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places; Yea, I have a goodly heritage."

"Jehovah said to me, Thou art my Son: this day I have begotten Thee. Ask of me, and I will give Thee the nations for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." (Ps. 2:7,8). "All things are yours, and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's," "Thou wilt guide me by Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none on earth that I desire beside Thee. My flesh and my heart fail; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever."

I will bless Jehovah who hath given me counsel: Yea, in the night seasons my inward parts prompt me. — i.e., to praise and give Thee thanks. "THOU maintainest my lot", and I know that by almighty power and unfailing fidelity it is kept in eternal security, "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are **kept** by the power of God unto salvation".

III. In Eternal Security and Fulness of Joy. (vss. 8-11).

"I have set Jehovah before me always: Because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved."

David could not have written these lines of himself. Obviously they were not true of him. Too often he acted without regard to the presence of God, — though, in justice, let it be said that he made it his purpose and habit to depend on God and obey His commands. But, for example, when he spoke deceitfully and did wrong to his neighbor, Uriah, it was not God who gave him counsel for the evil course he took. God was not then at his right hand. For the fact in every case is, "Jehovah is with you while you are with Him; and if you seek Him, He will be found of you; but if you

forsake Him, He will forsake you". (2 Chron. 15:1,2). Trusting in God implies obedience, but David was "drawn away by his own lust and enticed", Being deceived, he thought he could have "good" that was contrary to God. But the law of God, which he well knew and should have taken into account, was speedily executed. His pleasures were turned to ashes; his sorrows multiplied. He could not, then, have said of himself? **"Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices: Even my flesh rests in safety."** For the joy of his heart and tongue ceased; even his flesh was trembling in danger. The judgments of God fell upon him: "The sword shall never depart from thy house because thou hast despised Me. Thus saith Jehovah, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house." (2 Sam. 12:9-11). David was moved; he was shaken. But he repented, and returned to his refuge, and Jehovah took away his sin. Such was his experience time after time. God's covenant stood fast; "the sure mercies of David" never failed. His petition couched in the first word of this Psalm was granted; he was **kept** by the mercy and power of God unto salvation. "Thy house and thy kingdom is made sure forever before thee; thy throne is established forever." (2 Sam. 7:16). When, by his sins and the sins of his sons his earthly house, throne and kingdom had fallen in ruins, God sent word by His prophet Amos, (9.11), "I will raise up the hut of David that is fallen". This, of course, could be done only through a son of David who had resources and would be true and faithful to God's covenant for David and his house. In the fulness of the time that SON came, and even now is completing a spiritual House for Jehovah, "a glorious church, . . . holy and without a flaw." Read Rev. 21:2-8.

"For Thou wilt not leave my soul to destruction; Neither wilt Thou give Thy beloved to see corruption. Thou makest me to know the path of life; In Thy presence there is fulness of joys; At Thy right hand are pleasures for evermore."

David died, was buried, "was laid unto his

fathers and saw corruption", and his silent tomb was still pointed out a thousand years later, when Peter, preaching on Pentecost, to a great multitude, quoted these verses as what "David says in Him" (not merely **concerning** Him), and "Being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins He would make one to sit on his throne; he foreseeing this spake of the resurrection of Christ . . . This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses." (Acts 2:22-32). Paul, another witness, confirms the fact that "God said" what David wrote in this Psalm, and that this is "the word of salvation sent to us", (Acts 13:22-39); even "the gospel of God which He had promised before in the Scriptures, concerning His Son, who was born of the seed of David, according to the flesh; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of Holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." (Ro. 1: 1-3). God "raised Him from the dead and made Him sit (enthroned) at His right hand . . . and put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him to be Head over all things for the church, which is His body." (Eph. 1:15-23). And further,

"If the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead shall give life also to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwelleth in you . . . For as many as are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God . . . The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs of Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified with Him." (Ro. 8:11-17).

Can I say with Paul, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord . . . that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, becoming conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead." (Phil. 3:8-16).

Sketches of the Covenanters

By J. C. McFeeters

Chapter XXV.

Expelling the Ministers — A. D. 1662.

"The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church." In the martyrdom of Argyle and Guthrie blood of the best quality had been shed, and the most precious seed had been sown. Therefore the harvest will surely be great, the field will yield an hundred fold.

The fidelity of Argyle and of Guthrie, their devotion to Christ and the Covenant, reappeared

in hundreds of noblemen and in hundreds of ministers all over Scotland. Overawe and subdue the Covenanters by sacrificing their prominent leaders? Their foes mistook their spirit and underestimated their strength, knowing little of the deathless principles of the Covenant that carried them into the service of the Lord, not counting their lives dear for Christ's sake. The Covenanters overawed! Will the sun faint and fail beneath the gale? Will the oak wither at the

loss of a few boughs? Will veterans recoil at the first fire? Rather, will not the fighting spirit be roused?

At this time the Covenanters numbered about 1,000 ministers, and 100,000 communicants. They had 900 congregations. The ministers were not all staunch; the leaven of compromise had been working; half the number had become more or less infected. They had weakened in the Covenant and yielded to King Charles under his vicious administration. The political whirlpool in its outside circles was drawing them slowly yet surely toward its horrible vortex.

The sifting time had come for the Covenanters. God knows how to shake His sieve to clean the wheat. He seeks not bulk, but value. Numbers are nothing to Him; character is everything. He would rather have Gideon with 300 men up to the standard, than thirty regiments below it. He preferred one-tenth of Israel to the whole number, and sifted the nation in Nebuchadnezzar's sieve to get the good wheat separated from the inferior.

The Covenanted Church became loaded down with chaff, weevil, shrunken grains, and broken kernels — low grades of religious life — and the Lord shook the bad out of the Church by making it exceedingly painful and difficult to stay in. The way of faithfulness was filled with hardships. God made Covenant-keeping dangerous and expensive. The followers of Christ were compelled to take up the cross and carry it. If true to their Lord, they must go outside the camp, bearing His reproach. If they keep conscience pure, they must accept cruel mockings, scourging, imprisonment, banishment, and death. In this way would God separate unto himself a "peculiar people, zealous of good works." The others may be of use in degree, yet to prevent general defection and universal declension, God winnows the wheat.

But who were thrown out of the Presbyterian Church in the reign of Charles II? Were they not the strong, unyielding, uncompromising Covenanters? Who are these separated from their brethren, and driven like chaff before the wind over the mountains and moors? And are they not the zealous defenders of the Reformed faith? the true soldiers of Jesus Christ? To the casual eye the scrupulous, strongheaded, hard-fighting Covenanters were tossed out, and the rest remained at home to distribute the prey; the lax party had the organization and held the Church; the strict party suffered disintegration and were banished. But such a view is only superficial; yea, it is a visual illusion.

The Church of Christ depends not on external organization. She can live without assemblies, presbyteries, or sessions. She can enjoy the fullest measure of the love of Christ without chapels, manses, or glebes. She can have

power and render service in any community, without ministers, elders, or deacons.

When the Covenanters were driven out by the persecutor, the Covenanted Church went forth into the wilderness, leaning upon the Lord Jesus Christ her Beloved. She brought with her all the essentials. She had the Bible, the Covenant, the faith, the sacraments, the Holy Spirit, and the love of God, and the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. The valleys were her places of worship; her meeting houses were fitted up with stone seats, rock pulpits, granite walls, green carpets, and azure ceilings. A row of stones was her sacramental table, and the purling stream her baptismal bowl. The mountains round about were filled with angelic hosts, and the plains were covered with the manna of heaven; the banner of Christ's love waved over the worshipers, and the glory of God filled the place. Such was the Church of the Covenanters in the times of persecution.

The king and his advisers in 1662 required of the Covenanted Church what no faithful self-respecting Covenanter could render. The demands in substance were:

That the oath of allegiance, embodying the king's supremacy over Church and State, shall be taken.

That the ministers in preaching and praying shall not refer to public sins, whether committed by the king or his parliament.

That the administration of the Church shall be, to some extent, according to the Prelatic form.

That the edicts of the king and the enactments of parliament shall not be questioned, even in the light of God's Word.

That the ministers shall comply with these demands, or be banished from their respective homes, parishes, and presbyteries.

Such was the sieve that did the work. What loyal heart could brook these terms? What minister of Christ, bent on preserving honor and conscience, could remain in charge of his church? In comparison with the Covenant, all earthly inducements were as rotten straw, in the judgment of those whose eyes took in the world of glory and rested on the Lord.

Two hundred Covenanted ministers quietly accepted the penalty. On the last Sabbath of October, 1622, they preached their farewell sermons. The churches were crowded; the grief of the people was indescribable, heart-groans broke into loud lamentations. "There was never such a sad day in Scotland as when the poor persecuted ministers took their leave of their people." Two hundred more stood their ground and fought the battle a little longer. These were forcibly eject-

ed. Thus that desolating blast smote four hundred congregations of Covenanters.

The minister with his wife and children departed in deep sorrow from the pleasant manse and the loving people. Tender ties were sundered and holy endearments sacrificed; the comforts of life were abandoned, and safety, shelter, and supplies left behind.

The minister could have retained all had not his conscience been so tender. But the servant of the Lord may not be bribed. Offer the true minister of Jesus Christ money, comfort, pleasure, honor, houses, lands — all that the world can give to corrupt his conscience in his calling, and you will get a laugh of scorn that will freeze the blood.

The winter storms were descending upon the man of God and his unprotected family, as they walked across the glebe to return no more. They went out, not knowing where they were going. Night may fall upon them in a dreary place; tomorrow may come to them without a roof, or a table, or a fire. Winter may drive them into a cold cave, where possibly some good-hearted shepherdess may find them, and share with them her pail of milk and oaten cakes. Withal no complaints. They have taken joyfully the spoiling of their goods for the sake of Christ. By them the reproach of Christ was accounted better than the riches of Egypt.

Alexander Peden was one of the fighting ministers. He preached till forced to leave his pulpit. On the day of his farewell service the congregation was convulsed with grief. Peden had to restrain the wails of the people again and again. Coming down from the pulpit after service, he shut the pulpit door and struck it three times with his Bible, saying with great emphasis, "I charge thee, in my Master's name, that no man ever enter thee, but such as come in by the door as I have done." The pulpit kept the solemn charge; no one entered there till after the persecution; it remained empty twenty-six years.

Prelatic ministers were sent to fill the 400 vacant pulpits, but the people refused to hear

them. The time of field-preaching had not come; the Conventicles in the mountains and moors became the order of the day.

The ministration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ — that river of God which makes glad the city of the Lord — had now reached the precipitous places where it was broken upon the rocks; yet it continued to flow, and even increase in volume and strength. The preaching by these ministers in the desolate places was power, impetuous, majestic, thunder-like amid the mountains, making the kingdom tremble. Great trials make great men.

We live in an easy age. Ministers may now have pulpit and salary on easy terms. They can preserve a good conscience without special self-denial. No providential issue now to separate the false from the true. But the ease of conscience in the Church's ministry, and the easy terms of communion in her membership, may change God's gold and make it dim with dross, and thus necessitate a furnace. The Lord may suddenly spring an event upon His Church, that will compel the true to be very true, and the false to be very false. Where will we stand in case the trial come?

Points for the Class

1. What effect had the death of Argyle and Guthrie on the Covenanters?
2. How does God keep His Church pure?
3. Why is the sifting process needed?
4. Can the Church survive the loss of her external organization?
5. Describe the Covenanted Church in the mountains and moors of Scotland?
6. What did the king require of the ministers?
7. How did the Covenanters receive his restrictions?
8. How many pastors were driven from their churches?
9. What may again occasion a sifting time?

Chapter XXVI.

The Field-Meetings — A. D. 1663

Middleton, the king's commissioner, had dictated to the Covenanted ministers how they should conduct their ministry. They boldly declined his authority over their work in the Gospel. He then laid down conditions upon which their pastoral relations must depend. These conditions have been stated in the foregoing chapter. They may be summed up in three brief sentences: Acknowledgement of the king's supremacy over the Church; Agreement to refrain from all public

criticism of the king; Willingness to conduct public worship as the king directed.

Such were the terms on which the Covenanted ministers might continue their work. They were given one month to reach a decision. The conflict of interests that tried the famous 400 ministers none knew but God. Home, wife, children, salary, comfort, tender ties, future supplies, and the welfare of the congregation — oh, how much was involved in that decision! Can the husband, the father, the shepherd, the watchman

arise and forsake all? Can he suspend the high calling, sunder the holy ties, abandon the field and flock, and go forth, now knowing whither he goeth? Can flesh and blood endure the ordeal?

But look at the other side. Will the servant of the Lord take orders from man? Will the ambassador of God submit to be muzzled? Will a pastor of Christ's flock hold his position for what he finds in the flesh-pot? Will the preacher of righteousness connive at wickedness? Will the herald of Gospel liberty become a slave to vilest men? Such was the other outlook. Which way will the man of God take?

The Lord made the way of faithfulness hard to travel. Only they, who, like Caleb, followed the Lord wholly, could walk therein. To make this Choice, the love of the Lord Jesus Christ had to arise in the heart and surge through all the veins, above love for wife, or children, or house, or lands, or brethren, or sisters, or self; and it must consume all these in the flames of its vehemence.

And the Lord made the wrong way, also, hard to travel; yea, impassable, except for those whose sin against light made them exceeding sinful. What more vile, degraded, contemptible, and criminal, than a minister of Christ, that is leased to an earthly power, purchased with things that perish, and controlled by designing men? In this manner would God separate the precious from the vile and put them far apart.

On November 1, 1662, three-fourths of the Covenanted ministers were brought to this valley of decision. The king's edict took effect upon those who had been settled within the past thirteen years; the others, for the time, were exempted. About 700, therefore, stood at the parting of the ways. Of this number about sixty per centum chose to suffer with Christ, that they might reign with him; the rest being faint-hearted, abode by the stuff. All honor to the Church that could muster such a proportion of self-sacrificing ministers! These men accepted the challenge and went forth, like soldiers, into the field of action, saying, "We will continue the conflict till we overcome, or hand it down in debate to posterity."

Four hundred ministers expelled from their congregations! four hundred churches left vacant! four hundred families rendered desolate! forty thousand of God's sheep, and as many lambs, left to wander in the wilderness without a shepherd! who can estimate the extent of such a calamity? who can reckon the sorrows, sufferings, and stupendous losses, public and private, caused by this iniquitous act of the king?

But the four hundred ministers were not silenced. Who can silence tongues of fire? They were scattered, but not conquered. They took shelter where it could be found — under friendly roofs, within dismal caves, under dripping moss-

hags, in the open fields, and on mountain tops. They wandered over desolate moors, and on lonely ridges. They suffered hunger, weariness, sickness, exposure. The rains of summer drenched them and the snows of winter stiffened them. They were clothed with plaids, shawls, and threadbare garments. They hastened from place to place to elude pursuers, and wherever they went they carried their Bible. The Bible to them in their desolation was meat, drink, light, shelter, fellowship, — everything the soul could wish.

These men of God were devoted preachers, they loved to preach, had a passion for preaching. The Word of God that carried them into such excess of suffering was their bones as fire, an unquenchable flame; and in their hearts as rising waters, an overflowing river. As Christ their Lord and Master preached in summer and in winter, in the field, to as many as came, so preached they to one soul, or to ten thousand.

The king sent detachments of his army over the country to compel the people, who had lost their pastors, to attend services under the ministers of the Episcopal Church. They refused. The new clergymen preached to empty pews in many of the Covenanted parishes. The Covenanters instinctively discovered the haunting places of their own ministers, and thither they repaired for their preaching. They traveled far that they might hear the precious Gospel, in its richness and fulness from consecrated lips. They were hungry for the Word of God and willingly incurred hardships and dangers to get a feast. These meetings at first were small; in time they developed into the great Conventicles at which thousands assembled to worship God.

A Conventicle Sabbath was a solemn day. The time and place having been fixed beforehand, the people were notified in a very private manner. A kind of wireless telegraphy seemed to have been operated by the Covenanters. The news spread and thousands came at the call. The place selected was usually in the depression of a lonely moor, or under the shelter of a desolate mountain; yet any spot was dangerous. The king had issued successive proclamations against the Conventicles, and his troops were constantly scouring the country in search of them.

The services were of necessity sensational. At the appointed time the people were on the ground. Many came a great distance, some of them traveled under the shades of night. From every direction they converged. Fathers and mothers with their sons and daughters were there. The young and the old were equally full of zeal, and the women were courageous as the men. On the way they would cannily scan the country from the hilltop, to see if the dreaded dragoons were in sight.

The hour for the service having arrived, the audience sat down upon the grass or on the rocks.

The minister took his stand on a prominent spot. Sentinels occupied elevated points, from whence they could detect and report the approach of troops. The mountain extended its friendly shelter over the congregation. The sun shed its light upon them like the smile of their heavenly Father. The sky spread over them as the canopy of God's heavenly high throne. The winds swept through the bushes and over the heather with regaling freshness. This was God's sanctuary built without hands; here His people worshipped in spirit and in truth.

The minister from his granite pulpit would catch the inspiration. The waiting people, the earnest faces, the gleaming eyes, the solemn hour, the charming scenery, the occasion, the danger, the privilege, the responsibility, the presence of God, the nearness of heaven — how much here to awaken all that was noble, courageous, and overpowering in God's messenger! The fiery, pathetic, powerful eloquence, that echoed among those rocks and swept through the coves, was beyond the reporter's skill. Here heaven touched earth; eternity overlapped time; glory overspread the worshipers. These were days when that which is most sacred, awful, and sublime burdened men's souls. Here holy oratory distilled like dew, breathed like zephyrs, crashed

like storms, leaped like devouring flames. The recorded sermons of these ministers are yet regarded as the very marrow of Christian literature.

Have we the zeal of these fathers for the house of our God? Are we carried to the place of worship at the appointed hour by our love for Jesus Christ? One glance at the enthusiasm of the Conventicle Covenanters would surely make the present generation blush.

Points for the Class.

1. State the demands Commissioner Middleton made upon the Covenanted ministers.
2. How would such a demand agitate the mind?
3. How long had they to decide?
4. What proportion remained faithful under the trial?
5. In what way did these continue their ministry?
6. Describe a Conventicle service.
7. How will present zeal for Divine services compare with their zeal?

“Psalms and Hymns and Spiritual Songs”

By the Rev. Frank D. Frazer

(Note: The following article is reproduced from “Blue Banner Faith and Life”, April-June, 1948. Eph. 5:19 and Col. 3:16 are constantly being confidently quoted as a complete refutation of the principle that only the Psalms of the Bible are authorized for singing in the worship of God. Those who adhere to that principle ought to have a clear and accurate understanding of these two texts. And those who confidently cite these texts as a justification of the use of non-inspired hymns in divine worship, ought to be willing to study a scholarly and exact exegesis of the texts, such as that which Mr. Frazer presents in this article. Because of the importance of this article, and its permanent reference value, reprints of it on separate sheets are being made and will be available at 5 cents each or 25 for \$1.00 postpaid. Ed.)

Question:

Will a strict exegesis of Eph. 5:19 and Col. 3:16 apply to the 150 Psalms only, thus excluding all human compositions?

Answer:

The texts referred to are as follows: “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and

making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Eph. 5:18,19); “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord” (Col. 3:16).

A strict exegesis of these passages requires, of course, that the words in them be taken in the sense obviously intended by the writer, and reasonably to be understood by those to whom the epistles were addressed, not in some other sense they might acquire at a future time.

Controversies within the Church have produced, for us, a sharp differentiation between “Psalms” and “Hymns”, “Psalms” being the accepted name for the God-inspired songs of praise collected in one book of Scripture, while “Hymns” has become the common designation of human compositions for singing in worship. But, so far as the records show, no such difference was attached to these words in the original apostolic Church, and this for the simple reason that, at that time, there were no uninspired songs used, or to be used, in the worship of the true God. Repeated assumptions and assertions to the contrary have never been substantiated.

The Christian Church had but recently emerged from the confines of the Jewish Synagogue, where only the Scripture Psalms were used in the praise service. No others were available for the praise service of the Church. Note that Paul does not tell his readers to **make** Psalms, Hymns or Songs, but to **sing** them to God, and **talk** of them to men, thus taking it for granted that these things were already at hand; things, indeed, which he regarded as of the greatest importance for Christians. And, while special gifts of the Spirit were promised to meet the needs of the Church (e.g., Eph. 4:7-16), none were promised for the making of songs of praise to God, nor for "singing the gospel" to men.

We know well that the preaching, teaching, and writing of Paul, preserved for us, is based on the Old Testament Scriptures; his constant appeal is to their very words.

In the providence of God, these Scriptures, originally written in Hebrew, were translated into Greek before the coming of Christ. This Greek version, called the Septuagint (often denoted by the abbreviation "LXX") was available wherever there were Greek-speaking Jews, and they were in all the important centers of the Mediterranean world. It was the only version available in the days of Christ and the apostles. Christ put the stamp of His approval on it by quoting from it. The original Hebrew, of course, remained as the standard, but, outside of Palestine, there were few who could understand it.

Paul wrote to the Greek-speaking Ephesians and Colossians in Greek. He assumed that they had this LXX version at hand, for he quotes frequently from it, and makes many references to it without taking the trouble to state his source. He assumed that his readers would recognize the words he used. In particular, without mentioning his quotations from other books, there are at least twelve quotations from, and direct references to, the Book of Psalms in Ephesians; at least three in Colossians. How do we know this? By the words he used. For instance, in Eph. 4:26, his Greek for "Be ye angry, and sin not" is found word for word in the LXX version of Psalm 4:4, a comparatively unusual, but very striking, rendering of the Hebrew.

Now when we examine the LXX, still used by the Greek Orthodox Church, we find these three words, "psalms", "hymns", "songs". We find them, generally, in place of three Hebrew words, **mizmor** (a psalm), **t'hillah** (a praise), **shir** (a song) without any hard and fast distinctions being observed.

The Greek "psalm", while it usually stands for "mizmor", also stands for "shir" and for "t'hillah". Indeed, the Hebrew title for the whole book is "T'hillim" (Praises), but the Greek title is "Psalms".

The Greek "hymn" is used for "t'hillah" and

also for "shir". "Psalm" and "hymn" are both Greek words which we have taken bodily into our language. Yet "hymn" is nowhere used in our English version of the Old Testament, although it is used in the LXX at least 16 times, and the verb "hymneo" (meaning "to sing hymns") at least 13 times; in every instance obviously meaning the songs given of God, synonymous with "psalm" and "sing psalms". The plural "hymns" is frequently used to designate these songs in general, without discriminating. For example, at the end of Psalm 72 we read, "The hymns of David, the son of Jesse, are ended". In Psalm 100:4 we find "Enter . . . into his courts with hymns". The Hebrew reading of 1 Chron. 16:8 is identical with that of Psalm 105:2; but the LXX translates the first, "Sing to him, sing hymns to him"; the second, "Sing to him, sing psalms to him". In 2 Chron. 29:30 we read that the Levites were commanded "to sing hymns to the Lord in the words of David and Asaph, the prophet; and they sang hymns with gladness".

Many individual Psalms have headings of their own. Some are marked "Psalm"; some "Song". Some have both titles, "A Psalm, a Song"; "A Psalm of a Song"; "A Song of a Psalm". Psalm 65 has both "Psalm" and "Song" in its title, and its first line is, "To thee, O God in Zion, a hymn is befitting". The heading of Psalm 76 reads, "For the Precentor in hymns, a Psalm of Asaph, a Song with reference to the Assyrian".

The Greek word for "song" (ode), occurs, for the most part, in place of "shir", but also for "mizmor". In Psalm 137:3 we read, "There those who took us captive demanded of us words of songs; And those who carried us away (demanded of us) a hymn, saying, Sing for us from the Song of Zion. How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" Here the "songs of Zion" meant, to a Hebrew, "the song of the Lord", i.e., "the song of Jehovah" as written in the book of Psalms. But note that either a "song" or a "hymn" was to be selected at random from these Psalms.

These examples, a few among many, are sufficient to show that each of the three words in question was applied to the 150 Psalms. They were applied to the 150 Psalms collectively. They were applied to the 150 Psalms individually, without discriminating between them. Yet, as anyone can see, these three words, "psalms, hymns, songs" are distinctly, etymologically different. Such free interchange of different names for the same thing is permissible only if it does not affect the writer's meaning and the reader's understanding. Therefore, such usage in the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures is conclusive proof that there was, at the time of writing, no doubt in anyone's mind as to the exact reference of these words.

That they were applied to the 150 Psalms **only** follows from the fact that no others are mentioned in the entire record as having been used in

the temple, synagogue or apostolic Church worship of God. If there were any others, what became of them? Where is any proof that others existed, or were so used?

But, what is the use of so many names for the same thing? Why pile up words? Well, it usually takes more than one word even to begin to define a thing of such dimensions and importance as the praise of the infinite, eternal and gracious God. Why is the law of God so often described by a group of three terms, such as "testimonies, statutes and judgments" (Deut. 4:45)? Why are prayers called "supplications, intercessions, thanksgivings" (1 Tim. 2:1)? "Psalms, hymns, songs" reveal the different aspects which our praise to God should have, according to the mind of His Spirit.

The word "psalm" refers to the instrumental accompaniment, as does "mizmor", for there were musical "instruments of the songs of God" (1 Chron. 16:42), as long as the sacrifice was physical and symbolic. Now, however, THE SACRIFICE has been offered; Jesus Christ "offered Himself", "laid down His life", "yielded up His spirit" on the cross, quoting, as He did so, the precise words of the LXX version of Psalm 31:5, "into thy hands I commit my spirit", changing only the tense of the verb to "commit" instead of "shall commit" (Luke 23:46). Now, the Holy Spirit has come to be "in you", believers, that you may "be filled with the Spirit". He has come to teach you, that you may understand and use His songs "in all wisdom". He has come to put "grace" in your hearts for singing to God. So when we sing a "psalm" we are to do so with our **spiritual instruments**, that is, our heart and understanding.

The word "hymn", as also "t'hillah", has to do exclusively with praise offered up to God. When we sing a "hymn" from the Psalm Book, we are to do so to God, not to men.

The Greek word for "song" indicates, as does "shir", the **manner** in which praise is to be offered to God, namely, by singing. But it was a word used for all kinds of song. The Asians were notably fond of drinking and singing. They had songs for their idol feasts which so often ended in drunken carousals. Hence it was necessary, especially for those just turning from heathenism, to limit "songs" by defining the category to which

they, as well as the "psalms" and "hymns" here spoken of, belong, that is, that they are "of the Spirit of God" (2 Sam. 23:1; Matt. 22:43).

The Greek name (**pneuma**) for wind, air, breath, ethereal substance, was used in the LXX for the Spirit of God and the spirit of man. Accordingly, under the continued control of the Spirit, Paul had already adapted a cognate Greek adjective, **pneumatikos**, to his use. This word we translate "spiritual". It is a word almost peculiar to Paul, for of its 26 occurrences in the New Testament, 24 are in his epistles. He applies it (a) to persons, as regenerated by the Spirit; (b) In at least 18 places he applies it to things (gifts, blessings, etc.).

Excluding one doubtful case and the two verses now before us, there are 15 places in which he uses this word as indicating, not merely the spiritual nature of the thing (as distinct from the physical or carnal), but, clearly and emphatically, that it exists in **dynamic connection with the Holy Spirit of God** as author or source; therefore as derived from, or given by, the Spirit.

The one doubtful case is in Eph. 6:12, where he speaks of "the spiritual things of wickedness". In our Revised Version this is interpreted as of "hosts" of wicked persons, of course in their fallen condition. It may rather refer to their power and activities. This is a perfectly proper use of the Greek word, and if it applies to things with which, as everyone knows, the Holy Spirit has no connection except to overrule them, it can occasion no confusion in the reader's mind. Therefore this exceptional case may be set aside.

The remaining 15 places are sufficient to establish Paul's uniform usage of the word, and to fix that meaning here. Therefore, the "songs" here specified are "spiritual", not because they express spiritual thoughts and aspirations, but because they are inspired and given by the Holy Spirit. It goes without saying that the same defining word is to be understood with "psalms" and with "hymns", for "songs" includes them both.

Thus all mere human compositions are excluded.

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Some Noteworthy Quotations

"Who does not know as things are now, spiritual religion never brings a man the world's praise? It entails on a man the world's disapprobation—the world's persecution—the world's mockery. . . Who has not heard of nicknames in plenty, bestowed on those who follow Christ — Puritans, Methodists, Calvinists, and many more?

Who does not know the petty family persecutions which often go on in private society today? Let a young person go to every ball, and opera, and race-course, and worldly party, and utterly neglect his soul, and no one interferes; no one says, 'Spare thyself' — no one says 'Take care: remember God, judgment, and eternity.' But let him

only begin to read his Bible, and be diligent in prayer — let him decline worldly amusements, and become particular in his employment of time, let him live like an immortal being; let him do this, I say, and all his friends and relatives will probably be up in arms. 'You are going too far. You are taking up extreme views'."

— J. C. Ryle

"Why doth God open one man's eyes and not another's? Paul (Romans 9) forbiddeth us to ask why; for it is too deep for man's capacity. God we see is honored thereby . . . Faith cometh not of our free-will; but is the gift of God."

— William Tyndale

"The doctrine of God's eternal predestination is so necessary to the Church of God, that without the same, faith can neither be truly taught, nor surely established."

— John Knox

"The angels, those noble citizens and princes of heaven, work for the good of the saints. The good angels are ready to do all offices of love to the people of God. 'Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?' (Hebrews chap. 1).

"The good angels do service to the saints in life. The angel did comfort the virgin Mary (Luke 1). The angels stopped the mouths of the lions, that they could not hurt Daniel (Daniel 6). A Christian has an invisible guard of angels about him: 'He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways' (Psalm 91). The highest angels take care of the lowest saints.

"The good angels do service at death. Christ in His agony was refreshed by an angel (Luke 22); so are believers in the agony of death; and when the saints' breath expires, their souls are carried to heaven by a convoy of angels (Luke 16).

"The good angels also do service at the day of judgment. The angels shall open the saints' graves, and shall conduct them into the presence of Christ, when they shall be made like His glorious body. 'He shall send His angels, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from the one end of heaven to the other' (Matthew 24). The angels at the day of judgment shall rid the godly of all their enemies. 'The tares are the children of the wicked one, the harvest is the end of the world, the reapers are the angels; as therefore the tares are gathered and burnt in the fire, so shall it be in the end of the world: the Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things which offend, and them which do iniquity, and cast them into a furnace of fire' (Matthew 13). See here the honor and dignity of a believer; he hath God's Name written upon him (Rev. 3), the Holy Ghost

dwelling in him (2 Tim. 1) and a guard of angels attending him. 'All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose' (Romans 8)."

— Thomas Watson

"The graces of the Spirit work for good. Grace is to the soul as light to the eye, as health to the body. Grace does to the soul, as a virtuous wife to her husband: 'She will do him good all the days of her life' (Proverbs 31). How incomparably useful are the graces! Faith and fear go hand in hand; faith keeps the heart cheerful, fear keeps the heart serious; faith keeps the heart from sinking in despair, fear keeps it from floating in presumption; all the graces display themselves in their beauty: hope is the helmet (1 Thess. 5), meekness 'the ornament' (1 Peter 3), love 'the bond of completeness' (Colossians 3). The saints' graces are weapons to defend them, wings to elevate them, jewels to enrich them, spices to perfume them, stars to adorn them, cordials to refresh them: and does not all this work for good? The graces are our evidences for heaven."

— Thomas Watson

"However luxuriantly and abundantly the ungrafted tree may leaf and blossom, it will NEVER bear the fruit which grows on the grafted tree. But however backward the grafted tree may be at first in its growth, the blossom which unfolds on its branches is FRUIT BLOSSOM. No tree grafts itself. The wild tree cannot change from its own kind to the grafted tree, unless a power which resides outside the sphere of botany enters in and effects the renewal of the wild tree. This is no relative transition. A tree is not one-tenth cultivated and nine-tenths wild, so that by degrees it may become entirely cultivated; it is simply grafted or not grafted, and the entire result of its future growth depends on this fundamental difference. And though from the nature of the case this figure does not escape the weak side which every metaphor has, it will nevertheless serve its purpose. It illustrates the idea, that if in the orchard of humanity a similar operation or grafting takes place, by which the character of the life-process of our human nature is potentially changed, a differentiation between man and man takes place which divides us INTO TWO KINDS. And if the sublimate, which from our being arrays itself in our consciousness, may be compared to the blossom in which the tree develops its hidden beauty, then it follows that the consciousness of the grafted and the consciousness of the non-grafted humanity MUST be as unlike as to kind, as the blossom of the wild, and that of the true, vine."

— Abraham Kuyper

"As one tree of the forest protects another

against the violence of the storm, so in the communion of saints does one protect the other against the storm-wind of doubt."

— Abraham Kuyper

"A believer of the nineteenth century knows much more than a believer of the tenth or third

century could know, but that additional knowledge is ever dug from the selfsame gold mine; and that former generations stood behind in wealth of knowledge, can only be explained by the fact, that in those times the working of the mine was not so far advanced."

— Abraham Kuyper

Religious Terms Defined

MEANS OF GRACE. "The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption, are his ordinances, especially the word, sacraments, and prayer; all which are made effectual to the elect for salvation" (S.C. 88).

THE WORD. The Holy Scripture of the Old and New Testaments, which as the special revelation of God makes known to sinners the only way of salvation.

SACRAMENTS. "A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ; wherein, by sensible signs, Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are represented, sealed, and applied to believers" (S.C. 92).

NEW TESTAMENT SACRAMENTS. "The sacraments of the New Testament are, Baptism and the Lord's Supper" (S.C. 93).

BAPTISM. "Baptism is a sacrament, wherein the washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's" (S.C. 94).

The LORD'S SUPPER. "The Lord's Supper is a sacrament, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ's appointment, his death is showed forth; and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment, and growth in grace" (S.C. 96).

PRAYER. "Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies" (S.C. 98).

ELEMENTS OF PRAYER. The various kinds of addresses to God which together make up Christian prayer.

ADORATION. That element of prayer which ascribes honor to God for His perfections and attributes.

THANKSGIVING. That element of prayer

which expresses gratitude to God for His love and mercies.

CONFESSION. That element of prayer which expresses our unworthiness and ill-desert because of our sins, and our sincere sorrow for them.

PETITION. That element of prayer in which we make request of God for any blessings which are agreeable to His will.

INTERCESSION. The special form of petition in which we request God for blessings to be bestowed upon others, or upon His Church.

PREACHING. The proclamation of the Word of God, with exposition of its meaning, and application to the circumstances of the hearers; if in a congregation of Christ's Church, by a minister of the Gospel or other properly authorized person.

EVANGELISM. Proclamation of the Gospel of Christ with the specific aim of the conversion of sinners, by a minister of the Gospel or a private Christian, publicly or privately, formally or informally.

MISSIONS. The work of evangelism and Church establishment carried on by the visible Church beyond its existing boundaries.

MISSIONARY. Any person appointed by the Church to engage in any part of the work of missions as a vocation.

THE CHURCH. The body of people who are distinguished from the rest of mankind by either a vital or an external participation in the dispensation of the Covenant of Grace.

HEAD OF THE CHURCH. The Lord Jesus Christ, who by the appointment of God the Father, has been made the head of the body, the Church.

THE INVISIBLE CHURCH. "The invisible church is the whole number of the elect that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one under Christ the head" (Larger Catechism, 64).

THE CHURCH MILITANT. That portion of the invisible Church which at a given time is present on earth, and consequently engaged in conflict with evil.

THE CHURCH TRIUMPHANT. That por-

tion of the invisible Church which has already entered the state of glory, and consequently is enjoying victory over evil with Christ.

THE VISIBLE CHURCH. "The visible church is a society made up of all such as in all ages and places of the world do profess the true religion, and of their children" (Larger Catechism, 62).

ATTRIBUTES OF THE CHURCH. Those qualities which the Church possesses as the body of Christ, namely, unity, holiness and catholicity.

UNITY OF THE CHURCH. The character of the invisible Church as one single body of which Christ is the head, and the oneness which the visible Church ought to possess throughout the world.

HOLINESS OF THE CHURCH. The character of the Church as a body separated from sin and the world, and devoted to God.

CATHOLICITY OF THE CHURCH. The universal character of the Church, as a body not limited to any particular times, places or denominations, but including all who profess the true religion, and their children.

MARKS OF THE CHURCH. The special signs by which the purity of a particular branch of the visible Church may be judged, namely (1) the faithful preaching of God's Word; (2) the proper administration of the sacraments; (3) the proper exercise of Church discipline.

OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH. Those who, having been chosen by the members and given authority by Christ, have been set apart for the work of governing the Church and administering

its affairs, namely, ministers of the Gospel, ruling elders, and deacons.

MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL. Those officers of the Church who have been set apart for the work of preaching the Word of God, administering the sacraments and governing the Church.

RULING ELDERS. Those officers of the Church who have been set apart for the work of governing the Church, but not for preaching the Word of God nor administering the sacraments.

DEACONS. Those officers of the Church who have been set apart for the administration of the business, financial and property interests of the Church, and for the care and relief of needy Christians.

CHURCH GOVERNMENT. The system of organization which Christ has appointed in the Scripture for the visible Church.

CHURCH JUDICATORIES. The series of graded courts composed of ministers and ruling elders by which the government of the Church is carried on, namely, Session (Consistory), Presbytery (Classis), Synod, General Assembly.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE. The exercise of the authority which Christ has committed to His Church for reclaiming members who fall into scandalous sin, and for guarding the purity of the Church by excluding those who cannot be brought to repentance.

CHURCH CENSURES. The progressive steps by which Church discipline is exercised, namely, Admonition, Rebuke, Suspension, Deposition and Excommunication.

Studies in the Book of Genesis

LESSON 163

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

8. The history of Joseph continued. 39:1 to 50:26, cont.

We have now reached the beginning of chapter 48 in our study of the book of Genesis. Jacob is near the time of his death. At the end of chapter 47 we noted that he asked Joseph to swear a solemn oath that his mortal body would not be buried in Egypt but would be laid to rest with the remains of his forefathers in the land of Canaan. Evidently there is a lapse of time between the end of chapter 47 and the beginning of chapter 48. Jacob has taken a turn for the worse, physically, and it is reported to Joseph: "Behold, thy father is sick." This implies that the end of Jacob's earthly journey is near.

Joseph therefore takes his two sons, Ephraim

and Manasseh, and goes to see his dying father. When Jacob is informed that Joseph is coming, he "strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed" (48:2). There is no indication that Jacob sent for Joseph's sons in order to pronounce a blessing upon them. Perhaps it had been planned long before that Jacob should bless Ephraim and Manasseh before his death. If we may suppose this to have been the case, it would explain the fact that Joseph takes the two sons with him on this occasion.

On the arrival of Joseph with his two sons, Jacob first recounts God's dealing with him in the land of Canaan. The thoughts of the aged patriarch go back many, many years to that lonely night when he slept under the stars at Bethel, and saw the vision of the ladder reaching to heaven, and received assurance of the covenant blessings of the Lord. He recalls that God

promised to make him fruitful, and make of him a multitude of people, and to give him the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession. All of this, of course, Joseph already knows well, but Jacob tells it over again because it leads up to what he is about to say next.

Jacob announces that Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, are to be counted as Jacob's sons just as Reuben and Simeon. This does not mean, of course, that Ephraim and Manasseh are to supplant Reuben and Simeon among Jacob's sons, but only that they are to be put on a par with them — that is, to be reckoned as Jacob's sons, not as his grandsons (which is what they really were). Jacob evidently has a special preference and favor for Joseph's sons because they are descended from Rachel, his first and true love. This act on the part of Jacob accounts for the fact that no tribe of Joseph is listed among the twelve tribes of Israel. Though the number twelve is conventionally used in speaking of the Israelite tribes, it is not strictly exact. For since Ephraim and Manasseh each constituted a tribe, the total is thirteen. Indeed, since the tribe of Manasseh in the settlement of Canaan actually received two extensive but not contiguous tracts of territory, one tract on each side of the Jordan River, there is a sense in which we can speak of fourteen tribes. The tribe of Dan also came to hold territory on both sides of the Jordan River.

As Jacob's eyesight is failing, he asks his son Joseph "Who are these?" On being reassured that they are indeed Joseph's two sons, he proceeds to bestow the blessing upon them. After embracing and kissing them, the aged patriarch lays his hands on their heads. Joseph is careful to place the boys so that Jacob's right hand will rest on the head of Manasseh, the firstborn, and his left hand on the head of Ephraim, the younger son of Joseph. But strangely, Jacob crosses his arms so that his right hand rests on the head of Ephraim, the younger, and his left hand on the head of Manasseh, the firstborn. The record states that Jacob did this "wittingly," that is, intentionally.

Joseph naturally thinks that his father has made a mistake, which he attempts to correct, informing his father that Manasseh, not Ephraim, is the firstborn. But Jacob insists upon keeping his arms crossed so that the right hand will rest upon the younger son. In this we see, as we have already seen in the Book of Genesis, the priority of grace over nature. In the sovereignty of God what may seem fitting or right according to nature may have to give way to special requirements of the kingdom of God. God chose Isaac, not Ishmael; He chose Jacob, not Esau; and now the best blessing rests upon Ephraim, not Manasseh. The bestowal of the blessings of divine grace is sovereign and cannot be regimented ac-

ording to human notions of custom or propriety.

The blessing itself is a beautiful and wonderful one. We should realize that this is something much deeper than merely the pious wishes of a dying man for his grandchildren. It partakes of the nature of true prophecy. We rightly regard Jacob as acting under a divine impulse in bestowing this blessing upon his grandsons.

"God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed all my life long unto this day, the Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth . . . In thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh: and he set Ephraim before Manasseh" (48:15, 16, 20).

This blessing, we should note, does not give Ephraim and Manasseh the place in God's redemptive program which belonged to the tribe of Judah (49:10). It would be from the tribe of Judah, not from the descendants of Joseph, that the Christ would finally come. Yet the naming of the name of Abraham and Isaac upon the lads seems to indicate that something more than merely earthly prosperity and numerical increase must be meant. This is a covenant blessing, not merely a promise of material and natural blessings. As for the numerical increase and inheritance of territory, we may note that this was abundantly fulfilled in the later history.

Finally, Jacob says to Joseph, "I die, but God shall be with you, and bring you again unto the land of your fathers." This is the true patriarchal faith in the promise of God. Jacob dies in a firm faith that the divine promise concerning inheritance of the land of Canaan cannot fail to be fulfilled.

"Moreover I have given thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow" (48:22). This reference seems mysterious to us because the matter is not mentioned elsewhere in the Genesis record. However it seems to be referred to in the New Testament (John 4:5) where we read of "the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph," located near Sychar (not far from Shechem, near Mount Gerizim). Apparently on some occasion Jacob had been in armed conflict with the Amorites. Possibly they had attacked him, and he defended himself and defeated them, thus gaining control of the piece of land mentioned. With the Israelites all in Egypt, no doubt the Amorites again took control of this "parcel of ground." Jacob, however, counts it as his by special right, apart from the general prospect that his seed shall inherit the whole land of Canaan. As something specially his to bestow, he grants it to his son Joseph.

Questions:

1. What news did Joseph hear about his father at the beginning of chapter 48?
2. Why did Joseph take Ephraim and Manasseh with him when he went to see his dying father?
3. What incident of past years did Jacob recall when Joseph arrived?
4. What special provision did Jacob make concerning the two sons of Joseph?
5. How many tribes of the Israelites actually existed?

6. What intentional act of Jacob was at first opposed by Joseph?

7. What theological principle seems to be implied in Jacob's disregarding of Joseph's objection?

8. In what respect did the blessing pronounced on Ephraim and Manasseh fall short of that pronounced later on Judah?

9. What firm conviction concerning the future was in Jacob's mind as he faced death?

10. What light does the New Testament shed on the meaning of 48:22?

LESSON 164**III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26, cont.****8. The history of Joseph continued. 39:1 to 50:26, cont.**

Chapter 49 records the dying Jacob's blessing upon his twelve sons, starting with Reuben his firstborn and ending with Benjamin the youngest. Like the blessing presented in the previous chapter, this series of blessings in chapter 49 is to be regarded as more than a summary of human thoughts and wishes. It is prophecy uttered by divine impulse. Moreover, it is remarkably fulfilled in the later history of Israel. In a way, we have here a condensed preview of the future destinies of the twelve tribes. Jacob, guided by the Spirit of God we may be sure, shows a keen insight into the real character and capacities of his various sons. At the same time he is really giving some of his sons a much needed warning concerning their ways.

There is a great difference in the blessings of the twelve sons. Some receive detailed predictions, some a very brief general statement, and some solemn warnings or censures only. That the whole is to be regarded as prophecy is evident from the statement of Jacob in verse 1: "Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall befall you in the last days." The expression "the last days" means "in the distant future." It may be translated "at the end of days" (Leupold). The Hebrew (*b'acherith hayyamim*) is an expression often used in Old Testament prophecy to mean the distant future when the Messiah would appear and Messianic prophecies would be fulfilled. Thus we are warranted in saying that here Jacob by inspiration of the Holy Spirit is able to look across centuries. He sees not only the occupation of Canaan by his descendants, but he sees the time of the Christ (verse 10). Yet the multitudinous details of the historical periods between — the periods of the Judges, the united kingdom, the divided kingdom, the Babylonian Captivity, the Persian dominion, the Maccabean,

the coming of the Romans — all these are left almost unmentioned. This is characteristic of the perspective of Old Testament prophecy. It views the high peaks of the distant future, while taking little or no notice of the centuries of historical time that may lie between one peak and another.

Concerning Reuben, though Jacob recognizes that he is the firstborn, little good is said. He is declared to be "unstable as water." Furthermore, Reuben "shall not excel," that is, shall not have any position of pre-eminence among the tribes. The reference concerning Reuben's immoral conduct is to what is recorded in 35:22.

Next, Simeon and Levi are the objects of their father's disapprobation. The statement that Simeon and Levi are "brethren" implies more than the literal sense of their being brothers — that is so obvious that it would not need to be stated. The meaning probably is that Simeon and Levi are similar, they think and act alike. The reference of Jacob to their wicked conduct is to what is recorded in 34:25-31, namely, the ruthless massacre of the men of Shechem. At the time Jacob told them how strongly he objected to their conduct. Now, after many years, he again recalls to mind their criminal behaviour. The consequence is: "I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel" (49:7). This prediction was indeed fulfilled, though somewhat differently in the case of Simeon and that of Levi. As for Simeon, the tribe rapidly decreased in numbers. In Numbers chapter 1 the tribe of Simeon is listed as having 59,300 men, but forty years later (Numbers 26) the number is only 22,000 — less than half the earlier figure. Being so small, the tribe of Simeon received its land "in the midst of the inheritance of the children of Judah" (Joshua 19:1). In Deuteronomy 33 Moses omits Simeon completely from his blessing on the tribes. Still later (1 Chron. 4:42,43) we find members of the tribe of Simeon seeking a dwelling beyond the limits of the land of Canaan. To summarize the history, we may say that Simeon virtually ceased to exist as a tribe of Israel, though no doubt there were

some individuals descended from Simeon living among the other tribes.

With regard to Levi, his descendants indeed occupied an honorable position among the people of Israel, for it was from this tribe that the priesthood was taken. Yet the posterity of Levi was literally divided in Jacob, and scattered in Israel, for the tribe of Levi received no allotment of land when the land was portioned out in the days of Joshua. The Levites received certain cities, but these were scattered about in the territory of the other tribes. Even though Levi himself was evil and immoral, during part of his life at least, the tribe of Levi turned toward righteousness as we are informed in Exodus 32:26-29,

Next comes the blessing pronounced upon Judah, and this is the most remarkable of all, for it contains a distinct, though mysterious, prophecy of the coming of the Christ. In verses 8 and 9 the emphasis is on Judah's future as a victorious conqueror. His hand shall be on the neck of his enemies, and his father's children shall bow down before him. This was fulfilled, of course, in the history of King David (see 2 Samuel 5:1-3). David, of the tribe of Judah, not only gained kingly power over all twelve tribes, but subdued all their enemies and founded a dynasty which lasted through twenty-one kings and more than four centuries of time (although during the greater part of this time the dynasty did not rule over the entire twelve tribes). But the conquering, victorious character of the tribe of Judah surely is a type (or small scale advance sample) of Him who as King of kings and Lord of lords goes forth conquering and to conquer (Revelation 6:2). For the kingship of the tribe of Judah did not stop when the last king of David's line (Zedekiah) was blinded and miserably confined in a Babylonian prison. The kingship was only interrupted — it was in abeyance until He should come to whom it really belongs, the One of whom it is said, "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:32,33).

We now come to the most mysterious part of this mysterious prophecy. "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be . . ." (49:10). The word "sceptre" is clear; it signifies a rod which symbolizes kingly rule or power. The word "lawgiver" is however not so clear. It can be correctly translated "lawgiver" as in the King James Version, or it may be translated "ruler's staff", and Leupold in his commentary prefers this latter rendering. At any rate, the meaning is that kingly power shall continue in the tribe of Judah "until Shiloh come."

But what is the meaning of "Shiloh"? Literally, the name means "tranquillity" or "rest." It was the name of a well-known town in Palestine, long the location of the Tabernacle, and also the residence of the prophet Ahijah. Jacob, in uttering his prophecy about the future of the tribe of Judah, uses the name Shiloh as symbolizing the possession of Canaan in peace and rest. The ultimate meaning, however, must be a reference to Him who is the Prince of Peace. This verse has always been regarded as a Messianic prophecy, though interpretations have differed in detail. Leupold states that Shiloh may be interpreted as "Restgiver," and adds that when the peoples "become aware of these superior achievements of his, they shall willingly tender 'to him obedience' " (Exposition of Genesis, II, 1179).

We are warranted, then, in taking Shiloh as a prophetic designation of the Lord Jesus Christ, the great Restgiver who said "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matt. 11:28). Christ is "the lion of the tribe of Judah" (Rev. 5:5).

"And unto him shall the gathering of the people be". In this sentence the pronoun "him" refers unquestionably to "Shiloh." Leupold paraphrases, "He shall be so great that men will readily yield him obedience" (Exposition of Genesis, II, 1180). The Hebrew verb used implies willing obedience, not that which is grudgingly yielded because of force. It is therefore a prophecy of the victories of the Gospel of Christ among the nations of the world.

We take verses 11 and 12 as non-Messianic prophecy, referring to the material and earthly blessings to be given to the tribe of Judah. The emphasis is on the fertility of the soil and the abundance of its fruits. Grape vines are so abundant that an ass's colt can be tethered to the choice vine — there are so many vines that it does not matter if one vine is damaged by the beast tied to it.

Zebulun is described as dwelling near the sea, and the border of Sidon. A glance at a map of the distribution of the twelve tribes under Joshua will show that this was fulfilled in the later history. The territory of Zebulun, however, did not fully reach to the border of Sidon, for the territory of the tribe of Asher came between.

Next the tribe of Issachar is mentioned. "Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens" (49:14). This quality of physical strength is no doubt something that Jacob has noted concerning his son Issachar, which now becomes a prophecy concerning the characteristics of the tribe descended from Issachar. "And he saw that rest was good, and the land it was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute" (49:15). Leupold interprets

this as follows: "Seeing the prospect of 'rest' and a good 'land' and 'pleasant,' this tribe would rather surrender other advantages and become a group who would 'stoop over with the shoulder to take on a burden', working for others in work that required only the contented exertion of brute strength" (Exposition of Genesis, II, 1187). That is, this tribe will prefer security and the enjoyment of common comforts to the benefits that might be obtained by greater enterprise and greater risks.

"Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent in the way, and adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward" (49:16,17). The name Dan means "Judge." So the name suggests the first thought expressed here by the patriarch: "Dan shall judge his people." Nothing is known concerning the later history of the tribe of Dan which throws any special light on the fulfillment of this prediction.

The rest of the prediction about Dan concerns his ability in self-defense if attacked. As fast and effectively as a serpent he will be able to strike back at the enemy who attacks him. Leupold remarks that the hero Samson was of the tribe of Dan.

"I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord" (49:18). This statement of Jacob, while it interrupts his blessing of the tribes, is connected in thought with what precedes it. Jacob has been speaking of the powers of the tribes to help or defend themselves. Judah has been compared to a lion, Issachar to a strong beast of burden, and Dan to a lurking serpent. Yet the true source of help is not in human powers or efforts, but in the Lord God and His gracious promises. After all, even what man can do for himself is really only a gift from God. Therefore at this point Jacob injects his confession of faith: "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord," lest anyone suppose that his real faith is faith in man.

Next Gad, Asher and Naphtali are briefly mentioned. A troop shall overcome Gad, but he shall overcome at the last (49:19). In the distribution of the tribes Gad was located on the east side of the Jordan River, a location exposed to attack by many enemies such as the roving Midianites and Ammonites.

Asher is mentioned as rich in food products. This tribe was located along the seacoast north of Mt. Carmel, which was a very productive region.

"Naphtali is a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words" (49:21). This metaphor calls attention to Naphtali's strength and speed, especially in warfare. We recall that Barak delivered Israel with an army of ten thousand men from the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun (Judges 4:6). The "goodly words" are illustrated by the song of Deborah and Barak (Judges 5).

Questions:

1. What statement of Jacob proves that his blessing of his sons is to be regarded as a prophecy?

2. What is the meaning of the expression "the last days" or "the latter days" in Old Testament prophecies?

3. How far was Jacob able to look into the future?

4. How was Jacob's prophecy concerning Simeon fulfilled?

5. What did Jacob say concerning Levi, and how did it come to pass in later history?

6. What does Jacob first emphasize concerning the future of the tribe of Judah?

7. How was this prophecy concerning Judah fulfilled?

8. What may be the meaning of the word translated "lawgiver" in 49:10?

9. What is the literal meaning of the word Shiloh?

10. What must be the ultimate reference of the term Shiloh?

11. Why is it fitting that the Messiah be called Shiloh?

12. What is implied concerning the Gospel of Christ by Jacob's prediction about Shiloh?

13. How should the prophecy about Issachar be interpreted?

14. What is the connection between 49:18 and what precedes it?

15. What mighty Israelite warrior was of the tribe of Dan?

16. What episode in the Book of Judges is recalled by Jacob's blessing on the tribe of Naphtali?

LESSON 165

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

8. The history of Joseph continued. 39:1 to 50:26, cont.

We have now reached Jacob's blessing on Joseph (49:22-26). This is the longest of all the blessings and clearly reflects Jacob's special love for Joseph, the firstborn son of Rachel. "Joseph

is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall" (49:22). The figure is that of a grape vine supported by a wall of masonry. The vine is prolific for the branches have climbed over the wall. Fruitfulness is increased by the fact that this vine is planted by the side of a well of water. We should realize that in ancient times wells were always fairly shallow — drilled wells hundreds of feet deep as we know them today were unknown. The roots of a tree or vine would easily reach the water of a nearby well. This prediction of fruitfulness well fits the historical development of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, which were descended from Joseph.

"The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob. . . ." (49:23,24). The picture is one of attack by enemies, but also of God-given strength for resistance and defence. Jacob well knows the true source of strength, whether physical or spiritual — the hands of the mighty God of Jacob. He adds: "from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel". This changes the metaphor from that of God strengthening the hands of a man drawing a bow to shoot an arrow to that of God as the Shepherd and Rock of His people. The idea of the Shepherd is that of protection and provision; that of the Rock is that of rugged strength available for His people.

In verses 25 and 26 Jacob continues his blessing on Joseph. Calling God "the Almighty" (how can liberal critics say that the patriarchs believed in a "tribal God"?) Jacob mentions rich blessings of nature—earth, deep, and sky—blessings to abound "above the blessings of thy progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills." Fruitfulness of man and beast is emphasized in beautiful poetic language. These blessings "shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren" (49:26). In the subsequent history all this was abundantly fulfilled. It should be noted that natural rather than spiritual blessings are foretold for the descendants of Joseph. As a matter of fact the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh were never outstanding for spiritual attainments. When the division of the kingdom took place, these tribes were found in the Northern Kingdom under the rule of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and sank into the depths of apostasy which finally resulted in the utter destruction of the Northern Kingdom in 721 B.C. by the armed forces of Assyria.

We may look a little longer at the blessing pronounced on Joseph, however. What is the precise meaning of the phrase "the blessings of thy father" in verse 26? The problem is whether

this phrase means "the blessings which thy father bestows" or "the blessings which thy father has received." While the language itself might be interpreted in either way, it is best for theological reasons to understand the phrase in the latter sense. After all, man is not a bestower of blessings but only a receiver of them. God alone is the Giver of every good and perfect gift. Jacob's meaning, then, must be that the blessings granted to him have exceeded those granted to his forefathers Abraham and Isaac.

Finally, there is a brief blessing pronounced upon Benjamin. "Benjamin shall raven as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil" (49:27). The comparison of Benjamin to a wolf is not meant to be derogatory but rather the reverse. The meaning is that Benjamin will be successful in what he undertakes to do. We may call to mind two men of the tribe of Benjamin: Saul, Israel's first king, and Saul of Tarsus, who became Paul the apostle of Christ to the Gentiles.

In the closing verses of chapter 49 we have Jacob's final charge to his sons. "I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite. . . ." As we have already seen in a previous lesson, the expression "to be gathered unto my people" cannot mean merely "to be buried," for we read in 25:17 that when Abraham died he was "gathered unto his people." But Abraham was buried in the cave of Machpelah in the land of Canaan, while his forefathers were buried far away at Ur of the Chaldees in Babylonia. Rather, "gathered unto his people" is a reference to the life that is beyond the death of the body. While the doctrine of immortality is not revealed so clearly and fully in the Old Testament as in the New, still it is there. These patriarchs who held the long view of life (Hebrews 11:13-16) well knew that there is a better country, that is, a heavenly one, and a city whose builder and maker is God. They well knew that the death of the body cannot be the end of a human life, but only a transition to the mysterious life beyond.

Jacob's concern that his mortal body be buried in the cave of Machpelah is not to be regarded as mere sentiment. Rather, this is an expression of a strong, unwavering faith in the divine promise of inheritance of the land of Canaan by his descendants. They are not to remain in Egypt forever; Canaan, not Egypt, is to be their home and their inheritance; Jacob, just because he believes this firmly, wants to be buried with Abraham and Isaac in the land of promise.

Thus Jacob, at the end of his long earthly life of 147 years (47:28), finally "yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people."

Questions:

1. Why did Jacob have a special love for Joseph?
2. What is specially stressed in Jacob's blessing on Joseph?
3. What is shown by 49:23, 24 as to the true source of human strength?
4. How did the later history of the descendants of Joseph compare with the blessing pronounced on Joseph by Jacob?

5. What is the meaning of the phrase "the blessings of thy father" in verse 26?
6. What is predicted concerning Benjamin?
7. What two famous Bible characters were descended from Benjamin?
8. How can it be shown that the expression "to be gathered unto his people" does not mean simply "to be buried"?
9. What was the reason for Jacob's concern that his body be buried in the cave of Machpelah?
10. How old was Jacob at the time of his death?

LESSON 166**III. History of the Covenant People from Abraham to Joseph. 11:27 to 50:26, cont.****8. The history of Joseph continued. 39:1 to 50:26, cont.**

Chapter 50, which we have now reached, describes the mourning of the people of Israel for Jacob, the burial of Jacob in Canaan, the plea of Joseph's brothers that he seek no revenge for their bad treatment of him, and finally, the death and burial of Joseph.

The typically Semitic and Israelitish concern for honorable treatment and burial of the dead is illustrated by this chapter. At the command of Joseph, the body of Jacob is embalmed by the "physicians" of Egypt. This process, which is well known from a detailed description of it in the works of the Greek historian Herodotus, took forty days. A brief summary of this is found in Leupold's Exposition of Genesis, II, 1205-6. This process of embalming in the Egyptian manner was necessary if the body was to be taken to Canaan for burial. Ordinarily the Israelites buried the body of a person who had died as soon as possible after death — usually the same day — so that no elaborate embalming was necessary. But that involved burying near the place where the person had died. The burial of Jacob, on the other hand, would involve a long journey.

We are informed that the Egyptians mourned for Jacob seventy days. This fact indicates the very high regard in which Jacob, as well as Joseph, was held in the land of Egypt. Nothing is said about how long the Israelites mourned for Jacob, but perhaps it was the same period of seventy days.

Following this period of mourning, Joseph presents himself before the house of Pharaoh with a request that he be allowed to leave Egypt temporarily in order to keep his solemn oath to bury his father in the land of Canaan. There may have been some taboo concerning death which made it impossible for him to appear directly before Pharaoh in person. At any rate,

the request was made in an indirect way, through "the house of Pharaoh." Leupold suggests that Joseph purposely acted through Pharaoh's courtiers so that they, having officially sponsored his request to Pharaoh, would not be in a position to make any insinuations later concerning his loyalty or the purpose of the journey to Canaan. We know that Joseph was rich in practical wisdom, and we cannot doubt that he had a good reason for acting as he did.

In presenting the request to Pharaoh, the fact that Joseph is under oath to go to the land of Canaan is stressed. This would serve to convince Pharaoh that Joseph was not acting from personal or selfish motives but from a sense of moral obligation. Such a request could not well be denied. Pharaoh accordingly graciously grants the requested permission: "Go up, and bury thy father, according as he made thee swear" (50:6). The expression "go up" is used, since Canaan is mostly higher in altitude than Egypt, the latter country lying largely near sea level.

Verses 7 to 13 describe the funeral procession from Egypt to Canaan. "It was a very great company" (50:9), including not only the men of the Israelites, but also many prominent Egyptians. The latter are described as "all the elders of the land of Egypt," together with the elders of Pharaoh's house, and "all the servants of Pharaoh." While we cannot say how many people were included in this funeral procession, the number must have been in the hundreds. Also we are told that there were chariots and horsemen; that is, an armed guard. The word translated "chariots" may mean "wagons" and does not necessarily mean war chariots. The "horsemen," however, were undoubtedly a guard of armed men. The wagons or "chariots" may have been used for transporting provisions needed for so many people on such a long trip.

At the threshing floor of Atad the procession comes to a halt. This is described as located "beyond Jordan," that is, presumably, on the east of the Jordan River. Note verse 13 which says that Jacob's sons carried the body INTO the land of

Canaan for burial. Apparently, then, the great procession including the Egyptians, the chariots and horsemen, stopped at a point in Transjordan, while the sons of Jacob proceeded with the body to the cave of Machpelah near Hebron in southern Canaan. This implies that the route followed by the funeral procession was not the most direct one possible (which would have been along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea) but a more round-about one which may, however, have been easier and safer for various reasons.

At the threshingfloor of Atad, seven days of mourning were passed, "and they mourned with a great and very sore lamentation" (50:10). This mourning was observed by the local Canaanites with the comment that it was a grievous mourning to the Egyptians. On account of this the place came to be called Abel-mizraim, that is, "Meadow of the Egyptians." To understand this, we should realize that in Hebrew the word for "mourning" differs only slightly in pronunciation from the word for "meadow". The Hebrew consonants in the two words are identical; it is only the vowels which differ. As originally written, the Old Testament in Hebrew consisted only of consonants, without vowels except where one was occasionally indicated by a letter used for the purpose. The vowel signs or "points" which appear in a printed Hebrew Bible today were added many centuries later by Jewish scholars who sought to guard against the original pronunciation being forgotten owing to the lapse of time.

The actual burial of the body of Jacob is undertaken by the patriarch's sons. It is not clear from the narrative whether the Egyptians remained at Abel-Mizraim or whether they followed the body to Hebron where the burial was to take place. It was the sons of Jacob who were under obligation to carry out the burial at the cave of Machpelah, located near the city of Hebron. Following this, the entire party returns to Egypt.

Following the return to Egypt, Joseph is approached by his brothers, who fear that now, since their father is dead, Joseph may seek revenge for the evil which they did to him in his youth. They send a representative to plead their cause. Their plea is that Jacob, before his death, has given a command to them to beg Joseph to forgive their wrongdoing (50:17). Some have supposed that this story was a lie invented by the brothers, but there seems no reason to regard it as such. Although Joseph's brothers had not always been honest and truthful men, still at this stage we may assume that they have learned their lesson and are honorable and truthful. Their address to Joseph involves a frank confession of wrongdoing, without any attempt at extenuation or in any way excusing themselves. And evidently Joseph regards them as sincere, for "Joseph wept when they spake unto him" (50:17b).

It is not clear whether the "messenger" first

approached Joseph alone, and was later followed by the brothers, or whether the "messenger" was really a spokesman accompanied by those whom he represented. By verse 18, at any rate, the brothers are all present, and fall down before Joseph, thus once more fulfilling his boyhood dream.

Joseph's response to the plea of the brothers shows real magnanimity and great-heartedness. There is no mean spirit of revenge or spite or resentment in Joseph. All is forgiven from the depths of his heart. Joseph replies: "Fear not: for am I in the place of God?" After all, their sin was against God. We can sin against God, and we can injure our fellow men. But we cannot injure God, nor can we really sin against man. God, not man, is the judge of man's moral life. David recognized this in Psalm 51:4 when he said, "Against thee, thee only have I sinned;" he had grievously injured two human beings, but in doing so he had heinously sinned against God. It is with God that the sinner really has to do.

Joseph adds a wonderful statement: "Ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive" (50:20). Here we are face to face with the mystery of God's foreordination. Strange as it may sometimes seem to us, the Bible clearly teaches that even the sinful acts of men are foreordained by God and fitted by God into a larger framework so that they work out for good in the end (compare Romans 8:28). This of course by no means takes away or lessens the guilt of man's sin, nor does it in the least make it right to do evil that good may come. The man who does evil is guilty in God's sight, even though the act is part of God's plan in a larger framework. God judges man according to the motives and moral quality of his acts, not according to the ultimate purposes that God may use those acts for in the end. Thus Joseph's brothers, in selling Joseph as a slave, were guilty of great sin. Yet that same act was part of God's plan for saving not only the people of Egypt, but the covenant seed of Abraham, alive through the years of famine. Indeed, we may say that as Christ was to come of the seed of Abraham, which could not be if the covenant people perished from starvation during the famine years, the crime of Joseph's brothers was essential to God's plan to redeem the world from sin. The same truth is illustrated by the act of Judas Iscariot in betraying Jesus. This was a sin, as Judas himself admitted when he said "I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood" (Matt. 27:4). Yet this very sinful act of Judas was a necessary part of the larger pattern of God's plan to redeem the world from sin by the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Let those who lightly brush aside the Biblical doctrine of divine foreordination ponder these clear facts of Scripture. Their quarrel is not with John Calvin but with the Holy Spirit who has deeply

imbedded this truth of foreordination in the fabric of Scripture.

Joseph harbors no resentment. He reassures and comforts his fearful brothers with promises of good treatment and with kind words.

Next, the last days and death of Joseph are related. Continuing to dwell in Egypt, Joseph reaches the age of 110 years, and sees his own grandchildren. The wording in the King James Version might seem to imply that Joseph saw his great-grandchildren, but scholars rightly hold that grandchildren are meant; this seems proved by the usage of the same Hebrew word in Ex. 20:5 and Deut. 5:9. The statement that the children of Machir were brought up on Joseph's knees probably means that he lived long enough after their birth to take them upon his knees.

Finally Joseph realizes that he is soon to die, Solemnly he reminds his brethren of the promise of God to bring them back to the land of Canaan, as He had sworn to give that land to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. As Jacob had done in his time,

so now Joseph requires the swearing of an oath that his mortal body shall be buried in the land of Canaan. He does not anticipate a special trip to Canaan for this purpose, but requires them to swear that when God brings them out of Egypt, they will take his bones along.

Incidentally, this requirement on Joseph's part illustrates the descending character of an oath or covenant entered into by the lawful representatives of a people. The men who actually swear this oath will all be dead before the time to leave Egypt arrives. Yet the oath will be binding on their descendants, just as if those descendants had actually sworn it themselves. A lawful oath or covenant, taken by the lawful representatives of a people, is binding on the people and their descendants, until the matter in question has been accomplished.

Then Joseph dies, at the age of 110 years, and his body is embalmed and put in a coffin in Egypt. From Exodus 13:19 we learn that the people of Israel remembered and kept the oath which Joseph had required them to swear.

Studies on the Sacraments

Note: The following **Studies on the Sacraments** were originally published in **Blue Banner Faith and Life** in 1948 and 1949. They are reproduced here, in a somewhat revised form, by

request. The lessons follow the treatment of the subject found in **The Larger Catechism of the Westminster Assembly**. The numbered questions and answers at the beginning of each lesson are taken from **The Larger Catechism**. — Ed.

LESSON 1

The Effectiveness of the Sacraments

Q. 161. How do the sacraments become effectual means of salvation?

A. The sacraments become effectual means of salvation, not by any power in themselves, or any virtue derived from the piety or intention of him by whom they are administered, but only by the working of the Holy Ghost, and the blessing of Christ, by whom they are instituted.

Scripture References:

1 Pet. 3:21. Acts 8:13 compared with Acts 8:23. 1 Cor. 3:6,7; 12:13. The efficacy of the sacraments depends entirely on the working of the Holy Spirit and the blessing of Christ, not on any inherent power nor on any power derived from the minister who administers them.

Question:

1. What does the Roman Catholic Church teach concerning the efficacy of the sacraments?

The Roman Catholic Church teaches that grace is contained in the sacraments themselves,

and that this grace is conferred on every recipient of the sacraments who does not positively resist it. This grace is said to be bestowed as an "opus operatum" (that is, as "a work wrought" or "an operation performed") upon every recipient who does not positively resist. A person may be ignorant of the truth about God and the way of salvation; he may even be unconscious because of sickness or accident; even so, it is held, baptism will of itself confer on him the grace of regeneration. According to this teaching, faith is not necessary; the sacrament works of itself, just as a red hot piece of iron will burn a person, whether he believes it will or not (Council of Trent, Session VII, Canons 6 and 8).

The Roman Catholic Church also holds that the efficacy of the sacraments depends on the secret intention of the administrator at the moment of administering the sacrament. The priest must, at the moment of performing the actions and pronouncing the words, have in his mind the intention of doing what the Church intends to do in that sacrament. Thus the priest

might say all the prescribed words and perform all the required actions, yet if he does not have in his heart and mind the secret intention of conveying grace through that sacrament, the recipient does not really receive any grace at all, and the sacrament is null and void. (Council of Trent, Session VII, Canon 11). If the administering priest has the right intention, the sacrament conveys grace to the recipient automatically unless the recipient positively resists it.

2. Do the sacraments have any power in themselves?

No. Our Catechism rightly rejects the Roman Catholic view of the efficacy of the sacraments, by saying that the sacraments do not become effectual means of salvation by any power in themselves. The Roman Catholic view is untrue and without support in the Bible. Note Acts 8:13, 23, where it is stated that Simon the Sorcerer "was baptized," and then afterwards the apostle Peter said to him "thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." If baptism of itself confers regeneration, as an "opus operatum," Simon would have been regenerated by his baptism — he would have been a new creature in Christ Jesus. But as a matter of fact he was still in the bond of iniquity. Clearly baptism did not convey any grace to Simon the Sorcerer. The whole idea that the sacraments of themselves confer grace is contrary to the Bible's emphasis on faith as necessary for salvation.

3. Is this false view of the sacraments limited to Roman Catholics?

No. There are many Protestants who have a mistaken and unscriptural view of the efficacy of the sacraments. Many who have never really repented of their sins and who have no clear faith in Jesus Christ as their Saviour, cherish the idea that to be baptized, or to "take communion," will of itself confer some spiritual benefit on them. Some go so far as to suppose that participation in the sacraments will get an ungodly person into heaven when he dies. Others think that by "taking communion" they somehow make up for their sins and gain standing with God.

The notion that baptism of itself removes a person's sins is quite common among uninstructed Protestants. Sometimes parents who make no Christian profession and are not living as Christians will ask a minister to baptize their children, and will be offended when he declines to do so. We should always remember that the sacraments do not work of themselves, and are without value apart from faith in Jesus Christ.

4. Does the efficacy of the sacraments depend on the piety or moral character of the minister?

No. On this point the Church of Rome is in agreement with orthodox Protestantism. The validity and efficacy of the sacraments are not dependent on the piety, spiritual life or moral

character of the person who administers them. Of course every minister should be a truly pious man and of moral character beyond reproach. But the spiritual state of the minister does not alter the efficacy of the sacraments. If a minister is proved to be an ungodly and wicked man, this does not mean that the people he has baptized were not really baptized, nor that those who sat at the communion table under his ministry did not really partake of the Lord's Supper. It is a terrible thing for a minister to be an unconverted person, but it does not limit the efficacy of the sacraments administered by him.

5. Does the intention of the minister determine the efficacy of the sacraments.

No. So long as the sacraments are administered substantially in accordance with Christ's institution, the personal intentions of the minister have no effect upon their efficacy. Suppose an unconverted man were to go into the ministry with wrong motives, regarding the ministry simply as an occupation or means of livelihood, and administering the Lord's Supper not because of real faith in Christ and obedience to Him, but merely because the rules of the Church require it. Such a minister would be a hireling, not a true servant of Christ, and his intention would be merely to comply with the formal requirements of his occupation. Though such a minister would be unworthy and his motives would be wrong, still his wrong intentions, and lack of the right intention, would not affect the validity or efficacy of the sacrament. Those communicants who partake of the sacrament with true repentance and real faith in Christ would receive the real benefit and blessing of the Lord's Supper, in spite of the minister's wrong intentions or motives.

6. On what does the efficacy of the sacraments really depend?

The efficacy of the sacraments really depends entirely upon the working of the Holy Spirit, and the blessing of Christ who instituted the sacraments. As the sacraments were not invented by man, but instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ as means of grace, we can be sure that God will accompany them with the gracious working of the Holy Spirit in the case of every person who partakes of them with a true faith, according to Christ's appointment. The Holy Spirit, whom Christ has sent, takes the things of Christ and applies them unto His people. It is His purpose to work through and with the sacraments. Thus the sacraments, which have no inherent power, are yet, by the Holy Spirit's working, real means of grace to God's children.

7. Is it possible to underrate the importance of the sacraments?

Yes, and many do so. While avoiding the error of the Church of Rome, which teaches that the sacraments have an inherent power, we must

avoid going to the opposite extreme and holding that the sacraments are not real means of grace.

There have been many, and are many today, who look upon baptism as simply a rite or ceremony of dedication of a child or adult person to God, and on the Lord's Supper as merely a memorial service to symbolize the truths of re-

demption and to remember Christ. Such a view of the sacraments is not in harmony with orthodox Calvinism (or the Reformed Faith) which is set forth in our Church standards. Baptism is more than a rite of dedication; the Lord's Supper is more than a symbolic portrayal and memorial service. Both sacraments are real means of grace, though they have no inherent power.

LESSON 2

What is a Sacrament?

Q. 162. What is a sacrament?

A. A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ in his Church, to signify, seal, and exhibit unto those that are within the covenant of grace, the benefits of his mediation; to strengthen and increase their faith, and all other graces; to oblige them to obedience; to testify and cherish their love and communion one with another; and to distinguish them from those that are without.

Scripture References:

Gen. 17:7, 10. Ex. 12. Matt. 28:19. Matt 26:26-28. sacraments are holy ordinances instituted by Christ in His Church, that is, in and for the visible body of the covenant people of God.

Rom. 4:11. 1 Cor. 11:24, 25. The sacraments are intended to signify, seal and exhibit the benefits of Christ's work of redemption.

Rom. 15:8. Ex. 12:48. The sacraments are not intended for the world but for those within the sphere of the Covenant of Grace.

Acts 2:38. 1 Cor. 10:16. The benefits of Christ's mediation constitute the meaning of the sacraments.

Rom. 4:11. Gal. 3:27. The sacraments are intended to increase believers' faith, and all other graces.

Rom. 6:3, 4. 1 Cor. 10:21. Participation in the sacraments involves a pledge or covenant of obedience to Christ.

Eph. 4:2-5. 1 Cor. 12:13. The sacraments are a bond of unity among Christian people.

Eph. 2:11, 12. Gen. 34:14. Participation in the sacraments is a badge of separation from the world, on the part of Christian people.

Questions:

1. How does the Shorter Catechism define a sacrament?

"A sacrament is a holy ordinance instituted by Christ, wherein, by sensible signs, Christ, and the benefits of the new covenant, are represented, sealed, and applied to believers" (S. C. 92). This is somewhat briefer than the Larger Catechism's definition, and gives only what is absolutely essential to a correct definition of a sacrament.

The Larger Catechism's answer is more detailed, and describes the nature and purpose of the sacraments more fully. We may analyze the Shorter Catechism's statement as follows:

(a) A sacrament is a holy ordinance; it belongs to the classification of things called "holy ordinances;" some holy ordinances are sacraments, others are not, but every sacrament is a holy ordinance.

(b) A sacrament is something instituted by Christ; that is, of course, by Christ during His life on earth. Thus marriage, while a holy ordinance, is not a sacrament, for it was not instituted by Christ during His earthly life; but baptism and the Lord's Supper were so instituted, therefore they are sacraments.

(c) A sacrament involves the use of "sensible signs," that is, material elements such as water, bread, wine, and certain actions by which these elements are used.

(d) A sacrament, with its "sensible signs," is for the purpose of portraying, sealing and applying Christ and His redemption.

(e) A sacrament is for believers, not for the world.

2. What is the original meaning of the word "sacrament"?

The word "sacrament" does not occur in the Bible. It is derived from the Latin word "sacramentum" which meant a pledge or an oath, especially a military oath of allegiance. In the early Church the Latin "sacramentum" came into use as a translation of the Greek word "mysterion" ("mystery"). This word "mysterion" occurs 27 times in the Greek New Testament; in Jerome's Latin version (the Vulgate), 8 of these are translated by "sacramentum" (Eph. 1:9; 3:3, 9; 5:32; Col. 1:27; 1 Tim. 3:16; Rev. 1:20; 17:7). The Greek word "mysterion" means something which remains hidden and unknown until it is revealed; thus it came to be used for various Christian doctrines and ordinances, including baptism and the Lord's Supper, and so the Latin "sacramentum" came into use for the same things.

Some have objected to the word "sacrament" because it does not occur in the Bible. This is foolish, for many necessary religious terms in

common use are not found in the Bible; the word "Trinity" is an example; so are the words "attribute," "infallible," "supernatural," and many others. These words do not occur in the Bible, but the ideas they stand for do, and the words are necessary as handles to pick up the ideas with.

We cannot find out what a sacrament is by studying the history of the word "sacrament," but we can properly use the word "sacrament" to designate a certain class of ordinances which we find in the Bible. The important thing is not that we should use only Bible words, but that the ideas we have in mind should be those intended by God in His Word.

3. For what body of people did Christ institute the sacraments?

For His Church, the body of people included in the sphere of the Covenant of Grace. Since the sacraments involve the use of external elements and actions, they have been entrusted to the visible Church, that is, the Church as a visible institution. We should always remember that baptism and the Lord's Supper are CHURCH ordinances. They are intended only for those who are members of the Church, and except in extraordinary circumstances they should never be administered except in an assembled congregation of Christ's Church.

To administer either sacrament to those outside the sphere of the Covenant of Grace is wrong. Private baptism and private communion are irregular and should be avoided. The idea that any company or association of Christian people may properly observe the Lord's Supper is also wrong (for example, the practice of having a special communion service for the graduating class of a theological seminary; the practice of a group of missionaries who are together on board ship enroute to foreign mission fields holding a communion service among themselves during the voyage; the practice of having a communion service in connection with a meeting of an interdenominational church council or association).

The sacraments pertain to the visible Church as an institution; they are not to be individualized by private observance, nor divested of their ecclesiastical character by administration in voluntary groups of Christian people or voluntary associations. They are for the Church only.

4. What is meant by the word "signify"?

In this connection, "signify" means to be a sign of something, that is, to portray or represent something. Thus the sacraments are to signify the benefits of Christ's mediation unto those that are within the Covenant of Grace. In the Lord's Supper the bread signifies the body of Christ and the wine signifies His blood. The Lord's Supper as a whole signifies the believer's participation in the benefits of Christ's redemption. Spiritual realities

are represented by material elements and external actions.

5. What is meant by the word "seal"?

The word "seal" is here used in the sense of "to pledge," "to guarantee" or "legally to certify." The Catechism states that the sacraments were instituted by Christ to seal the benefits of His mediation to those that are within the Covenant of Grace; that is, to guarantee, or legally to certify, these benefits to those persons.

This does not mean that baptism and the Lord's Supper of themselves, as mere outward ordinances, can guarantee anything to their recipients, but it means that when the sacraments are rightly used, with true faith in Christ, they function as "seals" or divinely-given certificates of the benefits of Christ's redemption. The person who, with true faith, makes a right use of the sacraments, is to regard them as seals of the covenant of Grace — as God's guarantee of the fulfillment of all the Covenant promises.

6. What is meant by the word "exhibit"?

We would naturally suppose that the word "exhibit" here means "to show forth" or "to display," but that is not the meaning intended in the Catechism nor in the Confession of Faith. Writing of the use of the same word in the Confession of Faith (XXVII. 3; XXVIII. 6), Dr. A. A. Hodge says: "The old English word 'exhibit', there used, does not mean to SHOW FORTH; but in the sense of the Latin EXHIBERE, from which it is derived, TO ADMINISTER, to apply" (Commentary on the Confession of Faith, p. 451).

In support of this explanation Dr. Hodge points out that while the Larger Catechism says "to signify, seal, and exhibit," the Shorter Catechism in the corresponding place (Q. 92) says "represented, sealed, and applied." Thus "exhibit" must be understood in the sense of "apply." Here again we must realize that, as in the case of the verb "seal," this "applying" must be understood to exist only when there is a right use of the sacraments, with true faith. Apart from real faith in Christ, the sacraments do not apply any spiritual benefits to those who receive them.

7. To whom are the sacraments intended to "signify, seal, and exhibit" Christ's benefits?

"Unto those that are within the Covenant of Grace," that is, to believers in Jesus Christ and to their children.

8. What are the benefits of Christ's mediation?

These benefits include all that Christ has done, is doing, and will do in the future for His people. They include His work as our Redeemer in His three offices of Prophet, Priest and King. In short, the entire plan of salvation is embraced within their scope, from God's decree to redeem

His elect, made before the creation of the world (Eph. 1:4), to the final glorification of the elect, and their enjoyment of eternal life in the kingdom of glory (Rom. 8:30). All this is included in the benefits of Christ's mediation which are signified, sealed and exhibited by the sacraments.

9. What practical purposes do the sacraments serve in the life of believers?

The sacraments serve "to strengthen and increase their faith, and all other graces," and also "to oblige them to obedience." That is, the sacraments when rightly used serve to strengthen and build up believers in all phases of their Christian life, thus making them better and more consistent Christians; and they also serve as pledges on the believer's part of obedience to the requirements of God's Covenant of Grace.

10. What function do the sacraments perform in human society as a whole?

In addition to their other uses and functions, the sacraments serve "to distinguish" the people of God "from those that are without." That is, they serve as badges or emblems or evidences of membership in the covenant people of God. They mark off those that are within the Covenant of Grace from the population of the world in general.

Baptism is the mark of Church membership as such; a baptized person is rightly regarded as a member of Christ's Church unless and until he has repudiated his baptism by long-continued neglect of the means of grace, or has been excommunicated because of heinous sin. This function of baptism has been greatly obscured by the abuse of the sacrament which has become terribly common in American Protestantism, by which many Churches will baptize any infants what-

ever, regardless of whether the parents are Church members or not, and apart from any proper understanding and acceptance of the obligations of the Covenant of Grace. In large sections of American Protestantism baptism has come to be regarded merely as a ceremony for attaching a name to an infant and in some vague manner dedicating the infant to God. When we speak of baptism serving as a mark to distinguish the Church from the world, we mean baptism as set forth in the Bible and our Church standards, not the modern American free and easy perversion of the sacrament.

While baptism is the mark of Church membership as such, the Lord's Supper is the mark of COMMUNICANT Church membership, that is, of Church membership as involving a voluntary personal profession of faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to Him.

As in the case of baptism, the true function of the Lord's Supper has been greatly obscured by the extreme form of "open communion" which is practiced by many Churches today, by which the decision whether to partake is left entirely to the individual, and by which virtually all who may wish to come are invited, even though they may have only a vague, sentimental attachment to Jesus, and may not be members in good standing of any truly evangelical Church. This practice breaks down the distinction between the Church and the world which the Lord's Supper is intended to maintain. Of course not all Churches that practice "open communion" have this extreme form of it; some limit the invitation to members in good standing of evangelical denominations or Churches; this, however, is not "open communion" in the strict sense of the term; rather, it is a loose form of "restricted communion."

LESSON 3

The Parts and Number of the Sacraments

Q. 163. What are the parts of a sacrament?

A. The parts of a sacrament are two: the one an outward sensible sign, used according to Christ's own appointment; the other an inward and spiritual grace thereby signified.

Q. 164. How many sacraments hath Christ instituted in his church under the New Testament?

A. Under the New Testament Christ hath instituted in his church only two sacraments, baptism and the Lord's supper.

Scripture References:

Matt. 3:11. 1 Pet. 3:21. Rom. 2:28, 29. The sacraments are not mere external signs or ceremonies, but involve also inward spiritual realities.

Matt. 28:19. 1 Cor. 11:20, 23. Matt. 26:26-28. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the only appointed New Testament sacraments.

Questions:

1. What is meant by saying that "the parts of a sacrament are two"?

This statement means that when a sacrament is rightly used, with true faith in Jesus Christ, it involves two parts, namely an outward, sensible sign, and an inward, spiritual grace. Those who use the sacraments wrongly, without true faith in Jesus Christ, do not really participate in THE SACRAMENTS; they only participate in the outward form or ritual of the sacraments, not in the spiritual realities of the sacraments.

2. What is meant by "an outward and sensible sign"?

By an "outward" sign the Catechism means a sign that exists in the external, physical world — the realm of matter, having physical and chemical properties, existing in the dimensions of time and space. The sacramental elements (water, bread, wine), and their accompanying actions, are "outward" in this sense.

By a "sensible" sign the Catechism means a sign that can be perceived by the senses, such as sight, taste, touch. The sacramental elements can be seen, touched, tasted; the sacramental actions can be perceived by the sense of sight. Thus the sacraments involve "sensible" signs.

3. In the outward part of the sacraments, what is necessary besides the actual material (water, bread, wine)?

Besides these actual material elements, it is necessary that they be "used according to Christ's own appointment;" that is, in the manner appointed by Christ in the Scripture, with the proper actions, and with words which are truly in harmony with the institution of Christ. Thus in the sacrament of baptism, it is necessary that water be applied to the person baptized; but this is not sufficient; it must be applied in the name of the Triune God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In the Lord's Supper, it is not sufficient that bread and wine be passed to the communicants and partaken of by them; Christ's appointment must be followed in taking the elements, giving thanks for them, breaking the bread and wine to the communicants with the words of institution.

4. What is meant by "an inward and spiritual grace"?

In this expression, "inward" is in contrast to "outward," "spiritual" is in contrast to "sensible," and "grace" is the counterpart of "sign." The word "grace" here means a saving work of God for and in the believer, which is also a gift of God to the believer. This grace is the counterpart of the external sign; the grace is what the sign stands for; the grace is the real thing, the reason for which the sign exists. The external sign may be regarded as a signboard pointing to the grace.

This grace is called "inward" because it does not exist in the physical or material world, but in the realm of the "heart," the spirit, the realm of personality; it exists in what we commonly call "the soul." This grace is called "spiritual" because it does not affect the bodily senses, such as sight, taste, touch or hearing, but the human spirit or soul; so far as it can be consciously perceived by the subject, it is perceived not by the senses but by the spiritual discernment (1 Cor. 2:9-16).

5. What is the connection between the "outward and sensible sign" and the "inward and spiritual grace"?

"There is in every sacrament a spiritual relation or sacramental union, between the sign and the thing signified; whence it comes to pass that the names and effects of the one are attributed to the other" (Confession of Faith, XXVII. 2). The Roman Catholic Church teaches that in the case of the Lord's Supper, at least, the sign is literally identical with the thing signified; the bread really is the actual body of Christ, and the wine really is the actual blood of Christ. Some Protestant Churches have a doctrine of the Lord's Supper which approaches this Roman Catholic teaching. We believe, on the other hand, that the bread and wine only represent the body and blood of Christ.

The bond of connection, or sacramental union, between the "outward and sensible sign" and the "inward and spiritual grace," then, is a symbolical and therefore a representative connection; the bread and wine symbolize, and therefore represent, the body and blood of Christ.

In addition to this symbolic connection, there is what may be called an instrumental connection between the sign and the grace. That is to say, by Christ's appointment, when the outward sign is rightly used, with true faith, the spiritual grace which it stands for is actually given or conveyed to the recipient. God by His Holy Spirit bestows the grace on the person who uses the outward sign aright, so in this sense we may affirm that there is an instrumental connection between the sign and the grace. The grace is conveyed not by the sacrament itself, but by the Holy Spirit; but inasmuch as the sacrament is a divinely appointed means of grace, the Holy Spirit honors it by bestowing grace where the sacrament is used aright.

6. How many sacraments are there under the New Testament?

Only two, namely, baptism and the Lord's Supper. These alone meet the requirements of the correct and Scriptural definition of a sacrament which is set forth in the Catechism (Q. 162). That is, these two divine ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, are clearly in a class by themselves, having certain characteristics which no other divine ordinances possess, and therefore they are set apart from the rest and the term "sacraments" is reserved to them alone.

This question of the Catechism (Q. 164) is especially directed against the Roman Catholic doctrine that there are seven sacraments (Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders and Matrimony). Part of these are essentially divine ordinances but not sacraments; others are not even divine ordinances, but have their roots in human tradition. Only two of this list of seven can really claim to be sacraments in the Scriptural and theologically correct sense of the term. ("Holy Eucharist" is a name for the Lord's Supper).

LESSON 4

What is Baptism?

Q. 165. What is baptism?

A. Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, wherein Christ hath ordained the washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, to be a sign and seal of ingrafting into himself, of remission of sins by his blood, and regeneration by his Spirit; of adoption and resurrection unto everlasting life; and whereby the parties baptized are solemnly admitted into the visible church, and enter into an open and professed engagement to be wholly and only the Lord's.

Scripture References:

Matt. 28:19. The sacrament of baptism instituted by Christ.

Gal. 3:27. Baptism is a sign and seal of union with Christ.

Mark 1:4. Rev. 1:5. Baptism represents remission of sins by Christ's blood.

Tit. 3:5. Eph. 5:26. Baptism represents regeneration or the new birth.

Gal. 3:26,27. Baptism represents adoption into the family of God.

1 Cor. 15:29. Rom. 6:3-5. Baptism stands for the resurrection unto everlasting life.

1 Cor. 12:13. Baptism is the rite of formal initiation into the visible Church.

Rom. 6:4. Baptism involves "an open and professed engagement to be wholly and only the Lord's."

Questions:

1. What action constitutes baptism?

Baptism is constituted by a washing of the person with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, by a minister of Christ.

2. What is the proper mode of baptism?

The mode of baptism is a matter of indifference. That is, the quantity of water to be used and the manner in which it is to be applied are not matters which have been appointed in the Scripture. In the history of the Church there have been three modes of baptism, namely effusion (pouring), sprinkling and immersion. Any one of these constitutes a valid administration of baptism.

The Confession of Faith states: "Dipping the person into the water is not necessary; but baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person" (XXVIII. 3) It should be noted that the Confession does not say that immersion is wrong, but only that it is not neces-

sary; nor does it say that sprinkling is the only right mode of baptism, but only that by sprinkling or pouring baptism is "rightly administered," that is, that either of these modes, equally with immersion, constitutes a valid administration of the sacrament.

3. Is it true that the Greek word translated "baptize" in the New Testament literally means "to immerse"?

Certainly not. In its New Testament usage, the Greek verb "baptizo" literally means "to wash", as will be seen by looking up Mark 7:4 and Luke 11:38, in both of which texts this verb is used, and where the idea of immersion would obviously be out of place.

The Greek noun "baptismos" literally means "washing," as is evident from Mark 7:4,8 and Hebrews 9:10. To suppose that tables were cleansed by immersion is absurd. Yet the Greek text of Mark 7:4 speaks of the "baptism" of tables. The confident claim of Baptists that "baptizo" and "baptismos" in their New Testament usage mean "to immerse" and "immersion" will not stand the test of a careful scrutiny of the passages in the New Testament where these Greek words occur.

4. What is the essential meaning of baptism?

Essentially baptism signifies union with Christ, and consequently it signifies, in a general way, all the benefits which Christ brings to His people. There are also certain of Christ's benefits which are represented in a more particular and direct way by baptism, especially the washing away of our sins and the new birth by the power of the Holy Spirit.

5. What is the meaning of "ingrafting into Christ"?

This phrase means being brought into vital union with Christ, so that the person is a member of the spiritual body of which Christ is the head, a branch of the true vine, a partaker of the spiritual life and power of Christ. As a twig is grafted into a tree, and thereafter exists in vital union with the tree, receiving its nourishment and strength from the tree, so the believer is grafted into Christ, receiving his spiritual nourishment and strength from Christ.

6. What is the connection between baptism and the forgiveness of sins?

Baptism is the sign and seal to the believer of the remission of his sins by the blood of Christ. Just as in ordinary life water is used to cleanse away dirt, so in God's plan of salvation the blood of Christ cleanses away the sins of His people. This is of course a figure of speech; the "blood" of Christ means His death, at which His blood

was shed; when the Bible says that the blood of Christ cleanses away our sins the meaning is that God forgives our sins, and sanctifies our hearts, on the basis of Christ's atonement.

These are transactions that take place in the spiritual realm; baptism is the outward sign and seal of them. There may be forgiveness of sins without baptism; there may also be (outward) baptism without the forgiveness of sins; but where baptism is rightly used it seals, and thus involves, the forgiveness of sins.

7. What is the relation between baptism and the new birth?

Roman Catholics and some Protestants hold that baptism itself confers regeneration or the new birth, so that the two are virtually identical, and whoever is baptized is also regenerated. The great majority of Protestants reject this teaching as an error. It is a confusion of the sign with the thing signified. If baptism is a sign and seal of regeneration, then it cannot be identical with regeneration.

Titus 3:5 is relevant in this connection; note that it does not speak of "the regeneration of washing," but of "the washing of regeneration," which is a very different thing. We are not regenerated by washing (baptism), but we are washed (spiritually cleansed) by regeneration (the new birth).

8. How is baptism a sign and seal of adoption into God's family?

Gal. 3:26,27 provides the answer to this question. To be baptized, in the true sense and use of baptism, involves union with Christ and faith in Christ. By faith in Christ the believer is adopted into God's family. Thus baptism is a sign and seal of adoption.

9. How is baptism a sign and seal of the resurrection unto everlasting life?

The Catechism cites 1 Cor. 15:29 and Rom. 6:5 in support of this proposition. The former of these texts is a very difficult one, and apparently refers to an (unauthorized) custom in the Corinthian Church of being baptized for the dead. The text does not sanction this custom, but recognizes it as existing, and the apostle then argues that if there is no resurrection, such baptism for the dead would be meaningless. From the apostle's argument we may properly infer that the baptism of any person would be useless and meaningless if there were no resurrection of the body. Thus baptism implies "resurrection unto everlasting life."

Rom. 6: 3-5 specifically links the two ideas of baptism and the resurrection: the believer who is united to Christ in baptism shall also be united with Christ in His resurrection.

(Note: The Baptist view that the basic meaning of baptism is identification with Christ in His burial and resurrection and that this requires immersion, is without foundation. Rom. 6:3-5 has nothing to do with the MODE of baptism, which is not there under discussion; the subject under discussion is sanctification, not baptism; baptism is introduced into the argument to prove a point about sanctification. It is quite true, of course, that union with Christ in His death and resurrection is represented by baptism, but this is just part of what baptism represents, and it implies nothing concerning the mode of baptism; it does not imply that the act of baptism is intended directly to portray burial and resurrection by immersion under water and rising out of it).

10. What is the connection between baptism and Church membership?

The Catechism states that by baptism "the parties are solemnly admitted into the visible Church." It is clear that baptism is a badge, sign or emblem of membership in the visible Church. A question arises, however, as to the precise function of baptism in this connection. Are people baptized because they are Church members, or are they Church members because they have been baptized?

Q. 165 of the Larger Catechism, and the similar statement of the Confession of Faith (XXVIII.1) seem at first sight to imply that people are Church members because they are baptized. On the other hand, the Westminster Standards uniformly teach that the sacraments are for those who already are Church members (L. C. 162; C. of F. XXVII.1). While there has apparently always been some confusion on this point, it appears that the view that people are baptized because they are already Church members is sound, and is held by most eminent writers on Reformed theology.

The key to the difficulty may be found in the word "solemnly," which is apparently used by the Catechism in the sense of "formally" or "publicly." That is, those persons who are already in God's sight members of the visible Church by reason of their covenant standing (in the case of infants) or by reason of their own profession of faith in Christ (in the case of adults), are formally and publicly **RECOGNIZED AS MEMBERS** — "solemnly admitted into the visible Church" — by the sacrament of baptism. We might say that by baptism the persons baptized (whether adults or infants) are publicly recognized, not only as members of the visible Church in general, but also as members of a particular branch and congregation of the visible Church.

11. What engagement of promise on the human side is involved in baptism?

"An open and professed engagement to be wholly and only the Lord's." In the case of adults

being baptized, this engagement is entered into by them personally. In the case of infants, it is entered into by the parents on behalf of the children, as their proper representatives. The fact

that baptism involves obligations on our part, as well as grace on God's part, is often insufficiently emphasized. We should always remember that baptism involves solemn vows on our part, as well as blessings on God's part.

LESSON 5

Who can Properly be Baptized?

Q. 166. Unto whom is baptism to be administered?

A. Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to him, but infants descended from parents, either both or but one of them professing faith in Christ, and obedience to him, are, in that respect, within the covenant, and to be baptized.

Scripture References:

Acts 2:38; 8:36, 37. For adults to be baptized, a personal profession of faith in Christ is required.

Gen. 17:7-9 compared with Gal. 3:9, 14; Col. 2:11, 12; Acts 2:38, 39; Rom. 4:11, 12. God's covenant with Abraham includes all believers in Christ, together with their children.

1 Cor. 7:14. One Christian parent is sufficient to give children a "holy" or covenant status, even though the other parent may be an unbeliever.

Matt. 28:19. All nations are to be baptized.

Luke 18:15, 16. Infants were brought to Jesus, with His approval, to be blessed by Him.

Rom. 11:16. The "holy" or covenant standing passes from parents to child, from "root" to "branches."

Questions:

1. What class of persons can rightly be baptized?

Only those who are members of the visible Church can rightly receive the sacrament of baptism.

2. Into what two classes are the members of the visible Church divided?

The visible Church is composed of two classes of people, namely (1) those who have made a personal profession of faith in Christ and obedience to Him; and (2) their infant children, that is, their children who have not yet made a personal profession of faith.

3. How does a person of adult age, or one who has reached the age of responsibility, become a member of the visible Church?

Persons formerly outside of the Church become members of the Church by making a public profession of faith in Christ and obedience to

Him. Upon making such a profession, they are admitted to membership and are thereupon baptized, and their names added to the roll of the particular congregation in which the sacrament is administered. Their baptism is both a token of their formal admission to the membership of the Church, and a privilege which belongs to them as members.

4. How do the infants of Christian parents become members of the Church?

The infants of one or both Christian parents are born into the Church, and thus are members from birth, just as children born in the United States are American citizens from birth. The infants of Christian parents are baptized because they are members of the Church from birth. They are not made members by being baptized; on the contrary, they are baptized because they are already members from birth.

5. Why are the children of Christian parents members of the Church from birth?

They are members of the Church from birth because of God's covenant with their parents, which is a continuation of God's covenant made with Abraham, which included his children after him as well as Abraham himself. However, the children of Christian parents do not have all the privileges of Church membership until they themselves make a personal profession of faith in Christ, and obedience to Him, and are thereupon admitted to the Lord's Supper.

6. Is it correct to speak of Christian young people, children of Church members, who have themselves been baptized as infants, as "joining the Church" when they make a profession of faith and are admitted to the Lord's Supper?

No, certainly not. A person cannot "join" something of which he is already a member. The children of Christian parents are ALREADY members of the Church from their birth, in evidence of which they are baptized. To speak of such young people "joining the Church" is wrong, for such language implies that previously they were not members, and that in their case baptism was not a sign of Church membership.

We do not speak of a person "joining" the United States, or becoming an American citizen, when he reaches his 21st birthday; he was an American citizen the day he was born, even though unable to profess personal allegiance to

his country. The common manner of speaking of Christian young people "joining the Church" is contrary to the Scriptural doctrines of the Covenant of Grace, of the Church, and of Baptism.

This prevalent manner of speaking betrays an individualistic, baptistic ideology which is contrary to the ideology of the Covenant of Grace which is set forth in our Church standards and which we believe to be Scriptural. In denominations where this individualistic ideology is prevalent it will probably require an entire generation — perhaps even two generations — of continuous, faithful preaching and teaching of the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace, and its implications, before the people can be brought to the point where they will no longer speak of the children of Christian parents "joining the Church." One sermon on the Covenant of Grace in five or six years will not accomplish the urgently needed result; there will have to be a constant emphasis on the Covenant of Grace as the great structural theme of Scripture, and a constant linking of other doctrines to it in their true relationships. Here is a real challenge for all ministers and members who take the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace seriously. Shall we be a truly Covenant-conscious Church, or shall our profession of the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace be merely formal and nominal?

7. Do all Churches believe that the infants of Christian parents ought to be baptized?

No. The Baptists and others of similar faith teach that only those who can make a personal profession of faith are to be baptized. This belief, however, has never been held by more than a minority of the Christian people of the world. Through the centuries the vast majority of professing Christians have believed in infant baptism.

8. What objections are commonly urged against the practice of infant baptism?

It is commonly objected by Baptists and some others: (a) that there is no command in the New Testament to baptize infants; (b) that there is no example of infants being baptized; (c) that infants cannot understand the meaning of baptism, therefore it cannot benefit them; (d) that most of those baptized in infancy grow up to be ungodly, or in later life turn out to be merely nominal Christians; (e) that infant baptism is a Roman Catholic superstition.

9. How can we answer the objection that there is in the New Testament no command to baptize infants?

We reply that no command is needed. Infant baptism is based on God's covenant with Abraham. Infants received the sign of the covenant (circumcision) in the Old Testament times, therefore they are to receive the sign of the same covenant also in New Testament times (baptism).

We would not expect to find a definite command to baptize infants. On the contrary, we would expect that, if the Baptist position is correct, there would be a definite command NOT to baptize infants, as this would be a change from the Old Testament practice.

10. Is it true that there is in the New Testament no example of infants being baptized?

It is true that there is no positive proof that infants were baptized, or that they were not baptized, one way or the other. Similarly there is no positive proof in the New Testament that women partook of the Lord's Supper. But a number of New Testament passages are best explained on the presumption that infants were baptized.

For example, the Philippian jailer "was baptized, he and all his" (Acts 16:33); Paul baptized "the household of Stephanas" (1 Cor. 1:16); Cornelius was baptized together with "his kinsmen and near friends" (Acts 10:24, 48). Can we suppose that in all these various family groups there were only adults, with no infants or young children?

11. How can we answer the objection that infants cannot understand the meaning of baptism, therefore it cannot benefit them?

Jesus took young children in His arms and blessed them, upon their parents' request. The Greek word means "babies," not children of eight or ten years old. This was not baptism, but it has something to do with the objection against infant baptism which we are considering. Clearly these children were too young to understand who Jesus was, or what He was doing. Yet Jesus did not hesitate to take them in His arms, and bless them. Who shall say that this was a useless act, or could not bring benefit to the children? As elsewhere in the Bible, the parents' faith was accepted on behalf of the children (compare Mark 9:24-27).

12. Is it true that most of those baptized as infants grow up to be either ungodly, or merely nominal Christians?

This has often been asserted, but never proved. There are no valid statistics to prove any such claim. Such evidence as exists proves nothing one way or the other. Many people who are baptized in adolescence or adult life also later turn out to be either ungodly, or merely nominal Christians. It has never yet been proved that Churches which reject infant baptism are more pure than those which practice it. Nor has it ever been proved that those baptized as adults tend, as a class, to be more faithful and consistent Christians than those baptized in their infancy.

13. Is infant baptism a Roman Catholic superstition?

Of course the fact that the Roman Catholic Church practices infant baptism does not prove

that infant baptism is wrong. The Roman Catholic Church also accepts the doctrine of the Trinity, the deity of Christ and many other truths of Christianity; we do not reject these because the

Church of Rome teaches them. As a matter of fact the practice of infant baptism existed, and can be proved to have existed, in the Church long before the appearance of the characteristic Romish errors and superstitions.

LESSON 6

Gaining Benefit from our Baptism

Q. 167. How is our baptism to be improved by us?

A. The needful but much neglected duty of improving our baptism, is to be performed by us all our life long, especially in the time of temptation, and when we are present at the administration of it to others; by serious and thankful consideration of the nature of it, and of the ends for which Christ instituted it, the privileges and benefits conferred and sealed thereby, and our solemn vows made therein; by being humbled for our sinful defilement, our falling short of, and walking contrary to, the grace of baptism, and our engagements; by growing up to assurance of pardon of sin, and of all other blessings sealed to us in that sacrament; by drawing strength from the death and resurrection of Christ, into whom we are baptized, for the mortifying of sin, and quickening of grace; and by endeavoring to live by faith, to have our conversation in holiness and righteousness, as those that have therein given up their names to Christ; and to walk in brotherly love, as being baptized by the same Spirit into one body.

Scripture References:

Col. 2:11, 12. Rom. 6:4, 6, 11. We are to improve our baptism throughout life, and especially in time of temptation to sin.

Rom. 6:3-5. We are to think seriously of the meaning of baptism, and its implications for our lives.

1 Cor. 1:11-13. Rom. 6:2, 3. We are to be humbled for our failure to live according to the implications of our baptism, and our own vows.

Rom. 4:11, 12. 1 Pet. 3:21. It is our duty to attain in actual experience the blessings sealed to us in our baptism.

Rom. 6:3-5. Gal. 3:26, 27. Rom. 6:22. Acts 2:33. Rightly to improve our baptism involves a serious effort to trust Christ fully and lead a genuinely righteous and holy life.

1 Cor. 12:13, 25-27. Improving our baptism involves a realization of our unity with our fellow Christians, and an effort to walk in brotherly love with them, since all have been baptized by the same Spirit into one body.

Questions:

1. What does the Catechism mean by "improving" our baptism?

By "improving" our baptism, the Catechism means using it to good purpose in our daily life: thus it means experiencing its meaning, and working out its implications, in actual life.

Baptism is (a) a sacrament; (b) a doctrine; and (c) an obligation to progressive Christian experience and service. We are to receive the sacrament, by being baptized; to believe and understand the doctrine, that is, the nature and meaning of baptism; and to live out the implications as growing Christians.

The question of the Catechism is intended to guard against the all-too-prevalent tendency to regard baptism as a mere rite or ceremony, something to be attended to and then forgotten. That this same tendency was common 300 years ago, when the Catechism was written, is shown by the reference to improving our baptism as a "much neglected duty." The situation remains the same today.

2. Is the efficacy of baptism limited to the time at which it is administered?

Certainly not. Baptism is a sign and seal of salvation from sin, and its efficacy continues as long as there remains any sin, or effect of sin, to be saved from. A mistaken notion that the efficacy of baptism is tied to the time of administration of it is the reason for some people's opposition to the baptism of the infants of believers. Since many of the things which baptism stands for or implies cannot be experienced by infants (such as repentance, faith, conscious assurance of salvation, etc.), some people hold that there is no use or meaning in the baptism of infants. But they are greatly mistaken. The efficacy of baptism covers the person's whole life subsequent to his baptism; those baptized as infants are to repent, believe, attain assurance, seek sanctification, etc., when they reach an age at which these experiences are psychologically possible for them.

We are born into this world only once, but we celebrate our birthday year after year throughout life; we are baptized only once, but are to remember our baptism and experience its meaning, and work out its implications, year after year throughout life.

3. At what times ought we especially to improve our baptism?

In times when we are confronted with temptation. At such times the recollection of our

baptism should serve to remind us that we are of the covenant people of God and must live accordingly and not compromise with sin as ungodly and worldly people do. Also we are to improve our baptism when we are present at the administration of baptism to others. At such times the meaning of baptism, and the vows connected with it, should become especially real and vivid to our minds and hearts. On such occasions we should remember that we, too, have received this same sacrament, with the same meaning and implications, and that we, too, are bound by the same solemn covenant vows.

4. Do we ever really fulfill our duty in improving our baptism?

No, for even the most faithful Christians break the law of God daily in thought, word and deed. Therefore in thinking of our baptism and what it should mean in our life, we are always to be humbled because of our past unfaithfulness and failures in living up to our solemn vows.

Some people who are not very earnest about seeking holiness, yet have a very complacent feeling about their own baptism, sometimes even counting on baptism to get them into heaven when they die. Such is a wrong attitude. The more fully we appreciate the real meaning of our baptism, the farther will spiritual complacency be from our hearts. Instead, we will have a real humility because of our personal failure to attain what was our duty to attain.

5. What ways of improving our baptism does the Catechism specify?

The Catechism specifies a number of Christian experiences and duties, such as being humbled for our sins, growing up to assurance of salvation, drawing strength from Christ for mortifying sin and quickening of grace, etc. These various experiences and duties, taken together, mean a continuous, serious undertaking to live a faithful, consistent Christian life, according to the teachings of the Word of God, all along the line.

As baptism stands for salvation from sin, improving our baptism involves taking salvation from sin seriously, in actual living experience. This in turn involves experiencing the reality of, and living out the implications of, effectual calling, justification, adoption, sanctification and the several benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from them. That is, improving our baptism means walking steadily forward in the highway of God's salvation, according to God's Word.

6. What does improving our baptism imply concerning Christian unity?

By the baptism of the Holy Spirit all Christians are baptized into the invisible Church; by the sacrament of baptism, all Christians are publicly recognized as members of the visible Church of Christ. This implies the duty of cultivating unity and brotherly love with those who participate in the same baptism and are members of the same body. We should cultivate unity and love with all faithful Christians, and especially with those who are fellow members with us of the same branch of the visible Church.

LESSON 7

What is the Lord's Supper?

Q. 168. What is the Lord's Supper?

A. The Lord's Supper is a sacrament of the New Testament, wherein by giving and receiving bread and wine according to the appointment of Jesus Christ, his death is showed forth; and they that worthily communicate feed upon his body and blood, to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace; have their union and communion with him confirmed; testify and renew their thankfulness, and engagement to God, and their mutual love and fellowship with each other, as members of the same mystical body.

Scripture References:

Luke 22:20. The Lord's Supper is a sacrament of the New Testament.

Matt. 26:26-28. 1 Cor. 11:23-26. The Lord's Supper is constituted by giving and receiving bread and wine according to the appointment of Christ.

1 Cor. 10:16. The right use of the Lord's Supper confirms the believer's union and communion with Christ.

1 Cor. 11:24. Partaking of the Lord's Supper involves thankfulness to God for His grace.

1 Cor. 10:14-16, 21. The Lord's Supper involves a renewal of our covenant vows of love and obedience to God.

1 Cor. 10:17. By partaking of the Lord's Supper, believers show and renew their mutual love and fellowship as members of Christ's spiritual body, the Church.

Questions:

1. What is meant by saying that "The Lord's Supper is a sacrament of the New Testament"?

In this statement, the phrase "the New Testament" does not refer to the New Testament as a book, or portion of the Bible, but to the New Testament (or New Covenant) as a dispensation of the Covenant of Grace. The Greek word translated "Testament" in Luke 22:20 usually means "covenant" in its N.T. usage, and it is so translated in this verse in the American Revised Ver-

sion (1901). The Covenant of Grace comprises God's plan and arrangements for the salvation of His people. The Old Dispensation of the Covenant of Grace was from Moses to Christ, and is called "the Old Testament" or "the Old Covenant." The New Dispensation of the Covenant of Grace is from the crucifixion of Christ to the end of the world, and is called "the New Testament" or "the New Covenant." Circumcision and the Passover were sacraments of the Old Covenant or the Old Testament; Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the sacraments of the New Testament or the New Covenant.

2. What constitutes the Lord's Supper?

The Lord's Supper is constituted by giving and receiving bread and wine according to the appointment of Jesus Christ. What is meant by "the appointment of Jesus Christ" is explained in the next question of the Catechism (Q. 169). There may be many circumstances (such as time, place, frequency, and the like) which may vary greatly without interfering with the essential character of the Lord's Supper. On the other hand, those matters which are included in Christ's appointment are essential elements of the Lord's Supper, which may not be changed or omitted.

Any substantial deviation from Christ's appointment would involve the danger of destroying the essential character of the ordinance as the Lord's Supper. Thus the Roman Catholic Mass is not really the Lord's Supper because the communicants receive only the bread or wafer and not the wine, which is reserved for the priest alone. This is a substantial deviation from Christ's appointment. Similarly, to omit any of the sacramental actions, such as the breaking of the bread, is a deviation from Christ's appointment, though less serious than the Roman Catholic practice referred to above.

3. What is the essential meaning of the Lord's Supper?

By the Lord's Supper, the death of Jesus Christ is showed forth. This means, of course, that the Lord's Supper portrays the doctrine of the substitutionary atonement, by which Christ died for the sins of His people. We might say that in the Lord's Supper the atonement of Christ is acted out as in a pageant. There is a possible reference to this in Gal. 3:1, where Paul tells the Galatian Christians that Jesus Christ had been "evidently set forth" (that is, VISIBLY set forth) before their eyes, and even crucified among them.

Our Lord's own words ("This is my body, which is given for you;" "This is my blood . . . which is shed for many, for the remission of sins") make it unmistakably clear that the doctrine of the substitutionary atonement is the basic meaning of the Lord's Supper. This is not all that the Lord's Supper means, but it is the basic meaning of the sacrament, and without this

basic truth, the other things which it represents are meaningless.

Therefore persons who have no knowledge of the doctrine of the substitutionary atonement cannot rightly partake of the Lord's Supper. Similarly, those who, under the influence of modern theology, have denied or explained away the substitutionary atonement of Christ, cannot rightly partake of the Lord's Supper, and for them to go through the motions of it is both blasphemy and a meaningless mockery. Those who do not believe that Christ died for our sins, in the honest, historic meaning of the words, are not Christians and have no right to the Lord's Supper, since they reject its central truth.

4. What is the purpose of the Lord's Supper?

In brief, the purpose of the Lord's Supper is the spiritual edification of the Lord's people. This means that rightly partaking of the Lord's Supper will strengthen, encourage and spiritually build up Christians along the whole line of their Christian faith, life and work.

The Catechism elaborates this by stating that those who rightly partake of the Lord's Supper (a) are confirmed in their spiritual relation to Christ their Savior; (b) are renewed and strengthened in their resolve to live a life of thankfulness and obedience to God; and (c) testify and renew their love and fellowship for their fellow believers. Thus the right use of the Lord's Supper encourages and builds up the Christian in relation to his Saviour, in relation to his God, and in relation to his brethren.

5. What is the relation of the Lord's Supper to the second coming of Christ?

"For as oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death TILL HE COME" (1 Cor. 11:26). The Lord's Supper points forward to the second coming of Christ. The Lord's Supper reminds us that human history will not go on forever; it will come to a sudden termination at the second coming of Christ.

The Lord's Supper is full of meaning with respect to the Christian philosophy of history. In this it parallels the Sabbath, which originated at the creation, and shall be consummated in eternity (Gen. 2:2,3; Heb. 4:1-10). The Lord's Supper bridges the gap from the first coming of Christ to His second coming, from the crucifixion to the Judgment Day. By portraying the Lord's death, it points us backward to Calvary; by the command to observe it "till he come", it points us forward to the Last Day.

The three great focal points of history, according to the Bible, are (a) the creation; (b) the crucifixion of Christ; and (c) the "Day of the Lord," that is, the Last Day, or the day of Christ's second coming. The Sabbath, which originated

prior to sin and apart from redemption, links the first and last of these points together; it spans the course of history from the original creation to the eternal consummation. The Lord's Supper,

which was instituted after man sinned, and as a part of the scheme of redemption, spans the course of CHRISTIAN history from the cross to the "great white throne."

LESSON 8

The Administration of the Lord's Supper

Q. 169. How hath Christ appointed bread and wine to be given and received in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper?

A. Christ hath appointed the ministers of his word, in the administration of the sacrament of the Lord's supper, to set apart the bread and wine from common use, by the word of institution, thanksgiving and prayer; to take and break the bread, and to give both the bread and the wine to the communicants: who are, by the same appointment, to take and eat the bread, and to drink the wine, in thankful remembrance that the body of Christ was broken and given, and his blood shed, for them.

Scripture References:

1 Cor. 11:23,24. Matt. 26:26-28. Mark 14:22-25. Luke 22:17-20. The institution of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper by Jesus Christ.

Questions:

1. Wherein the New Testament is the record of Christ's institution of the Lord's Supper found?

In the three Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke), and in Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 11. The latter is the fullest account of the institution of the Lord's Supper.

2. Why is it important that Christ's appointment be exactly followed in the administration of the Lord's Supper?

The Headship of Christ over the Church requires this. The Church is subject to Christ, and must obey His instructions and conform to His will in all things (Eph. 5:23,24). The Lord's Supper is THE LORD'S Supper; therefore the Church has no right to change or modify it. It did not originate in custom or tradition, but from a specific command of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Church has no right to alter it, to add to it or to subtract from it.

3. Whom has Christ appointed to administer the Lord's Supper?

Christ has appointed "the ministers of his Word" to administer the Lord's Supper. While this truth is not stated in the Biblical accounts of the institution of the Lord's Supper, it follows from other portions of the Scripture which speak of officers being ordained to have charge of the work and worship of the visible Church.

Ministers of Christ are called "stewards of the

mysteries of God" (1 Cor. 4:1,2; Titus 1:7). The word "steward" means a person officially entrusted with the oversight, care or administration of something. As the sacraments are certainly part of the "mysteries of God", it follows that they have been committed to the stewardship of the ministers of Christ.

The same truth follows by analogy from the Old Testament, in which the sacrifices, ritual, tabernacle and its contents and worship were entrusted to the priests and Levites. While there is of course a true sense in which every Christian is a priest of God, yet so far as official responsibility for the preaching of the Word and administration of the sacraments is concerned, the ministers of Christ are the New Testament counterpart of the priests and Levites of the Old Testament.

Some people believe that any Christian may administer baptism and the Lord's Supper. This however is contrary to good order in the Church. The Church is a visible body and as such must necessarily have leadership in its official functions. Good order requires that such authority be in the hands of those who have been duly chosen, examined and set apart for the exercise of it, and who accordingly can be held responsible for the rightful use of it. That such is indeed the will of Christ is shown by the considerations adduced in the preceding paragraph. The admonition of Paul, "Let all things be done decently and in order" Cor. 14:40) applies to the administration of the Lord's Supper as well as to the matters with which the apostle was immediately concerned is that context.

4. What are the elements used in the Lord's Supper?

The sacramental elements used in the Lord's Supper are two in number, namely, bread and wine. These elements serve a symbolical purpose. The bread represents Christ's body; the wine represents His blood. Taken together, the bread and the wine represent His human nature, which He took to Himself when He "was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14) by being born as a human child in Bethlehem.

5. What sacramental actions are involved in the Lord's Supper?

There are six sacramental actions involved in the Lord's Supper. Four of them were performed by Jesus (taking the bread and the cup; giving

thanks; breaking the bread; giving the bread and the cup to the disciples).

Two sacramental actions were performed by the disciples (taking the bread and the cup; eating the bread and drinking the wine). These six sacramental actions, taken together in their true meaning, portray or act out the atonement of Christ and a sinner's receiving Him by faith.

6. What is the meaning of the four sacramental actions performed by Jesus?

The meaning of the four sacramental actions performed by Jesus, and by His ministers in His name, is as follows:

(a) He **TOOK** the bread and the cup from the table where the Passover meal had been partaken of, signifying His taking a human nature (body and soul) to Himself when He was born into this world in Bethlehem.

(b) He **BLESSED**, or gave thanks for, the bread and the wine, setting them apart from ordinary uses for a special religious purpose. This action signifies our Saviour being set apart for His special work as the Redeemer of men, when He was baptized by John at the Jordan River at the age of thirty years. Jesus had previously been known as a carpenter, but now He was solemnly set apart for His special work, which He followed exclusively from that day until His crucifixion.

(c) He **BROKE** the bread, an action which signifies the breaking of His own body by being nailed to the cross, and by the spear of the Roman soldier which was thrust into His side after His

death. This sacramental action reminds us that we are not saved by Jesus' teachings, nor by His life alone, but pre-eminently by His death on the cross.

(d) He **GAVE** the bread and wine to the disciples, signifying the gift of Christ to sinful men by the infinite grace of God (John 3:16) and the preaching of the Gospel in which the divine gift of the Saviour is offered to sinners.

7. What is the meaning of the two sacramental actions performed by the disciples?

The meaning of the two sacramental actions performed by the disciples, and by communicants today, is as follows:

(a) They **TOOK** the bread and the cup, signifying taking Jesus as Saviour by believing on Him. Christ's incarnation, baptism and atonement, and the preaching of the Gospel, must be followed by personal faith in Jesus Christ on the part of sinners. This personal faith for salvation is signified by taking the bread and the cup.

(b) They **ATE** the bread and **DRANK** the wine, signifying dependence on Christ for spiritual life and growth. As our bodily life is dependent on daily food and drink, without which we could not have bodily life and health, so our spiritual life is dependent on Christ, and apart from Him we cannot have spiritual life and health. Partaking of the elements of bread and wine signifies our continued dependence on Christ, by our spiritual union with Him, for our growth in grace unto the perfection which shall be ours in the state of glory (Eph. 4:13).

LESSON 9

Feeding upon the Body and Blood of Christ

Q. 170. How do they that worthily communicate in the Lord's Supper feed upon the body and blood of Christ therein?

A. As the body and blood of Christ are not corporally or carnally present in, with, or under the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper, and yet are spiritually present to the faith of the receiver, no less truly and really than the elements themselves are to their outward senses; so they that worthily communicate in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, do therein feed upon the body and blood of Christ, not after a corporal and carnal, but in a spiritual manner; yet truly and really while by faith they receive and apply unto themselves Christ crucified, and all the benefits of his death.

Scripture References:

Acts 3:21. Christ's human nature is now in heaven, and must remain there until the end of the world; therefore His body and blood "are not corporally and carnally present in, with, or un-

der the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper."

Matt. 26:26, 28. Christ's body and blood are spiritually present to the faith of the person who receives the Lord's Supper, just as the bread and wine are present to their outward senses.

1 Cor. 11:24-29. Those who rightly partake of the Lord's Supper feed upon Christ's body and blood, not in a physical sense, but spiritually, and yet truly and really.

1 Cor. 10:16. Those who rightly partake of the Lord's Supper, by faith receive and apply to themselves Christ crucified, and all the benefits of His atonement.

Questions:

1. What are the principal views concerning the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper?

There are three principal views concerning the presence of the body and blood of Christ in

the Lord's Supper, namely (a) the Roman Catholic doctrine; (b) the Lutheran doctrine; and (c) the Reformed doctrine. These three are united in affirming that in the Lord's Supper believers receive and feed upon the body and blood of Christ. They differ as to the mode of Christ's presence in the sacrament and the mode of the believer's feeding upon His body and blood.

2. What is the Roman Catholic doctrine concerning the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper?

The Roman Catholic doctrine, called "Transubstantiation," was officially adopted as a doctrine by the Fourth Lateran Council, A. D. 1215, and authoritatively defined by the Council of Trent, A.D. 1545-1563, as follows: "If any one shall say that, in the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, there remains, together with the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, the substance of the Bread and Wine, and shall deny that wonderful and singular conversion of the whole substance of the Bread into (His) Body and of the Wine into (His) Blood, the species only of the Bread and Wine remaining — which conversion the Catholic Church most fittingly calls Transubstantiation — let him be anathema." (The word "species" is here used to mean "outward appearance," while "substance" is used to mean "reality").

Thus the Roman Catholic Church teaches that the bread and wine are miraculously changed into the literal body and blood of Christ, only the outward appearance of bread and wine remaining. This doctrine has the corollary of the idea of the Mass as a SACRIFICE in which Christ is offered up anew for the sins of men. A common Roman Catholic catechism speaks of the Mass as the unbloody sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ, and adds that the Mass is the same sacrifice as that of the cross, though without real shedding of blood or real death, since of course Christ can die no more.

3. How can the Roman Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation be shown to be false?

A. A. Hodge ("Outlines of Theology") presents the following points as an argument against the Roman Catholic doctrine:

(a) By analogy of the Scripture use of language, the word "is" in the statement "This is my body" must be understood to mean "represents"; see Gen. 41:26, 27; Ex. 12:11; Dan. 7:24; Rev. 1:20.

(b) Paul refers to one of the elements as "bread," even after it has been consecrated in the Lord's Supper: 1 Cor. 10:16; 11:26-28.

(c) Even Roman Catholics hold that in every sacrament there is a SIGN and a THING SIGNIFIED. The doctrine of Transubstantiation confuses, and indeed identifies, the sign with the

thing signified, by holding that the bread and wine become the literal body and blood of Christ; thus the doctrine of Transubstantiation is contrary to the proper definition of a sacrament, held even by the Church of Rome itself.

(d) If Transubstantiation were true, it would mean that we could no longer believe the testimony of our senses, which tell us that bread is bread and not flesh, and that wine is wine and not blood. No miracle recorded in the Bible ever involved such a contradiction of the senses, which are God-given and reliable within their proper sphere of functioning.

(e) Transubstantiation is also contrary to reason, because it teaches that Christ's human body, while wholly present in heaven, may yet be present at many different places on earth at the same time. Also it is contrary to reason in maintaining that the body and blood of Christ are present without their sensible qualities, while the sensible qualities of bread and wine are present without the substance of bread and wine. This is contrary to reason because qualities can have no existence apart from the substance of which they are qualities.

(f) The doctrine of Transubstantiation is part and parcel of an antichristian system of priestcraft, which regards the Mass as a sacrifice, and virtually puts the priest and his work in the place of Christ and His work as the object of the people's faith.

For all the above reasons, we may rightly conclude that the doctrine of Transubstantiation is false, unscriptural and religiously harmful.

4. What is the historic Lutheran doctrine concerning the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper?

Following the teaching of the Reformer Martin Luther, orthodox Lutheranism teaches that "the Sacrament of the Altar" is "the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, for us Christians to eat and to drink, instituted by Christ Himself" (Luther's Small Catechism).

This is quite different from the Roman Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation, for the Lutheran doctrine denies that the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ. Orthodox Lutheranism does, however, hold to a real bodily and local presence of the body and blood of Christ in the sacrament. This is coupled with a doctrine of the ubiquity of the glorified body of Christ. While we believe that these elements of the historic Lutheran doctrine of the Lord's Supper are erroneous, we should realize that it is both ignorant and unfair to say, as some do, that the Lutheran doctrine is almost the same as that of the Church of Rome.

5. What is the historic Reformed doctrine concerning the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper?

The orthodox Reformed doctrine is set forth in Q. 170 of the Catechism. This doctrine affirms that in the Lord's Supper true believers "truly and really" feed upon the body and blood of Christ, "not after a corporal and carnal, but in a spiritual manner."

The Reformed doctrine expressly denies that the body and blood of Christ are "corporally or carnally present in, with, or under the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper," thus rejecting both the Roman Catholic and the Lutheran doctrines. Yet the body and blood of Christ are held to be "spiritually present to the faith of the receiver, no less truly and really than the elements themselves are to their outward senses."

A. A. Hodge (Outlines of Theology) summarizes the doctrine of the historic Reformed creeds as follows: "All the Reformed agree as to the following particulars: 1st. This eating was not with the mouth in any manner. 2d. It was only by the soul that they were received. 3d. It was by faith, which is declared to be the hand and mouth of the soul. 4th. It was by or through the power of the Holy Ghost. But this receiving Christ's body is not confined to the Lord's supper; it takes place whenever faith in him is exercised."

6. If a person who is not a true believer partakes of the sacramental elements, does he receive and feed upon the body and blood of Christ?

No, for such a person lacks the faith by which alone Christ and His benefits can be received by any human being. Such a partaker would receive only bread and wine, and his partaking of the elements would be presumptuous and sinful.

7. What is meant by "worthily communicating in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper"?

We should note carefully that "worthily" is

an adverb, not an adjective. This adverb, which is taken from Paul's words in 1 Cor. 11:27, describes the manner of partaking of the sacrament, not the character of the person who partakes. It does not mean that a person must be WORTHY of partaking of the Lord's Supper. Since all human beings are sinners, and can only be saved by the free mercy of God, of course none can ever be worthy of partaking of the Lord's Supper. To speak of being worthy is the same as to speak of DESERVING GRACE, that is, DESERVING WHAT WE DO NOT DESERVE. This is a contradiction in terms. If we deserve it, then it is not grace; if it is grace, then it is something we do not deserve.

The adverb "unworthily" used in the King James Version is more correctly translated in the American Revised Version (1901) by the phrase "in an unworthy manner," which brings out the meaning quite clearly.

To partake in an unworthy manner would be to partake without true faith in Christ, or while cherishing unrepented sin in our hearts, or without a proper understanding of the meaning of the Lord's Supper.

We should realize, too, that the word translated "damnation" in the King James Version of 1 Cor. 11:29 does not necessarily mean eternal damnation. The Greek word is KRIMA, which means "judgment." This word is translated "judgment" 13 times in the King James Version of the New Testament. The American Revised Version (1901) translates it by "judgment" in 1 Cor. 11:29. The nature of the divine judgment in question is indicated by the next verse (11:30): "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." (See *Blue Banner Faith and Life*, Vol. 3, April-June 1948, pages 92 and 93).

(To be continued)

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 for books to the manager of this magazine.

THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE, by T. T. Shields. *The Gospel Witness*, 130 Gerrard St., East, Toronto 2, Ont., Canada. 1956, pp. 208. \$2.50.

For forty-five years, until his death on April 4, 1955, Dr. T. T. Shields was pastor of Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto; and this volume is the first of a series to be published as the Dr.

T. T. Shields' Memorial Library, selected from his preaching and teaching during that long ministry.

The choice of **The Doctrines of Grace** as the first title is a very happy one, for this book, consisting of addresses given at his regular Thursday night lecture, gives the fundamentals of his theology, which is essentially Calvinistic. The titles

of the lectures speak for themselves — The Sovereignty of God, the Doctrine of Election, Total Depravity, Justification by Faith Alone, The Atonement, The Eternal Security of the Believer, to mention some of the subjects dealt with.

The style of these lectures shows clearly why Dr. John Hutton, late Editor of **The British Weekly**, once described Dr. Shields as "The Canadian Spurgeon." Here is Spurgeon's gift of felicitous illustration from everyday, personal experience; humour with seldom a barb to it; obviously effortless contact with an audience; and behind it all the most meticulous scholarship and careful Bible study.

Dr. Shields' gentle irony is often refreshing. He confesses himself a pre-millennialist, but stresses the need for caution in dealing with prophetic matters that relate to the future, and has little patience with those who profess absolute certainty — "From absolute ignorance of the Bible to oracular certainty, to a position where a person knows all there is to know upon a certain thing, so that they know it beyond all contradiction, all that is necessary is a Scofield Bible and three months!"

Dr. Shields does not conceal the fact that he is a Baptist, and disagrees with those who believe that the sprinkling of infants is scriptural baptism; but he refers to this only in passing, and so may perhaps be excused this lapse from a consistent application of covenant-theology!

The fact that the lectures are published exactly as delivered and printed in **The Gospel Witness** means occasional irritation for the reader who is referred to copies of **The Gospel Witness**, "which you will find at the door," or pointed to passages of Scripture, "which we have just read." A very little careful editing could have removed such minor irritations without detracting from the direct and intensely personal presentation of truth which was characteristic of Dr. Shields' preaching. But this book is cordially recommended as a popular presentation of Biblical theology.

— Hugh J. Blair

RED DRAGON OVER CHINA, by Harold M. Martinson. Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis 15, Minn. 1956, pp. 328. \$3.50.

Red Dragon over China, written by a man who was born in China, and who spent many years as a Lutheran missionary in that unhappy land, is not a book to be taken lightly. In it Rev. Harold H. Martinson gives a grim picture of the rise and growth of Communism in China, and of the unspeakable methods it has used to achieve its purpose. The book is in two parts: Part One gives a chronological and well-documented account of the hatching, growth and ultimate victory of the Red Dragon of Communism. The lesson of this section is clearly stated on p. 95 — "For any society not to be on its guard against

the subtle workings of Communism is fatal. The only time to stop it is **before** it infiltrates into a community. Once it has gained a strangle hold, the people are powerless to throw it off." Part Two gives case-histories of men and women who give restrained and unhysterical testimony to the vicious brutalities by which Communism has achieved its aim. This section of the book is not pleasant reading, and yet, for all the sickening violence of which it tells, one is left with a feeling not of despair but of supreme confidence. What hope of permanent survival has a system which has to use such means to maintain its wretched existence? Or what cannot ultimately be achieved by a Christian faith which has demonstrated in so many cases of humble men and women a resilience which man's inhumanity to man has proved finally impotent to break?

— Hugh J. Blair

CALVIN AND AUGUSTINE, By Benjamin B. Warfield. The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., P.O. Box 185, Nutley 10, N. J. 1956, pp. 507. \$4.95.

When Dr. B. B. Warfield died in 1921, after occupying the Chair of Systematic Theology in Princeton Theological Seminary for 35 years, many of his more notable articles, which had appeared in encyclopedias, theological reviews and other periodicals, were collected and published in ten large volumes by the Oxford University Press. Most of these are now out of print, and the Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company is re-issuing them in fresh format with introductions by modern Reformed theologians. This is the fourth of the volumes which have appeared, the previous ones being **The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible**, **The Person and Work of Christ**, and **Biblical and Theological Studies**.

This volume contains articles which appeared in two of the Oxford University Press volumes, **Studies in Tertullian and Augustine**, and **Calvin and Calvinism**. Naturally, some articles in the former volumes have been omitted, but three addresses, which Warfield gave in connection with the quater-centenary of Calvin's birth, which were first published in pamphlet form by The Hope Trust, Edinburgh, Scotland, are added in an appendix.

We regret that the article on "Augustine and the Pelagian Controversy" had to be sacrificed, for we need it as a counteractive to what Professor F. F. Bruce has called "the popular English creed of justification by decency." At first thought we would have preferred it to the long articles on "Augustine's Doctrine of Knowledge and Authority." However, in studying them in their new setting, we appreciate the fact that these were inserted to correspond with the articles on "Calvin's Doctrine of the Knowledge of God" and "Calvin's Doctrine of God." A comparison of these makes a very fine study. The arti-

cles on "Augustine's Doctrine of Knowledge and Authority" gives a clear insight into Augustine's thought, while the one on "Augustine and His 'Confessions'" gives an insight into his heart. The addresses on "Calvin as a Theologian," which are inserted in the appendix, certainly compensate for the dropping of the article in the previous volume "On the Literary History of Calvin's 'Institutes'" which, though interesting, has not the same popular value, and many of the facts of which are given in other articles. However, the one on "Calvin's Doctrine of Creation," which is also dropped, has still much relevance today in view of the continued popularity of the evolution theory, and other naturalistic explanations. But the one on "Calvin's Doctrine of the Trinity," which is reprinted is a most careful theological study by a master and should go far to correct and clarify the thinking of many on this great subject. Here the originality and independence of Calvin's mind is sympathetically brought out. The claim on the dust cover will surely be justified that "This collection will prove of great value to the student of church history and doctrine, and cannot help but impress the discerning reader with the relevancy of Calvin and Augustine to the religious and theological situation of the present day."

In many quarters there is a revived interest in religion and even in the Reformed Faith. But, alas, many worship afar off, and have little understanding of the thought of those they profess to follow. Even those who seek to study the writings of those who have gone before, if asked, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" would be compelled to confess, like the Ethiopian eunuch, "How can I, except some man should guide me?" There are no greater theologians in the history of the church than Augustine and Calvin, and there is no better guide to an understanding of them than Dr. B. B. Warfield. He made a thorough study of their works, yet he was not weighed down by the mass of material which they produced and evoked from others in commendation and criticism. His penetrating mind grasped their thought and his sympathetic soul entered into their experience, while his scintillating pen presents his findings with a clarity and often wit, which leaves nothing to be desired.

Although the articles and addresses were written or delivered about 50 years ago they are quite as fresh today. Indeed, they are a good corrective to much of the loose thinking so prevalent at the present time, and to the false claims that some make to be the true successors of Augustine and Calvin. Against the claims of the Romanists to be true Augustinians Warfield shows that, while he did attribute secondary authority to the church and some saving efficacy to the sacraments, yet his fundamental principles of the supreme authority of Scripture and the complete dependence of sinful man upon Divine grace are the direct anti-

thesis of the system of Romanism. Augustine died before he had worked out his principles to their full consistency. It was left for the Reformation to do that. Accordingly, as Warfield says, "the Reformation was the triumph of Augustine's doctrine of grace over Augustine's doctrine of the church." Thus Calvin is the true successor of Augustine.

Again, neo-orthodoxy claims to be a revival of Calvinism, and to teach Calvin's doctrine of the *testimonium Spiritus Sancti* by its emphasis upon the subjectiveness of revelation. But Warfield, though writing long before the time of Barth and Brunner, shows that Calvin emphasized the witness of the Holy Spirit as necessary because of the depravity of human nature which blinds men to an understanding of the Bible, whose canonicity is confirmed on historico-critical grounds. Warfield also shows that Calvin recognizes the legitimacy of natural revelation which neo-orthodoxy repudiates. So, as Warfield defends Augustine and Calvin from some of the criticisms and misunderstandings which they faced in their day and down to his time, his elucidation of their positions is equally relevant today. It is just a matter of applying his propositions to the present situation. This makes the reading all the more interesting. It may surprise some to learn from Warfield that Calvin emphasises as strongly the Fatherhood of God as His sovereignty, and calls for love to Him as well as fear and reverence.

This is no bedside book, or one for a mere leisure moment. It needs to be studied with some application. However, Warfield has such a forceful and beautiful style that the attentive reader is carried forward imperceptibly along the current of this thought and does not experience the weariness associated with some theological works. Warfield had the great ability, on the one hand, of carefully analysing a passage and setting out fully its relations and implications, and, on the other, of summing up a great body of doctrine in a few sentences. He who has mastered Warfield will have obtained a wide and exact theological education.

— W. R. McEwen

THE HEART, MIND AND SOUL OF COMMUNISM, by Fred Schwartz

THE COMMUNIST INTERPRETATION OF PEACE, by Fred Schwartz

THE CHRISTIAN ANSWER TO COMMUNISM, by Fred Schwartz

All published by Great Commission Press, P. O. Box 727, Anderson, Indiana. For sale by The Christian Anti-Communism Crusade, P. O. Box 508, Waterloo, Iowa. Paper covered booklets. Price of each booklet, 50 cents. Special rates on quantities.

Dr. Schwartz is one of the outstanding speakers on the problems of Communism. He was born in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, January 15, 1913. He received his early education in Australia and completed the Medical Course at the Queensland University, graduating in Medicine and Surgery. He has also worked in Psychiatry. He is a lay preacher and evangelist and has traveled extensively to speak of the dangers of Communism.

There is some duplication in the above three booklets, but this may be expected as he is approaching the problem from three different angles. These are three enlightening tracts and our eyes are certainly opened to the danger and threats of Communism.

"In 1917 they had 40,000 followers; in 1952 they are in absolute control of 800,000,000. They have multiplied those under their control by 20,000 in 35 years, an increase of 2 million percent" (p. 7, **The Heart, Mind and Soul of Communism**).

"Communism is a religion of promise . . . The promise is two-fold in nature . . . One aspect appeals to the poor, the ignorant, and the underprivileged; and the other aspect appeals to the wealthy, the intellectually superior, and the idealistic reformers" (p. 7, **The Heart, Mind and Soul of Communism**).

To appeal to the educated is an appeal of Reform. "Communism is not a program to cure one or two; but to cure all of the sins of the whole world" (p. 9). "Science" is to bring about the redemption of mankind in the program of Communist expansion.

The author strips the false front from the Communist mind and thinking. We ask ourselves, as we read these booklets, what we can do to help in stopping the expansion of this false religion. (One answer is a vigorous presentation of the Reformed Faith.)

The Communist assumes that we are at war — at this very moment. Thus we see the impossibility of living in peaceful coexistence, the futility of summit meetings, and the absurdity of disarmament programs.

"As long as the Communist idea prevails in the mind of one man true peace is impossible" (p. 14, **The Christian Answer to Communism**). We see that the entire communist world and a good half of the remaining world are convinced that they have won the world. "Peace is the dialectic synthesis which emerges when the progressive thesis of the proletariat utterly overwhelms the reactionary antithesis of the bourgeoisie and by violence and by bloodshed there is established Socialism, under the dictatorship of the proletariat, which is peace" (p. 16, **The Communist Interpretation of Peace**). Peace to the Communist is total victory.

"To believe that Communism is primarily a revolt against poverty is to fall victim to the Marxist snare, and to teach that Communism can be stopped by the simple improvement in economic conditions is to fall to the level of contemptible political quackery" (p. 17, **The Christian Answer to Communism**). The author cites his own nation as an example. In 1949 the nation was very prosperous, and yet the Communists came "within an inch of the conquest of the entire country."

The author shows why communism has such a hold. Its followers are devoted to the cause. They are willing to die for it — as we see in many of these so called confessions. They give, they sacrifice, they identify themselves with the people.

We can not read these books without confession of our sin. We must realize Rom. 12:1 in our lives. All is His. But do we live as though this is true?

— Charles Sterrett

THIRTY YEARS A WATCH TOWER SLAVE. by William J. Schnell. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1956. pp. 207. \$2.95.

This is the personal story of one who for thirty years had been an important figure in the development of the sect of the Jehovah's Witnesses both in Germany and in the United States. In 1954, after a spiritual struggle, he gave himself completely to Christ and severed his connections with the Watch Tower organization. At that time he vowed that he would reveal to the world the inner workings of this organization and this book is the result.

The author traces the development of the "Bible Students" organized by Charles Russell into what are now called Jehovah's Witnesses. Early developments took place in Germany shortly after World War I. The trials and errors of the pilot organization laid the groundwork for the more successful attack on organized Christianity in America. Their main medium of propaganda has been volumes of printed material sold to a gullible public.

Their aims, ideas, and policies as revealed by the author are enough to send a shudder through every Christian. For a society that has attacked all organizations and especially churches as works of the devil, it is one of the most highly organized and efficient systems of them all.

This book will be a great help to those who find themselves confronted by the Jehovah's Witnesses. It reveals their heresies and methods so that they may be successfully counteracted.

Since the author feels that the rapidly growing Watch Tower organization poses a great threat to our society, it would certainly be wise for every Christian to become informed and thus prepared against such sinister forces.

— D. Howard Elliott

THE CHAOS OF CULTS, By J. K. Van Baalen (revised and enlarged edition). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1956, pp. 409. \$3.95.

This book gives an excellent survey of the most popular 'isms' of today, including Spiritism, Theosophy, Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Science, Buchmanism, Seventh-Day Adventism and others. They all share a fundamental defect which Mr. Van Baalen describes as 'auto-soterism,' the heresy that salvation can be achieved by man. Mr. Van Baalen gives a carefully-documented account of each of the cults with which he deals, and a great part of the value of the book consists in quotations from the writings of the cults themselves, with a clear statement showing where these conflict with Scripture. Throughout the book, and particularly in the closing chapters, there is much positive teaching of Scriptural truth, and there is a valuable chapter on 'Approaching Adherents of the Cults,' where difficulties are frankly recognized and sound counsel is given.

The present reviewer is not sure of the wisdom of including a lengthy chapter on Modernism in a book of this kind. That is not to say that he has any sympathy with Modernism, but he feels that the attack on it is blunted by placing it in company with Rosicrucianism, Baha'ism and the rest. One feels that this chapter could profitably have been published as a separate indictment.

In his opening chapter Mr. Van Baalen draws attention to the fact that "the cults are the unpaid bills of the church," meaning that "most of them are the result of an insufficient emphasis by Christians upon some valuable point of Biblical teaching", and makes the same point again on p. 364, where he says that "the cults . . . owe their rise, in part at least, to the shortcomings of the churches." One would have liked to see this truth underlined even more than it is throughout the book, for the success of the cults is to a considerable extent due to the fact that their propagandists profess to minister to real human needs and to relate the Bible to contemporary experience and current affairs. There can be only whole-hearted approval for Mr. Van Baalen's contention that the answer to the cults lies not only in renewed study of the Bible but in definite doctrinal teaching by the churches.

There are too many misprints in a book of this price. Mr. Eddy would be surprised to find himself quoted on p. 113, and Miss Helen Keller would not be flattered by being described as adding 'lust to the movement' (Swedenborgianism, p. 346)! A whole line seems to have dropped out near the top of p. 371.

— Hugh J. Blair

THE VOICE FROM CALVARY, by Marion C. Gosselink. The Presbyterian and Reformed

Publishing Co., Box 185, Nutley 10, N. J. 1956, pp. 49, paper cover. \$1.00.

Tastes in sermons naturally differ, and what appeals to one hearer by not be welcomed by another. This reviewer's ideal of a sermon is the exposition and application of a verse or a passage of Scripture, where the preacher is content to discover what God would say to him and to others in that verse or passage. Since that is so, he may as well say frankly that these sermons on Christ's words from the Cross do not come up to his ideal. Here is an abundance of sound Scriptural teaching, presented in a most attractive and winsome manner, and with a realization of the great issues at stake. But it is not textual preaching. Perhaps the series chosen for meditation does not lend itself to exposition, but it is disappointing to one reader at least to find a large proportion of each meditation dealing with other portions of Scripture than that on which it is professedly based. For example, the sermon on Christ's word to the penitent thief ends on this note: "How can we show that we belong to Him? We must make His will the rule of our conduct. We must make His service the main business of our lives. Our time must be spent in honoring Him . . ." All this is true and necessary teaching, but it is difficult to see how it is derived from, "Today shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." Approximately one page out of more than five in the meditation on "Woman, behold thy son! . . . Behold thy mother!" is taken up with these words of Christ from the Cross. In the sermon on Christ's cry of dereliction there is a considerable amount of space taken up with the thought of Christ as the Light of the world. And it is difficult to see what the three reasons for Christ's peace of mind have to do with His cry, "I thirst."

But having said all this by way of criticism of these meditations, one is still left with the feeling that here is a warm and winsome presentation of Gospel truth that will prove helpful and inspiring to many who read it.

— Hugh J. Blair

THE PERFECT PRAYER, By Herman Hoeksema (Volume X of Exposition of The Heidelberg Catechism). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1956, pp. 224. \$3.00.

In this volume the Rev. Herman Hoeksema concludes his series of expositions of the Heidelberg Catechism. But we have more here than an exposition of the Catechism; the writer ranges over a wide area doctrine connected with prayer and particularly with the Lord's Prayer, with which this section of the Catechism deals. His treatment of the different petitions deals first with their meaning, and then, more important still, with the disposition necessary for praying them. He makes it very clear that this is a prayer for believers only, and shows, for example, that an unbeliever, while he might desire the

satisfaction of his physical nature, can never really pray with faith and with a surrendered will, "Give us this day our daily bread."

Under this fourth petition, Mr. Hoeksema devotes a chapter to the question of prayer for Divine healing, and gives convincing grounds for holding that the healing miracles of the New Testament were 'signs,' and that the passage in the Epistle of James most commonly adduced in support of 'faith-healing' is concerned not with physical illness but with soul-sickness. This section, while entirely relevant to its context, might well be printed as a separate pamphlet dealing with this very debatable issue of today.

The only part of the exposition which the reviewer found faintly unsatisfying was that dealing with the very difficult sixth petition — "Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil". Mr. Hoeksema at one stage is almost prepared to make this into two separate petitions, making seven in all, but finally links them together as negative and positive statements of the same desire to gain the victory over temptation. If he might be permitted to insert his own view, the reviewer would tentatively suggest that a more satisfactory interpretation is to be derived from linking the two parts of the petition even more closely together, and taking the particle 'but' as qualifying the whole previous sentence. "Lead us not into temptation" can scarcely be taken by itself as it stands, without any qualification, for it seems against all that we know of prayer to ask God not to do something. What God wants to do is God's will, and it would be presumption to ask Him not to do His will. But if we take the word 'but' as qualifying the whole previous sentence, we can make it read an equivalent to "Lead us not into temptation **without delivering us from evil** (or from the evil one)".

This is a most excellent book, and the fortunate possessors of the whole series have in their hands more than an exposition of the valuable Heidelberg Catechism: they have ten volumes of Reformed theology presented in a systematic and most attractive form.

— Hugh J. Blair

MAN IN THE PROCESS OF TIME, by J. Stafford Wright. William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1956, pp. 187. \$3.00.

The sub-title of this book, **A Christian Assessment of the Powers and Functions of the Human Personality**, expresses more clearly, perhaps, than the title itself the nature of the contents. It is an attempt to evaluate, in the light of the Word of God some of the theories of psychology and many puzzling phenomena or supposed phenomena of the human mind.

The author, Dr. J. Stafford Wright, is a clergyman of the Church of England, and Principal of Tyndale Hall, Bristol. His basic viewpoint is strongly evangelical. Although his discussion

of "Revelation and Inspiration" (chapter XVI, pp. 168-176) stresses an aspect different from that usually emphasized, being concerned mainly with the way the minds of the human authors of the Scriptures functioned in receiving the revelation, the opening sentences of the chapter make clear his attitude. He writes, "All through this book we have referred to the Bible as the inspired revelation of God and His will. We have treated it as absolute truth and assumed that all truths will be in harmony with it" (p. 168). He proceeds immediately to make clear that, although the writers of Scripture may have had a share of the type of inspiration attributed to poets, artists, etc., the real basis of their work was not in their own minds but in the direct activity of the Holy Spirit.

In the opening chapter, "The Nature of the Evidence," he says, "Truth about man can come to him either from experience or by revelation from God. Truth from these two sources will be in harmony with each other." (p. 12). As to the functions of these two sources he aptly remarks, ". . . experience breaks down as a guide just at points where it is needed most. We need to know something about the God whom we are to worship; what is his nature; and what he requires of us. We want to know something about our destiny when the curtain of death falls. If there is to be any answer to these questions, it must come by revelation from God." "Revelation may show how man's body is to be used in the service of God, but it will not necessarily describe the anatomy of the body, and the functions of the brain and nerves. Revelation may show the right direction of thought, but it will not necessarily say anything about the 'structure' of the mind. Yet it is essential to know something about the body and mind of man if we are to reach the truth about him." (pp. 12, 13).

Chapter II, "God the Creator," contains an excellent discussion of the Transcendence and Immanence of God. The Immanence of God is clearly distinguished from Pantheism when the author says, "The universe is not in any sense necessary for the existence of God, but God is necessary for the continued existence of the Universe." (p. 22). On the other hand we are warned not to "confuse two things that the Bible keeps separate. These . . . are the Immanence of God, and the Indwelling of the Holy Spirit, . . . the special prerogative of Christians." "Christians are those who have received the Spirit, in contrast to the people of the world who have not received Him. There is not a single passage in the New Testament which says that all men have the Spirit of God as part of their natural heritage" (p. 23).

The main part of the book, chapters III-XIII, would require for its proper evaluation a knowledge of psychology far beyond that of the present reviewer. A few chapter headings may serve to

indicate something of the subject matter. "The Mind of Man in the New Psychology," "Man and His Body," "The Mind and Time," "Mind, Matter, and Miracles," "Ghosts and Poltergeists," "The Evidence for Reincarnation." It seems to this reviewer that in this section the author has at times given unnecessary credence to some supposed phenomena (e.g. spiritist manifestations). While "the evidence for reincarnation" is rejected as explicable on other grounds, as well as unscriptural, one wonders if the rejection could not have been a little more vigorous and pointed. A warning against the dangers of hypnotism (p. 40) nevertheless attempts to justify its use in the treatment of certain disorders. A sounder view, I believe, is that of another writer who holds that under no circumstances should one submit his mind to the control of another. A somewhat peculiar idea of two distinct falls of angels is set forth in chapter XII, "Man and His Unseen Neighbors."

Chapter VII, "The Significance of Beauty", presents an interesting theory of the nature of the exceptional talents, or "inspiration," as it is often called, often shown by poets, painters, and other artists. It also contains a vigorous and effective critique of the theory of "art for art's sake," or the idea that the artist or poet is subject only to esthetic standards, and not to moral principles, in his work.

In the last few chapters the author turns again to discussion of matters dealt with more directly in the Scriptures. For the most part he seems to be on sound ground here, although a few exceptions might be noted. Although he repudiates universalism, and holds Hell to be a dreadful reality, he suggests the possibility that these sufferings may not be eternal. He does not, however, commit himself definitely to this view. Also, in discussing the Biblical view of man, he seems to hold a modified form of the tripartite theory of man's being. In spite of these weaknesses, this section contains much that should be helpful in understanding the nature of the Christian life.

— Lester B. McIntyre

THE EVILS OF CALVINISM AS SEEN THROUGH THE EYES OF AN ARMINIAN, by L. R. Shelton. Old Puritan Press, P.O. Box 6057, New Orleans 14, Louisiana. 1956, mimeographed, pp. 60, paper cover. 35 cents.

This booklet repeats in expanded form the treatment of the same theme found in an earlier publication (**THE EVILS OF CALVINISM**, by the Rev. Frank B. Beck; see review in **Blue Banner Faith and Life**, October-December, 1956, p. 189).

The teaching of this booklet is sound, though the style of writing scarcely matches it, and there is an extravagant exegesis of the parable of the mustard tree which refers the birds to

modernists, and goes on, "You just try to tear one of those modernists out of there — try to shoot one of those birds out of the branches of the trees — and see what you get into."

— Hugh J. Blair

THE GOSPELS: AN EXPANDED TRANSLATION by Kenneth S. Wuest. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1956, pp. 311. \$3.50.

The author, teacher of New Testament Greek at Moody Bible Institute, has given us a literal translation of the four gospels which fulfills its purpose of bringing out "the richness, force, and clarity of the Greek text."

An expanded translation enables the author to use as many English words as may be needed to reproduce the full picture found in a single Greek word. The Koine Greek, in which the New Testament is written, is full of atmosphere. It pictures the life of our Lord just as the man on the street saw Him and heard Him speak. It is full of vivid, plain language such as people used in the market place.

Dr. Wuest has made a valuable contribution to a better understanding of the New Testament by reproducing the original picture in this way. For example the authorized version gives us the concise, "give place," in Matt. 9:24. The expanded translation says, "be clearing out of here so as to make room." It helps to keep us awake and to pay attention to what we are reading. The Greek imperfect tense shows continuous and incomplete action in the past. Instead of "they came" as the authorized text translates it, we read "they kept on coming." The great importance in making a clear distinction of the tense of the Greek verb is seen in the translation of Matt. 16:19 where the periphrastic future perfect is rendered by the authorized version, "whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth **shall be bound** in heaven . . ." whereas the expanded translation reads, "whatsoever you bind on earth shall have been already bound in heaven . . ." This makes clear the fact that the Christian believer's authority on earth is limited to speaking what God has already made known in His Word. God Himself has pronounced the rules for judgement and the earthly church itself is bound by God's standard.

Any translation is in measure an interpretation and so the author's first chapter, explaining the advantages of an expanded translation, reveals something of his views concerning the "Rapture" and "Great Tribulation", the distinction between "devil" and "demon", and so forth. However, the lay reader as well as the Greek student can derive a wealth of material from this expanded translation.

— D. Ray Wilcox

ANCHOR OF HOPE, Preston J. Stegenga. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Michigan. 1954. 271 pp., cloth, \$3.50.

This history of Hope College was written as his doctoral thesis by a graduate of the college. Hope College, Holland, Michigan, was already in the hearts of the Dutch settlers when they arrived in that area in 1846-1847. They were God-fearing men and women who desired that their children should know the Truth, and who believed that this was possible only if they were able to read and understand it for themselves and teach it to others. The work is very fittingly dedicated to the memory of those "American Pioneers of Dutch Descent who passed on to us a rich heritage of Faith and Hope."

"Anchor of Hope" is another evidence of the great contribution made to America as we know it today by the denominational colleges of the country. It tells the story of the struggle into existence, development from an Academy into a college, the hardships of financing a growing institution, the problems of secularism, etc. In it one sees not only an institution, but a whole church in the throes of life.

This work will be of special interest to all ex-students, alumni and friends of the college; to the Reformed Church in America, and to all who are concerned with the present day contribution of denominational colleges to American life. They have the peculiar opportunity and responsibility of bringing the Word of God to bear on the total life and thinking of youth who will shape the world of tomorrow.

— E. C. Copeland

WITH JESUS ON THE NAVAJO ROAD, by Jacob and Christina Bolt. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 225 Jefferson Avenue, S. E., Grand Rapids 3, Michigan. 1956, pp. 120. \$2.00.

The authors were for 25 years missionaries of the Christian Reformed Church to the Navajo Indians of the Southwest. They have interestingly, earnestly, humourously told the story of their labour in language the child will understand and will attract their elders. One rides with them across the desert, through the storms; sits with them by a bedside; hears them teach in school, church and home; yearns with them over the lost, the wayward. To review the work would be to spoil it. A good book for home and church library. Put copies in your school and public library.

— E. C. Copeland

WHITHER ISRAELI? MOSAIC RESTORATIONISM EXAMINED, by Cecil J. Lowry. Available from the author, 578 Kenwyn Road, Oakland, California. pp. 69, paper cover. 50 cents.

In this work the author presents the Scrip-

ture evidence that led him to abandon the idea that Israel has a glorious national future to be realized at the return of the Lord. In five chapters he shows that this idea had no place in the preaching or writing of the Apostles (the N. T.), nor of the early church fathers until it was brought in through non-Christian, Jewish influences; that at the first coming of the Messiah national Israel was to disappear within a people of God redeemed from among all nations irrespective of whether Israel accepted or rejected Christ as the promised Messiah; that national Israel rejected Christ, and therefore, the kingdom was taken from them and given to a people bringing forth the fruits thereof; that the church has replaced Israel as "the kingdom of priests unto God". The work is well documented by references to Talmudists, Jewish historians, the Fathers, Reformed theologians, and church historians, as well as the Scriptures. It is worthy of wide use.

— E. C. Copeland

INTERPRETING THE BIBLE, by J. Stafford Wright. Tyndale Press, 39 Bedford Square, London W. C. 1, England. pp. 23, paper cover. 6d.

The aim of this booklet is to analyse Biblical writing into various classifications by means of definitions to aid in the interpretation of it. Having classified the material, the reader can arrive at a more nearly accurate interpretation. Nine classifications are made: Literal fact, Substantial Fact or Compressed Fact, Metaphor, Parable, Symbol, Type, Allegory, Myth, Saga.

The work is wholly constructive. It is aimed at helping to avoid many of the pitfalls of Biblical interpretation by the layman who sincerely wishes to know and transmit the truth of God, and yet is unaware of the significance of the various literary types used by Scripture writers. He is warned against such mistakes as trying to find a meaning for every detail of a parable, over-emphasis of typology in the Dispensational fashion, etc. Principal Wright lists Myth and Saga as two erroneous views of historical material in Scripture held by Modernist and Neo-Orthodox theologians, and warns Bible scholars against them. Its brevity and clarity make it most useful to the layman.

— E. C. Copeland

GUIDANCE, by Oliver R. Barclay. Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 39 Bedford Square, London, W.C. 1, England. Pp. 48. Paper cover. 1 shilling.

Here is a fine work in simple, plain language on a very important problem of every-day Christianity. Mr. Barclay has written for the average Christian, and it will be found stimulating and instructive by all. It is just the handbook Christian leaders have been wanting to put in the hands of young Christians.

The subtitle is: Some Biblical Principles. That

well describes the work. There are eleven chapters covering the ground very completely and thoroughly, though briefly and pointedly. "Guidance" for Mr. Barclay is not a technique for occasional use, but daily fellowship with God. God is no psychiatric consultant to be approached on occasions of deep depression or "important" moments of "decision". He makes no promises to supply "guidance" to the occasional enquirer. The author warns against dependence on feelings, seeking signs, and the use of "methods", however much they may appear sanctified by the experience of godly men and women of the past. Most heartily recommended.

— E. C. Copeland

PRAYER AND LIFE'S HIGHEST, By Paul S. Rees. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1956, pp. 128. \$2.00.

Dr. Paul S. Rees is at the present time the pastor of the First Covenant Church of Minneapolis, Minnesota. He has been in this pastorate for more than twenty years. At one time he was President of the National Association of Evangelicals and is an outstanding leader in this field. Dr. Rees is an able leader, preacher, as well as writer. His books of sermons include, **If God Be For Us, Things Unshakable, The Radiant Cross and The Face of Our Lord.**

His latest work is not a book of sermons, but it unquestionably could furnish much fuel for any sermon on prayer. The author has taken, as his springboard for this subject, six prayers of the Apostle Paul. Each chapter is a discussion of one of these prayers. The Chapter titles are as follows: (I have taken the liberty to add the references for each chapter) I. Prayer and the Way of Mastery. Ephesians 1:15-19; 3:14-19. II. Prayer and the Way of Excellency. Philipians 1:9-11. III. Prayer and the Way of Consistency. Colossians 1:9-12; 2:1-2. IV. Prayer and the Way of Sanctity. I Thessalonians 5:23. V. Prayer and the Way of Expectancy. 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12. VI. Prayer and the Way of Serenity. 2 Thessalonians 3:5; 3:16.

Dr. Rees takes special pains to assure the average Christian reader that he can comprehend the message of the book. He accomplishes this end by writing in a fluent and powerful style. He relieves the reader of laborious "word studies" into the difficult passages of Greek. But he quotes freely from the various translations of the Bible, such as Williams, Weymouth, Phillips, Berkeley and the R.S.V. This is done to demonstrate the numerous shades of meaning which are included in each passage. Included in the style is the method or system of outline which the author employed. The outline of each chapter follows the natural outline which each of the Apostle Paul's prayers evidence, i.e. the author comments on each logical division of the prayer.

This method furnishes a natural outline which allows ease of reading.

The over-all tone of the book is both devotional and challenging. It is devotional in that it turns the heart and mind of the reader toward God. The author encourages the reader unconsciously to view the aspects of prayer from the objective standpoint; in other words as God regards prayer. The book is challenging in that the author "dares" or "provokes" the Christian to place as much trust and faith in God through prayer as Paul did. In the discussion of each of Paul's prayers, Dr. Rees points out that the most prized attributes of the Christian personality are within reach of all Christians if they will but reach out toward God via the avenues of prayer. This book proclaims the many possibilities which prayer provides if believers will use it wisely.

This book is well worth reading by anyone who desires to communicate more closely with the God of the universe.

— Marion L. McFarland

THE PILOT SERIES IN LITERATURE: BOOK ONE, by Alice Fenenga, Gertrude Haan and Beth Merizon. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1957, pp. 516. \$5.50.

The Pilot Series in Literature, of which this volume is the first, consists of three literary readers of the junior high school level. They are meant to "pilot" or guide the students along the highway of good reading through these formative years.

The general format presents a pleasing appearance. The pages are large and the print is bold and clear. Illustrations are black and white and of the etching type.

The stories have interest appeal for students of this age group. There are tales of courage, famous people, nature, adventure, animals and foreign lands.

A unit of myths, legends and tales of fancy include such old gems of literature as "The Song of Hiawatha," "Rip Van Winkle", and "The Inchcape Rock". Selections from the beloved classic, "Pilgrim's Progress" greet you in the opening pages.

The vocabulary is well within the range of the 12 to 14 year age group. While no glossary is included there are footnotes at the bottom of each page giving pronunciation and definition of words that might be difficult.

Helps to study in the form of questions and suggestions follow each story. Interesting facts about the author's life and their relation to the story add to the understanding.

The National Union of Christian Schools is to be commended for their successful efforts in producing this fine text book.

You, too, will say as I did when I saw it,
"Oh! I'd like to have one of these for my own."
— Marian M. Vos

SOME THOUGHTS OF FAITH HEALING,
Editors: V. Edmunds and C. G. Scorer, Tyndale
Press, 39 Bedford Square, London W. C. 1, Eng-
land, 1956, pp. 60, paper cover. 2s.6d.

On the back of the title page we read, "This document represents the findings of a Study Group. It is published in order to promote discussion of the problems involved. Its conclusions are not to be regarded as the expression by the Christian Medical Fellowship of an official view."

In five chapters the editors show that the New Testament evidences are that the special gifts of miracles were to end with the apostolic age; that first and second century church literature indicates the people of that day understood that these special gifts had ceased to be exercised; by examination of a number of case histories it is shown that there is no reliable evidence that anyone professing to exercise the gift of healing has ever actually brought about any healing of organic disease of a nature different from cures observed by medical science in cases unrelated to claims of faith healing. (The study confined its investigations to organic diseases as the manifestations of functional diseases are not so easily demonstrated, nor their complete cure so easily subjected to proof). The authors firmly believe that God does answer prayer and heal the body, but for them the proof of the practice of faith healing must rest on demonstrable evidence of cures brought about in a manner not known as possible to medical science or unobserved apart from the practice. Following their general conclusions the authors quote in an appendix a long passage (with which they heartily agree) from B. B. Warfield's *MIRACLES: YESTERDAY AND TODAY* (pp 192-195). This is a classic defense of the Reformed position that special gifts of healing were accompaniments of the Apostolic age only, given as proof of the authority of the apostles in the establishment of the church.

This is indeed a very sane, interesting, and enlightening defense of the historic Reformed position on faith healing by men qualified both medically and spiritually to examine all the evidence and give an unbiased opinion. It is most heartily recommended.

— E. Clark Copeland

WHAT PRESBYTERIANS BELIEVE, by
Gordon H. Clark. Presbyterian and Reformed

Publishing Co., P. O. Box 185, Nutley 10, N. J. 1956, pp. 130, paper cover. \$2.00.

The Butler University Professor of Philosophy has added another volume to his growing shelf of works in defense of the Reformed faith and life. The subtitle of this volume is "An Exposition of the Westminster Confession." The work first appeared in the *SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN JOURNAL* as a series of popular discussions of the themes of the Confession. To each has been added a section to make the word serve the purposes of study classes. "Even so, it is still not a formal commentary," says the author in the Preface.

Not every section is examined, but the work is creative in opening up discussion and steering thought. The simple language and style give clarity to profound truths and make them stick. Dr. Clark has very admirably succeeded in his aim of making the Confession come alive for the layman. Pastors will find it a very helpful aid in their presentation of the great doctrines of our faith either in sermon or study class.

This is no "watered down" form of Calvinism. As an example we quote from the chapter on Good Works: "The first part of this section teaches that every distinction between good and evil is found in the Bible . . . The Biblical revelation is therefore essential to a knowledge of what good works are . . . The first requirement for a good work is that it be commanded by God . . . Thus while good works are done voluntarily and not against our wishes and desires, they are not the result of a 'free' will independent God. God in his sovereign grace changes our desires and makes us willing."

It is sad to find that this Reformed principle is forgotten when the chapter on Worship is under discussion. Having quoted, "the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by himself, and so limited by his revealed will that he may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men. . . ." the author states, "Therefore Bible believing Presbyterians will not make the sign of the cross, sprinkle themselves with holy water, bow to the altar, or **invent any rite not prescribed in the Scriptures**" (p. 85). It is always easier to point the finger at others than at ourselves. How does Dr. Clark justify the use of the pipe organ and the hymn by this interpretation?

Heartily recommended for home and church libraries.

— E. Clark Copeland

Books Received

Because of lack of space, our usual list of Books Received is omitted from the present issue. Although this issue contains a large number of

reviews, there still remains a long list of books which have been received from publishers but not yet reviewed. Some of these have been in

the hands of persons who promised to review them for over two years. It would be very encouraging if reviews of most or all of these could be published in our next issue. Brief notices

will be acceptable in case reviewers prefer not to attempt longer reviews. Copy must be in the hands of the editor by June 1 to ensure publication in the July-September issue. — Ed.

Blue Banner Question Box

Readers are invited to submit Biblical, doctrinal and practical questions for answer in this department. Names of correspondents will not be published, but anonymous communications will be disregarded.

Question:

On a recent Sabbath morning a speaker on a religious radio broadcast made the following statement: "God votes for us, the devil votes against us, and the way we vote swings the election." What should be thought of this statement?

Answer:

The statement cited is an old one, which has been in circulation for many years. The theology implied by the statement is Arminianism, which denies the Biblical doctrine of God's sovereign, free election of sinners unto eternal life, and regards salvation as depending, at its crucial point, on a "decision" which the sinner is said to be perfectly free to make. The unscriptural character of the statement cited is so extreme that it should be obvious to any careful student of the Word of God.

There is not space here to present the wide range of Biblical proof of the doctrine of sovereign election, nor to present an extended refutation of the Arminian theology which denies this doctrine. Interested readers are referred to the article entitled "When God is not God" in this issue of *Blue Banner Faith and Life*. For fuller treatment we recommend two excellent books: **THE REFORMED DOCTRINE OF PREDESTINATION**, by Loraine Boettner, published by the Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich.; (2) **THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD**, by Arthur W. Pink, published by Bible Truth Depot, Swengel, Pa. These works present the Biblical data in some detail.

We shall, however, cite two verses from Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians: "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will . . ." (1:4, 5).

Note that according to these verses, the choice of persons to be saved (a) was made by God in eternity, "before the foundation of the world"; (b) was the cause, not the result, of the persons being holy; therefore they were not elect-

ed because God foresaw that they would make a holy decision to accept the Gospel; (c) was according to the good pleasure of God's will, not according to the good pleasure of the sinner's will.

Arminianism is popular because it flatters the natural man and his powers. At the same time it debases God, regarding Him as a helpless onlooker until man, by his free will, makes the all important decision. Arminianism regards man's will as something that has somehow escaped the ruin and corruption done to the human personality by man's fall into sin. The sinner is regarded as having full power and ability to repent and believe the Gospel. He is regarded as initiating the process of salvation. Once the sinner has started it, God follows it up with divine grace. But the sinner has to start it. How can Arminians reconcile this view with the truth that the natural man is "dead in trespasses and sins"? (Eph. 2:1). We might ask, is the human will included in this condition of spiritual death or is it not?

The statement cited from a radio broadcast regards both God and the devil as merely "voting" while the sinner alone is the one who "swings the election." This statement seems to put God and the devil on a par as far as ability to influence the sinner is concerned. And it seems to regard the unsaved sinner as exercising a power greater than that exercised by God Himself. In conclusion, we regard the statement cited as theologically unsound, dishonoring to God, and likely to lead sinners to think that sin has left their inner personality undamaged.

— J. G. Vos

Question:

In view of the fact that Holy Scripture makes it plain that philosophy is after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of this world, and not after Christ (Col. 2:8-10), how is it that so many professed Calvinists and conservative evangelical ministers spend so much of their time learning and preaching philosophy?

If it can be shown from Col. 2:8 that philosophy is not Christian, is it not time that professed-

ly born-again Christians stopped talking about Christian philosophy when there is no such thing?

It has generally been admitted by godly men in all ages that to be called by God to preach the Gospel is the greatest honour that can be bestowed on a man in this life. How is it then that so many orthodox ministers, especially in the U.S.A., give up their churches and go to teach philosophy in secular schools and universities? Does this not indicate that they were never really called by God to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ?

Answer:

The foregoing queries, which came from a reader in England, were divided into three items. We have put them together here as they are closely related and can best be answered in a single answer.

The word "philosophy" means literally "love of wisdom." We do not believe that philosophy is necessarily anti-Christian or evil. In the Epistle to the Colossians the apostle Paul was endeavouring to guard the Christians of Colosse against the ancient heresy known as Gnosticism. This was a very false and injurious type of teaching which was infecting the churches. A careful study of the Epistle shows that Paul's warning is not aimed at philosophy as such, but at the Gnostic teaching which was menacing the churches.

Understanding philosophy rightly as "love of wisdom," there is real philosophy in the Bible. The Old Testament books of Job, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes are often classified as "Wisdom Literature" and they present a true philosophy which honors God and benefits man. These inspired books are high in their praise of wisdom.

Human secular philosophy is contrary to Christianity because it leaves God and His revelation out of account. Thus Paul tells us that "the world by wisdom knew not God" (1 Cor 1:21). Any system of thought which starts without belief in God is bound to lead man away from the truth. It does not follow, however, that there is no value to the Christian in the study of human secular philosophy. Admittedly, philosophy without God is no substitute for the Gospel nor does it offer any satisfactory conclusions to the child of God. Yet if we are to preach the Gospel to sinners in a way that is truly relevant to their condition and their need, we must have a clear understanding of the system of false ideas that is entrenched in their minds. If anything is needed today, it is Gospel preaching which is truly relevant to modern man's deep blindness and foolishness. The servant of Christ must know the false assumptions and the refuges of lies which lurk in the minds of modern men, that he may adequately present the truth of God in pointed antithesis to them. This requires a knowledge

of both philosophy and modern scientific thought.

We maintain, too, that there is such a thing as genuinely Christian philosophy. Dr. Cornelius Van Til in a pamphlet entitled "Christian Philosophy" asks whether there can be a Christian and Calvinistic philosophy, and then replies: "Our answer is that a life and world view that is all-comprehensive and thoroughly self-conscious may fairly be called a philosophy. Non-Christian thinkers have for centuries usurped the term philosophy. They claimed to be the only ones that followed facts and operated by principles of reason. . . . Only on the presupposition that the self-contained God of Scripture controls all things, can man know himself or anything else." He goes on to state that a truly Christian philosophy is the only real philosophy. Dr. Van Til also states that truly Christian philosophy "must interpret its own starting-point and its own criterion in terms of the infallible authority of Scripture."

Dr. Van Til also states: "A truly Christian philosophy, a philosophy based frankly on the presuppositions of the truth of the Christian religion, is now being worked out by Professors D. H. Th. Vollenhoven and H. Dooyeweerd of Amsterdam and by H. G. Stoker of Potchefstroom" (South Africa). "They employ the profoundest insights of Augustine, Calvin and others, and are building, for the first time in history, an imposing and comprehensive structure of Christian philosophical interpretation."

With reference to the query why "so many orthodox ministers, especially in the U.S.A." give up their churches to teach philosophy in secular schools, the present writer does not know of more than one or two ministers that have actually done this. Doubtless there may be cases unknown to me, but I have no knowledge of facts which would indicate that "many" orthodox ministers have done this. Our correspondent is perhaps not accurately informed as to the facts in American churches and educational institutions. Philosophy has little popularity in America in comparison with other branches of study today. For example, Geneva College at the present time has about 850 regular students; of these, about two dozen have chosen a course in philosophy. This course constitutes about one-sixth of the academic schedule for one school year of the students who have elected it. We seriously doubt that "many" orthodox ministers have abandoned preaching in order to teach philosophy. As to whether such a change of occupation would indicate that the persons in question were never really called by God to preach the Gospel, in the nature of the case this question cannot be answered. Only God and the persons concerned could give a true answer to it. In denominations holding the Presbyterian system of church government, release of a minister from the pastoral charge of a congregation requires the

approval of the presbytery. Where such approval is given, the resignation of a minister cannot be regarded as disorderly. The minister himself is of course accountable to God for his decisions in all such matters.

— J. G. Vos

Question:

Why is it that there is so little stress laid upon a God-given experimental religion in Calvinistic circles in the U.S.A. and Holland? Religious literature coming from these two countries gives the impression that to be separate from the world and from worldliness is "Pietism."

Answer:

The above query came from a subscriber in England. I am not sure just what literature he has seen which has given him the impression of lack of emphasis on practical experimental religion. Several things may be said on the subject, however.

In the first place, there is a considerable amount of publication of solid Puritan works going on. The Sovereign Grace Book Club, the Eerdmans Publishing Company, the Baker Book House, the Bible Truth Depot, and others, have been reprinting a wealth of material by the Reformers and Puritan divines. Works of men like Calvin, Baxter, Owen, Bunyan and others have been appearing in new printings and evidently are being sold and read.

In the second place, the total volume of truly Reformed or Calvinistic literature being published in America today is actually only a tiny trickle in comparison with the vast flood of religious literature which is continually pouring from the presses. Most of this great bulk of literature may be classified as either (a) Fundamentalist literature, or (b) Liberal or Neo-orthodox literature.

What is called "Fundamentalist" literature is almost wholly Arminian in theology, is usually Premillennial in its view of prophecy, and a large part of it is strongly colored by Dispensationalism of the Darby-Scotfield type. Also much Fundamentalist literature is affected by trichotomy, by erroneous views on sanctification, and by crude confusion in its teaching on the subject of assurance.

On the other hand, the Liberal and Neo-orthodox literature which is issued in immense volume by the large publishers of New York, Chicago, etc., is based on the "higher critical" view of the Bible and is hostile to the orthodox view of Scripture and to historic, supernatural Christianity in general. The amount of this type of religious literature which is published is really astonishing. A constant stream of it flows from the presses — each passing year adds scores of new books of this general type, and the printings are large.

Real Calvinists in America are but a feeble voice crying in the wilderness of Fundamentalism and Liberalism. It is natural, therefore, and indeed necessary, that Calvinistic publications be largely aimed to counteract the erroneous Fundamentalist and Liberal material which abounds on every hand. This may account for the impression of our correspondent that American Calvinistic literature is neglecting experimental religion. The need is so urgent to ground people in basic sound doctrine and to defend the orthodox view of Scripture and to present the case for historic supernatural Christianity, that literature on the cultivation of the subjective side of religion (what our correspondent calls "experimental religion") may have been somewhat neglected in comparison with the former.

Pietism is properly defined as "a movement in the Lutheran Church, which arose towards the end of the 17th and continued during the first half of the following century" (Encyclopaedia Britannica). The name "Pietism" was given to the movement by its opponents in ridicule, as the name "Methodists" was given to the followers of John Wesley in England. Pietism was a movement of an inner circle within the larger circle of the Lutheran Church. It emphasized the universal priesthood of believers, the importance of a practical Christian life, an evangelistic type of preaching and the need for presenting the Gospel winsomely to unbelievers. Gradually the difference between Pietism and orthodox Lutheranism crystallized: the Pietists emphasized personal spiritual experience, while the orthodox Lutherans emphasized correct theological doctrine. This led to a false antithesis between experience and theology, with the Pietists unduly neglecting theology while the orthodox neglected experience. The Pietist emphasis on experience and separation from the world tended to become somewhat stereotyped in the idea that worldliness can be identified with certain specific worldly practices and amusements.

Pietism was losing influence as a definite movement by about 1750. However the characteristic ideas of Pietism still exist today and are far from uncommon in Christian circles, in America at least. True Christian separation from the world and from worldliness is not Pietism, of course. Yet false and Pietistic ideas of separation are so prevalent that it is no wonder that our correspondent has gotten the unfortunate impression that Reformed writers are only against "Pietism" and not in favor of true Biblical holiness. We could point out Reformed literature which strongly stresses the need for personal holiness and Biblical separation from the world. However, there is no doubt a need for more of such literature.

— J. G. Vos

Question:

Recently I read an article which held that the sinner hates God. Do you consider this Scriptural?

Answer:

It may seem a hard saying to affirm that the unsaved sinner actually hates God. Nevertheless, Scripture teaches that this is so. A few verses may be cited as evidence:

Rom. 1:30, "Backbiters, haters of God. . .".

Psalm 81:15, "The haters of the Lord. . .".

Psalm 139:21, "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee?"

When mankind fell into sin, the human heart became deeply depraved and corrupted by sin. The essence of sin is enmity to God. This sinfulness has so deeply affected man that he is declared to be "dead in trespasses and sins," that is, completely dominated by the sinful nature. The doctrine of total depravity does not imply that any person in this life is as bad as he could become, but it implies that no part of the human personality has been left unspoiled by sin. In his deepest self, the unsaved, unregenerate sinner is at enmity with the holy God. He is therefore truly called a "hater of God."

Yet it may seem to us that our unsaved neighbors and friends cannot really be that bad. Do we not observe them performing acts of kindness and unselfish service to others? How can we say that a man who contributes money for Hungarian Relief and supports the local hospital and Community Chest is totally depraved by sin and actually a hater of God? The answer to this problem is to be found in the Biblical doctrine of Common Grace.

Scripture teaches that besides the saving grace of God, which makes a man a Christian and brings him to eternal life, there is also such a

thing as the common grace of God. This grace is called "common" because it is not limited to the elect but is given to all mankind in general. Common grace does not bring salvation but it does restrain the effects of human sinfulness. It operates partly through conscience and partly in other ways. Under the influences of God's common grace evil is restrained and a degree of human decency and civic law and order are maintained. If it were not for the restraining influence of God's common grace, wicked people would rise up and kill all the Christians in the world. Conditions of extreme violence such as existed in the period just prior to the Flood would be repeated.

The common grace of God may not only limit and restrain external manifestations of wickedness, but may also keep the principle of enmity to God from dominating the consciousness of the unsaved sinner. By the common grace of God this hatred of God, which is there and is certainly real, may be kept below the level of consciousness, deep in the subconscious personality of the sinner. Consequently few sinners think of themselves as haters of God, because their consciousness of this principle of hatred is limited by God's common grace.

In hell, God's common grace will be no more. The sinner in hell will consciously hate God to all eternity. For in hell people's real inner character will absolutely dominate their life and consciousness without any restraint whatever. The sinner in hell will not only have this deep enmity to God, but he will fully realize that he has it and is dominated by it.

— J. G. Vos

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. An annual financial report is published in the Minutes of Synod of the denomination.

Sets of back issues for the years 1955 and 1956 are available at \$1.00 for each year, postpaid. The supply of back issues of all other years is exhausted, except for a few odd copies that are available. Pressboard binders which will conveniently preserve two years' issues are available at 75 cents each, postpaid. Subscriptions for 1957 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 during the year. When subscriptions are received during the year, the back issues beginning with 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 Street, Geelong, Victoria, Australia. Annual subscription rate for Australia and New Zealand is 10 shillings. (At present Mr. Barkley is on furlough in Ireland; therefore new subscriptions from Australia and New Zealand should be sent direct to U.S.A. for the time being).

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The Offense of the Cross

By J. G. Vos

"If I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? Then is the offense of the cross ceased". Gal. 5:11

The word here translated "offense" is the Greek "skandalon", which first meant the trigger of a trap or snare, then an occasion of stumbling. Our word "scandal" is derived from it. The offense of the cross is the stumblingblock that keeps people from becoming Christians. It is the offense of the cross that makes Christianity different from all other religions. Only Christianity presents a crucified Saviour as the center of its system. It is the presence or absence of the offense of the cross that determines whether a movement or organization is truly Christian or not. If the offense of the cross is by-passed or toned down, it is not Christianity but a counterfeit.

It is the cross of Christ, not our cross, that is spoken of. The "cross" means the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ for sinners. This implies human guilt, depravity, inability to save self. It implies that salvation is not an attainment but a gift of free grace. It reduces us all to paupers before the holy God.

The cross of Christ is not a sentimental idea, but a horribly realistic one. There is nothing beautiful or lovely about the cross of Christ in itself; it is unspeakably dreadful. It stands for the righteous judgment and awful wrath of God against human sin. It stands for the curse of God upon the sinner. Christ was made a curse for us: for it is written, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal. 3:13). But the cross also stands for the love and mercy of God. At Calvary, divine love and divine wrath meet. God so loved this wicked world that He gave His Son to suffer and die for sinners on the accursed cross.

The cross is an offense not merely because of its crudity, its cruelty and its shame. It is an offense to unsaved sinners even more because of what it implies concerning them. It cuts the root of human pride, pretension and self-righteousness. It eliminates all ground of human boasting. It leaves us nothing to claim, nothing to congrat-

ulate ourselves about. The cross will not let a man stand on his own feet before God. It will not let a man claim salvation by "doing his best" or "keeping the golden rule". All this is cut off at the root.

The cross is an offense to all non-Christian religion, to all apostate religion, to all pseudo-Christianity, to all legalism or moralism, to all formalism, to all Christless schemes of "character building", and to all the rest of the dismal array of human substitutes for salvation by the shed blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Today, more than ever, the cross is an offense. Men seek to evade it by theories that take the blood out of salvation and leave us a Jesus who was only an example, a martyr, a teacher. Thousands of theological books have been written in these attempts to get rid of the offense of the cross—the bare, bald truth that the Son of God suffered and died, His blood was shed, in bearing the wrath and curse of God as the Substitute of guilty and helpless sinners. Our age retains the name of the cross, but explains away its reality and power. Modern religion is really a bloodless faith. Because it is bloodless, it is also hopeless, and cannot save guilty men from sin and hell.

What the world hates, the saved Christian glories in. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal. 6:14). The offense of the cross, the hated sign of the substitutionary atonement, is the sign of genuine Christianity. We should never tone it down, minimize it, soft-pedal it, apologize for it. It must always be dominant in our religion. Christ is not preached aright unless His shed blood is emphasized as the only way guilty human beings can find peace with the righteous God. We can never advance beyond the cross; we can never outgrow it and go on to other things. It will always be central.

(Reprinted by permission from "The Covenanter Pastor")

Though sun and moon and stars be not, the heavens a vanished scroll,
The pillars of the earth are His. Be fixed in God, my soul.
The waves may roar, the nations rage, and yet at His command
At the four corners of the earth the four great angels stand,
And swiftly hasteneth the day foretold in His sure Word,
The kingdom of the world shall be the kingdom of the Lord.

(Author unknown. Adapted)



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NUMBER 3

**Behold, a King shall reign in righteousness, and
princes shall rule in judgment. And a man shall be as a
hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tem-
pest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of
a great rock in a weary land.**

Isaiah 32:1,2

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System of Doctrine set forth in the Word of God and Summarized in the Standards
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Hail, Sovereign Love

By John Andre

Hail, sovereign love, which first began
The scheme to rescue fallen man!
Hail, matchless, free, eternal grace,
Which gave my soul a Hiding Place.

Against the God who built the sky,
I fought with hands uplifted high,
Despised the mention of His grace,
Too proud to seek a Hiding Place.

Enwrapt in thick Egyptian night,
And fond of darkness more than light,
Madly I ran the sinful race,
Secure, without a Hiding Place.

And thus the eternal counsel ran,
Almighty love, arrest that man!
I felt the arrows of distress,
And found I had no Hiding Place.

Indignant justice stood in view;
To Sinai's fiery mount I flew;
But Justice cried, with frowning face:
"This mountain is no Hiding Place."

Ere long a heavenly voice I heard,
And Mercy's angel soon appeared;
He led me at a placid pace,
To Jesus as a Hiding Place.

On Him almighty vengeance fell
Which must have sunk a world to Hell.
He bore it for a sinful race,
And thus became their Hiding Place.

Should sevenfold storms of thunder roll,
And shake this globe from pole to pole,
No thunderbolt shall daunt my face,
For Jesus is my Hiding Place.

A few more rolling suns at most,
Shall land me on fair Canaan's coast,
When I shall sing the song of grace,
And see my glorious Hiding Place.

Note: Major John Andre was an officer of the British Army at the time of the American War of Independence. Born in London of Swiss parents in 1751, he resisted the call of the Gospel during early life, but was brought to a clear faith in Christ and a full assurance of salvation before his death.

When the American traitor Benedict Arnold made overtures to the British to betray West Point on the Hudson River, then an important American fort, the British commander, Sir Henry Clinton, appointed Andre to negotiate with Arnold. Arnold gave Andre papers including plans of the fort at West Point. While attempting to return to the British headquarters, Andre was captured

within the American lines, and was hanged as a spy in October, 1780, at the age of 29 years.

The foregoing beautiful poem was written by Major Andre a few days before his execution. In reading the poem, the author's clear, strong conviction of his own utter sinfulness should be noted, as well as his ringing testimony to the sovereign grace of God in Christ. Andre, as a truly Biblical Christian, knew that back of his salvation stood the eternal counsel of God which had decreed, from all eternity, that he, a particular human being, should be "arrested" by divine grace and should come to Jesus, the all-sufficient Hiding Place. Note that the poem attributes nothing but sin and failure to man, while all the praise and glory are attributed to the God of sovereign grace.

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The Evangelical Library *A World-Wide Christian Loan Library*

By Iain Murray, B. A.

"If religious books are not widely circulated among the masses in this country . . . I do not know what is to become of us as a nation. If the truth is not diffused error will be. If the evangelical volume does not reach every hamlet the pages of a corrupt literature will. If God and His Word are not known and received, the Devil and his works will gain the ascendancy." These words of Daniel Webster, the American statesman, epitomize the vision which lies behind The Evangelical Library. The origin of the Library lies in the spiritual experience of the founder, and this fact explains why it was not designed as a mere academic institution but to promote the study of those writings which reflect the truth as in Jesus.

One dark and stormy Sabbath, in the early years of this century, Geoffrey Williams, a school-boy in Brighton, was struck down by the preaching of that faithful minister of the Gospel, Mr. J. K. Popham. The love and knowledge of the Word of God implanted in his soul at that time, was soon being nourished and strengthened by the writings of Reformers, Puritans and Covenanters whose worth Mr. Popham constantly enforced. As years passed, and more and more old writers were studied, the power of the printed page became deeply impressed on Mr. Williams' heart. He observed the numerous instances when God had used books in a remarkable way to extend His Kingdom; he saw the meaning of Luther's assertion that "Satan hates the use of pens" for good purposes; finally he was burdened by the realisation that many of the best books were scarcely known and beyond the reach of the ordinary Christian. "The thought of a great Protestant nation", writes Mr. Williams, "without an Evangelical library with facilities for the widespread circulation of this heritage of truth took hold of my spirit as by an irresistible influence, set me free from anxiety as to personal treasures, and fired me with an urge to sow the seeds of a great Circulating and Reference Library for the Christian public, both at home and abroad." The vision was not for a mere library, but for a ministry of literature, an unstopping of those wells of truth for which the Church had long suffered the most serious want.

While these convictions were crystallizing in his mind, Mr. Geoffrey Williams began to search

the country to gather the right books. What was difficult then would have been impossible now. We in Britain have in this generation lived to see the fulfilment of those solemn words which Stephen Egerton wrote some three centuries ago in his preface to that famous Puritan book by Richard Rogers "The Practice of Christianity". Stephen Egerton after reproving their careless under-valuing of the books God was giving them ends on a prophetic note deploring that so many Christians "rarely or never read over a good book (of any reasonable bignisse) from the beginning to the end thereof: or if they do so, they (as if they had done enough) . . . lose it, or cast it aside for ever, to the dust, cobwebs and moths to study and meditate upon, for any more dealing they meane to have with it . . . **What neede wee may have hereafter of such sound and savorie writings as we now cast at our heeles, hee only knoweth that knoweth all things perfectly.**" In the twenties and thirties Mr. Geoffrey Williams observing the signs of an approaching famine, was working day and night collecting "the wheat into his garner". His expectations were fulfilled for in the last war alone some twenty million books (including hundreds of thousands of Puritan and other rare theological writings) were destroyed, while millions more were pulped. These were in one important sense greater losses than we ever suffered on a battlefield. Thus it came about that in a semi-rural parish in Surrey about 1930 a brick building was erected and "The Beddington Free Grace Library" established. The momentous significance of this event was observed for several years by only a few. The fact is that this rare and valuable collection of books was more or less hidden away in this outlying district, comparatively unused like an unworked gold-mine. Here the Library remained till the early years of the last war, when a few influential visitors, and in particular Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones (who has since become the President of the Library) discovered its existence and warmly exhorted that it should be centralised in the heart of London. "As far as I am aware," wrote Dr. Lloyd-Jones, "there is no such collection of books anywhere. For anyone who is at all interested in true Protestantism, and especially in its revival, the Library is a sheer delight! It should be within easy reach and access." The next vital stage in the Library's history therefore took place in 1943 with its removal

to London. The Times newspaper reported, "This project promises to be of great influence and far reaching importance." Finally the Library was moved in 1946 to a more advantageous position in Chiltern Street, where I would like to conduct the reader.

The main part of the Library is on the top floor of a large nineteenth century red-brick building, and we shall find it open anytime between 10 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. Four flights of plain stairs led us to our destination. The covers of the latest Reformed books (generally from the U.S.A.) are attractively displayed alongside the staircase; before we climb the last flight a notice arrests our hurried ascent — "Pause and Pray". These brief words convey the spirit of the authors whose works we shall soon see: "If you want to be a deep divine," said Samuel Rutherford "study sanctification". At the top on opening a door we enter a long hall, and books meet our gaze in every direction. The hall is divided into several compartments, each containing various sections — commentaries, doctrine, systematic theology, Church history, biography, junior literature, etc. A glass case containing Puritan works extends the whole length of the hall, at the far end of which is a Reference Room with tables and chairs for those who wish to consult the rare and reference volumes in the reading room. The Library is a living fulfilment of the prediction of an old Puritan writer — "Our books may come to be seen where ourselves shall never be heard. These may preach where the author cannot, and (which is more) when he is not." Do we want to hear the teaching that shook England in the sixteenth century? Or the preaching that set on foot the great spiritual movement in England and Scotland in the seventeenth century? Would we like to meet the New England Puritans, and learn the truths upon which the American nation was built? Do we want to know the facts of the great eighteenth century awakening? All these things, and many more, these precious time honoured volumes make possible. We can have a real familiarity with the men whose pictures adorn the walls — John Calvin in his study, The Westminster Divines in session, George Whitefield meeting with "The Holy Club" in Oxford, to mention but a few. How many thoughts these old books bring to mind — Who were their authors? Where are they now! How short is time! How great was the diligence and Scriptural learning of our forefathers! Who have the various owners been throughout the centuries — did they use them well or die ignorant of their words? Answers to the latter question are sometimes unexpectedly received; once on taking down Hutcheson's great commentary on John's Gospel I found neatly inscribed inside "Robt. M. McCheyne, Dundee, 1836." No doubt if the book could speak it would tell of the prayers, fasts, tears, and joys it once witnessed in its faithful owner's study.

Inside an office at the near end of the hall, we

may well find Mr. Goeffrey Williams immersed in correspondence or reading but always ready to greet a visitor. If he is not there we shall certainly meet Miss Denby, his untiring assistant and secretary. Miss Denby is the only full-time assistant, and lovingly attempts as much as three workers could comfortably undertake. If it was not for the part-time assistance of voluntary helpers the running of the Library on its present scale would be impossible.

The first floor of the building is not open to the public, but we must go there to appreciate the far flung influence this work is exercising. On this floor all the work of mailing books to the provinces and abroad goes on, for books may be borrowed in all parts of the world. A map on the wall shows us that The Evangelical Library has now some 85 branches, spread over all five continents, one even behind the 'Iron Curtain' in Hungary. The books that leave this department may soon be crossing the Seven Seas, or travelling by boat on the rivers of Africa, by dog-sledge in Alaska, or upon the packs of postmen in Korea. One branch of the Library at Taipeh, Taiwan (Formosa) itself possess no less than 3,400 books in English and 1,600 in Chinese. At this branch alone recently some 8,800 have been read on the premises in six months! Another branch in French Equatorial Africa serves five large Missions with some 250 missionaries. The branch in the Belgian Congo under the leadership of Mademoiselle Madeleine Bremond has even opened sub-branches, and has a native helper whose work it is to read good books to numbers of illiterates. All this in the providence of God has resulted from the conversion of a school-boy in Brighton! We are forcibly reminded of the words of the founder of Emmanuel College (that great Puritan foundation) in 1584, to Queen Elizabeth, "I have set an acorn, which when it becomes an oak, God alone knows what will be the fruit thereof."

It may well be that the reader of this article, seeing the hand of God in this work, may desire to know of its future progress and to give what prayerful support they can. Those who are members of the Library freely receive the Library Bulletin from time to time. This generally contains not only an account of the work, but a valuable historical or theological article. The autumn number of last year, for instance, contained a fine account of "The Scriptural Doctrine of Election from the Reformers to the Puritans", and the present Spring issue has in it an article on the Scottish Covenanters. A Lecture is given annually on behalf of the Library and later published. Some of the past titles indicate the character of these lectures — "The Practical Writings of the English Reformers," "Reformation Principles," "The Faith of the English Reformers."

The founder himself, deeply impressed when young by "Jessica's First Prayer," has formed a fine Junior section where youth from the tenderest

age may glean ears of corn suited to their years, and find book after book that God has conspicuously blessed to generations of little children. Oh! that the Holy Spirit would bring again a revival of true religion and draw men, women, and children to Himself. As this ministry of literature is used to that end and to establish saints in the truth as it is in Jesus we shall have cause to praise His Holy Name that this world-wide Library was brought into being.

I will close with a few suggestions of means of aiding this work. The help of authors and publishers who send copies of their books is warmly

appreciated. Elderly Christians who are no longer using their books can safeguard their preservation for posterity and their widespread usefulness by giving them to the Library. Above all, the Lord's people can help by their prayers and, as constrained, by their purse.

Note: The foregoing article on a remarkable Kingdom work was specially written for **Blue Banner Faith and Life** by Mr. Murray. Full particulars concerning the Library will be sent on application to the Librarian, The Evangelical Library, 78A Chiltern Street, London, W.1, England. — Ed.

Sketches of the Covenanters

By J. C. McFeeters

Chapter XXVII.

The Covenanters' Communion. — A. D. 1664.

The Lord Jesus Christ loves His Church with love that arises into flames. "I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with a great jealousy." The Church is His Bride, His well-beloved, His only one; He has bestowed His heart upon her.

The love of Jesus for His Church has ever been excessive in intensity. His blood was shed for her redemption. Love laid Him on the altar, where His life was consumed for her sake. It laid all Covenant blessings at her feet, placed the angelic hosts at her service, made the universe tributary to her welfare, opened heaven for her admission, prepared her throne at the right hand of God, and gave the eternal ages to her for service and enjoyment, in Jesus Christ her Lord. And this love has never abated; His voice resounds across the centuries, falling upon her ears in sweetest accents, saying, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love."

The Lord Jesus asks the Church for reciprocal love. It is His due; Christ is worthy; nothing less than vehement love will satisfy the Divine heart. The apostle, in dread of its subsidence, cries out, "Keep yourselves in the love of God." How readily the Church, in interest and zeal, becomes cold. Her spiritual pulse sinks till it is scarcely perceptible; the flames disappear, and the coals lie hidden in their own grey ashes.

With such conditions the Lord is vexed. He gently chides His inconstant Bride, saying, "Thou has left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen; repent, and do the first works." Then in unwaning faithfulness He tenderly soliloquizes: "Behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her; and she shall sing as in the days of her youth." The Covenanted Church was now in

the wilderness; the Lord had brought her hither, that He might woo her back to Himself, and revive her first love. Here He spake to her heart the words that rekindled the first of her earliest and strongest devotion to the Covenant, that holy contract of her marriage to the Lord.

The loving fidelity of the 40,000 Covenanters, or more, who had been deprived of their ministers by King Charles, was severely tested. The Lord Jesus, in His crucial providence, was to them as a refiner's fire; their love was sorely tried in the terrible heat.

The first question that appealed to the heart was concerning comfort and convenience. Their churches were occupied by other ministers. There the people could have preaching, hear the Word, listen to prayers, sing Psalms, and receive baptism and the Lord's Supper. True, the services were spiced and ornamented with details, which the Covenanters disliked, because they were unscriptural. But could they not find hidden manna on the sand, and kernels of wheat in the chaff? Could they not get sufficient food in the new ministrations to sustain their souls? Could they not reach heaven by the new road as certainly as by the old? Such were the inquiries that appealed to their love of ease. These sturdy sons of the Covenant said, "NO." They said it, too, with emphasis like the lightning that strikes the oak. They said, "Public worship, not in all parts according to the Book of God, is corrupt; we will not participate in such services, for the Lord has said, 'Cursed be the deceiver, that sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing.'"

The second question was concerning the imminent dangers that attended their own services. Their meetings were held in distant places; in the lonely mountain, on the homeless moor, in the

swampy moss, the dark glen, among the rugged rocks, and in the dreary cave — just wherever they could find a place to worship God in peace. They had no roof for shelter, no walls to break the storm, no fires for heat. Attending these meetings involved travel, weariness, hunger, exposure, loss of sleep, shivering in the cold, every physical strain, besides the risk of life, liberty and property, at the hands of the enemy. These heroic sons and daughters of the Covenant said, "We will go; if we perish, we perish; though He slay us, yet will we trust in Him." These Covenanters would not habituate themselves to sinful conditions, nor permit their conscience to be drugged with the love of ease. They had much of the spirit of Paul; they counted all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. They consulted not with flesh and blood; not even with their own flesh, which was often wasted with hunger, fatigue, and pain; nor with their own blood, which was frequently sprinkled on the heather and mingled with the mountain rill.

The Covenicles, held in these desolate resorts, were awe-inspiring, especially the Communions. Many of the people journeyed at night toward the selected spot, for troops were over-running the country to shoot them down, and day travel was extremely dangerous. They therefore followed their path in the light of the stars, or under the pale moon. They came from all directions, converging like streams at the place appointed, and spread out like an overflowing tide. Sometimes they numbered 5,000 and more. Men and women, young and old, came and sat down on the broad green, in quietness and with unwonted gravity. The men in their kilts, plaids, and caps; the women in shawls and plain clothes; the boys and girls beaming and bright, and dressed in their best—all gathered together, sitting down on the grass or on the rocks. What an inspiration to the minister, when opening his Bible he gazed upon the earnest faces and caught the gleam of those expectant eyes!

Saturday was Preparation day for the Communion. Preparation services sometimes lasted till sunset. Several ministers were usually in attendance. At night the grave old elders would meet in clusters, under the shadow of a rock, or in a cave, or beside the murmuring brook, and spend hours in prayer. With the dawn of Sabbath the people were astir, and soon appeared again on the grounds. Then began the solemn services that lifted their souls into the heavens of joy, and brought them into the glorious presence of Jesus Christ.

We may receive an impression of the greatness of these occasions, from memorials yet to be seen on some of the sacred places where the Communions were held. Certain stones near the town of Irongrey remain as witnesses of these inspir-

ing solemnities. The stones were evidently on the ground, as witnesses of the wonderful doings of God and His people, in the days of the Covenicles. Oh, that they could speak! This place is in the bosom of a mount. Here we find an open space, like unto an amphitheater, large enough to seat thousands. On this ground are two rows of stones, each row high enough for a seat, and long enough to accommodate fifty persons. Between them, other stones stand upright, which evidently supported planks, on which the bread and wine were passed in front of the communicants. At a little distance are two other rows of similar construction. Here were accommodations for 200 at one table service. On one occasion, it is said, sixteen tables were served, the number of communicants on that day being no less than 3,000.

At one end of these four rows stands a small table of stone, from which, no doubt, the minister gave the bread and wine to the people. Here he made the table addresses, that were so sweet and refreshing to these weary souls. What solemn days these must have been. Hungry hearts found a feast in the desert. The wells of salvation overflowed; the palm trees of sacred ordinances shed their sweet fragrance, spread forth their shade, yielded their fruit, for these followers of the Lamb. The presence of the Lord was deeply felt. These Covenanters worshiped here in spirit and in truth. Their prayers ascended on the wings of the winds; the sound of the Psalms mingled with the song of the birds and the chant of the brooks. The eloquence of the preacher—now rising like the storm, now falling like a spring shower—now consoling the sad, now arousing the strong—now exhibiting the loveliness of Jesus, now depicting the woes of the lost—in its ever-varying notes of tenderness and power, echoed along the hillside, and died away in the distance. Some of these sermons are yet in print.

These have been regarded, by certain writers, as the greatest days of the Church since the times of the apostles. How bright and refreshing the sunshine that poured down from the spiritual heavens upon these Covenanters! The desert rejoiced and blossomed as the rose. Heaven was very near. One who survived the persecution said, that if he had any part of his life to live over again, he would choose these years.

Points for the Class.

1. How should the Church respond to the love of Christ?
2. In what way does her love often fail?
3. How does Jesus reprove His people for growing feeble in love?
4. How has He sometimes undertaken to revive His Church's fidelity?

5. What two questions did the Covenanters face in attending Conventicle services?

6. Describe a Conventicle Communion.

7. What memorials are found at Irongrey?

8. How may we have the same rapturous joy at communions now?

A Peril of Spiritual Maturity

By the Rev. George B. Duncan, M.A.

Will you turn with me to 1 Kings 13 — a passage of Scripture that may not be very well-known; for I want to consider with you some aspects of failure in Christian living which are peculiarly the peril of those who have grown older in Christian experience, and to do so against the background of this story. And if we want a text to focus our thought at the beginning, we shall take it from verse 11, "Now there dwelt an old prophet in Bethel . . ."

May I begin by saying that I know perfectly well that **age has its** prerogatives. There are some things that age has that youth can never have. I think, for instance, of the **wealth of experience** that age alone can enjoy. I suppose that most of us know what it is to meet older Christians who are rich in experience, who have a wealth of memory that makes them seem rich indeed; veterans of many battlefields and conquests; men and women who have walked a long way with God. They have a maturity of judgment, a knowledge of life and of the Bible, a knowledge of God . . . that seem to make the problems that baffle and perplex us quite simple, and enable them to avoid the mistakes that those of us who are younger so easily make. In this wealth of experience they have prerogative over youth; and also, I believe, in the **work of encouragement**. Many of us can recall meeting Christians the wealth of whose experience has humbled us, for those same men and women have accomplished a work of encouragement which has helped us along. And how humbly grateful we shall ever be for that ministry and that memory, that set our feet steadfastly on the way.

But while age and experience have their prerogatives, they have also their **perils**: and it is to these that I want to turn your thought.

Years ago I heard a Christian say, "Few Christians end well." You know, if that is true, then it is more than ever vital that the experienced Christian who so rightly thinks that "he standeth," should "take heed lest he fall." May I add very humbly that I address these words as much to myself as to anyone who has been a servant of Jesus Christ for more than a few years, for it is more than twenty-one years since I led my first evangelistic mission, and I am beginning now to think of some of the perils that the passing of the years can bring.

Let us turn then, and look into the mirror of God's Word and see there **ourselves**: and as we read I want to remind you that age is a relative term, and God's Word may come to those who are not so very old, but older than others. So let us look at this old prophet who dwelt in Bethel. And first, I want to note with you what I call —

I. The Lethargy that Marked his Service.

Here was a man who had spiritually very nearly come to a standstill. Note **the inaction into which he had settled down**. Bethel, where he lived, was the scene of Jeroboam's sin — the setting up of false religion, served by false priests. The details are found in the closing verses of the previous chapter. The action of the king was to become proverbial and legendary in the history of Israel: for Jeroboam was the king "who made Israel to sin."

The motive of Jeroboam's sin was political expediency; the action, one of spiritual apostasy. And in the face of this challenge, the old prophet was silent. He had nothing to say, and said nothing. Why was this? Why had this lethargy settled down across his service for God? Was it because of **weariness**? He had fought through many battles in the past: he just could not rouse himself for yet another battle; this time he would leave it to others to fight. Or perhaps was it **worldly wisdom** — for he had a family to look after, and it would not do to incur disfavor in high places. Would it matter if he compromised just this once, and let this thing pass unrebuked?

Well, whatever the reasons, the silence remained unbroken, the message unspoken, and the servant of God remained at home. The lethargy that marked his service.

I want to ask, is this perchance true of you? Is your pace slowing down? Spiritually, vitally, have you very nearly come to a halt and a standstill? There was a time when no one was keener than you in the ministry of prayer. In your own prayer-life you prayed with some purpose. In the prayer-life of your church, you could always be relied upon: your prayer meant so much to the church, to God, to the minister, to yourself. But in your praying you have slowed down; and for weeks, for months, it may be for years, "the old prophet" has come almost to a halt in his prayer-life.

In your consecration you were once fastidiously careful: your standards were high, almost intolerably so, in your separation to Christ from the world . . . but it cost so much to maintain that standard, and you grew so weary, and so wise, that slowly and almost imperceptibly the world has encroached, and as far as consecration is concerned, you have almost forgotten the meaning of the word.

What about your service? How desperately keen you were; how unashamedly you used to go out for the conversion of others — and you saw them converted. But that has all stopped now: you are not interested in that; you do not toil for that; you do not labor for that; you do not suffer for that as once you did.

You are a Christian still, you are a prophet still; you still hold office—you are a deacon; you are an elder; you are a Sabbath school teacher, you are a member of committee, a chairman of committee, you are a minister, you are a bishop, a missionary, a Christian parent: you are holding office. Listen, all the spiritual vitality has been drained out of it, and there is a lethargy upon your service, and you have come to a halt, and you are at a standstill. Your testimony? You have none. Your usefulness has practically gone. You are holding on to a position; you have a rank to which you have ceased to have the spiritual right. The inaction into which he had settled.

And then I want you to notice **the intrusion by which he was startled**. The lethargy which was upon the life of this old prophet was suddenly, rudely startled; the silence which he had been careful to maintain was suddenly, sharply broken. His sons rushed in to tell him of the dramatic event: that the king himself had been officiating at the high place that very day, and the man of God, a young man of Judah, had dramatically interrupted the service. The curse of God had been pronounced against the altar; and the king, violently angry, had caused the instant arrest of the man of God — and he had been struck immediately by the hand of God in judgment. Then a cowed and frightened king had pleaded for mercy, before a rent altar, amidst the smoke of the scattered ashes. A cringing and conciliatory monarch had offered hospitality and rewards — to find his offer treated with contempt. What had been the words of the man of God from Judah, to the king? "If thou wilt give me half thine house, I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place: for so it was charged me by the word of the Lord." The long silence had been broken, and like a sudden peal of thunder out of a leaden and sullen sky, the voice of God had spoken; and with glowing faces the sons of the old prophet ended their breathless story, while the old man watched and listened.

What was it that turned their glowing faces

into puzzled wonderment? Was it the sudden, stabbing realization that what had just happened should have happened long ago? And that the man who should have done it was not the man of God from Judah, but the old prophet, their father, to whom they now told their story — across whose face consternation and anger now chased each other, until finally a burning, sullen anger settled there, and the man who had been inactive so long, stung into action, demanded, "Where did that man of God go?"

The intrusion by which he was startled. All I know is this, that again and again, where the lethargy of our service has slowed down to inaction, when an intrusion comes to startle us into amazement and into anger — when a minister comes to the church with a flaming heart; a son or a daughter is converted in their Christian home to God, and with passionate devotion they give their all to Christ; when a man or a girl joins the fellowship of the church with heart afire for God; a Christian comes into the office, a new nurse starts her training in the hospital, a new curate joins the staff — and the silence is broken. The lethargy is startled into alarm. God begins to speak directly, where there was a comfortable security and quietness. All is disturbed and confused. And the "old prophet," amazed, alarmed, angry, is stirred to action at last.

The lethargy that marked his service . . . Is there an old prophet reading this? Spiritually you have come to a halt. Has somebody come into your life? Has the voice of God spoken?

Worse followed, for the lethargy that marked the service of the old prophet was replaced by what I call—

II. The Animosity that Seared his Spirit.

Here we face the tragic fact that the man who took no action at all against the deeds of Jeroboam, became passionately and angrily active against the man of God. One thing that appalls me, that shames me, is just this very thing: the ceaseless animosity of Christian against Christian. You find it in churches, you find it in fellowships, you find it on mission stations, you find it in societies, you find it wherever you find Christians: and the tragedy is that those involved are very, very seldom youngsters in the faith. Children do not normally kill children. Men kill men. You do not find it in the Sabbath school, you do not find it among the young people in the Youth Fellowship. You do not find it among the confirmation candidates. You find it at a higher level. You find it among the older Christians, in your deacons' court, in your kirk session; you find it among clergy and ministers, in your committees, among your sabbath school teachers, in Christian parents; you find it

in the "old prophet." This is where you find it: the animosity that sears the spirit.

Then you find that those who have ceased to be active in the vital things of God against the enemy of souls, are tirelessly active against the "men of God." Why? Why was this old prophet roused to action — not against the false worship of Jeroboam: he did not do a thing about that. Why was he roused to action against the faithful servant of Jehovah? I think, first of all, because of a **pride that would not be humbled**. The man's pride was hurt to the quick. The man who remained unmoved when God's Name was dishonored was stung to the quick when his own actions were condemned. The security and comfort he had gained by compromising his loyalty had been treated with contempt by another. The standards that he had lowered by his slackness had been raised again to the mast by the zealotry of the man of God. The silence he had so carefully maintained had been broken. The message he had ceased to declare had been declared by another. Everything he knew he should have been, and had failed to be, the man of God from Judah had been. And as his own sons told the story of it all, they told the story of his own condemnation; and his pride hated it. A man in his position, a man of his age, a man of his experience, being condemned, being judged! He had been weighed in the balances, and found wanting. Not explicitly, for the man of God from Judah had not said a word about him; but he had been condemned implicitly. He sensed it as he listened to the story told by his own sons. He saw it in the glow that had been kindled, and still shone, on their faces. His imagination ran riot as he followed the telling of the story in a thousand homes in Bethel that day; and with the telling he would have been called "the old prophet, the man who had done nothing, the man who had lowered his standards, the man who had compromised . . ." Condemned! condemned . . . and **he hated it**.

Have you got a pride that will not be humbled? Oh, his wounded, resentful pride writhed and twisted with the pain of it all, until the focus of all the hate and all the hurt was found in a **purpose that would not be halted** — to find the man, and somehow to bring him down; to bring him down to his own level, and to make him swallow those words of contempt, "Neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place," making himself out to be better than the old prophet — for **he** had been eating bread and drinking water there for these years and months past. So the purpose was formulated and pursued until he found the man of God. The animosity that seared his spirit.

Tell me, Are you more active against the people of God than against the enemies of God?

Are you? Is it possible? Do you write more, do you talk more, do you think more, do you plan more, against the servants of God, than His enemies? Do you? I'll tell you why. Because the life of somebody has condemned you. Not verbally, but implicitly. Am I speaking to some parents, and your child's love for Jesus Christ condemns your lack of love? Am I speaking to some minister, and the zeal of someone in your church condemns your lack of it? Am I speaking to some Christian worker, and your compromising with the world is condemned by the consecration of your colleague; some clerk or typist, some nurse, and your silence is condemned by the witness of that new girl; some missionary, and the standard of your devotion to Jesus Christ — or lack of it — is condemned by another? Tell me, have you got a pride that will not be humbled? You go to Keswick, and in your heart you are pursuing some devilish purpose to bring that one down by fair means or foul, that they too may come under condemnation, for having dared to suggest that you, with your position, and all your experience, and all of your age, that **you** were wrong?

Listen, my friend, very briefly as I close. You and I have been looking into the mirror of God's truth in the light of this "old prophet." We have seen the lethargy that marked his service, the animosity that seared his spirit; note finally—

III. The Tragedy that Crowned his Success.

For the old prophet succeeded. And listen: you too can succeed. Parent, you can take the love of your child for Christ, that love, that burden for souls: and **you can kill that**. Brother minister, you can temper all the burning zeal of that young fellow, and quench it. Christian worker, you can lower the standards of that other young person, you can silence that fresh and artless testimony. You can. The old prophet did. And to do it, you will use **the weapon that he used**. Do you know what that was? He used his tongue. And with a blend of friendliness, a touch of authority, a suggestion of divine guidance, with his tongue the old prophet — are you listening? — **he lied**.

And as he spoke, he knew he lied. You, too, can use your tongue — one of the most powerful and deadly things we possess. That is why it is one of the touchstones of Christian maturity: "if any man offend not in word (in tongue), the same is a perfect man." You can go on talking persistently: you can speak authoritatively, you can even use the language of spirituality; and in the use of your tongue **you can lie**. And even as you are claiming that what you say is right, you know in your heart that you are lying.

The old prophet knew that he lied. Is there some older Christian here, and you are — am I being hard? — in your dealings with the young, whoever it is, with that other servant of God,

whether flagrantly, whether obviously, or whether rather cleverly and with just a tinge of suggestion, you are a liar, and you know it. The weapon you used was the weapon the old prophet used. It was the weapon the devil used when he said to our first parents, "Ye shall not surely die!"

The weapon he used: and **the wreckage he was**. . . for he brought the young man to the path of disobedience. He brought him into the path of danger. He brought him to the place of death. For suddenly, a leap from the lion, a moment of agony, and a life of usefulness was over. The tragedy that crowned his success.

You see, he did succeed. And one of the supreme tragedies of age is that when we succeed, **we kill**. . . somebody's love for the Master, somebody's purpose of obedience, somebody's devotion and surrender. We succeed, and we slay.

Old prophet, how many lives of usefulness have you ended? The life of one of your children? A member of your church? Somebody in the mission station? Somebody who came under your authority? You lied, and you slew. Old prophet, is there somebody you have not killed yet, but are planning to? Come, stand for just a moment as we close, by the wreckage of the life you lied to destroy. Can you see the face, as the old prophet looked on the face of the man of God on the road that day? The love you killed, the devotion you slew, the testimony you silenced, the consecration you destroyed, the usefulness you ended?

Come, stand by the old prophet. I wonder if you have one more thing in common with him? Listen. The lethargy that marred his service; the animosity that seared his spirit; the tragedy that

crowned his success; can you share this — **the agony that broke his heart?** "And the old prophet came to the city, to mourn. . ." Thank God for his tears that flowed! Do you know anything of tears like these?

If you don't know what it is to weep here, I only hope that God will give you a place in heaven where you can weep, and weep, and weep, and weep. . . for the child of God whose usefulness you killed, whose love you extinguished. Ah, there are those alive today, but all the testimony, all the usefulness, everything worthwhile is **dead**. And it was an old prophet that did it.

If we share the agony that broke the heart of the old prophet, and know something of the tears that flowed, then possibly we too may share one other thing in the agony that he knew, for we read in the story, not only of the tears that flowed, but of the testimony that fell from his lips. For at last the old prophet would seem to have been brought back to God, and his lips that had been sealed and silent for so long without any real testimony bore this testimony: "The saying which he cried by the word of the Lord shall surely come to pass." And if these words are read by someone, and you know in your heart that your experience of the past few months, or even years, has been that of the old prophet that dwelt in Bethel, then may God grant that your lips too may be unsealed, and that once again a testimony to the word of the Lord may fall from your lips, bringing grace and mercy and salvation to others.

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The Kingdom of Truth

By J. G. Vos

"Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. Pilate saith unto him, What is truth?" — John 18:37, 38a.

Jesus is standing before Pontius Pilate, the Roman Procurator. Pilate asks Jesus, "Art thou the king of the Jews?" Jesus in response asks Pilate, "Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?" — that is, are you using the term "king" in the Roman sense or in the Jewish sense?

Pilate replies, "Am I a Jew?" — that is, Pilate is speaking of kingship in the Roman sense. Jesus explains that he is not a king in the sense Pilate has in mind. "My kingdom is not of this world. . . my kingdom is not from hence." Jesus is not

speaking about being a king in the earthly, political sense.

Still, Jesus claims to be a king. So Pilate asks another question: "Art thou a king then?" — that is, are you a king in any sense of the word? This time Jesus replies with a ringing affirmation: "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."

Jesus is king, then, of the kingdom of truth. The citizens of this kingdom are those who are "of the truth." They hear and obey the voice of the King of that kingdom. They are supremely devoted to the truth.

The Roman Empire, of which Pilate was an official representative, was not a kingdom of truth. Its citizens heard and obeyed the voice of

Caesar. Its officials were supremely devoted, not to truth, but to power. Here are two kingdoms face to face: the Roman Empire, built on the lust for power, and the Kingdom of Jesus, which is the Kingdom of truth.

Everyone claims to be in favor of truth, of course. Yet in fact there are various attitudes to truth. In particular the portion of Scripture which is before us suggests three different attitudes to truth, namely:

1. Pilate's attitude to truth, or **truth for man's sake.**
2. The philosophers' attitude to truth, or **truth for truth's sake.**
3. Jesus' attitude to truth, or **truth for God's sake.**

Looking at this divergence from a different angle, we may ask whether truth is:

1. A tool to be utilized?
2. An abstract ideal to be pursued?
3. An attribute of the living God?

Is something to be regarded as true:

1. Because it suits man's purposes to regard it as true?
2. Or just because it is true?
3. Or because it is in harmony with the nature of God for it to be true?

Still otherwise viewed, is truth determined by:

1. The nature of man?
2. Or the nature of the universe?
3. Or the nature of God?

What is our most ultimate concept, which really determines the trend and character of all our thinking? Is it:

1. Man?
2. Or the universe?
3. Or is it God?

Our answers to these various questions will show whether we believe in truth for man's sake, truth for truth's sake, or truth for God's sake.

First let us consider —

I. Pilate's Attitude to Truth: Truth for Man's Sake.

Pilate sneeringly asks Jesus, "What is truth?" and apparently does not even pause for an answer. Pilate was a hard-headed Roman, a "practical" man of the world. He was what some people today would call a realist. To Pilate, truth is something to be used in the struggle to get ahead in life. To Pilate, the question of truth is really

subordinate to the question of man's ambitions at the moment.

Is Jesus to be treated as innocent or as guilty? Three times Pilate declares Jesus innocent. Yet his final verdict is that Jesus shall be treated as guilty. Pilate is more concerned about the political needs of the hour than about questions of law and evidence. He is not deeply concerned about the question, "Is Jesus really guilty?" Rather, he is concerned about the question, "What will happen if I do not declare Jesus to be guilty?"

Soon the Jews will be shouting, "If thou let this man go thou art not Caesar's friend." The clamor of the Jews is ringing in Pilate's ears. Their clamor is louder than the claims of truth. So truth must be bent and twisted to fit the exigencies of the hour.

Russian Communism has murdered truth by regarding it as a plastic substance to be molded and re-molded to fit the changing "party line" of the day. In Russia, history has been revised and radically altered. Names have been removed from history books and encyclopedias. What was declared to be true of Trotsky in 1918 was no longer held to be true in 1930. What was true of Stalin in 1940 was reversed by the Party Line in 1956. At one time nothing was too good for the Soviet State to say about Stalin; at another time nothing was too bad for the Soviet State to say about Stalin.

Truth under Communism is whatever suits man's purpose at the moment, whatever seems temporarily likely to advance the cause of the Soviet State.

Under Communism truth has been murdered, not only in the field of politics or government, but throughout the whole fabric of life. Truth in literature and in the field of science has been dictated by the Kremlin on the basis of serving the Communist Party's passing needs.

So a Soviet biologist, Lysenko, against all the biological science of the free world, held that changes produced by environment are inherited. This notion was promoted because it was held to fit Communist social ideology. For many years Soviet agriculture forfeited the tremendous gains that might have been achieved by the use of hybrid corn or maize. A doctrinaire notion, canonized as truth by the Kremlin, tied the hands of Soviet scientists and agricultural experts. But a few years later the Soviet State reversed the doctrine of heredity which it had once sponsored as essential to the Party Line. Now hybrid corn is produced in large quantities in the Soviet Union.

It is not only Pilate and the Kremlin that regard truth as a plastic to be bent and molded to fit man's changing purposes and goals. This attitude, although in a milder and less shocking form, is widespread in our present-day western

culture. There is of course a wide difference between the aims of Communism and the aims of those in western culture who regard truth as relative to man's experiences. Nevertheless, the two share the same perverse attitude to truth as something changeable and relative to man's needs and experiences.

In particular, modern theories of ethics have been influenced by this plastic view of truth, as have modern views of education. This betrayal of truth in our western culture is inherent in the philosophy called Pragmatism or Instrumentalism. Pragmatism, a typically American philosophy, was originated by C. S. Peirce, advocated by William James, and later widely popularized by John Dewey. It was Dewey who adopted the name Instrumentalism for it. This philosophy is defined as "A system of thought in which stress is placed upon practical consequences and values as standards." Funk and Wagnalls defines Pragmatism as "the metaphysical theory that reality is for man what he makes it to be in the service of so-called practical ends." Webster defines Pragmatism as "Emphasis upon the application of ideas, or the practical bearings of conceptions and beliefs," adding that it is characteristic of this philosophy to hold that "the meaning of conceptions is to be sought in their practical bearings, and that the function of thought is as a guide to action, and that the truth is pre-eminently to be tested by the practical consequences of belief." Webster defines Instrumentalism as "The conception that the significant factor of a thing is its value as an instrument; specifically, the doctrine that ideas are instruments of action and that their usefulness determines their truth; pragmatism; humanism."

Dewey had little patience with orthodox Christian belief. In his book **A Common Faith** he said that God is a name for the active relation between the ideal and the actual in human life (page 51). In the same book Dewey said, "Faith in the continued disclosing of truth through directed co-operative human endeavor is more religious in quality than is any faith in a completed revelation" (page 26). Thus he rejected the Bible as a completed revelation of truth by God to man.

According to Dewey, there cannot be any such thing as absolute truth. Something is to be regarded as "true" if it functions satisfactorily or produces a desirable practical result.

Dewey wrote two types of books: those on education and those on philosophy. His books on education have apparently been much more widely read than his philosophical writings. In the latter his radical rejection of the historic Christian view of truth is quite explicit, whereas in the former it is a concealed assumption rather than an expressly avowed position. This may perhaps explain why many students of education

have absorbed a good deal of Dewey's attitude to truth without realizing how radically antagonistic it is to the very foundations of the historic Christian Faith.

When carried out consistently, Pragmatism or Instrumentalism involves the rejection of absolute truth and the rejection of absolute, permanently valid moral standards. Everything is made relative to man's changing, developing situation of the moment. Truth becomes something like a wage-scale which is geared to a constantly fluctuating cost-of-living index.

This view of truth has infected religion also. It is manifested in the prevalent substitution of the concept of **value** for that of **truth**. Our forefathers, in considering any doctrine of religion, were primarily concerned about the question, "Is it true?". But today it is more common to waive the question of truth and ask instead "What is its value?"

We are told today, for example, that the Westminster Confession of Faith was an excellent book for the Christians of the seventeenth century, because it represented their efforts to clothe their religious experience with garments made from the mental concepts they were familiar with. Their experience, we are told, had a reality and a value, but the garments they clothed it with were only of passing importance. Today, we are told, we must clothe our religious experience in new concepts which have meaning to the man in the street in our own day. Thus "truth" becomes a mere changing garment or vesture by which each generation expresses in its own way its own experiences. The experience is held to be permanently valid, but the "truth" by which it is expressed is held to be changeable and constantly changing. Those who hold this view of religion regard the Westminster Confession and other great historic creeds of the Church as mere museum pieces today — documents with a certain historical interest, but not really usable by modern men.

Real Biblical Christianity deals in truth — absolute, unchanging, unchangeable truth. The modern counterfeit of Christianity, on the other hand, deals in values, that is, whatever is regarded as useful for some human need or purpose. Jesus, the King of the Kingdom of Truth, calls the world back to truth.

Now let us consider—

II. The Philosophers' Attitude to Truth: Truth for Truth's Sake.

We may glimpse the Greek philosophers' attitude to truth lurking behind Pilate's sneering question, "What is truth?"

The Greek philosophers engaged in an end-

less search for truth. Always in pursuit of truth, they never reached any fully satisfactory conclusions. Their quest for truth was an endless chain reaction. There was never any end to the long, long trail. What one philosopher set forth as final, the next showed to be inadequate.

Moreover, even at any one time the philosophers could never agree among themselves. They were divided into sects and schools which mutually contradicted each other.

To the practical man like Pilate it must have all seemed a hopeless and useless tangle of words and phrases. No doubt Pilate considered all philosophers a bit queer — men who devoted their lives to the pursuit of something as elusive as truth — something so elusive that they could not even agree on what they were seeking.

"Surely," Pilate may have thought, "philosophy may be all right for these queer fellows who are a little cracked. Let them talk about truth — it is harmless, even though useless — but as for me, a man of the world who has to make practical decisions, I have to keep my feet on the ground. I cannot go around with my head in the clouds talking about abstract theories of truth."

The Greek philosophers professed deep devotion to truth. **But it was truth for truth's sake.** This may seem higher and more noble than Pilate's cynical attitude to truth, but it is still too low a view of truth. Like "art for art's sake," "truth for truth's sake" is essentially a form of idolatry.

What is idolatry? Idolatry is giving our supreme loyalty and devotion to anything or anyone other than the living God. "Art for art's sake" is idolatry. It is a denial of man's obligation to love and serve God supremely in the sphere of his esthetic life. Ultimately, it is a denial that man is a creature of God.

So also "truth for truth's sake" is idolatry. It is idolatry just as surely as bowing in the temple of Baal is idolatry. It is a denial of man's obligation to love and serve God supremely in the sphere of knowledge. Ultimately, it is a denial that man is a creature of God.

The philosophers regarded "truth" as a more ultimate concept than God. In other words, they held that something is in harmony with God because it is true, not that something is true because it is in harmony with God. To them truth was the largest circle, and God was a smaller circle within that largest circle. They regarded impersonal, abstract truth as something greater, wider and more important than the personal, living God. To the Greek philosophers, the outermost circle of man's environment was not a Person but a thing.

Truth for truth's sake seems better than truth

for man's sake just in the same sense that a subtle and cultured idolatry seems less shocking and offensive than a crude and repulsive one. But still it is an idolatry. We can put Baal in the place of God, or we can put human ambition and development in the place of God, or we can put abstract impersonal truth in the place of God. In any case, it remains idolatry.

This idolatry of truth for truth's sake is as characteristic of the scholarly world of our own day as it was of the scholarly world of Pilate's day. It is regarded as almost axiomatic today that a real scholar is interested in truth for truth's sake. To challenge or question this notion may seem almost like academic blasphemy. Yet it must be challenged in the name of the living God.

Truth for truth's sake always falls short of the real truth. In the end it comes down to God or man as the object of our supreme devotion. Either God or man is the king of the Kingdom of Truth.

The worshipper of Baal is really worshipping an idea formed by the mind of man. The devotee of truth for truth's sake is also really worshipping an idea formed by the human mind. He holds that man — not individually, of course, but collectively — is the king of the Kingdom of Truth. The "truth" he seeks is an impersonal projection of the human mind. In the end it comes down to truth for man's sake or truth for God's sake.

Finally, let us consider—

III. Jesus' Attitude to Truth: Truth for God's Sake.

The universe would not even exist except for the creative activity of God — the mysterious, infinite, almighty Person who is above and beyond all facts, all laws, all truth, all thinking, all ideas. God is a particular Person, not an impersonal function of the universe or of man's mind.

If God is really the Creator of the universe, then the Creator must be greater than the creation, as the builder is greater than the building he constructs. But in that case, the notion of truth for truth's sake is an idolatry after all, and only truth for God's sake can be the proper object of a Christian scholar's quest and devotion.

This implies the constant recognition of the true background of all human knowledge. Whether in the humanities or in the sciences, the facts which are studied must be seen as facts created by God. Only when seen in relation to God can facts be seen in their true meaning and significance. God is the background of all reality and of all knowledge.

The greatest peril facing American Christian higher education today, in my judgment, is not the peril of too little emphasis on religion. Some hold that it is. I believe they are mistaken.

Rather, I would venture to assert, the greatest peril facing Christian higher education in America today is the peril of a dichotomy or division between the religious features and the so-called "secular" features of education. It is the peril of a division into watertight compartments of two sectors or parts of the educational field, with the accompanying tacitly held notion that God is important for one of these compartments but irrelevant for the other.

The tendency in Christian circles today is to think that if the Bible teaching in a Christian college is sound and the worship services adequate, then all is well. **The tendency is to think that God is interested in nothing but religion.**

But God is God everywhere. He is God of everything. He is the Lord of all reality and of all knowledge. If God is not the God of nature, then He is not the God of religion either. If He is not God in the field of history, and the field of language, and the field of psychology, and the field of physical science, and the field of biological science, and the field of social science — if He is not Lord over all these, then He is not really Lord of religion either. God is Lord over all reality, or He is nothing at all.

Do we sense this peril facing American Christian higher education — the peril of limiting God to the field of religion, the peril of relating God in a meaningful way only to the field of religion, while the idolatries of truth for man's sake and truth for truth's sake are left to dominate the vast field of life and knowledge outside the limited sphere called "religion"?

What is needed in Christian education today, I would urge, is not more emphasis upon religion, but rather a more pervasive, meaningful and relevant belief in God **beyond** the sphere of religion. To put it another way, what is needed is a pervasive and thoroughly self-conscious theistic philosophy as the background and interpretive key and unifying principle of all knowledge in every field.

The kingdom over which Jesus is King is the Kingdom of Truth. He is supreme in this kingdom. Those who are "of the truth" hear His voice. They are the citizens of the Kingdom of Truth. To them, devotion to truth is not an idolatry, because it is not truth for man's sake nor

truth for truth's sake, but truth for God's sake to which they are devoted.

For Jesus is none other than the living God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. Devotion to Jesus Christ is devotion to truth for God's sake.

There is nothing and no one greater than the eternal Word, God the Son, the personal Wisdom. His nature determines the nature of truth. It is the eternal Word, who is **THE TRUTH** (John 14:6) that makes truth true. It was His eternal thinking that made the laws of mathematics and of logic what they are. It was the working of His infinite mind that planned the universe with all its mysterious and marvellous laws and forces. The mysteries of mind and matter were planned by His thinking in the silent vastness of eternity.

The vastness of the spiral nebulae in remotest outer space sprang from the thinking of the eternal Word, whom we know in human history as the Lord Jesus Christ. For the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.

The baffling complexities of the atom were planned in eternity by Jesus Christ. In the infinite reaches of His own eternity He planned the package. At the creation of the universe He wrapped it up. Man is only beginning to unwrap it today.

Shall we face it — Christ is of cosmic significance. It is the great heresy of our day to regard Christ as having only religious significance. Christ is the King of all truth, not just the King of religious truth.

The need of our idolatrous age is to relate all our thinking — not just our religious thinking but **ALL** of our thinking — to Christ, the eternal Word, the Son of the living God, the Planner, Creator, Purpose and Lord of all reality, the King of Truth.

Shall we dare to seek and love truth for God's sake? Shall we dare to break with the dominant trends of our age? Shall we dare to be citizens of the real kingdom of Truth?

Note: The foregoing article was preached as a Convocation sermon in the chapel of Geneva College, April 14, 1957.

Religious Terms Defined

KINGDOM OF GOD. The supremacy of God exercised for His own glory in the redemption of His people, especially in the spheres of power, righteousness and blessedness.

KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. Same as Kingdom of God, as shown by usage in parallel passages in the Gospels, as Luke 18:16 compared with Matthew 19:14, etc.

KINGSHIP OF CHRIST. "Christ executeth the office of a king, in subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies" (S. C. 26).

KINGDOM OF GRACE. The present reign of Christ over His redeemed people, the spiritual Israel (L. C. 191; S.C. 102).

KINGDOM OF POWER. The present reign of Christ as Mediator over the entire universe for the benefit of His Church (Eph. 1:20-23), exercised through the divine providence which controls all that comes to pass, and involving the duty of submission on the part of all moral agents (L. C. 191).

KINGDOM OF GLORY. The future Kingdom of God which will be absolutely perfect and free from evil, to be established at Christ's second coming, in which the saints shall reign with Christ for ever (L.C. 191; S.C. 102).

INTERMEDIATE STATE. The state of souls separated from their bodies, between death and the resurrection; in the case of the redeemed, a state of happiness, peace, rest, being present with the Lord, and awaiting the still higher blessedness of the resurrection of the body (L.C. 86).

SECOND COMING OF CHRIST. The personal, visible, bodily return of the Lord Jesus Christ to this earth, in like manner as He ascended, which will take place at the Last Day, and will put a sudden stop to the age-long process of human history (L.C. 56).

RESURRECTION. The supernatural event which will immediately follow the second coming of Christ, in which the bodies of the dead shall be raised to life and re-united with their souls for ever (L.C. 87).

RESURRECTION BODY. The body as raised from the dead at the Last Day, in some way identical with the body that died and was buried, yet different in its properties; in the case of the

redeemed, a body spiritual, incorruptible, like Christ's glorious body (L.C. 87).

TRANSFORMATION OF LIVING SAINTS. The instantaneous, supernatural change which shall take place in believers still living at the moment of Christ's second coming, by which, without passing through the experience of death, their bodies shall be changed from mortal to immortal bodies suited to the state of glory (L.C. 87).

RAPTURE. The supernatural event which will immediately follow the resurrection and the transformation of living saints, in which the redeemed shall be caught up to Christ in the clouds, and set on His right hand (L.C. 90).

JUDGMENT. The final judicial determination of the eternal destinies of angels and human beings, which shall immediately follow the resurrection, transformation of living saints and rapture to Christ in the clouds, in which Jesus Christ the Mediator shall pronounce judgment according to absolute righteousness (L.C. 89-90).

HEAVEN. That place in the created universe where the presence and glory of God are especially manifested, and where the Lord Jesus Christ is now engaged in preparing eternal habitations for His people (L.C. 90).

HELL. That place in the created universe originally prepared for the devil and his angels, where the wicked shall be totally deprived of the favorable presence of God and shall "be punished with unspeakable torments, both of body and soul . . . for ever" (L.C. 89).

ETERNITY. The final fulfilment of human history, in which all that is now partial and incomplete shall have reached its full development, whether of righteousness and blessedness or of sin and woe, when the elect and the reprobate shall have been permanently separated, when the redeemed shall enjoy that endless Sabbath rest for which the entire sweep of world history was a brief moment of preparation (Rom. 8:19-25; Heb. 4:9, 10).

Some Noteworthy Quotations

PRAYER is not an engine by which we overcome the unwillingness of God. God is ever ready to grant what is really good for us, when we have, by prayer, made ourselves ready to receive it.

— Alfred Plummer

COMMIT thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass (Psalm 37:5). It is the glory and excellency of believers to take their views and form their judgment from God's truths; to oppose nature, sense and feeling; to stand still and wait and see the salvation of God; to omit no appointed means, but to be diligent in

the way of God's institutions, quietly and patiently submitting every issue to His wisdom and goodness. This is the obedience of faith, and is attended with the patience of hope, and the issue is always determined in love. It is impossible it would be otherwise, for it is the immutable decree of Heaven, that "all things work together for good to them who love God, to them who are called according to His purpose."

COMMITTING our way to God unburdens the mind; trusting our all to Him makes the heart easy; relying on Him to bring our concerns to pass makes the spirit joyful. But when carnal

reason is suffered to make its report, then with Jacob we cry "All these things are against us." Hence fainting and dropping come from fear, fear from doubting, doubting from unbelief, and unbelief chiefly prevails through ignorance and inattention to God's word of grace, His covenant love, precious promises, and solemn oath in Christ Jesus. Ever needful is this prayer of faith, "Lord, increase our faith" (Luke 17:5).

How easy I live,
How joyful I sing,
When I to my Lord
My ways do commit.
I'm safe like a bird,
Soared high on the wing;
My Lord brings to pass
All things He sees fit.

— Mason's Spiritual Treasury

I AM NOT COME HERE for murder, for they have no matter of fact to charge me with, but only my judgment. I am about twenty years of age. At fourteen or fifteen I was a hearer of the curates and indulged; and while I was a hearer of these I was a blasphemer and Sabbath-breaker; and a chapter of the Bible was a burden to me; but since I heard this persecuted Gospel I durst not blaspheme, nor break the Sabbath, and the Bible became my delight. . . .

— The last words of Marion Harvie, spoken on the scaffold just before she was hanged for the "crime" of being a Covenanter, January 26, 1681. The hangman prevented her speaking any further.

FAREWELL. Be diligent in duty. Make your peace with God, through Christ. There is a great trial coming. As to the remnant I leave, I have committed them to God. Tell them from me not to weary, nor be discouraged in maintaining the testimony. Let them not quit nor forego one of these truths. Keep your ground, and the Lord

will provide you teachers and ministers, and when He comes, He will make these despised truths glorious upon the earth. Lord, into Thy hands I commit my spirit, for Thou hast redeemed me, Lord God of truth.

— The last words of the Covenanter martyr James Renwick, spoken upon the scaffold as he was being hanged at Edinburgh, Scotland, February 17, 1688, for his faithful adherence to the principles of the Covenanted Reformation, at the age of 26 years.

NOTHING is more senseless than the attempt to modify the results of the inspiration of Jehovah in conformity with human reason.

— A. A. Hodge

IT IS CERTAINLY as impious, and perhaps more foolish, to refuse to see clearly what God has revealed clearly, as it is to attempt to understand in detail great undefined facts which God has seen fit to leave upon the verge of our horizon. We hear of some dapper preachers who claim that the age has outgrown doctrine. They have advanced around the circle to the place from which they started, and hope they are ready again to enter the kingdom of heaven like little children, as far as ignorance is concerned. Let it be remembered that systematic theology has its essence simply in clear thinking and clear speaking on the subject of that religion which is revealed in the Scriptures. A man can outgrow systematic theology, therefore, either by ceasing to be clear-headed, or by ceasing to be religious, and in no other way. I suppose some escape in their haste by both ways at once.

— A. A. Hodge

THE PRESENT, above all other periods of human history, is intolerant of all vague, undetermined and loosely-held views. Sharp, clearly-defined logic and earnest faith will hold the field at the last.

— A. A. Hodge

The Doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints as Taught in Hebrews VI

By the Rev. Hugh J. Blair, B.A.

When Oliver Cromwell lay dying, it was a wild September day with the winds howling; and the winds of doubt assailed his own heart. He had one question to ask the chaplain who was ministering to him. "Tell me," he asked, "is it possible to fall from grace?" The chaplain, true to this great doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, answered, "No, it is not possible." "Then," said the dying man, "I am safe, for I know that I was once in grace."

That soul-steadying truth, that those who are

truly born again by the Holy Spirit "can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved" (Confession of Faith, XVII. 1), is clearly taught in several passages of Scripture. For example, John 10:28, 29, "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." See also Romans 8:38, 39 and Philippians 1:6. In view of the fact that there is

such clear Scriptural support for this doctrine in the passages which have been referred to, it may be asked what purpose is served by seeking to derive it from this difficult chapter in Hebrews, where, as is well known, there is one passage which seems to contradict it flatly and has been something of an embarrassment to expositors who have held to the truth that it is not possible to fall from grace. The answer is that if it can be shown that Hebrews 6 not only does not contradict the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints but specifically teaches it, the doctrine is incontrovertibly confirmed.

It may be well at the outset to look at the passage in question, and examine some of the attempts that have been made to show that it does not conflict with the doctrine so clearly taught elsewhere. The crucial verses read as follows: "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame" (Hebrews 6:4-6).

Two lines of approach have been followed in attempts to show that these verses do not contradict the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. One is the view that those described in these verses were not believers at all. "None of the experiences described by any means implies being born again, true repentance, true saving faith or divine election to eternal life. What these people had was a religious experience common to multitudes of people who are not really born again" (J. G. Vos, in *Blue Banner Faith and Life*, July-September, 1950, p. 124). Bishop Ryle says, "The person here described as 'falling away' has no characteristics which may not be discovered in unconverted men: while it is not said that he possesses saving faith, or charity, or is elect." And Calvin takes "tasted of" not to mean experienced but to taste merely with the tip of the lips. But one cannot help feeling that the watering down of the strong terms in verses 4, 5 to make them apply to the unregenerate, is motivated by the apparent impossibility of harmonizing the passage otherwise with the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints! Dr. T. T. Shields says bluntly, "If the man of whom that is said is not a Christian, who is?" (*The Doctrines of Grace*, p. 168).

Dr. Louis Berkhof adopts another interpretation: "There are warnings against apostasy which would seem to be quite uncalled for, if the believer could not fall away, Matt. 24:12; Col. 1:23; Heb. 2:1; 3:14; 6:11; 1 John 2:6. But these warnings regard the whole matter from the side of man and are seriously meant. They prompt self-examination, and are instrumental in keeping believers in the way of perseverance. They do not prove that any of those addressed will apostatize, but simply state that the use of means is

necessary to prevent them from committing this sin" (*Systematic Theology*, p. 548). A. M. Stibbs refers to similar interpretations in *The New Bible Commentary*, p. 1117, where he writes, "Others, again, suppose that this suggestion that the regenerate can thus become apostate, and be finally lost, is actually only hypothetical and theoretical. Even on the human side it is much more unlikely than physical suicide, and so only to be thought of as a remote possibility; and actually on the divine side it can by grace never happen."

It seems, therefore, that this passage can be harmonized with the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints by assuming either that those referred to are not real believers or that the apostasy referred to is not real apostasy. Neither seems entirely satisfactory, and each cancels out the other. Is there another alternative? The purpose of this article is to present the view that there is.

It should be noted that the whole passage — Hebrews 5:11 to 6:20 — is really a parenthesis, and should be considered as a whole. The writer is on the point of beginning a discussion of Christ's priesthood, "after the order of Melchisedec," when he realizes that the teaching which he is about to give may prove to be beyond the capacity of those to whom he is writing. When they should be capable of digesting strong meat, they are still babies, able to take only milk. They, like a great many Christians still, are still at the ABC's of Christian experience and Christian knowledge, and satisfied that it should be so. Chapter 6 therefore deals with this situation, and it is only with the last verse of it that the Epistle gets back to Christ as a high priest "after the order of Melchisedec."

The opening verses of this chapter are an exhortation to immature Christians to leave the first stage of Christian experience and go on to perfection, not trying to lay the foundation again. The first stages, of course, are of vital importance — repentance, faith, public profession ("doctrine of baptisms"), the call to Christian service ("laying on of hands"), newness of life ("resurrection of the dead"), and the realization of the fact of the final judgment. But the Christian must not be content with these first beginnings. Some of those to whom this Epistle was written seemed to think that the Christian life consisted in a continual returning to such new beginnings — repenting and believing, making a profession, and so on; then falling away for a while to the old life again; then a new repentance and a new profession of faith, like a man laying the foundation of his house again and again. But, says the writer of this Epistle, **that is quite impossible**. That is the import of of verses 4 and 5. This going back to the beginnings again and again is impossible, for — and here is the crux of the argument — **that would imply that Christ would need to be continually crucified for them** ("crucifying for themselves the Son of God afresh, and putting Him to an open shame"). Christ's crucifixion on their behalf

was apparently ineffective, if the whole process of repentance and faith has to be repeated, and so He is put to an open shame, not only the shame of a fresh crucifixion, but the ignominy of continual failure. If commentators had remembered that later in the Epistle the writer stresses most emphatically that Christ's sacrifice was once for all, the point made here might have been more clearly apprehended. The point of the passage is not simply that a man cannot be converted twice, but that **he does not need to be converted twice**, for Christ's finished work on behalf of the believer was final and effective. The question under discussion is not the impossibility of being renewed from apostasy, but the impossibility of going back to the unregenerate state again; in other words, the impossibility of apostasy. And what is that but the doctrine of final perseverance — once regenerate, always regenerate?

On this interpretation, the rest of the chapter fits amazingly into place. The significant word in the illustration of verses 7 and 8 is the word "oft." If a piece of ground is good, and has good seed sown in it, the net result of God's frequent watering of it will be that it brings forth fruit abundantly and increasingly: the purpose of repeated rain is not to start growth all over again, but to increase the growth that has begun. But ground that is continually bringing forth briars and thorns is not going to produce any better harvest for all the rain that falls upon it: it has never been freed from the primeval curse of Adam's sin, and nothing can be done with it.

But, says the author of the Epistle in effect to

his readers, "You are not like the ground which has never been freed from the curse." The fruits of salvation have already been showing in their lives: he mentions some of them — "your work and labor of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister." But still he is not satisfied, and again he appeals to them not to be lazily content with what they have but to go on "to the full assurance of hope unto the end." They have abundant examples of endurance to follow, particularly that of Abraham, who persevered in faith and patience, "and so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise." And so the chapter comes to its crown and climax with the secret of final perseverance: we have a faithful God, a God who has not only promised but who has sworn by Himself to bring us through — "that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." There are two impossibilities in this chapter — for God to lie (verse 18), and, derived from that, for any who have been once enlightened to fall away and need renewal (verses 4-6).

And if we still doubt whether the hope of advancement can be realized in us, there is one more convincing argument to be brought forward. Christ our Forerunner has already entered into the perfection of glory that will one day be ours. "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil, whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."

Blue Banner Question Box

Readers are invited to submit Biblical, doctrinal and practical questions for answer in this department. Names of correspondents will not be published, but anonymous communications will be disregarded.

Question:

What is Existentialism?

Answer:

Although not stated, this question implies a two-fold inquiry: (1) What does the term "existentialism" mean? (2) How does it affect the Christian believer?

(1) There is no simple answer to the first question. The derivation of the word itself is that it has come into English usage from the philosophical sense of the German and Danish terms *existenz* and *eksistens*. The simplest thing that can be said about it is that it was and is a reaction against the idealistic philosophy of Descartes, Kant and Hegel. One of its earliest pro-

ponents was the Dane, Soren Kierkegaard, who felt that the religious, social and philosophical developments of his time destroyed the individual. This intense and almost passionate insistence upon the individual's responsibility for making himself what he is has become one of the distinctive concepts of the existentialists. But this insistence upon the individual's freedom operates in a universe which is irrational and in which life itself is absurd and without meaning. There is no orderly universe in the sense of a **created** universe subject to the objective natural and moral law of its Creator. To the existentialist the only meaning and value is created by his own individual choice.

Perhaps the greatest appeal of existentialism

to students in the modern world has been that it offers a desperate attempt to seek to salvage something of a free individual in a world committed to the worship of the gods and laws of a naturalistic, materialistic universe. Furthermore it seems to offer some hope to those who would like to live a life which is a law unto itself — a creator of its own norms and standards.

(2) How will existentialism affect the Christian believer? There can be no absolute answer to this question either. The Christian believer is one who approaches all life, and all the questions relating to life from the perspective of humility — in reliance upon the revelation of God and His unveiling of the meaning and purpose of this world through His written and living Word — the Scriptures and Jesus Christ the Son of God. The Christian believer will soon discover that there is a great gulf fixed between himself and the existentialist in the starting-point from which he approaches any of life's basic questions. However there is a sense in which the believer will want to seek to understand the existentialist in order to seek by God's grace to know how and where to present Jesus Christ and His Word.

To those who are interested in further study of this subject it is suggested that further reading can be done in two recently published studies of this modern-day philosophical movement. One is written by J. M. Spier on "Christianity and Existentialism," published in 1953 by The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., P. O. Box 185, Nutley 10, N. J.; the other, written from the perspective of the tradition of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas is written by the Harvard professor of philosophy, John Wild, and is entitled "The Challenge of Existentialism" (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Indiana, 1955).

— S. Bruce Willson

Question:

What should be thought about Billy Graham's views: (1) on the Sabbath; (2) on demonism? — as shown by recent issues of his syndicated column.

Answer:

(1) We can agree when Billy Graham says, "I am of the opinion that as a people, we have almost forgotten the commandment, 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.'" But we do not have to go back to the "horse and buggy days" to keep the day of the Sabbath institution, the permanent memorial of God's creation and of Christ's resurrection. What we need to do is to get ready for next Sabbath day and keep it holy, and so forward. We cannot blame our disobedience on "the machine age." It is our abuse of the machine that is at fault. We are told by experts, who have made many tests, that the machines would last longer and give better service, if allowed to rest

on the Sabbath day. The writer was told by a blast furnace superintendent that the blast furnace would last longer if allowed to cool down on the Sabbath day. He knew by long experience exactly what he was talking about. The trouble is, men keep grasping for more money every week, and forget Him who made all things for His own glory.

Jesus Christ plainly taught that there are works of necessity and mercy that should be attended to on the Sabbath day, for the glory of God. But Mr. Graham says that these are "in the public interest, and therefore justified." They are justified primarily because God made them necessary to His glory. "There are also," says Mr. Graham, "a few businesses without which the community couldn't function," and he mentions "filling stations" as an example. But if filling stations were closed on Sabbath, there would not be such "hurrying, traveling and visiting" on that day, neither would there be such a heavy toll of highway, railway and airway accidents, which really would be in the public interest. The trouble is that "the public" keeps demanding more and more services for its own pleasure and financial gain, neither necessary nor merciful, leaving God out of account.

(2) Billy Graham says, "The reason there are so many different denominations is that there are so many different kinds of people." Rather it is because there are so many different kinds and mixtures of so-called "religion." He says, "the differences in the great Christian Churches are really quite minor." Are differences of faith, conduct, worship, and government quite minor? What differences could be greater? He says, "The chief differences in the major Protestant Churches are the result of the freedom of interpretation, which has been the genius of Christianity."

Is "freedom of interpretation" the genius of the true, or of false Christianity? We believe 1 Peter 1: 9, 10, that "we have the more sure word of prophecy (the inspired Word of God), whereunto ye do well, if ye take heed, as unto a light shining in a squalid place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts, knowing THIS FIRST that no prophecy of Scripture is of one's own (i.e., of any human) interpretation." Our Confession of Faith (I. 9, 10) states, "The infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself . . . The supreme Judge by whom all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture."

Precisely here are the cross-roads. Billy Graham was recently accused of changing the direction of his evangelistic effort. He has pub-

licly denied the accusation at the beginning of his New York City campaign. He says that no matter what his sponsorship may be, "The centrality of my message will be Christ and Him crucified." BUT in order to give this message, he not only accepts, but demands the sponsorship of churches, councils of churches, and other associations which, by their own standards and leadership, deny the deity, the atonement, the miracles and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Presumably, he regards these as "minor" results of the "freedom of interpretation," for, when his hearers, desiring to learn more of the message he was given, come to him, he sends them to his sponsors, to whomsoever they may choose — to Modernists, Unitarians, Roman Catholics, or what not? He says, "The old terms fundamentalism and liberalism are now passe. The situation has radically changed since the days of Machen, Riley, and other defenders of the faith of a generation ago." Thus he has himself exposed the fundamental error upon which his preaching has been based from the first, and says, "I intend to continue."

— Frank D. Frazer

Question:

Is it unbiblical for women: (1) to wear slacks or trousers? Does not the Bible forbid women to wear men's clothing, and vice versa? (2) To attend church services without wearing hats?

Answer:

(1) The first query no doubt refers to Deut. 22:5 which (both in the Hebrew and in the Greek version commonly used in Paul's time) reads literally: "It shall not be (that) the equipment of man be upon woman; neither shall a man wear the garment of a woman, for every one doing these things is an abomination to Jehovah, thy God."

The word here translated "equipment" is a collective noun of wide usage for various implements, tools, vessels, instruments, etc., requiring some specific indication of the kind of equipment in view. The word for "man" is a special word designating a strong, able man. The equipment of an able man of course includes clothing, but clothing is not specified in the first clause as it is in the second. His equipment indicates the work he is fitted to do. He is to do it, and not put it off on his wife, or other women. In any case he is not to wear a woman's garment (specifically, her outer garment) to hide himself when he ought to be doing his own work.

This is a part of God's provision for the rights of woman, that she be not imposed upon. God's order of things is perfect; any man or woman who violates His order is an abomination to Him.

(2) The second query refers to 1 Cor. 11: 3-16,

which likewise is based on God's order of all created things. In Paul's day, the woman's veil was a symbol of her created nature and position, as revealed in Gen. 2:20b-23. Today a woman's hat bears no such significance. However, she still has the "veil" which God gave her from the first (verses 14, 15). She has a right to that glory. She has the word of 1 Pet. 3:1-4, to adorn herself with "a meek and quiet spirit which, in the sight of God, is of great price." Note also 1 Tim. 2:9-15; 3:11; 5:13-15; Titus 2:3-5.

Seeking first the glory of God, "the willing and the doing of His good pleasure," common sense, good taste, safety, health and comfort are guides sufficient to determine what men and women shall wear in church, and every other place, according to the duty of the situation. Women's hats should not be so large that those sitting behind cannot see the speaker. Hard and fast rules, such as people make for themselves, often become burdensome hindrances. Fashions continually change. Should men go back to the clothes many wore in Paul's day, they would be wearing women's skirts of today. Christians are to dress modestly, becomingly, avoiding anything that would make them conspicuous, ridiculous, or automatons in uniform. Many a wicked heart and sinful life has been covered by the garb of a nun, or a uniform, or a dress that meets all the proprieties.

Behaviour is more important than dress. The writer knows a young lady who for years has not been able to wear a hat on the top of her head since a serious auto accident, but her quiet and reverent deportment in church has been more of grace than a hat on her head. "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the House of God; for to draw nigh to hear is better than to give the sacrifice of fools; for they know not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thy heart be hasty to utter anything before God; for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few."

— Frank D. Frazer

Question:

What is the theological argument underlying the teaching of the Confession of Faith (XXI. 4) and the Larger Catechism (Q. 183), that "Prayer is to be made . . . not for the dead." Can the proposition be proved by the proof-texts cited (2 Sam. 12:21-23 with Luke 16:25,26 and Rev. 14:13), or does it really rest rather on general theological grounds or inferences from other doctrines?

Answer:

The proof-texts cited plainly prove that human probation ends at death, that is, at the moment of the separation of the soul from the body. This is confirmed by many other texts of both Old and

New Testaments. For example, Heb. 9:27; John 8:21,24; Prov. 14:32; Psalm 88:10,11; Eccles. 9:4-6; Heb. 3:7-15; Psalm 95:7-11; 2 Cor. 6:2; Rev. 22:11,12. Death is the final crisis for all.

In Matthew 25:31-46, the Son of Man, to whom all judgment was committed, reveals that people die either as “sheep,” meaning persons who belong to Him, whom He knows, who know Him and follow Him, and for whom He died; or as “goats,” meaning those who do not belong to Him, having refused His shepherding care. Neither their nature nor identity is changed after death.

At the resurrection of the body, and reunion of body and soul — at the great assize — all are gathered and separated into groups, the “sheep” on the right hand, and the “goats” on the left of the Judge, before He pronounces the sentence of final destiny upon them as human persons of both soul and body. Likewise in Rev. 20:11-15, it is “the dead small and great” who are judged “according to their works.” Their only works are “the works of their hands,” i.e., while in their bodies in earth, for “there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave” (Eccles. 9:10). But as the human soul of Christ was not left in the grave, neither are the souls of those united in Him by faith. They are with Him where He is.

The Scriptures give no foundation for the belief that probation continues in any sense after the death of the body; no foundation for the teaching of “purgatory” by Roman Catholics; of a “second chance” by such sects as the Seventh-Day Adventists, or Jehovah’s Witnesses; of Universalists, or of Spiritualists.

But the Scriptures do teach that human probation ends at the death of the body, and of this an obvious corollary (i.e., a proposition needing no additional proof) is that believers, being in eternal life with Christ, have no need whatsoever for prayers on their behalf; and that unbelievers, being in eternal death without Christ, could not in any sense be helped by prayers contrary to the will of God.

For a very helpful discussion of Q. 183 of the Larger Catechism, the reader is referred to “Studies in the Larger Catechism,” by Dr. J. G. Vos, in **Blue Banner Faith and Life**, Volume 4 (1949), pages 61-63.

— Frank D. Frazer

Question:

Is a “ground-breaking ceremony” a part of Scripturally appointed worship? If not, is it proper to participate in it?

Answer:

A “ground-breaking ceremony” is not a part of Scripturally appointed worship. However, when, for instance, a new building is to be erected, “ground-breaking” becomes a natural necessity,

such as, if the building is to be dedicated to the service of God, affords a time and place for Scripturally appointed worship, as did the laying of the foundation stone for rebuilding the temple at Jerusalem (Ezra 3:9-13), or the dedication of the restored walls of Jerusalem (Neh. 12:27-43), or the dedication of Solomon’s temple (2 Chron. 5:1:14), with the prayer of Solomon that follows. On these occasions, of course, the symbolical forms of worship, sacrifice with instrumental music, were used, according to the commandment for that time. But the point is that worship was offered by the people on these special occasions of joy and thanksgiving, and God graciously manifested His acceptance.

Those symbolical forms fulfilled by Jesus Christ are done away, and are **not commanded** for the present time. “The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship must worship in spirit and in truth.” “In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” “By Him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise continually.” Every one sincerely in covenant with God says “I will bless the Lord at all times.”

Hence, when God has provided the means and opportunity for some extension of His kingdom on earth, its actual beginning may be a fitting time for a public acknowledgment of His grace by Scripturally appointed worship; by thanksgiving, praise, reading of appropriate Scripture, and prayer.

— F. D. Frazer

Question:

Is the Covenanter Church still opposed to religious observance of Christmas and Easter, or have these principles been given up? It seems that many congregations do observe these days with religious features. Were our Scottish forefathers wrong on this question, or is the present trend wrong, or are we just drifting along without thinking of the principles involved?

Answer:

Our Scottish forefathers, acting on the God-given principle regulating His worship, that whatever is not commanded in His written Word is forbidden, abolished the religious observance of Christmas and Easter, by Act of the General Assembly in 1592, and declared such observance “unlawful within this Church,” by the National Covenant of Scotland in 1638, which Covenant we also have acknowledged and sworn in our Covenant of 1871, Section 6. Thus we have set to our seal that they were right.

This was a constituent item of the principles

for which they fought and bled, and which by the help of God, they finally won. And by that victory, we today enjoy civil and religious liberty; **liberty**, that is, to obey the Word of God; **NOT** liberty to follow the present trend of the multitude in rejecting the Word of God as the supreme rule of conduct, and manner of worship.

The question before us calls attention to evidences of unfaithfulness to the God of our Covenant. There are also signs in the ecumenical camp and elsewhere, of new encroachments of the tyranny of Liberalism, which never fails to take advantage of every opportunity to increase its strength. With all its pious professions of love and tolerance it will kindle ecclesiastical strife to enslave the conscience of men, if and when it thinks it is strong enough. It is time now to stop and consider what we do.

At the same time it is to be remembered that faithfulness requires of a pastor clear, positive declarations of the truth of the incarnation and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, whenever and wherever the opportunity is afforded him, without worldly show and vain attempts at entertainment in the Church.

The reader is referred to the answer to a similar question in the "Blue Banner Question Box" of Vol. 7 (1952), p.84f; and to the article "The Observance of Days," reprinted in **Blue Banner Faith and Life**, Vol. 8 (1953), p. 8ff; both by the Editor, Dr. J. G. Vos. And for the fundamental principle here involved, see the article "The Second Commandment" by Dr. William Young, in **Blue Banner Faith and Life**, Vol. 12 (1957), p. 12.

— F. D. Frazer

Question:

Does not the Covenanter Church's emphasis on what is called "purity of worship" lead to a spir-

itual pride which may be worse sin than hymn singing, or instrumental music? Does this Church have any testimony against pride?

Answer:

The Covenanter Church's emphasis on purity of worship is intended to lead to such humbleness of spirit, mind and will before God, as shall manifest itself in sincere and carefully exact obedience to the written requirements of God's holiness in His worship. It is intended to lead away from and prevent the pride and presumption of will-worship. And it is known to have this effect in hearts willing to do the will of God. But, "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked."

As to which sins are worse or better in the sight of God, we are not capable of judging without His Word. His Word in Leviticus 10:1-5 very impressively reveals how He regards the sin of presumption in His worship. And we are all to remember that "every sin deserveth God's wrath and curse, both in this life and in that which is to come" (Shorter Catechism, 84).

This Church primarily and continuously witnesses to the truth of "the testimony of God in the Holy Scriptures," and confesses that its duty is to state and defend the teachings thereof (Testimony, XXXII. 1). In other words, the testimony of this Church is, **first and always**, the testimony of the Bible. Does the Bible have any testimony against pride? For answer, use a concordance, or Nave's Topical Bible which fills 5½ pages quoting 121 passages of the Bible's testimony against pride, with many additional passages against presumption, against self-righteousness and self-will.

The Covenanter Church's public Covenant of 1871, inclusive of its Confession of Sin, is, from beginning to end, testimony **against** pride and **for** true humility before God.

— F. D. Frazer

Studies on the Sacraments

LESSON 10

How to Prepare for the Lord's Supper

Q. 171. How are they that receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to prepare themselves before they come unto it?

A. They that receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper are, before they come, to prepare themselves thereunto, by examining themselves of their being in Christ, or their sins and wants; of the truth and measure of their knowledge, faith, repentance; love to God and the brethren, charity to all men, forgiving those that have done them wrong; of their desires after Christ, and of their new obedience; and by renewing the exercise of

these graces, by serious meditation, and fervent prayer.

Scripture References:

1 Cor. 11:28. Self-examination is required before partaking of the Lord's supper.

2 Cor. 13:5. A Christian should examine himself as to the reality of his faith and experience.

1 Cor. 5:7. Ex. 12:15. Separation from sin is required as a preparation for receiving the Lord's supper.

1 Cor. 11:29. 2 Cor. 13:5. Matt. 26:28. Zech. 12:10. 1 Cor. 11:31. 1 Cor. 10:16, 17. Acts 2:46, 47. 1 Cor. 5:8. 1 Cor. 11:18-20. Matt. 5:23, 24. In preparing to partake of the Lord's supper, it is our duty to examine ourselves concerning the "truth and measure" of our knowledge, faith, repentance and consistency of Christian living.

Isa. 55:1. John 7:37. 1 Cor. 5:7, 8. 1 Cor. 11:24-28. Heb. 10:21, 22, 24. Psalm 26:6. 2 Chron. 30:18, 19. Matt 26:26. We are to examine ourselves as to our desires after Christ, and our new obedience to Him; we are to seek the renewal of all Christian graces, and to engage in serious meditation, and prayer for divine grace.

Questions:

1. Why is special preparation necessary before partaking of the Lord's supper?

Because of the importance of the Lord's supper, the solemn nature of the sacrament, and the danger of incurring divine judgments if we partake in an unworthy manner. Proper preparation is required, not only by these considerations, but by the specific command of the Word of God (1 Cor. 11:28). In the face of this express command, it is definitely wrong and sinful to partake of the Lord's supper without preparation.

2. What is the purpose of such special preparation for the Lord's supper?

The purpose of such special preparation is that we may partake of the sacrament aright, to our strengthening, encouragement and growth in grace, not to judgment or being chastened of the Lord. The purpose of self-examination is not to discourage us and frighten us away from the Lord's table, but that we may approach the Lord's table aright and receive a blessing. Note 1 Cor. 11:28, "But let a man examine himself, AND SO LET HIM EAT OF THAT BREAD, AND DRINK OF THAT CUP." The apostle does not say, "Let a man examine himself, and refrain from eating of that bread. . .". The outcome of self-examination ought to be repentance and confession of sin, renewed faith and love toward our Saviour, and then receiving His blessing at the communion table. The "communion season" is the divinely-appointed time for taking an inventory of our spiritual state, measuring ourselves by the divine standard, repenting of and forsaking what is contrary to God's will, and resolving by God's grace to live a life that will be pleasing to Him.

3. Why does the Church have special services in preparation for the Lord's supper? What is their purpose, and do they fulfil that purpose?

The purpose of special preparatory services before the Lord's supper is obedience to the command of 1 Cor. 11:28, 31. Every individual Christian should examine himself and make his own preparation individually, but for our greater encouragement and assistance it is eminently proper to have special services of the Church before the

Lord's supper is administered. Such services are to impress upon us the wickedness of our sins, our great need of God's grace, and the urgent duty of hearty repentance, so that we may not add sin to sin by partaking in an unworthy manner.

While of course there is always room for improvement, and a danger of formalism, yet many can testify that such preparatory services have been a blessing to them and have been used by the Holy Spirit to bring them closer to the Lord. The general abandonment of such preparatory services in many denominations that formerly maintained them is one of the signs of the spiritual decadence of modern Protestantism.

4. What should we say to a Church member who is unwilling to partake of the Lord's supper because he "feels he is not good enough"?

Such a state of mind reveals a pitiable condition of spiritual bondage. It is the outcome of a legalistic view of salvation (salvation by works or character) plus a fear of incurring the divine judgment mentioned in 1 Cor. 11:29-32. Such a Church member should be kindly and patiently instructed so that he may come to understand that no person in the world is "good enough" to deserve any of God's blessings, and that salvation and everything the Lord's supper stands for is the free gift of God's unmerited grace to sinners. Such a person should be encouraged to cast himself on the free mercy of God in Christ, and then to partake of the Lord's supper after the proper preparation. See also the discussion of the next question of the Catechism (Q. 172).

Sometimes the statement that a person does not feel himself "good enough" to partake of the Lord's supper may be a mere excuse offered by nominal church members who are living in sin and have no intention or desire of taking Jesus Christ and the Lord's supper seriously. We should be very careful never to encourage such to partake of the sacrament while in their carnal condition, for they will be in peril of incurring divine judgment if they partake. What such people need is to be born again of the Holy Spirit, honestly to repent of their sins, sincerely to believe on Christ as their Saviour, and only then — after due preparation — to partake of the Lord's supper.

Besides the legalists and the nominal church members already discussed, there are some true Christians who may be described as victims of a morbidly active conscience. Such people fully realize that we are saved by grace, not by works, and they are far removed from the nominal church members who carelessly continue in sin. Filled with doubts and scruples, they find the approach of the communion season an occasion of distress rather than of joy. We should endeavor to help such Christians by sympathy and encouragement rather than by reproaches or harsh criticism. Such morbidly introspective souls should be encouraged to look outward rather than inward — to look to

Christ and His redemption rather than always to be thinking about their own doubts and weaknesses. They are like the diffident Mr. Fearing, in the second part of Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," of whom Greatheart said, "He had, I think, a Slough of Despond in his mind, a slough that he carried everywhere with him, or else he could never have been as he was. Mr. Fearing was always pessimistic about himself, yet "he was a man that had the root of the matter in him," and

finally crossed the last river triumphantly, "not much above wetshod," saying, "I shall, I shall." (See also next lesson, on Q. 172 of the Catechism.

5. What is the most important element in preparation for the Lord's supper?

Personal faith in Christ and Him crucified as our only Saviour, accompanied by sincere repentance for sin.

LESSON 11

Should a Doubting Christian Partake of the Lord's Supper?

Q. 172. May one who doubteth of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation, come to the Lord's supper?

A. One who doubteth of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation to the sacrament of the Lord's supper, may have true interest in Christ, though he be not yet assured thereof; and in God's account hath it, if he be duly affected with the apprehension of the want of it, and unfeignedly desires to be found in Christ, and to depart from iniquity; in which case (because promises are made, and this sacrament is appointed, for the relief even of weak and doubting Christians) he is to bewail his unbelief, and labor to have his doubts resolved; and, so doing, he may and ought to come to the Lord's supper, that he may be farther strengthened.

Scripture References:

Isa. 50:10. 1 John 5:13. Psalm 88:1-18. Psalm 77:1-12. Jonah 2:4, 7. Assurance not being of the essence of salvation, a person may possess the fact of salvation without having attained the consciousness of salvation.

Isa. 54:7-10. Matt. 5:3, 4. Psalm 31:22. Psalm 73:13, 22, 23. Phil. 3:8, 9. Psalm 10:17. Psalm 42:1, 2, 5, 11. 2 Tim. 2:19. Isa. 50:10. A deep concern about one's personal salvation, coupled with an earnest desire to be found in Christ and to depart from iniquity, is an evidence of being in the state of grace, even though subjective assurance may be absent or defective.

Isa. 40:11, 29, 31. Matt. 11:28. Matt. 12:20. Matt. 26:28. Divine promises are made, and the Lord's supper provided, for the spiritual help even of weak and doubting Christians.

Mark 9:24. Acts 2:37. Acts 16:30. Rom. 4:10. 1 Cor 11:28. The person who is troubled with doubts about his own salvation, or proper preparation for the Lord's supper, after doing what he can to remove the difficulty, ought to come to the Lord's supper, for his spiritual benefit.

Questions:

1. With what class of persons is this question of the Catechism concerned?

With diffident Christians, that is, with Chris-

tians who hesitate to partake of the Lord's supper because of doubts in their mind, either concerning the fact of their salvation, or concerning their proper preparation for the sacrament. This question does not concern those who make no profession of faith in Christ, nor those who, while making a profession, live careless lives of easy compromise with sin. In this lesson we are concerned only with the spiritual problem of the person who is in earnest about the salvation of his soul, who believes in Christ, but who has doubts about his own spiritual state.

2. What is the difference between salvation and assurance of salvation?

Salvation is a matter of a person's relation to God; assurance is a matter of a person's feeling sure, in his own mind, about his relation to God. Many popular Fundamentalist Bible teachers confuse these two things, saying that if a person is saved he will always know it, and that if a person has accepted Christ and yet lacks assurance of salvation he simply does not believe God's Word. This teaching is over-simplified and erroneous, and has caused an untold amount of spiritual and mental anguish.

Following the definite teaching of the Bible, our Catechism and the rest of the Westminster Standards teach that there is a distinction between salvation itself, on the one hand, and mental assurance of salvation on the other. To deny or ignore that distinction is to open the door to serious theological errors.

For a fuller discussion of the distinction between salvation and assurance, the student is referred to Q. 80 and 81 of the Larger Catechism, and the discussion of same in **Blue Banner Faith and Life**, Vol. 2, No. 2 (April-June 1947), pages 66-69. Briefly, possession of something is one thing, and knowledge or certainty in one's own mind of the possession is something else.

A person might have a thousand dollars in the bank, and yet not know about it, or not feel certain that the money was really his. Similarly, a person may be really born again by the power of the Holy Spirit, and yet not enjoy mental certainty concerning this spiritual change. The Holy Spirit's work is much deeper than our consciousness.

Salvation, once a person really has it, is permanent and cannot be lost; but a person's certainty of it in his own consciousness is often obscured and interfered with by temptations, lapses into sin, or lack of understanding of the truths that are involved.

To upbraid a person who is struggling with spiritual doubts by telling him that he "doesn't believe John 3:16", etc., is not only heartlessly unkind, but reveals ignorance of the nature of such a person's real problem. It is amazing how dogmatically and confidently people write and speak on this subject of assurance, while they yet give no evidence of having studied its problems or being familiar with the history of discussion of this subject. There are popular Bible teachers who are naively unaware of the truth that the Holy Spirit's work of regeneration takes place below the level of man's consciousness. Some of these Bible teachers who are so positive that salvation and assurance are inseparable should read up on the subject in a standard orthodox work on Systematic Theology such as that of Charles Hodge. The common confusion about the subject of assurance is a good illustration of the value of thorough education in systematic theology over against the superficial training given in some Bible schools. This matter is not by any means "as simple as A-B-C."

3. Why should lack of assurance not keep a person from partaking of the Lord's supper?

We are not saved by assurance, but by faith in Christ as our Redeemer. That is to say, we are saved by believing IN CHRIST, not by believing that we are saved. It is a fine and comforting thing to be able honestly to believe that we are saved, but the really important thing is to believe on Jesus Christ as our Saviour. The person who confesses himself a lost sinner, sincerely intends and wants to believe in Christ as his only Redeemer, and is really trying to depart from iniquity, is a Christian and ought to partake of the Lord's supper, even though he may have some doubts about his salvation, or about his proper preparation for the sacrament.

When the Passover was observed by the people of Israel in Egypt, every family that had killed

the lamb and put the blood on the lintel and side posts of their house door was SAFE from the plague that destroyed the firstborn of the Egyptians. Suppose two families lived side by side. Both have killed the lamb and put the blood on the door. One family is rejoicing in the conscious certainty of safety from the destroying plague; the other family is troubled by doubts and worries, questioning and worrying about whether they will really be spared or not. Which of these families is the safest? The answer is, BOTH ARE ALIKE SAFE, though one has assurance, the other has doubts. For God had not said, "When I see a house where the people have no doubts or worries, I will pass over you." What God had said was: "When I see THE BLOOD I will pass over you" (Ex. 12:13). The person who is putting his faith in THE BLOOD, whatever doubts about himself he may have, is saved in God's sight, belongs to the covenant people of God, and ought to partake of the Lord's supper.

4. How should a diffident Christian prepare for the Lord's supper?

Besides the self-examination which every Christian should engage in before partaking of the Lord's supper, the diffident Christian should "bewail his unbelief, and labor to have his doubts resolved," and thereupon come to the Lord's table expecting a blessing. Lack of assurance is not to be complacently tolerated; we are always to strive to attain and retain the full conscious assurance of our personal salvation. Doubts may be unavoidable, for the time being, but we are never to regard them as legitimate tenants of our mind. Just as it is wrong to tell a diffident Christian "You don't believe John 3:16," so it is also very wrong to tell a person who is struggling with spiritual doubts: "Forget it; just ignore your doubts and problems; pay no attention to them and they will pass." Spiritual doubts are very real to the person who has them. They cannot be disposed of by a wave of the hand and a pat on the back. Such a person should face his own troubles frankly and seek relief. Study of God's Word, prayer, and conference with godly, experienced Christians will help. And as the Catechism rightly affirms, the Lord's supper itself is intended for the spiritual help of weak and doubting Christians.

LESSON 12

May Professing Christians be Debarred from the Lord's Supper?

Q. 173. May any who profess the faith, and desire to come to the Lord's supper, be kept from it?

A. Such as are found to be ignorant or scandalous, notwithstanding their profession of the faith, and desire to come to the Lord's supper, may and ought to be kept from that sacrament, by the power which Christ hath left in his church, until they receive instruction, and manifest their reformation.

Scripture References:

1 Cor. 11:27-34, compared with the following Scriptures: Matt. 7:6; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; Jude 23; Tim. 5:22. Christ has committed to His Church authority to exclude from its membership ignorant and scandalous persons, and this power must be understood to include the right and duty of keeping such persons from the Lord's supper.

2 Cor. 2:7. 2 Tim. 2:24-26. When his ignorance

has been overcome, or scandalous living corrected, the person who had been excluded is to be admitted to the fellowship and privileges of the visible Church.

Questions:

1. Is the Lord's supper intended for the unconverted?

No, for such persons lack saving faith in Christ, without which the sacrament cannot benefit them. Weak and doubting Christians may and ought, after due preparation, to partake of the Lord's supper. But persons who are really not Christians at all, or who are only hypocrites, can receive no benefit from the Lord's supper, and have no right to partake of it.

2. Is the Church to decide what persons are converted, and have saving faith in Christ?

Certainly not. Only God can see people's hearts, to be able to know with certainty what their spiritual condition is. Church officers and church courts cannot see people's hearts and they have no business to pronounce judgment on whether people are, or are not, truly saved Christians.

At various times and in various sects and denominations the attempt has been made to have a perfectly pure church by excluding all persons adjudged to be unregenerate. This attempt has always failed in practice, and must always fail, for church officers cannot see the heart. All such attempts to pronounce on people's spiritual condition, or their relation to God, are bound to produce evils even greater than they are intended to remedy. There have always been some unregenerate people in the visible Church; ministers and elders are not to blame for this unless they have been negligent in their legitimate duties.

3. If the Church is not to decide what persons are converted, how can there be any church discipline?

The true idea of church discipline is based upon evaluation of people's PROFESSION and PRACTICE, not on an attempted decision as to whether they are converted or not. The Church has no business to try to examine people's hearts, and pronounce judgment on their relation to God; but the Church, through its proper officers, does have the function of evaluating people's profession of faith and their manner of life.

If a person applies for membership in a congregation, the session is not to try to decide whether he is born again or not, nor to ask him to prove that he is converted, nor to ask him to narrate his religious experience so that officers of the congregation can decide whether he is saved or not. To attempt to exercise such functions would be to invade the realm which belongs to God alone. The officers of the congregation are, on the other

hand, to inquire as to the applicant's profession of faith and manner of life; and having done this, it is further their function to decide whether his profession of faith, and manner of life, are compatible with membership in the Church. The applicant does not have to prove that he is saved. His profession is to be taken at face value unless contradicted by his manner of life.

4. What classes of people are to be excluded from the Lord's supper?

"Such as are found to be ignorant or scandalous." By "ignorant" the Catechism means persons who do not make a proper profession of faith. A profession of faith of an ignorant person is inadequate for admission to church membership or to the Lord's supper. This inadequacy may be the result of lack of information, or it may be the result of false doctrines held by the applicant. Thus an applicant who did not know that Christ died on the cross to save sinners, or who did not know that salvation is by free grace and not by works, would have an inadequate profession because of lack of information.

On the other hand, an applicant who professed belief in the universal Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man would have an ignorant profession because of false doctrine held. Both kinds or ignorance — mere lack of knowledge, and actual profession of error — constitute a legitimate ground for exclusion from the Lord's supper, and from church membership.

By "scandalous" the Catechism means persons whose profession cannot be taken at face value because it is contradicted by their manner of life. "Scandal" does not mean any sin or fault whatever, but only such sinful conduct as would nullify the person's profession and render it improper to admit him to the Lord's supper, or to membership in the church. Such scandal might take many different forms, and the circumstances would have to be taken into account to arrive at a just decision concerning it.

The Catechism wisely refrains from attempting to provide a ready-made definition of either ignorance or scandal. It lays down the principle — which is undoubtedly Scriptural and therefore valid — and wisely leaves the precise application of the principle to the church courts before which such matters properly come for decision. The decision as to whether a particular applicant is ignorant or scandalous (in a way which would exclude him from church membership or from the Lord's supper) must be made by the church officers whose duty it is to pass on his application.

In the course of time every denomination acquires a body of precedents from decisions of such cases which have the effect of church law in deciding similar cases that may arise. Thus a denomination may have a settled church law that

professional gamblers cannot be admitted to church membership or to the Lord's supper. Or a denomination may have a church law that members of oath-bound secret societies must be excluded. In each case the denomination has applied the principle set forth in the Catechism, that those who are ignorant or scandalous are not to be admitted.

5. What is the position of the Catechism concerning the question of open, close or restricted communion?

This question, in the form in which it confronts us today, is not directly answered by the Catechism, or by any of the Westminster Standards, because the problems created by denominationalism were not then in view. The purpose of the Westminster Assembly of Divines was to lay the foundation for "a covenanted uniformity in religion" in the Churches of Scotland, England and Ireland. It was contemplated that there would be but one national Church in each kingdom, of which all faithful Christians would be members. Therefore the Westminster Assembly, while stating that the ignorant or scandalous are not to be admitted to the Lord's supper, did not take up the question of whether members of one denomination should be admitted to the sacrament in congregations of another denomination. This is a question which has arisen, for the most part, since the time of the Westminster Assembly three hundred years ago.

However, the statements of the Catechism do have some relation to the question of open, close or restricted communion. Open communion means that all persons who wish to come are admitted to the Lord's supper. (The invitation is usually to "all members of evangelical churches" or "all who are the Lord's," etc., but all who wish to partake are admitted without any investigation of their faith and life). Restricted communion means that members of other denominations may be admitted to the Lord's supper after they have met with the officers of the congregation and have satisfied them concerning their faith and life. (There are various degrees of "restricted communion," some broader, some more narrow, in various denominations). Close communion means that only members of the denomination that is administering the sacrament, or of closely allied denominations officially recognized as of virtually identical faith, are admitted to the Lord's supper.

The question of who is to be admitted to the Lord's supper has been greatly confused by the assumption that the only alternatives are "open" or "close" communion. This is untrue. "Restricted" communion is also a possibility that must be considered.

It should be said at once that the Catechism is clearly opposed to open communion. Open

communion leaves no opportunity for the exclusion of "such as are found to be ignorant or scandalous"; it takes the whole question of whether people are ignorant or scandalous out of the hands of the Church, and leaves everything up to the individual would-be communicant. This is contrary to the Biblical teaching that the Church may and should exclude the ignorant and the scandalous. In practice it involves the danger of a breakdown in church discipline, and profanation of the sacrament.

As for restricted and close communion, the Catechism AT LEAST requires the practice of restricted communion, and there is nothing said which is contrary to the practice of close communion on a denominational basis.

6. Does the practice of close communion deprive Christian people of their right to partake of the Lord's supper?

There can be no real privilege or "right" without the existence of a corresponding obligation or responsibility. The "right" to participate in the sacraments in a particular denomination of the visible Church implies the corresponding obligation of submission to the spiritual oversight and church discipline of the courts of that denomination. Where a person is not subject to the jurisdiction of a denomination, he cannot claim any "rights" in that denomination.

It is no doubt true that every faithful Christian, by the grace of God, has a right to partake of the Lord's supper, but not in a church whose doctrines he does not accept and to whose discipline he is unwilling to subject himself. Every faithful Christian, by God's grace, has a right to partake of the Lord's supper in the Church of which he is a member, whose doctrines he has professed to accept, and to whose discipline he is subject in the Lord.

To claim such a "right" to partake of the sacrament in some other denomination amounts to asking that denomination to deal with non-members on a different basis from that on which it deals with its own membership. A denomination sets up certain standards of faith and life, which it believes to be Scriptural, and then states that those who fail to come up to those standards are either ignorant or scandalous. Those of its own members who fail to measure up to those standards are excluded from the Lord's supper by church discipline. But no church can exercise church discipline in the case of persons who are not subject to its jurisdiction. Therefore a denomination may officially decide that the only way it can make sure of excluding the ignorant and the scandalous from the Lord's supper is by limiting participation to persons subject to its own jurisdiction and members of closely allied de-

nominations which maintain virtually identical standards of faith and life.

Only by mutual agreement on what constitutes ignorance and scandal can church discipline be maintained and the purity of the Church be safeguarded.

7. How can we answer the argument for open communion that "it is the Lord's supper, and all who are the Lord's should be invited to it?"

This argument is based upon an unconscious confusion of the visible with the invisible Church. According to the teaching of the Bible, it is not all members of the invisible Church (all who have been born again), but all who are living orderly as members of the visible Church (with a proper profession of faith and a corresponding life) that are entitled to the privileges of the visible Church, including the Lord's supper.

The apostle Paul directed that a certain member of the Corinthian Church, who was guilty of

scandal, be excluded from church fellowship (1 Cor. 5:13). This was actually done. The excluded member, though guilty of scandal, was presumably a Christian, as indicated by the fact that Paul later directed that he be restored to church privileges (2 Cor. 2:5-8).

Because it is the Lord's supper, it must be administered in accordance with the rules of the Lord's house (the visible Church) as these are set forth in the Bible. Of course each denomination must search the Scriptures and decide for itself what the rules of the Lord's house are, and then administer the Lord's supper accordingly. It is altogether unreasonable to expect that the Lord's supper shall be administered in Denomination A according to the rules of the Lord's house as these are understood in Denomination B. Each denomination is responsible to the Lord for its own interpretation of the Bible and for carrying out that interpretation in actual practice, including the administration of the sacraments.

LESSON 13

How should Communicants Partake of the Lord's Supper?

Q. 174. What is required of them that receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper in the time of the administration of it?

A. It is required of them that receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper, that during the time of the administration of it, with all holy reverence and attention they wait upon God in that ordinance, diligently observe the sacramental elements and actions, heedfully discern the Lord's body, and affectionately meditate on his death and sufferings, and thereby stir up themselves to a vigorous exercise of their graces; in judging themselves, and sorrowing for sin; in earnest hungering and thirsting after Christ, feeding on him by faith, receiving of his fulness, trusting in his merits, rejoicing in his love, giving thanks for his grace; in renewing of their covenant with God, and love to all the saints.

Scripture References:

Lev. 10:3. Heb. 12:38. Psalm 5:7. 1 Cor. 11:17, 26, 27. At the time of administration of the Lord's supper, communicants are to wait upon God in that ordinance with all holy reverence and attention.

Ex. 24:8 compared with Matt. 26:28. At the administration of the Lord's supper, the sacramental elements and actions are to be diligently observed.

Luke 22:19. 1 Cor. 11:26. 1 Cor. 10:3-5, 11, 14. Communicants are to meditate on Christ's sufferings and death, to stir themselves up to a vigorous exercise of their graces.

1 Cor. 13:31. Zech. 12:10. Communicants are to

judge themselves for their own sins, and feel sorrow for the same.

Rev. 22:17. John 6:35. John 1:16. Phil. 3:9. Psalm 63:4, 5. 2 Chron. 30:21. Psalm 22:26. At the administration of the Lord's supper, communicants are to hunger and thirst after Christ, and feed on Him by faith.

Jer. 50:5. Psalm 50:5. Acts 2:42. The administration of the Lord's supper is to be pre-eminently a time of renewing our covenant with God, and love to His people.

Questions:

1. What is the most obvious duty of communicants at the time of the administration of the Lord's supper?

Their most obvious duty is "with all holy reverence and attention to wait upon God in that ordinance." Reverence and attention are duties in connection with every divine service, but especially in connection with the Lord's supper which is a very solemn and sacred service because it commemorates the sufferings and death of our Lord. All irreverent or inattentive conduct at such a time must be very displeasing to God. Unnecessary talking or whispering, reading books or papers not connected with the service, falling asleep, day-dreaming about our worldly affairs, turning around to stare at people coming in late — all these and other forms of conduct that are contrary to reverent attention should be strictly avoided. We cannot expect a blessing from the sacrament unless we are willing to devote our undivided attention to it.

2. Why should communicants “diligently observe the sacramental elements and actions”?

Because these elements and actions are all essential to the meaning of the sacrament. The Lord's supper is a visible, tangible portrayal, by symbolic elements and actions, of Christ's redemption and the way of salvation. To receive the full impression that the sacrament is intended to produce upon our minds and hearts, we must attend carefully to every detail of the ordinance. The Lord's supper does not produce spiritual results automatically, as the Church of Rome wrongly teaches in its doctrine of an “opus operatum,” but by the truth which the sacrament presents, which the communicant grasps by faith, and which the Holy Spirit applies to his heart and life. Each of the sacramental elements and actions especially presents some phase of that truth.

3. What is meant by “discerning the Lord's body”?

The word “discerning” in the Greek text of 1 Cor. 11:29 means literally “distinguishing” or “discriminating”; “to distinguish or separate a person or thing from the rest” (Thayer's Lexicon). Thus “discerning” in this verse means **REALIZING** that the sacramental elements represent Christ's human nature, or **APPRECIATING** them as symbols of His body and blood. A person who saw in the sacrament only bread and wine, and who failed to see Christ and His redemption set forth in it, would fail to discern the Lord's body. In order truly to discern the Lord's body, there is required, first, a measure of doctrinal knowledge; and in the second place, personal trust in Christ as one's Saviour.

4. Why should communicants affectionately meditate on Christ's sufferings and death?

Christ's sufferings and death should be the principal object of our thoughts at the communion table, because His sufferings and death constitute the meaning of the Lord's supper. We should **AFFECTIONATELY** meditate on them because the infinite love of our Lord calls for a

cordial response of love or affection on our part. The more we realize what our redemption cost our Saviour in shame and suffering, the more we will feel moved to love Him in return.

Our attitude toward Christ, His sufferings and death, is never to be a sentimental one. Many people who are not really Christians feel a kind of sentimental admiration for Jesus, but they do not regard Him as a living person today nor as the only Redeemer of men. Such a sentimental attachment to Jesus does not differ essentially from the attitude people may have toward Florence Nightingale or Abraham Lincoln. The Christian's devotion to Christ, on the other hand, is to be a devotion to Him **CRUCIFIED AND RISEN FROM THE DEAD, THE LIVING LORD** — a devotion which stirs them up to “a vigorous exercise of their graces” and thus affects the whole course of their lives.

5. Why should communicants judge themselves, and sorrow for their sins?

It was because of the sins of His people that Jesus suffered and died on the cross. There can be no adequate appreciation of Christ's sufferings and death unless a person judges himself and sorrows for his sins. While our thoughts at the communion table are to be mainly on Christ's sufferings and death, we are to realize at the same time that it was our sins that He suffered and died to atone for; therefore we should judge ourselves and feel deep sorrow for our sin.

6. What special spiritual attitudes should a Christian have at the communion table?

(1) An attitude of earnest desire for communion with Christ (“hungering and thirsting after Christ”); (2) An attitude of personal faith in Him as Redeemer (“feeding on him by faith, receiving of his fulness, trusting in his merits”); (3) An attitude of spiritual joy (“rejoicing in his love”); (4) An attitude of thankfulness for His grace (“giving thanks for his grace”); (5) An attitude of sincere purpose to live in covenant with God and in love to His people (“renewing of their covenant with God, and love to all the saints”).

LESSON 14

The Duty of Christians after Partaking of the Lord's Supper

Q. 175. What is the duty of Christians, after they have received the sacrament of the Lord's supper?

A. The duty of Christians, after they have received the sacrament of the Lord's supper, is seriously to consider how they have behaved themselves therein, and with what success; if they find quickening and comfort, to bless God for it, beg the continuance of it, watch against relapses,

fulfill their vows, and encourage themselves to a frequent attendance on that ordinance: but if they find no present benefit, more exactly to review their preparation to, and carriage at the sacrament; in both which, if they can approve themselves to God and their own consciences, they are to wait for the fruit of it in due time; but, if they see that they have failed in either, they are to be humbled, and to attend upon it afterward with more care and diligence.

Scripture References:

Psalm 28:7. Psalm 85:8. 1 Cor. 11:17,30,31. After receiving the Lord's supper, Christians are to consider how they have acted, and what benefit they have received.

2 Chron. 30:21-26. Acts 2:42,46,47. Psalm 36:10. Song of Solomon 3:4. 1 Chron. 29:18. 1 Cor. 10:3-5, 12. Psalm 50:14. 1 Cor. 11:25,26. Those who find that they have received benefit from the Lord's supper are to thank God for it, seek to conserve the benefit for the future, fulfil their vows, and look forward to partaking of the Lord's supper often.

Song of Solomon 5:1-6. Psalm 123:1,2. Psalm 42:5,8. Psalm 43:3-5. In case no immediate spiritual benefit is experienced after partaking of the Lord's supper, communicants are to consider whether this may be their own fault, and if they conscientiously decide that it is not, they are to expect the benefit in due time.

2 Chron. 30:18,19. Isa. 1:16,18. 2 Cor. 7:11. 1 Chron. 15:12-14. Communicants who find that failure to receive benefit from the Lord's supper is their own fault, are to be humbled in their hearts, and to exercise more care and diligence in the future.

Questions:

1. Does the Christian's duty in connection with the Lord's supper end when the administration of the sacrament is completed?

No. Since the Lord's supper is intended to bring real spiritual benefit to Christian people, it is their duty to consider seriously how they have conducted themselves prior to and at the sacrament, and what benefit they have received. To drop the matter from our thoughts as soon as the actual communion service is dismissed would be to lose a part of the spiritual profit that we should receive from the sacrament.

2. Is the spiritual benefit of the Lord's supper always experienced at the time when the sacrament is received or immediately afterwards.

No. While it is undoubtedly true that most serious Christians consciously experience benefit at the time and immediately afterwards, this is not always nor necessarily the case. Sometimes God

in His wisdom withholds the blessing, or the consciousness of the blessing, for a time. As in the case of baptism, the benefits of the Lord's supper are not tied or limited to the time of administration.

3. When benefit is experienced, what attitudes should this produce in the communicant?

(1) An attitude of thankfulness to God; (2) A prayerful desire that the blessing may be continued; (3) A careful avoidance of pride or over-confidence which would occasion a relapse into sin; (4) A sincere purpose of paying his vows to God; (5) A desire to partake of the Lord's supper often.

The danger of spiritual pride or over-confidence is especially to be guarded against. The Christian who has experienced spiritual blessings and benefits is always in danger of becoming over-confident and starting to trust in himself instead of in Christ. This will lead to a humiliating fall into sin unless carefully guarded against.

4. When no immediate benefit is experienced from the Lord's supper, what should a Christian do about the matter?

He should realize that the failure to experience spiritual benefit may be his own fault, and therefore he should review his preparation for, and conduct at, the sacrament. If he finds himself to be at fault in either of these matters, he is "to be humbled, and to attend upon it afterward with more care and diligence." That is to say, lack of proper preparation for the Lord's supper, and improper partaking of the sacrament, are sins, and should be repented of the same as any other sins.

5. What should be the attitude of a Christian who is not conscious of benefit received from the Lord's supper, but does not find this to have been caused by his own faults?

Such a Christian should "wait for the fruit of it in due time"; that is, his attitude toward God in connection with this matter should be an attitude of faith, confidently expecting a blessing, and an attitude of patience, being willing for the blessing to be deferred if that is God's holy will. There are many examples in the Bible of saints whose blessings were deferred, either to develop their faith, or because of some secret purpose of God. Impatience is always contrary to faith.

LESSON 15**Similarities and Differences Between Baptism and the Lord's Supper**

Q. 176. Wherein do the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper agree?

A. The sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper agree, in that the author of both is God; the spiritual part of both is Christ and his benefits; both are seals of the same covenant, are to

be dispensed by ministers of the gospel, and by none other; and to be continued in the church of Christ until his second coming.

Q. 177. Wherein do the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper differ?

A. The sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper differ, in that baptism is to be administered but once, with water, to be a sign and seal of our regeneration and ingrafting into Christ, and that even to infants; whereas the Lord's supper is to be administered often, in the elements of bread and wine, to represent and exhibit Christ as spiritual nourishment to the soul, and to confirm our continuance and growth in him, and that only to such as are of years and ability to examine themselves.

Scripture References:

Matt: 28:19. 1 Cor. 11:23. God is the author of both baptism and the Lord's supper.

Rom. 6:3,4. 1 Cor. 10:16. The spiritual part of both sacraments is Christ and His benefits.

Rom. 4:11 compared with Col. 2:12. Matt. 26:27, 28. Both sacraments are seals of the same covenant.

John 1:33. Matt. 28:19. 1 Cor. 11:23. 1 Cor. 4:1. Heb. 5:4. Both sacraments are to be dispensed only by ministers of the Gospel.

Matt: 28:19, 20. 1 Cor. 11:26. Both sacraments are to be continued in the Church until Christ's second coming.

Matt. 3:11. Tit. 3:5. Gal. 3:27. Baptism is to be administered with water, as a sign and seal of the new birth and union with Christ; and since it represents the **beginning** of the Christian life, it is to be administered only once to any person.

Gen. 18:7, 9. Acts 2:38, 39. 1 Cor. 7:14. Baptism is to be administered to the infants of believers.

1 Cor. 11:23-26. The Lord's supper is to be administered repeatedly, with bread and wine, to represent Christ as spiritual nourishment to the soul.

1 Cor. 10:16. The Lord's supper is to confirm our continuance and growth in Christ.

1 Cor. 11:28, 29. Unlike baptism, the Lord's supper is to be administered only to persons of years and ability to examine themselves.

Questions:

1. How many points of agreement are there between baptism and the Lord's supper?

The Catechism enumerates five points of agreement, as follows: (1) The author of both sacraments is God. The Catechism might have added that both were instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ during His life on earth. (2) The spiritual part of both sacraments is Christ and His benefits; that is, Christ and His redemption is what is represented, sealed and applied by both baptism and the Lord's supper. (3) Both sacraments are seals of the same divine covenant, the Covenant of Grace which provides for the eternal salvation of God's elect. (4) As ordinances of the visible

Church, both sacraments are to be administered only by the ministers of the Gospel, to whom the mysteries of God have been entrusted. (5) Both sacraments are permanent in nature, to be continued in the Church until Christ's second coming at the Last Day.

Thus it appears that in everything which constitutes them SACRAMENTS, baptism and the Lord's supper are in agreement. That which constitutes them sacraments, they have in common.

2. What difference exists in the outward or material part of the two sacraments?

The material element of baptism is water, whereas the material elements of the Lord's supper are bread and wine.

3. What difference exists between baptism and the Lord's supper as to the spiritual reality signified and sealed by the sacraments?

While the spiritual reality signified and sealed by the two sacraments is basically the same, namely, Christ and His redemption and benefits, there is a difference in that baptism is a sign and seal of the **BEGINNING** of the Christian life (the new birth by the Holy Spirit, remission of sins through Christ's blood, union with Christ), whereas the Lord's supper is a sign and seal of the **CONTINUANCE** of the Christian life (feeding upon Christ for spiritual nourishment and growth in grace). The one is a sign and seal of spiritual **BIRTH**, the other is a sign and seal of spiritual **GROWTH**, both being based upon Christ's redemption.

4. Why is baptism to be administered only once to any person, while every Christian is to partake of the Lord's supper repeatedly?

This is because of the difference in the spiritual reality signified and sealed by the two sacraments. Baptism is a sign and seal of spiritual birth, and just as a person can have only one natural birth into this world, so he can be born again of the Holy Spirit only once. Since baptism is a sign and seal of this, a person is to be baptized only once.

The Lord's supper, on the other hand, is a sign and seal of spiritual growth by faith in Christ. Birth is an event but growth is a process. A person can be born only once but he can continue to grow for years. Similarly in the Christian life, while a person can be born again only once, he must continue to grow in grace all his life long. Since the spiritual reality of which the Lord's supper is a sign and seal (feeding upon Christ as spiritual nourishment to the soul) is a continuous process, the Christian is to partake of the Lord's supper repeatedly throughout his life until he departs to be with the Lord.

5. Why are infants to be baptized but not admitted to the Lord's supper until they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to Him?

For a discussion of the doctrine of infant bap-

tism, the student is referred to the following earlier issues of **Blue Banner Faith and Life**: Vol. 3, No. 4 (Oct.-Dec. 1948), pages 168-170; Vol. 4, No. 4 (Oct.-Dec. 1949), pages 166-173. The reasons why the infant children of believers are to be baptized are given there, and need not be repeated here.

As for the difference in this respect between baptism and the Lord's supper, the following considerations are relevant: Infants are not to be admitted to the Lord's supper because self-examination is required for a person rightly to partake of the Lord's supper (1 Cor. 11:28) and infants are not capable of self-examination; also personal faith is required for a person rightly to partake of the Lord's supper, and infants are not capable of exercising faith.

It has been held by some that for these very reasons baptism also ought to be withheld from infants, namely, because they are not capable of faith nor of self-examination. In answer to this

argument, it may be said that baptism is the New Testament counterpart of circumcision, and under the Old Testament infants were circumcised by God's command, even though they were incapable of exercising faith. Therefore if their incapacity for exercising faith did not prevent infants from being circumcised under the Old Testament, it should not prevent infants from being baptized under the New Testament.

It is eminently appropriate that infants should receive the sacrament which is a sign and seal of spiritual BIRTH (which occurs prior to and is the source of conscious faith and obedience), while it would be highly inappropriate for them to receive the sacrament which is a sign and seal of feeding on Christ for spiritual GROWTH (which occurs subsequent to birth and is dependent upon the conscious exercise of faith). The contention that those who practice infant baptism should also permit infant communion is entirely without weight, as it overlooks the distinction between the spiritual realities signified and sealed by the two sacraments.

Studies on Prayer

LESSON 1

The Nature of Christian Prayer

Q. 178. What is prayer?

A. Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, in the name of Christ, by the help of his Spirit; with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.

Scripture References:

Psalms 72:8. We are to offer up our desires unto God.

John 16:23. Prayer is to be offered in the name of Christ.

Rom. 8:26. We are to pray by the help of the Holy Spirit.

Psalms 32:5, 6. Dan. 9:4. In prayer, we are to confess our sins.

Phil. 4:6. In prayer, we are to thank God for His mercies.

Questions:

1. What kind of prayer is defined in this question and answer of the Catechism?

In this statement the Catechism gives a definition of true prayer, or Christian prayer; that is, prayer offered to God according to His revealed will by a person who has been reconciled to Him through the redemptive work of Christ.

2. Besides Christian prayer, what other kinds of prayer are there?

Prayer is practically universal in the human race. Even atheists have been known to pray when thoroughly alarmed or in deep trouble. All the non-Christian religious systems involve the practice of some kind of prayer. Non-Christian prayer, however, is not addressed to the true God but to some false divinity or misrepresentation of God. The only true God is the Triune God of the Scriptures, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; all others are false and have no real existence. Non-Christian prayer, moreover, does not approach God through Christ as Mediator. It is not offered in the name of Christ but simply in the name of the person praying, or perhaps in the name of some other mediator than Christ. Thus non-Christian prayer lacks the guarantee of acceptance with God (John 14:6). That God in His great mercy may sometimes hear and answer the prayers of non-Christians, in spite of their spiritual ignorance and lack of a Mediator, we should not deny. But such prayers differ essentially from Christian prayer, as explained above.

3. Why should we offer up our desires unto God?

We are God's creatures, and it is our nature to be dependent upon Him for the supply of our needs, physical, mental, social and spiritual. Even before the human race fell into sin, man was dependent on God and there was need for prayer. The fall into sin greatly increased our need and our dependence upon God. Since no human being

is able to face life by his own abilities and power, prayer is necessary if we are truly to glorify and enjoy God.

4. What kind of desires are we to offer to God in prayer?

In prayer, we are to offer to God only lawful desires, that is, desires that are in harmony with the moral law of God and that are offered in submission to the secret will of God. See the Shorter Catechism, Q. 98 ("for things agreeable to his will"), and the Larger Catechism, Q. 184 ("For what things are we to pray?"). We may not pray for anything we please; we must pray according to the Word of God and in submission to the will of God.

5. Why must we pray only in the name of Christ?

Because we are sinners, and only through Christ can we be reconciled to God and have access to His holy presence. Even a Christian sins against God daily in thought, word and deed, and his very prayers are stained by elements of sin. Therefore it is only through Christ's mediation, on the basis of His blood and righteousness, that we and our prayers can be acceptable to God.

6. Why must we pray only by the help of the Holy Spirit?

Romans 8:26 gives the key to the answer to this question. In the first place, we are too ignorant to pray without the help of the Holy Spirit. We do not know how to pray as we ought, nor what to pray for. We are also hindered by infirmities; that is, we are too weak and lacking in spiritual power to pray adequately. Instead of being filled with earnestness and zeal in approaching God in prayer, how often we are cold or lukewarm, and our minds distracted with all kinds of wandering thoughts! How often we consider prayer a burdensome duty rather than a real

privilege! Clearly there can be no real prayer apart from the help of the Holy Spirit.

7. Why must we confess our sins in praying to God?

Over and over again the Bible stresses the truth that to approach God acceptably in prayer we must confess our sins. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Psalm 66:18). Because of God's holiness and absolute intolerance of even the least sin, we cannot company with God unless we sincerely desire to part company with sin. The person who approaches God in prayer without feeling his own sinfulness and without confession of sin is a proud and self-righteous Pharisee rather than a Christian.

8. Why should we include thanksgiving for God's mercies in our prayers?

We are debtors to God for everything in life except our own sinfulness. Life itself and all the things that make the continuance of life possible and pleasant are gifts of God's kindness and love. Besides the natural blessings of life, such as rain and sunshine, food and clothing, peace and plenty, a Christian is under a far greater obligation to render thanksgiving to God by reason of the great blessings of God's gracious salvation. The Christian has had his soul delivered from eternal death, his eyes from tears and his feet from falling. He has been rescued from the horrible pit and miry clay and has been set firmly upon that great Rock, Christ Jesus. Redeemed from Satan's kingdom, he has been made a citizen of the kingdom of heaven and an heir of all things. Surely the Christian has abundant reason for thankfulness to God. Accordingly the Word of God teaches us that even in times of affliction, we are to remember to give thanks to God: "Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thess. 5:17, 18).

LESSON 2

To Whom are We to Pray?

Q. 179. Are we to pray unto God only?

A. God only being able to search the hearts, hear the requests, pardon the sins, and fulfill the desires of all; and only to be believed in, and worshipped with religious worship; prayer, which is a special part thereof, is to be made by all to Him alone, and to none other.

Scripture References:

1 Kings 8:39. Acts 1:24. Rom. 8:27. God alone knows the hearts of all human beings.

Psalm 65:2. God is the one who is able to hear our prayers.

Mic. 7:18. God is the one who is able to pardon our sins.

Psalm 145:18, 19. God is the one who is able to fulfill the desires of all who call upon Him.

Rom. 10:14. Matt. 4:10. Acts 10:25, 26. Rev. 22:8, 9. God alone is to be believed in and worshipped with religious faith and worship.

1 Cor. 1:2. Prayer is a special part of religious worship.

Ex. 20:3-5. Psalm 50:15. Men are to pray to God alone.

Questions:

1. What large and influential religious body teaches that it is right to pray to others besides God?

The Roman Catholic Church, which teaches

that it is proper to pray to the Virgin Mary, the saints and the angels, as well as to God.

2. Why does the Church of Rome teach that it is proper to pray to Mary, the saints and angels, as well as to God?

Because of a correct feeling of the need of a mediator in approaching the holy God, together with a failure to realize that Christ is the one and only mediator between God and men, who alone can give us access to the Father's presence, and acceptance with Him. The Church of Rome does indeed regard Christ as a Mediator between God and men, but goes beyond this and regards Mary, the saints and angels as mediators between us and Christ.

This false teaching results in an adoration of Mary, the saints and angels, which virtually amounts to idolatry. A common Roman Catholic catechism contains an appendix with 19 hymns, of which six are addressed to Mary, two to Joseph the husband of Mary, and the remaining eleven, so far as they are addressed to anyone in particular, are addressed to God the Father, Jesus Christ or the Holy Spirit. The same catechism states that we know that the saints hear our prayers, because they are with God, and God will make our prayers known to them! To say the least, this seems a roundabout way of reaching God with our prayers.

3. Why is God the only one who is able to hear our prayers?

Only God is omniscient, therefore only God is able to search and know the hearts of men; only God is omnipresent, therefore only God is able to hear the prayers of His creatures wherever they may be. Apart from the question of power to ANSWER prayers, only God has the certain, sure power to HEAR our prayers, discern the desires of our hearts and understand what our real needs are.

4. Why is God the only one who is able to pardon people's sins?

People's moral responsibility is to God, who is their Creator and Judge. The Jews were entirely correct in their belief that none can forgive sins, but God only. God is the Person whom our sins have offended, and only the offended party can forgive the sins. Our repentance and prayer for forgiveness are to be directed to God, not to some third party. We live in a day when many people think of sin only in terms of its effects on human society; we should remember that the effects on human society are only a side-issue or by-product of sin; the real and great evil is the offence committed against God; only God can forgive that.

5. Why is God alone able to fulfil the desires of all?

Because God alone is omnipotent, that is, only God has absolute and unlimited power. Nothing is too hard for the Lord. With God there is no such thing as impossibility. We are to pray only to Him who really has the power to answer our prayers. God is almighty; He is in complete control of all that comes to pass, in accordance with His own great eternal plan; therefore our prayers must be addressed to Him alone.

6. What does the Catechism mean by saying that God only is to be believed in?

By this statement the Catechism means that God only is to be believed in as the object of religious faith. We believe in the sun, moon and stars; we believe in angels and devils; we believe in ourselves and the human race; that is, we believe that all of these exist, and we believe certain things about them. But we do not believe in them as objects of religious faith, but only as objects of general knowledge, and sometimes as objects of general or non-religious faith. If we mail a letter at the post office, we have faith in the postal service; we believe that it is reliable and will deliver the letter to the addressee in due time. That is general faith, but not religious faith.

As for God, we not only believe that He exists, that He is almighty, infinite, eternal, unchangeable etc., but we believe IN Him with religious faith; that is, we take Him as OUR God, and entrust ourselves to Him for time and eternity, and confess that our destiny is in His hands, and that our chief end is to glorify and enjoy Him.

7. Why is God alone to be worshipped with religious worship?

This follows from the great truth that God alone is God. Religious worship, by definition, is that which is due to Him who is the object of our religious faith. If we believe that there is only one God it follows that this one God alone is to receive religious worship or devotion.

8. What king in the Bible tried to usurp God's prerogative of alone receiving religious worship?

Darius. Daniel 6:6-9.

9. Is it everyone's duty to pray to God?

Yes. Only the Christian can really pray, for only the Christian has the help of the Holy Spirit in prayer. Yet it is everyone's duty to pray. The prayers of non-Christians, who try to approach God without coming through Christ as their Mediator, cannot be pleasing to God; yet for them to neglect to pray is even more sinful and displeasing to God.

LESSON 3

Praying in the Name of Christ

Q. 180. What is it to pray in the name of Christ?

A. To pray in the name of Christ is, in obedience to his command, and in confidence on his promises, to ask mercy for his sake; not by bare mentioning of his name, but by drawing our encouragement to pray, and our boldness, strength, and hope of acceptance in prayer, from Christ and his mediation.

Scripture References:

John 14:13,14. John 16:24. Dan. 9:17. We are to pray in the name of Christ, asking mercy for His sake.

Matt. 7:21. A merely formal mentioning of Christ's name in prayer is not what is meant by praying in Christ's name.

Heb. 4:14-16. 1 John 5:13-15. We are to pray through Christ as our Mediator, by whom we have access to God's presence and acceptance with Him.

Questions:

1. How is Christian prayer distinguished from all other kinds of prayer?

Christian prayer is distinguished from all other kinds of prayer in that it is addressed to the true God, who is revealed in the Bible, through the God-man Jesus Christ as Mediator. All non-Christian prayer is either addressed to a non-existent false god, or attempts to approach the true God directly, without a mediator, or attempts to approach the true God through some other mediator than Jesus Christ.

2. Is it proper to mention the name of Jesus Christ in our prayers?

Certainly it is proper, and we should always remember to do so; but we should realize that praying in the name of Christ means something more than merely mentioning His name in some form of words at the end of our prayer.

3. Did God's people in Old Testament times pray in the name of Christ?

Yes, insofar as they prayed with faith in the coming of the promised Redeemer, and with an obedient observance of the appointed sacrifices which pointed forward to Him. The pious Israelite of Old Testament times approached God in prayer on the basis of the Covenant of Grace as truly as we do today; his prayers were offered to God on the basis of the redemptive work of the coming Messiah. This does not imply that all Old Testament saints understood this truth with equal clearness, but only that they had some understanding of it. And in God's sight their prayers were acceptable because of the future mediatorial work of Christ.

4. What is meant by asking mercy for Christ's sake?

To ask God for mercy for Christ's sake means to ask God to deal with us in love and favor, in spite of our great sins, because of what Jesus Christ has done for us. Because of Christ's perfect life of righteousness, which is reckoned to our account as if it were ours, and because of His shed blood which cleanses away our sins, God can receive us as His children and treat us with love and kindness instead of in wrath and judgment. To ask mercy for Christ's sake, then, means to ask God for mercy on the basis of Christ's work as our Saviour.

5. What wrong attitude of mind and heart prevents people from really praying in the name of Christ?

The attitude of self-confidence or self-righteousness, which causes people to put their trust in themselves their own righteousness or good life, works or character, so that they really trust in themselves rather than in Christ. Such people may mention the name of Christ in their prayers, but they are really praying in their own name, not in Christ's name, for they really think that they can stand on their own feet before God, and they do not realize their need of Christ's redemption.

6. What character in one of Jesus' parables prayed a self-righteous prayer?

The Pharisee in the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, who publicly thanked God that he was so much better than other people, always performed his religious duties, and so forth.

7. Why do we need encouragement to pray?

We need encouragement to pray because the sinful corruption of our hearts has inclined us to discouragement and spiritual sluggishness. Our knowledge and experience of Christ and His salvation should encourage us to engage in prayer in spite of our natural lack of inclination to it.

8. What is meant by drawing our boldness, strength and hope of acceptance in prayer from Christ and His mediation?

We could never have any real boldness or confidence in approaching God in prayer except for our faith in Christ as our Redeemer, for our hearts would always be filled with doubts and fears, wondering whether God would hear and accept our prayers or not. The person who is not a Christian may sometimes pray, and under stress of great affliction is likely to try to pray, but he can never enjoy any real boldness or confidence in prayer, because he does not know Christ, and

consequently he does not have any certainty of acceptance with God. This lack of faith in Christ's mediation must always leave his mind in a cloud of doubt and uncertainty; he can never be sure that his prayers will be accepted and answered. This feeling of doubt and uncertainty must always have the effect of preventing a person from praying with his whole heart. It is only when we have, through Christ, the assurance of being accepted with God that we can really pour out our heart to God in prayer.

9. Why does the Catechism specially mention Christ's mediation?

LESSON 4

Why Must Prayer be in the Name of Christ?

Q. 181. Why are we to pray in the name of Christ?

A. The sinfulness of man, and his distance from God by reason thereof, being so great, as that we can have no access unto his presence without a mediator; and there being none in heaven or earth appointed to, or fit for, that glorious work but Christ alone, we are to pray in no other name but his only.

Scripture References:

John 14:6. Isa. 59:2. Eph. 3:12. Man's sinfulness has separated him so far from God that he can have no access to God's holy presence except through a mediator.

John 6:27. Heb. 7:25-27. 1 Tim. 2:5. Acts. 4:12. Christ, and he alone, is qualified for the work of a mediator between God and man.

Col. 3:17. Heb. 13:15. We are to pray only in the name of Christ.

Questions:

1. What is the reason for the distance which separates man from God?

There are two reasons for the distance which separates man from God: (1) God is the infinite Creator, whereas man is a finite creature; (2) God is absolutely holy, whereas man is guilty and corrupted in sin.

2. When God created mankind, what was the reason for the distance which separated man from God?

At the creation of the human race, man was separated from God, his Creator, only by reason of the fact that he was a creature. This distance between Creator and creature was so great that man could not fully glorify and enjoy God except by God's bridging the chasm between Himself and mankind, which He did by the establishment of the Covenant of Works. As long as the human race had not yet fallen into sin, a COVENANT

There are multitudes of people who have only a vague, sentimental attachment to Jesus, thinking of Him as a great teacher, a great leader, a great ideal of humanity, and the like. Such people are not really Christians, and their prayers, though they may mention the name of Christ, are not really Christian prayers. We are not saved by Christ's teaching, but by His work — His blood and righteousness. Without faith in Christ's work of mediation, there can be no truly saving Christian faith. A sentimental admiration of Jesus as a human being is not sufficient, and does not constitute Christian faith.

was necessary for fully glorifying and enjoying God, but a MEDIATOR was not necessary.

When the Covenant of Works was broken by Adam's disobedience, the distance between God and man was increased by the fact of human sinfulness. Therefore from that time onward human beings could not have fellowship with God without BOTH A COVENANT AND A MEDIATOR (see the Confession of Faith, VII. 1).

3. Why is a mediator needed for sinful human beings to have access to God's presence?

Because absolute holiness is one of God's attributes, and this means that God is and must be infinitely removed from all that is sinful. The Bible teaches that God cannot deny Himself. If sinful human beings could, without a mediator, have access to the presence of the holy God, that would amount to God denying Himself; that is, it would mean that God would deny or disregard His own holiness, which is inseparable from Himself. If it were possible for human beings to come into God's presence without a mediator, it would bring them instantly under judgment and condemnation by reason of the intensity of God's wrath against sin.

4. Why is none but Christ qualified to be the mediator between God and man?

For a full answer to this question the student is referred to **Blue Banner Faith and Life**, Vol. 1, No. 7 (July-September 1946), pages 125-127. The mediator must be God, he must also be man, and he must be God and man in one person. Clearly none but Jesus Christ possesses these qualifications. Angels could not serve as mediators, for they are neither God nor man. God the Father could not serve in this capacity, for He is only God and not man. No human being except Christ could serve, for others are only man and not God. Moreover, all human beings except Jesus Christ are sinners, and therefore they are themselves in need of someone to be their mediator; therefore they could not serve as mediators for others.

5. Why can we not pray in the name of the Virgin Mary or the saints?

Because neither the Virgin Mary nor any of the saints possesses the qualifications for the work of mediation between God and ourselves. As a matter of fact, Mary and the saints themselves were saved and reconciled to God only through the mediatorial work of the Lord Jesus Christ. We may and should honor Mary and the saints for their faithful service, witnessing and suffering for the cause of Christ, but we may not give them any of the honor that belongs to Christ alone. They are of the company of the saved, but they are not co-saviours with Christ.

6. Why does the Catechism refer to the work of mediation between God and man as "that glorious work?"

Because the work of mediation manifests the glory of God in the salvation of man, and has its consummation in the eternal glory of the redeemed.

7. How does this answer of the Catechism contradict modern "liberal" views of Jesus Christ?

In this answer the Catechism sets forth the absolute uniqueness of Jesus Christ. He is represented as the only possible Saviour of the human race. There neither is, nor ever can be,

anyone alongside of Him. But the popular modern "liberal" view of Jesus Christ regards Him as essentially only human, the same as other men, differing from others only in degree, not in nature. Modernists may regard Jesus as the best man that ever lived, but according to their belief the human race, by its evolutionary progress, may some day produce a more perfect individual than Jesus Christ. The thorough Modernist, insofar as he believes in Jesus Christ at all, believes in him as "a" Saviour, not as THE ONE AND ONLY Saviour of the human race.

8. How is the command to pray in the name of Christ most commonly violated?

This command is most commonly violated by people ignorantly supposing that they can approach God's presence directly, without Christ as their Mediator. This is extremely common among those who have not been instructed in the truths of the Christian faith. Such people have no genuine consciousness of sin nor of their need for a mediator. They will address God as "Father", which they have no right to do apart from faith in Christ, and will then close their prayer by simply saying "Amen," without so much as mentioning the name of Jesus Christ. This amounts to people praying **IN THEIR OWN NAME**. The person who tries to approach God without a mediator is trying to pray in his own name.

LESSON 5

The Help of the Holy Spirit in Prayer

Q. 182. How doth the Spirit help us to pray?

A. We not knowing what to pray for as we ought, the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, by enabling us to understand both for whom, and what, and how prayer is to be made; and by working and quickening in our hearts (although not in all persons, nor at all times, in the same measure) those apprehensions, affections, and graces which are requisite for the right performance of that duty.

Scripture References:

Rom. 8:26, 27. The Holy Spirit helps us to pray aright.

Psalms 10:17. God prepares the hearts of His people, that they may pray aright.

Zech. 12:10. God imparts to His people the desire and ability to pray by bestowing His Holy Spirit upon them.

Eph. 6:18. Jude 20. We are to pray in the Spirit.

Questions:

1. Why do we need the help of the Holy Spirit to pray?

We need the help of the Holy Spirit because

of our spiritual ignorance, by reason of which we do not know what we should pray for, nor how to pray aright, and because of our spiritual weakness and sluggishness, by reason of which we feel disinclined to pray, and tend to engage in prayer in a formal and perfunctory manner, rather than in an earnest and spiritual manner.

2. How does the Holy Spirit remedy our spiritual ignorance?

The Holy Spirit remedies our spiritual ignorance, not by revealing to us any truth apart from or in addition to the Bible, but by opening our spiritual eyes so that we can discern the true meaning of what is already revealed in the Bible, and thus be enabled to know the will of God concerning prayer.

3. Does the Holy Spirit reveal to us that God has chosen a particular person for eternal life, and therefore we should pray for the salvation of that individual with assured confidence that our petition will be granted?

No. Only God knows who the elect are, and neither through prayer nor through any other shortcut can this information be obtained in advance of the actual salvation of elect persons. We have no right to say positively that a particular person must be one of those whom God has chosen

for eternal life because the Holy Spirit has "laid it on our heart" to pray for that person's salvation.

It is true that the Holy Spirit, by His own mysterious working, may stir up one or more of God's children to pray long and earnestly for the salvation of a particular unsaved person. In such a case we may be justified in cherishing a probable hope that that person will eventually come to Christ in repentance and faith. But we are not warranted in asserting this in advance of the person's actual experience of salvation. All such praying must always be done in humble submission to the sovereignty and secret counsel of God. We are to pray for the salvation of God's elect, and we are to pray that IF a particular person is one of the elect he will come to Christ and be saved.

God's decree of election was completed from all eternity, before the creation of the world; it cannot be changed or set aside by our praying. Even if the person we pray for is never saved, such prayers are not wasted or useless. They will be for the honor and glory of God at the Judgment Day, and will leave the unsaved sinner even more without excuse than he otherwise would be.

In this connection the history of the conversion of Augustine of Hippo is most interesting. It is related in his "Confessions," especially Book III. 19-21 and Book VIII. 25-30. Augustine's mother Monica prayed for his salvation continually for many years, until he was finally converted to Christ at the age of 32 years.

4. Why do we need the Holy Spirit's "working and quickening in our hearts" in order to pray as we should?

"Quickening" means life-giving or stimulation. We need the Holy Spirit's working and quickening in our hearts in order to pray as we should, because even those who have been born again are of themselves very sluggish and spiritually lukewarm, and apart from the special help of the Holy Spirit they would never pray as they should. By the special work of the Holy Spirit in the Christian's heart, this sinful sluggishness and indifference are in a measure overcome, so that real prayer becomes possible.

5. Does the Holy Spirit always work uniformly in helping Christian people to pray?

No. Every real Christian receives the help of the Holy Spirit for prayer, but this work of the Spirit is "not in all persons, nor at all times, in the same measure." That is, some persons receive more of this help than others; and the same person receives more help at one time than at another.

The reasons for this lack of uniformity in the

working of the Holy Spirit are reserved to the secret counsel of God. We may be sure that there is a wise purpose behind it, but what that purpose is, has not been revealed to us. It may be that in some cases the Holy Spirit largely withdraws His inward working for a time in order that we may be humbled and made to realize our dependence upon Him, and our helplessness of ourselves.

6. What is the meaning of "apprehensions" in this answer of the Catechism?

Here the word "apprehensions" means items of knowledge, that is, items of truth which the Holy Spirit enables us to grasp and understand in order that we may pray aright.

7. What is the meaning of "affections"?

"Affections" here means feelings and desires which the Holy Spirit stirs up in our hearts that we may pray aright, such as love for God, thankfulness to Him, a desire that His name may be glorified and His will done, etc.

8. What is meant by "graces" in this connection?

By "graces" the Catechism here means the spiritual qualifications which we must have, apart from right apprehensions and affections, in order to pray in a manner pleasing to God. Such "graces" are humility, self-denial, faith in God's promises, and persistence which enables us to overcome obstacles and keep on praying even when our sinful flesh would rather incline us in some other direction. These "graces" are definitely the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts; we do not have them of ourselves, and we cannot get them by human planning, good resolutions or will power.

9. What should be our attitude toward "prayer books" and written forms of prayer?

The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony speaks as follows on this matter: "Public prayer is to accompany the word preached: written FORMS of prayer, whether read or repeated, are not authorized in the Scriptures — are not calculated to exercise the mind in the graces of the Holy Spirit — are not adapted to the varieties of the state of the Church and its members, and are not to be used in approaching the throne of grace" (XXIV. 9).

Certainly we may learn something of value by reading and studying the prayers of eminent Christians of past times; but we should not depend on them in our own approach to the throne of grace. Rather, we should seek the grace of the Holy Spirit that we may frame acceptable and fervent prayers in our own words. We must always be on our guard against the tendency to religious formalism.

LESSON 6

The Classes of People for whom we are to Pray

Q. 183. For whom are we to pray?

A. We are to pray for the whole church of Christ upon earth; for magistrates, and ministers; for ourselves, our brethren, yea, our enemies; and for all sorts of men living, or that shall live hereafter; but not for the dead, nor for those that are known to have sinned the sin unto death.

Scripture References:

Eph. 6:18. Psalm 28:9. We are to pray for the whole Church of Christ on earth.

1 Tim. 2:1, 2. Col. 4:3. We are to pray for all who occupy positions of authority in Church and State.

Gen. 32:11. Isa. 38:1-5. It is proper to pray for ourselves.

James 5:16. Gen 20:7, 17. Job 42:7, 8. Matt. 5:44. We are to pray for our brethren, our friends, and even our enemies.

1 Tim. 2:1, 2. John 17:20. 2 Sam. 7:29. We are to pray for all sorts of men living, or that shall live in the future.

Questions:**1. Why must we pray for the whole Church of Christ on earth?**

We must pray for the whole Church of Christ on earth because of the spiritual unity of the Church as one body under Christ the head. Our prayers are not to be limited to our own congregation nor even to our own denomination; they are to include all branches of the Church of Christ. This does not mean, of course, that we are to pray in detail for all branches of the Church; but it does mean that we are not to limit our intercessions to that branch of the Church of which we ourselves are members. We are to pray for Christ's Church and Kingdom as a whole; we are not to be near-sighted or denominationally-minded in the matter of intercessory prayer. We should of course pray especially for our own denomination, for which we have a special concern and responsibility; but this should never exclude the larger outlook of pleading with God for the whole Church of Christ in all the world.

2. Why are we commanded to pray for magistrates?

We are commanded to pray for magistrates and ministers, that is, for persons in positions of authority in both State and Church, because both the State and the Church are divine institutions for the accomplishment of God's purposes in the world, and both need His help and blessing for the proper accomplishment of their tasks. Magistrates and ministers need wisdom, courage, honesty and integrity as well as other gifts of God's common

and special grace; therefore Christian people should pray for them.

3. Is it right to pray for ourselves?

Certainly it is right. To pray for ourselves is not the same thing as to pray selfishly. We may pray unselfishly for ourselves. The person who prays a selfish prayer sins in doing so, and will not receive any blessing from God in answer to his prayer (James 4:3). But there is a right way of praying for ourselves, as is exemplified many times in the Bible. (1) We may pray for legitimate temporal blessings for ourselves, such as health or healing, food, clothing, material prosperity, success in business, etc., and God will give us these blessings, in answer to our prayers, so far as is in accordance with His glory and our own true welfare. (2) We ought always to pray for spiritual blessings for ourselves, and when we do so sincerely and humbly we may be confident that God will answer our prayers, either by granting our requests, or in some other way that is even better, according to His own wisdom and love.

4. Why are we commanded to pray for our enemies?

It is sad but true that it is impossible to go through life and do our duty without incurring the enmity of some people, that is, without having some enemies. The best and holiest of God's saints have found this to be true; think, for example, of David, Elijah, Paul, Martin Luther, John Knox, Andrew Melville and James Renwick. In the present sinful state of the world it is also inevitable that nations sometimes be at enmity one with another. We should note that the Bible does not say that we should not have any enemies, but that we should love and pray for our enemies; this implies that we cannot avoid having them.

Even those who may unavoidably be our enemies are still human beings created in the image of God, and like ourselves they are sinners such as Christ died to redeem. Even though they are our enemies, they are not beyond the power of Christ to save. Therefore we should pray for them. This does not mean to pray that they will succeed in wrongdoing, but to pray for their true welfare.

5. Does the duty of praying for our enemies imply that we should not resist them?

By no means. We are to pray for our enemies, but at the same time it is also our duty to defend ourselves, our families and our country against injustice and violence. To pray for our enemies means chiefly to pray for their repentance, conversion to Christ, and salvation. It may also be our God-given duty to resist their aggressions or

injustice. If possible this is to be done by appeal to law; but if this is not possible, it may be our real duty to resist violence by force. If a criminal breaks into our house and threatens to murder our family, we should not hesitate to try to overpower him, or if necessary even to shoot him. Similarly it may be our duty to use force in resisting the public enemies, domestic or foreign, of our country; but even so we are not to hate them, but to pray that God will have mercy on them and save them for their sins.

6. Why are we to pray "for all sorts of men living, or that shall live hereafter"?

All human beings, both those living today and those yet to be born, are created in the image of God and for the purpose of glorifying God. Also many of those living today and those who shall live in the future are the elect of God, for whom Christ died, who shall in time be saved and become heirs of eternal glory. We are to pray that God will be glorified in them and that His elect, down to the end of time, will be gathered into one in Christ.

LESSON 7

The Classes of People for whom we are not to Pray

Q. 183. For whom are we to pray?

A. We are to pray . . . not for the dead, nor for those that are known to have sinned the sin unto death.

Scripture References:

2 Sam. 12:21-23. We are not to pray for the dead.

1 John 5:16. We are not commanded to pray for those who have sinned "a sin unto death."

Question:

1. Why is it wrong to pray for the dead?

Briefly, it is wrong to pray for the dead because the redeemed are with Christ in heaven, where they no longer need our prayers, and the lost are in hell, where our prayers can no longer avail to help them. As the souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness (Heb. 12:23) and are enjoying perfect rest and peace with Christ in heaven while they wait for the resurrection of their bodies and the Judgment Day (Rev. 6:11; 14:13), it is clear that they do not need our prayers; there is no blessing we could ask God to give them, that they do not already have. As for the lost, Scripture teaches with the utmost plainness that death is the end of all opportunity for repentance, conversion and salvation; after death there is "a great gulf fixed" and there remains no possibility of the lost ever being reconciled to God (Luke 16:24-26; Rev. 22:11).

2. Why does the Roman Catholic Church sanction prayers for the dead?

The Roman Catholic Church sanctions prayers for the dead because of its unscriptural belief in purgatory as "the state in which those suffer for a time who die guilty of venial sins, or without having satisfied for the punishment due to their sins." The Roman Church teaches that the prayers of living believers can help the souls in purgatory. If the whole idea of purgatory is unscriptural, as

we believe it to be, then of course prayers for the souls in purgatory are also excluded.

3. Are there Protestants who believe in praying for the dead?

There are some Protestants who believe in praying for the dead. This is not because they believe in purgatory, but because of a lack of faith in the Scriptural teaching that death is the end of all opportunity for salvation. Those who do not believe in heaven and hell as absolutely separate destinies, but simply believe in "the other world", will naturally not see any reason why they should not pray for the dead. Also those who believe that after death there will be a "second chance" for salvation may tend to believe that it is right to pray for the dead. As we believe that all these teachings are wrong and contrary to the Bible, we reject the idea of praying for the dead in all its forms.

4. Do we find any examples of prayers for the dead in the Bible?

No. There is not a single instance of such in the Word of God.

5. What is meant by "the sin unto death"?

This expression, which is taken from 1 John 5:16, is usually understood to be equivalent to the "unpardonable sin" or the "sin against the Holy Spirit" mentioned in Matt. 12:31, 32; Mark 3:29. This sin is unpardonable, not because it is too great to be forgiven, but because in its nature it inevitably cuts off the possibility of repentance and saving faith, and therefore of salvation.

It is understood to be a stubborn, permanent and complete resistance to the pleadings of the Holy Spirit which finally results in the Holy Spirit abandoning the person to his own sin, and totally ceasing to influence that person. Since true repentance is the gift of God, and comes by the working of the Holy Spirit in a person's heart, it is no longer possible when the Holy Spirit has finally abandoned a person. Such a person be-

comes utterly "hardened," and no longer shows the slightest interest in spiritual things or the salvation of his soul.

Since the salvation of such a person is impossible, because not in accordance with the purpose of God, it is clearly wrong to pray for such a person. We should not pray for a person who is known to have sinned the sin unto death, any more than we should pray to God for those who have died in sin.

However, we should be extremely cautious about saying that any particular individual has

sinned the sin unto death. It is improbable that this is a common sin. We should note the exact words of 1 John 5:16: "There is a sin unto death; I do not say that he shall pray for it." The text does not say: "I say that he shall NOT pray for it"; it simply refrains from commanding us to pray for such a person: "I do not say that he SHALL pray for it." If there is any reasonable doubt as to whether the person has committed "the sin unto death", we may properly pray for such a person, that if it is God's purpose God in His mercy will save him from sin and eternal death.

(To be continued)

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 for books to the publisher of this magazine.

REFORMED PULPIT, THE, Volume I (Symposium): Fourteen Sermons by Ministers of the Reformed Church in America. Society for Reformed Publications, 1519 E. Fulton St., Grand Rapids, Mich. 1955, pp. 145. \$2.00.

These fourteen sermons cover a wide range of topics as far as preaching is concerned. They are mainly practical discourses rather than doctrinal. One of the disappointing features of the volume is, that there is lacking a clear presentation of the great truths of the Reformation as exhibited in the Reformed Confessions. In some of the sermons there are misleading statements such as "In the time of Paul, there were three ways of gaining salvation" p. 38. Also there is quoted with approval the verses commencing "Press on, America; . . ." one line of which is "Maintain your faith in self; prove your Democracy."

By far the best sermon, in the opinion of this reviewer, is the one entitled "Ripe for Repentance", by Gordon H. Girod. There is sound theology and a faithful application of truth to the heart of the reader.

On the whole the sermons in this volume fail to come up to the standard one should expect from the title "The Reformed Pulpit".

— Alexander Barkley

PHILIPPIANS, THE EPISTLE TO THE, by Robert Johnstone. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1955 reprint of 1875, pp. xii, 490. \$3.95.

The greater portion of this volume consists of expository lectures on the epistle, taken section by section in order. Each section has an appropriate caption which gives the key thought in the

passage. The explanatory matter is well illustrated from other parts of Scripture and a clear insight is given to the meaning of the Epistle. Though a product of the last century this commentary is written in a style that is not cumbersome.

These lectures were, in substance, delivered from the pulpit during the services Sabbath by Sabbath. For that reason they are of particular interest to those who are called to preach the Word. They also demonstrate the importance of expository preaching as a means of edifying the body of Christ.

Appended to the lectures there is a revised translation of the Epistle and notes on the Greek text. These notes are valuable, for the student is not only treated to Prof. Johnstone's comments, but also to numerous extracts from the works of Lightfoot, Ellicott and Meyer. These notes occupy some 40 pages.

Included also in the volume is a translation of the Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians. This is designed to afford "a most interesting glimpse of their spiritual condition half a century, or thereby, after the apostle had gone to his reward."

We heartily welcome the reprinting of this commentary, which was commended by C. H. Spurgeon as "A noble volume. A real boon to the man who purchases it."

— Alexander Barkley

TWELVE GREAT QUESTIONS ABOUT CHRIST, by Clarence E. Macartney. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Michigan. 1956 reprint of 1923, pp. 221. \$2.50.

This book by the late Dr. Macartney, one of the most able defenders of evangelical Christianity, is a reprint edition, having been originally published by Revell in 1923. As a result, some of the references to specific persons or movements may seem to some to be irrelevant to present conditions, but this does not detract seriously from the value of the book, as most of the errors which the author refutes are live issues today, even the forms in which they are presented differing little, in many instances, from those in which they appeared a generation ago.

The "Twelve Great Questions" are: Was Christ Born of the Virgin Mary? Did Christ Fulfill Prophecy? Was Christ an Original Teacher? Did Christ Work Miracles? Was Christ the Son of God? Did Christ Die for Our Sins? Did Christ Rise from the Dead? Did Christ Ascend Into Heaven? Will Christ Come Again? Jesus and Paul — Do They Differ? Will Another Jesus Do? Have New Foes Risen Against Christ?

Others have perhaps written more profound treatises on most of these questions, but this book was written for the average Christian rather than the trained theologian, and is admirably adapted for the readers for whom it is intended. The discussions are, for the most part, firmly grounded in Scripture, and are presented in a clear and readable form. The book can be highly recommended to all who desire to be able to "give a reason for the faith that is in them."

— Lester B. McIntyre

THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS, by J. B. Lightfoot. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Michigan. 1956, reprint of 1891, pp. 288. \$3.95.

This translation of the Apostolic Fathers, by J. B. Lightfoot, edited and compiled by J. R. Harmer, has been photographically reprinted. Included in this volume are the writings of Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Polycarp, Diognetus, and others. Each is preceded by a valuable introduction from the pen of the distinguished translator.

Joseph Barber Lightfoot, bishop of Durham, was a profound and prolific writer. His fame and authority as a Greek scholar do not require stressing; for his works are still prized wherever the New Testament is seriously studied. He was an authority on the Apostolic Fathers, and this work is a fair summary of his views and writings in this important field of study.

Briefly yet convincingly, Dr. Lightfoot portrays the characteristics of the documents which he translates and reviews. In each case, the various sources are listed and evaluated. His introductions to the writings of the Apostolic Fathers, are of tremendous value to all students of the period.

The **evidential** value of the works of the Apostolic Fathers is illustrated by their references to the main Christian doctrines, to Church govern-

ment and practice. Needless to say, they throw much light, for us, on the day in which they lived. The **Didache**, or Teaching of the Apostles, is of particular significance, being obviously an early document, and a church-manual, or part thereof, of primitive Christianity. Dr. Lightfoot's comments whet the reader's 'appetite' with reference to this thrilling discovery of Bryennios at Constantinople in 1875. The **Didache** recognized the pouring of water as a valid mode of baptism; supports Communion in 'both kinds' and views 'bishop' and 'presbyter' as virtually synonymous terms — it simply speaks of bishops and deacons.

Constant quotation from Scripture greatly enhances the evidential value of these writings. In this respect it is noteworthy that these fathers clearly reveal by their language that the difference between them and the Apostles is one of kind, not of degree. The believing reader, while appreciating the written testimonies of these pupils of the Apostles, will, nevertheless, be increasingly impressed with the thought that the New Testament is inspired, whereas at best the Patrum Apostolicorum Opera are from men.

Ever since the famous edition of J. B. Cotelerius (Paris) in 1672, editions of the Apostolic Fathers have appeared — Clericus 1698, Russel 1746, Jacobson 1838, Hefele 1839, Funk 1878, Dressel 1857, and the excellent edition by Zahn, 1876. Then, towards the end of the nineteenth century, the works of Dr. Lightfoot began to be published, to the further enrichment of the Church. The book contains a useful index of Scripture passages, and has been attractively reproduced. Presenting a scholarly and conservative attitude to a fascinating period in the history of the Church, this volume deserves a place in libraries — public and private.

— Fred S. Leahy

EXPOSITORY DISCOURSES ON FIRST PETER, by John Brown. Sovereign Grace Book Club, 1124 S. E. First St., Evansville 13, Ind. 1956, three volumes, total pages 1411. Per set \$11.95.

Volume 1 begins with a delightfully fresh translation of Peter's first epistle, with excellent footnotes; this might profitably be compared with 1 Peter in the American Standard Version of 1901.

In the introduction, the author refers to critics of the epistle, defending its authenticity. He scorns the "wantonness of scepticism." Dr. Brown was conversant with the critical apparatus of his day, and his firm grasp of the internal evidence of the book, enabled him to refute the Germans, to the satisfaction of believing minds. His apologetic as set forth in the introduction is as sound and relevant as ever. It might well be studied alongside Dr. George Salmon's section on 1 Peter in his classical introduction to the New Testament.

There are 24 discourses in all — volume 1

ends at chp. 2:15, and volume 2 at chp. 3:22. Thus the work is well balanced, and further enhanced by the inclusion, in each volume, of "a table for finding out the exposition of any verse or clause of the epistle." The set concludes with a general index, an index of Greek words and phrases discussed, an index of authors quoted or mentioned and a Scripture index. It is, therefore, eminently serviceable.

John Brown (1784-1858) graduated from Edinburgh University at the age of 16, and was licensed to preach at 19. He laboured at Biggar in Lanarkshire, Rose Street Church, Edinburgh and Broughton Place Church in the same city. He was a prominent figure in Church affairs and a gifted writer. As Professor of exegetical theology to the United Presbyterian Church, he proved his worth, and his expositions of the Word include Romans, Hebrews, Galatians, John 17, 1 and 2 Peter. His scholarship, piety and zeal combined to make his works of exceeding value — and this particular work is no exception. Throughout, it is marked by exhaustive study, crystal-clear analysis, sound exegesis and reverent learning. The author is caught up by the spirit of the Apostle and lays bare the rich treasures of the epistle. Every minister and preacher, who loves the Reformed faith, will revel in this writing, and find it invaluable in pulpit preparation. With Robert Leighton and John Brown as guides, we can traverse the mountain-peaks of saving truth, as set forth in this part of Scripture, rejoicing in the insights granted to such exegetes, and thus entering into their labours.

These volumes are photolithoprinted, and the Sovereign Grace Book Club is to be highly commended for its courage and discernment in making them more readily available to this generation. We wish the work the widest possible circulation (it is well worth the price), and trust that ere long, the other expositions of John Brown will be selected for re-publication.

— Fred S. Leahy

MATTHEW, THE GOSPEL OF: AN EXPOSITORY AND HOMILETIC COMMENTARY, by David Thomas. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1956 reprint of 1873. pp. xvi, 560. \$3.95.

The author is a master of outline and analysis and the book is certainly a "Homiletic Commentary." A minister will find countless sermon suggestions in it. It explains the text quite fully, yet without too many critical notes. The Gospel is divided into 121 separate sections so that probably every passage is covered. These sections were first preached on from the author's pulpit, and then published in the "Homilist" of which he was the editor. There is a down-to-earth application applied in every section which is specific enough to bring the truth home to the reader yet

general enough that it applies today as well as it did in 1873. On the whole the book is quite orthodox, with only here and there what we might term the "seeds" of later liberalism showing up. For instance the author believes the miracles but shows some uncertainty about demon possession, and he does not believe that God forsook Christ on the cross. A book by a Bible-believing writer who is not a Premillennialist.

— C. E. Caskey

THE LIFE OF ELIJAH, by Arthur W. Pink. Bible Truth Depot, Swengel, Pa. 1956, pp. 314. \$4.95.

This is the first book by Mr. Pink which this reviewer has read. It will not be the last. The book is well written and reads fast. It contains 36 chapters, including the introduction. Mr. Pink has the remarkable ability to take you with him as he views the life of this prophet of old.

The tone is set in the introduction by the author. "The office which Elijah filled supplies an important key to an understanding of the times in which he lived and the character of his mission. He was a prophet, in fact one of the most remarkable pertaining to that Divine order. Now there is a real and marked difference between a servant of God and a prophet of God, for while all His prophets are servants yet not all of His servants are prophets. Prophecy always presupposes failure and sin. God only sent forth one of His prophets in a time of marked declension and departure of the people from Himself."

"The bringing in of the prophet was in the face of apostasy." Many illustrations are given in the introduction clearly supporting this truth. Mr. Pink also states: "Where a denomination has repudiated (in doctrine or practice) the Truth, membership in it can only be retained at the price of unfaithfulness to God."

We are first introduced to Elijah as he appears before the wicked king Ahab. A six month drought was upon the land when Elijah made himself known to Ahab. It took a man of courage and strength to stand before this despot. Mr. Pink examines this man of God and shows us the source of his strength and courage. The secret of his strength was due to his prayer life; his knowledge of God; and his consciousness of the Divine presence.

But we soon see that even the greatest saint on this earth is but clay. For following Elijah's courage, devotion and victory over the false prophets we see this same person running from the threats of a wicked queen and wishing for death. This man of God was not to die the death of a coward but was strengthened by his Lord and raised to strength once more. His life ended in victory.

The treatment Mr. Pink utilizes as we walk with the prophet in the hours of victory and moments of defeat is most instructive. The situation is stated; it is analyzed; and then application is made.

The work is full of quotable passages. Following are a few: "The prosperity or adversity of a nation is determined by its attitude and conduct toward God: directly so by those who have His living Oracles in their hands, indirectly so with the heathen — in their case being determined by their conduct toward His people."

"How many false gods have been worshipped in Christendom during the last few decades! What a travesty of the Divine Character has been set forth by the major portion of Protestantism — a 'god' whom no one fears."

"History repeats itself, not only because human nature is fundamentally the same in all ages, but also because the 'ways' of God, the principles of His government, remain unchanged."

"Elijah was a man who walked by faith and not sight, and walking by faith is not a mystical or nebulous thing but an intensely practical experience."

"God has not called His people to 'win the world to Christ': rather does He require them, by their lives, to witness against it."

"The more we dwell in the secret place of the Most High the less will the baubles of men charm us."

"It makes a tremendous difference when the minister knows he has the support of a praying people. How far is the pew responsible for the state of the pulpit today?"

Mr. Pink has written a book which should give courage to all the Lord's people.

— Charles Sterrett

THESSALONIANS, I AND II, By William Hendriksen, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1955, pp. 214. \$4.50.

This is a further valuable contribution from the pen of a mature and careful scholar. There is evidence of a through grasp of the Greek language and a wide acquaintance with the literature on the Pauline Epistles.

About 33 pages are devoted to an Introduction and the remaining pages to the commentary. A well defined outline and summary of each section are provided as well as a translation and verse by verse commentary.

Dr. Hendriksen in his method is exegetical, doctrinal and devotional. One is never left in doubt as to what his opinion is. For example, in

a very illuminating note he discusses the meaning of the expression "spirit, soul and body." Six theories are presented and then often follows the view of the author.

The Greek text is not provided, but Greek words under special discussion are given. A knowledge of Greek would be conducive to a more complete appreciation of this commentary. The student, however, who does not possess such a knowledge will be able to derive much benefit. It would seem that the author had such readers in mind in his analysis of the meaning of Greek words.

The printing of the text in bold type makes it easy to find the comments on a particular text. Indeed the publishers are to be commended for the splendid work they have done.

This commentary can be recommended whole heartedly as a work characterised in no ordinary degree by discriminative judgment, sound theology, practical wisdom and evangelical piety.

— Alexander Barkley

ROMANS, EXPOSITION OF THE EPISTLE TO THE, Volumes IV and V (on chapters 9 to 16), by Robert Haldane. Sovereign Grace Book Club, 1124 S. E. First St., Evansville 13, Indiana. 1956 reprint of 1939, pp. 148, 163. Per volume \$2.00. Complete set on Romans, \$7.50.

In these two volumes we have the completion of Robert Haldane's exposition of Romans. It is a work of merit and well worth reprinting. Some of the comments are most original and suggestive. For example in chap. 9, vs. 2,3 he favours the following translation and arrangement "I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart (for I myself made it my boast to be separated from Christ) for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." This leads to a better interpretation of this passage, without attributing to Paul a wish which is absurd. His sorrow for the Jews arose from his consciousness of what his own attitude to Christ was in the days before his conversion.

Throughout the commentary the approach of Mr. Haldane is based upon the doctrine of God's sovereignty. "If we lose the sight of sovereignty" he writes, "we lose sight of God." In vol. IV there is reprinted an article by Mr. Haldane entitled "The State of the Heathen World Destitute of the Gospel." Unfortunately the remaining portion has been omitted as it ends abruptly in the middle of a sentence. There are useful notes on the works of Stuart, McKnight and Tholuck, to which frequent reference is made throughout the commentary. To vol. V there is appended a translation of the Epistle by Conybeare and Howson.

We commend this commentary to readers who

are desirous of an explanatory and devotional aid to the better understanding of the Epistle to the Romans.

— Alexander Barkley

CLOSER TO CHRIST VIA THE QUIET HOUR, By Caroline K. Sapsford. King's Kupples of the First Baptist Church, Miltown, Wisconsin. Second edition, 80 pp. paper, 75c.

This stimulating thesis examines a vital element of the Christian life. Though written especially for the missionary and missionary candidate, it is of equal value to the home pastor and laymen. The material was gathered through correspondence and interviews with many missionaries and mission boards, and from a bibliography (31 works listed) including such men as Jeremy Taylor, Rosalind Goforth, S. D. Gordon, E. M. Bounds, H. W. Frost, R. G. Turnbull, C. G. Trumbull, etc. The treatment is practical, the style direct, and language plain.

The author, herself a missionary, is convinced that 90 per cent of missionary problems are personal spiritual ones due to neglect of the Quiet Hour. She not only diagnoses but makes practical suggestions as to how to develop a more meaningful fellowship with God.

We heartily agree with the emphasis upon the consecutive reading of the whole of the Scriptures as the best plan for Bible reading. The author warns against using devotional books instead of the Scriptures. After saying the singing or reciting a hymn will help to direct the mind towards God, Mrs. Sapsford says, "Of course the hymns are not inspired as the Word of God is . . . Some hymns can be a rich blessing, but do not substitute them for the Bible." She several times mentions the devotional use of the Psalms. We would hasten to suggest these two truths should add up to: "Sing the Psalms to direct the mind and the heart toward God."

Mrs. Sapsford emphasizes that, having understood the importance of the daily Quiet Hour, the individual must exercise his will in establishing and maintaining it uninterrupted by other activities if an effective labour is to be realized. Yet, she very rightly states, ". . . the essential factor . . . of the devotional life is not the saint on his knees nor the amount of time he spends there. It is the God who is on the throne. We look to God, and Him alone. We do not look to the Quiet Time" (p. 36).

We are in full agreement with the author that God demands willful obedience in the observance of the Quiet Time, and that neglect of it will rob the soul of its food and hence of its effectiveness. We have the feeling, however, that the author, possibly unwittingly, tends to go beyond this to the position that when God finds an individual spending time in Bible reading and prayer, He can then use him effectively. We must never forget that it is God who works in us both

to will and to do what is His good pleasure. We should, therefore, work out in daily experience what God has wrought within us. He makes men pray that He may use them.

The reviewer has found this booklet both heart-searching and challenging. We all need this kind of a stirring up. Read it and practise it trusting in God who has called us to watch and pray.

— E. C. Copeland

THE TEACHING OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS; by Geerhardus Vos. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids 3, Michigan. 1956, pp. 124. \$2.00.

Lovers of Biblical Theology and of the Reformed Faith give an eager welcome to the post-humous publication of the works of Professor Geerhardus Vos of Princeton Theological Seminary. Already his Teaching of Jesus concerning the Kingdom and the Church, his Notes on Biblical Theology, his Pauline Eschatology, and his Self Disclosure of Jesus have made a valuable contribution to the cause of truth and have given readers a fine picture of an outstanding scholar and a great teacher. The volume under review consists of his classroom lectures on the teaching of the Epistle to the Hebrews. They were delivered repeatedly to his students and have a limited circulation in mimeographed and duplicated form. Now they appear in permanent form in this attractive volume. They have been carefully, and we might also say, lovingly, rewritten and edited by his son, Rev. J. G. Vos, of Geneva College, the editor of this magazine. At no point however, has the essential meaning and message of the work been altered.

The book consists of five chapters. The first deals with the distinctive character of the epistle. Readers may be disappointed that little note is taken of the question of authorship, but special attention is given to the important matter of the people for whom the Epistle was written. The view presented by Dr. Vos will prove stimulating to readers who have accepted the traditional or popular idea that it was written for the Jews of the Dispersion. Not all may be disposed to accept his conclusions that the Epistle was primarily sent to Gentile Christians, but all will admire the manner in which he marshals his arguments and the practical way in which he applies the teaching of the Epistle. He makes it abundantly clear that the letter has a very direct and definite message for us in the 20th century.

The second chapter is a discussion of the DIATHEKE. In this word the ideas of 'Covenant' and 'disposition' are present rather than that of 'testament'. The author takes great pains to trace the meaning of the word throughout the Bible. It is a prominent Old Testament theme. It does not much appear in the New Testament apart from this Epistle to the Hebrews. Dr. Vos feels that this change of emphasis is due to the

fact that through the coming of the Messiah the people of God have received a new form of organization to take the place of the Covenant organization. This new organization yielded the ideas of Church, Christ, and the Kingdom of God. The Epistle's teaching on the DIATHEKE affects all Christianity. It emphasises the need for corporate worship and corporate social life.

Chapter three develops at some length the Epistle's Philosophy of Revelation and Redemption. It is clearly shown how the Old Testament order is a shadow of the heavenly reality, prefiguring the New Testament order. In the New Testament, the Substance of the Heavenly reality has come down to men. In the Old we have a sketch, in the New, we have the finished picture. The typology of the Epistle is analysed, the sonship of Christ defined and illustrated and the doctrine of divine Revelation clearly explained.

In Chapter four, Dr. Vos passes on to what is perhaps the most important doctrine in the Epistle: — the priesthood of Christ. The priestly idea is traced through Scripture, the work of the priesthood set forth, and the character of a true priest described.

The work concludes with a chapter on the Better Sacrifice. It is the centre of Christ's priestly work, and in dealing with the question of Sacrifice, Dr. Vos answers criticisms that the author of the Epistle had no doctrine of Atonement and that he was a ritualist who dealt with such external acts as cleansing and purifying. The book closes with helpful comments on the Terminology of ritual used in the Epistle, e. g. such words as expiate, purify, sanctify and perfect.

In conclusion we endorse the publishers' claim made on the cover of the volume. "The volume commends itself to all those students of the Word who respect exacting scholarship, humble submission to the original text of Scripture, illuminating comment, and intensive study. In every way the work testifies to the author's profound love of the Word of God."

— Adam Loughridge

READING THE BIBLE, A GUIDE, by E. H. Rece and William H. Beardslee. Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1956, pp. 188. Cloth \$3.75, paper \$2.25.

Protestantism has long since passed that stage when liberals delighted to pulverize the Bible with their mighty array of speculations which were thrust upon the Christian public in the guise of scientifically proven fact. For many years now it has become increasingly popular to speak out in praise of this book. Those who are heirs to the liberal traditionalism are now eager to extol the Bible as the source of spiritual inspiration, great literature, and history.

Rece and Beardslee have made another contribution to the already great number of Bible

study books written in this spirit. For those readers who do not mind being told that the Bible is truth mixed with error and inaccuracies this reviewer supposes that "Reading the Bible" will provide a passable introduction to the Scriptures.

However, he utterly fails to see how a Bible-believing Christian will find this book of any significant value. On the one hand, while the Scriptures receive a certain commendation by the authors, the whole tenor of their writing contradicts the divine authority and inspiration which the Word of God claims for itself. On the other hand, this book will not serve as a suitable exposition of what modern criticism holds, for there are very few serious attempts to present or defend critical theories in contradistinction to traditional orthodoxy.

Lest injustice be perpetrated against the authors, it must be pointed out that they do not appear to have any such purpose in mind and therefore are not to be criticized for not accomplishing what they did not set out to do. Their endeavor appears to have been to produce a study book (probably best suited for college classes) that will allow the student a broad glimpse of the Bible through glasses tinted with liberalism.

The product of such an endeavor, however, will be of little interest to one making a serious study of Biblical criticism, and of no value to one seeking a true knowledge of the Word of God.

— Joseph P. Duggan

THE PATTERN OF AUTHORITY, by Bernard Ramm. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1957, pp. 117. \$1.50

The publishers are to be commended for their publication of a new series of monographs entitled "Pathway Books", a series dealing with various aspects of apologetics, evidence, the theology written by some of the most capable evangelical scholars in this country and abroad. The publishers propose to tackle a broad variety of modern problems related to the Christian faith, covering such diverse subjects as communism, science, archaeology, Barthianism, liturgy, and dogmatics. This reviewer hopes that the "Pathway Books" will receive a warm welcome so that the publishers will be encouraged to add other titles to the seven now scheduled for publication or already in print.

Ramm's contribution to this series deals with the multifaceted field of religious authority. Although this work runs only a little over one hundred pages, the author has covered his subject quite ably, having written concisely and to the point, embracing in his scope not only a constructive presentation of the orthodox Protestant view, but also a critique of four other views: the Roman Catholic, Modernist, Kerygmatic, and Neo-orthodox. While delving into many of the complexities

of the philosophical problems which arise, he nevertheless presents the essential points of the several problems precisely and with clarity so that all can understand.

In striving to guard against the errors of those who would revere the authority of the Spirit (while discrediting the Scriptures) as well as those who would neglect the Spirit's ministry in the true pattern of religious authority, Ramm vigorously demonstrates that "the Spirit and the Word are insolubly conjoined. The Scriptures function in the ministry of the Spirit, and the Spirit functions in the instrument of the Word." (p. 29) He presents the following outline of the pattern of authority: "(1) **Christ**, who is the living, personal Word of God, the supreme revelation of God, the supreme depository of the knowledge of God (Col. 2:3).

"(2) **The Holy Spirit**, who conveys revelation, who delegates its authority, and who witnesses to its divinity.

"(3) **The Sacred Scriptures**, which are inspired by the Holy Spirit and therefore the document of revelation, which witnesses supremely to Jesus Christ, and which are the Spirit's instrument in effecting illumination." (p. 36)

This book is heartily recommended to anyone desirous of making a serious study of this vital aspect of Christian theology.

— Joseph P. Duggan

PRESBYTERIAN LITURGIES — HISTORICAL SKETCHES, by Charles W. Baird. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1957, pp. 266. \$3.00.

On reading this book one finds it difficult to realize that it was first published just over one hundred years ago. Admittedly, a great part of it is taken up with quotation from historical documents, but the author's comments and conclusions are given in a crisp and pithy fashion very far removed from the diffusiveness which characterized much nineteenth century theological writing.

The book gives a historical survey of the Presbyterian liturgies, and seeks to show that the use of set forms of prayer is not alien to Presbyterianism. John Calvin had his liturgy; John Knox had his liturgy; the early Puritans all used a Service Book; and it seems that the Westminster Divines were not opposed to a liturgy. What they were opposed to was not the use of set prayers but the imposing of a liturgy on a Church which had not been consulted, as happened when Charles I sought to enforce the use of the Scottish "Book of Common Prayer" of 1637, by an Order in Council without consulting the Scottish Church. Jenny Geddes, in the reported incident in St. Giles Cathedral, had listened without protest to the Reader reading the old prayers for the last time, but she could not tolerate the imposition of Laud's Liturgy. The Westminster Divines, further, would

not have set prayers which were invariable and gave no opportunity for free prayer.

Indeed, the impression left by a study of the documents quoted in this interesting book is not only that there is an enrichment of public prayer to be garnered from the devotional treasures of the centuries, but that full protection must be secured for free prayer, lest a liturgy become a yoke of bondage. Speaking of Calvin's use of a union of free prayer and a liturgy, the author writes, "For voluntary and extemporaneous prayer, Calvin made special provision . . . Only in those general supplications, which from their nature must be uniform, as they express common wants and desires, the reformer required a close adherence to the public formularies of the Church" (pp. 23, 24). The danger of liturgical practice is seen in the strict and undeviating adherence to the Genevan Liturgy demanded by the Synods of the French Churches in the latter part of the sixteenth century (pp. 74, 75).

There is much that is intensely interesting in this book. How many people know, for example, that when John Knox visited England in 1551, he was invited to assist in the revision of the Anglican Prayer Book — an example of co-operation that the ecumenical movement of the twentieth century has apparently failed to match! (p. 195).

While one could not go all the way with some of the modifications hinted at rather than specifically suggested for Presbyterian worship, there are some of the author's conclusions with which we cannot quarrel. Outstanding among these is his proposal on page 265: "A third measure proposed is a more strict adherence to the prescribed order of the Directory of Worship. The topics of prayer and their successions are clearly laid down in that formulary. Without supplying the need of a Liturgy, it was designed to prevent irregularity, and to secure uniformity in the performance of public prayer." If Presbyterian ministers, in their preparation for public worship, would turn more frequently to that excellent guide drawn up by the Westminster Divines, which for so many seems only to be an out-of-date appendix to the Confession, they would find such an enrichment of worship as would obviate the criticism made on page 253 of this book, and all too valid still: "It is nothing else than the power of preaching that brings and holds men to the bosom of our Church." And, more than that, we would be delivered from the degradation of worship perpetrated by ministers whose public prayers are a monotonous repetition of set forms and time-worn phrases compiled by themselves, and worse than any liturgy.

— Hugh J. Blair

OUR REASONABLE FAITH, by Herman Bavink. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1956, pp. 568. \$6.95.

Herman Bavinck, the author of this work, ranks as one of the four or five outstanding Calvinist theologians of the past hundred years, easily taking his place alongside such honored names as Charles Hodge, James Orr, Abraham Kuyper and Benjamin B. Warfield. To only a few has God given such remarkable gifts and the opportunity to use them to such full measure. Having a truly great mind, Bavinck saw Christian truth clearly and systematically, and presented it in a lucid, simple and orderly manner. Although an extremely voluminous writer, Bavinck was not a purveyor of second-hand thoughts but a truly original author. The stamp of his own mind is discernible everywhere in what he wrote.

The present volume, **Our Reasonable Faith**, was first published in the Dutch language in 1909 under the title *Magnalia Dei* ("The Wonderful Works of God"). It is a work following the same general lines as the author's much larger, four-volume work entitled **Reformed Dogmatics**. Although the two works cover the same field, **Our Reasonable Faith**, besides being briefer, provides a less technical and more popular type of treatment of the subject matter. Like the larger work, it is an exposition of the main doctrines of the Christian Faith according to the Reformed or Calvinistic interpretation of Christianity. The book has been very competently translated from the Dutch into English by the late Dr. Henry Zylstra of Calvin College.

If anyone is obsessed by the notion that theology or Christian doctrine is necessarily as dry as dust, abstract to the point of having no contact with life, and obscure to the progressive confusion of the reader — he should try reading this book, for it is just the opposite of all these things. It is concrete, it is lucidly clear. No one who loves God and cares about the Biblical revelation of God's counsel could find this book dull.

The book consists of twenty-four chapters which follow the usual sequence of topics in treatment of Reformed theology. The titles of the chapters are: I. Man's Highest Good. II. The Know-

ledge of God. III. General Revelation. IV. The Value of General Revelation. V. The Manner of Special Revelation. VI. The Content of Special Revelation. VII. The Holy Scriptures. VIII. Scripture and Confession. IX. The Being of God. X. The Divine Trinity. XI. Creation and Providence. XII. The Origin, Essence and Purpose of Man. XIII. Sin and Death. XIV. The Covenant of Grace. XV. The Mediator of the Covenant. XVI. The Divine and Human Nature of Christ. XVII. The Work of Christ in His Humiliation. XVIII. The Work of Christ in His Exaltation. XIX. The Gift of the Holy Spirit. XX. The Christian Calling. XXI. Justification. XXII. Sanctification. XXIII. The Church of Christ. XXIV. Eternal Life.

As a truly Reformed thinker, Bavinck maintained the mediatorial kingship of Christ over the universe. "All creatures without exception are subordinate to Christ, even as He himself as Mediator is subordinate to the Father (1 Cor. 11:3). While He exercises a sovereignty of grace over the church and is therefore frequently called the head of the church, He is vested with a sovereignty of power over all creatures. And in that relationship He is seldom called a head but often a King and Lord. He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords, the Prince or Chief of the kings of the earth, and as king He will reign until His enemies have been put under His feet" (p. 384).

This book can be read with great profit, not only by ministers and theological students, but by the average Christian reader of ordinary education. It is unfortunate that the book lacks an index. However the reader should not have great difficulty in finding a particular subject by consulting the Table of Contents at the beginning of the volume. The reviewer commends this book heartily and does not hesitate to call it a truly great book. Every thoughtful reader will find his grasp of the Christian system of truth deepened and enlarged by reading **Our Reasonable Faith**. The author excels in showing that the Reformed Faith is the teaching of the Bible and that it is pre-eminently a reasonable faith.

— J. G. Vos

Financial Help Needed

As this issue goes to press we have on hand about \$240.00 which is not sufficient to pay in full for the printing and mailing of the issue. The fourth issue of the year — the October-December issue — must also be paid for. For the printing and mailing of these two issues we need approximately \$575.00 in addition to the amount now on hand. As few subscriptions are received at this season of the year, contributions are urgently needed to make it possible to complete publication for 1957 without a deficit.

If you have found *Blue Banner Faith and Life* helpful, and consider its continued publication worth while, will you not help by sending a con-

tribution as the Lord may have enabled you. All contributions are welcome, whether large or small. Receipts are sent promptly to all donors. Financial reports are submitted quarterly to the Board of Publication of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, and an annual financial report is published in the Minutes of Synod. The present appeal for contributions has been approved by action of the Board of Publica-

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As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord: My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.

Isaiah 59:21

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Until the Day Break

By Christina G. Rossetti

When will the day bring its pleasure?
When will the night bring its rest?
Reaper and gleaner and thresher
Peer toward the east and the west:
The Sower He knoweth, and He knoweth best.

Meteors flash forth and expire,
Northern lights kindle and pale;
These are the days of desire,
Of eyes looking upward that fail;
Vanishing days as a finishing tale.

Bows down the crop in its glory,
Tenfold, fiftyfold, hundredfold;
The millet is ripened and hoary,
The wheat ears are ripened to gold:
Why keep us waiting in dimness and cold?

The Lord of the harvest, He knoweth
Who knoweth the first and the last:
The Sower Who patiently soweth,
He scanneth the present and past:
He saith, "What thou hast, what remaineth, hold
fast."

Yet, Lord, o'er Thy toil-wearied weepers
The storm clouds hang muttering and frown:
On threshers and gleaners and reapers,
O Lord of the harvest, look down;
Oh for the harvest, the shout, and the crown!

"Not so," saith the Lord of the reapers,
The Lord of the first and the last:
"O My toilers, My weary, My weepers,
What ye have, what remaineth, hold fast.
Hide in My heart till the vengeance be past."

All Saints

By Christina G. Rossetti

As grains of sand, as stars, as drops of dew,
Numbered and treasured by the Almighty Hand,
The Saints triumphant throng that holy land
Where all things and Jerusalem are new.

We know not half they sing or half they do,
But this we know, they rest and understand;
While like a conflagration freshly fanned
Their love glows upward, outward, through and
through.

Lo like a stream of incense launched on flame
Fresh Saints stream up from death to life above,
To shine among those others and rejoice:
What matters tribulation whence they came?
All love and only love can find a voice
Where God makes glad his saints, for God is Love.

A Pure River of Water of Life

By Christina G. Rossetti

We know not a voice of that River,
If vocal or silent it be,
Where for ever and ever and ever
It flows to no sea.

More deep than the seas is that River,
More full than their manifold tides,
Where for ever and ever and ever
It flows and abides.

Pure gold is the bed of that River
(The gold of that land is the best),
Where for ever and ever and ever
It flows on at rest.

Oh goodly the banks of that River,
Oh goodly the fruits that they bear,
Where for ever and ever and ever
It flows and is fair.

For lo on each bank of that River
The Tree of Life life-giving grows,
Where for ever and ever and ever
The Pure River flows.

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Worship in the Beauty of Holiness

By the Rev. Frank D. Frazer

The crowning glory of the Godhead and of His every perfection is His infinite, eternal, and unchangeable moral purity — **His Holiness**. Every expression of His attributes, every thought, word and action, is absolutely **right**, according to the perfect standard of His own holy will.

God created man in the image of God, that he might have fellowship with God, and in that fellowship glorify God beyond what he would otherwise be able to do. To this end therefore, man was made an intelligent, rational spirit, a free moral agent, partaker of holiness as the perfection of his finite, created nature, set apart for high and holy service to God. Moreover, in the pristine clarity and capacity of his understanding, he was willingly bound with God in a Covenant of Life for obedience, **perfect obedience** to the revealed will of God, that he might always have God's single standard of moral conduct, so far as made known to him. The crowning glory of man is such likeness to God that he may be capable of rational worship and service.

Yet, by disobedience to the covenant command of God, Adam lost his moral purity, the supreme element of his likeness to God; and consequently, the privilege of fellowship with God, for he had broken the tie of friendship and acted the part of an enemy. But God, in His great loving kindness, came to seek and to save His creature, and to bring him back; to judge, most certainly, but, in judgment to show mercy. He revealed to the man and his wife, a supplementary provision of the Covenant, not changing it in any way or degree, but for God's purpose of accomplishing its complete fulfilment, overruling man's unfaithfulness. In it now, **the grace of God** shines with surpassing glory. It is now seen to be a Covenant of Restoration, through pardon and re-birth, to all the privileges of "sons of God." The relation of man to God, creature to Creator, servant to the Lord God, is, of course, not changed, but that of son to Father opens the way, that had been closed by sin, to the most intimate spiritual fellowship. Nevertheless, the son is a son who disobeyed; still unconfirmed in righteousness and holiness of the truth; no more worthy to be called a son; no more worthy of any fellowship with the Father. But, if he come back humbly; if he confess his sin of forsaking the Father to serve self, and willing henceforth to be a "hired servant" to the Father, the Father welcomes him joyfully, with every conceivable inducement to love, reverence, honour, and obey the Father. Yet he must keep self in

the background, and be afraid lest he disobey the Father again.

"Intimate fellowship with the LORD is for them that fear Him,

"And His covenant to make them understand."
(Ps. 25:14).

For fellowship one must draw near to God. "Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you." "But if you forsake Him, He will forsake you," since He is the covenant-keeping God. Man's chief part in fellowship with God is his worship and service of God — his "**worth-ship**" with God; that is, the worthy acknowledgment and declaration, in thought, word and deed, of the infinite worthiness of God, that he may glorify God and enjoy Him forever. "Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive the glory and the honour and the thanks." And He only is worthy. "To whom will ye liken Me, that I should be equal? saith the Holy One." "I am Jehovah and there is none else; beside Me there is no God" — "beside Me there is no Saviour." "By Myself I have sworn . . . that unto Me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall bear witness."

Accordingly, worship is to be offered not only by the individual in private, but also by the assembly of God's people in public, for a collective witness to the reality and truth of God, "that all ends of the earth may fear Him." "Oh magnify Jehovah with me, and let us exalt His name together." "I will give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing praise unto Thee among the nations."

This is the present duty of every man; the duty of "the hour that now is." And the Lord Jesus Christ has given us the basic, comprehensive principle of worship in these words: — "When the real worshippers worship, they shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth (in reality), for the Father seeks such to worship Him. God is a spirit: therefore **it is necessary** that those who worship should worship in spirit and in reality." (Jn. 4:21-24, Dr. W. J. McKnight's translation). There can be mutual understanding only between spirit and spirit, and that only in the realm of reality. Real worshippers cannot worship with empty formalities, in pretence, with idols, or with any false conceptions of the God who "looketh not on the outward appearance, but looketh on the heart." First then, we must know **what** we worship; we must know **God as He is**. We can know

Him only by His revelation of Himself. But the fact that He has revealed Himself by His Word, and by His mighty works of salvation, providence, and creation calls for the worship of every living rational spirit. Real worshippers worship God in spirit, i.e., with all their powers of heart, mind, and will; they worship the God who exists, not in imagination or conjecture, but in reality — the God who made all things to fulfil His will. We have learned to depend on the perfect obedience of materials and physical forces; only fallen spirits fail.

Because of what He is; because of the reality of His perfections God, of necessity, is **jealous**. Perfection, for its own preservation, must not and therefore cannot tolerate or compromise with anything that is set up as a rival. "Jehovah is a jealous God and avengeth: Jehovah taketh vengeance on His adversaries." (Nahum 1:2). "Thou shalt worship no other God, for Jehovah, whose name is **Jealous**, is a jealous God." (Ex. 34:14). He is **jealous for His name**, all that whereby He maketh Himself known — "holy and reverend is His name" — therefore, He cannot be other than **jealous for His worship**, which is for the glory of His name.

To all who accept His covenant, He says, "I am the LORD your God: sanctify yourselves therefore, and **be ye holy, for I am holy**," (Lv. 11:44). The Eternal Spirit is holy. Things of His creation are holy when set apart from human uncleanness, for the service of God. They are not to be defiled by any compromise of human depravity. **The first requirement of worshippers** is, "I will be sanctified by them that come nigh Me, and before all the people I will be glorified." That is, I will be acknowledged and proclaimed to be the holy One, the Glorious One; not by word only, but also by obedient service. This, for example, was brought impressively to mind, when two priests, Nadab and Abihu, "offered strange fire before Jehovah, which He had not commanded them," and were stricken to their death by Jehovah's swift and fearful judgment, as recorded in His Word, a warning to all generations. (Lv. 10:1-3). What they offered was a self-conceived substitute in place of what God had provided. It was, therefore, unholy and dishonouring to God. Since God is eternal, everywhere present, and unchangeable in all His attributes, time and place can make no difference in the requirements of His worship. Hence, there stands the universal rule, **What God has not commanded in His worship is forbidden**.

This is not an arbitrary rule. There is necessary and sufficient reason for it, implicit in the very nature of the situation, man's relationship to God. "For, who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? or who hath first given to Him, and it be recompensed to him again? For from Him, and through Him, and for Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever, Amen." (Ro. 11:33-36). He is the source of all things. He is the intermediate agent by whom all things reach their destination and fulfil His purpose to bring

the glory to Himself. How unfit are we, by love of self, by depravity of nature, by neglect of His Word, to do anything aright for His glory! "The things of God no one knoweth save the Spirit of God. And we received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is from God, that we might know the things freely given us by God." (I Cor. 2:11, 12), and which we, therefore, are to return to God for His glory, not things of our own device or desire. Can we have any real fellowship with God by offering Him an unclean thing, which His Holiness must reject? See Mal. 1:13, 14.

"Who is like Thee among the greatest, O Jehovah, who is like Thee? to be glorified in holiness, to be feared in praises, doing wonders." "WORSHIP JEHOVAH IN THE BEAUTY OF HOLINESS; TREMBLE BEFORE HIM ALL THE EARTH!" (Ps. 96:9). Literally, **Worship Jehovah in the adornments (habiliments, apparel) of holiness**." Every thought, word, and act of worship is to be offered in the moral purity God Himself provides. "for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife (the church) hath made herself ready. And it was given unto her that she should array herself in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints." (Rv. 19:6-8). And "her clothing is inwrought with gold." (Ps. 45:13 R. V.). See also Eph. 5:25:27. And "Put ye on the new humanity which after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth." Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ (who is our righteousness), and make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof."

God's Word has much to say about His worship: there are many expressions in both the Old Testament and the New to describe and to command **worship**. These may be grouped in four classes, under the words most frequently used: — **1. To fear. 2. To humble thyself. 3. To love. 4. To serve.**

This order of the four is given in Dt. 10:12, 13: "And now Israel, what doth Jehovah thy God require of thee, but to **fear** Jehovah thy God, to walk in all His ways (not in your own ways, or those of other men; to **follow**, not to put self forward), and to **love** Him, and to **serve** Jehovah thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, to keep the commandments of Jehovah and His statutes."

Realisation of the presence of God wakens the deep, strong emotions of fear and of love to bring about the right attitude of soul and body, and the right action in worship. **Fear** comes first. "The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom" in every relationship, especially in fellowship with God, for, "By the fear of Jehovah men depart from evil." "Hear, O Israel, Jehovah is our God, Jehovah alone. . . . Thou shalt fear Jehovah thy God, and Him thou shalt serve." Jesus Christ combining this with the Second and First Commandments of the Ten, said, "It is written, Thou shalt **worship** the Lord thy God, and Him **only** thou shalt serve." God's holiness and power, His covenant, justice and truth combine to call forth

fear. Fear withers and lays low man's pride and selfishness. Self must be suppressed and kept out of the way.

When a man is **humbled**, his head bowed down, his body kneeling, prostrate before God; his soul willing to confess his sinfulness and utter unworthiness, then he is willing to acknowledge God in His greatness and glorious perfections. Then the marvellous love and kindness of God, His covenant, mercy and faithfulness, stir man's heart to **love** God. "We love Him, because he first loved us." Fear is two-sided; one side is dread, even terror; the other side is awe and reverence. **Love** drives out the terror, deepens and increases the reverence, and leads to complete submission to the will of God, because it is the will of God. "If ye love Me, ye will keep my commandments." To follow our own will, either to the right hand or to the left, is to miss the mark. Fear is the beginning; obedience the perfection of man's attainable wisdom. Obedience is the thing man threw away in his selfish pride; obedience must be regained for his salvation, his usefulness and happiness. Without obedience, it is impossible for anyone to **serve** God in reality. No matter how men may appraise it, if God did not command it, it is will-worship, dishonouring to God. Hear then the conclusion of the matter; Fear God and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man."

God requires nothing of us but that for which He has made provision. The present fact of His full provision for all the ordinances of worship is tantamount to His command to use it for His purpose. If God has provided for His own purpose, there is nothing better that can be provided. Is any man wiser or holier than God?

For **prayer**, we have His written holy Word, and His promised Holy Spirit to teach us how to pray, and what to pray for, in the exigencies of the occasion. "Not my will, but thine be done." For the hearing of God's Word, for knowledge, for testimony, for teaching and admonishing one another, we have the complete "Scripture of the truth," to which nothing is to be added, and from which nothing is to be taken away, even the law which is **perfect**, the commandment which is **pure**, and the fear which is **clean**, enduring forever. "Teach me to do Thy will, O God." As for the **sacraments** of intimate fellowship, mysteries of God's love, no man can know anything of them but by following carefully the plain, simple directions as written, and opening his heart to receive the riches of grace they convey. "Wait for Jehovah, and keep His way."

For **praise**, extraordinary provision has been made. We can understand this when we remember that God is necessarily jealous for His name. No one is **really** honoured by having said to him, or of him, what is not true, or what is ignorantly, inadequately expressed, even though it be well meant. Hence a complete collection of Praises is provided in Scripture, with the command to use

them embodied in the songs themselves, and in the prescribed manner of worship (e.g. Ps. 47:6; I Chron. 16:7-9; II Chron. 29:30); by example of Christ, and by the command of the Holy Spirit (Mt. 26:30; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). In the last two passages, these Praises of the Book are exclusively designated by the specific titles of many of them as found in the original Hebrew, and in the ancient Greek version, in common use when Paul was writing. Moreover, these "psalms, hymns and songs" are all qualified by the adjective which means precisely "**of**" or "**derived from the Spirit**"; this fact being confirmed by David himself, II Sam. 23:1, 2, and by Jesus Christ, for example, when He quoted from Psalm 110, saying, "David himself said by the Holy Spirit, in the Book of Psalms." (Mk. 12:36 with Lk. 20:42 and Mt. 22:43). Also Christ taught that the Book of Psalms is of equal authority with the other parts of Scripture, the Law and the Prophets; that it is part of "the law," the covenant law of God, which His hearers had accepted as "their law," the law which "**must be fulfilled**" (Lk. 24:44-48; Mt. 5:18); the Scripture that "**cannot be broken**" (Jn. 10:34, 35; 15:25).

The Psalms are the true praises of God, indited by the Holy Spirit of God, who is God. For the most part they are objectively expressed, and what is subjective is prophetically Messianic, the very "Word of Christ" expressing the thoughts and feeling of Christ, in the flesh, among sinners whose sins He carried, enemies persecuting Him without cause.

Among all the spiritual gifts of grace promised the church of the "new" covenant, there is none for the composing of songs of praise. God had attended to that; nothing more is needed, only fuller understanding of God's provision which the Holy Spirit is here to furnish all who ask.

In God's specifications for the tabernacle service, two silver trumpets were required, instruments with which a loud sound could be made to be heard afar off, to gather the thousands of Israel to the Tent of Meeting with God. "And the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow the trumpets." In case of danger from enemies, God would be with them to save. "Also in the day of your gladness, and in your set feasts, and in the beginnings of your months, ye shall blow the trumpets over your burnt-offerings, and over the sacrifice of your peace-offerings."

In the pattern for the temple service, given to David, other musical instruments were added, to be played by the Levites. I Chron. 23:5, 6. "And he set the Levites in the house of Jehovah, with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandment of David . . . **for the commandment was of Jehovah by His prophets**. And the Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets . . . and when the burnt-offering began, the song of Jehovah began also, and the trumpets, together with the instruments of David, King of Israel. And all the assembly worshipped, and the singers sang,

and the trumpeters sounded; all this continued until the burnt-offering was finished." (II Chron. 29:25-28).

Now notice what follows in verses 29 and 30: "And when the burnt-offering was consumed, the king and all those present with him, bowed themselves and worshipped (bowed the knee and prostrated themselves). Then Hezekiah the King, and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praises to Jehovah **with the words** of David and of Asaph the seer. And they sang praises **with gladness**, and kneeled down and prostrated themselves."

From this it is evident that the instruments were the accompaniment of the burnt-offering; not of the song. Their music was the song, a "song without words," and, therefore, merely symbolic of the song of the heart. The instruments and the sacrifice began and ended together.

Immediately following the simultaneous ending of the sacrifice and the instrumental music, the Levites were commanded to sing praises to Jehovah **with the words** of David and of Asaph the prophet, that is, of the well known Book of Praises. They did so with joy and gladness of heart; not with symbols, but **in reality**. The instruments were things of metal, wood and string. They were neither the gospel of salvation, nor the thanksgiving for it. The trumpet sound could only symbolise the proclamation of the glad tidings; the music of the other instruments could only symbolise the joyous thanksgiving for the salvation to be wrought out **in reality**, in due time, by **one real Sacrifice**. A "song without words" is variously interpreted by different persons, and by the same person in different circumstances. To tell the truth about God and His salvation, the song must be **in the words** of the Spirit of the Truth.

When the real, the all-sufficient Substitute, Messiah, the Prince, came, He was **cut off (slain)**, but not for Himself. He put the Covenant into effect for many by the sacrifice of Himself, and thereby caused the symbolic (the blood offering) and the oblation (the meal offering), that is, the whole sacrificial system of the Levitical law, to **cease**. (Dan. 9:20-27). He did so by fulfilling all that it symbolised. He was its Antitype. And ever since, on the cross, He pronounced the words, "It is finished," there has been no command of God to make or to use instruments in the worship of God.

To continue the use of instruments of music in worship is to disregard the teaching of Christ about what is necessary for worship today; it is to allow ourselves to be satisfied with the outward form, and careless of the inward reality of our worship; careless as to whether we really know the joy of salvation that wells up from the heart and finds its fullest and truest expression in the words of the Psalms.

The foregoing are some of the considerations presented in God's Word, whence it appears that purity in the worship of God is not the eccentricity of a few peculiar people, but God's emphatically repeated requirement of all worshippers; and that the purity of worship which God requires is **moral purity**, that is, **holiness**. He can be honoured only by **exact obedience**, willingly rendered. Let us honour Him by using **only** what He has commanded and provided, "according to the good pleasure of His will to the praise of the glory of His grace."

Note: For the foregoing article by Mr. Frazer we are indebted to **Free Presbyterian "Witness"**, of Glasgow, Scotland. The article was first published in the June, 1957, issue of that magazine. — Ed.

Sketches of the Covenanters

By J. C. McFeeters

Chapter XXVIII.

The Home Invaded. — A. D. 1665

Home, by Divine appointment, is a haven of rest for the weary father, a palace of honor for the virtuous mother, a citadel of defence for the helpless children. How sacred, pleasant, and ennobling is the Christian home, when modeled after the Divine pattern! It is a little paradise, a miniature heaven, a vestibule of the everlasting habitation; it fronts on the borders of the glory-world.

The home of the Covenanters in those days was mostly the abode of virtue and intelligence, of comfort in the Holy Spirit and abundant grace

in the Lord Jesus Christ. The knowledge of God was the light in which the household dwelt. The language of the Shorter Catechism was the mother tongue; the children were dieted on Psalms and porridge; the family altar was indispensable; the Holy Bible was appreciated more than bread, and King David's poetry more than roast lamb. The father's prayer at the hearthstone was vital to the household as the breath of their nostrils; morning and evening the voice of parents and children mingled together in the worship of God.

To the family that kept Covenant with God the Sabbath came with peculiar loveliness and

inspiration. On Saturday evening special preparation was made for the coming of the Lord's Day; even the turf was piled beside the fire, the potatoes were washed and in the pot, and the water carried from the spring; "the works of necessity and mercy" were reduced to a minimum. A solemn hush fell upon the fields, and a heavenly light gleamed upon the house, as the sun ascended the sky. The noise of labor had ceased, and the human voice was suppressed. The notes of a plover, or the bleating of a lamb, or the lowing of a cow, might be heard making the quietness all the more impressive. The morning came pouring out blessings upon the people, like Christ Jesus on the Mount of Beatitudes, filling every open heart with sweetness, holiness, and inspiration. The blessed morning came to lead the father and mother, with their sons and daughters, up into the mountain of God's House, to stand in the presence of the Lord of glory, and absorb the brightness that would shine in their faces for many days to come. The Sabbath was the great day of the week in the Covenanter's home.

Let us get a glimpse of these homes of the Covenanters, as they suffered when the storms of persecution swept the land. But will not the dwellingplace of the righteous be protected from harm? Will not the Lord, in His glorious presence, hover over them as a cloud by day and as a flaming fire by night? Hath He not said, "Upon all the glory shall be a defence?" Shall the cruel persecutor then have power to tread on that sacred threshold? May the ruthless slayer enter this little sanctuary, where God and His children dwell together in mutual and unquenchable love? Will the wicked be permitted to draw the sword, and quench the coals on the hearth, and the fire on the altar, with the blood of the worshipers? The answer is found in the story of the Covenanters.

God had now begun judgment at His own House. He was testing the fidelity of His people. The test must touch every point, cover every relation, and reach the degree of suffering that satisfies His mysterious will. God cares much, even for houses, fields, harvests, garners, comforts, conveniences, earthly ties — He cares much for all these as they affect His people. He cares infinitely more, however, for their moral cleanness, spiritual growth, untarnished fidelity, unconquerable faith, and everlasting honor. Therefore He permits the furnace to be heated, and sometimes heated sevenfold; yet He brings them out of the flames without the smell of fire on their garments.

The persecutors, heartless as the rocks and frigid as the iceberg, had equal disregard for the rights of men, the delicacy of women, and the innocence of children. A few incidents will show the general conditions. Nor are these exceptional cases; thousands, yea, tens of thousands suffered in like manner.

A Home at Lochgoin. This is a very ancient

residence of the Covenanters. The Howies have lived here since 1178, the twenty-eighth generation now occupying the house. The building is stone, one story high, with a loft. While the persecution raged, this was a chief resort of the Covenanters. Occupying a solitary place, with a vast out-stretch of waste moorland on every side, this house was like the shadow of a great rock in a weary land; the pursued often found shelter under its roof. Hither Peden, Cameron, Renwick, Paton, and many others repaired, and found a cordial welcome. On one occasion a group had come to spend the night in prayer. They felt comparatively secure, because a storm was raging over the moor. The clouds were pouring down torrents, and the fitful gusts were playing wildly across the broad expanse of moss and heather. These men of God knew how to wrestle with the Angel of the Covenant, and betimes continued their prayers till the break of day. The pursuers had scented their game; in the morning a detachment of cavalry rode up to the house. The Covenanters escaped through the back door. To give them more time, Mrs. Howie stood in front of the soldiers, and disputed their entrance into the house. A burly dragoon attempted to push in. She grappled him by the shoulder, whirled him about, and shoved him out with such force that he fell to the ground. Her Covenanted guests all escaped, and the soldiers, after a fruitless pursuit, withdrew. For this heroic service Mrs. Howie suffered much and her life was sought. Often she had to leave her home, and spend whole nights in the cold, damp moor, with a tender babe on her breast.

A Home near Muirkirk. James Glendinning was a shepherd whose humble cottage escaped not the notice of the persecutor. Knowing the danger that enshrouded his home, he arose one evening from his knees after family worship, and, walking softly across the floor, uncovered the cradle and gently lifted the babe, which he tenderly placed on the mother's knee, saying, "I commit you, my dear wife, and this sweet babe to the fatherly care of the Great Shepherd of Israel. If my days be cut short, God, the God under whose shadow we have taken refuge, will be to you a Husband, and to this child a Father." Not long after this, the house was beset by a company of soldiers. That very night his wife had constrained him to retire into his hiding-place near by. The soldiers rudely rushed into the house, expecting to pounce upon him as their prey. Not finding him they were enraged. Seizing the infant, they held the struggling form up in the face of the frantic mother, and flashing a glittering sword, threatened to cut it into pieces, if she did not reveal the hiding-place of her husband. At that moment the father, who had been attracted to the door, seeing the manoeuvres, rushed in. His soul was on fire; he was just then strong as ten men; he feared not consequences. "Hold, ye murderers! Back! Back!" cried he, waving his sword in their faces. He sprang toward his babe and rescued it, while he used his sword with telling effect upon

the intruders. The soldiers retreated, leaving the floor sprinkling with their blood. The family soon afterward removed to Holland.

A Home near Closeburn. James Nivison was a farmer whose hospitable home afforded comfort and shelter to many who were homeless. He was an unbending Covenanter. Nothing could daunt his noble soul. Being threatened with trouble and loss, he once replied, that if the turning of a straw, in obedience to unprincipled and arbitrary rulers, would save him from harm, he would not comply. His wife was of equal heroism. His home was often beset by soldiers in search of him, that he had to retire to the solitudes. He one day said to his wife, "My dear wife, stern necessity demands our temporary separation. God will be with us both — you at the home, and me in the wilderness." "I will accompany you," she firmly replied; "I will accompany you. If the archers hit you, I will be there to staunch your wounds and to bind up your bleeding head. In whatever danger you may be, I will be at your side, your affectionate wife, in life or in death." They went out together. Sadly they closed the door of their pleasant home, to wander, not knowing where. The mother carried a tender little babe in her bosom. Their first retreat was found in the woods, then in different caves. They made a basket of twigs for the infant. The mother, sitting in the mouth of

the cold cavern, would rock her little darling, and sing the soft lullabies that mingled with the sighing of the winds. They survived the persecution.

Sweet home! The Covenanted home is but an annex of heaven. Home is God's institution, endowed by Him with the wealth of infinite grace, furnished with holy ordinances, and consecrated with the blood of Christ. Do we appreciate the value, the dignity, and the advantage of a Covenanted home? Do we keep the home bright, cheerful, and inspiring, by worshiping our Covenant God, and honoring the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ?

Points for the Class

1. Describe a Covenanted home of the olden time.
2. What distresses fell upon these homes?
3. Can we account for these afflictive providences?
4. What is the explanation?
5. Give an incident at Lochgoin; Muirkirk; Closeburn.
6. How should a Covenanted home be appreciated?

The Word Made Flesh

By the Rev. John C. Rankin

Jesus Christ was no mere man, no earthly king, and His kingdom was no earthly kingdom. Neither He himself nor any of those things that are His were "of this world."

From the outset His disciples believed in Him as the Christ, the Son of God, and proclaimed Him as such. The sacred writers put Him at "the beginning" and "before all things." On the background of the teaching as a whole they declare Him as "Immanuel, God with us," "the Word made flesh" and "God manifest in the flesh."

So Simon Peter on the day of Pentecost: "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you . . . Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up . . . Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." So Philip, having joined the man of Ethiopia in his conveyance, "preached unto him Jesus." So also Paul: ". . . we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."

On the other hand how welcome is the truth that He was also man; "the only mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." He who was "in the form of God" was "found in fashion as a man." Deity and humanity were united in Him "Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven. . . And was made man." Therefore should it not also be said in this connection, "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

How welcome, too, it is to know that in all essential points He was a man, nevertheless in other ways He was quite unlike all other men. It is doubtful if He ever had a sick day in His life. Always in good health, He must have had a good appetite. He enjoyed food and drink and all good things of this life and had no foolish inhibitions about such enjoyments. Yet of course it was always a controlled enjoyment, in which there was never the slightest trace of self-indulgence. And He alone of all men never knew the pain of an accusing conscience. In His experience there was never any sorrow for sin.

Another question is about His looks. What was His outward appearance? All that anyone can say is that we have no certain information on this point. God in His providence has kept it from

us, doubtless for the best of reasons. He may have been tall or He may have been short or somewhere in between. He may have been slight or He may have been stout, although imagination may suggest that He was neither. However, we may well believe that He was "physically fit" as every manual laborer must be. Certainly He was "mentally awake and morally straight."

The apostle Peter knew that face and figure very well but has given us no word for he knew that such knowledge was not essential for our faith. "Whom having not seen ye love," he said. Such knowledge not having been given to us, all effort to invent it is of course in vain. Face to face contact with the Saviour is one of those things which have been reserved for us above when we "shall see him as he is."

In the meantime all substitutes for such knowledge are forbidden. "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image or any likeness of anything. . . ." is the law of God covering the case. Better do without it now if by and by we shall have it forever.

The representatives of Rome assure us that picture or statue is only a reminder to help us bring Him before us. But how can we be reminded of that which we have never seen or known? And how can mere human speculation and invention bring Him to view? We may rest assured that any visual representation of His appearance is and must be contrary to the facts.

For these and other reasons let us be content with the picture of Him as given in the Scriptures which is, so to speak, purely a character sketch and nothing more. And let us recall His words: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

Part of the Scriptural word-picture comes down to us from ancient time, or ever He was born. By way of preview the suffering Saviour of sinner-men is portrayed in the lamb of sacrifice. There is a foreshadowment of Him in prophet, priest and king. With growing clearness and definiteness of detail we are advised that He would be of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Judah and of the house of David. We are told that He would be born of a virgin, in the town of Bethlehem, and would unite in His person the attributes of God and man. He was to be both a King and a servant, a man of sorrows and the Prince of peace.

The New Testament provides the record of the fulfilment of the promise and prediction of the Old. The story of Christ's earthly life unfolds in the four Gospels; in them and to the last inspired page the depths of "the truth as it is in Jesus" are unveiled.

One great lesson which pervades the whole is that it was all "according to plan." As we read we realize that here indeed was the right One ("the man of God's own choosing"), who came upon the scene at the right time ("when the fullness of the time was come"), at the right place ("for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord"), in the right way ("a virgin shall be with child and shall bring forth a son"), and with the right thing ("Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." "He shall save his people from their sins"). "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Note: This is the first of a series of articles by Mr. Rankin. The second will appear, D.V., in our next issue. — Ed.

Some Noteworthy Quotations

THE CHRISTIAN MAN finds in the Bible the Word of God. Let it not be said that dependence upon a book is a dead or an artificial thing. The Reformation of the 16th century was founded upon the authority of the Bible, yet it set the world aflame. Dependence upon a word of man would be slavish, but dependence upon God's Word is life. Dark and gloomy would be the world, if we were left to our own devices, and had no blessed Word of God. The Bible to the Christian is not a burdensome law, but the very Magna Charta of Christian liberty.

— J. Gresham Machen

THE CHURCH is subdued by the cross, that she may know her pride, which is so innate and so fixed in the hearts of men that it cannot be removed, unless the Lord, so to speak, roots it out by force. There is, therefore, no wonder that the

faithful are so much humbled by the Lord, and that the lot of the Church is so contemptible; for if they had more vigor they would soon, as is often the case, break out into an insolent spirit.

— John Calvin

NO DOUBT as the name of God is more excellent than anything else in the whole world, so the worship of Him ought to be regarded as of more importance than all those duties by which we prove our love toward men.

— John Calvin

LET US KNOW that in the Church the Word of God so possesses the highest rank, that neither priests, nor kings, nor their counselors can claim a privilege to themselves, as though their conduct was not to be subject to God's Word.

— John Calvin

"ALL SCRIPTURE is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." This truth operates positively to the inclusion of everything in the doctrine, government and worship of the church which is commanded, explicitly or implicitly, in the Scriptures, and negatively to the exclusion of everything which is not so commanded.

— John L. Girardeau

THE ONLY BRIDLE that checks the degenerating tendency of the church — a tendency manifested in all ages — is the Word of God: for the Spirit of grace Himself ordinarily operates only in connection with that Word. If this restraint be discarded, the downward lapse is sure.

— John L. Girardeau

TO SING the praises of God upon the harp

and psaltery unquestionably formed a part of the training of the law and of the service of God under that dispensation of shadows and figures; but they are not now to be used in public thanksgiving.

— John Calvin

THE COVENANTER who abides by his Covenant is the truest patriot. The greatest service that can be rendered to the country is the presentation of God's ideal for nations.

— J. C. McFeeters

EVERY ATTEMPT to introduce the devices of man into the service of the Church should be strenuously resisted. Each innovation in the worship of God does violence to the most delicate and sacred feelings of the human heart, and is a reflection on the wisdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, who has ordained all the services of His House with utmost care and precision.

— J. C. McFeeters

Religious Terms Defined

CHARACTER. The moral quality of a person's inner nature or "heart," from which the issues of life spring, and by which decisions and conduct are determined.

FREE AGENCY. The human personality's freedom of choice and action, by reason of which a person's decisions and conduct proceed from his inner character, not from external constraint.

FREE WILL. A misleading and incorrect term for free agency. Man is a free agent, but his will is not free from the rest of his personality. The will is free in the sense that it is not determined by anything outside of the person; but it is not free in the sense that it can operate independently of motives and character.

CONSCIENCE. The power of the human personality to judge its own dispositions and conduct, which registers approval when these are in conformity with the moral standard which the person accepts as valid, and registers disapproval when they are contrary to the moral standard which the person accepts as valid.

DUTY. That which human beings ought to do, by reason of some relationship.

MORAL OBLIGATION. Man's duty to do the will of God, by reason of his relation as creature to his Creator.

ETHICS. The science which deals with the motive, standard and purpose of human action.

CHRISTIAN ETHICS. The branch of theological science which deals with what the Bible

teaches concerning the motive, standard and purpose of human action.

MOTIVE. The consideration or state of mind which determines the human will to some decision.

MOTIVE OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS. The desire to do the will of God, which determines the Christian's will to decisions in conformity with the will of God.

STANDARD. The authority by which something is measured, regulated or directed.

STANDARD OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS. The revealed will of God, in the Scriptures, by which right and wrong are to be distinguished and known.

GOAL. The end or purpose for which something exists, or toward which it should move.

GOAL OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS. The Kingdom of God, as man's highest good and purpose of life. "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever" (S.C. 1).

CALVINISM. That system of Christian doctrine which, holding to the absolute supremacy and sufficiency of Holy Scripture as the rule of faith and life, recognizes God's absolute sovereignty and complete control over all things, and man's absolute dependence on God for every factor of his salvation, faith and life. (Named after John Calvin, the author of the system's classic formulation, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, A. D. 1536).

ARMINIANISM. That theological system which regards the sovereignty of God as limited by the free will of His creatures. Arminianism teaches that God's decree of election proceeded from God's advance knowledge of men's free decisions to repent and accept Christ, so that it is really man, and not God, that determines who shall receive eternal life. (Named after Jacobus Arminius, a Dutch theologian who lived 1560-1609).

PIETISM. Originally a religious awakening in the Lutheran Churches of Europe in the latter part of the 17th century. This movement tended to set up an antithesis between personal Christian experience, on the one hand, and creeds, doctrinal orthodoxy and church organization, on the other hand. Today the term Pietism is used to designate a type of religion which strongly emphasizes the regeneration and sanctification of the individual Christian, while it regards "the world" not as something which the Christian should influence for righteousness, but as something from which the Christian should withdraw, lest his holiness be contaminated by contact with it.

BARTHIANISM. Also called Theology of Crisis, Dialectical Theology, and Neo-Orthodoxy, with approximately the same meaning. A new variety of theology originally developed by the Swiss theologians Karl Barth and Emil Brunner.

Barthianism is a reaction against Modernism, but it is based on modern philosophy rather than on the Bible as the infallible Word of God. It denies the possibility of a direct, real revelation of God in human history, accepts the conclusions of the "higher critics" concerning the Bible, rejects the true doctrines of the verbal inspiration and infallibility of Scripture, and teaches that the Bible provides no ethical principles of universal applicability.

LIBERALISM. That type of religion which denies or minimizes the supernatural character of Christianity (denying the reality of supernatural miracles, supernatural redemption and supernatural Christian experience), and holds that salvation is essentially a matter of culture or "character building" rather than a matter of redemption, and that Christianity, as a product of the evolutionary development of the human race, differs from other religions only in degree, not in essential nature.

NATURALISM. The theological and philosophical basis of Liberalism. Naturalism denies the reality of the supernatural in the Bible and in Christian experience, and holds that all religion and religious experience is the product of the operation of universal impersonal natural laws. The "God" of Naturalism is really only a part of nature, or an aspect of the universe.

Studies on Prayer

LESSON 8

What we are to Pray for

Q. 184. For what things are we to pray?

A. We are to pray for all things tending to the glory of God, the welfare of the Church, our own or others' good, but not for anything that is unlawful.

Scripture References:

Matt. 6:9. In our prayers, we are to think first of what will tend to glorify God.

Psalm 51:18; 122:6. We are to pray for the welfare of the Church.

Matt. 7:11. We are to pray for whatever will be for our own good.

Psalm 125:4. We are to pray for what will be for the good of others.

1 John 5:14. Psalm 66:18. We are not to pray for anything unlawful, or contrary to the will of God.

Questions:

1. What is the most important consideration in deciding what things to pray for?

The most important consideration must be the glory of God. The preface to the Lord's Prayer teaches us this, as well as many other parts of the Bible. Our chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him. We are not to think first of our own needs, problems and desires, but of God and His honor and glory.

2. How can we know what things tend to the glory of God?

There is only one way to learn what things tend to the glory of God, and that is by studying the Bible which is the revealed will of God. Apart from the light of Scripture, men have always gone astray and thought that many things would glorify God which are really contrary to God's will and even hateful to God. Jephthah thought he was glorifying God by offering his daughter to God as a burnt offering (Judges 11:29-40). This however was contrary to the will of God, and it was Jephthah's ignorance of the Scripture (the Law of God in the Books of Moses) which allowed him to go so far astray. In the Middle Ages and the period of the Reformation, the Inquisition took the lives of countless faithful, God-fearing Chris-

tians, and all in the name of the glory of God. When men deviate from the written Word, they will commit all kinds of errors in the name of the divine glory. We cannot pray aright unless we also study the Bible aright.

3. Why must we pray for the welfare of the Church?

The Church is not merely a human organization; it is the house of God, a divine institution, the body of which Christ is the Head. The true welfare of God's people, and even the peace and prosperity of the nations of the world, really depend on the spiritual welfare and security of the Church. This of course does not mean merely one denomination, but the whole visible Church of God on earth. The Bible teaches that God deals with the nations in accordance with their treatment of His covenant people, His Church. God said to Abraham: "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:3). Much later God spoke through the prophet Jeremiah and predicted the destruction of the Babylonian Empire by the Medes and Persians because of Babylon's cruel treatment of God's covenant people. "Thou art my battle-ax and weapons of war; for with thee I will break in pieces the nations, and with thee will I destroy kingdoms; and with thee will I break in pieces the horse and his rider; with thee also will I break in pieces man and woman; and with thee will I break in pieces old and young; and with thee will I break in pieces the young man and the maid; I will also break in pieces with thee the shepherd and his flock; and with thee will I break in pieces the husbandman and his yoke of oxen; and with thee will I break in pieces captains and rulers. **And I will render unto Babylon and to all the inhabitants of Chaldea all their evil that they have done in Zion in your sight, saith the Lord**" (Jer. 51:20:24). This remarkable statement does not mean that the Church is to attack the nations and their people with force of arms; it means, rather, that because of their persecution, oppression and mistreatment of Zion (the Church), God in His providence will bring about the judgment and destruction of the nations. From this it follows that the true welfare and prosperity of the Church are very closely related to the peace and prosperity of the nations of the world. It is still true that God will bless them that bless Zion, and curse them that curse Zion.

4. How do we know what things are for our own good?

In some matters, we can be sure that certain things are for our own good, because they are so revealed in Scripture. For such blessings we can always pray with the fullest confidence. For example, we know that it is always for our own good to "depart from evil, and do good, seek peace and pursue it" (Psalm 34:14). It is always for our own good to "draw near unto God" (Psalm

73:28). It is always for our own good that we be sanctified and made holy and Christlike in our character. In all matters which are thus revealed in the Bible, we are to pray confidently.

There are, however, other matters concerning which we have no positive revelation in the Bible. Business and financial prosperity, bodily healing, success in any particular undertaking — such things as these may or may not be for our true welfare. God has not revealed in His Word whether it is for His glory and our own good, in any particular case, that we receive such blessings as these. In such matters we are always to pray in submission to the will of God, saying as our Saviour did in the Garden of Gethsemane, "Not my will, but thine, be done." These blessings will be given to us **IF** they are in accordance with God's will, and they are in accordance with God's will **IF** they will best serve to promote His glory and our own good. But only God knows **WHETHER** they will do so; consequently we must pray in humble submission to God's will. The promoters of the present-day "divine healing" movement tell us that we are to pray for healing **BECAUSE** it is God's will; this is unscriptural. Rather, we are to pray for healing **IF** it is God's will.

5. What is meant by praying for the good of others?

By praying for others' good we mean, first of all, praying for their salvation, in submission to the sovereignty and secret counsel of God. In the second place, we mean praying for temporal blessings to be bestowed on others, insofar as God will be truly glorified in bestowing them.

6. Why is it wrong to pray for anything that is unlawful?

In the Bible, the distinction between right and wrong is an absolute one. Right is always right and wrong is always wrong. Anything that tends to obliterate or obscure this absolute distinction between right and wrong is wicked and displeasing to God. Consequently the Bible teaches that we may not "do evil that good may come;" that is, we may not try to accomplish good by doing something that is wrong. For example, we may not tell a lie to further a good cause. Similarly, we may not pray that we will win money in a lottery in order to contribute it to the Church or to foreign missions. We may not pray that anything which is dishonest or morally wrong will be blessed with success or prosperity.

There have been people who have conceived the idea that God's glory may require some utilization of evil on the part of God's people. A group of gangsters about to rob a bank would have no warrant for praying for God's blessing on their efforts. This is of course an extreme case, but the principle is valid in all cases. We may never seek God's blessing upon evil or wrongdoing. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not

hear me" (Psalm 68:18). God in His divine sovereignty can permit evil to exist and He can turn it to His own glory, but this does not mean that

God ever approves of evil; He always hates it because it is contrary to His nature, and His people are always to hate evil and to abstain from it.

LESSON 9

Right Attitudes in Prayer

Q. 185. How are we to pray?

A. We are to pray with an awful apprehension of the majesty of God, and deep sense of our own unworthiness, necessities, and sins; with penitent, thankful, and enlarged hearts; with understanding, faith, sincerity, fervency, love, and perseverance, waiting upon him, with humble submission to his will.

Scripture References:

Eccles. 5:1, 2. In prayer we are to realize and remember the majesty of God.

Gen. 18:27; 32:10. We are to pray with a sense of our own unworthiness in God's sight.

Luke 15:17-19. We are to pray with a sense of personal need.

Luke 13:13, 14. We are to pray with a sense of personal sin.

Psalm 51:17; 32:5, 6; 38:18. We are to pray with a spirit of repentance.

Phil. 4:6. We are to pray with an attitude of thankfulness to God.

1 Sam. 1:15; 2:1. We are to pray with enlarged hearts, having a deep desire to receive blessings from God.

1 Cor. 14:15. We are to pray with understanding, or intelligently.

Mark 11:24. James 1:6. We are to pray with faith in God and His promises.

Psalm 145:18; 17:1. James 5:16. 1 Tim. 2:8. We are to pray with sincerity, fervency and love to God.

Eph. 6:18. Micah 7:7. We are to pray perseveringly, waiting on God to answer in His own time.

Matt. 26:39. 1 John 5:14,15. We are to pray with humble submission to God's will.

Questions:

1. What is meant by "an awful apprehension of the majesty of God"?

In this expression, the word "awful" means "having reverential fear;" compare Heb. 12:28,29, "... let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear (ARV, reverence and awe): for our God is a consuming fire." The word "apprehension" means "realization." "The majesty of God" means God's absolute and infinite greatness, by which He is far above and beyond all created beings. We might

paraphrase the Catechism's statement as follows: "We are to pray with a reverential realization of God's absolute, infinite greatness and separation from all created beings."

2. Why should we pray "with an awful apprehension of the majesty of God"?

Because of who and what God is, as He is revealed to us in the Bible. God and man are not equals. We could not approach God with acceptance at all if God had not opened the way for us by condescending to establish His covenant with us. Even before the human race fell into sin, when Adam and Eve lived in their original righteousness in the Garden of Eden, they could not have enjoyed communion with God if God had not taken the initiative in bridging the chasm between Creator and creature by establishing the Covenant of Works (see the Confession of Faith, VII.1). If this was true even before the human race fell into sin, how much more true it is today, when we are separated from God not merely by our finitude as creatures, but also by our sinfulness as members of a fallen and corrupted race.

3. Is a reverent realization of the majesty of God often lacking in present-day prayers?

Yes. Even those who give evidence of being true children of God often fail to approach God in prayer with proper reverence. Even public prayers are sometimes offensively familiar in addressing God. This wrong attitude is doubtless a product of the one-sided emphasis on the love of God which has become more or less prevalent in modern Protestantism. Modern religion in stressing the love of God has failed to remember that love is only one aspect of God's being. We must never forget the majesty, holiness and justice of God. We should always remember that God is not a casual acquaintance to whom we may speak in any manner we please; God is the infinite, eternal, Unchangeable Creator and Ruler of the universe.

4. Why has modern religion tended to emphasize only the love of God, while forgetting His majesty and holiness?

Because the modern view of life is man-centered, not God-centered. This perverse man-centered view of life has even invaded many churches and the religious life of their members. The result has been a tendency to cling to those aspects of the Christian doctrine of God which are regarded as useful to mankind, while forgetting and neglecting those aspects which do not appear to

have a value for mankind. Sinful men can see how the love of God can benefit mankind, so they stress the love of God; they cannot see how the majesty of God can benefit mankind, so they neglect the majesty of God. The result is a one-sided idea of God and a lack of reverence in addressing God.

5. What does the Catechism mean by "a deep sense of our own unworthiness"?

This expression means a true consciousness of the fact that God owes us nothing; we have no valid claims on God's goodness and mercy. Even if we were not sinners, it would still be true that we would be UNWORTHY of God's blessings. God did not make the Covenant of Works with Adam because He had to; it was an unmerited act of grace and condescension on God's part. Still more are we unworthy of God's blessings by reason of our sinfulness; as sinners we are not only undeserving, but actually ill-deserving. When we approach God in prayer, we must realize this. The person who thinks that God owes him something, that he has some rights that God is obligated to respect and pay attention to, cannot pray aright.

6. What is meant by "a deep sense of our necessities"?

This means a true consciousness of our condition of personal need. Unless we have a true consciousness of our need, prayer is foolishness. If we have no sense of need, how can we sincerely ask God for anything? The Pharisee's prayer is an example of a "prayer" lacking the consciousness of need; he asked nothing of God; he only congratulated himself on his own attainments (Luke 18:11,12).

7. Why must we pray with "a deep sense of our own sins"?

Our guilty, sinful condition is real. If we do not have a full realization of it, our entire approach to God will be on the wrong basis. We can never approach God aright in prayer unless at the same time we recognize the real truth about ourselves. The person who lacks a deep sense of his own sinfulness will inevitably pray a self-righteous prayer which can only be an abomination to God. The person who prays lacking this deep consciousness of personal sin only deceives himself. Such prayer cannot be acceptable to God.

8. Why must we pray with "penitent, thankful, and enlarged hearts"?

We must pray with penitent hearts because God's mercy is promised to those who not only confess their sins, but sincerely desire to forsake them. To pray with an impenitent heart — a heart that proposes to keep on sinning — is to add presumption to all our other sins (Psalm 19:13; 68:18).

We must pray with thankful hearts because

we have received many blessings from God; to fail to feel thankful for these would be to add the sin of ingratitude to our other sins.

By "enlarged hearts" the Catechism means hearts with a deep longing and desire to receive God's blessings and experience communion with Him. We are not to pray as if we had only a slight desire for God and His blessings, but with an intense, earnest longing for nearness to God and blessings from Him. Only such an attitude in prayer can be acceptable to God.

9. What is meant by praying "with understanding"?

As used in the Catechism, this expression means praying with an intelligent insight into God's revelation in His Word, and our own personal needs, as well as the needs of others. There is such a thing as foolish prayer, and even wicked prayer. Some people try to make prayer a substitute for Bible study and for the functioning of their own intelligence and conscience. Faced with a choice between right and wrong, they will try to evade the issue by "making it a matter of prayer." When prayer is regarded as a substitute for obedience to the revealed will of God, it is not prayer that God will accept. When God commanded Abraham to offer his son, Isaac as a sacrifice, Abraham did not say, "I will pray about this for a few days to ask God's guidance as to what I should do." He obeyed the will of God which had already been revealed to him. When people "pray" to get "guidance" as to whether they should obey the Ten Commandments or not, they are on dangerous ground. Such praying is both stupid and wicked.

10. Why is faith necessary for right prayer?

The Bible states that without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11:6). God has been pleased to make faith the instrument of our salvation and the means by which we are to get blessings from Him. When the Catechism speaks of faith in this connection, of course it means faith in the true God and His Word and promises. Only such a faith has any value whatever in prayer. In our day the word "faith" is often used to describe such human attitudes as optimism, self-confidence, confidence in our fellow-men, etc. Such is not religious faith in the Bible sense. Only God can properly be the object of religious faith.

11. Why must we pray with sincerity, fervency and love to God?

If we do not pray thus, our prayers will not be real prayers; they will merely be hypocritical and mechanical pronouncing of words. Only if we are dead in earnest can we really pray.

12. What should be our expectation as to God's time and way of answering our prayers?

We should expect and believe that God will

answer our prayers in His own appointed time and way according to His holy will. That is, in all our praying we must be careful to maintain an attitude of submission to the sovereignty of God. We may never presume to dictate to God as to when and how our prayers are to be answered. If God in His sovereignty chooses to delay the answer to our prayers, we are not to become discouraged and give up praying; we are to exercise Christian patience, and keep on praying with "perseverance, waiting upon him." Luke 18:1-8 is very instructive in this connection.

If God does not answer our prayers in the way we desired, we should realize that this is not un-

kindness or lack of love on God's part, but because to grant our requests as we asked would not really be for God's glory and our own good. God may answer our prayer by withholding what we have asked Him for, either for a time or permanently. The apostle Paul prayed three times that his "thorn in the flesh" might depart from him, but God did not grant this request; instead, He said to Paul, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:7-9). Paul then understood that God had a purpose in permitting His servant to continue to suffer from this "thorn in the flesh;" it was to keep him from becoming proud and self-confident (verse 7).

LESSON 10

God's Rule for Direction in Prayer

Q. 186. What rule hath God given for our direction in the duty of prayer?

A. The whole word of God is of use to direct us in the duty of prayer; but the special rule of direction is that form of prayer which our Saviour Jesus Christ taught his disciples, commonly called "The Lord's Prayer."

Scripture References:

1 John 5:14. The whole Word of God is of use to direct us in the duty of prayer.

Matt. 6:9-13. Luke 11:2-4. The prayer Christ taught His disciples, commonly called "The Lord's Prayer."

Questions:

1. Why do we need a rule for our direction in the duty of prayer?

We need a rule for our direction in the duty of prayer because the fall of the human race into sin has so affected our hearts and minds that we could never pray aright without a God-given rule. In order to pray aright, we need to know the truth about God, about ourselves, and about how we can be reconciled to God; besides this, we need special knowledge about prayer, without which our prayer would inevitably be ignorant and wrong.

2. What is the source of the knowledge we need to pray aright?

The Holy Bible, the written Word of God, is the only adequate source of this knowledge. God's revelation in nature is not sufficient to guide us in prayer, nor is it suited to our need as sinful human beings. The heathen, who do not have the light of Scripture, but only the light of nature, invariably pray ignorantly and wrongly.

3. In what three ways does the Bible serve as our rule for direction in prayer?

The contents of the Bible, as our rule for direction in prayer, may be divided into three

classifications, as follows: (a) The teachings of the Bible in general; that is, the sum total of what the Bible teaches about God, man, salvation and duty. Since these teachings concern our relation to God, they have a bearing on the subject of prayer. (b) The teachings of the Bible on the specific subject of prayer. There are many portions of the Old Testament and especially of the New Testament that deal directly with the special subject of prayer. From these we are to learn how we should pray. (c) The form of prayer which Christ taught His disciples, commonly called "The Lord's Prayer." In this model prayer we have the Bible's teachings on the subject of prayer presented in concrete form; this is a prayer that embodies what the Bible teaches about prayer.

4. Is the prayer commonly called "The Lord's Prayer" really the Lord's prayer?

Of course not. It is the prayer that our Lord taught His disciples. It neither was nor could be our Lord's own prayer. Jesus Christ could not have used this form of prayer as His own personal prayer, for it contains a petition for forgiveness, which implies a consciousness of guilt and sinfulness which He did not have. The New Testament records certain prayers that Jesus actually prayed. The longest is in John chapter 17; it should be noted that it reveals no consciousness of sin, and contains no petition for forgiveness. The prayer commonly called "The Lord's Prayer" has been called by this name so long that it would be very difficult to change its name now. We may continue to call it by that name, but at the same time we should realize that Jesus Himself never prayed this prayer.

5. Where in the Bible is "The Lord's Prayer" found?

In Matthew 6:9-13, and in a slightly different form in Luke 11:2-4.

6. How can we account for the differences between the form of the Lord's Prayer in Matthew and the form of it in Luke?

Probably Jesus taught this prayer to His disciples on more than one occasion. The record given in Luke may be, and probably is, a record of a different occasion from that recorded in Matthew. Thus the two forms are to be regarded as equally correct.

There is a question about the textual genuineness of the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer in

Matthew ("For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen"). Some of the most important Greek manuscripts lack these words, while others vary in the wording of the conclusion. This problem must also be taken into consideration in comparing the form of the prayer in Matthew with that in Luke. The conclusion of the prayer is not given in Luke.

LESSON 11

The Proper Use of the Lord's Prayer

Q. 187. How is the Lord's prayer to be used?

A. The Lord's prayer is not only for direction, as a pattern, according to which we are to make our prayers; but may also be used as a prayer, so that it be done with understanding, faith, reverence, and other graces necessary to the right performance of the duty of prayer.

Scripture References:

Matt. 6:9. The Lord's Prayer is to be used as a pattern or model for making our own prayers.

Luke 11:2. The Lord's Prayer may properly be used as a prayer.

1 Cor. 14:15. The Lord's Prayer is to be used with understanding.

Heb. 11:6. The Lord's Prayer is to be used with faith.

Questions:

1. How can we use the Lord's Prayer as a pattern or model for making our own prayers?

We can use the Lord's Prayer as a pattern or model for making our own prayers by noting its characteristics and its contents, and framing our own petitions accordingly. We should note, first, the reverence of the Lord's Prayer; it is free from the objectionable familiarity with God which is common in modern prayers; it addresses God as "Father," but immediately adds "which art in heaven" so that the greatness and majesty of God are stressed.

In the second place, we should note the simplicity and directness, as well as the brevity, of the Lord's Prayer. Here is no flowery language, no display of oratory, no long, involved sentences. It is simple, short, to the point; we will realize the propriety of this when we consider that God knows our desires and our needs even before we present them to him.

In the third place, we should note the God-centered character of the Lord's Prayer. It does not start with ourselves and our needs, but with God, His name, His kingdom, His will. Only after these have been considered are our needs mentioned; clearly the Lord's Prayer is formed on the plan of "God First."

Finally, we should note that the Lord's Prayer includes our material needs as well as our spiritual needs, and that it does not commit the error, common in many modern prayers, of failing to ask for forgiveness of sins. In all these various respects the Lord's Prayer is to serve as a pattern or model according to which we can frame our own prayers in a manner that will be acceptable to God.

2. How may the Lord's Prayer properly be used as a prayer?

The Lord's Prayer may properly be used as a prayer, either by itself, or in connection with a prayer framed by ourselves, with the provisions laid down by the Catechism, "that it be done with understanding, faith, reverence, and other graces necessary to the right performance of the duty of prayer." That is, we are always to guard against and avoid the danger of a merely mechanical and formal use of the Lord's Prayer.

3. How has the Lord's Prayer sometimes been misused?

The Lord's Prayer has been misused, as suggested in the previous question, by being used in a merely mechanical and formal manner. Those who have thought that there is merit in repeating the words of the Lord's Prayer over and over, fifty or a hundred times, do not have the slightest understanding of its real nature and proper use. Many who avoid this extreme error, yet use the Lord's Prayer in a mechanical or irreverent manner, by repeating its words hastily and without thinking of their meaning and importance.

4. What objections have been raised to the use of the Lord's Prayer as a prayer?

Some Protestant Christians have been opposed to the use of the Lord's Prayer as a prayer on the ground that it is liable to mechanical and formalistic abuse. They cite the words of Jesus in Matthew 6:9 ("After this manner therefore pray ye") and say that this shows that the Lord's Prayer is intended to be used as a pattern for prayer, not as a prayer in itself. Such people fail to note that Jesus' words in Luke 11:2 ("When ye pray, say, Our Father," etc.) fully warrant the use of the Lord's Prayer as a prayer. The fact

that something is liable to abuse does not constitute an argument against its proper and legitimate use.

More important is the objection raised by a certain type of the teaching called Modern Dispensationalism, exemplified by the notes in the Scofield Reference Bible. This teaches that the Lord's Prayer, used as a form of prayer, belongs exclusively to the Old Dispensation (the Dispensation of Law, before the crucifixion of Christ), and is on legal ground and not suited to the New Testament people of God (Scofield Reference Bible, pages 1002, 1089-90). The Scofield Bible adds that the Lord's Prayer is not a prayer in the name of Christ, and that it makes our forgiveness of others the condition of God forgiving us, which, it is said, is characteristic of "law" in contrast to "grace" (page 1090). Accordingly, those Dispensationalists who follow this teaching of the Scofield Reference Bible refuse to use the Lord's Prayer as a form of prayer.

5. How can this Dispensational objection to the use of the Lord's Prayer as a prayer be answered?

(a) It is based on the error that the period from Moses to Christ was an era of law rather than an era of grace. The truth is that the Covenant of Works, or opportunity of gaining eternal life by legal obedience to God's will, came to an end when Adam and Eve sinned. Salvation by divine grace was announced in Gen. 3:15 and has been the only basis of approach to God ever since then. The period from Moses to Christ was not a period of approaching and serving God on a "legal" basis. It was a period of divine grace and redemption, followed by obedience to God's commandments as the fruit of salvation and as a token of gratitude to God. See the preface to the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:1, 2), which shows that obedience to the commandments is based on prior redemption, that is, on grace. Therefore the Lord's Prayer, even though given by Jesus before

He was crucified, is not to be regarded as "legal" or connected with the idea of salvation by works.

(b) Even though it is true that the Lord's Prayer is not formally a prayer in the name of Christ, yet it really is a prayer in the name of Christ. It addresses God as "our Father." How can anyone call God "Father" except through Christ, on the basis of Christ's redemption? See John 14:6, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

(c) It is not true that the Lord's Prayer makes our forgiveness of others the condition of God forgiving us. "Forgive us our debts AS we forgive our debtors" is not the same thing as saying "Forgive us our debts BECAUSE we forgive our debtors." The Catechism in Q. 194 gives the correct interpretation of the clause, which will be discussed in a subsequent lesson.

Note: The teaching of the Scofield Reference Bible on the subject of "law" and "grace" in the period from Moses to the crucifixion of Christ is very difficult to ascertain with accuracy, and appears to be inconsistent with itself. It is stated that at Sinai Israel "rashly" accepted the Law, and even that Israel exchanged grace for law (page 20, note 1). Yet Dr. Scofield freely recognizes that there was grace and redemption in the period from Moses to Christ; for instance, he calls Exodus "the book of redemption," states that this redemption is wholly of God, by the blood of Christ, etc. (page 88, note 1). The result of this apparent inconsistency has been great confusion in the minds of many Christian people.

For an explanation of the function of the Law in the period from Moses to Christ that is self-consistent and in line with the theology of the Westminster Standards, the student is referred to pages 141-145 of **Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments**, by Geerhardus Vos, published 1948 by Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids 3, Michigan.

LESSON 12

The Structure and Preface of the Lord's Prayer

Q. 188. Of how many parts does the Lord's prayer consist?

A. The Lord's prayer consists of three parts: a preface, petitions, and a conclusion.

Q. 189. What doth the preface of the Lord's prayer teach us?

A. The preface of the Lord's prayer (contained in these words, "Our Father which art in heaven") teacheth us, when we pray, to draw near to God with confidence of his fatherly goodness, and our interest therein; with reverence, and all other child-like dispositions, heavenly affections, and due apprehensions of his sovereign power, majesty, and gracious condescension: as also, to pray with and for others.

Scripture References:

Matt. 6:9. The preface of the Lord's Prayer.

Luke 11:13. Rom. 8:15. We are to approach God with confidence in His fatherly goodness.

Isa. 64:9. We are to approach God with a reverent attitude, as His children.

Psalms 123:1. Lam. 3:41. We are to pray with heavenly affections.

Isa. 63:15, 16. Neh. 1:4-6. We are to pray realizing God's sovereign power, majesty and gracious condescension.

Acts 12:5. Matt. 18:19. James 5:16-18. We are to pray with and for others.

Questions:

1. How is the Lord's Prayer divided?

The Lord's Prayer is made up of a preface ("Our Father which art in heaven"), six petitions, and a conclusion ("For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.").

2. What lessons can we learn from this division of the Lord's Prayer?

From this division of the Lord's Prayer, we can learn that our own prayers should be similarly composed. There should be order and progress in our prayers; they should not have everything thrown together and mixed up without order or arrangement. First of all, every prayer should have an introduction or "preface," recognizing God's infinite majesty and greatness; we should not rush into God's holy presence and begin to talk about our personal needs, without first addressing Him in reverent and worthy manner. Secondly, the petitions of our prayers ought to be properly arranged. Those dealing with God, His honor and glory, His kingdom, etc., should come first, and those dealing with ourselves, our needs and desires, etc., should come afterwards. Thirdly, our prayers should have a fitting conclusion.

3. What two main ideas are taught in the preface of the Lord's Prayer?

(a) The truth that God is the Father of His people; (b) The truth that God and His people are not equals, for God exists far above His people, in the majesty and glory of heaven.

4. Who can rightly call God "Father"?

Only Christian people, who have been reconciled to God through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ (John 14:6, "no man cometh unto the Father, but by me"). No person who is not a believing Christian has any right to use the Lord's Prayer. To encourage those who do not believe in Jesus Christ as their Saviour to use the Lord's Prayer is to encourage them in a sinful delusion, making them think that they are the children of God when really they are not.

5. Are not all human beings the children of God?

It is quite true that all human beings are children of God in the NATURAL sense, because they are God's creatures and He is their Creator. The Bible sometimes speaks of people as children of God in this natural sense (Acts 17:28, 29). But most places in the Bible which speak of God being a Father of people, or of people being children of God, use the terms "Father" and "children" not in the natural sense but in the RELIGIOUS sense; they mean that there is a special religious relationship between God and certain people.

It is in this religious sense that the term "Father" is used in the Lord's Prayer. In the re-

ligious sense, it is not true that all people are children of God. Jesus told some of the Jews that they were not children of God but children of the devil (John 8:42-44). See also 1 John 3:10; 5:18, 19, where we are taught that some people are children of God, while the rest are children of the devil.

6. What attitude should Christian people have toward their heavenly Father?

An attitude of confidence in His fatherly goodness, and their interest therein. By "interest" the Catechism means their SHARE of the benefits of God's goodness. We are to realize that our heavenly Father loves us and cares for us, and that it is not a vain or useless thing to approach His throne in prayer. Such an attitude of confidence in God as our Father comes from the special work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts (Rom. 8:15).

7. Why should we draw near to God with reverence?

Because the fact that God is our Father does not mean that God and ourselves are on a plane of equality, nor that we can approach God just as we please, or just as we would talk with an earthly friend. The Fatherhood of God does not cancel the majesty, glory and sovereignty of God; it does not mean that we can approach God with careless familiarity. The casualness and near-flippancy of some modern prayers is extremely irreverent, and very offensive. The Fatherhood and love of God make a poor excuse for irreverence in prayer.

8. What is meant by "heavenly affections"?

The scripture verses cited by the Catechism show that this expression is used in the sense of HEAVENWARD affections, that is, affections directed towards heaven, where God dwells in light and glory. That is, in prayer we are to separate our thoughts for a time from their common pre-occupation with our own earthly concerns, and to think of heaven, of the greatness, glory, power and wisdom of God, and to concentrate our thoughts and desires on God and heaven.

9. What is meant by "due apprehensions of his sovereign power, majesty, and gracious condescension"?

By "due apprehensions" the Catechism means realizing and feeling these truths as we should, and acting accordingly. The person who refers to God as a "pal" lacks a due apprehension of the majesty, power and gracious condescension of God.

By God's majesty, the Catechism means His infinite, absolute greatness above all created beings. By His power it means His almighty power, by which He can do anything which is not contrary to His own nature. By God's gracious condescension the Catechism means God's voluntarily doing for His people what He is not under any obligation or necessity to do. God did not have to send His Son into the world to die for sinners; He

did this because He **CHOSE** to do it; therefore it was an act of "gracious condescension" on God's part, something to which His creatures had no claim whatever. In approaching God in prayer, we must keep these truths about God in mind, if we would pray aright.

10. What can we learn from the plural pronoun "our" in the expression "Our Father which art in heaven"?

From this plural pronoun we can learn that we are to pray with and for others. Prayer is not

only an individual matter; there is also such a thing as joint or united prayer, as well as intercessory prayer. Each individual Christian is part of a great organism, the invisible Church, or body of Christ; each Christian is related to the other members of this spiritual organism; each must have a concern for the welfare of the others. God's relation to us as Father is something which we share with all other Christian people; therefore we should pray with and for others, as occasion may require and as opportunity may exist.

LESSON 13

Prayer that God's Name may be Hallowed

Q. 190. What do we pray for in the first petition?

A. In the first petition, (which is, "Hallowed be thy name"), acknowledging the utter inability and indisposition that is in ourselves and all men to honor God aright, we pray, that God would by his grace enable and incline us and others to know, to acknowledge, and highly to esteem him, his titles, attributes, ordinances, word, works, and whatsoever he is pleased to make himself known by; and to glorify him in thought, word and deed; that he would prevent and remove atheism, ignorance, idolatry, profaneness, and whatsoever is dishonorable to him; and by his overruling providence, direct and dispose of all things to his own glory.

Scripture References:

Matt. 6:9. Luke 11:2. The first petition of the Lord's Prayer.

2 Cor. 3:5. Psalm 51:15. No man of himself can honor God aright.

Psalm 67:2, 3. We are to pray that God would enable and incline men to know and praise Him.

Psalm 8:1-9; 83:18; 86:10-15; 138:1-3; 145:1-10; 147:19-20. 2 Cor. 2:14, 15. 2 Thess. 3:1. We are to pray that God would enable and incline men to know, acknowledge and highly value all the ways by which He makes Himself known.

Psalm 19:14; 103:1. Phil. 1:9, 11. We are to pray that God would enable and incline us and others to glorify Him in thought, word and deed.

2 Kings 19:15, 16. Psalm 67:1-4; 74:18, 22, 23; 97:7. Tph. 1:17, 18. We are to pray that God would prevent and remove whatever dishonors Him.

2 Chron. 20:5, 6, 10-12. Psalm 83:1-5, 13-18; 140:4, 8. We are to pray that God by His providence, would direct and dispose of all things to His own glory.

Questions:

1. What is the meaning of the word "hallowed" in the Lord's Prayer?

It means "regarded and treated as holy." For God's name to be hallowed means for all God's revelation of Himself to be regarded and treated as holy. God's "name" does not mean merely the divine names such as "God," "Lord," "Jehovah," etc., but all by which God makes Himself known. This includes His names in the narrower sense, and it also includes His titles, attributes, ordinances, Word, works, etc. All these constitute God's revelation of Himself, therefore they are to be regarded and treated as holy.

2. Whose duty is it to hallow God's name?

To hallow God's name is the duty of all His rational creatures, that is, angels and men, but especially it is the duty of His saints, whom He has redeemed from sin and death. All rational creatures are bound to hallow God's name because He is their Creator; but the redeemed have an added obligation to hallow His name, because besides being their Creator, God is also their Redeemer. They have been bought with a price, to serve and honor God.

3. Which of God's rational creatures are able to hallow His name aright?

The angels that have never sinned and the saints that have departed this life and entered the state of glory are able to hallow God's name aright, for they have no sinful nature which could prevent them from doing so. The angels that have fallen into sin can never hallow God's name, nor will they ever have the slightest desire to do so. Of human beings in this world, those who have not been born again cannot hallow God's name, nor do they have any real desire to do so for God's sake. Only the saints, who have been born again by the power of the Holy Spirit, can hallow God's name, and they only imperfectly, because their remaining corruption of nature causes them to fall into many temptations and sins, and renders even their best service partial and imperfect.

The Catechism speaks of "the utter inability and indisposition that is in ourselves and all men to honor God aright." This teaching of human sinfulness and inability is an unpopular teaching,

but still it is true. Even real Christians have neither the ability nor the inclination, of themselves, to honor God as He should be honored; and even the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart does not in the present life remove this "inability and indisposition" wholly, but only partially.

4. What do we mean by praying "that God would, by his grace, enable and incline" us to honor Him aright?

In this sentence, God's grace means the special, powerful work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, by which our natural "utter inability and indisposition" is overcome. This takes place, first, through the new birth, or regeneration, and secondly, through the process of sanctification by which Christians are made more and more holy in heart and life. Following the Bible, the Catechism teaches that both the desire and the power to please God come from the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts (Phil. 2:13).

5. How do Christian people fail to hallow God's name?

Of course all Christian people fail to hallow God's name perfectly; only the saints and angels in heaven can really do that. But many Christian people are habitually or occasionally involved in grossly irreverent failure to hallow God's name.

This includes all violations of the first four commandments, especially such sins as profane swearing and cursing, use of minced oaths ("Gosh," "Gee," "Heck," "Darn," "Jeepers," "Cripes," "Dickens," etc.), profane use of God's attributes ("Goodness," "Mercy," "Gracious," etc.), neglect and misuse of God's ordinances (such as family worship, church services, Baptism, the Lord's Supper, church discipline, official positions in church and civil government), neglect and misuse of God's Word (failure to read and study it, failure to take it seriously, misinterpreting it, using it for a wrong purpose, criticizing or ridiculing it, failure to believe its statements and obey its commands).

It also includes misuse of God's works in the realm of nature (regarding nature as existing and functioning of itself by impersonal natural law, trying to interpret and understand nature by human science without taking God into account, attempting to maintain an educational system which is "neutral" toward God and Christianity, interpreting human history otherwise than as the working out of the eternal plan of God for human redemption).

Clearly many — indeed all — Christian people are involved in at least part of these ways of failing to hallow God's name. Hallowing God's name involves more than a few minutes morning and evening and some time on the Sabbath devoted to religious worship; it really includes all our life, in thought, word and deed. By all we do or leave undone, by all we think or leave un-

thought, we either hallow or fail to hallow God's name. It is a matter not only of religious worship in the narrow sense, but of our whole philosophy of life in the broadest sense.

6. What specially hinders the hallowing of God's name?

All forms of sin hinder the hallowing of God's name, but some kinds of sin hinder it more than others. The Catechism mentions atheism, ignorance, idolatry and profaneness as especially hindering the hallowing of God's name. Atheism in its various forms is the denial of, or failure to believe in and worship, the true God who is revealed in the Bible. Ignorance is a lack of knowledge of the true God and His will, which makes it impossible to hallow His name. Idolatry consists in giving to any other the honor which belongs to God alone. Profaneness consists in regarding and treating what is holy as if it were common or ordinary; it is a life and attitude lacking in faith, reverence and the fear of God. All these, in their various forms, constitute obstacles to the proper hallowing of God's name; therefore when we pray "Hallowed be thy name," we are praying that these various forms of sin may be prevented and removed.

7. What should be the Christian's attitude toward the world's failure to hallow God's name?

The Christian should always be on guard against falling into a complacent agreement with or indifference to the world's failure to hallow God's name. Christian people must always stir themselves up to remember that they are radically different from worldly people and must never assent to the world's easy by-passing of God. Through the whole range of life in all its realms and in every fact, every experience and every detail of life, the Christian must always take God into account. There is no place in a Christian's life where God does not matter; there is no place where God's name need not be hallowed. Christians are to glorify God — hallow His name — in their every thought, word and deed; they may never copy the world in regarding God as irrelevant, and leaving Him out of consideration (Psalm 10:4).

8. How does God hallow His own name?

God hallows His own name — regards and treats it as holy — by His providence which controls all things that come to pass. God's providence is all-inclusive; from the fall of a sparrow to the rise of an empire, it embraces all that occurs in the universe. God controls and directs all things so that they work out for His own glory. Thus God perfectly hallows His own name; by His providence He displays His own nature and perfections. When we pray "Hallowed be thy name," we pray that God, by His providence, would order all events in such a way that His own glory will be manifested.

LESSON 14

Prayer for the Coming of God's Kingdom

Q. 191. What do we pray for in the second petition?

A. In the second petition, (which is, "Thy kingdom come"), acknowledging ourselves and all mankind to be by nature under the dominion of sin and Satan, we pray, that the kingdom of sin and Satan may be destroyed, the gospel propagated throughout the world, the Jews called, the fulness of the Gentiles brought in; . . .

Scripture References:

Eph. 2:2,3. All mankind are by nature under Satan's dominion.

Psalm 68:1,18. Rev. 12:10,11. Deut. 33:27. 1 John 3:8. Satan's kingdom is to be destroyed, for which we should pray.

2 Thess. 3:1. We are to pray for the propagation of the Gospel.

Rom. 10:1. We are to pray for the salvation of the Jews.

John 17:9,20. Rom. 11:25, 26. Psalm 67:1-7. Matt. 28:18-20. We should pray for the salvation of God's elect among the Gentiles.

Questions:

1. What is the spiritual condition of the human race apart from Christ and His salvation?

The spiritual condition of the human race apart from Christ and His salvation is a condition not only of guilt but also of bondage or slavery to the power of sin. The human race and all members of it are not only guilty before God but also enslaved to the power of evil. Because people are slaves to sin, they are not free to do good. They must be set free by the redemption of Christ, the Son of God, before they can love and serve God.

2. Why does the Catechism say that "by nature" we are enslaved to sin?

The Catechism uses this expression, "by nature," to show that our sinfulness is not merely a matter of bad habits, or the result of our environment, but part of OUR NATURE. We are born with a sinful nature, and from the beginning of our life we are slaves to sin, until Christ sets us free from its power. The expression, "by nature," is taken from the exact words of the Bible (Eph. 2:3).

3. What is the kingdom of Satan?

The "kingdom of Satan" is the sum total of everything in the universe that is contrary to the will of God. Satan, the chief of the fallen angels, became king of the kingdom of evil when he fell from his original holiness. The Catechism right-

ly speaks not only of "the kingdom of sin" but of "the kingdom of Satan," because sin is not a natural force such as gravity or electricity; sin is committed by persons, and the kingdom of sin is a kingdom of sinful persons — evil spirits and human beings — under the control of the supremely evil person called Satan. The kingdom of sin is a real kingdom with a real king, Satan or the devil. Every attempt to tone down or explain away the objective reality and personality of the devil is contrary to the Bible.

4. How can Satan exercise power as a king?

Satan can exercise power as a king only by the permission of God. The Bible teaches that all Satan's activities are strictly controlled by God. This is shown very clearly by the first two chapters of the book of Job, as well as by other parts of the Bible. God in His wisdom has permitted Satan to have certain power and to do certain things, but Satan cannot go beyond what God has permitted. This is also clearly shown by the power of Christ to cast out devils, as recorded in the Gospels. Satan's kingdom is temporary only and is doomed to total destruction. Rev. 12:12.

5. How is Satan's kingdom destroyed?

Satan's kingdom is destroyed by the work of Christ, the Son of God, who came to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8). Worldly, mechanical or merely human methods cannot accomplish anything toward destroying Satan's kingdom. Satan's kingdom is partly destroyed by the work of God's Holy Spirit, through the Word of God, in the conversion of sinners and the sanctification of believers. It will be completely and forever destroyed at the second coming of Jesus Christ (2 Thess. 2:8). Many people are deceived into thinking that the general progress of human civilization, general education and culture, science and invention, economic and social progress and organization, can restrain or destroy Satan's kingdom. All these can fit in with Satan's kingdom as much as with God's kingdom. Only the Gospel of Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, really destroys Satan's kingdom.

6. How should we pray that Satan's kingdom may be destroyed?

We should pray this prayer sincerely, with true faith. This means that we will not be satisfied merely to pray. We will also do what we can to bring about the destruction of Satan's kingdom, whenever we have an opportunity. If our faith is real it will be accompanied by works.

7. Why must we pray for the Gospel to be propagated throughout the world?

It is through the preaching of the Gospel that God's elect are brought to salvation (Rom.

10:13-15). Since this is a matter of such great importance, with so many obstacles in the way, and involving such great difficulties, it calls for earnest prayer. It is God's will that the Gospel of Christ shall be preached to all nations. Some countries are shut against the Gospel today. We should pray that God would cause the doors that are shut to be opened, so that the Gospel of Christ can enter and salvation be offered to the people of those countries. Some countries, such as Turkey and Russia, are almost locked tight against the Gospel of Christ. In other countries, such as Spain and Mexico, there are various restrictions and hindrances to the preaching of the Gospel. Read Revelation 3:7, 8 and note that Christ has the power to open doors so that the Gospel can enter in and have a clear track to go ahead.

8. What does the Catechism mean by praying that the Jews may be called?

By the word "called" the Catechism here means effectually called, that is, converted to Christ. The Catechism cites Rom. 10:1, where Paul said that his prayer was for the salvation of Israel. The 11th chapter of Romans predicts that at some future time there will be a great movement of the Jews to believe on Christ (Rom. 11:13-27). This does not mean that every Jew in the world will be converted to Christ, but that

there will be a great increase in the number of Jews that believe in Christ, at some time before the second coming of Christ. Paul tells us that the spiritual blindness of the Jews, which prevents them from seeing that Jesus is the Messiah, is only temporary, "until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (Rom 11:25). This shows that after "the fulness of the Gentiles" has "come in," the blindness of the Jews will be taken away, and large numbers of them will be converted to Christ. There are some Jews being converted to Christ all the time; we should pray for the hastening of the time when many of them will turn to Jesus Christ.

9. Why should we pray that the fulness of the Gentiles will be brought in?

The expression "the fulness of the Gentiles brought in" means the salvation of the great company of God's elect of all nations throughout the world, except the Jews. We should pray for the accomplishment of this work of God for three reasons: (a) God is glorified in the salvation of people of every race and nation. (b) The sooner "the fulness of the Gentiles" is brought in, the sooner the Jews will have their blindness removed and will turn to Christ. (c) The sooner all God's elect, both Jews and Gentiles, are saved, the sooner Christ will come to deliver His people from all sin and suffering, and give them eternal glory.

LESSON 15

Prayer for the Coming of God's Kingdom (Continued)

Q. 191 (Continued). What do we pray for in the second petition?

A. In the second petition, (which is, "Thy kingdom come"). . . . we pray, that. . . the church (may be) furnished with all gospel officers and ordinances, purged from corruption, countenanced and maintained by the civil magistrate: that the ordinances of Christ may be purely dispensed, and made effectual to the converting of those that are yet in their sins, and the confirming, comforting, and building up of those that are already converted: that Christ would rule in our hearts here, and hasten the time of his second coming, and our reigning with him for ever: and that he would be pleased so to exercise the kingdom of his power in all the world, as may best conduce to these ends.

Scripture References:

Matt. 9:38. 2 Thess. 3:1. We are to pray that the Church may be furnished with all Gospel officers and ordinances.

Mal. 1:11. Zeph. 3:9. We are to pray that the Church may be purified from corruption.

1 Tim. 2:1, 2. We are to pray that the Church may be countenanced and maintained by the civil magistrate.

Acts 4:29, 30. Eph. 6:18, 19. Rom. 15:29, 30, 32.

2 Thess. 1:11; 2:16, 17. We are to pray that the ordinances of Christ may be purely dispensed, and made effectual for their intended purposes.

Eph. 3:14-20. We are to pray that Christ would reign in our hearts while we are in this present world.

Rev. 22:20. We are to pray that Christ would hasten His second coming, and our reigning with Him for ever.

Isa. 64:1, 2. Rev. 4:8-11. We are to pray that Christ would so exercise His kingdom of power in the world, as may best further the kingdom of grace and hasten the kingdom of glory.

Questions:

1. Why should we pray that the Church may be furnished with all Gospel officers and ordinances?

(a) These Gospel officers and ordinances, so far as they are genuine and truly spiritual and beneficial, rather than merely mechanical and formal, are gifts of God and are dependent for their effectiveness on the special work of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit that calls men to be ministers of the Gospel; it is the Holy Spirit that provides and equips pastors, elders and deacons for the Church; it is the Holy Spirit that provides and makes effective such Church ordinances as

the preaching of the Gospel, the administration of the sacraments, the exercise of church discipline.

(b) If we are really sincere in praying that the Church may be furnished with all Gospel officers and ordinances, we will not be content to pray and do nothing more; we will be inclined to do what we can about it. For example, we will encourage young men to enter the Gospel ministry; we will contribute liberally to the support of Christian education and church ordinances; we will attend upon the ordinances of the Gospel, and will encourage and support those Church officers who are charged with the administration and work of the Church.

2. Why does the Church need to be purged from corruption?

Of course the Church OUGHT not to need to be purified from corruption. But the fact is that it always DOES need to be purified from corruption. This is not merely sometimes the case; it is always the case. There are always retrograde tendencies at work, which cause corruption in the doctrine, worship, government and discipline of the Church. These retrograde tendencies never cease to operate, and must always be vigilantly guarded against and counteracted.

The reformation of the Church is not to be regarded as a once-for-all act; it must be a continuous process. We should both pray and work for it. In this connection the letters to the seven Churches, in Revelation chapters 2 and 3, are most instructive. Nothing is more dangerously insidious than the comfortable belief that our own branch of the Visible Church is safe and secure for all inroads of corruption. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12. Whole denominations have succumbed to the deadly virus of modern unbelief and have become apostate from the truth, so they have ceased to be witnesses for the Gospel of Christ, while their ministers and members reassured each other by saying "The Church is basically sound." See the Confession of Faith, XXV. 5; Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, XXI. 6. It is highly presumptuous to assert that a particular denomination is so sound that there not only is not, but never will be, any Modernism in it. Yet this statement has been heard in a church court. We should always be on our guard against the leaven of corruption; we should always pray that the Church may be kept from it, and purified of it.

3. How is the Church to be countenanced and maintained by the civil magistrate?

(a) When the Catechism was written, 300 years ago, the prevailing idea on this question was that there was to be an official or established Church, which would not only be recognized by the civil government as the true Visible Church of Jesus Christ, but also supported financially from the national treasury. We no longer accept this view of the relation between Church and State today.

(b) Neither do we accept the extreme view sometimes called Voluntarism, to the effect that the State has nothing to do with religion and need not recognize or countenance the Church in any way. "Church and State are two distinct and separate institutions. The Christian religion should be the religion of both. . . Each has its own sphere, and its own functions to perform. Neither should invade the territory of the other. Where their duties coincide, as for example in the suppression of profanity, they should co-operate; yet always in such a way as not to mar their integrity as separate institutions. . ." (Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, XXIX. 7). Thus our standards teach an absolute separateness of JURISDICTION of Church and State, but the duty of friendly co-operation in matters in which their duties coincide.

(c) The Church should be countenanced and maintained by the civil magistrate, by being protected in the security and enjoyment of its rights and freedom; also it is proper for the State to "countenance and maintain" the Church by remission of taxes on Church property, etc.

(d) Our Standards do NOT teach that both true and false churches are to be countenanced and maintained by the State. At this point the teaching of the Westminster Standards differs from the prevalent American view of the relation between the State and religious associations and institutions. Under the Constitution and laws of the United States a Buddhist temple, a Unitarian church, a Jewish synagogue and a Mohammedan mosque enjoy identical and equal rights and privileges with the most evangelical and orthodox Protestant Christian Churches. There is not only no discrimination between Christian denominations; there is not even any discrimination between Christianity and other religions, so far as the State is concerned. This state of affairs is obviously not what the Westminster divines had in mind in saying that the Church should be "countenanced and maintained" by the civil magistrate. It is obvious that they meant that the TRUE Church should be countenanced and maintained by the civil magistrate. This of course raises difficult and serious problems, which we cannot discuss further in this lesson on the Lord's Prayer. We may accept as sound, however, the principle that a truly Christian nation would at least guarantee the freedom and security of the true Church of Jesus Christ in all its denominational branches.

4. What is meant by saying that the ordinances of Christ should be purely dispensed, and why should we pray for this?

(a) The ordinances of Christ are chiefly the preaching of the Word of God, the administration of the sacraments, the government of the church and the exercise of church discipline.

(b) These ordinances are purely dispensed when they are dispensed according to Christ's ap-

pointment in His Word, the Holy Bible, without human corruptions, additions or subtractions.

(c) This pure dispensing of Christ's ordinances depends on the Church's membership really wanting it, which in turn depends on the special work of the Holy Spirit in their hearts. Therefore we should pray that the Holy Spirit will so work in people's hearts that they will love, adhere to, preserve and defend the pure dispensation of Christ's ordinances. When this special work of the Holy Spirit is partly or wholly withdrawn, the membership and leadership of the Churches will soon introduce changes in Christ's ordinances, not according to Scripture, but according to the whims and fancies of their own hearts and the changing demands of "popularity."

5. Why should we pray that Christ's ordinances may be made effective for their intended purposes?

Unless made effective by the special work of the Holy Spirit, these ordinances will be mere forms without spiritual fruitfulness. Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but only God can give the increase (1 Cor. 3:6). We are not to put our trust in ecclesiastical mechanics, but in the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit's work.

6. What three forms or phases of Christ's kingdom are dealt with in the last part of this answer of the Catechism?

(a) Christ's present spiritual kingdom in the hearts of His people, called "the kingdom of grace" in the Shorter Catechism (S. C. 102). (b) Christ's eternal reign in glory, which will begin at His second coming, called "the kingdom of glory" in the Shorter Catechism (S.C. 102). (c) Christ's kingdom of power in the world, by which at the present time He has all power in heaven and in earth, even over His enemies.

To disregard any of these forms or phases of Christ's kingdom is sure to result in an erroneous,

unbalanced, one-sided view of Christ's kingly office. Such error is extremely common at the present day. One Christian will emphasize Christ's present spiritual kingdom, another His eternal kingdom of glory, and still another His present reign of power over the universe. Only by believing in and emphasizing all three together, in their mutual relations, can we really grasp the scope of Christ's kingship and hold a truly Scriptural view.

In the second petition of the Lord's Prayer we rightly pray for all three phases of His kingdom: the kingdom of grace, the kingdom of glory and the kingdom of power. We pray for the extension and continuance of the kingdom of grace, the hastening of the kingdom of glory, and the success of the kingdom of power for its appointed ends. Note that the kingdom of power is not an end in itself, but a means to the furtherance of the kingdom of grace and the hastening of the kingdom of glory. In this statement of the matter the Catechism is eminently Scriptural.

7. Is it proper to pray that Christ's second coming may be hastened?

Certainly, and we should be sure to do so. See Rev. 22:20; the Confession of Faith, XXXIII. 3. Of course we should not wish for Christ's second coming to take place before the appointed time, when all of God's elect will have been brought to the saving knowledge of Christ. But we should wish and pray that the appointed time may be hastened. The spirit that would prefer to postpone the kingdom of glory in order to afford greater scope for the plans, programs and activities of the Church during this present age is alien to the philosophy of history taught in the Scriptures. According to the Bible the present world is a preparation for the eternal kingdom of God; the eternal may not be subordinated to the temporal. We are not only to desire our Lord's second coming, but to pray that it may take place quickly.

LESSON 16

Prayer that God's Will may be Done

Q. 192. What do we pray for in the third petition?

A. In the third petition, (which is, "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven"), acknowledging, that by nature we and all men are not only utterly unable and unwilling to know and do the will of God, but prone to rebel against his word, to repine and murmur against his providence, and wholly inclined to do the will of the flesh, and of the devil: we pray that God would by his Spirit take away from ourselves and others all blindness, weakness, indisposedness, and perverseness of heart; and by his grace make us able and willing to know, do, and submit to his will in all things, with the like humility, cheerfulness, faith-

fulness, diligence, zeal, sincerity, and constancy as the angels do in heaven.

Scripture References:

Matt. 6:10. The third petition of the Lord's Prayer.

Rom. 7:18. Job 21:14. 1 Cor. 2:14 Man's natural inability and unwillingness to know and do the will of God.

Rom. 8:7. Ex. 17:7. Num. 14:2. Eph. 2:2. Man's natural tendency to rebel against God's Word and providence, and to serve self and Satan.

Eph. 1:17,18; 3:16. Matt. 26:20,41. Jer. 31:18,19.

We are to pray that God, by His Spirit, would take away from us and others whatever is contrary to knowing and doing His will.

Psalm 119:1,8,35,36. Acts 21:14. We are to pray that God, by His grace, would make us able and willing to know, do and submit to His will.

Mic. 6:8. Psalm 100:2. Job 1:21. 2 Sam. 15:25,26. Isa. 38:3. Psalm 119:4,5. Rom. 12:11. Psalm 119:80,112. Isa. 6:2,3. Psalm 103:20,21. Matt. 18:10. We are to pray that God would make us able and willing to know, do and submit to His will as truly and fully as the angels do in heaven.

Questions:

1. In what two senses does the Bible speak of the will of God?

(a) The Bible speaks of the revealed will of God, which is the rule of duty which He has given to the human race (e.g., John 7:17).

(b) The Bible also speaks of the secret will of God, that is, God's counsel or decrees, by which He has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass (e.g., 1 Peter 4:19).

The revealed will of God is also called His preceptive will, and is the standard of man's moral obligation. The secret will of God is also called His decretive will; it is not a rule of human duty, and cannot be known by man except as it unfolds in the events of God's providence; however, some parts of the secret will of God have been revealed in the prophecies of the Bible.

2. In what sense does the Lord's Prayer speak of the will of God?

As interpreted by the Catechism, the third petition of the Lord's prayer refers both to the revealed will of God and to the secret will of God. We are to know and do the revealed will of God; we are to submit cheerfully to the secret will of God, that is, to the events of God's providence. Thus the revealed will of God requires us to obey the Ten Commandments, to love God and our neighbor, etc., while submission to the secret will of God means that we will endure suffering, disappointments, hardships, bereavements, etc., patiently and without murmuring or rebelling against God.

3. Why are men by nature unwilling and unable to know and do the will of God?

Because of the sinful state of the human mind and heart which is the result of the fall of the race into sin. The fall into sin has darkened the human mind, so that apart from the new birth it cannot see and know the truth (Rom. 1:18-22; 1 Cor. 2:14), and it has also corrupted the human heart, so that men are inclined toward wickedness and opposed to righteousness (Rom. 1:28-32; Eph. 2:2,3). The new birth by the power of the Holy Spirit is God's remedy for this natural darkness of the sinful human mind and depravity of the

sinful human heart. Men can never really know the will of God by human reason, science or philosophy, nor can they ever really do the will of God until their hearts have been renewed by the life-giving work of the Holy Spirit. Thus when we pray "Thy will be done," this implies, first of all, a prayer for the special work of the Holy Spirit in human minds and hearts.

4. Why do people murmur and rebel against God's providence?

There can be no doubt that murmuring and rebelling against God's providence is a very common sin even among Christian people. A very common form is complaining about the weather. It is strange but true that most people will ascribe their successful and pleasant experiences to "chance", "luck," or their own prudence and industry, etc., but when things turn against them, they will blame the situation on God and murmur and rebel against God. Men who never think to thank God for seasons of good weather, will curse God if there is a storm or tornado that causes them suffering and loss.

This perverse murmuring and complaining against God's providence arises from the natural sinfulness of the human heart. People wrongly suppose that God OWES them happiness, prosperity, good health and other blessings, and that if any of these are taken away from them, God is cheating them of their just rights. While a Christian will of course realize that all such attitudes are wicked, he will also realize that such thoughts do arise in his own heart, and will be humbled because of them.

5. How is God's will done in heaven?

God's will is done in heaven by the holy angels and by the saints that have departed this life and been made perfect in holiness (Heb. 12:23). It is clear that in heaven God's will is done perfectly, as the Catechism explains. To do the will of God perfectly means not only to do exactly what God requires, but to do it with perfect attitudes and motives ("humility, cheerfulness, faithfulness, diligence, zeal, sincerity and constancy"). In heaven God's will is done perfectly because in heaven there is no sin or temptation to interfere with the perfect doing of God's will. It is a wonderful thought for the Christian that such a heaven is his sure destiny. The Christian is destined to be perfect and to be presented faultless before God's throne (Jude 24). The thought of our destiny of physical, mental, moral and spiritual perfection should be a strong encouragement to us as Christians in our conflicts with evil here on earth.

6. Is it possible for us to do God's will on earth as perfectly as the angels do in heaven?

No. It is our duty to do God's will, here and now, as perfectly as the angels do it in heaven; that simply means that what God requires of us

is perfect conformity to His revealed will. This perfect conformity would have been possible for the human race in this present world — indeed, it would have been actually attained — if Adam had not disobeyed God by eating the forbidden fruit. Adam's act of disobedience plunged the human race into sin and misery, and made perfect conformity to God's will in this life impossible.

Even born again Christians, who are being sanctified by the Holy Spirit, can conform to

God's will in this life only in part. Yet perfect conformity to God's will is always the ideal toward which we are to strive. It is not only our destiny in the life to come; it is also our duty in the present life; therefore we must always press on and strive toward a greater and greater attainment of it. "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:13,14).

LESSON 17

Prayer for our Daily Needs

Q. 193. What do we pray for in the fourth petition?

A. In the fourth petition, (which is, "Give us this day our daily bread"), acknowledging that in Adam, and by our own sin, we have forfeited our right to all the outward blessings of this life, and deserve to be wholly deprived of them by God, and to have them cursed to us in the use of them; and that neither they of themselves are able to sustain us, nor we to merit, or by our own industry to procure them; but prone to desire, get, and use them unlawfully: we pray for ourselves and others, that both they and we, waiting upon the providence of God from day to day in the use of lawful means, may, of his free gift, and as to his fatherly wisdom shall seem best, enjoy a competent portion of them; and have the same continued and blessed unto us in our holy and comfortable use of them; and to be kept from all things that are contrary to our temporal support and comfort.

Scripture References:

Gen. 2:17; 3:17. Rom. 8:20-22. Jer. 5:25. Deut. 28:15-17. In Adam, and by our own sin, we have forfeited the right to all blessings of this life.

Deut. 8:3. Outward blessings of themselves cannot sustain our life.

Gen. 32:10. Deut. 8:17, 18. We can neither earn God's blessings, nor obtain them by our own efforts.

Jer. 6:13. Mark 7:21, 22. Hos. 12:7. James 4:3. Because of our sinful hearts, we tend to desire, get and use the outward blessings of life unlawfully.

Gen. 43:12-14; 28:29. Eph. 4:28. 2 Thess. 3:11, 12. Phil. 4:6. We are to pray that, in subordination to the law and will of God, we may enjoy a suitable portion of the outward blessings of this life.

1 Tim. 4:3-5; 6:6-8. We are to pray that God will bless us in our legitimate use of earthly blessings.

Prov. 30:8, 9. We are to pray that we may be preserved from all that is contrary to our true welfare in this present life.

Questions:

1. Is it true that all men have an inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness?

This is only true within the limited sphere of civil society. Human beings have a civil right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness without unjust interference on the part of their fellow-men. Even within the sphere of human society the right of life or liberty may be taken away as a judicial penalty for the commission of crime. A man who has committed murder no longer has a right to life and liberty.

When we speak of man's relation to God, it is definitely NOT true that all men have a right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Whatever rights human beings might have, have been forfeited by sin; first by Adam's sin, which is imputed to all mankind; and then by each person's own sin, so that no human being has any rights which he can claim over against God. Man has no rights which God is bound to respect.

2. If God were to treat the human race with strict justice, apart from any way of salvation, what would be the result?

Human life would immediately become impossible, for all the common blessings such as rain and sunshine, food and clothing, homes and comforts, would be taken away; health would turn to sickness, and life to death. The human race has forfeited its claim to all these blessings. Only the GRACE AND MERCY of God cause sinful human beings to continue to receive and enjoy earthly blessings.

3. Is it true that God owes every man a life of happiness and prosperity?

No. What God owes every man is simply justice. In the case of fallen, sinful humanity, justice would mean God's wrath, curse and condemnation. Those who think God owes them something better than this fail to realize the meaning of God's righteousness and their own sinfulness. We should be deeply thankful that God deals with us on the basis of grace as well as justice.

4. Why cannot earthly blessings of themselves sustain our life?

We are not independent of God; our life is in His hands moment by moment. The real usefulness of all earthly things depends upon the providence of God. Food cannot give life to the starving, nor medicine health to the sick, except by the working of God's providence. It is only because God's providence is at work, that bread is more nourishing than stones. We tend to forget that we are dependent on God's providence every moment of our lives; we tend to place our faith in things rather than in the God who gives us the things. This becomes a form of idolatry, and even Christian people are often guilty of it. We should use the earthly things, and place our faith in God who gave them and who alone can bless them to our use.

5. Why can we not procure what we need by our own efforts?

Human independence is a vain delusion that is flattering to our sinful hearts. We cannot procure what we need by our own efforts because, in the first place, our efforts are always dependent on the providence of God. Our breathing, the beating of our heart, the functioning of our nervous system and muscles, our power to think and make decisions — all these depend continuously on the providence of God. We cannot do anything independently of God; in Him we live, and move, and have our being.

In the second place, the whole world of nature is constantly dependent on the providence of God. A man may plant wheat, but if God does not provide rain and sunlight, there will be no harvest. Or if there is rain and sunlight, in the providence of God a hailstorm may ruin everything. Men may build ships, and storms which only God controls may wreck them on their first voyage. It is evident that we must recognize that in every detail of our lives we are completely dependent on God.

6. Why do we tend to desire, get and use earthly blessings unlawfully?

Because of our sinful hearts, which cause us to commit sin in thought, word and deed every day of our lives. Even born-again Christians are not perfectly sanctified in this life, and must always contend against the sinful lusts and temptations which lurk in their hearts and which if unchecked will lead them into gross sins.

7. What is meant by "waiting upon the providence of God from day to day in the use of lawful means"?

This expression of the Catechism is a beautiful gem of Scriptural teaching. It means, in the first place, that we are to put our trust, not in our own powers or actions, but in the providence of God, that is, in God, whose providence controls our lives. We are to wait upon the providence of

God from day to day, realizing that God will give us blessings according to His holy will in His own appointed time; therefore we are to avoid both unbelief and impatience. We will not demand blessings immediately when God in His wisdom sees fit to postpone them.

In the second place, while placing our trust in God, we will not be lazy or inactive, but still will make use of means. If we are sick, we will trust in God to make us well if it is His will to do so, but we will also avail ourselves of the best possible medical treatment. If we are waiting on God for a harvest, we will also take pains to cultivate the soil and plant the seed. We will not expect God's providence to eliminate our own toil and efforts.

In the third place, we will take care to use only **LAWFUL** means. We will not take matters in our own hands by breaking the moral law of God. We will try to promote our business interests by intelligence and honest work, but not by use of dishonesty, untruth or theft, nor by injustice to anyone.

8. Why are earthly blessings a free gift to God's children?

They are a free gift because we can never earn or deserve them. Earthly blessings were purchased for God's children by the Lord Jesus Christ (Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, X. 5 and Error 6). Christ earned them, so they could be given to us as a free gift.

9. Is it right to pray for earthly blessings such as financial prosperity for ourselves and others?

Certainly this is right, and we ought to do it, but always in subordination to the will of God, "as to his fatherly wisdom shall seem best." We may pray for financial prosperity and similar earthly blessings, provided we pray that **IF** it is God's will He will give them to us. We have no way of knowing in advance whether or not such will be His will.

10. What does the Catechism mean by "a competent portion" of earthly blessings?

By this expression the Catechism means such a supply of earthly blessings as shall be for our true temporal and spiritual welfare. If God were to make all His children millionaires, this probably would not be for the true welfare of most of them. On the other hand, in most cases dire poverty would not be for their true welfare, either. In most cases God provides His people with a moderate portion of this world's goods, from which we may conclude that He deems this to be best for them. We should not cherish an ambition to "get rich," far less to "get rich quickly." The Christian ideal is a moderate, suitable portion of earthly prosperity. God gives some people great wealth, but we should not seek it.

11. Why should we pray for contentment in the use of God's blessings?

If we do not have contentment, we cannot really enjoy and appreciate the blessings of God. The lack of a spirit of contentment will turn all blessings into temptations or curses. Contentment is an attitude of mind which God can work in us by His Holy Spirit. We should seek this blessing

from Him. "Be content with such things as ye have" (Heb. 13:5); "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (Phil. 4:11); "Godliness with contentment is great gain" (1 Tim. 6:6).

LESSON 18

Prayer for Forgiveness

Q. 194. What do we pray for in the fifth petition?

A. In the fifth petition, (which is, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors"), acknowledging, that we and all others are guilty both of original and actual sin, and thereby become debtors to the justice of God; and that neither we, nor any other creature, can make the least satisfaction for that debt; . . .

Scripture References:

Matt. 6:12 Luke 11:4. The fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer.

Rom. 3:9-22. Matt. 18:24,25. Psalm 130:3,4. Psalm 51:5. 1 John 1: 8,10. We and all mankind are guilty before God, and wholly unable to satisfy His justice.

Questions:

1. What is the meaning of the word "debts" in the Lord's Prayer?

The word "debts" in the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:12) is used with the meaning of "sins," as shown by the parallel passage Luke 11:4. The meaning, therefore, is not commercial debts (which could be satisfied by a money payment) but penal debts — that is, obligation to suffer punishment according to the justice of God by reason of want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God. (The Greek word used in Matt. 6:12 is correctly translated "debts" in both the Authorized and Revised Versions, and therefore "debts" is preferable to "trespasses" which is used by some Churches. The word "debts" brings out more clearly the truth that we are debtors to the justice of God).

2. What aspect of sin does this petition of the Lord's Prayer concern?

It concerns the guilt of sin, which is the basic aspect of sin in the Bible. In addition to involving guilt, sin also involves pollution or uncleanness, bondage or helplessness, and misery or unhappiness. Sin condemns, defiles, enslaves, and renders miserable. But the basic, all-important truth about sin is that it condemns, it involves guilt, it brings a person under the judgment and punishment of God.

3. How is this emphasis on the guilt of sin neglected today?

At the present day it is popular to soft-pedal the guilt of sin and to place the main emphasis on the misery — personal and social — which sin produces. The guilt of sin is an unpopular idea today; the man-centered religion of the twentieth century tries to avoid this idea or explain it away. Sin is regarded as a misfortune or calamity, rather than as something deserving blame and punishment. Consequently, many modern people regard themselves as quite righteous; or if they think of themselves as sinners, they feel that they are to be pitied and consoled rather than judged and condemned.

4. What mistaken idea about guilt is common today?

Today it is very common to confuse **THE FEELING OF GUILT** with **THE FACT OF GUILT**. Popular notions of psychiatry have led many people to suppose that there is nothing to guilt beyond the feeling of guilt, and that if they can manage somehow to get rid of that troublesome feeling of guilt, they will have nothing to fear.

The legitimate practice of psychiatry deals with neurotic or mentally abnormal individuals only. Such persons may have an abnormal feeling or "complex" of guilt which destroys their happiness and usefulness, and which is entirely different from their real guilt before God. It may be possible to relieve such an abnormal feeling of guilt by psychiatric methods. But real guilt before God cannot be affected one whit by psychiatry. Guilt remains guilt, regardless of whether we are obsessed by it or unconscious of it.

Real guilt is not a mere subjective feeling, but an objective fact concerning a person's relation to God. A person may be so hardened in sin that he is entirely unconscious of his guilt, and vainly imagines himself to be a righteous person on the road to heaven. By the special work of the Holy Spirit a sinner is brought under conviction of sin, and then realizes himself to be guilty before God, and deserving of eternal punishment in hell. Imaginary guilt or the mere feeling of guilt may be removed by psychiatry, but real guilt can only be removed by the blood of Jesus Christ, the sinner's Substitute.

5. Of what forms of sin is every person guilty?

Every person is guilty of both original and actual sin. (The term "actual" as used in this connection does not mean "real," for original sin is

just as real as actual sin. Rather, the term "actual" means "pertaining to one's acts," in contrast to original sin which is the state in which we are born).

Infants, of course, are guilty only of original sin; all others are guilty of both original and actual sin. Original sin includes: (a) the guilt of Adam's first sin; (b) the lack of that original righteousness in which the human race was created; (c) the moral corruption of our whole nature. On these three counts every individual is guilty before God, quite apart from any personal actions of his own, every individual is born into this world with guilt charged against him on these three counts. Actual sin is the product, in a person's life and activity, of original sin; it includes all the sins of omission and commission which occur in the course of a person's life, as distinguished from the sin with which a person is born.

Many people today deny that original sin involves guilt. Some try to limit the scope of sin by defining it as "voluntary transgression of known law," etc. Such a definition is unbiblical because far too narrow. According to the Bible "all unrighteousness is sin" (1 John 5:17) and "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). David confessed that he was born in sin (Psalm 51:5); therefore ac-

ording to Rom. 6:23, when he was born he deserved death.

Many people especially rebel against the doctrine that newborn infants are guilty before God by reason of original sin. Against the teaching of the Scriptures they place their unrealistic and sentimental ideas of the "innocence" and "purity" of infancy. The Bible, however, definitely teaches that infants are guilty before God (Rom. 5:14), as witnessed by the fact that they are subject to death, which is the wages of sin.

6. What can we do to take away our guilt before God?

Absolutely nothing; "neither we, nor any other creature, can make the least satisfaction for that debt." Suppose that we could start tomorrow morning and live an absolutely perfect life all our days — that would be no more than our duty, and could not avail to cancel the guilt of any of our past sins. Of course, no one can start to live a perfect life anyway. We are morally bankrupt, totally debtors to the righteous judgment of God, and unable of ourselves to pay any part of the debt. Our guilt before God can be taken away only by the redemption of Jesus Christ.

LESSON 19

Prayer for Forgiveness (Continued)

Q. 194 (Continued). What do we pray for in the fifth petition?

A. In the fifth petition, (which is, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors") . . . we pray for ourselves and others, that God of his free grace would, through the obedience and satisfaction of Christ, apprehended and applied by faith, acquit us both from the guilt and punishment of sin, accept us in his Beloved, continue his favor and grace to us, pardon our daily failings, and fill us with peace and joy, in giving us daily more and more assurance of forgiveness; . . .

Scripture References:

Rom. 3:24-26. Heb. 9:22. We pray that God would, through Christ's redemption, acquit us from the guilt and penalty of sin.

Eph. 1:6,7. We pray that God would accept us as His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ.

2 Pet. 1:2. Hos. 14:2. Jer. 14:7. We pray that God would continue His grace toward us, and pardon our daily failings.

Rom. 15:13. Psalm 51:7-12. We pray that God would fill us with peace and joy, by a daily increasing assurance of His forgiveness.

Questions:

1. What is meant by God's free grace?

This means the undeserved love and favor of

God given to sinners by God's own good pleasure. This free grace of God is the source of our salvation. It is the ultimate reason why some are saved from sin and inherit eternal life. Thus it is also the true basis of the forgiveness of our sins. We are to come to God praying for forgiveness, not on the basis of our own character, good works, good resolutions, nor even on the basis of our own faith, but only on the basis of God's own free grace.

2. How is God's free grace given to sinners?

"Through the obedience and satisfaction of Christ," that is, through the finished work of Christ in the plan of redemption. This finished work of Christ is "apprehended and applied by faith;" that is, the Holy Spirit works faith in a sinner's heart, enabling and disposing him to believe on Jesus Christ; thus Christ's finished work is apprehended by the sinner (grasped, taken hold of, appropriated), and applied to his guilty condition by the work of the Holy Spirit. The free grace of God is the SOURCE of forgiveness, the finished work of Christ is the GROUND of forgiveness, and faith is the MEANS by which forgiveness is obtained.

3. Why does the Catechism mention both the obedience and the satisfaction of Christ?

Because both are essential to His saving work for sinners. By the "obedience" of Christ is here

meant what is sometimes called His active obedience — His life-long perfect keeping of the law of God, by which He achieved a perfect righteousness which can be imputed or credited to sinners. By the “satisfaction” of Christ is meant what is sometimes called His passive obedience — His sufferings and death by which He offered a sacrifice to atone for the sins of His people so that they could be forgiven and their sins canceled. Christ both lived for His people (to give them righteousness) and died for them (to cancel their guilt).

Many present-day Christians fail to realize the importance of the active obedience of Christ. Christ had to live a perfect life under the law in order to save His people; not only must a perfect righteousness be imputed to them, but only a perfect life would meet the requirements for the sacrifice required to atone for sin. An imperfect life could not be offered to God in sacrifice for the sins of others.

4. Why does the Catechism speak of God acquitting us “both from the guilt and punishment of sin”?

It is very important that the distinction and relation between these two be grasped. Guilt means debt to God’s justice, and involves obligation to suffer punishment. Christ’s redemption saves us from both the guilt and the punishment. Our guilt was laid upon Him, and He suffered the punishment in our place on Calvary. Unregenerate people almost always think of salvation as deliverance from the punishment of sin; the true Christian realizes that it is first of all a matter of deliverance from the guilt of sin. Many people are afraid of going to hell, who are not at all concerned about the fact that they are guilty before God. Almost everybody wants to be saved from hell, but only the born-again Christian wants to be saved from his guilt. True Christian repentance is

being sorry for the guilt of sin; false repentance is sorry only about the penalty of sin.

5. Why must we pray to God to pardon our daily failings?

When a person truly believes on Christ he is instantly justified for all eternity; the guilt of all his sins, past, present and future, is wholly canceled and he is declared to be a righteous person by reason of Christ’s blood and righteousness. So far as the judicial punishment of sin is concerned, the believer is justified once and for all. “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:1).

Yet the justified person still can and daily does commit sin in thought, word and deed, by omission and by commission. These “daily failings” cannot cancel his standing as a justified person; they cannot bring him into condemnation. But they can offend his heavenly Father, and cause Him to withdraw the light of His countenance from the person’s soul for a time. They cannot destroy the believer’s union with God but they can interrupt and weaken his communion with God. Therefore the believer is daily to confess his sins and to pray for God’s pardon for his daily failings.

6. What effect does the forgiveness of sin produce in a person’s consciousness?

The forgiveness of sin results in an experience of peace and joy and an increased assurance of forgiveness and salvation. This peace, joy and assurance are wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit. Since they are not given to all persons in equal measure, nor to the same person at all times in the same degree, it is proper that we should pray for the bestowal and increase of these blessings in our hearts.

LESSON 20

Prayer for Forgiveness (Continued)

Q. 194 (Continued). What do we pray for in the fifth petition?

A. In the fifth petition, (which is, “Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors”), . . . we pray . . . that God of his free grace would . . . acquit us both from the guilt and punishment of sin, etc. . . . which we are the rather imboldened to ask, and encouraged to expect, when we have this testimony in ourselves, that we from the heart forgive others their offences.

Scripture References:

Luke 11:4. Matt. 6:14,15; 18:35. Our heavenly Father requires of His children a sincere readiness to forgive others their offences against them.

Questions:

1. Why is the phrase “as we forgive our debtors” of special importance at the present time?

This phrase is of special importance at the present time because a certain type of the teaching called Modern Dispensationalism uses this phrase as the basis of a claim that the Lord’s Prayer is “on legal ground” and not suited to “the dispensation of grace” or “the age of the Church.” This peculiar teaching is especially prominent in the notes of the popular Scofield Reference Bible, which states in a note on Matt. 6:12 (“as we forgive our debtors”) that this is “legal ground” in contrast to Ephesians 4:32 “which is grace.” The Scofield Bible adds (page 1002), “Under law forgiveness is continued upon a like spirit in us; under grace we are forgiven for Christ’s sake, and exhorted to forgive because we have been forgiven.” On pages 1089-1090 the Scofield Bible informs us that “Used as a form, the Lord’s prayer is, dispensationally, upon legal, not church ground . . . it makes human forgiveness, as under the

law it must, the condition of divine forgiveness; an order which grace exactly reverses (cf. Eph. 4:32)." Because of this Dispensationalist teaching about the Lord's Prayer, some ministers have become so convinced that it is not a suitable prayer for Christians to use, that they are unwilling to have it used in the public worship of the Church.

2. How can this Dispensationalist error concerning the Lord's Prayer be answered?

See Lesson 11 of this series, on Q. 187 of the Larger Catechism, in the present issue of *Blue Banner Faith and Life*. The Dispensationalist error concerning the Lord's Prayer, as exemplified by the Scofield Reference Bible, is open to criticism on two counts. First, it is based on a mistaken notion of the character of the period from Moses to Christ, namely, that that period was an era of law in contrast to grace. Secondly, it is based on a misunderstanding of the meaning of the fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer. We shall consider each of these matters in the following questions.

3. Was the period from Moses to Christ an era of law in contrast to grace?

Certainly not. This is one of the outstanding errors of Modern Dispensationalism. It was an era of law, certainly, but not of law in contrast to grace, nor law in place of grace. In the period from Moses to Christ, the law was subsidiary to the system of grace. "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hands of a mediator" (Gal. 3:19); ". . . by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20); ". . . the law entered, that the offence might abound" (Rom. 5:20); "the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Gal. 3:24). All these and many other Scriptures that might be cited show that the function of the law, in the period from Moses to Christ, was not to serve as an alternative to the system of grace, but as a subsidiary to the system of grace, to convince people of their utter sinfulness and their need of divine redemption.

The period from Moses to Christ was not "legal ground" in the sense affirmed by the Scofield Reference Bible (which on page 20 actually affirms that at Sinai the people of Israel "rashly accepted the law" and "exchanged grace for law"). Since this Dispensationalist teaching is certainly erroneous, and greatly misunderstands the essential character of the period from Moses to Christ, it must also be erroneous to say that the Lord's Prayer is "on legal ground."

Modern Dispensationalism confuses the unscriptural, legalistic Judaism of the scribes and Pharisees with the pure, gracious, divinely-revealed religion of the Old Testament. Judaism and the real religion of the Old Testament cannot be

equated in this way, for the former is a legalistic perversion of the latter. (See **Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments**, by Geerhardus Vos, pp. 141-145; published 1948 by Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids 3, Michigan).

4. How does Dispensationalism misunderstand the fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer?

Modern Dispensationalism, as exemplified by the Scofield Reference Bible, sees a conflict between Matt. 6:12 ("Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors") and Eph. 4:32 ("Forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you"). The former of these texts is said to be forgiveness "under law" and the latter is said to be forgiveness "under grace." It is stated that "Under law forgiveness is conditioned upon a like spirit in us; under grace we are forgiven for Christ's sake, and exhorted to forgive because we have been forgiven" (Scofield Reference Bible, p. 1002).

We should realize that there is no real conflict between these two texts. They merely present different aspects or phases of the same matter. From Adam and Eve to the end of time, no human being ever was, ever will be or ever could be forgiven by God except FOR CHRIST'S SAKE, and on the basis of Christ's blood and righteousness. Forgiveness is the very essence of GRACE, and it is simply meaningless to talk about "forgiveness under law" and "forgiveness under grace." ALL forgiveness is under grace; otherwise it would not be forgiveness. If we earn it by obeying the law, then it is wages, not forgiveness. All the Old Testament saints were forgiven BY THE GRACE OF GOD, on the basis of the blood and righteousness of Christ, through faith in the promised Messiah, as evidenced by their obedient compliance with the ordinance of sacrifice. In their case, no less than in the case of Christians of the present day, willingness to forgive others was the fruit and product of God having first graciously forgiven them their sins.

Those who hold that God did not forgive the Old Testament saints until He saw in their hearts a spirit of forgiveness of others, not only grossly misread the Old Testament, but virtually deny the doctrine of the total depravity of fallen man. If man is wholly sinful, as the Bible certainly teaches, how can he do good until his heart is renewed by the Holy Spirit? How can he begin to love and forgive his fellow man UNTIL HE HAS BEEN RECONCILED TO GOD AND GIVEN A NEW HEART? And what does being reconciled to God mean, if not divine forgiveness of a person's sins? Nobody ever really loved or forgave his fellow man, in the Bible sense of the words, until he was first by grace reconciled to God, that is, forgiven by God. "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" (Matt. 7:16). Does a selfish, hateful, unregenerate heart that is at enmity with God, love and forgive others? Not until divine grace works a change and the person is renewed and forgiven.

On the other hand, it is as true today as it was in Old Testament times that God requires His people to have a loving and forgiving spirit toward others. We are not merely "exhorted" to forgive because we have been forgiven; we are COMMANDED to forgive, as a matter of duty. If we are not willing to forgive others, we should question the reality of our own Christian experience. If our life does not produce the FRUITS of salvation, what ground have we for assurance that we are saved? Genuine love of the brethren is an evidence that a person is truly saved: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death" (1 John 3:14). The person who is unwilling to forgive his brother, abideth in death; that is, the person who does not love his brother is unsaved. Therefore the Bible teaches that the person who is unwilling to forgive his brother is himself unforgiven by God. Forgiving our brother is of course not the GROUND of God forgiving us; rather, it is the EVIDENCE that God HAS FORGIVEN US. Where there is the real root, there will also be the fruit; if there is no fruit, then the real root is absent.

Looked at from one point of view, our forgiving others is a moral duty which is enjoined upon us. Looked at from another point of view, our forgiving others is a fruit and evidence of the grace of God in our lives. There is no real conflict between the two. It is only by grace that any sinner

is ever enabled to do his duty; the fact that we do our duty (forgive others) is an evidence of God's grace in us. Since forgiving others is the fruit of a person himself being forgiven by God, it could never have been the "condition" of being forgiven by God (as Dispensationalists hold that it was "under the law"). If we want to use the word "condition" at all in this connection, we should only say that our willingness to forgive others is the condition of our ASSURANCE that God has forgiven us; and this was as true in Old Testament times as today.

5. What is the true interpretation of the phrase "as we forgive our debtors"?

The true meaning of this expression is that given by the Catechism, namely, that we are "imboldened to ask" and "encouraged to expect" that God will forgive our sins, "when we have this testimony in ourselves, that we from the heart forgive others their offences."

Our readiness to forgive others is an evidence of the gracious working of God's Holy Spirit in our hearts; it is, therefore, an evidence that we have been reconciled to God and that we have a true, saving faith in Jesus Christ. When we are privileged to have this boldness and assurance, we can come to God as children to a Father, confessing our daily sins with full confidence that they will be forgiven — that He will treat us as His children and not as His enemies.

(To be continued)

Blue Banner Question Box

Readers are invited to submit Biblical, doctrinal and practical questions for answer in this department. Names of correspondents will not be published, but anonymous communications will be disregarded.

Question:

Are not the pitch pipe and the tuning fork forms of musical instruments? If they are, why do we allow their use in worship services? If we hold that musical instruments are forbidden in New Testament worship, should we not, to be consistent, rule out pitch pipes and tuning forks as well as organs and pianos?

Answer:

Pitch pipes and tuning forks are not to be regarded as musical instruments. Their purpose is not to accompany singing with instrumental music, but rather to enable us to sing well without using musical instruments. Their only function is to enable the song leader to get the correct pitch in starting the Psalm. This is not a part of worship at all. It does not constitute an addition to the worship commanded in Scripture; it is merely a convenient, practical way of enabling us to

worship God as He has commanded us in Scripture.

The following is Dr. John L. Girardeau's discussion of this matter, as given in his well-known book **Instrumental Music in the Public Worship of the Church** (p. 195):

"It is by some gravely contended that if tuning-forks and pitch-pipes may be used, so may organs. . . . Did those who submit this argument ever notice the use made of a tuning-fork or a pitch-pipe by a leader of singing? It is struck or sounded in a way to be heard by the leader himself, and when by means of it he has got the pitch of the tune to be sung, it is put into his pocket, where it snugly and silently rests while the singing proceeds. It no more accompanies the worship than does a bell. Like it, it stops sounding before the act of worship begins. What analogy is there between it and an instrument that accompanies every note of the singing by a corresponding note

of its own? Assign to the organ the same office as the humbler tuning-fork or pitch-pipe, namely, merely to give the leader of the simple singing the pitch of the tunes, and who would object to it? The question of organs would be as quiet as they would be. One toot before singing, and then they would be, as they ought to be during the public singing of praise, as silent as the grave."

— J. G. Vos

Question:

Does not Biblical principle of worship ("Whatever is not commanded in the worship of God is forbidden") rule out the use of church bulletins, offering envelopes and electronic equipment for amplifying the volume of the preacher's voice?

Answer:

Strictly speaking, the Biblical principle of worship is not simply that whatever is not commanded in the worship of God is forbidden. The principle is often stated in this way, which is really an over-simplification of the matter. Accurately stated, the principle is that **every element of worship that is not commanded is forbidden**. The elements of worship include such things as preaching, prayer, singing the Psalms in praise, the sacraments. No new elements are to be added, nor may anything be substituted for the elements appointed in Scripture. For example, we may not substitute non-inspired hymns for the singing of the inspired Psalter, nor may we add instrumental music (which is not appointed in Scripture for New Testament worship).

In addition to the various appointed elements of worship, however, there are also **circumstances of worship**. These include such matters as time and place of the service, heating, lighting and ventilation of the building, provision of book racks in the pews, a board on which the numbers of Psalter selections can be displayed, use of offering envelopes, use of a mimeographed or printed church bulletin, a bell to summon the worshippers to the service, electronic amplification of the preacher's voice, ear phones for the hard of hearing, a pitch pipe or tuning fork for the precentor, collection plates, and various other things. Some of these are necessary to the holding of a service; others are not necessary but may be more or less desirable. None of these circumstances is commanded in Scripture, yet the Biblical principle of worship does not rule such circumstances out. The Confession of Faith speaks as follows concerning them:

"... there are some circumstances concerning the worship of God, and government of the church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence, according to the general rules of the Word, which are always to be observed" (I. 6).

This statement of the Westminster Confession

concerning circumstances of worship in no way contradicts the principle laid down by the Westminster Assembly that "The second commandment forbiddeth the worshipping of God by images, or any other way not appointed in his Word" (Shorter Catechism, Q. 51).

— J. G. Vos

Question:

Why do we not chant the Psalms as they are in the Bible, rather than using a rhymed, metrical version with tunes, in our congregational singing?

Answer:

No question of principle is involved here. It is purely a matter of expediency. It is perfectly proper to chant the Psalms as they are found in the Bible, and some Churches do this. The writer well remembers the beautiful chanting of some of the Psalms by Chinese Christians in Manchuria years ago. The wording in the commonly used Mandarin Union Version of the Bible was the basis, only sometimes a phrase or line was repeated. The chant was typically Oriental. American and European missionaries were often impressed with its beauty.

However, such chanting is more difficult than the singing of a metrical version where a fixed tune is repeated stanza by stanza. The Covenanter groups in Manchuria ordinarily used a metrical version with tunes similar to our American metrical Psalter, although it was not complete, as it contained only about a hundred selections.

Because it is easier for an ordinary congregation to sing the Psalms in a metrical version with tunes, most Churches which adhere to the use of the Psalms in worship follow this practice. But it should be realized that chanting the "prose" version of the Psalms is equally proper and in no way violates Scriptural principles of worship.

If the plea is made that we should sing the Psalms as they are in the Bible rather than in a man-made metrical version, it may be replied that strictly speaking, to sing the Psalms exactly as they are in the Bible, we will have to learn Hebrew and sing them in that language. All translations are man-made, and none is as perfect as the original Hebrew text. The King James Version is a man-made translation just as truly as our metrical Psalter is a man-made translation. The translators were not inspired in either case. What we have are not inspired translations, but accurate translations of an inspired Book.

— J. G. Vos

Question:

What are included in secret societies, besides Freemasonry and college fraternities and sororities?

Answer:

This query concerns the type of organizations commonly called "lodges" or "fraternal orders." Of these Freemasonry, with its many branches and degrees, is by far the most important and influential. Many of the others are copies, more or less, from the Masonic pattern. Some of the common lodges are the Elks, Moose, Shriners, Odd Fellows, Woodmen and Eagles. Prominent women's lodges are the Eastern Star and the Daughters of Rebekah. The Order of De Molay is the Masonic organization for boys. There are many others.

While there are certainly some differences between these various organizations, it may be said of them in general that they are secret, they are oath-bound and they have a non-Christian religious character. These characteristics all constitute good reasons why a Christian should not join a lodge. Especially, the oath-bound character and the religious character of the lodges make it improper for a Christian to join them.

When anyone joins a lodge, he must first take a solemn oath promising to keep the rules of the order and not to reveal its secrets. He must take this oath first, before he knows what the rules and secrets are. Thus he does not really know what he is promising. No Christian has the right to take such a "blind" oath or make such a "blind" promise. We may not swear or promise anything until we know exactly what it is, and are sure that it is something we can approve of, according to God's law.

The lodges are based on a false system or religion, contrary to that revealed in the Bible. They teach that those who are faithful members of the lodge will go to heaven when they die. This is contrary to the Bible which teaches that only by faith in Jesus Christ can we be saved and go to heaven.

Also the religious worship of the lodges is false and wrong. Their prayers do not mention the name of Jesus Christ. Thus they try to approach God in worship directly, without accepting Christ as their Saviour and Mediator by whom alone we can have access to God's presence. John 14:6. 1 Tim. 2:5.

It is often urged in defence of the lodges that many good Christian people, including ministers, are members of them. We readily admit that this is true, but it does not really affect the question at issue. The fact that good Christian people do something does not make it right. Our standard of life is the law of God revealed in the Bible, not the action of other Christians.

— J. G. Vos

Question:

What should be thought of the Scofield Refer-

ence Bible as a help toward understanding the Bible?

Answer:

While the Scofield Reference Bible contains some excellent features and valuable helps, the present writer cannot recommend it, because it is based upon a theory which is false and leads to serious errors. This theory is called Dispensationalism, and it is of quite modern origin. Apparently the first to advocate it was John Nelson Darby, an Englishman of the nineteenth century. In America it was taken up and carried further by Dr. C. I. Scofield, editor of the Scofield Reference Bible.

This Dispensational theory holds, in brief, that world history, from beginning to end, is divided into seven very distinct periods or "Dispensations," during each of which God deals with the human race on the basis of a distinct, specific principle. These seven Dispensations are: 1. Innocency. 2. Conscience. 3. Human Government. 4. Promise. 5. Law. 6. Grace. 7. The Kingdom (or the Millennium). The first four of these seven Dispensations run successively from the creation to the time of Moses. The fifth, the Dispensation of Law, runs from Moses to the crucifixion of Christ. The sixth, the Dispensation of Grace, runs from the crucifixion of Christ to His second coming. The seventh, the Dispensation of the Kingdom, runs for a thousand years following the second coming of Christ.

In working out this theory of seven Dispensations, the Scofield Reference Bible draws a sharp contrast between the Dispensation of Law and the Dispensation of Grace. Law and grace are regarded as mutually exclusive principles, and the relation between them is regarded as an antithesis. Traditional Christian theology, on the other hand, has always held that law and grace are mutually complementary principles, and the relation between them historically is that the Law is subsidiary to the system of grace. This antithesis between law and grace dominates the teaching of the Scofield Reference Bible's notes. It is a major error and is the basic reason why the present writer cannot endorse the Scofield Reference Bible.

Another serious error of the Scofield Reference Bible is found in its **Postponement Theory of the Kingdom** coupled with its **Parenthesis Theory of the Church**. It is held that Christ offered an earthly kingdom to the Jews but they rejected the offer. Following this, the establishment of the Kingdom was postponed until the millennium, following the second coming of Christ. In the meantime, while the Kingdom is postponed, the Church is sandwiched in as a "parenthesis" in God's plans. This breaks the organic unity and continuity between the Old Testament Israel and the New Testament Church. Apart from Modern Dispensationalism, Christian theology has almost always held the organic unity and continuity of

Israel and the Church. Ortholox theology has always held that the Kingdom is both present and future, in different aspects. It finds nothing in the Bible about a kingdom offered to the Jews and then postponed until the end of the "Church age."

Those who wish further information about the teachings of the Scofield Reference Bible are referred to the following publications:

A Candid Examination of the Scofield Bible, by Albertus Pieters. 30 page pocket-size booklet, sold for 10 cents by the Bible Truth Depot, Mifflinburg, Pa.

Prophecy and the Church, by O. T. Allis, a full-length book sold at \$3.75 by the Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Box 185, Nutley 10, New Jersey; also handled by Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Michigan.

— J. G. Vos

Question:

Sabbath is the day of rest, yet we spend four hours in worship together, and some spend much time traveling to and from church. This is the highlight of my week, meeting others in Christian fellowship. But I do not find it a day of rest.

Answer:

Under modern conditions it is often impossible for members to reach city churches without an hour or more driving through traffic. If this trip must be made four times — twice to church and twice home again — a great deal of time is spent in travel. When this is added to four hours or more spent at services (Sabbath School; Young People's Society or other evening group meeting; morning and evening preaching services), it is difficult to find more than an hour or so for quiet reading or rest at home. It is possible that we may sometimes be trying to have too many meetings, in view of the distance that many people have to travel between their homes and their place of worship. There is some danger that we American Christians will lose sight of the symbolism of the Sabbath in our earnest zeal to utilize the day to the full for worship and religious education. The matter is worthy of serious consideration.

As a further comment on our correspondent's statement, we shall quote a few sentences from **Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments** by Geerhardus Vos (copyright 1948 by Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.):

"The Sabbath is not in the first place a means of advancing religion. It has its main significance apart from that, in pointing forward to the eternal issues of life and history. Even the most advanced religious spirit cannot absolve itself from taking part in that. It is a serious question whether the modern church has not too much lost sight of this by making the day well-nigh exclusively an instrument of religious propaganda, at the expense

of its eternity-typifying value. Of course it goes without saying that a day devoted to the remembrance of man's eternal destiny cannot be properly observed without the positive cultivation of those religious concerns which are so intimately joined to the final issue of his lot. But, even where this is conceded, the fact remains that it is possible to crowd too much into the day that is merely subservient to religious propaganda, and to void it too much of the static, God-ward and heavenly-ward directed occupation of piety" (p. 157).

— J. G. Vos

Question:

What are the main beliefs of the Jehovah's Witnesses, and why are they wrong?

Answer:

Jehovah's Witnesses is a cult which has gone by various names during its past history. The founder of this cult was Charles Taze Russell. The earliest name was Zion's Watchtower (1879). In 1881 Russell founded the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Other names that have been used are Associated Bible Students, Millennial Dawn, International Bible Students' Association, and finally Jehovah's Witnesses. The term Russellism is applied to the movement by those who are opposed to it.

"Pastor" Russell died in 1916, after which the leadership of the movement was taken up by "Judge" J. F. Rutherford. Since Rutherford's death, other men have come to the forefront. The movement has a large publishing house located in Brooklyn, and has branches in many parts of the world.

Russellism is strongly opposed to such Biblical doctrines as the Trinity, the Deity of Christ, the sufficiency of Christ's atonement, salvation by grace, and eternal punishment of the wicked in hell. Russellism teaches that all churches are of the devil. The movement is essentially rationalistic, refusing to accept any doctrine except what it holds to be "reasonable." Jehovah's Witnesses make a great claim to a superior knowledge of the Bible, often referring to fine points of the Hebrew and the Greek, while as a matter of fact they are grossly ignorant of real Biblical scholarship and are only able to impress people who are more ignorant than themselves. When asked questions by men who have a real knowledge of Greek and Hebrew, Witnesses are embarrassed and unable to reply.

Those wishing more information on this subject are referred to the following publications:

Chapter on "Jehovah's Witnesses" in **The Chaos of Cults**, by J. K. Van Baalen, pages 231-269. Revised edition published 1956 at \$3.95 by William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich.

Jehovah of the Watchtower, by Walter R.

Martin and Norman H. Klann, published by Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 208 pages. Paper cover, \$1.50; cloth bound, \$2.50.

Thirty Years a Watch Tower Slave, by William J. Schnell. 207 pages. Published at \$2.95 by Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. This is the life story of a man who left the movement after being a member of it for thirty years.

— J. G. Vos

Question:

How important was the Holy Spirit in establishing the early Christian Church; for example, in connection with the determination of the canon of Scripture and the ordering of the Church's public worship?

Answer:

It would of course be impossible to overrate the importance of the Holy Spirit in the establishment of the early Christian Church and in the life of every true Christian Church of any period of history. Jesus Christ promised His disciples that He would send the Holy Spirit: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you" (John 16:13, 14). This promise of Jesus was certainly kept. At Pentecost the Holy Spirit was poured out in a new fulness, constituting the New Testament form of the Church (in distinction from the Old Testament Israel). Ever since then, the true Christian Church has had the illumination and guidance of the Holy Spirit in the truth of God.

The apostles and their associates were infallibly inspired in writing the various books of the New Testament. The apostles were also infallibly guided by the Holy Spirit in setting up the worship and organization of the Church. Since the days of the apostles, the Church has been illuminated and guided by the Holy Spirit in its progressive grasp of and testimony for the truth. This does not imply that any particular branch of the Church is totally free from error, nor that any Church is infallible in its official teachings. It does imply that through the centuries of the Church's history, there has been a true progress in understanding and confessing the truth revealed in the Scriptures. There have been errors and deviations, but through the history of the Church there runs a "line of orthodoxy" which marks the central highway or main stream of knowledge of the truth. This "line of orthodoxy" runs from the apostles (about 30-100 A.D.) through Augustine (about 400 A.D.) to the Protestant Reformers (1500-1600 A.D.). From the Protestant Reformation the "line of orthodoxy" runs through the great Puritan divines (1600-1700 A.D.) to the great Reformed theologians of the 19th century,

such as the Hodges, James Orr, Benjamin B. Warfield, Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck. From the Reformed theologians of the 19th century, the "line of orthodoxy" extends to those who confess the Reformed Faith at the present day. In this "line of orthodoxy" there has been true progress from the apostles to the present day, each stage building on what had already been attained by the previous stage.

What should be borne in mind especially is that the Holy Spirit works with and through the Word. The Holy Spirit's guidance of the Church is a guidance in the understanding of Scripture; it is not a guidance apart from and beyond Scripture. It is not as though the early Christian Church had a double authority, namely Scripture and the Holy Spirit, and got some truths from one and some from the other. The Spirit works within the sphere of the written Word. He does not now reveal new truth to the Church; He illuminates the mind of the Church so that it can discern truth which is already revealed in Scripture. There is no opposition between the Holy Spirit and the Bible. The Holy Spirit is the real Author of the Bible and He opens the eyes of the Church to discern the true meaning of the Bible. No new truth will be added until the end of the world. All the truth that God has for the Church is already revealed in the pages of the Bible. It is all in the Bible from the beginning, but it is not all in the mind of the Church from the beginning. The Church's grasp and understanding of the truth is progressive, increasing from age to age, yet the whole process is within the limits of Scripture.

With regard to the determination of the canon of Scripture, the early Church took over the Old Testament canon from the Jewish synagogue. This Old Testament canon was already settled and was evidently approved by Jesus Christ. In the matter of the New Testament canon, the Church was guided by the Holy Spirit in coming to agreement as to which books were "apostolic," that is, which were written by apostles or by men closely associated with the apostles. These "apostolic" books were regarded as authoritative, and admitted to the canon or official list of authoritative books, while all others were rejected. For a further discussion of the question of the New Testament canon, see *Blue Banner Faith and Life*, Vol. 11, No. 4, October-December 1956, page 200.

— J. G. Vos

Question:

Please comment on the Scriptural bases for the various millennial positions.

Answer:

This question would require too much space to answer here. The reader is referred to the following books which deal with the subject:

(a) Postmillennial. **Israel and the New Cove-**

nant, by Roderick Campbell. 336 pages. Published 1954 at \$3.75 by the Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Box 185, Nutley 10, N. J. Reviewed in *Blue Banner Faith and Life*, July-September 1955, pp. 123-125.

(b) Premillennial. **Crucial Questions about the Kingdom of God**, by George E. Ladd. 193 pages. Published 1952 at \$3.00 by Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. Reviewed in *Blue Banner Faith and Life*, April-June 1953, pp. 95-98.

(c) Amillennial. **Future of the Kingdom in Prophecy and Fulfilment**, by Martin J. Wyngaarden. 211 pages. Published 1955 at \$3.50 by Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. Reviewed in *Blue Banner Faith and Life*, October-December 1955, pp. 196-7.

The reader is also referred to the series of studies entitled **The End of the Ages**, which appeared in *Blue Banner Faith and Life*, October-December 1950, pp. 169-174 and January-March 1951, pp. 18-35.

— J. G. Vos

Question:

Please explain the meaning or usage of the word "cup" in Matthew 26:39. The Scofield Reference Bible in a note on this verse (page 1038) states that the "cup" must be interpreted by Christ's own use of it as a symbolic term in speaking of his approaching sacrificial death. Reference is made to Matt. 20:22 and John 18:11. The Scofield Bible also refers to Isaiah 53:10, which speaks of making Christ's soul an offering for sin. Was Christ's flesh or soul made an offering for our sin?

Answer:

Matthew 26:39 reads as follows: "And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt."

The other texts referred to are as follows:

Matthew 20:22, "But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able."

John 18:11, "Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"

Isaiah 53:10, "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand."

The parallel references to Matt. 26:39 are Mark 14:36 and Luke 22:42.

Two problems are involved in our correspond-

ent's query: (1) What is the precise meaning of the term "this cup" as used by our Lord in the Garden of Gethsemane? (2) What is the meaning of "his soul" in Isa. 53:10?

The note on page 1038 of the Scofield Bible states that Jesus "could have been in no fear of an unwilling death. The value of the account of the agony in the Garden is in the evidence it affords that He knew fully what the agony of the cross would mean when His soul was made an offering for sin (Isa. 53:10) in the hiding of the Father's face. Knowing the cost to the utmost, He voluntarily paid it."

Certainly there could have been no question of an unwilling death. Jesus laid down His life of Himself; no man took it from Him (John 10:17, 18). Yet this truth does not rule out the fact that it must have been terrible for Jesus to contemplate even the physical sufferings that He knew were in store for Him. We are told in Hebrews 5:7 that Jesus "offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared." This is believed to be a reference to our Lord's agony in the Garden of Gethsemane. Note that it does not say that He prayed to be spared from death, but that He prayed "unto him that was able to save him from death." The actual prayer was, "Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done." Yet this text in Hebrews shows that physical suffering and death was a terrible thing to Jesus. We should not lightly dismiss our Lord's physical sufferings just because the spiritual suffering was even greater. The fact that it cost so much, even in physical pain and agony, makes our Lord's sacrifice for us the more amazing.

We believe, however, that the Scofield Bible is correct in emphasizing the hiding of His Father's face as the hardest to bear of our Saviour's sufferings. **The New Bible Commentary** (Davidson, Stibbs & Kevan), commenting on Mark 14:36 says:

"We shall never know exactly what was **this cup** from which Jesus shrank in such horror. It was certainly more than physical suffering, otherwise many a martyr has since shown greater courage than He. We may say that it was the agony to His sinless soul of being 'made sin' (2 Cor. 5:21) and exposed to the divine judgment of sin, of tasting in all its bitterness that death which is the wages of sin that those who trust in Him might never taste it (Heb. 2:9). This is something beyond the range of human experience altogether, since He alone was sinless" (p. 836).

We regard this comment as sound. When Jesus hung on the cross, a time came when the Father's face was turned away from Him. He had then no consciousness of the favorable presence of the Father. It was at this point, we know, that He cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46). He was experiencing the wrath and curse of God because

the sins of His people had been laid on Him. In Him was no sin; on Him were the sins of God's elect from the creation to the end of the world. He who was personally sinless was treated as guilty of the sins of men. Certainly this terrible experience must be regarded as the uttermost of the sufferings included in the idea of "this cup."

With regard to the second question — the meaning of the term "soul" in Isaiah 53:10 — we note that the Hebrew word here translated "soul" is NEPHESH. This word occurs 724 times in the Hebrew Old Testament. Of these, 428 are translated by "soul" in the King James Version, 119 by "life", and the rest by a variety of other terms such as "self," "person," "creature," and several others.

Isaiah 53 portrays Christ being offered as a sacrifice. This calls to our minds the ritual of sacrifice in the Levitical law. Verse 10 says "when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin." The Hebrew word for "an offering for sin" is ASHAM which is almost always translated "trespass offering" in the King James Version. Since the figure is that of a sheep or lamb being offered in sacrifice, we may refer to Lev. 17:11, "For the life (NEPHESH) of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul (NEPHESH)". This text teaches that NEPHESH makes atonement for NEPHESH.

We do not believe that "soul" is used in antithesis to "body" or "flesh", either in Lev. 17:11 or in Isa. 53:10. To try to bring out the true force and idea of the term we shall cite the discussion found in **Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments**, by Geerhardus Vos (copyright 1948 by Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co.), page 182:

"To the conception of the ritual 'blood' and 'life' are identical. And 'life' and 'soul' are likewise identical. We need, therefore, only to inquire into the Old Testament signification of 'soul' to reach the inwardness of the matter on this point. Besides several others, the classical passage on the subject is Lev. 17:11. Here we read: 'For the life of the flesh' (i. e., living flesh) 'is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make covering for your souls; for it is the blood that makes covering by reason of the life.' What, then, is the Old Testament conception of 'soul'? In that the reason is placed for its efficacy to cover for souls. The two associations of the term 'soul' are in the first place that of individuation, secondly, that of sensibility. Both are course, physiologically, and hence symbolically, intimately connected with the blood in the body. 'Soul' is that which results when the general spirit of life joins breath to a body. This is not meant for an affirmation of trichotomy; it is a practical distinction between spirit and soul not as two entities, substantially considered, but as

two aspects of the same thing. And in the same practical way soul and sensation, feeling, are associated. The question, therefore, is simply reduced to this: what makes the principle of individuation and of sensibility the proper instrument for expiation? It will be seen at a glance that the answer to this is found in the vicarious theory, and in it alone. That which is a substitute for another person must be an individual, and that which undergoes punishment for another must be capable of feeling, of suffering. Taking it together, then we may say, that the blood has its rich symbolism in sacrifice first, because it stands for death, secondly because it stands for the death of an individual, substitutionary person, and thirdly because it stands for a death involving suffering. All this is given in the slaying, but slaying or dying are abstract conceptions, that cannot be made subject to sight symbolically, whereas 'blood' and 'soul' and 'life' are concrete things."

To return to our correspondent's query, we may conclude that when God made Christ's soul an offering for sin this means a sacrificial, substitutionary death involving suffering. It includes not only the slaying of His human flesh ("This is my body, which is broken for you") but also, especially, the grievous suffering which He experienced in His consciousness. For all suffering, whether it be physical or mental or spiritual, is experienced only in consciousness.

— J. G. Vos

Note on Billy Graham:

I regret that with my statement in the last issue of this Question Box (Blue Banner Faith and Life, July-September 1957, pages 133-4), concerning the disposition of inquirers who came forward at the Billy Graham evangelistic meetings in New York City, I did not mention my authorities. These, having very high rating for accurate reporting, and of wide and enormous circulation, are in part:

LIFE Magazine of May 27, 1957, page 25 (twelve days after the Graham meetings were in full swing), says: "Of the 2800 who came on the first four nights. . . 40% were new decisions. **As it always does the Graham team referred them all to local churches of their choice**" (emphasis mine).

TIME Magazine of May 6, 1957, page 86, says (as to Graham's established policy in this matter): "In areas where Graham preaches, Catholics are generally advised by their priests not to attend. But numbers of those making 'decisions for Christ' turn out to be Roman Catholics (**whose pledge cards are duly passed along to Catholic churches**)" (emphasis mine).

TIME Magazine of May 27, 1957, pages 46-48, tells of Billy Graham's "invitation." Those who come forward are directed to the Inquiry Room where "counselors" "fill out a card with particulars of the inquirer's religious background to be

forwarded to an appropriate minister" (emphasis mine). Remember that Billy Graham and his staff were acting under the sponsorship of the Protestant Council of New York, which notoriously is dominated by modern Liberals.

I add a quotation from a published letter by the Hon. James E. Bennett, a prominent Christian attorney of New York, dated February 4, 1957, in reply to a letter to him by Gen. W. K. Harrison, a contributing editor of CHRISTIANITY TODAY, of which excerpts had been published in CHRISTIANITY TODAY, January 21, 1957, pertaining "to the controversy over modernist ministerial cooperation in the coming New York City campaign of Dr. Billy Graham." Mr. Bennett wrote, "The main points involved are that Billy Graham pro-

poses to follow his usual custom of telling the candidates for salvation that they should go to the church of their own choice, and he told me, personally, that this included synagogues, Catholic churches, and modern churches, as well as fundamental churches" (emphasis mine).

So far as I have knowledge, none of these reports have been denied or criticized by Billy Graham or his staff. But, if these and many corroborating reports of Billy Graham's compromises of the evangel of Jesus Christ with modernist religion are not true; if they were not permitted further in his New York campaign, I shall be very happy and thankful to God to so state it here and elsewhere.

— Frank D. Frazer

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 for books to the manager of this magazine.

PROTESTANT PREACHING IN LENT, by Harold J. Ockenga. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1957, pp. 285. \$3.95.

A series of 47 sermons by Dr. Ockenga, pastor of the historic Park Street Church of Boston, is presented in this volume. Though not complete as they were preached, they nevertheless have full thought content, and the applications have a direct touch with life. In a graphic manner the author has written these sermons and divided them into eight sections: The Dinner Parties of Jesus; Glorifying in the Cross; The Suffering Messiah; Questions Asked of Jesus; The Last Week; Jesus, Pray for Us; At the Cross of Christ; and Character Conflicts at Calvary.

In his many years of preaching and in the present volume, Dr. Ockenga has shown that preaching is still a power in evangelical Christianity.

— Reid W. Stewart

NINETY-FIVE BRIEF TALKS FOR VARIOUS OCCASIONS, by C. B. Eavey. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1956, pp. 103. \$2.00.

C. B. Eavey is a retired college professor, formerly on the faculty of Wheaton College. He is the author of numerous books, including **Principles of Teaching for Christian Teachers** and **Principles of Personality Building for Christian Parents**.

Ninety-five Brief Talks was not written for

the purpose of giving speech-makers ready-cut speeches and talks, but rather to stimulate the thinking of those who communicate by way of the platform or pulpit. Each "talk" included in this book is more like an essay or theme. The talks were not written to be given verbatim but as thoughts to stimulate other thoughts. "May the reading of the book lead less to acceptance of the thoughts presented therein than to the stimulation of the thinking reader."

The subjects included in the book cover many phases of the Christian life. Some of the talks are on the personal relationship with the Saviour and the benefits received from this personal union. For example, the following are a few of the subjects: "The Comforter," "Self-Control," "The Lord is Here," "God's Purchase."

The style is clear but forceful. The author does not waste space with large, involved and oft-times misunderstood words, but clearly and tersely presents the truth and the heart of his message. In many of the talks the author begins by quoting a passage of Scripture and from there develops his theme.

Doctrinally, C. B. Eavey sets forth the historic apostolic concept of Christianity. This work is evidence that Mr. Eavey has not been swayed by the modernism of today but holds and proclaims the sound, time-proven truth of the Gospel.

This book would be well received in the library of any Christian leader, layman or minister. In the Preface, Mr. Eavey states that "The book,

if properly written, should be helpful to general readers as well as to ministers and other persons who are called upon to present their thoughts to their fellowmen."

— Marion L. McFarland

BIBLE DOCTRINE, UNIT TWO, BOOK ONE. Committee on Christian Education of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Room 728 Schaff Bldg., 1505 Race St., Philadelphia 2, Pa. 1957. Pupil's Workbook, pp. 214, paper cover, plastic binding, \$1.50. Supplementary Answer Book, pp. 16, paper cover, 35 cents.

This workbook is paper covered with a spiral binding. This type of binding is convenient in that it allows the book to lie flat when opened at any page. This particular unit is a study of the Westminster Shorter Catechism questions No. 39 through No. 87. These questions are grouped into 15 lessons with more than one question included in each lesson. The questions are grouped according to the subject matter, and the lesson for each particular group is titled according to the questions. For example, Lesson 6 is entitled "A Day for God," and includes Questions 47-62.

At the beginning of each lesson, the Catechism questions and answers which are included in that lesson are fully quoted, followed by a short story leading into the points of the lesson. Lesson 6, for example, is introduced with a story of a boy who wanted to play baseball on Sabbath but his mother pointed out that God gave six days in which to play and the Sabbath was to be set apart as a day of rest in memory of Christ's day of rest — the resurrection. Following the story is the first question which the lesson discusses. I. Is the Sabbath for Christians? Under this point there are questions to answer and blanks to be filled in by the pupil. The remaining four points of Lesson 6 are: II. What Day is to be Kept as the Sabbath? III. What is the Purpose of the Sabbath? IV. Jesus, our Example in Sabbath Keeping. V. Activities for the Sabbath.

The style or form is largely in outline and questions and answers, completion and matching. The proven principles of good pedagogy are followed but not rigorously. There are a number of drawings and photographs which greatly aid in presenting and illustrating each lesson. As a whole the workbook is attractive, easy to read and understand. The print is large which avoids the discouragement evidenced by teenagers when confronted by small print.

The workbook is based on sound Scriptural teachings and doctrines, and contains nothing which would be offensive to any sincere seeker of divine truth. The workbook does not stress doctrine as doctrine, but emphasizes the practical application of divine truth to the life of the child of God. The doctrines taught are taught in relation to the life of the believer and not as abstractions without any significant connection to spiritual growth.

The workbook is called a workbook for the Junior High pupil. The Junior High student can certainly gain a much deeper understanding of God and the Scripture from this study, but I feel that High School and College students would also learn much from this workbook, if the title would not prove to be a source of embarrassment or a stumblingblock to the latter group.

— Marion L. McFarland

THE FREE OFFER OF THE GOSPEL, by John Murray and Ned B. Stonehouse. Committee on Christian Education of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Room 728, Schaff Bldg., 1505 Race St., Philadelphia 2, Pa. 1955, pp. 27, pocket size, paper cover. 25 cents.

Reformed theology has always spoken of a limited atonement. The atoning death of Christ is efficacious only in reference to those whom God has chosen unto salvation. In view of the limited character of the atonement, is it possible to speak of a universal offer of the gospel? Does God seriously offer salvation to those He does not intend to save? Can there be in the preaching of the gospel a genuine offer of salvation to the reprobate?

The conclusion might be reached that a limited atonement precludes an unlimited offer of salvation. It might be supposed that the gospel offer as well as the atonement is limited by the divine decree of election. However, the gospel itself places no such stricture on its offer of salvation. The gospel presents a serious, well-meant, genuine offer of saving grace to both elect and reprobate sinners. In connection with this fact it may also be said that God *desires* the salvation of all men, the reprobate as well as the elect. Such is the main contention of this booklet by Professors Murray and Stonehouse of Westminster Theological Seminary.

The theological problem involved in the free offer is a difficult one, especially for the Reformed theologian who emphasizes the sovereign character of divine grace. In order to deal decisively with this problem we must bear in mind the distinction between the secret will and the revealed will of God. God's secret will includes His decree of election and reprobation, while his command that all men everywhere should repent and believe on the Saviour is revealed in the gospel. Thus, God's will includes both a decretive and a preceptive aspect, the one secret and the other revealed. However, God's decree and his precept are not two contradictory or independent wills, but rather the one incomprehensible will of God is exhibited to us in two ways, as Calvin explains.

Since the divine will is manifold in its content and manifestation, it cannot be simply said that God does not will the salvation of those whom He sovereignly decreed to pass by with the insuperable activity of His saving grace. It is the

Father's good pleasure to impart His grace efficaciously to those whom He has given the Son. But it is the Father's good pleasure that His grace be freely offered to all men. According to God's decretive will God wills to pass by some with the gift of salvation, and yet His revealed will in the gospel offer is that He wills that these sinners be saved.

This vexing problem is handled in a most helpful way. The authors show their colors as able exegetes in dealing carefully with about a dozen passages which express an ardent desire on the part of God for the salvation of the impenitent and reprobate. These passages show that the doctrine of sovereign electing grace in no way precludes a genuine offer of salvation to all sinners in the preaching of the gospel. It is further shown that "in the free offer there is expressed not simply the bare preceptive will of God but the disposition of loving-kindness on the part of God pointing to the salvation to be gained through compliance with the overtures of gospel grace" (p. 4).

The study of this problem has values for both dogmatics and practical theology. Reports from England indicate that this booklet has stirred up a lively controversy there among conservatives. It has been feared that aid and encouragement have been given to Arminianism by this booklet. In America also the long standing debate on common grace, which comes to a focus in the question of the free offer, has been renewed by the appearance of this booklet. Some readers who hold Professors Murray and Stonehouse in high esteem as Reformed theologians believe that some of their statements border on the Arminian view of free grace. It is possible that some readers who are more or less unreformed in their thinking may draw Arminian inferences from certain statements found in this booklet. To be sure, one always runs the risk of being misconstrued when stating the truth. But there can be no justification for "erring on the safe side" when stating the truth, in order to prevent possible misconstructions, if in erring one must state less than the truth. No doubt those who have emphasized the sovereignty of divine grace exclusively while denying the free offer of divine grace have erred on the safe side, but we believe that they have erred seriously.

Free grace is sometimes virtually denied in an effort to avoid Arminianism. On the other hand free grace is often emphasized over against Hyper-Calvinism. These two points of view are like two rocky cliffs, between which the water is very deep. We can steer a safe course between them only if we are guided by Scripture all the way. Surely this is one of the deep things of God which is really incomprehensible to man. God's thoughts are not our thoughts, and when men attempt to bring God's thoughts within the range of their own understanding they must in the last analysis reduce God to the finite categories of human logic. The apparent dualism between electing

grace and a universal offer, insoluble to human reason, serves to remind us of the depth and richness of divine wisdom. This in turn elicits our praise and worship (cf. Rom. 11:33).

On the side of practical theology it can be said without fear of contradiction that the Reformed faith has always taken seriously the truth of the free offer of the gospel. And yet it is to the shame of some Reformed churches that they have not always been the most active in the evangelistic mission of the church. And so it must be affirmed once again that Calvinism's emphasis on the sovereignty of divine grace in predestination, when rightly understood, does not stifle evangelism but rather stimulates evangelism. We believe that a study of the implications of the "free offer" should be a real stimulus to true evangelism, and should also incline the church to take more seriously the Great Commission of her Lord.

— Joseph A. Hill

THE CHRISTIAN AND THE STATE, by H. M. Carson. The Tyndale Press, 39 Bedford Square, London, W.C. 1, England. 1957, pp. 48, paper cover. 1 s. 6d. Available in U.S.A. from The Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, 1444 North Astor, Chicago 10, Ill.

This is another of the FOUNDATIONS FOR FAITH series of the Tyndale Press. This series aims at providing clearly written statements on questions concerning the Christian life that arise at the late Secondary School level or at the early College or University stage.

This booklet is a fine and stimulating presentation of the relationship of the Christian to the state. Such a publication is most appropriate to our uncertain period of national and international politics. Surely Christians must have something to offer towards the way out of the world dilemma.

The chapter titles are: What is the State? The Duty of Prayer. The Duty of Obedience. The Limits of Obedience. The Christian and Politics. The Welfare State. Capital Punishment. War. Lessons from History.

With the main thesis and discussion we are quite in agreement and recommend the work as most useful. We especially commend the discussion on the authority of the State to enforce its will, both as to its responsibility to do so and as to its limitations. Caesar's authority ends where it counters Christ's command. We have known Christians who insisted that Caesar's command is to be obeyed even if it is contrary to God's. Mr. Carson well refutes this error. We likewise commend the voice raised in support of capital punishment on Biblical grounds. All too little has been said on this subject during the parliamentary debate in Britain.

The chapter on War is weak. It completely fails to help clarify issues so that an inquirer

could come to a reasoned conclusion. The claims of pacifists are given with apparent disapproval, but nothing positive on the other side is suggested. The discussion on the Christian's participation in politics is also weak. The author rightly regards as untenable the position held by some that political life is a worldly one not befitting the believer. He also rightly disproves the claim that a Christian may vote but may not hold office. However he has not examined the question whether both may involve an allegiance which is counter to the claims of Christ, such as our Covenanter brethren in the British Isles hold to be the case, and we in the U.S.A. also.

This booklet will stimulate positive thinking.

— E. Clark Copeland

THE TEACHER OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IN THE QUMRAN TEXTS, by F. F. Bruce. The Tyndale Press, 39 Bedford Square, London, W.C. 1, England. 1957, pp. 36, paper cover. 2s.

The Dead Sea Scrolls have been drawing considerable attention from all quarters as throwing light on a period of history heretofore somewhat dark. Professor Bruce is one of those best qualified to speak on these documents. In this monograph he discusses the identity of three characters in these documents, the "Teacher of Righteousness," the "Man of Falsehood," and the "Wicked Priest." These names indicate the effort on the part of the Essenes of the Inter-Testamentary period to identify their history with prophetic eschatology.

The "Teacher" was the apparent leader, possibly the founder, of the group of politico-religious zealots whom the "Wicked Priest" and the "Man of Falsehood" sought to overthrow. Comparisons are made with Christianity, but it is shown that there is clearly nothing in common between the two. Professor Bruce is very conservative in his conclusions as to identity.

This is an interesting study, especially to historians concerned with this period of history. It is surely a valuable work for those who want to keep abreast of archaeological developments and their significance for the Christian Faith.

— E. Clark Copeland

GOD BECAME MAN, by A. M. Stibbs. The Tyndale Press, 39 Bedford Square, London, W.C. 1, England. 1957, pp. 36, paper cover, 1 s. 6 d.

"The distinctive truth of Christianity concerns the person and work of Jesus Christ" (Introduction). Any clear statement of these fundamental truths is, therefore, a most welcome preaching of the Gospel. The sub-title of the paper is "Some Consideration of the Questions How? and Why?"

This booklet is the clearest statement of the

facts and meaning of Christ's "two distinct natures and one person" this reviewer has ever come across. In it Professor Stibbs, who is always enlightening, refreshing, and practical, is at his best. The discussion is scholarly, yet plain and very understandable.

The paper begins by a consideration of some particular dangers of some of the modern scholarly theories which are often treated as if they were established facts. After examining some of the philosophical speculations on how and why God became man, the Scriptural teaching is positively set forth.

This is most heartily recommended as a helpful work on a difficult subject. Pastors would do well to make copies available to their congregations. The booklet is obtainable in America from the Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, 1444 North Astor, Chicago 10, Illinois.

— E. Clark Copeland

CHRISTIAN FAITH AND THE FREEDOM OF SCIENCE, by R. Hooykaas. The Tyndale Press, 39 Bedford Square, London, W.C. 1, England. (Published for the Research Scientists' Christian Fellowship). 1957, pp. 24, paper cover. 2 s. 6 d.

Dr. Hooykaas is Professor of the History of Science at the Free University of Amsterdam, and he writes from the point of view of a true Reformed theologian. He gives us a most enlightening discussion of the meaning of the freedom of science and the conditions essential to it. His thesis is that "the inner freedom necessary to scientific work is fully **guaranteed** by a biblical religion" (p. 9). By tracing briefly the historical development of scientific thought, Professor Hooykaas demonstrates that "even under conditions of outward liberty there is no inner liberty for those who cling to human authority, whether it be the authority of other people or the authority of human reason" (p. 8). He goes on to say that the rationalist certainly does not possess inner freedom because he is obliged to distort reality in order to fit it in with his "reason," forgetting that the idea of "rationality" changes with time.

Professor Hooykaas defines freedom (which he says is not license) as "a being bound to God." He quotes R. Cotes' statement in his preface to the second edition of Newton's *PRINCIPIA*, "that this world could arise from nothing but the perfectly free will of God" (p. 21). The observation of "natural phenomena therefore draw us, against our wills, to principles which witness to God's dominion" (p. 22). After quoting (note the order) John 8:32,30; 2 Cor 3:17 and Psalm 36:9, he concludes: "From these questions it is evident that Truth in the biblical sense is not an abstract truth, but a Person, Christ or the Spirit of Christ. So, taking into account both kinds of truth, we could perhaps better say that to the Puritans it was Truth which led to the freedom necessary to

find truth. We cannot be radically free until, tired and exhausted from the vain search after truth, we have stretched out our arms to the Liberator" (p. 23).

This is a very valuable work to put into the hands of our young people, constantly confronted as they are with this problem in our public schools and colleges. It is a qualified scientist's reply to the claims of human autonomy. How about putting copies in your school and public libraries? (In U. S. A. address The Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, 1444 North Astor, Chicago 10, Illinois).

— E. Clark Copeland

SCRIPTURE AND MYTH, by P. E. Hughes. The Tyndale Press, 39 Bedford Square, London, W.C. 1, England. 1956, pp. 30, paper cover. 1 s. 6 d. In U.S.A.: The Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, 1444 North Astor, Chicago 10, Ill.

The sub-title of this monograph is: An Examination of Rudolph Bultmann's Plea for Demythologization (of the New Testament).

In a few words, Bultmann's plea is that all myth (miraculous or supernormal elements) must be shorn from the Gospel so that only the irreducible essence of truth with which modern man must be confronted remains. This removing the deity, virgin birth, substitutionary death, resurrection and ascension of Christ, the Trinity, spirits, original sin, death as penalty for sin, etc. It would proclaim an act of God by which He forgives sin through the death of a mere mortal individual by which He demonstrated how all men could be saved. Man may identify himself with Christ in His death and resurrection in this life only, for death is a natural certainty and resurrection an impossibility. It is "therefore a faith without a hope" (p. 12).

Dr. Hughes clearly defines the crucial tenets of Bultmann's theory and very ably analyzes them, exposing their inconsistency and instability. The criterion of myth is what is not acceptable to his own "modern scientific mind" and he forgets that science that is "modern" today will be outmoded tomorrow. Strangely enough, Bultmann has not called in question the being of God, though he has rejected His authority. The last two sections of the treatise are an excellent apology on the necessary submission of human reason to the revealed will of God.

A very valuable service is being done by the Graduate Fellowship in Great Britain through conducting these summer lectures and printing them. The topics are all of vital importance to the Church of Christ and are very ably handled.

— E. Clark Copeland

DIPSYCHOS, A CASE-HISTORY OF SPIRITUAL ILL-HEALTH, by the Christian Medical

Fellowship (England). The Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 39 Bedford Square, London, W.C. 1, England. 1957, pp. 23, pocket size, paper cover. 3 d.

The title is a Greek word meaning "two souled" or a person with two personalities. It is the confession of a youth who went through university, at first possessing some religious zeal and participating in spiritual activities, later involved in a heavy schedule, keeping up only the routine of religious activities, and finally falling into complete neglect, even disillusionment about the reality of God and religious experience. God at last drew him to Himself. The story is simply told with a realism that is a sharp warning to any in the same position, and to parents and church leaders to do all in their power to see that youth have a foundation of personal experience in Christ before being cast into the world. A worthwhile tract.

— E. Clark Copeland

HOLD THE FAITH: AN INTRODUCTORY BIBLE STUDY COURSE, BOOK TWO. The Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 39 Bedford Square, London, W.C. 1, England. 1957, pp. 71, paper cover. 1 s. 6 d.

This booklet is designed to follow Book One (see review in *Blue Banner Faith and Life*, October-December 1955, p. 194). It is a six months' course of daily readings expected to require 20 minutes if the answers to the thought questions are written down in a note book. It is pointed out in the introduction that writing down the answers is more effective than just passing over the questions in one's mind. There are two questions daily, aimed at getting the facts and applying them practically.

The portions covered in order are John's Gospel, I Samuel, Galatians, Ephesians, James, I John, Isaiah 40-66, I and II Timothy, I and II Thessalonians, and selections from the Psalms.

To follow this there is a three year course covering the whole of the Bible in a more detailed study.

These studies are not of the type which become a crutch impossible to throw off. They are designed for the new Christian, but would be a fine stimulus to the older Christian, giving him possibly a new approach to God's revelation of Himself.

— E. Clark Copeland

CHRIST'S KINGDOM AND COMING, by Jesse Wilson Hodges. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1957, pp. 247. \$3.00.

This work is really, what its sub-title states, "An Analysis of Dispensationalism." Different critics of this modern interpretation of Scripture naturally follow their own method, and while one might wish that Dr. Hodges had condensed

some parts of his book and expanded others, there can be no doubt as to his painstaking approach. Since 1926 this distinguished Baptist teacher has studied Dispensationalism, and his bibliography alone indicates his familiarity with the field. Throughout the book, the main Dispensational leaders are constantly and effectively quoted.

There are a few statements which we cannot accept, and the grouping of "covenantal and federal theology" with false cults — e.g., Adventism and Mormonism — on p. 51 is greatly to be deplored. On p. 46 Dr. Hodges clearly rejects covenant theology. While this is not surprising, it must be noted that there is a consequent weakness in his otherwise excellent refutation of Dispensationalism. It is significant that he makes no reference to the Church in the Old Testament (although he does mention Old Testament saints), a fine counter-argument to certain dispensational theories. On p. 60 he declares his belief in the "trinitarian nature both of God and man"! In pages 49-51 we find an unfair grouping of Dispensationalism with false cults, and while Dispensationalism as such is clearly heretical in that it removes, in the minds of men, the Cross from its place of centrality in Scripture and in the saving purpose of God, it does not follow that its adherents are to be grouped with men like Charles T. Russell and Josiah Smith!

But these criticisms do not detract from the value of the work as a useful handbook on Dispensationalism. The author completely shatters the scheme of men like Scofield, Blackstone, Ironside, Larkin, Gaebelein and Chafer. In refuting the idea of seven distinct periods of time, termed dispensations, Dr. Hodges really demolishes Dispensationalism — that one chapter (p. 60) is in itself a sufficient reason for rejecting the whole intricate dispensational scheme. The seven dispensations are purely fictional.

Dr. Hodges states the amillennial position quite clearly, although his examination of postmillennialism is too brief to be of much value. Keeping in mind the object of the book, we record its success, and wish it a wide circulation. In chapter 20, concerning the inter-relation of Church and Kingdom, Dr. Hodges does not seem so sure of himself; and when in the next chapter he describes the heavenly city of Rev. 21:14 as "the capital city of the kingdom of heaven" we are at a loss to grasp his meaning.

Misprints are few in number. At the beginning of the last paragraph on p. 181, there is an omission of a word or words; the first name of Oswald T. Allis is mis-spelt Oswald (p. 43); Garbiel should be Gabriel (p. 111, sect. 5); and hypocrisy is mis-spelt in p. 142.

Premillennialists who are NOT dispensationalists will appreciate Dr. Hodges' fairness to their position — and on the whole his writing is both fair and sane. Dispensationalism is the "modernism" of much present-day Fundamentalism: it

violates practically every principle of exposition, handles and Scriptures in the arbitrary and irresponsible fashion, and robs Christians of some of the most precious truths concerning the Cross, the Church and the Last Things. We are grateful for this examination.

— Fred S. Leahy

AMERICAN CALVINISM: A SURVEY, edited by Jacob T. Hoogstra. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1957, pp. 137. \$2.50.

This book records the papers and most of the discussions of the Calvinistic Conference held in Grand Rapids, Michigan, June 20 and 21, 1956, sponsored by the Calvinistic Action Committee. As the title implies, the book presents a survey of contemporary American Calvinism. Following two brief devotional addresses by Professor H. H. Meeter (Calvin College) and the Rev. Imre Bertalan (Hungarian Reformed), there are six papers on the status of Calvinism and two on its prospects.

Professor John H. Gerstner (Pittsburgh-Kenia Theological Seminary) deals in a thorough manner with "American Calvinism until the Twentieth Century." This lecture is clear and well documented, providing an essential background to all that follows. Perhaps its outstanding feature is Gerstner's defence and clarification of Jonathan Edwards and his theology. This will repay careful study. Here we have what is really a history in miniature: it is essentially inclusive, well balanced and always lucid — a most useful paper to possess. It is greatly to be regretted that notes were not taken of the discussion following this particular paper.

"American Calvinism in the Twentieth Century" is ably outlined by Professor Paul Woolley (Westminster Seminary), and so two professors of Church History unite to present a valuable sketch and analysis. Woolley takes up the story where Gerstner leaves it down, and tells it equally well. His paper, and indeed the whole book, should be compared with Professor Clarence Bouma's brilliant lecture, "Calvinism in American Theology Today," which appeared exactly ten years ago in the book, "Calvinism in Times of Crisis," which reported the third American Calvinistic Conference. Professor Woolley's section on worship (p. 48) is very brief and his remarks on "variety of worship" (p. 59) will seem somewhat ambiguous to most Covenanters. His style is easily followed and his insights are always enriching.

Ecclesiastical surveys of the Northeastern, Southern and Midwestern regions are well presented by Professor Donald F. Tweedie (Gordon College and Divinity School), J. Moody McDilli (Pastor in the Presbyterian Church, U. S.) and Jerome De Yong (Pastor in the Reformed Church in America), respectively. J. Moody McDilli's survey is particularly valuable. It is evident from these reports that Barth and Brunner have

stimulated discussion and in some cases won disciples. There is much "middle-of-the-road Calvinism," and some are now defending this modified form. Indeed the various types can be detected in the papers before us — as was obviously intended.

Jacob T. Hoogstra (Pastor in the Christian Reformed Church) provides a thought-provoking study on the prospects of Calvinism. Dealing with international Calvinism, he indicates the true ecumenicity. He has a good case for the Calvinistic Action Committee and the International Association of Reformed Faith and Action. His history and evaluation of ecumenical trends are of great service. In view of his comments one cannot help wishing that those Calvinists who, in their well-meaning zeal, have committed themselves to ecumenical projects which are intended to witness against the organized "liberalism" of our day, but which are not fully Reformed, would reconsider their position and return with penitent humility to a purely Reformed basis for action. The tendency of such men to speak of "essential truths" is surely dangerous in any Calvinist — for Truth is one, and can we ever dispense with part of it? Are we to yield so much as a hair's breadth of the Truth in order to organize an opposition to current errors? Is a second-best witness ever justifiable?

It is encouraging when Hoogstra refers to the new French translation of Calvin's *Institutes*, but one wonders if he is wise in stating that "books will have to be sent into the country of Spain clandestinely in spite of stringent police measures to clamp down on the importation of religious literature."

The contribution of Professor Jaarsma (Calvin College) on "The Prospects of Calvinism with reference to Education," although described by Professor Woolley as "a most helpful paper," and no doubt able, is disappointing in its style, but the thoughts are good. Cornelius Jaarsma is an experienced educator.

The final chapter, "Prospects of Calvinism — Theology," by Professor Eugene M. Osterhaven (sometimes spelt Oosterhaven in this book) is a brilliant analysis of the subject, and would provide an excellent basis for group discussion. This reviewer only regrets the expression "Roman Catholic Christianity" on page 126. Paradoxical as it may seem, Romanism is at once the antithesis and the counterfeit of Calvinism.

The various discussions at the conference are helpful; the conferees being, in addition to the above-named: A. H. Freundt (Belhaven College), Bernard S. Didier (Pastor, Presbyterian U.S.A.), Professor Herman Ridderbos (Kampen, Netherlands), and S. Bruce Willson (uniformly mis-spelt Wilson in this book, Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh). Mr. Hoogstra has edited the book well, and misprints are few in number and not of a serious nature. "Heges" on p. 136 is probably meant to be Hegel.

A photograph of the conferees enhances an already attractive volume. We welcome this fine publication which should interest Calvinists everywhere.

— Fred S. Leahy

An Urgent Plea to Book Reviewers

Those who have accepted books for review and promised to review them but have not done so, and have already had the books in their possession for longer than one year, are urgently requested to send in a brief (one paragraph) notice about each book by November 15, 1957, which is the deadline for our January-March 1958 issue. The backlog of unreviewed books should be cleared as soon as possible. We have a moral obligation to the publishers who have supplied free copies of books for review purposes. Some of

these books have been in the hands of reviewers for over three years with no review published. A considerable number have been in the hands of reviewers for more than one year.

We wish to express hearty thanks to all who have reviewed books for *Blue Banner Faith and Life* in the past. Your efforts have helped to make the magazine a success. We hope for continued help along the same line in the future. — Ed.

"We promise and swear, by the GREAT NAME OF THE LORD OUR GOD, to continue in the profession and obedience of the aforesaid religion; and that we shall defend the same, and resist all

these contrary errors and corruptions, according to our vocation, and to the uttermost of that power that God hath put in our hands, all the days of our life." — The National Covenant of Scotland, 1638.

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