
BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

J. G. VOS, Editor and Manager

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**All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned
every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on
Him the iniquity of us all.**

Isaiah 53:6

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 Bible My Mother Gave Me

From a very Old Scrapbook

Give me that grand old Volume, the gift of a
mother's love,

Tho' the spirit that first taught me has winged its
flight above.

Yet, with no legacy but this, she has left me
wealth untold,

Yea, mightier than earth's riches, or the wealth of
Ophir's gold.

When a child, I've kneeled beside her, in our dear
old cottage home,

And listened to her reading from that prized and
cherished tome.

As with low and gentle cadence, and a meek and
reverent mien,

God's word fell from her trembling lips like a
presence felt and seen.

Solemn and sweet the counsels that spring from
its open page,

Written with all the fervor and zeal of the pro-
phet age;

Full of the inspiration of the holy bards who trod,

Caring not for the scoffer's scorn, if they gained a
soul to God.

Men who in mind were God-like, and have left on
its blazoned scroll

Food for all coming ages in its manna of the soul;

"Who, through long days of anguish, and nights
devoid of ease,"

Still wrote with the burning pen of faith its
higher mysteries.

I can list that good man yonder, in the gray church
by the brook,

Take up that marvelous tale of love, of the story
and the Book:

How through the twilight glimmer, from the earli-
est dawn of time,

It was handed down as an heirloom in almost
every clime.

How through strong persecution and the struggle
of evil days,

The precious light of the truth ne'er died, but
was fanned to a beacon blaze.

How in far-off lands, where the cypress bends o'er
the laurel bough,

It was hid like some precious treasure, and they
bled for its truth, as now.

He tells how there stood around it a phalanx none
could break,

Though steel and fire and lash swept on, and the
cruel wave lapt the stake;

How dungeon doors and prison bars had never
damped the flame,

But raised up converts to the creed whence Chris-
tian comfort came.

That housed in caves and caverns — how it stirs
our Scottish blood!

The Covenanters, sword in hand, poured forth the
crimson flood;

And eloquent grows the preacher, as the Sabbath
sunshine falls

Thro' cobwebbed aisle and checkered pane, a halo
on the walls!

That still 'mid sore disaster, in the heat and strife
of doubt,

Some bear the Gospel oriflamme, and one by one
march out,

Till forth from heathen kingdoms and isles beyond
the sea,

The glorious tidings of the Book spreads Christ's
salvation free.

So I cling to my mother's Bible, in its torn and
tattered boards,

As one of the greatest gems of art and the king of
all other hoards,

As in life the true consoler, and in death ere the
Judgment Call,

The guide that will lead to the shining shore
where the Father waits for all.

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Sketches of the Covenanters

By J. C. McFeeters

Chapter XXIX.

The Battle of Rullion Green. — A. D. 1666.

A young Covenanter once stood on the battlefield of Rullion Green, pensively pondering over the battle and the heroes whose blood had watered this soil. Two centuries and more had fled since the engagement, yet the field appealed to the responsive heart with powerful eloquence. The beautiful slope, the verdent pasture, the grazing flocks, the broad valley, the distant hills, the expansive sky, the summer charm—all blended into a strange enchantment around the young man's soul. The quiet meditation quickened the heart; the heart aroused the imagination; the imagination revived the scenes of November 28, 1666, by which this field was made memorable in the struggle of the Covenanters for civil and religious liberty. He was deeply impressed with the value of the Covenant, which was sealed with the blood of the noble warriors who sleep on this hillside. There he vowed, that if God would ever give him a home of his own, the home would be called RULLION GREEN. God gave him a home; a beautiful residence, adorned with this name, graces the city of Airdrie to-day.

The battle of Rullion Green had its cause many days previous to the actual engagement. We will get the better view by following the chain of events.

Four years before, to the very month, four hundred ministers has been expelled from their churches, because they would not forsake their Covenant, renounce Presbyterianism, and follow the instructions of King Charles and his Council, in the administration of God's house.

The Covenanted people, deeply in sympathy with their ministers, refused to wait on the preaching of the curates — the ministers of the Episcopal Church sent by the authority of the king to supply the vacant pulpits.

A series of proclamations was then issued to bring the Covenanters into subjection, each proclamation being severer than the one preceding.

The people were enjoined to attend their own parish church, warned against going to the conventicles, and threatened with fines, imprisonment, and exile for frequenting what the king termed "unwarrantable preaching."

To enforce the royal will and overawe the Covenanters, troops were stationed among the people and commissioned to plunder and kill the disobedient at will.

The sufferings of the Covenanters, at the hands of the soldiers, were indescribable. Their homes were invaded; their property was confiscated; their flocks and herds were driven off; their families were broken up; the aged and delicate, the women and children — all who would not yield to their demands endured personal violence. The country groaned and staggered under the cruelty authorized by King Charles, and practiced by his agents.

Conditions became desperate; the wise were driven mad; patience ceased to be a virtue; endurance was at the point of conflagration. Thousands had to flee and keep in hiding, to escape personal harm and even the shedding of their blood.

At this juncture of events, four young Covenanters, fleeing from place to place for safety, came to a dwelling, where they found four dragoons preparing to roast an old man on a gridiron, to extract information concerning his money. The sight shocked every noble feeling; their manhood was aroused, and their courage was greater than their prudence. They challenged the conduct of the soldiers, and were answered with drawn swords. The Covenanters came off best. They rescued the aged victim, disarmed the soldiers, and marched them off at the point of their own sabers. In the fight one of the Covenanters fired a pistol, wounding a dragoon. That was "the shot that echoes around the world," and re-echoes, till it resounded over the green valley of the Boyne, among the rocks of Bunker Hill, and along the banks of the Appomattox.

The Covenanters knew they had now precipitated a conflict, that would call armies into the field. The king's measures have hitherto been severe, but now the furnace will be heated seven fold. The Covenanters must now meet force with force, or be utterly crushed. They attempted to raise an army. Next morning, the four men were increased to ten, and a second encounter resulted in the capture of a detachment of the king's regulars, with one dead. The second day volunteers swelled the number to 250; the prospects were

growing bright. Another engagement resulted in the surrender of Sir James Turner, the local commander of the royal forces. Thus far the operations greatly encouraged the Covenanters: they now hoped to be able to redress their grievances, and compel the king to withdraw his army, thus bringing the horrors of those times to an end.

King Charles hastily prepared to meet the new conditions. He termed the uprising, "A formidable insurrection." He massed his troops to crush "the rebels." The Covenanters spent their time moving from one town to another to increase their forces. Colonel James Wallace, a brave officer of considerable military experience, was chosen commander. The recruits were not numerous. They were also without discipline, and inefficiently armed, carrying muskets, pistols, swords, pikes, scythes, pitchforks, and flails.

At Lanark they remained a day, renewing their Covenant and issuing a Public Declaration, stating that the object of their appeal to arms was the redress of their grievances. The next day they manoeuvred, coming in contact with detachments of the enemy. The weather was unfavorable; rain, snow, sleet, and wind united in drenching, chilling, and depressing the unsheltered and underfed men, and turning the roads, over which they marched, into deep mire. When the morning of the 28th arrived, the day of the battle, Colonel Wallace had only 900 men at his command.

The Covenanters were moving around the foot of the Pentland hills, a few miles from Edinburgh, when General Dalziel, with 3000 of the king's troops, emerged from a pass behind them, and offered battle. Wallace accepted the challenge. He formed his men for action on the hillside, having the advantage of the higher ground. The gentle slope extended down to the spot where Dalziel's war-horse was pawing the ground. The sun was sinking behind the hills. The day was cold and the country was covered with sleet.

Dalziel ordered an attack by his cavalry. The horsemen formed, each with blade in hand, and moved rapidly up the rising ground. Colonel Wallace immediately placed his mounted men in readiness to receive them. The space between the armies was about half a mile. The Covenanters grimly watched their approach. The waiting moments were burdened with awe, but the Covenanters knew how to turn awful moments into power. They carried the Psalms in their hearts. Some one began to sing. The Psalm was pensive and the tune solemn. All hearts were responsive; from 900 voices a wave of sacred music rolled up the mountain-side against the heavens. The very sentiment seemed to be the stirring of hearts, that were consciously entering a forlorn battle:

"O God, why hast Thou cast us off?

Is it for evermore?

Against Thy pasture-sheep why doth

Thine anger smoke so sore?"

They sang three stanzas. While the echoes were dying away, the brave Colonel ordered a charge. Adown the field his horsemen dashed. They struck the enemy with terrific force, broke their ranks, and hurled them back upon their own base.

Dalziel ordered another charge. The troops plunge forward to retrieve their lost honor. Over the blood-stained snow they gallop; nearer and nearer they approach the stern line awaiting them on the hillside. Wallace gives the word, and the Covenanters again strike the gleaming column with clash of swords, once more rolling it back upon itself in confusion.

A third time the cavalry charged up the hill, and a third time the Covenanters hurled them back. Dalziel at last moved his entire force forward, which, like a tidal wave, carried all before it. The Covenanters were swept from the field leaving 50 dead. The battle was lost, but not the cause. These heroes fought well. The defeat was certain, in their own minds, even before a shot was fired; but believing that the cause of liberty now demanded a sacrifice, they freely offered up themselves on the altar.

Rullion Green! How euphonic the name! What music in the words! What clustering memories to awaken all that is heroic and ennobling in our hearts! Do we appreciate the fruits of the fields, fertilized with the blood of the fathers? Are we loyal as they were to the Covenants? Do our lives arise into the heroic spirit, and take on the moral grandeur exhibited by them.?

Points for the Class

1. What led to the battle of Rullion Green?
2. Who commanded on each side?
3. What was the respective strength of the forces?
4. Where was the engagement fought?
5. Describe the battle. How did it issue?
6. For what were the Covenanters contending?
7. What fruits of their sufferings do we now enjoy?

(To be continued)

The Intolerance of the Christian Witness

Toleration is generally regarded as the hallmark of a mature and fully developed civilization, the distinguishing feature of a culture that is both broad and deep. Christianity is, therefore, regarded as, per excellence, the religion of toleration, and any section of the professing Church that shows the slightest sign of intolerance, or that protests against practices and beliefs that seem to it inconsistent with a Christian profession, is regarded as having thereby put itself outside the pale. Frequently the Free Church, and still more frequently its organ, **The Monthly Record**, are constrained to raise a witness against disloyalty to the truth on the part of those who pay it lip homage, and to expose practices that undermine the purity enjoined upon the Church of Christ in its worship and discipline. In consequence both are treated with suspicion, and at times with open hostility by those who profess to cherish a like precious faith. This is done in the name of the tolerance that is supposed to be the mark of genuine Christianity, and, above all, in the name of the positive witness which is supposed to comprise the whole duty of the Church of God in the world. It is well, then, to examine these positions and find out if they ring true to the New Testament witness and to the practice of the Apostolic Church.

I

Let us, first of all, investigate the claim that Christianity is supremely the religion of tolerance and that the civilization built upon it must be marked by a broad toleration in thought and life. With the New Testament open before us, it is very difficult to recognize this spirit of toleration in Jesus Christ. On the contrary, it could be claimed that Christianity, judged on the human level, owed much of its potency and dynamic to its implacable intolerance. When it first entered the easy, indulgent rotten world of its day, with its multitude of religions that suited every taste and indulged every vice, it came as a challenge to all the accepted values and standards of life and at once opened relentless war on all that would not measure up to God's full demand upon the mind, the heart, the soul, and the life of man. In this it thought it was truly interpreting the mind of its Lord, who declared that He came not to give peace but a sword. This intolerance was applied in the realm of conduct to distinguish between what was animated by the Spirit of Christ and what was governed by the spirit of the world; in the realm of thought to pose the two great opposites of truth and error; in the realm of loyalties to deal with the ultimates of love and hate, of acceptance and rejection, of fidelity and compromise. Thus the Church of Christ in its first impact on the world owed not a little of its vitality and its transforming power to its open and unrelenting intolerance of all that was not in accord with the mind of

Christ, and its insistence that the whole empire of mind and heart and life be brought under the sovereignty of the Divine Lord. We cannot see that its vocation can have changed, or that its vitality and strength can derive from any other attitude to the world than that of a stern refusal to be "called the son of Pharaoh's daughter." If this be so, must we not recapture and reassert the intolerant note in the mission and message of the Church in order to present God's challenge to the unrighteousness and ungodliness of men?

II

In this context of toleration we are frequently told that, in the interests of harmony and peace, we must put dogmatism aside, cease to insist on denominational distinctions and recognise the contribution that every branch of the professing Church is making to the discovery of truth. To insist on our own "insights" is inevitably to cause disharmony and division. Indeed, the placing of special emphasis on any distinctive doctrines of the faith is to be deprecated as tending to cleavage and disunity. Too precise a statement of belief is also to be discouraged as tending to bring to light underlying disharmonies that had better be submerged. In this respect theology has to answer for a great deal as the greatest divisive factor in the ecclesiastical life. If thinking deeply on the verities of the faith is to underline differences, it is better not to think at all! In this spirit of mutual tolerance a common Creed, a clear statement of belief to which all must subscribe, is emphatically ruled out. Christianity must be expressed in terms of its lowest common denominator with other religions, and an assortment of vague generalities, capable of a multitude of interpretations, is to do service for the basic faith of the Church. When one comes face to face with the tragic consequences of this indifferentism in matters of faith, one realises somewhat more clearly why Paul was so insistent on holding fast "the form of sound words," why he pledged his converts to fidelity to the precious deposit of truth he committed to them, why the Church was urged to "contend for the faith once for all delivered unto the saints." It was because its deposit of doctrinal truth constituted the foundation laid by prophets or apostles on which the Church of God was to be built. It was because this broad field of truth formed the soil out of which the Christian life was to derive its strength and substance. It was because "the truth as it is in Jesus" was to light the steps of his pilgrim people till the Eternal Day should break upon them. To diminish this deposit by one jot or tittle was to pilfer God's truth and prove unfaithful to the Divine trust. To carve and pare this body of doctrine was to do injury to the living body of Christ which is His Church. There was, therefore, good cause why

Paul should passionately urge his young disciple: "O, Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babbling."

III

It is in this spirit of toleration, too, that we are urged, most frequently by our fellow evangelicals, to cease protesting against situations inside and outside the Church and be content with proclaiming the Gospel. This is what is termed a positive witness. Now, while every Church must have a positive witness if it is to disclose to the world the truths for which it stands, we cannot for a moment agree that its responsibility to the truth ends there. We have the example of the Master Himself and of His Apostles in their exposure and denunciation of error side by side with the proclamation of positive truth. Only in this way can our hearers be instructed to distinguish between the false and the true. Failure to do this, due largely to a spurious charity and fear of division, has led in the past to spiritual disaster and to the very divisions that we tried to shun. We have in mind, to give but one example, a certain youth organisation that we have been in contact with in Scotland which has been in recent days practically split from top to bottom, so that the patient upbuilding of several generations seemed in danger of being overthrown. This had been brought about by the admission into its membership of those who were not, as it turned out, in full sympathy with its doctrinal position. It is very clear to us now that this situation came about by the policy over a number of years of presenting "a

positive witness" only, and ignoring doctrines that were silently and subtly sapping the foundations of faith. That this policy was adopted in the interests of harmony and tolerance there can be no doubt, but in the end it proved more disruptive than the faithful exposure of false doctrine would have been. And yet many of its long-distance friends would have the Free Church to-day adopt the same policy which could not fail to have, in the long run, the same disastrous results. If Apostles, in declaring the whole counsel of God, shunned not to expose and condemn "damnable heresies," no more must we if we are to inculcate to our members an intelligent and a vigilant faith that will stand in the day of testing.

Thus it is that Christian intolerance, which applies the will of God to every situation in life, produces the conditions under which true liberty thrives, and a mere licence is not confused with freedom. And if the will of God is to be asserted and His law applied to human government and human conduct, we must give heed to the apostolic injunction: "Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine." And this, by the will of God, we will continue to do.

Note: For the foregoing article we are indebted to **The Monthly Record of the Free Church of Scotland**. A false and unscriptural tolerance is one of the principal features of the inclusive type of religion which is becoming increasingly popular in America today. We believe the emphasis of this article may be needed in America even more than in Scotland. — Editor.

Vain Worship

By the Rev. W. R. McEwen, B.A.

There is an increasing emphasis in Protestant Churches on the observance of Lent, especially "Holy Week," as it is called, the regarding of "Good Friday" as a sacred day, and the celebrating of "Easter." Those who do not fall in line with such observances are regarded as odd, old-fashioned and out-of-step with the times, and may even be identified with those worldings who despise spiritual discipline and disregard the great facts of the Christian faith. Now, no one likes to be counted odd. Nor should we do anything to encourage the all-too-prevalent worldliness of these days.

So it may be asked, why should we not practise self-denial through Lent, and commemorate Christ's death on "Good Friday," and His resurrection on the following Sabbath? Surely it is well if people's eyes are turned to the Cross of Christ and the empty tomb? So some would argue. It is hard to stand up against the current of popular opinion — especially religious opinion. And cer-

tainly those celebrations are becoming more popular.

But we must determine everything by the Bible. Especially in regard to the worship of God we should ask, "What saith the Scriptures?" "To the Law and to the Testimony" should ever be our appeal. And the Bible is full of instruction regulative of our worship. This shows how particular God is in these matters and how He does not leave such to human devising — no matter how well-intentioned.

We also find in the Bible many situations parallel to the present. How they were met shows us how to meet similar situations today. Now the situation in Palestine, when Christ was on earth, was very similar to the religious situation today. There was great emphasis upon externalism in the worship of God. The Pharisees, in their professed zeal for the worship of God, not only observed every ordinance of the law punctiliously but add-

ed further regulations to it. Thus this movement, which had started off as a reform movement prompted by patriotic and religious zeal, had degenerated into a cold formalism, because human interpretations of and additions to Scripture were given equal authority to it. Accordingly they received the censure of the Saviour when He said: "Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition." (Mark 7:9.)

That is what has happened in history in the Christian Church. During the Middle Ages there were added to the primitive simplicity of the apostolic practices other customs and regulations. Perhaps they were well-meant at the time — to stimulate spiritual life, to add beauty to the worship of God, to discipline the daily life. But these became burdensome, and defeated every good object. For they detracted from the glory of God and the authority of His Word. With the multiplying of ceremonies spiritual life had reached a low ebb, when the Reformation called the people back to life and reality. One of the results of the Reformation was the ridding of the Church of a mass of externalism which was encouraging superstition, choking spiritual life and dishonouring God. Unfortunately, many practices, condemned and thrown out at the Reformation, are creeping back into Reformed Churches.

Surely the word of Christ is applicable to this situation: "Ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition." Let none object to our taking the word of Christ to the Pharisees and so applying it. We have the precedent of Jesus Christ Himself in this instance. In reproof of the Pharisees for their emphasis on externalism, He quoted the Word of God through Isaiah denouncing the externalism of his day. The Bible is not only historic but contemporaneous. Its principles apply to all ages where the same conditions obtain.

Let us note, then, its principles in regard to worship, and see how it reproves man-made worship as in effect the putting of the traditions and precepts of man before the doctrines and commandments of God.

I. IN THE ORDAINING OF DAYS

God has ordained one day in seven to be a holy Sabbath to Himself. From the creation, this day was set apart and sanctified. The command to observe it was embodied amid the spiritual and moral precepts of the Ten Commandments. Thus it was given Divine sanction, and breaches of it were severely punished. When Christ came, He claimed lordship over it, showing that it is of perpetual obligation.

After the resurrection on the first day of the week and His many appearances and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on that day, the apostles

and early Christians began to observe this day as the Sabbath. It is a seventh of time and complies with all the requirements of the fourth commandment as much as the last day of the week. This, then, is the commandment of God. There is one day set apart by God as sacred.

But men have added to the commandments of God. After a lapse of some years men began to commemorate the birth of Christ. As there was a pagan festival in December the Church conveniently arranged to celebrate Christ's birth at that time — perhaps to wean away the heathen converts from their pagan customs. It is doubtful if they succeeded, and today "Christmas" is "reverting to type." Apart from that, the observing of "Christmas" as a religious festival is based on the traditions of men, not on the commandment of God.

Another pagan festival was that of Astarte, the Assyrian goddess, who was regarded as the Queen of heaven. Jeremiah refers to the heathen custom of baking cakes in honour of the Queen of heaven — (Jer. 44: 19) no doubt the origin of the hotcross buns. This feast also celebrated the return of Spring, when plants burst into new life after the death of winter. So some Church leaders thought it would be a good idea to use this festival to commemorate the resurrection of Christ. They also associated with it the death of Christ. Thus we have "Good Friday" and "Easter," though it is very doubtful if Christ were crucified on a Friday.

But there is no Biblical authority for such celebrations. We are commanded to commemorate Christ's death, not by a day but by a feast — the Lord's Supper. And we should commemorate Christ's resurrection, not only once a year but once a week — on the Lord's Day. The observance of these special days as "most sacred" detracts from the sanctity of God's Holy Day. People are often more concerned about "Holy Week" than the holy day of each week.

But what is worse: it is setting aside the commandments of God for the traditions of men. As the Directory of Worship wisely states: "There is no day commanded in scripture to be kept holy under the gospel but the Lord's Day, which is the Christian Sabbath. Festival days, vulgarly called **Holy days**, having no warrant in the word of God, are not to be continued."

II. IN THE OFFERING OF PRAISE

Another very important part of worship is praise. God has commanded it. How many of the psalms call upon us to praise God. Not only so, but He has appointed the substance and ordained the manner of His people's praise. He has inspired by His Holy Spirit 150 psalms, and had them collected and arranged in a single book which He commanded His people to use. He has

also indicated that the acceptable way of worshipping Him in this more spiritual dispensation of the New Testament, is by the fruit of the lips. Indeed, that was the manner of praise in the Old Testament, apart from national celebrations and the symbolic worship of the temple. There were no instruments in the Synagogue worship, after which the worship of the New Testament Church was modelled.

For a long time the praise of the Church consisted of the singing of the psalms unaccompanied by instrumental music. But gradually, as the Church degenerated, hymns of human composition were substituted for the inspired psalms, and these were sung to the accompaniment of instruments, as services became more ornate and greater emphasis was placed upon externals. But at the Reformation Calvin restored the psalms in public worship by encouraging their translation into metre for singing. Instruments were also cast out of the Churches along with images, altars and incense, and something of the primitive simplicity was restored. In some churches, like the Lutheran and the Anglican, such a clean sweep was not made. But now instruments have come back into nearly every church, and most sing hymns. Most people do not think there is anything wrong with it. Yet it is an abandonment of the commandment of God for the traditions of men.

III. IN THE OBSERVANCE OF RITUAL

A certain amount of ritual seems necessary for the decent conducting of public worship. God has laid it down that everything should be done decently and in order. So there are certain forms which are to be observed. There are the singing of praise, the reading and preaching of the Word, public prayers, the offering and the benediction. These are essential parts of ordinary New Testament worship, as they were of the synagogue worship. Then there are the Christian sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which should be duly observed with deep solemnity and befitting dignity.

But there is an increasing tendency to exalt the sacraments at the expense of the preaching of the Word, which our Lord and Paul placed in the forefront. This tendency is seen in the new style of Church architecture which puts the pulpit to the side and places in the forefront what is called the "Holy Table." This is often an oblong box, which is more like an altar, and, indeed, is often called an altar. Sometimes it is "adorned" with a cross or a chalice, though the latter is not in use. Thus, symbolism is intruding more and more into the worship of God and drawing superstitious reverence towards itself.

Then, ministers are wearing special ecclesiastical costumes and practice distinctive postures. Some call these clothes vestments, which is the name for the robes of a priest. Some bow to the east and make the sign of the Cross. All this is a revival of Romanism — and, indeed, of paganism — in professedly Reformed churches. But it all flows from the practice of rejecting the commandment of God and substituting the tradition of men.

When once the principle is abandoned that the commandment of God is essential in the regulation of worship, and men begin to follow their own devices and the traditions of men, there is no limit to which they may not go. The only safe course is to submit ourselves unreservedly to God, remembering that He is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth, and remembering, too, that we are saved, not by outward forms and ceremonial observances, but by an inward work of grace wrought by the Spirit of God, enabling us to cast ourselves upon Jesus Christ as He is offered to us in all His simplicity in the Gospel.

Note: The foregoing article is reproduced from the May 15, 1957, issue of **Our Banner** (Australia). The author is a minister of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland who is serving in Australia. — Editor.

The Wondrous Birth

By the Rev. John C. Rankin

A few years before our A.D. 1 it came to pass as had been foretold, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." The mother of our Lord brought forth her first born son. We are indebted to Matthew and Luke for the account of how this virgin daughter of the tribe of Judah came to be with child. This was indeed a wondrous birth; most wonderful, because at the heart of the event was that wonder of all wonders — "God was in Christ." He who Himself had erected the stage stepped out upon it. The Architect and

Builder of the universe came down from above to dwell in it. The great Printer, who took out His bold type in the stars and His small type in the sand stepped out from behind His case of type. God Himself, in the person of the second person in Himself, came down from heaven into the world. It was all in the wisdom and power of the Almighty Maker of heaven and earth. It was in strict accord with His own eternal plan and purpose for the children of men. It was the supreme manifestation of His justice and love.

The birth of Jesus was linked with that of one of His kin who was to serve as the forerunner. John was sent to be the herald of the King, to prepare the way before Him. His birth as well as Jesus' partook of the supernatural. His parents, as those of Isaac long before, were past the time of parenthood.

Jesus' birth, however, was something "wholly other" in the annals of conception and birth. In this case a virgin conceived. Mary was found with child of the Holy Ghost. This miraculous conception was accomplished in her in an instant. And in that instant God the Son took to Himself the nature of His creature, man. God came to earth in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin. He Himself personally entered the world of His creation and embarked upon the stream of human life. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." God the eternal Son "became man, and so was, and continues to be, God and man, in two distinct natures, and one person, forever."

Various terms have been used to describe it. It was incarnation and it was advent. It was condescension and descent. It was entrance and it was presence. Except for the special mission on which He came, His coming must have been in glory. But as it was He laid aside the heavenly glory and entered the life of the world, as it were, a prince incognito. Thus He put Himself in immediate contact with His rebellious subjects, in a life of intimate relation and close association with them to the end of their redemption. Having at the outset taken to Himself a low estate, He retained it to the end of His days. Late in life He was heard to say "the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head."

We see His divine humility in the choice of His first abode here on earth. The place of His birth may have been nothing more than a cave in the side of a hill which was used as a shelter for livestock. It may not have been in use at the time. We are not told that there were cattle there. As a place of public housing, in that country and among that people, it is doubtful if it would seem as offensive as it would be to us today. At any rate, it was there, in such a place, that the Saviour entered upon His career here on earth.

Lowly as was His birth in every way, it was not unattended by marks of supreme distinction indicative of its real, though hidden, greatness. Besides the miraculous conception by which it came to be, there was angelic visitation, announcement and acclaim. "The angel of the Lord appeared unto him." "In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God." "And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them." "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host."

There were signs in heaven above and in the

earth beneath. "We have seen his star in the east," "and the glory of the Lord shone round about them." And there was inspired and enraptured utterance. "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel." "Blessed art thou among women." "My soul doth magnify the Lord." "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel."

There are certain things which may not be overlooked but must needs be considered in connection with the birth of Christ.

One of these is the moral and religious state of the world at the time. As for the Jews, their former faith had been transmuted into shallow formalism, a ritualistic works-religion. True piety had subsided to the point where those in possession of it were outnumbered many fold. The free spirit of the true believer, imbued with the life of God, was crushed under the burden of innumerable petty rules and regulations.

The religious leaders were blind guides. The rulers were moral monsters. Heathenism had taken over large sections and great numbers of the people in Jerusalem and elsewhere. The spiritual life of God's people was at an all-time low when Jesus came.

All evidences indicate that the heathen world, in and through and all around the Jewish people, had fallen into unprecedented depths of moral degradation and religious corruption. Satan's kingdom never flourished more. Witness the prevalence of stark demoniacal possession among the Jews themselves. Satan was apparently at the height of his power in his possession of the souls of men.

On the other hand we may not fail to observe the outburst of abounding joy in evidence at the Saviour's birth. Even the baby John leaped in his mother's womb for joy on the occasion of Mary's arrival at her cousin Elizabeth's home in Judea, whither she came for seclusion during the remaining months of her "expectancy." Elizabeth rejoiced and said: "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" And Mary said: "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." The angel said: "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy," and the angelic host uttered forth their praise to God. "The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them." Sometime later the wise men "rejoiced with exceeding great joy" when to them the star again appeared. All of which was purely and only the natural and

appropriate expression on the part of angels and believing men of their joy in the Lord and of the joy of the Lord in them.

Note: This is the second of a series of articles by Mr. Rankin. The third will appear, D.V., in our next issue. — Editor.

The Relevancy of the Reformed Faith to Social Righteousness

By the Rev. J. Renwick Patterson, D. D.

This article is a condensation of four studies I had the privilege of presenting at a Christian Worker's Conference. The subject was assigned. It is one that I would perhaps not have chosen had I been selecting it for myself. I am glad, however, that the assignment was made. It led me into an area of thought and into a field of study I might not have pursued had not the task been laid upon me.

The development of this theme is not at all an easy task. The statement of it implies that one should be able to state very clearly and precisely what are the supreme principles of the Reformed Faith. That involves something more than the mere repetition of the five well known tenets of Calvinism. There is a considerable difference of opinion among theologians as to what the supreme principles of the Reformed Faith really are. With a faith so profound and all-inclusive as is Calvinism, that the pointing out of its supreme principles is a quite difficult task and one in which those who have attempted to do so have come up with answers that are somewhat at variance is not to be wondered at. Yet if we are going to establish that the Reformed Faith has a relevancy to social righteousness in our day we will have to settle what we believe to be the supreme principles of the faith. It will then be ours to determine whether or not these principles are relevant to social righteousness in our time.

Not only is it our task to attempt to pin-point those principles of the Reformed Faith that are particularly relevant to social righteousness, but also we must attempt to so diagnose the ills of the world that we may be able to see the relevancy of these supreme principles to the specific needs of the world of our day.

It does not require a great amount of intelligence to be able to see that the world in which we live is in a tragic total situation. It is a world in which something is wrong — a world in which so much is wrong that many who study its ailments apart from the light of the Word of God find themselves arriving in the depths of despair and pessimism. Many of them become cynical. Nearly everyone agrees that the world is in a terrible mess. But the world's sickness is not easy of diagnosis. It is suffering from many complications, so that it is exceedingly difficult to pin-point

the ailments and to say specifically and exactly where the trouble lies. Yet definite diagnosis is necessary and specific medication must be prescribed and applied.

Realizing something of the difficulties of understanding, comprehending, diagnosing the disease and then of applying the necessary medication to a patient that is frequently most uncooperative, indifferent and often rebellious, the adherents of the Reformed Faith are kept from joining the company of cynics and descending with them into the valley of pessimism and despair by their belief that in the sovereignty of God is salvation found. The only specific for the disease of the world and of our society is found in the Word of God.

If the Reformed Faith ever had a relevancy for the needs of the world it has a special relevancy for today. Never before has the world faced the situation which confronts it now. Never before has man had within his grasp forces that can bring about total destruction — the very annihilation of civilization. In such a total tragic situation the Reformed Faith has a special relevancy.

I have before me as I write a number of publications. Everyone of them is well worth reading, and they all bear upon our subject. I am particularly indebted to a little booklet printed and distributed by the "Society of Reformed Publications", entitled, "Relevancy of the Pivotal Points of the Reformed Faith" by John E. Kuizenga. I am deeply indebted to this booklet for much of the development of this paper. I am also indebted to two other booklets — "The Sovereignty of God" by Professor John Murray, and "Christian Social Action in the United States" published by the Christian Labor Association. I wish also to mention three books that have been especially helpful: "Calvinism" by Abraham Kuyper, a book consisting of his six Stone Foundation lectures; "Common Grace" by Cornelius Van Til; and "God Centered Living" — a symposium by the Calvinistic Action Committee.

In the belief that the Reformed Faith is relevant — that it contains the only adequate specific for the ills of our civilization in this our day, I wish now to emphasize certain features of the Reformed Faith in support of its relevancy.

The Reformed Faith is relevant, first of all, because it is a religion. It is an orthodox religion. It is Christian, and nothing less than the Christian religion is adequate. It is the belief of your reader that we have in the Reformed Faith the most consistent and all-inclusive expression of Christianity to be found among the various forms of orthodoxy. It is a totalitarian religion. It has no sympathy with the secular, compartmentized view of life, the view that would relegate religion to one compartment of life and confine it there.

The Reformed Faith is a totalitarian religion, one that implies direct access to God, and that calls for total commitment. It involves the total surrender, the total dedication, the total consecration of all that one is, of all that one has, and of all that one hopes to be, in all of life's relationships, to the sovereign, triune God.

In this totalitarian religion, the Reformed Faith, God is not just an idea, not just a symbol, not just a poetic fancy, not just a means to an end, nor merely a first cause nor an unmoved mover. He is the living God. He is the Person Supreme to Whom our highest loyalty belongs. Our life with Him does not permit any loyalties except those that can be included in loyalty to Him. It is a loyalty that calls not merely for the subordination, but for the absolute repudiation of every claim that clashes with or conflicts in any way with the claims of Almighty God. The commitment called for is total, the surrender full and unconditional. That is the Calvinistic ideal. Calvin's own symbol of it is a hand outstretched in service, holding a burning heart. That is the pulse-beat of this faith that is so relevant to the needs of the world today.

This totalitarian aspect of the faith that is so supremely relevant today is something the free world lacks and something communism has in ugly caricature. The secret of communism is that it has succeeded, with all its ruthlessness, in arousing a sense of self-dedication, a sense of self-consecration to a cause, among its followers. And communistic youth has responded with a loyalty that is like loyalty to a religion. The godless, materialistic religion of communism, with all its treachery, has succeeded in striking a cord in the hearts of its youth, and they have responded with a loyalty that challenges the world. The secularized free world lacks this total dedication to a cause. The secularized free world isn't thinking in terms of self-sacrifice, it isn't thinking in terms of spending its self. It is thinking rather in terms of creature comfort, in terms of leisure, in terms of enjoyment of the way of life we have come so much to take for granted. The secularized free world does not have a loyalty like the loyalty to a religion. It is not total dedication to a cause that leads us to oppose communism. Rather, it is because we prefer smugness, a good time, an abundant life of self-indulgence. The only thing we really hate is to be uncomfortable, and so we have set as our goal the highest possible level of

creature comfort. But there is no dedication there. There is nothing on that level to rival the loyalty to a religious dedication such as is found in Russia.

The only adequate rival to a religion is a higher religion. Secularism, lacking the total dedication to a cause that is found in Communism is not adequately equipped to withstand communism. The western world is on the side of the weaker commitment and the lesser conviction. Something must be instilled into the democracies that is now lacking if they are to withstand the crises of our times.

The Reformed Faith is exceedingly relevant today because it has that which the democracies lack and which they so much need. It is a totalitarian religion dedicated to a cause, undergirded with conviction and commanding a loyalty which is the only possible rival to the total dedication and loyalty undergirding communism.

To become infiltrated with this totalitarian concept, this dedication to a sovereign God, is the only hope of western civilization. Youth demands a religion — something to live for — something to adventure for — if need be, something to die for. If we cannot present to them and exemplify to them such a religion in Christianity, then sooner or later godless Communism, or some other false religion will win their hearts. That so-called Christianity which rejects the Cross and consequently the challenge in the invitation, "If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me," Luke 9:23, has lost the element of total dedication, and it has nothing left to offer the democracies that is high enough to out-challenge communism. Little wonder is it that some modernistic leaders of contemporary Christianity have themselves developed a pink fringe and are drifting toward communism. The inevitable drift is there because they themselves are lacking the only kind of total commitment that can withstand the pull of the faith they see in a religion that is stronger than the faith they have in their own.

But the God-centered, Bible founded Reformed Faith can present to the youth of our democracies the kind of religion that gives them something to live for, to adventure for, and if need be, to die for. This is our hope, for it lifts our eyes above democracy, and, to quote Dr. Kuizenga, "unless and until democracy becomes a symbol of loyalty to something higher than democracy, democracy cannot endure." Until we get ready to die for God we shall never be ready to die for our neighbors nor even for our own highest life.

The Bible-centered God-exalting Reformed Faith presents and exemplifies such a Christianity. That is the first reason why I believe the Reformed Faith is relevant to Social Righteousness in our day.

A young Chinese Communist speaking to Dr.

Frank Price, a recent moderator of the Presbyterian Church U. S. and the last man of that Church to be run out of Red China, said, "Christianity can give the world a better social order than Marxism ever can; but you see, we Marxians believe in ours. We give our time. We live on a moderate income and give the rest for propagation purposes of Marxism. Until you Christians believe Christianity enough to live it, to sacrifice, to work for it, we Marxians are in the lead." He was speaking about this thing of total dedication. If the Communists are aware of this, it is high time Christians in America were aware of it. Having a faith sufficient for our day, let's declare it and live it.

This totalitarian religion about which we have been speaking has to do with far more than the individual. Likewise it has to do with far more than just the spiritual side of life. The fundamental concept of the Reformed Faith, as has already been indicated, is the sovereignty of God. The second reason why I believe the Reformed Faith to be relevant is because of that concept.

The all important question is whether God has to do with the whole of life or whether He is limited to a mere fraction of it. Is He relevant or is He irrelevant? Does God really count? And if He counts, is it only in a small sector of man's life — in his religious feelings and worship? In other areas of life is man autonomous? Does God have a voice in those areas of life that are defined as things not religious, or as things not spiritual? Does God have any relevancy in the physical, temporal and earthly areas of life? It is in these areas that social problems, national affairs and civil government belong. Does God have any relevancy here? The secular view of life is that God has nothing to do in these areas.

In the world in which we live two life systems are engaged in mortal combat. One is out to build a world of its own from the data of the natural man, and to construct man himself from the data of nature. The other is out to build a world honoring to God and to His Son, Jesus Christ — to build a life system devoted, for the glory of God, to saving the Christian heritage and to promoting the Cause of God on earth.

As Christians face the world with its problems, they must never assume that non-Christian thought has no contribution to make whatsoever toward their solution. But it is only Christian thought that can see the problems in their true perspective. Non-Christian thought views the problems as rising out of the horizontal or social relationships between individuals, groups and cultures. Christian thought sees that while the horizontal relationships have a bearing on these problems, that there is a vertical or spiritual relationship between man and God, and that things will never be right on the horizontal until the vertical relationship is right. We have our social problems primarily as the re-

sult of a disturbance in the vertical relationship. This disturbance consists of man's revolt against the authority of God, the entrance of sin into God's creation, and the resultant separation of man from God. The solution is the restoration of the vertical relationship.

Christians and non-Christians live in the same physical world. But the Christian's interpretation of that world is entirely different from the non-Christian's interpretation. By the very nature of things it is utterly impossible for the non-Christian to grasp the Christian world-view. It is impossible because that view calls for spiritual discernment. Jesus told Nicodemus that a man cannot "see", cannot grasp with the mind, cannot understand with the heart, cannot conceive of the nature or understand the meaning and purpose of the Kingdom of God unless he has experienced a new birth and been made a new creation in Jesus Christ. And that is something that calls for divine intervention.

But the Christian, the one who has experienced this Divine intervention and has been made a new creature, is in the unique position. He is able to see that which the non-Christian cannot see. He is able, in the light of the Word of God to structure it in his mind and to work toward it in his mind and to work it in his life. Moreover, he is in a position to make use of the common grace which God has bestowed upon all men to help him structure this Kingdom in human society to the glory of God.

The sovereignty of God applies not only to the way in which we are saved. It applies to our thinking on ultimate reality. The Reformed Faith calls for the God-centered look in our total world-view, our structure of the total field of human knowledge. The Christian, being redeemed by the grace of God and for which redemption he gives God all the glory, learns to view all things in the light of God's revelation. God enters his interpretation of every aspect of reality. In his construction of human society God enters every realm. In his cultural outreach, God becomes the first and the last.

In the sovereignty of God is found the only sure foundation for individuality with the rights of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." The individual belongs to God and to His purposes and only He has the right to use the individual as the means to serve His purpose. Without the sovereignty of God false absolutes arise and freedom is lost. The individual becomes a pawn.

When freedom is built on the wrong foundation the result is slavery. This happens because men without God do not know what to do with freedom except to enslave themselves. Without the sovereignty of God there is no basis left for freedom. If God is not sovereign then what basis is there for the state not being sovereign, and if there is no higher sovereignty than the state,

what is to prevent it from becoming absolute and dictatorial? Men of the Reformation overthrew tyranny and brought about the establishment of democracies moving toward education, religious liberty and decent living conditions for all men because they were building on the sovereignty of God in which they saw the charter of freedom. From this same God nations derive their being and governments derive their authority to preserve order, to suppress evil and punish the doers thereof within, and to resist aggression from without.

Having created the world and endowed it with all the scientific, social and industrial potentialities which are in the process of development, a world so rich in natural resources, a world in which so many forces operate in the realm of natural law, a world to be populated with intelligent beings capable of using those natural resources and of harnessing those natural laws, surely it must have been with the intent that man should search out and use those resources and laws in promoting the abundant life for man to the glory of God. That is both implicit and explicit in the command, "Replenish the earth and subdue it." Gen. 1:28. To subdue means to conquer and bring into subjection — to render submissive and usable. All of God's commands are purposeful. Man is to subdue the earth for a purpose. He is to develop and utilize for the good of man and the glory of God all that God has put within his reach to the fullest extent of his physical and intellectual capabilities.

To subdue the earth, develop these resources, harness these forces, educate man and cultivate his intellectual and creative powers, his questfulness, his imaginative potentials, his inventive genius, without corollarity to the sovereignty of God is to develop a monstrosity that will destroy the very beings who created it. There is no question but that man has made great strides in subduing the earth. Much of it has been witnessed in our day. But in doing so he has constructed a monster before which he quakes today in fear and anxiety. He has not kept God foremost in his thinking. All too often God has not entered his thinking at all.

As it is only under the sovereignty of God that the individual finds his right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, so it is under the sovereignty of God that a nation, a sovereign state, finds its rights. Aside from the sovereignty of God there is no ultimate reason why a wicked nation must fall. But if God is sovereign and just, then wicked nations have reason to tremble.

Without God, government becomes merely the voice of the strong, or the voice of whatever class is in power. But with God and under His sovereignty government becomes His agency for the promotion of harmony and justice. The more conscious a government is of its responsibility to God the more zealous it will be in seeking the abundant life for its people.

Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free". That holds for individuals and it holds for nations. The great fundamental of all truth is that God is sovereign. Man's worst difficulties begin when he denies this fundamental and assumes that he is free to do as he pleases. The only hope for our civilization in this atomic age is an awakening to the fact that God is, and that He, not man, has the last word. When men become bond servants of God, and as such, servants to all men, then is their freedom formed and preserved. Hence, the relevancy of the Reformed Faith to Social Righteousness, relevant because God is the ultimate of reality.

Another reason why I believe the Reformed Faith to be relevant to social righteousness is because of its concept of sin. We cannot have a proper understanding of the world situation unless we have a correct view of sin.

The Reformed Faith, with its Biblical view that sin had its origin in a primal fall, and that the resultant guilt and perversion is co-extensive with the race, rejects the inadequate, unrealistic, insane and impossible views of sin that man has formulated in his own speculative thinking. It holds that man is not fundamentally good, but that he is fundamentally evil. This view of sin is particularly relevant to the needs of our day when present attitudes toward the enormities of sin are exceedingly shallow. The Reformed Faith gives us the answer to why we have such a wicked world, and why such sinful people exist in it. But the resultant pessimism into which we are pressed because of our knowledge of man is transcended by optimism because of our knowledge of God.

We have only to consider what is happening in so many of our courts of justice today to see the lightness with which sin is regarded. The modern notion that criminals are mere unfortunates who have become confused in their thinking and got themselves out of social adjustment serves to encourage crime. The tendency is to regard them as not being responsible for their acts, but rather as the poor victims of circumstance and environment. Discipline in society as well as in the home and in church is almost a thing of the past.

But where the Reformed Faith is strong men know what sin is and they know what to do about it. The Word of God gives the magistrate the power of the sword for a purpose — in order to deal with vice and crime, with economic exploitation and moral debauchery of individuals and communities. It is needed in order to restore and preserve the right conception of law and in order to maintain the proper administration of it by the courts.

The Reformed or Calvinistic conception of sin is relevant, not only because it would restore the power of the sword within, but it would also restore the power of the sword without. And may I say right here that it is not war-mongering to

make such a statement. There is in the world today a sentimental love that is founded upon neither justice nor righteousness. It is a kind of love that destroys the capacity for stern and righteous indignation. Biblical love, on the other hand, preserves that capacity, and in a world of sin that capacity must be preserved. Certainly we must work for peace. The Reformed Faith bids us strive for it, but at the same time it recognizes that just wars may at any time be necessary. The Reformed Faith is therefore not radically pacifistic.

A conviction of sin is necessary if there is to be a conviction of righteousness and a conviction of judgment. Of the three convictions which the Holy Spirit by His coming brings to the world, the first mentioned is that of sin. Then follow the conviction of righteousness and of judgment. There can be no true conception of either righteousness or judgment if there is not a true conception of sin. "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." For a nation to be exalted it must know what righteousness is and practice it, and to know what righteousness is that it may practice it, it must know what sin is — what it is that brings "reproach to any people".

The Reformed Faith is relevant to social righteousness in our day because of its concept of sin. This conviction will send us out to work for social reform, to labor for the raising of the moral standards of our society, and to seek the promotion of justice on the basis of high conviction in conformity with the revealed will of God, rather than, as is so often the case, upon pragmatic experimentation, prudence, expediency or compromise. The Reformed conviction of sin will keep us working constantly for a new social order, founded upon and exalting truth and righteousness, but this same conviction will prevent us from illusions in expecting the impossible. Since sin will always be present in time, Utopias will therefore never be attained. However, as the individual is ever to strive for perfection in his own life because our "Father in heaven is perfect", so our faith directs us to labor to bring society to perfection, to conformity with the kingdom of God, a goal impossible of attainment in this world, yet one toward which we are duty bound to strive.

In further support of the relevancy of the Reformed Faith to Social Righteousness I wish now to consider briefly the subject of "grace". And since we are dealing with the relevancy of the Reformed Faith to Social Righteousness rather than the relevancy of the Reformed Faith to Redemption, our particular interest at this point will be "common" rather than "special" grace. I may say that in dealing with this subject it is not my intention to enter into the controversy over this subject that has arisen among Dutch theologians or among those of Dutch descent.

I may say that I adhere to the traditional view of the doctrine defended by Abraham Kuyper.

The Bible declares that there is a law written on every man's heart. All men have a sense of right and wrong. This law on the heart is a gift of God, something He has bestowed upon all men. But why should all men have been thus endowed? To what purpose was this gift bestowed? It appears to me that Kuyper has handled these questions exceedingly well.

In the mind of Kuyper common grace has both a negative and a positive aspect. It has a restraining aspect and a promoting aspect. In his view, the essence of common grace in its negative aspect, is God's restraint upon the process of the sinful development of history. It is common grace that keeps the totally depraved from being totally wicked. It is common grace that prevents this world from being the most wicked of all possible wicked worlds. The essence of common grace in its positive aspect, as conceived by Kuyper, is the accomplishment in history the sinner is enabled to make by reason of God's gifts to him.

The entire doctrine of common grace, according to Kuyper, presupposes, as does also that of special grace, the fact of total depravity. The difference between common grace and special grace is indicated in the different effects they accomplish upon the totally depraved. Common grace always results in something less than regeneration. Special grace always results in regeneration. By it the cancer of sin is removed by taking out its roots. Common grace does not remove the cancer, it merely suppresses it. Common grace may trim back the wild shoots, but it does not lift out the root. It serves to prevent in time the full fruitage of total depravity. Common grace is God's restraining of the destructive forces of sin. It is His chaining of Satan for a season. This negative aspect of common grace results in the restraint of sin in the soul of man so that his thoughts are not totally corrupt, in the body of man so that his deeds are not totally base, and in the world of man so that it is not totally wicked. The scope of common grace is the total man and his total world.

But God's purpose is not merely to make human life possible, or endurable on the earth by the restraint of sin, it is also His purpose to make possible the appearance of civil righteousness, justice and government on the earth among all men. This, Kuyper holds, is the aspect of common grace "that leads to the maintenance and control of our human life."

But why should the world be preserved? Why should sinners be controlled? Why should there be any civil government among the heathen? Why should the world be continued through a repetition of ages? If life is merely repetition, why should it be continued at all? But life has not been merely repetition. There has been progress in history. There has been advancement. Here too, we see the effects of common grace, for it operates not

only to restrain the process of sin and to maintain and control human life, but it operates also to cause human life and the life of the world to pass through processes resulting in their more complete and richer development. Common grace works then, 1st. for the restraint of sin, 2nd. for maintenance and control in human life, and 3rd. for progress in the world. Because of the operation of common grace we have a degree of order in the world. Civil government operates, crime is punished, laws are enacted, courts of justice function, and civilization is possible.

Christians are called "the salt of the earth" and the "light of the world". But salt is of no value unless there is something to be salted. Light is of no value unless there is something to be illuminated. Common grace gives true believers something to build on and work with in their endeavor to promote the progress of the Kingdom of God on earth. Without common grace their task would be hopeless and meaningless. But with common grace there is something in the natural man and in his world that the recipients of special grace can utilize and work with to the glory of God. Common grace is the only explanation we have as to why this world, which is so predominantly non-Christian, is not worse than it is.

Common grace gives Christians something to work with in seeking moral reform and Christian social action. The gift of common grace being bestowed upon all men, we have no excuse for considering the task of reform hopeless. It is not possible to make all men Christian. Only those are Christian, in the true sense of the term, who are the recipients of God's special, efficacious grace, which He bestows by grace alone. But due to common grace man is educable. He can be taught to aspire. He can have instilled in him a sense of duty. He can be led to serve. He can be inspired to work for noble ends. He can be taught to sacrifice for that which is good and even to die for the general welfare.

This lays upon Christians a solemn obligation and duty to utilize these qualities in the natural man for the upbuilding of the cause of righteousness and the advancement of the Kingdom of God on earth. These are the qualities with which we may work in non-Christian society, in non-Christian nations and in the non-Christian world in promoting the general welfare, in promoting human relations and understanding, in promoting the peace of the world and good will among men.

The final thing I want to mention in support of the relevancy of the Reformed Faith to social righteousness is the Reformed Concept of the Kingship of Jesus Christ. "Christ is KING." He is Lord over all the earth. Just prior to His ascension our Lord said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth". He has been given authority over all that there is. When all the ideas involved in our Christian faith are made to converge at one

point, in one primary and all-inclusive idea, that idea takes the form of the Kingship of Jesus Christ. The sovereignty of God and the Kingship of Jesus Christ are corollary doctrines. They belong together — they merge into one — yet in such a way that there is a distinction.

The Kingship of Jesus Christ presupposes everything that He is. It presupposes His deity, His incarnation, His messianic office, His death, His resurrection, His ascension and His exaltation. It is not on the basis of any one of these alone, but on all of them, in grand and total concept, that His Kingship rests.

The Apostle Paul, in writing the first chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, was carried by the Spirit into an ecstasy of eloquence as he expressed his desire that they might comprehend the significance of the Kingship of the Lord Jesus Christ. His prayer was that God would give them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, that their understanding might be enlightened, so that they would know the hope of His calling, the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, the exceeding greatness of His power toward believers, the working of His power in being raised from the dead and set at the right hand of the Father of glory in heavenly places, far above all principality and power, far above all might and dominion, far above every name that is named — not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; Who has had all things put under His feet, and who has been given the Headship over all things, even of the Church, which is His body, and which is also His satisfaction and fullness. All of this the Father of Glory has given to Jesus Christ our Lord, our King — the One who filleth all in all. He is the first and the last — the beginning and the ending — the Alpha and the Omega — the WORD — the PERSON in whom the total creative idea of God is embodied, the One by Whom all things were created, the One who upholds all things by the word of His power. He is the ultimate end of all that has ever been, that is, or that shall ever be. On the basis of all that He is, in His person, and in His work, He has been given a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and every tongue confess. This is the King of kings and the Lord of lords who is seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Bring forth a just and loving King who is loved, honored and respected by his subjects and they will gladly obey him and with joy lay down their lives for him. Such a King we have in Jesus, and those who have been rescued from the guilt and curse of sin by His redemptive grace find their joy and satisfaction in daily dying unto self in order that they may live for Him to the glory of God.

As King, he reigns over all of life. He is Lord of the individual life, Head of the Church, and

King of nations, and is to be so recognized by each. The distinctive grasp of the Reformed Faith of the sovereignty of God comes to living reality in the Kingship of Jesus Christ. It is His Kingship that gives meaning to the ten commandments in our day. Our morality finds its essence and compelling motive in Him. He being the compelling motive in the Christian Faith for morality keeps it from relapsing into legalism. The emphasis is taken from the "thou shalt not" and put in a faith which has its ethics and morality based on the commandments, but which finds its compelling motive in the spirit of a new life in Him.

This all-inclusive doctrine of the Kingship of Christ embraces every other doctrine of the Christian faith. It puts meaning into all our evangelistic and missionary endeavors and sends us out, not merely with a man-centered passion for souls, but with a Christ centered passion to tell men about our Lord so that they may know Him, and observe to do all things whatsoever He has commanded. It sends us out to seek reformation in our social and national life with a Bible-centered Christ-exalting application of the Gospel to society with the purpose of having His Kingship honored in every area of life.

In fighting the liquor traffic, in seeking the preservation of the Christian Sabbath, in laboring to maintain a place for the Bible in public education, and in working in behalf of other causes along the reform front, the compelling motive must ever be the honor of Christ.

It is the desire to honor Him that motivates us

in seeking His recognition in the fundamental law of our land. We labor because we believe that theocracy is the only sure foundation for democracy. When democracies are established on other bases — man-centered — such as "Like equality by nature, natural rights, man's fullest development, the greatest good for the greatest number," without any recognition of the rights of God, they are built upon the sand.

It is only on the basis of the Eternal King that democracy can maintain its life and go on to full strength. The Kingship of Christ has smashed tyrannies of the past. In that Kingship is our hope for the present and for the future. Liberty, freedom, human rights and privileges are assured only when we build on truth. As Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Christians have been committed with the task of transforming the world, but it must be transformed "according to the pattern shown on the Mount". It must be built according to the purposes of God.

Our Christian Faith is immensely relevant to social reform in our day, relevant because the total world-view concepts which are derived from the Word of God are the only concepts adequate to a world in need. With His help and for His glory may we strive to declare His purposes so that all our efforts toward the moral reformation of our society and nation will be in accord with the Divine Standard.

Religious Terms Defined

ANTINOMIANISM. The false teaching that the Christian, by reason of Christ's atonement and obedience to God's law, is freed from the obligation of personal obedience to the moral law of God.

DISPENSATIONALISM. The false system of Bible interpretation represented by the writings of J. N. Darby and the Scofield Reference Bible, which divides the history of mankind into seven distinct periods or "dispensations," and affirms that in each period God deals with the human race on the basis of some one specific principle. Dispensationalism denies the spiritual identity of Israel and the Church, and tends to set grace and law sharply against each other as antithetical and mutually exclusive principles.

POSTMILLENNIALISM. That view of the Last Things which holds that the second coming of Christ will take place following the close of a

long period of world-wide peace and righteousness (but not absolute perfection without sin or death) called "the Millennium" or "the Kingdom of God." Orthodox Postmillennialism accepts the supernatural Christianity of the Scriptures, and holds that the Millennium will be brought about by the power of God, partly, at least, through evangelism, missionary work, the work of the Holy Spirit in the salvation of men, and the application of Christian ethical principles to society.

PSEUDO-POSTMILLENNIALISM. An optimistic belief in human betterment and progress which serves Modernists and Liberals as a substitute for belief in the Biblical prophecies concerning the Last Things. Pseudo-Postmillennialism believes that the Kingdom of God will be achieved gradually through a NATURAL process by which social institutions will be reformed and "Christianized." This differs from orthodox Postmillennialism in that it regards the coming of the

Kingdom of God as the product of the operation of natural laws in an evolutionary process, whereas orthodox Postmillennialism regards the coming of the Kingdom of God as the product of the SUPERNATURAL working of the Holy Spirit in connection with the preaching of the Gospel and the expansion of Christianity in the world.

PREMILLENNIALISM. That view of the Last Things which holds that the second coming of Christ will be followed by a period of world-wide peace and righteousness, before the end of the world, called "the Millennium" or "the Kingdom of God," during which Christ will reign as King in person on this earth. Premillennialists are divided into various groups by their different views of the order of events associated with the second coming of Christ, but they all agree in holding that there will be a millennium on earth AFTER the second coming of Christ but BEFORE the end of the world.

AMILLENNIALISM. That view of the Last Things which holds that the Bible does not predict a "Millennium" or period of world-wide peace and righteousness on this earth before the end of the world. Amillennialism teaches that there will be a parallel and contemporaneous development of good and evil — God's Kingdom and Satan's kingdom — in the world, which will continue until the second coming of Christ. At the second coming of Christ the resurrection and the judgment will take place, followed by the eternal order of things — the absolute, perfect Kingdom of God, in which there will be no sin, suffering nor death. Amillennialists emphasize the idea that time (or "history") is the realm of that which is relative, incomplete and imperfect, whereas eternity (or that which is "beyond history") is the realm of that which is absolute, complete and perfect.

ESCHATOLOGY. The doctrine of the Last Things. The name comes from the Greek word "eschatos," meaning "last." Eschatology includes the state of man after death, the second coming of Christ and related matters, the resurrection, the judgment, heaven, hell and eternity.

ACCOMMODATION OF SCRIPTURE. The practice of taking a phrase or text of Scripture out of its context, and employing it otherwise than according to its proper meaning, to apply to some other matter which the words seem to fit. For example, the words of 1 Samuel 9:13 have sometimes been applied by accommodation to the Christian's approach to the communion table in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The practice of accommodation of Scripture is always wrong and sinful, for it amounts to making a text of Scripture say something which it does not really say. The minister who deals in accommodation of Scripture betrays the fact that he is a careless student

of Scripture who has not learned how to handle aright the Word of truth.

ADIAPHORA. Things inherently morally indifferent; that is, matters which in themselves are neither sinful nor righteous, but which may be either sinful or lawful according to circumstances (Romans 14:1-12).

ADORATION. The act of reverently contemplating the divine majesty and glory, and rendering loving worship to God for His sake.

ALTAR. A table or raised structure upon which sacrifices were offered. Sacrifices having been fulfilled and abolished forever by the true sacrifice of Christ upon the cross, there remains no need for altars, and the communion table in a Christian congregation's place of worship should not be called an altar, for no sacrifice is offered upon it. The use of the phrase "family altar" to mean the practice of family worship is improper and misleading and should be avoided.

ANABAPTISTS. A sect which arose in Germany at the time of the Reformation, which practiced the re-baptism of persons who had been baptized as infants.

ANNIHILATIONISM. The false doctrine that the wicked will not suffer eternal punishment in hell, but will finally cease to exist, as if they had never lived.

ANTEDILUVIANS. Those members of the human race that lived before the great flood of Genesis 6-8.

ANTICHRIST. One who is against Christ. There are many antichrists (1 John 2:18), and also a spirit of antichrist in the world (1 John 4:3). Many orthodox Reformed theologians believe that 2 Thess. 2:3, 4 and Rev. 13:1-10 predict the appearance of an individual, personal anti-christ, who will be utterly against Christ, before the second coming of the Lord.

ANTITYPE. That which corresponds to a type; the fulfilment of a type. Thus, Adam, Moses and David are types of Christ, or divinely planned portrayals of certain truths about Christ, whereas Christ is the antitype of Adam, Moses and David.

APOCRYPHA. Those books excluded from the Bible because of lack of divine inspiration. "The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the canon of Scripture; and therefore are of no authority in the Church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved, or made use of, than other human writings" (Westminster Confession of Faith, I. 3).

Some Noteworthy Quotations

IF FAITH HAS NOT for its basis a testimony of God to which we must submit, as to an authority exterior to our personal judgment, and independent of it, then faith is no faith.

— Adolphe Monod

IT MAY SOMETIMES seem difficult to take our stand frankly by the side of Christ and His apostles. It will always be found safe.

— Benjamin B. Warfield

THE MORE I STUDY the Scriptures, the example of Christ, and of the apostles, and the history of my own heart, the more I am convinced that a testimony of God, placed without us and above us, exempt from all intermixture of sin and error which belong to a fallen race, and received with submission on the sole authority of God, is the true basis of faith.

— Adolphe Monod

YOU MAY READ your Bible, and pray over it till you die; you may wait on the preached Word every Sabbath day, and sit down at every sacrament till you die; yet, if you do not find Christ in the ordinances, if He do not reveal Himself to your soul in the preached Word, in the broken bread and poured-out wine, if you are not brought to cleave to Him, to believe in Him, to cry out with inward adoration: "My Lord, and my God;" "How great is His goodness! How great is His beauty!" — then the outward observance of the ordinances is all in vain to you. You have come to the well of salvation, but have gone away with the pitcher empty and however proud and boastful you may be of your bodily exercise, you will find in that day that it profits little, and that you will stand speechless before the King.

— Robert Murray McCheyne

IT IS A HARDER THING to be a holy person than to be a martyr. It is more easy to withstand an enemy than a temptation. When conflict with an enemy, we do not conflict with an arm of flesh and blood; but with inward conflict we fight with "principalities and powers."

— Thomas Manton

WORKS ARE NOT the condition of justification, yet they are the evidence of it. By the righteousness of faith we are acquitted from sin, and by the righteousness of works we are acquitted from guile and hypocrisy. Though works have nothing to do in the court of heaven in matter of justification, yet they have a voice and testimony in the court of conscience.

— Thomas Manton

MAN HATES EVIL, because it is against his

interest; But God hates evil, because it is against His nature.

— Thomas Manton

NO CHILD OF GOD can ever grow strong in grace with mere exhortation, if it be not associated with good old-fashioned doctrine. I should like to hear all our pulpits sounding with the good old-fashioned doctrine of John Owen, and such men as Bunyan, and Charnock, and Goodwin, and those men of olden time who knew the truth and dared to preach it fully. There were giants in those days . . . Now where find we such? We labor and we strive, we dig, we toil, we seek to be something, and we end in being nothing. And so it must be as long as hands are weak and knees are feeble; and so also must this be as long as good doctrine is denied us, and truth is kept back in the ministry. Feed God's children well; give them comfort; give them much to feed upon of the sweet things of the kingdom of God; and then they will grow strong, then they will begin to work.

— Charles H. Spurgeon

CHRIST'S SOLDIERS ALWAYS win their battles on their knees. On their feet they may be conquered, but on their knees they are invincible.

— Charles H. Spurgeon

IN THE PSALMS, we look into the heart of all the saints, and we seem to gaze into fair pleasure-gardens; into heaven itself, indeed; where bloom the sweet, refreshing, gladdening flowers of holy and happy thoughts about God and all His benefits. On the other hand, where will you find deeper, sadder, more piteous words of mourning than in the Psalms? In these again, we look into the heart of the saints, and we seem to be looking into death, yea, into hell itself. How gloomy, how dark it is there, because of the many sad visions of the wrath of God!

— Martin Luther

GIVE WHAT THOU commandest, and command what Thou wilt.

— Augustine of Hippo

THE GRACE OF GOD does not find men fit for salvation, but makes them so.

— Augustine of Hippo

IN HEAVEN ALONE is the attainment of our highest good.

— Jonathan Edwards

Studies on Prayer

LESSON 21

Prayer for Deliverance from Evil

Q. 195. What do we pray for in the sixth petition?

A. In the sixth petition, (which is, "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil"), acknowledging, that the most wise, righteous, and gracious God, for divers holy and just ends, may so order things, that we may be assulted, foiled, and for a time led captive by temptations; . . .

Scripture References:

Matt. 6:13. Luke 11:4. The sixth petition of the Lord's Prayer.

2 Chron. 32:31. Judges 2:21, 22. Deut. 4:34; 7:19. Job 1:12; 2:6. Acts 20:19. James 1:2, 3. Heb. 11:37. For His own wise and holy purposes, God sometimes permits His children to be tempted by evil, and even to yield to temptation for a time.

Questions:

1. What great problem is involved in the subject of temptation?

The problem of the relation of God to evil. This problem, we must at once confess, cannot be wholly solved. The Bible does not reveal the solution of it, except in part; and our finite and sin-clouded minds are unable to give a full and final answer to the question: How can a good God permit evil to originate and exist in His creation?

We can only accept what the Bible tells us concerning this subject with childlike faith and humility, and frankly confess that "we know in part" only, and that the full solution is one of the secret things which God has reserved to Himself. Those who attempt fully to rationalize this problem run a terrible risk of falling into skepticism.

2. What wrong solutions of this problem have been attempted?

(a) The theory of dualism, which holds that good and evil, or God and Satan, are both eternal, so that from all eternity they have confronted each other and have been in conflict with each other. This theory cannot be accepted because it is contrary to the plain teaching of the Bible that in the beginning there was only God, and that evil originated in the universe subsequently to God's work of creation. Only God has existed from all eternity; Satan had a beginning.

(b) The theory of a limited God, who would like to prevent and restrain evil in the universe, but finds that he lacks the power to do so. According to this theory God is doing the best He can, but His power is limited in various ways (such as by the laws of nature, or by the free will of His

creatures) and therefore it is not possible for Him to cope adequately with the forces of evil. This theory cannot be accepted because it is contrary to the clear teaching of the Bible that God is Almighty; He is infinite in His being and all His attributes, and nothing that He chooses to do is too hard for Him to accomplish. Moreover, this theory of a limited God fails to explain how evil originated.

3. What light does the Bible shed on this problem of the relation of God to evil?

While the Bible does not provide a complete solution, it does give some truths which shed light on the problem and guard us against jumping to erroneous conclusions. What the Bible teaches on the subject may be summarized as follows:

(a) Only God has existed eternally; all that exists except God owes its existence to His work of creation (Gen. 1:1).

(b) When the created universe came from the hand of God, it was wholly good, that is, free from both physical and moral evil (Gen. 1:31).

(c) Evil originated subsequently to the creation, beginning with the fall of certain of the angels "from their first estate," that is, from holiness (2 Pet. 2:4. Jude 6).

(d) Satan, the chief of the fallen angels, introduced evil into the human race by seducing Eve to commit sin (Gen. 3:1-6).

(e) Through the sin of Adam, sin and death became universal in the human race (Rom. 5:12).

(f) The fall of the angels, and the temptation and fall of the human race, were permitted by God, and also foreordained by God (Eph. 1:11. Psalm 33:11. Psalm 115:3. Dan. 4:35).

(g) The responsibility for the origin and continuance of evil rests wholly upon the fallen angels and human beings, not at all upon God (Psalm 25:8. 1 John 1:5).

(h) God's reason for permitting evil was His own purpose to order it to His own glory in the end (Rom. 11:32. Job 1:12; 2:6; 42:10-17).

4. What aspects of this problem does the Bible leave unexplained?

(a) How evil could originate in beings wholly good, as Satan and all the angels were when they were created.

(b) How Satan could succeed in leading our first parents into sin, when there was no evil in their nature to which he could appeal.

(c) How God could permit and foreordain evil without Himself becoming responsible for its sinfulness.

These are mysteries which baffle our minds. We simply do not know the answers. Yet we dare not attempt to deny the facts. Those who attempt to solve the problem by denying these three facts, only plunge into heresies which are totally destructive of Christianity. There is a point at which a reverent ignorance, rather than irreverent speculation and theorizing, becomes us.

5. Is it right to blame our temptations on God?

Certainly not (James 1:13, 14). God does not Himself tempt any person. To blame our temp-

tations on God is wicked and irreverent. Yet it is also wrong to suppose that God has nothing whatever to do with the temptations that we experience. While God does not Himself tempt us, it is true all the same that God, for His own purposes, "may so order things" that we are tempted. We should never fall into the atheistic notion that "things" exist or occur apart from the foreordination and providential control of God. When we meet with temptation, we should realize two things: (a) It is not God that is tempting me, but Satan or my sinful heart or both. (b) Yet this temptation has been foreordained by God as part of His plan, and it is God that has permitted this temptation to come to me, for His own wise purposes.

LESSON 22

Prayer for Deliverance from Evil, Continued

Q. 195 (Continued). What do we pray for in the sixth petition?

A. In the sixth petition, (which is, "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil"), acknowledging. . . that Satan, the world, and the flesh, are ready powerfully to draw us aside, and insnare us. . .

Scripture References:

1 Chron. 21:1. Job 1:6-12; 2:1-7. Zech. 3:1. Mark 4:15. Luke 22:31. 2 Cor. 2:11; 12:7. The assaults of Satan upon God's children.

Luke 21:34. Mark 4:19. James 4:4. 1 John 2:15-17. Rev. 18:4. The world, as Satan's ally, is ready to draw the Christian into sin.

James 1:14. Gal. 5:17. Rom. 7:18; 8:12, 13. The flesh, or our sin-corrupted nature, as Satan's ally, is ready to lead us into sin.

Questions:

1. Who is Satan?

Satan is the chief of the fallen angels. The name Satan means "adversary" or "one who opposes." Satan is described in the Bible as "the prince of the power of the air" and "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." He is also described as the one "which deceiveth the whole world" (Eph. 2:2; Rev. 12:9). According to the Bible Satan is very crafty, intelligent and powerful, yet always strictly under the control of God (Job. 1:12; 2:6. Matt. 4:10, 11).

2. What false belief concerning Satan is common today?

The notion that Satan has no real, personal existence, but is merely a personification of the forces of evil in the universe and in the human soul. Modern "liberal" theology tends to deny the existence of an objective, personal devil. Satan is said to be just a name for the sinful tendencies

and desires of our hearts. The people described in the New Testament as possessed by demons, are said to have been simply mentally ill. Such an attitude toward Satan must be highly satisfactory to Satan himself, as he can do his work all the better when his objective existence is denied.

The Bible, however, speaks of Satan and the evil spirits with the utmost realism. Satan is described as a definite person, not a mere personification of an idea. Demon possession is spoken of as objectively real and is carefully distinguished from ordinary insanity and bodily sickness (Matt. 4:24). Christian theology cannot be maintained without belief in a personal devil, any more than it can be maintained without belief in a personal God. Moreover the authority and trustworthiness of Jesus Christ are at stake in this matter. It is clear that Jesus believed in Satan as a real, individual, personal spirit. If we are disciples of Jesus, we must accept His teaching on this as on all other matters.

3. What allies does Satan have in his efforts to lead us into sin?

Satan, of course, has a great host of fallen angels, or evil spirits, through which he can act and work. Unlike God, Satan is a finite being and therefore cannot be present everywhere at once; but aided by the host of demons he can have his work carried on at many places and in many people simultaneously. Apart from the demons, Satan has two great allies in this world, namely "the world" and "the flesh." Through these he is able, within the limits of God's permission, to accomplish many of his purposes.

4. What is meant by "the world" as an ally of Satan?

The term "world" is used in the Bible with various meanings. It is used in a good sense,

meaning the world as God's creation and property (Psalm 24:1. 1 Cor. 3:22; 7:31). It is also used in a bad sense, meaning Satan's kingdom in the world, the sum total of all in the world that is against God (1 John 2:15-17). Even those things in the world which are themselves legitimate and innocent, such as science, art, literature, athletic sports, social fellowship, become allies of Satan when we become too firmly attached to them, and love them more than we love God.

Then, too, there is that world which is always Satan's ally, the world of sinful pride, lusts and pleasures. Satan is very intelligent and he knows just how to appeal to a person to try to draw him away from God. One person he will tempt with intoxicating liquor, gambling, night clubs and the like; another he will seek to lead to an idolatrous supreme devotion to music or painting; another he will persuade to make science his god, so that he will not worship the living and true God. In each case Satan seeks to use "the world" as his ally.

5. What is meant by "the flesh" as an ally of Satan?

When the term "the flesh" is used in the Bible in a bad sense, it does NOT mean the human body, as many have wrongly supposed, but the whole sinful nature of fallen man. Paul said that a Christian, in whom the Spirit of God dwells, is "not in the flesh" (Rom. 8:9. Manifestly, a Christian is still IN THE BODY until his death; therefore "the flesh" cannot mean "the body." The Christian is "not in the flesh", but some of "the flesh" remains in the Christian throughout the present life.

This remaining corruption, or sinful nature in the Christian, gives Satan something to appeal to

in seeking to tempt the Christian to sin. "The flesh" — the remaining sinful corruption of nature — is the occasion of innumerable failures and falls on the part of Christians. If it were not for our remaining sinful natures, the temptations of Satan would not be so serious. It is because there remains within us something akin to Satan and utterly contrary to God (Rom. 8:8, 9) that Satanic temptations are so insidious and so often successful. The Christian cannot take any real comfort from his own strength of character or will power, but only from the realization that God's power is limitless and God's covenant promises cannot fail. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31). The Christian will not place confidence in his own constancy, but in the fact that the Almighty God is FOR him.

6. Why do Christians often experience a desperate struggle with temptation, while unsaved people seem to enjoy untroubled calm?

It is strictly true that Christians often experience a desperate struggle with temptation. As the Catechism says, "Satan, the world, and the flesh, are ready POWERFULLY to draw us aside, and insnare us." By being born again, the Christian has a new spiritual life from God. This new life is utterly contrary to "the flesh" or the old sinful nature. Therefore these two clash in a desperate encounter the one against the other, and the Christian's soul becomes a battlefield (Gal. 5:17) as one temptation after another has to be faced.

In the case of the unsaved person, on the other hand, the sinful nature or "the flesh" has the field to itself. Special temptation is unnecessary in such a case; Satan is already in control of the person's life. It is when Satan's dominion is challenged by the work of the Holy Spirit that a real struggle between "the flesh" and "the Spirit" takes place.

LESSON 23

Prayer for Deliverance from Evil (Continued)

Q. 195 (Continued). What do we pray for in the sixth petition?

A. In the sixth petition, (which is, "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil", acknowledging. . . and that we, even after the pardon of our sins, by reason of our corruption, weakness, and want of watchfulness, are not only subject to be tempted, and forward to expose ourselves unto temptations, but also of ourselves unable and unwilling to resist them, to recover out of them, and to improve them; and worthy to be left under the power of them; . . .

Scripture References:

Gal. 5:17. Matt. 26:41, 69-72. Gal 2:11-14. 2 Chron. 18:3 compared with 2 Chron. 19:2. Because of their remaining corruption of nature, etc.,

even true Christians are not only subject to temptation, but sometimes actually reckless in exposing themselves to temptation.

Rom. 7:23, 24. 1 Chron. 21:1-4. 2 Chron. 16:7-10. We are unable of ourselves to resist, recover out of, and improve our temptations.

Psalm 81: 11, 12. We justly deserve to be left under the power of our temptations.

Questions:

1. What class of people is the Catechism dealing with in the portion quoted above?

With Christian people, believers in Jesus Christ, as shown by the fact that it says "even after the pardon of our sins." Of course people who are not Christians also suffer temptation,

are unable of themselves to resist and overcome it, etc. But the Catechism is here dealing with the special subject of the effect of temptation on Christian believers. It is here counteracting the errors of those who claim that Christian people can, in this life, attain a spiritual state where temptation can no longer affect them, where "the flesh" will no longer lust against the Spirit, and where spiritual conflict against sin need no longer be engaged in. We should realize that a daily battle against sin and temptation is not characteristic of people's experience before they are born again, but is precisely the experience of born again Christian people, and is so represented in the Bible.

2. What reasons does the Catechism assign for the Christian being subject to temptation?

"Corruption, weakness, and want of watchfulness." These three reasons really all amount to the same thing: the Christian's remaining corruption of nature, "the flesh" which remains in him even after he is born again and is in process of being sanctified. It is because of this corruption of nature that the Christian is spiritually weak; it is because of this corruption of nature that he is prone to be careless instead of watchful. Bodily or physical weakness is of course a factor in our readiness to yield to temptation, and Satan is very subtle in taking advantage of weakness, sickness or bodily fatigue in order to seduce the soul. Physical weakness alone, however, could not account for our readiness to yield to temptation; it is only a subordinate accessory to the spiritual factors.

3. Is it too strong to say that Christians are forward to expose themselves to temptations?

According to some modern teachings about sanctification, this expression is too strong, but not according to a sound interpretation of the Biblical data. Of course Christians are not ALWAYS forward to expose themselves to temptations, but only sometimes. We very easily become proud and confident of our own ability to stand upright and resist evil, and then we are very likely to become careless and even foolhardy with reference to temptation, and too often the out-

come is a humiliating lapse into sin from which we are later recovered by the grace of God.

4. What is meant by improving our temptations?

To improve our temptations means to benefit from them in some way, as by learning the lessons that they can teach us, being humbled by them, resolving to be more watchful in the future, and praying to God for increased grace to resist the devil. Every temptation that comes to a child of God is permitted in the wisdom and love of God for a good purpose. We are to discern, so far as possible, what that purpose is, and to learn the spiritual lessons involved accordingly.

5. Why are we of ourselves unable to resist, recover out of, and improve our temptations?

Because of our remaining sinfulness or corruption of nature, by reason of which our mind is still partly clouded and our will still partly paralyzed. We should realize that we are absolutely dependent on the grace of God for every phase and factor of our salvation, our faith and our life. Not only are we dependent on the power of God for being born again and believing on Christ at the beginning of our Christian life; we are also dependent on the power and help of God moment by moment and day by day to the end of our earthly pilgrimage. By the special help of the Holy Spirit and the intercession of Jesus Christ our Mediator we are enabled more and more to gain the victory over temptation, to live a holy life, and thus to glorify God.

6. Why does the Catechism add that we are worthy to be left under the power of our temptations?

In order that we may realize that all our progress in the Christian life is wholly a matter of grace. God often punishes wicked people for their sins by abandoning them to their own sinfulness. That He does not do so in the case of Christian people is not because they are themselves worthy of the special, powerful work of the Holy Spirit in their hearts, but wholly because of the free love and mercy of God.

LESSON 24

Prayer for Deliverance from Evil (Continued)

Q. 195 (Continued). What do we pray for in the sixth petition?

A. In the sixth petition, (which is, "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil"), . . . we pray that God would so overrule the world and all in it, subdue the flesh, and restrain Satan, order all things, bestow and bless the means of grace, and quicken us to watchfulness in the use of them, that we and all his people may by his providence be kept from being tempted to sin; . . .

Scripture References:

John 17:15. Psalm 51:10; 119:133. 2 Cor. 12:7, 8. 1 Cor. 10:12, 13. We pray that God would overrule the world, subdue the flesh, restrain Satan and order all things so that we may be kept from being tempted.

Heb. 13:20, 21. Matt. 26:41. Psalm 19:13. We pray that God would bless the means of grace, enable us to use them aright, etc., that we may be kept from temptation to sin.

Questions:

1. How does God overrule the world for the benefit of His people?

God overrules the world by His providential control which makes all things — even the acts of Satan and of wicked men — work together for His own glory and the eventual good of His people. The background of this truth is, of course, the Calvinistic (that is to say, the Biblical) view of the absolute sovereignty of God. If God is not absolutely sovereign, then He does not really control all that comes to pass, then He cannot make **ALL THINGS** to work together for good for His people.

Only a God who is absolutely in control of the entire created universe can make all things turn out according to His own pre-determined purpose. If some things are beyond the control of God, then there is no telling what unexpected factors may disrupt His plans and ruin everything. As a matter of fact, of course, the Bible emphatically teaches the absolute sovereignty of God over the entire created universe, including the devil and all his works (Psalm 115:3. Eph. 1:11. Acts 4:27, 28. Rom. 8:28).

Back of every fact in the universe is the eternal plan of God, not a mere general plan, but a specific plan that provides in the minutest detail for the time, place, causes, effects and relationships of every individual fact. This eternal plan or counsel of God is put into effect by His works of creation and providence. All that ever takes place, from the fall of a sparrow to the rise of an empire, from the melting of a particular snowflake to the growth of a civilization, from the growth of a particular blade of grass to the formation of a spiral nebula — takes place in exact accordance with the plan and providence of God, and each individual fact fits perfectly into its specific place in the plan. Therefore it is not vain or foolish for us to pray that God would overrule the world and all in it for His glory and our spiritual welfare.

2. Can we always see how God overrules the world for the benefit of His people?

No. Sometimes we can see remarkable instances of such overruling, which we call "special providences." The famous Spanish Armada which was sent to attack and destroy the Protestant nation of England was destroyed by an unexpected storm. There have been many instances, great and small, of such remarkable overruling of the world by God. But often we cannot see how the world

is overruled for good. We must believe, on the authority of God's Word, that He will overrule all things for His glory and our good, even when we cannot see how things will work out to make this come true.

3. How does God "subdue the flesh" in the Christian?

God does not totally remove or eradicate "the flesh" from the Christian until death, when the souls of believers are made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory. But God subdues the flesh — limits its activity, and keeps it under control — by the regenerating and sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. This is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit, which imparts to the person a new heart, or a new nature, and then after that enables that new nature more and more to become the controlling factor in the person's life. Sometimes after a building has caught fire, we hear an announcement that the fire has been brought under control. This means that while the fire has not yet been put out, but is still burning, yet it is being prevented from spreading and destroying without limit. The remaining corruption in the Christian, called "the flesh," is like a fire that has not been entirely extinguished, but has been brought under control. The new nature more and more gains the ascendancy over it.

4. How does God restrain Satan?

The book of Job gives an instance of God restraining Satan (1:12; 2:6). God restrains Satan, according to His own wise plan, by His Almighty power which even Satan is compelled to recognize and obey. Satan is a finite, created spirit, and as such is totally subject to the control of God.

5. How does God use the means of grace to keep His people from being overcome by temptation?

The means of grace are the Word, the sacraments and prayer. These are the appointed means for the conversion and sanctification of sinners. God first of all makes these means available for His elect. They are brought in contact with the visible Church which proclaims the Gospel and dispenses the sacraments. Secondly, the Holy Spirit inclines the heart to use these means of grace, and to use them aright. Thirdly, the Holy Spirit accompanies the right use of the means of grace by His own almighty, supernatural working in the person's soul, so that they are made effectual to their intended purpose. The right use of the means of grace thus accompanied by the inward work of the Holy Spirit, keeps the Christian in a spiritual state in which temptation cannot easily appeal to him, or gain a lodgement in his heart.

LESSON 25**Prayer for Deliverance from Evil, Continued**

Q. 195 (Continued). What do we pray for in the sixth petition?

A. In the sixth petition, (which is, "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil"),

... we pray. . . (that we and all his people may by his providence be kept from being tempted to sin;) or, if tempted, that by his Spirit we may be powerfully supported and enabled to stand in the hour of temptation; or, when fallen, raised again and recovered out of it, and have a sanctified use and improvement thereof; that our sanctification and salvation may be perfected, Satan trodden under our feet, and we fully freed from sin, temptation, and all evil, for ever.

Scripture References:

Eph. 3:14-17. 1 Thess. 3:13. Jude 24. We pray that God by His Holy Spirit would support us and keep us from falling when we are tempted.

Psalm 51:12. 1 Pet. 5:8-10. 2 Cor. 13:7, 9. We pray that when we have yielded to temptation, God would raise us up again and that our experience might be used for our sanctification.

Rom. 16:20. Zech. 3:2. Luke 22:31, 32. We pray that God would give us victory over the assaults of Satan.

John 17:15. 1 Thess. 5:23. In the sixth petition of the Lord's Prayer we also pray for our final and complete redemption from all sin and evil.

Questions:

1. Why does God not always keep us from being tempted, or keep us from falling when we are tempted?

God, who is almighty, could of course keep us entirely isolated from all Satan's temptations, if it were His purpose to do so. He could also keep us from falling into sin when we are tempted. But such is not always His purpose. For His own wise and proper reasons, God sometimes allows His children to be tempted, and even to fall under the assaults of temptation. One reason for this is easy to discern: that we should not become too proud and self-confident by constant freedom from conflict with sin, or by constant success in striving against it. God allows His children to suffer temptation, and sometimes to fall under it, to keep them humble. But there may be many other special reasons known to God.

2. Give an example from the Bible of a person who was enabled to resist and overcome temptation.

(a) Joseph. Gen. 39:9. (b) Micaiah. 2 Chron. 18:12, 13. (c) Daniel. Dan. 6:10.

3. Give an example from the Bible of a person who was tempted and fell into sin, but was later recovered out of it by the grace of God.

(a) David. 2 Sam. 12:13. (b) Jonah. Jon. 1:3. (c) Peter. Mark 14:66-72.

4. What state of mind is likely to result when a Christian yields to temptation and falls into sin?

Yielding to temptation and falling into sin

will interrupt the Christian's spiritual joy and peace, and produce a troubled, uneasy conscience. His assurance of salvation may be diminished or even destroyed for the time being. Under such circumstances the Christian may become very discouraged spiritually, and may become very formal or neglectful in his use of the means of grace. For all this there is only one remedy: hearty repentance, confession of sin and prayer for the restoration of the light of God's countenance upon the soul. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16).

5. When will our sanctification and salvation be perfected?

Not until we enter the state of glory will we be made perfect in holiness. However we are to experience a constant progress toward the ideal of perfection throughout our Christian life. Clearly a faithful resistance to temptation, and a "sanctified use and improvement thereof" when we have suffered temptation or have yielded to it, will deepen the quality of our spiritual life and increase our progress in holiness. We should never tolerate the idea that because perfect holiness cannot be attained in this life, therefore we need not resist sin and strive for holiness. We are constantly to advance toward the goal, even though we know we cannot actually attain it in this present life.

6. What is meant by Satan being trodden under our feet?

This expression, which is taken from Rom. 16:20, refers to special and significant victories given to the saints by the grace of God, whereby Satan is remarkably defeated and his evil designs frustrated. Sometimes after a long and weary conflict with temptation and suffering, God shows His favor by giving His children special and noteworthy victories over the devil and his works. Persecutors of the saints may be cut off by death or otherwise, obstacles to Christian profession and practice may be removed, closed doors may be opened, burdens or handicaps may be removed, etc. Acts chapter 16 narrates how Satan was trodden under the feet of the saints of Philippi, a city where he had previously had the field pretty much to himself.

7. Why should we have confidence in praying that we shall be "fully freed from sin, temptation, and all evil, for ever"?

Because God is a covenant-keeping God and completes the good work which He has begun in the Christian. "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me: thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever: forsake not the works of thine own hands" (Psalm 138:8). "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6).

LESSON 26

The Conclusion of the Lord's Prayer

Q. 196. What doth the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer teach us?

A. The conclusion of the Lord's Prayer, (which is, "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever, Amen"), teacheth us to enforce our petitions with arguments, which are to be taken, not from any worthiness in ourselves, or in any other creature, but from God; and with our prayers to join praises, ascribing to God alone eternal sovereignty, omnipotency, and glorious excellency; in regard whereof, as he is able and willing to help us, so we by faith are emboldened to plead with him that he would, and quietly to rely upon him, that he will fulfil our requests. And, to testify this our desire and assurance, we say, "Amen."

Scripture References:

Matt. 6:13. The conclusion of the Lord's Prayer.

Rom. 15:30. It is proper in prayer to enforce our petitions with arguments.

Dan. 9:4, 7-9, 16-19. Our arguments in prayer are to be based on God, not on ourselves or other creatures.

Phil. 4:6. 1 Chron. 29:10-13. To our prayers we are to join praises, ascribing glory to God.

Eph. 3:20, 21. Luke 11:13. God is both able and willing to help us.

2 Chron. 20:6, 11; 14:11. By faith we are encouraged to plead with God to help us, and to trust Him to answer our prayers.

1 Cor. 14:16. Rev. 22:20, 21. In testimony of our desire and assurance of answer from God, we say "Amen" at the conclusion of our prayers.

Questions:

1. What special difficulty is involved in the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer?

There is a serious question as to whether the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer forms a part of the genuine text of the Scriptures. The Lord's Prayer is found in Matt. 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4. The conclusion ("For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen") is not found in Luke, and in Matthew it does not occur in the most authentic and reliable manuscripts. The King James Version includes the conclusion in Matt. 6:13, but the American Revised Version (1901) omits it from the text, and states in the margin: "Many authorities, some ancient, but with variations, add 'For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.'"

Alford's "Greek Testament" states that the

conclusion "must on every ground of sound criticism be omitted. Had it formed part of the original text, it is absolutely inconceivable that all the ancient authorities should with one consent have omitted it," and adds: "We find absolutely no trace of it in early times, in any family of manuscripts or in any expositions." Jamieson, Fausset and Brown's "Commentary on the Whole Bible" states of the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer: "If any reliance is to be placed on external evidence, this doxology, we think, can hardly be considered part of the original text. . . . On a review of the evidence, the strong probability, we think, is that it was no part of the original text."

We should realize that our authority is not the King James Version, but the GENUINE text of the Bible in the original Hebrew and Greek (Confession of Faith, I. 8). While the evidence indicates that the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer is not a genuine part of the text of the Bible, nevertheless the ideas expressed in the conclusion are all true and Scriptural, as the texts cited by the Catechism demonstrate. Everything in the conclusion can be found taught somewhere in the Bible. Therefore in the present lesson we shall study the conclusion along the lines suggested by the Catechism.

2. Is it proper to enforce our petitions with arguments as we plead with God in prayer?

Certainly it is, and this practice is exemplified by many prayers in the Bible. We have only to think of the prayers of Moses, of David, of Daniel and other Old Testament saints to realize that this is true.

3. What kind of arguments should we use to enforce our petitions in pleading with God?

Our arguments should not be based on ourselves, our own character, earnestness, faith, good works, good intentions, or anything else whatsoever about ourselves or other creatures, but on God, His love and mercy, His covenant and promises, His mighty deeds for His people in past times, the honor of His name in the world, etc.

4. Why should we join praises with our petitions?

We should join praises with our petitions, ascribing glory to God, because praise is an essential element in prayer. God is supremely worthy to be praised. Man can fulfil no higher or nobler purpose than to praise God. As Augustine said in the beginning of his "Confessions," "Thou awakest us to delight in Thy praise; for Thou madest us for Thyself, and our heart is restless, until it reposes in Thee."

5. What is the meaning of the word "Amen"?

The word "Amen" comes from a Hebrew word meaning "firm," "faithful," "truly". In the Greek New Testament the word occurs 150 times, of which the King James Version translates 50 by "amen" and 100 by "verily." In the discourses of Jesus recorded in the Gospels, the word "Verily" or the expression "Verily, verily . . ." occur frequently. In each case the Greek word is "Amen", meaning "truly."

6. Why do we close our prayers with "Amen"?

As the word "Amen" means "truly," we close our prayers with this word to show our sincere, real desire and confidence that God will hear and answer our prayers. As the Catechism points out,

God is the one who is able to help us, because He possesses eternal sovereignty ("the kingdom"), omnipotency ("the power"), and glorious excellency ("the glory"), and therefore, when we have pleaded with Him to help us according to our need, we are "quietly to rely upon him, that he will fulfil our requests."

The "Amen" at the end of our prayer is like the signature at the close of a letter, a token or evidence of our sincere belief and desire. At the same time it forms a fitting and properly solemn conclusion for our prayers, and is therefore an indication of reverence.

The End

Studies on the Plan of Salvation

LESSON 1

God's Provision of Salvation for His People

Note: The numbered questions and answers at the beginning of each lesson of this series are taken from the Larger Catechism of the Westminster Assembly.

Q. 30. Doth God leave all mankind to perish in the estate of sin and misery?

A. God doth not leave all men to perish in the estate of sin and misery, into which they fell by the breach of the first covenant, commonly called the Covenant of Works; but of his mere love and mercy delivereth his elect out of it, and bringeth them into an estate of salvation by the second covenant, commonly called the Covenant of Grace.

Scripture References:

1 Thess. 5:9. God has appointed his elect to obtain salvation by Christ.

Galatians 3:10-12. Mankind in sin and misery because of the breach of the Covenant of Works.

Titus 3:4-7. The elect are saved from sin by the kindness, love and mercy of God.

Galatians 3:21. There is no hope of salvation on the basis of our own works.

Romans 3:20-22. Salvation by works being impossible, God has provided another way, by the righteousness of a Substitute.

Question:

1. What two names are given to the first covenant that God made with mankind?

(a) A Covenant of Life; (b) The Covenant of Works.

2. Why can the same covenant be called both a "Covenant of Life" and a "Covenant of Works"?

Because the first covenant was an arrangement made by God on the basis of which mankind could gain eternal life by works of obedience to God.

3. Why did God not leave all men to perish in their sin and misery?

Because of his mere love and mercy; that is, God was not under any obligation to save any part of the human race; but as a matter of fact, because of his love and mercy, he wished and planned to save some.

4. What part of the human race does God save out of their sin and misery?

God saves **his elect**, that is, those whom he has chosen from all eternity to be the heirs of salvation and eternal life.

5. Is it unfair or unjust for God to save only his elect, and pass by the rest of the human race?

No. It is not unfair or unjust because God does not **owe** salvation to anyone. All have sinned against him, forfeiting all rights, and God owes them nothing but judgment. When God chooses to save some, this is not a matter of obligation, but a free gift. Certainly it is **unequal** for God to save some and pass by others; but it is not **unjust**, because God is under no obligation to save any of those who have sinned against him.

6. How can we know whether we are among the elect?

There is no shortcut to assurance that we are of the elect. We can never find out by trying to pry into God's secret plans and purposes which he has not revealed to us. The only way to find out is to believe on Jesus Christ as our Saviour, repent of our sins, and faithfully use the means of

grace that God has appointed. In this way, sooner or later, we can come to a full assurance, or certainty, of our personal salvation, from which we can rightly conclude that we are indeed among the elect of God.

7. What is the name of the second covenant which God made with men?

The Covenant of Grace.

Q. 31. With whom was the Covenant of Grace made?

A. The Covenant of Grace was made with Christ as the second Adam, and in him with all the elect as his seed.

Scripture References:

Galatians 3:16. The Covenant of Grace made with Christ, Abraham's seed.

Romans 5:15-21. Christ the second Adam.

Isaiah 53: 10, 11. The elect, as Christ's "seed", represented by Christ in the Covenant of Grace.

Questions:

1. Who were the parties of the Covenant of Works?

God was the party who made the covenant; the other party was Adam as the representative of all his descendants, or the whole human race.

2. Why is Christ called "the second Adam"?

Because in the Covenant of Grace, Christ takes the place that Adam had in the Covenant of Works.

3. Whom did Christ represent in the Covenant of Grace?

He represented "all the elect".

4. Why is it wrong to say that Christ represented the whole human race?

(a) Christ's own words contradict such a view of the matter, as we see, for example, in John 17:9, "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine." Here Christ speaks of a certain body of people as **given** to him by God the Father; he prayed for them, but he did not pray for the population of the world in general. (b) If Christ in the Covenant of Grace represented the whole human race, then the whole human race will be saved. But the Bible teaches that **only part** of the human race will be saved. So if we say that Christ represented **everybody**, then we will have to say that **Christ does not really save anybody**, but only gives everybody "a chance" to be saved, and it is "up to each person to take it or leave it". That is a very common belief today, but the Bible is against it. Christ did not suffer and die to give everybody, or anybody, a "chance" to be saved; he suffered and died to **accomplish** the salvation of the elect.

5. When was the Covenant of Grace made?

It was made in eternity, before the creation of the world, between God the Father and God the Son. Read Ephesians 1:4. The Covenant of Grace was **made before** the Covenant of Works, but it was **revealed** to mankind **after** the Covenant of Works had been broken.

6. When was the Covenant of Grace first revealed to the human race?

Immediately after the fall, in God's words to the serpent, Genesis 3:15, where God promised that "the seed of the woman", that is, Christ, would finally destroy the serpent, that is, Satan and Satan's kingdom.

LESSON 2

How the Covenant of Grace Manifests God's Grace

Q. 32. How is the grace of God manifested in the second covenant?

A. The grace of God is manifested in the second covenant, in that he freely provideth and offereth to sinners a Mediator, and life and salvation by him; and requiring faith as the condition to interest them in him, promiseth and giveth his Holy Spirit to all his elect, to work in them that faith, with all other saving graces; and to enable them unto all holy obedience, as the evidence of truth of their faith and thankfulness of God, and as the way which he hath appointed them to salvation.

Scripture References:

Genesis 3:15. A Redeemer from sin promised.

Isaiah 42:6. Christ promised "for a covenant of the people".

John 6:27. Christ appointed by God the Father to give men eternal life.

1 John 5:11, 12. Eternal life given in the Son of God.

John 3:16. Faith required as the condition of interest in Christ.

John 1:12. Faith in Christ needed to become children of God.

Proverbs 1:23. God's Holy Spirit promised to his elect.

2 Cor. 4:13. Faith wrought in the elect by the Holy Spirit.

Galatians 5:22, 23. Various graces wrought in the elect by the Spirit.

Ezekiel 36:27. The elect enabled unto obedience by the Holy Spirit.

James 2:18, 22. Good works of the elect an evidence of their faith.

2 Cor. 5:14, 15. By a good life the elect show their thankfulness to God.

Ephesians 2:10. The Christian's good works foreordained by God, that he should walk in them.

Questions:

1. What is the meaning of the word "grace" when we speak of "the grace of God"?

God's grace means his love and favor given to those who deserve his wrath and curse because of sin.

2. How has God offered and provided a Mediator to his people?

God has **freely** offered and provided a Mediator, that is, as a **free gift**.

3. What is the meaning of the word "Mediator"?

A Mediator is a person who reconciles two parties who are at enmity with each other.

4. Why was it necessary for sinners to have a Mediator in order to be saved?

A Mediator was necessary because sinners could not reconcile **themselves** to God.

5. What does Christ, our Mediator, provide?

He provides salvation from sin, and eternal life, to those who receive him.

6. What condition is attached to the Covenant of Grace?

The condition attached to the Covenant of Grace is **faith in Jesus Christ**.

7. What is the meaning of the word "interest" in this question?

The word "interest" here means making sure that they will share in the benefits provided by the Mediator.

8. How do we get faith in Jesus Christ?

Saving faith in Jesus Christ is a gift of God.

We do not have it of ourselves, or by nature. No one can really believe on Christ unless God has given him the gift of faith.

9. How does God give us the gift of faith in Jesus Christ?

God gives us the gift of faith in Jesus Christ by the special work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts.

10. Since saving faith is a gift of God, do we need to try to believe on Christ, or should we just wait until God gives us the gift of faith?

Although it is true that saving faith is a gift of God, and we cannot get it of ourselves, still it is our duty to try to believe on Christ. If we really **want** to believe on Christ, that is a sign that God is giving us the gift of faith.

11. What other things does the Holy Spirit work in our hearts and lives besides faith?

He works "all other saving graces", including repentance, and sanctification with all that it includes.

12. What is the result of this work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts?

The result of this work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts is that we are made able to obey the law of God, which we could not do of ourselves because of our sinful and helpless condition by nature.

13. Why should a Christian want to obey the law of God?

A Christian should want to obey the law of God as an evidence of the truth of his faith and thankfulness to God.

14. What other reason is there why a Christian should want to obey the law of God?

A Christian should want to obey the law of God because that is "the way which God hath appointed to salvation". This does not mean that obeying God's law is any part of the ground of our salvation, but that being saved from sin unto righteousness, obedience to the law is the way that God has appointed for a saved person to walk in, and the person who is really saved will want to forsake sin and follow righteousness more and **more**.

LESSON 3

The Dispensations of the Covenant of Grace

Q. 33. Was the Covenant of Grace always administered after one and the same manner?

A. The Covenant of Grace was not always administered after the same manner, but the administrations of it under the Old Testament were different from those under the New.

Scripture References:

2 Cor. 3:6-9. The old and new dispensations of the Covenant of Grace contrasted.

Questions:

1. When did the Covenant of Works come to

an end as a way by which men could attain to eternal life?

The Covenant of Works, as a possible way of attaining eternal life, came to an end when our first parents ate the forbidden fruit. While the Covenant of Works is still in force today in that unsaved sinners are under the curse of the broken covenant, still no one can attain eternal life by the Covenant of Works today.

2. When did the Covenant of Grace begin to operate as the way for sinners to receive eternal life?

Immediately after the fall, when our first parents were driven from Eden. Genesis 3:15.

3. Why is it wrong to say that the Covenant of Grace began when Christ was crucified?

Because the Bible clearly teaches that God's people in all ages after the fall were saved by grace and in no other way.

4. What error concerning this question is common today?

It is very common today to hold that the Jews were saved by works, but Christians are saved by grace. Those who hold this view say that the Covenant of Works, as a way of gaining eternal life, did not end until Calvary.

5. Over against this common error, what principle does the Catechism set forth?

The Catechism teaches the **unity** of the Old Testament and the New Testament in the one Covenant of Grace. According to the Catechism, since Adam's fall there has been only **one** way of salvation and that has been by the Covenant of Grace. It is entirely wrong and harmful to set the Old Testament and the New Testament over against each other as if they taught **different** ways of salvation. The truth is that both Testaments teach one and the same way of salvation.

6. How can we account for the many obvious differences between the Old Testament and the New Testament?

The one way of salvation, or the Covenant of Grace, was **administered in different ways** under the two Testaments. We might illustrate this by the history of the United States. Through our national existence we have had one and the same Constitution, but that one constitution has been administered sometimes by one party and sometimes by another. A Democratic administration differs in some respects from a Republican administration, yet the constitution that is being administered is one and the same.

Q. 34. How was the Covenant of Grace administered under the Old Testament?

A. The Covenant of Grace was administered under the Old Testament, by promises, prophecies,

sacrifices, circumcision, the passover, and other types and ordinances, which did all fore-signify Christ then to come, and were for that time sufficient to build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah, by whom they then had full remission of sin, and eternal salvation.

Scriptural References:

Romans 15:8. Christ a minister of the Old Testament dispensation.

Acts 3:20, 24. Christ the true message of the Old Testament.

Hebrews 10:1. The law had a shadow of good things to come.

Romans 4:11. Abraham saved by imputed righteousness received by faith.

1 Cor. 5:7. Christ the true meaning of the passover.

Hebrews 11:13. The Old Testament saints, from "afar off", saw and embraced the promises of the gospel of Christ.

Galations 3:7-9, 14. The gospel preached of old unto Abraham; his faith essentially the same as the faith of New Testament believers.

Questions:

1. What is the first recorded promise of a Redeemer in the Old Testament? Genesis 3:15.

2. Give examples of other promises or prophecies of a coming Redeemer (a) From the Books of Moses; (b) From the Psalms; (c) From the prophetic books of the Old Testament.

(a) Genesis 49:10; Numbers 24:17; Deuteronomy 18:15. (b) Psalms 2, 22, 45, 110. (c) Isaiah 9:6, 7; Isaiah 11:1-5; Zechariah 9:9, 10; Malachi 3:1. (The student will easily be able to give a great many more such prophecies).

3. How did the Passover and other sacrifices point forward to Christ?

By the slaying of the lamb, and shedding its blood, they taught the people the truth that without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin, and that the coming Redeemer must suffer and die as a substitute for sinners.

4. What is meant by the word "types"?

A "type" means a kind of specimen or sample of something, given beforehand, in a smaller way or on a lower plane. Thus we may say that David is a type of Christ the conquering King; Solomon is a type of Christ reigning in eternal peace; Melchizedek is a type of Christ as High Priest; Moses is a type of Christ as Prophet, and so on.

5. What is the difference between a "type" and a "symbol"?

A symbol is an arbitrary sign used to denote

something else. Thus we say that in the anointing ceremony of the Old Testament, the **oil** is a symbol of the Holy Spirit; in the Lord's Supper, the **bread** and **wine** are symbols of Christ's body and blood; after the Flood, the **rainbow** was a symbol of God's covenant promise; often in the Bible, the number **seven** is used as a symbol for perfection, and the number **ten** as a symbol for completeness; in Revelation 13 the number **666** is a symbol for the Beast. A **type** differs from a symbol in that a type is not **arbitrarily** used to denote something else; there is a real and more or less obvious similarity between the **type** and the **antitype** (the fulfillment of the type). Thus there is an obvious resemblance between Melchizedek and Christ, and between Moses and Christ, in the matters typified. But there is no obvious similarity between oil and the Holy Spirit, nor between the rainbow and God's promise not to destroy the earth again by a flood.

6. What was the purpose of the sacrifices, types, ordinances, etc., of the Old Testament?

The purpose of all of them was to point forward to Christ, the coming Redeemer. This does not mean that every ordinance, etc., pointed directly to Christ himself. Rather, it means that all the types, ordinances, etc., pointed forward to some aspect of **the way of salvation through Christ**. For example, the disease of leprosy is plainly treated in the Old Testament as a symbol of **sin**. Thus the various rules and regulations concerning the disease of leprosy, its uncleanness, etc., were intended to emphasize the vileness and sinfulness of sin, and to show people their need of divine deliverance from it. In this way the rules about leprosy pointed forward to Christ.

7. What was the **effectiveness** of the Old Testament promises, prophecies, types, sacrifices and other ordinances?

These were sufficient, **for that time**, to build up the elect in faith in the promised Redeemer. We might compare these Old Testament ordinances to school-books prepared for children. Such books are usually full of pictures, because children readily grasp the meaning of pictures when it is hard for them to understand written descriptions or abstract discussions. But when the child has grown up, the pictures are no longer needed, and ordinary books are then suitable. In the Old Testament period God's people were treated as children, for that was their spiritual condition. God provided "pictures" — that is, the truths of redemption were portrayed before their eyes by a multitude of oft-repeated sacrifices, ordinances and symbols. These served to prop up their faith, we may say, until the coming of the Redeemer in person. When he came, the "pictures" were no longer needed.

8. What benefits did Old Testament believers receive from Christ?

They had full remission of sin, and eternal life, **right then**. It is an error to teach, as some do, that the Old Testament saints did not receive **full** remission of sin until Christ was crucified. Hebrews 11:39, 40 teaches that the Old Testament saints did not receive the full completion of their redemption, that is, **the resurrection of the body**, in their own times, for they must wait for that until the end of the world, when Old and New Testament believers will receive it together at one and the same time. But in the matter of **remission of sins** they were not left waiting. They received **full** remission of sins **when they believed**. This does not mean that they necessarily received the same degree of **assurance in their own minds** as New Testament believers receive. Remission of sins, in God's sight, is one thing; assurance of remission, in the believer's own mind, is another matter.

LESSON 4

The New Dispensation of the Covenant of Grace

Q. 35. How is the Covenant of Grace administered under the New Testament?

A. Under the New Testament, when Christ the substance was exhibited, the same covenant of grace was and still is to be administered in the preaching of the word, and the administration of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper; in which grace and salvation are held forth in more fulness, evidence, and efficacy, to all nations.

Scripture References:

Mark 16:15. Matthew 28:19, 20. Under the New Testament, the Covenant of Grace is to be administered throughout all nations, with baptism in the name of the Triune God.

1 Cor. 11:23-25. The Lord's Supper a New Testament ordinance of the Covenant of Grace.

2 Cor. 3:6-9. How the New Testament administration excels the Old Testament administration of the Covenant of Grace.

Hebrews 8:6, 10, 11. The superiority of the New Testament administration over the Old Testament administration of the Covenant of Grace.

Questions:

1. What other name is used for "The New Testament"?

The "New Covenant". The same Greek word may be translated either "Testament" or "Covenant" depending on the context in which it is used.

2. What is the relation of the New Testament or New Covenant to the Covenant of Grace?

The "New Testament" or "New Covenant" is

the **new dispensation** of the Covenant of Grace. It is the second dispensation under which the Covenant of Grace has been administered. The first dispensation began immediately after our first parents sinned against God, and ended when Christ was crucified. The second dispensation began at Calvary and will continue until the end of the world. It will be terminated by the Judgment Day.

3. What three meanings does the phrase "The New Testament" have?

(a) This phrase is used to denote a **period of time** in sacred history, from the crucifixion of Christ to the Judgment Day or end of the world. This same period of time is sometimes called **the age of the gospel**. (b) The same phrase is used to denote an **arrangement of religious operations and ordinances**, under which God administers the Covenant of Grace. (c) The same phrase, "The New Testament", is used to describe a portion of the Bible, namely, the 27 books written **after** the coming of Christ, which describe the nature and establishment of "The New Covenant".

4. Why does the Catechism speak of Christ as "the substance"?

This expression is used in contrast to the promises, prophecies, types, ordinances", etc., by which Christ and his salvation were **pictured** in the Old Testament period. Christ is the **substance**, or the reality, while the Old Testament types, sacrifices, etc., were only **shadows** pointing forward to Christ.

5. What are the main differences between the ordinances of the New Testament and those of the Old Testament?

(a) The ordinances of the New Testament are **fewer in number** than those of the Old Testament. Chiefly they are simply the preaching of the Word, baptism and the Lord's Supper; whereas in the Old Testament there were a large number of ordinances.

(b) The ordinances of the New Testament are **simpler in nature** than those of the Old Testament. Baptism, the Lord's Supper and the preaching of the Word are all very simple in their nature, whereas the ordinances of the Old Testament were very complicated, and far more difficult and inconvenient to observe, than the ordinances of the New Testament. For example, think of the elaborate ritual of the Passover; of the complicated ceremonies of the Day of Atonement; of all the detailed ceremonial laws concerning uncleanness, concerning foods, concerning sacrifices and offerings. For us who live under the New Testament, God has greatly **simplified** the administration of the Covenant of Grace.

(c) The ordinances of the New Testament are **more spiritual** than those of the Old Testament. Under the Old Testament there was much that appealed to the senses of sight and hearing, and

even the burning of sweet incense which appealed to the sense of smell. The tabernacle, and later the temple, were magnificent and glorious structures, with a great appeal to the senses. All of this outward display was well suited to the childish spiritual condition of God's people in those days. The people of Israel, spiritually considered, were children, and God taught them, we may say, by "picture books." But under the New Testament the people of God have come to adult age or maturity, and so God has provided a more spiritual administration of the Covenant of Grace. As Jesus said to the woman at the well of Samaria, "The hour cometh, and now is, when neither in this mountain, nor at Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father. . . The Hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him" (John 4:21, 23).

(d) The ordinances of the New Testament are **more effectual** than those of the Old Testament. The ordinances of the Old Testament were effectual, of course, to worshippers who had **faith**; but the ordinances of the New Testament are **more** effectual, for in them "grace and salvation are held forth in more fullness, evidence, and efficacy".

(e) The ordinances of the New Testament are **more universal** than those of the Old Testament. The ordinances of the Old Testament were limited to the one nation of Israel; under the New Testament, the gospel is to be preached, and the Covenant of Grace administered, among "all nations", that is, to the human race regardless of national boundaries.

6. What is the main point of similarity between the ordinances of the Old Testament and those of the New Testament?

The main point of similarity is that **both Testaments** are dispensations or administrations of **one and the same Covenant of Grace**. Both hold forth and one and the same "grace and salvation." The essential meaning of both is exactly the same; they differ only in external details and appearances; the real meaning and nature of both is identical. King David worshipped God by types and sacrifices, but he received exactly the same salvation (though not necessarily the same assurance and comfort in his own mind) as we receive through the preaching of the Word and the use of baptism and the Lord's Supper.

7. How many dispensations are there in the Bible?

The popular "Scofield Reference Bible" teaches that God's dealings with the human race are divided into **seven distinct and different dispensations**. This is certainly wrong if we define a "dispensation" as the Scofield Bible defines it, as a period of time during which God's dealings with the human race are characterized by some specific principle. At most there are **three** dispensations, one of the

Covenant of Works and two of the Covenant of Grace. Thus the first dispensation (the Covenant of Works) was from the creation of man until Adam fell into sin; the second dispensation (the

Old Testament) was from the fall of man until the crucifixion of Christ; the third dispensation (the New Testament) is from the crucifixion of Christ until the end of the world.

LESSON 5

The Mediator of the Covenant of Grace

Q. 36. Who is the Mediator of the Covenant of Grace?

A. The only Mediator of the Covenant of Grace is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, of one substance and equal with the Father, in the fulness of time became man, and so was and continues to be God and man, in two entire and distinct natures, and one person, for ever.

Scripture References:

1 Timothy 2:5. Christ the only Mediator between God and men.

John 1:1. The eternal and true deity of Christ.

John 1:14. John 10:30. Phil. 2:6. Christ equal with God the Father.

Galatians 4:4. In the fulness of time the Son of God became man.

Luke 1:35. Romans 9:5. Colossians 2:9. Christ's divine and human natures united in one divine person.

Hebrews 7:24, 25. Christ will continue as God and man forever.

Questions:

1. How many mediators are there between God and men?

There is one only.

2. How does the Roman Catholic Church practically deny this truth of the Bible?

By regarding Mary and the saints as mediators, praying to them, and hoping for their intercession with God on behalf of sinners.

3. What is meant by affirming that Christ is the **eternal** Son of God?

By affirming that Christ is the **eternal** Son of God, we mean that he has **always** been the Son of God, the second person of the divine Trinity, from all eternity. He did not become the Son of God when he became man nor at any time in the history of the created universe.

4. What is meant by affirming that Christ is **of one substance** with the Father?

By affirming that Christ is **of one substance with the Father**, we mean that there is only one God, and Jesus Christ is this one God just as truly as the Father is this one God. As Christians we do

not believe in **three** Gods, but in **one** God who exists in three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ is therefore not **like** God; he **is** God, the only God that there is. In him dwells, not a part of the fulness of the Godhead bodily, but **all** the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 2:9).

5. What is meant by affirming that Christ is **equal** with the Father?

By affirming that Christ is **equal with** the Father, we mean that so far as his nature is concerned, Christ is not subordinate to the Father in any way. By reason of his self-humiliation, during his life on earth, he was subordinate to the Father **in position**, for he took upon him the form of a servant. But **in nature**, even during his life on earth, he was, and is today, fully equal with God the Father.

6. How is the doctrine of **the deity of Christ** denied today?

(a) The doctrine of **the deity of Christ** is denied by those who say that Christ is divine because all men are divine. If all men are divine, then for Christ to be divine is nothing out of the ordinary. (b) The doctrine of the deity of Christ is denied by those who, while calling Christ "the Son of God", still refuse to say that he is of one substance and equal with the Father. Such people consider it a sin to worship Jesus Christ. (c) The doctrine of the deity of Christ is denied by those who accept his deity **only as a "limiting concept"**; that is, when they speak of Christ as divine, or call him "the Son of God", they do not mean that this is really the absolute truth about Christ; they only mean that Christ's "deity" is a convenient label for classifying Christ for the time being; in calling Christ "God" they do not mean that he really and truly is God, but only that he is "God" for us human beings—that he may occupy the place of God in our human thinking at the present time. It is obvious that the idea of Christ's deity as a "limiting concept" is something very different from the faith of orthodox historic Christianity in Christ's deity.

7. When did the eternal Son of God become man?

At a point in human history called by the Scriptures "the fulness of time" or "the fulness of the time", that is, the time appointed by God in the counsels of eternity, which was also the time when all the agelong preparations for Christ's incarnation had been completed.

8. How long will the Son of God continue to be man?

Christ, the eternal Son of God, became man at the time of his incarnation, was man as well as God throughout his life on earth, is man as well as God now in heaven, and will continue to be man as well as God for ever, to all eternity. The idea that Christ was human only during his earthly life is contrary to the teachings of the Bible on this subject. Revelation 5:6, for example, teaches that not only Christ's human nature but even the evidences of his crucifixion continue in heaven. Christ's heavenly high priestly ministry also depends on his possessing a true human nature in heaven: Hebrews 7:25; 5:1-5.

9. What is the importance of the word "entire" in this answer of the Catechism?

The word "entire" emphasizes the truth that Christ is not only truly but **fully** God and **fully** man both on earth and in heaven. There is no element lacking from either his deity or his humanity. With respect to his human nature, Christ possesses both a human body and a human soul, in addition to his **divine Spirit**. This is often overlooked, and Christ is wrongly represented as composed of a divine Spirit and a human body. Such a Christ would not be **fully human**. Because of his divine nature, Christ must not be thought of as less than **fully God**, nor in any sense subordinate to God the Father except **positionally**, by reason of his voluntarily assumed position of a servant while he was here on earth.

10. What is the importance of the word "distinct" in this answer of the Catechism?

The word "distinct" teaches the truth that Christ's two natures, divine and human, while they were and are mysteriously united in one divine person, still are not in any way mixed, blended or confused. Each remains distinct and retains its separate identity. Christ's divine nature always remains his divine nature; his human nature al-

ways remains his human nature; these two cannot be mixed in any way. Christ is not a being halfway between God and man; he is a person who is both God and man at the same time; he is as truly God as if he were not man at all; and he is as truly man as if he were not God at all. In the record of our Lord's life on earth, at one point his deity shines forth, as when he said "Before Abraham was, I am"; at another point his humanity is disclosed, as when he said "I thirst." But the two are never mixed or confused in any way.

11. What is the importance of the statement that Christ is "one person"?

This statement avoids the error of those who have thought of Christ as a divine person united to a human person, so that Christ had a double personality. We should realize that according to the teachings of the Scriptures, Christ, while he possessed **two natures**, was **only one person**. It follows from this that **Christ, while a human being, is not a human person**. From all eternity he has been a **divine person**. At a certain point in history, this divine person took to himself, not a human person, but a human **nature** which lacked personality. Christ therefore was and is a divine person with a human nature. We should realize that **human nature** is that which all members of the human race have in common (namely, a human body and a human soul), whereas **personality** is that which distinguishes one member of the human race from all others. In the matter of human nature, all human beings are exactly alike; in the matter of personality, of all the people that have ever lived, there have never been two alike; each individual is different from all others. We should always be careful to avoid the common error and popular misconception which regards Christ as a **human person**. If Christ were a human person, then certainly it would be idolatry to worship him. But because he is a divine person, even though possessed of a human nature, it is not idolatry to worship him as the Christian Church always has done.

LESSON 6

How the Son of God Became Man

Q. 37. How did Christ, being the Son of God, become man?

A. Christ the Son of God became man, by taking to himself a true body, and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her substance, and born of her, yet without sin.

Scripture References:

John 1:14. The Son of God became man, with a human body.

Matthew 26:38. Christ possessed a human soul, capable of sorrow.

Luke 1:27, 31, 42. Galations 4:4. Christ born of the Virgin Mary.

Hebrews 4:15; 7:26. Christ was and is without sin.

Questions:

1. What are the parts or elements of which our human nature is composed?

Our human nature consists of two parts or elements, namely **body** and **soul**. The body is made of material substance, that is, of chemical elements such as oxygen, hydrogen, calcium, carbon, etc. The soul, which is also called the **spirit**,

is entirely different from the body, because it is not made of material substance. The soul and body are mysteriously joined together in one individual **personality**. Christ, however, was not a human person; his human body and soul together were united to his divine person.

2. What does the Bible teach about Christ's human body?

The Bible teaches that Christ's human body was and is **real**; it was not a mere illusion or appearance, but a real body made of material substance, just as our body is.

3. What error was held by some people in the ancient Church concerning Christ's body?

Some people held that Christ's body was not real, but only imaginary, or an illusion. They admitted that he **seemed** to have a human body, but they denied that it could be **real**.

4. Besides his human body, what element of human nature did Christ take to himself?

As explained in the previous lesson, besides his human body, he took to himself a human soul, without which he could not be a truly **human** being.

5. What is meant by saying that Christ took to himself a **reasonable** soul?

In this statement the word "reasonable" means **rational**, or having the power to think and reason.

6. In addition to Christ's human soul, what spiritual nature does he have?

In addition to his human soul, he is a divine Spirit, God the Son, the second Person of the divine Trinity.

7. In what way was Christ's birth an exception to the ordinary birth of human beings?

Christ had **no human father**. He was miraculously conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary. Thus the Holy Spirit's power wrought a **supernatural** work, and Jesus, contrary to the laws of nature, was born of a virgin, without a human father.

8. What false belief is very commonly held today concerning Christ's birth?

It is very common today to say that Joseph was the real father of Jesus.

9. What should we think of such a belief?

To say that Joseph was the real father of Jesus is **blasphemous**, because (a) it implies that Mary, Jesus' mother, was an immoral person; (b) it implies that the Scripture accounts of the virgin birth of Jesus are false, and therefore that the Word of God is an unreliable mixture of truth and error.

10. How should we answer those who say that the virgin birth of Christ is taught in only two of the four Gospels, and therefore we need not believe it?

(a) If it were taught in only **one verse of one Gospel**, we would be bound to believe it on the authority of God's Word. (b) As a matter of fact Matthew and Luke, the only Gospels that record Jesus' **birth**, both affirm that he was born of the Virgin Mary. Since the other two Gospels, Mark and John, do not speak of Jesus' birth, infancy or childhood at all, of course we cannot expect them to present the truth that he was born of the Virgin Mary.

11. Although Jesus partook of human nature the same as our own, composed of body and soul, what great difference existed between his human nature and ours?

Our human nature is **sinful**. We are born in trespasses and sins, with a sinful heart and a tendency to commit sin. But Jesus was born, by the miracle-working power of the Holy Spirit, with a **sinless** human nature (Note Luke 1:35, "that holy thing, which shall be born of thee . . ."). He was born without the stain or original sin and he never committed actual transgressions.

12. Since Mary, the mother of Jesus, was a sinner like other people, how could Jesus, her Son, be born with a **sinless** human nature?

This was a special miracle, accomplished by the almighty power of God. We cannot doubt that Mary was sinful, although saved by divine grace. By nature she had a sinful heart as we all do. Only by the supernatural power of God could her child Jesus be born with a perfectly sinless heart and nature.

13. What is the importance of the doctrine of the virgin birth of Jesus today?

This doctrine is an outstanding landmark in the controversy between modernism and orthodox Christianity. Perhaps no other single doctrine of the Christian faith has been subjected to so much ridicule and scoffing. Where the doctrine of the virgin birth of Christ is given up, belief in the full inspiration and authority of the Holy Scriptures goes with it, and it is usually not long until most of the other doctrines of Christianity are given up too.

LESSON 7

Why the Mediator Must be God

Q. 83. Why was it requisite that the Mediator should be God?

A. It was requisite that the Mediator should be God, that he might sustain and keep the human nature from sinking under the infinite wrath of God, and the power of death; give worth and efficacy to his sufferings, obedience, and intercession; and to satisfy God's justice, procure his favor, purchase a peculiar people, give his Spirit to them, conquer all their enemies, and bring them to everlasting salvation.

Scripture References:

Acts 2:24, 25. Romans 1:4 compared with Romans 4:25. Hebrews 9:14. The Mediator must be God in order that he might keep the human nature from sinking under the wrath of God and power of death.

Acts 20:28. Hebrews 9:14. Hebrews 7:25-28. The Mediator must be God in order to give worth and efficacy to his sufferings, obedience and intercession.

Romans 3:24-26. The Mediator must be God in order to satisfy God's justice.

Ephesians 1:6. Matthew 3:17. The Mediator must be God in order to procure God's favor.

Titus 2:13, 14. The Mediator must be God in order to purchase a peculiar people.

Galatians 4:6. The Mediator must be God in order to give his Spirit to his purchased people.

Luke 1:68, 69, 71, 74. The Mediator must be God in order to conquer all the enemies of his purchased people.

Hebrews 5:8, 9. Hebrews 9:11-15. The Mediator must be God in order to bring his purchased people to everlasting salvation.

Questions:

1. Why could not an ordinary human being, such as Moses, David or Paul, act as Mediator and save the human race from sin?

All ordinary human beings are themselves sinners, and therefore would be disqualified for the work of saving others from sin. Those who are themselves in need of salvation cannot accomplish the salvation of others.

2. Why could not God, by a miracle, provide a sinless human being, such as Adam was before the fall, to act as Mediator and reconcile us to God?

Even a sinless human being, if merely human, would not have been able to endure the wrath and curse of God as Christ did. It was necessary that

the Mediator be God in order to sustain and support his human nature in its temptations and sufferings.

3. How could Jesus Christ, who was only one person, "give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45) and bear the penalty for the sins of many people?

If Jesus Christ had been only a human being — even a sinless human being — at most he could have acted as substitute for only one other person. Then there would have to be as many Saviours as there were sinners. One life could, perhaps, if God were willing to consent to such an arrangement, be substituted for one life. But because Jesus Christ was not only a human being, but also truly divine, it was possible for him to "give his life a ransom for many", becoming the true substitute of all the people of God. His divine nature gave an infinite value to his human nature, so that he could suffer and die for many people at the same time.

4. When Jesus was tempted by the devil, was it possible for him to commit sin?

Since Jesus Christ was truly God, we must conclude that it was actually impossible for him to commit sin. Still the Bible teaches that he experienced a real temptation. How the temptation could be real, while at the same time it was impossible for him to commit sin, is a mystery which we cannot hope to understand.

5. How does the fact that Jesus Christ, the Mediator, is truly God, guarantee the success of a plan of salvation?

If Jesus Christ were only a human being — even a perfect human being — it would have been possible for him to fail in his work, by yielding to temptation and falling into sin. In that case the Second Adam would have been a failure just as the first Adam was, by disobeying the will of God. But because Jesus Christ was not only human, but also truly divine, he was and is almighty. Therefore his success is a certainty, since he can neither fail in his work, nor fall into sin.

Q. 39. Why was it requisite that the Mediator should be man?

A. It was requisite that the Mediator should be man, that he might advance our nature, perform obedience to the law, suffer and make intercession for us in our nature, have a fellow-feeling of our infirmities; that we might receive the adoption of sons, and have comfort and access with boldness unto the throne of grace.

Scripture References:

Hebrews 2:16. Christ took not the nature of angels but human nature.

Galatians 4:4. The Mediator must be man in order that he might be under the law.

Hebrews 2:14. Hebrews 7:24, 25. The Mediator must be man in order that he might suffer and make intercession for us in our nature.

Hebrews 4:15. The Mediator must be man in order that he might experience a fellow-feeling of our infirmities.

Galatians 4:5. The Mediator must be man in order that we might receive the adoption of sons.

Hebrews 4:16. The Mediator must be man in order that we might have access to the throne of grace.

Questions:

1. Why could the angel Gabriel or some other angel not have become a Mediator to save the human race from sin?

The angels are not members of the human race; they do not possess human nature; therefore none of them could be qualified to become the Second Adam to undo the wrong done by the first Adam.

2. Why was it necessary that the Mediator "partake of flesh and blood", that is, possess a human nature?

Because to redeem the human race, the Mediator must act as the **representative** of human beings, and in order to be a representative of human beings, he must first of all be a **member of the human race**. Even in ordinary human organizations, a person cannot be an officer until he is first a member. Christ could not be a Redeemer of the human race unless he was first of all a member of the human race. Since sin and ruin came by man, redemption must come by man too (1 Cor. 15:21, "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead").

3. Why must the Mediator perform obedience to the law?

Adam and all his posterity had broken the law of God and lived in violation of that law. It was necessary that the Second Adam keep the

law of God perfectly. God himself is not under the law; he is the **Lawgiver**. Jesus Christ had to be truly human so that he could be truly under the law of God, and thus succeed where Adam failed, in meeting the condition of the Covenant of Works, namely a perfect obedience to the law of God.

4. Why was it necessary for the Mediator to be truly human in order to be our High Priest?

A true priest, according to God's appointment, must be chosen from among men and must be able to **sympathize** with the sufferings and troubles of human beings because he has experienced suffering and trouble himself. Read Hebrews 5:1, 2, and note that these verses do not speak especially concerning Christ; they only set forth the nature of the priestly office in general — the qualifications of **any** priest. Since Jesus Christ was to be our High Priest, he must meet these qualifications too.

5. But cannot God himself sympathize with our human sufferings?

God knows all about our human sufferings, and has pity or compassion on them. We may say that God has sympathy **for** but not **with** our human sufferings. The word **sympathize** literally means "to suffer with" someone. Since God is an infinite Being, and suffering implies limitation, God himself, in his own nature, cannot suffer, and therefore he cannot really sympathize **with** our sufferings. Many people speak carelessly about God "suffering" who should realize that this is contrary to the truth that God is **infinite** and **unchangeable**. Suffering by its very nature implies limitation and change; therefore an infinite and unchangeable being cannot suffer. God knows all about our sufferings, for he knows all things, but he cannot experience them in his own nature. The only way that God could experience our human sufferings was by becoming human, as he did. The Son of God, a divine person, took to himself a human nature; and thus God experienced human sufferings, not in his own nature, but in his adopted human nature.

(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.

SECOND THOUGHTS ON THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS, by F. F. Bruce. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub-

lishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1956, pp. 144. \$2.50.

This is one of many books on the Dead Sea Scrolls. It should not be considered as a final authority as the findings have increased since the writing of the book, and as the scrolls are presently in the process of being read.

The book does give a good summary of the scrolls, how they came to be found, what they are, and their probable importance. Their importance cannot be fully known until the writings are translated.

Professor Bruce covers rather well the background of the Essenes, the group which buried the scrolls. He spends some time telling of their community life in the light of the scrolls themselves. There are in this volume no passages or scrolls translated, but verses are translated throughout the book to give comparison readings.

It would be recommended as a general book on the subject, as it does provide a background for the many articles and mentions of the scrolls with which we all come in contact (e.g., the television play based on the finding of the scrolls).

— Robert Fullerton

THE EPISTLES OF PAUL TO THE PHILIPPIANS AND TO PHILEMON, by Jacobus J. Mueller. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1955, pp. 200. \$3.50.

This volume is part of the New International Commentary on the New Testament, and contains a foreword by N. B. Stonehouse, editor. The book is divided into two sections, the first being a commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians, and the second on the Epistle to Philemon. Each section contains an introduction which takes up such questions as the authorship, the purpose of the letter, the time and place of its origin, and an outline of the epistle. In this way, the author sets forth his views, and explains them to the reader right at the start, without cluttering up the exposition proper with explanations of the various opinions. The Scripture text used is that of the American Standard Version of 1901, and each section under study is printed in full at the beginning of each chapter.

Dr. Mueller's exposition is clear, and makes easy reading for the layman who is not familiar with the Greek text, yet it is by no means shallow or superficial. For the serious student, the footnotes will hold more interest, as most of the exegetical and critical notes appear there.

The exposition of Philippians 2:5-11, with its exegetical footnotes takes up two chapters; it is ably done, and indicates the author's sound Christology. In a footnote, Mueller carefully points out the errors of the modern so-called "Kenotic Theories," and shows quite plainly how the improper interpretation of this passage in effect annuls the Scriptural doctrine of the Trinity. Dr.

Mueller's view is that the "Kenosis," or emptying of Christ consisted not in an emptying of His divine attributes, for then He would have ceased to be God; the emptying was in a metaphorical sense — to bring to nought, or to make worthless. Christ, in emptying Himself, took the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. "He emptied Himself by taking the form of a servant."

This volume contains a helpful explanation of the abbreviations used, an index of the chief subjects, and an index of the Scripture references used throughout the commentary. All of this adds to the usefulness of the volume, and makes it easier to use for the person who is not familiar with abbreviations used for the different manuscripts and versions of the text.

— Joseph Caskey

THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS, by Charles F. Pfeiffer. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1957, pp. 107. \$2.50.

Dr. Pfeiffer, Professor of Old Testament Languages and Literature at Moody Bible Institute, here gives a very interesting and instructive picture of what these scrolls mean to the evangelical Christian. In doing so he has also created respect for Biblical archaeology and textual criticism — the scholarship the layman has come to fear as the enemy of sound doctrine. It is clear, of course, that Dr. Pfeiffer does not accept all the hypotheses of the higher critics. His discussion of the contribution of Biblical scholarship to a correct understanding of the text of Scripture is, in the mind of reviewer, worth the price of the book.

Dr. Pfeiffer says that the last word is yet to be said as to who were the writers and the characters described in the writings, and therefore when they were written. The chief value of the scrolls is in the light they throw on Old Testament language, the life and religious thought of their day, and the canon of Scripture they reflect. Contrary to earlier predictions they give no basis for change in the text of any Old Testament books.

This book is most readable, and should be in every church library.

— E. C. Copeland

HEICHER FILING SYSTEM FOR MINISTERS, MISSIONARIES, ETC., by M. K. W. Heicher. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1957, pp. iv, 86. \$2.00.

This system is suggested for "ministers, missionaries, church school teachers and other church workers." It was developed by the editor of Doran's Minister's Manual. It appears to be a very simple, workable method of filing articles, clippings, page references to information in books and current magazines, as well as one's own sermons and articles.

The book consists of procedural instructions, a table of subjects in alphabetical order with filing numbers, and a table of subjects in numerical order. There are about 170 numbers for additional subjects; thus it is really expandable and adaptable to the individual user.

The beginning worker, especially, should find this system a real aid in his study.

— E. C. Copeland

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS: A STUDY MANUAL, by Gleason L. Archer, Jr. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1957, pp. 108, paper cover. \$1.50.

This study manual is the first in the publishers' Shield Bible Study Series. The aim is to aid the pastor or Bible teacher in studying and directing the study of the Bible in a thorough and detailed manner at an advanced level. It is written in language and style adaptable to the average student or parishoner. The writer of this volume is Professor of Biblical Languages at Fuller Theological Seminary.

The introduction discusses authorship, date, and addressees of the Epistle in a brief and enlightening manner. Following a detailed outline clearly presenting the theme and natural development of the Epistle, the text is taken up verse by verse and phrase by phrase. Helpful Greek words and expressions are given in English characters and translated. The treatment is that of Reformed theology, a good example being the discussion of the much-debated passage in chapter 6:1-8. There are sentences here and there that are inconsistent with this position, however — e.g., “. . . for Christ gives Himself to man just as far as man gives himself to Him” (p. 40), and the explanation of 8:10, which seems to assume that obedience under the Old Covenant was only because of the constraint of fear or duty, that the law was not written on hearts because the Holy Spirit had not taken up “residence in the believer's soul” and therefore there was no New Birth.

The work is in general a very useful one, and the publishers are to be congratulated on their efforts to stimulate Bible study in this way.

— E. C. Copeland

GRACE FOR TODAY, by William Goulooze. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1957, pp. 114. \$2.50.

This is the sixth and last book on the subject of suffering by this author, who was himself a sufferer for nine years. Copies of this and other books by the same author can be had for free distribution to sufferers by writing Victory Mission, 385 College Avenue, Holland, Michigan. This is a foundation set up by the author before his death for this purpose.

The author was a pastor in the Reformed Church of America and a professor in their Western Theological Seminary, Holland, Michigan. The book consists of ten meditations written in a very personal style upon the “grace” given him of God when specialists at Mayo Brothers Hospital told him that his disease (cancer) had returned (for the third time) and that there was nothing more that they could do for him. The meditations are in two parts: Grace for Submission, and Grace for Service.

It is indeed a good book to put in the hands of a sufferer who has little or no hope of recovery.

— E. C. Copeland

THE LIMITS OF MEDICAL RESPONSIBILITY, by A. S. Aldis. Tyndale Press, 39 Bedford Square, London, W. C. 1, England. 1957, pp. 16, paper cover. Sixpence.

This pamphlet is of special interest to the British practitioner as it is especially concerned with the British doctor's problems, in particular the ethical problems arising out of the National Health Service. It does, however, take up such world-wide problems as those posed by the age of skepticism in which we live, scientific advance and professional courtesy. The author's thesis is that the answer to all these problems must be found in the Christian faith. The closing section, the longest, is on “The Christian Way” and is very well said. Dr. Aldis considers it the Christian doctor's responsibility to present Christ and the way of salvation in particular to those for whom medical science can do nothing further.

It should be suggestive to all medical men.

— E. C. Copeland

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

In this volume “the most important subject that can engage our minds,” as the foreword puts it, is searched out for our meat and drink. Mr. Pink, with his logical and precise analysis, has made the great doctrine of the Atonement of Jesus Christ both interesting and pertinent to everyday life and thought.

Even the seasoned student of the Word will find deep, rich treasure here, yet the young in the faith will find this book within his capacity if he has an ordinary education. Indeed, it would be an excellent thing if those newly awakened to saving faith and its wonderful deliverance might be directed to this book to feed their souls on this great message which contains the very heart of our Christian hope. There is repetition and overlapping at times, but that is to its advantage in placing the imprint of these structural elements in our thinking. And for those more mature in their

Christian life, there will be such arresting and thought-provoking ideas as this:

"The charge which was laid against Christ as He stood before the Sanhedrin, as brought against those whom He represented was not false! Guilty of blasphemy against God each of us most certainly is. Therefore as the official Representative of His sinful people, the Lord Jesus stood silent, putting in no plea to arrest judgment. So true was the accusation against us, there was no need of witnesses (Matt. 26:65)!" (page 75).

Or this, with regard to those who insist that the Christian is under no obligation to observe the law:

"They suppose that an inward consent to the holiness of His commands presents a higher ideal of spiritual freedom, than subjection to an external code. But the reverse is the fact. The withdrawal of objective law is really the denial of responsibility, and liberty is infringed, when responsibility is infringed. Spiritual liberty is not the power to do as we please (that is licentiousness), but the power to do as we ought; it is the being delivered from the bondage of sin which prevented us from serving God. The true nature of spiritual liberty is clearly enough defined in Psalm 119:45: 'I will walk at liberty: for I seek thy precepts.'" (pp. 234 f.).

We may find Mr. Pink censorious at times, possibly because of his own very logical thought habits: "The horrible and blasphemous idea of the Arminians is. . ." (p. 121); "To reason. . . that Christ made atonement for no man's sins in particular, but only for sin in general, is really too purile (sic) for serious consideration" (p. 264).

Here is a book that should find its place on the Christian home bookshelf, and it will stand many re-readings.

— Lester E. Kilpatrick

BIBLE DOCTRINE: UNIT ONE, BOOKS ONE AND TWO, by Dorothy Partington. Committee on Christian Education of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 728 Schaff Bldg., 1505 Race St., Philadelphia 2, Pa. Two volumes, 1955, total pages 325; paper covers, plastic spiral binding. Teacher's Manual, \$1.50. Pupil's Workbook, \$1.25.

This is a very worthwhile project, though obviously in the exploratory stage. The number and nature of the "errata" listed on a page inserted is largely revision of material, rather than mere correction of typographical errors. The project is one that gives promise of something solid and basic, yet with interest and appeal for those of Junior High and High School age. The paper, print and make up are good.

If these books could be used in the Sabbath Schools of the Covenanter Church it would contribute greatly to grounding our youth in the

basic Biblical framework of our faith. Of course, in questions that bear on the materials of worship and praise especially, the teacher would need to present additional material. Though the books are expensive, they should serve as a permanent reference book for the pupil. They are well illustrated and documented where archaeological information is presented.

One minor criticism is that there is sometimes a lack of clarity in the writing. After speaking of evangelistic meetings and the "speaker", a later paragraph refers to the "evangelist" and one wonders whether it is one of the writers of the Gospels to whom reference is made. Reference is made in Lesson 10, Book II, to Lesson 4, to clarify the significance of "water" in Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus. Yet neither "water" nor "washing" is mentioned in that lesson. Only the laver is listed as part of the tabernacle furniture.

This reviewer would raise a question as to the wisdom of making prominent one or another of the possible wrong answers to the catechism question first, then seeking to show the correct view. An illustration is found in the discussion of Catechism Question One, where a morbid picture of one Richard Corey, a suicide, is presented. Another is found in the lesson on effectual calling, where the baptistic pattern of conversion, all too commonly considered as the norm even in churches holding to covenant theology, is first presented, and then shown to be defective.

Should not the correct answer be made as demonstrably the proper answer as possible, first? Then, with it dominating the field, it can be thrown into sharper focus by calling attention to various errors popularly held.

Don't wait for a work book perfect in every detail. Get this one and use it.

— Lester E. Kilpatrick

CO-OPERATION WITHOUT COMPROMISE, A HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF EVANGELICALS, by James DeForest Murch. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1956, pp. 220. \$3.50.

This book is an authorized history of the National Association of Evangelicals. Its author is the Editor of **United Evangelical Action**, the official organ of the N.A.E., and he is well qualified to trace the history and the various activities of the association.

The N.A.E. was organized in the early 1940's by a group of evangelical leaders who were deeply concerned about the growing power of liberalism in the Protestant Churches. Their purpose in the establishment of the N.A.E. was to provide a medium for voluntary action among the several groups of evangelical Christians in America. It

was decided at the beginning that the new organization was not to be a council of churches, but a voluntary association of evangelical churches, denominations, organizations and individuals. It does not seek the union of churches, and has no means of exercising control over its constituent members. The basis for membership in the association is acceptance of a 7-point Statement of Faith, which affirms belief in what are commonly regarded as the cardinal doctrines of Evangelical Christianity.

Undoubtedly one of the strongest temptations in the work of an inter-church agency such as the N.A.E. is the temptation to overstep its proper sphere of activity, and to attempt to perform some of those functions which Christ has definitely committed to the visible Church. The N.A.E. ran headlong into this vital issue in connection with its work in the field of evangelism. In 1945 a full-time Secretary of Evangelism was appointed, and the N.A.E. employed evangelists to go out under its auspices to plan and conduct city-wide campaigns. This policy met with strong criticism from some of the churches on the ground that this was encroaching on one of the most cherished functions of the churches themselves, and that methods of procedure were being proposed which were distasteful to some of the members of the Association. It was finally decided that the N.A.E., while continuing by various means to encourage evangelistic effort, would leave the actual work of evangelism to the churches.

The author of this history thus makes it clear that the N.A.E. cannot do the work of the Church, and has no intention of developing into a Church. Your reviewer feels that this only serves to emphasize the fact that while the N.A.E. offers a certain measure of help and fellowship to evangelicals in all branches of Protestantism, it does not in any adequate way answer the dilemma of the evangelical Christian who is a member of a denomination controlled by liberals. The actual work of training ministers, sending out missionaries and evangelists, etc., must be done by the churches, and of course can only be effectively done by those churches that remain faithful to God's Truth.

This book gives a full and interesting discussion of the many fields of work in which the N.A.E. and its constituent agencies are operating. Of special interest is the work that is being done in the fields of education, radio broadcasting and religious liberty. This book is commended to all who are interested in learning more about the principles and work of this organization.

— John McMillan

ALL YE THAT LABOR: AN ESSAY ON CHRISTIANITY, COMMUNISM AND THE PROBLEM OF EVIL, by Lester DeKoster. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1956, pocket size, pp. 128. \$1.50.

This is the first volume to appear in a new series of books which the Eerdmans company is publishing, known as the Pathway Books. According to the publishers, these books are designed "to help teachers, students, preachers, and laymen keep themselves informed on the important subjects and the crucial problems which confront the Christian Church today. They are designed to help the reader bear witness to the Christian faith in the modern world."

All Ye That Labor is an essay dealing with Communism and the challenge which it presents to Christianity. The author contrasts Christianity and Communism by showing the way in which each deals with the problem of evil. The title of the book calls attention to the Communist's "labor" to save himself, instead of recognizing that only God can save him. The author points out that the grave weakness in Karl Marx's analysis of evil and its cure lies in the fact that he does not hold man responsible for his sin, and as a result he can assure no man of his personal salvation.

This book provides, in brief form, a very valuable treatment of the theories of Marx, which have formed the life-blood of Communist practice. The average citizen of the Free World needs to be aroused to the fact that we cannot effectively oppose Communism without some understanding of its true nature. Mr. DeKoster of course does not stop there, but goes on to present the Christian answer to Communism, and to the evils which have fostered its growth. He is forthright in his attack on the philosophy of *laissez faire* — let people do as they choose. He insists that that theory as developed by Adam Smith failed to take evil seriously, and rested upon false premises just as certainly as did the theories of Marx. "The control by legislation of minimum wages, hours of work, the labor of women and children, and the conditions of labor are all in violation of the *laissez faire* theory. But they have contributed to the national welfare in so generally recognized a way that no one seriously proposes the abolition of such controls."

Strong emphasis is placed by the author on the responsibility of Christian stewardship and the fact that each individual must one day render his account to a just Judge. God grants man the right to property, as He grants him talents and the freedom to use them, only that they may be employed for divine ends. The author closes his work by saying that until we earnestly endeavor to bring every economic relation under the dominion of love, we are not effectively engaged in anti-Marxism.

This book is an excellent contribution, from a constructive Christian standpoint, to the fight against Communism.

— John McMillan

HANDBOOK OF BIBLE HISTORY, BOOK II: OLD TESTAMENT FROM THE KINGDOM OF

DAVID TO THE CLOSE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT PERIOD, by George Stob. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1956, pp. 142. Paper \$1.00. Cloth \$1.50.

This handbook is the second in a series. The first covered from the Creation to the Kingdom of David. This book covers the period from David and the Kingdom to the rebuilding of Jerusalem by Ezra and Nehemiah. The third in the series is on the New Testament.

There are twenty-five lessons in this book and an appendix which contains the chronology of the kings. It is a book which appears to be well suited to the needs of religious education classes. The lesson comprises a Scripture reading (may be several chapters); the story (abbreviated from the Scripture reading); an outline of the teaching; and a series of questions. The questions are gathered together in three groups: Group I for children in the lower grades, 3, 4, 5; Group II for grades 6, 7, 8, including not only factual questions but thought-provoking questions; Group III "are intended to probe more deeply into the theology and ethics and the particular revelational teaching of the Scripture reading, and to provide a basis for advanced discussion."

Of the 25 lessons, 4 are devoted to David, 3 to Solomon, and one to the time when the kingdom is divided. The remaining lessons have to do with the apostasy of the divided kingdom. Those questions which are thought-provoking and up to date. Although these events took place centuries ago, the student is brought to the realization that the problem is with us today.

This Handbook would be of great help to those who are responsible for religious instruction.

— Charles S. Sterrett

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE OLD TESTAMENT, by J. A. Thompson. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1957, pp. 121, pocket size. \$1.50.

This is a handy, brief and readable introduction to the subject of Old Testament archaeology. It will serve as a good help to the reader who has no previous knowledge of the subject. The light shed upon the Old Testament by archaeological discoveries is strikingly brought out.

The reviewer regrets greatly that the author of this book adheres to the so-called late dating of the Exodus and related events. "Our general conclusion is that a date of 1300 B. C. for the Exodus would suit the facts disclosed by the archaeologists working in Egypt" (p. 47). This, it should be pointed out, involves giving the fallible conclusions of "the archaeologists working in Egypt" priority over a necessary inference from an explicit statement of the infallible Word of God, for I Kings 6:1 states that the fourth year of Solomon's reign,

when the construction of the Temple was begun, was the four hundred and eightieth year after the Exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt. This statement of I Kings 6:1 requires that the Exodus be dated at or about 1440 B. C., or 140 years earlier than Thompson dates it. This difficulty is recognized by the author, who attempts very lamely to relieve the situation by referring to the Septuagint (which gives 440 years instead of 480 years) and by suggesting that the 480 years of I Kings 6:1 may be based on a symbolic use of numbers. The reviewer would add that apart from the difficulty with I Kings 6:1, dating the Exodus at 1300 B. C. gives rise to further difficulties, for this leaves a bare 300 years for all the events between the Exodus and David — the Wilderness Wanderings, the conquest of Canaan under Joshua, the entire period of the Judges, and the reign of Saul. The period of the Book of Judges alone covers at the very least more than 300 years (Judges 11:26). For a convincing defence of the view that the Exodus took place about 1440 B. C., the reader is referred to **Archeology and the Old Testament**, by M. F. Unger.

In a brief statement about the Ten Plagues in Egypt, it seems to this reviewer that the supernatural character of these plagues is somewhat toned down by the author's statement that the plagues "are neither improbable nor unusual. They are part of the local color of Egypt. No doubt they were more serious than usual, and the last plague, namely the death of the firstborn, (Ex. 12), was one without parallel" (pp. 50, 51).

At another point the author seems to soft-pedal the supernatural character of the Biblical narrative. "The story of Israel's fear at the report of the spies and of her failure to proceed with the conquest at that time, is well known. The people turned back and remained in the wilderness for many years. When they finally decided to move, they proceeded at once to the east and, skirting Edom and Moab, were able to launch their attack from the east" (p. 55). But according to the Biblical narrative, the people of Israel wanted to go ahead with the conquest of the Promised Land the next day after their rebellion in the incident of the Ten Spies (Numbers 14:40). Moses, however, declared that the Lord would not be with them (Numbers 14:41,42), and the people were sentenced by God to wander in the wilderness for forty years (Numbers 14:33, 34). When they finally did enter the Promised Land it was not the people of Israel who "decided to move", but God who gave supernatural guidance through the miraculous pillar of cloud, by which the Israelites knew when they were to remain encamped and when they were to go forward (Exodus 13:21, 22; 40:36-38; Numbers 9:15-23). Why not say, "When the Lord finally commanded them to move," instead of "When they finally decided to move"? Perhaps this reviewer is naive, but he has been taught to think of the Lord God as the

One of whose mighty acts the Old Testament is primarily a record.

— J. G. Vos

OUT OF THE EARTH: THE WITNESS OF ARCHAEOLOGY TO THE NEW TESTAMENT, by E. M. Blaiklock. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1957, pp. 80, pocket size. \$1.50.

Here we have a most instructive, readable introductory handbook on the bearing of archaeological discovery on the New Testament. The

principal discoveries are described and their importance for the study of the New Testament is explained. Special attention is given to Sir William Ramsay's discoveries in Asia Minor as these throw a flood of light on the Acts of the Apostles and Revelation chapters 2-3. There is also a very interesting chapter on Archeology and the Early Church.

This little book is written in a very interesting style. It is heartily recommended to our readers.

— J. G. Vos

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:

In the booklet entitled BIBLE TRUTH FOR YOUNG CHRISTIANS, Lesson 4, Question 13, the following appears:

Q. What did Jesus Christ promise to do in the Covenant of Grace?

A. He promised to come into this world, be born as a baby, grow up and live a perfect life, suffer and die on the cross for the sins of His people, rise again from the dead the third day, go back to heaven again and send the Holy Spirit to change our hearts and make us believe on Him; and everything else that was necessary to save us from our sins and give us eternal life with God. Matt. 1:21.

What do you mean by "everything else that was necessary"?

Answer:

The expression "everything else that was necessary" would include at least the following activities of Jesus Christ: (1) His restraint of the devil, and sustaining His people in the face of temptation; (2) His kingship over the nations of the world, by which world history is controlled and directed so as to work out for the eternal salvation of the elect; (3) His heavenly activity as High Priest on behalf of His people; (4) His present work of preparing a place in heaven for the eternal habitation of His people (John 14); (5) His receiving the souls of His people to Himself at the time of their death; (6) His raising the bodies of His people to life and immortality at the Last Day; (7) His publicly vindicating and acquitting His people in the Day of Judgment.

— J. G. Vos

Question:

In Acts 8:12-24 we read of those who believed the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ. Simon himself also believed and was baptized. Yet when Peter and John came they laid hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit, for as yet He had fallen upon none of them; only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

One commentator I read states that there is no answer to this difficult problem. Another says that these men actually received the Holy Spirit at conversion as any born again person does, but when Peter and John laid hands on them they received the Holy Spirit with power to work miracles. Does this not suggest a second work of grace?

What is your interpretation of this passage including the future of Simon? Or is this better left where the record leaves it?

Answer:

The best concise answer to this query known to me is the comment of Professor F. F. Bruce on Acts 8:15 (In *The Acts of the Apostles*, Tyndale Press, London, 1951, pp. 186-7):

"Although these Samaritan believers had received Christian baptism, they did not receive the Spirit until the laying on of the apostles' hands. The receiving of the Holy Spirit in Acts is connected with the manifestation of some spiritual gift. The order of events varies; the Gentiles in x. 44 ff. were baptized because their glossolalia showed that they had already received the Spirit; the disciples at Ephesus in xix. 5 f. received Him thus as the immediate sequel to Christian baptism (cf. ii. 38) and the imposition of apostolic hands."

As Professor Bruce points out, in Acts "the order of events varies." Therefore no one instance of receiving the Holy Spirit should be set up as a pattern to which all later experience must conform. The Church was still in its formative period, and special supernatural manifestations were still taking place. Thus it would seem an unwarranted inference to say that the narrative in Acts 8:12-24 suggests the idea of a second work of grace.

With regard to Simon the sorcerer, the record states that he both believed and was baptized (Acts 8:13). Yet the apostle Peter later told him that he was "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity" (verse 23). This certainly seems to imply that Simon was an unsaved man at the time when Peter spoke to him. In what sense, then, are we to understand the statement that Simon "believed"? No doubt Simon professed acceptance of the message, as did others: He must have been what we today would call a nominal or merely professing Christian. Not all faith is really saving faith, as is illustrated by the Parable of the Sower. Presumably Simon's faith lacked the element of personal conviction of sin and repentance.

With regard to the future of Simon, Scripture says nothing, except that he asked Peter to pray for him. It is possible, of course, that Simon later came to true repentance and saving faith in Christ, though the Scripture nowhere states that he did.

— J. G. Vos

Question:

On what basis is it decided that certain verses of the Bible shall be used as benedictions? Who are authorized to pronounce benedictions, and on what is this based? Is the concert recitation of benedictions proper, and why is it that only one or two are used in this way?

Answer:

In the Old Testament, the Aaronic priests were commanded to bless the people of Israel, using a specified form of words. The record of this is found in Numbers 6:22-27: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them, The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them."

This passage of the Old Testament is basic to the subject of the use of benedictions in Christian worship. The Aaronic priesthood has passed away, of course, but some of its functions are exercised by those set apart as ministers of Jesus Christ under the New Covenant. Those functions which were peculiar to the nature of the Old Covenant, such as

the offering of animal sacrifices, have passed away; but those functions which were not peculiar to the nature of the Old Covenant have come down to the Christian ministry. That the Christian ministry is in some sense successor to the Aaronic priesthood is proved by Isaiah 66:21, which predicts of the Gentiles, "And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the Lord."

As the Aaronic priests were commissioned to pronounce a blessing upon the people of God in the name of the Lord, so Christian ministers are officially commissioned to do so. Pronouncing the benediction is an official act of an ordained minister and is properly done only in a congregation of Christ's Church. The practice, so common today, of asking a minister to "pronounce the benediction" at the close of a community meeting or school program, is not justifiable. The benediction is an official blessing and it is only for the body of Christ's people — the Church. Nor should any and all church meetings be closed with the benediction. It should be reserved for gatherings of a congregation as such. Whether many or few are present is not important. The thing that matters is the nature of the assembly. Is it or is it not a gathering of Christ's Church as such?

Christian ministers may use the Aaronic benediction, as given in Numbers 6:22-27, or they may choose one of the forms of benediction used by the apostles of our Lord, as recorded in their epistles. Perhaps the most commonly used is that found in 2 Corinthians 13:14, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen." If words of the apostles are used instead of the form in Numbers 6, care should be taken that what is used is actually a benediction in form and in meaning. It is not proper for ministers to make their own benedictions.

The pronouncing of the benediction is an official act of the minister as an ordained officer. Therefore licentiates and other unordained persons are not authorized to pronounce the benediction. It is proper, however, for a licentiate to invoke a benediction, using such a form of words as "May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with us all. Amen." In using such a form, he speaks as a member of the congregation, without special standing as an official representative of Christ.

The reciting of benedictions in unison is not proper as the conclusion of a regular church service. At the close of such a service, the minister, as the representative of Christ, should pronounce the benediction. However in informal or fellowship meetings, such as prayer meetings, young people's societies, and the like, the reciting of a form of benediction in unison is not improper. The form most commonly used for this purpose is the one strangely misnamed the Mizpah Benediction

(Genesis 31:49), "The Lord watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another." A brief study of the passage in which this verse is found is sufficient to show that these words, as originally used by Jacob and his uncle Laban, were anything but a benediction. Here were two men settling a violent quarrel, but neither of them fully trusting the other. They pile up a huge heap of stones as a marker of the official boundary between them. Then they call upon the Lord to watch that neither crosses this line to harm the other. The present writer would suggest that there are many verses in the Bible — especially in the Book of Psalms — which are better fitted for use as a verse to be recited in unison at the close of Christian meetings.

— J. G. Vos

Question:

Why is "Which" used in the Lord's Prayer ("Our Father which art in heaven") instead of "who"? Would it not be more respectful to use "Who"?

Answer:

The use of "which" to mean "who" in the King James Version is simply an example of old English. The American Revised Version (1901) uses "Who" and so does the Revised Standard Version and most other recent versions. While the King James Version is a magnificent translation of the Bible and has many excellent features, we must realize that in the three and a half centuries since it was made the English language has changed somewhat. This results in some differences from the way things would be said at the present day.

— J. G. Vos

Question:

Is it correct to describe the "dedication" of in-

fants (in a church which does not believe in infant baptism) as an "extra-Scriptural practice"?

Answer:

"Extra-Scriptural" means outside of what is commanded in Scripture. Those churches which practice infant baptism believe it to be commanded in Scripture. But some churches which hold that infant baptism is not commanded — and indeed not warranted — by Scripture, nevertheless practice dedication of infants. Unless they claim that dedication of infants is required by Scripture, they should not object to this ceremony being called "extra-Scriptural."

Whether it is legitimate to have "extra-Scriptural" ceremonies in the worship of God, of course, depends on the particular view one takes on the subject of worship. If the view be taken that whatever is not forbidden is legitimate, then "extra-Scriptural" ceremonies are proper. On the other hand, if the view be taken that whatever is not commanded is forbidden, then "extra-Scriptural" ceremonies are improper. The reader is referred to the article on "The Second Commandment," by Dr. William Young in the January-March 1957 issue of this magazine, pages 12-17, for a fuller discussion of this matter.

— J. G. Vos

Correction:

In our last issue (October-December, 1957) an unfortunate error occurred on page 170 column 2) in the article entitled "Word Made Flesh", by the Rev. John C. Rankin. In the first line of the second paragraph of column 2 the word "while" should be added after the word "that", so as to read: "How welcome, too, it is to know that while in all essential points he was a man. . .". The editor regrets the occurrence of this error, and suggests that readers make the appropriate correction in their copies of the October-December, 1957 issue.

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 Publications of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America quarterly.

Back issues of 1956 and 1957 are available at \$1.00 for each year, postpaid. Pressboard binders which will conveniently preserve two years' issues are available at 75 cents each, postpaid. See front cover for names and addresses of Agents for Britain, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand.

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



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APRIL-JUNE, 1958

NUMBER 2

**For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given:
and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his
name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty
God, The everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.**

Isaiah 9:6

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 Martyr's Child

By Harriet Stuart Menteth

Oh, the sunrise! the sunrise hath wonderous power
To gladden all living things;
It breaks on the chill night's murkiest hour,
Like a smile from the king of kings!
'Tis earliest June, and the earth hath thrilled
With the earnest of summer given;
And the very city's self is filled
With the breath and the beam of heaven!

A glory is circling the stern black brow
Of Dunedin's fortress old,
And a gleam is waking, more faintly now,
Her Tolbooth prison-hold,
Where one hath risen, but not from sleep,
To gaze on that dawning sky —
"True wife! what aileth thee now to weep?
Heaven brightens ere I die!"

There are mustering groups in the silent streets
That are silent no longer now;
Though briefly each other his fellow greets,
As with doubting on his brow!
It seemeth as if an anguish pressed
Alike on a nation's heart —
One mighty load — upon every breast,
Which yet each must bear apart!

And still in its joy, o'er that joyless throng,
The brightening day-dawn smiled;
While threading the crowd's dense maze along,
Came an old man, and a child;
The man was woe-worn past all relief;
The child's young brow was fair—
So sunny, it seemed that no frost of grief
Could linger a moment there!

And onward he tripped at the old man's side,
With many a step for one;
And smiled at the face of his ancient guide,
As to bid his grief begone!
And still as the sunbeam before him danced
On the shade of the narrow street,
His little hands he would clap, entranced,
And chase it with eager feet!

"O whist ye, my bairn", said the old man then;
"And is this a time for play?
Your hairs may be white, ere the half ye'll ken
Of the loss ye shall thole this day!"

"Ye said I should look in my father's face,
And sit on my father's knee.
Long, long he has lain in yon darksome place,
But I know he'll come home with me!"

"O whist ye, my bairn", quoth the old man still;
"For a better home he's bound.
But first he must suffer his Master's will,
And lie in the chill, damp ground!"
The child looked wistfully up again:
"His Master is God on high;
He sends the sun, and He stays the rain;
He'll make it both warm and dry!"

They have entered in by the dismal door;
They have mounted the weary stair;
And the mirth of the young child's heart is o'er,
For no sunbeam follows there!
With a shuddering dread, as the harsh key grates,
By the old man's side he clings;
But he hears a voice, and no longer waits—
To his father's heart he springs!

"My child! my own child! am I clasping thee now?
My God, all Thy will be done!"
And he whom no terror of earth could bow,
Rained tears upon his son!
"Now rest thee, my Willie, upon my knee,
For thy father's hours are brief;
And store up my words, with thy love for me,
Engraved on thy heart's first grief!"

"They will tell thee, my bairn, that thy father died
A death both of sin and shame;
And the finger of scorn, and the foot of pride
Will be busy with my name.
But heed them not, boy! for the cause of God
I render this day my breath;
And tread thou the path that thy father trode,
Though it lead to thy father's death!"

"For my Master's honor, my Master's Crown,
A martyr 'tis mine to be;
And the orphan's God shall look kindly down,
My pleasant child, on thee!
I seal thee now, with my parting kiss,
Till at His right hand we meet.
Death! death! thy bitterest drop is this,
All else in thy cup is sweet!"

(Continued on back cover.)

BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

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NUMBER 2

Sketches of the Covenanters

By J. C. McFeeters

Chapter XXX.

The Oppressor's Revenge. — A. D. 1667.

The sun was sinking behind the Pentland hills, when the last assault was made upon the Covenanters at the battle of Rullion Green. They, being driven from the field, were pursued without mercy till night kindly threw its shadow over the scene of carnage. About 30 were slaughtered in the flight, and 50 taken prisoners; many of these were speedily executed.

The stars timidly arose and shed their pale light over the crimsoned field. The night was bitterly cold. The dead lay scattered over the frosted ground, and the air was burdened with the groans of the dying. All had been barbarously stripped of their clothing by the ruthless conquerors. The blood of the dying was chilled in their veins, ere it oozed from their wounds and froze upon the ground. The tender-hearted women of Edinburgh came the next day, with clothes for the living and winding sheets for the dead. An upright stone, two feet by three, marks the place where these soldiers of Christ, in number about 50, calmly sleep, awaiting the resurrection of the just. Beautiful fir trees swaying their soft branches over the grave seem to be singing the dirge of the fallen heroes.

Heroes! This was a forlorn battle. The battle that must be lost, that other battles may be won, demands heroes of the noblest type; and here were the men. They were willing to fight in the presence of defeat. Listen to their resolution just before the battle: "We will follow on, till God shall do His service by us; and though we shall all die at the end of it, we think the giving of a testimony enough for all."

The little army of the Covenanters, broken and bleeding, was now scattered upon the mountains and completely disorganized. One of these men, wandering alone, came to a cottage at midnight. He was bleeding, hungry, weary, utterly exhausted, ready to die. He asked for food and shelter. The pitiful request was denied, for such kindness, if the authorities were informed, would endanger the family; and the penalty might be expulsion, imprisonment, or death. No cup of cold water for this thirsty soul; no spark of charity to warm this shivering child of the Covenant. Feeling the chill of death already creeping through his

veins, he touchingly said, "If you find me dead in the morning, bury me on the hillside, looking toward my home beyond the valley." In the morning he was found dead, under an oak beside the house. He was buried as he had requested. A stone, with an interesting inscription, marks the grave.

After this battle the Covenanters were subjected to a period of horrors that exhaust description. The brief warlike demonstration was by the government called "The Pentland Rising." The men who had placed themselves under Colonel Wallace, for the redress of their wrongs, had come from the adjacent counties. General Dalziel was immediately sent with an army to punish the people of these districts. Here we must draw a veil and cover the more shocking barbarities and hideous indignities; the unmentionable crimes practiced upon these Covenanters, who already had suffered beyond the limit of patience; upon the men, women, and children who were as inoffensive, as they were helpless, beneath the monstrous tyranny of King Charles and his brutal soldiers.

The story of pillage may be painted in flames; the story of revenge may be recorded in vitriol; the story of carnage may be written in blood; but the story of the horrors that befell the Covenanted families, especially the delicate and helpless members of the household, must not be told. The manner in which fathers, husbands, and brothers stood and died on the door-step in defence of mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters, may be related; but the inhumanity that followed must not be mentioned. Purity shudders at the horror; the heart sickens at the thought; the eyes instinctively turn away.

General Dalziel quartered his army upon the Covenanters, sent troops in all directions to raid the country, disinherited those who were engaged in the "Uprising", subjected to arrest all who were suspected, and reduced the people to extremest poverty. The soldiers lived in the homes of the Covenanters, compelled the family to provide boarding, and proudly tyrannized over the household. They devoured, or destroyed the crops; slaughtered, or drove off the flocks and herds; tortured, imprisoned, and shot the people according to their pleasure. The prisons were over-

crowded with old and young, men and women, the sickly and the dying.

Three men under the king were chiefly responsible for these atrocities, and all three were reprobate Covenanters. Their names can be mentioned only with abhorrence and detestation: the Earl of Lauderdale, the Earl of Rothes, and Archbishop Sharp. Lauderdale, formerly known as John Maitland, one of the Scotch Commissioners at the Westminster Assembly, shined in that bright galaxy as a morning star; but like Lucifer, son of the morning, he fell from the glory-crested height. Rothes was the son of the Earl of Rothes, celebrated for his active part in the Covenant of 1638. Archbishop Sharp was a Covenanted minister, previous to the restoration of King Charles. Such were the chief actors in these scenes of infernal cruelty practiced upon the Covenanters. Surely they could not have been so atrociously wicked, had they not been previously exalted to heaven in privilege and by profession. Satan could not have been the devil, had he not first been an angel.

Some prisoners taken at Rullion Green were, after their execution, utilized by the government, for the intimidation of the Covenanters. Their heads were set up in public places in various cities, as a gruesome warning to all others. These men, when on the way to Rullion Green, had paused at Lanark to renew their Covenant. There they lifted up the right hand to heaven, making their appeal to God. Now those right hands are cut off and set up on spikes over the gates of the city — a grim admonition to the living.

Some of the prisoners were reserved for the slower process of law, and the severer operations of cruelty. John Neilson became conspicuous through the tortures he endured, the noble spirit he displayed, and the death by which he glorified God. He was a man renowned for his wealth, as well as for greatheartedness. The preceding year Sir James Turner, when commanding the king's troops, despoiled him of his property; yet when that lawless officer had been taken prisoner by the Covenanters, Neilson pleaded for him and saved his life. Now Neilson is in his hands. Will the kindness be returned? Ah, kindness returned! Rather feel for a pulse in the cold granite or look upon the white marble for a loving smile.

The Court questioned Neilson, but his answers were not satisfactory. They tortured him, but could extract nothing further. They thrust one of his legs into an iron boot, and crushed it with a wedge, driven between the flesh and the iron; yet nothing but groans were extorted from him. Filled with wrath, because a confession involving others could not be elicited, they passed the death sentence on him. He went cheerfully to the scaffold.

Hugh M'Kail, a young minister of Jesus Christ, was another victim. He was a man mighty in the

Scriptures and full of the Holy Spirit. His lips were touched with a live coal from the altar of God, his eloquence was seraphic. In one of his impassionate outbursts he had said, "The Church in all ages has been persecuted by a Pharaoh on the throne, a Haman in the state, and a Judas in the Church." Archbishop Sharp heard of the terse statement. The lightning had struck the mark. Sharp appropriated the caricature, and saw Judas personified in his own character. He never forgave the young minister.

M'Kail was put on trial for his connection with the Pentland Rising. He candidly confessed his part in the insurrection. The Court then demanded information concerning the leaders; he had none to impart. They then tortured him with the iron boot; the only response was groans. He swooned in the dreadful agony.

This noble young minister was sentenced to die. He received the sentence with serene happiness. When on the scaffold, he was filled with unutterable joy; his victory over fear and death was complete; his soul was clothed with immortal bliss. His highest hopes were now turning into realization that were ten thousand times brighter and more glorious than his most sanguine expectations. The Lord Jesus was at his side; the heavens were opening to receive him; in a few moments his face would shine in the light that dazzled angels, and his voice would mingle in the chorus of the redeemed round about the throne. What wonder that he poured forth the ecstasy of a transfigured soul in these his last words: "Welcome, God and Father; welcome, sweet Jesus the Mediator of the new Covenant; welcome, blessed Spirit of grace, and God of all consolation; welcome, glory; welcome eternal life; welcome death. O Lord, into Thy hands I commit my spirit; for Thou hast redeemed my soul, Lord God of truth."

These were the winter days of the Church. But the winter was like summer in fruitfulness. How nobly did she endure the inclement season and produce fruit of excellent quality! We are enjoying the summer time of peace and comfort, of privileges and advantages. How much more abundant should be our labors of love than even theirs, in the Lord Jesus Christ! A comparison, we fear, would put us to great disadvantage, perhaps to shame.

Points for the Class

1. What cruelties were practiced on the Covenanters on Rullion Green field?
2. Describe the wounded Covenanter seeking shelter.
3. What horrors followed the battle?
4. What atrocities were committed by Gen. Dalziel's troops?

5. What three men were in great part responsible for the cruelties?

6. Describe the sufferings of John Neilson.

7. Relate the sufferings of Hugh McKail.

8. How did he meet his death?

9. What special advantages have we for serving God?

(To be continued)

Neutrality Impossible

By the Rev. A. Barkley, B. A.

The policy of neutrality has always been fraught with danger. In times of war small nations have sought refuge under this policy, only to find themselves swallowed up in the spreading tide of aggression. Neutral nations, that have escaped, owed their safety to their geographical position rather than to their policy.

Neutrality is a sentiment that receives very little support in the Bible. Our Lord makes it perfectly clear that those who are not for Him are against Him. There can be no middle-of-the-road policy as far as His true disciples are concerned. "Ye cannot serve two masters."

In the days of the prophet Elijah there was a great deal of laxity in religious matters. Ahab, the king, followed in the wicked ways of his fathers, while the queen, Jezebel, zealously supported the false, degrading, immoral religion of Baal. Those were dark days for Israel; but God raised up a prophet in the person of Elijah, who challenged the prophets of Baal, and faithfully proclaimed the message of the Lord God of Israel. The thrilling story of this great campaign is recorded in 1 Kings 18. The challenging question is stated in verse 21, "And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word."

A Challenge to Thought

In these words we have a challenge to thought "How long halt ye between two opinions?" It was a call to ponder the facts. There could be no excuse for not knowing the true God. They knew what God had done in the days of Moses; how their fathers had crossed the Red Sea and the flooded waters of Jordan. They had the record of the revelation that was given to Moses regarding the nature of the Divine Being. Prophets had spoken and psalmists had sung of the glory and mighty power of the Lord, Whose throne was in the heavens.

In contrast to all this there was evidence before their eyes of the utter worthlessness of the idols they worshipped. They had no records of the achievements of Baal, and the terrible cruelties perpetrated in the name of such a god were sufficient to condemn the whole system. Had the peo-

ple considered the facts they would have been saved from descending to such depths of idolatry.

There is need for some serious thinking these days. Every day we can see evidence of the misery and unhappiness that have come because of false gods. When people worship the gods of wealth, pleasure, power, and selfish indulgence, the consequences must be felt in the community. Men and women do not rise above the standards of the god they worship, and so you have greed, selfishness, dishonesty, deceitfulness, abounding more and more.

On the other hand there is the Truth. God has revealed Himself in the creation of the universe, in the glory of nature, and the bountiful provision he has made for the children of men. In addition, He has given us a special revelation in His Word which can be read and studied. In these last days God has indeed spoken to us by His Son. We can see changed lives and we can learn about the transformations that have taken place when the Gospel has been proclaimed in the mission fields. There is need for some careful and serious thinking. Are you prepared to sit down and ponder the facts?

A Rebuke to Compromise

This question of Elijah is also a rebuke to compromise. "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him." There could be no question of steering a middle course between truth and error. The prophets of Baal had the argument of numbers—there were 450 of them, and Elijah stood alone. But there was no compromise. Elijah knew what he believed, and there could be no suggestion of mingling the truth with falsehood.

Those who believe the Bible as the Word of God must not compromise with those who deny the authority of the Scriptures. There are some who may disagree with such a view. The Bible, they say, is only a book, and if we believe in God there is no need to worry about the inspiration and veracity of Scripture. But the question we must face it, "Does the person who regards the Bible as the Word of God believe in the same God as the person who at least believes that parts of the Bible are not inspired?" A tremendous lot

depends on the view that is taken of the Bible. In the days of the Reformation men and women were prepared to die at the stake rather than compromise with those who would not accept the authority of the Bible. To compromise on the authority of the Bible is to weaken the very foundation of one's faith.

There is also no place for compromise on what we believe concerning the person of Christ, the nature of his atoning work, His resurrection from the dead, and His coming at the end of the age to judge the world. Great controversies raged in the fourth century regarding the person of Christ. Some said He was just the perfect man created by God and was given as an example for human beings to follow. Others contended that He was God's co-equal and co-eternal Son, that in His person there was the union of two natures—human and divine. Between such views there could be no compromise. It is of vital importance what we think of Christ. If we have to remain silent on such a matter then there can be no effective witness borne. In a word, true and vital Christianity cannot be mixed with bits and pieces from other religions. To talk about a world religion made up a mixture of Mohammedanism, Confucianism, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Christianity, is to misunderstand the real essence of the Christian faith. In this changing world we are confronted to proclaim in an uncompromising fashion the glorious truth that God has revealed concerning His Son, Whose blood was shed for the remission of sins. There was no compromise in apostolic days, and there should be no compromise today.

A Call to Action

But Elijah's question issues a call to action. "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him." There was no use coming to a conclusion without being prepared to act. Elijah expected the people to show their true convictions in active service. They would be left in no doubt after the scene on Mt. Carmel as to the God they should serve. What does it mean to follow God?

What did Christ expect when He said to certain people, "Follow Me"?

1. It involves the renunciation of all false religions. You cannot follow God and Baal. It means a complete break with sinful practices. The pagan, when he comes to acknowledge Christ, breaks with his idols and the religion of his people. How important it is to take that definite stand and leave no doubt as to the fact that you are following God.

2. It also involves consideration of the claims of God and willingness to obey Him. In such consideration we should ask what God's claims are in respect of time, money and ability. The claims of Christ should come first in every sphere. Jesus Christ is Lord in the life of the true believer. To confess Him as Lord and allow some organization or some secular interest in life to take first place is contrary to the teaching of the Word of God. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

To follow Christ there must be diligent study of the Scriptures so that we may know the will of God; there must be regular, earnest believing prayer, and there must be willingness to obey the Lord in faithful service. "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me."

How long halt ye between two opinions? Will those listening, who may never have given a serious thought to such matters, ponder carefully what has been said? Will those who have confessed Christ, consider carefully and prayerfully their duty to give Him their undivided allegiance?

Note: The foregoing article by the Rev. Alexander Barkley, B.A., minister of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Geelong, Victoria, Australia, was originally presented as a radio broadcast in Australia. Later it was published in the January 1, 1958 issue of *Evangelical Action* (Australia), from which it is reprinted here. Certainly Mr. Barkley's earnest message is as much needed in America as in Australia. — Editor.

The Growing Life

By the Rev. John C. Rankin

With Jesus' birth there began the course of events which make up the story of His earthly life. At the expiration of eight days He was circumcised and thirty-two days later He was presented by His mother in the temple of the Lord. Then came the visit of the Magi. Thus early in His life both Jew and Gentile paid homage to the new born King.

A further event of this period was the sinister

attempt which was made upon His life. The wise-men were warned of God in a dream to "depart into their own country another way." Thereupon the angel of the Lord appeared unto Joseph in a dream directing him to "Arise and flee into Egypt, for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him." Of course it was not in Herod's power to do this. His ruthless scheme was overruled and his madness spent itself in vain. "Rachel wept for her

children" but the life of the infant Jesus was preserved.

Thus early in His life, even in His infancy, was manifested man's enmity to God and to His Son. This aspect of the Saviour's life will unfold more fully later, but it was in evidence from the outset. A wicked world even then called for the blood of the Son of God.

It was one of the great wonders of the ways of God with men that on such a slender thread of life should hang the salvation of sinner-men. Yet so it was. The preservation of Mary's holy child was guaranteed by the sovereignty of Almighty God. He was there, as ever, "in the shadows keeping watch above his own." No power in earth or hell could harm that tender, little life.

Aside from the events peculiar to it, the infancy of Jesus was a perfectly natural babyhood with all that it involves. Light shone on the Judean hills, but it is safe to say that no halo sat upon His head or bright Shekinah glowed around his cradle. The baby soul, however, was aglow with the light of the stainless purity and ineffable sweetness with which He entered into life. For it was God's plan that the original birth-stain of the believers should be covered by the spotless beauty of this perfect babyhood. Only a sinless life from the cradle to the grave could atone for the sinfulness of our lives from birth to death.

The record states that Joseph and his charges resided in Egypt until the death of Herod. Their sojourn there has been reckoned as of brief duration, two or three months perhaps. Then another summons came with the reappearance of the angel of the Lord in a dream with directions to return to their own land. Joseph's interpretation of this was apparently that he was to make his home in Bethlehem. Yet again the warning came to bypass that part of the country and resume his former residence in the home town of the north. So he "turned aside into the parts of Galilee and came and dwelt in the city called Nazareth." Thus the place of Jesus' birth was lost to human knowledge for the time, and there was a special significance in the fact that He should be called a Nazarene.

To all intents and purposes Nazareth was His home for the first thirty years; all but the last three or four years of His life. For the story of this period we are limited to thirteen verses in the second chapter of Luke. Here we have the inspiring record of the formative years in which He passed from infancy through childhood and youth to full-grown, fully developed manhood, in which at the age of thirty He entered upon His public ministry.

It is our privilege reverently to inquire into the nature of His experience and progress during this period. It was the time of growth and education. Of formal education, He had little, and yet

more perhaps than we might think. There was first of all the training and instruction from both parents in the home. To this was added the education derived from the synagogue services and a synagogue school.

All education was religious in those days. It was God-centered through and through and may be described as Christian, for the pure Jewish faith was further centered in the promised Christ. The Bible, as it existed at the time, was the textbook, and there was access to it in the synagogue. The scrolls of the books were costly, but it may be that Joseph himself was in possession of the sacred Scriptures in whole or in part.

Besides the contacts in home and synagogue there were those with the neighbors and the mixed population, both Jew and Gentile, of the little town. Always many strangers were passing through or stopping over, for Nazareth was on the main highway running east and west. It is pleasant to think about Galilee in those days, with its fertile soil and rich productivity, its teeming multitudes and delightful scenery. Shall we not at least try to imagine what Jesus' reactions were to the grandeur and beauty of the natural world? To nature's sweet sounds and her exquisite colorings? There was work and play we may be sure, with stimulating companionship and healthful excursions into the hills and vales around. With keen interest and quick perception all was observed, correctly interpreted and absorbed. It is safe to say that no facet of the total truth escaped His notice. His thinking took in everything, and there was no flaw in His intellect, no defect in His understanding. He saw all correctly, and experienced a growing knowledge of the whole truth concerning the totality of persons and things.

Above all He was taught of God by way of His Word under the tutelage of His Spirit, and there was no inward impediment to the acquisition of all knowledge that came His way.

It was a gradual development, of course, and proceeded by degrees and stages, as with all human growth. For it is said that "the child grew." And it had been prophesied that He would "grow up before God as a tender plant." His life at the first was like that of "a young and tender sprout." But we know this too, as the prophet foretold: "the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord."

We must realize that the Saviour's mission could be fulfilled only in and through the work of His public life. It was foreordained that in God's own time and way He should present Himself to the Jews as their Messiah and to all mankind as the only Saviour of men. Not until His preparation had been fully made, not until His manhood

had been perfectly attained, could this take place. And even then He had to be especially commissioned and thoroughly tested ere he could enter upon this final part of His life-work.

Consequently, growth and education were the keynote of these so-called "hidden years." At His first visit to the holy city and the temple He was irresistibly attracted to the school of the rabbis, where He sat in the role of a learner, not a teacher. He came with a passion for learning such as no student before or since has ever had. For that year He was their prize pupil — an apt learner and the outstanding scholar. And apparently He stayed on long after school was out and was found "sitting in the midst of the doctors both hearing them and asking them questions." More than that, before they knew it, the teachers were taking the learner's place and were asking questions of Him. And "all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and his answers."

Thus even at this young and tender age it was with Him as with His illustrious ancestor who was able to declare: "I have more understanding than all my teachers. I understand more than the ancients." Later on in His life some of these same teachers would exclaim: "Whence hath this man letters having never learned?" and He would show them very pointedly how they "nullified the word of God through their tradition." Even at the age of twelve, whatever it may have been that He learned from them, they had much more to learn from Him. Nevertheless it was the time for the natural human growth and development. It extended throughout by far the greater part of His life, and He took full advantage of the time allotted to Him for this purpose.

There were certain factors in operation at the time which were favorable to this growth. One

of these was the complete absence of all manifestations of the Supernatural in the constitution of His person at this time. The miraculous which was in evidence on the occasion of His birth was in complete abeyance until it reappeared at His baptism. Of course it could not be expressed in any way during this time.

Coupled with this was His ability to keep a secret. And what a secret it was which He kept strictly to Himself through all these years! It is also clear from the attitude shown by His parents as recorded in connection with the incident of Luke 2:41-51 that a veil of darkness overspread the parental minds during this time. It was all in the providence of God, for, otherwise, how could they have been real parents to Him?

In consideration of the dignity of His supreme divinity, what divine humility was here! In the perfect purity of His soul how He must have suffered from the sin of the world both in the family itself as well as everywhere else. From the first awakening of conscious life to the end of His days He was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."

And yet always what comfort, peace and joy were His, in the love and fellowship of His Father and His God. Love was the essence of His spirit. His soul was instinct with a divine compassion and affection, yet never in any way at the sacrifice of His holiness and justice. Also all of this part of His life was service — the service of God, both directly and by way of the service of men. Also all was part of His work of suffering—obedience for the redemption of sinner-men.

Note: This is the third of a series of articles by Mr. Rankin. The fourth will appear, D.V., in our next issue. — Editor.

Religious Terms Defined

APOSTASY. Forsaking the truth of God, by word or actions, on the part of an individual, a church or a nation; especially, falling away from those truths which are essential to the existence of Christianity, such as the Trinity, the Deity of Christ and the substitutionary atonement. The Bible predicts an apostasy before the second coming of Christ (2 Thess. 2:3).

APOSTLE. A person sent upon a commission; especially, one of the group of men chosen by Jesus Christ as official witnesses of His resurrection and ordained as His official representatives for establishing the doctrine, worship, government and discipline of the New Testament Church.

ARMINIANISM. The doctrinal system derived from the teachings of the Dutch theologian Jacobus Arminius, which regards the sovereignty

of God as limited by the free will of man, and which conceives of the work of salvation as divided between God and man, with the decisive factor in the hands of man.

BISHOP. An overseer; one of the titles used in the New Testament for the pastor of a Christian congregation. In the history of the Church the title "bishop" came to be used for an officer higher than pastors and elders, having jurisdiction over many congregations — something unknown in the New Testament.

BLASPHEMY. The sin of speaking or writing reproachfully or slanderously against God or the things of God, such as the Bible, the sacraments, the Sabbath, divine worship, etc.

BUCHMANISM. A modern religious move-

ment led by the Rev. Frank Buchman, called "A First Century Christian Fellowship," "The Oxford Group Movement," "Moral Rearmament," etc. The movement is characterized by a false type of mysticism, emphasis on personal confession of sin to other "Group" members, fellowship between Bible-believers and modernists, and lack of concern about sound doctrine.

CALVINISM. Consistent Biblical Christianity, called "Calvinism" because it received its classical doctrinal formulation in the writings of the Reformer John Calvin. Calvinism is that system of Christian doctrine which recognizes the absolute, unlimited sovereignty of God, and man's complete dependence on God for every factor of his life, faith and salvation. Also called the Reformed Faith.

CATHOLIC CHURCH, THE. The Universal Church of God, as distinguished from a particular branch, congregation or denomination of that Church. The Church of Rome has wrongly appropriated to itself the term "Catholic"; it is self-contradictory to call a body "Roman" (which is particular) and at the same time "Catholic" (which means universal).

CELIBACY OF THE CLERGY. The sectarian requirement of the Roman Catholic Church that its ordained officers abstain from marriage. This requirement, which is without any Scriptural warrant, was not generally enforced until more than 1,000 years after Christ.

CHANCE. An event which comes to pass by the divine foreordination and providence, which is of such a nature that the human mind cannot calculate or predict its occurrence, or assign a definite cause to it. Proverbs 16:33.

CHILIASM. The doctrine of a thousand year reign of Christ; commonly used as equivalent to Premillennialism, or the doctrine of a thousand year reign of Christ on earth after His second coming.

CHRISTMAS. The day commonly observed as the anniversary of the birth of Jesus Christ. There is no historical evidence that our Saviour was born on the 25th of December, nor is there any trace in the New Testament of the observance of His birth as a holy day. Rather, the evidence which exists indicates that the religious observance of December 25 was connected with the ancient pagan god Mithras and that the Christian Church adopted it as the anniversary of Christ's birth.

CONCEPTION, THE IMMACULATE. The false Roman Catholic doctrine, made an official dogma in 1854, that the Virgin Mary was born without original sin. The term "immaculate conception" is often incorrectly used by Protestants when they mean the virgin birth of Christ.

CONGREGATION. A body of Christian people of common faith, united under the same officers, and assembling together for public worship.

CONGREGATIONALISM. That system of church government which recognizes no authority having jurisdiction over more than a single local congregation. This system is held by Congregationalists, Baptists and some others. It is opposed to the Papal, Presbyterian and Episcopal forms of church government.

CONSCIENCE. That function of the human soul which registers approval when a person's actions are in accordance with what he believes to be right, and disapproval when his actions are not in accordance with what he believes to be right.

CONSISTENCY. Agreement or harmony between a person's vows, or profession of faith, and his words and deeds.

CONSUBSTANTIATION. The Lutheran doctrine of the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper, which teaches that in the sacrament there is present "the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, for us Christians to eat and to drink . . ." (Luther's Small Catechism). This is opposed to the Roman Catholic dogma of Transubstantiation, which holds that the bread and wine are miraculously changed into the real body and blood of Christ.

COVENANT. A Covenant of God with man is an arrangement made by God and imposed on man, for the purpose of bringing man into religious communion with God, involving certain promises on God's part and certain obligations on man's part.

CREATION. "The work of creation is, God's making all things of nothing, by the word of his power, in the space of six days, and all very good" (S.C. 9).

CUSTOMS. Religious practices sanctioned by long usage; may be either good, bad or indifferent. Customs based on long usage are often confused with practices based on **principles** having divine authority. It is a symptom of religious decadence when customs are treated as unalterable, while principles are regarded as mere human conventions or preferences.

DECALOGUE. The Ten Commandments. Ex. 20:1-17.

DECREES OF GOD. "The decrees of God are, his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass" (S.C. 7).

DEMONISM, DEMON POSSESSION. An activity of demons or evil spirits described in the New Testament, by which one or more of them gained control of a human personality and dominated it for Satanic purposes. In the New Testament this is distinguished (a) from ordinary insanity or mental disease; and (b) from bodily disease. Matt. 4:24.

Some Noteworthy Quotations

WHEN GOD PARDONS SIN He takes it off as a burden, removes it away as filthiness, and blots it out as a debt.

— Philip Henry

"NO MAN CAN COME UNTO ME except the Father which hath sent me draw him". . . Go, Arminian, and tell your hearers that they will come if they please, but know that your Redeemer looks you in the face, and tells you that you are uttering a lie. Men will NOT come. They never will come of themselves. You cannot induce them to come by all your thunders, nor can you entice them to come by all your invitations. They WILL NOT come unto Christ. Until the Spirit draw them, come they neither will, nor can.

— Charles H. Spurgeon

A HEAD FULL of vain and unprofitable notions, meeting with a heart full of pride and self-conceitdness, dispose a man directly to be an atheist.

— Philip Henry

THEY THAT KNOW HEAVEN to be their home, reckon the world a strange country. There is a more excellent glory sealed up to them in Christ, and they do the less care for worldly advantages; certainly they do not lay out their strength and their care upon them. Who would purchase a rattle with the same price that would buy a jewel? or dig for iron with mattocks of gold?

— Thomas Manton

AN EVANGELIST SAID in my hearing: "He that believeth hath everlasting life. HATH — that spells 'got it.'" It is an odd way of spelling, but it is sound divinity.

— Charles H. Spurgeon

WHY IS IT THAT SO MANY professed Chris-

tians "feel above" undertaking humble work for God and humanity? We have heard of a minister of Christ complaining that his station was "beneath his talents"! As if the soul of a beggar were beneath the genius of a Paul! Some are unwilling to enter a mission school, or to distribute tracts through a poor district, strangely forgetting that their divine Master was Himself a missionary. Have such never learned that the towel where-with Jesus wiped His disciples' feet outshone the purple that wrapped Caesar's limbs? Do they not know that the post of honor is the post of service?

— Theodore Cuyler

THOUGH CONSCIENCE WEIGH us down, and tell us God is angry, yet God is greater than our heart. The conscience is but one drop; the reconciled God is an ocean of consolation.

— Martin Luther

POSSESSORS OF DIVINE TRUTH are eager to spread it. "For," as Carlyle says, "if new-got gold is said to burn the pocket till it be cast forth into circulation, much more may new-found truth."

— Charles H. Spurgeon

MEN LEARN IN SUFFERING what they teach in song.

— Charles H. Spurgeon

WHATEVER DESPERATE DISTRESSES, and deadly dangers, the people of God may fall into, yet they are "prisoners of hope" (Zechariah 9:11), and may look for deliverance by the blood of the covenant.

— Thomas Brooks

DUTIES NOT PERFORMED according to the right order are but half the service we owe to God, and the worse half too.

— Thomas Boston

Destructive Higher Criticism of the Bible

By J. G. Vos

The word "criticism" does not necessarily mean "attacking" or "finding fault with" something. It is derived from the Greek word meaning "to judge," and need not carry any implication of unfavorable judgment. A judge is expected to acquit the innocent as well as to punish the guilty. His judgment may be in favor of the defendant at the bar, rather than against him. It is really misuse of the word "criticize" that limits it, in many people's minds, to fault-finding or adverse criticism.

In the world of scholarship, criticism simply means a very careful, exact study of something involving the use of skillful judgment concerning it. Thus, for example, a professor who has specialized for a lifetime in the study of Shakespeare's plays is qualified to publish a critical study of them, whereas a person who might read some of Shakespeare's plays merely for enjoyment would not be qualified to publish a critical study of them. The professor analyzes every line and closely studies every word, whereas the ordinary

uncritical reader is content to go through the material rapidly and casually.

In the world of Biblical scholarship, also, criticism simply means a very careful, exact study involving the use of skillful judgment. The term "criticism" by no means implies an attack on the Bible, nor does it imply a skeptical or unfavorable attitude toward the Bible. It merely means scholarly, exact, painstaking study.

Biblical criticism is of two types, commonly called "lower" and "higher" criticism. Lower criticism is also called textual criticism. This type of criticism is concerned with establishing what is the genuine text of a particular book of the Bible. Our knowledge of the text of the Bible is based on manuscripts which have come down from ancient times. There are many of these manuscripts, of which some are older and more reliable than others. Even the oldest and most reliable manuscripts do not fully agree word for word with each other. There are slight differences between manuscripts, called "variant readings," which were caused by scribes making errors in copying manuscripts. Where there is a difference between two manuscripts, both cannot be correct. It is the function of "lower" or textual criticism to decide, so far as possible, which of the variant readings is the correct one. This is done on the basis of various kinds of evidence, and has become quite an exact science. As a result of the achievements of textual criticism, our present-day text of the Old and New Testaments is for all practical purposes the authentic text as written by the original writers. The variant readings about which some doubt remains are mostly quite insignificant and do not affect any doctrine of the Christian faith. Textual criticism in the hands of scholars who fully believe in the Bible as the infallible Word of God is a useful — and indeed a necessary — tool of Biblical scholarship. In the hands of liberal or modernistic scholars, who invariably are biased against some of the cardinal truths of the Bible, textual criticism may be very unreliable and destructive of the true text of the Scriptures. That is, the liberal critic is so prejudiced by his type of theology that he does not always handle the Scripture text objectively, but often permits his personal subjective preferences and opinions to affect his judgment as to which variant readings is the correct one. This type of textual criticism is called destructive or negative textual criticism when it is referred to by conservative Bible scholars.

Higher criticism is not concerned with establishing what is the true text of a book or documenting what is the true text of a book or document. It takes the book or document as it has been established by lower or textual criticism, and then proceeds to ask such questions as: Who wrote this book? When and where was it written? Was the reputed author the real author of the book or did someone else write it? Did the author or authors in-

corporate previously existing materials into the book, and if so can these be identified and isolated from each other in the book as we have it today? What is the meaning of the book? What is its value? Higher criticism is sometimes called literary criticism or historical criticism because it seeks to investigate the literary and historical sources and background of a book, rather than merely determining which of the variant readings is correct.

An example of higher criticism is the attempt to find out what are the relations of the four Gospels to each other. Which of the four Gospels — Matthew, Mark, Luke and John — was written first? Which of them is dependent on one or more of the others? Is there any special source of information back of part of the four gospels in distinction from the rest of them? There is nothing necessarily evil or reprehensible in such studies in the hands of believing, conservative scholars. Higher criticism as engaged in by believing scholars is called positive higher criticism. It can be a valuable tool in the study of Scripture.

But not all higher criticism of the Bible can be called positive or even legitimate. There is also negative higher criticism, which means higher criticism in the hands of scholars who do not fully accept the Bible as the infallible Word of God. This negative higher criticism starts out with the assumption that the Bible is just a human book, like any other human book. It is held that in the scientific study of the Bible, scholars must disregard all claims of the Bible to be supernaturally inspired and infallible and treat it just as they would treat Caesar's Gallic War or the writings of Aristotle. Thus the negative higher critic starts out by assuming that the Bible is not what it claims to be. This perverse assumption naturally distorts his critical judgment all along the line. It is not too much to say that negative higher criticism is a very prejudiced, unfair and wicked attack on the Word of God. The negative higher critic is not interested in the question "What does the Bible say about me?" Rather, he is concerned with the question, "What do I say about the Bible?" His intellectual pride — often amounting to a colossal arrogance — keeps him from recognizing that his own mind is clouded by sin. He is deeply prejudiced against the supernaturalism of the Bible and against its plan of redemption by the shed blood of Christ. Consequently he handles the Bible in a way that tends to eliminate or discount these ideas. We do not mean that the negative higher critic is a hypocrite who consciously and intentionally distorts the Bible from its true meaning to a false one. On the contrary, we may readily concede that most of these men, if not all, are sincere and honest and believe that they are handling the Bible objectively in accordance with strict scientific methods. They themselves do not realize how much sin and unbelief have warped their thinking.

Some of the typical positions of negative higher criticism are the following: Moses did not write the first five books of the Bible. Instead, they were written centuries after the time of Moses by a series of men whose names are unknown. The books of Moses as we have them today are really, it is held, a patchwork of separate documents finally put together by an unknown editor whom the critics call "R" (for "Redactor," the Latin term for "editor"). One of these separate documents is called "E" because it commonly uses the Hebrew word Elohim as the name of God. Another document is called "J" because it uses the name Jehovah or Jahweh for God. A third document is called "P" because it contains a code of laws for the priesthood. Separate from all these is the document called "D" which stands for Deuteronomy. It is held that Deuteronomy was not written by Moses, but by an unknown Jewish writer or group of writers about the time of king Josiah, who lived some 800 years after the time of Moses.

Further, negative higher criticism claims that the book of Isaiah was only partly written by Isaiah. It is claimed that chapters 40 to 66 of Isaiah were written by an unknown prophet whom the critics call "Deutero-Isaiah" ("the second Isaiah") who lived, it is said, 150 years after the real Isaiah. Some critics claim that some of the closing chapters of Isaiah were written by a third writer whom they call "Trito-Isaiah" ("the third Isaiah").

Negative higher critics also claim that Daniel was not written by Daniel nor in the time of Daniel, but by an unknown writer long after Daniel's time, in the Maccabean period (about 150 B.C., or 400 years after Daniel's time). They hold this because they claim that Daniel could not have known in advance about many of the things prophesied in the book of Daniel. Rather than admit that there are genuine prophecies from God which were fulfilled later, negative higher critics assert that the book of Daniel was written after the things had happened on the field of history. In other words, everything supernatural must be discounted at any cost.

Many more destructive claims of negative higher criticism could be cited, but we do not have the space for this, nor is it necessary. The negative higher critics put forth their destructive and damaging "conclusions" with a great air of confidence and superior scholarship, making the sweeping claim that "All scholars are agreed" as to these findings. Anyone who ventures to ques-

tion their findings is likely to be called bigoted, narrow-minded, an obscurantist, an ignorant fundamentalist, a "literalist," "an extreme conservative," and the like. Thus they try to give the impression that all intelligent and informed people must necessarily agree with them.

This is far from the case, however. There are highly qualified Biblical scholars who do not accept the conclusions of negative higher criticism. The present writer once had the privilege of studying Hebrew under Dr. Robert Dick Wilson, who was a great scholar and a forthright defender of the truth and integrity of the Bible. Dr. Wilson used to make such statements as "No man living knows enough to disprove the truth of the Old Testament," and "Blessed is the man who will not trust a professor." He was credited with learning every language and dialect that any part of the Bible was translated into down to 500 A. D.

The following incident will show how prejudiced and narrow-minded negative higher critics of the Bible really are. A student in one of our great universities, known to the present writer, was taking a course in ancient Near Eastern archaeology under a professor who unqualifiedly endorsed the conclusions of negative higher criticism of the Bible. In the course of one of his lectures the professor made the sweeping statement that "All scholars are agreed that the higher critical view of the Old Testament is correct." After the lecture the student referred to above asked the professor: "Professor, don't you consider Robert Dick Wilson a scholar?" "Who?" "Robert Dick Wilson." "Oh," replied the professor, "I will tell you about him. Robert Dick Wilson could be a scholar. He knows enough to be a scholar. But he has identified himself with a position which it is impossible for a scholar to hold!" This calls to the writer's mind the sentiment attributed to an officer of the Japanese occupation forces in Manchuria in the 1930's: "If he is on our side he is a soldier. If he is on the other side he is a bandit."

We are happy to be able to reprint, immediately following the present article, an article entitled "Testing the Higher Criticism in the Law Courts," which was originally published in the Sunday School Times. We are grateful to the Editor of The Sunday School Times for kind permission to reproduce this copyrighted article. It shows with devastating effectiveness the unsoundness of the much-vaunted scholarly methods of negative higher criticism of the Bible.

Testing the Higher Criticism in the Law Courts

By H. E. Irwin, K.C.

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In the year 1910 there passed away one of the outstanding literary men of the last half of the 19th century (Sir Wm. Robertson Nicoll). Re-

viewing the history of his times, he expressed his opinion that the writings of the so-called Higher Critics of the Bible constituted the particular blot upon the literature of his day.

Some of us who know that the Bible is the very Word of God, a revelation to men of the wisdom of God and His plan for man's redemption, have longed for the day—which was sure to come—when some one or more of this school of the false prophets would have the temerity to step out into the highways of the world—equipped with the tools and the rules by which they have, as they vainly imagine, analysed, dissected, rejected, and reconstructed God's Word to the extinction of all spiritual content—and demonstrate the wonders of their skill and knowledge by applying them to the books of today. And this has now actually happened.

A Canadian woman of accredited literary capacity, Miss Florence Deeks, toiled three or more weary years to write the story of woman's part in the world's history. She called it **The Web**. She took the voluminous manuscript to the MacMillan Company of Canada, the Canadian branch of one of the best known publishing houses of Great Britain and the United States. There it lay for six or eight months; at about the end of which period the Anglo-Saxon world was flooded with the loudly heralded **Outline of History** from the press of the English publishing house whose branch in Toronto had had in their possession the manuscript of **The Web** for practically the identical period during which the author of **The Outline** was writing, at terrific speed, the two volumes of his work.

A Damage Suit Against H. G. Wells

When she read **The Outline**, the author of **The Web** — which had not as yet been published—was convinced that she recognised so many of her own original ideas, and such frequent repetitions of her own sequence of events in narration, that she felt assured that the author of **The Outline** had not merely fallen upon but unto **The Web**, and had actually appropriated many parts of it and incorporated them in his book.

She consulted eminent counsel, and brought action for 500,000 dollars against H. G. Wells, the author of **The Outline of History**, and against the MacMillan Company, the publishing house from which it issued, and other commercial houses engaged in promoting its sale.

On behalf of the defendants (Mr. Wells and his publishers) it was alleged that the manuscript to **The Web** had never been in the hands of the author of **The Outline**, that no copy of it or of any portion of it had ever been made, and that no part of the contents of the manuscript had ever, by any other means, been made available to him. They affirmed that it had never been out of the custody of the Toronto house and that the author of **The**

Outline, which was written in England, had not been in Canada during the period when the manuscript of **The Web** was in the hands of the MacMillans.

The plaintiff had no evidence wherewith to offset this denial. How, then, was she to prove to the satisfaction of a Court of Justice that her unpublished book had been plagiarised? That was a question to stagger the most optimistic of advocates.

Evidence of Higher Critics

But some person conceived a happy thought. Why not seek out the services of one of those men who can take the books of the Bible and by analysis, dissection and, some wonderful faculty known only to themselves, determine just what portion was written by the alleged author; and not only so, but ascertain how many other authors had any part in the finished product, and assign to each the very chapters, verses, or parts of verses, contributed by each?

Set one of these critics to the task, it was urged, and he will ascertain exactly what pages, paragraphs, phrases, and words in **The Outline of History** were taken by its author from the manuscript of **The Web**.

There was at the time in the University of Toronto an Associate Professor of Ancient and Old Testament Languages and Literature, the Rev. W. A. Irwin, M.A., B.D., Ph.D., who reckons among his Alma Maters both Toronto University and Victoria University of Canada and the University of Chicago. He had been teaching these languages for ten years, and a year later he was appointed and now occupies the professorial chair in the Department of Old Testament Languages and Literature in Chicago University.

To him Miss Deeks took her case. I quote from the professor's signed statement, filed in court at his own request, as a part of the plaintiff's case.

"Miss Deeks called upon me, told me the story of her manuscript and her belief that Mr. H. G. Wells had used it in writing his **Outline of History**, and asked me to undertake a study of the two works for evidence bearing upon this contention. I consent, in considerable measure because this is the sort of task with which my study of ancient literatures repeatedly confronts me, and I was interested to test out in modern works the methods commonly applied to those of the ancient world."

He wrought, and read, extracted, tabulated, and compared, according to the rules approved by the Bible critics and by which they have reached their "assured results."

And now for the trial—for all things are now ready.

The pleadings have been placed on records of

the court. The plaintiff has charged that, with the connivance of the MacMillan Company, Mr. H. G. Wells, author of *The Outline of History*, has had access to her unpublished manuscript of *The Web* and has used considerable portions thereof which he has incorporated in *The Outline*. The defendant, Wells, has alleged in denial that he had no knowledge of *The Web*, had never seen the manuscript, and had never used any portion of its contents. In like manner the defendant, the MacMillans, pleaded in denial that they had never broken faith with Miss Deeks by permitting anyone to have access to the manuscript of *The Web* while it was in their custody.

It is for the plaintiff to prove to the court by satisfactory evidence the facts she had pleaded. And now comes forth the professor, fresh from the laboratory of Biblical dissection, and upon his oath saith that by his analysis and comparisons, and by the application of the rules of Biblical Criticism, it is established beyond a doubt that:

1. The author of *The Outline* had access to the manuscript of *The Web*.
2. The manuscript was at hand as he wrote.
3. The manuscript was constantly available, lying close at hand on his work table, and referred to repeatedly if not steadily throughout the course of his writing.
4. Sometimes it lay open before him and his writing was palpably a disguised copying of a passage from *The Web*.

Moreover, we find a privilege accorded to this witness seldom accorded to any witness in a court of justice. In addition to giving his evidence by way of oral answers to questions of counsel, he was permitted to file with the court a 60-page statement of his findings, with the reasons therefor. Another witness of the same sort was also sworn and heard in the same behalf.

The Judge's Verdict

The plaintiff's case rested there. With what result?

Listen to the words of the learned trial Judge, the Hon. Mr. Justice Raney, reported in the Ontario Law Reports, 1931, at page 828:

If I were to accept Professor Irwin's evidence and argument, there would only remain for my consideration the legal questions involved in the piracy of a noncopyright manuscript. But the extracts I have quoted, and the other scores of pages of Professor Irwin's memorandum, are just solemn nonsense. His comparisons are without significance, and his argument and conclusions are alike puerile. Like Gratiano, Professor Irwin spoke "an infinite deal of nothing." His reasons are not even "two grains of wheat hidden in two bushels of chaff." They are not reasons at all.

The court dismissed the action of plaintiff and gave defendants their large costs.

But perhaps the trial Judge erred. Let us follow on to the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of Ontario. Four Appeal Judges sit upon the hearing. All agree in dismissing the appeal. One of these Judges, the Hon. Mr. Justice Riddell, is known both in legal and literary circles throughout Canada, and almost equally well-known in the larger cities of the United States. He writes a Judgment covering 14 pages of the Law Reports. In it he says, at page 840: "I have no hesitation in agreeing with the learned trial Judge in the utter worthlessness of this kind of evidence—it is almost an insult to common sense." And again: "I am wholly in accord with the view of the trial Judge as to the weight to be given to this evidence in this case."

Thus, the application of the methods of the so-called Higher Critics and religious modernists to the determination of the authorship of various portions of a book written in our own day is, by the highest authorities on evidence, adjudged and declared to be:

Fantastic hypotheses.

Solemn nonsense.

Almost an insult to common sense.

Utter worthlessness of this kind of evidence.

Comparisons without significance.

Arguments and conclusions alike puerile.

Not even two grains of wheat hidden in two bushels of chaff.

Not reasons at all.

Hard to understand how anyone, party or witness, could imagine that any court could accept or be influenced by it.

The plaintiff, Miss Deeks, was not satisfied with the decision of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of Ontario. She had the right to carry an appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada, or to carry it directly to the foot of the Throne, and there be heard by the Lords of the Privy Council, the highest Tribunal of Justice and the Court of the last resort in the British Empire. She chose the latter, and the hearing of this appeal was begun. On the conclusion of argument for the appellant (the plaintiff in the action), Lord Atkin, the Presiding Judge, delivered the unanimous judgment of the Court, dismissing the appeal.

The proceedings before the trial and at the trial were such that the plaintiff's case rested solely on the weight to be given to the evidence of Professor Irwin. She had not a tittle of evidence to show that the defendant Wells ever had even the possibility of access to the manuscript of *The Web*.

Speaking of this situation, the learned trial Judge, in the concluding words of his written judgment says:

"The defendants were not, I think, called upon to offer any evidence to rebut Professor Irwin's fantastic hypotheses, but Mr. Wells and the MacMillan Company of Toronto preferred to offer evidence."

The statement of the trial Judge means that if Mr. Wells and the MacMillan Company had chosen to offer no evidence, he (the Judge) would notwithstanding have found that the plaintiff had failed to prove her charge of plagiarism. Or, in other words, that he would have found that the "assured results" of Professor Irwin's comparison and investigation of the two books, made in the approved methods of the Higher Criticism, was no proof at all, and could not properly be made the basis on which to rest a judgment of the Court.

Conclusion

And this finding of the trial Judge stands today, approved unanimously by the full bench of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court of Ontario, and both these judgments have been unanimously affirmed by the highest Tribunal of Justice and the Court of last resort in the British Empire.

This, then, is the settled law of Canada and all the British Empire, not only for a case which involves a claim of 500,000 dollars damages, but

in every case—be it a claim for one dollar before a rural justice of the peace; evidence arrived at by the methods of the so-called Higher Criticism is not sufficient whereon to base a judgment that would transfer a dollar bill from the pocket of one party to an action, to the pocket of the other party.

Is it reasonable, is it right, that any fair-minded man, woman or child should accept this very same kind of evidence as sufficient whereon to base a rejection or even a doubt as to the truth or genuineness of any portion of God's Word?

What then becomes of the "assured results" of the Higher Critics and the Modernists? But that is a trivial question compared with that of the resultant effect in time and in eternity upon the millions who have been misled and deluded by the persistent presentation of these same "assured"—but now exploded—"results."

I cannot conclude this article without saying that, after a thorough examination of Professor Irwin's evidence, it would be unfair for me to leave the impression that he was wittingly offering a stone for bread. The Word, Old Testament and New, tells us very plainly of a law which psychology, alas, ignores: that the persistent refusal to receive the truth brings on blindness and results in actually believing a lie.

Studies on the Plan of Salvation

LESSON 8

Why the Mediator Must be God and Man in one Person

Note: The numbered questions and answers at the beginning of each lesson of this series are taken from the Larger Catechism of the Westminster Assembly.

Q. 40. Why was it requisite that the Mediator should be God and man in one person?

A. It was requisite that the Mediator, who was to reconcile God and man, should himself be both God and man, and this in one person, that the proper works of each nature might be accepted of God for us, and relied on by us, as the works of the whole person.

Scripture References:

Matthew 1: 21, 23. The Mediator both God and man in one person.

Matthew 3:17. Hebrews 9:14. The works of each of the Mediator's two natures accepted by God for us as the works of the whole person.

1 Peter 2:6. The Mediator and His work, as a whole, to be relied on by us for our salvation.

Question:

1. Why could not God provide two Mediators, one divine and the other human, to accomplish the salvation of His people from sin?

Because the relation between the works of each of the two natures required that these two natures be united in one person. A divine Mediator could not experience suffering except through a human nature; a human Mediator could not endure the required suffering, except as sustained by a divine nature. Therefore it was necessary, not only that the Mediator be God and that He be man, but that both natures be united in one person, that His work might be a unity.

2. What work of Christ's divine nature does Scripture speak of as part of the work of accomplishing our salvation?

Hebrews 9:14. It was **through the eternal Spirit** that Christ offered Himself a sacrifice to God for our sins. This may be translated "through HIS eternal Spirit" (See American Revised Version

of 1901, margin). In any case, the meaning is probably not "through the Holy Spirit," but rather "through his own divine nature"; that is, it was through His divine nature that Christ offered Himself as a sacrifice to God for the sins of His people; His divine nature gave value and efficacy to the sacrifice and sufferings of His human nature.

3. What work of Christ's human nature does Scripture speak of as a part of the work of accomplishing our salvation?

Scripture speaks of Christ's obedience to the law, and of all His sufferings, and especially of His death, all of which were works of His human nature, as essential parts of the work of accomplishing our salvation.

4. How can we explain Scripture texts in which what is proper to one of Christ's natures is referred to the other nature?

The unity of Christ's person affords the true explanation of such texts. For example, Acts 20:28, "the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Here we find "blood," which was a part of Christ's human nature, associated with the name "God," which belongs to His divine nature.

John 6:62. "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?" Here a title associated with Christ's human nature, the title "Son of man," is used in connection with a fact concerning Christ's divine nature, namely His eternal pre-existence in heaven, before His incarnation in this world. In these and many similar Scripture passages the explanation is that the unity of Christ's person permits reference to either of His natures in terms which strictly apply to the other nature.

Q. 41. Why was our Mediator called Jesus?

A. Our Mediator was called Jesus, because he saveth his people from their sins.

Scripture References:

Matthew 1:21. The divine command to name the child of Mary "Jesus," and the reason for this name.

Question:

1. What is the literal meaning of the name "Jesus"?

The name "Jesus" is a Greek form corresponding to the Hebrew name "Jehoshua," "Joshua" or "Jeshua." There is some uncertainty as to the exact translation of the name, but it certainly is derived from the Hebrew word meaning "salvation" or "to save." The meaning is commonly taken to be "Jehovah saves" or "Jehovah is salvation."

2. Who decided that our Saviour should be named "Jesus"?

This decision was made by God Himself, and it was announced to Joseph by an angel of the Lord who appeared to him in a dream.

3. What great truths of our faith are involved in the statement "he shall save his people from their sins"?

The following great truths of our faith are involved in this sublime statement revealed to Joseph by an angel of the Lord:

(a) Salvation from sin is accomplished by the divinely-provided Redeemer, and is not something which can be achieved by ourselves.

(b) Our Redeemer **ACTUALLY SAVES** His people from their sins; He does not merely give them "a chance" of salvation, or "an offer" of salvation; He actually and fully saves them, which includes His doing all that is necessary to guarantee that they shall be finally saved.

(c) Our Redeemer saves a particular body of human beings, the elect of God, spoken of in this text as "his people." He was not sent into the world to save everybody, nor to try to save everybody, but to save His people.

4. Is "Jesus" a personal name or a title?

Jesus is the personal name of our Saviour.

Q. 42. Why was our Mediator called Christ?

A. Our Mediator was called Christ, because he was anointed with the Holy Ghost above measure; and so set apart and fully furnished with all authority and ability, to execute the offices of prophet, priest, and king of his Church, in the estate both of his humiliation and exaltation.

Scripture References:

John 3:34. The Holy Spirit was given to our Saviour above measure.

Psalms 45:7. Our Saviour given the Holy Spirit above His fellows.

John 6:27. Our Saviour "sealed" by God the Father, that is, set apart for His redemptive work.

Matthew 28:18-20. Our Saviour furnished by God the Father with all authority and ability to carry out His appointed work to the end.

Acts 3:21, 22. Our Saviour raised up by God the Father to be a prophet.

Luke 4:18, 21. The work of Christ as a prophet.

Hebrews 4:14, 15; 5:5-7. Our Saviour called by God the Father to be a high priest; and His priestly work for His people.

Psalms 2:6. Matthew 21:5. Isaiah 9:6, 7. Our Saviour made a king by God the Father; and the glories of His kingly office.

Phil. 2:8-11. Christ executes His offices both

in His estate of humiliation and in His estate of exaltation.

Questions:

1. Is "Christ" a name or a title?

"Christ" is not a name, but a title which accompanies the personal name "Jesus." This is brought out by the use of the definite article with "Christ" which occurs in some places, such as Matthew 16:16, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

2. What is the literal meaning of the word "Christ"?

"Christ" is the English form of the Greek word **Christos** which means Anointed. This Greek word **Christos** is a translation of the Hebrew word **Messiah**, which also means Anointed. Thus whether we say that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, or the Anointed One, is a matter of language rather than of meaning. These terms all mean the same. In passages of the Old Testament where the word "anointed" occurs with reference to the coming Redeemer, such as Psalm 2:2 ("the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his anointed. . ."), the Hebrew word "Messiah" could equally correctly be translated by the word Christ, for the meaning is identical.

3. What is the basic idea involved in the title "Christ"?

The basic idea involved in the title "Christ" is the idea of anointing. In the Old Testament period kings and priests were anointed with oil to set them apart to their special offices. This oil of anointing was a symbol of the Holy Spirit who would enter their hearts and equip them with abili-

ty and wisdom for their duties as kings or priests. So we see that the idea of anointing in the Old Testament was setting a person apart to a special office, with a symbol of the Holy Spirit's work in that person's life. All the Old Testament kings and priests, however, were only types or shadows pointing forward to Jesus, the true and final king and priest. Jesus is the One who above all others has been anointed by the Holy Spirit to fit Him to be our prophet, priest and king. Instead of being anointed with oil, as in the Old Testament period, Jesus received the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove which abode upon Him (Matthew 3:16).

4. Why did Jesus receive the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove?

While no certain answer can be given to this question, it has been suggested that the form of a dove represented the **totality** of the Holy Spirit, for Jesus received the Spirit without measure. At Pentecost believers received the Holy Spirit in the form of tongues of fire, something divisible, of which each person received a share; but in the case of Jesus, the form of a dove may suggest the idea of totality or indivisibility (see Genesis 15:10, "the birds divided he not").

5. When does Christ execute the offices of prophet, priest and king?

Christ, our Saviour, executes the offices of prophet, priest and king both in His estate of humiliation (that is, during His life on earth), and in His estate of exaltation (that is, since His resurrection, and especially in His life of glory in heaven). This means that Christ was a prophet, a priest and a king when He was on earth, and that He is a prophet, a priest and a king in heaven today.

LESSON 9

How Christ Functions as a Prophet and as a Priest

Q. 43. How doth Christ execute the office of a prophet?

A. Christ executeth the office of a prophet in his revealing to the church in all ages, by his Spirit and word, in divers ways of administration, the whole will of God, in all things concerning their edification and salvation.

Scripture References:

John 1:18. Christ as prophet is the great revealer of the Father.

1 Peter 1:10-12. The Spirit of Christ revealed divine truth to the Old Testament prophets.

Hebrews 1:1, 2. Christ as prophet brings the final revelation of God to men.

John 15:15. Christ revealed truth from the Father to the apostles.

Acts 20:32. The edifying nature of Christ's prophetic work.

Ephesians 4:11-13. Christ's prophetic work edifies or builds up His body, the Church.

John 20:31. Christ's words recorded in Scripture in order that by His work as prophet men might believe and have life.

Questions:

1. What is the true meaning of the word "prophet"?

A prophet is God's representative in speaking to men, God's spokesman, God's mouthpiece.

2. Why do we usually think of a prophet as one who foretells the future?

Because many of the prophets, especially in the Old Testament, received revelations from God

which contained predictions of future events. There are so many predictions of future events in the prophetic books of the Old Testament that we have come to think of a "prophet" as a "predicter of the future." However, many of the messages of the prophets concerned their own times, and the real meaning of the word "prophet" is not a foreteller of the future, but a man who delivers a message from God to the people.

3. In what periods of history did Christ execute the office of a prophet?

"In all ages."

4. How did Christ execute the office of a prophet in the Old Testament period?

During the Old Testament period Christ executed the office of a prophet by His Spirit, revealing His truth through the various prophets, Psalmists and other writers of the Old Testament Scriptures.

5. How did Christ execute the office of a prophet during His earthly ministry?

During His earthly ministry Christ executed the office of a prophet:

(a) By preaching to the people of the Jews;

(b) By teaching and preaching to His own followers, or disciples, who believed on Him;

(c) By training and instructing the twelve Apostles, who would be His official witnesses after His ascension to heaven.

6. How does Christ execute the office of a prophet today?

Christ executes the office of a prophet today:

(a) Through His written Word, the Holy Bible;

(b) By His Holy Spirit, whom He has sent, who illuminates our hearts and minds so that we can receive and understand the truth revealed in the Scriptures.

7. In executing the office of a prophet, what message has Christ revealed to His Church?

He has revealed a complete message, containing the whole will of God in all things concerning our edification and salvation. The truth contained in Scripture, grasped by a mind illuminated by the Holy Spirit, is complete and fully adequate. No other sources of knowledge are to be added.

Q. 44. How doth Christ execute the office of a priest?

A. Christ executeth the office of a priest, in his once offering himself a sacrifice without spot to God, to be a reconciliation for the sins of his people; and in making continual intercession for them.

Scriptural References:

Hebrews 9:14. Christ executes the office of a priest in offering Himself as a sacrifice to God.

Hebrews 9:28. Christ offered once for the sins of many.

Hebrews 2:17. Christ offered Himself in order to reconcile His people to God.

Hebrews 7:25. Christ as a priest makes continual intercession for His people.

Questions:

1. What is the difference between a prophet and a priest?

A prophet is God's representative in speaking to men; a priest is men's representative in approaching God.

2. What are the qualifications for the office of priesthood?

These are found in Hebrews 5:1, 2, and are as follows:

(a) The priest must be a member of the human race, that is, chosen from among men. An angel could not act as a priest to represent men in approaching God.

(b) The priest must be able to sympathize with the ignorant and erring, because he himself is "compassed with infirmity."

(c) The priest must not take the office on himself, but must be called to it by God, as Aaron was (Heb. 5:4).

3. What are the functions of the office of priesthood?

These also are found in Hebrews 5:1-4, and are as follows:

(a) A priest must represent men in things pertaining to God.

(b) A priest must offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.

(c) A priest must make intercession for the people (Hebrews 7:25).

4. What part of the Bible most fully discusses Christ's priestly office?

While the **functions** of Christ's priestly office are discussed in many books of the Bible with great fulness, His priestly office **as such** is discussed most fully in the Epistle to the Hebrews. In the Old Testament, Psalm 110:4 is perhaps the most direct statement of Christ's priestly office.

5. How did Christ possess the qualifications for His priestly office?

(a) By His incarnation, or taking to Himself a human nature, He became a human being. Thus, becoming a member of the human race, He was

qualified to be chosen from among men for the priestly office.

(b) Because He was "compassed with infirmity," and underwent the miseries and sufferings of human life as "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," He was able to sympathize with the ignorant and erring.

(c) He did not take the priestly office upon Himself, but was called by God, as Aaron had been (Hebrews 5:4, 5).

6. How does Christ exercise the functions of the priestly office?

(a) As the Second Adam, the Mediator of the Covenant of Grace, Christ is the representative of all the elect people of God; thus He acts as the representative of men in things pertaining to God.

(b) He laid down His own life on Calvary as a sacrifice for the sins of His people; thus He fulfilled the **sacrificial** function of the priestly office.

(c) He made intercession for His people while still on earth (John 17), and He continues to make intercession for His people as He ministers at the right hand of God the Father in heaven. Thus He fulfills the **intercessory** function of the priestly office.

7. What is the relative importance of Christ's priestly office?

Christ's priestly office is the central and supremely important one of His three offices of prophet, priest and king. While we must regard the whole of Christ's saving work as a unity, and should realize that no part of it is non-essential, still His work as priest is the very heart and center of His work as our Redeemer.

8. What error concerning Christ's offices is common in modern Liberalism?

Modern Liberalism seeks to retain the doctrine of Christ's kingly office while either abandoning or denaturing the doctrine of His priestly office. Thus widely known liberal teachers never weary of speaking about "the kingdom of God," although they either deny or explain away the substitutionary atonement of Christ. Of course these liberal teachers put their own ideas into such terms as "the kingdom of God;" they do not mean by such an expression what historic orthodox Christianity has always meant by it. But they try to retain some kind of belief in Christ's kingly office while giving up or by-passing His priestly office. We should realize that Christ's work is a unity and none of His three offices can be retained in our theology without the other two. The Scriptures know only a Christ who is a **prophet and a priest and a king**. This is the only real Christ. All partial Christs are only the products of subjective human ideas.

LESSON 10

How Christ Functions as a King

Q. 45. How doth Christ execute the office of a king?

A. Christ executeth the office of a king, in calling out of the world a people to himself, and giving them officers, laws, and censures, by which he visibly governs them; in bestowing saving grace upon his elect, rewarding their obedience, and correcting them for their sins, preserving and supporting them under all their temptations and sufferings, restraining and overcoming all their enemies, and powerfully ordering all things for his own glory, and their good; and also in taking vengeance on the rest, who know not God, and obey not the gospel.

Scripture References:

Acts 15:14-16. Isaiah 55:4, 5. Genesis 49:10. Psalm 110:3. Christ executes the office of a king in calling out of the world a people to Himself.

Ephesians 4:11, 12. 1 Cor. 12:28. Christ executes the office of a king in giving His people officers.

Isa. 33:22. Christ executes the office of a king in giving His people laws.

Matt. 18:17, 18. Cor. 5:4, 5. Christ executes

the office of a king in giving His people the censures of church discipline.

Acts 5:31. Christ executes the office of a king in bestowing saving grace upon His elect.

Rev. 22:12. Rev. 2:10. Christ executes the office of a king in rewarding His people for their obedience.

Rev. 3:19. Christ executes the office of a king in correcting His elect for their sins.

Isa. 63:9. Christ executes the office of a king in supporting His people in their temptations and sufferings.

1 Cor. 15:25. Psalm 110:1, 2. Christ executes the office of a king in restraining and overcoming the enemies of His people.

Rom. 14:10, 11. Christ executes the office of a king by powerfully ordering all things for His own glory.

Rom. 8:28. Christ executes the office of a king by powerfully ordering all things for the good of His elect.

2 Thess. 1:8, 9. Psalm 2:8, 9. Christ executes the office of a king in taking vengeance on His

enemies, who know not God, and obey not the Gospel.

Questions:

1. Into what three spheres does the Catechism divide the exercise of Christ's kingly office?

(a) The sphere of the Visible Church; (b) the sphere of the Invisible Church; (c) the sphere of the world.

2. Which is the most important of these three spheres in which Christ's kingly office is exercised?

The sphere of the Invisible Church, or the body of the elect, is the most important, for it is for the benefit of the Invisible Church that Christ exercises His kingly office (a) in the Visible Church, and (b) in the world or universe.

3. What elements are included in Christ's kingly rule in the Visible Church?

(a) Calling out of the world a people who shall be members of the Visible Church.

(b) Giving them officers, as appointed in the Scriptures, and as realized in actual life.

(c) Giving them laws and censures, by which He visibly governs them, that is, by means of the structure of church government and discipline.

4. What elements are included in Christ's kingly rule in the Invisible Church?

(a) Bestowing saving grace upon His elect, by the work of the Holy Spirit in their hearts and lives, resulting in their being united to Christ in their effectual calling.

(b) Rewarding the obedience of His people, both now by His providence, and at the Judgment Day by supernatural power; and correcting His people for their sins, in His providential discipline during the present life.

(c) Preserving and supporting His elect under all their temptations and sufferings, so that they

are never overwhelmed with troubles, but are always kept from despair.

5. What elements are included in Christ's kingly rule in the world or universe?

(a) Restraining and overwhelming all the enemies of His elect.

(b) Powerfully ordering all things to His own glory, and His people's good, so that even the evil deeds of wicked men are made to work out for the true benefit of the elect.

(c) Taking vengeance on the wicked, who know not God, nor obey the Gospel. This vengeance is partly during the present life, by Christ's providential dispensations, but chiefly at the Judgment Day at the end of the world.

6. In which sphere is Christ's kingly rule over the nations included?

Christ's kingly rule or reign over the nations is included in the third sphere, namely, the exercise of His kingly office in the world or universe.

7. Is Christ a king today?

Certainly Christ is a king today. The Bible teaches that He was a king when He was on this earth in the flesh, that He is a king today, and that He will continue to be a king for ever and ever.

8. Is Christ reigning over the nations of the world today?

Yes. While it is true that the nations of the World are living in neglect of, or in rebellion against, Christ's kingly reign, still He is reigning over them and accomplishing His purposes in spite of their neglect and rebellion.

(Note: For a fuller discussion of Christ's kingly reign over the universe, the student is referred to the article entitled **The Kingly Office of Jesus Christ** in *Blue Banner Faith and Life*, Volume 1 Number 7 (July-September, 1946), pages 109-114).

LESSON 11

How Christ Humbled Himself in Becoming Man

Q. 46. What was the estate of Christ's humiliation?

A. The estate of Christ's humiliation was that low condition, wherein he, for our sakes, emptying himself of his glory, took upon him the form of a servant, in his conception and birth, life, death, and after his death, until his resurrection.

Scripture References:

Phil. 2:6-8. Christ's voluntary self-humiliation.

Luke 1:31. Christ's humiliation in His birth as a human being.

2 Cor. 8:9. Christ's self-humiliation in giving up the enjoyment of riches in heaven for a life of poverty on earth.

Acts 2:24. Christ's resurrection terminated His humiliation.

Questions:

1. In carrying out the Plan of Salvation, what kind of condition did Christ take upon Himself?

A low condition.

2. Why did Christ take on Himself a low condition?

For our sakes.

3. What was Christ's condition before He came into this world?

A state of infinite divine glory, described in the Bible as "being rich."

4. How may the expression "made himself of no reputation" (Phil. 2:7) also be translated?

This expression literally means "emptied himself."

5. Of what did Christ "empty himself" when He became man?

He emptied Himself of the enjoyment of His heavenly glory.

6. What serious error has been held concerning Christ's "emptying himself"?

Some have held that this expression in the Greek text of Phil. 2:7 means that Christ emptied Himself of His deity. According to this interpretation, which is called the theory of Kenosis ("emptying"), Christ was divine when He was in heaven, but cast His deity aside, and was only a man when He was on earth. Or it is held that while remaining divine in the abstract, He "emptied himself" of divine attributes such as omnipotence and omniscience during His life on earth, so that while theoretically still God He was practically only man while on earth. This theory is really an attempt to bridge the chasm between the merely human Jesus of modern theology and the divine Christ of orthodox historic Christianity. It attempts to speak of Christ as divine and yet not divine at the same time.

Since many texts of the New Testament teach that Christ was truly and fully God while He was on earth, this theory of Kenosis cannot be correct. The true meaning of Phil. 2:7 is that Christ emptied Himself of the enjoyment of His divine glory, taking "the form of a servant" instead. His nature was still the same as it had been in heaven, but His position was different.

7. What was Christ's position during His earthly life?

The "form" or position of a servant.

8. What chapter of the Old Testament prophesied that the Redeemer would be "the Servant of the Lord"?

Isaiah chapter 53. The whole chapter tells of Christ's estate of humiliation. Verse 11 calls Him "my righteous servant."

Q. 47. How did Christ humble himself in his conception and birth?

A. Christ humbled himself in his conception and birth, in that, being from all eternity the Son of God, in the bosom of the Father, he was pleased in the fulness of time to become the son of man,

made of a woman of low estate, and to be born of her; with divers circumstances of more than ordinary abasement.

Scripture References:

John 1: 14, 18. Christ, who became man, was from all eternity the Son of God.

Gal. 4:4. Christ in the fulness of time became man and was born as an infant.

Luke 2:7. Our Saviour was born of a woman of low estate, and with circumstances of more than ordinary abasement.

Questions:

1. How long had Christ been the Son of God?

From all eternity.

2. What is the meaning of the statement that Christ was "in the bosom of the Father" (John 1:18)?

This means that Christ, the eternal Son, is one with God the Father. The Father and the Son are the same in substance, though they are distinct persons of the Trinity. Christ is God just as truly as the Father is God, and yet there are not two Gods, but only one God.

3. Why does the Catechism say that Christ "was pleased" to become the son of man?

This expression implies that Christ became man voluntarily, of His own free choice, not because He was compelled to do so.

4. When did Christ become man?

When the fulness of the time was come. Gal. 4:4.

5. What is the meaning of this expression, "When the fulness of the time was come"?

This means the time appointed by God from all eternity for Christ to be born as a human being; also the time when all the age-long preparations had been completed, and the prophecies were about to be fulfilled.

6. Why is Mary, the mother of Jesus, referred to as "a woman of low estate"?

This is based on Mary's own words as found in Luke 1:48. It refers not to her character, but to her economic and social position among the Jewish people of that day.

7. What "circumstances of more than ordinary abasement" attended the birth and infancy of Jesus Christ?

He was born in a stable, because there was no room in the inn. It was necessary to take Him suddenly to a foreign country in order to escape Herod's plot to murder Him.

LESSON 12

How Christ Humbled Himself During His Earthly Life

Q. 48. How did Christ humble himself in his life?

A. Christ humbled himself in his life, by subjecting himself to the law, which he perfectly fulfilled; and by conflicting with the indignities of the world, temptations of Satan, and infirmities in his flesh, whether common to the nature of man, or particularly accompanying that his low condition.

Scripture References:

Gal. 4:4. Christ was born under the law.

Matt. 5:17. Rom. 5:18. Christ perfectly fulfilled the law of God.

Psalms 22:6. Heb. 12:2,3. Christ conflicted with the indignities of the world.

Matt. 4:1-12. Luke 4:13. Christ conflicted with the temptations of Satan.

Heb. 2:17, 18; 4:5. Isa. 52:13, 14. Christ conflicted with infirmities in His flesh, either common to humanity, or specially involved in His low condition.

Questions:

1. Why was it necessary that our Saviour be subject to the law of God?

It was necessary that our Saviour be subject to the law of God, in order that He might fulfill the law as our representatives, rendering a perfect obedience to the will of God, which Adam had failed to do in the Covenant of Works. Christ, the Second Adam, must accomplish this successfully in order that His righteousness could be reckoned to our account.

2. How did our Saviour become subject to the law of God?

Our Saviour became subject to the law of God by His own voluntary decision to become man, according to the stipulated terms of the Covenant of Grace entered into between Him and the Father in eternity before the creation of the world.

3. To what law did our Saviour become subject?

He became subject to the whole law of God, both the moral law and the ceremonial law.

4. How did Christ fulfill the law of God?

Christ fulfilled the law of God **perfectly**. His obedience to the law was both positive and negative. He never broke any of the law's commands, and He fully performed all that the law required.

5. Why was becoming subject to the law a matter of Christ humbling Himself?

Because as God He was by nature above the law. By nature He was not under the law, but the Author of the law. In becoming man, He laid aside the enjoyment of His heavenly glory, and took the form or position of a servant, under the law.

6. Why were the indignities of the world a humiliation to our Saviour?

Because the indignities of the world were contrary to His holy nature, and because they were contrary to the peace, harmony, beauty, order and reverence of heaven, whence He had come.

7. Why were the temptations of Satan a humiliation to our Saviour?

Because it was an insult to His holy character to be tempted by Satan, who is not only deceitful and wicked, but in rebellion against the authority of God. The Lord of glory was approached and tempted by the vilest and most lawless rebel in the universe. This must have been extremely humiliating and irritating to our Saviour.

8. What were some of the "infirmities in his flesh" which our Saviour suffered during His life on this earth?

Weariness, hunger, thirst, poverty, "no place to lay his head," being misunderstood and reproached by His near relations, etc.

9. What should be our own attitude in view of the way in which our Saviour humbled Himself during His life on earth?

(a) We should be filled with the deepest gratitude to Him who endured such afflictions and privations for our sakes.

(b) We should resist the temptation to yield to discouragement and despair when we are faced with troubles and hardships in our earthly pilgrimage, remembering that our Saviour, the Lord of glory, endured much more grievous troubles and hardships in His great love for us.

LESSON 13

How Christ Humbled Himself in His Death

Q. 49. How did Christ humble himself in his death?

A. Christ humbled himself in his death, in that having been betrayed by Judas, forsaken by his

disciples, scorned and rejected by the world, condemned by Pilate, and tormented by his persecutors; having also conflicted with the terrors of death, and the powers of darkness, felt and borne the weight of God's wrath, he laid down his life an offering for sin, enduring the painful, shameful, and cursed death of the cross.

Scripture References:

Matt. 27:4. Christ betrayed by Judas.

Matt. 26:56. Christ forsaken by His disciples.

Isa. 53:2, 3. Christ scorned and rejected by the world.

Matt. 27:26-50. John 19:34. Christ condemned by Pilate, and tormented by His persecutors.

Luke 22:44. Matt. 27:46. Christ's conflict with the terrors of death and powers of darkness, and His experience of the weight of God's wrath.

Isa. 53:10. Christ's life laid down by Himself as an offering for sin.

Phil. 2:8. Heb. 12:2. Gal. 3:13. The painful, shameful and cursed death of the cross.

Questions:

1. Why was being betrayed by Judas an especially grievous humiliation for our Saviour?

Because Judas was not a stranger, or professed enemy, but a person who had been admitted to special privileges and friendship with Jesus in the circle of the twelve disciples.

2. Why was being forsaken by His disciples hard for Jesus to bear?

Because the conduct of the disciples showed that, for the time being at least, they were much more concerned about their own personal safety than about loyalty to their Lord. In their minds personal fear was a stronger motive than devotion to Christ.

3. Why was being scorned and rejected by the world a humiliation to Christ?

Because He was the Creator and Lord of all the world, and the world ought to have received Him with reverence and joy. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not" (John 1:11).

4. Why was being condemned by Pilate a special humiliation to Christ?

Because His condemnation was **contrary to justice**. Pilate, the Roman governor, sat as a judge, the official representative of a divine institution in human society, namely, the State. Pilate, who was appointed to administer justice, condemned Christ unjustly, that is, contrary to the evidence in the case.

5. How was Christ tormented by His persecutors?

Read Matthew 27:26-50.

6. When did Jesus engage in conflict with the terrors of death and powers of darkness?

In the Garden of Gethsemane, the night before He was crucified.

7. When did Jesus feel the weight of God's wrath?

Jesus felt and bore the weight of God's wrath against human sin during the whole of His life on earth, but especially at the end of His earthly life, in the Garden of Gethsemane, and most of all during the three hours of darkness while He hung on the cross, from the sixth hour to the ninth hour, ending with His cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

8. What was the character of our Saviour's death?

Our Saviour offered His own life as a sacrifice to God to atone for the sins of men. Therefore His death was unique and unlike that of other men. Jesus died, not of sickness, accident or old age; not simply as a victim of injustice or oppression; not even merely as a martyr for a great cause; but as an offering for sin, a substitute for sinners, bearing their deserved penalty in their stead.

9. Why was death by crucifixion a particularly bitter death?

Death by crucifixion was a particularly bitter death because it was painful, shameful and accursed.

10. Why was death by crucifixion a painful death?

Because no vital organ of the body was directly injured; therefore the victims of crucifixion often lingered and suffered for many hours and even days before death came; also the loss of blood and exposure to the hot sun would cause extreme exhaustion and thirst.

11. Why was death by crucifixion a shameful and cursed death?

In the Roman Empire, death by crucifixion was reserved for slaves and the lowest criminals. Even more important is the fact that God's Word had pronounced this mode of death to be accursed: Gal. 3:13; Deut. 21:23, "He that is hanged is accursed of God."

12. How did our Saviour finally die?

Our Saviour finally **voluntarily laid down His life**, at the appointed moment, as we learn from the following facts in the record:

(a) "Jesus . . . yielded up the ghost," Matt. 27:50.

(b) In John 19:28 we are told that "Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished . . . saith, I thirst"; that is, He required a drink of

water to clear His brain for His final act on the cross, which followed immediately: "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost."

(c) In John 10:17, 18 Jesus said, "I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself."

(d) Jesus died after being on the cross about six hours. The two thieves were still alive at the end of this time. In Mark 15:44 we read that

"Pilate marvelled if he were already dead."

Thus the evidence indicates that Jesus finally yielded up His own life by an act of His own will, and not because the limit of His physical endurance had been reached.

13. What is the importance of the death of Jesus Christ?

The death of Jesus Christ is the center of the Bible, the focal point of the world's history, the central fact in the Gospel message, and the foundation of our hope for eternal life.

LESSON 14

How Christ's Humiliation Continued Even after His Death

Q. 50. Wherein consisted Christ's humiliation after his death?

A. Christ's humiliation after his death consisted in his being buried, and continuing in the state of the dead, and under the power of death till the third day: which hath been otherwise expressed in these words, He descended into hell.

Scripture References:

1 Cor. 15:3, 4. Christ's burial a necessary fact of the Gospel.

Psalms 16:10 compared with Acts 2:24-31. Christ's continuing in the state of the dead, and under the power of death, till the third day.

Rom. 6:9. Matt. 12:40. The power of death over Christ's body was only temporary, being limited to three days.

Questions:

1. Where was Christ's soul during the time His body was in the tomb?

In heaven or paradise, as shown by Luke 23:43.

2. Why was it a humiliation to Christ for His body to be buried and to continue under the power of death for a time?

Because "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). Christ was "the holy One of God"; He had no **personal** sin. Death would have had no power over Him at all except for the fact that our sins were laid upon Him, and He died, and was buried, as our Sin-bearer and Substitute. Because His being buried was a part of the wages or penalty of sin, it was an element in our Saviour's humiliation.

3. Why could Christ's body be kept under the power of death for a short time only?

Because the penalty for sin had been fully paid, and the guilt of His people's sins wholly canceled. If Christ's body had remained permanently under the power of death, it would have indicated that the penalty for sin had not been fully paid.

4. What is meant by the expression of "The Apostles' Creed" which says "He descended into hell"?

This expression has been understood in various ways. Some hold that Christ literally descended into hell — not the hell of the devil and the wicked angels, but a place where the Old Testament saints were waiting. There He preached to these spirits and opened the way for them to enter heaven. This interpretation, which is held by the Roman Catholic Church and by some Protestants, is unsound and is based on a misunderstanding of 1 Peter 3:18-20.

Some Protestants hold that the words "He descended into hell" refer to Christ's sufferings on the cross, that is, that He descended into hell, not as a place, but as an experience of suffering. While this idea is doctrinally sound, it is historically unwarranted, because the word translated "hell" in the "Apostles' Creed" is not **Gehenna** (the place of punishment) but **Hades** (the realm or sphere of death).

Our Catechism teaches that the words "He descended into hell" refer to Christ's being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time, the word "hell" being understood as "the realm of the power of death."

The so-called "Apostles' Creed" was not written by the Apostles, and originated in the Church later than the time of the Apostles. It is possible that the original framers of the "Apostles' Creed" accepted the interpretation of 1 Peter 3:18-20 referred to above, and that the Westminster Assembly understood the clause "He descended into hell" in a sense different from that of the original framers of the Creed. This is justifiable because it is more important that our theology be Scripturally correct than that we accept this clause in the sense intended by the framers of the Creed. Some Protestant denominations have omitted this clause altogether from their official form of the Apostles' Creed, because of ambiguity as to its meaning.

Christ's Estate of Exaltation

Q. 51. What was the estate of Christ's Exaltation?

A. The estate of Christ's exaltation comprehendeth his resurrection, ascension, sitting at the right hand of the Father, and his coming again to judge the world.

Scripture References:

1 Cor. 15:4. Christ's resurrection.

Mark 16:19. Christ's ascension to heaven.

Eph. 1:20. Christ's sitting at the right hand of the Father.

Acts 1:11; 17:31. Christ's coming again to judge the world.

Questions:

1. What four elements are included in Christ's estate of exaltation?

(a) His resurrection. (b) His ascension to heaven. (c) His sitting at the right hand of God the Father. (d) His coming again to judge the world.

2. Which of these four elements are past, which present, and which still future?

Two are past, His resurrection and ascension. One is present, His sitting at the right hand of God the Father. One is still future, His coming again to judge the world.

Q. 52. How was Christ exalted in his resurrection?

A. Christ was exalted in his resurrection, in that, not having seen corruption in death, (of which it was not possible for him to be held), and having the very same body in which he suffered, with the essential properties thereof, (but without mortality, and other infirmities belonging to this life), really united to his soul, he rose again from the dead the third day by his own power; whereby he declared himself to be the Son of God, to have satisfied divine justice, to have vanquished death, and him that had the power of it, and to be the Lord of quick and dead: all which he did as a public person, the head of his Church, for their justification, quickening in grace, support against enemies, and to assure them of their resurrection from the dead at the last day.

Scripture References:

Acts 2:24, 27. Christ's body was not subject to decay while in the tomb.

Luke 24:39. Christ rose again in the identical body in which He suffered.

Rom. 6:9. Rev. 1:18. Christ's resurrection body was and is immortal.

John 10:18. Christ rose again by His own power.

Rom. 1:4. By His resurrection, Christ was declared to be the Son of God.

Rom. 8:34. By His resurrection, Christ was declared to have satisfied the justice of God.

Heb. 2:14. Christ's resurrection declared Him to have conquered death and Satan, who had the power of death.

Rom. 14:9. By His resurrection, Christ was shown to be the Lord of both the living and the dead.

1 Cor. 15:21, 22. In His resurrection Christ acted as "a public person."

Eph. 1:20-23. Col. 1:18. Christ, in His resurrection, acted as the Head of His Church.

Rom. 4:25. Christ was raised from the dead for our justification.

Eph. 2:1, 5, 6. Col. 2:12. Christ was raised from the dead for His people's quickening in grace.

1 Cor. 15:25-27. Christ was raised from the dead to conquer His people's enemies.

1 Cor. 15:20. Christ was raised from the dead to guarantee that His people, also, shall rise from the dead.

Questions:

1. How do we know that Christ's body did not suffer decay while it was in the tomb?

Psalm 16:10 compared with Acts 2:27.

2. Why was it not possible for Christ to be held permanently under the power of death?

(a) Because of His deity; being the Son of God, He could not remain under the power of death.

(b) Because the penalty for sin had been completely paid and canceled; therefore death (which is the penalty for sin) had lost its claim upon Him.

3. With what body did Christ rise again on the third day?

With the identical body in which He suffered, but glorified.

4. What is the meaning of the expression "essential properties thereof"?

This means the properties or characteristics which identified it as Christ's true human body. See Luke 24:39.

5. What was the difference between Christ's glorified body and His body before He was crucified?

His glorified body is "without mortality, and other common infirmities belonging to this life."

6. What was the difference between Christ's resurrection and the miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead which is recorded in John chapter 11?

(a) Christ rose by His own power; Lazarus was raised by the power of another.

(b) Christ rose immortal, never to die again; Lazarus was raised mortal, and finally did die again.

7. What five great truths were demonstrated by Christ's resurrection?

(a) That He is the Son of God.

(b) That He had fully satisfied God's justice on account of the sins of His people.

(c) That He had conquered death.

(d) That He had conquered Satan, the devil.

(e) That He is the Lord of the living and the dead.

8. What is the meaning of the words "quick" and quickening"?

"Quick" is an old word which means "alive" or "living"; "quickening" means "making alive".

9. What is meant by the expression "a public person"?

This means someone who acts, not for himself personally, but as an official representative of a body of people. It is the opposite of "a private citizen" or "a private person." Christ's great redemptive acts were of a representative and official nature.

10. As a public person, whom did Christ represent?

He represented His people, His Church, of which He is the Head.

11. What benefits come to the Church from Christ's resurrection?

(a) Justification. (b) Quickening in grace. (c) Support against enemies. (d) Assurance of our own resurrection at the Last Day.

LESSON 15

How Christ was Exalted in His Ascension to Heaven

Q. 53. How was Christ exalted in his ascension?

A. Christ was exalted in his ascension, in that having after his resurrection often appeared unto and conversed with his apostles, speaking to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, and giving them commission to preach the gospel to all nations, forty days after his resurrection, he in our nature, and as our head, triumphing over enemies, visibly went up into the highest heavens, there to receive gifts for men, and to raise up our affections thither, and to prepare a place for us, where himself is, and shall continue till his second coming at the end of the world.

Scripture References:

Acts 1:3, 4. Christ's appearing to the apostles after His resurrection.

Matt. 28:19, 20. The Great Commission to preach the Gospel to all nations.

Heb. 6:20. Christ ascended to heaven as our Head.

Eph. 4:8. Christ ascended triumphant over enemies.

Acts 1:9-11. Eph. 4:10. Psalm 68:18. The record of Christ's ascension; His purpose in ascending to receive gifts for men.

Col. 3:1, 2. Christ's purpose in ascending was to raise our affections heavenward.

John 14:3. Christ has ascended to heaven to prepare a place for His people.

Acts 3:21. Christ must remain in heaven until His second coming.

Questions:

1. How long was the interval between Christ's resurrection and His ascension?

Forty days.

2. How did Christ associate with His disciples during this interval?

He did not remain with them constantly, but appeared to them repeatedly.

3. What great command did Christ give to His people during this interval?

The "Great Commission" to preach the Gospel to all nations, recorded in Matthew 28:18-20. Mark 16:15-8. Luke 24:47. Acts 1:8.

4. Why is the phrase "in our nature" used to describe Christ's ascension?

Because it was not merely as God that He ascended into heaven, but as human being, with a human body and a human soul. Christ's **human** nature left this earth and entered the realm within the veil.

5. Why is the phrase "as our head" used to describe Christ's ascension?

Because His ascension was an official act, in which He functioned as our representative, the Second Adam, the head of the redeemed human

race. In heaven today Jesus Christ the God-man is the representative or head of the people of God.

6. How did Christ triumph over enemies in His ascension?

His enemies had rejected and crucified Him, but now in spite of their hatred and opposition He ascended into heaven to be proclaimed King of kings and Lord of lords.

7. How do we know that our Saviour ascended visibly?

Acts 1:9-11, "And when he had spoken these things, **while they beheld**, he was taken up; and a cloud received him **out of their sight**. And, while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye **have seen** him go into heaven."

8. Why is the visibility of Christ's ascension so strongly emphasized in the account in Acts 1:9-11?

Doubtless the reason for the strong emphasis on visibility is to avoid the idea that Christ's ascension was only a vision or hallucination, or only a spiritual ascension. The record leaves no doubt that the disciples were wide awake and actually saw Christ's human form rise up and leave the earth.

9. What is the modern view of Christ's ascension?

Modern religious Liberalism, since it does not believe in the bodily resurrection of Christ, of course cannot believe in a literal ascension either. Modernism disbelieves both of these great Gospel facts, and explains them away as myths or legends.

10. Is it hard to believe that Christ, in his human body, literally ascended out of this earth to heaven?

It all depends on what kind of Christ we believe in. If Jesus Christ was merely a human being, it would be extremely difficult if not impossible to believe that he really ascended to heaven. But if we believe in the Christ of the Scriptures, who came down from heaven in the

first place, it is not at all difficult to believe that when His work on earth was accomplished He ascended to heaven again. For if He did not ascend to heaven, then He must still be visibly present somewhere in this world (since He rose from the dead). It is of course perfectly obvious that the risen Christ is not now present in bodily form anywhere in this world; therefore we conclude that the Scripture account of His ascension is entirely reasonable and credible, and the only possible view, once His literal resurrection from the dead is granted.

11. What is meant by saying that Christ ascended to heaven in order to receive gifts for men?

"To receive gifts for men" is an expression taken from Psalm 68:18, and quoted in Ephesians 4:8. The kind of gifts meant can be discovered from Ephesians 4:11, 12, namely, various kinds of official functions in the Church, such as the offices of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. The purpose of these various gifts is stated in verse 12, namely, "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."

12. Why should Christ's ascension raise our affections heavenward?

The fact that our Saviour is in heaven should make us think of heaven and value it more highly than all our possessions in this world. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

13. What is Christ doing in heaven at the present time?

Among other things which the Bible mentions, He is preparing a place for His people in heavenly glory, to be their eternal home. John 14:1-3.

14. How do we know that heaven is a place and not just a spiritual state or condition?

Christ's human body is there, therefore it must be a place. Moreover His own promise in John 14:3 ("I go to prepare a place for you") certainly implies that heaven is a place. We should resist all tendency to "spiritualize" or explain away the plain, simple, realistic meaning of Christ's promise, and should adhere tenaciously to the unsophisticated realism of the Scriptures. We do not know where heaven is, but we do know that it is a real place. The doctrine of the bodily resurrection implies and requires believing in heaven as a place.

LESSON 16

Christ's Exaltation at the Right Hand of God

Q. 54. How is Christ exalted in his sitting at the right hand of God?

A. Christ is exalted in his sitting at the right hand of God in that as God-man he is advanced to the highest favor with God the Father, with all

fullness of joy, glory, and power over all things in heaven and earth; and doth gather and defend his church, and subdue their enemies, furnisheth his ministers and people with gifts and graces, and maketh intercession for them.

Scripture References:

Phil. 2:9. Christ exalted by God the Father.

Psalm 16:11 compared with Acts 2:28. Christ given all fulness of joy by God the Father.

John 17:5. Christ given glory by God the Father.

Eph. 1:22. 1 Peter 3:22. Christ given supreme power by God the Father.

Eph. 4:10-12. Psalm 110:1, 2. Christ, at the Father's right hand, gathers and defends His Church, subdues their enemies, and furnishes His ministers and people with gifts and graces.

Rom. 8:34. Christ, at the Father's right hand, makes intercession for His people.

Questions:

1. What is meant by saying that Christ sits at the right hand of God in heaven?

This is of course figurative language. Since God is a spirit and has no body, He does not have a literal right hand. The meaning is that Christ as Mediator, being God and man in one person, occupies the highest place in heaven next to God the Father. As God, Christ is fully equal to the Father in all things; as God-man, He exalted to the highest place in heaven next to God.

2. Why was Christ exalted to the right hand of God in heaven?

This honor was given Him as a reward for His obedience, sufferings and death, according to the terms of the Covenant of Grace. Read Phil. 2:8-11.

3. What power does Christ exercise at the right hand of God in heaven?

"All power in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). "He hath put all things under his feet" (1 Cor. 15:27). ". . . he raised him from the dead, and set him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet. . . ." (Eph. 1:20-22). The power committed to Christ is absolutely universal and includes the entire created universe. 1 Cor. 15:27, 28 shows that only God the Father is excepted from Christ's dominion.

4. How long will Christ's dominion over the entire created universe continue?

It will continue throughout the present age and until Christ's second coming at the end of the

world. "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1 Cor. 15:25, 26). At that time, when death, the last enemy, has been destroyed by the resurrection of the dead, Christ will give up His dominion **over the universe**, as shown by 1 Cor. 15:24, "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power," and verse 28, "And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."

However, Christ will never give up His kingly office as **head of the redeemed human race**, as shown by Luke 1:33, "And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

5. What is the purpose or aim of Christ's dominion over the entire universe?

The purpose or aim of Christ's dominion over the entire universe is **the benefit of His Church**, as shown by Ephesians 1:22, "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church." This text is often misunderstood, as if it said "head over all things IN the church," that is, as if it meant simply that Christ is the head of the Church. But we should note that the text says "head over all things TO the church," that is, head over the entire universe for the benefit of the Church.

6. How does Christ's universal dominion benefit His Church?

(a) By gathering His elect people into His Church.

(b) By defending His Church against enemies.

(c) By perfecting His Church, bestowing gifts and graces on ministers and people.

(d) By making intercession for His people.

7. What error is common today concerning Christ's kingly dominion?

A very common false teaching asserts that Christ is not a king today, and will not exercise kingly power until after His second coming, when, it is alleged, He will reign for a thousand years in Jerusalem.

1 Cor. 15:23-28 certainly teaches that Christ is reigning NOW (verse 25), and that His second coming will mark the end, not the beginning, of His dominion over the entire universe (verses 23, 24).

LESSON 17

How Christ Makes Intercession for His People

Q. 55. How doth Christ make intercession?

A. Christ maketh intercession by his appearing in our nature continually before the Father in heaven, in the merit of his obedience and sacrifice on earth, declaring his will to have it applied to all believers; answering all accusations against them, and procuring for them quiet of conscience, notwithstanding daily failings, access with boldness to the throne of grace, and acceptance of their persons and services.

Scripture References:

Heb. 9:12, 24. Christ appears in the presence of God on our behalf.

Heb. 1:3. Christ's heavenly intercession is based on the merit of His sacrifice and obedience on earth.

John 3:16; 17:9, 20, 24. It is Christ's will that the merit of His obedience and sacrifice be applied to all believers.

Rom. 8:33, 34. Christ in His heavenly intercession answers all accusations against His people.

Rom. 5:1, 2. 1 John 2:1, 2. Christ by His heavenly intercession procures quiet of conscience for His people, in spite of their daily failings.

Heb. 4:16. Christ procures for His people the acceptance of their persons.

1 Pet. 2:5. Christ procures for His people the acceptance of their services.

Heb. 7:25. Christ makes intercession for His people continually, saving them to the uttermost.

Questions:

1. To which of Christ's three offices does His work of intercession belong?

To the office of a priest. Hebrews 7:24, 25.

2. What book of the Bible tells us most about the priesthood of Christ?

The Epistle to the Hebrews.

3. In what chapter of the Bible is Christ's "Great High Priestly Prayer" found?

In John chapter 17, the chapter where the Scottish Reformer John Knox "cast his first anchor."

4. To whom does Christ make intercession for His people?

To God the Father.

5. On what basis, or by what right, does Christ intercede for His people?

"In the merit of his obedience and sacrifice

on earth"; that is, in His heavenly intercession Christ presents His obedience and sacrifice on earth as a sufficient reason why His people's sins should be forgiven, blessings given to them, their services accepted, etc.

6. According to the will and purpose of Christ, to what persons is the merit of His obedience and sacrifice applied?

To all believers.

7. In the Bible, who is represented as making accusations against God's children?

Satan, or the devil. Read Job 1:9-11; 2:4, 5. Revelation 12:9, 10. Zechariah 3:1, 2.

8. Of what might Satan accuse God's people?

Of being unworthy of God's blessings and favor, because of their sins.

9. How can Christ answer Satan's accusations against believers?

By showing that, although God's people are themselves sinful and unworthy, yet since Christ Himself suffered the penalty due to their sins, and also provided a perfect righteousness which is reckoned to their account, Satan has no ground for making charges against them. For every sin that Satan can accuse a Christian of, Christ can say "My blood was shed to take away that sin." Thus Satan is left without any standing ground for accusing believers.

10. What is there in the life of Christian people that would tend to cause an uneasy conscience?

Daily failings in thought, word and deed. The more serious minded the Christian is, the more he would be likely to feel conviction of conscience because of his failures and sins.

11. How can we enjoy real peace of conscience in spite of daily failings?

"Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Rom. 5:20). Christ's atonement and righteousness, which He pleads on our behalf, are greater than all our sins and failures. Therefore, because of His heavenly intercession, peace of conscience is given to Christian believers. This does not mean that the Christian may have a complacent attitude and be satisfied to commit sin daily; on the contrary, he must fight against it continually. But the Christian can have assurance that his sins are forgiven and cannot bring him into condemnation. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1).

12. How can we, with all our sins and failures, have boldness to come to God's throne of grace in prayer?

Of ourselves alone we could not have such boldness, for God is holy and we are sinful. But through Christ's heavenly intercession, because He is our Mediator and High Priest, we can come to God in prayer with confidence, as children to a father. Read Hebrews 4:15, 16.

13. Why are the services or "good works" of Christian people acceptable to God?

Not because of ourselves, for we are sinful by nature; nor because of the quality or character of our "good works," for they are very imperfect and marred by sin; but only because of the heavenly intercession of Christ our Mediator.

LESSON 18

How Christ will Come Again to this World

Q. 56. How is Christ to be exalted in his coming again to judge the world?

A. Christ is to be exalted in his coming again to judge the world, in that he, who was unjustly judged and condemned by wicked men, shall come again at the last day in great power, and in the full manifestation of his glory, and of his Father's, with all the holy angels, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God, to judge the world in righteousness.

Scripture References:

Acts 3:14, 15. Christ was unjustly judged and condemned by wicked men.

Matt. 24:30. Christ shall come again visibly in the clouds, with power and glory.

Luke 9:26. Matt. 25:31. Christ shall come again in His own glory, and the Father's glory, and with all the holy angels.

1 Thess. 4:16. Christ shall come again with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trumpet of God.

Acts 17:31. At His second coming, Christ shall judge the world in righteousness.

Acts 1:10, 11. Christ's second coming will be a definite, visible event.

Revelation 1:7. When Christ comes, "every eye shall see him."

Daniel 7:13. Christ shall come on the clouds of heaven.

Rev. 20:11, 12. The great Judgment of the Last Day.

Questions:

1. What great event will take place immediately after Christ's second coming?

The Judgment.

2. When will Christ's second coming take place?

At the Last Day, also called the end of the world or the end of history.

3. When will the Last Day come?

This question cannot really be answered, as the information has not been revealed in the Word

of God. Matt. 24:26, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man. . .". All attempts to calculate the date of Christ's second coming are useless and unscriptural. We should be on guard against being deceived by those who claim to know "that day and hour" in advance. At the same time we must remember that Christ's second coming is a definite event which will take place at a definite time, that is, a particular year, month, day and hour. On a definite calendar day, known only to God, human history will suddenly come to an abrupt conclusion with the second coming of Christ, followed immediately by the Judgment.

4. Can we know whether the second coming of Christ is approaching or drawing near?

Yes. Although it is impossible to calculate the date of the Lord's return, still it is possible to know whether that blessed event is drawing near. Certain signs have been prophesied as preceding the Lord's return. The appearance of ALL these signs will show that His return is NEAR. Matt. 24:33, "So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors." The American Revised Version (of 1901) translates this verse as follows: "Even so ye also, when ye shall see all these things, know ye that he is nigh, even at the doors."

5. What preparations should we as Christians make for the second coming of Christ?

Matt. 24:44, "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." Matt. 25:13, "Watch therefore; for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." Read also Luke 12:35-40.

6. What should be our attitude toward the second coming of Christ and the Judgment Day?

We should look forward to these great redemptive events with eager and joyful anticipation, realizing that they will bring about the completion of our redemption — our complete and permanent deliverance from sin, death and all their consequences. Titus 2:13, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." I Peter 1:13, "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." Luke 21:28, "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your

heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." Revelation 22:20, "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

7. What will be the manner of Christ's second coming?

Many questions may arise in our minds which cannot be answered. We should always remember that the Bible was given to meet our needs, not to satisfy our curiosity. We should not allow our imagination to wander beyond what is plainly revealed in the Scriptures. Concerning the manner of Christ's second coming, the Word of God teaches clearly the following facts:

(a) Christ's second coming will be personal coming; Acts 1:11, "This same Jesus . . .".

(b) Christ's second coming will be a visible coming; Acts 1:11, ". . . in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven"; Rev. 1:7, "Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him."

(c) Christ's second coming will be a miraculous or supernatural coming, which will crash through the order of nature with the almighty power of God; 1 Cor. 15:22; 1 Thes. 4:16, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." Matthew 24:27, "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

(d) Christ's second coming will be a sudden coming, at a definite and particular time, which is referred to as "the day and the hour"; see also 1 Cor. 15:22, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye", etc.

8. How will Christ judge the world at His second coming?

He will judge the world in righteousness, that is, according to the righteous law of God. For the first time in human history, absolute justice is going to be dispensed to the human race.

9. Who will be judged at Christ's second coming?

Rev. 20:11-15 shows that the great Judgment will include all the dead who have ever lived, and also all persons still living when Christ returns will be judged.

10. Will Christian people be judged at Christ's second coming?

They will be judged, but not condemned. In their case, the sentence will be one of acquittal because of Christ's blood and righteousness which are imputed or reckoned to their account. 2 Cor. 5:10, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ . . ."; Rom. 4:10, "For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ"; Rom. 8:1, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus . . .".

11. How will the heathen, who lived and died without the light of Scripture, be judged?

They will be judged according to the law of nature, which was written in their heart and conscience. Read Romans 2:12-16, where the apostle Paul explains this matter.

12. What has been the prevalent attitude of orthodox churches, in recent years, toward the doctrine of the second coming of Christ?

This doctrine, which beyond question is clearly revealed in the Scriptures as one of the great truths of the Christian faith, and which has always been held to be a cardinal doctrine of Christianity, has been greatly neglected in orthodox churches, so much so that many ministers seldom, if ever, preach on it, and many people know almost nothing about it. The result of this widespread neglect has been that certain denominations and sects have taken up this doctrine and carried it to absurd and fanatical extremes, far beyond what a sober study of the Scriptures would warrant. We should deplore these fantastic studies of "prophecy," but at the same time we should avoid the opposite extreme of forgetting and neglecting the doctrine of Christ's second coming. We can believe thoroughly in the real, visible, supernatural second coming of Christ without accepting the fantastic ideas of the so-called "experts on prophecy" who are so popular today.

LESSON 19

The Benefits we Receive from Christ's Mediation

Q. 57. What benefits hath Christ procured by his mediation?

A. Christ, by his mediation, hath procured redemption, with all other benefits of the Covenant of Grace.

Scripture References:

Heb. 9:12. Christ has obtained redemption for His people with His own blood.

Mark 10:45. Christ laid down His life as a ransom-price.

1 Tim. 2:6. Christ gave Himself a ransom for all.

Job 19:25. Long ago Job looked forward to Christ as his Redeemer.

Rom. 3:24. We are justified on the basis of redemption through Christ.

1 Cor. 1:30. Christ is made redemption to His people.

Eph. 1:17. Redemption is through Christ's blood.

Col. 1:14. Forgiveness of sins is based on redemption through Christ's blood.

2 Cor. 1:20. All the benefits of the Covenant of Grace come to the believer through Christ.

Questions:

1. What is the meaning of the word "mediation"?

It means to act as a Mediator or go-between in reconciling parties who were at enmity with each other.

2. What is the basic meaning of the word "redemption"?

It means to recover possession by the payment of a purchase or ransom price.

3. What is the principal meaning of the word "redemption" in the New Testament?

It means Christ's reclaiming sinners from sin and death, and gaining salvation and life for them, by the payment of His precious blood as the ransom price for them.

4. What other usage of the word "redemption" is found in the New Testament?

It is also used to refer to the resurrection of the body, because this is the final instalment of the benefits of redemption. See Rom. 8:23; Eph. 1:14; Luke 21:28.

5. Why was it necessary for Christ to pay a ransom price for our redemption?

Because the whole human race was guilty before God, and according to God's righteous Judgment deserves eternal death.

6. To whom did Christ pay the ransom price?

He paid the ransom price to God. The notion that the ransom price was paid to Satan is a very old error, which reappears from time to time, but it is without foundation in the Word of God. Christ came to destroy the works of Satan, it is true, but not by paying a ransom price to Satan. He destroyed the works of Satan by paying the ransom price to God.

7. If God is love, as the Bible says, why could He not forgive sinners without the payment of a ransom price?

The Bible teaches us that God is love, but it also teaches us that He is a God of righteousness and holiness, and that He cannot deny Himself. If God were simply to forgive sin, without an atonement or ransom price, He would deny His own righteousness. The penalty of sin must be borne by a Substitute; otherwise God could not righteously forgive our sins.

8. In addition to redemption, or suffering and dying for our sins, what other benefits of the Covenant of Grace has Christ procured for His people?

Justification, Adoption, Sanctification, and the several benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from them, including assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end; also those benefits which come to the believer at death and at the resurrection. See The Shorter Catechism, Q. 32, 36, 37, 38.

Q. 58. How do we come to be made partakers of the benefits which Christ hath procured?

A. We are made partakers of the benefits which Christ hath procured, by the application of them to us, which is the work especially of God the Holy Ghost.

Scripture References:

John 1:11, 12. Christ's benefits applied to us.

Titus 3:5, 6. Regeneration by the Holy Spirit is necessary for salvation.

Questions:

1. What is the difference between the work of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit?

Christ has **obtained redemption for us; the Holy Spirit applies redemption to us**, so that we actually experience the benefit of it. Redemption is purchased by Christ, but applied by the Holy Spirit. Christ bought it and paid for it; the Holy Spirit enables us to experience its benefit.

2. Why is it necessary for the Holy Spirit to apply Christ's redemption to us?

Because of ourselves we are so sinful that we could never get the benefit of Christ's redemption if we were left to ourselves; only by the almighty work of the Holy Spirit, changing our hearts and leading us to repent and believe, can we actually receive the benefit of what Christ has done for us.

3. Is it true that in the end our salvation depends entirely on our human free will, by which we either accept the Gospel or reject it?

This kind of statement is only part of the truth and is very liable to misunderstanding and very conducive to theological error. We might express the whole matter this way:

(a) Our salvation depends on whether we accept or reject the Gospel.

(b) In accepting or rejecting the Gospel, we always act according to our free will (more correctly called free agency).

(c) Apart from the work of the Holy Spirit, everyone's free will would choose to reject the Gospel.

(d) When a person's heart is changed by the Holy Spirit, his free will chooses to accept the Gospel.

(e) Therefore in the end it depends on the work of the Holy Spirit in people's hearts. Man is a free agent, but he is also dead in sin and cannot originate a love for God and for holiness in his own heart.

4. Is the work of the Holy Spirit, in applying

Christ's redemption, subject to human control?

No. It is a sovereign work of God. He is the Potter; we are the clay. His work is not subject to our control. But this does not mean that the Holy Spirit does not work in answer to the prayers of Christian people; He does.

LESSON 20

Who are the Beneficiaries of Christ's Redemption?

Q. 59. Who are made partakers of redemption through Christ?

A. Redemption is certainly applied, and effectually communicated, to all those for whom Christ hath purchased it; who are in time by the Holy Ghost enabled to believe in Christ according to the gospel.

Scripture References:

Eph. 1:13, 14. John 6:37, 39; 10:15, 16. Redemption is effectually communicated to those for whom Christ purchased it.

Eph. 2:8. 2 Cor. 4:13. Those for whom Christ purchased redemption are in time enabled to believe in Him according to the Gospel.

John 17:9. Christ prays for those for whom He purchased redemption.

John 17:20. Christ makes intercession for all who are believers in Him.

Acts 2:47. Those for whom redemption was purchased are in due time added to the Church.

Acts 16:14. For a person to be saved by the Gospel, the heart must be "opened" by the Lord.

Acts 18:9-11. God knows exactly who His elect are, for whom redemption has been purchased, and to whom in due time it is to be applied.

Questions:

1. For whom did Christ purchase redemption?

For a body of people described in Scripture by such terms as "His people," "His sheep," "His church," "His body," "The elect," "Those whom He foreknew," etc.

2. How many people are included in the body for whom redemption was purchased?

"A great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues. . . ." Rev. 7:9. Scripture teaches that the elect are: (a) A definite number of particular people, not the entire human race, but a part. (b) A very great number, passing human ability to count. (c) A number unknown to men, but known to God, and determined before the creation of the world.

3. Did not Christ purchase redemption for everybody?

Although this is the popular idea today, we believe it is contrary to what the Bible teaches, and that our Confession of Faith and Catechisms are right in rejecting it. The Bible teaches, rather, that Christ purchased redemption for "his own," "his sheep," "his people," etc.

4. How can we explain the Scripture texts which say that Christ died for all?

When the Bible says that Christ died for all this does not mean for all men; it means for all Christians or for all the elect. Some of the similar texts mean that Christ died for sinners regardless of race or nationality, whether Jews or Gentiles: 1 John 2:2. In the Bible such terms as "all" do not mean every individual person in the world, as will be seen by looking up the following texts: Luke 2:1; Acts 19:27; Luke 19:48; Mark 11:32, 81; Acts 4:21; John 12:19. In 1 Thess. 2:15 the apostle Paul says that the Jews of his day were "contrary to all men." Does this mean that they were contrary to the Eskimos of Greenland with whom they had never had the least contact? Or that they were contrary to themselves and their own leaders? If we insist that the word "all" always means "all" in the absolute sense without any implied limitations, we run into many absurdities. The meaning of "all" must be determined in the light of the context and of the system of revealed truth as a whole.

5. Is it right to say: "God gives everyone a chance to be saved, and it is up to us to take it or leave it"?

There is no such thing as chance in the Plan of Salvation revealed in the Bible. Christ's redemption is **CERTAINLY AND EFFECTUALLY** applied to all those for whom it was intended and purchased.

6. How does the Holy Spirit apply Christ's redemption to the elect?

By enabling them, at a particular time in their life, to believe in Christ according to the Gospel.

(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.

INSPIRING TALKS TO JUNIORS, by Marion C. Gosselink. W. A. Wilde Company, 131 Clarendon St., Boston, Mass. 1957, pp. 144. \$2.50.

Dr. Gosselink is a clergyman of the Reformed Church in America. He has collected and written 50 short stories for young people. They are interesting to read. These stories average between three and four pages.

Dr. Gosselink desires to illustrate various truths and catch the attention of young readers. The first story is one for the entry upon the new year and the last story is for the close of the old year.

Young readers will find them interesting, I believe, and there are many illustrations and suggestions for those working with young people.

— Charles S. Sterrett

A TREASURY OF STORIES, by Herbert V. Prochnow. W. A. Wilde Company, 131 Clarendon St., Boston, Mass. 1957, pp. 143. \$2.00.

This book was written for those who prepare public talks. It contains 135 pages of stories, illustrations, quotations, etc., and an index by subjects and authors.

There are stories, illustrations, etc., available for all occasions. It would be a valuable book to have.

— Charles S. Sterrett

THE EPISTLES OF PAUL TO THE THESSALONIANS, by Leon Morris. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1957, pp. 152. \$2.00.

This book and "The General Epistle of James" by R. V. G. Tasker are the first to appear of a new series called "The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries."

There is an introduction (20 pages) to the two Thessalonian Epistles. The commentary follows an outline of the text. Comments are given on each verse with the number of the verse plainly marked. Thus in using the book it is easy to turn to the comments on a particular verse or passage.

This is not a commentary that will satisfy the one making a thorough study of the text. It was not so intended. However, for those who desire

conclusions rather than lengthy discussions, this commentary will be found useful.

The present writer, after having read the book, feels that the author is a qualified expositor, orthodox in his viewpoint, and that he has succeeded in giving a sane, truthful exposition, long enough to be useful without being burdensome.

One quotation of many that might be given is from the comment on 1 Thess. 1:4: "In these two Epistles Paul uses 'brethren' twenty-one times, revealing the closeness of the tie which bound the (once) proud Pharisee to the despised Gentile. . . In view of the many loose modern ideas on 'the brotherhood of man' it is worth noting that the New Testament concept of brotherhood is specifically a brotherhood in Christian bonds. Here it is linked with being loved by God and with election. . . . In the face of those who think of election as harsh and arbitrary the teaching of this verse should be stressed, namely that election proceeds from God's love for us."

I gladly recommend this book to Bible students — both laymen and ministers.

— Waldo Mitchel

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES, by R. V. G. Tasker. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1957, pp. 144. \$2.00.

This work is one of the first of a new series called "Tyndale New Testament Commentaries." R. V. G. Tasker is general editor of the series as well as author of this volume.

The arrangement of the material in this commentary is the same as in "The Epistles of Paul to the Thessalonians," by Leon Morris (see review of same above).

The following statements are from a review of this book by Wick Broomall in *The Westminster Theological Journal*, November, 1957:

"This little commentary is delightful reading. Although the author is quite conversant with critical questions, these technical matters are left in the background. Greek words are transliterated. Various versions, ancient and modern, are often cited as interpretations or better renderings of the text. . . ."

"This brief commentary is just the thing for the intelligent layman. And even the busy pastor, who presumably has larger and more erudite books on this epistle, will find it well worth his perusal and study. Let us hope that the standard thus set in his initial volume will be followed in the subsequent commentaries of this proposed series."

I wish to mention one instance in which I find myself in disagreement with the author. Commenting on James 5:13 — "Is any merry? let him sing psalms" — the author cites the various places in the New Testament in which the Greek word for "psalm" is used, and then states, "The word cannot then, in the present context, be restricted to the singing of the psalms of David."

With this exception I would recommend the book as a sound and helpful commentary.

— Waldo Mitchel

LETTERS TO THE SEVEN CHURCHES, by Joseph A. Seiss. Baker Book House. Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1956, pp. 343. \$2.75.

This book is another in the Baker Reprint Library. It is said to be a reprint from the edition of 1889, but the date of its first publication is not given. The author, Dr. Joseph A. Seiss, is identified as "a Lutheran pastor of the last half of the past century." It is not a technical, scholarly study, but a series of expository sermons aiming primarily to bring out the practical application of these letters, and to set forth their messages of warning and comfort. In this the author has succeeded very well. A few extracts will show the clarity and vigor of his exposition and application.

In discussing the letter to the church at Pergamos, he says of those who "hold the doctrine of Balaam": "Though holding to Christianity, and in no way intending to renounce their profession and standing as members of the church, they would yet not be so bigoted as to wrong themselves out of much good fortune by refusing to concede anything to paganism. Why not be friends of these high people, yield a little here and there, and profit in temporal estate without letting go their Christianity? They would not be cynics. They could see no harm in accepting invitations to the entertainments of their heathen neighbors, in partaking of food and banquets on which the name of some heathen god was called, in visiting the pagan temples and shows on great occasions, in indulging themselves a little according to the customs of the community. This would please the heathen and secure their favor. . . . What need was there for such rigid and bigoted scrupulosity when there was not the least danger of their ever turning heathen? And so they began to amalgamate with the rank and unchaste paganism which held dominion around them, and claimed it as their Christian liberty to do so. Satan had tried them with violence and persecution, but, failing by that meth-

od, he plied them with social seductions, flattering them with worldly friendships, good standing with their heathen neighbors, credit for liberality, easy wealth, and gratifying pleasures. And with these lures they were drawn and enticed . . ." (pp. 106, 107).

"It is one of the particular ailments of the Church in all time . . . that many of its members, for their own ease, pleasure, and gain, claim it to be their right and liberty to join in the ways, habits, amusements, and society of the corrupt and idolatrous world, while yet claiming to be very correct and orthodox Christians, if not Christians of a superior sort, quite freed from the bigoted and illiberal spirit of those who count such things an abomination" (p. 109). This is a fitting rebuke to many evangelicals today who are more and more erasing the line of distinction between Christian and worldly conduct, branding those who oppose various amusements, compromising church connections, etc., as "narrow-minded," "self-righteous" or "Pharisaical," apparently oblivious to the fact that it is possible that they themselves may be as self-righteous or Pharisaical over the supposed superiority of their attitude as those whom they criticize can be over the real or fancied superiority of their behaviour.

Of the failure to maintain church discipline he says: "It was the bane and curse of the church of Pergamos that with all its faithfulness to the name and faith of Christ it had such people in it and that they were allowed to remain in it without discipline and excommunication. And it is the bane and curse of the church of our day. . ." (p. 110).

"People of a bad life and a corrupted faith have no business in the church, and those who have the oversight are to see to it that they reform from their ill ways or are thrown out from all church-fellowship and recognition. It may be a very unpleasant thing to do, but not to do it is to give countenance to sin and to connive at iniquity. Being grieved at it is not enough; there must be action — admonition first, and then, if there be no amendment, expulsion and excommunication" (p. 103).

Of excessive tolerance and indifference to moral doctrinal error he says: "Controversy, instead of being the bane of the church, has many a time been its only salvation. What would have become of it in the time of Athanasius, or the time of Luther, had it not been for the tremendous controversy in these instances? To let all things drift along as they will for the sake of avoiding sharp conflicts and disturbing collisions is to let the devil do as he pleases and to give over the precious things of God to disaster and ruin. . . . To refuse battle with errorists is to accept battle with God, and we can be at no loss to know what the issue must be" (pp. 114, 115).

As a specimen of the comfort to be derived

from Christ's promises, we have this from his discussion of the letter to the church in Philadelphia: "**Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.**" The emphasis is on the 'I', and the clear implication is that some strong human activity was at work to silence these people, or to set them back from their rightful place and influence. The announcement is one of encouragement and blessed promise to them. Though men were trying to suppress them and break them down from proclaiming and propagating what they held and believed, the mighty Jesus was with them. He who has the keys of the kingdom was on their side" (p. 215). "Weak and despised as they were, the door was to be kept open for them. Men might try to shut it, but never should succeed in so doing. . . . Further, with all their weakness and disadvantages their cause was to carry in the end. . . . Not by their strength and eloquence, not by their merit and deservings, but by the power and grace of him who holds all the keys and power of the kingdom, they were to be brought to honor for holding fast the word of his patience" (pp. 218, 219).

At a few points in this book one finds hints of Dispensationalism (and the author is listed by Dr. Loraine Boettner in his recent book, *The Millennium*, p. 378, as a Dispensationalist), but this is not noticeable in the book as a whole, as the author's purpose was not to foretell the future, but to find instruction for the Church — a task in which he has succeeded admirably.

— Lester B. McIntyre

I, II TIMOTHY AND TITUS, by William Hendriksen. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1957, pp. 404. \$6.00.

This commentary is all that the publishers claim for it. Each Biblical book is prefaced by a thorough examination of critical questions, and the methods and results are both sane and satisfying. Another feature of this commentary is the author's own translation, and throughout his sound knowledge of Greek, and other languages, is obvious. Dr. Hendriksen follows the verse by verse method. Each book is preceded by an outline showing the general structure, and the relevant section of the outline is repeated before each main division of the book. At the end of each chapter there is a synthesis which brings into focus the central ideas of the passage. The study of each Biblical book closes with a useful and representative bibliography.

On the "great texts" he rises well to underline the theological implications. His approach to controversial Pauline passages — e.g., the adornment of women (1 Tim. 2:9) — shows good historical awareness and consequently proves valuable. Presbyterians will note with satisfaction his handling of 1 Tim. 4:14.

The whole work is fresh and pleasing, simple

without being superficial, scholarly without being pedantic, original without disregard for traditional interpretations. This commentary is homiletical and highly suggestive for the preacher. It is developed within the context of the whole of Scripture, oriented to the living, reigning Christ, and crucially related to daily life. There are a few places where we cannot fully agree with the author, but this does not lessen our appreciation of a fine work.

The book is well printed and the matter systematically set forth. This and the few preceding volumes of the commentary which have already appeared, make us eager to see the fulfilment of Dr. Hendriksen's complete study of the New Testament: it will be of distinct service to the Christian world, and we believe it to be a commentary with a future.

— Fred S. Leahy

PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT, by John Murray. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1957, pp. 272. \$3.50. (Published in England by Pickering & Inglis, Ltd.).

In this study of the various aspects of Biblical ethics, the Professor of Systematic Theology in Westminster Theological Seminary presents the conservative approach to the Scriptures in a most satisfying way. In his preface, Professor Murray states: "One of the main purposes of this volume is to show the basic unity and continuity of the biblical ethic." That purpose has been admirably served.

We can but select a few of the outstanding points made in this work. On page 23 we are reminded of the modern tendency to find an antithesis between **commandment** and **love**; but in actual fact no such antithesis exists: "We are **commanded** to love God and our neighbour. . . . Love itself is exercised in obedience to a commandment — "Thou shalt love'."

Dealing with "The Marriage Ordinance and Procreation" (Chapter 3), Murray provides a thorough and scholarly examination of the whole subject. His remarks on divorce are particularly helpful. Every Biblical passage of significance in this connection is expounded in this chapter in a manner which evokes our gratitude and praise. However, we would have liked to see a greater emphasis laid upon the provision of a seed for the Church as an important and divinely ordained function of marriage.

Equally satisfying is the chapter dealing with the ordinance of Labour. Whatever the reader will think about Murray's insistence upon six days of labour being obligatory — and this is an important point — there will be nothing but profound appreciation of his treatment of this subject. And here is a pointed word on pages 85 and 86 for lazy ministers! Christians who tend to write

and speak of Capitalism in our day as if it were sacrosanct should read pages 89-93. Murray clearly sees the social implications of the Gospel, and states some of them here in a delightfully frank way. We wish that orthodox writers generally were always as balanced and honest as Professor Murray in these pages. But the section of this chapter which will give rise to most discussion relates to slavery. He does not believe that slavery is **intrinsicly** wrong — he, of course, condemns all the evils associated with modern slavery — and if anyone is inclined to despise his position, he should read his masterly, expositional treatment of the subject, and think again.

Chapter 5 considers the sanctity of Life, and capital punishment received careful thought, and once again we find immaculate exegesis in support of his argument. The sanctity of Truth is studied in the following chapter, and here Murray states that "the difference between right and wrong, between truth and falsehood, is not a chasm but a razor's edge" (p. 141). The relation of truth to war raises some interesting and important questions. This reviewer is not altogether happy about Murray's handling of the deception of the men of Ai by Joshua (Josh. 8:29). "The men of Ai were deceived," we read, "as to the meaning of the retreat of Israel, but that deception resulted from their failure to discover its real purpose." Was not its "real purpose" that they **should fail** to understand the retreat? Was it not a trick of war? The reference to the divine sanction of Joshua's stratagem (p. 144) does not completely solve the problem, for even war itself which finds such sanction, is at best an evil — the lesser of two evils. Is there another factor which Murray has overlooked, namely, that war is, in one sense, a mutually recognized battle of wits? It might also be noticed that in this section on the stratagems of war there is no direct reference to spying.

The chapter on Law and Grace is most helpful and throughout we have the most frequent and enlightening recourse to Scripture. We are clearly shown the place of law in the economy of grace. Dealing with the dynamic of the Biblical ethic (Chapter 9), Murray shows that the Holy Spirit is "dynamic in the realization" of that ethic. "The biblical ethic knows no fulfilment of its demands other than produced by the constraint and claim of Christ's redeeming love (cf., 2 Cor. 5:14, 15; Gal. 2:20). Our love is always ignited by the flame of Christ's love. And it is the Holy Spirit who sheds abroad in our hearts the igniting flame of the love of God in Christ Jesus. The love that is ignited is the fruit of the Spirit."

Other chapters discuss our Lord's Teaching and the Fear of God. There are five helpful appendices and the whole work rests evenly on conservative presuppositions. Here is a book that every conscientious "liberal" should read, and dispensationalist-fundamentalists would also do well to study it. Every student of the Scriptures will wel-

come his work which is pre-eminently and soundly expositional in its approach to the main aspects of Biblical ethics. No minister or teacher of the Reformed Faith can afford to be without this book, which represents an expansion of the Payton Lectures of 1955 delivered in Fuller Theological Seminary. We have nothing but respect and gratitude, especially the latter, for his contribution to Reformed thought.

— Fred S. Leahy

EXPOSITION OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES, by Thomas Manton. Sovereign Grace Book Club, 1124 S. E. First St., Evansville, Indiana. 1957, reprint of 1648, pp. VII, viii, 454. \$4.50.

In these days of digests and condensations who would, or could, write an average of four and one-ninth pages on each verse of the Epistle of James? The Reverend Thomas Manton did it three centuries ago, and this is a reprint of his valuable work. From his preface it appears that the contents are weekly expositions of the author (who loved preaching so much that he kept on when a prisoner and his only audience consisted of his wife and a servant).

Every word of the Epistle is mentioned, every phrase is fully explained and many are expanded into homilies, and no difficulties are dodged in this exposition. The author knew the opinions of other scholars and, what is more important, he knew the Lord from a close personal walk with Him in troubled times. He also knew the contents of the Bible so that he could match Scripture with Scripture skillfully and often, and he knew the Bible as the infallible Word of God.

In addition to the sketch of the author's life, his preface to the book, and the 454 pages of exposition, the eight additional pages of index should be mentioned. Six pages are a subject index and the other two list over 200 Scripture verses which are explained in the book.

— C. E. Caskey

MANUAL ON SOUL-WINNING, by M. W. Downey. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1957, pp. 23, paper cover. 40 cents.

This little manual is a condensation of the author's book, "The Art of Soul-Winning," and is intended to be used as a student's hand-book under a teacher who is following more or less the larger and more comprehensive book. It is in two parts: Preparation for Soul-Winning, and Participation in Soul-Winning. The first part covers the importance and conditions for success in soul-winning together with Scripture memorizing, assurance of salvation, and the life of victory. The second part tells how to deal with children, the concerned, the confused, the careless, and the carnal.

The manual is more like a table of contents

than a book. However every part is backed up by Scripture references and the booklet might be used to show what Bible verses can be used in preparation for soul-winning and in working with the types of people mentioned above. Each lesson is followed by several questions for the student (46 questions over the ten chapters) and these include a review of the verses which are to be memorized. The author is Dean of the Canadian Bible Institute in Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

— C. E. Caskey

THE STORY OF THE CROSS, by Leon Morris. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1957, pp. 128. \$2.00.

This is a devotional study of the last three chapters of Matthew based on a series of Lenten meditations given in Melbourne, Australia. The last chapter was added later, and used as a Bible study. There are several main divisions and under each the Bible verses are printed in divisions of from one to nine verses (usually four or five), with an appropriate sub-title for the passage. After each passage the comments are given, and while the aim is devotional there is ample explanatory material. The story of the sufferings and death of our Lord is taken from Matthew's Gospel rather than from the combined story of the four Gospels.

The book is orthodox and evangelical in its interpretations. For instance, although other views are mentioned, the author says of the question of God having forsaken Christ on the cross, "If He said that the Father had forsaken Him, then it must have been so, . . .".

Quoting 2 Cor. 5:21 (" . . . made him to be sin for us,") and Hab. 1:13 (" . . . of purer eyes than to behold evil"), he shows how the forsaking is to be understood. Then in application he says, "His being forsaken by the Father means that His people will never be forsaken."

Of the agony in Gethsemane he says that it must not be thought of as a shrinking from physical pain. "It was the reaction of the Sinless One being made one with sinners, to being made sin with them. We, who are immersed in sin, can hardly imagine what it must be for One of such spotless purity to stand in the place of sinners. We can only look on Gethsemane, and wonder."

In reading the book we are made to see the events as Matthew presents them. Most of us will find things we had either overlooked or had not known before, and we shall probably find the devotional applications interesting and profitable.

— C. E. Caskey

THE MASTERY OF SELF, by Branse Burbridge. Tyndale Press, 39 Bedford Square, London, W. C. 1, England. 1957, p.p. 39, paper cover. 1s. 6d.

Man's plight is that he has through literal "self-control" become a slave of his own passions. The author briefly, yet poignantly, sets forth Scripture's way to freedom, i.e., God-control. Since self is the biggest problem of the Christian life, as it is of the life of the unconverted, all who sincerely seek God's way for themselves will find these six brief chapters very helpful. It is especially useful to put into the hands of seekers and young Christians. Highly recommended.

— E. Clark Copeland

THE QUIET TIME, ed. by J.D.C. Anderson. Tyndale Press, 39 Bedford Square, London, W.C. 1, England. 1957, pp. 48, paper cover. 1 shilling.

This very popular booklet — one of the first Inter-Varsity Fellowship publications — has gone through four editions and sold over 70,000 copies. The place and use of the Word and prayer in coming to "see the King's face" is the burden of this work. Practical suggestions are given by various men of God who speak from the revealed Word and from personal experience. You will find yourself going back to it often.

— E. Clark Copeland

BEING A CHRISTIAN, by J. R. W. Stott. Tyndale Press, 39 Bedford Square, London, W.C. 1, England. 1957, pp. 32, pocket size, paper cover. 2d.

The same author and publishers produced a booklet two years ago, "Becoming a Christian," to which this is a sequel. Here is a plain, attractive, concise statement of the Scriptural pattern of the Christian life. It is written particularly for the newly converted, but it will convict and stimulate all who by it re-examine the privileges and responsibilities of the child of God. Place a supply for free distribution in your church.

— E. Clark Copeland

IS THERE A CONFLICT BETWEEN GENESIS I AND NATURAL SCIENCE? by N. H. Ridderbos. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1957, pp. 88. \$1.50.

This is a question which continues to engage the attention of serious students of the Bible. Some would close the question summarily by answering it in the affirmative, and then abandon either natural science or the Bible according to their predilections. Others, in answering in the negative, have sought to show, by tracing many parallels between Genesis 1 and natural science, how Moses has anticipated modern thought. This is not how Dr. N. H. Ridderbos approaches this question.

His first concern is how to understand Genesis 1. He examines various views, and shows his preference for the literary-framework hypothesis which attributes the facts related and the order of

events to the literary style and schematic arrangement of the author, rather than regarding the chapter as a precise description of creation. This does not deny the plenary inspiration of Genesis 1 nor the reality of creation *ex nihilo* ("out of nothing"), nor that God is the Creator, but it avoids some of the difficulties, where a literal interpretation of Genesis 1 seems to contradict natural science. Not that all difficulties are overcome by this hypothesis, which is still a hypothesis. Dr. Ridderbos recognizes difficulties in every viewpoint, and examines them carefully. He is openminded and sympathetic with the views of others. He has much to say on the "days" of creation and other problems.

Dr. Ridderbos does not write as one who has said the final word. Rather do we see the Professor of Old Testament in the Free University of Amsterdam at work on this question. The result is a useful contribution on the subject and a stimulus to others to follow some of his lines of thought.

— W. R. McEwen

WHEN THE TIME HAD FULLY COME: STUDIES IN NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY, by Herman N. Ridderbos. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1957, pp. 104. \$1.50.

One of the aims of these handy Pathway Pocket Books, of which this is the third, is said to be "to make relevant to modern man the basic affirmations of the Christian Faith." That is what this little volume does. Its theme is the Kingdom of God, as revealed and proclaimed throughout the New Testament.

Dr. H. N. Ridderbos, who handles the subject with the competence of a Reformed scholar abreast of contemporary thought, traces the development of this great idea through the Synoptic Gospels and the Pauline Epistles. Keeping close to the Biblical revelation he avoids the extremes of the liberal, who sees nothing in the Kingdom but a present social order or a subjective mysticism, and of the dispensationalist, who postpones the Kingdom to the future. He regards the Kingdom as a present spiritual reality, ushered into the world scene by the redemptive acts of God in Jesus Christ, and having present social implications, yet looking forward to the future for its consummation.

Naturally enough he deals with the significance of the law in connection with the Kingdom, and has a penetrating chapter on the Sermon on the Mount and another on Paul's attitude to the law. He shows that the Sermon on the Mount has an application to the present situation. He regards the redemptive-historical viewpoint as the underlying and unifying theme of Paul's preaching.

The final chapter deals with the relationship of the Scriptures of the New Testament to the history of redemption. He maintains their verbal

inspiration as against modern attempts to separate the Word of God from the writings in which it is contained. He emphasizes the importance of the apostolate in the formation of the New Testament.

This is a very valuable — though brief — contribution to New Testament theology.

— W. R. McEwen

INTERPRETING REVELATION, by Merrill C. Tenney. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1957, pp. 220. \$3.50.

The Book of Revelation is one of the most difficult books of the Bible to interpret. Yet the obscurity of the meaning has often been matched by the dogmatism of some would-be expositors. However, in the field of eschatology generally calmer and saner judgments seem to be coming to the fore. This attitude is reflected in this recent book by Merrill C. Tenney, Ph. D., Dean of the Graduate School of Wheaton College, who has already proved himself a sound scholar and a careful exegete.

Of the 220 pages of this book less than 50 cover a continuous commentary. Many are occupied with introductory matter and supplementary observations and conclusions. However, all these contribute to a better understanding of the whole book. The chapters on "The Old Testament Background of Revelation" and "The Christology of Revelation" are most helpful, while the chapters on "The Terminology of Revelation" and "The Symbolism of Revelation" have many illuminating comments. It seems obvious that some of these chapters appeared as separate articles, as is acknowledged in the preface. Yet this does not destroy the unity of the whole.

The author acknowledges that "the book has been treated from a premillenarian and moderate futurist standpoint." But he seeks to be fair to other viewpoints, and has two chapters in which he states them all objectively. He recognizes that many who hold other positions than his own still accept the reality of the personal and visible second advent. He distinguishes between the views of those who believe in the authority of Scripture and therefore in the objectivity of Christ's second coming and attendant events and those of unbelievers who spiritualize and explain away all predictive prophecy.

While the premillennial and futurist approach somewhat vitiates this interpretation at some points, as a whole it is wonderfully free from bias. The premillennial bias is seen in such comments as on Rev. 1:5, where the author states, "Just as surely, however, as He is the faithful witness and the firstborn from the dead, so surely **will he become** (emphasis mine. W.R.McE.) the ruler of the kings of the earth" (p. 119). This change of tense is quite arbitrary. Yet, in other places (e.g., p. 163) he recognizes the present kingship of Jesus Christ. The objection he raises against the continuous-

historical method, that if the predictions in Revelation refer to historical events of later centuries they would be meaningless to the first readers, is equally valid and, indeed, would have greater force against the futurist view. Yet he has no sympathy with modern dispensationalism, except that the introduction of a millennium after the church has been removed from the earth must bring about a state in which salvation would be on a different basis and introduce into a different company than in the day of grace. But he does not seem to have considered the implications of his position. He recognizes the relevance of Revelation to this present age, and acknowledges — if not the identity — at least a close relationship between the Church and the Kingdom. His exposition of the letters to the seven churches shows how the messages applied to the particular situations in those historic churches and to similar situations in the church down the ages till the present day, while he recognizes that they may also have a prophetic import. He acknowledges that, though the church is not mentioned by name after chapter 3 (except in 22:16) much may be applicable to it and it may be prefigured in the Bride and other symbols.

This open-mindedness, coupled with a careful exegesis, should make this book most helpful even to those who do not accept the author's viewpoint. The whole book reveals what a wealth of doctrine and relevant teaching is contained in this last book of the Bible. The analyses and outlines of sections and texts suggest some useful preaching material. It is also refreshing to read this rich exposition which breathes a warmth of love for the Lord and His Word, and also a gracious spirit to all who love His appearing. It is to be hoped that many who have been turned away from Revelation because of its difficulties and some fantastic interpretations will be attracted to re-study it. They will also be helped by the bibliography, which incidentally reveals that Dr. Tenney has made a wide study of the subject from various viewpoints. It is surprising, however, that "More than Conquerors" by William Hendriksen is not listed. There is a full index of Scriptures quoted or expounded, and also a subject index.

— W. R. McEwen

EVANGELICAL RESPONSIBILITY IN CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGY (a Pathway Book), by Carl F. H. Henry. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1957, pp. 89. \$1.50.

The modernist-fundamentalist strife which raged so vigorously some decades ago in America has very much passed into oblivion. Today an irenic spirit largely prevails. Theological contention is no longer fashionable.

Professor Henry seeks to determine the responsibility of evangelicals in the contemporary religious situation. How should they regard and

respond to the older modernism of Dr. Fosdick, the revised modernism popular today, neo-orthodoxy? What of the ecumenical movement, denominationalism, inter-church cooperation? What lessons can be learned from the past?

A vast array of questions are put and answered. For the most part the author gives much sound advice, especially when he calls for "recovery of the apostolic perspective and dedication of the evangelical movement to biblical realities".

However, this booklet is plagued by the disparity between its brevity and the tremendous scope of problems Professor Henry endeavors to investigate. Again and again it is lamentable that the "apostolic perspective" and "biblical realities" are not explicitly defined as they apply to many problems which he raises. Although this is done in a general way, the reader often finds no help in discovering the Biblical answer to the more concrete issues which may confront him.

Too often Professor Henry presents one side, then the other, asking questions indicating difficulties and possible variations, but then proceeds to a new topic. Thus, we are told that "evangelical emphasis on an indispensable doctrinal basis for church unity needs, however, to be defined with greater precision." (p. 79) He tells us of the Reformed position of a strict creedal fellowship, and then of the evangelical view requiring only certain minimum doctrinal agreement. Both are open to criticism — what then? Are we to be helped along to a better position? At first it might seem so as he continues: "The significance of Christian doctrine, its dispensability or indispensability, its definition as witness or revelation, the elements identified respectively as core and periphery —" (p. 80) This reviewer hoped to read something which would help point the way to a definition of his responsibility in this regard, but the author continued, and concluded: "— these are issues on which evangelical Christianity must be vocal." It is regrettable that this booklet is not itself vocal on this issue. Similar examples are to be found elsewhere in the final chapter.

Furthermore, certain inconsistencies are suggested. Again, had this work been of greater length these could have been dispelled by further clarification. Thus, Professor Henry seems to fail to recognize the foundational flaws of neo-orthodoxy when he says that "it remains for evangelical theology, however, to reinforce the still inadequate positions to which Barth and Brunner have lifted much of the prevailing theological outlook. . ." (p. 66) Immediately thereafter, however, the author's judgment appears much better when he advises that "a higher spirit to quicken and to fulfill the theological fortunes of this century will require more than . . . the revision of neo-orthodoxy. . ." The reader, however, is actually left without a clear-cut conception of the author's position.

In the preface the reader is cautioned that "academic lectures, unfortunately, do not always provide comprehensive solutions to burdensome ecclesiastical problems. But perhaps the minimal service expected of them is that they contribute somewhat to the clarification of perspectives." (p. 10) This reviewer, however, is of the opinion that the minimal service would be more adequately fulfilled if the author, having pointed out the errors of modernism, neo-orthodoxy, and fundamentalism in the first three chapters, would in the last actually define evangelical responsibility in regard to error with equal clarity. This indeed is a tremendous task, it would involve proving that certain solutions are clearly right and others certainly wrong. Very general positions are taken by the author, but the specific content of his solutions is so vague that it is questionable that there is any significant contribution towards even the clarification of perspectives.

— Joseph P. Duggan

MAN IN NATURE AND IN GRACE (a Pathway Book), by Stuart Barton Babbage. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1957, pp. 125. \$1.50.

Dr. Babbage prefaces this intriguing series of essays with the candid confession that he too is "one of those who 'for ever make new books, as apothecaries make new mixtures, by pouring only out of one vessel into another, and who are for ever twisting and untwisting the same rope.'" Even here he draws from the confession of Nathaniel Micklem. In a sense his confession is quite proper, yet it is more revealing to say that he has taken many strands and twisted them into beautiful but sturdy cord.

His subject is man; more exactly, man's view of man. In introducing this vital topic to his readers he refers to a vast number of thinkers ranging from ancient Greek philosophers to contemporary English poets and novelists. The tremendous scope may be easily seen by the fact that about two hundred leaders of world-opinion are listed in a separate index, whereas this is a very small book.

However, we do not have here a dry encyclopaedic arrangement, nor a chaotic rushing blindly through one school of thought after another. Rather, by carefully selecting and organizing his material, the author weaves a marvelous fabric which sharply displays the truth and error of what man thinks of himself, ever in contrast to Biblical revelation.

What is man? What is his true relationship to God, his fellows, the world about him? Can he face the reality of sin, death, and psychological crises without knowing himself? We dare not be ignorant here, nor ought we be ignorant of our neighbor's beliefs in this realm.

This does not purport to be a great work, but

the reader will find it penetrating and fascinating — in every regard highly rewarding. Such a book often becomes tedious to most readers, but Dr. Babbage's writing tends instead to ensnare the reader's attention. His erudition is excelled only by his skill in the fine art of communicating ideas — ideas which are in this case well worth communicating.

— Joseph P. Duggan

RELIGION IN MODERN LIFE, by George G. Hackman, Charles W. Kegley, and Viljo K. Nikander. The Macmillan Company, New York. 1957, pp. 480.

What is religion? Shall we view it with Matthew Arnold simply as "morality touched by emotion", with Schleiermacher as utter dependence on infinite reality, with Harold Hoeffding as something intellectual, or with Kant as duty? What are the ways of knowing in religion? Shall we look to authority, mysticism, empiricism, faith, or revelation?

The authors of *Religion in Modern Life* constantly shy away from radical answers to all such questions. No one answer is sufficient; no system ought to be followed slavishly. Similarly, truth is to be found in many places. Such an approach, very popular today, can never attain to Biblical religion, which is necessarily radical.

The authors certainly would not be disturbed by such a charge, for their express intention is not to propound the Christian faith, but rather "to introduce any inquiring person to the nature of religion and to its function in the modern life of the western world." (p. v)

Religion as conceived by man, however, ought never be confused with the religion of the Bible. Indeed, Mr. Kegley warns that we "must scrutinize any claims of the 'static' and authoritarian sort. . . All revelation must be reverently but nonetheless critically examined." (p. 51)

Many professors of the Christian faith doubtless will be encouraged by the high esteem in which some of Jesus' teachings are held in this book. Likewise, some of the words of the prophets and apostles are extolled. However, it must be emphasized that this book deals not with religion as divinely revealed, but as the authors think religion ought to be. Thus, while historic Christianity is not directly attacked, distinctive and basic tenets which the Bible sets forth are, when expedient, ignored. Jesus, for example, becomes a great teacher and a godly and able man, but nothing more.

What is especially disappointing is the failure of the authors themselves to scrutinize what the Bible says about Jesus' unique deity, the significance of the cross, the condition of the natural man, the nature of true faith, and so forth. We

are frequently given statements as to what they believe to be true religion, but they do not trouble to present — even by way of refutation — numerous Biblical teachings which contradict popular concepts. Never is the inquiring reader instructed how he is to pursue this scrutiny and critical examination.

It is not surprising that Christianity suffers distortion in the treatment of those who deny the authority of the Scriptures. It is, however, somewhat surprising that the authors of this book — who lament the intellectual childishness of some in regard to the matter of authority — should have us accept their view of religion without giving us the criteria by which any system is to be judged.

— Joseph P. Duggan

ABRAHAM TO THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS, by G. Frederick Owen. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1957, pp. 429. \$5.95.

This is a remarkable book. In one volume it provides a continuous history of Palestine over a period of four thousand years, from the time of Abraham to A.D. 1957. It is written in a good, readable style and handsomely illustrated with twenty-eight pages of excellent photographs and maps.

Part of this book naturally consists of a running account of the historical period covered by the Bible. This is accurately presented and reflects the author's reverent faith in the Bible as the Word of God. In the judgment of the reviewer, the most valuable parts of the book, however, are those parts dealing with historical periods not covered by the Bible, especially the period between the Old Testament and the New (including the heroic Maccabean age), the era of the Crusades and the most recent period, since Palestine became a British mandate following the first World War. Many people who have a good knowledge of Biblical history yet know almost nothing about these other, extra-Biblical periods. The author's treatment of these is most satisfying. The early heroism and later dismal corruption of the Maccabean period, the folly and shame to Christendom of the Crusades, and the complex interplay of racial, social, political and religious forces which resulted in the present situation in Palestine, are graphically portrayed. The part on the Crusades is especially valuable. The lawless and immoral actions of some of the Crusading forces which represented "Christian" Europe were utterly scandalous and horrible — for example, the senseless butchering of inoffensive Jews in the Rhineland and elsewhere. If Christian people only knew better what the Crusades really were like, they would not be so ready to use the term "Crusade" as a part of the name of present-day deligious movements or programs. Why should evangelistic and educational projects be called "Crusades" — a term which calls to mind hosts of carnal, superstitious men

bent on recovering "the true cross" and the empty tomb of Christ, many of whom were scarcely even nominal Christians, too often involved in the most outrageous atrocities.

Events have moved with dizzying rapidity in Palestine since General Allenby and the British forces liberated it from the Turks during the first World War. The present volume is recommended to all who desire an informative, readable account of what has happened and just how the present situation came about.

It is a pity that the book is marred by numerous typographical errors, indicating rather careless proofreading. On page 344 a line of type has been omitted between lines 12 and 13. Most of these failures in proofreading do not affect the intelligibility of the narrative, but do detract from an otherwise most excellent production. This book is heartily recommended to our readers.

— J. G. Vos

THE CONFLICT WITH ROME, by G. C. Berkouwer. The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, P. O. Box 185, Nutley 10, N. J. 1958, pp. 319. \$5.95.

The author of this book is the learned professor of Dogmatic Theology in the Free University of Amsterdam. The book has been competently translated from the original Dutch under the supervision of Professor David H. Freeman of the University of Rhode Island.

American books on the conflict between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism often stress such practical issues as public transportation of parochial school pupils, the influence of the Roman Catholic Church in politics, and Catholic instigation of persecution and discrimination against Protestant missionaries and converts in Latin America. It is perhaps characteristic of our American attitude to look more at the facts which appear on the surface than at the deeper issues which lie beneath the surface. In Europe it is more usual to consider the basic conflict which exists in the realm of ideas. Dr. Berkouwer, at any rate, has written a most scholarly book which deals with the really basic differences between Romanism and Protestantism. Readers will find here no discussion of the school bus issue nor any consideration of whether the Knights of Columbus constitute a threat to American freedom. The book is pre-eminently a treatment of the **theological** conflict between Rome and the Churches of the Reformation. For those who want to know what Roman Catholic theology really is, this book will prove most helpful.

Many Protestants — even well-educated and earnest ones — have rather hazy ideas as to the doctrinal structure of Romanism. For example, just what does the Roman Catholic Church believe and teach about the Virgin Mary and her place and

function in God's plan of redemption? Dr. Berkouwer's chapter on this, entitled "Ave Maria" (pp. 152-178), not only presents a clear, informative account of exactly what the Catholic position is, but also provides a most penetrating and keen refutation of that position from the standpoint of Biblical truth.

Dr. Berkouwer discusses Roman Catholic theology in a very calm, scholarly manner. Nowhere does he become excited or deal in name-calling. There is no heat manifested in this discussion, but there is a great deal of light, and surely that is what is most needed. And nowhere is Dr. Berkouwer weak or concessive in defending the Protestant position, which he firmly believes to be Biblical and therefore true.

This book is heartily recommended to our readers. It will enable us to have a more intelligent understanding of what the Church of Rome believes, and a more discerning grasp of our reasons for being Protestants.

— J. G. Vos

PSALMODY: IS THE USE OF UNINSPIRED SONGS IN THE WORSHIP OF GOD AUTHORIZED? by R. J. George. Published by the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland through its Witness Bearing Committee, Rev. Fred S. Leahy, Convener, 468 Ravenhill Road, Belfast, Northern Ireland. 1958, pp. 16, paper cover. Price 6d. per copy, or 5s. per dozen.

It is good to see this fine tract which was published by the Witness Committee of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America reprinted by the Covenanter Church of Ireland. The tract was written by Dr. R. J. George who was for many years professor in the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Allegheny, Pa. (now Pittsburgh). The booklet provides a clear, concise, convincing argument in favor of the exclusive use of the Psalms of the Bible as the matter of praise in the worship of God. It would be an excellent writing to place in the hands of anyone interested in learning about the Covenanter position concerning worship, and especially anyone who says that "There is nothing about Christ in the Psalms."

— J. G. Vos

THE BANNER OF TRUTH, a magazine published occasionally by The Banner of Truth Trust, Mr. Iain Murray, B.A., Editor, 65A Blenheim Terrace, St. John's Wood, London, N.W. 8, England. Subscriptions may be sent to The Bible Truth Depot, P. O. Box 86, Mifflinburg, Pennsylvania. Subscription of 6 issues, \$1.25.

This magazine under the editorship of Mr. Iain Murray, B.A., has now published ten issues. They are not published on fixed dates, but from time to time when sufficient material is at hand. The material is all of a solid, orthodox, spiritual

and edifying character. To give our readers an idea of the contents, we shall list what is found in the tenth issue, which consists of 26 pages.

First there is an Editorial, stating the importance of republishing the standard classic works of Puritan and Reformation literature, followed by an announcement of the republication, by the Banner of Truth Trust, of the works of Jonathan Edwards, who is often rated as America's greatest theologian. This is followed by a sketch of the life and work of Jonathan Edwards, who lived 1703-1758. Then comes a sketch of the life and work of Charles Hodge, the great Presbyterian theologian of the 19th century. An outline of one of Hodge's sermons follows, on the text 1 Tim. 2:4, "Who will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." Then comes a page of quotations from the great evangelist George Whitefield — the man whose life and work proved the falsity of the charge that a Calvinist cannot be an evangelist. This is followed by an article on Thomas V. Moore's commentary on the Book of Zechariah, which is being reprinted by the Banner of Truth Trust. Next comes a brief article on the written ministry of Arthur W. Pink, and last of all an excerpt from one of the late Mr. Pink's booklets, entitled "The Godhood of God."

There is no chaff or filler in **The Banner of Truth**. It is all meat. Those who love the truth will find it well worth subscribing to. It is most encouraging to note the renewed interest in the writings of the Puritans and Reformers.

— J. G. Vos

NEW PROOF TEXTS FOR THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM, edited by Jean A. Vis. Reformed Publications, 1819 Newton Ave., S. E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1957, pp. 70, paper cover. 85 cents.

This booklet provides newly edited proof texts for the 129 questions and answers of the Heidelberg Catechism. In addition to the proof texts, the questions and answers of the Catechism are given in full. The book is attractively printed and shows evidence of careful preparation.

— J. G. Vos

MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, REMARRIAGE, by a Committee of the Chicago and Michigan Synods of the Reformed Church in America. Reformed Publications, 1819 Newton Ave., S. E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1957, pp. 24, paper cover. 30 cents.

This is a report of a church committee. It takes the ground that there are two legitimate grounds for absolute divorce, namely adultery and desertion in which the Christian faith is an issue. The innocent party in a Scriptural divorce may remarry; the guilty party may not as long as the former (innocent) spouse is still living. Neither

party in an unscriptural divorce may remarry. There is a statement as to the church standing of different classes of parties, and as to the duty of church courts in different kinds of situations.

— J. G. Vos

THE "EVILS OF CALVINISM", by Frank B. Beck, North East Baptist Church, Millerton, N. Y. 8-page pocket-size booklet. Per copy, 5 cents.

This booklet shows that the alleged "evils" of Calvinism are really truths and constitute its strength, not its weakness. Following this the real evils of Arminianism are briefly described, and it is pointed out that these evils cannot be laid at the door of Calvinism. We are glad to commend this booklet.

— J. G. Vos

THE TWENTY-THIRD PSALM, by Frank B. Beck, North East Baptist Church, Millerton, N. Y. 8-page pocket-size booklet. Per copy, 5 cents.

This is a practical exposition of the twenty-third Psalm and an application of it to the Christian life. The relation of Psalm 23 to Psalms 22 and 24 is aptly brought out. The teaching is sound, edifying and comforting.

— J. G. Vos

THE STORY OF A REVIVAL, by Walter C. Brehaut. Published by the author at Le Planel, Torteval, Guernsey, Channel Islands, Great Britain. Per copy, 3d.

THE STORY OF MY CONVERSION (same author and address as above). Per copy, 4½d.

HOW I LEARNT THE DOCTRINES OF SOVEREIGN GRACE (same author and address as above). Per copy, 3d.

These three small pamphlets were written by a man who has become a convinced Calvinist after years of being a formalistic moralist. He also tried the Keswick or "Victorious Life" prescription for deliverance from the enslaving power of sin, but found it did not deliver him. Finally he came to accept the doctrines of free and sovereign grace, realizing that salvation is wholly of the Lord. He did not become a Calvinist through reading the writings of Calvin or of Calvinists, of which he knew practically nothing, but by the Holy Spirit illuminating his mind in the use of the Word. He says, "The Bible became a new book to me, and I found rest for my soul."

The booklets can be obtained from the author at his address in the Island of Guernsey, or from E. J. Harmer, 47 Albion Road, Tunbridge Wells, England. They are recommended to our readers.

— J. G. Vos

THE EVANGELICAL LIBRARY BULLETIN,

78a Chiltern St., London, W.1, England. No. 19, Autumn, 1957.

It is a pleasure to call attention again to the Evangelical Library of London, England, and its Bulletin. The issue before us has a picture of Richard Baxter on its cover. Inside is an article entitled "Fervent in Spirit; Serving the Lord," which describes the lives and witness of John Janeway and Joseph Alleine, two eminent Christians of Baxter's day, three centuries ago. There is also an item about the Library's missionary work in the Congo, Africa. Copies can be obtained on request to the Evangelical Library.

— J. G. Vos

THE FAITH OF THE ENGLISH REFORMERS: THE FOUNDATION OF THEIR DOCTRINE EXAMINED, by Iain Murray, B.A. (The Annual Lecture of The Evangelical Library, 1956). Pp. 23, paper cover.

THE LESSER-KNOWN WORKS OF JOHN BUNYAN, by Ralph E. Ford (The Annual Lecture of The Evangelical Library, 1957). Pp. 40, paper cover.

Obtainable from The Evangelical Library, 78a Chiltern St., London, W. 1, England.

In the former of these booklets Mr. Murray ably demonstrates that the English Reformers not only held the general doctrines of evangelical Christianity, including justification by faith alone, but that they maintained the doctrines of sovereign grace, otherwise known as Calvinism or the Reformed Faith, and in particular that they held the Calvinistic doctrine of election or predestination. Mr. Murray also shows that the preaching of this faith led to "the mightiest religious awakening since the days of the apostles." The booklet is a timely presentation of truth.

In the second booklet, Mr. Ford deals with the lesser-known works of John Bunyan. Bunyan is of course famed as the author of "The Pilgrim's Progress," but how many present-day Christians have read anything else by Bunyan? Mr. Ford gives many choice gems from Bunyan's other works, accompanied by comments of his own. This is a most interesting and worth-while booklet.

— J. G. Vos

REFORMED DOGMATICS: ITS ESSENCE AND METHOD, by Klaas Runia. Published by The Board of Directors of the Association for Higher Education on a Calvinistic Basis (Australia), c/o The Reformed Theological College, 20 Fenwick Street, Geelong, Victoria, Australia. 1957, pp. 30, paper cover. No price stated.

This booklet contains the Inaugural Address of Dr. Klaas Runia, Professor of Systematic Theology at the Reformed Theological College, Geelong, Victoria, Australia, an institution with which the

ministers of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Australia are co-operating. The address was delivered on the 15th of February, 1957. Professor Runia ably shows that the Reformed theology is grounded in the Scriptures. In its method it is, first, Scriptural; second, loyal to the confessions of the Church; third, God-centered in the Trinitarian sense.

The establishment of the Reformed Theological College in Australia is most encouraging. People tell us that Calvinism is dead, but it seems to have a good deal of vitality. We wish the brethren in Australia well in their work and witness for our Lord and His Truth.

— J. G. Vos

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL MATERIALS. Great Commission Publications, 712 Schaf Building, 1505 Race Street, Philadelphia 2, Penna.

We received from Great Commission Publications, which is the publishing agency of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, a sample set of their 1958 Vacation Bible School materials for review in Blue Banner Faith and Life.

An examination of these materials shows that they are of superior quality in every respect. They are most attractively printed and are well gauged for the capacity of the various age levels of children in Vacation Bible Schools. There are four levels: Beginner, Primary, Junior and Intermediate. Each of these has a teacher's manual, a pupil's workbook, and supplementary materials. The material is pedagogically sound, and moreover it is true to the Bible and loyal to the Reformed Faith.

In each level the teacher's manual costs 95 cents and the pupil's workbook 25 cents. The other materials are correspondingly reasonable in price. A sample kit giving one sample of each of the 1958 materials can be obtained for \$3.50. These sample kits are returnable if in good condition and if returned within three weeks.

One of the most noteworthy features of this set of materials is that they are completely free of so-called "pictures of Jesus." The reviewer does not know of any other Vacation Bible School materials, from any source, of which this can be said. These materials have plenty of pictures and pictorial handwork, but there are no pictures purporting to portray Jesus Christ. The publishers are certainly to be commended, not only for the general high quality and Biblical soundness of their materials, but particularly for their initiative and courage in producing a fine set of materials without "pictures of Jesus" which are offensive to many conscientious Christians.

If you are planning a Vacation Bible School for 1958 and have not yet definitely decided on what materials to use, by all means send for a sample kit of these Great Commission Publications

materials before making the decision. You will be surprised and pleased with their high quality and attractiveness. They are heartily recommended to our readers.

— J. G. Vos

THE BIBLE AS HISTORY: A CONFIRMATION OF THE BOOK OF BOOKS, by Werner Keller. William Morrow and Company, Inc., 425 Fourth Ave., New York 16, N. Y. 1957, pp. 452. \$5.95.

This book was originally published in German in 1955. The fourth printing in English appeared in July, 1957. This indicates something of the popularity of the book. The title as it appears on the title page (THE BIBLE AS HISTORY: A CONFIRMATION OF THE BOOK OF BOOKS) is somewhat misleading in view of the contents of the volume. This title would lead the reader to expect an analysis and exposition of the historical contents of the Bible. Expecting this, the reviewer was somewhat dismayed to find that the book opens with Abraham in Ur of the Chaldees — the entire history from Adam to the time of Abraham is omitted. Turning to the part on the New Testament, we find that the crucifixion of Christ is treated in great detail, but there is not a single word about our Lord's resurrection. Immediately following the account of the burial of Jesus, the author takes up the life of the Apostle Paul. Yet to Christians the resurrection of Christ is a historical fact of supreme importance. And certainly the historical evidence for the reality of our Lord's bodily resurrection is simply overwhelming. How, then, can a man write a book on "The Bible as History" and not even mention the resurrection of Christ?

Lest we be unfair to the author, we should note that the dust jacket of the volume gives an expanded form of the title, namely: **Archaeology & Science adventure 4000 years into the past to document THE BIBLE AS HISTORY: A CONFIRMATION OF THE BOOK OF BOOKS.** It appears, therefore, that it was not the author's purpose to treat the historical contents of the Bible as such, but rather to present a survey of contributions made by archaeological discovery and extra-Biblical historical research to the confirmation of the Bible's historical statements. This sheds a different light on the omission of the period before Abraham and the non-mention of our Lord's resurrection. Archaeology has discovered little or nothing that directly confirms specific statements of the Bible about persons or events in the period between Adam and Abraham, except for the fact that it has definitely confirmed the Bible's statement that Mesopotamia was the cradle of the human race. And the resurrection of Christ, though attested by the most substantial historical evidence in the Bible itself, was not an event of the kind that would leave archaeological evidence, nor is it attested by historical testimony outside of that recorded in the Bible.

The author in his Introduction affirms his faith

in the Bible in the following words: "In view of the overwhelming mass of authentic and well-attested evidence now available, as I thought of the skeptical criticism which from the eighteenth century onward would fain have demolished the Bible altogether, there kept hammering in my brain this one sentence: 'The Bible is right after all.'" (p. xxv).

The book is beautifully gotten up, with many splendid photographs, drawings and maps which add greatly to the reader's interest and the book's value. The author writes in a very interesting, readable style, which has been competently translated into English. The printing is excellent, with good clear type, and the entire appearance of the volume is most attractive. And for a book of this type and size the price is moderate.

In spite of his forthright insistence that "The Bible is right after all," the author evidently does not believe in the full historical trustworthiness — let alone the plenary inspiration and infallibility — of the Biblical record. This is exemplified by his treatment of Moses on pages 110, 111:

"Moses was a Hebrew who was born in Egypt, brought up by Egyptians, and bore a typical Egyptian name. Moses is the name Maose which is commonly found on the Nile. The Egyptian word 'MS' ('MS' stands for Mosu. Egyptian hieroglyphs used no vowels.) means simply 'boy-son'. A number of Pharaohs are called Ahmose, Amasis, Thutmose. And Thutmose was the name of the famous sculptor, among whose masterpieces the incomparably beautiful head of Nofretete is still the admiration of the world.

"These are facts. Egyptologists know that. But the general public picks on the famous Biblical story of Moses in the bulrushes, and it is not difficult on the basis of this charming story to produce an apparently valid argument against the authenticity of the figure of Moses. 'It is simply the birth-legend of Sargon,' they say. But they add mentally, 'Plagiarism.'

"Cuneiform texts have this to say of King Sargon, the founder of the Semitic dynasty of Akkad in 2360 B.C.: 'I am Sargon, the powerful king, the king of Akkad. My mother was a temple prostitute; I did not know any father. My mother conceived me and bore me in secret. She put me in a little box made of reeds, sealing its lid with pitch. She put me in the river. . . . The river carried me away and brought me to Akki the waterman. Akki the waterman adopted me and brought me up as his son. . . .'

"The similarity with the Biblical story of Moses is in fact astounding: 'And when she could no longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river's brink.' (Ex. 2:3ff.)

"The basket story is a very old Semitic folk

tale. It was handed down by word of mouth for many centuries. The Sargon legend of the third millennium B.C. is found on Neo-Babylonian cuneiform tablets of the first millennium B.C. It is nothing more than the frills with which posterity has always loved to adorn the lives of great men. Who would dream of doubting the historicity of the Emperor Barbarossa simply because he is said to be still sleeping under Kyffhaeuser?"

Thus author Keller believes in the historicity of Moses but he does not believe in the historicity of "the basket story" — that is one of the "frills with which posterity has always loved to adorn the lives of great men." Concerning this viewpoint, the reviewer would make the following comments:

(1) This viewpoint is incompatible with the belief that Moses himself was the author of the Book of Exodus. If the basket story is a frill added by posterity, then Moses himself did not write it.

(2) While there are some striking resemblances between the birth-legend of Sargon and the basket story about Moses, the differences between the two stories are equally striking or even more so.

(3) If we accept Dr. Keller's viewpoint about the basket story, what becomes of the statements of the New Testament in Acts 7:20, 21 and Hebrews 11:23 — statements which evidently are based upon acceptance of the record in Exodus (including "the basket story") as true? Must these New Testament verses also be discounted as the acceptance of frills with which posterity has adorned the life of a great man? Can the New Testament be accepted as truly and fully the Word of God in that case?

Dr. Keller also seems to cast doubt on the historical character of some of the events described in the Book of Daniel. Speaking of the conquests of Cyrus king of Persia he says:

"The way to Babylonia was open and Babylon lay invitingly before him. Against the background of such a situation, a strange and mysterious story got about, which, since it has been recorded in the Bible, has gripped the imagination of the western world." (This is followed by a quotation of Daniel 5:1, 4-7, 25-28 and three paragraphs about Joseph interpreting Pharaoh's dreams in Egypt, and the identity and official rank of Belshazzar in Babylon. Dr. Keller then continues:)

"The story of Belshazzar's feast and the writing on the wall reflects through the eyes of the prophets a contemporary political situation. In 539 B.C. Cyrus turned his attack against Nabonidus, and the Babylonian army was defeated. With that the hours of the last great Mesopotamian empire were numbered" (pp. 309, 310).

While the matter is not made perfectly clear, it seems to the reviewer that Dr. Keller does not

believe (a) that the story of the handwriting on the wall at Belshazzar's feast is historically true — rather, he thinks that the story “reflects through the eyes of the prophets a contemporary political situation”; (b) that Daniel wrote the Book of Daniel, as orthodox Christians have always believed; the Bible represents Daniel as an eyewitness of the handwriting on the wall and the writer of the record about it; Dr. Keller on the contrary holds that the story reflects contemporary history “through the eyes of the prophets.”

With regard to the general chronological scheme of Old Testament history, Dr. Keller adheres to the so-called “late chronology” which is generally favored by liberals. This places the Exodus in 1290 B.C. and the fall of Jericho in 1250 B.C. or somewhere near that time. Dr. Keller very properly recognizes, however, that the date of the fall of Jericho is disputed and that there are eminent archaeologists who hold that Jericho fell in or about 1400 B.C. The reviewer would point out that the “late chronology,” which is advocated by Albright and others, involves rejection of various statements of the Bible itself. The key verse is 1 Kings 6:1 which states that the construction of the Jerusalem temple began in the

fourth year of Solomon's reign, which was the 480th year after the children of Israel left Egypt. This yields a date of 1441 or 1440 for the Exodus and 1401 or 1400 for the fall of Jericho — 150 years earlier than the “late chronology” allows. The “late chronology” also involves extreme difficulty in dealing with the Book of Judges — it does not allow anywhere nearly enough time for the history of the period of the Judges, and requires discounting more statements of the Bible. Those who are interested in an illuminating and convincing defence of the “early chronology” (which is that of the Bible itself) are referred to Unger, *Archeology and the Old Testament* (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich.), pp. 140-152.

In conclusion, the reviewer believes that Dr. Keller's book has great value for the reader who can read it with discernment and weigh its statements duly. For such readers, it will prove a very rewarding book. But the reviewer would not recommend it for indiscriminate circulation among persons with only a superficial knowledge of the Bible and of Christian truth.

— J. G. Vos

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:

Is singing, in the praise service of the church, of songs or passages from the New Testament contrary to the principle of Biblical worship?

Answer:

It is in direct violation of the Second Commandment which forbids the worshipping of God in any way not appointed in His Word. From this Commandment, together with many confirming statements in the Bible, and the record of an extraordinary number of God's most terrible judgments upon men and nations for its violation, **this principle** of Biblical worship has been formulated: “**WHATEVER IS NOT COMMANDED IN THE WORSHIP OF GOD IS FORBIDDEN.**”

By the beginning of the 16th century the church of Christ had brought almost complete moral and spiritual destruction upon itself by practices contrary to **this principle** — practices cunningly introduced by heretical teachers into the worship and government of the church, where they could do the most harm and, eventually, destroy the faith. Even the so-called Ecumenical

Councils had decreed canons to allow and expedite these practices.

For example, the extant epitome of the Council of Laodicea (sometime in the second half of the 4th Century A.D.) reads as follows:

“Psalms of private origin, or books uncanonical are not to be sung in churches; but the canonical writings of the Old and New Testaments” (*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series, Vol. XIV, p. 158.*)

While this forbids the use of psalms of private origin (unauthorized by the Church), it seems to allow singing of parts of any canonical book of either the Old or New Testament, and was so followed in practice, and soon any song authorized by a Bishop, of high enough standing, was sung in the church.

Then the Holy Spirit raised up faithful men around whom He gathered a **reformed** church, and in it **restored** the whole pattern of the church, the faith and ordinances appointed by Christ. In restoring **the principle** of worship, the canons of the Councils of course were repudiated as of no

authority whatsoever. See the Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter I, Section 10.

However, it was not long till the same subtle heresies began to enter the reformed church, in the way, by smooth and agreeable **practices contrary to the principle**. They have increased greatly, and today the ecumenical councils are here again, seeking to spread wide the substance of the old canons, and the church is fast losing its life and its power.

What can be done? Only the Spirit of God can renew life and restore power. He never does anything contrary to the Word of God. By His grace we are in possession of this Word, the Bible, to be used according to His will. On the face of it, all is not for singing in praise of God. If we seek His purpose we can find it in His commands. Only one book, containing nothing but Psalms, we are commanded (1) to sing to God in praise; (2) to use in teaching and admonishing one another. This command is made emphatic by repetition; it is repeated in the New Testament very explicitly (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). All the songs in the one book, while of three general titles — “psalms, hymns, and songs” — are of one origin. They are “of Holy-Spirit origin,” as the Greek word expressly defines them in accordance with 2 Sam. 23:1, 2. They are derived from the Holy Spirit alone, and no gift of grace is promised any man to enable him to write another song for the praise service of the church of Christ.

If we would stop to consider that the infinite, eternal, unchangeable wisdom and goodness of God belong to the Holy Spirit; that His knowledge of all things, past, present, and yet to come is complete, we would assure ourselves that we have all the songs we need for the worship of God. Really they are “new songs” because, in any increase of the light of the knowledge of Christ, they reveal to the understanding a new fulness of meaning. The Christian religion is not a new religion, differing in kind or substance from the first revelation of it, but, in all essentials, is one with the old, revealed as men are able to understand it, that they may glorify God by singing with the understanding. Let us make more effort to understand the Psalms. We will be glad we did.

— F. D. Frazer

Question:

Does the Bible teach that it is spiritually dangerous to use translations of the Bible made by unbelievers?

Answer:

The Holy Spirit inspired and controlled chosen men to write, in the ancient Hebrew and Greek languages, the original text of the Bible, to which nothing is to be added, nothing taken away. In His providence He has preserved the same in the

purity of its truth to the present time, and now is Personally present in this world to help, teach, and guide believers in all that pertains to this truth of God (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7-15).

Translation into languages as spoken today is necessary in carrying out Christ's Great Commission. But translation is more than mere changes of letters and sounds; it inevitably becomes an interpretation of the original text. No man of himself is capable of making a translation completely true to the truth of God without unreserved dependence on the promised help, teaching and guidance of the Holy Spirit. No man, or group of men, not believing that the Holy Spirit exists, or that any help is needed, can make a translation true to the meaning of the Author. Certainly, then, it is spiritually dangerous for any one to use such a translation as if it were authentic, the very Word of God for salvation, faith and life. “The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life” (2 Cor. 3:6).

Knowing the completeness of the Bible for its purpose, the one who proposed this question looked for warnings against this peril, either in direct word or “by good and necessary consequence,” and is to be commended for seeking and finding texts that give the answer with authority, such as Heb. 3:12; Matt. 16:6; Prov. 16:12; 4:14, 15.

We suggest some others in addition that seem to be more directly to the point: “For many deceivers are entered into the world who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist. Look to yourselves that you lose not those things which we wrought, but that you receive a full reward If any one come to you and bring not this teaching, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting (welcome), for he that gives him greeting (welcome) becomes partaker in his evil deeds” (2 John 7-11). Note also Rom. 16:17, 18; 1 Cor. 6:14-18; Gal. 1:7-9; Eph. 5:11; 2 Tim. 3:1-7.

Many translations are offered us today. When tested by comparison with the original text, **the only standard text**, they all have been found defective. Our so-called Authorized Version was made by Christian scholars in 1611. In the opinion of the present writer it is exceptionally true to the genius of the original languages, which providentially have become crystallized because no longer used, but it is defective, with errors of interpretation, and the English language has changed. The English and American Revised Versions made important corrections, yet still are not perfect; they have their own errors. The latest, so-called Revised Standard Version is not fit to be allowed as a “standard” version, for while there are improvements, there are also serious errors. The committee that made this version allowed no conservative, fully Bible-believing scholars in their number. “When there is a question about

the true and full sense of any Scripture (which is not manifold, but one) it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly" (Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter I, Section 9).

We recommend the study of a very helpful series of articles on "Versions and Annotated Editions of the Bible" by the Rev. Lester E. Kilpatrick, published in *Blue Banner Faith and Life*, beginning in Volume 4 (1949) page 80 and continuing, at intervals, to Volume 9 (1954), page 68.

— F. D. Frazer

Question:

What is your opinion as to the soundness and value of *The Bible as History* by Werner Keller?

Answer:

See review of this book in the Book Review section of this issue of *Blue Banner Faith and Life*.

Question:

How should one answer a member of Jehovah's Witnesses who refuses a blood transfusion, citing as grounds such Scripture passages as Gen. 9:4; Levit. 17:10-14; Acts 15:28, 29? The person concerned is in need of an operation, and a surgeon refuses to operate unless blood transfusions are permitted; yet the patient takes his stand against them.

Answer:

Genesis 9:4 reads: "But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat." The verses in Leviticus and Acts are based on this same idea.

All of these texts speak of **eating blood**. A blood transfusion is not **eating blood**, so if we interpret the texts literally they would not apply to the matter in question.

Why was the eating of blood forbidden? It was because blood stands for life, and blood shed stands for life given up. This was the essential idea of the sacrificial shedding of blood, and it is the central idea of the atonement by the shed blood of Christ. "For the life 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" (Levit. 17:11).

All of these Scripture texts speak of the blood of an animal that has been shed in death. The shedding of the blood involved the death of the animal. Because this was the essence of the ritual of sacrificial atonement, the Israelites were forbidden to eat blood. The shed blood of the animal was to remind them of the sacrifice and that their sin was forbidden only through the death of a substitute. Eating blood would tend to cause them to forget this religious truth and to regard shed blood as something common or ordinary.

There is no implication that there is anything unwholesome, unclean or unhygienic involved in eating blood. The reason for the prohibition was not hygienic but theological.

In a blood transfusion performed in the course of a surgical operation the whole situation is different. In the first place, it is not the blood of an animal that is used; it is human blood. In the second place, the blood is not eaten; it is introduced directly into the patient's circulation by artificial means. In the third place, the human being who provides the blood — the donor — does not give up his or her life in the process. The donor merely contributes an amount of blood which can be spared temporarily from his own body and which will soon be replaced by his body making new blood. Thus in the case of a transfusion the use of blood does not involve the shedding of blood in the Bible sense and it does not involve the death of the donor of the blood.

Thus the texts of the Bible which prohibit the eating of blood are not applicable to the situation described in our correspondent's query. We conclude that the Bible does not forbid blood transfusions. The member of Jehovah's Witnesses who needs blood transfusions to save his life, but refuses to have them, is a victim of needless scruples based on a superficial and inaccurate interpretation of the Bible. Not only are blood transfusions not forbidden by the Bible; if they are needed it is one's duty to have them. This is implied by a sound interpretation and application of the commandment "Thou shalt not kill". Our Shorter Catechism rightly interprets this commandment thus: "The sixth commandment requireth all lawful endeavors to preserve our own life, and the life of others" (Q. 67).

— J. G. Vos

"I could die like a Roman, but choose rather to die as a Christian. . . . God hath laid engagements upon Scotland; we are tied by Covenant to religion and reformation. It is the duty of every Christian to be loyal, yet I think the order of things is to be observed. Religion must not be

the cock-boat but the ship; God must have what is His, as well as Caesar what is his."

—The Marquis of Argyle, when about to die on the scaffold in 1661 for his loyalty to Christ's Crown and Covenant.

The Martyr's Child

(Continued from inside front cover.)

The child clings close to his father's heart,
 But they bear him by force away—
 A gentle force; but they needs must part,
 And that old man guides his way.
 Once more they are treading the crowded street,
 But no longer the sunlight smiled;
 And looks of pity from some they meet,
 For they know the martyr's child!

"Yon darksome thing that shuts out the sky,
 O tell me what may it be?
 It scares my heart, though I know not why,
 For it seems to gloom on me!"
 With a quivering lip, and a thrill of awe,
 Was the old man's answer given:
 "'Tis a ladder, poor bairn, such as Jacob saw,
 By which angels mount to heaven!"

They have set his head on the Nether Bow,
 To scorch in the summer air;
 And months go by, and the winter's snow
 Falls white on its thin gray hair.
 And still the same look that in death he wore,
 Is sealed on the solemn brow—
 A look as of one who hath travailed sore,
 But whose pangs are ended now!

Through years of oppression, and blood, and
 shame,
 The earth as a wine-press trode—
 That silent witness abides the same,
 In its mute appeal to God!
 And many a saint hath waxed strong to bear,
 While musing in that sad place;
 And the heart of the tyrant hath failed for fear,
 In the awe of that still, stern face.

There were prophet-words on those lips in death,
 That Scotland remembers still;
 And she looks for her God's awakening breath,
 Through the long, long night of ill!
 "They may scatter their dust to the winds of
 heaven—
 To the bounds of the utmost sea;
 But her Covenants, burned, reviled and riven,
 Shall yet her reviving be!"

There sitteth a child by the Nether Bow
 In the light of the summer sky;
 And he steals there yet in the winter's snow,
 But he shuns the passers-by;

A fair, pale child, with a faded cheek,
 As a lily in darkness reared,
 And an eye, in its sad abstraction meek,
 As if nothing he hoped or feared!

In the early dawn, at the fall of eve,
 But not in the noon of day;
 And he doth not weep, and he doth not grieve,
 But he never was seen to play!
 A child in whom childhood's life is dead;
 Its sweet light marred and dim;
 And he gazes up at that awful head,
 As though it held speech with him!

Oh! a strange, sad sight, was the converse mute
 Of the dead and the living there;
 And thoughts in that young child's soul took root
 Which manhood might scarcely bear!
 But ever he meekly went his way,
 As the stars came o'er the place;
 And his mother wept, as she heard him say,
 "I have seen my father's face!"

Years faded and died, and the child was gone,
 But a pale youth came instead,
 In the solemn eve, and at early dawn,
 To gaze on the awful head!
 And oft when the moonlight fell in showers,
 He would linger the night long there;
 And his spirit went up through those silent hours
 To his father's God in prayer!

The shadow had passed from his heart and brow,
 And a deep calm filled his breast;
 For the peace of God was his portion now,
 And his weary soul had rest!
 The martyr's God had looked kindly down
 On the martyr's orphan son;
 And the Spirit had sealed him for His own,
 And his goal was almost won!

There was fond hope cherished and earnest given,
 Of a course like his father's high;
 But the seed that had ripened so soon for heaven,
 God gathered to the sky!
 He comes no more to the 'customed place;
 In vain would affection save.
 He hath looked his last on his father's face,
 And he lies in his mother's grave!

Note: The martyr referred to in the above poem is James Guthrie, Scottish Covenanter pastor and leader, who because of his loyalty to Christ's Crown and Covenant was convicted of high treason, and put to death by hanging at Edinburgh, June 1, 1661. His last words on the scaffold were: "The Covenants! the Covenants shall yet be Scotland's reviving!"



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And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.

Daniel 2:44

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The Stranger

By John Clare

When trouble haunts me, need I sigh?
No, rather smile away despair;
For those have been more sad than I,
With burdens more than I could bear;
Aye, gone rejoicing under care
Where I had sunk in black despair.

When pain disturbs my peace and rest,
Am I a hopeless grief to keep,
When some have slept on torture's breast
And smiled as in the sweetest sleep,
Aye, peace on thorns, in faith forgiven,
And pillowed on the hope of heaven?

Though low and poor and broken down,
Am I to think myself distress?
No, rather laugh where others frown
And think my being truly blest;
For others I can daily see
More worthy riches worse than me.

Aye, once a stranger blest the earth
Who never caused a heart to mourn,
Whose very voice gave sorrow mirth—
And how did earth his worth return?
It spurned him from its lowliest lot,
The meanest station owned him not.

An outcast thrown in sorrow's way,
A fugitive that knew no sin,
Yet in lone places forced to stray—
Men would not take the stranger in.
Yet peace, though much himself he mourned,
Was all to others he returned.

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

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

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

Be Strong

By Maltbie D. Babcock

Be strong!
We are not here to play, — to dream, to drift.
We have hard work to do and loads to lift.
Shun not the struggle, — face it; 'tis God's gift.

Be strong!
Say not the days are evil. Who's to blame?
And fold the hands and acquiesce, — O shame!
Stand up, speak out, and bravely, in God's name.

Be strong!
It matters not how deep entrenched the wrong,
How hard the battle goes, the day how long;
Faint not, — fight on! Tomorrow comes the song.

On the Twenty-Third Psalm

(Author unknown)

In "pastures green"? Not always; sometimes He
Who knoweth best, in kindness leadeth me
In weary ways, where heavy shadows be.

And by "still waters"? No, not always so;
Oft-times the heavy tempests round me blow,
And o'er my soul the waves and billows go.

But when the storms beat loudest, and I cry
Aloud for help, the Master standeth by,
And whispers to my soul, "Lo, it is I!"

So, where He leads me, I can safely go,
And in the blest hereafter I shall know
Why, in His wisdom, He hath led me so.

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Sketches of the Covenanters

By J. C. McFeeters

Chapter XXXI.

Indulgence, the Six-Fold Snare. — A. D. 1665.

The Covenanters, after the Pentland Rising, were placed under martial law. Every district was garrisoned and overrun with troops. The military, having been empowered to plunder, pillage, and punish at their caprice, did not hesitate to shoot down innocent people without trial, leaving them weltering in their own blood. King Charles accounted the Covenanters rebels to be subdued with fire and sword. He was determined upon their subjection, or destruction. "Better," said one in his service, "that the land bear whins than whigs." The Covenanters were called whigs; the whins were worthless bushes.

The Covenanters rebels! Be it remembered that Scotland was under a Constitutional government, and the Constitution was embodied in the Covenant. Also, the king and the people had accepted the Covenant on oath. Yet in the face of all this, King Charles attempted to rescind the Covenant, destroy the Constitution, and assume absolute power. Ah, was not Charles the rebel? Was not he the traitor, the revolutionist, the autocrat who attempted to turn things upside down? The Covenanters were the Old Guard, who stood for law, justice, government, and constitutional rights, on the accepted basis — God's law and Covenant. Nor did the Old Guard ever yield the field; they occupy it yet.

True, the Covenanters did decline the king's authority in certain particulars! But were they not justifiable? A glance at the situation will solve the question.

The king, having expelled the Covenanted ministers, substituted others of his own choice. The Covenanters refused to hear them.

The king restricted the Covenanters to their own parishes in public worship. They went where they pleased.

The king forbade marriages or baptisms, except by Episcopal ministers. The Covenanters went to their own ministers for these services.

The king ordered them to observe the Episcopal form of worship. They believed this to be unscriptural, and refused.

The king commanded the people to deliver up their ministers to the authorities for punishment. This they would in no wise do.

The Covenanters rebels, because they declined the king's authority in matters like these? How could they have done otherwise? Two courses lay before them; resist the tyrant's will, or submit as his slaves. Blessed be the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave them light, strength, courage, and victory. These fathers of the Covenant choose to suffer and be free; to endure the king's wrath and keep a pure conscience of compromise and continue the conflict. The invitation to come down, and consult on the plains of Ono, was answered by its own echo — O, no.

The Covenanters, like the Israelites, flourished while in this great tribulation. They were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them. The more they were afflicted, the more they multiplied and grew. Their ministers were numbered by hundreds; the people, who assembled in Conventicles, by tens of thousands. Oppression could not crush them; the furnace, though heated seven times more than it was wont, could not singe their garments. Their adversaries became alarmed and began to devise other measures. Their device was diabolical wisdom. Satan, having had more than three thousand years since he failed on Israel in Egypt, was now better in his work. The king proposed to indulge the ministers. The royal indulgence was surely a product of the bottomless pit. The snare was laid six times and caught many unwary souls.

The First Indulgence was granted in 1669. The expelled ministers were offered pardon, and permission to return to their churches on certain conditions stipulated by the king. Forty-two accepted the Indulgence, and by that very act conceded the king's right to expel, and to recall, the ministers of Christ, at his own pleasure. The great principles for which they had suffered were thereby sacrificed — the supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ over His Church, and the Church's independence under Christ.

What were the conditions upon which these ministers returned? We give them in substance:

1. They must attend the meetings of the Prelatic ministers.

2. They must permit none of the people from other parishes to attend their services.

3. They must refrain from speaking or preaching against the king's supremacy.

4. They must not criticize the king or his government.

The Indulgence, with such conditions, was accepted by forty-two ministers. Are we surprised? Do we wonder that so many relaxed under the strain of persecution, and returned to their own vine and fig tree? Let not censure, from her bowers of ease, be too severe. The hardships of these men were great, the sufferings excessive, the outlook dark. They were worn and sickly; they were filled with pain by exposure to storms, living in caves, and sleeping on the ground. Their lives were in jeopardy every hour. Yet it must be said that these ministers sacrificed much for which they had long and nobly battled; they capitulated on terms dictated by the enemy, surrendered their rights as the ambassadors of Christ, and accepted conditions that made them bond servants of King Charles. They were caught in the snare.

The Second Indulgence was issued in 1672. Eighty ministers were selected by the king for this bait, and most of them swallowed it. Yet among the eighty some inflexible men were found on whom the deceitful offer had no effect. They knew how to endure hardness as good soldiers. One of them on receiving the legal notice at the hand of an official said, "I cannot be so uncivil as to refuse this paper offered me by your lordship." Then letting it fall to the ground, he added, "But I can receive no instructions from you, regulating my ministry; for then I would be your ambassador, not Christ's". He was immediately thrust into prison, and continued there until death. The Third Indulgence was another snare, equally deceitful and injurious.

The other three were offered by King James VII, and all were of the same nature, only each being more lenient, seductive, and Satanic, than the one preceding. The Indulgence was a dragnet, drawing large hauls of hungry fish, and leaving them to squirm on the shores of sinful compromises.

The Covenanters who remained faithful were greatly diminished. The ministers were decimated until few were left. Yet as the banner of the Covenant fell from the hand of one, it was snatched up by another, and defiantly given to the breeze. At no moment did the battle cease for lack of heroes.

The Indulgence did what sword, pillage, prison, torture, exile, gibbet—all could not do; it shattered the Covenanted forces and wasted their power. The fiercest fires of persecution only fused the

elements, and consolidated the mass of metal. But the fruit of Indulgence was debate, dissension, distraction, and division and decimation. The tree is known by its fruit; the fruit was bad, very bad. The non-Indulged charged their brethren with betrayal of Christ and His cause. The Indulged retorted, that the King's offer opened the way back to the churches, and refusal to accept protracted the evil times. Thus the host of God was divided against itself; Judah against Israel, and Israel against Judah. Archbishop Sharp had boasted, that by the Indulgence he would throw a "bone of contention" among the Presbyterians. He judged rightly.

The cause of Christ still demands self-sacrifice. Fidelity to Jesus Christ is hard to the flesh; it always has been and always will be. The friendship of this world is enmity against God, and against all who sincerely love God. To make terms with the world is to forfeit God's love. The Church has lost much of the heroic heart, the militant power, the iron nerve, and the fire of the Holy Spirit, by reason of ease, indulgence, compromise, and inordinate desire for the friendship of the world. "If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him; if we deny Him; He also will deny us."

Points for the Class

1. Why were the Covenanters styled rebels?
2. How did the king try to suppress them?
3. On what points did they refuse to obey the king?
4. Were they justifiable? On what grounds?
5. How did the persecuted people increase?
6. What new attempt to divide and destroy them?
7. How many Indulgences were offered?
8. On what terms were ministers permitted to return home?
9. What effect had the Indulgences on the Covenanters?
10. What present danger along the line of Indulgence?

Chapter XXXII.

The Field Meetings Under Fire. — A. D. 1679.

The king's Indulgence did double work on the persecuted ministers. The Indulgence was a surgical knife that removed the spinal nerve of the Indulged; and it was a sharp sword launched at the heart of those who refused the Indulgence. The proclamation that offered pardon announced desperate measures against all who declined the offer. The persecution thereby grew fiercer and the sufferings more insufferable.

The Indulgence thinned the Covenanted ranks; many ministers withdrew from the Old Blue Banner with its golden motto: "FOR CHRIST'S CROWN AND COVENANT." Home! sweet, sweet home had charmed the heart. The Indulged were no more worthy of being called Covenanters. They had lost zeal, courage, place, and name among the worthies. Some however repented and returned to the solitudes. Their home, as they had crossed the threshold, was to them no more like home, but a gloomy prison, a dreary waste, an intolerable place, because the heart condemned them, and God was greater than the heart. These went back to their brethren, to endure hardness as good soldiers for Christ's sake. Persecution with all its hardships, in comparison with the Indulgence, was a paradise while the love of Jesus Christ enamored the soul.

The ministers who remained loyal to the Lord and the Covenant were pursued by men who drove like Jehu. The Conventicles, however, continued. The Covenanters swarmed on the grounds where the preaching was appointed. They refused to hear the curates of the Episcopal Church, and likewise the ministers who had returned through the king's Indulgence. The latter had forfeited their confidence and respect. The people, forsaking the parish churches, traveled to the moors and mountains for their preaching. There they found their own ministers, the unconquerable ambassadors of Christ, the uncompromising messengers of God.

A price was placed upon the heads of these ministers, by the government of King Charles. They were hunted like partridges upon the mountains. Let them be brought in, dead or alive, and the prize will range in value from \$500 to \$2,000. The people were commanded to refuse them bread, lodging, fellowship, all kindness and support, that they might perish without a helping hand or a consoling word. To attend their preaching was accounted a crime to be punished by the judges, an act of rebellion worthy of imprisonment or death.

The ministers were not overawed, nor were the people intimidated. Field-preaching characterized the times. Conventicles were more numerous and the attendance larger than hitherto. It was estimated that, on a certain Sabbath, an aggregate of 16,000 attended three meetings held in one county. Men, women, and children traveled miles and miles to these sequestered spots among the hills and on the moors, in defiance of all threats and in face of all dangers. There they stayed through the long Sabbath hours, listening to the rich, sweet Gospel of Christ, while the ministers spoke with earnestness as from the very portals of eternity.

The Conventicles flourished in spite of every effort to suppress them. The king and his counselors became alarmed and sent the "Highland

host," a vicious army of 10,000 strong, to extinguish these hated Field-meetings. The Covenanters suffered at their hands, as by a foreign invasion. The military atrocities, horrible before, were now barbarous in the extreme. "Fire, and blood, and vapors of smoke" marked the path of these brutal men as they raided the country. Yet the Conventicles were not extinguished.

To meet the conditions of increasing terror, the Covenanters came to the Field-meetings armed and ready for self-defence. Sentries were stationed on the hills that towered above the worshippers, and the discharge of a gun was the signal of danger. At the approach of soldiers, the people quietly dispersed, if escape were possible; if not, then the armed men drew out and lined up for battle. Many a time the worship of God was suddenly turned into the clash of arms.

The Lomond-hills formed good places for these meetings. On one occasion, a large concourse of people had assembled amidst these sheltering heights. Rev. John Wellwood, a young minister whom the soldiers could not catch, was feasting these hungry souls with the Word of life. Some of his sermons are still extant. They are rich in nourishment, nervous with earnestness, and flashing with fiery eloquence. He lived in the dark days, but died exclaiming, "Now, eternal light! no more night, nor darkness to me." While the people this day were feasting on his words, the signal announced the approach of the dragoons. The people quietly moved up the "brae." The soldiers rode up and delivered five volleys into the crowd. The balls whizzed among the men, women, and children, but none were hurt. A ledge of rock prevented an attack. The captain commanded them to dismiss. "We will," they replied, "when the service is over, if you promise us no harm." The promise was given, yet the treacherous troops dashed upon the hindmost and captured eighteen.

An attack was made also on a Conventicle held at Lillies-leaf moor. A large number of people had assembled. The famous John Blackader was preaching. The alarm shot was fired when the minister was in the middle of the afternoon sermon. He at once closed the service with a few words to allay fear. The people stood in their places, showing no excitement. The troopers came up at full gallop and formed in battle line in front of the Covenanters. The soldiers were astonished at the calmness of the people. A sullen pause followed; not a word, not a movement. The officer broke the silence, shouting, "In the name of the king, I charge you to dismiss." The reply was immediate: "We are here in the name of the King of heaven, to hear the Gospel, and to harm no man." Such unexpected calmness and fortitude wilted the officer. Another painful pause. What next? No one knew. The suspense was suddenly broken by a woman who stepped forth from the midst of the Covenanters. She was alone; her

movements showed decision; her eyes were flashing; her face was flushed with indignation. She went straight for the officer, seized the bridle close to the horse's mouth, and wheeled him about, vociferating, "Fye on ye, man, fye on ye; the vengeance of God will overtake you for marring so good a work". The officer was dazed as by an exploding shell. The woman was his own sister. He was crestfallen, and withdrew the dragoons, while the people went home unharmed.

One of these armed Field-meetings was held at Drumclog. It was a sweet summer Sabbath, June 1, 1679. The Covenanters had come in large numbers. They covered the green sward, sitting among clumps of moss and heather. They were far from the abode of man; nothing there to break the solemn stillness of the Lord's day, except the notes of the heathercock and plover. Loudon-hill stood near like a mighty champion. The air breathed softly across the field, and the sky bent silently over the worshipers; the hearts of the people were lifted up in sweet Psalms that echoed over the hills, and a serene joy filled all. The Holy Spirit came mightily upon the people; the Lord was among them. Thomas Douglas was the minister. He was one of the three mighties, who afterward issued the Sanquhar Declaration disowning King Charles II as a tyrant. The sermon was half finished when a signal shot was heard. Mr. Douglas immediately closed the Bible, saying, "You have the theory; now for the practice." 250 resolute men hastily sprang to their feet, lined up, and marched off to meet Claverhouse who was coming with 240 dragoons. The Covenanters halted on an elevation to await the attack. While waiting they sang the 76th Psalm to the tune of "Martyrs." The Psalm was very appropriate; well fitted to arouse the military spirit:

"In Judah's land God is well known,
His name's in Israel great;
In Salem is His tabernacle,
In Zion is His seat."

The troops galloped forward and fired. Their fire drew a vigorous response. The Covenanters aimed with deadly precision; the fighting was desperate; hand-to-hand encounters were frequent. The troops broke and fled, leaving 20 dead on the field. The Covenanters had 1 killed and 5 mortally wounded. Hamilton, Hackston, Paton, Balfour, Cleeland, and Hall were the noble captains that won the day in the name of the Lord of Hosts.

These fighting Covenanters, who could fight as well as pray, have won for their posterity the privilege of worshiping God in peace. There is nothing now to hurt or annoy in God's mountain. How punctual, diligent, and appreciative ought we to be in the service of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Points for the Class

1. What was the double effect of the Indulgence?
2. What new effort to suppress the Conventicles?
3. Give the character of the Highland host.
4. How did the Covenanters prepare for self-defense?
5. Describe the Conventicle at the Lomond-hills, Lillies-leaf moor; Drumclog.
6. Who were the Covenanted captains at Drumclog?
7. How should we appreciate peaceful worship?

(To be continued)

Christ's Entrance Into Public Life

By the Rev. John C. Rankin

Jesus' entrance into public life began when He took leave of the quiet home in Nazareth and came and presented Himself to John at the Jordan. His mother reappears from time to time in the story, the last time being when her name is given as among those who waited in the upper room after the ascension. The last we hear of Joseph is in connection with the search which was made by Jesus' parents for their lost son, when at last He was found "sitting in the midst of the doctors."

It has been assumed that Joseph died and that his place as the breadwinner was taken by the oldest of the family. It is possible that one of the younger brothers may also have learned the carpenter's trade, perhaps as an apprentice to

Jesus, and was ready to take over when Jesus left. In any case we may be sure that His departure entailed no particular hardship on those left behind.

To all appearances Jesus' coming to John was as it was with all who came, that is as a humble penitent, a candidate for John's baptism of repentance. Although John was related to Jesus they were entirely unacquainted prior to this first meeting between them. However somehow John immediately recognized his cousin who and what He really was, and vigorously demurred. But Jesus insisted; and, though He had no sin to be confessed, He was baptized. Coming up out of the water the heavens were opened, the Spirit descend-

ed upon Him as a dove and abode upon Him and the Father's voice was heard. So John's first impression was confirmed and Jesus received His formal commission and enduement.

The baptism was His personal consecration in His human nature to the work ahead, and His official commission and appointment to it. With it came the full enduement of His human nature for it, and the witness of the Father to Him. The voice was the official seal of God's approval on His preparation up to this point.

The temptation was next in order. Immediately He was both led and driven of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. The main point, however, was a full and searching testing of His human devotion to the will of the Father and to the cause of the kingdom as God meant that it should be. His soul was tried and tested to the utmost, as a new-made bow is bent to the extreme limit of its strength. It was an other-worldly conflict brought down upon the platform of this present world and life. For the human Jesus it was a terrific ordeal and stretched all His powers of body and soul, of mind and heart, to their fullest extent. But with God's help He overcame. In love and faithfulness He gained the victory and triumphed in God's grace. In Him also all His own were tested and gained the victory in and with Him.

Here, as already on previous occasions, we mark the perfect clearness and readiness of His mind for whatever came. He showed Himself fully equal to the occasion, and His handling of the Scriptures was of course superb. He not only parried each dart with the shields of faith but carried the battle home with the sword of the Spirit. And we may well believe that the adversary was glad to flee away to some sequestered spot in the invisible realm of the spirit world to attend to the wounds received.

With the conclusion of the test there could be no question of Jesus' complete and perfect dedication to the cause and to "the trials yet decreed." "Having been tempted in all points like as we are yet without sin" He is able to "save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him."

Now He was not only consecrated and equipped, but also thoroughly tested. The transition was complete and He was indeed meet for the Father's use, "prepared unto every good work" which lay before Him in the years ahead. These would be few, but more than a few years' work was to be crowded into them."

Here we pause for some preliminary reflections on the sort of story we are following. Very apparent is the fact that it has all the elements of a good story from any point of view. There is progress in it — a flow of events in constant motion. With ever-increasing intensity and growing

fascination it mounts to its tremendous climax. Change and movement make a good story, and we have seen this up to this point, but not as we shall see it in the remainder of the story. Now great and moving events follow hard one upon another. Wonders throng on every page. And beyond all surface things we sense immeasurable depths of meaning. Things of infinitely transcendent value lie before our wondering gaze. And best of all is the fact that it is all true. It speaks for itself at every point and self-evidences itself in every word.

What are the elements of meaning in it? There is teaching here and there is example. There are the proofs provided in the miracles. There is the training of leaders for future service. There is the gathering together of true believers in one body which was and is the Church of Jesus Christ. There is the inauguration of Messiah's Kingdom. These all have their place and importance and are essential to the whole. But the depths of meaning are not in them.

We go deeper and come closer to it when we see the public life as Messiah's (Christ's) presentation of Himself to the people and as their rejection of Him. The initial act of presentation came with the cleansing of the temple. This carried with it His claim to the Messiahship, as of course also to supreme divine Sonship. The Jews recognized it as such a claim and their instant reaction was to challenge the claim and to demand a sign. We shall see more of this later but this "coming of the Lord to his temple" was not in the approved manner as they conceived it. However it was in full accord with the spirit and demand of the time. For the call to repentance was in the air. John's ministry had seen to that. Nevertheless there was no such thing in the hearts of the Jewish leaders.

The character of this initial presentation with its inevitable reaction insured once and for all that Jesus would die at the hands of sinful men. The only wonder is that they did not try to do away with him before they did. From that time on His life was ever in danger, and on various occasions it was necessary to resort to special measures in order to preserve it. God was watching over and controlling all, and the Saviour led as it were a charmed life until the day came for God to give Him up unto His death for sins and for Him to offer up His life as a sacrifice to satisfy the justice of God. Thus we come to the deepest depths of the meaning of this life, which is that He "came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

We shall never fathom the full depth of the meaning and the immeasurable worth of Jesus' earthly life until we see it as the work of redemption. From beginning to end it was a special work of God in Him. Though the infancy was preparatory to the growing life, and the life of growth to the public life, yet in them all God's special

work was going on. His whole life was a work in which and by which He purchased our salvation. For "when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4: 4, 5).

Another way of stating the facts in regard to these deep things of God in Christ is that His baptism marked His entrance upon the exercise of His kingly and prophetic offices. He was a prophet, and at this point He began to prophesy. He was a king, and at this point the government began to rest upon His shoulder. But above all He was a priest and a sacrifice, and His life as priest and sacrifice began with the beginning of

His life on earth. He began to redeem as soon as He began to be the God-man that He became by virtue of His incarnation. His work of redemption began with His very advent into life, or ever He was born. From the moment of His conception He was our "great high priest" and "the lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

***References** — for the baptism: Matt. 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21, 22; John 1:29-34. For the temptation: Matt. 4:1-11; Mark 1:12, 13; Luke 4:1-13.

Note: This is the fourth of a series of articles by Mr. Rankin. The fifth will appear, D. V., in our next issue. — Editor.

Expository Teaching--How to Go About It

By the Rev. W. Leslie Land, M.A., B. Litt.

We do well to free our minds from a commonly held notion that expository preaching and teaching is a specialized affair, and in any case not very practical, and that what **really** matters is evangelism. Let it be clearly understood that no one is saved without the Word of God. If God had not been pleased to give to us a revelation concerning our sin and perilous condition, and concerning His gracious willingness to save us and His way of accomplishing this in and through His Saviour Son, Jesus Christ, then we all would have been shut out of heaven for ever.

But in saying this we are already in the realm of expository teaching — we are simply expounding or opening up in simple terms what the Holy Spirit has already taught us from God's Word.

We must never fall for the false notion, however popular it may be, that you can get folk saved by some kind of persuasive pressure or emotional appeal, and that you can leave Bible teaching to those who have a particular bent and aptitude for that sort of thing. Satan will have scored a great victory if he can beguile us into any kind of degree of disparagement or belittling of the Word of God. He knows that the Word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword.

Apostolic Example

Some one may say, "Yes, I know that God's Word is very important, but what matters most is what God has **done** for us sinners in His Son. We must tell people what God has **done**, rather than give them doctrine." Now that is a dangerous line of reasoning. True, our salvation rests upon what God has **done** in the Person of His Son. But it rests equally upon what God has **said** in His Word. Let it be clearly understood that God has

clothed the historic **facts** of the Gospel with **words**; otherwise we would not understand the meaning of those facts. A child is born of a virgin in Bethlehem; in early manhood he dies on a Cross; the third morning he rises from the dead — and so on. Yes, but what does it all mean to us?

The Holy Spirit has clothed the facts with meaning. He has **expounded** the significance of the facts; and it is this divinely inspired **exposition** that we are called to preach and teach. Indeed, that is the Gospel.

When we read in Acts 5:42, "They ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ," we clearly understand that the apostles taught and proclaimed not merely the historic facts, but the **significance** of those facts — i.e., the **doctrines** of the Gospel. Clearly then we must do the same if we would win souls for Christ. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. 10:17).

Now, how does one go about this expository teaching? In seeking to answer this vitally important question, let it be clear that our purpose is to be practical and helpful, rather than theoretically precise and academic.

Note of Authority

The secret of expository teaching really lies in thinking God's thoughts after him. **His** thoughts are not **our** thoughts (Isaiah 55:8). **Our** thoughts cannot lead to anyone's salvation. We do not go to our class or congregation with "I think. . . ." On the contrary, we tell them what **God** says—"Thus saith the Lord." There is, or should be, that note of **authority** in our teaching, and this can only be the case in so far as we are familiar with God's thoughts, made known to us in and through God's Word.

The Holy Spirit is pleased to honour and use

God's thoughts and God's Word in the saving of men and women. Expository teaching or preaching, then, is only possible if the teacher or preacher knows the thoughts of God expressed in the written Word, the Bible. God's thoughts are above ours as the heavens are higher than the earth; so also is a Bible-based message above the speculations of one who "likes to think for himself."

The question, then, amounts to this—How may I come to know God's thoughts so that in my teaching and preaching I may pass them on to others? Well, in the first place I must know Jesus Christ as my own personal Saviour. It is not enough to know a certain church or denomination or evangelical movement. I must know **Christ**. I must be born again: otherwise I cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God: they are foolishness to me (1 Cor. 2:14). The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit: they are **spiritually** discerned.

Secondly, I must **pray** about my preparation. "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" Neither will God communicate His thoughts to you and me unless we are in sweet communion and fellowship with Him. Our **union** with Christ is one thing—it is inviolable: our **communion** is another—it is fragile, easily broken. Prayer is a means of grace whereby communion and fellowship with God are restored. Time taken on your knees alone with God is a "must" if you are going to give out God's Word and message.

Thirdly, we come to the task of turning to God's Word and studying it with a view to discovering God's thoughts—God's message. What is God saying to me in and through this or that passage of Holy Scripture?

Now when the preparation has been carefully and prayerfully done, there often comes over one a feeling difficult to express; it is not so much, "I've got hold of a message!" but rather, "A message has got hold of me!" One may even experience a sense of excitement, and there is an inner longing to deliver the Word. It has come as a burden from the Lord. Yes, expository teaching and preaching is a truly **prophetic** ministry—a "telling forth" of the Word of God (a very different thing from a "talk"!).

Difficulties to Overcome

Now in this vital matter of studying your Bible with a view to preparing a message, let us distinguish two kinds of difficulties—

(i) what we will call the **accidental difficulties**—e.g., translation; words whose meanings have changed; allusions, and so on. Let me briefly illustrate each of these points—

(a) **Translation**: the "four beasts" in Revelation 4 should read "four living creatures": they are quite distinct from the **beasts** of Revelation 13.

(b) **Words whose meanings have changed**; e.g.

prevent (1 Thess. 4:15) used to mean "go before": **conversation** (1 Pet. 1:18 etc.) used to mean "manner of life": "vile" (Phil. 3:21) used to mean "lowly," and so on.

(c) **Allusions**: 2 Cor. 2:14: 16 an allusion to a Roman Triumph; Ephes. 1:14, "**earnest**," an allusion to the earnest money in a transaction, etc. . . .

All such difficulties are easily overcome by our having a few suitable books of reference at hand; e.g., a modern translation, a good commentary, a concordance, a topical text book, an expository dictionary, etc. We must take the trouble to clear these accidental difficulties before we proceed to the exposition.

(ii) **The expositional difficulties**: i.e., opening up the true meaning and significance of the verse or passage. Here lies our main task. What are God's thoughts, conveyed to me through the written Word? One thing is certain: **if I would know God's thoughts I must study His written Word**. But it is also true to say that **if I would really understand God's written Word, I must know God's thoughts**. Then how or where do I begin? Well, the practical answer is, I believe, quite simple: I begin by knowing some of God's thoughts. I then turn to the Bible (God's written Word) already knowing some of God's thoughts, and the Holy Spirit lights up the sacred page and reveals yet more of God's thoughts to me.

Yes, but how did we ever come to know some of God's thoughts in the first place? Well, many of us, surely, arrived there through a godly mother, a faithful minister, a class leader, or a truly evangelical, Bible-honouring book. Then began for us the progressively wonderful and thrilling exploration of the treasures and riches of God's Word—a sort of spiritual "chain-reaction."

Let me illustrate this principle in operation. One of the first of God's thoughts to be made our own is His absolute **sovereignty**—the sovereignty of God. Now turn to the Bible and there it is! "In the beginning God . . ."; "God so loved the world . . ."; "The revelation . . . which God gave. . . ." The initiative is always with God. Out in the world we hear such a lot about man, and how wonderful he is; but there it is—it does not happen to be one of God's thoughts! When we study the Bible with this thought of God's sovereignty in mind, it is very wonderful how the truth of it grows and develops. He is sovereign in creation: God said . . . and it was so. And so by **faith** we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God . . . (Heb. 11:3).

Thinking God's Thoughts

So you see, in our teaching and preaching we shall not try to prove that there is a God by talking about the natural realm; indeed we shall not talk **up** from nature to God, but rather talk **down** from God to nature. It is because we know God, by faith, through the Bible, to be so wonderful that

we find His trees, His seas, His mountains and rivers and so on . . . so wonderful.

Again, He is sovereign in all His providential dealings; providential in the seasons, in seed-time and harvest, in our waking and sleeping, in sickness and in health, in life and in death. All that happens under the aegis of His throne must be providential—not just simply the things that make us “purr” and feel happy. So, in preparing our message we are safeguarded against a lot of popular and sentimental nonsense about God. We are enabled to think God’s thoughts after Him.

Again, we find in the Bible that God is sovereign in redemption and salvation. “No man cometh unto me except the Father draw him.” “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me.” This great truth will save us from the tormenting strain of trying to do **His** work for Him: it will make us think hard and seriously about so-called “decisions for Christ.” It will inspire within us a sense of urgency and longing to be in His will and utterly at His disposal.

Another of God’s thoughts is the utter sinfulness and consequent helplessness of man by nature. Turn to your Bible with this (**His**) thought in mind, and the Holy Spirit will lead you further into the truth of this matter. You will discover that **all** men by nature are completely alienated from (i.e., are complete foreigners and strangers to) the life of God. You will never dare to jeopardise the souls of your unsaved hearers by flattering them that they are anything but lost, and under divine wrath and condemnation.

Unfolding Revelation

This dark picture given us in the Bible of man’s fallen and helpless condition by nature is unrelieved by any ray of light from human sources, or by any divine spark of man’s possessing. The dead cannot rise and “come to Christ”: Christ and Christ alone must say, “Lazarus, come forth!” The Holy Spirit, and He alone, can “breathe” upon these slain that they may live.” You would find it very much easier to take a light view of sin in your teaching and preaching; but then, you would not be thinking God’s thoughts after Him. Faithful expository speaking will mean that every service, every meeting, every class becomes a potential hour of resurrection.

Another of God’s thoughts — His most precious thought — is the pre-eminence of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, in all things. Turn to your Bible with this (**His**) thought ever in your heart and mind, and the Holy Spirit will show you Christ in all the Scriptures. You will find that **all** that God has for us in this life and the next is to be had only in and through His Mediator-Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Always teach and preach Jesus Christ, and you will be very near to God’s heart; “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” “Hear Him!” Faithful expository

preaching always “preaches man **down** and Christ **up**.”

You will discover in God’s Word that no man can have any dealings with God whatsoever, other than through His Son our only Mediator and sin-bearer. No one is saved apart from Him. All the hope and faith of Old Testament believers center in Him. He is the only “Ark” of refuge from judgment; outside of Him the world is under a deluge of righteous wrath and judgment. Nothing but the blood of Jesus, God’s Son, can stand between a sinner and hell. He is the only “ladder” set up to heaven on earth. His two Advents — one in humiliation, the other in glory — are the two mountain peaks in history as God views it. The whole Bible is Christocentric — Christ centered — and so must all our teaching and preaching be, if it is to be God’s message to sinful men and women.

Yet another of God’s wonderful thoughts has to do with the Person and work of the Holy Spirit. He is the great Executive of the Godhead. The Father plans and decrees; the Holy Spirit sees it through (gets it done) in the world. We meet Him in the old creation, bringing order out of chaos; we meet Him in the new creation, **convincing men** of sin and leading them to Christ. Our whole salvation is planned by the Father, wrought and accomplished by the Son and applied by the Spirit. The Bible reveals them to be one God in three equal Persons. The Son is subordinate to the Father, not in Person, but in His **office** as Mediator. The Holy Spirit is subordinate to the Son, not in Person, but in His **office** as Sanctifier. The Son glorifies the Father and leads men to the Father. The Holy Spirit glorifies the Son and leads men to the Son. The centrality of the Son in all our preaching derives from the fact that there is none other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved.

Whole Counsel of God

So then, always teach and preach Jesus Christ, but avoid specializing in any particular doctrine; such specialization always leads to schism and sectarianism. Never shrink from giving the whole counsel of God. For your exposition help, seek those books and periodicals which clearly set out to think God’s thoughts after Him. You will soon learn to discern them. While learning, seek the advice and guidance of a trusted evangelical minister or spiritual leader. Never fear or decry scholarship. Use it, when you meet it in a truly born-again man or woman. Avoid so-called “modernism” like the plague. It is not modern, but it has well-nigh robbed the church of its Gospel and its power.

Faithful expository teaching and preaching are the means which the Holy Spirit is pleased to bless and use in the salvation of souls. Speak to men’s hearts as well as to their heads. Finally, remember that human persuasion and emotional ap-

peals for "decisions" may lead to eternally serious consequences. For a person to imagine that he is saved just because he has been asked to say or to sign is indeed a terrible thing.

Preach the Word; pray unceasingly, and leave the Lord Himself "to add such as are being saved."

Note: The foregoing article is reprinted here by special permission of the author and of the Editor of *The Life of Faith* (England). The article was originally published in the March 6, 1958, issue of that periodical. — Editor.

The Self-Testimony of Jesus

By the Rev. W. R. McEwen, B.A.

It has been said that "Christianity is Christ." While that statement is open to misunderstanding it should be evident that there is no such thing as Christless Christianity. Some have been so foolish as to advocate such a contradiction in terms. When the facts of Jesus' Virgin birth, miraculous life, atoning death and physical resurrection have been denied, and the attempt to retain the historic Jesus apart from the miraculous element has proved a failure, some have sought to maintain "the essence" of Christianity apart from the question of whether He lived or not. Of course such is not Christianity of the New Testament nor of the historic Christian Church.

No serious student, however, doubts that Jesus existed. And the views men hold of Him will affect their views of Christianity. So to answer the question, "What is Christianity?" we must answer the question, "Who was, or Who is, Jesus Christ?"

To answer that question we naturally turn to the New Testament. Here we have the earliest documents by contemporaneous writers, giving the facts about Christ. While the epistles of Paul are our earliest sources, and throw a lot of light on the Person and work of Jesus Christ, and the other epistles bear similar testimony, the Gospels are specially designed to give a clear picture of the Lord. There we get more facts concerning Him, see Him in action and hear Him speak. And none had a more intimate knowledge of Jesus than the apostle John. He was in the inner circle of the twelve, being specially privileged to be present on several occasions of gracious revelation. But not only does John give us a fuller and more intimate portrait of Jesus, he also records more of His own words. It is this self-testimony which we propose to consider briefly. For, as Prof. James Denney has well said, "To be a Christian means, in one aspect of it, to take Christ at His own estimate."

Christ — a Controversialist

Now, it is true that Jewish law did not regard it as competent for a person to bear witness of himself. Yet there were exceptions to this rule. Paul wrote in his self-defence, to vindicate his name from false aspersions. And Jesus, in controversy with His enemies, was compelled to bear witness of Himself.

There were others who bore witness of him — John the Baptist, the Father, and His miracles. But when the truth of their testimony was disputed and denied, He was compelled, as a faithful and true witness, to witness a good confession. Indeed, He engaged in most heated controversy with the Jewish leaders about the truth of His claims. Today controversy is not popular. In some quarters it is almost considered unchristian to engage in controversy, especially when it concerns the Person and work of our Lord. Such sacred themes, we are told, should not be bandied about in public debate. But this was not the case in the days of His flesh. He, Himself, engaged most strenuously in debate in the temple, and insisted most earnestly on the truth of His claims. Today such persistence would be frowned upon in some quarters. After all, we are told, we may differ in regard to the Person of Christ, yet if we love Him we may agree to differ and be friends all the same. Such a position is absurd. How can one love Christ, if he is not sure who He is? And how can one preserve intellectual integrity and view with indifference vital doctrines which Jesus regarded as so important? If we are to have faith in Christ, which is the way to become a Christian, and if we are to love Him, which is the essence of Christianity, we certainly must concern ourselves with the question, Who was, and Who is, Jesus Christ? As the ex-blind man wisely replied when asked by the Lord, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" "Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him?" To this question we now address ourselves, with the aid of Christ's own testimony, as given by John.

His Deity

A customary title, which Jesus used when speaking of God, was "Father." Sometimes He spoke of "the Father," sometimes of "My Father"; but He never used the expression "our Father" in speaking of His relationship with God; that is, He never coupled Himself with humanity as in the same relationship to God. He also spoke of Himself as "the Son" or "the Son of God." Many today do not appreciate the force and significance of these designations. They speak lightly of the universal Fatherhood of God and of all men being sons of God. So they class Jesus in the same category

with the rest of mankind. But that is not how the Jews understood Christ's statements. They realized that to claim God as His own Father was to make Himself equal with God, and to call Himself the Son of God was to claim to be of the same nature as God, just as a son has the same nature as his father. And that is how Jesus meant them to understand Him. For He also claimed identity with the Father so that if men knew Him they would know the Father (John 8:19). He also stated that He was from above and not of this world (8:23), and declared to Philip, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father" (14:9).

Further, He applied the great Divine name, I AM, to himself. That was the name by which the Lord revealed Himself to Moses in the bush. Yet Jesus quietly claimed it repeatedly. Indeed, He stated that unless men believed that they would die in their sins (John 8:24). So He claimed the Divine prerogative of deciding the eternal destiny of men.

He also claimed pre-existence. "Before Abraham was I am," He declared. This has even more force in the original. It means literally, "Before Abraham was born I am." Notice also it is not "I was." Abraham was born. He came into existence. He was a creature in time. There was a time when He was not. But Jesus is eternal. He existed long before He was born into the world. There never was a time when He was not. He was eternally subsisting with the Father and the Holy Spirit in the unity of the Godhead. While He lived in time when on earth yet He had a life above time. His Divine nature is an eternal now. He has not only pre-existence, but self-existence. So we should fall before Him, and cry, like Thomas, "My Lord and My God."

His Humanity

While Christ claimed to be God He also spoke of Himself as a man. He moved among men as a man and was recognised as such, and He did not repudiate it. People knew He came from Nazareth, and was brought up in a normal home with brothers and sisters who regarded Him as one of the family. And He lived a real human life. He was hungry and tired; He ate and slept. Not only had He a true body, subject to physical affections; He had a reasonable soul with truly human emotions. He was troubled in spirit, He had indignation, He wept, He had joy. While insisting on His Deity, He never minimised his humanity. He acknowledged that on earth He lived in a state of humiliation, to which He descended from heaven and in which the Father was greater than He.

"Only one human characteristic," says Warfield, "was alien to Him. He was without sin: 'the prince of the world,' He declared, 'hath nothing in Me.'" So, though He condemned sin in others, and exposed it as He probed the secrets of the heart, and though He was most humble in His demeanour,

yet He challenged His opponents "which of you convicteth Me of sin?" with confidence that they could not successfully take up that challenge.

His Personality

While Jesus was and is both God, and man, yet He is not two persons or a split-personality — a sort of Dr. Jeckel and Mr. Hyde. He is only one Person. He ever speaks of Himself as "I".

In His personality He is distinct from the Father and the Holy Spirit. It was an early heresy that Jesus was just another mode of manifestation of the same Person Who is also designated as Father and Holy Spirit. This ancient heresy is again being revived. But it is contradicted by the self-testimony of Jesus. He spoke of Himself as being sent by the Father (20:21), and as coming forth from Him (8:42). He addressed the Father in prayer. He also spoke about the Father and He sending another Comforter — a distinct Person to take His place.

When Christ became man He did not become another Person. He ever implied the unity and continuity of His personality. Though on earth in the body, He was the Son of Man in heaven. Though limited as to His manhood, He was almighty as to His Godhead.

His Mission

This is the Person, Who, taking our nature, bore the penalty of our sin when He was lifted up upon the Cross. The Cross was no after-thought in the plan of God and in the mission of Jesus Christ. Christ ever bore witness to the purpose of His coming. He was pointed out by John the Baptist as "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," and He accepted that designation. Now, as Denney has explained, "a lamb by which sin is taken away is nothing but a sacrificial lamb, and the expression covers precisely the same spiritual debt to Christ and dependence upon Him as is covered by propitiation." At the first Passover at the beginning of His ministry He predicted the destruction of the temple of His body. To Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, He explained that "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:14, 15). Thus He referred to His death on the Cross and the purpose of it.

Again, in His discourse in the synagogue of Capernaum, recorded in John 6, in which Jesus spoke of Himself as the Bread of Life, He not only pointed backward to His heavenly origin, but forward to the Cross where He would give His flesh for the life of the world (John 6:51). He also declared Himself to be the Good Shepherd Who gave Himself for the sheep (John 10:11). To Martha He said He was the resurrection and the life Who would raise the believing dead. In

response to the enquiring Greeks He applied to Himself the principle of life through death illustrated, in the growth of a grain of wheat, and went on to speak of the drawing power of the crucified Son of man. In His High-priestly prayer He spoke of His purpose to give eternal life to as many as were given Him of the Father — a life which consisted of knowing the only true God and Jesus Christ Whom He had sent. And on the

Cross, John records, He bowed His head as He cried in triumph, "It is finished."

This, then, is the Saviour Who offers Himself to us in the Gospel. And Christianity is the life of faith in this same Jesus Christ.

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The Man of God

A Sermon Preached at the Graduation Exercises of the Reformed Theological Seminary, Kobe, Japan, March 21, 1958.

By the Rev. Samuel E. Boyle

Scripture Reading: 1 Kings 13; 1 Tim. 6:11-16; 2 Tim. 3:14-17.

Members of the Board of Directors, Faculty members, students and friends: I am happy to have some part in this graduation service with you, and to offer my sincere congratulations to the Seminary Board and Faculty at this time for another year of faithful work in training pastors for the Church of God in Japan. I extend at the same time my personal congratulations to the two members of the graduating class. My prayer is that God's blessing may continue to rest on these two young men, on their families and on the work to which God is calling them.

My subject today is **The Man of God**. I propose to make a comparison of the "Man of God" in the Old Testament theocracy and the New Testament "Man of God" in the ministry of the Christian Church.

The name "Man of God" occurs often in the Old Testament. Moses is frequently called "Moses the man of God." Samuel, David and many prophets, some of whom were called only by this name, are called in the Old Testament **ish Elohim**, "Man of God." I have chosen one of the anonymous representatives of this Old Testament office for our study today, the un-named "Man of God" who came from Judah to bear testimony against the false altar of King Jeroboam at Bethel. This story is recorded in 1 Kings 13. The New Testament does not use the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew **ish Elohim** ("Man of God") often. John the Baptist is described in John 1:6 as "a man sent from God," and Nicodemus said to Jesus, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God" (John 3:2), but the only instances of the direct use of "man of God" occur in Paul's writings to Timothy. 1 Tim. 6:11 says: "But thou, **O man of God**, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life. . . ."

2 Tim. 3:15-17 says: "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 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."

Our first study, then, will be:

I. The Man of God under the Old Testament Theocracy (1 Kings 13).

Under modern influences of man-centered political thinking the idea of a theocracy has come to be almost universally dismissed as impractical and even dangerous. Even Calvinists dismiss as a mistake the temporary religious efforts to establish theocratic forms of civil government in Geneva during the time of Calvin, or under the Puritans in New England. The Mosaic theocracy is generally assumed even in Christian circles to have been a failure and to be no longer a model for modern Christian imitation.

We should remember, though, that the Mosaic ideal of a commonwealth ruled by Jehovah the spiritual King was not the result of expediency, nor of man's religious zeal. The theocratic rule in Israel was directly ordained of God and remains to this day the highest standard of human government under God. In spite of the many imperfections in the administration of this theocracy, the experiment produced lasting good for all future generations. The basic principle of democracy was enforced when both church and state were subject to the Covenant of Jehovah and His moral law. The purity of worship and morality was linked to the Israelite national destiny as a holy nation devoted to the service of Jehovah that in Him all nations might be blessed. Many other social and political benefits are directly related to that Mosaic theocratic period in Israel.

Even so, the Mosaic theocracy failed in history. Why? Several reasons might be considered. The strict nationalistic and racial limits of the theocracy were intolerable to the universal reign of Jehovah. The religious formalism and legalism which marked the Jewish nation became a contradiction to the true spiritual ethics of Jehovah. Then, most serious of all, the rebellion and hypocrisy of the human leaders in church and state constantly led Israel into moral and religious decay. In time, the stubborn and proud failure of kings, priests and people to obey the Lord God to whom they were spiritually bound in holy Covenant bonds led to that tragic national ruin which brought an end to the visible Theocracy of the Old Testament.

As the visible theocracy became more corrupt God raised up prophets, watchmen of the theocracy of Jehovah, to warn and protest and to call to repentance. These men are called "men of God." One such man of God came out of Judah to warn King Jeroboam against his apostasy at Bethel. It is this anonymous man of God who now becomes our study.

Jeroboam, the revolutionary leader against Solomon's son Rehoboam, had successfully drawn away the ten northern tribes and established a new kingdom. Aware of the spiritual ties between his subjects and the divinely appointed worship at Jerusalem, Jeroboam set up two new worship centers, one at Dan in the most northern point of his kingdom, and the second at the border of Judah in the town of Bethel. He made golden calves and set up new altars. It was a direct blow at the spiritual unity of God's people, and it stamped this king forever in Israel's history as "Jeroboam the son of Nebat who made Israel to sin."

At this critical point the man of God from Judah arrived "in the word of Jehovah" to denounce the false altar. "O altar, O altar!" he cried, and predicted that a future king from the house of David, Josiah by name, would someday burn the bones of the priests on that very altar. He also pronounced an instant curse on the altar by predicting that it would split in two, spilling out the ashes. When Jeroboam raised his arm to command his guards to arrest this bold intruder, the arm was paralyzed. The humbled king then had to beg the prophet to heal his arm, which the man of God did. The altar, true to the word of Jehovah, split and spilled out the ashes to the earth.

The story has been read already, so we need not tell it in detail. I choose only four essential points of this narrative to bring us a lesson for modern use.

(1) The Message of this Man of God.

The prophets received directly from Jehovah Himself, objectively and miraculously, the exact words to be uttered to the people of Israel. The man of God is said to have come to Bethel "in" this Word of Jehovah. It clothed him completely.

The Word was master of the man. He was conscious, alert, obedient and trusting. Yet the Word of Jehovah was in full and powerful control of the man of God. Thus the Word of Jehovah was accompanied by miracles. The miracle of prediction proved the Word. The miracle of the broken altar, the paralyzed arm and its cure, and other details in this chapter, are necessary and historical evidences that the prophet truly spoke the Word of Jehovah. Had he not been able to perform these miracles his words would not have been accepted. He would have been a lying prophet.

(2) The "Commandment" or "charge" of the Lord

This was a divinely revealed limitation or command of essential importance to the successful delivery of the Word of Jehovah to Israel. It was a simple command: "For so it was charged me by the word of the Lord, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest" (1 Kings 13:9). We may imagine reasons for this restriction, but the important thing is to notice that this "commandment" was imposed on the bearer of the Word of the Lord by the Lord Himself as an inescapable obligation, and it was said to be a commandment directly related to the Word of Jehovah.

(3) The Struggle of Faith in the Man of God

We may imagine the inward struggle of this lonely prophet who left home, who entered enemy territory and challenged a powerful monarch at the highest point of this false worship. Truly this man was one of splendid faith. And when the king offered him the rewards of honor and gifts the man of God sternly refused. "If thou wilt give me half thine house, I will not go with thee. . . For so it was charged me by the word of the Lord. . . ." (verses 8, 9).

How sad, then, to find a few verses later that another more subtle temptation finally did overcome the man of God and lead him to the fatal act of disobedience which cost him his life. So in the struggle of faith it often happens that defeat comes hard on the heels of great triumphs. The man of God relaxed. He sat under a wayside oak tree.

At this point another strange man appears, an old prophet who lived in Bethel. He was within walking distance of Jeroboam's altar but had never opened his mouth in protest. He was a dumb dog, which could not bark. This man, hearing from his sons of the day's events, pursued the man of God, found him under the tree, and brought him home to dinner.

"I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spoke unto me by the word of the Lord, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water" (verse 18). "BUT HE LIED."

The man of God had resisted the temptation of

the king. He fell victim to a false prophet who lied. Why was this? The attack of Satan here was successful because it attacked the prophet's faith in the absolute infallibility and unchanging authority of the Word of Jehovah in which he had come to Bethel. As long as the man of God stayed inside that holy Word he was invincible. When he began to entertain alternative theories of truth, to reconsider his original commission in the light of new revelations from human lips, he failed. So Satan always wins, if men weaken on their faith in God's Word. The attack of Satan in the garden of Eden was at this point, "Yea, hath God said?" The effort to defeat our Lord in the temptation in the wilderness was along the same line of attack. So you and I may be warned that Satan will ever try to unsettle us at this point.

(4) God's Vindication of His Word

As the two prophets sat at dinner suddenly Jehovah's Word did come to the old prophet who had lied to the man of God from Judah. Doom was pronounced. The man of God was met by a lion as he rode home, killed instantly. Here God manifested His holiness by keeping the lion from eating the dead body, or slaying the ass. Then the old man of Bethel made lamentations and asked that his body be buried with the bones of this man of God.

Then, after more than 300 years, the reforming king Josiah came across this grave and was told that it was the burial place of a man of God who had prophesied the work which Josiah was now doing. King Josiah gave orders: "Let no man touch this grave." The incident closes with these words: "So they let his bones alone" (2 Kings 23:18).

II. The Man of God in the New Testament Church and Kingdom

In the New Testament we learn that the visible theocratic rule of ancient Israel, the ordinances of worship and all the types of that dispensation come to perfect fulfillment in Jesus Christ. We are released from the narrow and materialistic limits of the days of Jeroboam when the man of God came so bravely to testify against the altar. Still, we recognize that there is a spiritual unity, an organic connection between that man of God and the New Testament ministry. We, too, are prophets of the spiritual, universal theocracy of God through Christ His mediatorial King.

Our Lord said after His resurrection: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen" (Matt. 28:18-20).

The man of God in Bethel rightly saw this sinful act of Jeroboam as a blow at the visible

theocracy. He sought to stop this apostasy. He longed to call Israel back to the true Jehovah-worship at Jerusalem, and to restore the visible unity of the Kingdom as God had ordained it under Moses. He failed.

In what respects is the New Testament minister similar to this man of God in the Old Testament? In what respects are we ministers of a much more glorious Kingdom than his was? Let us examine Paul's Pastoral Epistles to see what the work of the man of God is in the New Testament age and Church.

Reformed students of the Bible usually speak of the apostolic age as the Ministry of Witness. The apostles were special, temporary witnesses of the incarnation, atonement and exaltation of Jesus Christ. With the apostles present there was also a temporary ministry of Spirit-filled gifts — speaking in tongues, healing, prophetic utterances, etc. It is our belief that after the death of the apostles and those whom they directly endowed with apostolic powers, the ministry of the Church came under the permanent officers called **elders** and **deacons**. The elders are called both bishops and elders. We count these two names as synonyms for one office. There are teaching elders and ruling elders, equal in representative power over the Church. Timothy, then, is one of the earliest known examples of the bishop or teaching elder in the New Testament Church. What was his work? Following the story in 1 Kings 13 let us see the essential points in the message, life and witness of the man of God.

(1) The Message of the Man of God in the New Testament Church

The Old Testament man of God received an objective revelation directly from Jehovah. We do not receive these direct revelations. Our inner thoughts, our inner light of soul, our experiences and wisdom, do not now bring objective and infallible revelations to us from God. Instead, we have the Holy Scriptures, the objective revelation of God written in the Hebrew and Greek autographs and from these transmitted, translated and put into our hands in our own language.

The New Testament man of God is therefore not unique as a new bearer of information about God. We are only humble workmen, trusting in the Spirit's illumination and our own hard work in exegesis and prayer and meditation to understand, preach and obey the Word of God put in our hands by the Lord Himself.

The Reformed Churches are united in their insistence that the written Word of God, the Scripture of the Old and New Testaments, is the central and sufficient message of the Church. This Bible is our sole authority, our only message to lost sinners, our one guide and consolation, our holy commandment to be kept pure until we see Jesus face to face.

Paul commanded Timothy, "Preach the word." That is our duty. Dr. Herman Bavinck wrote in his book entitled **Our Reasonable Faith**:

"The church has not received Scripture from God in order simply to rest on it, and still less in order to bury this treasure in earth. On the contrary, the church is called to preserve this Word of God, to explain it, to preach it, apply it, translate it, spread it abroad, recommend it, and defend it — in a word, to **cause the thoughts of God, laid down in the Scriptures, to triumph everywhere and at all times over the thoughts of man.**"

(2) The "Charge" and "Commandment" of God to the Man of God

Several times Paul warns Timothy, saying, "But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. . . ." "I give thee charge. . . . that thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. . . ." The apostle uses two words with a military sound: "I charge thee," "keep the commandment." This same thought appears in 2 Tim. 4. It is as if Paul were the commanding officer warning his soldier Timothy to keep the orders faithfully. In the Pastoral Epistles the little Greek word *pistis* (faith) occurs 17 times. This commandment of Paul to the young man of God was to obey the Word of God in his own life, to flee from all apostasy, worldliness, hypocrisy and sin which had already crept into the churches. He was to keep himself pure so that the consistent life witness of the messenger would never fail and give occasion to men to blaspheme the Gospel.

It may seem to you today a remote possibility that you could ever fail to keep this commandment and charge of God to ministers. But from many years of experience in the ministry let me warn you that nothing is more easy and possible than for a minister to fail in ethics or doctrine and in one instant lose his crown. The man of God in the New Testament is as vulnerable to Satan's devices as was the man of God in the Old Testament. The minister is under constant attack, spiritually and sometimes physically, and the danger is real.

(3) The Good Fight of Faith to Lay Hold on Eternal Life

If the task of the man of God is to preach the Word, and if it is our task to preach this Word in church and in society so as to "**cause the thoughts of God, laid down in Scripture, to triumph everywhere and at all times over the thoughts of man,**" there will be intense resistance. We must lift up the Truth. We must challenge false altars in church and state. We must bear the burning rebuke of God against idols and false philosophies in the world as well as in our own tiny congregations. Then we shall be in a terrible

fight, but it is a beautiful fight with the Lord as our Commander-in-Chief.

Paul links this good fight of faith with our personal salvation closely. "Lay hold on eternal life," Paul says, "whereunto also thou wast called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses. . . ." (1. Tim. 6:12).

The minister easily becomes a victim of his profession in imagining that he is apart from the common Christians, that he is an expert. He rebukes others, exhorts others, prays for others, and scolds others, but forgets that he himself is a sinner in the same plight as his people. Thus the public ministry becomes unreal for we imagine that we are God's experts, God's special favorites, little popes over the Church. Paul warns us by his own expressed fear in 1 Cor. 9:27: "I keep my body under, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

The weapons in our good fight are the Word of God and the other means of grace. Faithful use of God's appointed weapons will bring victory after victory as our lives and words agree in a good confession of Christ before men.

(4) The Good Confession of the Man of God

The faithful presentation of the Word of God, our effort to make **the thoughts of God, laid down in the Scripture, to triumph everywhere and at all times over the thoughts of men** will provoke conflict, and the man of God will again and again be forced to make a public confession before men of the church and of the world. Paul often speaks of this "confession" (*homologia*, from the Greek verb *homologeō*, meaning "to say the same thing," "to agree," "to assent"). It is the act of saying boldly and voluntarily that we agree with Jesus. Paul writes to Timothy of his first public confession of faith, probably at his baptism, and then points to the perfect confession of all times: "Christ Jesus who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession."

The man of God wins the good fight of faith by **confessing** constantly — in pastoral work, in personal evangelism, in church courts, in society no matter what the historical conditions about him may be — to **the whole Word of God**. The man of God witnesses a good confession when he dares to speak faithfully and in love that part of the Word of God which is most needed at each moment, and in each place. Our normal sphere is church work. We cannot be forever running outside this divine place of service. However, the message of the man of God is Jesus Christ the King! Our message is a universally authoritative Gospel for all mankind. We cannot under any threat of force reduce the Bible message to fit certain demands of the State or of any other hostile force.

Under Communist governments today the Christian Church is tempted to alter radically the Christian message. The chief emphasis of the New Testament on supernatural salvation, on sin and redemption, is carefully subdued, preached only inside the Church. Outside, and in the churches also, the false glory of social and economic goals linked to communistic ideology is given the great emphasis. Patriotism, a good thing in itself, has become a false altar, a golden calf, and Christian ministers are falling down and worshipping in pathetic fear of the State.

In such a crisis the Christian minister faces a dangerous temptation. Shall we alter our message? Shall we adapt the Word of God to new demands from the State? Shall we try to twist the Sermon on the Mount or the Lord's Prayer into a flattering sermon, in praise of Communist social reforms? Many Christians are doing this. I have noticed lately a tendency of Fundamentalist sects in Communist lands to make a tacit compromise with the State by which they render to Caesar complete and unquestioning supremacy over society, the Church and the home, but quietly honor God only within the narrow limits of certain permitted worship services. A favorite text in Communist lands, then, is the word of Christ; "Ye are the salt of the earth." They interpret this as a parable of the Church's present duty to hide, to withdraw to limited worship services, to Christian discipleship only in the narrow circle left open to them by a totalitarian, atheistic state. This is even said to be more "Christian" than our modern idea of "rights" of liberty and the like.

But Jesus also said, "Ye are the light of the world." He said that a city set on a hill cannot be hidden. This requires the churches in Communist lands to preach boldly those Bible truths which indirectly rebuke the Communist regime for its ideological rebellion against the Creator. The Christian Church must dare to denounce the false altar of Communism as a fundamental violation of the universal and everlasting Theocracy of Christ. Even if it costs our lives, that is the Bible commandment. Paul did not meddle in affairs of state. He was not a politician. Yet he died under state persecution because his bold confession was contrary to the prevailing wishes of the heathen state. In the latter part of 2 Timothy Paul wrote: "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me. . . AND I WAS DELIVERED OUT OF THE MOUTH OF THE LION" (4:16, 17). He fared better than the man of God at Bethel!

Conclusion

We have the Word of God to preach. We have a solemn command to be faithful to that Word. We are in a good fight of faith. We must pray to God to enable us to make a good confession. We shall someday receive our reward and eternal joy at the coming of Jesus Christ. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life" (Rev. 2:10). May God keep us faithful until Jesus comes! Amen.

Religious Terms Defined

DEITY OF CHRIST. The truth that the historical person Jesus Christ, by reason of His divine nature, was and is the only true God, Creator of the universe, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily (1 John 5:20. John 1:1-3. Col. 2:9).

DEPRAVITY, TOTAL. The truth that the unsaved sinner is corrupted in every part of his personality, including both body and soul, so that apart from the special work of the Holy Spirit he cannot choose to love God, nor do anything spiritually good in God's sight.

DEVIL, THE. The chief of the fallen angels, who, by the providential permission of God, heads the kingdom of evil in opposition to the kingdom of God until the time appointed by God for him to be cast into hell (Rev. 20:10).

DISPENSATION. A particular manner of God's dealing with His creatures, or the period of

time that coincides with the same. In the Bible, three dispensations are distinguished: (1) The Covenant of Works, from the creation of mankind to Adam's fall. (2) The Old Dispensation of the Covenant of Grace, from Adam's fall to the crucifixion of Christ. (3) The New Dispensation of the Covenant of Grace, from the crucifixion of Christ to His second coming. These three are dispensations of HISTORY. Beyond them is "the age to come," or ETERNITY.

DOCTRINE. A truth of the Bible set forth in logical form in its relation to other truths of the Bible. True doctrines consist of (1) facts, plus (2) the divinely revealed meaning of the facts.

DONATISTS. A separatist sect of North African Christians in the fourth and fifth centuries after Christ, which held that the validity of a minister's official acts depends upon his personal piety, and that those who had denied Christ under persecution could never be restored to good

standing in the Church. These errors were strongly and effectively opposed by the North African bishop Augustine of Hippo.

DORT, SYNOD OF. A synod summoned by the authority of the government, at Dort in the Netherlands, 1618-1619, for the purpose of settling the Arminian controversy. It was attended by delegates from Holland, England, Scotland, Switzerland and Germany. The Synod condemned the five leading propositions of the Arminians as false, and affirmed the contrary propositions of Calvinism as Biblical truths. The Westminster Assembly of Divines, 25 years later, built upon this foundation.

EASTER. Originally the festival of the Saxon goddess of springtime, Eostre. The name was taken over by the Church for a day to commemorate Christ's resurrection. Easter observance is not even mentioned in the Bible, and must be regarded as a corruption of the appointed worship of God. The word "Easter" occurs once in the King James Version (Acts 12:4), but it is incorrect, and should be translated "passover" (see American Revised and Revised Standard versions).

ELDER. An officer of a Christian congregation ordained to participate in the government of the Church. All elders share in governing the Church, but some, called "ministers" or "pastors"

also preach the Gospel (1 Tim. 5:17). In the New Testament the word "bishop" is used interchangeably with "elder"; every elder is a bishop, and every bishop is an elder.

EPISCOPACY. An unscriptural form of Church government in which bishops are regarded as a distinct office higher than pastors or elders, each bishop having jurisdiction over a number of congregations and their officers. The New Testament knows nothing of bishops as officers distinct from, and superior to, ministers and elders.

ERASTIANISM. The doctrine (named after Erastus, a Swiss physician of the 16th century) which teaches that the State should be supreme over the Church and should support, control and legislate for the Church.

ERASTIAN TOLERATION. An act or policy of a government which claims a totalitarian supremacy over the Church, by which a limited freedom of worship or other activities is allowed to religious bodies which are willing to recognize the State's supremacy in principle and to comply with the State's rules and regulations concerning religious matters. Erastian Toleration is a base counterfeit of religious liberty, for it proceeds from the false notion that the State is supreme in matters of religion.

Some Noteworthy Quotations

THEY THAT SIDE with the saints shall thrive with the saints.

— John Trapp

THE SUM IS: remember always the presence of God; rejoice always in the will of God; and direct all to the glory of God.

— Archbishop Leighton

WHEN WE GO TO GOD by prayer, the devil knows we go to fetch strength against him, and therefore he opposes us all he can.

— Richard Sibbes

IF GOD'S TODAY be soon for thy repentance, thy tomorrow may be too late for His acceptance.

— William Secker

WHEN GOD IS not believed, we must needs give credit to the devil.

— Stephen Charnock

THEY LOSE NOTHING who gain Christ.

— Samuel Rutherford

CHRIST'S PERFORMANCES outstrip His promises.

— Nehemiah Rogers

UNITY IN ERROR is unity in ruin.

— Charles H. Spurgeon

FOR GOD WE TAKE to record in our consciences that, from our hearts, we abhor all sects of heresy and all teachers of erroneous doctrine; and that with all humility we embrace the purity of Christ's Evangel, which is the only food for our souls; and therefore so precious unto us that we are determined to suffer the extremity of worldly danger, rather than that we will suffer ourselves to be defrauded of the same. For hereof we are certainly persuaded that whoever denies Christ Jesus, or is ashamed of Him, in presence of men, shall be denied before the Father and before His holy angels. And therefore, by the assistance of the mighty Spirit of the same Lord Jesus, we firmly purpose to abide to the end in the confession of this our faith.

— The Scottish Parliament, 1560

THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST, thus seen through the Word and by the illumination of the Spirit, impresses every mind that gazes on it with a sense of full-orbed completeness and perfection. But it is of a kind so new and unprecedented, that

minds devoid of the Spirit are insensible to the glory of it.

— George Smeaton

AN EXAMINATION of the Acts of the Apostles discovers to us the Spirit's present operation everywhere along with the preaching of the Gospel.

— George Smeaton

THE FIRST DISCIPLES were called to wait in the attitude of humble suppliants for the power with which they were to be endued by the Holy Spirit coming upon them (Acts 1:8); and we have

there an example of what is ever to be reproduced. Before this they evinced ignorance and prejudice, timidity and shrinking from the cross, ambition and pride. After the descent of the Spirit there was no more debate who should be the greatest; they forgot self, and rose to an elevation previously unknown. They imbibed new ideas of the spirituality of Christ's kingdom. The Spirit brought all things back to their remembrance. The instruments that the Spirit formed felt that they are rather passive than active in the whole work — tools in another's hand.

— George Smeaton

Studies on the Plan of Salvation

LESSON 21

Can Those who Have Never Heard the Gospel be Saved?

Q. 60. Can they who have never heard the gospel, and so know not Jesus Christ, nor believe in him, be saved by their living according to the light of nature?

A. They who having never heard the gospel, know not Jesus Christ, and believe not in him, cannot be saved, be they ever so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, or the laws of that religion which they profess; neither is there salvation in any other, but in Christ alone, who is the Saviour only of his body the Church.

Scripture References:

Rom. 10:14. The Gospel message is necessary for salvation.

2 Thess. 1:8, 9. Eph. 2:12. John 1:10-12. Those who do not know Jesus Christ are under divine condemnation because of their sins.

John 8:24. Mark 16:16. Faith in Jesus Christ is necessary for salvation.

1 Cor. 1:20-24. There is no real knowledge of God, or salvation, apart from the preaching of the cross of Christ.

John 4:22. Rom. 9:31, 32. Phil. 3:4-9. Careful living according to the light of nature, or any religious system which a person may profess, is not sufficient for salvation.

Acts 4:12. There is no salvation except in Christ.

Eph. 5:23. Christ is the Saviour only of His body, the Church.

Questions:

1. Why will the heathen, who have never heard the Gospel, be condemned at the Judgment Day?

Not because of failure to believe in Christ, but simply because of their sins. Read Rom. 2:12.

2. Why cannot the heathen be saved by being diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature?

Because the entire human race is in a state of sin, and everyone is born with a sinful heart which inclines him to do evil. Therefore all people have fallen short, even of what they knew to be right by the light of nature. Since the wages of sin is death, those who have sinned are under the sentence of death.

3. Why cannot the heathen be saved by being diligent to frame their lives according to the laws of that religion which they profess?

Because the heathen religions are predominantly false. Although they all contain some elements of truth, of course, nevertheless as systems they are false. None of them contains the truth which sinners need — the truth about the way of salvation through a divine-human Mediator. Therefore no matter how much zeal the heathen may have for the duties of their own religion, this cannot save them. If Paul's extreme zeal as a Pharisee could not save him, how much less could the zeal or earnestness of the heathen bring about their salvation.

4. If the heathen are sincere in their heathen belief, will they not be saved because of their sincerity?

Modern sentiment inclines people to think so, no doubt, but the verdict of Scripture is to the contrary. Read Acts 4:12. **Sincerity is of no value apart from truth.** The more sincere a person is in following a false religion, the more surely he is on the way to ruin. Communism is a world menace today precisely because of the sincerity of the Communists. If they did not really believe in

Communism, they would not make such great efforts and sacrifices to promote this false system. Sincerely believing something does not make it true, nor can it absolve the sincere person from guilt.

5. Is it not unfair for God to condemn those who have never heard the Gospel?

If God owed salvation, or "a chance of salvation," to everybody (or anybody), then it would be unjust for Him to condemn those who have never heard the Gospel. But as a matter of fact God does not owe "a chance of salvation" to anyone. He is under no obligation to provide salvation, or an offer of salvation, to anyone at all. Therefore there is no injustice involved in His saving some and passing by others.

6. But if God condemns those who have never heard the Gospel, does not this amount to partiality in God's dealings with the human race?

It certainly does amount to partiality; that is, God gives to some what He, in His divine sovereignty, withholds from others. The same is true with respect to God's bestowal of health, intelligence, material prosperity and all the ordinary blessings of life. In His providence God gives to some what He withholds from others. Certainly this is partiality. God does not treat all people alike. He treats some better than others. The Bible so teaches.

But this is not injustice, because God owes nobody any blessings at all. Nor is it respect of persons, because whatever God's reasons for His actions may be, they are not based on the character or righteousness of the persons who receive salvation. Rather, it is a matter of pure, undeserved grace that the elect are saved from sin unto eternal life.

7. What hope is there for the salvation of the heathen?

The Gospel of Christ, published throughout

the world by missionaries, is the message of salvation full and free to everyone that believeth.

8. Apart from faith in the Gospel message, what hope may we have for the salvation of a part of the heathen world?

Although it cannot be actually proved from the Bible, many orthodox Bible students have held as a matter of opinion the hope that all infants dying in infancy are saved. In this connection the student is referred to the Confession of Faith, Chapter X, Section 3, first sentence. It should be carefully noted that the Confession of Faith makes no statement as to whether or not there are any non-elect infants. It speaks only of "elect infants dying in infancy." The implied contrast is not to "non-elect infants dying in infancy," but to "elect infants NOT dying in infancy." That is, a contrast is implied between **elect infants who die in infancy** and **elect infants who live to grow up to years of discretion**.

9. What further hope may we have for the salvation of some of the heathen?

See the Confession of Faith, Chapter X, Section 3, second sentence, which refers to "other elect persons, who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the word." This refers to the insane and to persons who are mentally deficient. It is certainly possible that some or all of such will be among the saved, though they are psychologically incapable of believing the Gospel.

10. What should we think of the doctrine of Universalism, or the belief that all human beings will finally be saved?

(a) It is clearly contradicted by many passages of Scripture. (b) It is founded on the false idea that God is nothing but love. (c) It completely cuts the nerve of both foreign missions and evangelism. If everybody is going to be saved anyway, then why preach the Gospel, either at home or on the foreign field?

LESSON 22

Nominal Church Membership does not Guarantee Salvation

Q. 61. Are all saved who hear the gospel, and live in the Church?

A. All that hear the gospel, and live in the visible Church, are not saved; but they only who are true members of the Church Invisible.

Scripture References:

John 12:38-40. Rom. 9:6. Matt. 7:21. Rom. 11:7. There is a distinction between the external body of the people of God, who profess the true religion, and the body of those who truly know God and are really saved.

Questions:

1. Why is hearing the Gospel, and member-

ship in the visible Church not sufficient to ensure our salvation?

We are saved by means of a personal faith in Jesus Christ as our Saviour; but it is possible for a person to hear the Gospel, and join a Church, without having a personal faith in Christ as his Saviour.

2. What two classes of people are found in the membership of the visible Church?

(a) Those who are truly saved because they have a real faith in Christ. (b) Those who are not truly saved, because they have only a formal profession of Christianity, without the spiritual power and reality of it.

3. Who can determine with certainty which members of the visible Church are really saved and which are merely formal professors of Christianity?

Only God can know this with certainty in every case. However it is possible for a person to attain absolute assurance concerning **his own** salvation. But we can never speak **with absolute certainty** about the salvation or non-salvation of other people who make a profession of faith in Christ.

4. What is the ideal condition of the visible Church?

The ideal condition is a membership which is entirely composed of truly saved persons. While this is certainly the ideal, it can never be really attained in this world. Just as there was a Judas among the twelve disciples, so there will always be some unsaved persons in the membership of the visible Church in this world. Ministers and elders are not to blame for this unless it is the result of their neglect of their duties. It is their duty to exclude from the visible Church such as are ignorant or scandalous, that is, such as do not make a proper profession of faith, or whose lives make it impossible to accept their profession at face value. But apart from the obviously ignorant and scandalous, there are many professing Christians who may be members of the visible Church without being really saved. This is an unavoidable condition, which must be recognized, even though it is to be deplored. The attempt, which has sometimes been made, to remove from the visible

Church all members judged to be "unconverted," has always led to even greater evils than it was intended to remedy.

5. Must an applicant for membership in the visible Church prove to the officers of the Church that he is born again?

Certainly not. Church officers are to take an applicant's profession at face value in the absence of evidence that the profession is not credible. It is no duty of ministers and elders to try to examine into people's hearts to see if they are born again or not.

Membership in the visible Church is based on a **credible profession of faith and obedience**, not on **demonstration of regeneration**. The acceptance of an applicant is based on presumption, not on proof. He does not have to prove that he is converted. It is **presumed** that he knows what he is talking about and is telling the truth when he makes a profession of faith, unless there is evidence which makes such a presumption impossible. See the **Reformed Presbyterian Testimony**, Chapter XXI, Section 2; Chapter XXII, Section 1 and 2 and Error 3.

6. What should be the personal aim of every member of the visible Church?

Every member of the visible Church should make it his aim to attain full assurance that he is not only a member of the visible Church, but also truly saved by personal faith in Jesus Christ as his Saviour.

LESSON 23

The Church as a Visible Body

Q. 62. What is the visible Church?

A. 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.

Scripture References:

1 Cor. 1:2; 12:13. Rom. 15:9-12. Rev. 7:9. Psalms 2:8; 22:27-31; 45:17. Matt. 28:18-20; Isa. 59:21. The visible Church consists of those, of all times and places, who profess the true religion.

1 Cor. 7:14. Acts 2:39. Rom. 11:16. Gen. 17:7. The children of those who profess the true religion are members of the visible Church along with their parents, because they are included with their parents in the covenant promises of God.

Questions:

1. Why is the visible Church called "visible"?

Because it is possible to see who belongs to it. We cannot see how many people in a community are born again, or truly saved; but it is possible

to see how many are members of the Church. It is possible, for example, to see and know that a particular congregation has 100 members, or 150 members. But it is not possible to see how many of these people are truly Christians in their hearts; that is known only to God.

2. How many visible Churches are there in the world?

There is only one, which, however, includes many branches, or denominations, and a very large number of particular congregations. We should note that the Catechism does not say that "The visible Church is an organization. . .", but rather says "The visible Church is a society. . .". It is one society, though it includes many organizations.

3. What denomination is the true visible Church?

No one denomination has the right to claim to be the true visible Church. Every denomination which is loyal to the truth of the Gospel according to the word of God is a **branch** of the visible Church,

When any one denomination claims to be THE true visible Church, this necessarily implies that others are false. Such a claim is presumptuous and sinful. We should realize that the true visible Church is greater than any one denomination. While we believe that our own denomination holds a broader and more consistent testimony for the truth than others (which is our proper reason for being members of it), we should freely recognize that the visible Church includes many branches which hold the Gospel with a greater or less degree of consistency.

4. What is the scope of the visible Church with respect to time?

It includes believers of all ages of the world's history, from the time of Adam and Eve to the end of the world. All people of every age who professed faith in the true religion are included in the visible Church.

5. What is the scope of the visible Church with respect to place?

It includes people in all places of the world, wherever the light of the Gospel has penetrated the world's darkness and some people have professed the true religion.

6. What makes a person a member of the visible Church?

A public profession of faith in the true religion, that is, a public profession of faith in Jesus Christ and obedience to Him.

7. What is the badge of entrance into the visible Church?

The sacrament of Baptism.

8. What is the highest privilege of membership in a particular congregation of the visible Church?

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

9. Are there unconverted people or hypocrites in the membership of the visible Church?

Yes. Nowhere does Scripture promise that there can be such a thing, in this world, as a perfectly pure visible Church, in whose membership there can never be any unconverted persons. Even the twelve disciples had a Judas among them. Similarly it appears from the Book of Acts and the New Testament Epistles that there were hypocrites or unconverted persons in the early churches established by the apostles. Some of them were finally suspended or excommunicated by the church discipline.

10. Can we have a perfectly pure and holy visible Church by putting out those members who are not born again?

This has been tried at various times by certain sects, and always with disastrous results. The truth is that only God knows certainly who the regenerate are. A person may attain full assurance about his own salvation, but not about other people's. We may be able in some cases to say that probably a certain person is born again, or not born again, but we can never be absolutely sure. Since only God can really know who the hypocrites are, it is obviously impossible to purify the Church by casting them out. **The visible Church is not a society of those who can prove that they are born again; it is a society of those who profess the true religion.**

11. In addition to those who profess the true religion, what other class of persons is included in the membership of the visible Church?

The infant or minor children of those who profess the true religion.

12. What denominations deny that children of believers are members of the visible Church?

The Baptists and others who hold the same doctrines. These hold that the children of Christian people are not members of the visible Church until they reach the age of discretion, make a public profession of their faith and are baptized.

13. What is the badge or sign that the children of Christian people are members of the visible Church?

Infant baptism.

14. When children of Christian parents, who have been baptized in their infancy, reach years of discretion, what is their duty with respect to membership in the Church?

It is their duty to make a public profession of faith and seek admission to the Lord's Table.

15. Why is it incorrect to speak of such young people as "joining the Church"?

Because they are already members by birth, as recognized by their baptism.

16. How can we explain the fact that people who profess to believe in infant baptism and who profess to believe that the infant children of Christians are members of the visible Church, still commonly speak about the children of Christian parents "joining the Church" when they are admitted to the Lord's Supper for the first time?

This improper use of the expression "joining the Church" can probably not be wholly attributed to any one cause. Rather, it is probable that at least three distinct factors are involved, namely:

(1) The strong power of custom and habit, which in many people is more influential than intelligent conviction of truth.

(2) A very inadequate grasp of the doctrine

of the Covenant of Grace and its implications concerning the sacraments and the Church. Some members of churches holding the covenant theology have never in their lives heard a sermon on the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace. They could not discuss this doctrine intelligently, because of sheer lack of knowledge of what it is and what it means. It is not at all surprising that such people do not habitually speak the language of a covenant-conscious people.

(3) The very strong influence of Baptist teachings in the present-day Protestant world. The Baptist position has the advantage of a certain ele-

mentary simplicity which makes it easy to accept the inculcate, but which is not necessarily the hallmark of truth. Present-day Fundamentalism is largely Baptist in its view of the Church and the sacraments, as it is Arminian in its view of the way of salvation. With all due respect for our Baptist brethren and the good work they have done, we believe that a more thorough study of the Scriptures leads to the Covenant theology which regards the infant children of believers as members of the visible Church from their birth, by reason of the covenant relation between God and their parents.

LESSON 24

The Privileges of the Visible Church

Q. 63. What are the special privileges of the visible Church?

A. The visible Church hath the privilege of being under God's special care and government; of being protected and preserved in all ages, notwithstanding the opposition of all enemies; and of enjoying the communion of saints, the ordinary means of salvation, and offers of grace by Christ to all members of it in the ministry of the gospel, testifying, that whosoever believes in him shall be saved, and excluding none that will come to him.

Scripture References:

Isa. 4:5, 6. Tim. 4:10. The visible Church is under God's special care and government.

Psalms 115:1, 2. Isa. 31:4, 5. Zech. 12:2-9. The visible Church is protected and preserved by God in all ages, in spite of the opposition of enemies.

Acts 2:39, 42. The visible Church enjoys the communion of saints, and ordinary means of salvation.

Psalms 147:9, 20. Rom. 9:4. Eph. 4:11, 12. Mark 16:15, 16. The visible Church enjoys the offers of the Gospel.

John 6:37. The ministry of the Gospel, in the visible Church, excludes none that will come to Christ.

Questions:

1. What is meant by saying that the visible Church is under God's special care and government?

By this we mean that in addition to God's ordinary providence which controls all things that come to pass, God provides for the safety and welfare of His Church in a special way, making various circumstances and acts of men work together for the benefit of His Church.

2. What promise has our Saviour given concerning the protection and permanence of His Church?

Matt. 16:18, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The word here translated "hell" is Hades, the realm of death. The expression "the gates of Hades" is a figure of speech for the greatest possible power that could attack the Church. The promise implies that there shall be a true visible Church of Christ in the world until His second coming.

3. How has this promise of protection and preservation been fulfilled in past ages?

We can think of many examples. First, the early Church was preserved from the wrath and malice of the Jews, who would have extinguished the light of the Gospel if it had been in their power to do so. God used the power of the Roman Empire to protect the infant Church against Jewish persecution. The destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70 A.D. marked the end of the power of the Jews anywhere in the world to persecute Christianity.

This was followed by the Roman persecution, which lasted some 250 years, until the Emperor Constantine issued his Edict of Toleration in the year 313 A.D. During these 250 years of persecution, God protected and preserved His Church chiefly in three ways:

(1) The blood of the martyrs became the seed of the Church: the more Christians were killed, the greater the number of Christians became.

(2) There were intervals of peace and quiet when the Church was free from persecution and could carry on its work without danger. Except for these breathing spells, the Church could hardly have survived.

(3) In most cases there were places free from persecution to which Christians could flee for refuge. This gave them some relief and prevented the complete extinction of Christianity.

It would be a long story to tell of God's special care of His Church during the Middle Ages, the period of the Reformation, and modern times.

In every age God's special providence has been at work for the benefit of the Church.

4. How has this promise of special protection and defense been fulfilled in our own time?

By the destruction of the totalitarian regimes of Germany, Italy and Japan, which constituted a threat to Christianity as great, if not even greater, than that of the ancient Roman Empire. Since World War II the power of Communism has become a powerful threat to the Christian Church. Only the almighty power of God can protect and preserve His Church in the face of this terrible menace.

5. What is meant by saying that the visible Church enjoys the communion of saints?

This means that the members of the visible Church receive encouragement and spiritual benefit from the fellowship that they have with one another. It is extremely difficult to live a Christian life in isolation from other Christian people. But with the friendship, encouragement and support of other Christians, it becomes much easier.

6. What are "the ordinary means of salvation" which the visible Church enjoys?

The preaching and teaching of the Word of God, the administration of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, church discipline, public worship, and pastoral care and oversight of the members.

7. What is the chief responsibility of the visible Church?

The offer of grace by Christ in the ministry of the Gospel, which offer is made continually to all members of the visible Church, including chil-

dren who are not yet communicant members, and also made to all adherents and other persons who attend services or otherwise come under the influence of the visible Church.

8. How broad is the Gospel invitation which is entrusted to the visible Church?

It is universal; it includes all persons who can be reached with the message; it announces that whosoever believes in Christ shall be saved; it excludes none that desire to come to Christ.

9. Are home and foreign missions properly the work of the visible Church, or should they be carried on by voluntary associations outside the Church?

Certainly home and foreign missions are properly the work of the visible Church. In our day a great deal of foreign missionary work is carried on by non-church organizations. There are many un denominational and "faith" missions. We believe that this is a wrong tendency and that private voluntary organizations should not take up the work which Christ has committed to the Church. However under exceptional circumstances, or when the Church neglects or refuses to carry on missionary work, voluntary associations may rightly undertake the task.

10. What is the importance of the visible Church?

Beyond question it is of very great importance. There are three divine institutions in this world: the Church, the State and the Family. Each of these is supremely important in its own sphere. We should support the visible Church faithfully because it is a divine institution, not merely a human organization.

LESSON 25

The Nature of the Invisible Church

Q. 64. What is the invisible Church?

A. The invisible Church is the whole number of the elect that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one under Christ the head.

Scripture References:

Eph. 1:10, 22, 23. John 10:52; 11:52. The invisible Church consists of all the elect of God, including all truly saved persons of past, present and future.

Acts 18:9, 10. Elect persons who have not yet come to Christ are part of the invisible Church.

John 17:20. Christ, in His High Priestly prayer, made intercession for future believers in Himself, thus recognizing them as part of the invisible Church.

Questions:

1. Why is the invisible Church called "invisible"?

Because we cannot see exactly who, or how many persons, are members of it. Only God knows the number, and exactly who they are.

2. When the invisible Church is completed, at the end of the world, will the number of its members be great or small?

Read Revelation 7:9, 10.

3. Where are the members of the invisible Church at the present time?

Those who have passed away from this earth are in heaven with Christ. The ones who are still living in the body are in this world.

4. In addition to those in heaven and those now

living in this world, what group of persons must be included in the invisible Church?

Those now living in this world who are not yet Christians, but will believe in Christ before their death; and also those not yet born, who in their own time will believe in Christ and receive salvation.

5. What name is sometimes given to that portion of the invisible Church that is now with Christ in heaven?

The Church Triumphant.

6. What name is sometimes given to that portion of the invisible Church which is now on this earth?

The Church Militant, so called because it is engaged in a struggle against the world, the flesh and the devil.

7. Are the old Testament saints who died in faith, from Abel to the time of Christ, members of the invisible Church?

Yes. Christ has only one spiritual body, and the redeemed of all ages, both Jews and Gentiles, are members of it.

8. Is it possible for a person to be a member of the invisible Church while not a member of a particular branch of the visible Church?

Certainly this is possible, but it is an irregular condition. For example, a convict serving a prison

term is converted to Christ while in prison. He is a member of the invisible Church, but it may be impossible for him to unite with a particular branch of the visible Church. It is the duty of every Christian, unless providentially prevented, to unite with a particular branch of the visible Church.

9. Is it possible for a person to be a member of the visible Church without being a member of the invisible Church?

Unfortunately it is possible, and the deplorable fact is that there have been many such, though only God can know with certainty who they are. Beyond question many people have had their names on church membership rolls whose names were not written in the Book of Life.

10. How can we illustrate the relation between the visible Church and the invisible Church?

One illustration that has been suggested is the analogy of the soul and the body. A more adequate illustration is afforded by drawing a diagram of two circles which partly overlap. One circle stands for the visible Church, those who profess in Christ. The other circle stands for the invisible Church, those who are really redeemed and truly united to Christ. The part where the two circles overlap stands for those who are members of both the visible and the invisible Church; that is, they are included in both circles, for they both profess faith in Christ and also are truly united to Him.

LESSON 26

Benefits of Membership in the Invisible Church

Q. 65. What special benefits do the members of the invisible church enjoy by Christ?

A. The members of the invisible church by Christ enjoy union and communion with him in grace and glory.

Scripture References:

John 17:21. Eph. 2:5, 6. The Christian's union and communion with Christ in grace.

John 17:24. The Christian's union and communion with Christ in glory.

Note: Question 65 is of the nature of a heading or summary of all the questions from No. 66 to No. 90. All these questions develop the doctrine which is summarized in No. 65.

Questions:

1. Why are the benefits mentioned in this question called "special benefits"?

Because they are not given to all members of the visible Church, but only to such as are also true members of the invisible Church.

2. What two words include all the benefits which believers receive from Christ?

Union and Communion. The succeeding questions (66-90) will bring out the difference in meaning between these two words.

3. In what two spheres or states of existence do believers receive benefits from Christ?

In the sphere of grace, or the Christian life here on earth, and in the sphere of glory, or the life to come.

Q. 66. What is that union which the elect have with Christ?

A. The union which the elect have with Christ is the work of God's grace, whereby they are spiritually and mystically, yet really and inseparably, joined to Christ as their head and husband; which is done in their effectual calling.

Scripture References:

Eph. 1:22; 2:6-8. The union which the elect have with Christ proceeds wholly from God's grace and is accomplished by His divine power.

1 Cor. 6:17. John 10:28. The elect are really and inseparably joined to Christ.

Eph. 5:23. 30. Christ is the Head and Husband of the elect.

1 Pet. 5:10. 1 Cor. 1:9. The elect are united to Christ by their effectual calling.

Questions:

1. What is meant by saying that the union of the elect with Christ "is the work of God's grace"?

This means that union with Christ is a gift of God, which is accomplished by the almighty work of His Holy Spirit; it is not something that we can achieve or do for ourselves.

2. What is meant by saying that we are "spiritually and mystically" joined to Christ?

This expression guards against the idea that we are **literally** joined to Christ as if He were an earthly person. The Church is the body of Christ, and Christians are the members of Christ, but only in a spiritual sense, not in any physical or material sense of the word.

3. Why does the Catechism add the words "yet really and inseparably"?

Because spiritual relationships, while mysterious and invisible, are yet true and real. We naturally tend to regard that which we cannot see or understand as imaginary or unreal. Our spiritual union with Christ is both invisible and mysterious, but that does not mean that it is unreal. Spiritual

things, in their own sphere, are just as real as material things. Moreover, our union with Christ is also unbreakable and permanent. The person who is once truly joined to Christ will always be joined to Christ; therefore the Catechism adds the word "inseparably."

4. What is meant by calling Christ the "head and husband" of the elect?

Two figures of speech are involved, both of which are prominent in the New Testament. The first is the figure of the human body. The human body has a head, and also members, such as hands and feet. According to this figure of speech, Christ is the head, and the elect are the members of His spiritual body.

The second figure is that of marriage. In this figure Christ is represented as the husband or bridegroom, because He provides for, loves and defends His Church. The Church, or whole body of the elect, is represented as the bride of Christ, because the Church enjoys His protection, provision and care, and seeks to honor and serve Him.

5. How are the elect joined to Christ?

By their effectual calling. This is explained in the next lesson.

LESSON 27

How the Elect are Joined to Christ

Q. 67. What is effectual calling?

A. Effectual calling is the work of God's almighty power and grace, whereby (out of his free and special love to his elect, and from nothing in them moving him thereunto) he doth, in his accepted time, invite and draw them to Jesus Christ, by his word and Spirit; savingly enlightening their minds, renewing and powerfully determining their wills, so as they (although in themselves dead in sin) are hereby made willing and able freely to answer his call, and to accept and embrace the grace offered and conveyed therein.

Scripture References:

John 5:25. Eph. 1:18-20. 2 Tim. 1:8, 9. Effectual calling is wrought by the grace and almighty power of God.

Tit. 3:4, 5. Eph. 2:4-9. Rom. 9:11. Effectual calling proceeds from the free, unmerited love of God to His elect, and does not depend in any sense on their character or works.

2 Cor. 5:20 compared with 2 Cor. 6:1, 2. Those who are effectually called are united to Christ in God's accepted time.

John 6:44. The elect are not merely invited or led, but effectively drawn, to Christ.

2 Thess. 2:13, 14. The elect united to Christ by the Word and Spirit of God.

Acts 26:18. 1 Cor. 2:10-12. In effectual calling, the Holy Spirit enlightens the mind so that the person can know and accept the truth.

Ezek. 11:19; 36:26, 27. John 6:45. In effectual calling the Holy Spirit effectively renews and determines the will so that the person wants to come to Christ.

Eph. 2:5. Phil. 2:13. Deut. 30:6. In effectual calling, those who of themselves are dead in sin are made both willing and able to respond to the call, so that they actually receive Christ and His salvation.

Questions:

1. In what two ways does God call sinners to come to Christ?

First, by the external call of the Gospel message, which is addressed to all men indiscriminately. This external call alone is not sufficient for salvation, for it is often resisted and rejected by sinners. Second, by the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of men. This work of the Holy Spirit is called **effectual** because it always accomplishes its intended purpose of bringing the person to Christ. When the effectual calling of the Holy Spirit is added to the external call of the Gospel message, the person becomes a Christian without fail.

2. Is God's work of effectual calling directed toward all men?

No. If it were, all men without exception would be saved. As a matter of fact God's effectual calling is not directed toward everybody, but only toward the elect, whom God has chosen for eternal life.

3. Why does effectual calling always accomplish its intended purpose?

Because it is carried out, not by limited power, but by the **almighty** power of God.

4. Does God love all men equally and in the same way?

No. The Bible speaks of two kinds of divine love. First, there is a general love of God which is bestowed on all men. This general love of God conveys many blessings, but it does not bring about anyone's eternal salvation. Second, there is a special love of God which is not given to all, but is reserved for the elect. This special love of God carries with it the eternal salvation of those on whom it is bestowed. For Scripture proof of the special love of God for the elect, read Rom. 9:13; John 17:9; Jer. 31:3.

5. Is it not unjust for God to love some people more than others?

No. If God were to deal with the human race according to justice alone, all without exception would be condemned. The subject we are considering is not a matter of justice, but of mercy. Mercy does not have to be administered equally, or impartially. Since God owes His special, saving love to no one, He is free to give or withhold it as He pleases. See Rom. 9:14-18, where the apostle Paul answers this same question, a question which was being asked even in his day.

6. What is meant by saying that God's love is "free"?

This means that God loves men of His own free will and choice, not because He is under any obligation or necessity to do so.

7. What is the reason why God bestows His special, saving love on one person, and withholds it from another person?

Doubtless God has a good reason for everything He does, but His reasons are not always revealed to us. We only know that, whatever God's reason may be, it is **NOT** because one person's works, nature or character are better than another's. The Catechism makes this clear by adding the words: "from nothing in them moving him thereunto." This expression rules out also the common error that God's special love is given to particular persons because God knew in advance that they would repent of their sins and believe the Gospel. The truth is that the elect repent of their sins and believe the Gospel **precisely because the special, saving love of God has been bestowed**

upon them. If you are a Christian is not because you are good, nor because God foresaw that you would someday become good, but just because God is good.

8. When does God draw the elect to Jesus Christ?

"In his accepted time," that is, in the particular time which God has appointed for each person. In some, it may be in their childhood or youth. In some, it may even be in their infancy (see Luke 1:15). In others it may be in mature years, or in old age. In some, it may be just before death, as in the case of the dying thief. But in every case it is during the lifetime on earth of each elect person.

9. How does God invite and draw the elect to Jesus Christ?

By His Word and by His Holy Spirit, working together.

10. Why must the minds of sinners be enlightened if they are to come to Christ?

Because by nature their minds are darkened and clouded by sin, and therefore they are totally prejudiced against God and the Gospel.

11. Why must their wills be renewed and powerfully determined if they are to come to Christ?

Because by nature they are dead in sins, and their wills are stubbornly prejudiced and bent against God.

12. Does God, in His work of effectual calling, force the elect to come to Christ whether they want to or not?

Certainly not. God deals with the elect as **persons**, not as if they were sticks or stones, nor yet as if they were mere machines or robots. The Holy Spirit so renews and changes their hearts that of their own will they **WANT** to come to Christ. If a person really wants to come to Christ with all his heart, that is an evidence that the Holy Spirit has made that person willing by changing his heart.

13. If it were not for the almighty work of the Holy Spirit changing the heart, how many of the elect would come to Christ?

None at all, for by nature they are both unwilling and also unable to come.

14. What, in a word, is the difference between the external call of the Gospel and effectual calling of the Holy Spirit?

In the external call of the Gospel, grace is **OFFERED** to sinners; in the effectual calling of the Holy Spirit, grace is actually **CONVEYED** to sinners so that they respond by accepting the offer. The external call is an **OFFER**; the effectual call is an **OPERATION**.

LESSON 28

Without Effectual Calling there is no Salvation**Q. 68. Are the elect only effectually called?**

A. All the elect, and they only, are effectually called; although others may be, and often are, outwardly called by the ministry of the word, and have some common operations of the Spirit; who, for their wilful neglect and contempt of the grace offered to them, being justly left in their unbelief, do never truly come to Jesus Christ.

Scripture References:

Acts 13:48. All the elect are effectually called, and eventually believe on Christ.

Matt. 22:14. Though many are outwardly called by the Gospel, only a part of these are effectually called by the Holy Spirit.

Matt. 7:22; 13:20, 21. Heb. 6:4-6. Those who are only outwardly called by the Gospel, may and often do share in the common operations of the Holy Spirit.

John 12:38-40. Acts 28:25-27. John 6:64, 65. Psalm 81:11, 12. Those who have only the outward call of the Gospel and the common operations of the Spirit, and lack the effectual call of the Spirit, inevitably neglect the grace offered to them, are justly left in their unbelief, never truly come to Christ, and so are lost.

Questions:

1. What class of people alone are effectually called by the Holy Spirit?

The elect of God.

2. What other names are given in the Bible to this class of people?

Christ's "sheep," those whom the Father gave unto Christ, those chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, those whose names were written in the Lamb's book of life, those predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's Son, etc.

3. In addition to the Spirit's work of effectual calling, what other kind of calling takes place?

The outward calling of the ministry of the Word, that is, the Gospel offer.

4. Which group is the larger, those called by the Holy Spirit, or those outwardly called by the ministry of the Word?

Those outwardly called by the ministry of the Word. See Matt. 22:14, "Many are called, but few are chosen." Here the "called" are those outwardly called. The "chosen" are those effectually called by the Holy Spirit.

5. Are the operations of the Holy Spirit in human hearts limited to the elect?

No. The saving operations of the Holy Spirit are confined to the elect; but in addition to the Spirit's saving operations, there are also the common operations of the Spirit, which may be and often are experienced by others than the elect.

6. What is the nature of the common operations of the Spirit?

The common operations of the Spirit may convict of sin, lead to an outward reformation of life of greater or less degree, restrain sin and evil, lead sinful people to perform acts of kindness or mercy in the sphere of human society, and the like. But the common operations of the Spirit fall short of salvation; they do not result in the person being united to Christ as his Saviour in repentance and true faith.

7. Why are the common operations of the Spirit insufficient for salvation?

Because unless born again of the Holy Spirit, a person inevitably neglects and misuses the common operations of the Spirit. Nothing short of a new birth will bring about saving faith in Christ.

8. Is it fair for God to give to some people only the common operations of the Spirit, while withholding from them the saving operations of the Holy Spirit?

Salvation is a matter of grace, not of debt. God is not obliged to save anyone at all. If He chooses to save some but not all, this does not involve any unfairness on God's part. Since God owes salvation to nobody, He is perfectly free to bestow it as a free gift on some, while withholding it from others.

Q. 69. What is the communion in grace which the members of the invisible Church have with Christ?

A. The communion in grace which the members of the invisible Church have with Christ, is their partaking of the virtue of his mediation, in their justification, adoption, sanctification, and whatever else, in this life, manifests their union with him.

Scripture References:

Rom. 8:30. The elect, by the experience of justification, partake of the virtue of Christ's mediation, thus having communion with Christ in grace.

Eph. 1:5. By the experience of adoption into God's family, the elect partake of the virtue of Christ's mediation, thus having communion with Christ in grace.

1 Cor. 1:30. By the experience of sanctification, and other benefits received in this life, the

elect partake of the virtue of Christ's mediation, thus having communion with Him in grace.

Note: This question is of the nature of a summary of the contents of Questions 70-81. Therefore we shall consider it only briefly and then pass on to Q. 70.

Questions:

1. What is the meaning of the word "virtue" in this question?

It means "power" or "efficacy" in accomplishing an intended purpose.

2. What is the meaning of the word "mediation" in this question?

It describes Christ's work of reconciling God and man, who were alienated one from the other by man's sin. Christ as Mediator brings these two together again.

3. What is the character of Christ's work of mediation?

It possesses "virtue" or power to accomplish its intended purpose. Christ's work of mediation is now an accomplished, finished historical fact, although of course the application of it to particular persons is not yet completed, but continues at the present day. The power of Christ's work of mediation will continue permanently, until all of the elect have actually been reconciled to God.

LESSON 29

How God Pronounces Sinners Righteous

Q. 70. What is justification?

A. Justification is an act of God's free grace unto sinners, in which he pardoneth all their sins, accepteth and accounteth their persons righteous in his sight; not for any thing wrought in them, or done by them, but only for the perfect obedience and full satisfaction of Christ, by God imputed to them, and received by faith alone.

Scripture References:

Rom. 3:22-25; 4:5. Justification is an act of God's free grace unto sinners.

2 Cor. 5:19-21. Rom. 3:22-28. In justification, God not only pardons all a person's sins, but also accepts that person as positively righteous in God's sight.

Tit. 3:5-7. Eph. 1:7. Justification is not based on the character or works of the person justified, nor even on the work of the Holy Spirit in his heart, but is strictly "according to his mercy" and based on Christ's righteousness and "redemption through his blood."

Rom. 5:17-19. Rom. 4:6-8. In justification, the merit of Christ's righteousness and obedience are "imputed" or credited to the account of the person who is justified, who receives this "imputed" righteousness as a free gift of God.

Acts 10:43. Gal. 2:16. Phil. 3:9. Faith is the means of justification, or the connecting link between the sinners and the righteousness of Christ.

Questions:

1. In what book of the Bible is the doctrine of Justification by Faith most fully set forth?

The Epistle to the Romans.

2. In what book of the Bible is the error of justification by works most clearly refuted?

In the Epistle to the Galatians, which shows

that we are justified by faith ALONE, without the deeds of the law.

3. Does not the Epistle of James teach that we are justified by works?

Yes, but this is not a contradiction of the teaching of Romans and Galatians. James presents good works as the fruits or evidence of our justification, not as the ground or reason for our justification. We are justified by faith alone, but the kind of faith that justifies is never found alone. We are not saved on the ground of good works, but if really saved we will not be without them as the fruits of our salvation. The reader is referred to Blue Banner Faith and Life, Volume I, Number 8 (October-December, 1946), page 177, column 2.

4. What is the meaning of the word "justify" in the New Testament?

This is a legal term which means to declare or judicially pronounce a person to be righteous before God, according to the standard of God's moral law. To "justify" a person does not mean to make that person righteous; it means to declare him righteous. The person's relation to the law, not his personal character, is concerned.

5. When a person is justified, what becomes of that person's sins?

They are freely pardoned or forgiven, being canceled by Christ's atonement.

6. Why would the pardon of our sins not be enough to save us and give us eternal life?

Because God requires more of us that we should be merely free of the guilt of sin. We must not only be without sin, but must also have a positive righteousness, just as if all our life long, without failing for a single moment, we had always loved the Lord our God with all our heart and soul and mind and strength, and our neighbor as ourself.

If God were merely to pardon our sins, we would be sinless but still unsaved because we would lack this positive righteousness without which none can enter heaven or receive eternal life. Suppose a man is arrested and fined for driving an automobile in a reckless manner, and at the same time it is discovered that he does not possess a driver's license. A kind friend may step up and pay the amount of the fine, thus canceling that obligation. But paying the fine would not give the person the right to operate an automobile; for that he must have a positive authorization in the form of an operator's license. Similarly, for Christ by His atonement to cancel the guilt of our sins still does not give us the right to enter heaven; for that, we must have a positive righteousness credited to our account.

7. In addition to forgiving our sins, what else does God do for us in justification?

He accepts and accounts, or regards, our persons as positively righteous in His sight.

8. What is the only ground of God's act of justification?

The only ground is the righteousness of Christ — His perfect obedience and full satisfaction" — which God "imputes" or reckons to the credit of the sinner. Christ's sufferings and death on the cross cancel the guilt of our sins. The positive righteousness of Christ, by which He actively and perfectly obeyed the whole of God's law throughout His entire earthly life, is the ground or basis for God accepting our persons as righteous in His sight. Christ not only died for us; He also lived for us, a life of perfect, total, blameless obedience to the whole law of God, and **without this no human being could possibly receive eternal life.**

9. What two false grounds of justification does the Catechism reject?

(a) "Anything wrought in them," that is, a change of character wrought in a person by the Spirit of God. Every Christian, of course, has such a change of character, but this is not the ground of his justification before God.

(b) "Anything done by them," that is, good works of any kind, such as are claimed as a ground of salvation by Catholics and others.

Thus the Catechism rejects, in the first place, the error of Liberalism, namely salvation by character; and in the second place, the error of Romanism and all other forms of moralism, namely salvation by human works.

10. What is the meaning of the word "imputed" when it is used in connection with justification?

This word, which occurs again and again in the apostle Paul's discussion of this subject, means "reckoned" or "accounted." Our sins are reckoned to Christ; Christ's righteousness is reckoned to the Christian, or credited to his account.

11. What part does faith play in connection with our justification?

Faith is in no sense the ground or reason for or justification. It is, however, the means or instrument by which we receive the grace of justification. We are justified by means of faith, but on account of the righteousness of Christ.

12. Why does the Catechism add the word "alone" after "faith"?

Because the Roman Catholic Church and some others teach that we are saved by a combination of faith and works. This contradicts the Scripture doctrine that the only ground of justification is the righteousness of Christ, and the only means of justification is personal faith in Jesus Christ.

LESSON 30

Justification is an Unearned, Undeserved Gift

Q. 71. How is justification an act of God's free grace?

A. Although Christ, by his obedience and death, did make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to God's justice in the behalf of them that are justified; yet in as much as God accepteth the satisfaction from a surety, which he might have demanded of them, and did provide this surety, his own only Son, imputing his righteousness to them, and requiring nothing of them for their justification but faith, which also is his gift, their justification is to them of free grace.

Scripture References:

Rom. 5:8-10, 19. Christ rendered a true satisfaction of God's justice on behalf of those who are justified.

1 Tim. 2:5, 6. Heb. 10:10. Matt. 20:28. Dan. 9:24-26. Isa. 53:4-6, 10-12. Heb. 7:22. Rom. 8:32. 1 Pet. 1:18, 19. In the case of those who are justified, God accepts the satisfaction of His divine justice at the hand of a "surety" or substitute, which he might have demanded of each justified person himself. This "surety" is God's own Son, provided as a substitute by God Himself.

2 Cor. 5:21. Christ's righteousness is imputed to the justified person.

Rom. 3:24, 25. The only condition of justification is faith in Christ.

Eph. 2:8. Faith in Christ is itself a gift of God to the believer.

Eph. 1:7. Redemption and forgiveness are mat-

ters of God's free grace, that is, free, unmerited gifts of God's love.

Questions:

1. What is the meaning of the expression "God's free grace"?

This means God's favor bestowed as a free gift on those who are not only undeserving, but also ill-deserving.

2. Why does it seem contradictory to say that "Justification is an act of God's free grace"?

It seems contradictory to make this statement, because our justification was purchased by the payment of a price; if purchased and paid for, then how can it be at the same time a free gift? This is the problem that this question of the Catechism undertakes to explain.

3. How can our justification be both a purchase and also a free gift?

It was purchased by Jesus Christ; it is a free gift to us. Salvation is free to sinners, but it cost the precious blood of Christ to make it free.

4. Why was it necessary that our justification be purchased by Christ?

Because the justice of God, which had been violated by human sin, had to be satisfied if sinners were to be justified. God cannot deny Himself. Because He is absolutely just, He cannot disregard human sin. The sinner cannot be justified unless God's justice has first been satisfied.

5. Was it not unjust for God to take the sins of guilty human beings and lay them on the innocent Christ?

This arrangement would have been unjust only if God the Father had compelled Jesus Christ against His will to bear the sins of the elect. This, however, was not the case. Christ was not compelled to suffer and die for sinners; He suffered and died for them voluntarily. Since Christ willingly suffered for our sins, there was no injustice involved in this transaction.

6. What is the meaning of the word "surety"?

It means a person who acts as a guarantor or substitute, doing for us what we have failed to do for ourselves, and paying our debt to God's justice, which we could not pay ourselves.

7. Where in the New Testament is Jesus called a "surety"?

Hebrews 7:22.

8. How should we answer those who say that a God of love would be willing to forgive sinners without any atonement and that a God who will not forgive sinners unless His Son is crucified is a harsh and vindictive Being?

In the first place, we should remind such

people that they have no right to talk about "a God of love" as if God were nothing but love. The God revealed in the Bible is a God of righteousness as well as a God of love. Love is only one aspect of God's character; it is not the whole.

In the second place, such people are looking at one side of the matter only. The same God who demanded an atonement also provided the atonement; the same God who said "When I see the blood I will pass over you" also provided the Lamb for the sacrifice. When God gives what He Himself demands, He cannot be accused of being harsh or unloving. Suppose a human judge has imposed a fine of \$100 on some lawbreaker. The poor man has no money, and the judge, feeling genuinely sorry for him, pays the man's fine with \$100 of the judge's own personal funds. Would anyone say: "What a harsh, vindictive judge! He will not let that poor lawbreaker go free unless someone pays a fine of \$100! Has he no love for his fellow men? If he had any love for that poor man, he would dismiss the charges against him and never even mention the payment of a penalty! His insisting that the penalty be paid shows that he has no love!" Such statements strike us as quite absurd, but they are no more absurd than the attitude of the man who says that a God of love would never demand an atonement as a condition of forgiving sinners.

God is not merely a loving Father; He is also a Judge. He is the moral ruler of the universe. If God were to forgive sinners without any atonement being required, the entire universe would cease to exist in one instant. It is just as impossible for God to forgive sinners without an atonement, as it would be for God to stop being God.

9. What does God require of sinners for their justification?

Simply faith in Jesus Christ as their Saviour. The exact meaning of this is explained in the next question, No. 72.

10. In addition to giving His Son to die for our sins, what else does God provide in order that we may be saved?

God provides the faith by which we believe in Christ. We do not have this faith of ourselves and we cannot originate this faith in our own hearts. It is a gift of God, as the Scripture plainly teaches.

11. Where does the Bible teach that saving faith is a gift of God?

Eph. 2:8 and Acts 11:18, as well as other places.

12. What do we mean by saying that "faith is a gift of God"?

By this we mean that if God had merely given His Son to die for sinners, and then left it to men to accept or reject the offer of salvation on a "take it or leave it" basis, the result would have

been that not a single human being would ever be saved, for all are so enslaved by the power of sin that no one would believe on Christ. Therefore God in His mercy also changes people's hearts by the work of his Holy Spirit, so that they become able and willing to believe on Christ as their Saviour.

13. If faith is a gift of God, does this mean that God makes people believe in Christ whether they want to or not?

God does not compel any person to believe in Christ against his will. God changes a person's heart or nature by His almighty power, with the result that that person voluntarily and gladly accepts Christ.

14. What has been the history of the doctrine of justification by God's free grace?

This doctrine is implied and suggested in the Old Testament, and clearly revealed in the New Testament, especially in the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians. In Acts chapter 15 we read of the Apostolic Council in Jerusalem, where the doctrine of justification by free grace prevailed over the false doctrine which would add works of law-observance as part of the necessary ground of justification.

As the centuries passed, the doctrine of justification by free grace was practically forgotten, and its place was taken by the Roman Catholic system of salvation by grace-plus-works. At the time of the Reformation in the early years of the sixteenth century, the glorious truth of justification by free grace was re-discovered by Martin Luther and widely proclaimed by Luther and the other Reformers. The result was the greatest revival that the Church has ever known.

In modern Protestantism the doctrine of justification by free grace has been largely abandoned. Liberalism or Modernism preaches a doctrine of salvation by works or salvation by character. The result is that modern "Liberal" Protestantism has already lost its power and is gradually losing most of its influence in the world. Its adherents number many millions of people, but most of them are only mildly interested in religion. Even among those who are counted as evangelicals, the notion seems to be common that we are saved by a combination of faith and works. In many a pulpit the Gospel of free grace has been supplanted by a vague moralism. Vast quantities of "religious education" materials give the impression that Christianity is essentially a matter of "being good." A return to the great truths re-discovered at the Protestant Reformation is urgently needed.

15. What objection has been raised against the doctrine of justification by free grace?

The objection has been raised, that if sinners are justified as a free gift of God, regardless of their own works or character, then there remains

no motive for righteous or godly living, and we might as well do as we please.

16. How can this objection be answered?

First of all, we should realize that this objection is nothing new. People were raising it in the time of the apostle Paul. Romans 6:1, "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" Romans 6:15, "Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace?" To both questions Paul replies in the negative, "God forbid."

In the second place, people who raise this objection talk as if justification were the whole of salvation — as if God merely justifies sinners and then does nothing whatever else for them. But this is a very false view of the matter. We may not look at justification alone by itself. The person who is justified is also regenerated, or born again. He receives a new heart, which seeks after holiness. Gradually he is sanctified by the Holy Spirit; that is, his character is changed and made holy. Justification does not happen alone; it is a link in a chain. **The person who has been justified is also in process of being sanctified. There are no exceptions to this rule.**

17. But if we are not to do good works in order to save our soul, then what is the Christian's motive for practicing righteousness?

The right motive for righteous living is devotion and thankfulness to God for creating us and redeeming us from sin as a free gift. We are to practice righteousness, not in order to be saved, but because it is our duty and because we love God.

18. Prove from the Bible that good works are the FRUIT and not the GROUND of our salvation.

Eph. 2:8-10, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them." Note that our salvation is "UNTO good works," that is, good works are the fruit or product of salvation, not its ground.

Phil. 2:12, 13, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Note that we are not commanded to work FOR our salvation, but rather to work it OUT. We have to get it before we can work it out. We receive it as a free gift, and then after that we are to work out the implications and consequences of it in our lives.

19. Why have many people been opposed to the doctrine of justification by free grace?

Because this doctrine humbles human pride to the dust and gives ALL the glory and credit for human salvation to God alone. It lifts God very

high and lays man very low. Even faith itself is really God's gift. The result is, as Paul pointed out in Rom. 3:27, that "boasting" is excluded.

Sinful men would gladly give God PART of the credit for salvation, and take part of the credit themselves. But the doctrine of justification by free grace gives ALL the credit to God alone and none whatever to the sinner. Human pride rises in stubborn rebellion against such a doctrine. Only when a person's heart has been changed by the Holy Spirit can he really accept this doctrine sincerely. Then he will have "a broken and contrite heart" (Psalm 51:17).

20. Why is a new Reformation needed at the present day?

As already stated earlier in this lesson, in our day the doctrine of justification by free grace has been all but forgotten. The majority of the large denominations, though they may have it set forth correctly in their official creeds, as a matter of fact no longer believe or preach it in any pointed or consistent way. In many cases the Protestant churches which claim to hold it yet show but little zeal or enthusiasm for preaching it. It is not an exaggeration to say that the average Protestant church member knows little or nothing of it. Meantime the Roman Catholic Church, which strongly opposes this doctrine, is gaining ground daily at the expense of a Protestantism which has lost its grip on the central truth of the Reformation.

LESSON 31

What Kind of Faith Brings Justification?

Q. 72. What is justifying faith?

A. Justifying faith is a saving grace, wrought in the heart of a sinner by the Spirit and word of God, whereby he, being convinced of his sin and misery, and of the disability in himself and all other creatures to recover him out of his lost condition, not only assenteth to the truth of the promise of the gospel, but receiveth and resteth upon Christ and his righteousness, therein held forth, for pardon of sin, and for the accepting and accounting of his person righteous in the sight of God for salvation.

Scripture References:

Heb. 10:39. Justifying faith is a saving grace.

2 Cor. 4:13. Eph. 1:17-19. Justifying faith is wrought in the heart of a sinner by the Holy Spirit of God.

Rom. 10:14, 17. In producing justifying faith, the Holy Spirit uses the Word of God, that is, the Gospel message.

Acts 2:37; 16:30. John 16:8, 9. Rom. 5:6. Eph. 2:1. Acts 4:12. The person in whom justifying faith has been wrought is convinced of his own inability to save himself, and that none can save him except Christ.

Eph. 1:13. Assent to the truth of the promise of the Gospel is an element in justifying faith.

John 1:12. Acts 16:31; 10:43. By justifying faith, a person receives and rests upon Christ and His righteousness as the ground of the pardon of sin.

Phil. 3:9. Acts 15:11. By justifying faith, a person receives and rests upon Christ and His righteousness as the ground of his being accepted and accounted righteous in the sight of God, for salvation.

Questions:

1. What is meant by saying that "justifying faith is a saving grace"?

This means that justifying faith brings about a person's eternal salvation. The person who has this kind of faith shall certainly be saved, and receive eternal life.

2. How does a person come to have justifying faith?

Not of a person's own human will power, but as a special gift of God.

3. How does God give a person the gift of justifying faith?

He produces this faith in a person's heart by the Word of God and the work of the Holy Spirit.

4. Can either the Word or the Spirit alone produce justifying faith in a person's heart?

No. Only by both together can justifying faith be produced. The Word, or Gospel message alone, without the Holy Spirit, may result in a kind of faith, but not the kind that justifies. Where the Word is not known, as among the heathen who have never heard the name of Christ, the Holy Spirit does not do any saving work (except perhaps in the case of infants dying in infancy, etc.).

5. When God works justifying faith in a sinner's heart, of what four facts does the sinner become convinced?

(a) He becomes convinced of his sinful condition. (b) He becomes convinced of his misery. (c) He becomes convinced of his own helplessness to save himself from sin and misery. (d) He becomes convinced of the inability of anyone else except Almighty God to save him from sin and misery.

6. When God works justifying faith in a person's heart, what attitude will that person have to the promise of the Gospel?

He will give up his natural doubt or unbelief, and gladly recognize that the promise of the Gospel is true.

7. When a person denies the truthfulness of God's Word, in whole or in part, what does this show concerning the state of that person's heart?

Such unbelief ordinarily indicates that the person does not have saving faith, and is not a child of God. The only exception to this statement would be in the case of a person in whose heart justifying faith has been wrought by the Holy Spirit, who yet because of weakness of intellect denies the truthfulness or authority of some portion of the Bible without realizing that this is inconsistent with justifying faith and that it dishonors God.

8. Is it enough for a person to accept the promise of the Gospel as true?

No. A person may accept the promise of the Gospel as true and yet not be a saved Christian. We must also "receive and rest upon Christ and his righteousness", etc.

9. What is meant by "receiving and resting upon Christ and his righteousness"?

First of all, this means giving up all hope of being saved in any other way than as a free gift by Christ. We must give up all claim to good works, good character, or whatever it may be that we have been putting our confidence in.

Secondly, we must ask God to save us as a free gift for Christ's sake, because of the merit of Christ's atonement and righteousness. Thirdly, we must count on God doing as He has promised, entrusting ourselves to Christ as our Saviour, both for this present life and for eternity.

10. In addition to pardoning sin, what else does God do for the person who has justifying faith?

In addition to pardoning the person's sin, God also accepts and accounts his person as righteous. It has been said that "Justified means just-as-if-I'd," though of course this is not the derivation of the word. But it is true that justified means just

as if I had always lived a perfect life; not merely just as if I had never committed any sins, but actually just as if I had always loved God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength, and my neighbor as myself. Not only does Christ's shed blood cancel the guilt of our sins, but in addition the perfect, blameless, righteous life of Jesus Christ, who fulfilled the whole law of God, is "imputed" or placed to the credit of the person who has justifying faith.

11. Besides justifying faith, what other kinds of faith are there?

Besides justifying faith, there are also (a) Historical faith and (b) Temporary faith.

12. What is historical faith?

This is a mere belief in Jesus Christ as a historical person, just as we believe in George Washington or Julius Caesar. The person who has historical faith believes that Jesus Christ lived, said and did certain things, was crucified — and he may even believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. But all this is to him merely so much information. He has no personal trust in Christ as his Saviour.

13. Can historical faith alone save us?

No. We read in James 2:19 that the devils have this kind of faith. But it does not save them; it only makes them tremble with fear.

14. What is temporary faith?

This is a kind of faith which at first resembles true saving faith, but it is only temporary and soon passes away because it has no root in a new heart. We learn of this kind of faith from the Parable of the Sower. Temporary faith often results from "revivals" where there is much excitement and people's emotions are powerfully stirred up. They profess to be "converted," but later return to their former sinful manner of living and lose interest in religion.

15. How can temporary faith be distinguished from true justifying faith?

The only sure way to distinguish the two is by the test of time. True faith abides and grows with the passing of time; temporary faith withers and dies. When a person's faith seems to arise largely from emotional excitement, we should realize that it may not be true saving faith, but only temporary.

LESSON 32

How Faith Brings About Justification

Q. 73. How doth faith justify a sinner in the sight of God?

A. Faith justifies a sinner in the sight of God, not because of those other graces which do always

accompany it, or of good works that are the fruits of it, nor as if the grace of faith, or any act thereof, were imputed to him for his justification; but only as it is an instrument by which he receiveth and applieth Christ and his righteousness.

Scripture References:

Gal. 3:11. Rom. 3:28. Scripture places **faith** in contrast with "the law" and "deeds," therefore we are not justified by those graces that accompany faith, nor by the good works that are the fruits of faith.

Rom. 4:5 compared with Rom. 10:10. Believing on Christ for justification is contrasted with **working** for justification; therefore **faith is not a work of the believer**, but rather a **receiving of Christ's work**; therefore faith itself is not imputed to the believer as the ground of his justification.

John 1:12. Phil. 3:9. Gal. 2:16. In justification, faith is simply and solely an **instrument** with which the believer establishes contact with the righteousness of Christ for salvation.

Questions:

1. Is faith the means of our justification, or is it the ground of our justification, or is it both?

Faith is the means of our justification, but not the ground. According to the language of Scripture, we are justified **BY** faith or **THROUGH** faith, but not **ON ACCOUNT OF** faith.

2. What is the only ground of our justification?

The only ground of our justification is the atonement and righteousness of our Saviour Jesus Christ. **We are saved by grace, through faith, on account of the righteousness of Christ.** The source of our salvation is grace, the means of our salvation is faith, and the ground of our salvation is Christ's finished work.

3. Is faith regarded in the Bible as a "good work" of the believer?

No. Faith is the Christian's act of believing and trusting Christ as his Saviour. But in the Bible this is not regarded as a "work"; on the contrary, it is expressly contrasted with "works," as in Eph. 2:8, 9. "For by grace are ye saved **through faith**; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; **not of works**, lest any man should boast." If faith were regarded as a "work", it would leave room for the believer to boast of his faith. But salvation by faith is expressly declared to be "not of works, lest any man should boast." Therefore faith is not regarded as a "work," has no merit attached to it, and cannot be in any sense the ground of our salvation. Note, too, that the Catechism, in harmony with the Bible, speaks of "good works" as the **fruits of faith**; therefore faith itself cannot be a good work of the believer. Rather, faith is a **good work of God in the believer.**

4. What error is sometimes held concerning the place of faith in our salvation?

The error that salvation by faith means eternal life on lower terms than those originally announced in the Covenant of Works. According to

this false teaching, since we as sinners do not have any adequate righteousness, God graciously lowers His requirements, and agrees to accept faith in place of righteousness.

This teaching is based on a mistaken interpretation of Rom. 4:3, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." This verse is quoted by Paul from Genesis 15:6. The false teaching we are considering interprets this text as follows: "Abraham did not have a perfect righteousness, such as God originally required of men, but he **DID** have faith, and so God graciously accepted faith as a substitute for righteousness."

This interpretation would contradict the whole teaching of Romans and Galatians, not to mention other parts of the Bible, concerning the ground of our justification. For example, in Romans 5:12-21 there is an elaborate parallel between Adam and Christ, which teaches that Christ fulfils the Covenant of Works, and that Christ's righteousness is the ground of our justification. The context in Romans 4 shows that the interpretation of Rom. 4:3 cited above is wrong, for in verse 2 and again in verses 4 and 5 it is plainly asserted that Abraham was not justified by works; therefore in Abraham's case faith could not have been regarded as a "work" or substitute for righteousness. By comparison with other parts of the epistle it is evident that the true meaning of Rom. 4:3 is as follows: "Abraham believed God, and by means of this faith in God's promises, the perfect righteousness of Christ was imputed to him just as if it were his own personal righteousness." God never accepts anything less than perfect righteousness, but He graciously accepts **CHRIST'S** righteousness in place of our own.

5. What is meant by saying that faith is "only an instrument"?

This means that all the righteousness involved in our salvation, and also all the power involved in our salvation, are wholly of God; faith is merely a connecting link, a channel, a way of receiving God's grace.

6. What is the error of the Roman Catholic Church concerning faith?

The Roman Catholic Church teaches that faith is a grace involving merit; that is to say, that faith is a form of "good works." A common Catholic catechism speaks of "faith," "hope," and "charity" as "graces or gifts of God," but adds that "Grace is necessary to salvation, because without grace we can do nothing to merit heaven." This amounts to saying that while we cannot save ourselves without help from God, yet we **CAN** save ourselves **WITH** help from God. The truth, of course, is that faith is a grace or gift of God by which we receive as a free gift, apart from any merit on our part, the heaven which Christ has merited for us.

7. What is the common error of "liberal" Protestants concerning faith?

Modernism or Liberalism tends to regard faith as something valuable for its own sake, something like "morale" or "self-confidence," which keeps a person from discouragement, rather than regarding faith as a connecting link with the righteousness of Christ.

Liberalism thinks of faith from the psychological point of view, and regards it as helpful and valuable because of the state of mind which it produces in a person, rather than regarding it

from the theological (and Scriptural) point of view as having the atonement and righteousness of Christ for its object. According to Liberalism, it is the act and attitude of believing, rather than what or in whom we believe, that is the important thing. Needless to say, this modern "liberal" idea of faith is utterly destructive not only of the doctrine of justification by free grace, but also of the whole teaching of the Bible on faith and salvation. That is to say, the Liberal idea of faith is destructive of Christianity.

LESSON 33

How we Become Children of God

Q. 74. What is adoption?

A. Adoption is an act of the free grace of God, in and for his only Son Jesus Christ, whereby all those that are justified are received into the number of his children, have his name put upon them, the Spirit of his Son given to them, are under his fatherly care and dispensations, admitted to all the liberties and privileges of the sons of God, made heirs of all the promises, and fellow heirs with Christ in glory.

Scripture References:

1 John 3:1. Adoption is an act of God's free grace, that is, an undeserved gift of God's love.

Eph. 1:5. Gal. 4:4, 5. God's act of adoption is "in and for his only Son Jesus Christ."

John 1:12. All believers in Christ, that is, all justified persons, are also adopted into the number of God's children.

2 Cor. 6:18. Rev. 2:12. In adoption, the name of God is put upon the believer.

Gal. 4:6. In connection with adoption, the Holy Spirit is given to the Christian.

Psalms 103:13. Prov. 14:26. Matt. 6:32. Those who have been adopted as God's children are under His fatherly care and dispensations.

Heb. 6:12. Rom. 8:17. Those who have been adopted as God's children are made heirs of all God's promises, and fellow-heirs with Christ in glory.

Questions:

1. What is the difference between justification and adoption?

Justification is a change in our legal status; adoption is a change in our personal status. Justification pronounces us to be righteous in God's sight; adoption makes us God's children. Justification makes us citizens of God's kingdom; adoption makes us members of God's family. In justification, God acts as a Judge; in adoption, God acts as a Father.

2. Why is adoption referred to as "an act"?

Because it takes place instantaneously at a particular time.

3. Does adoption come before or after justification?

In the logical order, as presented in the Catechism, justification comes first and adoption follows this. But in Christian experience, these two acts of God take place at the same instant of time.

4. Can a person be justified without being adopted, or adopted without being justified?

No. These two acts of God always occur together. They can be distinguished, for they differ in meaning the one from the other, but they cannot be separated. The person who is justified is also at the same time adopted into the family of God. The person who is truly a child of God, in the religious sense of the term, is also a justified person.

5. Why is the doctrine of adoption often neglected or denied at the present day?

Because of the prevalence of the false doctrine of the "universal Fatherhood of God." If God is the Father of everyone, then obviously everyone is already a child of God, and the doctrine of adoption does not make sense. If every person in the world is already a child of God by nature, then there is no need for anyone to be adopted into the family of God. Many Christian people fail to realize that this conception of "the universal Fatherhood of God" (in the religious sense) is a false doctrine, without support in the Bible, and contrary to the truth that man is by nature a child of wrath (Eph. 2:3).

6. How can we know by personal experience that we have been adopted as God's children?

Gal. 4:6. Rom 8:15, 16.

7. What special blessings does adoption involve?

(a) A special and intimate relation to God, as His children. (b) The Holy Spirit given to us to dwell in our hearts. (c) A right to all the promises

of God in the present life. (d) A title-deed to eternal glory as fellow-heirs with Christ.

8. How many times can a person be adopted into God's family?

Like justification, adoption takes place only once in the life of a person.

9. Can we forfeit or lose our adoption into God's family?

No. One received into God's family, we shall be His children forever. This privilege cannot be lost.

10. Can we forfeit or lose our own feeling or consciousness that we are God's children?

Yes. By falling into sin and grieving the Holy Spirit, we can lose our own assurance or consciousness that we are God's children. This matter is more fully discussed under Q. 81, "Are all true believers at all times assured of their present being in the estate of grace, and that they shall be saved?" Salvation cannot be lost, but our own assurance of it can be lost to a degree, and for a time. Adoption cannot be lost, but our own enjoyment of it can be forfeited for a time.

11. What special duty does our adoption into God's family impose on us?

The duty of living as sons and daughters of the living God. See 2 Cor. 6:14-18.

(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.

EXPOSITION OF THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS, by John Brown. Sovereign Grace Book Club, 1124 S.E. First St., Evansville 13, Indiana. 1957 (reprint), pp. 426. \$4.95.

Anything by John Brown of Edinburgh (1784-1858) is well worth having, and the Sovereign Grace Book Club is to be thanked for republishing his expository discourses on I Peter (3 volumes) and now his commentary on Galatians. It is to be hoped that more of his expository work will yet become available.

Dr. Brown provides in this work a scholarly and painstaking treatment of Galatians. This magnificent exegesis is characterized throughout by a sanity and breadth which are typical of this outstanding Scottish minister of the Word, whom C. H. Spurgeon called "a modern Puritan." A great deal of modern conservative commentary is not to be compared with Brown (making due allowance for the critical apparatus available to him — and even here he is an expert) and his commentaries deserve a new lease of life. No preacher can fail to profit from this illuminating study of a great epistle. It can be placed alongside Luther's monumental work.

This volume includes the following appendices: Calvin's exposition of Gal. 4:1-7 (in Latin and English); the **period** of the appearance of the Messiah; elements of Christianity; remarks on the principle of the support of the Christian ministry — Gal. 6:6; opposition of the natural mind to the peculiar doctrines of Christianity, especially the doctrine of the Cross; practical power of Christian

truth; tendency of man to rest in a mere external religion; Paul's mode of considering Judaism and Christianity in their various relations (Winer). There are subject and Scripture indices.

The twelve-page prolegomena to the Epistle, dealing with critical questions, has been omitted — whether deliberately or accidentally we do not know, as Jay Green, publisher, makes no reference to the omission in his three-page preface; this means that most of the points listed under "Galatians" in the subject index are irrelevant for this edition. We regret the omission and recommend the book to all serious students of Scripture. Binding and general production are excellent, although the representation on the dust cover, of the serpent in prelate attire, might seem offensive to some. The plan to furnish a Puritan Commentary, composed of "masters" like Owen, Manton and Goodwin, is to be warmly commended.

— Fred. S. Leahy

THE RETURNING BACKSLIDER, by Richard Sibbes. Sovereign Grace Book Club, 1124 S.E. First St., Evansville, Indiana. 1957 (reprint), pp. 194.

GOD'S PROVIDENCE UNFOLDED IN THE BOOK OF ESTHER, by Alexander Carson. 1957 (reprint), pp. 132.

These two works are combined in a single volume priced at \$3.95.

This reprint of an expositional study of Hosea 14 by Richard Sibbes, the Puritan, is bound with a discussion of God's Providence as unfolded in the book of Esther, by Alexander Carson.

Sibbes on Hosea is thorough and suggestive; he is always devotional and theological and he makes constant and skillful use of Scripture in general. To study Hosea 14 with Sibbes is an enriching experience and well worth the effort. Unfortunately this part of the book is in small print, nevertheless we believe that its reappearance should find a wide appreciation. The subject is one which every preacher should deal with today, for, alas, it is always relevant.

Alexander Carson's examination of Esther is easily read; the print is good and the style straightforward. We are given a Biblical and thoroughly satisfying doctrine of Providence. "There is," he remarks, "nothing fortuitous — nothing without God" (p. 87). His treatment of the book proves his contention. It is often urged that God is not mentioned in Esther: prayer is, and as Carson shows, the hand of God can be traced throughout. In a wicked world, with much chaos and pessimism, the book of Esther assures us that God reigns.

These reprints are well bound and are photolithographed by Cushing-Malloy, Inc., on high grade paper. Who was Alexander Carson? His name is not so well known as that of Richard Sibbes. A brief biographical note in the publisher's preface would have been of great value, but we are told nothing about him, except that he was "a godly man." Most likely this is the work of Rev. Alexander Carson (1776-1844) who was born in County Tyrone, Ireland and died in the city of Belfast. He was educated at the University of Glasgow, and became a Presbyterian minister in Ireland in 1798. He was a man of outstanding ability and profound erudition. In 1805 he withdrew from his Presbyterian brethren and finally became a Baptist. Certainly the work before us is what we would expect from such a man. We would make the friendly suggestion that future reprints by the Sovereign Grace Book Club — all of which we welcome — contain in the actual volume a brief biographical sketch. This would add greatly to the usefulness of their ministry.

— Fred. S. Leahy

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

This book is a short biography, 174 pages including footnotes, of which there are not a few, a bibliography and an index. It is very easy to read, the style being interesting and not in the least laborious with great detail. It is not a novel. The author has searched carefully in the original sources for the information which he has used to interpret the life and work of a man whose name is still on the lips of many Christian people.

Many books have been written about Calvin, some to honor him, and some to play him down. Mr. Stickelberger has displayed the facts of his life in such a clear, understandable language that

he leaves one no doubting the sincere desire of Calvin to know God's will and purpose for his life, and his determination to act accordingly.

Herman Brute is quoted in a short note about the author as saying: "This work, in genuine Swiss tradition, gives evidence of two of Stickelberger's characteristic gifts, first, the ability to do the research to find out what has happened in the past, and second, to present his material in such a way that it lives in the present, and is to everyone understandable. He does not invent history, he animates and illumines it."

The author takes one back to Calvin's day and portrays events and happenings in the light of the civilization of that day. One is impressed with the will and determination of Calvin to carry out the purpose of his life in the face of extreme bodily weakness, brought on largely by malnutrition, and the great opposition which he faced.

The book is very readable and informative and is to be recommended to anyone who wishes to know more about Calvin and the part he played in the sixteenth century reformation.

— Herbert A. Hays

STORIES OF OUR NATIONAL SONGS, by Ernest K. Emurian. W. A. Wilde Company, 131 Clarendon St., Boston, Mass. 1957, pp. 108. \$2.00.

The author is a Methodist minister, although this is not strictly speaking a religious book. It gives the background and history of America's national songs — **America, America the Beautiful**, **The Battle Hymn of the Republic**, and **The Star-Spangled Banner**. Many interesting anecdotes are told in connection with these songs. The book is interesting and well written, and should prove of value especially to school teachers.

— J. G. Vos

THE FOURTH "R" IN AMERICAN EDUCATION, by R. H. Martin. Published by the author, 712 Grant Bldg., Pittsburgh 19, Pa. 1957, pp. 106. \$2.00.

This book deals with one of the most — if not the most — vital of problems on the national policy scene today. It is the problem of providing an adequate education for the youth of our nation. Dr. Martin cites authoritative figures as to the growth of juvenile crime and lawlessness which are truly alarming. He does not take the grandfatherly pat-on-the-head attitude, "I have faith in our young folks," as do some who thereby think themselves progressive, "young in spirit myself," broadminded. Dr. Martin rather views this crime situation as pointing up a failure in the educational program which is being provided. Specifically, he regards it as emphasizing the omission of moral and religious instruction.

Dr. Martin shows that there is no dearth of qualified opinion of leaders in our land today, as

well as leaders in past generations, who testify that such omission constitutes a radical change in the substance of the basic education in the schools, from that of the early days of our nation. Then, the Puritan leaders were not satisfied with the three R's, but a fourth "R", religion, was included, and indeed, pervaded the other three. Evidence is given to show that, in great measure, at least, the religion taught was Biblically governed.

Why should this change have come about, namely, the gradual exclusion of moral and religious instruction from the public schools? To this there is no answer given in this book, but the space devoted to seeking to show that neutrality towards the truth and claims of God is impossible (true enough! L. K.), on the one hand, and that "sectarianism" should and can be eliminated, on the other, would indicate that it is here that Dr. Martin recognizes the nub of the problem.

Dr. Martin often refers to "basic religion," and gives as "the great Christian standard of morals," the following: "It is based upon great religious truths — that man is a creature of God — **a moral creation**; that God has given laws by which man is to be governed; that these laws are the expression of His will, the rules laid down to guide man in living his life here in this world; that God holds man responsible for obedience to these laws, rewards him for obedience and punishes him for disobedience" (p. 56).

But there is **nothing** distinctively Christian here. And it IS certainly distinctive of Christianity that it claims to be unique, that there is **only one way to God** and that is through Jesus Christ. There are professing Christians in our land — not organized into one denomination but found in many of them — who think that Christianity is but one of many legitimate approaches to God. Some would even recognize Hinduism and Mohammedanism as true, sincere and proper efforts to worship God, which Christians if they are "truly tolerant and kind" should recognize alongside Christianity.

These professing Christians are so vocal and numerous today that actually they constitute a sect, a cult, in their own right, though they would indignantly disavow the appellation. They insist, rather, that those who do not agree with them in this great levelling of all religion to a "basic religion" standard, are guilty of sectarianism, and so of excluding "religious and moral instruction" from our schools.

Hence, this book contributes nothing toward solving the problem. It simply sets forth one sectarian approach to "religious instruction" and insists that anyone who does not accept it is sectarian. It appears that the author is honestly unaware that there are any **serious** differences as to what should be taught. He insists that the differences are not serious.

Dr. Martin has really addressed himself in this book to insisting that there is no reason why all should not be satisfied with the substance of "basic religion" as set forth in the quotation above. Since the people of the country have shown that in fact they do not agree, and the exclusion of "religious and moral instruction from the public schools" has resulted, this book contributes nothing toward solving the real problem.

The great need pointed up by the growing juvenile crime and delinquency is the need of a faithful testimony as to what is distinctive of God's revelation in Jesus Christ.

— Lester E. Kilpatrick

PAUL'S USE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, by E. Early Ellis. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1957, pp. 204. \$3.00.

This volume consists of four chapters, of which the first is entitled "Paul and His Bible." In this chapter the author deals with such important matters as the problem of the Septuagint, the Introductory Formulas used by Paul and quotations not from the Old Testament. Chapter II, which bears the title "Paul and Judaism," presents an excellent and instructive discussion of the influence of Paul's Jewish background on his interpretation of the Old Testament. Dr. Ellis concludes that "the Apostle's Old Testament exegesis was not just an adoption of current traditions, but reveals a vitality and understanding totally foreign to rabbinical literature. . . . Paul was a disciple of Christ, not of Gamaliel."

In the third chapter attention is focussed on the relationship between Paul's teaching and parallel passages in the teaching of Christ and the apostles. Paul was not an isolationist and there is no conflict between his teaching and that of Christ and the other apostles. "The correspondence in the use and interpretation of the O. T. is an especially significant aspect of the unified message of the early Church" (p. 86). Dr. Ellis is not satisfied with the view that Paul's relation to other N. T. writings can be explained as "a borrowing by one writer from another." He favors the opinion that there is a mutual connection with a third source.

The fourth chapter presents "a synthesis of Pauline exegesis both from a topical and from a hermeneutical viewpoint." The author shows how Paul uses the O. T. selectively and weaves each passage into the framework of his theology.

Valuable appendices to the extent of 35 pages provide lists of texts quoted in the Pauline Epistles. An abundance of footnotes directs the student to the works of scholars in both the European and English speaking world. Quotations from Latin, German and French sources are translated into English.

Professor Ellis has had a wide experience in Old Testament studies and has reached a maturity in scholarship that is manifest in every page of the book. Opinions of others are carefully weighed and criticisms are fair and lucid. We welcome this scholarly and conservative work which must prove of inestimable value to every student of the Old Testament.

— Alexander Barkley

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, by David Thomas. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1955, pp. 493. \$3.95.

This is a reprint of a book published in 1870. David Thomas was a Broad Churchman and was editor of "The Homilist" from 1851 to 1870. This book is made up of homiletic sketches which appeared in "The Homilist" during a period of five years.

There are three main divisions and these are dealt with in one hundred and eleven short sections. In each section a fixed pattern is followed. First there is the text, then emendative renderings, exegetical remarks and homiletics. There is a lot of suggestive material for the preacher, although some of the outlines are fanciful. We agree with Spurgeon's evaluation of this work when he says. "Many of the homiletic outlines strike us as 'much ado about nothing,' still, if a man should read this work and get no help from it, it would be his own fault."

— Alexander Barkley

HISTORY AND PROPHECY IN RELATION TO THE MESSIAH, by Alfred Edersheim. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1955, reprint of 1901, pp. xxiv, 391. \$3.75.

This is another volume in the Baker Co-operative Reprint Library. The contents consist of twelve lectures, delivered during the years 1880-1884 in the chapel of Lincoln's Inn, on the foundation of Bishop Warburton. The aim of these lectures was "to show the prophetic character of the Old Testament and its fulfilment in Jesus Christ." Dr. Edersheim shows how Christianity is deeply rooted in the Old Testament and that the conception of the Kingdom of God is one of the fundamental ideas of the Old Testament. He directs attention to the importance of the work of the prophets in the historical development in Israel, and the preparation for the coming of Christ. The views of such critics as Astruc, Eichhorn, DeWette, Bleek and Wellhausen are shown to be untenable if we really believe in the Christ who appeared to the disciples on the road to Emmaus.

Since the days of Edersheim the science of archaeology has provided much more light regarding the historical background of the Old Testament. Nevertheless this is a valuable book and the arguments presented by this devout scholar are just as valid today as they were in the last century.

— Alexander Barkley

THY WORD IS TRUTH, by Edward J. Young. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1957, pp. 287. \$3.50.

As one is accustomed to receive from the pen of Dr. Edward J. Young of Westminster Theological Seminary, this volume presents a clear, well defined statement of the orthodox Reformed teaching regarding the inspiration of the Scriptures. It is not meant to be "a technical theological treatise," but is designed to "appeal to the modern evangelical not to cast aside the time-honored Biblical view of inspiration."

Within the scope of eleven chapters, Dr. Young deals with such questions as the true meaning of Inspiration; what is innerancy?; are there errors in the Bible?; some modern views of the Bible; the Bible and Salvation. There is no inclination to evade difficulties. Within the limits afforded in such a work, the author deals with problems ranging from the interpretation of Genesis chapter 1 to the difficulties arising from the Old Testament references in the speech of Stephen. Helpful suggestions are provided for those who may be confronted with the so-called "contradictions" and "errors" which critics love to point out.

With the characteristic honesty which we have learned to associate with Professor Young, he discards fanciful explanations. Where there is not sufficient data to provide a satisfactory answer, he advises the acknowledgment that "with our present limited knowledge, the answer to this particular difficulty is not known to us."

Throughout the volume philosophical terminology is avoided, and the reader is not left in doubt as to the meaning of the technical terms employed. In every page the grandeur and authority of the Scriptures are kept in view. Nothing is conceded to those who in any way would undermine faith in the Bible as in truth the Word of God. The whole contents might be summarized in the words, "The Bible is not merely a witness to some nebulous 'Word' of God; the Bible itself is the Word of God."

This book is of particular value to young people who are confronted with the so-called "scientific approach" that is common in most secular universities. A better gift, apart from the Bible itself, could not be given by Christian parents to a son or daughter who leaves home to enter some of these modern institutions for higher education.

— Alexander Barkley

WANTING THE IMPOSSIBLE, by George B. Duncan. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1957, pp. 126. \$2.00.

This book is a handy, well printed volume of 14 short sermons, addressed primarily to church members, by the Vicar of Christ Church, Cockfosters, England. It is second in a series, "Preaching for Today," edited by Cecil Northcott.

In the Preface, the author says of these sermons (dedicated to "Those who pray for me"), "The lessons they seek to emphasize have been born out of a study of the Word of God in relation to the needs of the Christian living out his or her life in the context of the Christian Church." They bear the impress of his gentle, sympathetic touch, of the earnestness and simplicity of his thought and are illustrated from common, ordinary experience. He takes the Bible as the Word of God, and says much that Church members, professing Christians everywhere, need to think much more about than they do. He challenges all of us at many points.

Of the best of these sermons we would mention, "The Most Important Question in the World" — "What shall I do then with Jesus who is called Christ?"; "A Soul with a Grievance — He was angry and would not go in" — a neglected part of one of Christ's parables. "A Walled Garden" gives a beautiful picture of the Church from one point of view. Sufficiently suggestive are the titled, "At His Feet"; "The Sin of Inactivity"; "The Discipline of Disappointment."

There is good in the other sermons, too, but in these mentioned above there is less of a doctrine frequently intrusive, though not often obtrusive, the old Pelagian, Arminian doctrine that the will of man can effectively resist the will of God, and thwart God's purpose. In the first sermon, "The Gospel We Preach," the preacher pushes for a "decision" on man's part (p. 19), with no mention of the work of the Holy Spirit, who alone persuades and enables a sinner really to decide for Christ. We might have overlooked this did it not come in again and again in the sequel, ignoring the fact that faith is "the gift of God" to one born again of the Spirit, not something produced by man.

In the second sermon, which gives the title "Wanting the Impossible" to the book (2 Sam. 23:15), the impossible is here at your hand. You can have it **if you take it**. The "new life can be yours **if you take it**. . . **if you receive Him who is the Life**. **If you open your heart to receive Christ by the Holy Spirit, He will enter your life, and then everything that is in Christ will be yours**." Can a spiritually dead man open either heart or hand to receive anything? In the words of Dr. B. B. Warfield, "We cannot look to ourselves for the decisive act in our salvation and at the same time be looking to God for all. Trust transformed into work loses its quality; turned back on itself, it is obliterated."

In Sermon 7, "More than Conquerors," the interpretation of the text, Rom. 8:37, is that of the Keswick Convention, of Charles G. Trumbull, and others of the "Victorious Life" doctrine. On p. 69 Dr. Trumbull is quoted as saying that in his experience, "the Christian life was not to serve Christ, not to try to imitate Christ, not to strive after Christ, but for him **to live was Christ**." Then Mr.

Duncan adds, "The secret of the victorious life is, that the only victorious life that has ever been lived and ever will be lived is the life of our risen Lord lived out in our lives."

But on p. 67 he says, "Paul does not say, 'In all these things we shall be more than conquerors,' but 'we are'. . . There is no delay." (Why wait on God's slow process of sanctification?). "We are super-conquerors. . . Does that mean that the Christian is never defeated? No; but it does mean that he never need be. Does it mean that the Christian is without sin? No; but it does mean that he can be without blame and without conscious sin — we are super-conquerors!"

Here is confusion and contradiction of terms, which in such a vitally important matter is dangerous. And though the author be not conscious of his entanglement, his readers should be warned.

Could Christ "live out in our lives" a life that is not without sin, without being Himself conscious of what He was doing? Without deliberate sin in so doing? And there is certainly no decisive victory for us so long as the life we live is merely without conscious sin. "Who can understand his errors?" Is it superfluous to pray, "Cleanse thou me from hidden faults"? "Make me to know my transgression and my sin" —? Why did God make known His covenant? Why did He give men His law? Why send His prophet to make Jerusalem know her abominations?

Let us read the text in its context: "We are more than conquerors through him who loved us," — not merely "who loves us," for Paul here speaks of a transcendent manifestation of Christ's immeasurable and unchangeable love at one particular time in the past, often mentioned throughout the Word. For it was He who loved the church-you-me and gave Himself up for us, not to us, but to His enemies and ours, "on our behalf," "in our place" — to enemies who "took him and bound him and led him away" to crucify Him, that He might do the Father's will. The subject of this 8th chapter of Romans is the security of the Christian. And this text tells us that our security is not to be found in our decision, or resolution, or loyalty, but only in Christ's love and power, so that the victory we obtain through Christ, is not partial or uncertain, but complete, that all the glory of it may be ascribed to God alone.

— Frank D. Frazer

WOMAN IN THE CHURCH: A RESTUDY OF WOMAN'S PLACE IN BUILDING THE KINGDOM, by Russell C. Prohl. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1957, pp. 86. \$2.00.

This book is written in an interesting style, attractively printed, easy to read. It is well documented, and includes a bibliography. Evidently the author devoted a lot of research and study to its preparation. He is considerate of all who may

not agree with him, particularly the more conservative part of his own Lutheran Church, the Missouri Synod.

At the outset, he states the question this: "What is the God-pleasing status of women in the Church?" This is noticeably different from the subtitle. But his references to the activities of the World Council of Churches, and others, soon indicate that he is going to work for the "social gospel" idea that women (and men) are "building the Kingdom." Yet he says, emphatically, (p. 17), that God's Word is to be the guide in deciding what the answer shall be. "The pertinent passages must be studied carefully to determine what the words actually say. . . must be considered in their context, and in the light of the whole Bible." We agree. And we would add, if the Bible is the Word of God, then it is an objective thing that comes TO us, not OUT FROM US. And it means what it says. But, instead of coming to grips with the vital question, What does God say?, Mr. Prohl raises other questions, as to whom and when and where and how does the Bible speak? — proper questions, no doubt, but allowed to obscure the God who speaks, they lead to a one-sided, subjective interpretation. So one cannot be sure just what the "biblical, evangelical, Lutheran method" he proposes to follow may mean. It is described negatively, by the rejection of certain principles that conflict with those which, presumably, he holds. But two or three of these (p. 18 f.), seem to beg the question.

In Chapter II Emil Brunner, exponent of the so-called "New Christianity," is quoted and his pronouncements taken as directives in the study. While Brunner says, "The Bible is the Word of God," he keeps repeating what is to the effect that the Bible is **not** the Word of God except in so far as the reader (or hearer) **feels** that it is God's Word **to him**. This would make subjective interpretation of itself decisive.

Certainly there is the order of creation, and there is the order of redemption. God is not a God of confusion. But, redemption was not to remove any inequality in the order of creation, but to right the disorder brought into human relationship by man's violation of that order. Redemption is God's transcendent work, but not to transcend His perfect order of creation. In God's infinite love, it was to restore, at infinite cost, what man had lost by refusing to subordinate himself unto the LORD God, his Creator. Brunner's assertion that woman's sphere of activity is no longer to be determined by God's order of creation, but by human experience in trying to make a better order for themselves, is false, foolish, and dangerous. God says, "No man can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him." Neither can any social organization. The work of the Church is not to redeem men, or society, but to witness to God's Word and work, specifically by obedience, for Christ is the Head of the Church.

1 Cor. 11:3, by a sequence of three propositions, to be taken together, states the order of authority within the order of creation, as the basis for answer to the question of the Corinthian Church: "I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of woman is man; and the head of Christ is God." ("Christ," i.e., the man Christ Jesus, the only Mediator).

There are three subordinate positions under one supreme Head. What here especially concerns the subordinate positions of man and woman is further explained in verses 11 and 12 that follow. From these we see that, since Christ is the Head of every man, and, neither man is without woman nor woman without man in the Lord, therefore Christ, the Lord, is equally the Head of every woman. Whatever authority man has over woman is subordinate under the authority of Christ. But, subordinate position of itself in no way or degree alters essential equality, or implies inferiority. If there be inferiority, its cause must be sought elsewhere. "The head of Christ is God," yet Christ always was and always shall be "very God of very God. . . of one substance with the Father." And yet He voluntarily took a subordinate position that God might be glorified. He came in the likeness of men that He might "give Himself a ransom for many."

Our author quotes only the second term of this sequence (p. 24), and while he allows that it belongs to the order of creation (p. 30), the translation he accepted from the 1952 Revised Standard Version, "the head of a woman is her husband," must be challenged on the ground of Greek grammar and usage. The word for man, **aner**, is the ordinary word to distinguish man from woman. Its use for "husband" is secondary, and dependent on the context (see lexicons). Here it has the article, **ho aner**, the generic article, fixing for its noun the generic sense shared with "woman." "The Greek definite article does not mean possession," i.e., is never equivalent to a possessive pronoun, and may be freely translated as such only where the context requires it (Robertson, **Grammar of the Greek New Testament**, p. 727 (b) and 769 (c)). Here the context concerns "every man" and therefore also every woman. The generic sense of **ho aner** is confirmed by the LXX (Greek) version of Gen. 2:24, where the generic **anthropos** is used for **ho aner** in verse 23. And this is confirmed by the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 19:4-6; Mark 10:6-9), "Have ye not read that He who made them at the beginning made them male and female? **For this cause. . .**" (quoting Gen. 2:24 word for word). **Precisely because** they were male and female, they did, and still do, enter the marriage relation, and thereupon become husband and wife; **NOT** because they were husband and wife before they married. Thus Jesus endorsed the accuracy of the ancient Greek version in this place, and the generic sense of **ho aner**. Paul repeats the same in Eph. 5:31, showing how he uses the words in question.

This is only one example of the author's frequent use of textual interpretation that cannot be justified by the context or by Greek usage. He bases his argument largely on the rendering "husband and wife" for man and woman. In his recapitulation (p. 64), he puts this first. Several times he quotes, to his own purpose, from the writings of Tertullian, but does not tell us that in the places referred to, Tertullian was arguing "from the very first records of the sacred writings" that the word for "woman" stands for the female of mankind, however she be classified as to age or condition. He notes that Paul is speaking of "every woman," and does not need to specify virgins (unmarried women) or any other class; then adds, "So, too, did the Corinthians themselves understand him. In fact, at this day (approximately 150 years after Paul wrote First Corinthians), the Corinthians do veil their virgins. What the apostles taught, their disciples approve" (*Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Volume IV, pp. 31, 33).

However, woman's position in the Church is further described in seven other New Testament places: 1 Cor. 14:34; Eph. 5:22; Col. 3:18; 1 Tim. 2:11; 1 Pet. 3:1, 5 — by a verb and a noun from the same root. This verb, though variously translated, "to be subject," "submissive," "obedient," etc., means literally "to be in subordinate position," as in an army arrayed for action. The noun means "subordination." The verb occurs, in the above places, only in the Middle (reflexive) voice, and the command is, "put yourselves in subordinate position" — (even as Christ subordinated Himself under God.) It is primarily a matter or **order** established by Christ, by His example and command, to be followed by every man and every woman.

1 Cor. 14:34, 35 and **1 Tim. 2:11-15** are closely parallel passages which describe woman's subordination in speaking and teaching in the Church, based on the order of creation as further revealed in "the law", that is the Old Covenant Scriptures with the first covenant statute as written in **Gen. 2:16, 17**.

Woman was created to be a "help" to man. Both being created in the image of God, she was to be a help to him in his intellectual, moral, and spiritual activities; therefore, essential equality in these particulars is implied. In physical activities, however, there are differences, for obvious reasons. If and when they together enter the marriage covenant, they are therein constituted "one flesh" for mutual help in the home. And, in general, man being the stronger physically, is to help woman. "But the woman being deceived came to be in transgression (of the law)." In her state of sin, she chose not to help the man, but to persuade him to follow her; which she did, and he did. Then they were together in the state of sin. The Judge of all the earth pronounced sentence on the woman according to her sin; and on the man according to his sin, as written in **Gen. 3:16-19**.

Every detail of this sentence — whether we like it or not — remains in force until the death of the body. For, God's work of redemption is not completed in this world; but shall be completed in His Kingdom of Heaven. And no kingdom that man may think to build on earth will ever reach heaven.

In the Corinthian passage, the word rendered "keep silence" is a psychological word describing a mental attitude and corresponding behavior. It occurs in verses 28 and 30 concerning men, where it plainly means a deferential, temporary silence. It does NOT anywhere mean absolute silence. There were two much stronger words at hand, either of which Paul could have used had he wanted it — the one which he used in writing to Titus, of silencing "insubordinate men, vain talkers, teaching things they ought not" (Tit. 1:10, 11); the other Peter used of silencing "the ignorance of foolish men" (1 Pet. 2:15). For "men," in both these places, Paul and Peter used **anthropoi**, meaning both men and women.

In Timothy, a still more general word is rendered "silence." Primarily it means rest, quietness, the quietness of perfect order. The word translated "shame," as used in a physical sense, means ugly, deformed; in its moral sense it means "**not conformed**" (to law and order); therefore, in error, sin. Why are we not ashamed of sin?

From these two passages, which explain and confirm each other, Christ's order that man shall rule over woman forbids her from exercising authority over man, particularly, by speaking or teaching **officially, from a ruling position in the Church**. The reason is obvious, in view of the fact that "the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (Rom. 7:12). Woman has no right to change her position as ordered by Christ. No man, no number of men, have any right to change her position, for Christ is the Head of every man. No Church has any right to change her position, for Christ is the Head of the Church.

However, woman's rightful position guarantees to her all the authority belonging thereto, and plenty of room for exercise of all her abilities. She is richly endowed, especially for duties in and for the home, which is the structural unit of both Church and State. She has far more to do for the peace and prosperity of Church and State than, in general, she is now doing. We don't rock cradles now, but no one can fail to see the truth in the old saying, "The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world," not autocratically, but none the less effectively when done in obedience to Christ. A wise woman once saved a city by talking as she had a right to talk (2 Sam. 20:16-22). A highly gifted woman, a deacon of the Church, evidently a woman of wealth, was a helper (**not a "ruler"**; cf p. 70 in our book), a patroness of many, including the apostle Paul (Rom. 16:1,2). The

tragedies presently occurring in the confusion of home, Church and State, warn us all that violation of Christ's order by men and/or woman is bound to be disastrous.

When we come to the end of our book (p. 80), we find we are still with Brunner, at the same

place from which we started. Giving preference to subjective interpretation, our author has been led astray. He has found only a man-pleasing answer to the question. He missed the good and wise guidance of God's objective Word.

— Frank D. Frazer

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.

Back Issues Needed:

The Library of Covenant College and Theological Seminary desires a set of issues of *Blue Banner Faith and Life* for the years 1946 to 1955, inclusive. Anyone able and willing to provide these back issues, in whole or in part, is requested to write to Dr. Robert G. Rayburn, President, P.O. Box 143, Clayton, St. Louis 5, Missouri. — Editor.

Question:

Prefacing statements: (a) As a substitute for His redeemed, Christ was rated a sinner. (b) For atonement He would have to endure all the punishment due to man. (c) His release did not come till after He had been in the grave several hours.

(1) What did Christ mean when, about to die on the cross, He said "It is finished"?

(2) What connection is there between Christ's being in the grave all of the last seventh-day Sabbath and His atonement for broken Sabbath days?

(3) Does Peter's statement that "His soul was not left in hell, neither did His flesh see corruption," mean that Christ, while His body was in the grave, endured what to man is eternal punishment?

(4) Do these things mean that the atonement was not completed till Christ rose from the dead?

Answer:

(1) There seems to be no doubt that when Christ, as He was about to die on the cross, said "It is finished," He meant all and probably somewhat more than He meant when He said to His father a few hours previously in His intercessory prayer, "I have glorified Thee on the earth having finished the work Thou hast given me to do" (John 17:4, American Revised Version). He used two slightly different verbs for "finished"; in the latter case the one that was more comprehensive. He had now finished the work He had to do on earth — the entire work of His humiliation, even to the payment in full of the ransom price of redemption. In the article of His death that work was finished, completed, perfected.

(2) There remained nothing more for Christ to do on earth by way of satisfaction for broken Sabbaths, or any other sins of those for whom He died. His dead body lying in the grave for a time had nothing to do with atonement. But, this was of the riches of God's grace, faithfulness and perfect timing. The death of Christ, the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, had followed, in regular order, the last Passover sacrifice, as its antitype, its complete fulfillment. By grace, His body was buried so that His death was confirmed in the ordinary way that men could investigate, understand, believe, and give, true first-hand testimony. Also, there were explicit prophecies to be fulfilled, such as Isa. 53:9 (ARV), "And they made His grave with the wicked, and with a rich man in His death." In the prophetic calendar of redemption given Israel in the "Set Feasts," the Feast of First fruits was prophetic of the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Levit. 23:9-14). It was timed for "the morrow after the Sabbath." And so it came about that "when the Sabbath was passed. . . on the first day of the week," Jesus "showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs" (see 1 Cor. 15:20-23).

(3) There were very definite limits to the time during which the body of Jesus should lie in the grave, as in Psalm 16:10, the inspired explanation of which is given by Peter (Acts 2:31, AV), "His soul was not left in hell, neither did His flesh see corruption." The word here translated "hell" is "sheol" in the Hebrew, "hades" in the Greek. The primary meaning of both is "the grave." But the grave is "hell" only to those for whom no escape has been provided. Jesus Christ was in possession of "the keys of hell and of death" (Rev. 1:18). Therefore, His soul was not detained there, even for one moment, but, before that day was done, He was "in paradise" according to His promise to the repentant malefactor on the cross beside His own (Luke 23:43). He was in heaven where, from thenceforward, His work would be till the day he returns to earth for the final judgment. To be sure He appeared to His disciples, from time to time, during a period of forty days, but made it plain to them that it was not as it had

been "while I was ye with you." Whenever He appeared, He said and did what He wanted to say and do, then "vanished from their sight."

Now, let us be quite sure we understand the three statements with which our questioner prefaced these questions. As for (c), the spirit of Christ was released when "the veil of the temple was rent in the midst," and Jesus "crying with a loud voice, said, Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit." His dead body was released when in cooperation with the Father and the Holy Spirit, He rose from the dead.

As for (a) and (b), Christ could not have been a substitute for sinners unless He were Himself personally sinless. Being rated, accounted, regarded, treated as a sinner, could not and did not make Him a sinner. Since He was without sin, "holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners," "as a lamb without blemish and without spot," who "through the Eternal (Holy) Spirit offered Himself without blemish unto God," it was impossible that His sufferings should be the same as "all" those due to man, or as "what to man is eternal punishment." It was impossible that He should suffer remorse as a man who had committed sin. It was impossible that He should suffer the utter hopelessness of a man cut off eternally from the presence and favor of God. But, since Christ had taken a perfect human nature into union with His divine nature, in such a way that He was still one Person, He could and did suffer as a sinless man who is also GOD in all infinite perfections of power and worth. He suffered the violent, penal death of the sacrifice. He suffered in Gethsemane, and before Gethsemane (John 12:27), in anticipation of the cup and the hour of separation from the Father, and, on the cross, in the darkness and unspeakable agony of that hour, He suffered beyond man's ability to conceive. He suffered voluntarily what in the councils of eternity the three Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, had agreed would completely and perfectly satisfy the law and justice of God for all the sins of the elect. Of all His recorded sayings on the cross, He uttered but one little four-letter word expressive of His bodily suffering. It was "when Jesus knew that all things were already **finished**, that the Scripture should be fulfilled, He said, am-thirsty" (Psalm 22:15).

Hence the answer to (3) is that, While the dead body of Christ lay in the grave, the spirit of Christ was in heaven carrying further forward His part in the great work of redemption. We must differentiate in mind the work of atonement as a part, though a most essential part, of the whole work of redemption.

(4) The answer has been given above. The atonement was completed in the death of Christ on the cross.

— Frank D. Frazer

Question:

(1) What is the Received Text" of the Greek

New Testament? (2) What is the standing or authority of the "Received Text"? (3) Since the Authorized or King James Version of the New Testament is based on the "Received Text," should it not be preferred to more recent translations which are not based on the "Received Text"?

Answer:

These queries concern the subject of Textual Criticism, which is the science by which the genuine text of a document is determined. When different manuscripts of a document are not identical, but show variations in wording, all cannot be correct. It is the function of textual criticism to determine, as far as possible, which "reading" or wording is the correct one; that is, which is the genuine text written by the original author of the document.

Many manuscripts of the Greek New Testament have come down from past times. Some of these are much older than others. Some of them bear evidence of being more accurate than others. By the practice of textual criticism scholars have sought to determine, in any given case, which manuscript or manuscripts give us the genuine words which were written by the original author. In other words, textual criticism seeks to weed out or eliminate the errors which have crept into manuscripts in the process of copying down through the centuries.

There is nothing evil, reprehensible or "modernistic" about textual criticism in the hands of competent scholars. Yet it seems disturbing to many Christians when they are told that the version of the Bible with which they are most familiar is marred by some defects and does not always reproduce with complete accuracy the genuine original text of the Word of God. It is very easy for a devout believer to fall into the habit of assuming that the familiar wording must be the best and that any attempt to change it on the basis of evidence from more correct manuscripts amounts to an unwarranted tampering with the Word of God.

But the most familiar is not necessarily the most correct, nor are scholars tampering with God's holy Word when they seek by sound processes of textual criticism to ascertain as accurately as possible what the genuine original text of the Bible is. Rather, a high regard for the Bible as the infallible Word of God requires that we make every effort to determine, as far as it is possible for us to do so, what is the genuine text of the Scriptures.

Even though the differences between a "good" text and a "poor" text are comparatively slight, faithfulness to the Word of God requires that we use **the best possible text**, both for theological study and as a basis for modern language translations. Only the best obtainable is good enough in such an important matter.

The "**Textus Receptus**" or "Received Text" has no special standing or authority. The term "Received Text" originated in the preface of the second edition of the Greek New Testament published by the Elzevirs at Leiden, Holland, in 1633. The preface contained the words: **Textum ergo habes, nunc ab omnibus receptum: in quo nihil immutatum aut corruptum damus.**" This sentence may be translated: "Therefore thou hast the text now received by all: in which we have given nothing altered or corrupt" (**The Infallible Word**, Philadelphia, 1946, page 171). This was merely a publisher's blurb — a somewhat audacious claim comparable to many claims of advertisers of the present day.

"The Text of the Elzevir edition of 1624 and the quite similar third edition published by Robert Estienne (Stephanus) of Paris in 1550 dominated the text used for more than two hundred years, the former on the Continent, the latter in England. It is this type of text which underlies our King James Version. This inferior but long dominant text was based, as Souter says, 'on Erasmus' last edition, the Complutensian Polyglot, and a handful of manuscripts — in fact, on something like a hundredth part of the Greek evidence now at our disposal, not to speak of versions and citations" (**The Infallible Word**, p. 171).

The so-called Received Text, in other words, was merely an early stage in the process of New Testament textual criticism — the process of scholarly comparison of manuscripts and other evidences in order to determine as precisely as possible the original authentic text as written by the inspired writers. While the "Received Text" represented progress in its day, three to four hundred years ago, it would be the opposite of progress to regard it as the standard text today.

With regard to the King James Version (Authorized Version), the question of its quality and value is complicated by the fact that in any appraisal of this or any other version, two entirely distinct questions are involved, namely:

(1) The question of the skill or quality of the work of translation of the Greek text into English.

(2) The question of the value or accuracy of the Greek text from which the translation was made.

Obviously these are distinct questions and should be distinctly investigated and answered. It is possible that a given version of the New Testament may have been very competently translated from a very poor Greek text. On the other hand, a very good Greek text may have been very poorly translated into English.

The ideal, of course, would be to have the best possible Greek text and then have it translated with the greatest possible skill. On the other hand, the utmost skill and faithfulness of

the scholars who do the work of translation cannot yield a product which is better than the text on which they work.

This can be illustrated from modern life as follows. A speech by the Prime Minister of Britain or the President of the United States is taken down in shorthand by a stenographer, who later produces a typewritten copy of the speech. It is then desired that the speech be translated into French or Russian for a broadcast. The translator may be highly qualified and perfectly honest and may do a very competent job of translating the speech, but if there are several errors, of greater or less importance, in the stenographer's reproduction of the speech, no amount of skill in translation can counteract them. Rather, the more competent the translator, the more accurately will these very errors be reproduced and perpetuated in his translation. Now suppose that the speech was taken down, not by a single stenographer, but by several, and that on examining their work it appears that one or two of them are clearly more accurate than the others. Obviously the "text" reproduced by these most accurate stenographers would be the best one to deliver to the translator for the purpose of rendering into French or Russian.

With respect to the Authorized or King James Version of the New Testament, the fact is that the men who did the translating were very highly skilled as translators, and did a remarkably accurate piece of work in rendering the Greek New Testament into the English of three centuries ago. But the Greek text which they used as the basis of their version was decidedly inferior to the best which is available today. So we may say that the Authorized Version of the New Testament is an excellent translation of a poor text.

One of the most important manuscripts of the Greek New Testament was unknown in 1611 — the famous **Codex Sinaiticus** or Sinaitic Manuscript, which was discovered by Tischendorf in the 19th century. Also, papyrus fragments of the Greek New Testament were unknown in 1611, yet many of them are known today, and these include the oldest known specimen of any part of the Greek text. Moreover, the science of textual criticism was only in its infancy in 1611. It has made tremendous advances since then, so that today we have **critical texts**, such as Nestle's, which approximate very much more closely the authentic original Greek than did any text available to scholars in 1611.

The best simple discussion of this subject known to the present writer is the chapter entitled **The Transmission of the Scriptures** in the volume entitled **The Infallible Word**, published 1946 by The Presbyterian Guardian Publishing Corporation, Philadelphia, Pa. This book is a symposium by the faculty of Westminster Theological Seminary. The chapter mentioned above was written by

Dr. John Skilton, and occupies pages 137-187 of the book. The part on pages 158 to 163 is especially relevant to the question of the propriety of textual criticism of the New Testament.

— J. G. Vos

Question:

What is your opinion of the Lamsa Bible which is being widely advertised at the present time? Is it closer to the original Word of God than our ordinary English versions?

Answer:

The full title of the Lamsa Bible is: **The Holy Bible — From Ancient Eastern Manuscripts, containing the Old and New Testaments translated from the Peshitta, the authorized Bible of the Church of the East.** The translation into English is by George M. Lamsa, the publisher is A. J. Holman Company, Philadelphia 7, Pa., and the price of the Bible is \$12.50.

In my opinion the Lamsa Bible has no special value above our ordinary English versions, is not closer to the original Word of God, and is being advertised with misleading statements.

The Lamsa Bible is a translation into English of the Peshitta, which was an Aramaic or Syriac translation made in the fifth century after Christ. The Peshitta was made by translating from Greek into Syriac, in the case of the New Testament. The Old Testament of the Peshitta was made by translating from Hebrew into Syriac, but later this was revised to bring it into closer harmony with the Septuagint, the most important Greek translation of the Old Testament. Our common English

versions of the Bible were translated directly from the Hebrew and Greek into English. The Lamsa Bible, on the other hand, is a second-hand or second degree translation — the English of the Lamsa Bible was translated from Syriac, which in turn was translated from Hebrew and Greek. Far from the Lamsa Bible being closer to the original Scripture, it is obviously farther removed from it than our ordinary versions are, for between the original Hebrew and Greek and the English Lamsa Version there is the intermediate step of the Peshitta, the ancient Aramaic or Syriac version.

The claim that the Peshitta was written in the language that Jesus spoke is unfounded. The language of the Peshitta is a form of Aramaic or Syriac which existed 500 years after the time of Christ, and in a different country from that in which He lived.

Being itself a translation of the original Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, the Peshitta cannot possibly be a rival or competitor to them in point of authority. No translation can possibly be more correct or more authentic or more valuable than the original from which it was translated. The claim that the Lamsa Bible somehow gets us closer to the real words of Jesus, or to the true sense of Scripture, is unfounded and misleading.

Those who wish further evidence and information concerning the real character of the Lamsa Bible are referred to an excellent article entitled **The Lamsa Bible: Scholarship or Pretense?**, by Allan A. MacRae, Ph.D., which appeared in **The Sunday School Times** for February 22, 1958, pages 142-144.

— J. G. Vos

In Memoriam

On June 3, 1958, the Rev. Frank D. Frazer departed this earthly life to be present with the Lord. His two book reviews and his contribution to the Question Box which appear in this issue were received a few days before his death. As the present issue goes to press we have no details as to the circumstances of his passing — only a telegram stating the fact.

Mr. Frazer was a supporter and helper in the work of publishing *Blue Banner Faith and Life* from the beginning of the enterprise. In the opinion of the editor he was the best read theological scholar in the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. He was an unflinching provider of sound and Scriptural counsel in the handling of difficult problems. The editor of this magazine often received help from his wise and faithful counsel. The many persons who have read his articles and other contributions in *Blue Banner Faith and Life* will realize how greatly he helped to make the magazine a success. His edifying material will be missed in the future.

Though saddened by the departure of our

brother, we know that to depart, for a Christian, is to be with Christ, which is far better than to remain here. We may therefore be comforted and may rejoice in the victory which he, by the grace of a faithful, covenant-keeping God, has won over all sin and suffering. In this dispensation of God's Providence a stanza of Harriet Stuart Menteth's poem, "Peden at the Grave of Cameron," seems very appropriate:

"I bless Thee for the quiet rest Thy servant
taketh now;
I bless Thee for his blessedness, and for his
crowned brow;
For every weary step he trod, in faithful fol-
lowing Thee,
And for the good fight foughten well, and
closed right valiantly!"

To his family and friends we extend our sincere sympathy in their sorrow. And may we all be as ready as our brother Mr. Frazer was, when the Lord's call comes to each one of us to pass from the realm of time into that of eternity.

— J. G. Vos

The Glass

"Now we see through a glass, darkly" — 1 Cor.
13:12

By M. W. Dougherty

The glass is dim!
'Tis frosted o'er
By chilling unbelief
That lurks continually
In little niches of my heart.
In times of trial it clouds the glass
Through which I look for comfort,
And for Him.

The glass is dim!
It is befogged by doubt,
The close companion of my unbelief.
It scurries back and forth
Upon the glass with great uncertainty;
With dimness less intense
Than lack of faith, it none the less
Obscures my view of yonder home
That's made by Him.

The glass is dim!
By grief of loss;
We fear to face the path
That I must walk, bereft
Of fellowship and words.
Though dimmed by tearful streaks,
It hinders, as I try to find the hand
Held out by Him.

The glass is dim!
All this I know,
And Oh! the turmoil of the soul
It brings. But this
I also know, there is a time
When what I faintly see
With hindered view, will all be clear,
Made so by Him.

The glass is dim!
But by the flame of faith
The frost is cleared.
A gentle voice gives courage,
And my tears of grief
Are gently wiped away
With tenderness. He grasps my hand,
I walk with Him.

The Coming Creed

By Horatius Bonar

The creeds have gone, so speaks the age,
The era of the sects is past.
Forward! In spite of saint or sage,
True freedom has begun at last.

The Christ of God is now no more;
The Christ of man now sits supreme;
The cross is part of mystic lore,
The resurrection morn a dream.

The age's progress fears no God,
No righteous law, no Judge's throne;
Man bounds along his new-found road,
And calls the universe his own.

Not faith in God, but faith in man
Is pilot now, and sail, and oar;
The creeds are shrivelled, cold, and wan;
The Christ that has been is no more.

Old truth, which once struck deep in hearts,
Fights hard for life, but fights in vain;
Old error into vigor starts,
And fable comes to life again.

Old mischief now becomes earth's creed;
The falsehood lives, the truth has died;
Man leans upon a broken reed,
And falls in helplessness of pride.

He spurns the hands that would have led,
The lips that would have spoken love;
The Book that would his soul have fed,
And taught the wisdom from above.

The ever-standing cross, to him,
Is but a Hebrew relic vain;
The wondrous birth at Bethlehem
A fiction of the wandering brain.

He wants no Saviour and no light;
No teacher but himself he needs;
He knows not of a human night,
Save from the darkness of the creeds.

Eternal Light, hide not Thy face:
Eternal Truth, direct our way;
Eternal Love, shine forth in grace;
Reveal our darkness and **THY** day.

"The veracity of God, and not the reasonableness of any doctrine, is the ground of our faith. It is the work of the gospel to cast down reasonings against the knowledge of God, and bring into captivity every thought unto the obedience of Christ."

Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, IV.4



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VOLUME 13

OCTOBER-DECEMBER, 1958

NUMBER 4

Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the LORD, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places.

Deuteronomy 33:29

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 Death of Rutherford

By Harriet Stuart Menteth

Tread lightly through the darkened room, for a sick man lieth there,
And, 'mid the dimness, only stirs the whispered breath of prayer;
As anxious hearts take watch by turns beside the lowly bed,
Where sleep the awful stillness wears—that soon must wrap the dead!

Hours hath he known of fevered pain — but now his rest is calm,
As though upon the spirit worn distilled some healing balm:
It may be that his dreaming ear wakes old accustomed words,
Or drinks once more the matin song of Anwoth's "blessed birds!"

Oh! green and fresh upon his soul those early haunts arise,
His kirk — his home — his wild wood walk — with all their memories —
The very rushing of the burn, by which so oft he trod,
The while on eagle wings of faith his spirit met its God!

A smile hath brightened on his lips — a light around his brow —
Oh! surely, "words unspeakable" that dreamer listeth now —
And glories of the upper sky, his raptured senses steep,
Blent with the whispers of His love — who gives His loved ones sleep!

But hark! — a sound! — a tramp of horse! — a loud, harsh, wrangling din!
Oh! rudely on that dream of heaven this world hath broken in —
In vain affection's earnest plea — the intruders forward press —
And with a struggling spasm of pain, he wakes to consciousness!

Strange lights are streaming through the room — strange forms are round his bed -
Slowly his dazzled sense takes in, each shape and sound of dread:
"False traitor to thy country's law — and to thy sovereign lord,
I summon thee to meet thy doom, thou felon Rutherford!"

Feebly the sick man raised his hand — his hand so thin and pale,
And something in the hollow eye made that rude speaker quail:
"Man! thou hast sped thine errand well! — yet it is wasted breath,
Except the great ones of the earth can break my tryst with death!

"A few brief days — or briefer hours — and I am going home,
Unto mine own prepared place, where but few great ones come!
And to the judgement seat of Him, who sealed me with His seal —
'Gainst evil tongues, and evil men, I make my last appeal!

"A traitor was His name on earth! a felon's doom His fate!
Thrice welcome were my Master's cup — but it hath come too late!
The summons of that mightiest King, to whom all kings must bow,
Is on me for an earlier day — is on me even now!

"I hear — I hear the chariot wheels, that bring my Saviour nigh,
For me He bears a golden crown — a harp of melody —
For me He opens wide His arms — He shows His wounded side —
Lord! 'tis my passport into life! — I live — for Thou hast died!"

They give his writings to the flames — they brand his grave with shame —
A hissing in the mouth of fools becomes his honoured name;
And darkness wraps a while the land, for which he prayed and strove,
But blessed in the Lord his death — and blest his rest above!

(Note: See sketch of the life of Rutherford on back cover.)

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Assurance of Salvation: Its Possibility and True Basis

By J. G. Vos

By "assurance of salvation" is meant a conviction in the mind of a Christian of the absolute certainty of his present and eternal salvation. Our hearts crave not merely possibility or probability, but full assurance or certainty of our own salvation. The Christian who has full assurance has a conviction of absolute, infallible certainty concerning his own eternal salvation.

Roman Catholics and some Protestants deny the possibility of absolute assurance of salvation in this life. In general, all who deny the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints (sometimes called the eternal security of the believer in Christ) must also deny the possibility of absolute assurance of eternal salvation.

We hold that those who deny the possibility of assurance are wrong, because many passages of Scripture teach us that full assurance is attainable in this life.

Not all who claim to have assurance of salvation have a right to this claim. Three classes of people, if they claim to have assurance, are basing their claim on shifting sands: (1) Legalists or moralists, who trust in their own good works, good life, good character or high ideals; (2) Formalists, who put their trust in the observance of external forms or ceremonies rather than in Christ; and (3) Emotionalists and Mystics, who trust in their own feelings or who "just feel" that they are saved.

An erroneous and very superficial teaching on assurance is often found in present-day American evangelical circles. It is the product of a superficial type of evangelism which says little or nothing about the need for deep repentance for sin, which presents only a partial and inadequate statement of the grounds of assurance and which almost invariably tends to confuse salvation itself with the Christian's subjective assurance of salvation. This superficial type of evangelism encourages people to think that when they have written their name in place of "whosoever" in John 3:16, or raised their hand in a meeting to signify their acceptance of Christ as Saviour, they should immediately think of themselves as saved forever. This is a confusion of salvation with assurance — a confusion of an objective state with a subjective conviction. It is a confusion of faith in Christ with faith that I am in Christ; a confusion of belief in the Gospel with belief that I

have truly believed the Gospel. It is amazing how dogmatically and confidently some people write and speak on this subject, who yet give no evidence of having studied its problems or of being at all familiar with the history of discussion about it.

Salvation and assurance are two different things, though they are often confused today as they have been in past times. A person may be really saved, and still not be sure, in his own mind, of his salvation. Such a person is safe, and his safety is sure, but he is not sure about his safety. His salvation is not in doubt, but he may be in doubt about his salvation.

We receive salvation by believing in Christ; we receive assurance by believing that we have believed in Christ aright. In salvation, the object of our faith is Christ. But in assurance we do not believe directly in Christ; rather, we believe something about ourselves, namely, that we have received something from Christ by believing in Him. To put it another way, to be saved we must believe in Christ and what He did FOR us on Calvary centuries ago; to receive assurance, we must believe that Christ is doing something IN us right here and now.

Confusing salvation with assurance leads many people who may be true Christians to trust in the wrong thing for their assurance of salvation. They base their assurance solely on the promise of the Gospel, such as "Whosoever believeth. . . .", and they reason thus: "I believe, therefore I am saved." But it must be realized that not all faith is saving faith. There is true faith and there is counterfeit faith, as shown by the Parable of the Sower. How do I know that I have believed aright — how do I know that my faith is genuine saving faith? It may indeed be genuine saving faith, but I should not rest assured of eternal salvation merely because of a decision made at some time to accept Christ as Saviour.

3 The grounds of assurance are presented in the Bible as three in number, and it should be realized that they work together, not separately, as grounds upon which we have a right to an infallible conviction of our own salvation. These grounds are: (1) the truth of God's Gospel promises to believers; (2) the evidence in a person's heart and life of those graces to which the promises are ad-

have
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dressed; and (3) the testimony of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Adoption, bearing witness with our spirits that we are the children of God.

The divine truth of the promises of the Gospel is the foundation upon which assurance must rest. Without this, we could never attain to full conviction or certainty. The person who doubts or disbelieves the truth of the Bible can never attain absolute certainty of his own salvation. But a recognition of the divine truth of the promises of the Gospel **alone** is not enough to warrant assurance. Many a person believes the Bible from cover to cover, with a technical or "historical" faith, who has no right to feel assured of his own salvation. The divine truth of the Bible, including the promises it contains, **alone and by itself**, is not a sufficient ground of assurance. The devils also believe, and tremble (James 2:19). Besides believing the promises, we must have evidence that our faith is the genuine kind of faith. A person should have in his heart and life the evidence of those graces to which the promises of God are addressed.

This means that a person needs to have the evidence of a new and changed life — that old things have passed away, and all things become new (2 Cor. 5:17). Here again, this ground of assurance must not be taken by itself alone, but must go along with the other true grounds. Whosoever believeth shall not perish, but how do I know that I have believed aright, how do I know that my faith is the real thing, how do I know that I am not just self-deceived? A person might say, "I know just because I know, just as I know what my own name is, or just as I know that I am awake and not asleep." But this will yield only probability, not infallible certainty. There may remain some lingering doubt that my faith is after all not the real thing, that I am after all self-deceived.

The truth is, we know that we have believed aright when we see some of the fruits of salvation in our lives. Christ came to save us FROM our sins, not IN our sins. If we have believed aright, we have not only been saved instantly from their guilt, but we will also be saved, gradually but increasingly, from their power and their uncleanness. Read 1 John 2:3-6 and 1 John 3:14. Just what has Christ done for us? Has He forgiven our sins, just that and nothing more? If that is our experience, then we have no right to rest assured of our salvation. Good works and a changed life are the fruits of a real salvation, and as such they form a part of the ground of a legitimate assurance of personal salvation. If Christ has really saved a person's soul, He will also, increasingly, save that person's LIFE — his eyes from tears and his feet from falling. All this enters into the ground of assurance of salvation.

The third part of the proper grounds of assurance is the testimony of the Holy Spirit in the

Christian's heart. This does not mean some special revelation or strange voice within us, nor that God will speak to us today as He once spoke to Moses and Paul, or as one human person might speak to another. If we expect anything like this we will be disappointed. Read 1 John 3:24; 5:10; Romans 8:15, 16. God is a person. To know God is a very different thing from merely knowing about God. The Holy Spirit, through the experiences of the Christian life, causes the believer really to know God as a Person.

This personal knowledge of God, by the operation of the Holy Spirit in our hearts, becomes the final, ultimate ground of our infallible assurance of salvation. It serves as a true ground for the hope that maketh not ashamed (Rom. 5:5).

"The Holy Spirit is the direct Author of faith in all its degrees, as also of love and hope. Full assurance, therefore, which is the fulness of hope resting on the fulness of faith, is a state of mind which it is the office of the Holy Ghost to induce in our minds in connection with the evidence of our gracious character above stated. In whatever way He works in us to will and do of His own good pleasure, or sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts, or begets us again to a lively hope, in that way He gives origin to the grace of full assurance — not as a blind and fortuitous feeling, but as a legitimate and undoubting conclusion from appropriate evidence" (quoted from A. A. Hodge, **Commentary on the Confession of Faith**).

How can we test the genuineness of our own assurance? Dr. A. A. Hodge in his **Commentary on the Confession of Faith** gives four tests by which true assurance can be distinguished from false or presumptuous assurance. These four tests are:

4 tests

1. True assurance produces real humility; false assurance, on the other hand, tends to foster spiritual pride.

2. True assurance leads to increased seeking after holiness, whereas false assurance tends rather to produce slothfulness and self-indulgence.

3. True assurance encourages self-examination, with a desire to be searched and corrected by God; false assurance on the other hand tends to be satisfied with appearances and to avoid careful examination of one's heart and life.

4. True assurance produces aspirations for closer fellowship with God; false assurance does not draw the person closer to God.

After full assurance is once attained, it may be temporarily weakened or partially lost by reason of a variety of causes, including temptations, the believer's lapses into sin, and providential dispensations of God. This is not only the teaching of Scripture (Psalm 32; Psalm 143:1-7; 2 Cor. 7:5), but also it is the common experience of Christian people. For an unchanging and always unclouded

consciousness of God's presence and blessing we shall have to wait until we reach heaven; such unvarying bliss does not exist on earth. Assurance is not a constant, unchanging quantity; just because it is a state of mind rather than a state of existence — subjective rather than objective — it inevitably has its variations in degree of intensity, its ups and downs.

Yet the true believer's consciousness of God's presence and favor can never be entirely lost. If it could, the believed would sink into utter despair.

Through all the varied experiences of life, the Christian believer is never left without some consciousness of God's presence and favor. This keeps him from despair even in his darkest hours.

Assurance is not only the Christian's privilege — it is also a duty to seek it, and having gained it, to endeavor to keep it strong and clear by living close to the Lord. This means a faithful, conscientious use of the appointed means of grace, and waiting patiently upon God for His blessing.

Sketches of the Covenanters

By J. C. McFeeters

Chapter XXXIII

A Massacre — A. D. 1679.

The victory at Drumclog was followed up by the Covenanters with vigor. Claverhouse, with his broken ranks, was hotly pursued. He fled from the field on a wounded horse; nor did he halt till he reached Glasgow, 25 miles away. The pursuers followed him half the distance. He began that Sabbath with the beat of drums, and ended it with defeat and shame.

Next morning these Covenanters had doubled their number; 500 men stood harnessed for war, determined to overtake the foe, renew the fight, and win other victories. That forenoon with Hamilton in command, they boldly dashed into Glasgow to strike the broken forces of Claverhouse; but they were repulsed. They retired to an encampment much dispirited. As was usual with the Covenanters, they began to enquire into the moral cause of this reverse. They felt that God for some reason was displeased. The investigation revealed the fact that Thomas Weir, who had joined them with 140 horsemen, had been a dragoon in Dalziel's ranks at Rullion Green, where the Covenanters were defeated.

A committee was appointed to wait on Weir and investigate his case. They were roughly received. He gave no satisfaction for having been on the enemy's side on the former occasion. The Covenanters were quick to reach Bible conclusions and at once classed him with Achan who in the days of Joshua brought defeat upon Israel. Weir with his detachment was summarily dismissed. A resolution was then adopted that none who had forsaken the Covenant or were guilty of the sins of the times be admitted into the army. This was a heroic step, a return to the solid basis, the old Covenant grounds that had been abandoned in 1650 when the "Act of Classes" was rescinded, and the doors opened to admit unfaithful men into places of public trust. Sir Robert Hamilton, at the head of half a regiment of

Covenanters, thus nobly attempted to rebuild the walls of Zion and set up the gates, even in troublesome times. These were men of God who knew the Lord of hosts, in whose eyes fidelity is everything and numbers are nothing. They were afraid of nothing but sin.

The martial spirit of the Covenanters rapidly spread during the week; they flocked to the standard that was again lifted up for **Christ's Crown and Covenant**.

Beneath the waving folds of the Blue Banner 5,000 men had rallied when Saturday's sun was sinking in the west. They had unbounded confidence in the cause for which they adventured their lives; a holy enthusiasm knit them together. They were ready for battle "with hand strokes," as they said to Hackston, one of their noble captains. They had accepted the responsibility of war and were determined to win or die. The Sabbath was approaching. They planned to enter into its sweet rest and offer the appointed worship; then on Monday morning, march upon the enemy and strike for freedom. But, alas, how quickly fairest prospects may be covered with darkness! The sun set that evening behind an ugly cloud.

Hamilton had held a council of war on Thursday. He had the benefit of the wisdom and advice of Donald Cargill, Thomas Douglas, John King, and John Kidd, ministers eminent among the Covenanters. That Council adopted a public Declaration, stating their reasons for taking up arms. This statement embodied:

1. Their purpose to defend the true Reformed religion;
2. Their adherence to the Solemn League and Covenant;
3. An acknowledgement of public sins and duties;

4. A denunciation of Popery, Prelacy, and Erastianism.

The Declaration was proclaimed to the army and published to the world. On these impregnable grounds the little army was consolidated; they felt themselves strong in the Lord, and able in His name to fight His battles.

On Saturday night, when quietness had fallen upon the camp, John Welch arrived with an additional force of 440 men. This should have been an inspiration, but it was the very opposite. Welch was a prominent Conventicle minister; "a diligent, fervent, successful preacher." He was a fearless man; a price equal to \$2,000 had been set upon his head by the government. Yet, he it was who introduced the confusion of tongues that resulted in the utter dissipation of the army, and the consequent defeat of the Covenanters at Bothwell Bridge.

Welch was dissatisfied with the Declaration. It was too forceful for him. He would tone it down, that it might soothe the king, placate the Duke of Monmouth, condone the Indulged ministers, and restore Weir to the ranks. He presented a new Declaration as a substitute for the one already in force. For two weeks, even till the enemy was lining up for battle, he agitated the question. At last Hamilton, the commander, contrary to his convictions, yielded for the sake of peace. He hoped by this means to save his distracted army, that with solid ranks he might meet the foe and win the fight. But he sadly mistook policy for wisdom. The battle of Bothwell Bridge was lost that moment. The battle was lost before a shot was fired. Hamilton surrendered before he met Monmouth. He had displaced the truth for the sake of harmony. His flag is already furled, there will be no fighting now except by the heroes of the van-guard. The Divine favor that gives victories has been withdrawn. The martial spirit has fled from the leader and his men are weak as women.

On Sabbath morning, June 22, 1679, the king's army, 15,000 strong was massed on the north bank of the Clyde; on the south side the Covenanters numbering 5,000 confronted them. The narrow bridge lay between them. Hackston, Paton, and Balfour, with 300 Covenanters stood at its south end. The rest of the army was behind them on the moor with gunshot, standing in eleven solid squares; six banners waved proudly over them. They had one cannon, two detachment of cavalry, and a body of skirmishers.

Monmouth orders his troops across the bridge. A solid column pushes forward broad as the bridge is wide; step follows step in that dread procession, when lo, a spreading puff of smoke rises on the bank in front, and a cannon ball is hurled among them, while muskets pour forth volleys of death. The bridge is strewn with bleed-

ing men and the broken ranks fall back. The Duke orders another charge. A second column moves hurriedly over the gory path of their fallen comrades to meet the same fate. Again and again, the attack and the repulse. They attempt to ford the river, but Balfour with his sharpshooters hurls them back, while many a brave man lies down in the cool stream to rise no more. The bridge drips with blood; the Clyde is crimsoned. After three hours the Covenanters' ammunition fails, and Monmouth rushes the bridge. The Covenanters meet them with swords, but are overpowered; they fall back upon the main body and find it unfit for action.

The royal army was soon across. They line up for the general engagement, but hesitate to give battle; they have tested the courage of the Covenanters, and have a dread of results. Hamilton is awaiting his opportunity. His intention is to rush the enemy into the river. He orders a forward movement, but the order fails. Wherefore does his army hesitate? Ah, many of the officers have disappeared. Terror is creeping over the masses like a death chill. Welch and his friends have left; Weir with his 140 horsemen takes fright and flees; Hamilton loses his head and his cavalry stampedes; the army is thrown into confusion; all is lost. In the fight only 15 were killed; in the flight 400 were slaughtered.

Monmouth, seeing the panic, ordered a pursuit which resulted in a running butchery, a horrid massacre. A body of 1,200 surrendered; these were compelled to lie flat on the ground all night. If in their wounds or aching they moved head or hand, an admonition was delivered from a musket. A change of posture, then a sharp crack, a whizzing bullet, a bleeding victim, a death struggle, a pallid corpse.

That was a sad Sabbath for the Covenanters. Defeat, dishonor, and distress turned the day into a painful memory. The calamity doubtless, arose out of the compromise of Covenanted principles. Welch's wisdom proved to be foolishness; Weir's strength, weakness; Hamilton's compliance, defeat.

The sacrifice of truth can never be productive of good. Loss, sorrow, defeat, and death are in the train of any policy that buries principle.

Points for the Class

1. How did the Covenanters follow up their victory at Drumclog?
2. What reverse did they suffer?
3. How did they account for it?
4. What was the growth of their army?
5. Who introduced confusion into their ranks?
6. What was the subject of debate?

7. How did it terminate?
8. Describe the forces at the battle of Bothwell Bridge.
9. Describe the battle and its issue.
10. What lesson may we learn from this defeat?

Chapter XXXIV

The Covenanters' Prisons. — A. D. 1680.

"They who profess Christ in this generation must suffer much or sin much," exclaimed one of the Scottish martyrs. The enemy was in power and every means was employed to compel the Covenanters to abandon their Covenant with God, break relation with Jesus Christ, and thus destroy their testimony. To accomplish this, the king and his courtiers subjected these inoffensive people to cruelties most shocking. While they remained steadfast in their Covenant, the violence increased; when any one of them relaxed, one step of defection necessitated another, till they stood in the enemy's camp. The same process is ever true.

The massacre at Bothwell Bridge brought upon the Covenanters extreme distress. Their sufferings hitherto had been as a continual dropping on a very rainy day, with fitful gusts striking here and there; now a hurricane sweeps the country, bringing ruin and desolation in its broad path. Every available force was put in operation for the utter annihilation of the Covenanters. Their ardor for Christ and His royal rights must be quenched in their blood, and their testimony to the truth must be silenced. The king, the courts, the army, the bishops—all were combined for the overthrow of the Presbyterian system of faith and the Covenant of God. Upon the ruins of the temple of liberty, erected by the Reformers, King Charles had determined to build his castle of absolute despotism. He knew that the glory of Christ's supremacy would never fade out of the skies of Scotland, while Covenanters preached, prayed, and sang Psalms; nor would his despotism flourish while there were Covenanters to challenge his impious claim of authority over the Church, and iniquitous attempt to rule man's conscience. Hence the desperate attempt to overawe and suppress them.

After the battle of Bothwell Bridge, the first stroke of excessive cruelty fell upon the 1,200 prisoners who had surrendered on the field. They lay all night upon the cold ground huddled together like sheep, surrounded by a strong guard. It was a night of horror. The sentinels watched every motion, and shot at any hand or head that dared to stir. In the morning they were marched from their mossy bivouac, leaving the green field dotted with crimson pools, and strewn with the

dead who had received fatal shots; there they lay in garments rolled in blood.

The prisoners were tied together, two and two, and driven to Edinburgh, as cattle to the slaughter. The journey was dreary, during which they suffered from hunger, weariness, cruel mockings, and barbarous treatment. In the Greyfriars' churchyard, there yet remains the small enclosure, into which these prisoners were driven like so many dumb animals. Here they were kept to await their sentence. Twelve hundred men, with scarcely comfortable standing room, without decent clothing, without sanitary accommodations, without proper food, without shelter, detained for months within these stone walls under a merciless guard—who can conceive of their sufferings? They had been stripped, all but naked; the hard ground was their bed; the sky was their roof; they were exposed to the heat of day, and the chill of night; the rains of July drenched them; the snows of November blanketed them.

During these wearisome months the number of prisoners constantly grew less, and mostly by melancholy means. Some of them subscribed a bond confessing themselves to be rebels and promising unconditional obedience to the king. The hardships of their condition, the threats against their lives, and the entreaties of relatives overpowered conscience. They were released only to be reproached, distressed, tormented, and pillaged at home, by the soldiers who overran the country. Their unholy bond sacrificed their peace with God, and brought no protection from man. Such is the effect of every compromise of God's people with the world.

Disease also reduced the number. Sickness arising from exposure, neglect, and ill fare, wrought havoc with their lives. The living watched carefully over their dying companions, as they lay on the cold hard ground, destitute of every earthly cordial and comfort. But the Balm of Gilead they had in plenty; the consolations of God were abundant; the promises distilled sweetness upon their lips; prayers filled the place with incense; the Psalms were as the music of heaven in their ears; the gates of glory opened wide for the dying; pain, sorrow, and darkness vanished from the soul, as it went forth from the earthly tabernacle to enter into the Eternal City.

Quite a few were condemned to death and executed on the scaffold. Prominent among these, were John Kid and John King, two ministers of Christ. They received their sentence with serenity and went hand in hand, to the place of execution. Their conversation was cheerful. Their outlook was far beyond the scaffold, and the city towers, and the high hills outlined on the sky, and even beyond the glowing sun that was then smiling in the west. What magnificent scenery

their eyes must have rested upon, as they now had come to Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the innumerable company of angels, the spirits of just men made perfect! Already in triumphant faith they were walking the golden streets, with palms in their hands, crowns on their heads, and songs in their hearts. Kid was a witty man, usually overflowing with innocent mirth; even in sight of the gallows his humor was insuppressible. Looking into King's face he made a pun on their own names, saying, "I have often heard and read of a kid sacrificed, but I seldom or never heard of a king made a sacrifice."

Four hundred of these Covenanters remained unmoved by threats, promises, sufferings, or protracted hardships. The painful weeks and months might wear them out, but they continued firm in the faith and testimony, resolved to honor their Lord and His Covenant while they had breath. They remembered the promise, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." They were of the unbending type.

The king's council, hopeless in attempting to bring them to terms, resolved to finish the irksome task by shipping all to distant lands. They placed 243 on a small sail-ship, which was tossed on the Atlantic ocean until engulfed amidst the waves. The remainder were never transported.

Many Covenanters were confined in places even more intolerable than this. Dunnottar Castle became one of these notable spots. The castle stands on a rock that projects into the sea. Here still exists a deep dark room, called the "Whigs' Vault," where 167 Covenanters were crowded together. Forty-five of these were women. The room is 56 feet long, 16 wide, and 12 high, having two small windows. This outrageous disregard for sex, decency, health, and every natural right, aroused even the indignation of the governor's wife, at whose request the women, after some days, were removed to another vault. The prisoners suffered the horrors of these dark foul pits three months. But the Lord Jesus Christ did not foresake them; they were sustained by His abundant grace. He heard their mournful cries and upheld their faith. Some breathed out their lives on the hard stone floor, with no pillow on which to rest their aching heads. Blessed termination of the horrid cruelty! Even there the "pearl gate" opened wide and the ransomed soul arose in power, and walked forth into the marvelous light of the world above. They who survived death were offered liberty on condition of taking the king's oath, and acknowledging his supremacy over Church and conscience. They persistently refused to do this. How great the loyalty of these men and women to the Lord Jesus Christ. Imprisonment

with all its bitterness was sweeter to them than liberty with a defiled conscience.

The Bass Rock, too, was a penitentiary for the Covenanters. This is a lofty green rock arising boldly out of the sea near Edinburgh, having steep rugged sides, being accessible only at one point. Thither they brought, in the latter years of the persecution, the overflow of prisoners after the inland jails had been crowded. The rock is very desolate. This was the Covenanters' Patmos. Here Alexander Peden, John Blackader, and many others spent months, and years walking round and round over the storm-battered cliffs, or sitting on the ledges looking landward thinking of the desolate home, the broken family, the wasted Church and the guilty land. When the waves dashed against the rock, and the breakers leaped high; when storms darkened the land, and billows whitened the sea; when nothing was heard but the noise of the waters, the roar of the tempest, and the scream of the sea-fowl, even then was the Holy Spirit there to illuminate these prisoners of hope. They held communion with God; visions of glory lighted up their dreary home; they moved amidst the scenery of heaven; the Bass rock was peopled with angels. Blackader has left on record some rich experiences he there enjoyed.

We are free to worship God according to conscience and the Word. But let us not forget that our liberty is the blossom, and our privileges the fruit, of the rough black root of persecution suffered by our forefathers. Had they not been faithful, we would have had to fight the battles they fought, and suffer as they suffered, or have perished in darkness. Will not we, for the sake of coming generations be likewise faithful? The Lord Jesus grant us strength and success.

Points for the Class

1. What was done with the prisoners taken at Bothwell Bridge?
2. How did they suffer in Edinburgh?
3. Describe their prison and their hardships.
4. What two of their ministers were executed?
5. Describe Dunnottar Castle.
6. Describe the Bass Rock.
7. For what was it used in those times?
8. How may we meet the obligations descending from the fathers?

A Philosophy of History

By the Rev. W. R. McEwen, B. A.

We are all in the midst of history in the making. Yet we are so much involved in the process that it is difficult for us to abstract ourselves from it, to stand aloof, as it were, and view our lives in their historical perspective; to see the sweep of God's eternal purposes working out in the world and learn our part in the Divine scheme of things; to gain a philosophy of history. But this the Bible gives, especially in the historical books, as it records the lives of men from birth to death and traces the movements of men and nations.

The Fact of Sin

One of the first facts of which the Bible takes cognisance is the fact of sin. It is because this fact is ignored today that people cannot understand the situations with which they are confronted. They seek to build up a scheme of things upon an optimistic view of human nature, and are confused and disillusioned when it all collapses like a house of cards. The Biblical writers do not make such a mistake. They recognise the universal and prevalent fact of sin.

They trace the downfall of Israel to the fact that the people followed the sins of Jeroboam, "who made Israel to sin". No doubt there were various forms of sin and various kinds of sinners. There were those who went farther than Jeroboam in the ways of wickedness. And all did not transgress the same way. Nor were all equally blameworthy. Kings and princes, who should have restrained evil and been examples of piety and morality, were often ringleaders in idolatry and iniquity. But all were too ready to follow their encouragement and bad example.

Usually sin began in breaches of the first table of the law. Perhaps at first there were only some minor deviations in connection with the worship of God, some tolerance of pagan practices, some compromise with heathen ideas. But this path led down to immortality of the vilest kind and persecution of the utmost cruelty. Some descended to the lowest depths of degradation, while others would stop at nothing to gain their diabolical ends. Athaliah murdered her own grandchildren. Joash had the prophet Zechariah, who dared to reprove him for his sins, stoned to death. The pages of Bible history are stained with blood. The fact of sin is evident on every hand.

But the thing to notice is that it is not regarded as exceptional. It is something with which everyone is affected. Adam begat sons in his own likeness — sinners like himself. And though God destroyed the wicked world by the Flood and only saved righteous Noah and his family, yet he and

his family were also sinners. Then God called Abraham from the idolatries of Ur of the Chaldees, yet he and his descendants were far from perfect. And while God separated the Israelites from the corruptions of Egypt and Canaan, yet they learned their ways. Goodness was not hereditary. The sons of Eli, the godly priest, made themselves vile. The sons of Samuel, the child of prayer, did not walk in his ways. The children of other godly parents did not always turn out well. Indeed, all have the same evil tendencies.

The Bible recognises this fact, which is evident in history, that "there is none righteous, no not one". It declares that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God". "We are all as an unclean thing", confessed the prophet Isaiah. "All we, like sheep, have gone astray", he acknowledged. "I was shapen in iniquity", the Psalmist confessed. The fact of sin is writ large upon the pages of holy Scripture. We cannot understand history without taking it into account.

In the humanistic optimism engendered by the prosperity of the Victorian era and the advances made in science it used to be thought, about the turn of the century, that the golden age of peace and plenty was about to be ushered in. The poet, Tennyson, sang:

"Arise and fly
The reeling Faun, the sensual feast;
Move upward, working out the beast,
And let the ape and tiger die".

But they're not dead yet! Indeed it is not the beast in man but the man in man which is the problem. Sin is still a fact in the world today, with which we must reckon. Men still turn away from God, dishonour His Name and disobey His commands. If they do not express their unbelief in forms of idolatry prevalent in past ages or in some countries today, they still worship gods of their own making. And they grow like the gods they worship. Thus wickedness abounds. "Truth is fallen in the streets and equity cannot enter". The situations described in the Bible repeat themselves in the world today. There are many parallels to present conditions. For human nature does not change. It is still corrupt, and breaks forth in acts of sin wherever it has occasion.

Thinking people are becoming conscious of this situation. They realise that there is something in man which makes him turn to evil. Because of this the hearts of many are filled with fear. The boasted discoveries and inventions of science can be turned to man's destruction. A mood of pessimism and despair has settled on some,

as they see the nations poised on the brink of the volcano of nuclear war. Certainly, viewing the situation solely from the human standpoint, there are dread possibilities which might well give us pause. If we looked only to man our hearts might well fail us for fear, for the future looks black, indeed.

The Fact of Grace

But man has not the last say. God has not abandoned His world nor given up the reins of government to evil forces. And His tender mercies are over all His other works. God has spoken, and also acted. He has a word of grace and a work of grace. "It is of the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not".

There is His common grace, making His sun to shine upon the evil and the good, and sending rain upon the just and the unjust, and preserving and governing all His creatures and all their actions. So He controls circumstances, restraining evil and keeping evil men in check so that they do not destroy each other. Thus life on earth is made possible and even pleasant at times. This is a factor which needs to be taken into consideration when viewing the history of the world.

But there is greater grace than that; there is God's saving grace — His love shown forth in mercy to the undeserving and in compassion to the guilty to pardon their sin and bind them to Himself in the bonds of fellowship. That love is pledged to His people in a gracious covenant. That covenant was made with Abraham and renewed to Isaac and Jacob and the nation of Israel, though no more deserving than others. In it He promised to bless those who turned to Him in loving trust and laid hold by faith on His covenant promises. That covenant was eventually sealed by the blood of God's own Son when, as a substitute for His people, He paid the penalty for their sin.

To prepare for His coming and to dispense the blessings of His grace to believing people before His coming, God appointed certain ordinances through which people might see Christ's work more clearly and be enabled by faith to avail themselves of its benefits. Thus He instructed the priesthood to offer sacrifices which, though they could not take away sin, spoke of a sacrifice of nobler name. He raised up prophets who proclaimed His Word to a disobedient people, called them back to Himself, and pointed them to the Saviour. He appointed kings to rule His people and represent the kingly office of His Son. And in the darkest days of apostasy His grace was seen in preserving the priesthood, in inspiring the prophets and in maintaining the Davidic line of kingship from which the promised Messiah was to come. There was also always a remnant that remained faithful to His Word, delighted in His ordinances and laid hold on His covenant promises. These experienced pardon and peace in their own souls in the midst of the storms and troubles of life, and saw in all the confusion a Divine plan working out. These had a philosophy of history.

And we are living in as dark days as ever faced the world. But God's covenant still stands. God's grace is still offered to the guilty. God's purposes will still be accomplished. Where sin abounds grace much more abounds.

And it is the privilege of needy sinners, conscious of their need, and convicted of their guilt and unworthiness, to lay hold of His covenant promises. Thus linked to Him and His gracious sovereign purposes the believing soul can remain calm when he hears of the things that are coming on the earth, and can face the future with joyful hope. That is the true philosophy of history.

Note: For the foregoing timely article we are indebted to **Evangelical Action** (Australia). It is reprinted here from the July 1, 1958, issue of that periodical. — Editor.

Where Modernism Begins

By the Rev. Hugh J. Blair, B. A.

Writing more than fifty years ago, H. Hensley Henson, then Canon of Westminster, declared, "Moreover it is hard to see why the traditional practice of limiting the lessons read in Church to the Bible should forever continue. . . . We want to supplement the canonical Scriptures by the Christian compositions which have secured the approval of general acceptance, and taken the rank of spiritual classics among religious people, just as in the worship of the Church the Psalter has been supplemented by hymns and anthems" (quoted in **The Psalms in Worship**, pp. 416f.).

Twenty-five years later, an American Professor, Dr. A. W. Palmer, President of the Congregational Seminary in Chicago, had the same point of view to propound. "The race," he said, "goes on building a larger Bible. The real Bible of the intelligent Christian today includes devotional books like **Pilgrim's Progress** and the **Imitation of Christ**, great hymns like the **Te Deum** and **Jesus, Lover of my Soul**, creeds and confessions like the Apostles' Creed, biographies like those of St. Francis or David Livingstone. . . . These books have far greater religious influence in our

lives and are more continuously and appropriately used in our churches than Esther, Chronicles, or Ecclesiastes. The true and larger Bible is never complete" (quoted by Wilbur M. Smith in *Therefore Stand*, p. 126).

Still more recently, Dr. Leslie Weatherhead of the City Temple, London, has written, "If the process by which the Bible was begun had continued, then the words of Milton and Browning and many another would be in the Bible, and whatever theory you hold of the inspiration of the Bible, do realize that there is more spiritual inspiration in some of Browning's poems than in some chapters of the Bible. . . . The Word of God is the truth about God and about life, and wherever you find the truth about God and life, that is the word of God" (*In Quest of a Kingdom*, p. 204).

These are the statements of outspoken modernists who do not accept the unique inspiration of the Bible, and we perhaps should not be surprised that they set merely human compositions above the Word of God. But are they not carrying to its logical conclusion what is done in many churches when hymns are substituted for the Divinely-inspired Psalms of the Bible? If one book of the Bible can be set aside for something more modern and suited to popular taste, is it not reasonable to give the same liberty in the case of other parts of the Bible as well? The Book of Psalms is a part of the inspired Word of God: and the purpose of this study is to suggest to those who think that hymns should be used in the worship of God that they are, perhaps all unintentionally, casting doubt on the inspiration and sufficiency of the Bible itself. It is a strange and illogical fact that some of the most strongly evangelical and fundamentalist groups, which stand firmly on the doctrine of the Divine inspiration of the Word of God, are apparently the most reluctant to use the praise section of that Divinely-inspired Word in their worship. It seems to me that a consistent application of the doctrine of Divine inspiration demands that nothing should be substituted in worship for the perfection which God Himself has given.

There is a verse in the fourth chapter of Deuteronomy which states quite clearly, "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you," on which *The New Bible Commentary* makes the comment: "This peremptory command creates a sharp distinction between the word of God and the word of man." And lest it should be thought that that "peremptory command" is concerned only with the law of Moses or the Old Testament, we find the same prohibition expressed still more solemnly at the end of the New Testament: "I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book." There is "a sharp dis-

inction between the word of God and the word of man," and anything that would tend to blur that distinction must be most carefully watched.

It comes down to this: if the Bible is Divinely inspired, the only infallible rule of faith and practice, as we believe it is, then it is absolutely unique; it stands on a plane of its own; and, therefore, to substitute anything else for any part of it is to prefer the inferior work of man to the perfect Word of God. Those who do not accept the Divine inspiration of the Bible are, of course, faced with no such dilemma: the modernists consider themselves at liberty to discard parts of the Bible as inadequate and imperfect. And that, it seems to me, is what is done when God's book of praises is set aside as insufficient. If that is true, it gives the modernists some very strange bedfellows!

It is a stubborn fact of history that the making of hymn-books had its beginning in the second century when Bardesanes used hymns to popularise the false doctrines of Gnosticism which had been rejected by the church. There he showed himself a shrewd student of human nature, for people will sing unthinkingly what in their saner moments they know to be quite erroneous. For example, the fact that "the Londonderry Air" is a very fine tune is sufficient to make a great many thoughtless people get pleasure from a song set to it, called "Danny Boy," with this blatantly Romish line in it: "And kneel and say an 'Ave' there for me." Similarly the rousing, martial tune of "Onward, Christian Soldiers" tends to camouflage the fact that there is rather more than a suggestion of the material cross of Romanism in its tunefully attractive chorus, "With the cross of Jesus going on before." The church of the Reformation wisely got rid of the material symbol of the cross, so that the spiritual truth of the atonement might be the more clearly revealed, but the hymnary in some instances at least seems to wish to introduce it.

At all events, the fact is that singing has often been the medium of a popular propagation of error. The heretical sect of the Donatists in Augustine's day used this method of circulating error in popular fashion; and most noted of all the heretics of the early centuries was Arius, whose name still stands for opposition to the doctrine of the Deity of Christ. He was tried and deposed by the authorities of the church, but he went far and wide, singing to attractive tunes, songs of his own composition designed to seduce the masses to unbelief, and to a very large extent he accomplished by rhyme what he could not do by reason. All these efforts were, of course, intentionally framed for the purpose of deception, though their authors would perhaps have disclaimed any such intention. But the most obvious moral to be derived from this period in the history of hymn-writing seems to be that to depart from the Word of God always

holds the possibility of error, and that musical error is more contagious than any other kind. Safer, surely, was the attitude of Richard Baxter when he set his hand to the paraphrasing of the Psalms: "I feared adding to God's word, and making my own to pass for God's."

Having suggested, however reluctantly, that there is a kinship between modernism and the substitution of hymns for Psalms, I want to go a stage further and explore the possibility that the setting aside of the Psalms in favor of hymns can itself be the beginning of modernism. History seems to show that the substitution of hymns for Psalms marked the beginning in many cases of a laxer view of the Bible which had its ultimate harvest in modernism full-blown.

When we go back, for example, to the churches of the Reformation, we find that hymns belonged more to the Lutheran church and psalms to those churches which were more strongly Calvinistic. Luther personally preferred the Psalms, and contended that they had much more sap and strength than any hymns: some of his finest hymns were based on Psalms, for example the 46th. But his followers came to use the Psalms less and less and hymns of human composition more and more. Versions of the Psalms were made in the German language shortly after Luther's time, but they did not take deep or wide-spread root, and have survived only in a few localities. Is it not significant, then, that it was from Germany that there came in the 18th and 19th centuries the rationalism which radically criticized the Bible and dismissed much of it as myth and legend?

Calvin, on the contrary, was hostile to anything which might seem to detract from the supreme authority of the Bible, and from the outset of his ministry in Geneva set his face against the introduction of "human hymns." The Calvinistic churches of the Reformation followed his example, and, it seems, remained proof against destructive Biblical criticism as long as they remained exclusively Psalm-singing. But in the 18th century Isaac Watts opened the door to the use of praise other than that inspired and enjoined by God, when he proposed to make David speak like a Christian, and followed up his paraphrases of the Psalms with a very large number of hymns for worship. Watts himself was no modernist, though it is perhaps not without significance that he was accused of heresy with regard to the doctrine of Christ's Deity: the man who cast doubt on the sufficiency of any part of Scripture cannot expect to be considered above suspicion of unorthodoxy. Still, he was no modernist, though his implied criticism of a part of the Old Testament must have had some influence in preparing a theological climate in which criticisms of the whole Bible could grow and flourish.

One hesitates to question the value of the work done by Moody and Sankey, who were great-

ly used of God in the work of evangelical revival, but the Rev. Kenneth A. Macrae, of the Free Church of Scotland, in his booklet **The Resurgence of Arminianism**, maintains with some cogency that while there was no taint of modernism in the Moody-Sankey revival, the evangelists' undermining of the Calvinism of the Free Church in Scotland encouraged those who favored the new German Higher Criticism to come out into the open with their criticism of the Bible.

There appear to be grounds, therefore, for the contention that to substitute hymns for Psalms is, perhaps all inadvertently, to open the door to the destructive criticism that rejects much more of the Bible than the Psalms.

It remains to ask what those who advocate the singing of hymns in worship have in common with the modernists. For the most part, very little, we are glad to say, and as very many of those who sing hymns would say most emphatically. Certainly a very large majority of those who advocate the singing of hymns in worship have never realized the full implications of what they are doing. There are varying degrees of man's insistence that he knows better than God; and the denial of the inspiration and the authority of the Bible is a far cry from the substitution of human hymns for the Psalms that God has given. And yet is there not something of the same rebellion against God's way in them both? Modernism really began in the Garden of Eden when the tempter first questioned the sufficiency and the validity of the Divine word. "Yea, hath God said. . . ?" was the Serpent's question to Eve. Over against the Word of God was set a suggestion of truth and experience beyond what God had said. The seeds of a fatal self-sufficiency were sown there. And modernism, if the grace of God does not check the universal tendency, is the ultimate assertion of the wisdom of man's reason over against the revealed truth of God.

It is significant that for the objectivity of the Psalms there is often substituted the subjectivity of human hymns, which are frequently man-centered, in contrast to the God-centered character of the Psalms. It is very easy to fall into the error of assuming that since there is a subjective side to worship, in which our experiences and our feelings and our needs have a very real place, worship must be largely subjective, and that the medium of praise should consequently reflect the feelings of the worshipper. Many excellent hymns are content to do that. But worship is much more than a subjective experience in which our spirits draw near to God, the Father of spirits: it is a realisation of Him as He is in truth and an approach to Him as He has revealed Himself in His Word.

A writer setting forth the standard for hymns has written, "The true hymn must have a motion God-ward. It is not exactly necessary that God

should be directly addressed, but must be uppermost in the thought if not particularly conspicuous in the expression. The true hymn must tend towards God; bring him to mind; exalt his name, and seek glory. Those which are simply introspective, didactic, dogmatic, sentimental, egotistical, and the like are not hymns." It is my contention that the vast majority of hymns fail to reach that norm, and that the only "hymns" which do reach it invariably are the "hymns" of the Divinely-given Book of Praises.

It might be thought, however, that this man-directed emphasis of many hymns, while a little unhealthy from the point of view of robust worship, is more or less harmless. But the fact is that a concern limited to personal experience, however important that they may be, carries within it the seeds of its own deterioration. Writing of the subjective Pietism of seventeenth-century Germany — a Pietism which manifested itself incidentally in an exceptionally rich outburst of church song — James Orr in *The Progress of Dogma* declares, "For the healthy objectivity of the piety of the Reformers, it substituted a morbid brooding on subjective states; while, in a scientific respect, it could offer no satisfaction to minds aroused to ask the meaning of the Christian doctrines, and their relations to the wide fields of knowledge opened up around them. It cannot be thought surprising, therefore, that Pietism. . . should, about the middle of the eighteenth century, fall a prey to the rationalism which at that time was overspreading Europe" (p. 290). If man be the measure of things, there comes inevitably a place where he sets his own reason above the revelation which God has given. And that is Modernism.

But lest it should be thought that there is no danger of such an insidious slipping towards Modernism in a church which uses the Psalms exclusively in praise, it should be pointed out that there is a possibility of a personal Higher Criticism even among those who are satisfied to use only the Psalms in worship. To pick and choose among the Psalms and select only certain of them for worship has in it an implied criticism of the portions which are omitted. For example, there is a reluctance to use those Psalms which have been called the Imprecatory Psalms, containing prayers for the destruction of wicked men. Such reluctance seems to regard these Psalms merely as human compositions, expressing the Psalmist's personal vindictiveness against his personal enemies. The truth is that they are Divinely inspired

and are directed against the implacable enemies of God and of God's kingdom in every age, showing His righteous wrath against evil.

A similar tendency is observable in the use of only those portions of the Psalms which deal with subjective experience, omitting the portions which deal with the historical, objective basis of that personal experience in the sovereign acts of God's grace. Dr. J. G. Vos writes regarding such tendencies: "Those who love one aspect of the Psalms only, while finding other aspects alien to their religious life, or even unpleasant and objectionable, are already involved in a process which, if not reversed, will in the course of time lead to the complete rejection of the Psalter as the manual of praise. This same process, if not checked, will in the course of time lead to a complete departure from the Biblical religion of divine redemption from an objective realm of evil, to an alien type of religion, a type of religion which is merely subjective and idealistic" (*Blue Banner Faith and Life*, July-September 1952 (Vol. 7 No. 3) p. 126).

I am convinced, therefore, that we must give ourselves to a more systematic and intensive study of the Psalms; above all, that we should find Christ in the Psalms, which, as He Himself said, spoke of Him; and that we should find in them the living Word of the living God.

I should be most reluctant to leave the impression of condemning those who advocate the singing of hymns in the worship of God without realising the implications of what they are doing, especially in view of the fact that God in His sovereign grace has used hymns and religious poetry to bring truth and blessing to the hearts of many. But I cannot forget that God has used even the preaching of modernists to do the same, for He can use very imperfect vessels to bear the good news of His grace. But shall we knowingly be satisfied to use an imperfect instrument of praise when a perfect one, Divinely provided, lies to our hand? Shall we rashly suggest that any part of God's Word is imperfect and inadequate for the purpose for which He has given it? We have a promise regarding every part of the Word of God, including the Book of Psalms which He has given for His worship, which no human composition can confidently claim: "It shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

"The veracity of God, and not the reasonableness of any doctrine, is the ground of our faith. It is the work of the gospel to cast down reason-

ings against the knowledge of God, and bring into captivity every thought unto the obedience of Christ."

— Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, IV. 4

Christ's Public Life as a Whole

By the Rev. John C. Rankin

It may be well for us at this point to have a preview of Christ's public life as a whole, and to overview some other things as well. One of these is the geography: the North and South divisions, and the variations east and west.

Also some attention should be given to the topography. This is as interesting as any to be found anywhere in the world. This land, even more in Jesus' day than it is today, was a land of contrasts. Classified in general as semi-tropical, there was the richly fertile North and the comparatively barren South, the heights of the central mountain range running north and south with the Great Sea on the west and the depths of the mighty chasm of the Jordan on the east. Jerusalem sits three thousand feet or more above the level of the sea. The surface of the Sea of Galilee lies 682 feet below sea level, and that of the Dead Sea 1292 feet.

Four or five sections of the land are distinguished. West of the Jordan there are Galilee, Samaria and Judea. On the east lay the region called Decapolis ("ten cities") and Perea. Jesus' ministry falls into four or five periods corresponding to these various sections of the country. These are the Judean, the Galilean (of which there were two), the Decapolis, and the Perea. These ministries were interspersed from time to time by journeys to Jerusalem for the annual religious festivals and by excursions into the North or across the Sea of Galilee to the provinces of the East.

By far the greater part of the material furnished by the Gospel narratives is devoted to the public life and a great part of this to the events of the last week of the Saviour's life.

The relations existing between John the Baptist and Jesus is in itself a highly interesting and rewarding subject. We think of John's service to Jesus by his preparation of the hearts of the people by his denunciation of their sins and by his call to repentance and faith. He told of the Messiah and His kingdom so soon to appear. And when Jesus of Nazareth came upon the scene he hailed Him as the Christ.

Then there was Jesus' service to John which he rendered throughout the several months of the Judean ministry. John had only devotion for Jesus; Jesus only admiration and respect for John. We have John's witness to Jesus and Jesus' glowing tribute to John. Presently John's work began to wane while Jesus' work was on the gain. This was altogether agreeable to the forerunner. "He must increase but I must decrease" (John 3:30).

Next in the order of time, after the baptism and the temptation (Matthew, Mark and Luke —

the "Synoptic" Gospels), come the events leading up to and included in the Judean ministry (John 1:29-3:4).

With the conclusion of the temptation Matthew and Luke both speak of Jesus as going into Galilee, but they do not say just when that was or that the Galilean ministry ensued immediately. Mark clearly indicates an interim between the events of Jesus' entrance upon His public life and the ministry in Galilee for he says: "Now, after that John was put in prison Jesus came into Galilee." John, as we shall see, fills in the story of this interim. And the Synoptic writers were correct in representing the Galilean ministry as the real beginning of Jesus' own exclusive and distinctive public life.

According to what has just been said the public life of Christ divides into several periods as follows:

1. The Judean (in close conjunction with John the Baptist in his work, about nine months).

2. The Great Galilean Ministry (about sixteen months) which in itself falls into four phases as follows:

(1) The opening of the work (with headquarters in Capernaum and with journeys out from that city as the center).

(2) The rise of the Jewish opposition (dating from the appearance on the scene of observers from Jerusalem).

(3) Jesus' conflict with the Jewish leaders in their opposition, together with the continuing advance of popular interest, leading to the institution of the apostleship.

(4) A succession of teaching and healing tours through lower Galilee.

3. The Later Galilean Ministry (about six months), with excursions into Decapolis.

4. The Perea Ministry.

5. The Last Journeys to Jerusalem.

6. The Last Week.

The apostle Peter provides a convenient summation of the entire public life in his words recorded in Acts 10:37-39. Here he speaks to Cornelius and others of "the Word" which was published throughout all Judea and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached; how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power; who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with him. . . . whom they slew and hanged on a tree."

The Beginning of Christ's Public Life

It is on John the Evangelist, and on him alone, that we depend for the very beginning of Jesus public activity. It came immediately after His temptation, with His reappearance amid the throng attending upon John the Baptist and his preaching.

The initial sequence of events naturally included a number of first things in this part of His life. His personal identity as the Christ having been made known to John meant that it was time for John to make Him known. Also, as at this time Jesus was tested, so too was John. The test for the Baptist came on a certain day when a delegation from Jerusalem came. They questioned him concerning his claims, and at the conclusion of the interview virtually challenged his right to preach and to baptize. John in turn advised them of the presence of the Christ already among them and in deepest humility bore witness to Him.

It was in the providence of God that on the very next day he saw Jesus as He returned from the temptation. Pointing Him out to those about him he publicly proclaimed Him as "the lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world" — in other words, the Christ.

That particular day has been estimated to have been the day of the week corresponding to our Friday. According to this calculation the day following would be the last day of the Jewish week, their Sabbath and our Saturday. It was a quiet day on the banks of the Jordan in which the Sabbath rest was scrupulously observed.

The Baptist was up betimes that morning and was standing somewhere in the open, two of his disciples with him. Jesus, too, was abroad; and, wherever it was that He had been, He was on His way back to the place of His lodging.

Now John again, and in the same terms as before, though now in the presence of only two, bore witness to Him as the Christ. Whereupon they two turned away from John and followed Jesus. That day they believed and were converted to Him and before the day was done they, too, had testified each to his brother and so won other two for Christ. So Andrew and his brother, Simon, John and James became the first of the disciples of the Lord. And Jesus Himself in His own humble way began to make Himself known to men and graciously received them into the fold of His love.

On the morning of the next day, our Sabbath, these five set out to go to Galilee. Presumably they crossed the Jordan and proceeded northward on the east side of the river. Presently two more disciples had been added, namely, Philip and Nathanael. So it was that two days later seven young men arrived and were guests in the home of one of their number, Nathanael, in his home in Cana of Galilee.

No sooner had they arrived than all seven received an invitation to attend a wedding in another home in Cana. The people of this home were evidently relatives or friends of Jesus' mother and her family. So it was that water was changed into wine that day and the first miracle was performed. As John says, "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him" (John 2:11).

But the passover was at hand and soon Jesus and His disciples were found in Jerusalem on His first official visit to the holy city and the sacred temple. Then, before anyone knew what was going on, Jesus performed His first official public action as the Christ.

The temple was being desecrated and it was a condition which called to high heaven for drastic treatment. It was a condition which Jesus had probably often observed through the years. A fixed determination had taken form in His mind that when the right time came He would deal with it as it deserved. This He now did, and drove them all out and said, "Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise."

In so doing He demonstrated His own unique authority. It signified that He claimed the right to take such action in the interests of "his Father's house." In other words it was an assertion of His Messiahship. It was the first public presentation and offering of Himself to the Jews as the Christ.

The days that followed witnessed His first public preaching and healing which was also in His Father's house. Then came the first approach to Him of the Jewish leaders with their challenge. One of these, Nicodemus by name, evidently impressed by all he saw and heard, felt that the situation called for a more favorable reaction. Coming under cover of the night he ascended by an outside stairway to the housetop where Jesus and the disciples were staying.

Nicodemus came with a decidedly different kind of attitude, which was excellent as far as it went. "Rabbi," he said, "we know that thou art a teacher from God, for no man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him." There followed the wonderful interview between these two, preserved for us by John the disciple who doubtless "listened in".

The feast being over, Jesus and His disciples removed to a point on the west side of the lower Jordan where in a sense He joined John the Baptist in his work, and awaited developments. Perhaps He thought that the temple rulers needed a cooling-off period, and this action served the double purpose of the expression of His full and heart-felt support of John in his work and at the same

time furnished a convenient opportunity for further conference with Him on the part of the leaders, provided they were so disposed.

This work alongside of that of John the Baptist occupied a period of about nine months, from Mid-August to Mid-May, and constituted what is known as the Judean, or early Judean ministry. "John," it is said, "did no miracle," though Jesus did, but there is no record of any miracle during this time. Jesus tarried by the Jordan with His disciples and baptized, though He did not officiate in the ceremony personally but through the agency of His devoted followers.

Inevitably His following was in the increase, while John's was on the decline. Eventually this aspect of the situation got around and it is evident that the Pharisees were quite alarmed. Also toward the end of this period it became increasingly

clear that they had become definitely settled in their opposition. There were signs that the leaders went to Herod with their complaints and charges. It was probably at their instigation as well as for personal reasons that later John was arrested and cast into prison.

Before this happened, however, Jesus, in order to spare John any further embarrassment, decided to leave. So it was that the scene of His labors was transferred to the populous province of the North. "He left Judea and departed again into Galilee" (John 4:3). So ended the Judean ministry. However, His blessed teaching, healing and saving work was now definitely under way.

Note: This is the fifth of a series of studies on the Life of Christ by Mr. Rankin. The sixth will appear, D.V., in our next issue. — Editor.

Religious Terms Defined

ETERNITY OF GOD. God's mode of existence without beginning, without end, and independent of all limitations of time, so that all events in the history of the created universe are equally present to Him at once.

EUCCHARIST. A name for the sacrament of the Lord's Supper; literally, "giving thanks."

EXALTATION OF CHRIST. "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).

EXCOMMUNICATION. The final censure of church discipline, by which the offending person is solemnly excluded from the visible Church until he gives evidence of repentance.

EXHORTATION. The act of presenting to a person motives calculated to move him to action in the performance of duty. Christian doctrine is to be accompanied and followed by Christian exhortation, that the hearers may be stirred up to a practical profession of Christianity.

EXTREME UNCTION. One of the non-biblical sacraments of the Roman Catholic Church, in which those about to die are anointed with oil and prayed for by the priest.

FAITH. The dependence of a person on the truthfulness and reliability of another person.

OBJECT OF FAITH. That on which faith terminates and rests. All faith has an object, and this object is, ultimately, a person. The immediate object of faith may be a proposition or a doctrine (Heb. 11:3), but the ultimate object of faith is the person on whose testimony we believe the

proposition or doctrine. Thus faith in the Bible is ultimately faith in God whose revelation the Bible is.

FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST. "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).

HISTORICAL FAITH. A mere assent to the facts of the Gospel as a matter of history, as that Christ was born in Bethlehem, crucified on Calvary, etc., without personal trust in Christ for salvation. Historical faith is necessary for salvation, but is not sufficient without personal trust.

TEMPORARY FAITH. A faith which superficially resembles saving faith, but which does not proceed from a heart renewed by the Holy Spirit, and which therefore cannot endure persecution or tribulation for Christ's sake. Such temporary faith often results from artificial "high pressure" methods of evangelism, which induce many to profess faith in Christ who later fall away from this profession to their former worldly life.

FALL OF MAN. The lapse of the human race from its original state of moral perfection to a state of sin and misery, which took place by the sin of our first parents, Adam and Eve, in eating the forbidden fruit.

FATE. The heathen notion that all events are determined by a blind, impersonal, irresistible force which operates regardless of the free agency of men. This is very different from the Calvinistic doctrine of foreordination, which teaches that the infinitely wise, loving, righteous, personal God has determined all that comes to pass, including the motives, decisions and acts of all free agents such as angels and men.

FIVE POINTS OF CALVINISM. Five truths of the Calvinistic system of theology which were affirmed by the Synod of Dort (Netherlands, A.D. 1618-19), in contradiction to the five articles of the Remonstrants or Arminians. The "Five Points of Calvinism" are: 1. Unconditional election; 2. Limited or particular atonement; 3. The total depravity of the sinner; 4. The irresistible character of saving grace; 5. The final perseverance of the saints. These "five points" are NOT a brief summary of Calvinism, as they are often wrongly said to be; they are merely the Calvinistic answer to five errors held by the Arminians. Calvinism is a comprehensive system of Biblical truth and cannot be summarized in these five points, for it includes a wide range of other truths. In other words, there is much more to Calvinism than anti-Arminianism.

FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD. The knowledge of God by which, from all eternity, He has known all things that will ever come to pass. This foreknowledge of God is based upon His own decrees of foreordination, and is not in any way contingent or dependent upon the acts of His creatures. (See Westminster Confession of Faith, II. 2).

FOREORDINATION. God's determination, from all eternity, of every fact in the universe, including every event that takes place in time. God's foreordination is not based upon His foreknowledge, but upon the counsel of His own will. (See Eph. 1:11; Westminster Confession of Faith, III. 1, 2; Shorter Catechism, 7).

FORGIVENESS OF SINS. That act of God (Included in Justification) by which the sinner's guilt is no longer reckoned (imputed) to him, and the corresponding penalty is therefore not inflicted upon him. Forgiveness of sins is possible only because of the atonement of Jesus Christ, the sinner's Substitute, to whom the sinner's guilt was imputed by God, and by whom the sinner's penalty was vicariously borne.

FORMALISM. That perversion of Christianity in which emphasis is placed upon the mere external observance of the ordinances of worship, while the heart remains unaffected by the power of godliness (2 Tim. 3:5). Formalism affects all churches, not only those with an elaborate ritualism, but also those which insist upon Scriptural purity and simplicity of worship.

FREE AGENCY. The capacity of rational beings, including man, for making decisions and performing actions in accordance with their own nature or character, without constraint from outside their own personality. The term "free agency" is more correct than "free will," for the latter may imply that the will can choose independently of the person's nature or character, which is not true. Free agency means only freedom of the personality from EXTERNAL constraint; it does not mean freedom of the will from the personality as a whole. The unsaved sinner is a free agent, but because his nature is sinful, his free decisions and acts are always sinful, too. A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit.

FUTURE LIFE. The "world" or "age" to come, which will follow the present age in which we are now living. The present world is the world of history; the future world will be the world of eternity. Scripture divides the life of humanity into "this world (age)" and "the world (age) to come" — Matt. 12:32; Eph. 1:21, etc. The future life is "the life which is life indeed" — the life in which we will really and fully be alive (I Tim. 6:18, ARV).

GNOSTICISM. The general name given to the teachings of a number of sects, in the time of the early Church, which claimed possession of a deeper knowledge of truth than was possessed by the orthodox Church and its members. Gnosticism was largely derived from heathen religion and philosophy. It taught that the God who created the world was not the Supreme Being, and that evil is identified with matter.

Some Noteworthy Quotations

TRUE RELIGION, in great part, consists in holy affections.

— Jonathan Edwards

IT IS EVIDENT that there is a spiritual conviction of the truth, or a belief peculiar to those who are spiritual, who are regenerated, and who have the Spirit of God, in His holy communications, dwelling in them as a vital principle. . . . A view of the divine glory directly convinces the mind of the divinity of these things. . . . The gospel of the blessed God does not go abroad a begging for its evidence so much as some think: it has its highest

and most proper evidence in itself.

— Jonathan Edwards

FAITH, THEREFORE, from its beginning to its perfection is the gift of God. And that this gift is bestowed on some and not on others, who will deny but he who would fight against the most manifest testimonies of the Scripture? But why faith is not given to all ought not to concern the believer, who knows that all men by the sin of one came into most just condemnation. But why God delivers one from this condemnation and not another belongs to His inscrutable judgments, and

"His ways are past finding out." And if it be investigated and inquired how it is that each receiver of faith is deemed of God worthy to receive such a gift, there are not wanting those who will say: "It is by their human will." But we say it is by grace, or Divine predestination.

— Augustine of Hippo

THE SCRIPTURE DECLARES that all those who believe in the only-begotten Son of God are the children and heirs of God. Christ, therefore, is the clear glass in which we are called upon to behold the eternal and hidden election of God; and of that election He is also the earnest. But the eye, by which we behold that eternal life which God sets before us in this glass, is faith. And the hand by which we lay hold of this earnest and pledge is faith. If any will have the matter more plainly stated, let them take it thus: election precedes faith as to its Divine order, but it is seen and understood by faith.

— John Calvin

THE ATTRACTION OF HEAVEN is in part the attraction of freedom from sin. And not a little of the contempt poured upon it, while pretending to protest against cloistered withdrawal, springs in reality from a defective perception of the seriousness of sin. Where the eye has not by divine grace been opened to the world's wickedness, it is easy to look with disdain on the Christian's world-shyness. But the Christian, who knows that the end of sin cannot come until the end of this world, looks at the question in a light of his own. He is fully warranted in considering ridicule of this kind part of the reproach of Christ and bearing it with joy. Nor should we forget, that an excess of interest in the present life, when shown in the name of religion, is apt, in our day, to be a symptom of doubt or unbelief in regard to the life to come.

— Geerhardus Vos

A SCHEME OF THOUGHT which runs counter to the atonement, if carried out to its logical

consequences, is destructive to religion, and subversive of morality. The peace and security of mankind depend on a true knowledge of God, not in one attribute, but in all the perfections of His nature. The position too widely maintained at present, that God is nothing but a fountain of goodness, who sacrifices everything to the happiness of His creatures, destroys all religion, because it takes no account of the subjection, love and reverence due to God. The thinkers who at present would strike out the atonement from the creed of Christendom, agree in maintaining that love was the only motive in the divine mind in creating the world, and in legislating for it, and that He had no other object or design but the communication of happiness. . . . It is held that the Most High never punishes but for men's good, and generally not at all, if they render this unnecessary by repentance. This at once banishes all moral aims from the divine government, and, in a word, so completely reverses the relations of things, that, on this principle, the creature can scarcely be said to exist for the Creator, but conversely. This theory disconnects happiness from moral excellence, which cannot any longer be regarded as possessed of intrinsic value. Nay, it gives way at every point where physical happiness is threatened or imperilled. This is a low view of the divine government.

— George Smeaton

THE ELEMENT OF SUBSTITUTION, that is, of an exchange of places, constitutes the very core of the atonement; and this is also the Gospel in a single word. When mankind had lost a due standing before God, there was, and there could be, no relaxation of the Divine claims or the original idea of man; and in any scheme of restoration, or method by which grace could be glorified in man's salvation, a mediator must, from the necessity of the case, enter into man's position and come under his responsibilities both as to duty to be done and suffering to be endured.

— George Smeaton

Studies on the Plan of Salvation

LESSON 34

How does a Christian Get a Good Character?

Q. 75. What is sanctification?

A. Sanctification is a work of God's grace, whereby they whom God hath, before the foundation of the world, chosen to be holy, are in time, through the powerful operation of his Spirit applying the death and resurrection of Christ unto them, renewed in their whole man after the image of God; having the seeds of repentance unto life,

and all other saving graces, put into their hearts, and those graces so stirred up, increased, and strengthened, as that they more and more die unto sin, and rise unto newness of life.

Scripture References:

Eph. 1:4. 1 Cor. 6:11. 2 Thess. 2:13. Those whom God from eternity has chosen to be holy,

are in time sanctified by the powerful operation of His Holy Spirit.

Rom. 6:4-6. The Holy Spirit applies the death and resurrection of Christ unto the believer, that he may be sanctified.

Eph. 4:23, 24. Sanctification involves renewal of the whole man after the image of God.

Acts 11:18. I John 3:9. In sanctification, the "seeds" or roots of repentance and all other saving graces are planted in the believer's heart.

Jude 20. Heb. 6:11, 12. Eph. 3:16-19. Col. 1:10, 11. In sanctification, the graces which have been planted in the believer's heart are stirred up, increased, and strengthened.

Rom. 6:4, 6, 14. Gal. 5:24. Sanctification results in the believer more and more dying unto sin, and living unto righteousness.

Questions:

1. Why is sanctification called a "work" of God's free grace instead of an act of God's free grace?

Because, unlike justification and adoption, sanctification is not an act but a process. Justification and adoption are instantaneous acts, completed once for all in an instant of time, but sanctification is a lifelong process starting the moment the person is regenerated, and continuing until the moment of death when the soul enters the state of glory.

2. Who will be sanctified?

The elect, whom God has chosen from before the creation of the world to be holy, and they only.

3. What is the meaning of the word "sanctify"?

It means to make holy.

4. What two kinds of sanctification does the New Testament speak of?

(a) It speaks of what may be called a sanctification of position or external privileges. This kind of sanctification is mentioned in 1 Cor. 7:14. It involves certain spiritual blessings and privileges, but does not necessarily involve the eternal salvation of the person who is thus "sanctified."

(b) It speaks of personal sanctification, or the sanctification of a changed life and godly character. This personal sanctification is mentioned in 1 Cor. 6:11. The person who is sanctified in this way is a saved person and heir of eternal life.

5. Which of these two kinds of sanctification is discussed in the question we are studying in The Larger Catechism?

The second, or personal sanctification of life and character.

6. What power is involved in the work of sanctification?

The almighty power of God the Holy Spirit.

7. What is meant by saying that the Holy Spirit applies the death and resurrection of Christ to those who are being sanctified?

This means that those benefits which Christ purchased for the elect by His sufferings and death, and which are guaranteed by His resurrection, are actually bestowed on the Christian by the work of the Holy Spirit. God the Father planned our redemption; God the Son purchased our redemption; God the Holy Spirit applies our redemption so that we actually experience the benefit of it.

8. What is meant by saying that those who are sanctified are "renewed in their whole man"?

This means, first of all, that sanctification involves both the body and the soul, as is shown by 1 Thess. 5:23. Secondly, sanctification is not limited to any one function or part of the soul's life, but includes all. It involves the mind, or intellect; the emotions, or feelings; and the will, or power of making decisions.

9. What is the pattern or ideal according to which the Holy Spirit carries on His work of sanctification?

The pattern is "the image of God." Man was created in the image of God, but by his fall into sin, the image of God in man was broken and marred. However it was not entirely destroyed; the broken fragments of it remain in every human being in the world. By sanctification, the image of God in man is perfectly restored. This image of God consists chiefly of knowledge, righteousness and holiness.

10. What figure of speech does the Catechism, following the New Testament, use to describe the process of sanctification?

The figure of death and resurrection, or dying unto sin and rising unto newness of life.

11. What lessons concerning the Christian life can we learn from this figure?

First, we can learn that we may not tolerate the least sin in our life. We are to die unto sin, to crucify sin. Secondly, we can learn that our progress in holiness is not something that we can achieve of ourselves; as the dead have no power to raise themselves, so our rising to newness of life depends upon the power of God.

12. What two errors concerning sanctification are common today?

(a) The error called antinomianism, which is a denial that the Christian is under obligation to obey the moral law of God. This error makes sanctification unnecessary.

(b) The error called perfectionism, also called "total sanctification" and "sinless perfection," which teaches that sanctification is not a process but an act which may be complete at a definite time during the course of the present life, after which the person is "totally sanctified."

Note: The question of perfectionism, or "total sanctification," will be further discussed under

LESSON 35

How we Turn from our Sins to God

Q. 76. What is repentance unto life?

A. Repentance unto life is a saving grace, wrought in the heart of a sinner by the Spirit and word of God, whereby out of the sight and sense, not only of the danger, but also of the filthiness and odiousness of his sins, and upon the apprehension of God's mercy in Christ to such as are penitent, he so grieves for and hates his sins, as that he turns from them all to God, purposing and endeavoring constantly to walk with him in all the ways of new obedience.

Scripture References:

2 Tim. 2:25. Repentance unto life is a saving grace, or gift of God.

Zech. 12:10. Acts 11:18-21. Repentance unto life is wrought in the heart of a sinner by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.

Ezek. 18:28-32. Luke 15:17, 18. Hos. 2:6, 7. In true repentance the sinner is thoroughly aware of the danger of his sins.

Ezek. 36:31. Isa. 30:22. The sinner who is truly repentant is aware not merely of the danger, but also of the filthiness and odiousness of his sins.

Joel 2:12, 13. In true repentance there is always an apprehension of God's forgiving mercy in Christ to such as are penitent.

Jer. 31:18, 19. The person who is truly repentant has a deep sorrow for sin.

2 Cor. 7:11. The person who is truly repentant actually hates his sins.

Acts 26:18. Ezek. 14:6. 1 Kings 8:47, 48. True repentance involves turning from all one's sins unto God.

Psalms 119:6, 59, 128. Luke 1:6. 2 Kings 23:25. Genuine repentance involves a sincere purpose of new obedience to the will of God.

Questions:

1. Why does the Catechism speak of "repentance unto life" instead of speaking simply of "repentance"?

Q. 78, "Whence ariseth the imperfection of sanctification in believers?"

13. What attitude should we have toward the matter of sanctification?

We should not only seek to understand clearly the Bible doctrine of sanctification, but also should seek the reality and power of it in our personal experience.

Because there is another kind of repentance which is not unto life. We read that Judas "repented himself. . . and hanged himself" (Matt. 27:3-5). This false repentance is also called "the sorrow of the world" (2 Cor. 7:10) in contrast to true repentance or "godly sorrow". There we read that "the sorrow of the world worketh death"; that is to say, it is not "repentance unto life" but "repentance unto death," for the outcome of it is not eternal life but eternal death.

2. Why is repentance unto life called "a saving grace"?

It is called "saving" because its outcome is salvation or eternal life; it is called "a grace" because it is something we receive as a gift from God, not something that we have naturally of ourselves.

3. According to the teaching of the Bible, who needs to repent?

Everyone without exception needs to repent. We should note that in the Bible the commands to repent are universal. John the Baptist and Jesus, for example, in their preaching, said "Repent ye" without distinguishing between good and bad, religious and indifferent, ignorant and educated, etc. They did not say, "Repent, those of you who have done something that needs to be repented of," nor "Repent, those of you who are sinners," but simply and without qualification, "Repent ye."

4. How is repentance unto life wrought in the heart of the sinner?

By the Spirit and the Word of God. Here the term "Word of God" of course means not only the Bible, but the message of saving truth contained in the Bible, that is, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, regardless of whether it is read, preached, or proclaimed in some other way. Repentance unto life is not wrought by the Spirit alone without the Word, nor by the Word alone without the Spirit, but by the two together, the Holy Spirit using and applying the truth of the Word. This implies that where the Gospel has not been proclaimed, the Holy Spirit does not work in such a way as to bring about people's salvation. He

works where the Word has been proclaimed and is known.

5. Is it enough for a person to realize the danger of his sins?

No. Fear of God's punishment plays a part, certainly, in bringing people to Christ for salvation, but fear of punishment alone is not enough. The person who is a Christian only because of fear of hell is not really a Christian at all. We must be sorry for our sins, that is, for our sins themselves, not merely for the sufferings and misery they bring upon us. We must turn from sin because sin is wrong, not merely because it is dangerous.

6. In addition to the danger of our sins, what must we realize concerning our sins?

We must realize the "filthiness and odiousness" of our sins; that is to say, we must realize that our sins are utterly contrary to the holiness and character of God, and are therefore unclean and to be hated.

7. Why must we also have an apprehension of God's mercy in Christ?

Without an apprehension of God's mercy in Christ, repentance would not lead to salvation but to despair, for while realizing that our sins deserve God's wrath and curse for all eternity, we would yet see no way of deliverance from them. It is only when accompanied by faith in Christ as Saviour that repentance is a **Christian** experience. It is reported that a Hindu society in New York City took the Westminster Shorter Catechism definition of "Repentance unto life" and changed it to fit their Hindu religion by omitting the words "and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ." By this omission, they eliminated everything distinctively Christian from the definition. The result was as follows: "Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience." This satisfied the Hindu society, which shows that there is no Christianity in it.

8. Is it necessary for a Christian to have deep sorrow for sin?

Certainly it is necessary. Sin is not a trifle, nor a slight evil. It is absolutely evil, so that any sin, even the least, deserves God's wrath and curse to all eternity. Even the smallest sin is a total contradiction of God's holiness. Therefore the Christian, throughout life, must always have deep sorrow for sin.

9. Is repentance an act, a process, or an attitude?

Looked at on its human side, repentance is an attitude of heart and mind with respect to God, self

and sin. But repentance unto life is more than an attitude. It is an attitude which results in action — the constant serious effort to live a righteous life.

10. Should we repent once for all when we come to believe on Christ, or should we continue to repent day by day?

The crisis of conversion when a person first believes in Christ ought to be pre-eminently a time of repentance. But repentance is not something that can be done once for all. We must continue to have the attitude of repentance day by day throughout our life in this world.

11. How can we test the genuineness of our repentance?

It is not safe to rely wholly on our feelings, for they are very deceptive. The only sure test of any religious experience is its fruit. If our repentance leads to "purposing and endeavoring" to live a new and better life, we may believe that it is genuine Christian repentance, or "repentance unto life."

12. Why is there little true repentance at the present day?

There may be several reasons for this condition, but certainly one of the main reasons is that during recent years there has been relatively little preaching of the law of God, the holiness of God, and the wrath of God against human sin. Instead of stressing these subjects, modern Protestantism has shifted its emphasis and proclaims a God who is nothing but love, and who is represented as too kind-hearted to punish anyone forever. Sin is represented as an evil, but not a great enough evil to alienate man from God and bring him under the wrath and curse of God. It is no wonder that this shift of emphasis, and these corruptions of the truth, have resulted in the present state of affairs. The unbalanced modern emphasis on the love of God has produced an attitude of complacency and self-righteousness in modern Protestantism. Scripture teaches that Christ came to call, not the righteous, but sinners, to repentance. Those who consider themselves righteous will of course feel no need of repentance. Only by a general return to the whole truth about God and His law can the ground be laid for a real revival of Christian faith and experience.

13. How can it be proved from the Bible that repentance is a gift of God, and not simply an achievement of our human free will?

There are texts which speak of repentance as a gift of God, such as Acts 11:18 and 2 Tim. 2:25. Also there are texts which teach the same truth by speaking of repentance as a **work of God**, such as Jer. 31:18, 19 and Zech. 12:10.

14. Can repentance take away the guilt of our sins?

No. The guilt of our sins is cancelled only by the blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

15. If repentance cannot cancel our sins, then why must we repent?

Christ came to this world, not simply to save us, but to save us from sin. He came not simply to give us eternal life, but to give us eternal righteousness. We cannot accept a part of what Christ offers; we must take all or nothing. If we do not

want righteousness, then we cannot have eternal life either. We cannot be saved without being saved FROM SIN. The person who does not repent is the person who wants to cling to sin. This state of mind is contrary to accepting Christ as our Savior from sin. We cannot have our sins and also have salvation from our sins at the same time, any more than a person can be saved from fire while deliberately remaining in a burning building.

LESSON 36

The Difference between Being Declared Right and Being Made Good

Q. 77. Wherein do justification and sanctification differ?

A. Although sanctification be inseparably joined with justification, yet they differ, in that God in justification imputeth the righteousness of Christ; in sanctification his Spirit infuseth grace, and enableth to the exercise thereof; in the former, sin is pardoned; in the other, it is subdued: the one doth equally free all believers from the revenging wrath of God, and that perfectly in this life, that they never fall into condemnation; the other is neither equal in all, nor in this life perfect in any, but growing up to perfection.

Scripture References:

1 Cor. 6:11. 1 Cor. 1:30. Justification and sanctification are inseparably joined together.

Rom. 4:6, 8. In justification, God imputes to the sinner the righteousness of Christ.

Ezek. 36:27. In sanctification, God infuses grace, and enables the Christian to exercise it.

Rom. 3: 24, 25. In justification, sin is pardoned.

Rom. 6:6, 14. In sanctification, sin is subdued,

Rom. 8:33, 34. Justification frees all believers equally, and perfectly in this life, from the wrath of God.

1 John 2:12-14. Heb. 5:12-14. Sanctification is not equal in all Christians, but varies according to the progress they have made.

1 John 1:8, 10. Sanctification is not perfect in any Christian in this life.

2 Cor. 7:1. Phil. 3:12-14. Sanctification is a gradual process which approaches, but does not in this life actually attain, the ideal of moral perfection.

Note: This question of the Catechism being a contrast between the two doctrines of justification and sanctification, the following table of resemblances and contrasted points may be helpful in understanding this matter.

I. Points in Which Justification and Sanctification are Similar

1. They are inseparably joined together; there is no justification without sanctification, and no sanctification without justification. The person who has one has the other also.

2. God is the Author and Source of both justification and sanctification.

3. Both justification and sanctification proceed from God's grace, or His special love and favor to ill-deserving sinners.

II. Points in Which Justification and Sanctification Differ.

A. JUSTIFICATION IS

1. An ACT of God's free grace.
2. An act by which God IMPUTES Christ's righteousness.
3. An act in which God PARDONS sin.
4. TOTAL AND EQUAL in all cases.
5. COMPLETE AND PERFECT in this life.
6. A JUDICIAL VERDICT which frees from condemnation and awards eternal life.

B. SANCTIFICATION IS

1. A WORK of God's free grace.
2. A work by which God INFUSES grace and power.
3. A work in which God SUBDUES sin.
4. DIFFERENT IN DEGREE in different persons.
5. INCOMPLETE AND IMPERFECT in this life.
6. A divinely planted and watered SPIRITUAL GROWTH of Christian character.

Questions:

1. What is meant by saying that sanctification is inseparably joined with justification?

This means that though these two elements of salvation can be distinguished, they cannot be separated. There is no such thing as justification

without sanctification, or sanctification without justification. The person who has been justified is, without exception, being sanctified, and vice versa.

2. Prove from the Bible that justification and sanctification are inseparable.

1. Cor. 1:30, "But of him are ye in Christ, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." Here righteousness (which is the same thing as justification) is linked together with sanctification, and we are told that Christ Jesus is made unto us both righteousness and sanctification. Therefore the person who has Christ has both justification and sanctification.

Rom. 6:22. "Being now made free from sin, and become servants of God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." Here "being made free from sin," that is, justification, is closely connected with "bringing forth fruit unto holiness," that is, sanctification.

3. What attempts have been made to separate justification and sanctification?

(a) People of the Pentecostal persuasion hold that justification is not necessarily accompanied and followed by sanctification. They tend to divide Christians into two classes, namely: 1. Those who have only been justified; and 2. Those who have been both justified and also sanctified. Those who hold this view also tend to regard sanctification as an act, which may be complete in this life. This same general tendency is manifested by those who attempt to classify Christians into: 1. Those who have received the Holy Spirit; and 2. Those who are "saved" but have not yet received the Holy Spirit. (See Rom. 8:9, "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his").

(b) Modern Liberalism has given up the doctrine of justification by free grace, but seeks to cultivate sanctification apart from justification. Thus the modern Liberal preachers no longer believe in or proclaim the truth of justification by the free grace of God, but they never weary of preaching about "character building" and similar subjects. This error is vastly more serious than that of the Pentecostal believers mentioned above. They say that a person may have the foundation (justification) without having the house (sanctification) built upon it. But the modern Liberal preachers say, in effect, that a person may have a wonderful house of sanctification ("character building") without any real foundation at all underneath it; that is, without any foundation except ordinary, sinful, unregenerate human nature.

4. What is the difference in meaning between the terms "impute" and "infuse"?

To impute is a legal term; it means to reckon something, or charge something to the account of a person. To impute Christ's righteousness to a

person means to place Christ's righteousness to the credit of that person in the account books of heaven. Imputation is a transfer of righteousness or guilt, credit or debit, in God's record books.

The term "infuse," on the other hand, means to pour in. It refers not to a transaction in the record books of God in heaven, but to something that God does in the heart and soul of a person here on earth. It describes, not a change of legal status, but a change of personal character.

God imputes to us the righteousness of Christ, but infuses grace and power into our hearts so that we can eventually cultivate our own personal righteousness. The perfect righteousness of Christ is imputed to the believer while he is still here in this world; but in heavenly glory he shall also be clothed with **the perfected righteousness of saints**, that is, the personal righteousness of character which is the finished product of sanctification (see Rev. 19:8).

5. Why did not God provide that sanctification should be equal in all believers in this present life?

Since God is almighty, of course He could have made sanctification equal in all believers in this present life, but as a matter of fact He did not choose to do so. Why, we are not told in the Bible. We can only say that God in His sovereignty has done as seemed good in His sight (see Matt. 11:26). We cannot call God to account for His plans and decisions. To do so is a contradiction of the religious relationship between man and God.

6. Why is the distinction between justification and sanctification important for us in our Christian life?

This distinction is extremely important for the Christian life, because there is always some tendency to confuse these two things. The person who thinks that justification includes all the sanctification he needs, so that he need not seek personal holiness or character and life, stands in peril because he is not truly justified. On the other hand, the person who thinks that sanctification includes all the justification he needs, stands in peril because he is trying to save himself by good works. Thus the distinction between justification and sanctification is extremely important for avoiding the two extremes of antinomianism and legalism. The true believer will avoid both of these extremes, and will realize that justification is the foundation of his salvation, while sanctification is the fruit of his salvation. We should hold and teach the whole Bible truth about both of these great doctrines, noting carefully their similarities and differences, and the relation between the two.

7. Is the difference between justification and sanctification merely a matter of theory or ab-

stract doctrine, or "theological hair-splitting"?

On the contrary, this is a matter of vital importance for the practical life of every Christian. No sincere Christian will regard such matters as mere theories or abstractions. Every true

Christian will realize that this distinction is vitally important, and that justification and sanctification are as necessary for the salvation of his soul as air, food and water are for the life and health of his body.

LESSON 37

Why There are no Perfect Christians

Q. 78. Whence ariseth the imperfection of sanctification in believers?

A. The imperfection of sanctification in believers ariseth from the remnants of sin abiding in every part of them, and the perpetual lustings of the flesh against the spirit; whereby they are often foiled with temptations, and fall into many sins, are hindered in all their spiritual services, and their best works are imperfect and defiled in the sight of God.

Scripture References:

Rom. 7:18, 23. Mark 14: 66-72. Gal 2:11, 12. By reason of the sinful corruption of nature which remains even in believers, they are faced with temptations and fall into many sins.

Heb. 12:1. The Christian is hindered in all spiritual exercises by the remnants of sin in his nature.

Isa. 64:6. Ex. 28:38. Even the Christian's best works are imperfect and defiled by sin in the sight of God.

1 John 1:8. James 3:2; 5:16. Phil. 3:12-14. Prov. 24:9. Eccles. 7:29. The imperfection of sanctification in believers is a fact recognized in Scripture.

Questions:

1. If it is true that the Christian has received salvation, then how can the Catechism speak about "the imperfection of sanctification in believers"?

The term "salvation" in the Bible and in Christian doctrine is not always used in the same sense. It is a complex idea and includes several elements. Sometimes one of these is referred to, and sometimes another. We commonly say that a Christian is a saved person, which is quite true, of course, if rightly understood. But if we wish to speak with precise accuracy, we must say that a Christian is a person who has been saved in one sense, is being saved in another sense, and shall be saved in still another sense. He has been saved from the guilt of sin, is being saved from the power of sin, and shall be saved from the presence of sin. The Christian has received justification, is receiving sanctification, and shall receive glorification. We receive salvation in installments, not all at one time. As the Christian's sanctification is a process which continues throughout his earthly life, it necessarily remains imperfect during this present life.

2. Is our sanctification imperfect because of something outside of us, or because of something inside of us?

Our sanctification is imperfect because of something inside of us, namely, the sinful nature which remains with us even after we are born again. It is very common indeed for Christians to blame their sins and failures on something outside of themselves, such as the sinful world, the devil, adverse circumstances, and so forth. But the truth is that our own sinful nature is the real cause of the imperfection of our sanctification.

3. But do not external factors such as the world and the devil lead Christians into sinful compromise with evil?

External factors, such as the world, the devil, evil companions, intoxicating liquor, and the like, may be the occasions of our compromising with evil. These external factors take advantage of our sinful nature, and we are seduced into committing actual transgressions. But these external things of themselves could have no power to seduce us into sin if it were not for the sinful nature remaining in us. All these external temptations were faced by our Saviour Jesus Christ, yet He never committed the least sin. In His case there was no sinful nature to which the external occasions of temptation could present a powerful appeal. We should guard against the prevalent error of loudly denouncing the world and the devil, while saying little or nothing about the sinful corruption of nature which remains in every Christian in the world. Merely condemning the sins of the world will not make Christian people holy or Christlike. More than this is needed. The sin in each person's own heart must be mortified or crucified. When this is done the world and the devil will find much less to appeal to in the Christian's heart.

4. What are some of the names used in the Bible to designate the sinful nature which remains in those who are born again?

"The old man" (Rom. 6:6); "the flesh" (Rom. 7:18); "the law of sin which is in my members" (Rom. 7:23); "the stony heart" (Ezek. 36:26); "sin that dwelleth in me" (Rom. 7:17); "the body of this death" (Rom. 7:24).

5. What is the meaning of the word "flesh" in the Bible?

This is one of the hardest terms in the Bible

to understand, because it is used with at least three different meanings, which are as follows:

(a) The purely physical sense, as in the expression "flesh and blood." In the sense, "flesh" is a certain part of the human body.

(b) "Flesh" is also used to mean man in his human weakness, as for example in the verse "All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field."

(c) The term "flesh" is used to mean **the sinful nature of fallen man**, which remains even in the Christian, as in the verse "In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing."

We should guard against the extremely common error that the word "flesh" means a PART of our human nature. It does not refer to a "lower" nature; it refers to our whole nature as corrupted by sin.

6. What is the most common error in understanding those Bible passages which speak of "the flesh" as something evil?

Undoubtedly the most common error in dealing with these passages is to regard "the flesh" as meaning simply **the human body**. In reality, of course, "the flesh" includes the whole nature of man which has been corrupted by sin which the Catechism recognizes by speaking of "sin abiding in every part of them." Primarily, sin is not a matter of the body but of the soul or spirit, but it involves the whole of our human nature. **There is nothing human which has not been corrupted and defiled by mankind's fall into sin.**

That "the flesh" cannot mean **the human body** will be realized by a mere glance at Paul's list of "the works of the flesh" in Gal. 5:19-21. Here seventeen sins are mentioned as "works of the flesh," yet ten of them are distinctly **sins of the mind** (idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies envyings), in which the body is not concerned at all, or in which its function is entirely secondary and subordinate. It is very discouraging to hear ministers, who should know better, speak of "the flesh" as if it meant simply the human body, and as if somehow sin has affected the body more than the soul or spirit of man.

7. According to the Bible, which is characteristic of the Christian life, peace or conflict?

According to the Bible, the Christian life is both a life of peace and also a life of conflict. It is a life of peace with God and of conflict with sin. The unsaved person is at war with God and at peace with sin. The Christian is at peace with God and at war with sin.

8. If a person experiences no conflict with sin, what does this indicate concerning his religious experience?

A person who experiences no real conflict with sin is in all probability an unsaved sinner, dead in trespasses and sins. A person who experiences but little conflict with sin should examine himself to discover whether he has grieved the Holy Spirit and so fallen into a condition of spiritual sluggishness and slumber. Such a Christian should heed the warning of Rom. 13:11, "It is high time to awake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."

9. Should a Christian become discouraged because he has to fight a hard battle against sin?

No. While our human weakness naturally leads us to become discouraged by prolonged conflict, it is a fact that a hard battle against sin is a good sign. It shows that we are on the right track, traveling the real highway to heaven, and are experiencing exactly what all God's saints, even the best and holiest, have had to go through. Instead of becoming discouraged by conflict with sin, we should rather be suspicious and even alarmed if we find that we have little or no conflict with sin.

10. Why is it that prayer and other spiritual duties are often so extremely difficult even for earnest and faithful Christians?

This is undoubtedly a fact of Christian experience, as well as a teaching of God's Word. The reason is that our sinful nature which remains with us fights desperately against those spiritual exercises which tend toward crucifying "the flesh." "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Gal. 5:17). As the Catechism points out, it is true that believers "are hindered in all their spiritual services."

11. What should we think of those evangelists and preachers who represent the Christian life as entirely joyful, pleasant and easy?

Those who speak so have not yet come to grips with the real evil of their own hearts.

12. What is the real character of even the best of our "good works" in God's sight?

Even the best of our works are imperfect and defiled in the sight of God, because of the sin remaining in the heart and life of all of us.

13. What great Scripture passage deals with the Christians warfare against sin?

Ephesians 6:10-18, which commands us to "put on the whole armor of God."

14. What part of the "whole armor of God" is the most important of all?

"Above all, taking the shield of faith, where-with ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked (one)" (Eph. 6:16).

LESSON 38

Can a Christian Lose his Salvation?

Q. 79. May not true believers, by reason of their imperfections, and the many temptations and sins they are overtaken with, fall away from the state of grace?

A. True believers, by reason of the unchangeable love of God, and his decree and covenant to give them perseverance, their inseparable union with Christ, his continual intercession for them, and the Spirit and seed of God abiding in them, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Scripture References:

Jer. 31:3. The unchangeable love of God for His own. Heb. 13: 20, 21. 2 Sam. 23:5. God's covenant to give His people the grace of perseverance.

1 Cor. 1:8, 9. The believer's inseparable union with Christ.

Heb. 7:25. Luke 22:32. Christ's intercession for His own.

1 John 3:9. 1 John 2:27. The Spirit and seed of God abiding in the Christian.

Jer. 32:40. John 10:28. The true believer can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace.

1 Pet. 1:5. The true believer is kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

Questions:

1. What class of people does the answer to this question of the Catechism discuss?

True believers, that is, those who are truly born again, justified, adopted into the family of God, and in process of being sanctified.

2. What class of people does this answer not discuss?

The class commonly called hypocrites, including all who make a profession of Christianity but are not really born again. Some of these may be mere pretenders; others may be self-deceived, thinking they are born again when they really are not; others may know nothing about being born again, but assume that they can be saved by their good works or character. None of these are under discussion in the answer to Q. 79.

3. Can true believers fall away from the state of grace?

No. That is, they cannot totally and finally fall away from the state of grace.

4. Prove from the Bible that true believers

cannot totally and finally fall away from the state of grace.

John 10:28 states explicitly that they cannot. Romans 8:35-39 lists sixteen things which cannot separate the believer from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, and then adds "nor any other creature." Those who hold that true believers can fall away from the state of grace and be eternally lost reply that none of the things listed by the apostle Paul can separate the believer from God's love, but the believer's own free will can do it. By this claim they hold that **human free will is not a created thing**, for after listing these things the apostle adds, "Nor any other creature." We conclude, therefore, that the believer's free will, being a creature, it cannot separate the believer from the saving love of God.

5. What does the Catechism imply by the words "neither totally nor finally"?

These words imply that true believers may partially and temporarily fall away from the state of grace. As a matter of fact this partial and temporary falling away is taught in the Bible as a possibility, and it can be observed among Christian people in our own day.

6. Does the fact that true believers cannot perish depend on their own will power, earnestness or faithfulness?

No. If our eternal salvation depended on ourselves, none of us would be saved.

7. If our eternal security does not depend on our own efforts, then what does it depend on?

It depends, ultimately, on the love and power of God.

8. How does the Catechism summarize the Bible proofs that true believers cannot perish?

The Catechism lists five reasons from Scripture, which are as follows:

- (a) The unchangeable love of God.
- (b) God's decree and covenant to give them perseverance.
- (c) Their inseparable union with Christ.
- (d) Christ's continual intercession for them.
- (e) The Spirit and seed of God abiding in them.

9. Prove from the Bible that God's love for the elect is eternal and therefore unchangeable.

Jer. 31:3. This verse speaks of God loving His people with an everlasting love. If this love is changeable, then it is not really everlasting. If really everlasting, then it is unchangeable.

10. What is the nature of God's love for His elect?

God's love for His elect is not merely a general love, that wishes and hopes for their welfare, but a special, particular love that actually goes into action and infallibly provides for their eternal fellowship with God Himself.

11. Give two texts of Scripture which prove that God has promised to keep His elect from falling away from the state of grace.

Psalms 138:8 and its New Testament counterpart, Phil. 1:6.

12. Show from Scripture that the believer's union with Christ is an inseparable union, and therefore an eternal union.

Rom. 8:35-39. Psalm 23:6. Psalm 73:24. John 17:24.

13. Give a text from the Gospels and one from the Epistles showing Christ's intercession for His people.

John 17:9. Hebrews 7:25.

14. Will Christ ever stop making intercession for His people?

No. His intercession will continue until the last of the elect enters the state of eternal glory, for we read in Heb. 7:25 that "He ever liveth to make intercession for them."

15. How do we know that Christ's intercession for His people will be effective?

God the Father will always grant the requests of Jesus Christ, for He is the Father's beloved Son in whom He is well pleased (Matt. 3:17), and everything that He does is always pleasing to the Father (John 8:29).

16. How does the abiding of the Spirit of God in believers prove that they cannot fall away from the state of grace?

The Holy Spirit cannot dwell in the heart of an unsaved person (John 14:17), but He dwells in the heart of every believer (John 14:17; Rom. 8:9). Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would abide forever (John 14:16). If it were possible for a believer to fall away from the state of grace, that would mean that a saved person would become unsaved again. Then the Holy Spirit would have to leave that person, for He cannot dwell in an unsaved person. But Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would come to believers to abide forever. Therefore the Spirit cannot depart from a true believer's heart; therefore a true believer

cannot lose his salvation and become unsaved again.

17. What is meant by the "seed of God" abiding in believers?

The "seed of God" means the new, holy nature created in the heart of a person when he is born again by the power of the Holy Spirit.

18. How does the abiding of this new nature or "seed of God" in believers show that they cannot fall away from the state of grace?

1 Pet. 1:23, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." Here the new nature, or "seed of God," which a Christian receives when he is born again, is affirmed to be incorruptible. If it is incorruptible then it cannot perish and die, but will live and grow forever. But if it were possible for a believer totally to fall away from the state of grace, then it would be possible for the "seed of God" in that person's heart to perish and die. In that case, the "seed of God" would not be incorruptible, but corruptible. But God's Word says plainly that the "seed of God" in the believer is incorruptible. Therefore the "seed of God" abiding in the believer guarantees that the believer cannot totally fall away from the state of grace and be lost.

19. Should this doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, or the eternal security of the believer in Christ, lead us to indifference or carelessness in our Christian life?

It has often been made a criticism of this doctrine that it takes away all motive for seeking holiness. This criticism is based on the false notion that Christians seek holiness only because of fear of hell. Really this criticism is quite without foundation. Christians who believe this doctrine are just as earnest, faithful and careful in their Christian life as other Christians who do not accept this doctrine.

The truth is that this doctrine, rightly understood, should be, and is, a powerful incentive to patient and faithful Christian service. The Christian who is filled day and night with fears and worries lest he may fall away from the state of grace and perish eternally, cannot render the best service to God, because his mind is distracted by his fears. The believer whose mind has been set at rest by the clear teaching of God's Word on this subject will be the better able to devote his life to seeking the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Just as in ordinary human life, so also it is true in the spiritual life of the Christian, that security is necessary for normal progress and activity.

LESSON 39

Note: In connection with this lesson, it is suggested that the article **Assurance of Salvation:**

Its Possibility and True Basis, beginning on page 145 of this issue, be read.

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Q. 80. Can true believers be infallibly assured that they are in the estate of grace, and that they shall persevere therein unto salvation?

A. Such as truly believe in Christ, and endeavor to walk in all good conscience before him, may, without extraordinary revelation, by faith grounded upon the truth of God's promises, and by the Spirit enabling them to discern in themselves those graces to which the promises of life are made, and bearing witness with their spirits that they are the children of God, be infallibly assured that they are in the estate of grace, and shall persevere therein unto salvation.

Scripture References:

1 John 2:3. A conscientious endeavor to keep God's commandments is necessary for the attainment of assurance.

1 Cor. 2:12. 1 John 3:14, 18, 21, 24; 4:13, 16. Heb. 6:11, 12. The attainment of assurance is possible, and depends upon the truth of God's promises and upon the believer being enabled by the Holy Spirit to discern in Himself the graces to which the promises are made.

Rom. 8:15, 16. 1 John 5:10. The testimony of the Holy Spirit in the believer's soul is a factor in the attainment of assurance.

1 John 5:13. Full assurance includes assurance of final perseverance unto eternal life.

Questions:

1. What is meant by "assurance of salvation"?

This means an absolute conviction in the mind of a Christian of the certainty of his present and eternal salvation.

2. Do all Christians believe that full assurance is possible in this life?

No. Roman Catholics and Arminians deny the possibility of absolute assurance of salvation in this present life.

3. Why do we hold that those who deny the possibility of assurance are wrong?

We hold that those who deny the possibility of assurance are wrong because many passages of Scripture teach us that full assurance is attainable in this life.

4. Do all people who claim to have assurance of their own salvation have a right to make this claim?

By no means. Moralists or Legalists, Mystics and Formalists have no right to claim assurance of personal salvation. All of them are trusting in what the Scripture calls "refuges of lies" rather than in the true grace of God.

5. What false teaching on assurance is common among earnest Christian people today?

The confusion of **assurance of salvation** with **salvation itself**.

6. Are salvation and assurance of salvation the same thing?

Certainly not. Salvation and assurance of salvation are two different things, though many people fail to realize the difference between them. Suppose a patient undergoes a surgical operation. Such a patient, when he consents to the operation, exercises faith in the surgeon. The surgeon does his work skillfully and well; the operation is successful and the patient is on the road to recovery. Hours later as he begins to come out of the anaesthetic, his brain clears and he asks whether everything is all right. The surgeon comes and assures him that all is well. He was **SAFE** by reason of the surgeon's skillful work, but this fact did not give him assurance of his safety in his own mind. That came later, upon appropriate evidence (when the surgeon talked with him after the operation).

7. What is the difference between salvation and assurance?

Salvation is what God does for us to save us from sin. Assurance is our becoming fully convinced, in our own mind, that we have received these benefits from God.

8. What are the grounds of assurance of salvation?

As presented in the Bible and summarized in the Catechism, these grounds are three in number. It should be realized that they work together, not independently. They are:

(a) The truth of God's promises to believers.

(b) The evidence in a person's life of the graces to which God's promises are addressed.

(c) The witness of the Holy Spirit in the believer's heart that he is a child of God.

9. What is meant by the truth of God's promises as a ground of assurance?

The divine truth of the promises of the Gospel is the foundation upon which assurance must rest. Without it, we could never attain full conviction of personal salvation. The person who doubts or disbelieves the Bible can never have full assurance of his personal salvation. Assurance starts with accepting the promises of God in His Word as true.

10. What is meant by the evidence in a person's heart and life of those graces to which God's promises are addressed?

Briefly, this means the evidence of a changed and new life (2 Cor. 5:17). The gracious promises of God are not addressed to particular persons — such as John Doe and Jane Smith — by name. They are addressed to certain **classes** of persons:

those who believe, those who flee to Christ for refuge, those who have broken heart because of sin, those who love God, etc. How do I know that the promises are addressed to me? Only by recognizing in myself real evidence of the graces to which the promises are addressed.

11. What is meant by the testimony of the Holy Spirit as a ground of assurance?

This does not mean some special revelation such as came to some people in Bible times. It means knowing God personally through the work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts (1 John 3:24; 5:10; Rom. 8:15, 16). This work of the Holy Spirit in our hearts serves as a true ground for the hope that maketh not ashamed. The person who knows God personally by vital spiritual experience possesses the witness within himself (1 John 5:10).

12. How can we test the genuineness of our own assurance?

See the close of the article **Assurance of Salvation: Its Possibility and True Basis**, on pages 145ff. of this issue of **Blue Banner Faith and Life**. The article gives four Scriptural tests by which true assurance can be distinguished from false or presumptuous assurance.

Q. 81. Are all true believers at all times assured of their present being in the estate of grace, and that they shall be saved?

A. Assurance of grace and salvation not being of the essence of faith, true believers may wait long before they obtain it; and after the enjoyment thereof, may have it weakened and intermitted, through manifold distempers, sins, temptations and desertions; yet are they never left without such a presence and support of the Spirit of God as keeps them from sinking into utter despair.

Scripture References:

Eph. 1:13. Assurance is not essential to faith, and may come afterwards.

Isa. 50:10. Psalm 88. True believers may have to wait long before they attain full assurance.

Psalm 77:1-12. Psalm 31:22. Psalm 22:1. Even after full assurance has been experienced, it is subject to change from various causes.

1 John 3:9. Job 13:15. Psalm 73:15, 23. Isa. 54:7-10. True believers are never left without any consciousness of the favor of God; they always have such a presence and support of the Holy Spirit as to preserve them from utter despair.

Questions:

1. What does the Catechism mean by saying that assurance is not of the essence of faith?

This means that true saving faith may exist without assurance of salvation in the believer's

*sudden conversion
not standard
for full assurance*

own mind. A person may have a true faith, and be really saved, without being sure of his salvation in his own consciousness.

2. Do all Christians have the grace of assurance as soon as they believe in Christ as their Saviour?

No. There are some Christians who do receive the grace of assurance immediately upon believing in Christ as their Saviour. This is often the case with persons who are converted to Christ in a very sudden manner, or who have gone through an intense spiritual struggle before they really came to Christ. The Reformer John Calvin, who was suddenly converted, is an example of this. But most Christians experience a more gradual conversion, and may have a true saving faith for some time — even a long time — before they possess full certainty of their salvation in their own minds.

3. Can every Christian attain full assurance of his salvation?

Yes. Assurance is possible to attain, and every Christian who uses the appointed means of grace faithfully and patiently waits on God will obtain it in the end. (Read Psalm 40:1).

4. After assurance of salvation is once attained, can it be lost?

Yes. That is, it may be temporarily "weakened and intermitted" because of a variety of causes, including temptations, the believer's own sins, and providential dispensations of God. This is not only the teaching of Scripture (Psalm 32; Psalm 143:1-7; 2 Cor. 7:5), but also it is the common experience of Christian people. For an unchanging and always unclouded realization of God's presence and favor we must wait until we enter the state of eternal glory.

5. Can a true Christian's consciousness of God's presence and favor ever be wholly lost?

No. If the believer's consciousness of God's presence and favor could be entirely lost, the believer would sink into utter despair. But God never allows this to happen. The believer always is conscious of some help from God.

6. How should we seek to maintain a clear and strong assurance of our salvation?

Every Christian should earnestly endeavor to attain, and having attained, to retain, a strong and clear assurance of his salvation by a faithful, patient, conscientious use of the means of grace, waiting upon God in Word, sacraments and prayer.

7. Should we feel discouraged if we do not possess full assurance soon after we believe on Christ?

No. We should exercise Christian patience, and wait upon God to give us assurance in His own good time.

LESSON 40

Our Communion in Glory with Christ

Q. 82. What is the communion in glory which the members of the invisible church have with Christ?

A. The communion in glory which the members of the invisible church have with Christ, is in this life, immediately after death, and at last perfected at the resurrection and day of judgment.

Scripture References:

2 Cor. 3:18. The believer's communion in glory with Christ in the present life.

Luke 23:43. The believer's communion in glory with Christ immediately after death.

1 Thess. 4:17. The believer's communion in glory with Christ perfected at the resurrection and day of judgment.

Note: Question 69 was "What is the communion in grace which the members of the invisible church have with Christ?" Questions 70-81 deal subject of the communion **in glory** which they have with Christ. Question 82 introduces the new subject of the communion **in glory** which they have with Christ. Then Questions 83-90 deal with this subject of communion in glory with Christ. The answer to Question 82 is a summary of the subject **Communion in Glory with Christ**. It contains no doctrine which is not more fully stated in the questions which follow. Therefore we shall consider Question 82 only very briefly, and then pass on to the questions which follow it.

Questions:

1. What is the difference between grace and glory?

In the Bible, both of these words are used with various meanings. But as used here in the Catechism, **grace** refers to those blessings of salvation which we receive in this present life, while **glory** refers to those blessings of salvation which we receive chiefly in the life to come.

2. Do the people of God receive glory all at once, or in instalments?

God's people receive glory, not all at once, but in three stages or instalments.

3. What are the three stages in which God's people receive glory?

(a) They receive the first-fruits of glory during the present life.

(b) They enter the state of glory at their death.

(c) They receive the perfection of glory at the resurrection.

Q. 83. What is the communion in glory with Christ which the members of the invisible church enjoy in this life?

A. The members of the invisible church have communicated to them in this life the first-fruits of glory with Christ, as they are members of him their head, and so in him are interested in that glory which he is fully possessed of; and, as an earnest thereof, enjoy the sense of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, and hope of glory: as, on the contrary, sense of God's revenging wrath, horror of conscience, and a fearful expectation of judgment, are to the wicked the beginning of their torments which they shall endure after death.

Scripture References:

Eph. 2:5, 6. Believers, because they are members of Christ their Head, participate in the glory which Christ possesses in heaven.

Rom. 5:1 compared with 2 Cor. 1:22. Believers, in this life, enjoy the consciousness of God's love.

Rom. 5:1, 2; 14:17. Peace of conscience, Christian joy, and hope of glory, are the believer's portion here on earth.

Gen. 4:13. Matt. 27:4. Heb. 10:27. Rom. 2:9. Mark 9:44. Just as the believer, in the present life, experiences a foretaste of the glory of heaven, so wicked people, in the present life, experience a foretaste of the miseries of hell.

Questions:

1. What is meant by the expression "the first-fruits of glory"?

This means a sample of foretaste of the glory which we shall enjoy to the full in the life to come.

2. What is meant by saying that the members of the invisible Church "are interested in that glory" which Christ already fully possesses?

Here the word "interested" does not mean that they are eager to learn about it, but rather that they are **entitled to a share in** the glory which Christ now enjoys in heaven.

3. Why cannot Christian people have the full enjoyment of Christ's glory here and now?

This is impossible because of three facts which, in God's providence, continue to exist during the present life. These three facts are:

(a) The continued presence of a sinful nature in the Christian.

(b) The mortality and weakness of the Christian's physical body.

(c) The presence of sin and suffering in the world which surrounds the Christian.

4. When will these three facts, which prevent the full enjoyment of glory here and now, be changed?

The presence of the sinful nature in the believer will come to an end at his death. The mortality and weakness of his physical body will end at the resurrection at the last day. The sin and suffering in the world which surrounds the believer here and now, will be left behind him at his death, and will be totally abolished at the Judgment Day at the end of the world.

5. What is meant by saying that the believer here and now has "an earnest of Christ's glory"?

The expression "an earnest" means a deposit, a token payment, or a payment on account, which is made as evidence of good faith in promising that the balance shall be paid in due time. Glory is our inheritance in the life to come, but we receive a sample of it during this present life as evidence that we shall receive the fulness of it in the future life.

6. What kind of experiences go to make up the

"earnest" of glory which God's people receive during the present life?

The enjoyment of consciousness of God's love; peace of conscience; joy in the Holy Spirit; the hope (that is, the assurance, or "hope that maketh not ashamed," Rom. 5:5) of the fulness of glory in the future. These experiences enable the believer at times to enjoy a kind of "heaven on earth."

7. How do wicked people receive a sample of their future destiny during the present life?

Even before death they experience, more or less, "a sense of God's revenging wrath," "horror of conscience," and "a fearful expectation of judgment." Sometimes these terrors may be so severe that they can be described as a kind of "hell on earth." The Bible teaches definitely that this is so, and it has often been exemplified by the words and actions of wicked people, especially as they felt the approach of death.

8. Does the believer enjoy this foretaste of glory equally at all times?

No. Because of doubts, temptations, the attacks of Satan, and other things, the enjoyment of this foretaste of glory varies from time to time. Sometimes it is very clear, and at other times it is clouded and weak. But the believer is never left entirely without it.

LESSON 41

Why Must Christians Die?

Q. 84. Shall all men die?

A. Death being threatened as the wages of sin, it is appointed unto all men once to die; for that all have sinned.

Scripture References:

Rom. 6:23. Death is the "wages" or penalty of sin.

Heb. 9:27. God has appointed unto all men once to die.

Rom. 5:12. Death has passed upon all men, because all have sinned.

Questions:

1. Are there any exceptions to the rule that all men must die?

Yes. Enoch and Elijah were translated to the state of glory without dying. Read Gen. 5:24; Heb. 11:5; 2 Kings 2:11. Also the Bible teaches that all of God's people who shall be living in the world when Jesus Christ comes again will be translated to the state of glory without dying. Read 1 Cor. 15:51,52; 1 Thess. 4:16, 17.

2. Has there ever been an exception to the

truth that all men have sinned?

Yes, our Saviour Jesus Christ lived a blameless, perfect life, wholly without sin. Death would not have been able to claim Him, except for the fact that the sins of God's people were laid upon Him, and so He voluntarily laid down His life as a sacrifice for others. He came under the curse of God, suffered and died because of OUR sins. In Him was no sin, but the Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

3. Is death to be regarded as a normal or an abnormal experience of human beings?

Modern thought, influenced by the evolution theory, holds that death is entirely normal, good and necessary. It holds that for a human being to die is just as normal and proper as for leaves to drop off trees in the autumn. According to evolution, only by the death of millions of generations of human beings can perfection be attained — if indeed it can ever be attained. But according to the teachings of the Bible, death is strictly abnormal. Men were not created to die; they were created to live. The separation of soul from body, and the decay of the body, are fearful things because they are contrary to the integrity of our human nature as created by God. Therefore the

Bible describes death as "the last enemy" and says that it shall be destroyed. The Bible also says that the devil is the one who has the power of death (Heb. 2:14), and that Christ came to destroy the works of the devil and "to deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2:15).

4. What is proved by the fact that death is universal in the human race?

The fact that death is universal proves that sin is universal also. Regardless of the ideas of scientists and philosophers, human beings instinctively recoil from death and realize that death is a fearful thing. The human soul has implanted in it an unquenchable thirst for life. Yet in the face of this powerful, universal thirst for life, death comes to all. The only adequate explanation is that **something is radically wrong with the human race**. This the Bible calls SIN, and explains the fact of death by the fact of sin. Rom. 5:12; 6:23.

5. Will science ever be able to overcome death?

No. By God's common grace, scientific discoveries may be able in some cases to postpone death, but science can never overcome death, because back of the natural causes of death (such as sickness, accident, old age) there is the spiritual cause, namely sin and God's righteous judgment upon sin.

Q. 85. Death being the wages of sin, why are not the righteous delivered from death, seeing all their sins are forgiven in Christ?

A. The righteous shall be delivered from death itself at the last day, and even in death are delivered from the sting and curse of it; so that, although they die, yet it is out of God's love, to free them perfectly from sin and misery, and to make them capable of farther communion with Christ in glory, which they then enter upon.

Scripture References:

1 Cor. 15:26. Heb. 2:15. The righteous shall be delivered from death itself at the Last Day.

1 Cor. 15:55-57. Even in death, the righteous are spared the sting and curse of it.

Isa. 57:1, 2. 2 Kings 22:20. In the case of the righteous, death is to be explained by God's love, not by His wrath against sin.

Rev. 14:13. Eph. 5:27. The death of the Christian serves to free him perfectly from sin and misery.

Luke 23:43. Phil. 1:23. The Christian's death serves to render him capable of the farther communion with Christ which he then enters upon in the state of glory.

Questions:

1. What is the meaning of the word "wages" in this question?

The word "wages" is here used with the meaning of penalty or punishment. Because the sinner deserves death, the Bible speaks of death as the "wages" of sin, for wages are a payment to a person of what he deserves to receive.

2. What is the real problem which this question of the Catechism faces?

The real problem which this question faces is, Why do Christians have to die? Since death is the penalty for sin, and Christ bore this penalty as the Christian's Substitute, it would seem to involve a contradiction to say that the Christian must still die himself.

3. Is it possible to give a complete solution of this problem?

No. The Catechism presents some truths which shed some light on the problem. But the problem itself cannot be wholly solved. We can only say that God knows what is best for His own glory and the real good of His people. "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." Why does God not take Christian people to heaven without dying, as He took Enoch and Elijah? We do not know. We can only acknowledge the sovereignty of God, and affirm that whatever God does is all very good.

4. In what way are the righteous delivered from death, and when?

While not delivered from death as an experience, the righteous are delivered from the death of the body as a state or condition. This will take place at the Last Day.

5. What deliverance do the righteous enjoy in the experience of death?

In the experience of death, the righteous are delivered from the sting and curse of it.

6. What is meant by the "sting and curse" of death?

These terms describe death as the penalty of sin. See 1 Cor. 15:55, 56. The righteous do not have to experience death as the penalty of sin.

7. If death is not the penalty of sin to the righteous, then what is it?

To the righteous, death is, first of all, the **consequence** of sin, that is, an effect of sin on the human personality. In the second place, to the righteous, death is a token of God's love. It brings the Christian benefit rather than harm. This does not mean that the death of the body is not itself a fearful thing, but it means that the result of the death of the body is to bring real benefit to the Christian.

8. How does the death of the body bring benefit to the Christian?

The death of the body brings benefit to the Christian by translating him from this environment of sin and misery to the perfect environment of heavenly peace and rest. The Christian, even though justified, adopted, and in process of being sanctified, can never be perfectly happy and blessed in this world because of the presence on every hand, and in his own heart, of sin and suffering. Death removes the Christian from this vale of tears and places him immediately in heavenly glory in the presence of Christ.

9. Why is communion with Christ more perfect in heavenly glory than here on earth?

(a) Because the Christian is in the visible presence of Christ in glory.

(b) Because the sins and temptations of his own heart and the distractions of earthly life will all have passed away.

(c) Because bodily weakness, weariness, infirmity, sickness and pain will be no more.

LESSON 42

Glory Immediately After Death

Q. 86. What is the communion in glory with Christ, which the members of the invisible church enjoy immediately after death?

A. The communion in glory with Christ, which the members of the invisible church enjoy immediately after death, is, in that their souls are then made perfect in holiness, and received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies, which even in death continue united to Christ, and rest in their graves as in their beds, till at the last day they be again united to their souls. Whereas the souls of the wicked are at their death cast into hell, where they remain in torments and utter darkness, and their bodies kept in their graves, as in their prisons, till the resurrection and judgment of the great day.

Scripture References:

Heb. 12:23. The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness.

2 Cor. 5:1, 6, 8. Phil. 1:23 compared with Acts 3:21 and Eph. 4:10. The souls of believers are at their death received into the Lord's presence in heaven.

1 John 3:2. 1 Cor. 13:12. Believers after their death shall behold the face of God.

Rom. 8:23. Psalm 16:9. Believers after their death must await the redemption of their bodies.

1 Thess. 4:14. The bodies of believers, though buried in the grave, remain united to Christ.

Isa. 57:2. The bodies of believers rest in their graves as in their beds.

Job 19:26, 27. The bodies of believers shall again be united to their souls.

Luke 16:23, 24. Acts 1:25. Jude 6, 7. The souls of the wicked are at their death cast into hell.

Questions:

1. What is the condition of believers in Christ after their death?

The condition of believers in Christ after their death is a condition of consciousness, memory,

holiness, blessedness, peaceful rest, and waiting for the completion of their redemption by the resurrection of their bodies; the condition of their bodies is a condition of rest until the resurrection.

2. When do the souls of believers enter upon this blessed condition?

Immediately after their death.

3. What popular false doctrine is rejected by this answer of the Catechism?

The unscriptural doctrine of "soul sleep", which holds that the souls of Christians at the time of their death pass into unconsciousness, being as if they did not exist, until the resurrection.

4. Give two Scripture passages which prove that the doctrine of "soul sleep" is false.

Luke 16:19-31 and Luke 23:39-43.

5. What kind of holiness do believers possess immediately after death?

Perfect holiness (a) in extent; (b) in degree; (c) in stability. Never again can they fall short of moral perfection, suffer temptation or fall into any sin.

6. What is the chief element in the happiness or blessedness of the souls of believers after death?

The chief element in their blessedness or happiness is their beholding the face of God in light and glory.

7. Where is heaven?

This question, which our natural curiosity raises in our minds, cannot be definitely answered. However the Bible clearly reveals that heaven is the place where God's glory is specially manifested, and it is the place where our Saviour Jesus Christ in His glorified human nature now lives.

8. Is the condition of the souls of believers after their death the highest and most blessed condition they are destined to enjoy?

No. While the condition of the souls of believers after their death is a condition of perfect

holiness, still it is not the highest and most blessed condition they are destined to enjoy. The enjoyment of the **supreme** blessedness must wait until the resurrection of the body at the last day. Therefore the Bible represents the souls of believers in heaven as patiently waiting for the resurrection.

9. When will the resurrection take place?

At the time of the second coming of Christ, called in the Bible the "Last Day." This will be a definite time, but it is one of the secret things of God's counsel which have not been revealed to us. Therefore all attempts to predict the time are false and wrong.

10. What is the condition of the bodies of believers after their death?

After their death, the bodies of believers rest in their graves as in their beds, and are still united to Christ.

11. What is meant by saying that the bodies of believers are still united to Christ?

This means that Christ still regards the human bodies of His people, even though dead and buried, as something exceedingly precious, because He intends to raise them up again at the Last Day. Therefore He does not regard the dead bodies of His people as something worthless, to be discarded as of no more use, but as something valuable and important, to be lovingly watched over until the resurrection. The Bible compares the dead body of a Christian to a seed which has been planted and which will spring forth to new life at the appointed time.

12. What was the ancient pagan attitude toward the body after death had taken place?

The pagan attitude was that the body even in life is the prison of the soul, or a hindrance to the soul, or a frustrating, limiting burden to the soul, and that death liberates the soul from the body and sets it free for a higher and nobler life; and that the body is only worthless matter which must be cast away or discarded because it will only decay and can never live again. This pagan attitude, though characteristic of the ancient world, is quite common at the present day.

13. How does this pagan attitude toward the human body differ from the Christian belief about the body?

According to the Word of God, the human body is not something evil; it is not the prison of the soul, but the home of the soul; not a burden to the soul, but an organ of the soul. Death by separating soul and body deprives the soul of something which it needs for its highest happiness and self-expression. See the apostle Paul's statements in 2 Cor. 5:1-4. Especially the Christian attitude toward the body differs from the pagan attitude in that Christianity teaches that the body shall rise

again by the power of God, and therefore its real and highest usefulness lies beyond the present life, in the wonderful life of eternity. Therefore the dead body of a Christian is not something which has no further purpose or function.

14. What should we think of the increasingly prevalent practice of cremation as a substitute for burial?

Of course all things are possible to God, who can raise up a body that has been burnt to ashes just as easily as one that has been buried and has returned to dust. Cremation is nothing new, for it was practiced in very ancient times, as will be seen by reading of Homer's Iliad, as well as by many archaeological findings. Nevertheless, the prevailing Jewish and Christian sentiment has been one of opposition to cremation and of preference for burial.

The objection of the majority of Christian people to cremation is not so much to the actual process of cremation itself, as to the type of thinking which leads many non-Christians to prefer cremation to burial. Most of those who advocate cremation do not believe in the resurrection of the body and consider it morbid to regard the dead body as precious. This is part of the modern pagan view of life, which regards the dead body as utterly worthless, mere lifeless matter which can never again have any value as a contribution to personality, which therefore should be destroyed as quickly and as completely as possible.

There are indeed Christian people who prefer cremation to burial, who are not moved by the unbelieving attitude mentioned in the preceding paragraph. Other Christians should not judge them for this preference, nor should anyone go so far as to say that cremation is sinful. Those who are inclined toward cremation, however, should consider seriously whether their attitude is not likely to be interpreted by the world as implying unbelief in the resurrection of the body.

15. Prove from the Bible that the souls of the wicked are in hell after their death.

Luke 16:23, 24.

16. What is the doctrine of "spiritualism" or spiritism?

This is the soul-destroying false doctrine that it is possible for the living to communicate with the dead through a person called a medium.

17. What is the attitude of the Bible toward spiritism?

The Bible forbids and condemns this practice in the most emphatic terms. Levit. 19:31; 20:6, 27; Isa. 8:19, and other Scriptures referring to witches, familiar spirits, etc., condemn the practice of spiritism. These persons with familiar spirits, etc., were similar to the mediums of the present day.

18. What should we think of the practice of prayers for the dead?

Prayers for the dead are unscriptural and wrong. If the dead are in heaven they do not need our prayers. If they are in hell our prayers cannot help them. After death there is no more opportunity for repentance or salvation. We should devote our attention rather to praying and working for the salvation of the living, leaving those who have passed away from this earth in the hands of God.

19. What should we think of the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory?

The Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory teaches that very few Christians go directly to heaven when they die. The majority go to purgatory where they must suffer until the fires of purgatory have cleansed away their remaining sinfulness. This doctrine is utterly contrary to Scripture, and makes the cross of Christ of none effect, for it implies that Christ's atonement is not effective in taking away ALL of the believer's sin.

LESSON 43

Our Mortal Bodies Shall Put on Immortality

Q. 87. What are we to believe concerning the resurrection?

A. We are to believe, that at the last day there shall be a general resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust; when they that are then found alive shall in a moment be changed; and the self-same bodies of the dead which were laid in the grave, being then again united to their souls for ever, shall be raised up by the power of Christ. The bodies of the just by the Spirit of Christ, and by virtue of his resurrection as their head, shall be raised in power, spiritual, incorruptible, and made like to his glorious body; and the bodies of the wicked shall be raised up in dishonor by him, as an offended judge.

Scripture References:

Acts 24:15. There shall be a general resurrection of the righteous and the wicked.

1 Cor. 15:51-53. 1 Thess. 4:15-17. At the time of the resurrection, living Christians shall instantly be changed without dying.

1 Cor. 15:53. John 5:28, 29. The self-same bodies that are buried shall rise again.

1 Cor. 15:21-23, 42-44. The bodies of the righteous shall be raised incorruptible.

Phil. 3:21. The bodies of the righteous shall be like Christ's glorious body.

John 5:27-29. Matt. 25:33. Rev. 20:13. The bodies of the wicked shall be raised by Christ as Judge.

Questions:

1. What is the meaning of the expression "at the last day"?

This means the time of the second coming of Christ.

2. When will the last day come?

The time when the last day shall come has not been revealed in the Bible. It is one of the secret

things which God has reserved to Himself. However, the Bible teaches that it will be a definite, particular time, referred to as "that day and hour." Although God has not revealed the time, it will certainly be a definite calendar year, month, day and hour, when the age-long history of the world will suddenly come to a conclusion with the visible return of Christ in glory upon the clouds of heaven, followed immediately by the resurrection and the judgment.

3. Is it possible that the last day may come within our own lifetime?

Yes. While we do not believe that a sound interpretation of the Scriptures warrants the popular belief that the second coming of Christ may occur "at any moment," still this does not imply that it could not take place within our lifetime; nor do we have a right to expect that it will surely take place within our lifetime.

4. What attitude does the Bible command us to have toward the second coming of our Lord?

"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20).

5. Is it Scriptural for a Christian to look forward to the last day with eager anticipation?

Yes. Read 2 Peter 3:10-14, and note the language used in verse 12, "Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God . . .". Also note Titus 2:13, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

6. Will there be more than one resurrection?

No. The Scriptures teach that there will be ONE general resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.

7. Prove from the Bible that there will be one single resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.

John 5:28, 29, "The hour is coming, in the

which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." Concerning this passage of Scripture, it should be noted that (a) it speaks of "the hour," in the singular, "the hour is coming," not "the hours are coming." Therefore a single, definite time is meant. (b) When that definite time comes, not part, but ALL that are in the graves shall come forth. (c) Those who shall come forth from the graves at that time are expressly stated to include both classes, the righteous and the wicked.

8. What should we think of the doctrine that there will be two resurrections, the first a resurrection of the redeemed, and the second, a thousand years later, a resurrection of the wicked dead?

This teaching forms a part of the premillennial interpretation of Rev. 20:1-6. This vision, which was revealed to the apostle John on the island of Patmos, is unquestionably filled with symbolic features, such as "the key of the bottomless pit," "a great chain," "a seal," and is therefore somewhat difficult to interpret with certainty. Because of this difficulty of interpretation, there has never been any unanimity in the Church, from the post-apostolic age to the present time, concerning the meaning of the vision.

This prophetic vision should be interpreted in accordance with the clear, non-symbolic teaching of our Lord in John 5:28, 29, rather than to start with a theory about the meaning of Rev. 20:1-6 and then interpret John 5:28, 29 to fit our theory of the meaning of Rev. 20:1-6. Our Lord's clear teaching in John 5:28, 29 rules out the double resurrection idea. Therefore we believe that "the first resurrection" mentioned in Rev. 20:1-6 is not the resurrection of the body but a spiritual resurrection, possibly being the same as that spoken of by our Lord in John 5:25, "The hour is coming, AND NOW IS, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." It should be carefully noted that Rev. 20:4 does not say "they rose from their graves," but only "and they lived . . .". In the Greek the word "lived" is in the aorist tense and cannot mean "lived again" or "began to live," but simply lived.

9. Will the resurrection body of the redeemed be the same as their present body, or different?

Scripture teaches that the identity of the body will be the same, but its qualities will be different. It is the same body that is buried that shall

rise again, but it will rise clothed with glory and immortality. 1 Cor. 15:37, 42-44.

10. What is meant by saying that the resurrection body will be a "spiritual" body?

We must be careful not to misunderstand this word. "Spiritual" is an adjective, not a noun. A "spiritual" body is not the same thing as "a spirit" or "a spirit body." When the New Testament speaks of the resurrection body of the saints as "a spiritual body" this means a body perfectly suited to be the temple of God the Holy Spirit.

11. Prove from the Bible that the resurrection body will not be a mere spirit, but will be a real body, distinct from the soul or spirit.

Luke 24:39, "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."

12. Why do many people scoff at the doctrine of the resurrection of the body?

This doctrine of God's Word has been made the object of scoffing ever since the Sadducees (Acts 23:8) and the Athenians (Acts 17:32) disbelieved it. Those who regard this doctrine as absurd or impossible do so because they reject the authority of the Scriptures and do not believe in a God who is almighty and can work miracles.

13. Can the resurrection of the body be proved by science or reason?

No. The resurrection of the body is a mystery which is revealed only in the written Word of God. Apart from the Scriptures we could not know it. Also we should realize that science and human reason can never disprove the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. We hold this precious truth and promise by faith, on the authority of God's infallible Word, the Holy Bible.

14. Is it proper for the Church, in order to avoid offending those who do not believe in the resurrection, to emphasize the immortality of the soul and say little or nothing about the resurrection of the body?

No. In the Bible the emphasis is on the resurrection of the body rather than on the immortality of the soul, though of course the Bible plainly teaches both. Rom. 8:23, "We ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, **the redemption of our body.**" We should not trim off one jot or tittle of our faith to suit the ideas or appease the prejudices of modern unbelief. The Church must proclaim the whole counsel of God, regardless of consequences, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear.

LESSON 44

The Great Judgment at the Last Day

Q. 88. What shall immediately follow after the resurrection?

A. Immediately after the resurrection shall follow the general and final judgment of angels and men; the day and hour whereof no man knoweth, that all may watch and pray, and be ever ready for the coming of the Lord.

Scripture References:

2 Pet. 2:4. Jude 6. The angels that sinned are to be judged.

Jude 7, 14, 15. Matt. 25:46. Christ is coming again to be the Judge of all.

Matt. 24:36. The time of the judgment is unknown to men.

Matt. 24:42-44. Luke 21:35, 36. It is our duty to watch and pray and be always ready for Christ's coming.

Questions:

1. How soon after the resurrection of the dead will the judgment take place?

Immediately after.

2. Show from the Bible that the resurrection and the judgment are so closely connected that the latter must follow immediately after the former.

John 5:27-29. In this portion of Scripture (verse 27) Christ speaks of having received from God the Father authority to execute judgment; (verse 28) He predicts that He will call all that are in the graves to come forth; (verse 30) He states that they shall come forth, some to the resurrection of life, and others to **the resurrection of judgment** (the word "damnation" in the King James Version represents a Greek word which is more accurately translated "judgment"). If the judgment is not to follow immediately after the resurrection, these verses could not connect the two events so closely.

3. What interpretation of prophecy holds a different view concerning the relation of the judgment to the resurrection?

The premillennial interpretation of prophecy holds that: (a) at the second coming of Christ the redeemed will rise from the dead. (b) This will be followed by a period of a thousand years during which Christ will rule the world from Jerusalem. (c) At the end of the thousand-year kingdom will come the resurrection of the wicked dead, followed by the general and final judgment of angels and men. We believe that this interpretation is based on a misunderstanding of Bible prophecies.

4. What is implied by the use of the expression

"the day and hour whereof" in speaking of the Judgment Day?

This expression, "the day and hour whereof," implies that the judgment will begin at a definite, particular time.

5. Why is it impossible for anyone to know in advance the day and hour of the judgment?

It is impossible because this information has not been revealed to men by God. Not only does the Bible not disclose the day and hour, but it is impossible to calculate the day and hour from prophecies in the Bible, in any way whatever.

6. Since we cannot know the day and hour of the judgment in advance, what should be our attitude toward this coming event?

Realizing the certainty of the judgment, and our own ignorance of the time, we should make adequate preparation, so that if the Judgment Day comes we will be ready for it. The person who is not saved should prepare, first of all, by repenting of sin and believing on Christ as his Saviour. The Christian should prepare by daily seriousness and faithfulness in the Christian life; he should "watch and pray, and be ever ready for the coming of the Lord."

7. Is it possible that the second coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and the Judgment Day, will come to pass during the lifetime of people now living in the world?

Certainly this must be regarded as possible; otherwise the warnings of Matt. 24:42-44 and Luke 21:36 would not apply to the present generation. If it is impossible for the Judgment Day to come during our lifetime, then Christ's words, "Therefore be ye also ready," would not apply to us. We do not need to be ready for something which cannot possibly happen to us. We should note that the statement "In such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" refers to the second coming of Christ in glory, not the death of the Christian as it has often been wrongly interpreted. The context, verses 36-42, shows clearly that the second coming of Christ in glory is the subject that is under discussion.

8. Is it probable that the second coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead and the Judgment Day will come to pass during the lifetime of people now living in the world?

The Bible affords no basis for answering this question with confidence. Many people in past times have thought that they could answer it confidently, but time has proved them wrong. It is better to refrain from speculations of this kind, and to rest content in the clear teaching of the

Bible that it is possible that Christ may come again in our lifetime.

9. What wrong attitudes should be avoided in studying the second coming of Christ and related doctrines?

There are two extreme attitudes which should be avoided: (a) Many Christians become so absorbed in these doctrines that they show but little interest in the other teachings of the Bible. One such person declared that the time has come to stop preaching the Gospel and to devote ourselves exclusively to God's prophetic program! This is a fanatical extreme. The second coming of Christ, the resurrection and the judgment are indeed important doctrines of the Bible, but they are not the only important doctrines of the Bible.

(b) There are also many Christians who go to the opposite extreme, and almost totally neglect the doctrines of the second coming of Christ, the resurrection and the judgment. This also is a harmful extreme. The right view is a balanced one; we should view these doctrines in their proper place in the divinely revealed system of truth, giving them just the degree of emphasis that properly belongs to them, according to the teaching of the Bible.

10. Why do we believe in one single general judgment, instead of two or more?

A number of reasons based on the Bible might be given. In Rev. 20:11-15 we see portrayed a general judgment, at which there are present the redeemed, whose names are written in the Book of Life, and also the wicked, who shall be cast into

the lake of fire. The same teaching is set forth in Matt. 25:46. The interpretation that Matt. 25:31 ("And before him shall be gathered all nations...") describes a judgment of nations as such — of nations as corporate political entities — rather than a judgment of individual human beings, is quite unwarranted. The word here translated "nations" is the Greek word *ethnos* (plural *ethne*) which occurs 164 times in the New Testament. It is translated "Gentiles" 93 times; "heathen" 5 times; "nation" or "nations" 64 times; "people" twice. It is quite commonly used to mean the people composing a nation or nations, and has no necessary reference to "states" or nations in their corporate political capacity. It is quite unwarranted to hold that Matt. 25:32 means that before Christ's throne shall be gathered the political governments of Great Britain, France, Germany, China, the United States of America, Mexico, etc. The meaning is simply that all people without distinctions of race or nationality, shall be gathered before Christ's judgment throne.

11. Who is to be the Judge of the entire human race?

The Lord Jesus Christ. John 5:22, 27.

12. Why is Christ especially qualified to be the Judge of the human race?

Because He is both God and man, with these two natures united in one Person. Because He is God, He knows all things that ever happened; because He is man, He has experienced temptation and suffering; thus He is eminently qualified to render a just judgment.

LESSON 45

The Eternal Destiny of the Wicked

Q. 89. What shall be done to the wicked at the day of judgment?

A. At the day of judgment, the wicked shall be set on Christ's left hand, and, upon clear evidence, and full conviction of their own consciences, shall have the fearful but just sentence of condemnation pronounced against them; and thereupon shall be cast out from the favorable presence of God, and the glorious fellowship with Christ, his saints, and all his holy angels, into hell, to be punished with unspeakable torments, both of body and soul, with the devil and his angels for ever.

Scripture References:

Matt. 25:33. The wicked shall be set on Christ's left hand.

Rom. 2:15, 16. The wicked will be convicted by their own conscience.

Matt. 25:41-43. Christ shall pronounce sentence against the wicked.

Luke 16:26. The wicked shall be isolated from the presence of God, Christ, the holy angels and the saints.

2 Thess. 1:8, 9. The wicked shall be punished with terrible torments for ever.

Matt. 26:24. Those who have been judicially condemned can never to all eternity be restored to the favor of God.

Matt. 25:46. The punishment of the wicked will be everlasting.

Matt. 5:29, 30. The punishment of hell will involve the body as well as the soul.

Mark 9:43-48. The sufferings of hell will never come to an end.

Matt. 10:28. The punishment of hell will involve both body and soul.

Questions:

1. What is the meaning of the prophecy that

the wicked shall be set on Christ's left hand, while the righteous are set on His right hand?

This teaching of our Lord implies that there is to be a judicial separation of the righteous from the wicked. These two classes of human beings, which have existed side by side during the present life, are to be separated by Christ acting as Judge. The separation will be infallibly accurate, total and permanent. Never again to all eternity will any of the wicked come into contact with any of the righteous. Never again will it be possible for any communication to take place between the two. Wickedness and wicked men are going to be completely isolated in God's universe.

2. Upon what ground will the wicked be condemned?

The wicked will be condemned on account of their own sin. Matt. 25:41-46. Rev. 20:12, 13.

2. Will the wicked be condemned because they have not believed on Christ?

Those who have heard the Gospel and have failed to believe on Christ, being thus guilty of the sin of unbelief, will be condemned on account of this sin as well as on account of all their other sins.

4. Will the wicked be condemned because God has not predestinated them to eternal life?

Those whom God has "passed by" and not chosen to eternal life will be condemned, but their condemnation will be on account of their own sins, not on account of God's decree of predestination. They are not predestined to be condemned on account of being non-elect persons.

5. In the case of the heathen who have never heard the Gospel, and are therefore not guilty of the sin of unbelief in Christ, what will be the basis on which they will be judged?

They will be judged according to the revelation of God in the light of nature (Rom. 1:20) and the law of God written on the human heart (Rom. 2:14-16), which will convict them as sinners and leave them without excuse.

6. Will the wicked feel themselves unfairly treated at the Judgment Day?

No. Even though they do not have the slightest love for God, or thankfulness for any of His mercies, still they will realize in their own conscience that God has treated them strictly according to justice. At the Judgment Day the perfect justice of God will be vindicated at last before the whole creation, and all will confess that God is just. Those who have spent their lives accusing God of unrighteousness will realize in their own hearts that God is righteous and that they themselves are wicked.

7. Prove from the Bible that hell is a place and not merely a state or condition.

Matt. 10:28. Since the bodies, as well as the souls, of the wicked will be there, it must be a place.

8. What is the belief of the Universalists?

They believe that all human beings, without exception, will finally be saved and enjoy eternal life with God.

9. Can Universalism be reconciled with the Bible statements about hell?

No. The Bible very plainly teaches that not all, but only part, of the human race will be saved, and the rest will be eternally lost. Jesus spoke of a sin that shall never be forgiven in this world or the world to come (Matt. 12:32). He said concerning Judas Iscariot that it would have been better for him if he had never been born (Matt. 26:24). These and many other texts of Scripture cannot be reconciled with the theory of Universalism.

10. What is the belief of Annihilationists?

They believe that the punishment of hell will not be eternal, but only for a period of time, after which the wicked in hell will cease to exist, their personality having been blotted out or having totally disintegrated leaving nothing. They also argue that God is too good and loving to punish any of His creatures eternally. They also claim that in the Bible the word "eternal" does not really mean forever, but only "age-long" or a long period of time.

11. What Scripture text proves that this doctrine is false?

Matt. 25:46. In this text the same Greek word is used for both "everlasting" and "eternal." It is unfortunate that the King James Version uses these two different words, because in the Greek exactly the same word is used in both cases. Therefore if the blessedness of heaven will last forever, the sufferings of hell must last for ever too.

12. Is God too good and loving to punish the wicked for ever?

No. The only way we know of the goodness and love of God is from the Bible. The same Bible which tells us that "God is love" also informs us that "Our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29). It is wrong to pick and choose among the teachings of the Bible. We must accept all that the Bible teaches, or else reject the Bible as a whole and take the consequences. If we accept what the Bible teaches about God's love, we must also accept what it teaches about God's justice, and His wrath against sin (Rom. 1:18).

13. Is it contrary to "the spirit of Christ" to believe in hell?

No. The only way we know anything about "the spirit of Christ" is from his teachings and

actions recorded in the written Word of God, the Holy Bible. The fact is that Christ's own teachings contain more warnings about eternal punishment than can be found in any other part of the Bible. It was not the apostles, nor the prophets, but Jesus Himself who most clearly and emphatically warned men about the worm that dieth not, the fire that is not quenched, the outer darkness, the gnashing of teeth, the God who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Those who claim that to believe in hell is contrary to "the spirit of Christ" simply decide for themselves what they would like to believe, and then label their self-made creed "the spirit of Christ." It is really wicked to do this.

14. What Scripture passage proves that there can be no opportunity to repent and be saved in hell?

Luke 16:19-31, the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. Note especially verse 23, "And in hell he lifted up his eyes. . .", and verse 26, "Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed; so

that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence."

15. Is the fear of hell a proper motive for believing on Christ as our Saviour?

Yes. It is not the highest motive, for we are taught in 1 John 4:18 that the mature Christian, who is "made perfect in love," is beyond the need of being influenced by the motive of fear. But certainly Jesus inculcated the fear of hell (Matt. 10:28; Luke 12:5). We may conclude therefore, that although it is true that "perfect love casteth out fear," yet those who have not reached that high point of Christian experience, and have not yet attained full assurance or certainty of their own salvation, ought to be influenced by the lower motive of fear of eternal ruin, and "flee from the wrath to come" by repenting of sin, believing on Christ for salvation, and making a diligent use of the means of grace (the Word, the sacraments and prayer).

LESSON 46

The Supreme Blessedness of the Redeemed

Q. 90 What shall be done to the righteous at the day of judgment?

A. At the day of judgment, the righteous, being caught up to Christ in the clouds, shall be set on his right hand, and there openly acknowledged and acquitted, shall join with him in the judging of reprobate angels and men, and shall be received into heaven, where they shall be fully and for ever freed from all sin and misery: filled with inconceivable joys, made perfectly holy and happy both in body and soul, in the company of innumerable saints and holy angels, but especially in the immediate vision and fruition of God the Father, of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, to all eternity. And this is the perfect and full communion, which the members of the invisible church shall enjoy with Christ in glory, at the resurrection and day of judgment.

Scripture References:

1 Thess. 4:17. The righteous shall be caught up in the clouds to Christ.

Matt. 25:33. The righteous shall be set on Christ's right hand.

Matt. 10:32. They shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted.

1 Cor. 6:2, 3. The redeemed shall join with Christ in the judgment of angels and of the world.

Matt. 25:24, 46. The righteous shall be received into heaven.

Eph. 5:27. They shall be fully freed from all sin.

Rev. 14:13. They shall be fully freed from all misery.

Psalms 16:11. They shall be filled with joy.

Heb. 11:22, 23. They shall enjoy the company of saints and holy angels.

1 John 3:2. 1 Cor. 13:12. They shall have a direct vision of God.

1 Thess. 4:17, 18. They shall be in the Lord's presence to all eternity.

Questions:

1. What two classes of people will be caught up in the clouds to meet Christ?

(a) The dead in Christ, who will rise from their graves as Christ descends from heaven with a shout, 1 Thess. 4:16.

(b) The living Christians who are in the world at the time of Christ's second coming, 1 Thess. 4:17.

2. Why will not the law of gravitation prevent the righteous from rising in the air to meet Christ?

The rising in the air, on the part of the righteous, will be a miracle wrought by the supernatural power of God. The law of gravity can no more prevent their rising in the air than it could prevent Christ's ascension long ago. The Judgment Day will mark the END of the dominion of natural laws and forces, as we know them now, over God's people. That great day will mark the transition to "the age to come," the day of eternity, in which the supernatural will not be the ex-

ception but the rule (Heb. 6:5, "the powers of the age to come").

3. What is the meaning of the statement that the righteous shall be set on Christ's right hand?

This statement implies a judicial, total and permanent separation of the righteous from the wicked. Never again to all eternity can there be the slightest contact or communication between the two classes of human beings, the redeemed and the judicially condemned — the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent.

4. What is meant by saying that the righteous shall be "openly acknowledged and acquitted"?

This means, in the first place, that the Lord Jesus Christ, acting as Judge, will publicly declare, before the whole universe, that these people, who have been persecuted and reproached because of their faith in Him, and His own people, upon whom His special love has been bestowed, and whom He has redeemed from sin to be His spiritual body.

Secondly, it means that Christ, acting as Judge, will pronounce His people to be not guilty of the slightest sin, and perfectly righteous before the Law of God, because He Himself has borne the guilt of their sins by His atonement, and because of His own perfect righteousness which has been reckoned (or "imputed") to them just as if it were their own personal righteousness.

5. What is meant by the statement that the saints shall join with Christ in judging reprobate angels and men?

This truth, which is set forth in 1 Cor. 6:2, 3, does not mean that the saints will have authority of their own to determine the eternal destiny of angels or men, for this solemn function belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ alone. Rather, the meaning is that the saints shall join or concur with Christ in the sentence which He will pronounce upon the wicked angels and men; as Christ pronounces sentence, the saints will signify their assent, approving of His judgment as righteous. As Satan and the wicked angels have grievously troubled and afflicted God's people for thousands of years, and as wicked men have oppressed and persecuted and reproached God's children, it is very fitting that the saints, having been vindicated by the great Judge, shall join in the sentence to be pronounced upon the fallen angels and wicked men.

6. What is meant by saying that the righteous shall be received into heaven?

This means that the Judgment Day will mark their entrance as complete personalities, with both body and soul, into the place, as well as the condition, of total blessedness. The remainder of the answer to Q. 90 deals with the character of this place and condition of perfect blessedness.

7. Why can we not have perfect blessedness here and now?

There are several reasons why the Christian cannot enjoy complete blessedness here and now, such as:

(a) He cannot see his Saviour face to face here and now.

(b) The facts of bodily infirmity, sickness and pain prevent the enjoyment of complete blessedness now.

(c) The sinful corruption which remains in the Christian's own heart, here on earth, which necessitates a constant battle against temptation and sin, prevents the enjoyment of perfect blessedness now.

(d) Here on earth the Christian is surrounded by a wicked and miserable environment, and the more holy the Christian becomes, the more he feels distressed by the presence and effects of sin in his surroundings.

8. How will these various factors in our present condition be changed in heaven?

(a) We shall see our Saviour face to face.

(b) Our mortal body, which is afflicted with pain, sickness, weakness and fatigue, will put on immortality. All sickness, pain and distress will forever pass away, and what is mortal will be swallowed up by the full, vibrant life of eternity.

(c) The sinful corruption of our own hearts, and the constant conflict against sin and temptation which it requires, will come to an end for ever at the moment of death.

(d) The environment of heaven will be perfectly holy; "there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rev. 21:27; compare Rev. 22:15).

9. What will be the chief element in the blessedness of heaven?

The chief element in the blessedness of heaven will be "the immediate vision and fruition of God."

10. What is meant by the word "vision" in this statement?

It means "seeing"; and the statement means that the saints shall see God.

11. What is meant by saying that this seeing of God will be "immediate"?

The word "immediate" implies that the saints shall see God directly, without anything interposed between them and God. Here on earth we cannot see God directly. We now see darkly, as in a mir-

ror, but then we shall see "face to face." Here on earth we see God only as He is reflected in His Word, and more dimly in His works; but in heaven we shall have an immediate or direct vision of God, without the need of His being reflected either in nature or in Scripture.

It was this truth that many of the Covenanter martyrs had in mind when, in their dying testimonies, they used words similar to these of James Renwick: "Farewell, sweet Bible, and preaching of the Gospel, Farewell, sun, moon and stars, and all sublunary things. Farewell conflicts with a body of death. Welcome scaffold for precious Christ. Welcome heavenly Jerusalem. Welcome innumerable company of angels. Welcome General Assembly and Church of the firstborn. Welcome, crown of glory, white robes, and song of Moses and the Lamb. And, above all, welcome O thou blessed Trinity and One God! O Eternal One, I commit my soul into Thy eternal rest!"

12. What is meant by the statement that the saints shall enjoy fruition of God?

Fruition means to bear fruit. The purpose of a fruit tree is to bear fruit. A fruit tree which never bears fruit has no fruition. Such a tree has lived without attaining the purpose or goal for which it exists. If we think of a human life as a tree, we may say that the fruit it was intended to bear is the perfect glorifying and enjoying of God. The Christian cannot yield this fruit in this world except in a very imperfect and partial way. But in heaven he will at last attain the goal for which he was created; he will at last yield the real fruit of a perfect glorification and enjoyment of God. This goal is called "fruition of God" because only in perfect communion with God can this fruit be produced by any human life.

13. What should we think of the popular idea that the saints in heaven will do little or nothing but play on harps?

This popular notion is a mere caricature of what the Bible teaches about heaven, based on an absurdly literal interpretation of one or two Scripture passages which are symbolic in character. The Bible warrants believing that the saints in heaven will engage in the most intense activity, out of all comparison with the busiest activity and greatest achievements of their life here on earth. We may be sure that "the life that is life indeed" will not be a life of boredom or idleness.

14. Does not the Bible teach that heaven will be a state of perfect rest? How then can it be a state of intense activity?

It is true that the Bible represents heaven as a state of perfect rest. The idea of "rest" is really largely a negative idea, meaning freedom from weariness, fatigue, unpleasant or painful toil, etc., all of which evils are solely the results of sin and the curse. It is only because of the presence of sin in the world that rest is incompatible with activity.

Before Adam sinned, rest and activity could be simultaneous. But after he sinned, activity became laborious, man-killing toil, because of the curse (Gen. 3:17-19). But in heaven "there shall be no more curse" (Rev. 22:3). Therefore in heaven activity and rest will no longer be contrary to each other. The saints can enjoy the most intense activity, and the most perfect rest, at the same time. Weariness and fatigue will be unknown, for their causes will have been removed for ever. (The foregoing should not be understood as implying that the activity of the saints in heaven will be without pause or intermission, but only that their activity will not cause exhaustion and need for recuperation. Nor should it be supposed that Adam and Eve before the Fall were constantly active; certainly God intended the night as a period of rest, even before the Fall, and there was the weekly sabbath as a period of cessation from common activity; but as long as man's life and constitution were **normal**, that is, sinless, activity was not a destructive force, and rest was not needed to prevent death from exhaustion, as it became necessary after the Fall into sin. Adam as created was a perfect, though finite, replica of the Godhead; and as God Himself worked and then rested (Gen. 2:1-3) but did not need rest because of exhaustion, so mankind before the Fall worked and then rested, but not because their work had caused exhaustion.

15. Where will heaven be?

The Bible does not satisfy our curiosity by providing this information for us. However it definitely teaches that heaven is a place (John 14:1-6). Heaven is that place where glory of God is specially manifested and where the glorified human nature of Christ has its habitation. When we say that heaven is a place, this does not necessarily imply that it is a place somewhere in the kind of space that we know about in this life. It may be located in some other kind of space, on a higher plane of existence, hence not to be located in terms of astronomy.

The End

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.

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.

BRAINWASHING: THE STORY OF MEN WHO DEFIED IT, by Edward Hunter. Pyramid Books, 444 Madison Ave., New York 22, N. Y. 1957, pp. 236, paper cover. 45 cents (postpaid).

Edward Hunter, a "life-long Methodist," wrote a longer book on this same subject several years ago. The present pocket-sized book is much better than the first volume, as it is more condensed and better focused on the essentials of the problem discussed.

The author is quite well fitted for this needed literary task. "He begun his new career as a foreign correspondent in 1927 as a reporter and news editor of the Tokyo *Advertiser*, and editor of the Hankow *Herald* and the Peiping *Leader*. He has watched the development of psychological warfare from the invasion of Manchuria by the Japanese to the conquest of Ethiopia by the Italians, and the Spanish Civil War. From Pearl Harbor to V-J Day, he served with the U. S. forces in the China-Burma-India theatre. Later he returned to his career as a roving correspondent, writer, and lecturer. He has spent the last two years in this country and in far parts of the world, in Singapore, Hong Kong, Tokyo and elsewhere, collecting material, interviewing hundreds of people of all stations and ranks in providing the authoritative documentary material and personal anecdotes for this book."

Hunter begins with a definition of the word "brainwashing" and tells of the basic discoveries of Ivan P. Pavlov which Lenin and the early Bolshevik regime quickly turned to **human** psychology instead of the animal psychology which Pavlov was studying. Since that time the technique of brainwashing has become routine in all Communist nations and the whole world now uses and, in a measure, understands this sinister device of scientific totalitarianism.

Much of this little book is based on personal experience narratives and interviews from men who met Communist brainwashing in China or in Korea during the war there. Then, after six chapters of this type of description of actual experiences under Communist brainwashing, the author turns to analysis. He quotes Dr. Leon Freedom, an expert student of this subject approached from the viewpoint of his field of neuropsychiatry. Dr. Freedom gives a "clinical analysis" of brainwashing techniques and results.

The final part of this small book is the most needed contribution to our information yet found in books on this subject: "How it Can Be Beat" (Chapter X).

The reviewer has pondered over this very question for the past nine years since Communism drove Protestantism out of China. Is it possible to hold up under Communist animal psychology and torture? Edward Hunter shows us by case studies that human beings have resisted brainwashing, and that given the spiritual stamina of faith and moral convictions, men can come through such suffering triumphant. This is the most valuable part of the book. I like Mr. Hunter's concluding remarks:

"What is absolutely essential is that the full facts be given to all our people, for mind warfare is total war. . . . There is no 'behind the lines' any longer."

Even though Mr. Hunter does not reflect the strong, orthodox Biblical standpoint of Reformed Christianity, his information and analysis are most valuable to Christian readers. More than this, after reading this little book one can see the same evil technique at work in Soviet and Communist Chinese foreign policy. The reviewer read the book in Tokyo as Russian Leader Khrushchev was in the news with some alternating threats and smiling blandishments seeking to impress the Western powers. Communist China was giving the same treatment to Japan in the dispute over the Nagasaki flag incident and trade talks. The realistic grasp of the simple yet devilish purpose of Communist brainwashing as a technique of social control will make us stronger in the day of temptation, if we also fall victim to the modern Antichrist of Communism.

— Samuel E. Boyle

THE HOUR HAD COME, by Go Puan Seng. Douma Publications, 1819 Newton Ave., Grand Rapids, Mich. 1958, pp. 228. \$3.50.

The hour had come — for testing, trial and reliance upon God's guidance in the lives of Christian Chinese and Filipinos.

Many of us have perhaps known or read very little of the people of the Philippine Islands during the days and months of the Japanese invasion and occupation, much less read or known a particular group's tribulation. The writer is a Chinese Chris-

tian, Go Puan Seng, who relates his family's and friends' experiences as hunted ones because of their courageous stand against tyranny, collaboration and oppression. More than that, it is a true story of "faith through peril," the Providence of God working in a very real and personal way. The author's talent for expressing this makes the book particularly outstanding.

The Go, Aquino and Dans families are the people portrayed in a way to make the reader feel he would easily recognize them were he to meet them. Their reliance on God through prayer and the guidance given them through Scripture reading enabled them to move from one refuge to another many times just a few miles ahead of the Japanese. One such instance which illustrates this deliverance is the one during which the group fleeing to the hills had reached the point of no return. They must go on. After group prayer they did, refreshed and strengthened.

Mr. Go writes in a most natural way of Providential circumstances. This feature makes it a most readable as well as a personal account. In recalling dearly beloved friends who suffered death he says, ". . . there are Peters who die on the cross and Johns who live to testify. For me to recall the horrors of war is at the same time to remember the everlasting love of God."

Mr. Go is the editor of the most widely circulated Chinese daily paper in the Philippines and an elder in the Presbyterian Church in Manila. His book has been endorsed by the late Ramon Magsaysay, President of the Philippines, as one "to affect lovers of freedom the world over and in sum a story of Christian faith and character."

— Eleanor C. Robb

TESTAMENT OF VISION, by Henry Zylstra. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1958, pp. 234. \$3.50.

A little book only in the literal sense of the word, Henry Zylstra's **Testament of Vision** is the most strikingly effective book of its kind I have read recently. Zylstra knew what to say, and what is more important in our day of mass literary production, he knew how to say it.

There is a message in this book for anyone seeking a truly Christian and Reformed approach to the literary art, to education, both secondary and higher, and to religion in the modern, secular world. So often we of the Reformed persuasion have left unchallenged the basic premises of the secular materialist which affect our lives and those of our children at precisely these points. In **Testament of Vision** we read the words of one who, before his untimely death, felt no hesitation to meet the arguments of those who would wish us to accede blindly to their artistic, educational, or religious presuppositions.

The book is eclectic by nature, for it is com-

posed of a varied collection of the most pertinent of the writings of the author who, at the time of his death, was Chairman of the Department of English at Calvin College. It is divided into three sections treating successively literature, education and religion in the light of a philosophy informed by Reformed conviction, and a concluding section comprising letters written by the author while in the armed services.

There is something here for every serious minded Christian, be he a "specialist," interested in one particular phase of the subject matter included in the book, e. g., the problem of the Christian and the modern novel — or a layman concerned with the impact of the secular world upon himself, his church, his school, his family.

One must not yield greatly to the temptation to quote for quotation's sake; moreover, the quotations tend to call themselves to mind in unusual numbers, the style is so clear and succinct, the message so pertinent. Still a few quotations may be in order so that one might see the range and incisiveness of Zylstra's mind.

Zylstra pleads the case for a study of literature as of fundamental importance. "It is full of all kinds of import — religious, philosophical, social, practical, and other" (p. 27). He pleads for a return to the older concept of literature as "humane letters," one of the humanites in the truest sense. In the day of specialization, Sputnik, and an uninformed craze for science as the answer to our problems it is refreshing to read, "We should take our stand on the tradition-sanctioned reputation of literature as the heart and center of the general education of the student" (p. 34). Much more could be indicated to define clearly Zylstra's position concerning the importance of literature in the educational process.

The author touches upon some of the more prickly problems with which the Christian is confronted, especially one reared in a Puritan tradition, when he must face the fact of "modern" literature. The articles dealing with the modern novel, poetry in general, and the relationship of the Christian life and belief to the whole world of the aesthetic should be read by every Christian student who undoubtedly will have to read something in the modern idiom before his formal education is completed. Is the novel degrading? Is novel reading a waste of time? Does the poet of our day have something to say to us, or is he merely an obscurantist? These and other like questions are handled firmly and forthrightly by Zylstra in the light of a conscious Reformed position.

Zylstra has harsh words for that person who believes that his Christianity precludes an interest in the cultural. Some may wriggle uncomfortably; some may censure; yet this problem is so crucial to an understanding of the Reformed concept that it must be faced squarely. The author causes us to

face it. It may well startle many to hear Zylstra speak out: "I do not know where the student of the varying religious and moral dogmas of men in our time could go for such swiftly rewarding insights as well as to the modern novel. It is a rich school of morality" (p. 68). Nevertheless, Zylstra comes to grips with the problem. He finds a personal, positive attitude in the light of which he can act. I see in this far more common sense, even hope, than vainly and timidly wishing modern literature were not.

Justice cannot be done to **Testament of Vision** without bringing to one's attention the clear and telling statements of Henry Zylstra on the modern educational dilemma. Here, Zylstra's remarks become more universally pertinent than in the first section of the book. He stands unequivocally opposed to the modern philosophy of education. He asserts the actual broadness of traditional education, insisting that "man is a horizon in which two worlds meet, the natural and the spiritual" (p. 130). His opposition to the progressivistic educational theory is based on the conviction that at bottom it cannot "do justice to the freedom of mind, to the fulfillment of man's characteristically human destiny to know" (p. 131). His opposition rests on the premise that the "notion of cleverness" adduced by the modern theory of education is basically evolutionary, pragmatic, skeptical, and deterministic. Continuing in this vein Zylstra concisely points up the basic clashes between traditionalist and progressivist educational theories. It will reward any parent who is at all concerned about his child's education to read this section of the book, whether in the final analysis he stands to the right or the left in educational theory and practice.

Altogether **Testament of Vision** is a richly rewarding book. There is a little in it for everyone whose concern is alive to the realities confronting us in modern education and religion; above all it will not leave one unchallenged.

— Norman M. Carson

CHRIST IN OUR PLACE: THE SUBSTITUTIONARY CHARACTER OF CALVIN'S DOCTRINE OF RECONCILIATION, by Paul Van Buren. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1957, pp. 152. \$300. (Published in Britain by Oliver & Boyd).

This book, a doctoral thesis submitted to Professor Oscar Cullman at the University of Basel, is a scholarly, but eminently readable study of Calvin's doctrine of the Atonement; and Mr. Van Buren has done a great service to Calvin and to Reformed theology in publishing it. He has obviously made a careful study of his sources in Calvin's own writings, and has an enviable gift for grasping the essential points and presenting them lucidly and cogently. At various points in the argument he gives a useful sum-

mary of what has gone before, and throughout the whole book shows himself a teacher of outstanding ability.

The book is divided into three parts, of which Part II deals with the central thesis that Christ is in our place. But, quite correctly, in Part I Mr. Van Buren deals first with the problem of sinful man confronted by the righteousness of God, and God's solution of this problem in the Incarnation of His Son, upon which the Atonement rests. And in Part III he deals with the subjective side of reconciliation as it follows from its objective foundation in the person and work of Christ. Thus the three divisions are:

Part I. The Incarnation: Christ's Union with us.

Part II. The Atonement: Christ in our Place.

Part III. Incorporation: Union with Christ.

Christ in our place means that Christ came where we were, and stood where we stand; in our place He rendered a perfect obedience, fulfilling the law which we not only did not fulfil but broke; in our place He stood condemned and suffered our punishment; in our place He has been raised, and in our place He has ascended to be our representative before the throne of His Father. The author gives a careful synopsis of Calvin's teaching on these truths, and more than once gives a competent summary in one illuminating sentence. For example, speaking of Christ's sinlessness: "In a word, Calvin understands the sinlessness of Christ primarily as obedience." Or this, on Christ's intercession on our behalf: "The doctrine of the eternal intercession of Christ on our behalf. . . is really only another way of saying that God chooses to see us for all eternity only as being in Christ, that He looks at us no longer in ourselves but looks at us and sees only the righteousness of Christ, even as He once looked at Christ upon the cross and saw only our sin." Or this on sanctification: "Sanctification places an imperative upon the Christian. . . But this imperative is based on the indicative: the event of God's mercy in Jesus Christ."

Mr. Van Buren is perhaps a little less sure-footed when he leaves the realm of exposition, as he occasionally feels he must, for the realm of criticism, and poses questions which have presented themselves to him out of Calvin's own theology. He does not feel that it is his place to reject Calvin at any point or to offer alternatives, though the form of his questions often suggests that he has a positive contribution to make. He is content to return finally to his original thesis that the only starting-point for an understanding of the Christian life and of the Church is that of Calvin and of the Bible: "Christ as our representative, Christ in our place."

It only remains to add that the book is beautifully printed and produced: one misprint was detected, on page 100, "man in Himself" for "man in himself"; and it was disconcerting to find in the review copy that the introduction by Karl Barth, promised in the Table of Contents on page v, seems to have been omitted! But this book is well able to stand on its own feet as an exposition of Calvin's thought by one who proves himself well qualified to give it.

— Hugh J. Blair

ECUMENISM AND THE EVANGELICAL, by J. Marcellus Kik. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Box 185, Nutley 10, N.J. 1957, pp. 152. \$3.50.

Dr. Kik, associate editor of *Christianity Today*, a magazine of recent origin, extensive circulation and, for the most part, substantial content, has in this book undertaken the task of evaluating the strength and weakness of the present-day ecumenical movement from the standpoint of the evangelical. In the first chapter he discusses some of the motivations for church union and shows their inadequacy. In the following chapter, entitled "Evangelical Apprehensions," he discusses some of the dangers of the current ecumenical movement — its failure to argue on a sound, Scriptural Christology, its minimizing of theology, its inclusiveness of the most diverse and contradictory views even of doctrine historically considered vital to Christianity, and its faulty conception of the Church.

Other chapters deal with such matters as the authority of Scripture, the nature of the unity for which Christ prayed in His great intercessory prayer (John 17), the spiritual unity of all believers, and the nature of the church, both visible and invisible. The last two chapters deal respectively with "Evangelical Disunity" and "The Coming Great Church." The former deals with the nature and causes of diversions among evangelicals, and indicates certain fields where further study and a greater measure of agreement are needed before a satisfactory external union can be achieved — among others, the doctrine of baptism, the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, Arminianism vs. Calvinism, and then various eschatological views. The latter is a brief presentation of the orthodox post-millennial view of the future prospects of the Church. A few sentences from the chapter should be of particular interest to Covenanters: "There are no better missionary hymns than those contained in the Psalms. One of the contributing factors to the present-day pessimism, gloominess, defeatism, within the Church is the omitting of the Psalms from the hymn books. They should have first place. The best musical talent of the Church should be occupied in setting the Psalms to fitting music."

Weaknesses of the book, in the opinion of this reviewer, are a tendency to undervalue the importance of external unity "on the basis of truth and Scriptural order" (Covenant of 1871) on the one hand, and on the other a willingness to accept an outward unity which might come short of that ideal, although the author is far from advocating a "least common denominator" basis. Some statements also raise the question as to whether or not he gives full recognition to the place of the visible Church as it is set forth in the Scripture. On the whole, however, it is a valuable contribution to the understanding of the questions of vital importance to the Church.

— Lester B. McIntyre

THE DEEPER FAITH, by Gordon Girod. Reformer Publications, 1819 Newton Ave., S. E., Grand Rapids, Mich. 1958, pp. 135, \$2.50.

This little book is an outstanding example of popular theological writing at its best. It is an exposition of what are commonly called "The Five Points of Calvinism" in a form well adapted to the ordinary Christian without special theological training. Yet it is capable of furnishing new insights even for those with considerable knowledge of theology. Mr. Girod, who is pastor of the Hope Reformed Church in Chicago, takes as his basis the Canons of Dort, one of the doctrinal standards of Calvinistic bodies of Dutch origin. The book sets forth clearly and convincingly, and in an interesting manner, the Scriptural evidence for these doctrines, together with their importance in Christian life and thought.

The author shows a high degree of ability to discuss profound questions in a clear way. Those who are accustomed to thinking of books on doctrines as characterized by "dryness," (a dryness more often found in the mind of a reader than in the books themselves, I suspect) will find themselves agreeably surprised on reading this work, which is highly recommended to all who desire a fuller understanding of the system of doctrine set forth in the Bible.

— Lester B. McIntyre

SELECT SERMONS OF GEORGE WHITEFIELD, by George Whitefield. Banner of Truth Trust, 58-59 Highgate West Hill, London, N. 6, England. 1958 (reprint), pp. 119. \$2.25.

This little book consists of three main sections. Pages 11-32 contain an account of the life and ministry of George Whitefield, written by the famous Bishop Ryle. The second section, pages 33-46, is entitled "A Summary of Gospel Doctrine Taught by Mr. Whitefield." This was a funeral sermon preached on the occasion of Whitefield's death by one R. Elliott, A.B., who, according to a footnote, was converted under the evangelist's early ministry, later becoming a prominent minister and a close friend of Whitefield.

The third and longest section consists of six of Whitefield's sermons.

The sermons, together with the summary of his doctrine, show him to be a firm adherent and strong advocate of the system of doctrine known as Calvinism. That he did not consider an emphasis on doctrine to be inconsistent with or a hindrance to evangelistic preaching is clearly shown by the prominence which he gave to such doctrines as election, limited atonement and the perseverance of the saints. The emotional element is by no means lacking, but Whitefield evidently considered emotion secondary to sound conviction of the truths of the Gospel — and not merely a "simple" Gospel at that. He also took a sound view of the relation of law and grace, insisting firmly that salvation is by grace alone, and that it must be accompanied by obedience to the moral law as proof of its genuineness.

Emphases such as these, if followed by more present-day evangelists, might bring deeper and more lasting, if perhaps less sensational results.

— Lester B. McIntyre

WHY WE BAPTIZE INFANTS, by Albertus Pieters. The Church Press, 1819 Newton Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids, Mich. 1958 (3rd edition), pp. 32, paper cover. 40 cents.

This reprint of a booklet by the late Dr. Pieters sets forth briefly the Scriptural arguments for infant baptism, showing how it is rooted and grounded in the covenant theology taught in the Bible. The practical benefits are also set forth clearly and emphatically. Considerable attention is also given to the history of the ordinance in the life of the Church.

One weakness is a tendency to put too much stress on secondary arguments which in some cases seem to be the consequences rather than the grounds of infant baptism.

We would like to call attention in this connection to four excellent tracts obtainable from the Southern Presbyterian Journal, Weaverville, N. C.: "The Baptism of Infants" and "Baptism by Sprinkling," by the Rev. Ben L. Rose; and "Why We Baptize Infants" and "Why We Baptize by Sprinkling," by the Rev. J. B. Green, D.D. These tracts set forth clearly the teaching of Scripture as to the meaning and mode of baptism and the proper recipients of the ordinance, and provide an effective answer to the Baptist errors on these matters.

— Lester B. McIntyre

TAKING HEED TO THE FLOCK, by Peter Y. DeJong. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1958, pp. 85, paper cover. \$1.00.

This book is a practical study of the principles and practice of family visitation, which, the author believes, is in danger of declining and dy-

ing away in the Reformed Church. Family visitation as he clearly shows, is the way by which pastors and elders can carry out the mandate of God's Word which enjoins them to watch for the souls of believers and their children; and its practice is consistent with Reformed doctrine, which, in contrast to Lutheranism and "present-day Fundamentalism" with their emphasis on the individual at the expense of the family and the church, stresses the covenant relationship.

Of Dr. DeJong's ten chapters, the best are on "The Value of Family Visitation" and "The Proper Practice of Family Visitation." The former of these shows the value of family visitation both for the eldership and the congregation, and ends with these words: "If family visitation did no more than keep alive in the minds and hearts of believers the ideal of a truly God-centered home, its value could never be overestimated." The latter gives much practical advice on the method of conducting family visitation, and makes the useful suggestion that the use of prayer at the very beginning means not only that time is not wasted on matters that are not relevant but also that both elders and members are reminded that the work will not attain its goal without God's blessing.

Perhaps the least satisfying chapter is that on "The Scriptural Basis of Family Visitation." The chapter does give a satisfactory account of Scriptural authority for "undershepherds" of the flock, but it is elsewhere in the book, e.g., in the chapter on "Objections to Family Visitation," that we must look for some of the relevant Scripture passages on the subject. And it is a little surprising to find no reference at all to the Old Testament, where, even more pronouncedly than in the New Testament, the family was the basic social unit, and definite injunctions are given regarding family religion.

The whole book sets a very high ideal of pastoral responsibility and nurture, and gives most valuable and practical guidance on this most important but often-neglected aspect of the Church's work and witness. It is cordially commended to all ministers and elders.

— Hugh J. Blair

THE ORIGIN AND TRANSMISSION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, by L. D. Twilley. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1957, pp. 69. \$1.50. (Published in Britain by Oliver & Boyd, 8s. 6d.).

This little book — one of the series of Pathway Books, dealing with Contemporary Evangelical Studies — is an excellent brief introduction to the making and transmission of the New Testament, and the author has compressed into very small compass a great amount of information. The first part of the book is concerned with showing how the literature which was to become the

New Testament took its rise in the context of an expanding Church. The author then goes on to deal most competently with the subject of textual criticism, showing how different readings came into being and indicating the great amount of evidence on which sound conclusions about the exact wording of the original can be based. Here is a book, simply and clearly written, which can serve as a reliable introduction to the important subject with which it deals, and can prove invaluable to theological students and many others who are concerned with the text of the New Testament. Excellent maps and diagrams make the author's teaching still more lucid, and a useful bibliography points the way to wider studies. One likes the note with which the book closes: "One fact of untold importance emerges from all these investigations; no serious error has crept into our New Testament, and they who read it reverently will be led into the Truth of God's saving love for them. . . . That same Holy Spirit who prompted and directed the New Testament writers at the first has preserved the Sacred Record through the ages, and is still present to interpret its message to us to-day."

— Hugh J. Blair

WILLIAM THE BAPTIST, by James M. Chaney. Committee on Christian Education of the Bible Presbyterian Synod, 3712 Riviera Road, Columbia 5, S. C. 1957 (reprint of 1877), pp. 133, paper cover. \$1.00.

This is a reprint of a study of Romans 6:3, 4, prepared by the author for a Sabbath School class in his congregation (Presbyterian Church in the U. S.), and originally published in 1877. It has gone through many editions.

The study is in the form of a dialogue between William, a thorough going Baptist, and the pastor of his devout Presbyterian wife. William asks honest, searching questions and eventually is persuaded by the weight of the evidence given that immersion is not baptism (p. 131) and that there is a "Thus saith the Lord" for infant baptism.

The language and style are a bit Victorian, but the argument is clear and lively. We are glad to recommend this fine exposition for home and church libraries.

— E. Clark Copeland

THE BIBLE BOOK BY BOOK, by J. B. Tidwell. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1955, pp. 223. \$2.50.

The author is professor of Biblical Literature at Baylor University, Waco, Texas. The book has been prepared for a one-year course (150 lessons) for high schools and colleges. This edition is a partial revision of the 11th printing of the original work.

There are 40 pages of introductory work on

such subjects as Inspiration, the names of God, sacred institutions, language, versions, etc. The books of the Bible are taken up one by one. There is a brief discussion of the writer, purpose and importance of the book and its message, then an analysis (which the author suggests should be drilled into the memory) and some topics for study and discussion. It is very carefully prepared and there are suggestions adapting the material to classes of varied maturity.

The work has the merit of provoking study of the text of Scripture without being a substitute for it or an interpretation of it. It is designed to help the student know the facts and processes of revelation so that he may interpret and apply them. The approach is always practical and stimulating.

In the introductory section (pages 24, 25) the author lists "Seven Great Covenants" which he says are of two kinds, "(1) Declarative or Unconditional, as Gen. 9:11 'I will'. (2) Mutual or Conditional, as Ex. 19:5 'If thou wilt'." This we find misleading. To call the Covenant given at Sinai a mutual covenant would seem to indicate that God and Israel met as equals and drew up an agreeable basis of sonship, namely, that Israel would become the sons of God by obedience. The obvious meaning of verse 5 is that through obedience they should give evidence that they were the true sons of God. This covenant was "conditional" only in the sense that the blessings covenanted were to be realized only through the exercise of the means God provided. It therefore did place on Israel the responsibility of obedience. But it must be remembered that it is an "If thou wilt . . . then I (God) will. . . ." In every Covenant God acts first, and man's action is always a response to God's work of grace.

This outline of the covenants makes no mention of the Covenant of Works or of the Covenant of Grace, a very serious omission if covenants are to be discussed at all. Under the discussion of the New Covenant the statement is made, "It is primarily for Israel, but Christians are partakers," and Ephesians 2:1-20 is given as a proof text!

Under the heading of "The Church" this statement is made (page 23): "Up to Christ's time no such thing as a church existed." This seems very strange as the next sentence reads, "The word (church) means 'an assemblage' . . .". Exactly the same words have been used to define the synagogue a few sentences earlier.

In discussing the versions of the English Bible, no mention is made of the Revised Standard Version. This is a serious oversight in revision of the earlier publication, it would seem.

In the introduction to The Revelation, the four schools of interpretation are fairly presented

without statement of preference of the author. This method seems to be followed throughout and makes the book much more widely acceptable.

There is a mistake in the date of the fall of Samaria on page 113. 621 B.C. should be 721 B.C.; it is very likely a printer's error.

We believe this is a useful study guide for personal or class use. It is not designed for the lazy.

— E. Clark Copeland

THE CHRISTIAN WITNESS IN THE HOME, by W. F. Batt. Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 39 Bedford Square, London W.C.1, England. 1958, pp. 24, pocket size, paper cover. Nine pence.

This is a booklet of practical advice for the Christian convert in a non-Christian home or one which is only nominally Christian, and therefore indifferent or positively opposed to his Christian fervor. How to maintain a positive witness and yet not offend is the burden of the author, as well as how to gain an influence which may lead to the salvation of the family. The suggestions are equally good for the young people in a Christian home. Well written. Very rewarding.

— E. Clark Copeland

REVELATION TWENTY: AN EXPOSITION, by J. Marcellus Kik. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., P. O. Box 185, Nutley 10, N. J. 1955, pp. 92. \$2.00.

This work comes from the pen of a pastor and talented preacher and writer, an able exegete and a sane interpreter of the Scriptures. It is a masterpiece of clear Anglo-Saxon English. It is well within the grasp of the ordinary layman. At the same time the theologian will find it a valuable contribution to his works on eschatology.

Dr. Kik is a postmillennialist. He states that position very clearly and ably defends it. His opponents will have to reckon with this work, and are sure to find it stimulating and constructive.

Dr. Kik finds "the first resurrection" the key to the understanding of the chapter. He defines it as the resurrection of the soul, (p. 7) or regeneration. These resurrected souls reign over the world, flesh and devil within themselves, and over the church without through the power of the keys. The blood of Jesus binds the devil and by their testimony, the saints continue to bind him throughout the Gospel Age. Thus the thousand years is the vast extent of the Messianic Kingdom on earth from the first to the second advent of Christ when that kingdom is handed over to the Father (1 Cor. 15:28). After all nations have become predominantly Christian (p. 60) the devil is loosed "a little season." He gathers wicked men as many as

the sand (where he finds so many in Dr. Kik's kingdom we don't quite know) and attacks the Church from every side. Christ comes and delivers His saints; the general resurrection occurs, and the judgment of both saints and sinners takes place, ending in the eternal reward of the righteous and condemnation of the devil and his hosts.

We heartily congratulate Dr. Kik on his lucid defence of the Gospel and the Spirit as the sole agents of regeneration whereby the kingdoms of this world become in reality the kingdom of our God and His Christ; that it is no cataclysmic second coming of Christ which initiates the Kingdom of the Messiah and binds Satan; that it is not from a material throne with material weapons that Christ defeats the devil and wicked men; that Christ's return is only to the harvest — the resurrection of all men and the immediate judgment of all men according to their works and the establishment of the Consummated Kingdom.

However we disagree with one point of general interpretation. Dr. Kik limits the figures of chapter 20 and the New Heaven and New Earth of chapter 21 to descriptions of spiritual changes on this earth. The "souls of those that had been beheaded" (verse 4) are the victorious lives of those who in their lives had been more than conquerors and suffered even to death (p. 51). We fail to see how the interpretation of the "souls" that see them in retrospect as crowned before they were beheaded only does justice to the Greek pluperfect tense. We cannot avoid the conclusion that if they reigned 1000 years, they reigned from the time of their regeneration until the second advent, which includes the time they were souls separated from their bodies from the time of their death till the resurrection. The New Heaven and New Earth are limited to a description of the new society created by regenerate men (pp. 78-80). If they are only that, then there is no appropriate climax to the Messianic Kingdom on this earth. The Postmillennialist agrees that there can be no absolute perfection in this world, and that our great hope is in the world to come. It seems most natural to regard chapters 20 to 22 as a continuous picture of the Messianic Kingdom and its merger into the Eternal State, and the New Heaven and New Earth as the environment and life of the glorified believer. These terms are then all of them eschatological terms describing the spiritual work beginning in the new creature here on earth and coming to a definite and final climax of incorruptible reality with the Lord in glory.

The interpretation of verse 10, ". . . the devil . . . was cast into the lake of fire. . ." is that this is the victory of the Gospel (p. 74). The context is that this is the final victory of Christ at His coming over the devil and his hosts, a cataclysmic event.

The statement is made that the Beast of verse 10 was the Roman Empire and the False Prophet was papal Rome (pp. 73, 74). This kind of interpretation is dangerous and robs the book of any practical application except at certain periods of history. There have always been beasts of political power opposed to the Kingdom and false prophets of organized religion speaking lies in the name of God. Saints in every generation have had to refuse worship to these monsters or verse 4 also has meaning in certain periods only.

Though differing from the author in these points, we most heartily recommend this work to our readers as a truly profitable one.

— E. Clark Copeland

THE MILLENNIUM, by Loraine Boettner. The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., P. O. Box 185, Nutley 10, N. J. 1958, pp. 380. \$4.50.

We would heartily agree with those who consider this the finest evaluation of the three schools of eschatology to appear. Dr. Boettner has distinguished himself as a serious writer on Reformed theology, his "Reformed Doctrine of Predestination" being the classic work on that subject in our generation. This work is equally well done and worthy of most careful study.

Dr. Boettner is himself a postmillennialist, and defends that position. At the same time he is very fair in his presentation of the other interpretations. He shows that each is consistently evangelical and has been held by many able and sincere men, all equally desirous of upholding the truth of Scripture. Dr. Boettner recognizes the difficulty of the task he has undertaken in attempting to analyze the three schools of thought, because of the variation within each school. He therefore treads warily, but he grants no quarter. The reader is aware constantly that the author is fully informed of the views of others and in all confidence and sincerity presents what he is persuaded is the truth of God. We may differ, but we are bound to respect his scholarship and his honest, reverent presentation.

None of the views is without its problems. The reviewer finds certain so far unsolved difficulties with both the postmillennial and the amillennial views. One question on which he was hoping for more light was the postmillennial view that the world is to become so predominantly Christian that the prophecy of Jeremiah 31:33 will be completely fulfilled in this world, that a man will have no need to call his brother to know the Lord for all shall know Him. But he does not find a persuasive argument. Dr. Boettner devotes one chapter to "Material Prosperity During the Millennium" in an effort to show that the influences of the Kingdom are far-reaching. It seems that this is to be taken as an

evidence that the prophecy above mentioned is to be completely fulfilled in this world. Reference is also made to social, moral and political changes as evidence in this direction. Has Khrushchev invited the West to a summit conference because of the influence of the Gospel on the Communistic System or because he believes that he is now in a position of better bargaining power, or possibly because of the fear of nuclear weapons? That there is this kind of progress is readily admitted, and that it is a by-product of the Gospel through the workings of God's common grace that the purpose of His special grace may be accomplished is also evident. But it is also made clear in Scripture and witnessed in contemporary history that wicked men use the mere outward appearances to cover up their own wicked purposes. "The plowing of the wicked is sin." They may as well be a mark of the skillful deceptive work of Satan, as an evidence of the realization of the Kingdom.

On the other hand, we believe that some amillennialists overwork the Parable of the Tares in an effort to prove that evil will remain dominant in the world. There is no indication in the parable that there were more tares gathered and burned than good grain harvested; rather, the impression is quite the opposite. Had the tares predominated, the progressive farmer would have plowed up the field to avoid the ruining of the next year's crop. These differences are largely matters of degree, not of essential difference concerning the power and means of the accomplishment of the purpose of God.

We are indeed grateful to Dr. Boettner and the publishers for making this study available. It should be in the library of every Reformed Presbyterian Church and home, and of every conscientious student of the subject of eschatology.

— E. Clark Copeland

WHY THOUSAND YEARS? OR WILL THE SECOND COMING BE PRE-MILLENNIAL? by William Masselink. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1953, pp. 222. \$2.50.

This is a photolithographic reprint of the original published in 1930. The work is a popularly written analysis of the heart of the premillennial eschatological position as seen from the Reformed standpoint. The author concerns himself almost entirely with dispensational premillennialism and the far-reaching effects of this false system of interpretation. He shows it to be not merely a school of interpretation of eschatology, but a false system of interpretation of the whole of Scripture. We agree with the statement on the dust jacket: "For a lucid and accurate exposition of amillennial eschatology, the reader will find **WHY THOUSAND YEARS?** a satisfying account."

The author begins by describing the main features of Chiliasm. Then follows an historical account of the development of Chiliasm. Next there is a careful examination of the subject of the interpretation of prophecy showing that the insistence upon a rigid literalism has led to gross errors. It may be said here that many if not most of the premillennial studies of prophecy appear to search prophecy to support Chiliasm, rather than to be searchings of the prophets to discover their message for the future. Following this is an examination of the errors of Dispensationalism: the denial of the Covenant of Grace, repudiation of Infant Baptism, an unbiblical conception of the Kingdom, undervaluation of the Church and of church creeds, confusion concerning law and grace, unscriptural pre-eminence of the Jew, and the errors concerning the closing events of world history, the millennium, resurrection and judgment.

Dr. Masselink's study is detailed, but not technical, and will be equally appreciated by the layman and the theologian. The publishers have done us a service in making the work again available. We wish they had improved its usefulness by adding subject and Scripture-reference indices and a bibliography. We heartily recommend it to our readers.

— E. Clark Copeland

ACTS THROUGH EPHESIANS: AN EXPANDED TRANSLATION, by Kenneth S. Wuest. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1958, pp. 248. \$3.50.

Dr. Wuest, teacher of New Testament Greek at the Moody Bible Institute, has seen the success of his expanded translation of the Gospels, and has now issued the second volume in this paraphrastic study of the Greek New Testament. He seeks to bring out the shades of meaning in the original text, using modern English. He follows the Greek order of words and pays careful attention to questions of grammar. The material is set forth in paragraphs — a definite help to the reader. There is an eleven-page "definition of terms," a brief Bibliography and an Index of Scripture passages.

This book will be useful to those seeking to recapture or discover the freshness and vitality of the New Testament in the original Greek. However at some points there is a tendency to the fanciful, and at times his translation is open to serious question. For example, his assertion in the preface (p. 14) that the Greek word for "received" in Acts 1:9 means "to take up under in order to raise up, to bear on high," and his expanded translation, "A cloud came under Him in order to bear Him up on high out of their sight," coupled with his identification of the cloud with "the Shekinah glory sent down to bring the Lord Jesus to heaven through the king-

dom of Satan and his demons in the lower atmosphere" (p. 15) will cause many to raise the eyebrow. And so will his translation of Eph. 2:8, 9, "By grace have you been saved in time past completely through faith, with the result that your salvation persists through the present time; and this (salvation) is not from you as a source; of God it is the gift, not from a source of works, in order that no one might boast. . .".

— Fred S. Leahy

THE VISIBLE WORDS OF GOD: AN EXPOSITION OF THE SACRAMENTAL THEOLOGY OF PETER MARTYR VERMIGLI, by Joseph C. McLelland. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1957, pp. 291. \$4.00.

This work was originally published in Britain by Oliver & Boyd, Edinburgh, and has now been photolithographed by Cushing-Malloy, Inc., for Eerdmans. Dr. McLelland was, as he put it, "introduced" to Peter Martyr, "the great theologian of the Reformation period," by Professor T. F. Torrance of New College, Edinburgh. Professor Torrance has written a brief foreword to this volume. And now this Presbyterian minister has become intimately acquainted with Peter Martyr Vermigli (1500-1562), who was involved in many sixteenth-century debates on the Lord's Supper (often termed the Eucharist in this book), and won high praise from John Calvin. As Professor Torrance points out, it is one of the tragedies of Reformation history that the works of Butzer and Martyr have been so largely neglected. Dr. McLelland has done much to atone for the slight to one of the Reformation's most distinguished theologians.

To read this book is to explore new territory and receive deeper insights into one of the vital controversies of the Reformation. The writer simply lets Peter Martyr speak as much as possible, although his own appraisal is always illuminating. Dr. McLelland shows his knowledge of current theological literature, as well as the writings of the Reformers. He is familiar with Karl Barth, and refers to him at times, being inclined to follow at some points the dialectical theology — for example in his discussion of **anhypostasia** and **enhypostasia** (pp. 218 f.). It is good to see the author's careful definition of terms, a practice which makes the work accessible to a greater public reading.

The book contains a biographical section, a study of Revelation and Sacrament (three chapters), Union with Christ (three chapters), Real Presence and True Sacrifice (four chapters), and four appendices. Appendix A is a bibliography of the works of Peter Martyr; Appendix B deals with his patristic sources; Appendix C provides a thorough comparison of Bucer, Calvin and Martyr; and the last Appendix is concerned with the definitive statements of Martyr's "eucharistic teaching."

We have found the work helpful on numerous points, especially on the relationship between circumcision and baptism, which arises in the study of the ordinance of Baptism (Chapter V). His reply to the Anabaptists is a brilliant statement of Covenant theology. It makes refreshing reading.

This attractive volume is the essence of neatness and clarity and is marked throughout with the most painstaking scholarship.

Dr. McLelland earned his Ph. D. degree at Edinburgh, worked as a Presbyterian minister in Canada, taught Greek at Knox College, Toronto, and in 1955-56 was Lecturer in Christian Ethics at the Presbyterian College, Montreal, and later, in 1956-57, Lecturer in Church History at Knox College, Toronto. His exposition of Peter Martyr's doctrine is a signal contribution in the fields of Church history and theology.

— Fred S. Leahy

THE SOCIETY OF THE FUTURE. by H. van Riessen. The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., P. O. Box 185, Nutley 10, N. J. 1957, pp. 320. \$4.95.

To a large extent this book fulfils its claim to be a "social challenge to every thinking American" (publisher's note) — and, we would add, to every reader. The author is now prominent in the philosophical school of Herman Dooyeweerd, which has found such support and created much interest, especially in Dutch circles. In this book we have the sane and responsible writing which we expect from a man of Dr. van Riessen's stature — a professor at the Institute of Technology of Delft, holding a doctor's degree in both engineering and philosophy, and well known as a writer on science and philosophy, and worker in political, social and economic movements in the Netherlands. His participation in the Underground Movement during the German occupation qualifies him almost immeasurably for the analysis of our present situation in the light of Scripture. Inevitably such a social study, being Christian, has its eschatological dimension — in van Riessen this is amillenarian. This presupposition is never far below the surface.

The work is honest in its recognition of social injustice, and is faithful to the social implications of the Gospel. It is refreshing and encouraging to find this in a conservative study in view of the "social gospel" of the modernist. Communism is well refuted and Capitalism is subjected to a close scrutiny. No easy answers are offered. Dealing with the Church and the social problem, van Riessen is equally frank: "if it had not been the property of Christ, it would have gone down ingloriously"; it behaved "as one that has arrived." But some words are written in the Church's defence, to show **why** she was inadequate — serious

internal troubles; in some cases oppression. Besides, there were protests against social injustice from many pulpits: he includes in his list, Maurice, Kinsley, Da Costa and Kuyper. He is not making excuses for the Church, and says so, yet he feels that often the criticism of the Church is too sweeping. He points out, for example, that the subordination of the Church to the State in Lutheran countries and in England, Holland, etc., hindered her witness. "An independent formulation and critique of the social situation, which in such a case had to be directed against the State as well, was practically impossible" (p. 99).

Van Riessen is quick to remind us that "the steady advance of the denial of the Christ of the Scriptures had produced decay and impotence in the Church of the nineteenth century" (p. 100) — a most important point. Many writers are thorough in their exposure of the Church's failure in the social sphere in the last century and even later; not so many endeavor, as an van Riessen does, to seek the reasons for her failure.

The author does not allow his eschatology to dampen his zeal for the recovery or realization of a Christian social order, and Covenanters will be impressed by his declaration that our social derailment is primarily due to what is termed "the **de-Christianizing** of life in the last century and even earlier. . . . Whoever ignores this fact limits his causes to the surface, and fails to find a remedy" (p. 93).

Abraham Kuyper's "sphere sovereignty" is clearly taught in this work, and on the whole it seems to provide a sound Christian approach to the social question, although it must not be pushed to an extreme. While family, Church, State, etc., are independent and yet equally subject to the sovereignty of God, the Church, nevertheless, has a certain authority, ordained by God, over her members, and so has the State.

We will not always be in agreement with this talented writer, but we will always be grateful for his courageous and painstaking approach, and his book deserves careful study and frequent consultation. This work is not easy to read, and the fact that it is a translation is a further difficulty — but our thanks are due to the translator, David Hugh Freeman (Department of Philosophy, University of Rhode Island) and to the publishers for making it available to the English-speaking world. Unfortunately the proofreading was poor; otherwise this useful book is attractively produced.

— Fred S. Leahy

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN ROMAN CATHOLIC THOUGHT, G. C. Berkouwer. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1958, pp. 81. \$1.50.

It is the boast of the Church of Rome that she continues ever the same and her faith never

changes. At the time of Protestant Reformation the great Council of Trent, which met intermittently from 1545 to 1563, authoritatively determined Roman Catholic doctrine in a form which rigidly rejects the two great principles of the Protestant Reformation, namely (1) the principle that the Bible is the only infallible rule of faith and life, and (2) the truth of justification by faith alone without human merit. Ever since the Council of Trent, therefore, the Church of Rome has held to the Gospel of Christ only in an attenuated and ambiguous form.

Protestants have become quite accustomed to the idea that the Church of Rome is forever unalterably committed to an anti-evangelical type of theology in which salvation is regarded as partly by grace and partly by human works. The massive external organizational front of world-wide Roman Catholicism appears so uniformly smooth and solid that Protestants not unnaturally suppose that everything behind that exterior must be equally smooth and solid, and that the rejection of the Biblical theology of grace must command unanimous and unhesitating assent throughout the entire mammoth structure.

Students of church history know that through the centuries there have been repeated attempts to revive the theology of free grace within the structure of Roman Catholicism. The witnessing voice of the German theologian Gottschalk in the ninth century was such an attempt, as was the Jansenist movement in France in the seventeenth century. Yet every such movement or tendency has been crushed by the weight of church authority. No serious effort to return to the pure theology of free grace within the structure of the Roman Catholic Church has been successful. Rome continues to confront the world with an ambiguous grace-plus-works doctrine of salvation.

But the theology of grace keeps reasserting itself within the Roman Catholic Church. Dr. Berkouwer's little book, "Recent Developments in Roman Catholic Thought" — one of Eerdman's Pathway series — describes for Protestant readers the most recent and present rumblings of dissatisfaction and potential dissent within the Church of Rome. Dr. Berkouwer points out that leading Roman Catholic writers are abandoning the time-honored denunciatory attitude toward Luther and the other Reformers and are adopting a new appraisal of these men which is much more favorable. And there is a new claim on the part of some that Protestants have misunderstood the decisions of the Council of Trent — that the Council did not really mean to reject the theology of free grace at all. A Roman Catholic theologian named Hans Kueng in 1957 published a large book on **Justification**. In this book Kueng insists that justification is on the basis of free grace and received by faith alone, and that the Council of

Trent did not really mean to deny this. The neo-orthodox theologian Karl Barth wrote a preface for Kueng's book, in which he expressed amazement at Kueng's statements, and offered to make a pilgrimage to Trent with a confession of sin if Kueng proves to be correct in his statement of Roman Catholic theology. "But he first wants to see what the reactions of the official Roman church will be" (p. 61).

Dr. Berkouwer does not think that Protestants have misunderstood the Council of Trent. But some of the statements from Roman Catholic sources which he cites are really amazing. The book makes fascinating reading, and shows that behind the massive front of Romanism there is a ferment at work which favors return to Biblical truth. Will this, too, be crushed and silenced, or will it be fruitful in influencing Catholicism toward a purer and truer doctrine of salvation?

— J. G. Vos

WHO WROTE ISAIAH? by Edward J. Young. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1958, pp. 88. \$1.50.

Liberal scholars to a man hold that Isaiah did not write the last twenty-seven chapters of the book which bears his name. So sure are they of this that the matter is hardly debated among them any more. These chapters, it is maintained, must have been written during the Babylonian Captivity, more than 150 years after the time of Isaiah, by an unknown prophet to whom these scholars have given the name of "the Second Isaiah" or "Deutero-Isaiah." No such person is known to history, nor has any other name than that of Isaiah the son of Amoz come down to us from ancient times as the author of any part of the book.

Back of the liberal scholars' denial that Isaiah wrote the entire book is their anti-supernaturalistic view of history and of revelation. There are things in chapters 40-66 of the book which the real Isaiah could not possibly have known or written, it is said. That is to say, the reality of supernatural divine inspiration and predictive prophecy is ruled out at the start. The chapters must have been written after the things themselves had happened or at least after they were beginning to happen. Thus faith in the real action of God in history is excluded.

Dr. Young in "Who Wrote Isaiah?" — another of the Eerdmans Pathway series — has given a learned yet very readable statement of the problem and defense of the traditional (and Biblical) teaching that Isaiah the son of Amoz wrote the entire sixty-six chapters of the book. He writes, of course, from the standpoint of orthodox historic Christianity, and brings out clearly what is really back of the negative views of liberal critics.

In the course of the book Dr. Young shows the internal unity and coherence of the book as a whole — how the last twenty-seven chapters are

organically related to the earlier part of the book — a consideration which, of course, strongly supports the belief that Isaiah alone was the author of it all.

It is not to be expected that this book will convince liberal critics who approach the Bible from a perverse philosophical viewpoint. But it should be very useful for confirming the faith of Christians in the integrity of God's Word, and showing them that the conservative view is capable of sound intellectual defence. Especially this

book will be of great value to young people and students in colleges where they may hear sweeping assertion to the effect that "all scholars are agreed" that Isaiah did not write chapters 40-66 of the Book of Isaiah. Because of its conciseness and modest price, this book can be widely used for giving or lending to young people exposed to such destructive teachings. May the Lord bless it to the establishing of many in the truth of His Holy Word!

— J. G. Vos

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:

Should a Christian attend the Oberammergau Passion Play? If not, what reasons can be given for not attending?

Answer:

Oberammergau is a village of Bavaria, Germany, which is renowned chiefly for the Passion Play which is performed there every tenth year. In the year 1633 a plague was raging in the area, and the inhabitants took a vow to perform such a play in the hope of checking the epidemic. The play portrays the trial, sufferings and crucifixion of Christ. It is distinctly a Roman Catholic enterprise. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica the performance is regarded as "a solemn act of religious worship" by the people of Oberammergau, and it is regarded as a high honor to play the part of Jesus Christ. As performed at Oberammergau the Passion Play requires about nine hours. Presumably our correspondent is referring in his query to a motion picture of the Passion Play.

Without wishing to impute any insincerity or improper motives to the people of Oberammergau or others who may be involved in the presentation of the Passion Play, in the light of Biblical principles such a performance ought not to exist, and Christian people ought neither to participate in it nor to attend it. While it may be quite compatible with Roman Catholic concepts of ethics and of worship, it cannot be justified on the basis of truly Biblical principles.

In the first place, it is wrong for any mere man to act the part of Jesus Christ in any dramatic performance or motion picture. The best and holiest man in the world is not good enough to impersonate Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is unique; He is God and man in one person. How can a

mere man — and a sinful man at that — portray the experiences, emotions, facial expressions and actions of Jesus Christ without giving a false impression? If another can act the part of Jesus Christ and portray His actions and reactions, then Jesus Christ cannot be truly unique. Therefore the inevitable result of such a performance must be to detract from the sense of the deity and uniqueness of Christ, and to scale Him down, at least to some extent, to the level of the merely human.

Secondly, the Bible gives us no slightest hint of the personal appearance of Jesus Christ. It cannot be without reason that this information has been withheld from us in the Scripture. We are to think of Christ as He is today in heavenly glory, not as He was in His estate of humiliation when on this earth in "the days of His flesh". "Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him (so) no more" (2 Cor. 5:16). An artist's "portrait of Christ" is not based on any real information about Christ's personal appearance "in the days of His flesh" but only on the painter's artistic imagination. Similarly, and dramatic representation of Christ must necessarily involve an interpretation of Christ and a portrayal of His person for which we have absolutely no data in the Bible.

Thirdly, the Bible is extremely reserved about the actual details of the sufferings of Christ and about His subjective reactions to them. The bare facts are given with a severe reserve as to details which might feed the imagination. Of the actual crucifixion we are only told "they crucified him" (Matt. 27:35); nothing is said about the awful pain which this must have caused, nor of Jesus' reaction to this terrible experience. The fullest account we have of the subjective reactions of Jesus to His sufferings is not found in the New Testament at all, but in the twenty-second

Psalm, where it is given through David by prophetic inspiration, and partly veiled in figurative language. In view of this extreme reserve of the Scripture as to the details of Christ's sufferings and His reactions, it is contrary to the leading of Scripture to dramatize Christ's sufferings in a Passion Play.

The Passion Play may be regarded as religious worship, or it may be regarded as religious instruction, or it may be regarded as entertainment. It is evident that the folk of Oberammergau regard it as religious worship. But they are Roman Catholics and do not hold the Scriptural principle of worship, namely, that every element of worship must have warrant in the Word of God — what is not appointed in Scripture is forbidden and to be rejected. When measured by this test, the Passion Play will at once be seen to be contrary to the Biblical principle of worship.

But may it not be proper to attend the Passion Play if the play is regarded as religious instruction or entertainment? As to entertainment, we should reject that instantly. The awful anguish should reject that instantly. The awful anguish and sufferings of the Son of God are not fit material for human entertainment. But what of religious instruction? It has already been shown that any dramatic presentation of Christ's sufferings must go beyond what Scripture tells us and must inevitably result in a false representation of Christ. We are to get our religious instruction from the Holy Scripture, the written Word of God, which is

inspired of the Holy Spirit and which the Holy Spirit uses as a means of grace. Religious drama has not been appointed as a means of grace nor have we any warrant for supposing that the Holy Spirit will bless its use. The fact that some people seem to have been influenced for good by viewing the Passion Play does not prove that it is legitimate, nor even the fact that some may testify that it has led to their conversion. God in His sovereignty may sometimes use various means to accomplish His purposes, which are yet far removed from what He has appointed in His Word for the practice of His covenant people.

The most extreme and terrible part of the sufferings of Christ was His enduring the wrath and curse of God on account of the sins of His people which had been imputed to Him. No dramatic representation can depict this. Therefore the inevitable effect of a dramatization must be to emphasize His physical sufferings. But this again is to give a false impression and lend countenance to a false idea — the idea that the physical sufferings were the main thing in the passion of our Saviour.

We need not pass a harsh judgment on the people of Oberammergau, for that which we cannot approve of, they do in ignorance of the Biblical principles on which we base our position. But as conscientious, Bible-oriented Protestant Christians, we should not in any way countenance such a performance as the Passion Play.

— J. G. Vos

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Samuel Rutherford

Samuel Rutherford was born about 1600 and died in 1661. After studying theology he was installed as pastor of the church of Anwoth in Kirkcudbrightshire, Scotland, in 1627, and it soon became clear that Rutherford was destined to be a leader in the Church of Scotland. In 1636 he published, in Holland, a treatise against the errors of Arminianism. This championship of Calvinism soon got Rutherford in trouble with the bishop, Thomas Sydserf (for at that time the government of the Church of Scotland was partly Episcopal). Charges were filed against Rutherford before the High Commission Court; he was deposed from his pastoral charge at Anwoth, and sentenced to banishment in the northern city of Aberdeen. This forced separation from his beloved congregation of Anwoth was a great affliction to Rutherford, but he bore it patiently. He was confined in Aberdeen for about a year and a half, until February 1638.

Rutherford was one of those present at the signing of the National Covenant of Scotland in Edinburgh in 1638. By the action of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, which met the same year in Glasgow, he was restored to his pastoral office at Anwoth. Soon Rutherford's reputation as a scholar and theologian became more widely known. In 1639 he was made professor of divinity at St. Andrews. Later, in 1643, he was chosen as one of the eight commissioners from the Church of Scotland to the Westminster Assembly of Divines in England, where he attended the Assembly's sessions day after day for

over three years. With the Scottish minister George Gillespie, Rutherford was one of those who had great influence on the decisions and formulations of the Westminster Assembly.

Perhaps Rutherford's most famous book was "Lex Rex, a Dispute for the Just Prerogative of King and People" (1644), a plea for constitutional government, against the idea that the king has arbitrary power above the law. Rutherford is best known today, however, by his "Letters", most of which were written during his banishment in Aberdeen, and which have become one of the devotional classics of Christendom. Their true spirituality, earnestness, and portrayal of the preciousness of Christ, our duty to forsake all for His sake, and the glorious future that awaits His people, make them one of the books that will never grow old.

After the Restoration of Charles II in 1660, his book "Lex Rex" was publicly burnt by order of the government. Following this Rutherford was deposed from all his offices, and summoned to appear before the parliament of Scotland to answer to a charge of treason. When this summons was issued he was, however, already a sick man, and before he could be tried for treason by earthly rulers he was summoned by the King of kings and left this earth for the realm of glory and endless light. His summons to appear on the charge of treason forms the theme of the poem "The Deathbed of Rutherford" which appears on the inside front cover of this issue of "Blue Banner Faith and Life". — J. G. V.

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