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## BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

J. G. VOS, Editor and Manager

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NUMBER 1

And when these things begin to come to pass,  
then look up, and lift up your heads; for your re-  
demption draweth nigh.

Luke 21:28

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## *We'll Guard the Day of Rest*

In His great Name who gave it  
At earth's unfolding morn,  
His primal gift of mercy  
To millions yet unborn;  
In faith that He who made us  
Can judge our need the best —  
For health, for peace, for blessing,  
We'll guard the Day of Rest!

In hallow'd, glad remembrance,  
His Church through ages long  
Has linked her Sabbath-keeping  
With resurrection song.  
For worship and for witness,  
And for communion blest,  
And thoughts to heav'n uplifted,  
We'll guard the day of rest.

For earth-ties, sacred, tender,  
For love and home's sweet sake,  
'Midst toil, and stress, and hurry,  
There comes God's blessed break.  
By all we hold most precious  
We hail His wise behest;  
And for ourselves and others,  
We'll guard the Day of Rest!

(Author unknown; from "Happy Greetings"  
(1953), Lord's Day Observance Society, London)

## *Help Me to Live*

Help me to live that other lives may see  
Some slight reflection of my Lord in me.  
I would not blaze before the world, a star  
Streaming its radiance on the earth afar;  
I would not lift my head so very high  
That men could say I sought to touch the sky  
In my ambitious efforts to be known;  
I would but seek Thy smile, and Thine alone,  
And at Thy feet in sweet submission prove  
The richness and the comfort of Thy love;  
For love alone can turn our life to light  
And make us luminous in God's own sight.

(Author unknown)

## *He Giveth His Beloved Sleep*

Of all the thoughts of God that are  
Borne inward into souls afar  
Along the Psalmist's music deep,  
Now tell me if there any is  
For gift and grace surpassing this:  
"He giveth His beloved sleep"—?

What would we give to our beloved?  
The hero's heart to be unmoved,  
The poet's star-tuned harp to sweep,  
The patriot's voice to teach and rouse;  
The monarch's crown to light the brows?—  
"He giveth His beloved sleep."

What would we give to our beloved?  
A little faith all undisproved,  
A little dust to over weep,  
And bitter memories to make  
The whole earth blasted for our sake?—  
"He giveth His beloved sleep."

"Sleep soft, beloved," we sometimes say,  
Who have no tune to charm away  
Sad dreams that through the eyelids creep;  
But never doleful dream again  
Shall break the happy slumber when  
He giveth His beloved sleep.

— Elizabeth Barrett Browning

## *At the Close of Day*

The camel at the close of day  
Kneels down upon the sandy plain  
To have his burden lifted off —  
And rest again.

My soul, thou too shouldst to thy knees,  
When daylight draweth to a close,  
And let thy Master lift thy load —  
And grant repose.

Else how couldst thou tomorrow meet,  
With all tomorrow's work to do,  
If thou thy burden all the night  
Dost carry through?

The camel kneels at break of day  
To have his guide replace his load,  
Then rises up anew to take  
The desert road.

So thou shouldst kneel at morning's dawn  
That God may give thee daily care,  
Assured that He no load too great  
Will make thee bear.

(Author unknown)

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## *Prophecy, Time and Eternity*

By J. G. Vos

"But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away."—1 Cor. 13:10.

"For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come."—Heb. 13:14.

Biblical prophecy is an immense subject. Rather than risk getting lost in such a large forest, I shall limit this article to one specific aspect of the subject, namely, the Biblical philosophy of prophecy in relation to time and eternity.

The term "prophecy," properly speaking, does not necessarily refer to prediction of the future. Much of what the Biblical prophets had to say concerned their own day and age. The prophet was an authoritative spokesman for God. He came to men with a message of truth and duty from God. Thus the prophet's function was the opposite of the priest's function. The prophet represented God in approaching man; the priest represented man in approaching God and effecting reconciliation between sinful man and the holy God.

The prophets did predict future events, however, and predictive prophecy is such a prominent feature of their work that the term "prophecy" has come to be used, in popular speech, as equivalent to "prediction of the future." In this article the term "prophecy" is to be understood in this common, popular sense, as meaning prediction of the future.

Before proceeding further it would be well to note that the Bible stresses the **objective**, God-given character of prophecy. This is exactly the opposite of the modern view that is being taught in large theological schools all over the world. This modern view regards prophecy as essentially **subjective**. It is regarded as a product of the mind of the prophet. The prophets are regarded as men of genius, men with outstanding analytical powers, who could discern and interpret the trends of the times. It is denied that they were able actually to predict definite events in the distant future.

Such modern scholars speak of the prophets as having "felt," "realized," "discerned," "understood," "been convinced," etc., etc., that certain things would happen. The prophets themselves, on the other hand, introduced their messages by the formula "**Thus saith the Lord . . .**" or words

with an equivalent meaning. We should realize that the Bible itself sets forth the objective view of prophecy. Note, for example, 2 Peter 1:21, where Peter is speaking of the prophecies of the Old Testament: "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

Peter here defines the **source** of prophecy both negatively and positively:

(1) Negatively: it did not come by the will of man. It came, indeed, through the instrumentality of man, through the personality of man, but the impulse which started the process was not a decision of the human will — the prophecy came not by the will of man.

(2) Positively: holy men of God spake as they were moved — carried along — by the Holy Spirit.

The real source of prophecy, then, is God. Man is the channel, but God is the source. The modern subjective view of prophecy is destructive of Christianity as divine revelation.

Views of prophecy may differ widely because views of the nature of God and the nature of the Bible differ widely. It is absolutely useless to discuss interpretations of prophecy with anyone unless there is first a common ground of basic understanding and agreement as to the nature of God, the supernatural character of Christianity, and the character of the Bible as objective, infallible divine revelation.

Many errors in views about prophecy are really rooted in unbelief as to the foundations of Christianity. For instance, someone who believes that the Bible is the record of the evolutionary development of man's religious life will have a very different view of prophecy from that of someone who believes that the Bible is the record of God's redemption of man from sin.

### **I. Time will be Followed by Eternity**

God's order is: 1. Creation. 2. History. 3. Consummation. The doctrine of Creation is unique in the Biblical religion. It does not exist in any other religious system in a pure or consistent form. All other systems tend either to regard the universe as eternal, or to regard it as coming into existence of itself. (It may be objected that the religion of Islam holds the doctrine of creation.

In reply it can be said that, like almost everything in Islam that is good or true, this has been borrowed from Jewish and Christian sources). Scripture alone teaches creation *ex nihilo* ("out of nothing") by the almighty power of God. This is the root of the **supernaturalism** of the Bible. Every doctrine in the whole Bible from Genesis to Revelation depends absolutely on the doctrine of creation as stated in Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

There was a beginning. God never had a beginning, but the universe had a beginning. It has not been in existence from all eternity — it had a beginning. We do not know how long ago the beginning was, but we know that there was a beginning. The Biblical concept of creation implies that **historic time** — the great world-process which we call "history" — does not exist of itself, but only by the power of God. Moreover history is not eternal in either direction. It had a beginning and it will also have an end.

Only the Bible teaches the **created** character of history. Therefore only the Bible provides a real basis for the idea of an "end of the world" or a consummation of **end of history**. The ancient classical view of history, as held by the Greeks, Romans and others, was that it is eternal — a series of endlessly repeated cycles — endless motion without any real goal ever being reached. A golden age is followed by a silver age, and so on to the end of the series, after which it all starts over again. This has always been going on and it will go on forever, with no beginning, no ending, no real progress and no goal. The Bible, on the contrary, teaches that there will be a goal. Time will be followed by eternity. Eternity is not a mere continuation of time. It is something which exists alongside of time but on a higher level, and it is essentially different from time. In eternity clocks and calendars as we know them will be meaningless and useless. Eternity cannot be measured in terms of days, hours or minutes. Eternity is always imminent, it is always just ahead of each and every one of us. None of us is ever more than an earthly lifetime from eternity. Therefore so far as we as individuals are concerned, the end of history is always imminent for each and every one of us. None need wait ages and ages to participate in the life of eternity. All of us will participate in the life of eternity in just a few years — just as soon as the death of our physical body takes place. Our physical body is our only connecting link with the world of time and space. When the body is no longer able to function, the person has become an inhabitant of eternity. For him, history is already over.

## II. Eternity is the Ideal and Absolute Fulfilment of Religion

"We know in part, and we prophesy in part, but when that which is perfect is come, then that

which is in part shall be done away." What we call "heaven" or "eternity" is the perfect, absolute, ideal fulfilment of religion. Owing to the existence of sin, there can be no perfect people and no perfect world within the process which we call "history", but only beyond it.

Among Christian people there are various views about the Millennium (the vision of the thousand years in Revelation 20.) Some hold that this will be before the second coming of Christ, others that it will be after the second coming of Christ; some that it is present, others that it is still future. But all agree that the Millennium will be **temporary**, and all agree that it will be **imperfect** — it will not last forever, and it will include sin and death. Therefore the Millennium, whatever view we may take of it, cannot be the absolute fulfilment of the religious ideal. For the absolute fulfilment will only be "when that which is perfect is come."

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob realized full well that the **ultimate** fulfilment of God's promises to them lay not in Canaan but in eternity. They looked for the better country, which is the heavenly one.

Any system which makes anything within history the **ultimate** object of Christian hope is unbiblical and regards the temporal too highly and the eternal not highly enough.

Biblical prophecy is like a telescope which peers far down the avenue of time and even beyond the farthest rim of time and on out into the mysterious realm of eternity that lies beyond time.

**It is a mistake to assume that all prophecies must be completely and absolutely fulfilled within the confines of time or history. The fact is that many prophecies of the Bible look out beyond the rim of time into the infinite reaches of eternity that lies beyond time.**

It is a recognized principle of interpretation that prophecy may have a multiple fulfilment. It may have its fulfilment in successive stages on different levels of existence. Thus there may be a relative fulfilment and an absolute fulfilment. This can be seen, for example, in the interpretation of such texts as "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" and "all shall know me, from the least unto the greatest."

How do the waters cover the sea? They cover it **absolutely**. There is not a square inch of the sea that is not covered by the waters of the sea. Hence this prophecy predicts a state of affairs where the knowledge of the Lord will be absolutely universal. "All shall know me" — not many, not the great majority, but **all**. When shall this be? If we are inquiring as to the absolute, exhaustive fulfilment of the prophecies, it must

be in that ideal and perfect order of things which we call "heaven" or "eternity."

Yet these and similar prophecies may also be fulfilled partially and relatively through the centuries of history. Some of them, at least, have been fulfilled and we can see that they have been fulfilled to a certain extent — much more than, say, 1,000 years ago. But it is not legitimate to infer or assume that the **absolute** fulfilment of such prophecies must be within history, that is, before the end of the world. The analogy of Scripture teaches, rather, that such prophecy looks far beyond the limit of historic time and out beyond, into the absolute realm of eternity.

It is well for us to remember that prophecy is given in terms of conditions which existed when the prophecy was given, but fulfilled in terms of conditions which exist when the prophecy is fulfilled. This is illustrated by a story told by Dr. Albertus Pieters in one of his books. Back in the nineties a father very much wanted his son to abstain from the use of tobacco. He promised the boy: "Son, if you will not smoke or use tobacco in any form until you are 21 years old, I will give you a horse and a new buggy for a present on your twenty-first birthday."

The boy wanted the reward, so he kept the bargain. When the 21st birthday arrived, the father said at breakfast, "Son, you will find your birthday present out on the front lawn." The young man went out, and there he found what used to be called a sports roadster. You see, it was about 1910 or 1912, and since the agreement had been made the automobile had been invented and had come into use. Do you suppose the young man said to his father: "Dad, you just can't do this to me. You promised me a horse and buggy. Now I want you to keep that promise and give me the horse and buggy as you promised."

Was the gift of an automobile a true fulfilment of the father's promise? Would a gift of a horse and buggy in 1912 have been a true fulfilment of the promise made in 1895? The promise was given in terms of the horse and buggy era, but the fulfilment was in terms of the automobile age. I am inclined to think that the young man accepted the car without raising any objections.

This story illustrates an important principle of Bible interpretation. When the Bible predicts that in the ideal state of the future "the lion shall eat straw like the ox," this does not mean that there will be vegetarian lions either on earth or in heaven. It is a prediction that the destructive forces of nature will be changed or abolished. The prediction is stated in terms of conditions which existed when the prophet lived. Lions were a real menace then. It will be fulfilled in God's own way in the future.

The Old Testament predicts that in the ideal state of the future, the "new heavens and new earth" (Isa. 65:17), children will not die until they are 100 years old. The same passage adds, "For as the days of a tree shall be the days of my people" (Isa. 65:22). This is a prophecy given in terms of conditions existing at the time of the giving of the prophecy. It will be fulfilled in terms of conditions existing at the fulfilment. The New Testament shows us that it means **eternal life**, the life that can never die, "for there shall be no more death." It is given in terms of time; it is fulfilled in terms of eternity.

If we will remember that the temporal is always imperfect, owing to the presence of sin, we will realize that only eternity can bring the absolute fulfilment of the religious ideal. Even a state vastly more perfect than exists today, if it exists within the temporal order, will still contain sin and so be imperfect, therefore it cannot be the fulfilment of religion.

### III. The Arrival of the Eternal Order will be Catastrophic

By saying that the arrival of the eternal order will be catastrophic we mean that it will be sudden, not gradual; a revolution, not an evolution.

The Bible speaks of the great redemptive facts in terms of supernatural realism. Christ's resurrection, His ascension, His coming again are not "spiritualized" in the Bible but are treated as literally real. Many people object to this at the present day because they are intoxicated by scientific thought which regards nature as all that exists, and they shy away from the idea of the supernatural as something superstitious or unscientific. A recent writer on the teachings of the Apostle Paul, for example, says that Paul's statements about Christ coming again with a shout, at the last trump, etc., as described in 1 Thess. 4:16, must be stripped of their Jewish imagery if we are to discern their real meaning. What is really meant, it is said, is merely that good will overcome evil in the end. Such scholars have developed an allergy to the supernatural. They try to reduce it to the smallest possible minimum. And to that extent, their thinking is alien to the spirit of Biblical Christianity.

One of America's greatest theologians, Dr. Benjamin B. Warfield, said that Christ's ascension must have made this earth lighter by so many pounds weight, however crude this idea may seem to some people. Christ after His resurrection ate broiled fish and a piece of honeycomb. The idea that the resurrection body and the life of eternity will be thin, filmy, unreal or ghost-like is foreign to Bible teachings. Eternity and heaven will be more, not less, real and substantial than what we experience here on earth. It is this present life

that is thin and filmy — in heaven things will be really solid and substantial.

All this implies what the Bible plainly teaches, that the second coming of Christ and the end of the world are not some vague mystic experience but a literal fact. He cometh with clouds; every eye shall see Him, even those that pierced Him.

The denial of this Biblical realism springs, basically, from unbelief in the supernatural character of God's redemption program. Those who do not believe that Jesus Christ really rose from the dead, but only that His spirit (or only His influence?) lives on, will of course not believe that He is literally coming again and that every eye shall see Him.

Bible-believing Christians are agreed as to the reality and literal character of Christ's second coming and the supplanting of history by eternity, whatever differences of interpretation may exist concerning other matters of varying degrees of importance.

Scripture links the end of history with the return of Jesus Christ. History will end with the visible, personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ to this earth. This is of the very essence of Christianity. This return of Christ will mark the boundary line between the temporal and the eternal, between world history and the vast eternity that lies beyond world history.

Jesus Christ is not a product of history. He said, "Ye are from beneath; I am from above. Ye are of this world; I am not of this world." Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem and lived a human life in historical time, but he came from the great beyond, and at His ascension he left the realm of historical time to re-enter the realm of eternity.

Since this was the case, the product of Christ's redemptive work cannot be adequately measured or described in terms of time or history. The product of Christ's redemptive work is not only historical but **eternal**, and it must necessarily overleap and outlast the temporal order.

In Nebuchadnezzar's vision the stone cut out of the mountain without hands grew until it filled the whole earth. It stood for the Kingdom of God. But there is more. It outlasts the world and it alone stands forever. The clock of history will finally cease to tick, but the product of Christ's redemption will live on in its glory and wonder. Heaven and earth shall indeed pass away, but His words shall not pass away.

The coming of the eternal order cannot be a gradual process. In the nature of the case it must be sudden and catastrophic. This is obviously true in the life of an individual person. **Earthly** life may last many years, but there comes a certain definite moment when it ceases and the person has entered upon the life of eternity.

Death is instantaneous as truly as birth is instantaneous. Death occurs all at once at a particular time. One moment the person is a resident of time and space; the next moment he is a resident of eternity.

The same thing must be true of the world as a whole. History does not gradually merge into the eternal order of things. It cannot, because of the radically different character of the two conditions. There are not only moral and spiritual but also physical and cosmic changes involved. The difference between the realm of time and the realm of eternity is a difference of kind, not merely a difference of degree.

Time, space, physics, chemistry — all these things that condition life as we experience it here and now — all these will give way to a higher level or plane of existence which will be essentially **different**. That will be our true destiny — what we were being prepared for all our life long. But it will be different. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him at he is" (1 John 3:2).

What should our attitude to God's future program? Some would not wish eternity to dawn because they are absorbed in what they are doing in time. Not until I graduate from college! Not until I attain my life's goals in this world! Not until America has become a truly and fully Christian nation!

But is this a right attitude? Do we want "that which is perfect" to be delayed so that we can longer enjoy "that which is in part"? Is the **relatively perfect** so important to us that we want the arrival of the **absolutely perfect** deferred to make room for it? ? Where is our **ultimate** Christian hope anchored? "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

The boundary line between time and eternity is set by God, not by us. This is true, whether we are speaking of an individual person's life or of the world as a whole. God sets the boundaries. This is a prerogative of His sovereignty.

And eternity always takes absolute priority over everything in time. Nothing we are doing here is so important that it must delay the launching of God's program of eternity. The relatively perfect may not delay or impede the absolutely perfect. This the early Christians realized. We find it reflected, for example, in the end of the Bible: "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

The poem entitled "What Then?" by J. Whitfield Green stresses the fact that eternity is imminent and inevitable. It is appended here.

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

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

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

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

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## *Sketches of the Covenanters*

By J. C. McFeeters

### Chapter XLIX

#### **The Shepherdless Flock.**

Renwick received the martyr's crown at the age of twenty-six. His limp body was borne from the scaffold to Greyfriar's churchyard. A spot of ground, a few yards square, had been allotted there for criminals. The Covenanters in those days were accounted criminals by the civil authorities. Here the ground was stirred again and again, till the bodies of 100 martyrs were heaped together, and Renwick's was the last. A suitable stone bearing his name, and referring to the others, now graces this hundred-fold grave. What a cluster of gems the Lord will find here, in the day when He makes up His jewels!

When the Blue Banner fell from Renwick's lifeless hand, Alexander Shields grasped it. He was scarcely worthy. Though he had served well and suffered much in former years, yet once he had lapsed. This temporary defection, while pardonable, proved to be a symptom of inherent weakness that unfitted him for leadership. For his fault he shed tears, but they could not remove the stain, nor restore confidence. The fearless Covenanters continued the struggle, their own spiritual momentum being sufficient to carry them forward with or without leaders. The persecution had now reached its eventide; the sunset was showing some rosy tints; a bright day would be dawning. This year, 1688, William, Prince of Orange, with an army of 15,000, disputed the right of King James to the throne.

The persecutor was able to give the Covenanters no more attention. The coward fled without a battle. He lost his kingdom, and, with his fall, the house of the Stuarts sank into oblivion, as had been predicted by the Covenanters.

The Revolution filled the Covenanted Societies with high hope. They became enthusiastic supporters of the new king, expecting him to inaugurate a reign of righteousness. A Convention of statesmen met in Edinburgh to readjust public affairs and restore peace. Claverhouse, too, was there, still dripping with the blood of the martyrs. He had dashed suddenly upon the scene with his troops, to break up the Convention, and give battle to King William's supporters. The Convention was without a sufficient guard. The delegates were in danger. To whom could they look for protection? Listen! The call is to the Cameronians; to the men who have borne the brunt of persecution for twenty-eight years, and are now quietly returning from the moors and caverns to their desolate homes. To these who have been hated and hunted and tortured and hacked to pieces—to these the government now appeals for help. These, after all they have suffered, are the Reliables. They are the recognized patriots, who stand ready for any sacrifice, and are worthy of any trust, in the name of liberty and righteousness. "We are coming," was their quick reply. A regiment was mustered in one day without the beat of a drum; two others were offered. The poor Covenanters were not now despised.

The persecution being over, the Church endeavored to resume her operations. The General Assembly convened October 18, 1690, after a violent suspension lasting forty years. This Assembly was most remarkable for its membership. There sat together three active Cameronian ministers, threescore other ministers pale from their hiding places, a large group of the Indulged ministers who had gone home years ago, a number of curates who had slipped into the vacancies, and a list of bishops who had been in the service of the persecuting government. Such being the blend, the aroma was anything but sweet. Alexander Peden had prophesied of this Assembly years before. He said, "The Indulged, and the lukewarm ministers, with some young things that know nothing, will hive together in a General Assembly; the hands red with blood, and the hands black with defection, will be clasped by our ministers; and ye will not ken who has been the persecutor, and who the sufferer; and your testimony will be cut off at the web's end." How true the prediction!

Rev. Hugh Kennedy was chosen Moderator. The choice indicated the spirit of the Assembly. This man had accepted the Indulgence, had given thanks for the Toleration, and had debarred from Communion the Covenanters who had fought at Bothwell Bridge. The liberals had the meeting. Moderation, compromise, unionism, a nauseating agreeableness pervaded the Court, like the miasma that broods over a stagnant pond.

The three Cameronians, Alexander Shields, Thomas Linning, and William Boyd, had courage to represent the Covenanted Societies, by presenting their petition for the restoration of the General Assembly on Reformation grounds, according to the Covenant of 1638. The petition was treated with contempt; it was not even read in the Assembly. The three ministers winced, faltered, yielded. They fell beneath the popular wave, to rise no more. These men, who had bravely faced persecution, were at last overcome by blandishment. The Covenanted cause was at stake in that Assembly, as truly as it ever had been in the presence of Claverhouse and his dragoons; and here the leaders surrendered.

The Covenanted Societies refused to follow their faithless guides into the General Assembly, to disappear there in the strange blending of religious forces. These were men of conviction; they did not vary with the weather; they thought for themselves. Some of them were aged, and had seen the Covenant Temple of 1638, with its strong foundation and imposing structure. They had seen the Reformation in its glory — the Covenanted Church of Christ, purified, strengthened, and exalted, under the care of Henderson, Johnston, Guthrie, Argyle,

and others whose hearts God had touched; and now they saw this reconstruction. Ah, how inferior! It was far removed from the true foundation; it was conspicuous only for its hay, wood, and stubble; they saw and wept. The Covenanted cause was practically abandoned. What Satan could not win by fire and sword, he had won by the enchantments of peace.

The Assembly submitted to the king's supremacy over the Church. King William, like the former rulers, had seized the gem of Christ's authority and set it in his own crown. For this royal truth the martyrs had died. Now their blood was reckoned an unnecessary expenditure. The Covenant was ignored, and its principles set aside; the Church was placed on a new basis. Thus the glory of Scotland's Reformation sank behind a fog-bank that has never yet cleared away.

The Covenanted Societies resolved to maintain their organization, as the true representatives of Scotland's Reformation Church; the legitimate successors of Knox, Melville, Guthrie, Cameron, Cargill, and Renwick; the rightful heirs of the Covenant, its obligations and blessings; the devoted witnesses of Jesus Christ, going forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. They had much for which to contend. The supremacy of Christ, the independence of the Church, the Covenant of the fathers, the testimony of the martyrs, the purity of Divine worship, the dignity of Church discipline — all had suffered at the hands of this Assembly. Against the great defection they resolved to lift up a testimony. They would not deny their Covenant Lord, by entering into relation with Church or State, as at that time constituted and administered. These Covenanters were ridiculed as a fanatical, narrow-minded faction. James Renwick had been taunted with the question, "Do you believe that none, but those of your principles, can enter heaven?" "I never said so," he replied; "but I do say, These are principles worth suffering for." A noble reply to the sarcastic question which often re-appears.

Narrow-minded! Breadth may be viewed from various positions. He, who attempts to broaden himself by accepting error, becomes the narrow man. Every error adopted means a truth rejected. This process may continue till the heart is so contracted that there is no room for either God or man. Ah, the irony of such broadness! How different with Him who will not surrender a hair-breadth of truth! He is the broad man; broad as the law of God, broad as the Gospel of Christ, broad as the principles of the everlasting Covenant, broad as the kingdom of heaven. Those Covenanters were the broadest men of their day.

The Covenanters would not receive Gospel services from ministers who had broken Covenant with them and with God. Sixteen years this flock was in the wilderness without a shepherd. They came together in societies for spiritual fellowship and the worship of God. The Lord sustained them, and maintained their cause. At length He sent them a minister, John McMillan; and thirty years later another, Thomas Nairn. By these the Reformed Presbytery was organized August 1, 1743.

Sir Robert Hamilton was the peerless champion of the pastorless people. He exhorted them, saying, "Labor to keep the good old way, seeking to be found in His way when He cometh, keeping the Word of Christ's patience, standing fast to your post, and close to your Master, in readiness to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth; for the winds are now let loose; and it is to be feared, many shall be blown away."

And the pastorless people spake often one to another, saying, "Wherefore, we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and Godly fear: for our God is a consuming fire. Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp bearing His reproach."

And Jesus encouraged them, saying, "He

that endureth to the end shall be saved." Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne."

#### Points For The Class

1. Who succeeded Renwick as leader of the Covenanters?
2. What was his character?
3. When did the Revolution take place?
4. How did the Cameronians regard it?
5. When was the General Assembly reorganized?
6. What was its general character?
7. How many in it represented the Covenanted Societies?
8. What course did they take?
9. What line of action did the Societies follow?
10. Who were the men of broad principles in those times?
11. By whom was the Reformed Presbytery organized?

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## *God Our Contemporary*

### A Review of a Widely Read Current Religious Book

GOD OUR CONTEMPORARY, by J. B. Phillips. The Macmillan Company, 60 Fifth Ave., New York 11, N. Y. 1960, pp. 137, paper cover. \$1.25.

The strength and chief value of this book is its forthright insistence upon the truth of Christianity and its relevance to modern man. Its message, stated in terms of present-day situations, needs and problems, is well calculated to shock the indifferent and the complacent into serious consideration of their need of God and a sober facing of the eternal issues of life.

Another notable value of this book is its very proper and wholesome challenging of that common present-day form of idolatry which consists in the worship of "science." Author Phillips calls attention to the limitations of science and ably shows that it can never meet all man's needs, nor his deepest needs.

It is greatly to be regretted, in view of the book's good features, that the author's basic theological views are not such as can be accepted as Biblical by evangelical Christians. For

one thing, he strongly stresses the Incarnation rather than the Atonement as the central truth of Christianity and the basis of man's salvation. This of course need not imply disbelief in the atonement, but it certainly involves a theological orientation differing markedly from that of the Reformation. This divergence from Reformation theology appears conspicuously in his statement that the purpose of Christ's coming was "to reveal the reality behind the appearance of things" (page 73). This is glaringly heretical. If he had said that a purpose of Christ's coming was to reveal the reality behind the appearance of things, the statement might pass. But to affirm that this was the purpose is to say that Christ came to teach rather than to save—to tell us or show us something rather than to do something for us as our Substitute. According to Scripture, of course, Christ's priestly office is central in importance. The purpose of His coming was to suffer and die on the cross as our Substitute—to give His life a ransom for many. His teaching, including His revelation of the Father, was incidental and subordinate to His atoning work.

Also conspicuously unsound is Phillips' attitude to the Bible, both in what he says and in what he leaves unsaid. Nowhere in the book is there any affirmation of the importance of holding to the full truth and trustworthiness of the Bible, not only as a means of grace, but also as the God-given infallible rule of faith and life. When he does speak of the Bible he betrays his essentially liberal attitude toward it. Instead of speaking of the Gospels as an infallibly true record of the life of our Lord, Phillips speaks of their "substantial accuracy" (page 67), and is mildly tolerant of the claim that there is an element of historical error in the Gospels (page 61).

The author repudiates belief in the doctrine of total depravity — he says that he is very far from subscribing to that doctrine (page 101). Yet it seems evident that he is laboring under a misconception of what the doctrine of total depravity is, supposing it to mean that sinful man is **absolutely** depraved in such a sense that he could not possibly become worse than he is, just as in physics absolute zero means that total lack of molecular motion beyond which there can be no deeper cold. But this is not what the doctrine of total depravity means in historic orthodox theology. The adjective "total" does not refer to the **degree** of depravity but to its **extent** — it means that there is no part of the sinner's personality which has not been damaged by sin. Thus in orthodox theology the destructive effect of sin is not limited to the emotions, or to the will, or the understanding, or the soul, or the body, or the social relationships of man, but it has permeated them all, so that no element of the sinner's personality is really normal in the sight of God; at no point and in no relationship does sinful man measure up to the ideal in terms of which man was created. This does not mean that the sinner is as bad as he could become, nor that anyone in this life is as bad as the eternally lost will be in hell. Nor does it mean that there is nothing in the sinner which can in any sense be truly called good. By the common grace of God there are elements of good **on the human level** in the sinner; the destructive effect of sin has been limited to some extent. Thus a man who is not a Christian may give money to build a hospital or provide a home for orphans. This is certainly good, but only in a limited sense. It is good on the horizontal plane, within human society, but it is not good in the highest sense because it does not proceed from a heart renewed by divine grace nor from a motive of love to God.

Phillips thinks much too highly of the non-Christian man. Repeatedly he speaks of non-Christians who are "men of good will" and urges that Christians co-operate with such people in worthy projects. He is not speaking of all the non-Christian people of the world — he freely admits that there are wicked people who could not be called "men of good will" — but of the kind-

hearted folk he sees in England who "have little or no articulate religious faith" yet engage in "actions of compassion and self-giving service" (page 131). Phillips quite fails to realize that the "goodness" of these "men of good will" is only limited and superficial. It is not something inherent in these people, but comes from the restraining activity of God's common grace in their lives, by which their deepest and most real personality is prevented from coming to its full manifestation in their consciousness and conduct. In spite of their geniality and humanitarian "good will" such people really **hate God**, according to Scripture, but the hatred is divinely restrained, during this life, from its complete manifestation and effect in their consciousness and conduct. In hell these people will hate God to all eternity with a most bitter, intense and utterly uninhibited hatred. The Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius was pre-eminently a "man of good will" — indeed he was one of the best of the Roman emperors, whose "Meditations" on the wise and good life is considered a classic to the present day. Yet this emperor was bitterly opposed to Christianity, and he brought about a cruel and ruthless persecution of Christians. It is this limited character of the non-Christian's "goodness" that Phillips fails to realize. He fails to recognize the deep enmity, the absolute ethical antithesis, which exists between Christian and non-Christian. God has put enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman, and it is both real and deep. Were it not for the restraining hand of God, these "men of good will" who are not Christians would rise up and kill every Christian they could lay their hands on.

In the judgment of the reviewer Phillips undervalues the Old Testament and over-emphasizes the newness of Christianity, failing to realize the essential continuity of Christianity with the Old Testament system of revelation and redemption.

On page 103 Phillips says of Christ: "No doubt he used the language of his own day . . .". This is an unguarded statement, to say the least. The subject under discussion is the real existence of Satan and the demons. Phillips seems to imply that Jesus did not really believe in personal evil spirits, but accommodated His language to what His hearers were accustomed to; or else to imply the idea of **kenosis** — that when the son of God became man He emptied Himself of His divine knowledge of reality.

On page 117 Phillips questions the existence of a personal devil. He says: "If we may personify the forces of evil for a moment, it would appear that 'Satan' does not bother to attack, for example, a university professor of philosophy, a popular film star, a busy farmer, a telephone operator or a worker in heavy industry, or anyone else, just so long as they are uncommitted in the real spiritual battle." Again, on page 118, he

speaks of "the forces of evil" and then, **in quotation marks**, of "the devil" and "Satan."

With the author's point here, that Satan does not bother to attack those who are not committed on the Lord's side, we are in agreement. But why should Phillips seem to be so embarrassed about the idea of a personal Satan? He begs the reader's permission to "personify the forces of evil for a moment," certainly implying by this that in his belief the forces of evil are not really personal in nature. The reviewer would point out that in Scripture the attributes of personality are applied to Satan no less than they are applied to God. Moreover, the "forces of evil" **must be personal, or else they are not really evil in the moral sense.** There are two kinds of evil: physical evil and moral evil. Physical evil, such as pain, suffering or calamity, may be impersonal — as when accident or circumstances cause suffering or death — though even this can happen only within the providential control of the personal God. But moral evil cannot be impersonal. Moral evil is what we commonly call sin or wickedness, and it can have no existence except as a quality or action of **persons** — beings having moral responsibility to God their Creator. If a tree falls and kills a man, that is physical evil. There is no personality in a tree, and it cannot commit sin nor be held responsible for its actions. But if a man covets another man's property, and kills him to get it,

that is moral evil, and for it he is held accountable to God his Creator. Moral evil exists in the universe because there are **persons** who are in revolt against God. These persons are not merely sinful men, but the demons, and especially Satan the chief of the demons. Thus in Scripture traits of personality are ascribed to Satan, such as lying, deception, craftiness, rage, enmity to God. It would seem that Phillips has uncritically adopted the common liberal notion that moral evil can be regarded as an impersonal "force" or "forces" while the idea of a real, living, personal devil is to be regarded as a "myth." But, as has been shown, this involves holding that moral evil is not really **moral** evil at all.

Other items in Phillips' presentation to which this reviewer must object are his apparent acceptance of the theory of human evolution (pages 8, 56) and his statement that "God's attitude toward mankind is one of unremitting love" (page 62).

This book may be used of the Lord to accomplish good, especially in jolting the indifferent and the complacent into a consciousness of the relevance of God. But the pattern of Christianity to which Phillips calls people is one which both deviates seriously from, and falls far short of, that revealed in the infallible Word of God.

— J. G. Vos

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## *Instrumental Music in the Public Worship of the Church*

By **John L. Girardeau**

(Continued from last issue)

In the fourth place, some of the elements of the temple-service were directly and solely typical of Christ, especially as a priest and as the atoning sacrifice to be offered for sin. Others were typical only of the Holy Ghost; and still others were typical, at one and the same time, both of Christ and the Holy Spirit. To use the technically accurate language of theology, the impenetration or acquisition of salvation is attributed to Christ, the application of it to the Holy Spirit. But the grace which applies the benefits secured by the work of Christ is closely related to the work by which they were acquired. Indeed it is itself acquired by the merit and intercession of the Redeemer. They therefore suppose and implicate each other. Consequently some of the types have a double reference to both. When they immediately represent the Holy Spirit they at the same time mediately represent Christ. Some of the positions taken in these preliminary remarks may be justly regarded and carried along

with the discussion as assumptions demanding no proof, and others will be substantiated as the argument proceeds.

**First**, The offices and work of the Holy Spirit were as clearly and definitely predicted and promised in the Old Testament Scriptures as were those of Christ. The truth is that they cannot possibly be disjoined. Neither would be operative to salvation without the other. The whole Old Testament revelation, so far as it was evangelical, bore a twofold reference to the blood and the water, to the meritorious acquisition of salvation by the righteousness and atoning death of Christ and its efficacious application by the grace of the Holy Ghost. In the conception of redemption which we find everywhere in the Bible justification and sanctification are never dissociated. They are ever represented as the complementary and equally necessary factors of one whole and complete salvation. This is

the very genius of the gospel as well before as after the death of the Son of God. As it was proclaimed to our first parents, revealed to Abel; Enoch and Noah, and, as the apostle expressly testifies, "preached before to Abraham," it was essentially promissory in its nature. The same promissory character was still more fully disclosed in the features of the Mosaic dispensation, in the Psalms and Prophets, and, as I hope to show, in the typical rites and ceremonies of the temple-service. That the person and offices of the Holy Spirit were distinctly known to believers under the old dispensation is proved by utterances in the Psalms, a book which represents the experience of God's true people in every condition of their history. In the 51st Psalm we have the prayers: "Take not thy Holy Spirit from me;" "Uphold me with thy free Spirit;" and in the 143rd, "Thy Spirit is good; lead me to the land of uprightness" Isaiah (chap. lxiii. 10) says: "They rebelled and vexed his Holy Spirit," which words, as they were spoken of the "house of Israel," suppose that they knew, or ought to have known, the Holy Spirit as their guide. It may be added that the sacred historians of the Old Testament over and over again assert, with reference to the heroic worthies of that dispensation, that the Spirit of the Lord came upon them. All this goes to show that the promises which related to the work of the Holy Spirit at a future period of the church's development were not unintelligible by those to whom they were delivered.

Let us cite some of those declarations which point to the work of the Spirit in the new dispensation. Isa. xxxii. 15-17: After describing the desolation that would be visited upon the land of Israel, the prophet says: "Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field, shall shall be counted for a forest. Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever." Isa. xlii. 1: "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my Spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles." Isa. xlv. 3, 4: "For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring; and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses." Isa. lix. 19, 20, 21: "So shall they fear the name of the Lord from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord.

As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; my Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and forever." This prophecy in regard to the Spirit resisting a flood of enemies is referred by the Rabbins to the coming of the Messiah. Ezek. xxxvi. 25-27: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them." Ezek. xxxvii. 13, 14: "And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put my Spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it, and performed it, saith the Lord." Joel ii, 28, 29: "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit." For the reference of this glorious promise to New Testament times we have the inspired testimony of the apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost, when it was measurably but remarkably fulfilled. In close connection with the promise that a fountain shall be opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness, Zechariah utters also the promise, xii. 10: "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications." It matters little whether or not with some we take the word *spirit* here to indicate a disposition. That disposition can be produced only by the Holy Spirit. The apostle Paul, it deserves to be considered, terms the Spirit "that holy Spirit of promise," Eph. i. 13; and in Gal. iii. 13, 14, he speaks very explicitly about this matter: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." How closely does he couple the atoning work of Christ and the applying work of the Spirit! And how clearly does he enounce the fact that the Spirit, as well as Christ, was promised in the ancient Scriptures and the early revelations made to the people of God!

**Secondly,** The offices of the Holy Ghost, to-

gether with their saving and joy-imparting effects, were typified, as well as the priestly work and expiatory death of Christ, in the services which were peculiar to the temple. In view of what has been shown concerning the clearness and fullness with which the work of the Spirit in New Testament times is announced in the prophetic writings we would be prepared to find this true upon an examination of the temple types; nor will we be disappointed by such an investigation. Those types, as well as the prophecies, proclaimed the gospel. They powerfully preached the whole salvation of the gospel,—the blood and the water, justification and sanctification. How could it be otherwise? As God intended by these typical ele-

ments to represent, as by object-lessons, the scheme of redemption to his ancient people who lived before its actual achievement, is it reasonable to suppose that he would have furnished an imperfect and inadequate pre-figuration of its essential parts? Would he have omitted all instruction beforehand in regard to the mode of its application? It is difficult to conceive how any theologian can fail to see the obvious foreshadowing in the temple furniture and service of the grace and work of the ever-blessed Spirit. I shall select for comment only those elements which appear with the greatest clearness to typify the offices of the Holy Spirit.

(To be continued)

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## *The Hebrew Sanctuary, A Study in Typology*

By the Rev. Wallace M. Nicholson, M. A., B. D., M. Th.

### VII. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MOST HOLY PLACE

The Tabernacle proper was divided into two unequal parts. The first, called the "Sanctuary," or the "Holy Place" was twenty cubits long, ten cubits wide and ten cubits in height; and the second the "Most Holy Place" or "the Holy of Holies" was a perfect cube of ten cubits. This inner apartment or the "Holy of Holies" was invested with peculiar sacredness. The Sanctuary itself was the dwelling-place of God; but this apartment was pre-eminently God's residence, the inner chamber of His Presence where no mortal man was allowed to enter except the High Priest, and that only one day in the year after special rites of lustrations for his own sins and those of the people; and even then his ministrations must be preceded by the burning of fragrant incense, — which enveloped the Ark of the Covenant — and accompanied with, the blood of immolated sacrifices. The significance of the Most Holy Place must necessarily correspond with that of the Tabernacle as a whole, while the vessels connected with it shed additional light upon the nature of God and His relations to His people as a just God and a Saviour. The Most Holy Place was, so to speak, the inner council chamber of the royal palace of the King where His throne of Judgment and Mercy were set up. There He is represented in the splendour of His divine excellence and in His infinite goodness to His people, who, in a state of legal and moral separation from Him are through the ample provisions of His grace intimately and undissolubly united to Himself on the basis of a restored covenant, fulfilled and ratified by a propitiatory sacrifice.

#### 1. The Ark of the Covenant.

The Hebrew name for the Ark signifies a

wooden chest. It is called the "ark of the testimony," "the ark of the covenant," and "the ark of God." Its purpose was to preserve the ten commandments engraven on tablets of stone. These tablets contained the terms of God's covenant with Israel, and so were called "the tables of the covenant." The ark itself was made of shittim wood overlaid with gold within and without, two and a half cubits long, one and a half cubits wide, and one and a half cubits in height. Its dimensions were so small that it has been thought that the tables of the covenant were placed edgewise within the chest. The ark derived its importance solely from its contents which served to impress upon Israel the holiness of God and His demands upon them, in utter contrast with the idolatrous rites of heathenism which stood at an immeasurable distance from the lofty standards and holy sanctions contained in the Decalogue. As a unit, the ark of the covenant was the symbol of God's presence among His people, but it is only in connection with the law within it, the mercy seat covering the ark as a lid, and the cherubim above the mercy seat that its full significance is to be understood.

#### 2. The Law.

The law was the basis of God's covenant with Israel, and if we take into consideration the nature of its contents, the mode and medium of its transcription, the manner of its promulgation, its position in the Tabernacle encased in the golden ark, at the base of the throne of gold, and containing as the core of its teaching love to God and man, it must appear to us as possessed of primary importance and inestimable value in the Mosiac economy.

The law, as an instrument of righteousness, stood in solitary grandeur in the midst of Israel,

revealing God's will to His people, and regulating in its general principles the Mosiac dispensation in its totality; while its universal and timeless principles of righteousness were designed to set the spiritual and moral standards for all the successive generations of the world. By its prohibitions and requirements it testified to the holiness of Jehovah and the standard of holiness required of His people. It is called a testimony to indicate the authority and will of God: it was also a standing witness against the sins of the children of the covenant. The law, however, was not a mere legal instrument of instruction and condemnation, since it contemplated God as the Deliverer of His people, and therefore He expected and enjoined their gratitude and homage. This is intimated in the preface to the Law.

"I am the Lord, thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt out of the house of bondage" (Exodus 20:2).

That the children of Israel failed to fulfil the terms of the covenant is too notorious to require discussion. The Law in its external aspect though holy, and just, and good, was antagonistic to the sinful nature of the people, and hence, if they were to realize their relation to God as a redeemed people, provision must be made not only to meet its claims but to guarantee its fulfilment in the children of the covenant themselves, and therefore in process of time its claims were fulfilled by the obedience of Christ, and provision made through the sanctifying influences of the Spirit to implant the law in the hearts of the redeemed, so that the terms of the law which were objective and external were realized subjectively and internally by the loving obedience of a purified people.

Much has been made of the antagonism between the Old and New Testaments in respect to the claims of the law, but when we are led to give more consideration to the unchangeable nature of God, and the immutability of the love and obedience He requires we shall find that the contrast is superficial. The aim of the law is to lead and command from without the loving obedience required, while the purpose of the gospel is to induce and qualify us to perform that loving obedience from within. It will also be remembered that under the Mosiac dispensation itself provision was made for the sanctification of God's people, so that along with the witness of the law, there was also an atonement provided to meet its rightful claims.

### 3. The Mercy Seat.

The Mercy Seat or "Capporeth" consisted of a lid of solid gold of the same dimensions as the ark, and placed on top of it. Although a part of the sacred chest it appears at times to be more important than the ark itself. According to the

book of Chronicles the Most Holy Place is called "the place of the capporeth." The literal meaning of the word denotes "a covering" but the word used in the Septuagint is more specific and signifies "an instrument of atonement." Atwater (The Tabernacle, p. 315.) says that the name "covering" is used because it is the place from which the covering of sin is authoritatively announced. According to Fairbairn (Typology, Vol. 2, p. 376) an expiatory covering was needed between the law on the one hand and God on the other, and the covering required must be a propitiatory covering, a place on which the holy eye of God may ever see the blood of reconciliation: while Oehler (Theology of the Old Testament, p. 258) says that when the capporeth is over the tables it is declared that God's grace, which provides an atonement or covering for the iniquity of the people, stands above His penal justice. The capporeth in its proximity to the law and its aspect towards it as a covering conveys a simple explanation of its typical design. As a covering fitting over the golden chest and facing the table of the covenant it must be conceived of a meeting with and satisfying the claims of the law in all its demands on the basis of the sacrifice offered and accepted in terms of the blood of reconciliation sprinkled upon and before the mercy seat. There was therefore a reaction between the capporeth and the law. The latter demanded satisfaction for sin, and perfect obedience; this the former provided by meeting all its claims, and the work of reconciliation was completed when the blood was presented and accepted at the throne of God, and before His very presence. And so it was when the type was replaced by the antitype the law demanded perfect obedience and further declared death as the wages of sin. The Church of God was unable to render perfect obedience, and God was unwilling that they should endure the just consequences. And so there stepped into the breach the Mediator of the Covenant, who his own self endured the penalty of the law and met by his own obedience all its claims.

"For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation (The word "propitiation" used here is the same as "capporeth" in the Hebrew.) through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God" (Rom. 3:23-25).

### 4. The Cherubim

Two cherubim made of beaten gold and of one piece with the capporeth were placed one at each end of the mercy seat. Their outstretched wings overshadowed the mercy seat, and their faces were towards one another and towards the capporeth (Exod. 25:18-21; 37:7-9). We have

no means of knowing the form or size of these figures, but with the help of other scripture references we take it that they possessed the predominating appearance of a man (Ezek. 1:5), combined with the forms of a lion, an eagle, and an ox (Rev. 4:7). These figures were ideal representations of non-existent beings, and it is not easy to discover their significance. According to Oehler (**Theology of the Old Testament**), they signify the glory of God as it is manifested in the world. Fairbairn and Atwater say they signify redeemed humanity when the work of salvation is complete: in other words, the cherubim pre-figure the church of God, redeemed, sanctified, and glorified. Whether or not we agree with the latter view the reasons supporting it by Fairbairn (**Typology**) Vol. 1, page 359), lend weight to his interpretation. According to some sound interpreters the cherubim signify the angels, and they quote in support of their contention, I Peter 1:12. But this seems contrary to their own general principles since they maintain that the sanctuary signifies Christ and his Body, the church. Besides since Christ took not on him the seed of angels but of Abraham, the idea of angels would seem to be out of place here. And as the mercy seat and the cherubim were all of one piece, even so Christ is typified as one in union and nature with His redeemed and glorified Church.

##### 5. The Annual Day of Atonement.

The full significance of the Most Holy Place cannot be understood except in connection with the annual day of atonement, since on every other day of the year this apartment was inaccessible to any human being. Even on this day it was accessible to the high priest alone, whose only function there was to burn incense and sprinkle the blood in the inner sanctuary. On this day, after the preliminary sacrifices were offered the high priest was to discard his official garments, bathe his whole body, and array himself in a plain white linen garment as befitting the humiliation and the purity which pertained to this sacred ordinance. He was to take a bullock for a sin-offering for himself, and the whole priestly family, and then taking a golden censer with burning coals from the great altar, and a quantity of fragrant incense, he was to put the incense on the fire upon his entrance within the veil, so that a cloud of sweet incense would fill the inner sanctuary: the ascending cloud of incense, a symbol of prayer, was to interpose as a protection between his sinfulness and the holiness of Jehovah, and at the same time provide acceptable entrance to the presence of the Lord. Afterwards, he was to return to the altar, take the blood of the bullock and again enter within the veil and sprinkle the blood seven times upon the mercy seat and the same number of times before the mercy seat. The blood sprinkled upon the mercy seat was for the sins of the priest and

his house, while the blood sprinkled before the mercy seat had reference to the sanctuary itself and its furniture, which had been defiled by the sins contracted by the priests in the sanctuary during the performance of their priestly duties.

Having thus made atonement for himself and his house the high priest was in a position to make atonement for the congregation. Two goats were then chosen, one for the Lord and the other for a scape-goat. The former having been slain as a sin-offering, the same sprinklings as before were made with its blood in the inner apartment.

This brought to an end the acts of atonement made in the Most Holy Place. It appears that the high priest entered the Holy of Holies on three occasions; first with the incense, again with the blood of the bullock, and finally with the blood of the goats. Afterwards the same sprinklings were made in the Holy Place, and in the court at the Altar of Burnt Offering (Ex. 30:10; Lev. 16: 16-13.)

The sanctuary now being cleansed from any taint of uncleanness, the high priest, placing his hands on the head of the live goat, made confession of sin on behalf of the people, and the live goat was sent away to a land of separation bearing the sins of the congregation. This ritual being now completed, the high priest put on his official garments and offered at the altar a burnt offering for himself and for the people. Then the bodies of the bullock and the goat were burnt to ashes outside the camp. The person sent away with the scape-goat and the person who burnt the flesh of these offerings were ceremonially unclean during the remainder of the day.

The devout reader of the New Testament will recognize in general at least the reference in this service to the atoning work of the Great High Priest. The service itself would indicate that the children of Israel were always sinning while provision was continually made to meet their needs. But it seems that there was a manifest imperfection in the other sacrifices since once a year atonement was made for all Israel. At this time, in consideration of the past year of their spiritual history, all the sins of the people and the priests together with the sanctuary and its vessels which had been tainted by their sins, were contemplated in their totality; and sacrifices were instituted for the purpose of a complete cancellation of sin.

According to Kurtz (*Sacrificial Worship*, p. 386.) the services in the fore-court were insufficient and therefore the atoning blood must be brought as near to God as possible even to the place of His dwelling.

A careful reader of the Old Testament will notice here the relative imperfection of all the apparatus used to put away sin. The sins of the people, of the priests, the tabernacle itself, (and

the previous sacrifices themselves in a manner) had to be atoned for once a year and even in this service the imperfection of the high priest himself comes into view since first he must atone himself and his family and when the services of the day were completed he again had to atone for himself and the people, in order to cancel the sins committed during the previous services. There is also great emphasis laid upon the sprinkling of the blood in the Most Holy Place so that this appears the most important part of the whole service, while the ritual connected with the two goats seems to shed further light on the typical nature of the service. The sacrifice was one but the effects were two. The slain goat manifested expiation for sins while the second typified the taking away of sin because it was atoned for.

The nature of this ordinance required an official of the highest rank. The suggestion of imperfection might be sufficient to indicate that this was only a symbolic remedy and that a better would be yet revealed. The first goat covered with its life the forfeited lives of those who had sinned. The second carried away the sins themselves (Lev. 16:5). Perhaps the best exposition of this great ordinance is to be found in Hebrews 9:10. In this case Christ is the Great High Priest (Heb. 9:1, 10-23).

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(To be continued)

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## *A Believer's Life of Christ*

By the Rev. John C. Rankin

**Note:** Mr. Rankin's studies in the Life of Christ have been appearing in **Blue Banner Faith and Life** since October, 1957. Recently Mr. Rankin's work was published in book form by the W. A. Wilde Company under the title **A Believer's Life of Christ**. The publication of these studies in serial form will be continued by special permission of the author and publisher. Copyright 1960 by W. A. Wilde Company, Natick, Mass. — Editor.

### CHAPTER XXI

#### THE STRATEGY OF RETREAT

A feature to be noted with regard to Christ's conflict in his day is his use of the strategy of retreat. It was a policy not unlike that of a general in the face of a furious offensive on the part of an enemy of superior strength. In a situation of this kind a wise leader resorts to the "tactics of evasion," "delaying action," the strategy of retreat.

It is a picture which affords a fair description of the situation encountered and of the course pursued throughout the public life of Christ. There was never any real surrender. As a matter of fact there was never any actual defeat. Nevertheless the Son of man was always in retreat. The situation required it. It was a policy which had to be adopted and was carried out in adaptation to the hard facts of his life.

This policy took form and substance in different ways. Three especially may be noted. One of these we may call the charge to secrecy. It was a propaganda restriction placed upon his followers and the beneficiaries of his favours. Another was the envelopment of his teaching in an enigmatic form designed to hide what was being said from all except his own. And a third was

that of actual physical self-removal or withdrawal.

The reasons for these actions may not have been the same in all cases. But in general it may be said that the end in view was protection from his and his disciples' enemies. It involved a perfectly natural form of self expression on his part and it was to the end of the preservation for the time of his own precious life and the lives of those with him. Let us consider three manifestations of Jesus' strategy in the order indicated.

#### I.

First then is that of the oft repeated charge to secrecy. Jesus' first object was to evangelize the homeland of the Jews. The aim was to cover the territory with the gospel of the kingdom. To this end he drew men to him and addressed the multitudes. To this end he gathered disciples about him and sent them out. This beginning of his gospel ministry was a period of intense activity and the work went forward at a rapid pace. Very early in his public career it could be said that this objective was attained.

And yet a man who was a leper, "full of leprosy," having been cleansed, was commanded to "tell no man" (Luke 5:12-14). Two blind men, healed, were straitly charged to "see that no man know it" (Matthew 9:30). Whole multitudes in fact were charged "that they should not make him known" (Matthew 12:16). Jairus' family and friends were strictly enjoined to silence concerning him who had brought the little daughter back to life again.

One who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech and another who was blind, both cured, were commanded not to tell. Undesirable

results are indicated when at times this command was disobeyed, but one way or another the work went forward.

A case of a somewhat different sort was the charge given on the occasion of the great confession. This was the strange command given to the disciples "that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ" (Matthew 16:20, Mark 8:30, Luke 9:21).

Another case of yet another kind was the charge to the three to whom it was given to be witnesses of the transfiguration. "Tell the vision to no man until the Son of man be risen from the dead" Luke records the fact that they obeyed (Matthew 17:9, Mark 9:9, Luke 9:36).

## 2.

On the second of these three we need not linger. As has been indicated it was evidently a measure adopted, by means of which the teaching ministry could be continued, while at the same time the lessons taught were concealed from the enemy and the unfriendly whose only use of them would be to use them against him.

## 3.

The third manifestation of Jesus' employment of the strategy of retreat is that of actual physical removal or withdrawal. It was a tactic of evasion which was often in exercise throughout his public life.

Generally speaking it was simply the normal procedure of his progress from place to place in the propagation of the gospel. At other times, however, it was definitely a tactic of evasion or a delaying action as when at Nazareth it is said that "he passing through the midst of them went his way" (Luke 4:30,31).

At times he would withdraw from the city to the sea, or he would go up into a mountain, or he would depart into a desert place or cross the sea. Such movements were doubtless undertaken at different times for different reasons. It may have been for further dissemination of the gospel, for rest or for personal seclusion for the practice of prayer. But often it was employed for the purpose of escape.

Having learned of the consultation of the Pharisees to destroy him "he withdrew himself from thence," (Matthew 12:15). On hearing of John's death he said to his disciples "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place and rest a while" (Mark 6:31). On the return of the twelve from their mission "he took them and went aside privately into a desert place" (Luke 9:10).

After the conflict with the leaders concerning their "tradition" he arose from thence and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon" (Mark 7:24).

After the feeding of the five thousand he "constrained his disciples to get into a ship and go before him to the other side, while he sent the multitudes away" (Matthew 14:22). After the feeding of the four thousand he sent the multitudes away and took to sea. After a sharp encounter with the leaders about a "sign from heaven" "he left them and departed" (Matthew 16:14, Mark 8:13). So much for the story as given in the three synoptic gospels.

Coming to John's gospel we read how on the occasion of the healing of the "impotent man" Jesus "conveyed himself away a multitude being in that place" (John 5:13). Threatened with the approach of the people to "take him by force to make him a king" he "departed again into a mountain alone." It was at this time that there was a general collapse of faith and a departure of many of the disciples, and a general falling away of the people from him. Also at this time it is said "that after these things, Jesus walked in Galilee, for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him" (John 7:1).

He delayed his journey to Jerusalem for the feast of the tabernacles and "went up not openly, but as it were in secret" (John 7:10). In John 8:59 we read that "they took up stones to cast at him: but he hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by." Again in John 10:39 after another threat of being stoned "they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand, And went away again beyond Jordan into a place where John at first baptized; and there he abode."

After the raising of Lazarus his enemies, the Pharisees, were greatly agitated about the attraction of the people to him and day by day took counsel to put him to death. Whereupon Jesus "walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples" (John 11:54). These are some of the more significant details of Jesus' practice of the tactics of evasion.

Putting all together, it clearly adds up to the personality of one who was essentially a man of peace. He was not one to go about looking for trouble, but often exerted himself to the utmost to avoid it and put it off. But his aim in life was to do the Father's will and finish the work which he had come to do. And this he did, and did it perfectly, which was the only way in which it could be done.

It is good to reflect upon his attitude and action in relation to criticism; to mark his spirit in the conflict. Some of the attacks that were made upon him were the accusations of Sabbath-breaking, of devil possession, of not having given them a sign (that is, their kind), and of insanity.

We can only marvel at the spirit in which he endured all these. There was a unique combination of qualities in his personality which was always in evidence. There was, for one thing, an utter fearlessness and boldness in all his contacts with his foes, and a never failing faithfulness to himself and to God. Besides which, to be observed, is an ever present lowliness and meekness of spirit. There was no least pride or boastfulness or forwardness about him.

Matthew 12:14f tells how, when apprised of the murderous intent of his enemies, he withdrew and charged the multitudes, all of whom were healed, "that they should not make him known." Then the inspired writer, citing one of the great messianic prophecies, attributes this behaviour to the kind of spirit which was in him. "He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory." And this was his own testimony; "For I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matthew 11:29).

In line with this was his constant readiness to reason it out with his foes; to explain the matter under discussion and set everything right. He was ever ready to "give an answer to every man," which he gave in meekness and the fear of God. Also he was wont to avail himself of every opportunity to deliver his own timeless teaching on all subjects.

But, in his unfailing truth and faithfulness, he could never deny himself, but was ever ready with some fresh form of self assertion. "A greater than the temple," "the Lord of the Sabbath," he said, "is here." "A greater than Jonas," "a greater than Solomon is here." It was a figure of speech, of course, which really meant that one of infinitely transcendent greatness was at hand. "If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God," he said, "then the kingdom of God is come unto you." In other words the kingdom, and also the King, is here. And, "whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother."

Certainly one of the reasons for his use of the strategy of retreat was because it was natural to him to react in that way. He was that way. He had an humble man's aversion for display or exhibitionism. He had a peace loving man's hatred for contention and strife.

One of the reasons for his occasional suppression of personal advertisement was probably consideration for the multitudes. For their sake he would have preferred to teach and heal in the centers of population where the people were, if this could be. But as it was, he was forced out and so they had to follow him into the desert or by or around the sea.

But always present in his mind was the preservation of his own life and the lives of his own. God, of course, was watching over him. As an infant his life had been preserved. And through all his days the enemy was never able to attain their end until the time came for him to give himself into their hand.

God's watch-care over him, however, was not without full participation on his part. It was not only his right and his privilege but also his duty to do what he himself could rightly do. He himself, under God, was called upon to take an active part in his own self preservation. And this he did, in various ways, again and again in his encounters with his foes. And we may well believe that it was with him a matter of frequent and fervent prayer, as well as the prayer of others for him. He may well have taken to himself the Psalmist's prayer

"Nor give me to my foe's desire;  
For witnesses that lie  
Against me risen are, and such  
As breathe out cruelty."

As for his suppression of his own fame it is altogether probable that a major reason was the desire to combat and correct the false view which obtained in his day concerning the Messiah and his kingdom. As the heralded Messiah-King, it was inevitable that the messianic idea as generally entertained would be applied to him. But it was a worldly concept which, being far from the truth, he could only strenuously oppose. Hence his repeated efforts to suppress the news concerning him may have been only to combat the current misconception of the kingdom and the King.

By way of conclusion we return to the thought that whatever happened in the life of Christ, it was all according to plan; it was all in fulfillment of the will of God. No one ever interfered in the slightest degree with God's purpose for the life of his incarnate Son. No power in heaven or earth or hell can ever frustrate the will of the Eternal.

As Jesus neared the end of his life's little day the outward appearance would give the impression of failure; his work a total loss. But it was not so. His every loss, for him, was gain. Every reverse was an advance. Failure was success and defeat was victory. In death itself at the hands of sinful men, he overcame. That Jesus was consistently victorious in life we know by his own testimony.

On the eve of his sacrificial death for sins he said, "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified." And, "except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it until life eternal." It was a principle of life in this present evil world which applied to his followers but which he accepted as applicable first of all to himself.

In the same discourse he went on to speak of his life in terms of perfect victory gained by way of suffering and death. "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me" (John 12:23-25, 31-33).

The final word of this last intimate discourse reads as follows: "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

(To be continued)

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## George Gillespie on Church Censures

By R. D. Eagleson, M. A., Dip. Ed.

(Continued from last issue)

**Note:** This article by a scholar in Australia expounds the classic Presbyterian view of the subject of Church Discipline as held by the 17th century Scottish divine George Gillespie.—Editor.

The question of discipline always comes to a head at the time of the celebration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Essentially it is a live issue at all times, but it particularly cannot be avoided during the communion season when the terms 'binding' and 'loosing' have special import. The sacrament, in contradistinction to a sacrifice, is a gift of God to man and in it remission (loosing) not condemnation (binding) is sealed to man, as is manifest by the words of the institution in Matthew 26:27-28, "Drink ye all of it . . . for the remission of sins." To admit a person to the Sacrament then is to loose him not to bind him. If the person be, however, a scandalous sinner, that is, one publicly known to be persisting in his sin (he has neglected to heed the admonition of the church), and the minister gives the sacrament to him, then the minister is guilty of sin, for while it is his duty to endeavor to obtain the sinner's conversion through the preaching of the Gospel, he is most assuredly not bound to give him the seal of remission of sins and salvation by Jesus Christ. The suspending of a scandalous sinner from the Sacrament is not principally grounded on the sin of drinking and eating unworthily, but rather on the nature of the ordinance which is such as cannot admit of the scandalous to receive it, without its being thereby profaned. It is contrary to the will of Jesus Christ to turn the communion of saints into a communion of scandalous sinners: it will only strengthen the hearts and hands of the evil in their wickedness.

There is ample confirmation in Scripture for this interpretation of Matthew 18 and its particular operation in connection with the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. In the Old Testament men were to be held back from the Passover and other Temple ordinances for uncleanness (Levit. 13:5; Num. 9:7, etc.) and it was the priest's duty to keep men back and to appoint officers for this task (2 Chron. 23:19). Indeed, in Ezekiel 22:26, the priests are charged by God for not distinguishing between the clean and the unclean, and in Jeremiah 7 the people themselves are castigated by

the Lord for daring to appear in His house while still grovelling in sin and heathenish abominations. Through His prophet Ezekiel, God condemns the people for entering His sanctuary while uncircumcised in heart themselves (Ezek. 23:20-29 c.f. Jer. 9:26) and for bringing the uncircumcised in heart into the Temple (Ezek. 44:7-9). He would not accept the hire of a whore as a gift; how less could He accept the whore herself (Deut. 23:18)? On the return from the Babylonian captivity it was only those Jews who 'had separated themselves from the filthiness of the heathen of the land to seek the Lord God of Israel' who were allowed to eat the Passover (Ezra. 6:21) and any who refused to accept the judgment or ruling ('binding') of the Church were to be separated, cast out, from the congregation (Ezra. 10:8).

There is a similar support in the New Testament for the power of corrective government. Our Lord charges us not to cast pearls before swine (Matthew 7:6) and Gillespie keenly perceived the application of this figure to the Communion and sinners. The Thessalonians were commanded to withdraw from every brother who walked disorderly and who did not obey the received teaching of the church (2 Thes. 3:6, 14-15) and this commandment is for our instruction and obedience too. Similar exhortations are to be found in Romans 16:17, 1 Corinthians 5:11-13; Galatians 1:9, Titus 3:10, 2 John 10.

Now all these instances in the Old, as well as the New, Testament involve judgment. A man had to be judged unclean, a scandalous sinner, and there were definite principles upon which the judgments were to be made. Moreover, it was a judgment by the church and once the decision had been made and the sentence passed, every member was to abide by it. For instance, when the church after due consideration decreed that a man's company was no longer worthy of being kept, every member was expected to conform to this decree.

The action of our Lord as recorded in Matthew 21:12-13, is instructive in this matter. He not only overthrew the tables but also cast out the sellers. They were profane and evil and He expelled them from the Table, and it was from the outer court,

not from the inner, that they were thrust. So here we have an example of Christ, the very source of reconciliation and salvation, casting out persons. Moreover, the Pharisees never objected on legal grounds to this act. Clearly, both Christ and they recognized that men of such insensitive irreverence were not fit to be even in the outer court of the House of God.

Nor can we afford to disregard the lessons which are so clearly drawn in Revelation 2. Here we have, as it were, our King giving advice to His servants and setting His government in order. The Church at Ephesus receives His praise and commendation for it had exercised discipline (verse 2); but Pergamos and Thyatira came under His rebuke for they had neglected this duty. We should pay particular attention to the warning which attends this failure, lest we also incur the wrath of our Lord.

There are also a number of cases in Scripture of unjust excommunication. In Isaiah 66:5 God promises that He will restore His true believers and make them ashamed who have hated and cast out the righteous. Our Master Himself referred to such a situation, "Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake." (Luke 6:22); and the Gospels record at least two examples: ". . . for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he (i.e. Jesus) was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue" (John 9:22) and "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue." (John 12:42). The significant fact in these verses is that no denunciation is made of the practice of suspension, but only of its abuse. If any inference about church censures can be drawn from these quotations, it surely must be, not that the practice is evil, but that it has been applied to the wrong persons.

There are some important features of the existence of this government and authority in the church which must be noted and duly observed in our practice. There is first the one that has already been mentioned, namely that the enacting of censures is a judgment of the church: it is not a prerogative of an individual. In our Lord's institution in Matthew 18, it is only after the church has sat in judgment and a member rejects its combined voice, that he is expelled. Elsewhere in Scripture when the power of loosing and binding in respect to sins is mentioned it is ascribed to church officers acting in a body, e.g., Matthew 16:19, John 20:23. If we go further afield allowing Scripture to interpret Scripture we learn from Matthew 28:20, that the church officers were authorized dogmatically and authoritatively to impose the will of Christ and bind His precepts upon the people, and from 1 Cor. 7:23, likewise to

pronounce them free from the burdens men would impose upon them contrary to the Word of God; and we have a practical demonstration in Acts 15 (particularly v. 28) of both these functions of binding and loosing being fulfilled by the church officers meeting in Synod, and not by a private individual. Now if these matters required and were entrusted only to particular members of the Church, its officers, meeting in a body, the equally weighty matter of suspension and excommunication must also demand similar care.

Nor has the power of ecclesiastical discipline been ascribed to the civil magistrate. As we have seen in the first part of this paper on church government, the civil magistrate does not derive his power from Christ as Mediator and King of the Church, and therefore does not have because of his office any authority in spiritual matters. Nowhere in Scripture is he declared to be an ambassador of Christ and it belongs to him only to bind with the cords of corporal punishment according to the law and justice. Such binding does not belong to the kingdom of Christ which is not of this world, nor is it as heavy a punishment, for it is never stated in scripture of it, as of ecclesiastical censures, that it will be ratified in Heaven. As we shall see later, it is for spiritual, not civil, reasons, that a person is cast out of the church and the punishment is also spiritual, both of which are outside the province and power of the civil magistrate. Christ Himself draws a distinction between the two forms of government and disciplinary action in Luke 12: ("when they bring you unto synagogues and unto **magistrates** and powers) and it is revealing to observe that God made a special provision for those who by accident or circumstance were legally unclean but morally pure. In Numbers 9 we have a record of the complaint of certain members of Israel who had become defiled by the dead body of a man so that they could not partake of the Passover, and yet were desirous of eating and, on God's admission, were in their hearts worthy of being admitted. These men approached Moses with their complaint, and when he enquired of the Lord, God decreed that such men should be allowed to keep the Passover on the fourteenth day of the second month. In this situation the civil or physical judgments (legal uncleanness) are shown to have no weight or application in the Church. (See above on the divided executions of Church and State.)

(To be continued)

At the very root of the modern liberal movement is the loss of the consciousness of sin.

— J. Gresham Machen

Paganism is optimistic with regard to unaided human nature, whereas Christianity is the religion of the broken heart.

— J. Gresham Machen

## *Religious Terms Defined*

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

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

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

**CHRISTIAN.** One who believes on Christ as his Saviour from sin, and obeys Christ as the Lord of his life. This means not merely Lord of his

religious life, but Lord of his whole life. Since Christianity is the way of salvation from sin, it is manifestly improper to speak of Jesus Christ (who was sinless) as a Christian.

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

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

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

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

## *Some Noteworthy Quotations*

Let me speak to Christless persons who are at ease. Many of you hearing me know that you are in a Christless state; and yet you know that you are at ease and happy. Why is this? It is because you hope to be brought to Christ before you die. You say, another day will do as well, and I will hear thee again of this matter; and therefore you take your ease now. But this is very unreasonable. It is not worthy of a rational being to act in this way. God has nowhere promised to bring you to Christ before you die. God has laid Himself under no manner of obligation to you. He has nowhere promised that you shall see tomorrow, or that you shall hear another sermon. There is a day near at hand when you shall not see a tomorrow. If this be not the last, there is a sermon yet to be preached which will be the last you will ever hear.

— Robert Murray McCheyne

The starting-point of every motive in religion is God and not man. Man is the instrument and means, God alone is here the goal, the point of departure and the point of arrival, the fountain from which the waters flow, and at the same time the ocean into which they finally return.

— Abraham Kuyper

God regenerates us, — that is to say, He rekindles in our heart the lamp sin had blown out. The necessary consequence of this regeneration is an irreconcilable conflict between the inner world of our heart and the world outside, and this conflict is ever the more intensified the more the regenerative principle pervades our consciousness. Now, in the Bible, God reveals, to the regenerate, a world of thought, a world of energies, a world full of beautiful life, which stands in direct opposition to his ordinary world, but which proves

to agree in a wonderful way, with the new life that has sprung up in his heart.

— Abraham Kuyper

All organized communities, civil and ecclesiastical, have a common responsibility, a moral personality in the sight of God, and are dealt with accordingly, rewarded or punished according to their conduct, as such. As their organized existence is confined to this world, so must the retributive dispensations of God respecting them be.

— Charles Hodge

It is the radical principle of the Bible, and consequently of all true religion, that God is all and in all; that of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things. It is the tendency of all truth to exalt God, and to humble the creature; and it is characteristic of true piety to feel that all good comes from God, and to desire that all glory should be given to God.

— Charles Hodge

It is the duty of Christians to receive kindly their brethren, and to aid them in every way within their power, and to do this from religious motives and in a religious manner, as becometh saints.

— Charles Hodge

It is the duty of Christians to be constantly watchful over the peace and purity of the Church, and not to allow those who cause divisions and scandals, by departing from the true doctrines, to pursue their course unnoticed. With all such we should break off every connection which either sanctions their opinions and conduct, or gives them facilities for effecting evil.

— Charles Hodge

False teachers have ever abounded in the Church. All the apostles were called upon earnestly to oppose them. Witness the epistles of Paul, John, Peter, and James. No one of the apostolical epistles is silent on this subject. Good men may indeed hold erroneous doctrines; but the false teachers, the promoters of heresy and divisions, as a class, are characterized by Paul as not influenced by a desire to serve Christ, but as selfish in their aims, and plausible, flattering, and deceitful in their conduct.

— Charles Hodge

Christians should unite the harmlessness of the dove with the wisdom of the serpent. They should be careful neither to cause divisions or scandals themselves, nor allow others to deceive and beguile them into evil.

— Charles Hodge

However much the Church may be distracted and troubled, error and its advocates cannot finally prevail. Satan is a conquered enemy with a lengthened chain; God will ultimately bruise him under the feet of His people.

— Charles Hodge

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.

— R. P. Testimony, IV. 4

The Lord Jesus, as King and Head of His Church, hath therein appointed a government, in the hand of Church officers, distinct from the civil magistrate.

— The Westminster Confession of Faith, XXX. 1

The Lord Jesus Christ hath instituted Church Discipline, in order to remove scandals, and prevent their unhappy effects; and no Church can, without the faithful and spiritual application of it, hope for His countenance and blessing.

— R. P. Testimony, XXXI. 3

The trouble with the paganism of ancient Greece as with the paganism of modern times, was not in the superstructure, which was glorious, but in the foundation, which was rotten.

— J. Gresham Machen

Faith is being exalted so high today that men are being satisfied with any kind of faith, just so it is faith.

— J. Gresham Machen

At the very root of the modern liberal movement is the loss of the consciousness of sin.

— J. Gresham Machen

Paganism is optimistic with regard to unaided human nature, whereas Christianity is the religion of the broken heart.

— J. Gresham Machen

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## *Studies in the Book of Proverbs*

(Continued from last issue)

### LESSON 4

#### TEACHINGS CONCERNING GODLY FAMILY LIFE

A godly family begins with a marriage in the Lord, that is, a marriage between a man and a woman who fear God. In our day marriage has been largely secularized and also romanticized with a false glamor which is derived not from Scriptural principles but from the idols of popular fiction, the motion picture screen and the television. In the face of this distorted view of love and marriage we also have a most tragic breakdown of marriage with many ending in the divorce courts and many which do not reach the divorce courts nevertheless becoming a distressing condition of continual cold war which neither honors God nor benefits man. Modern western civilization takes its goals and its standards from human sources, and thus is essentially idolatrous in character. A return to Biblical principles among Christian people would honor God and promote their own true happiness and welfare.

Dr. Hopkins in his little paperback book on

the Proverbs (now out of print) starts out his discussion of this subject by saying that a godly wife and mother is essential to a happy home. He finds four types of women described in the Proverbs. Of these, one type is good and the other three are evil in various ways. They are as follows:

(1) The worthy, gracious and wise woman. She is the crown of her husband, 12:4. She obtains honor, 11:16. She is thrifty and constructive, building her house, 14:1. More verses along the same lines might be cited.

(2) The fair but indiscreet woman. This type is vividly compared to a ring of gold in a swine's snout (11:22). The inspired text declares that mere physical attractiveness is not a proper standard for evaluation: "Grace is deceitful, and beauty is vain." Without a godly character, mere physical beauty is a snare and a delusion, as many

have learned by bitter experience. Some of the wickedest women in history have been described as surpassingly beautiful physically. The famous Cleopatra of Egypt is an example. Possibly the infamous Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, was considered beautiful; at any rate her last act before she was slain by Jehu was to fix her hair-do and put on her make-up. On the other hand, some godly women in Scripture are described as beautiful. Thus Abraham described Sarah (Gen. 12:11), and thus are described Rebekah (Gen. 24:16) and Rachel (Gen. 29:17). In other words, Scripture does not discount the worth of bodily beauty; it only asserts that beauty alone, without character, is deceitful and disappointing. Beauty is the gift of God but it is meant to be the accompaniment of a beautiful character, without which it is without real value.

(3) The contentious, nagging woman. Dr. Hopkins cites a number of texts from the Proverbs as examples of this type. She wears people out and gets on their nerves (19:13; 27:15). All attempts to correct or restrain her nagging, complaining disposition prove futile (27:16). It is better for a man to enjoy a little peace and quiet in a corner on the flat roof of the house, than to live with a woman of this type in a luxurious house. It is even better to retire to "a desert land" and get away from human society altogether than to dwell with "a contentious and fretful woman" (21:19). Can there be any doubt that the Holy Spirit in Scripture pronounces this complaining, nagging spirit deeply sinful?

(4) The shameless, foolish woman. In Scripture the terms "fool" and "foolishness" imply moral perversity, not merely lack of wisdom or intelligence. The foolish person is not only living in a stupid and senseless manner, but he or she is also in moral revolt against God, who is the true source of wisdom. Proverbs 12:4 says that the woman that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in her husband's bones, and that her folly tends toward waste and destructiveness (14:1). Such people were not limited to Biblical times. They can be seen today in our modern western culture. There are men who are worn and wearied because of the constant effort to provide money for their wives' lavish and extravagant tastes in clothes, cars and houses. No amount of money and no standard of living, however high, can satisfy a vain, proud, selfish, discontented heart. The man who is joined in marriage to such a wife has a heart-breaking problem which slowly crushes the life out of him. Such women are really guilty of slow murder though they may vainly imagine themselves to be paragons of idealism and virtue.

It should not be imagined that the Book of Proverbs implies that three women out of four are perverse while only one is godly and worthy. The book describes four types without implying anything as to numerical ratios. Nor should it be

supposed that the Proverbs regard women alone as affected by the vices described, while men are all noble, unselfish and virtuous. A reading of the book as a whole will show the sins and faults of the male sex faithfully dealt with. But the character of the wife and mother has so much to do with making a home happy or unhappy that it is stressed in connection with this aspect of the general subject.

If we may summarize the lessons taught in this connection, we may say that hasty and ill-considered marriage is foolish and perilous. Marrying some person with the hope of reforming him or her is even more hazardous. This hope is seldom realized. The reforming should in any case be done first, and the marrying (if any) afterwards. It should be remembered that under the Old Testament divorce for a variety of reasons was permitted because of the hardness of the people's hearts. Even with the relief of divorce thus available, the Book of Proverbs speaks in extremely strong and pointed language about the evil consequences of an ill-considered marriage. How much more should we attend to this teaching, living as we do under the New Testament system when divorce is not lawful except on the ground of adultery (and perhaps absolute desertion). Young people contemplating marriage should do some sober thinking and consider the character traits of a possible mate apart from the enchanting glamor of romance. If the young lady is the type who sits watching television while her mother washes the dinner dishes alone, the young man should take warning. If the young man is the type who expects the family car for "dates" but is unwilling to wash the car occasionally, or if he is disrespectful toward his own parents, the young woman should take warning. These may seem to be trivial symptoms, but they are samples of a large number of warning signals that the alert and godly person should watch for.

#### Questions:

1. How does a godly family begin?
2. How has marriage been falsely romanticized in our culture?
3. What four types of womanhood are described in Proverbs?
4. Give a verse describing the godly woman.
5. What does Scripture say about the fair but indiscreet woman?
6. When is bodily beauty of value and when is it not?
7. What does Proverbs say about the nagging type of woman?

8. Can the nagging, complaining temperament be changed?

9. What is included in the idea of "foolishness" in Scripture?

10. What pattern of life and conduct is exhibited by the foolish woman in modern society?

11. Does the Book of Proverbs represent men as more virtuous than women?

12. Why is it foolish to marry a person in hope of reforming him or her later?

13. How can young people be sure of making a wise decision as to whom to marry?

## LESSON 5

### THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A GODLY HOME

A good wife, according to Proverbs, is a great blessing to a man, and is to be regarded as a gift of God (18:22; 19:14). The joys of a pure married love are described as a gift of God for the benefit and enjoyment of His people, who were created male and female (Gen. 1:27) with the intention that the two sexes should complement each other (Gen. 2:18). Unlike some modern religious writers, the Bible treats sex realistically, and represents this relationship of married persons, not as an evil to be avoided so far as possible, nor as a mere concession to man's physical nature, but as a gift of God intended to bring happiness and contentment in the home. This is set forth especially in 5:15-21.

The description of "a worthy woman" in 31:10-31 may strike us as emphasizing chiefly the virtues of industry and thrift. Some have felt that the presentation is one-sided, as if a man was to value his wife chiefly because she is efficient in making or saving money. In answer to this charge of one-sidedness, certain things may be said. First, hard work and thrift were absolutely necessary in Biblical times just to keep out of debt. The economy was agricultural and the farming was done the hard way, without the benefits of machinery which are enjoyed today. Consequently life was a real struggle against ever-threatening poverty, and there was relatively little time left for leisure and the enjoyment of it. Secondly, the thrift and hard work described in Proverbs 31 are not regarded as an end in themselves, but as a means to an end. This is not work for work's sake, nor is it a miserly thrift for the sake of being stingy. It is industry and thrift as necessary means to a godly life. The underlying motive is the fear of the Lord. We live in a consumer-minded age. People are concerned, not with real economic justice, but with getting as much as they can while contributing as little as they can. In reality, however, consuming without producing is sinful and selfish. The industrial employee who does as little work as possible for his wage is selfish, sinful and really a thief. While modern mass-production of food and consumer goods has driven the wolf a little distance from the door, the godly person, whether man or woman, should be ashamed to live as a social parasite, consuming without producing. It is not necessary that one's contributions

be of the same kind as what one consumes (as in the simple agricultural economy of Biblical Palestine) but the contributions should be real and they should be of value.

Next, there is a strong emphasis in Proverbs on the reciprocal duties of parents and children. Obedience is enjoined upon children and many blessings are promised to obedient children. There are so many statements of this kind in the Proverbs that it is scarcely necessary to cite them. Mention may be made of 1:8,9; 23:22; 6:20,21; 19:27; 4:1-4; 4:10-13; 4:20-27; 3:1-4.

Surely these teachings of Proverbs are greatly needed in America today, where the tendency has been for parents to be "permissive" toward all the wishes of their children. It is reported that an Englishman visited America, and after his return to England was asked what he had seen. He replied, "I have seen many obedient parents." He did not, of course, assert that all American families are like that, but that many were.

This parental permissiveness has been abetted by an extreme emphasis of a passing phase of psychology — a type of psychology which has stressed "self expression" and has warned that any attempt to interfere with the natural impulses or actions of the child may cause "trauma" or an injury to his personality. This type of psychology is based upon a false view of human nature, namely that man is naturally good and is born without a sinful nature. The bad tendencies manifested in people's lives are said to have come from repressing some natural instinct or desire, not from being born with a sinful nature.

A cartoon in a religious magazine satirized this type of thinking quite effectively. It showed Cain, with his parents Adam and Eve, just after the killing of Abel. Abel is lying on the ground, wounded and bloody and obviously dead. Cain is standing nearby, a cigarette in his mouth, his left hand on his hip, and a "so what?" expression on his face. Adam is taking the whole thing very hard, and is pacing back and forth obviously having a difficult time controlling his feelings. Eve stands near Adam and says, "Now, Adam, don't take this so hard. Cain didn't really mean anything bad by what he did. The trouble with you, Adam, is that you don't understand the

younger generation and are out of sympathy with the ways of youth. This was just Cain's way of expressing his inner personality, frankly and unashamed, instead of being tied in knots by inhibitions."

In another cartoon a juvenile criminal (euphemistically called a "juvenile delinquent") has just killed a man. A police officer arrives to arrest the perpetrator of this deed. The police officer evidently is deeply shocked by the scene and is about to fasten handcuffs on the culprit, when the juvenile court child psychologist, who has also arrived on the scene, says, "Now whatever you do, officer, don't do anything to make him feel guilty about this."

Admittedly both of these cartoons present exaggerations, but they would not have been published at all if there were not much fact in the situation which is satirized. A case is reported by R. J. Rushdoony in his latest book, **Intellectual Schizophrenia**, where a junior high school boy actually attempted to knife a teacher. He was not expelled from school or visited with any real punishment as the court felt that it would be best for the boy to continue with his class in high school. It is reported that in at least one American city many high school teachers do not dare to turn their back on a class even for a minute lest the teacher suffer violence. This doubtless is also extreme, yet it certainly shows the folly of the "permissive" idea in dealing with the impulses of children and youth.

Proverbs also teaches the duty of parental discipline and that it results in obedience and the building of character. "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (22:6). This is asserted as a general principle. It does not mean that there may never be any exceptions in any degree. In general, however, parental training forms character which persists through life. Contrary to the prevalent idea today, there are many injunctions to parents to discipline their children in Proverbs, and several of these speak of corporal or physical punishment or correction. Some of these texts are 22:15, "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him;" 13:24, "He that spareth his rod hateth his son, but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes;" 29:15, "The rod and reproof give wisdom; but a child left to himself causeth shame to his mother;" 29:17, "Correct thy son, and he will give thee rest; yea, he will give delight unto thy soul;" 19:18, "Chasten thy son, seeing there is hope; and set not thy heart on his destruction;" 23:13,14, "Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beat him with the rod, he will not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell."

These verses do not imply, certainly, that all

correction must be physical punishment. Sometimes other forms of correction may be much wiser and better. But when verbal reproof does not result in changed conduct, something more drastic is called for. This may or may not be physical punishment, depending on the age of the child, his temperament and the nature of his conduct. But in any case correction should be something that brings the child up sharply to face his wrongdoing and to realize that it has definitely unpleasant consequences. Nothing is more futile than overly mild correction which causes the child no real pain or deprivation.

Children should not be corrected by a parent who is angry. To be effective correction must be administered by a self-disciplined parent, and it must be done in due moderation and love. If done properly according to these Biblical principles it will not have to be repeated for a long time, perhaps never. Experience, as well as Scripture, teaches that "a child left to himself causeth shame to his mother," and that "the rod and reproof give wisdom." Modern theories of child rearing which hold that wayward children should never receive physical correction claim to be wiser than God, who has given explicit instructions on this subject in His Word. These modern theories, of course, are based on a false, unscriptural view of human nature, which holds that children are essentially good by nature and that there is no radical moral evil in their nature which needs to be curbed or corrected.

Many texts of Proverbs tell of the joy and happiness that exist in a home with obedient children. 10:1; 23:15, 16 24-26; 13:1; 15:20; 28:7 and 29:3 may be cited as examples.

Incidentally, the family is not a democracy in which parents and children each have one vote as to what is to be done. Of all the ridiculous extremes to which the idea of democracy has been pushed by some misguided people, this is the worst. We have read of a family where a secret ballot of parents and children was cast to determine whether the birth of another baby in the family should be permitted. In another case the father had been promoted in the business firm in which he was employed, but to accept this promotion would have to move to a distant city, and the father, mother and children each cast a secret ballot on whether the promotion should be accepted or not. The inspired author of the Proverbs never had to comment on any such absurd situation as this, but possibly we can imagine what his comments might be — that foolishness is bound up in the hearts of some adults. We believe in democracy as, on the whole, a just and effective form of government for the nation. But the home, as revealed in the Bible, is not a democracy, and children have as little right to a determinative vote in the home as they have in a national political election. According to

God's Word, authority in the home is committed by God, first of all to the father, and next to him to the mother. The children, while they are minors, are subject to the authority of their parents in the Lord; they are not co-rulers of the family on a democratic basis. Even the sinless child Jesus "was subject unto" his foster father Joseph and his mother Mary (Luke 2:51). Moreover, it is psychologically harmful for children to have this democratic notion of the family structure. Children need the security which comes from knowing that they are living under a firm but loving parental authority. When this is removed, they are likely to feel insecure, with various kinds of bad reactions. Looking at the same matter in another way, parental authority is coupled with parental **responsibility**. Minor children cannot participate, really, in this responsibility, nor should they be expected to. Therefore it is folly and confusion to expect them to share authority equally with their parents.

#### Questions:

1. Does the Bible regard sex in marriage as a blessing or a curse?
2. What kind of virtues are stressed in the description of the "worthy woman" in Proverbs 31:10-31?
3. How can we answer the claim that this description is one-sided?
4. What evidences exist to show that we are living in a consumer-minded age?
5. When is a person a social parasite?
6. What duty of children to parents is stressed in Proverbs?
7. What is wrong with the psychology that would permit free and unrestricted "self-expression" to children and youth?
8. What are the good results of proper parental discipline?
9. Does the Bible teach that correction of children must take the form of corporal punishment?
10. If corporal punishment is not always called for, what is implied as to the duty of parental correction of children?
11. Why should children never be corrected by a parent in anger?
12. Why are moderation and love necessary in correcting children?
13. What is basically wrong with modern theories of child rearing which rule out all physical correction of children?
14. Why is it incorrect to regard the family as a democracy?
15. What harm may result to children when the family is regarded as a democracy in which parents and children share equally in all decisions?

## LESSON 6

### THE BLESSING AND DUTY OF HARD WORK

According to the Bible, work itself is a blessing, not a curse. Even before sin entered the human race, man had work to do. Adam had both a physical occupation and an intellectual task. He was the first gardener and he was the first scientist ((Gen. 2:15, 19, 20). This double assignment was neither physically exhausting nor mentally exhausting. On the contrary, it was for man's own great benefit and happiness. Man is essentially an active being, and idleness is not only sinful, but also physically and mentally harmful. God is a Worker, and Adam, created in the image of God, was to be a worker.

With the coming of sin, work was transformed from wholesome occupation to man-killing toil. A curse was pronounced upon the world of nature (Gen. 3:17-19) by which nature, from being man's friend, became partly man's enemy, and life became a struggle for existence. Only by hard work would human life thenceforth be possible. Man would eat bread in the sweat of his face. Though human life would be difficult, it would

not be impossible: man could still "eat bread." But hard work would be needed.

From that day to this the vast majority of earth's millions of people have existed just a step or two ahead of death by starvation. With our surplus of food in America produced by modern science, technology and mass production, we tend to forget that sheer physical hunger is still a desperate problem for the majority of the world's people. Even before Communism took over, there were many, many millions of people in China who went to bed hungry every night, and untold millions of children who were pitifully undernourished. The writer has seen men working twelve hours a day unloading eighty-pound sacks of cement on their backs, without machinery, from a ship and placing them on railway flat cars, at a wage equivalent to perhaps **twenty American cents a day** — just enough money to buy enough of the cheapest kind of stomach-filling food (corn meal mush or millet) to keep them alive to go through the same ordeal of labor the next day.

Such people are worn out and die in what we would call middle life. The children never got the meat, milk and fruit that they needed for normal health and growth. Under Communism starvation in China is reported to be much worse than it was years ago under the old government. Conditions among the four hundred million people of India are reported to be similarly bad in many parts of India. The causes of these distressing conditions are no doubt many and complex. We are only calling attention to the fact that human life is still a struggle to prevent death by starvation, appearances in America to the contrary notwithstanding. Hard work, thus, is a desperate necessity.

According to the Bible, both Old Testament and New, diligent work is also a duty, and idleness and laziness are sins. The Proverbs also emphasize this aspect of duty. Many texts can be cited to show the duty and reward of diligent work, and the disastrous consequences of sloth and idleness. We may cite 10:4,5; 12:14; 12:11; 28:19; 27:23-27; 12:27; 13:4; 21:5; 22:29; 12:24.

Our natural (but sinful) tendency to rationalize our own laziness is pointed out in Proverbs 26:13, "The slothful man saith, There is a lion in the way; a lion is in the streets." That is, if a person is just lazy, and doesn't want to work, almost anything will serve as a plausible excuse for this neglect, but the real reason is just sinful laziness. A woman took her son to see a physician because of his extreme disinclination to do any useful work. The doctor examined the boy and said, "Madam, your son is suffering from an aggravated condition of constitutional inertia," on which the boy promptly commented, "There, Mom! and you said I was just plain lazy!"

The description of the lazy man's vineyard in Proverbs 24:30-34 is a telling one. "I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep; so shall thy poverty come as one that travelth; and thy want as an armed man." The owner of this vineyard will soon become a social problem, dependent on the surplus produced by people more diligent than himself, or lacking such provisions, he will starve to death. Hard work will not solve all our problems, but it will solve many of them. It is a virtue commanded by God in Scripture, even though it is not very popular in American life at the present day.

Modern technology with its machinery, automation and mass production in western lands has made it possible to live with less hours of work and less back-breaking, man-killing labor than was formerly the case, and than is still the case in

much of the world. For this we should be deeply thankful to God, the source of all good, and we should determine to use the time and strength released in this way in occupation that will be beneficial to ourselves and others and fruitful to the glory of God. But is this the common result of the new freedom from exhausting toil? It is to be feared that it is not. The forty-hour work week does not always consist of forty hours of honest work. There are all sorts of ways of doing nothing part of the time or rendering less than an honest day's work for a day's pay. We have heard of a Christian young man who got a job in an industrial plant, and was told by other employees that he would have to stop working so hard, and learn to do less in a day's time. He said he believed in an honest day's work, but was informed that the other men would not stand for it in that plant.

And how is leisure time expended? How many hours a week are spent idly watching television or listening to broadcasts about sporting events? We do not mean to imply that no time should be spent on such things. But are Americans — even Christian Americans — on the whole treating their free time as a trust from God, for which they will finally have to give account to the Judge of their moral life? What is the real gain in our modern technological release from toil if the new freedom is spent merely in self-indulgent idleness or selfish pleasures? That many people know of no other ways to employ newly gained free time is itself an indictment of our culture as dying and sterile. Even apart from religious activities, there are many personality-enriching ways in which free time can be spent. Think of music, art, literature, science, history — any or all of which may become fascinatingly interesting to the person with an awakened mind. Are people intended to be mere vegetables, like turnips or cabbages? Remember the occupation assigned by God for Adam's mind to work on (Gen. 2:19,20). And think of the interesting, personality-developing hobbies that can be cultivated in one's free time, which may bring one to a new and deeper appreciation of some aspect of God's creation, and thus bring honor to the Creator! Yet people drift and vegetate, and sit by the hour watching the television. And whatever we may think of American television, certainly a great deal of it is less than personality-enriching and God-honoring material — some of it is downright silly, and some of it is sinful, presenting false goals and values to the viewer.

#### Questions:

1. Why is work a blessing rather than a curse?
2. What work did Adam have to do before sin entered the world?
3. What change in human work resulted from man's fall into sin?

4. What has been the economic condition of the majority of human beings from Adam to the present day?

5. What is the condition of millions of people in the Orient?

6. Give a text or texts from Proverbs showing that hard work is a duty.

7. Give a text that is an example of rationalizing laziness.

8. How is the vineyard of the lazy man described, and what lessons does it teach?

9. How has the need for toil been modified in the western world by modern science and technology?

10. How has the average American responded to the new leisure time and freedom from exhausting toil that modern science has brought?

11. How much time each week should a Christian spend watching television?

12. What God-honoring ways of spending leisure time can be suggested?

## LESSON 7

### WARNINGS AGAINST SOME SPECIAL TEMPTATIONS

Among many other matters, three special temptations are strongly warned against in the Book of Proverbs, and will be considered in this lesson. These are the temptations to **intemperance**, **impurity** and **suretyship**.

Distilled liquors with high alcoholic content, such as are common today, were unknown in Biblical times. The process of distillation was not invented until late medieval times. Yet intoxicating liquors were well known and are warned against in Proverbs. Some of the references to wine in Proverbs are figurative in character, such as 4:17 ("For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence") and 9:2 ("Wisdom . . . hath mingled her wine"). In other places wine is spoken of literally, with accompanying warnings concerning its perils. Some of these references are 20:1; 23:30,31; 31:4. In 31:6 wine seems to be spoken of as a narcotic medicine to be used to relieve the sufferings of those in a dying condition, as an injection of morphine might be used by a physician to relieve the pain of the dying today, or as a man about to die in the electric chair is first mercifully given a dose of morphine to calm his extreme fear. In this connection we may recall that "wine mingled with gall" was offered to our Saviour at His crucifixion, though He refused to drink it. This "wine mingled with gall" was a stupefying or pain-deadening drug which was offered in mercy to those about to experience the terrible agonies of crucifixion. Jesus refused it because as the Substitute for sinners He must bear the appointed suffering to the end, consciously and deliberately, with an unclouded brain. There is no reason to suppose that it would have been wrong for Him to drink it except for this fact, or that it was sinful for others who were crucified to drink it.

Other references to wine in Proverbs warn strongly against its dangers. "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging" (20:1); "at the last it

biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder" (23:32). The wild hallucinations of alcoholic delirium are graphically described in 23:33,34, "thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast." Certainly such warnings should be enough to terrify any conscientious person. In our day the problem of temperance is greatly compounded by the availability of distilled liquors with their very high alcoholic content, coupled with the persuasive advertising of these liquors which seems to meet us at every turn. Therefore if people in Solomon's day needed to beware of this type of temptation, much more is this the case at the present day.

There is more teaching on this subject in the Bible than is found in the single Book of Proverbs. Some people with much zeal but little training in exact thinking have over-simplified the whole subject as if the cause of alcoholism were simply drinking wine. As a matter of fact it may be much deeper than that. The person who finds alcohol a welcome escape from the hard reality of life is already a sick person mentally and spiritually. This person has a personality weakness; he finds the problems of life intolerable and life unbearable; he feels himself deeply inferior and unable to cope with life. In his spiritual desperation he seeks some kind of escape route from a life that he considers unendurable. Alcoholic liquor is a very poor, disappointing and dangerous escape route and it brings only sorrow and trouble in the end. But to the person concerned it may seem to be the only escape route available, so he takes it. We should not condone this sort of thing, but at the same time we should not oversimplify the problem and imagine that simply making alcohol unobtainable will solve the problem. The person who finds life unendurable will then seek some other desperate escape route — possibly suicide.

We will not solve the temperance problem, really, until we deal with the causes that make some people feel so desperately that they must find some escape from intolerable problems. We have heard many religious people ridicule the notion that alcoholism is a disease, who yet do not seem to understand what is meant by saying that alcoholism is a disease. When medical writers speak of alcoholism as a disease they do not usually mean simply addiction to alcohol, or the habit of drinking; what they mean is a personality disorder which is characterized by a desperate feeling of inferiority, inadequacy and inability to cope with unendurable conditions or problems — a feeling which drives the person to mental and spiritual desperation resulting in the use of alcohol as a means to at least temporary relief. We should think of people in this terrible condition, not with a self-righteous denunciation, but with Christian compassion. Merely to denounce their use of alcohol, while we do nothing to try to remedy their desperate mental and spiritual need, may be only a form of self-righteous hypocrisy.

We who have never experienced the temptation to seek relief from an unendurable reality in alcoholic liquor should be deeply thankful to God for this fact. And we should be moved to seek a real and truly adequate solution of the temperance problem which is so much in evidence today. One way in which we can do this is to oppose the widespread and extremely obnoxious advertising of liquors in our newspapers, magazines and other media of mass communication.

Another terrible temptation warned against in Proverbs is that to **impurity**. By this we mean all sins against the seventh commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Sex was given by God to be rightly used, for man's benefit and God's glory, not to be misused. We live in a day when Biblical teachings on this subject are laughed out of court by many people as "old fashioned taboos" while lawless indulgence of sexual desires is increasingly prevalent. Dr. Kinsey's notorious books on sex behaviour confound what is **average** with what is **normal**, and purport to show that a majority of the American people are unchaste. Dr. Kinsey's method of statistical research is open to serious criticism, however. One writer has said that Kinsey's first book, "Sex Behaviour in the American Male" should have been given the title "Sex Behaviour of Some American Men who were Willing to Talk about it", or still better "Sex Behaviour of Some Men who have no Sense of Shame." The same might be said, certainly, about his book on the sex behaviour of women. That the persons who were willing to talk to Dr. Kinsey's interviewers were really a representative cross-section of the American people is open to serious question. But even waiving this point, what is average or prevalent is not therefore **normal** or

**right**. You might go into a village where the entire population was sick with malaria, and one and all would register a body temperature that would be classed as fever. This would not mean that 100 degrees Fahrenheit is a normal body temperature, nor yet that such people are healthy. In the same way, the prevalence or alleged prevalence of sexual immorality does not imply that it is right or normal, but only that a lot of people are very sinful.

Some modern psychological theories, pushed to extremes, have led many people to think that a chaste life, even for an unmarried person, is an impossibility and may be psychologically damaging. The psychology pioneered by Sigmund Freud has led to a great deal of this kind of thinking — perhaps much more than Freud himself ever intended. This is undoubtedly one factor in the prevalence of immorality. Another factor is the breakdown of belief in the divine inspiration and authority of the Bible. Men like Wellhausen and Driver were ivory tower scholars who were interested only in their own specialties. These men probably had no intention of breaking down public morality. But their theories about the Old Testament led to the idea that the Ten Commandments are just a code of human customs, not a revelation of divine law. This breakdown of faith in the Bible as the inspired Word of God has its end product in a life that throws off all moral restraints. "Don't fence me in" becomes the slogan of the person who rejects the authority of the Ten Commandments and other moral laws of the Bible.

The Book of Proverbs is truly eloquent in its inspired warnings against immorality. The description of the seductive wiles of the prostitute is graphic (5:1-14; 7:5-27). These passages are a strong antidote to this kind of temptation. They show in terrible realism the disgust, remorse, poverty and degradation which are the end product of this kind of sin. In 6:23-35 the moral and spiritual peril of committing adultery (i.e., with someone else's wife, not necessarily a professional prostitute) is vividly described. This is not only a wicked sin, but senseless and irrational. Yet this kind of sin is glamorized by a good deal of the popular literature of our day, not to mention motion picture films and other media of entertainment. There is filth of this type openly for sale on newsstands today which would have landed the proprietors in jail a generation or two ago. Pornography, both of the crude type and of the more subtle, sophisticated type, is a big business today. These merchants are truly dealing in the souls of men and women, boys and girls. It is difficult to keep a clean mind today, and for the person who is not a Christian, probably impossible. But the Christian, by the grace of God, is enabled to do it, if not absolutely, yet increasingly.

Another temptation is that to **suretyship** (6:1; 11:15; 20:16; 17:18). We may wonder why this practice is so emphatically warned against. These texts do not mean that suretyship is always wrong or sinful, but that in most cases it is an improper and dangerous practice. A little reflection will show why this is so.

If a man has a million dollars, and becomes surety for the obligations of a foreign student in college which may run to a thousand or two dollars at most, there is neither sin nor danger in that arrangement, because the guarantor is financially able to make good on the guarantee without damage to himself or his family. But suppose that a man with a family to support and no resources beyond his home, automobile (needed in his business) and a very modest savings account, is prevailed upon to sign a note for a friend who is borrowing some thousands of dollars to start a business. The guarantor here risks everything he has. If he has to make good on the guarantee he may lose his savings account, car and home and be reduced to utter poverty. A man does not have a moral right to undertake such a risk even for a friend. We are commanded to love our neighbor **as ourself**, but the man who undertakes suretyship, of the type just described, is loving his neighbor **more than** himself. He is loving his neighbor out of balance with his obligations to himself and his own family, obligations which are primary and which God has placed upon him. Suretyship thus becomes a financial, social and spiritual trap and snare. Those whom God by His saving grace has made free men are not to allow themselves to become involved in this way. There is more than one way to get into slavery, and improper suretyship is one of the ways that may destroy the Christian's true freedom under God.

The End

## *Studies in Old Testament History*

### LESSON I

#### The Relation between God and the Universe

"The universe" means all that exists except God. The Bible is based upon a certain view of the relation between God and the universe. This view is known as **Theism**. Theism is the truth that there is a personal, almighty God, Creator and Ruler of all things, who is distinct from the universe.

When we say that God is a personal being, we do not mean exactly what we mean when we say that ourselves are personal beings. We mean that and more. Some writers refer to God as "trans-personal." By this they mean

#### Questions:

1. What three special temptations are warned against in Proverbs?
2. What may be the proper interpretation of Proverbs 31:6?
3. Why did Jesus refuse to drink the wine mingled with gall?
4. How is alcoholic delirium described in Proverbs?
5. In what ways is the problem of temperance more difficult today than in Solomon's day?
6. What kind of personality type is likely to become an alcoholic?
7. What can Christian people do to help the type of person who uses alcohol as an escape from life?
8. How can we oppose the prevalent advertising of liquors?
9. What great error is involved in Dr. Kinsey's books on sex behaviour?
10. How has the psychology of Freud led to immorality in practice?
11. How has Biblical criticism, such as that of Wellhausen and Driver, tended to break down Christian morality?
12. What is suretyship, and why is it warned against in Proverbs?
13. When would suretyship be legitimate? When would it be wrong?
14. Why are we not commanded to love our neighbor more than ourself?

that God is a personal being in a higher sense than man is. But God possesses all that personality means in man. God is a being possessing freedom and self-consciousness, who can call Himself "I" and whom we can call "Thou."

Many people today regard God as impersonal — a force or impulse rather than a personal being. This is wrong because it ranks God lower than man in the scale of existence. Man is a personal being; the personal is higher than the impersonal; therefore if God is higher than man He must be a personal being. An impersonal God would be lower than man; we would

have to refer to such a God as "it" rather than as "he" or "him."

God is a self-existent being. He exists of Himself, independently of all other beings, without a cause, without an origin, and without a purpose outside of Himself. It is strictly correct to say that God has no history, He has no past and He has no future, for He is independent of time. The self-existence of God is sometimes expressed by saying that God is a self-contained being.

The Bible teaches and assumes that God is distinct from the universe. The universe is dependent on God; God is not dependent on the universe. God is eternal; He never had a beginning; the universe, on the other hand, is temporal — it had a beginning and it exists within the framework of time created by God.

A further truth about God is His transcendence. This means that God is not only distinct from the universe, but also far above, behind and beyond it, and that there is absolutely nothing beyond God. God is our **ultimate** environment; beyond Him there is nothing. Thus our ultimate environment is personal, not impersonal as it is often regarded by modern philosophy and scientific thought. The Bible expresses this truth of the transcendence of God by saying that God dwells "in heaven" or "on high."

Complementary to God's transcendence is His immanence. This means that God is present everywhere in the universe, so that absolutely nothing great or small could exist without His continual energizing presence in it. God is actively present in the solar system, the milky way and the vast spiral nebulae and galaxies of remotest outer space, and He is also actively present in every atom, every electron, neutron, proton and every cell of the human body. Without God's active, sustaining presence in them, none of these could exist for single instant. God's immanence is sometimes called the cosmic presence of God.

To have a correct idea of God we must keep in mind both His transcendence and His immanence, as well as His personality and His self-existence. If either God's transcendence or His immanence is stressed without the other, the result will be an unbalanced and false concept of God.

Another truth about God is that He is a Spirit. Man **has** a spirit but God **is** a Spirit. This means that God has no physical body such as man has. It also means that God is invisible to our bodily eyes. When atheists and materialists boast that man has never discovered God, even in outer space, they only display their own naive ignorance of the Christian idea of God. For if God is a Spirit, then of course He cannot be discerned by the senses nor discovered by scientific instruments.

The Bible teaches that the one God exists in three "Persons", the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ is God the Son who at a certain point in history took a human nature to Himself and was born as a human being. Thus Christ is not only God but also man. As man, of course, He has a human body. This is not contrary to the idea that God is a Spirit.

The doctrine of the Trinity (or tri-unity of God) has often been ridiculed by scoffers who say that it is a contradiction to affirm that God is both one and also three. We readily admit that this truth is a mystery which human reason cannot solve, but we also insist that it is not a contradiction. If we were to say that God is one and three **in the same sense**, that would be a contradiction and nobody could believe it. But the doctrine of the Trinity does not involve any such absurdity. It holds, rather, that God is one in one sense, and three **in a different sense**. He is one in His essential being or existence, and He is three in His centers of personality or consciousness. We admit the mystery but we deny the contradiction.

Over against Theism there exists certain contrary views of the relation between God and the universe. These are known as **anti-theistic theories**. We may consider the principal ones briefly.

1. **Atheism** is the denial of the existence of God.

2. **Agnosticism** is the denial that it is possible for man to know with certainty that God exists. In practice this amounts to the same thing as atheism. The agnostic is a bit more cautious, however; where the atheist says "There is no God," the agnostic says, "We can never know whether there is a God."

3. **Materialism** is the teaching that nothing exists except material substance and physical energy. This is the official faith of the Communist world, and it is really a form of atheism. According to materialism God does not exist, and the human soul does not exist except as a function of the body during this present earthly life.

4. **Polytheism** is the belief in the existence of many gods. Our ancestors were once polytheists, before the Christian faith reached them. The ancient religions of Greece and Rome were polytheistic. Today polytheism is a dying faith, though it still exists in many parts of the world. There are three great **monotheistic** religions — Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Wherever polytheism comes in contact with monotheism, it tends to disintegrate and disappear. Contact with a purer form of belief in God tends to destroy polytheism.

5. **Pantheism** is the system which affirms that everything is divine. God is everything and

everything is God. God is thus merely another name for the universe as a whole. Or it may be expressed by saying that God is the soul of the universe, an impersonal cosmic force which is striving toward self-expression and personality, and attaining personality and self-consciousness only in man. Pantheism regards God as a name for the universe as a whole, or else as an aspect of the universe. Pantheism does not believe in a God who is distinct from the universe. It breaks down or blurs the most basic distinction of the Bible, the distinction between God and the universe (Genesis 1:1). It destroys religion because it regards the relation between man and God as the relation of a part to the whole.

6. **Humanism** is the system which regards the human race as existing for its own sake. It considers man's chief end to be his own welfare and happiness, and looks upon God and religion as means for promoting the progress of the human race. The humanist is not an atheist. He usually believes in God, but he regards man as more important. While the theist seeks to serve and worship God, the humanist seeks to use God. He considers the idea of God useful to humanity. For example, belief in God may help to stabilize the social order and curb criminal tendencies. Just as man has learned how to use electricity, so he can learn how to use God for human purposes. The affinities of such a belief are with magic rather than with religion. Religion is worshipping and serving God; magic is the attempt to gain control of God or the supernatural for human purposes.

7. **Deism** is the system which holds that God created the universe in the beginning as a marvelous automatic machine with built-in laws and power, and then left it to function automatically without any divine control. Deism affirms the transcendence of God but denies the immanence of God; it affirms God's work of creation but denies His work of providence. According to Deism God has nothing to do with the universe today. To the Deist God is merely a hypothesis to explain how things got started in the first place. Deism is mostly a dead faith today. It was extremely popular about the time of the French and American Revolutions. There are, however, people living today who have **deistic tendencies** in their thinking about God.

Each of these anti-theistic theories contradicts one or more of the essential points of Theism. Though some of these anti-theistic theories are extremely popular today, they are all contrary to the most basic teachings of the Bible. If the Bible is true, then the anti-theistic theories are false.

#### Questions:

1. What is meant by "the universe"?
2. What is Theism?
3. What do we mean by saying that God is a personal being?
4. What is meant by saying that God is a self-existent being?
5. What is the relation of God to time?
6. What is the relation of the universe to time?
7. What do we mean by saying that God is distinct from the universe?
8. What is meant by the transcendence of God?
9. What is our immediate environment?
10. What is our ultimate environment?
11. What is meant by the immanence of God?
12. Why must God's transcendence and His immanence be kept in balance in our thinking about God?
13. What do we mean by saying that God is a Spirit?
14. What is atheism?
15. What is materialism?
16. What is polytheism?
17. What is pantheism?
18. What is the harm in pantheism?
19. What is humanism?
20. What is deism?

## LESSON 2

### The Pre-Suppositions of the Bible

All knowledge is founded in part on assumptions or pre-suppositions. This is just as true of scientific knowledge as it is of religious knowledge. It is a common statement that science is based on facts, but religion is based on faith. Only a little reflection is needed to realize that this statement is a half-truth. Religion is based

on facts as well as on faith, and science is based on faith as well as on facts.

Even the exact sciences, such as physics and mathematics, are based on faith as well as on facts. In geometry, to use a familiar example, one starts out with several **axioms** which are accepted as true without needing to be proved.

From there on everything has to be proved by strict logic, but the axioms are accepted at the beginning by faith.

The scientist always approaches the facts with a certain point of view — with certain assumptions in his mind. He can no more deal simply with “facts” apart from an assumed viewpoint than a person could see without light. He always has the assumptions in his mind, even though he may not always be conscious of them.

For example, the scientist must assume the validity of his own mental processes. He must assume that the laws of logic are the same for everybody, instead of each person having a special kind of logic of his own. He must assume that the laws of mathematics are permanent, universally valid and unchangeable. These assumptions cannot be positively proved; they are accepted by faith. It is impossible to prove, for instance, that the boiling point of water at sea level was the same a thousand years ago as it is today. This must be believed but it cannot really be “proved.” Scientific assumptions, as axioms, are accepted without proof. They are the basis on which other knowledge can be gained and progress made.

The Bible also involves certain assumptions or presuppositions. Especially, the Bible assumes God (in the Theistic sense) as the ultimate point of reference for the explanation of facts. The Greek philosopher Archimedes said, “Give me a place to stand, and I will move the world.” Whether we want to move the world, or only to understand it, we have to have a place to stand. The facts of nature and of history have to be interpreted in terms of some principle or point of reference if they are to mean anything. It is only when a fact is related to something else — some principle or reference point — that it has any **meaning**. A fact unrelated to any reference point or principle of interpretation would be absolutely meaningless.

The Bible starts out with a standpoint. It regards God as the ultimate reference point or principle of interpretation, and interprets all facts in reference to this — that is, it interprets all facts in relation to God who is the Creator of facts. The basic assumption of the Bible, in terms of which it approaches and interprets the facts of nature and history, is the theistic view of God. The Bible regards God as the ultimate reference point.

There exist two, and only two, great world-views. One of these assumes that man is the ultimate reference point, and the other assumes that God is the ultimate reference point. One view starts with faith in God (in the theistic sense) and interprets everything in the light of God. The other view starts with faith in man (regarded as an independent being) and interprets everything in the light of man. One re-

gards divine revelation as the ultimate source and test of knowledge. The other regards human reason as the ultimate source and test of knowledge. These two great philosophies of life or world-views are opposed to each other but each of them is self-consistent. In the end it comes down to the issue of **God versus man** as the ultimate standpoint or frame of reference. The great alternatives are Biblical Theism on the one hand, and consistent Humanism on the other. All combination or compromise halfway world-views must break down in the end.

From the view that man is the ultimate reference point — that man’s reason is the final judge of what is true — there arose the philosophy of ancient Greece, as well as modern secular philosophy. From the view that God is the ultimate reference point has come Christianity and all truly Christian philosophy.

The Bible starts out by assuming God (Genesis 1:1, “In the beginning God. . .”). It does not attempt to prove God by appealing to man’s reason as the final judge of reality. It is remarkable that the Bible nowhere presents a formal argument to prove that God exists.

The Bible does mention the fact that God has revealed Himself in the world of nature and in the human heart, and that this natural revelation of God witnesses to His existence (Psalm 19:1; Romans 1:20). But apart from such references to the revelation of God in nature, the Bible does not attempt to prove God’s existence. Instead, the Bible starts out in its very first verse by **assuming** the existence of God, and then it goes on to tell about His nature, character and activities.

Because of the revelation of God in the world of nature and in the human heart, it is natural for mankind to believe in the existence of God. By starting out with the assumption that God exists, the Bible really presents the greatest argument of all for the existence of God. For this assumption of God’s existence is the key that unlocks countless mysteries of nature and of human life. The key that unlocks so many doors must be the true key.

Suppose we make the contrary assumption — that God does **not** exist. Immediately the universe, human life and our own souls are buried in unfathomable darkness and mystery. The person who is not willing to start by assuming that God exists has the responsibility of showing that his theory of no God yields a better and more credible explanation of the universe and of human life than that given in the Bible. Of course, the atheist, the agnostic, the pantheist, humanist, etc., are not able to do this. When we follow the Bible and start out by assuming the existence of God as the Bible does, then every fact in the universe becomes an argument

for God's existence. For there is not a single fact anywhere than can be better explained by denying God's existence than by assuming God's existence.

The Bible rates atheism as the religion of the fool. "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God" (Psalm 53:1). The person who denies God's existence is a foolish person because he insists on denying the greatest of all facts. In the Bible the term "fool" involves the idea of moral perversity even more than that of intellectual weakness. Suppose a person who had lived all his life in the United States were to deny the existence of the U.S. government, and to claim that he owes no obligations to the Government, since he chooses to deny its existence. Such a person would be regarded as lacking in common sense, and also as incapable of being a good citizen of the country. Yet even more absurd is the attitude of the atheist who owes his very life to God and yet denies that God exists, and disclaims all responsibility to God.

Every person must decide, in the end, whether he will face life with Biblical (theistic) assumptions or with secular (non-theistic) assumptions as his starting point and principle of interpretation. In this course we shall proceed to study the history of the Old Testament on the basis of the Biblical assumptions. In particular, we shall assume: (1) The theistic view of God — the existence of a personal, almighty God, Creator and Ruler of all things, who is distinct from the universe. (2) We shall also assume that revelation, or communication of truth from God to man, is possible and has actually occurred. (3) We shall further assume that man, being a creature of God, is at every point of his life subordinate to God and is not an autonomous or independent being.

We shall examine later the subject of miracles and the supernatural element of Bible history. Here we only remark that a person's attitude toward miracles depends upon his view of God. The Biblical teaching about miracles is subordinate to the Biblical teaching about God. Given Biblical Theism, the miracles of the Bible fit into the pattern perfectly. Assuming an antitheistic view of the universe, the miracles

of the Bible at once become a problem, an embarrassment and a stumbling-block.

#### Questions:

1. What is wrong with the statement: "Science is based on facts but religion is based on faith?"

2. How can it be shown that science is partly based on faith, as well as on facts?

3. What is meant by the word "axioms"?

4. What is the place of axioms in a science, such as geometry, for example?

5. What are some of the assumptions which science has to make?

6. What is the most basic assumption or presupposition of the Bible?

7. How many "world views" or basic philosophies of life are there?

8. What is the difference between these philosophies of life?

9. Why does the Bible not attempt to prove God's existence by reason or argument?

10. Why are we justified in assuming God's existence?

11. What happens if we start out by assuming that God does **not** exist?

12. What questions or problems are unanswerable if we assume that God does not exist?

13. What problems are solved, or human needs met, by eliminating God from our thinking?

14. Besides the existence of God, what do we have to assume in order to approach the teachings of the Bible?

15. How can it be shown that religion is partly based on facts, as well as on faith?

16. On what does a person's belief about miracles depend?

17. What view of the universe do the miracles of the Bible fit?

18. What does the Bible say about atheists?

19. What is included in the Biblical idea of the term "fool"?

20. Why is it hard to be an atheist?

21. Do you think there are many real atheists? are there any?

### LESSON 3

#### GOD'S REVELATION OF TRUTH TO MAN

The Bible is unique among the books of the world. From beginning to end it claims to be the Word of God. Obviously the Bible is a human book; this is so clear that no argument is necessary to prove it. Every sentence in it was written down by some human hand in the original manuscripts, and the Bible you are using

to read and study was translated and printed by human effort. Yet this is only one side of the picture. The Bible is also a divine book. Unlike all other books in the world, this book is God's message to man. What the Bible says, God says.

This claim of the Bible to be in a unique sense the Word of God is shown in many ways. In the Old Testament, among other ways, we find the oft-repeated formula "Thus saith the Lord", or equivalent expressions. This formula, of course, is to be taken at its face value. It means exactly what it says. It is wickedly perverse and wrong to interpret this formula of the Old Testament prophets as meaning merely: "It seems to me" or "The following is my view of this matter." The prophets were not primarily thinkers nor were they trend-analysts like our press columnists of today; they were primarily **organs of divine revelation**: through them the living God spoke His Word.

In the New Testament we find that Jesus Christ fully endorsed the high view of the divine character of Scripture which is set forth in the Old Testament. His formula for clinching a matter was "It is written." This, of course, means not merely written somewhere, but "It is Scripture." Jesus said this as a final answer to all dispute about any matter. Where Scripture has spoken, the last word has been spoken and further debate is out of the question for godly people. Jesus also spoke of the Old Testament prophecies, always asserting or implying that they must be fulfilled, that is, that they are not mere human opinions or predictions, but divine revelations of absolute truth and reliability. He accepted the canon of Scripture accepted by the godly Jews of His day ("The Law, the Prophets and the Writings" or, more simply, "The Law and the Prophets").

It is noteworthy that Jesus was no conformist. He did not pretend to agree with people just to win their favor or good will. On the contrary, he disputed sharply with the religious leadership of His day on various subjects, including, for example, the right observance of the Sabbath, proper treatment of needy parents, the length of public prayers. He even called the recognized religious leaders of His day "hypocrites" and raised the question of how they could escape the damnation of hell. Thus Jesus was clearly not a conformist. This makes all the more noteworthy the fact that so far as the entire record in the Gospels shows, Jesus never disagreed or differed with the Jewish religious leadership of His day on the absolute, infallible truth and divine authority of the Old Testament Scriptures. On this subject, Jesus and His opponents were agreed. "The Scripture cannot be broken" was an axiom of religion accepted by Him and them alike.

Thus the modern view of the Bible — that it is a collection of human insights and the precipitate of human experience and human wisdom — is radically at variance with the view presented in the Bible itself, and with the view held and taught by Jesus Christ concerning the

nature of Scripture. We have to make up our mind and take our choice — will we stand with the liberal and liberal-influenced scholarship of the present day, or will we take our stand with the prophets and apostles and the Lord Jesus Christ? Make no mistake — if you take your stand with the prophets, apostles and Christ, you will be called a "Fundamentalist" and said to be ignorant. A devout Christian woman who is a member of one of the largest Protestant denominations in America was taking a night course in Old Testament History at Geneva College. One evening after class she told the present writer: "I want to tell you what my pastor said about Geneva College. He said, 'Mrs. Blank, I hate to tell you this, but the Bible courses in Geneva College are worthless. The professors are all Fundamentalists, and they are fifty years behind the times.' I looked at him and said, 'Praise the Lord!'"

We shall now consider the general subject of Revelation. This means the communication of truth by God to man. There are two kinds of divine revelation, which are called, respectively, General Revelation and Special Revelation.

General Revelation is the revelation of God in nature. This includes both nature outside of man, commonly called "the world of nature," and nature in the human personality, commonly called "human nature." General Revelation is sometimes called "Natural Revelation" because it is given through nature. It is called "General" because it is given to all mankind without distinction. Wherever there are people, the General or Natural Revelation of God exists.

By General Revelation man can know something about the true God — such as, that He exists, that He is great, and that it is our duty to worship and serve Him. Also General Revelation can teach man some elementary truths about morality, such as that murder is wrong. General Revelation, however, is not sufficient to show man the way of salvation. It reveals nothing about a Saviour or a way of redemption from sin. Also, because man has become sinful, he misinterprets and distorts the General Revelation of God. For example, instead of worshipping the God who made the sun, moon and stars, he may worship the sun, moon and stars themselves. Since General Revelation is not adequate to meet man's need as a sinner, Special Revelation is necessary.

Special Revelation is a more direct and specific revelation of God than General Revelation. It is a revelation by God's **Word** — an intelligible message from God to man conveyed in the form of words. This is called "Special" because it is limited to a part of the human race, and also because, instead of merely teaching some general ideas about God, it reveals a special way of redemption from sin. The Special

Revelation of God was given to holy men in ancient times, and today we have it in permanent book form in the Holy Bible.

The **possibility** of Revelation has been questioned or denied by some scholars on the ground that the limited mind of man could not receive or grasp truth from the infinite mind of God. In reply to this it may be said that man can never know absolute truth as **God knows it**. "The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2:10, 11). Man cannot climb to God's level and view truth as God views it. But God can condescend to man's level and make truth known in terms that man's mind can grasp. This is true precisely because man was created in the image of God. The mind of man, therefore, is a small-scale copy of the mind of God.

Years ago in Princeton, New Jersey, a school-girl returned home an hour late from school and would not explain to her mother where she had been. This happened several times, and the mother became understandably worried about the matter. Finally the girl, who was twelve or thirteen years old, told the truth about it. She had been having a bad time with arithmetic in school. Her teacher was evidently not very competent and the girl was failing, with resultant poor grades in the subject. As she was becoming desperate about this, suddenly she had a new idea. She had heard that Albert Einstein was the world's greatest living mathematician, and that he lived only one mile or less from her school. Screwing up her courage she went to Einstein's house and rang the doorbell. The white-haired old professor answered the door himself, and the girl asked, "Are you Professor Einstein?" to which he replied, "Yes. What can I do for you?" She said, "Dr. Einstein, I am having a terrible time with arithmetic and I just cannot seem to get it. I have heard that you are the world's greatest expert on arithmetic. I wonder if you could spare the time to tutor me for a few days in arithmetic?"

Einstein, who was a truly great man, and not at all arrogant or "stuck up", replied, "Why, of course; come in." He sat down with the child and began explaining arithmetic to her. In Einstein's mind it was crystal-clear, and the girl soon began to get a grasp of it. After a few sessions, Dr. Einstein said, "You do not need any more help. You can get along all right by yourself now." The girl's grades had risen amazingly. Finally she told her mother the whole story, and the newspaper services got hold of the story and it was published around the world. The mother, naturally, was much relieved.

This child never could have discussed mathematics with Einstein on his level. We

doubt that many readers of **Blue Banner Faith and Life** would care to attempt it, if Einstein were still living. But Einstein could discuss mathematics with a school child on **her** level, and do it effectively so that she got a real grasp of the subject.

There is more difference between the mind of God and the human mind than between the mind of Einstein and the mind of a school child. Yet this illustration may help us to see the absurdity of the objection that revelation of truth (knowledge or information, if you will; what the sceptical unbeliever calls "propositional truth") from the mind of God to the mind of man must be impossible. Such objectors completely overlook the fact that God created the human mind and that man was created in the image of God.

The **modes** or **methods** of revelation were various. Some men had dreams, others saw visions, some heard voices, to some angels appeared; some were divinely led as they grappled with problems; others experienced theophanies, or visible manifestations of the divine presence. The important thing, however, is not the mode of revelation but the source of revelation. If you get a letter from the President of the United States, the important thing is not whether it came by ordinary mail, air mail, special messenger or even pigeon post. The important question is not the channel but the **source**. Is it a genuine letter sent to you by John F. Kennedy, President of the United States? If you are convinced that it is, you will regard it accordingly, quite regardless of the question of what particular mode of transmission brought the letter from the White House to your residence. Similarly, in the case of divine revelation, while the modes are various, the source is one only, namely, God Himself.

#### Questions:

1. What special claim is made by the Bible from beginning to end?
2. How do the Old Testament prophets claim divine authority for their messages?
3. What was the attitude of Jesus Christ to the Old Testament Scriptures?
4. What is meant by saying that Jesus was not a conformist, and what is the bearing of this on His attitude to the Scriptures?
5. What is the prevalent view of modern sophisticated scholarship as to the nature of the Bible?
6. What two kinds of divine Revelation are there?
7. What is meant by General Revelation?

8. Why is General Revelation called "General"?

9. Why is General Revelation not adequate for man's needs today?

10. What is meant by Special Revelation and how does it differ from General Revelation?

11. In what form does Special Revelation exist today?

12. How has the **possibility** of Revelation been questioned?

13. How can the objection about the possibility of Revelation be answered?

#### LESSON 4

##### THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE

The Bible is the inspired Word of God. This means that it is more than merely a human book written by great and good men. It is a book from God — a message from God to man.

The terms "inspiration" and "inspired" come from Latin words which were used as translations of Greek words. The Greek word **theopneustos** means literally **God-breathed** ("inspired of God", 2 Timothy 3:16). The idea is that the words of Scripture have been breathed by God out of His mouth. This of course is a figure of speech, but it is intended to teach us the truth that the words of the Bible are, in the fullest and strictest sense, the words of God Himself.

It is of course perfectly obvious that the Bible is a human book. There is not a sentence in it that was not written down by some human hand. But that is only one side of the matter. Besides being a human book, the Bible is also truly a divine book — it is from God; in its words God has spoken to man.

The first thing necessary, if we are to understand the idea of the inspiration of the Bible, is to realize that here "inspiration" is a technical term, referring to God's act of breathing something into written words. This is entirely different from the modern, popular sense of "inspiration." When someone on returning from a religious summer camp says, "I am simply brimming over with inspiration," the person who says this means **enthusiasm** or perhaps some kind of **religious emotion**. The same is the case when someone says, "Our pastor's sermons are so inspiring — I get a lot of inspiration out of them." Here again a human reaction or attitude is meant. This is a perfectly proper modern usage of the terms, but it has no connection with the meaning of the words "inspired" and "inspiration" when we are discussing the inspiration of the Bible.

The inspiration of the Bible is not our subjective response or reaction to the Bible; it is a quality of the Bible itself, as a book, regardless of how we react to the Bible. The Bible may stir us up with a glow of enthusiasm, or it may leave us as cold as ice. In either case, it is the inspired Word of God. A Bible stowed away in an old trunk in the attic is just as truly the

inspired Word of God as a Bible that someone carries in his pocket and reads every day.

Nor is the inspiration of the Bible the same thing as the inspiration of genius. There is a true sense in which we can say that great works of literature, art or music are "inspired," and that those who can produce them have "inspiration." This means a more direct insight into the inner nature of experience and reality than the ordinary person has, together with an unusual ability to communicate that insight to others. Great literature, art and music is inspired in this sense, but we must remember that this is an entirely different use of the term from what we mean when we say that the Bible is inspired. The inspiration of the Bible is unique. No other body of writings has ever had it; it belongs to the Bible alone.

The inspiration of the Bible was an activity of God by which the human writers of the Bible were so guided and controlled that what they wrote was exactly what God wanted them to write, and it was free from all errors of every kind. God by his Holy Spirit guided and worked along with the human writers. They may not always have been conscious of this activity of God along with their writing, but it was there whether they realized it at the time or not.

The true concept of the inspiration of the Bible is called the **verbal** or **plenary** inspiration of the Bible. "Verbal inspiration" means that the actual words of the Bible, in the original writing, were exactly what God intended. "Plenary inspiration" means that the Bible is fully, not just partly, the inspired Word of God.

Those interested in exposition and defence of the verbal inspiration of the Bible are referred to two books which are written in terms of modern discussion of this subject. These are, first, a small paperback book by J. I. Packer, a British Bible scholar, entitled "**Fundamentalism**" and **the Word of God** (published 1958; 191 pages, pocket size); secondly, **Thy Word is Truth**, by Edward J. Young (published 1957; 287 pages).

Many people today object strongly to the idea of the verbal inspiration of the Bible, yet there are excellent reasons for accepting it, and

it is held by many scholars of high rank and reputation.

The verbal inspiration of the Bible is the only kind of inspiration that really means anything. The Bible is a book composed of words. If we take away the words, we have only blank paper left. Thought cannot be expressed except in words. The person who says, "I believe that the general ideas of the Bible are inspired, but not that the actual words are inspired," is really making a meaningless statement. How do we even know what the general ideas of the Bible are except by reading the actual words of the Bible? And if we cannot be sure that the words are true and correct, how can we place any faith in the ideas derived from the words?

**Questions:**

1. What is the literal meaning of the Greek word **theopneustos** which is translated "inspired of God" in 2 Timothy 3:16?
2. How does the Biblical idea of the inspira-

tion of Scripture differ from the popular modern use of the term "inspiration"?

3. What is meant by saying that the inspiration of the Bible is not our subjective reaction to the Bible, but a quality of the Bible itself?

4. What is meant by the inspiration of genius, and how does this differ from the inspiration of the Bible?

5. If we define the inspiration of the Bible as an activity of God on the human writers of the Bible, what did this activity include and what were its results?

6. What is meant by the "plenary" or "verbal" inspiration of the Bible?

7. Why is the verbal inspiration of the Bible the only kind of inspiration that really means anything?

8. How should we answer the person who says he believes in the inspiration of the general ideas of the Bible, but not in the inspiration of the actual words of the Bible?

## LESSON 5

### THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE, CONTINUED

The true concept of the verbal inspiration of the Bible is called **the organic view of inspiration**. This is distinguished from **the mechanical or dictation theory of inspiration**. According to the latter theory, the human writers of the Bible were mere instruments or robots used by God, and their own personality traits were entirely suppressed in the production of the Bible. This is incorrect. According to the organic view, God used the human personality traits of the human writers to accomplish His divine purpose in the production of every part of the Bible. God did not suppress or eliminate their human personality traits, but used each human writer in accordance with his own special characteristics and capacities. God even chose and prepared the writers, each for his own specific task in the production of the Bible. And when these men wrote, the Spirit of God worked in and through them so that what they wrote was what God intended to have written, and it was infallibly true, that is, completely free from error.

The divine and human elements in the production of the Bible can be distinguished, but they cannot be separated, because they are organically inter-related.

A spiritual experience, the inward testimony of the Holy Spirit (Latin: **Testimonium Spiritus Sancti internum**) gives the Christian believer his ultimate ground of conviction that the Bible is the Word of God. This spiritual experience is not the ground of the authority of

the Bible, but it is the ground of **our conviction** of the authority of the Bible. The Bible possesses authority just because it is from God. The Holy Spirit working in our hearts gives us conviction that the Bible is really from God.

The written Word and the living Word. There is perfect harmony between Christ and the whole Bible. It is wrong to set up an antithesis between Christ and the Bible as religious authority. Those who praise Christ and at the same time disparage the Bible say: "We need a living Person, not a dead book." This attitude overlooks two important facts, namely: (1) The Person, Jesus Christ, Himself fully endorsed the Book. (2) It is only through the Book that we know anything about the Person (Christ). How can we be Christ's followers if we reject His teachings about the Bible, the written Word of God?

Because it is the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is **infallible**. Rightly handled and understood, it cannot lead us astray from the truth. Geneva College is committed to this very high view of the inspiration and authority of the Holy Bible.

For practical purposes, a printed English Bible is the infallible Word of God. However we must recognize that, strictly speaking, verbal inspiration and infallibility applies only to **the genuine text of the Bible in its original languages**, that is, to the Bible originally written by holy men who were inspired by the Holy

Spirit. There are three kinds of errors which may exist in a printed Bible such as we use today. These are:

(1) Errors in copying manuscripts before the invention of printing. The **original** manuscripts are all lost. What we have today are copies of copies of copies. There are many manuscripts of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, but no two are exactly alike. They contain slight errors which have crept in in the process of copying down through the centuries. Most of these differences are trivial, such as matters of spelling, but a few of them are important. Nearly all of them can be weeded out by a scholarly study and comparison of manuscripts. There remains a very small residue where there is some doubt as to whether we have the genuine text as originally given by God.

(2) Errors in translation. The men who have translated the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures into other languages have been extremely able scholars. However, no translation is perfect, therefore translations have to be progressively revised, corrected and improved as Biblical scholarship advances. It is generally recognized today that translations made three to four hundred years ago are not always fully satisfactory for the present day, therefore newer ones are produced from time to time.

(3) Printers' errors. These may occur in any printed Bible, but are commonest in the cheaper editions of the Bible. They are extremely rare in Bibles printed by reputable firms or organizations whose aim is quality rather than low price. However, occasionally a printer's error may be spotted even in the most carefully printed Bible. The remedy is obvious — if you think the Bible you are studying has a printer's error, compare it with several other copies printed by different firms. It will soon be evident which are correct and which has the error.

These three forms of error which may exist in a present-day printed Bible, when all added together, do not amount to very much. They

are explained here because of concern that we be strictly true and accurate in what we are saying about the inspiration and infallibility of the Bible.

#### Questions:

1. What is meant by the organic view of inspiration?

2. How does the organic view of inspiration differ from the mechanical or dictation theory of inspiration?

3. Why can the divine and human elements in the Bible be distinguished but not separated?

4. What is the ultimate ground of our conviction that the Bible is the Word of God?

5. Why is it wrong to set up an antithesis between Christ and the Bible, saying that we need Christ as a living person, not the Bible as a dead book?

6. What is meant by saying that the Bible is **infallible**?

7. To what form of the Bible do verbal inspiration and infallibility, **strictly speaking**, apply?

8. What three kinds of errors may exist in a printed English Bible such as we commonly use?

9. What can be done to eliminate errors that may have crept in during the process of copying and re-copying manuscripts before the invention of printing?

10. Why are new and improved translations of the Bible needed from time to time?

11. How can typographical or printers' errors in the Bible be detected and corrected?

12. What is the **practical** importance of the occurrence of these three forms of error in the printed Bibles of today?

## LESSON 6

### AUTHORITY IN RELIGION AND ETHICS

Human beings are so constructed that they must have some authority for their faith and life. Within Christendom various basic views of the seat of authority in religion and ethics have been held.

Historically, the Christian Church has regarded the Bible as the special revelation of God to man, and therefore as authoritative for man's faith and life. There have been differences concerning the **interpretation** of the Bible, that is, the **meaning and application** of the contents of

the Bible, but historically Christianity has held that the Bible, as the revelation of God, is authoritative for man's faith and life.

Something should be said here about the similarities and differences between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism in the matter of religious authority. Historically both of these have held that the Bible, as the revelation of God, is infallibly true and authoritative for man's faith and life. It is not correct to say, as many Protestants have ignorantly said, that the Ro-

man Catholic Church forbids its members to read the Bible. A similar incorrect statement often made by zealous but uninformed Protestants, is that the Roman Catholic Church has eliminated part of the Ten Commandments. Both of these statements are incorrect. The present writer possesses a copy of the most recent Catholic version of the Bible in English (Confraternity Version) and it contains a preface which strongly urges the reading of the Bible. Also the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20: 1-17) are given in full, in somewhat more modern English than the King James Version, but with nothing omitted. Protestants do not further their own cause by making untrue statements which any informed Catholic can immediately show to be untrue.

The truth of the matter is that Roman Catholicism, while regarding the Bible as infallible and authoritative, still regards it as a secondary authority, subordinate to the authority of the (allegedly infallible) Church. Catholicism also differs from historic Protestantism in regarding **tradition** as authoritative along with the Bible, and in including in the Bible the books of the Apocrypha which are rejected as uninspired by Jews and Protestants. With regard to the **use** of the Bible, the truth is that Roman Catholicism, while today in the United States at least, officially encouraging its people to read the Bible (in an approved Catholic version,) still does not place anywhere nearly as much emphasis on this as does historic Protestantism, which regards the Bible as the **only** infallible rule of faith and life. With regard to the Ten Commandments, the Catholic Bible gives them complete, but Catholic doctrinal instruction books interpret the commandment about images as not prohibiting the use of images of the Virgin, saints, etc., as commonly employed in Roman Catholic devotion.

In spite of these — certainly great and very serious — differences between the attitude of Roman Catholicism and that of historic Protestantism to the Bible, we should not forget the fact that the Roman Catholic Church does regard the Bible as the inspired and infallible revelation of God. There is a new interest in Biblical studies in Roman Catholic circles today which God may use for great good if it is His sovereign purpose to do so. As Dr. Berkouwer of the Free University of Amsterdam says, "when, today, partly owing to the stimulus of Protestant Bible study, the Roman Catholic theologians again are fully occupied with the study of the Holy Scripture, then one must indeed be interested. For there is no one who can foretell the future. Rome itself may declare that the unchanging Roman church is the infallible authority, but a church which comes under the influence of the sovereign Word must begin to move" (**Recent Developments in Roman Catholic Thought**, p. 42. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1958).

Over against the historic Christian view of the authority of the Bible, there has arisen a modern view which is really a revolt against the authority of the Bible. The historic Christian view is that the authority of the Bible is **objective**; that is, it is outside of our personality and does not depend upon our thinking, feelings or attitudes. The Bible is an objective fact, whether we like it or not, whether we agree with it or not, whether we pay any attention to it or not. As the revelation of God its authority is **objective** — we are to be subject to it, we are the recipients of it, but we do not contribute anything to making it what it is. Until about three centuries ago this objective view of religious authority was generally accepted.

During the modern period there has arisen a massive revolt against the historic Christian view of the authority of the Bible. This modern revolt regards religious authority as **subjective** rather than objective. (Subjective means something which comes from within our own personality; something which is a part of us, or is a product of our own mind or heart). This revolt against objective authority has arisen largely from the influence of modern philosophy — especially the philosophy of Immanuel Kant and his followers. Modern man has become increasingly intolerant of objective authority, of external restraints upon man's beliefs, thinking and moral values. "Don't fence me in" is the keynote of this revolt against objective authority. Such people say in effect, "Why should a dead book written more than two thousand years ago control my beliefs and my way of life? I intend to decide for myself what to believe and how to live, according to the leading of my own personality."

#### Questions:

1. What has been the historic Christian view about the authority of the Bible?
2. What is the difference between the **interpretation** of the Bible and the **authority** of the Bible?
3. In what respect are Roman Catholicism and historic Protestantism in agreement concerning the authority of the Bible?
4. What are the differences between Roman Catholicism and historic Protestantism with regard to the authority of the Bible?
5. What development among Roman Catholic scholars of the present day may give us some ground for encouragement?
6. What is meant by saying that the authority of the Bible is objective?
7. What is meant by a subjective view of religious authority?
8. What philosopher has contributed largely to the revolt against objective authority in religion and ethics?

## LESSON 7

## AUTHORITY IN RELIGION AND ETHICS, CONTINUED

This modern Subjectivism — this revolt against objective, external authority — is itself divided into two main types, which are called **Rationalism** and **Mysticism**. The name Rationalism comes from the Latin noun **ratio**, meaning "reason." Rationalism, accordingly, is belief in reason, or rather, it is regarding reason as the ultimate authority or test of truth. Mysticism, on the other hand, regards other elements of the human personality as the ultimate authority or test of truth. The Mystic appeals to elements of human experience which he regards as deeper than reason or thinking. Mystics go by feelings, intuitions, mysterious experiences, conscience, and the like.

Rationalism and Mysticism are basically the same in that both appeal to something within the human personality as the authority in religion; that is, both are subjective in their concept of authority. These two differ in temperament rather than basically. It has even been said that the real difference between Rationalism and Mysticism is a matter of **temperature**: Rationalism goes by "cold logic" whereas Mysticism goes by "warm" emotions or feelings.

Rationalism and Mysticism are evidence of revolt against Christianity because they both reject the concept of objective, external authority which is essential to the Christian faith. The person who says, "I do not believe in miracles because they are contrary to reason" is a Rationalist, for he is placing his human reason above the Word of God. Similarly, the man who says, "I accept only those parts of the Bible which I find to be true" is a Rationalist. Such a person approaches the Bible with the question: "What do I say about this book?" The right attitude, on the other hand, is that of the Christian, who approaches the Bible with the question: "What does this Book say about me?"

The person who says, "I feel that God will not send anyone to hell," is a Mystic, because he is placing his feelings or intuition above the Word of God. So also the person who says, "I want to live according to the dictates of my own conscience," is a Mystic, for he is placing his conscience (a part of his own personality) above the Word of God. (Conscience ought not to be a dictator).

The typical Rationalist is a person who likes mathematics and the exact sciences, such as physics and chemistry. He tries to deal with religion and ethics in the same way that he deals with the physical sciences. The typical Mystic, on the other hand, is a person who likes poetry, music and the fine arts. He seldom likes mathematics and the physical sciences. Both the Ra-

tionalist and the Mystic err by making their own personality their supreme authority for faith and life. At bottom, of course, this is just a form of idolatry. Every Rationalist really worships himself and every Mystic really worships himself. There cannot be two **supreme** authorities in any field. If an element of man's personality is his highest authority — an element of self — then he has become a man-worshipper, though he may not be fully aware of the significance of his attitude.

This modern revolt against the Bible as objective, external authority is extremely influential and widespread. Not only atheists, agnostics and communists, but many who profess to be Christians are influenced by it. There are learned professors in great universities who have only scorn and ridicule for the historic Christian view of the authority of the Bible. There are even prominent clergymen and professors in important theological seminaries who are dominated by subjective views of religious authority.

Geneva College, on the other hand, is committed to the historic Christian view that the Bible, as the infallible revelation of God, is the objective authority which it is our duty to believe and obey. We are not ashamed of this conviction, though it is greatly spoken against and despised at the present day. The Bible as the infallible Word of God has already weathered many storms and will continue to do so. When present-day Rationalists such as Julian Huxley have been forgotten, the Bible still will stand as the sure Word of the living God.

The emblem of the British and Foreign Bible Society shows an old-fashioned blacksmith's anvil surrounded by many broken hammers. Surrounding this there is an inscription which reads: "Hammer away, ye hostile bands; the hammers break — the anvil stands." Many hammers have been broken on this anvil — the Word of God — down through the centuries, and the anvil is still as sound and firm as ever. God's Word will not be destroyed by the attacks of men, nor will it pass away.

Another important distinction with regard to authority is the distinction between **historical authority** and **normative authority**. Historical authority establishes something as a fact — for example, that Saul was the first king of Israel, or that Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem. Everything in the Bible that is presented as factual possesses this kind of authority. Normative authority, on the other hand, sets a standard or pattern for us to live up to — for example, the Ten Commandments, and Christ's Sermon on the

Mount. Only part of the Bible possesses this kind of authority.

When we read in the Bible that Judas committed suicide by hanging himself, this has historical authority but not normative authority. In general, the good deeds of God's people, which were recorded in the Bible with approval or are said to have been performed by faith, or in obedience to God, have both historical and normative authority.

A very crude error in Bible interpretation, that is sometimes met with, is the notion that everything that is recorded in the Bible has God's approval. Actually, many things are recorded in the Bible just to show that God did **not** approve of them — to show the judgments of God that came on the people who committed such sins. It is important that the distinction between historical authority and normative authority be kept in mind, if we are to understand the Bible.

#### Questions:

1. Into what two forms may the subjective view of authority be divided?
2. What is meant by Rationalism?

3. What is meant by Mysticism?

4. In what respect are Rationalism and Mysticism the same?

5. In what respect are Rationalism and Mysticism different?

6. What type of person is likely, if not a Christian, to become a Rationalist?

7. What type of person is likely, if not a Christian, to become a Mystic?

8. Why is Rationalism destructive of the real authority of the Bible?

9. What is the real harm in Mysticism?

10. What is meant by historical authority?

11. Give an example of something in the Bible that has only historical authority.

12. What is meant by normative authority?

13. Give an example of something in the Bible that has normative authority.

14. What is wrong with the idea that if something is in the Bible, God must approve of it?

## LESSON 8

### THE LANGUAGES, TEXT AND CANON OF THE BIBLE

Most of the Old Testament was originally written in the Hebrew language. This language is a member of the Semitic family of languages, of which the original home may have been somewhere in Arabia or at any rate somewhere in the Near East. The most important member of this family of languages today is Arabic, which is a living language used by many millions of people. Some of the ancient languages of this group (which are now extinct) were Akkadian (Babylonian-Assyrian), Phoenician, Aramaean (Aramaic) and Ugaritic. Hebrew was closely allied to Canaanite and Moabite. Classical Hebrew is a language with a very simple sentence structure, the parts of a sentence being strung together like links in a chain, without many very complicated sentences. For many centuries Hebrew was a dead language, known only to learned scholars. Today the Republic of Israel is reviving Hebrew as a spoken and written language of everyday life, with considerable success.

A few chapters of the books of Daniel and Ezra, together with one verse of Jeremiah (a quotation) and one word in Genesis (Gen. 31:47, **Jegar-sahadutha**) are in a different language, variously called Aramaean, Aramaic, Syrian or Chaldee. The last of these names is definitely incorrect and based upon a misunderstanding. The other three are all permissible, though Aramaean

is preferable. This was the language used in Syria, just north of Palestine, the country of which Damascus was the capital during most of the Old Testament period. This is a cognate or cousin language to Hebrew. If we could trace the languages back far enough a point would be reached where Hebrew and Aramaean were identical. In the historic period they had diverged to the extent that anyone who knew one of the languages could not understand the other without learning it, even though the relationship could be discerned. Hebrew and Aramaean were perhaps as closely related to each other as English and German are related.

The New Testament was originally written in the Greek language. At the time when the New Testament was written, Greek was a "world language" — it was known and used by educated people throughout the "world" of the Mediterranean Sea and its shores — roughly the Roman Empire. Besides this advantage, Greek was specially suitable for the doctrinal books of the New Testament because it is a language of great precision. Exact meanings can be well expressed in Greek. In this respect it was more suitable than Hebrew would have been.

The original manuscripts of the Bible books, as written by the inspired writers themselves, are

called **autographs**. These have all been worn out or lost. Not a single one is known to exist at the present day. But before the autographs were worn out or lost, copies of them had been made. Before these were worn out or lost, copies of them, in turn, had been made. This process of copying manuscripts continued until the invention of printing in Europe in the fifteenth century after Christ made further copying of manuscripts unnecessary. The Hebrew and Aramaean Scriptures were painstakingly copied by learned Jewish scribes. The Greek Scriptures were copied by expertly trained scholars of the Christian world, especially by monks in the monasteries of the middle ages. From the best and most reliable of the manuscripts, our modern versions and printed Bibles have been made.

In speaking of the Bible, the term "Canon" means the list of books officially recognized as Scripture, and hence as having a right to be in the Bible. The canon of the Old Testament recognized by Jews and Protestants is identical, having 39 books, though the order of the books used by Jews is different from that used by Protestants. The Roman Catholic Church has all these 39 books and in addition several other books, commonly called Apocrypha, which are not recognized as Scripture by Jews or Protestants. With respect to the New Testament, the Jews of course do not accept any of the New Testament writings. The standard New Testament canon of 27 books, with which we are familiar from our Bibles, is accepted by all branches of Christianity, including the Roman Catholic Church.

A word may be said about the principle upon which the canon was formed. Why do we accept precisely these 39 books for the Old Testament and precisely these 27 books, and no others, for the New Testament? Some have supposed that this was a matter of church authority and that the church councils simply decided which books ought to be in the Bible. This, however, is an incorrect view of the matter. The truth is that the Jews before the time of Christ had already decided which books belong in the Old Testament Canon. They must have been divinely guided in this decision because Jesus Christ accepted without question or change the canon of the Old Testament Scriptures which was in common use by the Jewish religion of His day. For Christians and for the Christian Church, the fact that Christ sanctioned the Jewish canon of the Old Testament gives it divine approval. Hence we accept the same Old Testament canon that Christ accepted.

With regard to the New Testament, there were quite a number of books that some people wanted to include in the New Testament Canon, which the Church rejected. The test for the books of the New Testament was **apostolicity**. This means the question was asked which books

were written by the apostles or were known to have the sanction of the apostles. Those books that could pass this test were admitted to the canon, and those that could not pass this test were excluded from the canon. In view of the fact that communications were slow and the early church was undergoing persecution, it is not surprising that it took some time before agreement was reached on which books were apostolic in the sense explained above. Eventually, however, agreement was reached and the result is the New Testament as we know it today.

Like all ancient Hebrew books, the Old Testament originally consisted of consonants only. The reader had to know what vowels to pronounce with the consonants. As long as Hebrew was a living language this did not occasion any very great difficulty. But when Hebrew was no longer a spoken language, the time came that there was danger of losing the knowledge of how to pronounce the words. Jewish scholars called Massoretes undertook to do something about this, beginning in the seventh century after Christ. They worked out a system of vowels, called "points", to be written between, above or below the consonants. The Hebrew text with the vowels added is called the "pointed" or "Massoretic" text of the Old Testament. This is the form of the Hebrew Old Testament commonly used today by both Jews and Christians. The Massoretes also edited and standardized the text of the Hebrew Old Testament by comparing many manuscripts existing in their day.

**The New Bible Handbook**, top of page 30, states that: "No extant manuscript can be dated earlier than the ninth century A. D." This was a true statement when the book was first published (1947), but since then the discovery of the "Dead Sea Scrolls" in Palestine has rendered the statement obsolete. Among the Dead Sea Scrolls, discovered starting in 1947, are manuscripts of Isaiah and other parts of the Old Testament dating from about 100 years before the birth of Christ. That is about 1000 years older than the oldest previously known manuscript of any part of the Hebrew old Testament.

#### Questions:

1. In what language was most of the Old Testament originally written?
2. To what family of languages does this language belong?
3. In what other language were a few brief parts of the Old Testament originally written? What is the relation of this language to the language in which most of the Old Testament was originally written?
4. In what language was the New Testament originally written?

5. Name two advantages which this language had for the writing of the New Testament books.

6. What is the meaning of the term **canon** in connection with the Bible?

7. What difference exists between Protestants and Jews on the one hand, and Roman Catholics on the other hand, with regard to the canon of the Old Testament?

8. Why do we accept the canon of 39 books which we find in our Old Testament?

9. On what principle was the canon of the New Testament determined?

10. What is meant by the "pointed" or Masoretic" text of the Old Testament?

11. Previously to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947, how old were the oldest known surviving manuscripts of any part of the Hebrew Old Testament?

12. About how old are the manuscripts of parts of the Hebrew Old Testament which were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls a few years ago?

## LESSON 9

### THE MIRACLES OF THE BIBLE

This lesson takes up the Biblical philosophy of miracles. What is a miracle, and why were miracles needed in Bible times?

There are not so many miracles in the Bible as is commonly supposed. Miracles were God's emergency treatment, and they were not used when His ordinary way of working would have been sufficient. Most, but not all, of the Biblical miracles are clustered in four great groups or cycles of miracles. Each cycle came at a time of crisis or spiritual emergency. These cycles were:

(1) At the time of Moses and Joshua, in the 15th and 14th centuries before Christ. The crisis conditions requiring miracles were the Egyptian oppression of Israel, the Exodus, the wilderness journeyings and the conquest of Canaan.

(2) At the time of Elijah and Elisha (ninth century before Christ). The crisis conditions were the dominance of the false religion of Baal-worship, and the attacks by the nation of Syria on Israel.

(3) At the time of Daniel (sixth century before Christ). The crisis which called for miracles consisted in the fact that the Jews had been defeated by Babylon and large numbers of them taken captive to Babylonia. Also during this period Jerusalem and the Temple of the Lord were destroyed by the Babylonian army.

(4) At the time of Christ and the Apostles, in the New Testament. The crisis conditions were: the efforts of Satan and the demons to block the way of redemption, the unbelief of the religious leaders of the day, and the attempt to destroy the infant Christian Church by violent persecution.

A few Biblical miracles do not fall in any of these four cycles.

The following definition of a miracle should be memorized:

A miracle is

- (1) an event in the physical world,
- (2) having a spiritual purpose,
- (3) which is caused by the direct action of God,
- (4) apart from the forces of nature.

Each element in this definition is essential; none can be omitted without rendering the definition inadequate. The following is an explanation of the definition:

**1. A miracle is an event in the physical world.** It happens in the external world of time and space — the world we are in contact with by our senses such as sight, hearing and touch. Therefore a spiritual experience such as a vision is not properly classified as a miracle. An inward spiritual experience may be **supernatural**, in the sense that it is caused by the direct action of God, but it is not properly a miracle because it does not happen in the physical world.

**2. A miracle has a spiritual purpose.** The Biblical miracles were always performed for a serious moral or religious purpose, never merely to impress or astound people. Often, but not always, the purpose was linked with the relief of human suffering. **Always** it was connected in some way with God's plan of redemption from sin.

**3. A miracle is caused by the direct action of God.** Ordinarily, God works **indirectly**, through the forces of nature. When we pray "Give us this day our daily bread" God answers this prayer, but not by a miracle. The bread comes from wheat that grew by natural forces and processes. But when Jesus fed five thousand people with five loaves and two fishes, the ordinary forces and processes of nature were by-passed and the **direct** or creative power of God operated.

**4. A miracle occurs apart from the forces of nature.** This means that the **cause** of the miracle is not located within the fabric of nature. A miracle happens in the physical world of nature,

but the cause which made it happen is not in the physical world or the world of nature — the cause is hidden behind the scene in the supernatural world, which means that the cause is simply the act of God. Another way of saying the same thing is to say that a miracle is an event which has no cause except the will of God. Those interested in a further discussion of this point should read **Miracles: A Preliminary Study**, by C. S. Lewis.

A historical event may be a **combination of natural and miraculous events**. In such a case the miraculous part has no natural cause, but is caused solely by the will of God. The five loaves and two fishes were natural, but the multiplication of them to make enough to feed 5,000 people was miraculous.

Rationalists have attempted to explain away all the Biblical miracles. They usually admit that something very remarkable happened, then proceed to explain how it could have been caused by natural forces after all.

The miracles of the feeding of the five thousand affords a good example of Rationalist methods. It is claimed that there was nothing supernatural in what happened. The multitude which had been following Jesus had packages of lunch with them but were reluctant to bring these out lest they might have to share them with others. Then the little boy unselfishly gave Jesus his own lunch of five rolls and two fishes. This act of generosity so touched the feelings of the multitude that they were ashamed of their selfishness, and brought out their hidden packages and shared them with others. The result was that everyone had enough to eat.

Albert Schweitzer in his book **The Quest of the Historical Jesus** has a different explanation of the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand. He says that the whole story is true except for the statement that the people had enough to eat. Jesus took the five rolls and two small fishes and offered thanks for them, then divided them among all those people so that every person received a very little. The important thing, according to Dr. Schweitzer, was not that their bodily hunger should be satisfied, but that they should eat something which had been blessed by Jesus.

Criticism of such "explanations": the miraculous character of these events is their main point, and the reason for recording them in the pages of Scripture. If they were perfectly commonplace natural events there would be no point nor reason for recording them in the Bible.

Another rationalistic "explanation" deals with the miracle of Jesus walking on the water of the Sea of Galilee. Rationalists have said that Jesus actually only walked in the shallow water along

the shore, and the disciples mistakenly thought that He was walking on the surface of the water. Really this explanation is even shallower than the shallow water along the shore, on which Jesus is said to have walked. It regards the apostles as men who were childishly lacking in intelligence and common sense.

It is sometimes said that miracles were formerly a help to faith, but today they are a hindrance to faith, therefore we should not emphasize them at the present day. Since today miracles are an embarrassment rather than a help to our faith, it is said, it would be best just to pass them by silently and say as little as possible about them.

In answer to this it may be said that a Bible without miracles would be much easier to believe, certainly, but it would not be worth believing. Its messages would be radically different from what the message of the Bible really is. Miracles are **of the essence** of the Bible's message; they are not a minor, incidental feature — they are part of the main thing. To speak of "Christianity without miracles" is a contradiction in terms; it is like speaking of "an honest thief" or "a truthful liar." If without miracles, it is not Christianity. For Christianity is built upon and centers around the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the greatest miracle of all.

As already pointed out, what one believes about God determines what he will believe about miracles. No one believes in miracles who does not believe in God in the theistic sense. If we believe in God in the theistic sense, miracles will not be a problem to us. Also it should be realized that the resurrection of Christ is the key miracle of the whole system — it is the keystone of the arch of Biblical redemption and religion. The person who doubts or denies the resurrection of Christ as a fact of history will also doubt or deny all the other miracles of the Bible. The person who really accepts the resurrection of Christ will have no difficulty in accepting the other miracles of the Bible.

#### Questions:

1. When and why were miracles necessary in Bible times?
2. What four great cycles of miracles are recorded in the Bible? What was the crisis calling for miracles in each cycle?
3. Give a brief definition of a miracle.
4. What is meant by saying that a miracle is an event in the physical world?
5. How do the Biblical miracles differ from mere wonders intended to astonish people?
6. What is the difference between a miracle and God's ordinary, every-day way of working?

7. A Christian woman said, "I see miracles every day — the blue sky, the green grass, the flowers, the clouds, little children playing, birds singing, the ocean and the mountains." This woman intended to speak Christian truth when she said this. But how should we regard this statement?

8. A newspaper item said that two cars collided on a turnpike, but miraculously no one was injured. Was this really a miracle? If not, how should it be described?

9. A popular salad dressing is advertised as miraculous (Miracle Whip). Why is this an improper use of the term **miraculous**?

10. How have rationalists dealt with the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand?

11. How has Dr. Albert Schweitzer explained the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand?

12. What criticism may be brought against rationalistic "explanations" of the Biblical miracles?

13. How can we answer the person who says that today miracles are a hindrance to faith, therefore we should not emphasize them?

14. What is the key miracle of all miracles in the Bible?

(To be continued)

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## *Reviews of Religious Books*

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

**THE POSTMAN OF PATMOS**, by G. A. Hadjiantoniou. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1961 pp. 149, \$2.50.

Dr. Hadjiantoniou is a minister in the Greek Evangelical Church, is reformed in view-point and non-pre-millennial in eschatology.

The book is an explanation of the letters to the seven churches in Revelation two and three. He gives a very profitable historical setting for each of the churches, and shows keen insight in defining some Greek constructions. He also draws from parallel passages quite effectively.

There is one doctrinal error on page 121. "The adventure of sin was interposed and the clock of God's plans for man stood still for a while." Since he does not evince dispensational tendencies elsewhere, this must be a slip or a not too accurate way of expressing the relation of Adam's fall with God's plan of salvation.

— Robert More, Jr.

**THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY BABY BOOK**, by Allegra McBirney. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids 6, Michigan, 1961, pp 41. \$1.95.

This is a beautifully illustrated book for recording information about and experiences of an important family newcomer from one to six years. Space is provided for souvenirs such as birth certificate, photos, etc. However the book is much more than that — it is also a "parent book" concerned with the Christian parent's

growth in his Lord as his child develops and brings him into ever closer touch with God. It contains spiritual counsel for parents and words of wisdom for children to help them "increase in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." It is directed that children and parents might together come to know Christ and love Him more. This is a very attractive book and one that could well be given to new parents as a gift.

— Mrs. Kenneth G. Smith

**CALVIN'S DOCTRINE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD**, by T. H. L. Parker. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1959, pp. 129. \$3.00.

False religions are the result of man's search for God. Christianity is unique as it unveils God's revelation of Himself to man. John Calvin presented this very clearly in his Institutes, Commentaries, Sermons, and other writings. He showed that we are completely dependent upon God for our knowledge of God. This is a crucial teaching of the Reformed faith.

Mr. Parker has studied and correlated the writings of Calvin on this subject along with those of his contemporaries and critics. He is sympathetic to the Calvinistic position, and ably defends Calvin from those who would label him unappreciative of beauty on the one hand, or from those on the other hand who would attempt to read "natural theology" into his works. Many relevant passages are quoted from the Institutes

and from Calvin's Commentaries on Genesis and the Psalms.

Parker points out very clearly the teaching of Calvin that we cannot know God without His revelation of Himself. We have an innate knowledge of the existence of God, but the real knowledge of God Himself must come by divine revelation.

Calvin said that God reveals Himself in nature (this is where he sometimes is quoted out of context), but Calvin goes on to say that God's revelation in nature cannot be rightly understood without the Scriptures. "In the Scriptures God not only gives a clue to the right understanding of His works, but provides that understanding fully. In the Scriptures God reveals Himself as the Creator. That is to say in His Word God interprets His works. The Scriptures teach us the meaning and right use of the creation and history, which otherwise we misunderstand and misuse." (p. 39)

Following the basic format of the first two books of the Institutes Parker goes on to discuss Calvin's teaching of God's revelation of Himself through the written Word, the Scriptures, and through the Living Word, Jesus Christ. Calvin believed that the knowledge of God must be known with the head as well as the heart; he would undoubtedly deprecate much of the present day occupation with experience and its attendant contempt for doctrine. The last chapter of the book entitled, "The Knowledge of Faith", is a stimulating presentation of the interrelation between knowledge and faith in the conversion and growth of the Christian.

This book is not light reading, but it deals with one of the basic teachings of the Reformation which merits much greater study. The frequent Latin quotations reminded the reviewer that his four years of High School Latin are really "History", yet this might serve as a challenge to the reader rather than being a criticism of the book.

— Bruce C. Stewart

**BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS**, by Charles F. Pfeiffer. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1959, pp. 132. \$2.95.

A knowledge of secular history enriches our understanding of the Bible; this is true of personalities and events contemporary with Bible history. It is also true of the period between the Old and New Testaments. A knowledge of the history, the trends, the developments that took place during these "400 silent years" can add much of our understanding and appreciation of the Bible itself.

Dr. Pfeiffer describes this period in a very readable non-technical style. The first half of the book depicting the Persian Period gives the

background in secular history of the events surrounding the Babylonian captivity and the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple. The Dispersion of the Jews was responsible not only for the origin of the synagogue, but laid the groundwork for the eventual spread of Christianity following Pentecost.

In presenting the worship of the synagogue, it is unfortunate that Dr. Pfeiffer did not mention the praise service which was an integral part of the synagogue worship. This consisted in the singing of the Psalms of the Old Testament without instrumental accompaniment.

The Hellenistic Period is the title of the second half of the book. This deals with the successive domination of Palestine by the Ptolemies, the Seleucids, the Maccabees, and the Romans. There are interesting sidelights about the translation of the Septuagint, and the origin of Jewish sects, such as the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Essenes, and the Zealots. This information is especially pertinent in view of the current interest in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

I believe that any Bible student, Bible Class teacher, or minister will find this book rewarding. It should keep its place in your library on the "ready reference" shelf.

— Bruce C. Stewart

**LIFE CRUCIFIED**, by Oswald C. J. Hoffmann. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1959, pp. 125. \$2.50.

This is a book of devotional messages by the well known speaker on The Lutheran Hour radio program. As the title might indicate, they revolve around the theme of complete consecration to Christ. Since Christ was "The Life" Crucified, and since our faith is based not upon a thing or a process, but a Person, nothing is more important than having The Life Himself. "The call of Christianity is not primarily to service and good works, or even to faith, but to the Life. It is important to know that the Life can be received by faith, and that faith results in love and good works. But nothing is more important than to have the Life itself . . . the only alternative is death" (p. 11).

Our life cannot be the same because of The Life. The author develops this truth in the areas of service, love, peace, suffering, forgiveness, loneliness, old age, daily needs, etc. The book should provide helpful devotional reading for the layman, and stimulating seed-thoughts for the pastor.

— Bruce C. Stewart

**CENTRAL THEMES OF AMERICAN LIFE**, by Tim J. Campbell. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1959, pp. 188. \$3.50.

For most Reformed Presbyterians and many of Calvinistic background the material in this book will not be new. Mr. Campbell shows that the foundation of our American freedoms and development is the Christian faith, and more particularly Calvinism. Going back into colonial times he traces the religious influences which shaped our government, our demand for education, our concern for public morals and welfare, and our development of individual initiative in economic life. The things which have made America great have come directly or indirectly through the Reformed faith.

I was slightly disturbed at Dr. Campbell's mention of the Roman Catholic contribution (p. 87). While many Catholics participate in our civic life, their faith did nothing to promote our liberties, nor will it continue to protect our liberties if they gain the ascendancy. We need to be careful of our evaluation of what the Roman Catholic Church considers to be a necessary expedient in countries where they are in the minority.

Dr. Campbell shows a concern, and rightly so, that we cannot have the fruit without the tree. If we are going to forsake the religious truths that produced our freedoms, we will find that the freedoms themselves will disappear. Dr. Campbell calls for a rebirth of faith and a renewed sense of mission. To implement this, I would suggest the study of **"Doom of the Dictators"** by D. H. Elliott (Eerdmans, 1959).

— Bruce C. Stewart

**SERMON SUBSTANCE**, by Ralph G. Turnbull. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1958, pp. 224. \$3.50.

The sub-title of this book is **Suggestions and Substance for a Year of Preaching**. It is just that. There are 104 2-page sermon outlines following the liturgical church year. At the time of writing the author was Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Seattle, Washington.

A random sampling of the sermon outlines shows a conservative Biblical approach. Some of the titles are provocative such as "Caricature or Copyright?" Many of the outlines are alliterative, such as a sermon on Acts 25:19, **Casual, Causal, Crucial**. The textual and topical index will be of some help.

— Bruce C. Stewart

**THE INEXTINGUISHABLE BLAZE**, by A. Skevington Wood. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1960, pp. 256. \$3.75.

In this book Dr. Skevington Wood, minister of Southlands Methodist Church, York, England, tells the story of the momentous days of the Great Awakening of the Eighteenth Century. He shows how, side by side with the debauchery

and vice of that period there was lit a blaze which even that darkness could not put out. On the author's television screen we see such characters in action as Daniel Rowland and Howell Harris in Wales, Jonathan Edwards in New England, Whitefield in England and Scotland, and the two Wesleys, John and Charles, who "took the world for their parish."

The Prelude to the book depicts the condition of the church at the beginning of the century, together with the antecedents of the Revival. It has two main sections, each consisting of six chapters, which describe the Years of Visitation and the Years of Evangelization. The Postlude sums up the book's findings in the Message of the Revival and The Influence of that work of grace.

The author shows considerable skill in his presentation of the various factors that combined to bring about the Great Awakening; and he, for the most part, is eminently fair in dealing with the characters and religious groups that had a hand in shaping its activities and directing its several streams. Outstanding among these were the Anglican Evangelicals, the Moravians, the Methodists, and the Calvinists. These four groups did not always see eye to eye on doctrinal matters, yet were at one on the great doctrines concerning the supremacy of Holy Scripture as the rule of faith, of the necessity of regeneration and justification, of original sin, and of the call to live a life of holiness.

Dr. Wood shows that the Great Revival was more than the matter of the conversion of individuals. It rejuvenated churches; it expressed itself in the establishment of various agencies for promoting Christian work, such as missionary societies and The British and Foreign Bible Society; and it sparked the movement for the abolition of the slave trade. Its contribution to hymnody, says the author, can scarcely be overestimated and did much to raise the level of worship. One may think that he exaggerates a little in justifying John Wesley's description of the current Psalm Book as "the miserable scandalous doggerel of Sternhold and Hopkins;" but otherwise the book is eminently fair, makes interesting reading, and is well worth the price.

— Frederick F. Reade

**THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS**, by Henry Law. The Banner of Truth Trust, 78b Chiltern Street, London, W. I, England. 1960 (reprint) pp. 188, paper cover. 2s.6d.

Henry Law (1797-1884) was an Englishman but not of the established church. As the title would suggest, he strongly held to Covenant Theology. At times though his zeal almost became allegorisms. His style is very choppy. He

ranged from edenic to panoramic to grubby, in language and content. Originally published in 1854.

— Robert More, Jr.

**BULTMANN**, by Herman Ridderbos. (Modern Thinkers Series). The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Box 185, Nutley 10, N. J., 1960 translation, pp. 46. Paper cover. \$1.25.

Dr. Ridderbos is a professor of Reformed theology of Dutch nationality. He gives a brief background of Rudolf Bultmann and follows with a piercing analysis of his heresy.

Dr. Ridderbos clearly outlines Bultmann's "form-historical" bias, i.e., go back to the original form of the gospels before they were enshrouded with "myth." He also shows the penetration of naturalistic science in Bultmann.

Dr. Ridderbos' work is scholarly (with one possible major error), capable of being understood (unlike Bultmann) and necessary to comprehend modern religious thought.

— Robert More, Jr.

**BARTH**, by A. D. R. Polman. (Modern Thinkers Series). The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Box 185, Nutley 10, N. J. 1960 translation, paper cover, pp. 68. \$1.50.

Dr. Polman is a contemporary professor with Dr. Ridderbos. There is first a sketch of Karl Barth, then the presentation and refutation of his theology.

Barth's bias is repeatedly shown, namely that everything is Christological — everything ultimately rests in Christ. This emphasis of Barth (as carried out in the Word of God, predestination and creation in this book) is refreshing since Bultmann won't allow this much. This statement needs qualification, though; it is refreshing only if kept pure of Barth's dialectical theology. This, however, apparently can't be done.

Barth's ultimate emphasis is to be rejected, but Polman also has chinks in his armor. Such ideas as that the Psalms were **finally** admitted to the canon on a par with the law and the prophets, and that the written Word has nothing to do with the **Logos** — Jesus Christ — cannot be allowed. Others could be mentioned.

This book is scholarly, perceptive, and is a very systematic apologetic for Reformed theology.

— Robert More, Jr.

**I SAW THE LIGHT**, by J. H. Hegger, The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, Box 185, Nutley 10, N. J. 1961, pp. 171. \$3.75.

This book is unique in its field. It is not simply an account of one who, dissatisfied with the cold and formal worship of the Roman Catholic Church, found satisfaction in a change over to the Evangelical type of faith. It is that, but it is more than that.

Herman Hegger is a philosopher. He analyzes for us his feelings and his thinking. He seems to have, as the Foreword puts it, "a keen insight into motivation . . . and a simple but clear understanding of human responses."

And yet he is very readable. One is not led through a verbal labyrinth in reading his story. He has a pleasing style that gives one enjoyment in the reading. This reviewer would heartily recommend the book to any one who desires to know what forces operate within a priest of the Roman Catholic faith to send him finally into Protestantism. Incidentally he tells what moved him to decide for the type of Protestantism known as the Reformed Faith.

— F. F. Reade

**THE BILLY SUNDAY STORY**, by Lee Thomas. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1961, pp. 255. \$3.95.

This book acquaints one with the life and times of William Ashley Sunday, D.D., one of the most colorful figures and, at times controversial, in the field of evangelism. He preached to an estimated one hundred million people in the days before the loudspeaker was invented, using, in his larger tabernacles, a huge sounding board to carry his voice to the farthest recesses of the unique buildings in which he held his services.

His was a phenomenal career. Starting out as a penniless orphan he first rose to stardom in the baseball world, becoming known as the fastest runner on the base paths in the major leagues. After his conversion he forsook baseball to become secretary of religious work in the Y.M.C.A., and later on, toward the middle years of his life, he entered the field of evangelism in which he attained even greater success than he had acquired in the baseball world.

The best example of Sunday's success as an evangelist was his campaign in New York City in 1917. Newspaper men predicted, "The press will give Sunday a story for a day or two after he opens, then they'll drop him like a hot potato." The liquor interests boasted, "We'll pull Billy Sunday's cork in New York." But Billy went ahead, trusting the Lord of the harvest. He built there the largest tabernacle ever attempted. On the opening night 20,000 people listened to his message, and on the closing night it was estimated that more than 60,000 were unable to get into the tabernacle. During that ten weeks' campaign Sunday preached to more than one and one quarter million people,

while almost 100,000 walked down the sawdust trail to shake his hand and promise to live for God. The newspapers gave him all sorts of coverage and the liquor interests failed to "pull his cork in New York."

Mr. Thomas has done a grand job in telling the Billy Sunday story. To those who would like to become better acquainted with this unique character of the past generation this reviewer would say, in the words on the book's jacket, "You will find this authentic and artfully drawn biography thrilling and inspiring.

— F. F. Reade

**THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY AND HOME**, by Alexander C. De Jong. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1959, pp. 70, paper cover. \$.75 (dozen \$7.50).

This is an excellent booklet. Designed for a variety of uses, it could well serve as a guide for an adult discussion group; and the reviewer has already loaned his copy to inquiring individuals seeking a solid concept of marriage. The author has written provocatively, and each of the twenty-one chapters concludes with a number of well-worded questions to stimulate additional application. It is refreshing to find the contents structured in the covenant framework reflective of the writer's Reformed viewpoint, and yet approaching problems as we experience them in twentieth century America where homelife is in the decline. The chapters deal with problems regarding our present dilemma, the approach to marriage, the marriage relationship itself, children, dealing with handicapped children, finances, worship, and retirement. Another chapter suggesting ways the home may be a channel of witness to unbelievers would have been desirable, but nonetheless the reviewer heartily encourages a wide use of this timely and helpful booklet.

— Kenneth G. Smith

**A TREASURY OF BOOKS FOR BIBLE STUDY**, by Wilbur M. Smith. W. A. Wilde Co., 10 Huron Drive, Natick, Mass. 1960, pp. 289. \$3.95.

Dr. Smith, Professor at Fuller Seminary, is well qualified to write a book on this subject. He has a personal library of more than 25,000 volumes and has worked many years constructing bibliographies on such topics as the nativity of our Lord, thanksgiving, Bible atlases, etc. He keeps abreast of the latest books on all subjects related to Christianity. From his diligent research many Christians have been guided to the best evangelical books available.

Dr. Smith is quite comprehensive in his compilation of the various bibliographies. For example, here is the outline of his bibliography

on Thanksgiving literature: 1. The Vocabulary of Thanksgiving. 11. The Virtue of Thankfulness. III. Thanksgiving in the Bible: 1. In relation to Israel's sacrifices. 2. In the Psalter. 3. The thankfulness of Christ. 4. The thankfulness of St. Paul. 5. Sermonic literature. IV. Thanksgiving in prayer. 1. In the experience of prayer. 2. In the prayer book. V. Thanksgiving Day in America.

If any areas lie unconquered, he reveals them. For example: "While the Psalter has many passages expressing the gratitude of the Psalmist, I have not been able to find an actual study of thanksgiving in this portion of Scripture. I place this note here with the hope that someone will undertake a serious study of this edifying theme" (p.155).

Dr. Smith's book is a "must" for those who want guidance in choosing the proper book or books for Bible study. This book is also helpful in seeing what organization has been done in Christian literature and what still remains labeled "unfinished" or "not begun."

— Marion L. McFarland

**PERSONAL DECLENSION AND REVIVAL OF RELIGION IN THE SOUL**, by Octavius Winslow. The Banner of Truth Trust, 78b Chiltern St., London, W. 1, England. 1960, reprint of 1841. pp. 203. 7s 6d.

This book was written about one hundred years ago with the purpose of answering these questions: "What is the present state of my soul before God? How can I know whether I am growing or declining in godliness? What should be my present experience as a Christian and what are the symptoms of a departure from that experience?" These are questions that we all must continue to ask ourselves each day. For that reason this book is up to date and can be recommended to anyone who wants to re-examine his soul by the searchlight of Scripture. Dr. Winslow's book is penetrating. He has aptly uncovered and expored areas where we may be lukewarm in our zeal for the Lord. The areas emphasized are: love, faith, prayer, doctrinal error and fruitlessness. He concludes his book with an assurance that the Lord is a Restorer of His people and that He is a Keeper of His own if they but draw close to Him and determine to remain near Him.

Books written today are far easier to read, but the readability is not the problem when we are concerned with the state of our soul. This book will stimulate this needed concern.

— Marion L. McFarland

**THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE PHILIPPIANS**, by Ralph P. Martin. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1959, pp. 186. \$3.00.

In his commentary on Paul's epistle to the Philippians, Rev. R. P. Martin of London Bible College has written a book that assuredly promotes godly edifying. Consistent with the purpose of the Tyndale Series, he has divided this particular word of truth both rightly and reflectively. And true to the design of general editor R. V. G. Tasker, he has written a book that is neither unduly technical nor unhelpfully brief nor inordinately long.

Mr. Martin is thoroughly furnished to evaluate and to assess the true and the false in modern scholarship. His footnotes concerning problems of grammar or history or text are written clearly and cleanly. In moot questions, he presents varying interpretations with fair sportsmanship and leaves the reader to make his own conclusions. He wisely avoids foolish and unlearned questions and boldly encounters gainful and learned ones. As a scholar then and a paedagogue, Mr. Martin is an approved workman that needeth not to be ashamed of his erudition.

But I must venture to make two criticisms. First of all, the introduction may be a little too long. Amongst other things, it deals with the problems of the date and place of the epistle's composition. Since these problems have no real bearing on the content of the letter, the introduction may be unduly long.

In the second place, Mr. Martin's style is so concise and disciplined that it may be a little less than jubilant. As we know, Paul wrote all his letters with a rare calescent splendor. Especially in this Philippian epistle did Paul deliver his soul with undisguised elation and elevation. Exercising unprisoned liberty of expression, he wrote of a Redeemer known and knowable, proved and provable, One able to meet every need of every moment with Sovereign ease and sufficiency. It is in this epistle that Paul acquainted us with a contemporary Saviour who joys over us with singing, and who layeth His own on His shoulder with rejoicing. How exciting to live in, and with, and for One, who Himself lives in and with and for His elect.

As we know, Paul wrote of Christ Jesus with an overflow, a spontaneous, symphonic overflow of truth and grace and holy joy. His theme was constant; it ever featured One whose atonement and advocacy tranquilizes the conscience, whose Person satisfies the heart, whose Word directs the feet, Whose Personal indwelling fills the temple of the body with seraphic glory, and whose Administration from the Throne works all things together for our good. Wonder of wonders then if Paul had failed to write with ardor and exhilaration. Mr. Martin says things in his commentary that are true and honest and just and pure and of good report; but he might have said them with a more excellent animation.

— Venleau Evans

**NEW TESTAMENT SURVEY**, by Merrill C. Tenney. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1961, pp. 464. \$5.95.

A valuable compilation of a wide range of New Testament material. This book will be useful to those who need a clear and adequate survey of the great amount of study done on the N. T., and in particular for preachers, Bible students, and teachers.

The book is divided into five parts: The World of the N. T.; The Gospel; The Records of the Early Church; The Problems of the Early Church; and the Canon and Text.

The First part deals with the political, social, economic, and religious developments which prepared the way for the coming of Christ. It is done in a light and readable manner.

Under the Second section, each of the accounts of the Gospel is analyzed with respect to origin, date, characteristics, and outlined. There is also a four page harmony of the life of Christ at the end of this section.

Part Three deals with the period from A. D. 29 to 60. The basis for this section is the Acts of the Apostles. The epistles written during this period are inserted in their proper chronological position. This position is given by a date, and a corresponding chapter in the Acts.

The Epistles to Timothy and Titus, and those of Peter, Jude, and John are listed in section four. Each epistle is analyzed and outlined. The various ways in which the Revelation has been interpreted are placed together in a useful chart.

The final section deals with the Canon and its formation, and the documents of the N. T. text.

The table of contents is well outlined, and conveys exactly a summary of the whole work. The appendix contains a lengthy and reliable bibliography, and indices of persons, places, subjects, and references used in the work. This edition is on a paper of good quality, and is recommended highly to all.

— Edward A. Robson

**SPECIAL REVELATION AND THE WORD OF GOD**, by Bernard Ramm. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Michigan. 1961 pp. 207. \$4.00.

The question that faces contemporary theology today is, how are we to understand God's specific self disclosure? Or, more specifically, what do we mean by revelation? Dr. Ramm addresses himself to this problem in this book. Three major topics engage his interest; the concept, the modalities, and the products of special revelation.

In the first major division he discusses the

necessity and the centrality of special revelation. His discussion on the modality of special revelation is of special interest and importance. The author begins with the modality of divine condescension. The concept of divine speaking is another modality. Here Dr. Ramm stresses the reality of the historicity of special revelation. He says: "What must be insisted upon in the defense of the reality of revelation is that we cannot subjectivize it or spiritualize it (as existentially oriented theologies may do). It does come cosmic mediated; it does come through divine modalities, it does touch persons and nations, it does occur — secretly, mysteriously, or openly. It is therefore genuinely **historical** revelation" (p. 94). The writer insists that the modality of the incarnation is now continued in the church by means of the Scriptures. All of scripture is then a Christological document. It mediates Christ and has an "instrumental character" and thus the author makes void the charge, which is leveled against the evangelical, of bibliolatry.

The reader is then brought to the products of special revelation. Man communicates essentially by speaking. Thus God and man are speech-partners, but that which is spoken can only find universality, fixability, and correctness in writing. The knowledge of God is the central idea in special revelation. The question: is special revelation propositional? is restated but answered in the affirmative. The author gives a logical and convincing case against wordless mysticism. He says: "to speak of revelation of a person and not of truth is to speak — at least from the analogy of human encounter — nonsense. God is given in revelation as a person, **but along with truths of God**. Encounter with God is meaningful because it is not ineffable, **by virtue of the conceptual element of special revelation** of God. Revelation is event **and** interpretation, encounter **and** truth, a person **and** knowledge" pp. 159-160.

In this reviewer's estimation, Dr. Ramm has done an excellent job of presenting clearly the relation between God's self-disclosure and the written scriptures. He has avoided the bibliolatry of the fundamentalist and also the depreciation of revelation as knowledge found in neo-orthodoxy. The author has clearly emphasized that revelation is both a knowing and an experience of the living God.

Actually Dr. Ramm has merely brought Abraham Kuyper's discussion in **Principles of Sacred Theology** up to date, but he admits this when he says: "My indebtedness to Abraham Kuyper . . . is evident on almost every page." The contemporizing of this great work was needed and the author has done a commendable job.

This book is highly recommended as something that will clarify the ideas of the evangeli-

cal on this most vital subject and which may be used to challenge the idea of the liberal.

— John H. White

**THE CHURCH OF CHRIST**, by James Bannerman. Banner of Truth Trust, 78b Chiltern Street, London, W. 1, England. 1960 (reprint of 1869). 2 vols., 930 pages. Set 30 shillings (app. \$4.20)

Bannerman's **Church of Christ** was first published in 1869, and has now been reprinted as the second work in the Student's Reformed Theological Library. (The first is Cunningham's **Historical Theology**.)

In the Biographical Introduction this statement is made: "In our own day, however greatly we need an evangelical revival, we need even more than that. We need another Reformation, a movement that will go 'to the root of the mischief and bring back the visible church to the pattern of God's Word in her government, ordinances, and ministry. The republication of Bannerman's work is a step in that direction . . . For those who wish to study the doctrine of the Church in its several aspects as it was held by the majority of the Reformers, Puritans, Covenanters, and leaders of 'The Third Reformation,' it will prove an invaluable textbook."

Bannerman lived from 1807 to 1868, and was actively involved in the struggle in Scotland which eventually led many of the evangelicals of the Church of Scotland to separate and form the Free Church. He was a part of that movement. So he was no "ivory tower" theologian, but had faced living issues having to do with the nature of the church. This does not mean that his work is lacking in scholarship, or that it is polemical in nature. A sampling of his footnotes will show a wide acquaintance with scholars of many varying viewpoints: the Fathers, Scholastics, Reformers, and Rationalists. **The British and Foreign Evangelical Review** says, "The results of long and keen controversy, the gist of dry and weary treatises, the wisdom to be gathered from the church's own history as to her nature and constitution, will here be found garnered and arranged. . . . We venture to say, that taking the whole range of Reformed theology, no fairer representation of the whole Protestant doctrine of the Church has ever appeared."

The opening words of Bannerman's introduction are "The Bible is a revelation from God. . .", and this gives a fair representation of the viewpoint from which he writes. He is a sound believer in the inspiration of Scripture. He is a Calvinist and a Presbyterian, and constantly in this study he vindicates that view of the nature of the church generally called Presbyterian. He distinguishes and defends

this view from Independency on the one hand, and from Prelacy and Romanism on the other.

Bannerman believes that a correct view of the church is to be found in a proper understanding of the distinction and relationship between the visible and invisible church. He takes the following positions on issues often debated:

1. That there is just one "note" of the true church: "It is the succession of the truth alone that marks out a Christian Church." (p. 60, vol. I)

2. That "occasional communion" — fellowship in ordinances and ministerial duty — between churches held apart . . . by differences in government and doctrine" is permissible. (foot-note, p. 47, vol. I) A speech on the Union Question, dealing with the questions involved, is recorded in an appendix.

3. That it is legitimate for the State to recognize the Church, but not to control it.

This work belongs to the category of systematic rather than biblical theology; that is, it does not give detailed exegesis of Scripture passages dealing with the Church, but rather seeks to draw together Scriptural principles into a coherent system. It serves, therefore, to make clear the issues that are involved in a Scriptural understanding of the nature of the Church. The careful student of the subject will want to enter into exegesis of the passages involved, work that the author has no doubt done, but which he has not traced out in this writing.

In the world of the 1960's, the doctrine of the Church is of utmost importance. Two opposing tendencies are apparent today: on one hand the Ecumenical Movement, which seeks to unite all professing Christians in one church with an inclusive theological foundation; on the other hand, the tendency of many evangelicals to think of the visible church as of little importance, and of Christianity as a merely individual matter. Seekers for truth on this great subject will find not a little light in this valuable reprint.

— Wayne R. Spear

**THE PRESBYTERY OF ROUTE: THE TER-CENTENARY BOOK**, by Harry C. Waddell. The Belfast News-Letter, Ltd., Belfast, N. Ireland. 1960, pp. 289. 10s.6d. This book may be obtained at two dollars post free from Mr. R. A. McElderry, Ballymoney, Co. Antrim, N. Ireland.

Dr. Waddell was appointed by the Presbytery of Route, of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland, to prepare this volume in commemoration of the three hundredth anniversary of the distinct organization

of the presbytery, in 1657. The second half of the book contains the history of each congregation of the presbytery, prepared in most cases by the current pastor, and edited by Dr. Waddell.

This book is of interest and value to others than inhabitants of The Route (which is the name of a geographical district, not of a highway.) The history of Presbyterians in Ireland is the history of American Presbyterians who have migrated from Ulster to the United States and Canada. The later existence of Presbyterianism in America was largely determined by the struggles which developed and maintained Presbyterianism in the British Isles and the bulk of the American migration was Scotch-Irish rather than directly from Scotland.

Although special attention is given to the Route, the book is a good history of the whole Presbyterian Church of Ireland, from the time of colonization by Scots early in the seventeenth century. The Roman Catholic natives rebelled in 1641, and this was followed by an army of occupation in 1642, out of which grew the first presbytery, The Army Presbytery. Some of the bitterness of Roman Catholics against Protestants is understandable when it is realized that Protestantism was the religion of the invader and oppressor. But Presbyterians suffered persecution from the government, too. Not until 1782 was any permitted to vote or hold office in Ireland who did not agree to take communion according to the rites of the Episcopal Church. However, it is interesting that for a long period, ending in 1869, Presbyterian and Seceder ministers were paid a salary by the government. Most of the Seceder congregations had united with the Presbyterian Church in 1840.

There was a severe Arian controversy in the church, ending in 1829 in the separate organization of the "Non-Subscribing Presbyterians," apparently unitarian in doctrine. This had begun a century earlier among ministers who declined to subscribe to Confession of Faith, and a presbytery which declined to require it of them. Notably, there were more new congregations in the Synod of Ulster in the ten years following 1829 than there had been in the previous century, indicating a new evangelical spirit.

Covenanters will regret that Scotch-Irish Presbyterians, who suffered for their loyalty to the Solemn League and Covenant in the seventeenth century, though less severely than their fellows in Scotland, have in later times neglected it.

The book is well written, and a pattern for other histories of presbyteries.

— T. R. Hutcheson

**IN THE TWILIGHT OF WESTERN THOUGHT**, by Herman Dooyeweerd. The Presbyterian and

Reformed Publishing Company, Box 185, Nutley 10, N. J. 1960, pp. xvi, 195. \$3.50.

The gospel of Jesus Christ, revealed in the Word of God, the Bible, touches every realm and area of life. There is not a place to which we may go, an area of thought into which we may enter, nor an activity in which we may engage, where we may say, "God is not here — the gospel does not affect this — the Word of God is here silent." Only in the reformed faith does this concept of the all-pervasiveness of the law of God come into its own. We confess that God is sovereign over every sphere, and rules and reigns as he wills.

One of the last strongholds where man, even some Christian men, seeks to hold autonomous sway, is the arena of philosophy. There, man says, we must all proceed from ourselves, *de novo*, without presupposition, without preconceptions. Then we must somehow come to an understanding of ourselves, God, and the world that we live in.

This bastion of human autonomy comes under severe attack by a leading exponent of a "new" school of Christian philosophy — "The Philosophy of the Cosmomic Idea" — professor Herman Dooyeweerd of the Free University of Amsterdam in the Netherlands.

The book under review, "**In the Twilight of Western Thought**" is subtitled, "Studies in the pretended autonomy of philosophical thought." The discussion in many places is of a highly technical philosophical sort that may bewilder even the philosophy majors. Yet the thrust of Dooyeweerd's thought is sharp and clear. One is left breathless by the bold strokes with which Dooyeweerd paints the canvas of the history of philosophy in its relation to the specific problem at hand. Striking insights are numerous.

Dooyeweerd tears the mask of pretended autonomy from the face of sinful man. Man when left to himself sees all in terms of himself. "History has no windows looking out into eternity. Man is completely enclosed in it and cannot elevate himself to a suprahistorical level of contemplation" (p.63). He speaks of fourteen or fifteen basic modes of experience — spatial, numeric, biotic, sensual, logical, economic, moral, pistic, etc. The basic philosophies of the non-Christian arise from making one or more of these temporal modalities an absolute and interpreting all else in terms of it. "All these *isms* originate from the absolutizing of a specific scientific viewpoint which considers empirical reality only from one of the fundamental aspects of our temporal experience" (pp. 83, 84).

What is the answer? How do we come to formulate a proper and true philosophy? What is the standard? "This really absolute standard of truth is not to be found in man, but only in the Word of God, in its central sense, which uncovers the source of all absolutizations and which alone

can lead man to true knowledge of himself and of his absolute origin" (p. 61). Making this a bit more specific, he says: "ultimately the problem of the meaning of history revolves around the question: 'who is man himself and what is his origin and his final destination?' Outside of the central biblical revelation of creation, the fall into sin and redemption through Jesus Christ, no real answer is to be found to this question" (p. 111).

In pointing to the Word of God as the standard, he also points to the radical necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit so that man may see the meaning of the scriptures. In fact he pleads for a greater realization and application of these truths in our lives. "I am afraid that many Christians have only a theological knowledge of creation, fall into sin and redemption by Jesus Christ, and that this central theme of the Word-Revelation has not yet become the central motive-power of their lives" (pp. 187, 188).

His closing statement summarizes well many of these truths: "The question: 'What is man? Who is he?', cannot be answered by man himself. But it has been answered by God's Word-Revelation, which uncovers the religious root and center of human nature in its creation, fall into sin, and redemption by Jesus Christ. Man lost true self-knowledge since he lost the true knowledge of God. But all idols of the human self-hood, which man in his apostacy has devised, break down when they are confronted with the Word of God, which unmasks their vanity and nothingness. It is this Word alone, which by its radical grip can bring about a real reformation of our view of man and our view of the temporal world" (p. 195).

Such a calling of men back to the Scriptures is always a needed cry. There is no rethinking needed on this point. The Bible, God's Word is of absolute necessity for life and thought. We need to join in with this call and urge all men, including the sophisticated, to return to the Word of God, to its message of our creation, fall into sin, and redemption in Christ.

— Jack J. Peterson

MEMOIR AND SERMONS OF THE REV. ALEXANDER MACLEOD, Memoir by the Rev. D. Beaton. Westminster Standard, 183 Rutene Road, Gisborne, New Zealand, 1959 Reprint of 1925 Edition, pp. 48.2 shillings.

The Rev. Alexander Macleod, who is the subject of this booklet, was a minister of the Church of Scotland, and later of the Free Church, and lived from 1786 to 1869. He should not be confused with the Alexander McLeod who was prominent in the early history of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America.

This booklet consists of a brief memoir, excerpts from Macleod's diary for the years 1824

through 1827, four sermons, an appendix tracing the history of the parish of Uig, where Mr. Macleod enjoyed his greatest success, and an appendix in support of the Establishment Principle. Under Mr. Macleod's ministry, the parish of Uig experienced a revival; the reader who is acquainted with the "revival" preaching of the twentieth century, may be surprised at the doctrinal depth and thoroughgoing Calvinism of the sermons recorded here.

This booklet will be of interest mainly to those who are interested in the study of revivals, and those who desire to follow the intricacies of modern Scottish church history. (It may be of interest to Reformed Presbyterians and others that the publisher of this booklet also lists *The Singing of Psalms in the Worship of God*, by R. J. George.)

— Wayne Spear

JOHN CALVIN, 1509-1959: 450th ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION: DID CALVIN ADVOCATE THEOCRACY? and JOHN CALVIN'S SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS. Published by the Witness-Bearing Committee and Committee on Protestantism of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland. Obtainable from the Rev. F. S. Leahy, 468 Ravenhill Road, Belfast, North Ireland. pp. 16. one shilling, paper cover.

The title of this booklet tells a good bit about its contents. The first article, reprinted from the *Evangelical Quarterly* of April, 1937, is by Marc Cheneviere, Doctor of Jurisprudence at Geneva. This essay is a summary of Calvin's teaching concerning the relationship between church and state. It has the advantages and limitations of a summary: the subject which covers a thirty page chapter on Civil Government in the *Institutes*, plus other material on the church, is compressed to seven somewhat shorter pages. But the article does not attempt to give the Scriptural basis for Calvin's teaching; for that, one must go to Calvin himself.

The second article, by Frederick S. Leahy, a minister of the Irish Reformed Presbyterian Church, is reprinted from *Christianity Today*, January 5, 1959. Mr. Leahy draws from the teachings of Calvin, from his sermons and commentaries as well as the *Institutes* to show his concern for the social application of the Gospel. This is not a "social gospel", for, as Mr. Leahy says, that would be only "good advice", not "good news." This makes worthwhile reading in a day when evangelicals are being charged (sometimes with good reason) with showing little or no concern for the social evils of our day.

This booklet deals with live issues, and will be helpful in formulating right Christian thinking with regard to the implications of the Gospel for society.

— Wayne Spear

THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF CHRIST: Massages for Good Friday and Easter, by Abraham Kuyper. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich., 1960 (Reprint from 1888), pp. 150. \$2.50.

Probably one of the most profound questions that can ever be asked is, "What happened on Calvary?" This book, newly translated from the Dutch by Henry Zylstra, gives some penetrating insights into the answer to that question. Dr. Kuyper, statesman, scholar, Calvinist, examines various aspects of the death and resurrection of Christ. He emphasizes the fact that the death of Christ cannot be understood apart from what came before, and what came after, especially the Resurrection. He says in the preface, "Only in the radiance of that resurrection can Gethsemane and Golgotha be penetrated."

Thirteen meditations for Good Friday, and sixteen for Easter, are included in this volume. They are in Dr. Kuyper's characteristic style, with freshness of thought, apt illustrations from life, adherence to the Scriptures, and personal application.

These meditations presuppose the observance by the church of the Church Year. But this will not detract from the value of the examination into the meaning of Christ's death and resurrection, for those who find no basis in Scripture for the "observance of days." Many a minister will find seed thoughts here for his preaching, and the layman need not fear that he will find himself beyond his depth. This is a book which can be heartily recommended to give instruction in sound doctrine. It will move the Christian to greater appreciation for the work of his Saviour.

— Wayne Spear

THE CHURCH'S MISSION TO THE EDUCATED AMERICAN, by Joel H. Nederhood. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids 3, Michigan. 1960, pp. xii, 163. \$2.50.

"The Back to God Hour" is one of the finest religious broadcasts to be heard in America. Its presentation of the gospel of Jesus Christ as interpreted by the reformed standards is clear and contemporary. It is a fine example of evangelistic preaching.

The new associate minister of that program is Dr. Joel Nederhood who gives us in the volume entitled above, a study of the modern educated American, and how to present the gospel to him. This study is Nederhood's doctoral dissertation for the Free University of Amsterdam.

The concern of the book is mission. The New Testament teaching on this subject passes in review in the most valuable first chapter. Special emphasis centers on the message of the Acts. "Jesus transformed his vacillating apostles and his other disciples into a totally unique and supernaturally qualified community. In the book of

Acts is revealed a central truth which is of unbounded importance for both the Church and its mission: as a fulfilment of Jesus' last commission, the apostolic church was created a witness to its ascended Lord when it was baptised in the power of the Holy Spirit. This book is the book of the great commission because it describes that drama which occurred when the apostolic church, baptised in the power of the Holy Spirit, came in contact with the world, not only in Jerusalem, in Judaea and Samaria, but also 'unto the uttermost part of the earth' (p. 19).

Following this basic biblical study there is investigation of the church on the American scene with special emphasis on the appeal to class strata that is unconsciously a part of the witness of the local church. The educated himself is analyzed with a view to a composite picture of him — his prejudices, his religious ideas, his fears, etc.

The final chapter asks, how now can the church best appeal to the educated. The answer is gratifying. After all is said and done, after the educated has been analyzed, the answer to his need is the only answer that the Bible can give — he needs the saving gospel of Jesus Christ. "Because the educated evade their basic problem, their sin, they are unable to perceive the Christian gospel's total relevance to their condition. Therefore, they must be confronted repeatedly with that message which has always been the central message of the Christian mission: Repent, and believe the gospel. Deep within their hearts the educated look to man for salvation, justify themselves, and refuse to repent" (p. 132). Speaking of the church he says, ". . . if it fails to give the educated the gospel of salvation, it shall fail to speak to their greatest needs" (p.141).

— Jack J. Peterson

**IS CHRIST DIVIDED? A Plea for Christian Unity in a Revolutionary Age.** By Leslie Newbigin, General Secretary of the International Missionary Council. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1961, pp. 41. \$1.25.

This little book by Bishop Newbigin, famous champion of the World Council of Churches and International Missionary Council type of organic union of the churches, is less surprising than the fact that the book is published by so staid a Reformed publishing firm as William B. Eerdmans!

The advertising on the jacket of Newbigin's book praising another Eerdmans book, **A Message to Catholics and Protestants**, by Oscar Cullmann, lists seven quotations from contented readers, including one Jesuit priest who says: "If there were more writers of the Cullmann type, the prospects for the ecumenical movement would be most encouraging." G. C. Berkouwer

of the Free University in Amsterdam boosts the Cullmann book for its ecumenical message; "It forces us to feel again and profoundly the contradiction between the New Testament unity and the actual disunity of the churches."

What does all this mean? Have Eerdmans decided to climb on the WCC bandwagon? Is this another sign of the "thaw" in the cold war which up to this time has kept Calvinists aloof from the World Council? Rumors have been increasing of a changed policy in those "orthodox" circles which once were counted the bulwark against error; a more moderate attitude toward theistic evolution, or errors in the Scriptures; or a letting down the hostile and war-like guard against modernism, Barthianism and Romanism.

No matter what the motive back of Eerdmans' venture into the field of World Council propaganda, this little volume by Bishop Newbigin is one of the most effective appeals for unity on WCC-IMC terms that could be found.

There are four short chapters, each taking its departure from a text of Scripture. (1) When I Am Lifted Up. John 12:32. (2) By One Spirit, 1 Corinthians 12:13. (3) That the World May Know. John 17: 22-23. (4) To All Nations. Mark 13:6-10.

After so many years in ecumenical leadership, Bishop Newbigin knows well how to dance with many partners and not trample on theological bunions. The arguments advanced in his plea are Scriptural, logically impressive and drive home a needed lesson to our narrow little denominational consciences. So excellent are the things said by this author that I dare to imagine him delivering these four talks to the Covenanter Synod as devotional messages, and receiving almost unanimous praise. They would certainly be endorsed for publication in the church paper. There is no mention of the World Council. It is all strong New Testament pleading for unity in Christ.

Are we therefore safe in accepting, with thanks to Eerdmans, this bit of Christian advice and seeking to increase our ecumenical labors? No. The danger of this book is in the subtle presuppositions of the author and the things which he does not teach which are essential to true Christian unity. A counterfeit twenty dollar bill is the more dangerous for its close resemblance to the real money, and the highly Biblical words of Bishop Newbigin are all the more dangerous because they present what seems exactly like the Christian unity laid down for us by the Lord Jesus and Paul and other writers in the New Testament. I shall mention three points at which the counterfeit error of World Council ecumenicalism fails to meet the Bible test.

First, there is no hint in all that Bishop

Newbigin writes that the Christian unity anticipated will be built on the objective Standard of the Bible as God's only infallible rule for faith and ethics.

The Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 1, section x) states God's objective standard around which Christian unity may be built when men will humbly accept the Word written as their Guide: "The supreme judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined; and in whose sentence we are to rest; can be none other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture.

Bishop Newbigin says: "None of us has a clear blue-print of a united Church. We have to ask the Holy Spirit Himself to show us in our day what visible forms of unity He wills for us. But we have to ask — with penitence and faith" (p. 17). His is a subjective standard, not the objective Scriptures.

Speaking of his encounters with non-Christians in India who criticized the "shame of Protestant disunity" Newbigin answered them: "With all my heart I can answer that I long for every human being to be a Christian. But — in all loyalty to the church of my fathers — I have to confess that I cannot wish for every human being to be a Presbyterian. . . . only a universal fellowship can be the adequate bearer of a universal Gospel" (p. 12).

In these words we hear the characteristic note of all WCC propaganda. A unity is sought at the expense of Divine truth, theologically specified. Outward, organized unity without agreement about such important matters as church government and worship and doctrines is not true unity. It is only a whitewash to cover the deep cracks which actually divide men into denominations. Until the Holy Spirit **speaking in the Scriptures** enables the divided churches to work and pray together to hear what God speaks in the Bible, the only inspired and infallible Rule for faith and order, can we begin to expect true Christian unity.

A second hidden flaw in Newbigin's little book is that he discusses unity without mentioning the New Testament command to separate from all error.

It would seem that in view of the rampant apostasy in the major denominations within the World Council, or in the light of scandalous heresy for which the International Missionary Council is noted through its publications and sponsored speakers, that Newbigin would express concern that the churches be purified by Divine truth. In the Prayer of our Lord (John 17) which is so dear to ecumenical circles the Saviour asks,

"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."

The denial of the accuracy and authority of the Bible; the denial of the Genesis record of creation or the record of man's fall into sin, the denial of miracles, the Virgin Birth of Jesus, the bodily resurrection of Jesus, the substitutionary atonement, and many other historic Christian beliefs is so prevalent in the World Council missionary circles and literature that something ought to be done. How can there be Christian unity when this awful scandal of modernistic, Barthian unbelief is destroying the churches? This unbelief, not the ancient denominational divisions based on honorable concern for truth, should be repented of as our "scandal". Yet Bishop Newbigin seems blissfully unaware that it even exists.

Finally, the error of the WCC-IMC ecumenical propaganda is shown by the peculiarly tolerant view which the leaders seem always to show toward world Communism. Here is Newbigin's gentle reproof to anti-Communists.

"We shall not think of our task as one of trying to hold back the revolution of our time, but as one of bearing witness within that revolution to its true meaning. We shall not allow ourselves to be so obsessed by the fear of communism that we can see nothing else . . . . The penalty of allowing our judgment to be controlled by the fear of communism is that we may find ourselves defending injustice against the human cry for justice, and tyranny against the cry for freedom. . ." (p. 29).

Reasonable as this word of caution sounds it conceals a major, deadly error of the World Council type of ecumenicism. It is the chief sickness of Protestant liberals today, this detached neutrality toward Communism and their scolding of anti-Communists. What is underneath this pious attitude? Hidden under all these wise words is a belief in evolutionary progress and their stubborn hope that mankind is gradually progressing from the anarchy of unrestrained capitalistic competition into a future socialist order in which a just and durable social order will prevail.

The old social gospel dream has never died. Modernists who no longer think in terms of the Bible are dupes of the Communist line that their brutal revolution is "inevitable," a great step in the grinding, onward march of social improvement. Hence "we should not oppose Communism, as such, but learn to live in this revolutionary age and teach men the true meaning of revolution." This is a tragic misunderstanding of Communism's danger.

It is this mood which made the N.C.C. crowd in Cleveland, Ohio, a few years ago vote for ad-

mission of Red China to the United Nations. It is the above decision which even now brings many from the Iron Curtain churches, who are either converted Communists or even secret Communist agents posing as priests, to World Council meetings where they use all manner of guile to lead the Christians of the Free World into Marxist-Leninist trap.

It was this same liberal blindness which made the Chinese ecumenical circles in the Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., the United Church of China and the National Christian Council of China, fall into disgraceful, voluntary collaboration with the Red butchers of Peking. The error of "One Church" leads to the tyranny of "One World."

When all the things which Bishop Newbiggin said are combined with many of the things he failed to say we understand why his Christian "unity" is not Biblically sound. "Is Christ Divided?" Yes, He is divided from Satan, whom He answered long ago, "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

— Samuel E. Boyle

DAILY MANNA CALENDAR FOR 1962, edited by Martin Monsma. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids 6, Michigan. In box with arrangement for hanging on wall or standing on table. \$1.95 postpaid.

It is not too late to send for one of these calendars for 1962. A separate sheet is provided for every day in the year, with a verse or verses of Scripture and a brief meditation thereon. The material is spiritually helpful and well suited to personal or family devotions. This is also a fine gift item.

— J. G. Vos

PELOUBET'S SELECT NOTES FOR 1962, by Wilbur M. Smith, W. A. Wilde Company, 10 Huron Drive, Natick, Mass. pp. 500. \$2.95.

It is a pleasure again to commend the well-known Peloubet's Notes on the International Bible Lessons for Sabbath Schools. This reviewer knows of no more helpful material on the International Lessons in anywhere nearly such compact form or at anything approaching such a reasonable price. Those who have once used these Notes realize the usefulness and value. The material is truly informative and above all it is usable.

Dr. Smith, the editor, writes from a strongly evangelical point of view. His attitude toward the Scriptures as the infallible Word of God is beyond question. Occasionally a minor note of premillennial eschatology appears but these are not at all prominent in the work and need not interfere with its use by those who

hold that Scripture teaches a different view of prophecy.

This book is heartily commended to our readers.

— J. G. Vos

NORLIE'S SIMPLIFIED NEW TESTAMENT IN PLAIN ENGLISH FOR TODAY'S READER, by Olaf M. Norlie, with THE PSALMS FOR TODAY: A NEW TRANSLATION IN CURRENT ENGLISH, by R. K. Harrison. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1961, pp. 777. \$4.95.

This is a new translation from the original Greek and Hebrew of the New Testament and the Psalter. The aim has been to use simple words where possible, to shorten sentences where this can properly be done, and to use an ordinary rather than a pompous or "solemn" style. All names and pronouns referring to Deity are capitalized. The verse numbers are kept as in the King James Version, but the material is set up in paragraph form instead of each verse being a separate paragraph. Sub-headings are supplied giving a running index to the contents. There are also topical headings at the top of the pages.

The viewpoint of the translators is evangelical and conservative. In their effort to simplify the material, the translators have often given a free paraphrase rather than a true translation. It is to be feared, too, that oversimplification has obscured important Scriptural teachings. We have tested this especially in the Epistle to the Romans, because this is a key book for the doctrinal content of Christianity, and it is a book where exact statement makes all the difference in the world as to the meaning.

To our sorrow, we find the great Pauline and Reformation doctrine of Justification by Faith obscured by inexact translations — forms of statement which would perfectly suit a pre-Reformation Romanist or a Roman Catholic of today who holds the doctrine of Justification as it was mis-defined by the Council of Trent. Thus Romans 3:22 speaks of Justification as "God's own way of making men righteous." This of course it precisely is not, and cannot be, according to grammatical exegesis and sound theology. Justification is a judicial declaration that someone is righteous — it is a pronouncement of legal standing, not a change of character. It is sanctification which makes people righteous; justification is what declares them (legally) righteous, because the righteousness of Christ has been imputed or credited to them. A pardon from the governor of the state will let a man out of prison and pronounce him free from legal liability to suffer a penalty. But this does not give him a good character or

make him a law-abiding (righteous) person. In fact, if he had only the pardon, he might soon commit another crime. The pardon changes his relation to the law, it does not change his heart or character. For that, an inward spiritual change is needed. It is precisely the Romanist error at this point to define Justification as **making** people righteous, and thus to confound it with Sanctification.

We read on: Romans 3:30 is very correctly translated in the King James Version as "Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith." In the Greek the first of these clauses has the preposition **ek** with the genitive, and the second has the preposition **dia** with the genitive. These are correctly translated "by" and "through." Faith is thus the **means** and the **channel** by which we get justification. But it is not the **ground** or **reason** of justification — the ground or reason is the blood and righteousness of Christ. Now **Norlie's Simplified New Testament** translates this verse as: "There is only one God. He will justify the circumcised on the ground of their faith, and the uncircumcised also on the ground of their faith." This is grammatically impossible. Norlie has translated **ek** with the genitive and **dia** with the genitive as if both of them were **dia** with the accusative (which would mean "on account of"). Moreover, this is theologically utterly unsound and really is destructive of the true doctrine of Justification by Faith. For if faith is the **ground** of justification, then we have merely a new form of justification by works — we are justified on the ground, not of Christ's righteousness, but on the ground of something we ourselves do, namely, our act of believing.

Again, in Romans 14:21 the King James Version reads, "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby my brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak." The Greek word for "good" here is **kalon** which means **suitable or proper but not necessarily obligatory**. When something is **kalon** it is a legitimate good option or possible choice but not necessarily commanded by God. Thus Peter on the Mount of Transfiguration said to Jesus, "It is **kalon** for us to be here." Norlie translates Rom. 14:21 thus: "The right thing to do is not to eat flesh nor to drink wine, nor to do anything that makes your brother stumble or that offends and weakens him." Here **kalon**, which in Greek has no definite article, is made definite, and the concept of "good" is changed to that of "right" (which would be an entirely different word in Greek). "It is good . . ." is a correct translation. When this is changed to "The right thing to do . . ." the implication is conveyed that not to eat flesh, drink wine, etc., is an absolute moral duty (**The** right thing. . .) and therefore any other course is sinful and a violation of God's commands. The

context (verses 20 and 22) clearly shows that what is proposed in verse 21 is not mandatory or obligatory but is presented as a possible good or beneficial option. (Cf. 1 Cor. 7:1, "It is **kalon** for a man not to touch a woman)."

Romans 8:29 is also obscured by the quest for simplicity. In the King James Version this verse is translated with precise accuracy: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." It will be noted that the object of "foreknew" here is **persons**, not a **fact**; "whom", not "it"; the text does not say that God foreknew something about certain people, but that He foreknew **them**. Similarly, the object of "predestinate" is not a fact, but persons ("them"). But Norlie translates the verse thus: "It was His plan that they should conform to the likeness of His Son, so that He might be the First-born among many brethren. He foreknew this, and predestined it." Here the object of foreknowledge and predestination is not persons but a fact about the persons. This is grammatically impossible according to the Greek, and theologically unsound.

Revelation 20:4, 5 is translated by Norlie, without any warrant in the Greek, to make it teach the premillennial doctrine of a double resurrection. The King James Version accurately translates the Greek verb as **lived** in both verse 4 and verse 5. Norlie translates it in verse 4 as "came to life once more" and in verse 5 as "did not come to life again." The Greek is a simple aorist and means simply **lived** without any idea of "beginning to live again." Thus a theological idea foreign to the text has been imported into it. The premillennialist of course **interprets** this aorist "lived" as meaning "rose again from the dead" (of a bodily resurrection), but it is not the function of a translation to interpret, but to translate what the original says. Far less is it the function of a translation to promote a specific interpretation, not necessarily in the text, in a passage which is debated as to its meaning between rival schools of theology.

The Introduction to the new translation of the Psalms in this volume contains much that is true and of value, but is seriously marred by its attitude toward the so-called imprecatory Psalms. The translator finds "something of the vindictive spirit" in these Psalms (p. xii) and says that they show "a noticeable lack of charity towards those who acted and believed differently from the accepted pattern of Israelite thought" (ibid.). This seems to manifest a lack of due appreciation of the divine inspiration and revelatory character of this group of Psalms, as also of the way in which these very Psalms are quoted and handled by the inspired writers of the New Testament. As a matter of fact, the "imprecatory" Psalms are the expression in Old Testament poetry of the absolute ethical antithesis which exists between

the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman. The unregenerate really hate God and the things of God. Only the restraining common grace of God keeps the wicked from killing all the Christians in the world.

On the other hand, the new translation of the Psalms seems good and we believe it has considerable value for the Bible reader and student.

This book is attractively put up and must represent an immense amount of labor. Moreover there is a real need for something of this type. The reviewer regrets, therefore, that because of the theological and grammatical inaccuracy of the translation at key points, the book cannot be recommended. Simplicity, it would seem, has been obtained by the sacrifice of accuracy and precision in some of the most important passages of the New Testament.

— J. G. Vos

**MATTHEW HENRY'S COMMENTARY ON THE WHOLE BIBLE IN ONE VOLUME**, edited by Leslie F. Church. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1961, pp. 1986. \$9.95.

Matthew Henry's commentary on the entire Bible has long been a standard help to Bible students. Matthew Henry was an English Presbyterian pastor who lived about 250 years ago. His complete work contains six large volumes and can still be obtained in the complete set.

The present volume is a condensation and abridgement, but it is very conservatively done and is in Matthew Henry's own words. For the ordinary Christian user this one-volume work (it has almost two thousand pages) will prove fully adequate.

Considerable progress in Biblical learning has been made since Matthew Henry's day. Some of the great manuscript discoveries have occurred since his time, and practically all the developments of Biblical archaeology, with its wealth of light shed on the Scriptures, have come since his day. Matthew Henry is therefore not a scholarly or critical commentary for the minister (who should have an expert knowledge of the Bible in the light of the developed studies of believing scholars). Even for the minister, however, there is a wealth of usable and thought-provoking material in Matthew Henry. For the lay Christian, who wants to study the Bible but has no Hebrew or Greek, Matthew Henry is still a most excellent help. Many a Sabbath School lesson or prayer meeting topic has been developed to the edification of many by studying Matthew Henry's treatment of the Word. Needless to say, the theological viewpoint is that of a devout faith in the Scriptures as the verbally inspired and infallible Word of God.

This volume is heartily recommended to all our readers.

— J. G. Vos

## *Acknowledgment of Contributions*

The Manager of this magazine wishes to acknowledge, with hearty thanks, the following contributions to the cost of publishing the magazine since our last issue went to press.

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These generous contributions from friends and readers who have in this very practical manner shown their concern for the continued publication of **Blue Banner Faith and Life** are deeply appreciated. Less than half of the money needed is obtained from subscriptions; for the rest we are dependent on contributions. You can help the world-wide ministry of this magazine by contributing to the cost of publication as the Lord enables you.

Beginning with the present issue, the cost of printing the magazine is increasing by approximately 15% above what it was before. We wish to express special thanks to our printer, the Record Publishing Company, of Linn, Kansas, and Mr. Albert Higgins, the head of this firm, for keeping the rate down for several years while the cost of printing was rising all over

the country. Mr. Higgins helped this magazine substantially by keeping the cost of printing down, which of course meant limiting his own profit severely. We are convinced that the present 15% increase is not only moderate, but fully justified by the facts in the printing industry and in Mr. Higgins' own plant.

A reader has written commenting that the rather dark blue cover paper of the magazine makes it difficult to read the print outside and inside the cover pages. This is being remedied as soon as possible. The present issue is appearing with a slightly lighter cover than we had been

using. It is necessary, to avoid serious loss, to use up the present stock of cover paper. However, with the April-June 1962 issue we expect to go back to the light sky-blue cover paper that was used several years ago. This will make it much easier to read the print.

The statistics of the circulation of the magazine will be published in the April-June issue. They cannot be published in the present issue as our subscription list for 1962 is not yet stabilized at the time of going to press.

— J. G. Vos, Editor and Manager

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## *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:

(a) What is the authority for Christians casting lots?

(b) In particular, should a minister cast lots in connection with a call?

### Answer:

The following is taken from **Buck's Theological Dictionary** (1830 edition):

"Lot is a mutual agreement to determine an uncertain event, no other ways determinable, by an appeal to the providence of God, on casting or throwing something. This is a **decisory** lot, Prov. 16:33; 18:18. The matter, therefore, to be determined, in order to avoid guilt, should be important, and no other possible way left to determine it; and the manner of making the appeal solemn and grave, if we would escape the guilt of taking the name of God in vain. Wantonly, without necessity, and in a ludicrous manner, to make this appeal, must be therefore highly blameable. And if thus the decisory lot, when wantonly and unnecessarily employed, be criminal, equally, if not more so, must the **divinatory** lot be, which is employed for discovering the will of God: this, being no mean of God's appointment, must be superstitious, and the height of presumption" (p. 239).

There are numerous instances of casting lots, with divine approval, in the Old Testament. Canaan was divided to the tribes by lot (Num. 26:55; Josh. 14:2); see also Nehemiah 10:34; 1 Samuel 10:20, 21; 14:41.

In the New Testament, lots were cast to decide between two possible successors to Judas, who had committed suicide (Acts 1:26). There is no record of the use of lots by the apostolic church after Pentecost.

The present writer has seen a case where lots were cast to break a tie vote in a presbytery meeting. This is manifestly improper and without warrant. Such a tie vote should be broken by the moderator casting his own vote one way or the other. The Book of Government of the Reformed Presbyterian Church specifies that if the moderator declines to vote, in such a case, the motion before the house is lost. In the case of an election to office, obviously, it would be necessary to continue casting more ballots until the tie would be broken.

In the United States the basic code numbers which determined the order in which young men should be drafted for military service were chosen by lot. This being a matter involving life and death it was felt by the government authorities that the decision should not be made by man. We believe that this was a justifiable use of the lot, provided it was done in faith and with reverence and prayer.

The mere fact that the use of the lot among Christians after Pentecost is not recorded does not necessarily imply that such use would always be improper or wrong. The use of the lot cannot be **inherently** wrong or sinful, else it could not have been approved by God in the Old Testament system. To argue from the silence of the New Testament after Acts chapter one on this subject is to disregard the **occasional** character of the New Testament writings. There are subjects concerning which they had no occasion to speak.

The present writer believes that the position set forth by Buck is sound, with the limitations he sets forth. As for a minister casting lots in connection with a call, this would seem improper, as such a matter can be determined by the use of sanctified intelligence in weighing all the fac-

tors involved. Counsel may also be taken with wise and mature Christian brethren. It seems to the writer that the question whether to accept or decline a call, or how to decide between two or more simultaneous calls, can always be determined by the reverent use of ordinary means. This matter does not seem to come under Buck's category of things "no other ways determinable", and such use of the lot by ministers seems likely to foster superstition and also an unscriptural mysticism and anti-intellectualism. This is also likely to give rise to spiritual pride as the minister who casts lots for such a decision is likely to regard himself as more spiritual than the one who weighs the factors, after prayer, by use of his intelligence.

— J. G. Vos

**Question:**

May first cousins marry?

**Answer:**

(1) We know of no church law or rule against the marriage of first cousins. Nor is such marriage forbidden in Scripture.

(2) Marriage between first cousins is permitted in some states of the U.S.A. and prohibited by law in others. Legal counsel should be consulted by anyone considering such a marriage.

(3) The reason why marriage of first cousins is sometimes considered unwise is that it tends to intensify any hereditary tendencies (both good and bad). Bad hereditary traits are often Mendelian recessives. This means that for the bad trait to appear in the offspring, it must be in the heredity of both parents, not only one parent. A couple that are first cousins have partly the same grandparents. If there are any bad tendencies in the hereditary background, the likelihood of them appearing in the offspring is increased.

In conclusion: No inclusive or blanket rule can be given for this matter. Christian duty, however, requires that our actions be governed by wisdom, and this means taking the existing factors into account in what we do. First cousins considering marriage would do well to consult a Christian physician or geneticist. It is quite possible that no good reason against the marriage exists; on the other hand, the dangers in a particular case might be such that it would be very foolish to contract the marriage.

— J. G. Vos

**Question:**

If God's decree of election is eternal, does it not follow that the elect are the children of God from eternity? In that case, how can it be maintained that elect persons, prior to their regeneration, are "children of the devil" or "children of

wrath" as is claimed in **Blue Banner Faith and Life**, October-December 1961, page 204, on the basis of an interpretation of Ephesians 2:1-3?

**Answer:**

God's decree of election is eternal, but the accomplishment of the decree is not eternal — it takes place in time. People become children of God by **adoption**, which happens not in eternity but in time. See the **Westminster Confession of Faith**, Chapter XII, and Scripture texts there cited. Adoption is represented in Scripture and in the Reformed standards as following on or accompanying **Justification**. God's decree to justify the elect is eternal, but justification itself is not eternal — it takes place in time. On this the **Westminster Confession of Faith** speaks as follows:

"God did, from all eternity, decree to justify all the elect, and Christ did, in the fulness of time, die for their sins, and rise again for their justification: nevertheless, they are not justified, until the Holy Spirit doth, in due time, actually apply Christ unto them" (IX.4).

While God from eternity decrees that the elect shall be His children, He does not actually make them His children until they are regenerated, justified and adopted. Ephesians 2:1-3 clearly teaches that prior to becoming Christian believers, the elect are "children of wrath" and "even as others." Their **destiny** is not the same as that of the reprobate, but their **condition** is the same until they are regenerated.

—J. G. Vos

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## *Till the Perfect Day*

We still believe, though oft seems baffled  
Faith's noble, age-long fight;  
For right we stand, though gloom the scaffold  
With shadows to affright;  
For truth we strive, though still be ruffled  
His seamless robe of light.  
Faith's goodly fight will we maintain,  
Assured that righteousness shall reign.

His truth is mighty, though its power  
To man's rash heart seem slow;  
His grace shall fruit, though oft its flower  
Seems frayed while tempests blow;  
And hope, though threatening clouds may lower,  
Their frowns span with a bow.  
Undaunted, still we watch and pray  
Till Christ bring in the perfect day.

(Author unknown)



**BLUE  
BANNER  
FAITH  
AND  
LIFE**

VOLUME 17

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NUMBER 2

The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man, or Church; but wholly upon God (who is truth itself) the author thereof: and therefore it is to be received because it is the Word of God.

**The Westminster Confession of Faith, I. 4**

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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# *Eye Hath Not Seen*

By Christina G. Rossetti

Our feet shall tread upon the stars  
Less bright than we.  
The everlasting shore shall bound  
A fairer sea  
Than that which cold  
Now glimmers in the sun like gold.  
Oh good, oh blest! but who shall say  
How fair, how fair,  
Is the light-region where no cloud  
Darkens the air,  
Where weary eyes  
Rest on the green of Paradise?  
There cometh not the wind nor rain  
Nor sun nor snow:  
The Trees of Knowledge and of Life  
Bud there and blow,  
Their leaves and fruit  
Fed from an undecaying root.  
There Angels flying to and fro  
Are not more white  
Than Penitents some while ago,  
Now Saints in light:  
Once soiled and sad —  
Cleansed now and crowned, fulfilled and glad.  
Now yearning through the perfect rest  
Perhaps they gaze  
Earthwards upon their best-beloved  
In all earth's ways:  
Longing, but not  
With pain, as used to be their lot.  
The hush of that beatitude  
Is ages long,  
Sufficing Virgins, Prophets, Saints,  
Till the new song  
Shall be sent up  
From lips which drained the bitter cup.

If but the thought of Paradise  
Gives joy on earth,  
What shall it be to enter there  
Through second birth?  
To find once more  
Our dearest treasures gone before?  
To find the Shepherd of the sheep,  
The Lamb once slain,  
Who leads His own by living streams —  
Never again  
To thirst, or need  
Aught in green pastures where they feed.  
But from the altar comes a cry  
Awful and strong  
From martyred Saints: 'How long.' they say,  
'O Lord, how long,  
Holy and True,  
Shall vengeance for our blood be due?'  
Then the Lord gives them robes of white  
And bids them stay  
In patience till the time be full  
For the last day —  
The day of dread  
When the last sentence shall be said;  
When heaven and earth shall flee away,  
And the great deep  
Shall render up her dead, and earth  
Her sons that sleep,  
And day of grace  
Be hid for ever from Thy face.  
Oh hide us, till Thy wrath be past,  
Our grief, our shame,  
With Peter and with Magdalene,  
And him whose name  
No record tells  
Who by Thy promise with Thee dwells.

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# *I Look for the Lord*

By Christina G. Rossetti

Our wealth has wasted all away,  
Our pleasures have found wings;  
The night is long until the day;  
Lord, give us better things —  
A ray of light in thirsty night  
And secret water-springs.  
Our love is dead, or sleeps, or else  
Is hidden from our eyes:  
Our silent love, while no man tells  
Or if it lives or dies.  
Oh give us love, O Lord, above  
In changeless Paradise.

Our house is left us desolate,  
Even as Thy Word hath said.  
Before our face the way is great;  
Around us are the dead.  
Oh guide us, save us from the grave,  
As Thou Thy saints hast led.  
Lead us where pleasures evermore  
And wealth indeed are placed,  
And home on an eternal shore,  
And love that cannot waste:  
Where joy Thou art unto the heart,  
And sweetness to the taste.

# BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

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## *The Continuity of the Old and New Testaments*

By the Rev. Hugh J. Blair

There are many misconceptions of Scripture which have made people feel that the Old Testament is not really relevant today. The modernist, for example, sees the Old Testament as little more than the account of the evolution of the Jews from primitive beliefs and taboos to a lofty view of God, unsurpassed by any other religion before Christ. It is but one of the many sacred books which the world has known, expressing the religious laws and customs of one people in its quest for God. The God of the Old Testament is a very different person from the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The dispensationalist sees the Old Testament as forming a different stream, or several different streams, of thought from the dispensation of grace revealed in the New Testament. Particularly he distinguishes between the dispensation of Law in the Old Testament and the dispensation of Grace in the New.

The student of prophecy with his eyes fixed on the end of the ages finds in the Old Testament prophets innumerable details of what is going to happen in the last days, and he fits Old Testament predictions into the world history of today.

Each of these inadequate conceptions of the message and value of the Old Testament has its own effect not only on our thought but on our living. If the Old Testament is nothing more than the history of a primitive people's developing religion, then their laws, for example, regarding capital punishment for murder have no relevance for today. "A life for a life" is simply a blood taboo of a primitive people, which civilization and Christianity have outgrown. If we are not under the Law of the Old Testament, but under Grace, then we can safely make our own application, for example, of the Fourth Commandment, since the law of the Sabbath is not binding on those who are not under the Law. If the Old Testament prophets were mainly concerned with predicting the end of the ages, then we can consider as of less importance their teachings on national righteousness and even their predictions of the Kingdom which came when Christ proclaimed "The Kingdom of God is among you."

In face of all these misunderstandings, or incomplete understanding, of the message and the relevance of the Old Testament, it is the pur-

pose of this study to maintain the essential continuity of the Old and New Testaments.

It might be almost sufficient to say that the Old Testament was Christ's Bible, coloring all His teaching, and at the heart of His own life of devotion and prayer. How natural it was that words from the Old Testament, pondered and prayed over in the solitude, should leap to His mind and become an essential part of the victory won in the great crises of His life, until at the end it was with words from Old Testament Scripture that He committed His spirit to the Father. The fact that the Old Testament was the Bible of Jesus might well halt our questioning of its value and relevance.

We might do well to remember, too, that when the apostles referred to the Divinely inspired Scriptures, it was the Old Testament that they had in mind. And, above all, we must never forget that the name "Christ" itself is an Old Testament term, incomprehensible apart from the Old Testament. As Wilhelm Vischer puts it in his book on "The Witness of the Old Testament to Christ," "It is not the case that we know what the designation 'Christ' means. When the New Testament declares that Jesus is the Christ it immediately refers us to the Old Testament. Learn there what 'Christ' means."

All these things — Christ's use of the Old Testament, the apostles' view of the Old Testament as divinely inspired Scripture, and the fact that the term "Christ" has no meaning apart from the Old Testament — mean that we can dismiss for ever any thought that the Old Testament is not relevant today. The truth is that we need both Old and New Testaments for a full understanding of the fundamental truths of the Gospel of the grace of God.

It must be said most emphatically that the Old Testament — the Old Covenant — is the Covenant of Grace, no less than the New. It is a complete misreading of the Old Testament to suggest that it is a covenant of works, and that the law which it sets forth was ever meant to be a means whereby a man might be justified in the sight of God. Let the Westminster Confession of Faith guide us here: "This covenant of grace is frequently set forth in the scripture by the name of a Testament, in reference to the death of Jesus Christ the testator, and to the

everlasting inheritance, with all things belonging to it, therein bequeathed. This covenant was differently administered in the time of the law, and in the time of the gospel; under the law it was administered by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the paschal lamb, and other types and ordinances delivered to the people of the Jews, all foreshadowing Christ to come, which were for that time sufficient and efficacious through the operation of the Spirit, to instruct and build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah, by whom they had full remission of sin, and eternal salvation; and is called the Old Testament. Under the gospel, when Christ the substance was exhibited . . . it is held forth in more fulness, evidence and spiritual efficacy, to all nations, both Jews and Gentiles; and is called the New Testament. There are not two covenants of grace differing in substance, but one and the same under various dispensations." Quite simply, the Old Testament saints were saved in exactly the same way as we are, by grace, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

It should be noted that the Law given at Sinai, and particularly the Ten Commandments, do not first and foremost confront men with the challenge of inexorable law. God's revelation to Israel at Sinai did not begin, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." It began, "I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." Israel was confronted not first with what man must do but with what the grace of God had done. That same pattern is followed throughout the whole Old Testament, which is supremely a revelation of the loving kindness, the grace, of God. And so it is a misunderstanding to suggest that the Old Testament sets before us the demand of Law and the New Testament the gospel of Grace.

But it may be objected that if it be a misunderstanding of the teaching of the Old Testament, it is the same misunderstanding of which the Apostle Paul is guilty when he makes his famous contrast in Romans and Galatians between law and grace. In answer to that, two things must be said. One is the Law, when Paul wrote, had come to mean a great deal more than the Old Testament. It included the great mass of interpretations and rulings and traditions which centuries of later scribes had added to the original law, possessing in Jewish eyes an authority as binding as that of Moses himself. That was the Law when Paul wrote — the whole mass of Jewish legalism. And, secondly, it was against the Jewish misconception of the law as a covenant of works and not a covenant of grace that Paul inveighed so strongly. Paul never sets aside the Old Testament; he does set aside the Jewish misinterpretation of the Law as a way of

salvation. And he stresses again and again that salvation in the Old Testament as in the New is by grace, through faith.

A second truth which should be underlined is Christ's own statement that He did not come to destroy the Law but to fulfil it. Now it is true that there is a sense in which Christ was made the end of the law for righteousness. But the fact is that "law" has three senses, ceremonial, civil and moral. The ceremonial law with its ritual anticipations of redemption through the Cross of Christ ran its course and ceased when Christ died: the setting aside of that law is the theme of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The civil law, with its detailed injunctions for Israel's national life and government, was no longer operative when Israel ceased to be a theocracy. That is why the death penalty is no longer exacted for some of the offences for which it was the punishment in Israel's code of legislation: that is our answer to those who would say that acceptance of the Old Testament involves the imposition of the stringent laws of Israel's national life. The ceremonial law and the civil law were both destined to pass away, but the moral law which articulates the eternal purposes of God is eternally valid.

What, then, did Christ mean, when in the Sermon on the Mount He said, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time. . . But I say unto you"? Does that mean that He set aside the Old Testament? That would be flatly to contradict His own statement, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfil." What Christ was setting aside was not the Old Testament, but the scribes' interpretation of the Divine law, an interpretation which superimposed things on the law which were not there in the first place.

Christ's quotation of "them of old time" regarding murder certainly began with the Old Testament law, "Thou shalt not kill," but the scribes had added to that something which only served to weaken the stark impact of God's command: "and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment," that is, of legal proceedings. Similarly they limited adultery to the actual physical act, and had their own views on what were valid grounds for divorce — so long as it was done in a legal manner with "the writing of divorcement" they were satisfied. So far as swearing was concerned, they held that there were distinctions between different kinds of oaths: some were binding and some were not. And when Christ challenged what was said by "Them of old time," He was challenging not the law of the Old Testament, but the scribes' and Pharisees' interpretation of it and their own traditions.

But to say that Christ did not come to des-

troy the law does not mean that He left it as He found it. He said Himself that He came not to destroy but to fulfil. And "fulfil" means quite literally, "fill full." I remember years ago hearing a Scottish Old Testament scholar use a graphic picture to illustrate what Christ meant when He said that He came to fulfil the law. You may think of a glass as empty, as partly full of water, and as filled full. Similarly you can think of a period when there was no law, then of a period when there is a measure of law, and lastly of a period when the law is fulfilled in the light of Christ's teaching. Take "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" as an example. First of all the glass is empty: there is no law. Someone injures you: you get your own back **and more**. He puts out your eye: you maim him much more seriously or even kill him. He knocks out a tooth; you break his jaw. That is the kind of thing that happens when there is no law to restrict vengeance. Then the Old Testament law is given — an eye for an eye, **and no more**; a tooth for a tooth, **and no more**. The law was given to prevent excesses of vengeance. The glass is **now** half full. Then the Pharisees came and insisted on the letter of the law: if an eye had been put out, then the offender's eye must be put out, and so on. Then Christ came and His teaching meant that the glass was filled full, the law was completed. "But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also."

Similarly with the law of divorce. There was a time when divorce could be almost at will, as it is among Moslems today, when a man can say in the presence of witnesses, "You are no longer my wife," and the marriage tie is loosed. Then for the hardness of their hearts Moses gave them a law of divorce. There must be a writing of divorcement, stating clearly that there were some physical or moral reasons for it — not adultery, for the penalty for that was not divorce, but death. But now the glass was half-filled, for there was considerable limitation of divorce. The Pharisees were satisfied with that, and so long as the "writing of divorcement" was legally drawn up, divorce was allowed. Then Christ came to fulfil the law, and laid it down definitely that there was only one reason. So Christ came, not to set aside the Old Testament law, but to reinforce it and to fulfil its incompleteness.

We have shown, therefore, that the continuity of the Old and New Testaments is seen in the fact that the doctrine of the grace of God runs in an unbroken line through both of them, and in the fact that Christ has linked them inextricably together. But have we not proved too much? Are we to say that there is no difference at all? That would certainly be to go too far, for the differences are there. Calvin in the **Institutes** lists five, which William Niesel says

in his book on "The Theology of Calvin" are reducible to one — "that between the clarity of the gospel and the obscurity of the word which was preached before the gospel." But that is to oversimplify Calvin and the truth of which he wrote. As Calvin points out, the Old Testament represents spiritual blessings by temporal benefits, though not exclusively: and it reveals spiritual truth by pictorial representations. To that extent it is true to say that the difference between the Old Testament and the New is the difference between obscurity and clarity. But there is a greater difference than that, suggested by Jeremiah 31:31 ff., where the Word of God itself points the contrast: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. . . This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." The difference between the Old Testament and the New is the difference between the literal and the spiritual, as Calvin points out: "The Old Testament is of the letter, for it was published without the working of the Spirit. The New is spiritual because the Lord has engraved it upon men's hearts." The Pharisee who found that to keep the law, "Thou shalt not covet" was beyond his own resources came to say, when he received the Spirit within his heart, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me."

The difference, further, is the difference between the national and the universal. The Old Covenant was limited in its application: but now "they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord." The difference between the two covenants can perhaps be put concisely, if somewhat epigrammatically, as the difference between blessings that are **temporal** and blessings that are **spiritual**, between truth that is **pictorial** and truth that is **actual**, between obedience that is **external** and obedience that is **internal and spiritual**, between a religion that is **national** and a religion that is **universal**. But these differences, important though they are, and however great reason they afford for thanksgiving that we are living in New Testament days, are not differences of nature or of essence. The Bible is essentially a unity, for every part of it speaks of Christ. The ultimate continuity of the Old and New Testaments lies there. "Search the Scriptures," He said, "for these are they which testify of Me."

The most important implication of the con-

tinuity of the Old and New Testaments is the truth that New Testament Christianity cannot be divorced from its Old Testament roots. Indeed, there are certain Old Testament emphases without which New Testament Christianity would be unintelligible, incomplete and ineffective. We need the Old Testament emphasis on the holiness of God and the wrath of God against sin. That is assumed by the New Testament, but it is inexorably stated in the Old, and particularly in the history of Israel. Preaching today that neglects the Old Testament tends to blunt the impact of the divine holiness and to dull the conscience's awareness of sin.

We need the Old Testament's pictorial representation of propiation by sacrifice to help us to understand the Atonement. A preaching that neglects the Old Testament sees the Cross as something less than substitutionary.

A theology that denies the continuity of the Old and New Testaments will consider the Book of Psalms to be the superseded praise-book of sub-Christian worship, and will question our Lord's own statement that the Psalms speak of Him.

We need the Old Testament's stress on the

sovereignty of God to enable us to see the Kingship of Christ in all its implications, national as well as individual.

And in the situation of today with the Church of Christ standing as a minority group in the nation and in the world, we need the Old Testament doctrine of the Remnant to assure us that God can work His purposes out with far fewer instruments than we imagine necessary, and that all the principalities and powers of evil cannot finally defeat His purpose of a world's salvation.

All these truths and many more are ours in Old Testament and New Testament alike. For the God who "hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son" is the same God "Who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets." The continuity of the Old and New Testaments rests ultimately on the fact that He is the same, "yesterday and today and for ever."

**Note:** The above article is the Lecture given by the Rev. Hugh J. Blair, B. A., at the opening of the Theological Hall of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Belfast, Ireland, on October 19, 1961. — Editor.

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## *Sketches of the Covenanters*

By J. C. McFeeters

### Chapter L

#### **The Voice of the Martyrs' Blood**

The mountains and moors of Scotland are decorated with the tombstones of the martyrs. The descendants of the Covenanter fathers have erected many memorials in the places made sacred with the blood of the martyrs. The memorials range from the humble stone to the costly monument. The fathers have not been forgotten; yes, they are still highly esteemed for the heroic struggle, by which every son and daughter has a birthright to the richest inheritance of Christian liberty on earth.

The persecution lasted twenty-eight years, with few "blinks" to take the chill of horror out of the air. During this time, 18,000 persons, it is said, suffered death, or utmost hardships, for their faith in Jesus Christ. Of this number, 7,000 went into voluntary banishment; 2,500 were shipped to distant lands; 800 were outlawed; 680 were killed in battle, or died of their wounds; 500 were murdered in cold blood; 362 were, by form of law, executed. We have no account of the number that perished in shipwrecks, or succumbed to the horrors of transportation; nor of hundreds that

were shot at sight by the soldiers who ravaged the country for years; nor of the thousands who wasted away through cold, hunger, and exposure in the mountains and moors. Gloomy caves, dripping moss-hags, and unmarked graves, were asylums of mercy to multitudes, who are without any earthly record; but their names are written in heaven. Truly Scotland has been consecrated to the Lord. The blood of the martyrs has watered her heather, crimsoned her streams, stained her streets, and bedewed her fields. Scotland is the Lord's. The blood means much.

#### **The Blood Emphasizes the Truth of Christ**

The blood of the martyrs testifies to the value of the truth — the superlative importance of all revealed truth. Their blood placed emphasis on the sovereignty of God, the supremacy of Christ, the inspiration of the Bible, the preciousness of the Gospel, the independence of the Church, the liberty of conscience, and the thousand and one co-related doctrines of salvation. The Covenanters took their position at Christ's throne, where the rainbow of the Covenant arches the heavens; and from that point of view the plan of salvation

lay before them, in matchless detail and glorious perspective. These men received enlightenment from the Holy Spirit, and thereby had a broad, clear, rapturous vision of God and His redeeming grace. They saw the truth in the harmonious teachings of the Bible, and esteemed it as God's sanctuary, filled with the presence of Jesus Christ. These Covenanters found Christ in every particle of revealed truth, in every "jot" and in every "tittle" of the Word of God. Christ's life was throbbing in it, His glory was streaming through it, His energy was radiating from it. They were willing to lose the right eye, the right hand, the right foot, yea, life itself, rather than lose the least fragment of the Scriptures. Rather would they be jostled out of their homes, and wander in deserts, than depart from Bible doctrines. James Renwick was offered his life, if he would let a drop of ink fall on a sheet of paper. He chose death in preference to that compromising act. Is the truth, the entire system of truth, every stone in the temple of truth, thus dear to us?

#### **A Witnessing Church is Needed**

The blood testifies to the need of a witnessing Church. While Satan remains above the pit, and iniquity abounds in present proportions, a faithful and fearless testimony for Jesus Christ, and His glorious Gospel and royal rights, will be a moral necessity. God has His own way of calling out His witnesses, and assigning service to them. The Church, as a whole, has invalidated and incapacitated herself for this responsibility, by weakness, declension, and compromise. God does not commit His testimony to the Church, while in such condition; nor to the faithful in the Church, whose voices and actions are weakened or neutralized by majorities. This important and hazardous task throughout the ages has not been committed to a Church that is recreant at any point; nor to individuals that are true at every point; but to a distinctive body of earnest, faithful and fearless believers. For this purpose the Lord has divided and sub-divided His people time and again. He will have a testimony by a Church that is distinct from every retrograde organization. While the Covenanter Church was faithful under Henderson, Johnston, Guthrie, Gillespie and other worthy leaders, she was united, happy and prosperous; "she was beautiful as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners." But when she suppressed, by resolution, one principle of the Covenant, God drew the dividing line. He sent the persecution that brought out His witnesses, four hundred ministers and people in proportion. And when these ministers weakened under the royal indulgences, He intensified the persecution and called out the "Cameronians." These witnesses He qualified to see the truth in its vast proportions, and feel it in its divine dreadfulness. They became the embodiment of the Gospel of Jesus Christ;

they were the incarnation of the doctrines of His kingdom on earth. They dwelt in the presence of God, lived on the hidden manna, and pulsated with the power of the endless life. Such were the martyrs who defied death and all the instruments of torture. Have the Covenanters of today spirit, power and character like this?

#### **A Cry for Vengeance**

The blood of the martyrs cries unto God for vengeance. "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" Such was the cry of them that were "slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held." Vengeance in the Gospel! Vengeance in Jesus Christ! Vengeance in the heart of God! How we are shocked! We try to veil our eyes and shut out the dreadful fact. We attempt to explain away the terrible doctrine. Yet there it is. A sharp sword is sheathed in this scabbard, and it will yet be drawn for dreadful work. "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." "And shall not God avenge His own elect? . . . I tell you that He will avenge them speedily." God is just as well as merciful; yea, necessarily just, but conditionally merciful. Justice is an essential attribute of His life; mercy is volitional. The blood of the martyrs, their groans, tears, wanderings, the desolation of home, the cries of mothers and children, the horrors worse than death — all ever before His face; nothing is forgotten. Without repentance, no remission; sin does not grow feeble with years, nor die of old age. Judgment must be meted out, or rectitude would forsake the universe; the whole structure of God's kingdom would fall into ruins. The guilty must suffer. The individual perpetrators of these horrid crimes have already suffered; they have appeared personally before Christ's tribunal. But the State! Oh, the guilty State! The State was the chief party in the slaughter of these innocents. True, she has ceased to shed the blood of saints; but has she repented of the blood she has shed? Her eyes are dry; her brow is brass. Her children build monuments, but her hands are still red; the blood that once dripped in now dried, but it is still on her hands. Genuine repentance means reformation. The Reformation is under Scotland's feet. The twenty-eight years' struggle is to her a splendid drama; the principles are amusing. When He inquireth after blood, what shall Scotland do? The angel answers in the Revelation: "They have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and Thou hast given them blood to drink."

#### **Weighty Moral Obligations**

The blood of the martyrs imposes obligations upon posterity from generation to generation. The martyrs deeply felt their responsibility for the Church, her purity, doctrines, discipline, mem-

bership; for her loyalty to Christ, her separation from the world, and her administration in the Holy Spirit. Their zeal for the House of God brought them to the front; their passionate love for Jesus Christ placed them on the firing line. There they met every attack made upon Christ and His House; there they stood for the royal rights of Jesus and the honor of His kingdom; there they fell under the murderous fire, giving place to their successors. These children of Jesus knew how to die, but not how to retreat. They did their work well, and necessarily left it unfinished. The victory was assured, though not in sight. The death-stricken hand reached the blood-stained banner out to another to be carried forward. This war still rages. The supremacy of Jesus Christ is yet disputed; His royal rights are yet usurped by mortals; His Bride, the Church, still halts amid many opinions; the ordinances of grace are unblushingly corrupted; the teachings of the Gospels are adroitly doctored. The attacking forces are active, determined and numerous, as in the days of the martyrs. The tactics differ, but the fight goes on. Heavy, heavy are the moral obligations that fall to the successors of

those who gave their lives for the truth. To recede would be cowardice, desertion from the ranks, perjury within the Covenant, treason against Jesus Christ. Is this too strong? Listen: "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." Surely the times call for Christian soldiers; yea, heroes; possibly, martyrs. Do Covenanters feel their obligations to the Lord?

#### Points for the Class

1. How long did the persecution last?
2. What is the estimated number of those who suffered?
3. What significance is attached to the martyrs' blood?
4. How does it show the value of Gospel truth?
5. In what manner does the blood cry for vengeance?
6. How does it lay obligations on posterity?

(To be continued)

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## *The Hebrew Sanctuary, A Study in Typology*

By the Rev. Wallace B. Nicholson, M.A., B.D., M. Th.

### VIII. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HOLY PLACE

The holy place or the outward apartment of the sanctuary contained three holy vessels which appears to us to signify the service of the believer to his God. If the Most Holy Place signified the provision God made for His people, and **what He was to them** in His character as a just God and a Saviour then the holy place with its services represented **what they were to Him** in the character and exercise of the homage and obedience to Him, and so we read:

"When these things were thus ordained, the priests went always in the first tabernacle accomplishing the service of God" (Heb. 9:6).

#### 1. The Table of Shewbread.

The service connected with the shewbread was performed by the priests on every Sabbath. The Table was made of wood overlaid with gold and set up on the right hand in the holy place, as viewed from the entrance. This was a provision table where the children of Israel through the ministrations of the priests placed offerings before Jehovah. The bread was removed every Sabbath and fresh bread was substituted — twelve loaves to represent the twelve tribes of Israel. The statute concerning this service is emphatic. The bread

was to be "from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant" (Lev. 24:8).

This then represented a sphere of service and worship entrusted to the people of God. Bread as such constituted the staff of life; and they were required to labour in various ways to transmute the fruit of the ground into food for the nourishment of their bodies. The ground was the Lord's, the seed also was His; but the shewbread was in some respects unlike the manna, for they had to exercise themselves to provide suitable and palatable food. On the religious side this can be translated into spiritual ideas. The Hebrews were in union with God; and their spiritual and temporal well-being was dependent upon Him. But in order to manifest their indebtedness to Him, and to show their appreciation of His protection, care, and provision for them, they were to labour spiritually that they might present to Him the fruits of their spiritual life. The bread was a material token of their gratitude and love, and when presented before him in an orderly way, was acceptable and well-pleasing to Him.

And to remind them in case they were tempted to forget it through the influence of the false worship of the heathen, who offered material food to a material God, they were taught that the bread was not for eating but to be placed before His Presence for His approval and such we con-

ceive to be implied in the descriptive name of "shewbread." The Lord God was a spiritual God and did not require offerings for His sustenance (Psalm 50). The bread was later removed and partaken of by the priests themselves and so in the long run experience will show that those who profess the name of God and live for themselves will be left with little.

"Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own ways, and be filled with their own devices" (Prov. 1:31).

while those who serve the Lord and give Him of their best will have much.

"Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him; for they shall eat the fruit of their doings" (Isa. 3:10).

## 2. The Candlestick.

The candelabra with its seven lights was placed on the opposite side of the table of shewbread. Its immediate use was to provide light for the ministrations of the holy place, there being no windows, and therefore no light even during the day, unless we assume that the curtains were then drawn aside. But since everything in the Tabernacle was to image spiritual truths then the light in the holy place must symbolize spiritual light. The familiar spirits and wizards because they deferred not to the Word of God were destitute of spiritual light (Isa. 8:19, 20). While the righteous is so identified because his light breaks forth as the morning (Isa. 58:8). The Church of God is called the light of the world and the children of light. The light referred to is not merely intellectual light but spiritual and moral illumination imparted by the Spirit of God. The light from the candlestick fed by "pure olive oil beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always" (Isa. 60:1), prefigures the result of the effulgence of the divine glory shining upon and through the Lord's people. God Himself is the Fountain of Light, and Christ the Redeemer is the Light of the World and the people of God in all ages through the divine light imparted to them are the possessors and reflectors of that radiance which reproves and enlightens the children of darkness.

Oil in scripture is symbolic of the influence of the Holy Ghost, and apart from His illumination within their hearts neither the priests nor their spiritual successors were capable of understanding or performing their spiritual duties in a manner pleasing to the Lord.

"Clearly, therefore, what we see in the candlestick of the tabernacle is the church's relation to God as the possessor and reflector of the holy light that is in Him, which she is privileged to receive, and bound again to give forth to others. So that where she is there must be no

darkness, even though all around should be enveloped in the shades of night. It is her high distinction to dwell in the region of light, and to act under God as the bountiful dispenser of its grace, and truth." (Fairbairn, *Typology*, Vol. 2, page 370.)

"Since Philo's time, the candlestick with the seven lamps has often been referred to the seven planets of the ancients. But though the sanctity of the number seven may have had this reference in some other nations there is no trace of this in the Mosaic worship. The number seven is here always the sign of 'perfection and completion' in all relations which are rooted in the divine economy of salvation. But while in general, all holy things symbolize the communion between Jehovah and the people, the candlestick with its seven-fold light points to the 'perfect light' which shines in the covenant community; and in particular, the light does not refer merely to the communication of higher knowledge, but, as in the high priest's blessing, Num. 6:25 ('Jehovah makes His face shine upon thee'), to saving divine grace in general. This meaning of the symbol is specially confirmed by the visions in Zech. 4, and Rev. 1ff. There the candlestick is the symbol of a congregation enlightened by God; and when in the vision of Zechariah the candlestick is filled with oil without the act of man, the idea expressed is, as is said in verse 6, that all the success and all the splendour of the congregation is not effected by might or by power, but by the Spirit of God!" (G. G. Oehler, *Theology of the Old Testament*, page 256 New York.)

## 3. The Altar of Incense.

The golden altar of incense was situated just before the curtain dividing the holy place from the holy of holies. The symbolic meaning attached to the offering of incense is by common consent admitted to be prayer or intercession. We are then to enquire whose prayer is referred to and what is the precise meaning to be attached to this act of worship. Some of the Hebrews themselves followed the customs of heathen nations by burning incense to other Gods (II Chron. 34:35) and the Egyptians were known to honour their gods by offering odourous oblations. The Psalmist says, "Let my prayer be set before thee as the incense (Psa. 141:2) while the smoke of the incense in Isaiah 6:3, 4 must refer to prayer. The "pillars of smoke" referred to in Canticles 3:6 may also be predicated of the prayers of the church militant whose adoration continually ascends to heaven. In Luke 1:10 Zechariah is said to be offering incense while the

people without were engaged in prayer. The prayers of the Saints are referred to in Rev. 5:8; 8:3, 4, according to the same symbolism. The passage in Rev. 8:3, 4, has given rise to some difficulty as a distinction seems to be made between the incense and the prayers of the Saints. But since in Rev. 5:8, the incense is expressly

called the prayers of the Saints we may take it for granted that the golden censer contained the prayers of the Saints.

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(To be continued)

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## *Instrumental Music in the Public Worship of the Church*

By John L. Girardeau

(Continued from last issue)

**The Washing with Water.** Why was water employed as a type, if not to signify what the New Testament Scriptures so unmistakably characterize under that figure? "Except a man," said the Lord Jesus, "be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (Jno. iii. 5). The preposition here is omitted before the Spirit in the original, and the words may well be rendered "of water even the Spirit." At least this must be the meaning in the judgment of any one who would not co-ordinate external water with the almighty grace of the Holy Ghost in the new creation of the soul. And to talk of one's being spiritually born in part of an outward symbol is to speak unintelligibly. Paul several times uses washing and water to signify cleansing by the Holy Spirit. Eph. v. 26: "That he might sanctify and cleanse it (the church) with the washing of water by the word." 1 Cor. vi. 11: "And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." Tit. iii. 5: "According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and (or, even the) renewing of the Holy Ghost." John emphasizes the issue of water and blood from the side of Jesus on the cross, and declares, "This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one." (Jno. xx. 34; 1 Jno. v. 6, 8.) The Spirit bears witness both to justification and sanctification. It is he who sanctifies and he who bears witness with his own work in the soul. The analogy, then, between the type and the anti-type, as to the offices respectively discharged, leads to the conclusion that the lavers and ablutions of the temple typified the grace of the Holy Spirit. This view is far from being singular. It has the support of the illustrious Lightfoot. "The end of it (the laver) was," he says, "to wash the hands

and feet of the priests; but the most ultimate end was to signify the washing and purifying by the Spirit of grace, which is so oft called **water** in the Scripture. And so the sprinkling of the blood of the sacrifice, and the washing in the water of the laver, did read the two great divinity lectures, of washing by the blood of Christ from guilt, and by the grace of God from filthiness and pollution." (*Works*, Vol. ix., p. 419: London, 1823. Fairbairn takes substantially the same view: *Typology of Scripture*, Vol. ii., pp. 212, 213. See also M'Ewen, *Types*, Bk. iii, 3.) This witness is true and his learning and piety render it superfluous to cite the testimony of others to the same purpose.

**The Anointing Oil.** It is not clear from Scripture that this typified the Holy Spirit? Under the Old Testament economy priests, prophets and kings were anointed. Did the anointing oil of the temple signify that Christ would anoint himself? or rather, did it not prefigure his anointing by the Holy Ghost? He is the Christ, God's anointed One, and the holy Unction was the Spirit of wisdom, power and grace. Acts x. 38: "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power." This direct testimony is sufficient. The anointing oil of the temple discharged the typical office of prefiguring the holy Unction with which Jesus was anointed, and who, coming from him upon all his people, teacheth them all things. (1 Jno. ii. 27.) This view also is sustained by the authority of the distinguished scholar who has already been cited. "The oil and anointing," he observes, "wherewith the priests and the vessels of the Lord's house were sanctified, did denote the Word and the Spirit of God, whereby he sanctifieth the vessels of his election, even persons of his choice, to his service and acceptance." (*Ibid.*, p. 440. This view is also maintained by M'Ewen, *Types*, Bk. iii 3.)

**The Oil in the Golden Candlestick.** Taking into view the analogy of Scripture teaching, one cannot doubt that this oil typified the Holy Spirit. I cite the remarks upon this point of the Rev.

Patrick Fairbairn, in his **Typology of Scripture**: (Vol. ii., pp. 257, 258.) This symbol has received such repeated illustration in other parts of Scripture, that there is scarcely any room for difference of opinion as to its fundamental import and main idea. In the first chapter of Revelation, the image occurs in its original form, 'the seven golden lamps' (not candlesticks, as in our version, but the seven lamps on the one candlestick) are explained to mean 'the seven churches.' These churches, however, not as of themselves, but as replenished by the Spirit of God, and full of holy light and energy; and hence in the fourth chapter of the same book we again meet with seven lamps of fire before the throne of God, which are said to be 'the seven Spirits of God'—either the one Spirit of God in his varieties of holy and spiritual working. (This is probably the true view), or seven presiding spirits of light fitted by that Spirit for the ministrations referred to in the heavenly vision. Throughout Scripture, as we have already seen in chapter three of this part, oil is uniformly taken for a symbol of the Holy Spirit. It is so, not less with respect to its light-giving property, as to its qualities for anointing and refreshment; and hence the prophet Zechariah (chap. iv.) represents the exercise of the Spirit's gracious and victorious energy in behalf of the church under the image of two olive trees pouring oil into the golden candlestick, the church being manifestly imaged in the candlestick, and the Spirit's assisting grace in the perpetual current of oil with which it was supplied." (In opposition to Fairbairn, and in agreement with the majority of orthodox commentators, I would regard the golden candlestick as itself a type of Christ, and the **lights** merely, the **lamps** of revelation, as representing the Church. The oil, with Fairbairn, I take to typify the illuminating grace of the Holy Ghost; but the true Container of that oil is originally Christ himself, not the church (except, perhaps, derivatively), which receives it from him and manifests it in a world of darkness. See M'Ewen, **Types**, Bk. iii., 3.)

**The Feast of Pentecost.** "This festival," says Horne, in his Introduction, (Vol. ii., p. 126.) "had a typical reference to the miraculous effusion of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles and first-fruits of the Christian Church on the day of Pentecost, . . . on the fiftieth day after the resurrection of Jesus Christ." He refers, in support of this view, to Schultz, Lamy, Lightfoot, Michaelis, Reland and Alber.

Horne further says: (*Ibid.*, p. 127. M'Ewen strongly urges this typical significance of the Feast of Pentecost.) "One of the most remarkable ceremonies performed at this feast, in the later period of the Jewish polity, was the libation or pouring out of water, drawn from the fountain or pool of Siloam, upon the altar. As, according to the Jews themselves, (In confirmation of this assertion the author quotes the following passage from the Jerusalem Talmud: "Why is it called the

place or house of drawing? Because from thence they draw the Holy Spirit: as it is written, And ye shall draw water with joy from the wells of salvation.") this water was an emblem of the Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ applied the ceremony and the intention of it to himself when he cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. (Jno. vii. 37-39.)"

Treating of this feast, Fairbairn makes the following instructive remarks: (*Typol. Scrip.*, Vol. ii., p. 311.) "The rite that commemorated the typical redemption had to take precedence of anything belonging to the coming harvest, even of the presentation of its first ripening sheaf. But the work of redemption being finished, and the feast of fat things so long in preparation being ready, then the freest welcome is given to come and be satisfied with the loving-kindness of the Lord. And Christ having suffered and been glorified, what day could be so fitly chosen for the descent of the Holy Ghost as the day of Pentecost? For to what end was the Spirit given? To take of the things of Christ, and show them to Christ's people; that is, to turn the riches of his purchased redemption from being a treasure laid up among the precious things of God, into a treasure received and possessed by his people, so that they might be able to rejoice, and call others to rejoice with them, in the goodness of his house. Now the work of God is finished, henceforth the fruitful experience of it among his people proceeds; and the first-fruits of the Spirit having assuredly been given, he can never withdraw his hand till the whole inheritance of blessing is enjoyed."

#### Instrumental Music

In the first place, it has already been shown that neither by God's direction nor in the actual practice of his people in the old dispensation were instruments of music, susceptible of modulation, employed elsewhere in public worship than in the temple. They were not used in the tabernacle until David was preparing to build the temple, or in the synagogue.

In the second place, it has also been shown that whatever element of worship was embraced in the temple-service, and was absent from that of the synagogue, was typical in its character. This was true of instrumental music. Therefore, as an element of the temple-worship, it was typical.

In the third place, it has been proved that some of the elements contained in the temple-service were typical of the Holy Spirit and of the effects to be produced by him in the New Testament dispensation, such as consecration, illumination, purification, and the conversion of souls; and now,

In the fourth place, I lay down the proposi-

tion that the instrumental music of the temple-worship was typical of the joy and triumph of God's believing people to result from the plentiful effusion of the Holy Ghost in New Testament times.

It was suited to discharge such a significant office in the age in which God saw fit to prescribe its employment as a part of a typical ritual. It produces an exhilaration of the senses, and that is about all that it does produce. We have seen that the Israelites, like all other peoples, employed it in their national and secular rejoicings. Now, the Mosaic dispensation was not peculiarly a dispensation of the Spirit. It is a distinctive glory of the Christian economy that it is "the ministration of the Spirit." "But," says Paul, "we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." 1 Cor. ii. 7-10. This revelation, partially made in the old dispensation, is far more fully unfolded even in this life in the present, and will be still more amply and gloriously in the heavenly. "But if," also says the same apostle, "the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth." (2 Cor. iii. 7-10.) In the New Testament we are clearly taught the reason of this. It was not meet that the Holy Spirit should be copiously poured out before the actual offering up of the great atoning sacrifice and the entrance of the true high priest into the heavenly holy of holies. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)" (Jno. vii. 37-39.) As, then, in the ancient dispensation, the veil of the temple was not rent in twain, as the full liberty of adoption and boldness of access into the presence of God, with the assurance of faith and hope, which makes heaven begin on earth, were not granted

to the worshipper, it pleased God to typify the spiritual joy to spring from a richer possession of the Holy Spirit through the sensuous rapture engendered by the passionate melody of stringed instruments and the clash of cymbals, by the blare of trumpets and the ringing of harps. It was the instruction of his children in a lower school, preparing them for a higher. Meanwhile, it must not be forgotten, they were habitually recalled, even in that dispensation, by the simpler and more spiritual worship of their weekly assemblies, to a service of God which, as it had always existed in the past, contained in itself a prophecy of permanence through the whole future development of the church.

That the instrumental music of the temple, which, as we have seen, was introduced into its services only by express divine warrant, was typical, and therefore temporary, is further proved by the fact that it was not practised in the apostolic church. This, it is true, remains to be established in the progress of the argument, but it is so generally admitted that it may here be assumed. Most certainly if the King and Law-giver of the church had intended that kind of music to accompany its singing of praise under the New Testament, he would have instructed its inspired organizers to that effect. That they did not sanction it is evidence that he did not command it, and that in turn proves that it was designed to be merely typical during the continuance of the temple-worship.

Now, it must have been typical, either of Christ in his person or offices, or of the use of instrumental music by the church in the New Testament dispensation or some other outward action, or of the Holy Spirit in his person or offices, or of an effect produced by his grace. There is no other supposition I can think of. There is no conceivable sense in which it could have typified the person or offices of Christ. There is no sense in which it is supposable that it typified any other external action of the church than the use of instrumental music. It could not have typified the use of instrumental music itself, for that would involve the absurdity of a thing typifying itself — of an identity of the representation with the thing represented, of a type with its antitype. We cannot imagine any way in which it could have typified either the invisible person or the offices of the Holy Ghost. We are shut up, then, to the position that it was typical of an effect to be produced by the grace of the divine Spirit; and I but echo the opinion of eminent and godly divines in maintaining that it was designed to be a type of that spiritual and triumphant joy which is engendered by the plentiful effusion of the Holy Ghost upon believers under the Christian dispensation. The Spirit having been poured out, and that abundant joy of believers having been experienced, the shadow gave way to the substance, the type to the antitype.

# *A Believer's Life of Christ*

By the Rev. John C. Rankin

## CHAPTER XXII

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### CHRIST'S PROGRESS TO HIS LAST DAYS

A difficulty always encountered in all serious study of the life of Christ is the chronology. That the correct order of events was known to the gospel writers we may be sure, but it was not part of their purpose to make it known except in a general way. In the present chapter it will be our aim to review the flow of progress in the public life of Christ as best we may.

We have noted that there were periods in the public life roughly corresponding to the provinces into which the land was divided. As the objective of the Lord was to evangelize the Jewish homeland, there was no regular ministry devoted to the conversion of the Samaritans. Thus the main divisions of the public life were (1) the Judean ministry. As a matter of fact this extended from the very beginning to the very end of the life. (2) The Galilean; "The Great Galilean Ministry" and "the Later"; with excursions to the East into the Decapolis. (3) There followed the last journeys to Jerusalem, under which the Perea Ministry is to be included. (4) the last days of the last week in Jerusalem and its environs.

After the first swift rise to popularity in the north there arose the official opposition. Then there came a decline in public favour which was soon followed by a virtual complete collapse of popular interest and support. From that time on the opposition remained in possession of the field unto the end. Toward the end it mounted into what seemed to be an overwhelming victory on the one hand and a crushing defeat on the other.

The collapse of popular favour came, strangely enough, with the great miracle of the feeding of the five thousand. An immediate effect of this event was the attempt on the part of the multitudes to take him by force to make him a king. The failure of this attempt was followed, on Jesus' part, by a form of teaching wholly at variance with the popular notion of the Messiah and his kingdom. This precipitated the great crisis at which time "many of the disciples went back" to their homes and "walked no more with him."

Also about this time Jesus collided with the rulers on the matter of their tradition and refused to give them their kind of a sign. These things, together with the ever growing ferocity of the opposition, combined to produce the great Jewish apostasy.

What it meant was that the work in the main, in the two main provinces of Judea and Galilee, was at an end. It meant that the national rejection of Jesus the Christ was practically complete. The leaders and the people as a whole had had their opportunity to make up their minds, and the decision on the whole was contrary to his claims. From that time on by far the greater part of Jesus' time and attention was devoted to his own and to his teaching of them.

He first led them out of Jewish territory to Caesarea Philippi on the north. There he elicited "the great confession," and immediately transferred the center of his teaching from his person to his work, which would and could be consummated only in his death. It is true that his public teaching and healing continued for a time in the provinces to the east, in Decapolis and, last of all, in Perea. But a temporary success in these fields could in no way compensate for the great rejection which had arisen in the principal provinces.

The sadness of this picture of the active life of Christ is relieved in part by great shining moments which came to him in mid-career. There was of course the joy of the return of the twelve with their glowing report; and again, much later, of the seventy. Notable miracles were performed, as the feeding of the five thousand and later of the four; the stilling of the storm at sea, and the walking on the water.

Most important of all however, was the great confession. It was indeed a high point; and in our humble opinion, the great divide in the earthly life of the Lord. It signified the full recognition of his Messiahship on the part of the faithful few. It was the acknowledgment on their part of a fixed and immovable conviction concerning his person. At that point it was apparent that the Messiahship in their minds was now clearly conjoined with the loftiest concept of eternal Sonship.

With this confession the Saviour was ready for the next step, the much needed indoctrination concerning his work. This teaching was given, though it was not until after his death and resurrection that they really knew and believed and understood.

The great confession was soon followed by that solemn and glorious occasion of the transfiguration. "It came to pass about an eight days after these things, that he took Peter and John

and James and went up into a mountain to pray. And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistering. And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elias: Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem" (Luke 9:28-31).

As the ministry in Galilee had really ended with the feeding of the five thousand, so that in the Decapolis' came to an end with the feeding of the four. At this time there were also further controversies with the leaders concerning Sabbath observance; the plucking of the heads of grain in the ripened fields, and the healing of the man with the withered hand.

As for the last journeys to Jerusalem, it has been said that Jesus' aim at this time was "to attract the public attention of the whole land including Perea." He "moved back and forth through Judea and Perea and explained in popular discourse . . . the true religious life and the true idea of God and of his service." "Here belong the parables of the good Samaritan, the wedding feast, the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the prodigal son, the unjust steward, the rich man and Lazarus, the importunate widow and the Pharisee and the publican." (Davis Bible Dictionary, edition of 1898; article entitled "Jesus Christ," by Dr. George Tybout Purves).

Incidents of this ministry were the healing of the ten lepers only one of whom returned to give thanks, the short lived contact with the rich young ruler, and the blessing of the little children. Also there was the strife which developed among the disciples as to who was to be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, and the answer given to them.

This period began at a time when, as Luke says, "when the time was come that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem" (Luke 9:51); for it could not be that a prophet should perish anywhere else (Luke 13:33). Jesus foresaw the near approach of his departure from this world. But first he must pass through the awful ordeal of the consummation of his redemptive mission.

As he set his face in this direction, and entered on this sorrowful way, the wording of the statement would seem to indicate that it took all of the will power of which he was capable. But he made his decision and exercised his resolve and began the last long journey to the place of his death. It was an upward journey in a physical sense, while downward into the depths of the dark valley of death.

These last journeys, in Luke's account, are treated as one. They are more clearly distinguished in John. According to the writers, the first came in the Fall of the year when he went up to

the feast of the tabernacles. The second came in mid-winter and was to the feast of the dedication. The third and last ascent occurred in the Spring of the year, (A.D. 29 or 30), at the time of the great, annual Passover celebration.

At some time between the last two of these visits he came up as far as Bethany, when Lazarus was raised from the dead, after which he retreated into the background again. As Dr. Purves says, this miracle had a profound effect on the people of the capitol and so brought matters to a climax as between the leaders and the Lord. From that time on they consulted daily as to how to compass his death.

Following are some of the references relative to this period. "And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid" (Mark 10:32). When the ascent was made to Bethany for the raising of Lazarus, Thomas said to his fellow-disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him" (John 11:16).

As for the teaching, Jesus said, "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify: and the third day he shall rise again" (Matthew 20:17-19). "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: And they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again. And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken" (Luke 18:31-34).

The last ascent out of the deep chasm of the Jordan to the heights on which the city was built was timed so as to bring him to his destination six days before the feast. Leaving Perea he crossed the Jordan and came to ancient Jericho and passed through. It was then that blind Bartimeus received his sight and little Zaccheus' curiosity eventuated in the salvation of his soul. The journey brought Jesus and the disciples to Bethany again.

Lazarus' resurrection had brought distinction to the little suburb and apparently someone seemed to think that a banquet was in order with Jesus as the honoured guest. We read that "they made him a supper." Lazarus, of course, would be seated with Jesus and the twelve, and it was only natural that Martha should be one of those that served. But Mary, it was, who earned for herself a name of deathless fame. For she came with her "alabaster box of precious

ointment" and "poured it on his head," and "anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair." "So the house was filled with the odour of the ointment."

It was her personal tribute of praise; her expression of an inexpressible gratitude and love; and an action of surpassing loveliness. For her it was the least that she could do to show her love. Jesus accepted it with immeasurable satisfaction we may be sure, as a worthy deed, most worthily performed. And for the second time he came to her defense against her critics. Looking beyond the immediate occasion he saw it as a rehearsal of his anointing for his burial. (Matthew 26:6-13, Mark 14:3-9, John 12:1-8).

In all of this story of his life Jesus appears indeed as "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." "In all our affliction he was afflicted and the angel of his Presence saved us." "Surely he bore our griefs and carried our sorrows, yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him and with his stripes we are healed."

So many things there were in Jesus' life which hurt and pained him to the heart. Sin hurt, and our sinful ignorance, folly and unbelief. Men's contempt and repudiation hurt. The furious animosity and ferocity of the rulers hurt. The weakness and stupidity of the disciples hurt. In his foresight of things to come, the impending destruction in consequence of the national rejection, hurt. And who can say what pain there was in the anticipation of the cross with all that it meant of the wrath of demons and men, of his identification with the transgressors, his suffering for sin, separation from the Father and subjection to the wrath of God? "I have a baptism to be baptized with," he said, "and how am I straitened till it be accomplished" (Luke

12:51). "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39).

And yet through it all we must believe that he was not at all a gloomy soul. Suffering and shame were only for sin and its consequences and in relation to it. In the world he had tribulation, but only in and through and of the world. From all else he had something else; and the gifts of grace and salvation are not conferred with a long face. Whatever came upon him from without, in the depths of his being and nature there was only love and joy and peace.

There was comfort for him always in the Father save at the very last when the cloud of sins obscured that blessed face. But until that awful hour he lived in the fellowship of the Father, with the Spirit, and always in the blessedness of who and what he was and came to do. To the end of his days he knew the joy of perfect service rendered, duty faithfully discharged, and work well done, and of constant victory in the conflict.

As one has said, "If our Lord was 'the Man of Sorrows,' he was more profoundly still 'the Man of Joy.'" ("Biblical and Theological Studies" by the Faculty of Princeton Theological Seminary; article entitled "On the Emotional Life of Our Lord" by Dr. Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield.) "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27). "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" (John 15:11). "But unto the Son he saith . . . Thou has loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows" (Hebrews 1:8, 9).

(To be continued)

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## **George Gillespie on Church Censures**

By R. D. Eagleson, M.A., Dip. Ed.

(Continued from last issue)

**Note:** This article by a scholar in Australia expounds the classic Presbyterian view of the subject of Church Discipline as held by the 17th century Scottish divine George Gillespie. — Editor.

In Matthew 18, our basic text, the question of discipline ends with the Church (verse 17): there is no higher court. Some Erastians wanted the final decision to rest in the hands of the civil magistrate, while others raised the problem

of abuses in Church discipline. We have already considered how it is impossible in the light of Scripture for the magistrate to exercise authority in spiritual matters because of the divinely established distinction between the two governments. As for abuses, the charge is equally applicable to the civil magistrate as to the church officers, and possibly more so since in some countries he may act individually and without any other restraint. If excommunication is a spiritual matter, then we must leave it to those

who have been appointed by God to have rule in spiritual things. We cannot hope for success, security or safety in our actions if we go outside his decrees. The possibility of abuse is no ground for setting aside the ordinances of God. If, however, abuses do occur, the civil magistrate may command a re-examination of the case in another synod and thereby seek redress. He acts, here, however, in a purely legal manner in terms of the Church's constitution and not in opposition to it. If the church courts go outside their limits, or in extraordinary cases where the majority of the eldership and members defect, the magistrate may make their actions null and void (cf. 1 Kings 2:26) and may protect those unjustly cast out, according to the constitution of the Church. We have already considered examples of such action earlier and need only reiterate here that the civil magistrate is acting more as an arbitrator, albeit with authority, than as a ruler.

Although in ordinary cases the civil magistrate has no right to interfere in or execute discipline, he may support the Church by adding civil sanctions to its determinations. He may use his coercive power to compel the unruly to submit and to preserve the unity and peace of the Church. In doing this he follows, not precedes, the direction of the church court.

The exclusion of the civil magistrate from the power of church discipline means that this power is intrinsic to the Church itself, and that church members can only be censured by church members. The words of our Lord in Matthew 18 go further than this and indicate that the binding and loosing referred to are applicable only to church members. The person who comes under discipline, if he remains obdurate, is to become as a heathen and publican to the Church. This suggests that he did not have this relationship to the Church before, a fact which is attested by verse 15, in which the one who trespasses is called "thy brother." Here then is proof of a power of government in the Church limited to the Church and distinct from any other government.

We must also remember that discipline is concerned with what are known as **scandalous** sins. (The word **scandal** in its religious use means:

(a) discredit to religion occasioned by the conduct of a religious person; also perplexity of conscience occasioned by one who is looked up to as an example; (b) an occasion of unbelief or moral lapse; a stumbling block — **Students' Oxford English Dictionary**. Briefly, a scandal is a publicly known sin). It is visible sins which are the subject of discipline, for we are dealing with the Visible Church, and elders are not meant to know the secrets of men's hearts. We are not concerned in searching out the private trespasses in a man's life, but only with the public scandal of an openly profane life or a private sin which has grown public afterwards by the offender's obstinacy following admonition (cf. Matt. 18:17, 17).

Moreover it is with the spiritual side of sin and discipline, not the civil, and it is especially with spiritual sins, the scandals which are committed against the soul of a neighbor, that Christ is dealing in Matthew 18. The early part of the chapter proves this, for there He was dwelling on the doctrine of scandals and offences. Christ is not concerned with the reparation of our injuries — indeed, He refused to be a judge of these (Luke 12:14) — but with rules for our consciences concerning the amendment of our brother. "If thy brother transgress . . . gained thy brother" (verse 15.) The sole motive is a care and solicitude for the salvation of a brother's soul, and the gaining of him from eternal death to eternal life through admonitions and reproofs.

If civil transgressions are meant at all, it is only in their spiritual implication, in the effect of sin on the soul of the offender. But surely spiritual sins are more important and, in view of the emphasis contained in the words "gain thy brother", it is clear that none of us is to allow a brother to remain in sin without admonishing him. Furthermore, any sin committed in our sight, hearing or knowledge, should be a scandal to us and a trespass against us, because he who should edify us is scandalising us. So that the words **against thee** signify not a civil but a spiritual injury (cf. Levit. 18:18; 19:17).

(To be continued)

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## *Religious Terms Defined*

**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. (Held by Congregationalists, Baptists and some others; 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.

**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 origination, by the direct, almighty power of God, of what which is truly new as to form, as to matter, or as to both form and matter. "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). Creation is sharply distinguished from **Providence**, in which God works without originating anything truly new. The common view known as Theistic Evolution stands condemned because it confuses Creation and Providence, as well as on other grounds.

**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 sign of religious decadence when customs are treated as unalterable, while principles are regarded as mere human customs).

**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 clearly distinguished (a) from ordinary insanity or mental disease; and (b) from bodily disease; Matt. 4:24. The common notion that those described in Scripture as demon-possessed were in reality only mentally ill is therefore wrong. The symptoms may have been similar, but the **cause** was different.

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## *Some Noteworthy Quotations*

**ORDINARY POLITICS** sometimes has its sordid side; politics in church affairs always has.

— Herman Bavinck

**THE CLEARER SIGHT** we have of the sovereignty and power of heaven, the less we shall fear the calamities of this earth.

— Matthew Henry

**GIVE ME THE PLENARY VERBAL THEORY** with all its difficulties, rather than the doubt. I accept the difficulties, and humbly wait for their solution; but while I wait I am standing on a rock.

— J. C. Ryle

**WE ARE INDEBTED TO GOD** for the good works we do, and not He to us.

— Belgic Confession

**HE THAT WILL GO** as near the ditch as he can, will at some time or other fall in; so he that will take all liberty that possibly he may lawfully, cannot but fall into many unlawful things.

— Augustine of Hippo

**IF YOU FIND YOURSELF** loving any pleasure better than your prayers, and any book better than the Bible, any house better than the house of God, any table better than the Lord's table, any person better than Christ, any indulgence better than the hope of heaven — **TAKE ALARM.**

— Thomas Guthrie

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

— Amy Carmichael

**NO PHILOSOPHER** has ever been able to solve the riddle of the universe, nor has any been able to find a remedy for sin.

— Loraine Boettner

**TRAMPLE** on thine own credit and reputation, and sacrifice it, if need be, to God's honor.

— Thomas Boston

# Studies in Old Testament History

## LESSON 10

### THE PROBLEM OF BIBLE CHRONOLOGY

Many old Bibles, and some new ones, have the date 4004 B.C. as the date of the "beginning" (Genesis 1:1) or the creation of the world. Because this date has been printed in the margin of many Bibles, many people have come to think that this date is practically a statement of the Bible itself. But the fact is that the Bible does not tell us the date of the "beginning."

The figure 4004 B.C. is a part of Archbishop Ussher's scheme of Bible chronology. Ussher (also spelled Usher) was a scholar who lived in the 17th century. He based his calculations largely on the genealogies given in the Bible, but his reasoning was unsound, for he overlooked two important matters: (1) The Bible genealogies were not written to enable us to calculate the date of the Creation, but for the purpose of showing the line of descent of the people of Israel and especially Jesus Christ; in the Bible itself the genealogies are never used as a basis for constructing a scheme of Bible chronology. (2) In Bible genealogies minor links are often omitted, and a grandson spoken of as a son, etc. Thus in Matthew 1:1 the genealogy of Jesus Christ is given with only one link (David) between Jesus and Abraham — a period of almost 2,000 years of time. It is easy to prove that some links were often omitted in Bible genealogies, by comparing one passage with another. For proof of this statement, the student is referred to **Before Abraham**, by Byron C. Nelson. In other words, the Bible genealogies do not aim at mathematical completeness, but only at showing the true line of descent.

For these reasons, Ussher's date of 4004 B.C. for the Creation has now been generally abandoned by orthodox Bible scholars. The fact is that the Bible does not provide sufficient data to enable us to calculate the date of the Creation.

Giving up Ussher's date of 4004 B.C. does not mean, however, that we must accept the speculative claims of unbelieving scientists who speak of billions of years. For example, George Gamow, in his **Biography of the Earth**, speaks of the year 2,000,000,000 B.C. as "the earth's birth date" (page 6), adding that the earth's mother was the sun, implying, of course, that the sun must be much older than two billion years. Some scientists today are speaking of three billion years as the age of the earth. We should realize that such opinions are speculative. They involve assumptions which cannot be really proved, just as truly as Ussher's date of 4004 B.C. involves assumptions which cannot be proved.

After all, the date of the creation of the universe is not religiously important to us, for

if it were, God would have revealed it to us clearly in His Word. What is important is the fact of the creation of the universe. For this fact establishes the most important distinction of the Bible, namely, the distinction between Creator and creature. If there was a divine act of creation, then Creator and creation are entirely distinct. The Bible always distinguishes them clearly. It draws a clear, sharp line of demarcation between the Creator, on one hand, and all creatures, on the other hand. Even in Christ, who as God is the Creator and as man is a creature, the boundary line remains sharp and distinct. Christ is not a being halfway between God and man; He is fully God and fully man at the same time.

It is not until we reach the time of Abraham, about 2,000 B.C., that we can establish Bible chronology with practical certainty. Before Abraham there lies the undatable past. By the time of King David, about 1,000 B.C., most dates can be determined with a fair degree of precision.

The following table of approximate dates should be memorized and the student should be prepared to give any or all of these dates when called on to do so. This is the historical framework of the period of history that we are about to study. Even though most of these dates are approximate rather than precise, they will serve to fix in mind the sequence of persons and events. These dates are in accordance with the latest conclusions of conservative Biblical scholarship. (References: **Chronology of Israel**, by John Rea, in **Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society**, Volume 3 Number 3 (Summer, 1960, pages 67-69; **The Sunday School Times**, August 15, 1959, page 4).

Abraham .....	about 2000 B.C.
The Exodus .....	1447 B.C.
Fall of Jericho .....	1407 B.C.
Ruth, about .....	1120 B.C.
Samuel .....	about 1050 B.C.
Saul anointed .....	1043 B.C.
David, about .....	1000 B.C.
Solomon crowned .....	971 B.C.

The key dates given above follow what is called the "early chronology" of the Old Testament. This system of chronology best fits the data found in the Bible itself, especially the key statement in I Kings 6:1. Another system of chronology, called the "late chronology" is favored by Professor William F. Albright and many other scholars on the basis of their interpretation of archaeological findings. The "late chronology" differs from the "early chronology" by about 150 years in the period before the birth

of Samuel. For a comparative table of key dates in the two systems of chronology, see **The New Bible Commentary** (Davidson, Stibbs & Kevan), page 38.

The "Time Chart of Bible History" on the cover of the **Hammond Atlas of the Bible Lands** follows the "late chronology", giving the date of the Exodus as about 1290 B.C. In this course, however, we shall follow the "early chronology" as given in Manley's **New Bible Handbook**, page 104, with modifications as shown in the table of dates to be memorized (see above).

#### Questions:

1. When did Archbishop Ussher live?
2. What was Ussher's conclusion as to date of the Creation?
3. On what Biblical data did Ussher largely base his reasoning?
4. What improper assumptions are involved in Ussher's reasoning about Biblical chronology?
5. What is the prevalent attitude of present-day orthodox Biblical scholars to Ussher's scheme of Bible chronology?
6. Why is it not possible really to calculate the date of the Creation?

7. What is the age of the earth according to Professor George Gamow?

8. Why may we properly question such figures as those of Gamow?

9. What inference may we draw from the fact that the date of the origin of the universe is not revealed in the Bible?

10. Why is the fact of the Creation of great religious importance?

11. At what point in Old Testament history can we begin to determine dates with practical certainty?

12. At what point in Old Testament history can we begin to determine dates with a fair degree of precision?

13. What verse in First Kings is a "key statement" for a system of Bible chronology? What does the verse say?

14. What is the difference between the "early chronology" and the "late chronology" in studies of Old Testament history?

15. Why should we adhere to the "early chronology" in preference to the "late chronology"? Which system involves the wrong procedure of adjusting the Bible to human interpretation of archaeological findings?

## LESSON 11

### THE STORY OF THE CREATION — GENESIS 1 AND 2

We shall now take up the study of Genesis, the first book of the Bible. This book deals with things that happened very long ago, and it covers a great amount of time. Even on the basis of Ussher's chronology, the Book of Genesis covers as long a period of history as all the rest of the Bible together — a period of at least 2,200 years. If Ussher's chronology be rejected, then Genesis covers a much longer period of time. Everything narrated in Genesis happened long before the birth of Moses, the human writer of the book.

The first eleven chapters of Genesis tell of very early history in outline form, only the most important matters being mentioned, and few details being given. Beginning with chapter 12 there is a change in the method of the book; at this point it begins to go into great detail. From this point the book is built mainly around the life history of four men — Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. It ends with the death of Joseph in Egypt (about 1773 B.C.).

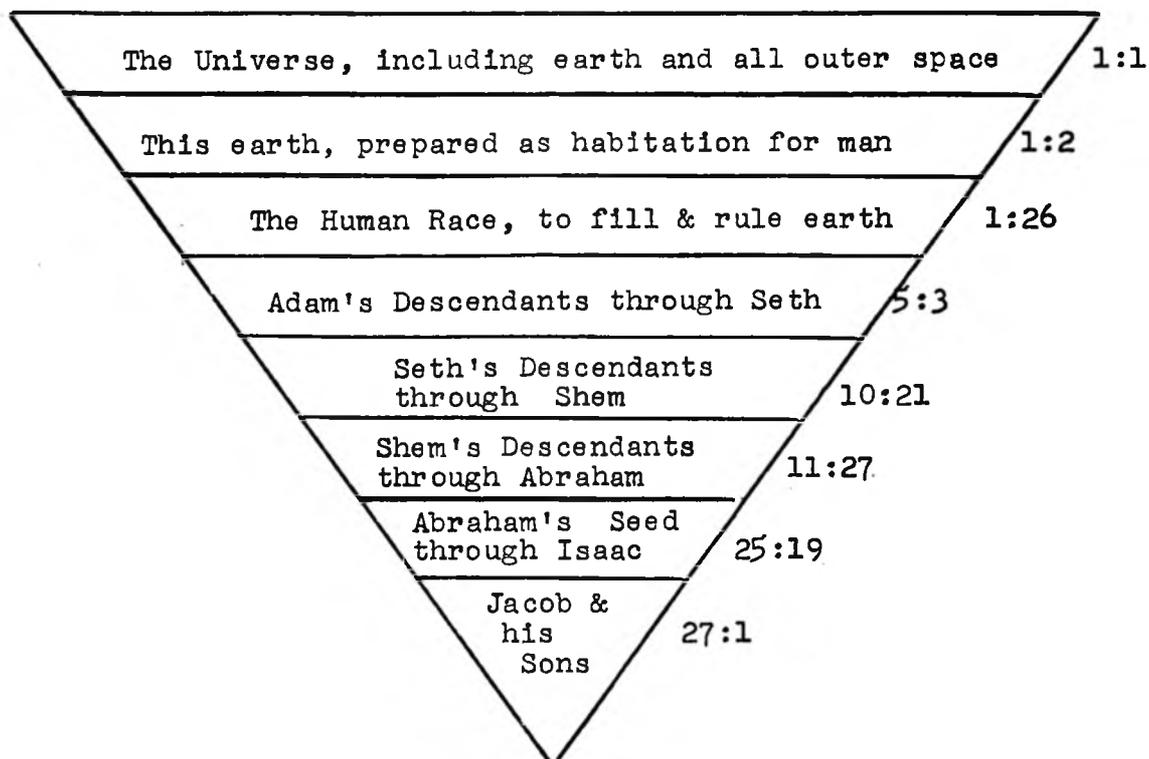
The method used by the Book of Genesis is to start with the broadest possible subject and constantly narrow the field down. What is not of special importance for God's plan of redemption is mentioned and then dropped. What is of special

importance for God's plan of redemption is carried on through. The structure of the Book of Genesis may be seen from the following diagram. Note that each successive topic constitutes a narrowing of the field. (See next page.)

The expression "These are the generations of . . ." which occurs repeatedly in Genesis, is the formula used to indicate that one subject is being dropped and a new subject or new part of a subject is being taken up. It always goes with what follows the formula, not with what precedes it. This formula is used as a caption or sub-title is used in present-day books. The formula might be paraphrased: "The following is an account of the history of . . .".

The Creation story is given in Genesis in two accounts. The first, from 1:1 to 2:3, emphasizes the cosmic point of view. The second, in 2:4-26, stresses the human race. There is no contradiction between the two nor is there any reason to say that both could not have been written by the same author. The account in chapter 2 modifies the story of the creation of man. Possibly the order here is logical rather than chronological.

Are the "six days of creation" to be regarded as literal days of 24 hours each, or is the word



"day" here used in a figurative sense to mean a long period of time? Arguments are presented on both sides of this question. Neither view is without its problems and difficulties. Both views have their advocates among orthodox Bible scholars of recognized standing. The figurative view — that "day" here means a long period of time — may be correct. However, the arguments commonly brought against the literal view are not conclusive at all. Remember, we are not dealing here with the way nature operates today, but with what happened when the direct, almighty, creative power of God was at work at the beginning of time. The question is not "How does nature work today?" but "How did God start nature to working in the first place?"

In addition to the literal and figurative views of the six days of creation, a third interpretation has been favored by some conservative Bible scholars. This is called the **Literary Framework View**. This view holds that the six days are merely a literary pattern or device in which the inspired writer arranged his material, just as Shakespeare arranged his dramas in acts and scenes. According to the Literary Framework View, the six days really have nothing to do with the passing of time. Like the literal and figurative views, this view has some points in its favor and is also confronted with some difficulties.

In view of the difficulties of this problem and the lack of agreement about it among conservative scholars, we may be wise to reserve judgment and wait for more light on the subject

before committing ourselves absolutely to any one of the three views that are held.

We shall take up the question of the evolutionary theory of man's origin in a later lesson.

#### Questions:

1. How much historical time is covered by the Book of Genesis, if Ussher's chronology be accepted?
2. If Ussher's chronology be rejected, how long a period of time does Genesis cover?
3. Were the events narrated in Genesis past, present or future when Moses wrote the book?
4. What is the literary character of the first 11 chapters of Genesis? Do these 11 chapters cover more, or less, historical time than the remaining 39 chapters of the book?
5. What four men are prominent in the part of Genesis that follows chapter 11?
6. What method is followed in Genesis as to treatment of the subject matter?
7. What is the meaning and purpose of the formula "these are the generations of" in Genesis?
8. What is the difference between the two accounts of the Creation in Genesis, Is there any real reason why Moses could not have been the author of both?

9. What interpretations exist as to the nature of the six days of Creation?

10. What can be said in defence of the literal view of the length of the days?

11. What is the "literary framework view" of the Creation days?

12. Why is it unwise at the present time to pronounce a final judgment on the length of the Creation days?

## LESSON 12

### THE ORIGINAL CONDITION OF THE HUMAN RACE

Genesis 1:1 speaks of the original creation of the universe out of nothing by the almighty power of God. Verses 2:25 describe the preparation and ordering of the earth for human habitation. Everything described looks forward to man as the climax and crown of God's creative activity.

All the lower creation is calculated to glorify God **indirectly**, by being used and enjoyed by the human race. Man, on the other hand, is to glorify God **self-consciously and directly**, for man alone was created in the image of God. The lower creation glorifies God through man. Man is the mirror by which the lower creation reflects the divine glory. This is beautifully brought out by Psalm 8 in the Book of Psalms:

What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor.

Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet;

All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field;

The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.

O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!

The same idea is found in Genesis 1:28, which contains God's mandate to the human race to rule, use and enjoy the earth and its contents (sometimes called "the cultural mandate"):

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

Evolutionary science of the common type disregards the fact that the lower creation was deliberately planned and prepared for the benefit of mankind. According to consistent evolution-

ists, it is due to sheer chance that man appeared and that he found the earth and its contents suited to his needs. Such scientists scoff at the idea that the vast amounts of coal and oil which exist underground were planned and providentially prepared by God for the benefit of the human race. They hold that it is mere coincidence that man can utilize coal and oil.

Real evolution is ruled out by the creation account in Genesis. Sometimes the term "evolution" is used in an improper sense, as meaning the development of varieties within a species, such as the many breeds and varieties of dogs, chickens or pigeons which are known today. No one questions the fact of this kind of development, but this is not **evolution** in the proper sense of the term. Real evolution means that there are no hard and fast boundary lines between species, and that one species can, gradually, develop into another. All life, both animal and vegetable, is held to be genetically related. Birds are said to have come from reptiles, for example. And man is said to have come, ultimately, from a one-celled animal called an amoeba.

This theory of development of one species into another cannot be reconciled with the repeated statement of Genesis 1 that God created distinct living organisms, each "after its kind." The "kinds" spoken of in Genesis 1 are not necessarily the same as what are called "species" in modern scientific classification. But at any rate, the Genesis record implies that God created definite "kinds" of organisms, each of which was different from others and could reproduce only its own "kind." Whether we call these "kinds" **species** or **genera (genuses)** is not very important. How many "kinds" God created, we cannot say. The number may certainly have been much less than the number of species recognized by modern scientific classification. Each "kind" created by God may have contained within itself the power to produce many varieties, some of which may be classed as separate species by science. For example, it seems to be true that the dog, wolf and coyote are all of one "kind" as the term is used in Genesis. These three all interbreed freely and the offspring are perfectly fertile. We may say, then, that dog, wolf and coyote are a single "kind" according to Genesis, while in science

they are classified as three distinct species. The fox, on the other hand, must be of a different "kind", for it cannot interbreed with the dog, wolf or coyote.

To take an example from the plant kingdom, one of the commonest and most popular house plants is the African Violet, which is botanically classified as the genus *Saintpaulia*. These plants have been found growing wild only in one rather limited region of East Africa. Some twenty recognizably different forms of *Saintpaulia* have been discovered in the African forests. These are all classified by the science of botany as distinct species. Yet they must all be of one "kind" as the word is used in Genesis 1, for any wild "species" of *Saintpaulia* can be hybridized by cross-pollination with other "species" of it without any difficulty, and the resulting new plants are perfectly fertile. From these twenty wild "species" there have been produced in less than 75 years' time about 3,000 cultivars or cultivated varieties. These again can be freely crossed with each other and also with any of the wild "species." It is so easy to cross one "species" or cultivated variety of *Saintpaulia* with another that it is being done all the time by amateur hybridizers who have a few plants on a window shelf in their home. On the other hand, experts have tried and tried to cross *Saintpaulia* with supposedly related plants such as *Petrocosmea* and *Streptocarpus*, but the effort fails because they never get any fertile seeds.

#### Questions:

1. Which of God's creatures is the crown of His work of creation?

2. How is the creation below man intended to glorify God?

3. What is the teaching of Psalm 8 on the place of man in the creation?

4. What is meant by the "cultural mandate"? Where is it found?

5. What important fact is disregarded by evolutionary science?

6. How is the existence of natural resources suited to human use explained by evolutionary scientists?

7. How is the term **evolution** often improperly used today?

8. What is the meaning of the term **evolution** when properly understood?

9. What phrase which occurs repeatedly in Genesis 1 has an important bearing on the question of evolution?

10. What is meant by the term **kind** as used in Genesis 1?

11. Why is it correct to say that the dog, wolf and coyote form a single "kind" as the term is used in Genesis 1? Why must the fox be of a different "kind"?

12. How many wild species of *Saintpaulia* (African Violets) are recognized by the science of botany? Why must these all be one "kind" as the term is used in Genesis 1?

## LESSON 13

### THE ORIGINAL CONDITION OF THE HUMAN RACE, CONTINUED

Evolutionary science is unable to frame a really satisfactory definition of the term **species**. This is quite evident from the various definitions given in books on biology. As used by science, **species** is a more or less fluid concept. If a definition of **species** could be universally agreed upon, it would clear the air of much confusion about whether evolution, in the sense of production of truly new species, has occurred.

The words "after its kind" imply that there is a God-ordained barrier between the "kinds" created by God. Development may take place within the "kind", but not beyond the limit of the "kind." Man, of course, was specially created by God and is not to be regarded as a product of evolution from a non-human ancestry.

Consistent evolution as it is commonly held by materialistic scientists is atheistic and is based on chance rather than on faith in God. It is held that living things developed by inherent forces, with-

out divine control. There is, however, a form of the evolution theory known as "theistic evolution" which includes belief in God. This form of the theory holds that evolution was God's method of creating living things. Theistic evolution is held by some scientists and by a good many religious scholars who are embarrassed by the confident claims of unbelieving scientists. If one is going to be an evolutionist, certainly it is much better to be a theistic one than an atheistic one. But it is questionable whether theistic evolution can be regarded as a consistent form of the evolution hypothesis, and whether it can really be reconciled with the divine truth of the first two chapters of Genesis.

One form of the theory of theistic evolution that seems plausible to many Christian believers holds that man's bodily organism was produced gradually by evolution through ages of time until something **physically** similar to man had ap-

peared. All this was a **natural** process and the organisms were **non-human**. Then at a certain point God intervened by His **supernatural** or **creative** power and implanted a mind or soul in these organisms, with the result that they became **persons**, after which they are properly regarded as **human** (“**homo sapiens**”). This way of putting the matter, it is thought, on the one hand recognizes the facts of science and on the other hand safeguards the truth of the Bible.

The difficulty with this construction is that it has to abandon evolution at the crucial point and bring in direct, supernatural creation to account for the existence of the human race. For it is precisely **personality** — the possession of a mind or soul — that makes man **human** and sets him apart from the lower creation. If we have to believe in supernatural creation to account for the one thing which above all else makes man human, then we have really admitted that evolution cannot explain the appearance of man on the earth. Needless to say, man’s bodily organism resembles that of the higher animals, but in the matter of personality he differs radically from them. Thus the person who holds the view that we have been examining may be an evolutionist, but he is not a **consistent** evolutionist, for he has to bring in supernatural intervention at the most important point. Really consistent evolution holds that man as a **whole** (both body and mind) was produced entirely by natural forces operating from within. It cannot admit external intervention at any point and still be thoroughly consistent in affirming evolution. The very word **evolution** means **unfolding** of what is already within something.

Theistic evolution is further shown to be un-Biblical by the fact that it breaks down and destroys the distinction between **creation** and **providence**. God’s work of creation is His work of originating new things (new as to form, new as to matter, or new as to both form and matter). This is spoken of in the Bible by the Hebrew verb **bara**, a term with a very specialized meaning, which occurs only 55 times in the Hebrew Old Testament, and **almost always** means **create** in the strict sense of the direct origination of something new. On the other hand, the ordinary word for **make** in the Old Testament is **asah** which occurs over 2600 times in the Old Testament and is translated in various ways, corresponding to the English verbs **do**, **make**, **work**. This term **asah** is used to describe God’s ordinary or **providential** working which operates through second causes or the forces of nature and which produces changes **without originating anything strictly new**. Theistic evolution, however, cannot account for the unique use of the verb **bara** in describing God’s work of Creation as distinguished from His work of Providence. For according to Theistic Evolution, evolution (a long, natural

process) was God’s **method** of creation. Because it was a **natural process** it would have to be classified as a part of God’s work of **Providence** — that is what Providence is: a natural process indirectly controlled by God. If Theistic Evolution were true, there would be no reason or need for the use of the special term **bara** in Genesis 1 and 2. **Asah** would fit all the way through.

Moreover, the Bible in Genesis 1 and 2 itself marks off creation as separated from Providence by a very definite and clear boundary line. On the seventh day God “rested from all his work which God created and made” (Gen. 2:3). This point marks the boundary of **creation** in the strict sense, although in later times the creative power of God was exerted in miracles. It is true that the word **asah** occurs 10 times in the first two chapters of Genesis, where it is used either to describe a providential dealing of God with that which had been created, or in connection with the verb **bara** which qualifies the meaning and renders it specific in the sense of origination of something new. We may say that **asah** is the broader term (meaning “do” or “make”) whereas **bara** is the narrower and more specific term (meaning “create”). All creation is a doing or making, but not all doing or making is creation. Hence **asah** could be used in its inclusive sense to describe a work of creation, but **bara** could not be used to describe the providential working of God. All this precise distinction, so clear in the Bible, is violated by Theistic Evolution which holds that God created living things **by means of a providential process**.

#### Questions:

1. What difficulty exists concerning the definition of the term **species**?
2. What fact is implied by the words “after its kind” in Genesis 1?
3. What is the common attitude of consistent evolutionists toward faith in God?
4. What is meant by “theistic evolution”?
5. What does “theistic evolution” hold concerning the origin of the human body?
6. What does “theistic evolution” hold concerning the origin of the human soul or mind?
7. Why is this theory of man’s origin not a **consistent** theory of evolution?
8. What is the difference between Creation and Providence?
9. What line of demarcation between God’s work of Creation and His works of Providence exists in Genesis?

10. How many times does the Hebrew verb **bara** occur in the Old Testament, and what does it mean?

11. How many times does the Hebrew verb

**asah** occur in the Old Testament, and what does it mean?

12. What is the bearing of these two Hebrew verbs on the question of evolution?

## LESSON 14

### THE ORIGINAL CONDITION OF THE HUMAN RACE, CONTINUED

It is sometimes stated that biological evolution is a scientifically established fact. This is incorrect. Biological evolution is properly called a theory or hypothesis. When scientists are absolutely confident that it is true, it may be said that evolution is a **scientific dogma** held by faith. The facts which it purports to interpret can also be interpreted otherwise, namely by special creation by God. But any view which brings God, special creation or the supernatural into the picture is immediately rejected as "unscientific" by the materialistic evolutionary scientists of our day.

Mention must be made of the tendency to write the word "evolution" with a capital "E" — Evolution — and to speak of it as if it were a cause of things happening. Thus when some people are asked what made the amoeba develop into man, they reply, "Evolution made it happen." Now this is confusing the issue by mere words. It is like saying, "Happening made it happen." Evolution is a view of development of living things. It requires an adequate cause, and cannot have caused itself. No one would think of saying "Motion makes things move" or "Boiling makes water boil," yet there are those who say, and with an air of superior knowledge, that Evolution made the amoeba evolve into man.

Another confusion is the tendency of some people to regard the passing of time as a cause. When asked what caused the evolution, say, of the horse, they tend to reply, "It took millions of years of time." But time is not the cause of anything. Time is merely part of the framework within which cause and effect operate, as space is part of that framework. Neither time nor space is really the **cause** of anything. Some wise person has remarked that "All eternity is not sufficient to complete that which has not yet been begun."

The theory of evolution can be discussed and criticized from three viewpoints: scientific, philosophical and religious. The scientific aspects of the hypothesis are discussed, pro and con, in many books which will be found in the college Library. Special reference may be made to **Genes, Genesis and Evolution**, by John Klotz. Klotz is critical of the evolution theory, but writes as a scientist. Another interesting book is **The Piltdown Forgery**, by Weiner (Oxford University Press). Weiner is himself an evolutionist, but he tells the story of how the notorious Piltdown fossils, which had been accepted by science as a link between the

anthropoids and man, were proved to have been deliberately falsified. The detection of the Piltdown hoax does not prove that evolution is not true, but it certainly does prove that eminent scientists can be mistaken in their interpretation of important data.

The question of Creation **versus** Evolution is **religiously** important for three reasons: (1) The language used in Genesis 1 ("after its kind") requires the acceptance of creation and the rejection of evolution. It is difficult to see how we can take the words "after its kind" seriously and still believe in any consistent form of evolution. (2) Only Creation is in accord with the Biblical teaching about the original righteousness and perfection of the human race. Creation and evolution involve two radically different, irreconcilable philosophies of history. Creation holds that man originated in a state of moral uprightness and simple civilization, and then **fell** into sin and misery. Evolution, on the other hand, holds that man originated on the **lowest** plane, and never fell, but instead has been continuously though slowly **rising** to enlightenment, civilization and perfection. (3) Accepting consistent evolution means rejecting or diluting the supernatural element in the Bible — and the supernatural element is the main thing in the Bible. Those who reduce or tone down the supernatural element in Genesis 1 will tend to do the same all along the line. Just as water seeks its own level, so the human mind inevitably seeks consistency. Those who accept evolution will too often minimize the supernatural in connection with prophecy, miracles, the virgin birth of Christ, His bodily resurrection, His ascension, His second coming, the inspiration and infallibility of the Bible, etc. Once we start giving up the supernaturalism of the Bible, it is hard to find a stopping place. The tendency is to seek consistency by giving up more and more of the supernatural until in the end one becomes a thorough-going naturalist in his philosophy of religion.

#### Questions:

1. Why is it incorrect to speak of evolution as a scientifically established fact? If not an established fact, what should it be called?

2. When may evolution properly be called a scientific dogma?

3. What is wrong with saying that Evolution made the amoeba evolve into man?

4. Why is it incorrect to regard the passing of time as a cause of evolution?

5. From what three standpoints may the theory of evolution be criticized?

6. What has been proved concerning the Piltdown fossils?

7. What does the discovery of the truth about the Piltdown fossils prove?

8. Give three reasons why the question of Creation versus Evolution is religiously important?

9. Contrast the Biblical philosophy of history with the evolutionary philosophy of history.

10. How does accepting the theory of evolution affect people's attitude toward the supernaturalism of the Bible?

## LESSON 15

### THE ORIGINAL CONDITION OF THE HUMAN RACE, CONTINUED

Man was made in the image and likeness of God. But what does this mean? First of all, there is probably no distinction intended between "image" and "likeness"; by a common Hebrew usage these are parallel terms used synonymously to mean the same thing.

Of course, a physical resemblance to God is not meant, for God is a Spirit, having no bodily form. Yet there is a sense in which man resembles God. Alone among God's creatures in this world, man was created "in the image of God." The "image of God," then, is something which not only indicates man's resemblance to God, but also marks man off as different from all other creatures on this earth. Because he possesses the image of God, man is like God, but different from the animals. It is true, of course, that in a sense man is like the animals. He breathes the same air, requires the same nutritional materials, and his physical organism is in general similar to that of the higher vertebrates. This is because man was intended to live in the same physical environment as the animals. But spiritually and psychologically man is different from the animals.

Orthodox theology holds that the image of God in man is psychological and spiritual. It is sometimes said to consist of the three elements of **knowledge, righteousness and holiness**. Man resembles God in the possession of a rational nature (he can think and reason); in the possession of a moral nature (unlike the animals, he can distinguish between right and wrong); and in the possession of a spiritual nature (he has the capacity for communion with God). Or it might be said that man, like God but unlike the animals, possesses personality and character. When man was created by God, his personality and character were perfect. Man was then capable of perfectly reflecting the glory of God. It is even correct to say that man as created was a perfect, though finite (limited, small-scale) replica (copy) of God.

All this has been sadly changed, of course, by man's fall into sin. Today man exists in a state of sin and misery. He has become greedy

and selfish, and loves his own ambitions and pleasures rather than loving God. He still possesses the image of God, but only in a damaged and broken form. It is only by grace, through divine redemption in the plan of salvation, that the image of God in man can finally be fully restored.

As created, man was to have dominion over all other creatures in this world. This also marks man as the bearer of the image of God. In a limited and subordinate sense man was to be the ruler of the world. He was to be God's representative in ruling over the creatures. Man as created was perfectly in harmony with the will of God; therefore he was qualified to hold dominion, as God's representative, over the creatures. When man was created, the whole world was subject to him. The world of nature was man's friend, not man's enemy. It was only through sin that man partially lost his dominion over the creatures, and nature became man's foe through the curse which God pronounced (Gen. 3:17-19).

It is a common idea today that the original state of man was a state of savagery, from which human civilization has slowly developed. This notion, however, is contrary to the account of early mankind given in the Bible. According to the Biblical record, mankind originated in a state of simple civilization and moral uprightness. His civilization was not technological, for at first he lacked all man-made tools. But lack of tools is not what makes people savages — it is their mental, moral and social traits that make them savages. The twentieth century has witnessed a resurgence of savage barbarism that is all the more terrible because it has advanced scientific discoveries at its disposal. No "stone age" savage did anything as cruel as twentieth century "brainwashing."

From mankind's original condition of a simple civilization and moral uprightness, the great majority of the human race **degenerated** to the condition of crime, violence and lawlessness which existed just prior to the Flood (Gen. 6:5, 11-13). This degenerate civilization was wiped out by the

Flood, and humanity had a new start with the family of Noah. After the Flood, large sections of the human race again degenerated as they willfully rejected the knowledge of the true God (Romans 1:20-32).

The savage and "primitive" peoples which have existed in ancient and modern times are to be explained, according to the Bible, as products of **retrogression** or **deterioration** caused, ultimately, by sin. They are branches of the human race which have deteriorated from the original civilization and moral uprightness of mankind. The headhunters of Borneo are not really "primitive" people; that is, they are not like the first people who ever lived on this earth. On the contrary, they are people far advanced in their degeneration; they are people who have moved backward instead of forward.

Consistent evolutionists and evolutionary sociologists take for granted that man was originally a savage, and has gradually developed into a gentleman. The truth is, rather, that man was originally a gentleman and rapidly deteriorated into a savage in many parts of the world.

It cannot be denied, of course, that there have been, and still are, peoples which exist in gross ignorance, savagery and crudity; there have been, and still are "cave men" and men with a "stone age" culture. These facts are well known. But such peoples are not really **primitive**; rather, they are degenerate.

Byron C. Nelson, in his interesting book **Before Abraham** brings out many facts about cave-dwelling stone age man in Europe. One significant fact is that these people did not live in caves because they lacked the skill to construct houses, but because they were cold. Europe had been glaciated and was slowly becoming habitable again. During a large part of the year it was bitterly cold. Men lived just inside the mouths of caves facing south, to get protection from the chill winds and to get some warmth from the sunshine. Some of these "stone age" caves, in France, are still inhabited today, by very civilized Frenchmen, with modern conveniences such as electric lights and telephones.

The Bible portrays the home of the earliest people not as a jungle but as a garden. The exact location of the Garden of Eden cannot be determined, but it was certainly in the Near East, as proved by the mention of the Euphrates River in connection with it.

The name "Eden" means "pleasantness" or "delight." The reference to the great rivers shows that Eden was a large tract of country. (Eden was larger than the Garden; the Garden was planted in Eden). Davis **Dictionary of the Bible** states the "The site of the garden of Eden is most probably to be sought about the head of the Persian Gulf." This is the region which

later came to be known as Mesopotamia or Babylonia. The present-day name is Iraq.

This home prepared by God for the first people was an ideal environment. Today that region is very arid. It was evidently different in the period before the Flood. The Bible pictures it as a very fertile and productive region. It is probable that the climate was mild and pleasant at all seasons of the year. In this garden God caused to grow "every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food."

Of the rivers that are mentioned, only two can be identified with certainty today, namely the Euphrates and the Tigris (Hiddekel). The land of Havilah mentioned in Gen. 2:11 is regarded as a region of Arabia. The Ethiopia mentioned in verse 13 can not have been the country of Africa known by the name of Ethiopia (Hebrew: **Cush**), for the connection with the Euphrates River requires a location in Asia. Evidently a region of southwestern Asia was called Ethiopia (**Cush**), as well as the more commonly known country in Africa. It may be that colonists went from the one in Asia to the one in Africa, taking the name with them, just as Plymouth (Massachusetts) was colonized by people from Plymouth (England) who named their new home after their old one.

#### Questions:

1. Why can the statement that man was made in the "image" or "likeness" of God not mean a physical resemblance to God?
2. In what way is man similar to the higher animals, and in what way does he differ sharply from them?
3. What is held by orthodox theology as to the meaning of the image of God in man?
4. How may the concept of the image of God in man be analyzed or broken down into its component elements?
5. What is meant by saying that man as created was a perfect, though finite, replica of God?
6. What change has resulted from man's fall into sin?
7. What was the intended relation of man, as created, to all other creatures in this world?
8. How has this relationship been partly changed by man's sin?
9. What is the common idea today, among people who do not accept the Bible, as to the original state of mankind?
10. What was the original social condition of mankind according to the Bible?

11. How are we to account for the existence of the savage and "primitive" peoples of past times and of the present day?

12. What facts show that the "cave men" of Stone Age Europe were not as wild and uncivilized as they are often represented as having been?

13. What is the meaning of the name "Eden"?

14. How can it be shown that Eden was a large tract of country?

15. In what part of the world was Eden certainly located?

16. What is the probable precise location of Eden? What is it named today?

17. What two rivers, connected with Eden, are known today?

18. How can it be shown that the **Ethiopia** or **Cush** mentioned in Genesis 2 was in Asia, not in Africa?

## LESSON 16

### THE FALL OF THE HUMAN RACE INTO SIN

#### Genesis, Chapter 3

The question has been raised as to whether the account of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden is to be regarded as historical or mythological. Were Adam and Eve real people, and did these things really happen? Or is this story comparable to the myths of ancient Greece and Rome?

The answer is that the Bible itself treats this record as literal and historical. In particular, the statements of Jesus Christ and the Apostle Paul imply acceptance of the historical character of Genesis 2 and 3. This is especially clear in the fifth chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans, where there is an elaborate comparison and contrast between Adam and Christ. If Adam is not a historical figure, then this argument of Paul has no meaning at all. There cannot be a parallel or comparison between a mythical Adam and a historical Christ. The mythological interpretation of the early chapters of Genesis is held chiefly by scholars who reject the full truth and divine authority of the Bible.

Besides the trees that were pleasant to the sight and good for food, in the garden of Eden, two special trees are mentioned, namely **the tree of life**, which was in the midst of the garden, and **the tree of the knowledge of good and evil**. What species of trees these were we do not know, nor is this important. What is important is the symbolic or sacramental meaning which was attached by God to these two trees. These two trees served as symbols of two religious principles. The tree of life was a symbol of the **principle of life**. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was a symbol of the **principle of probation**.

The tree of life symbolized not merely the life which man already possessed, but the highest kind of life to which man could attain — the kind of life which is called in the New Testament **eternal life**. This highest kind of life man did not yet possess. To obtain this, he must first pass through a probation or test. From Gen. 3:22 we see that before man sinned he had not yet eaten of the fruit of the tree of life. Evidently the right to eat this fruit had not yet been given.

The other symbolic tree was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which stood for the principle of probation or testing. This tree was also in the center of the garden (Gen. 3:3). Why was this tree called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? The wording of the Hebrew implies that this tree stood for the knowledge of good and evil as opposed to each other — good as the opposite of evil, and evil as the opposite of good. The tree stood for the contrast between good and evil.

It should be realized that this test was necessary for man's sake, not for God's sake. In past years many students in this course have written on tests or examinations that "God tested Adam and Eve to find out whether they would obey Him." This is not a correct statement. God does not need to perform tests to gain information that He otherwise would not have. The test was not necessary for God's sake, but it was necessary for Adam and Eve to become moral and spiritual adults — that they should not remain forever as naive children, but should become adults.

Man was created in the image of God and thus had the capacity for moral experience. Man was created good but he had not yet attained the moral maturity of deliberately choosing good in preference to evil. The test represented by the tree of the knowledge of good and evil would bring man to the experience of moral goodness in strong contrast to evil rejected, or it would bring man to the experience of moral evil in strong contrast to good rejected. Either way, man would come to moral maturity through the test presented by the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam and Eve would inevitably come to maturity — for better or for worse. They would never be the same again.

Why did God forbid Adam to eat the fruit of this tree? It is evident that the fruit was not evil or harmful in itself; on the contrary, it was "good for food." If the fruit had been poisonous or obviously harmful, then the test would not have been the kind of test God planned.

For this test, everything had to depend on the will of God. If Adam could have discerned other reasons — reasons which appealed to him as sensible or prudent — for leaving the fruit alone, then it would not have been a real test of obedience to the will of God. For a real test of obedience, it was necessary that Adam should leave the fruit alone simply because God had forbidden the eating of it, and for no other reason. This was not to be a test of Adam's sanity, nor of his intelligence, but of his willingness to obey the will of God. He was called upon to choose good and reject evil, not because he considered it reasonable or beneficial to do so, but out of sheer loyalty and devotion to the nature of God.

#### Questions:

1. How can it be shown that the Bible itself treats the story of Adam and Eve as real history?
2. What two special trees existed in the Garden of Eden?

3. What kind of life was symbolized by the Tree of Life?

4. What is the force of the words "knowledge of good and evil" in the Hebrew?

5. What principle was symbolized by the tree of the knowledge of good and evil?

6. Why was it necessary that Adam and Eve pass through a test or probation?

7. What kind of experience would the test bring to Adam and Eve?

8. Why was it necessary that the thing forbidden by God be something not evil or harmful in itself?

9. Why was the goodness of Adam and Eve (before they committed sin) not the highest kind of goodness?

10. What answer should we give to the person who says that God could and should have prevented Adam and Eve from coming into a situation where sin was a possible outcome?

### LESSON 17

#### THE FALL OF THE HUMAN RACE INTO SIN, CONTINUED

A question arises as to the duration of this test. By its very nature a test or probation cannot be permanent. A test must be temporary; the fact of a test implies the existence of a time limit. What this time limit would have been, if Adam had not sinned, we cannot say. But a time limit would have been reached, and man would have been given the right to eat the fruit of the tree of life. With that, both sin and death would have become forever impossible to Adam and all his descendants. They would have been confirmed in righteousness and life forever.

God attached a penalty to the eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil: "in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die" (Hebrew: "dying thou shalt die"). This implies not merely the death of the body, but death in the fullest, most absolute sense — death as the penalty of sin (Romans 5:12; 6:23). The immediate and obvious reference, of course, is to the death of the body. God's statement to Adam meant **at least** that his body would die. But it meant more than that; it meant death as the penalty of sin — eternal exclusion from the favorable presence of God. (The expression "in the day that thou eatest thereof . . ." does not imply that physical death would follow the eating of the fruit within one day's time. It is a Hebrew idiom used to express certainty. The meaning is that death will be the sure and inevitable consequence of eating the fruit.)

Taking up Genesis chapter 3, we find two more principles symbolized in a form that Adam and Eve could grasp. The **principle of tempta-**

**tion and sin** was symbolized by the serpent, and the **principle of death** was symbolized by the return of the human body to dust.

The literal serpent, of course, was only a tool in the hands of Satan, or the devil. The origin of sin **in the universe** is an unexplainable mystery. But the origin of sin **in the human race** is plainly attributed in Scripture to the temptation of our first parents by Satan, who used a serpent as his tool or instrument in this affair.

Satan's temptation of Eve proceeded in two stages. In the first stage, doubt is insinuated and instilled into her mind. In the second stage, the tempter used a bare-faced lie to induce her to commit sin.

In the first stage, the tempter raises the question of God's treatment of Adam and Eve. "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden." As a matter of fact, God had permitted the eating of the fruit of the trees of the garden with the exception of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (and the implied temporary exception of the tree of life). There was thus only a very small element of truth in what the tempter suggested to Eve. The prohibition attributed to God was a gross exaggeration. Yet it served the tempter's purpose of insinuating a doubt concerning the goodness and favor of God. The thought is suggested to Eve's mind that God is unreasonably strict, harsh and unkind in His treatment of man.

In the second stage of the temptation, the tempter boldly denies the truth of what God had said. God had said, "In the day that thou eatest

thereof, thou shalt surely die." Now the devil boldly denies this, saying, "Ye shall not surely die." This is a direct, flat, outright contradiction of the Word of God.

Satan follows up with an imputation of base and unworthy motives to God. "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." The idea here is that God has forbidden Adam and Eve to eat of the tree in order to keep from them a wonderful experience which they ought to enjoy.

Satan's work of tempting Eve was finished. All that remained was for Eve to consider the inherent desirability of the forbidden fruit. She did this; then she took of the fruit, ate it, and gave some of it to Adam, who also ate it.

It is to be noted that the tempter used only persuasion in inducing Eve to disobey God. He did not force her to commit sin, but only sought to induce her to commit sin of her own free will. Thus the sin cannot be blamed on Satan so as to excuse the disobedience of Eve and Adam. Eve, of course, never should have even listened to this mysterious serpent who started out his remarks by insinuating doubt concerning the goodness of God. She knew the voice of God and should not even have listened to this alien voice which brings suggestions and ideas contrary to what she had sufficient reason to believe to be true.

In deciding to eat the fruit, Eve really put Satan in the place of God. As a matter of fact God's design was the benefit of mankind, while Satan's aim was to bring about man's ruin. Since Satan flatly contradicted what God had said, Eve had to choose between the two. Should she believe God or should she believe the serpent? Before this time she had believed God. But now when confronted with Satan's contradiction of God, Eve chooses to believe Satan. This, of course, involved regarding God as a liar. It involved believing that God was the enemy of the human race and that Satan was the friend of the human race. Thus, in Eve's thinking, God and the devil were interchanged.

The New Testament tells us that Eve was **deceived** by the tempter — that is, she was confused and bewildered — but Adam was not deceived. Adam ate the fruit fully realizing what he was doing. This means that Adam's guilt was greater than Eve's (I Timothy 2:14).

"And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked: and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons" (Gen. 3:7). Their commission of sin had an immediate effect upon the consciousness of Adam and Eve. Their previous innocence is immediately replaced by a sense of guilt and sinfulness. Before committing sin they had not been conscious of being unclothed, nor was there any

reason for feeling ashamed of this (Gen. 2:25). But as soon as they had sinned against God, they realized their guilt, of which their bodily nakedness was symbolic. Instinctively they proceeded to prepare some makeshift clothing, using fig leaves for the purpose.

As we see later, the clothing which Adam and Eve made of fig leaves was not adequate, for God clothed them with coats of skins (Gen. 3:21). It has been aptly observed that all man-made religious systems are in reality only fig leaves which man has stitched together to try to cover his guilt. Only the God-given religion of redemption from sin by the shed blood of a Mediator (Jesus Christ) can really clothe man with righteousness.

Another result of the sin of Adam and Eve was their alienation from God. "And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden" (Gen. 3:8). Evidently before the Fall there had been close fellowship between God and man. Adam and Eve knew and recognized the voice of God when they heard it. They must have delighted in this close communion with God.

But after they sinned, there was a spiritual barrier between them and God. They felt this in their own consciousness, and instinctively tried to hide from God. Of course no one can really hide from God. Here in this early history we see the true nature of sin. Sin inevitably causes separation from God.

Still another characteristic of sin is seen in the attempt of both Adam and Eve to evade responsibility for what they had done. Neither was willing to accept the blame for sin. In this respect Adam and Eve set the pattern which sinful man has been following ever since.

A penalty was pronounced by God upon the serpent, upon Eve and upon Adam. The curse upon the serpent ("Upon thy belly shalt thou go") does not imply that prior to this snakes had legs and stood upright, as has sometimes been asserted. It merely implies that the serpent's closeness to the ground is now made a penalty; a new meaning and significance are at this point attached to this "grass roots" character of the serpent.

Genesis 3:15 is perhaps the most important single verse of the Old Testament, because it contains the first promise of redemption from sin. The literal serpent falls into the background, and Satan, the real tempter, is addressed. "I will put enmity," God says, "between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." In this text, "thee" refers to Satan. The seed of the serpent means either that part of the human race which is on the side of Satan, or it may mean the demons and evil spirits of which Satan

is the chief. The seed of the woman is the human race regarded as an organism, and specially, pre-eminently, the one great Seed of the woman, namely, the Lord Jesus Christ (compare Revelation 12:1, 2, 5, 17).

Genesis 3:15 forms a brief announcement or preview of the future history of the world. There is predicted an age-long, bitter conflict between opposing forces: the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman; and back of these — behind the scenes, as it were — between Satan and God. The outcome of this conflict will be two-fold: (1) The Seed of the woman will be wounded; (2) the seed of the serpent will be totally defeated and destroyed. These words, spoken by God so long ago, reach forward through the ages to the Cross of Calvary, and on from Calvary to the Great Judgment Day at the end of history. All the rest of the Bible is the record of the implementing of the program revealed in Genesis 3:15.

#### Questions:

1. Why is it necessary to believe that there would have been a time limit for the probation of Adam and Eve, if they had not sinned?
2. If Adam and Eve had not sinned, what would the result of the probation have been?
3. What penalty was attached to the eating of the forbidden fruit?
4. What kind of death is meant by the word "death" in this connection?
5. What is the meaning or force of the phrase "In the day that . . . " ?
6. What principle is symbolized by the serpent?
7. What principle is illustrated by the return of man's body to dust?
8. What can be said about the origin of sin in the universe?
9. What can be said in explanation of the origin of sin in the human race?
10. In how many stages did Satan's temptation of Eve take place?
11. What thought is instilled into Eve's mind in the first stage?
12. What bold statement is made by the tempter in the second stage?
13. What, according to Satan, was God's reason for forbidding Adam and Eve to eat the fruit?
14. What shows that Eve was fully to blame for what she did?
15. What New Testament statement proves that Adam's guilt was greater than Eve's? Why was this the case?
16. What was the immediate effect of sin on the consciousness of Adam and Eve?
17. What fact shows that garments made of fig leaves were inadequate?
18. What truth about man-made religions is illustrated by the fig-leaves of our first parents?
19. What was the second consequence of Adam and Eve committing sin?
20. What is the meaning of the penalty pronounced on the serpent?
21. What is the meaning and importance of Genesis 3:15?
22. What is meant by the "seed of the serpent"? By the "seed of the woman"?

## LESSON 18

### THE PERIOD FROM ADAM TO NOAH

Genesis, Chapters 4-6

We shall pass over the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden, and the history of Cain and Abel, to take up the record of the descendants of Cain (Gen. 4:16ff.). Coming down to the time of Lamech, the sixth generation from Adam, we note that "Lamech took unto him two wives," thus daring to change the marriage ordinance established by God at the creation of the human race. The evil of polygamy dates from the time of Lamech. Contrary to the common evolutionary theory of human progress, mankind was originally monogamous, and polygamy came in later, when the race had fallen very deeply into sin.

The period we are studying shows a very rapid and extreme development of sin in the line

of Cain. This is clearly shown by the arrogant boasting of Lamech. He proudly boasts that he needs no help from God; he can look after his own interests without any divine protection. All fear of God has been cast off. There remains no sense of need or of dependence on God for anything. Lamech recognizes no moral obligation and no law higher than his own wishes.

Evidently it was God's purpose, in the period of history we are dealing with, to allow sin to run its natural course, so as to show once for all what sin really is and what it really can do. This continued until God finally sent the Flood as a judgment upon mankind. Between Cain and the Flood, God checked the progress of sin only enough to render the continued existence of

humanity possible. God granted a minimum of grace throughout this period, until the real character of sin had been fully revealed, lest people boast that sin was not so very evil after all. Before carrying out the work of redemption actively, God first let the human race sink very deep in sin, that its exceeding sinfulness might become clear to all, and for all time.

We note that the great inventions and basic discoveries of civilization were made, not by the godly portion of the human race, but by the descendants of Cain. Though these people did not fear God, they were permitted to make great progress in material things. This shows the falsity of the idea often expressed that religion and civilization go hand in hand.

We now turn to the line of Seth, starting with Gen. 4:25. The name "Seth" means "appointed" or "substituted." Eve called her third son "Seth" because, as she said, God had appointed him to be her seed instead of Abel, whom Cain had killed. Eve saw the gracious appointment of God in this birth of her son. She may have hoped that this third son would be the promised Seed who would destroy the serpent. And, indeed, it was to be of the descendants of Seth that the promised Seed would finally come. Eve showed an attitude of faith that is in strong contrast to the godlessness of the line of Cain.

"And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the Lord" (Gen. 4:26). About the time of the birth of Enos, men began to call upon the name of the Lord. The formal, public worship of God began at that time. Before that, religious worship had apparently been a private matter. What was included in this public worship? We do not know. We may venture the opinion that it included prayer and the offering of sacrifices, and took place on the weekly Sabbath.

There is a remarkable parallel, as well as a remarkable contrast, between the two lines of people — those descended from Cain and those descended from Seth. This will become clearer if we see the two lines in parallel arrangement:

Adam's Descendants by Cain	Adam's Descendants by Seth
Adam -----	Adam
Cain -----	Seth
Enoch -----	Enos
Irad -----	Cainan
Mehujael -----	Mahalaleel
Methusael -----	Jared
Lamech -----	Enoch
Jabal, Jubal, Tubal-Cain ----	Methusaleh
	Lamech
	Noah
	Shem, Ham, Japheth

The first thing we notice here is the striking resemblance of some of the names in each line

to some in the other line. Two names, Enoch and Lamech, are identical in the two lines; several others are remarkably similar. This indicates identity of language and also that there was some contact between these two branches of the human race. Though differing widely in character and philosophy of life, they did not live in absolute isolation from each other.

Next, we may note the remarkable contrasts, generation by generation. Cain stands over against Seth — a true example of the seed of the serpent over against a true example of the seed of the woman.

Enoch, the son of Cain, whose birth was marked by the building of the world's first "city," stands over against Enos, whose birth was marked by the beginning of the public worship of Jehovah, the God of salvation. (Note that it was Cain, not his son Enoch, that built the world's first "city" — probably a very simple but walled and defensible village. Failure to note carefully the exact statement of Genesis 4:17 has led many students in this course to make the incorrect statement that Enoch built the first city).

Lamech of the line of Cain, founder of polygamy and author of the blasphemous speech of Gen. 4:23, 24, stands over against Enoch of the line of Seth, who walked with God and was taken from the world without dying (see New Testament: Hebrews 11:5).

Tubal-Cain, son of the Cainite Lamech, the pioneer of the metal industry which made man-killing weapons efficient, stands over against Methusaleh, who attained the greatest age ever reached by man on earth, namely, 969 years.

How clear it is that there were two kinds of people in the world, and that these two kinds of people differed radically in their philosophy of life and in their actions! Atheistic humanism stands over against humble faith in the Lord. And at the present day, humanity is still divided into two camps — the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman.

#### Questions:

1. What social evil began with Lamech of the line of Cain?
2. How does the Bible view of the original constitution of the family differ from that held by evolutionary science?
3. What moral characteristic is shown by the line of Cain?
4. What was evidently God's purpose in this period of history?
5. Why would it have been unwise to put God's plan of redemption into active operation immediately after the Fall?

6. What two lines of people existed on earth in the period between Adam and Noah?

7. Which line of people made the basic inventions and discoveries of human civilization? What does this show concerning the common notion that religion and civilization go hand-in-hand?

8. What is the meaning of the name "Seth"?

9. Why did Eve name her third son Seth?

10. What new development began at the time of the birth of Seth's son Enos?

11. What may have been included in the first public worship of God?

12. What is proved by the similarity of the names in the line of Cain with those in the line of Seth?

13. Who built the world's first "city", and on what occasion?

14. What was probably the size and nature of this "city"?

15. For what was Tubal-Cain famous?

16. What was the main difference between the people descended from Cain and those descended from Seth?

## LESSON 19

### THE PERIOD FROM ADAM TO NOAH, CONTINUED

The long life of many of these early people is to be accepted as literally true. It can be accounted for on the basis that humanity still possessed most of the physical vigor and vitality with which the race had been endowed by the Creator. There are serious objections to the mythological view and also to the view that "years" in this chapter means "months." Note also that the emphasis in the record is on the fact of death — with monotonous repetition the statement "and he died" reminds us that death conquered even these vigorous, long-lived early people.

At this point in the course, someone is sure to ask an old question: "Where did Cain get his wife?" Unbelievers and scoffers seem to regard this as an unanswerable question, and it has bothered some serious Christians too. The answer is as follows: Eve was the mother of all living (Gen. 3:20). Therefore Cain's wife (and also Seth's wife, for that matter) must have been descended from Eve. Presumably Cain's wife was his sister, though it is just possible that she was his niece. Note that Adam and Eve begat sons and daughters (Gen. 5:4); we know the names of only the first three sons. Marriage among very close relatives must have been the regular practice at the beginning of human history. If the human race was descended from a single pair, as the Bible teaches, there was no other way.

Such close marriage as a man marrying his sister or his niece would be illegal today throughout the civilized world, and forbidden by the moral codes of all the major religions of the world. We should realize that there are sound biological reasons for the civil and religious laws against such marriages today. Marriage of close relatives intensifies hereditary tendencies, both good and bad. It is likely to bring out latent (Mendelian recessive) bad tendencies and weaknesses, both physical and mental. But this was not the case when the human race had just been

created by God. There was no bad heredity back of Adam and Eve. Cain and Seth marrying their sisters would not and did not have any such bad effects as might be expected from such marriages today. Even as long afterwards as the time of Abraham, we find him married to his half-sister, with no indication in the record of any illegality or moral stigma attached to this union.

We have seen that God's purpose in this period of history was to allow sin to run its course with a minimum of restraint, in order that its true character might be fully manifested for all time. This predominantly negative character of the period is evident even in the godly line, the descendants of Seth. Even among them, there was no very remarkable progress in religion beyond the beginning of the public worship of God at the time of the birth of Seth's son Enos. We might say that God's program of redemption was marking time throughout this period; the godly were maintaining their own integrity, but there was no marked progress toward the accomplishment of God's redemptive purpose. There is no indication that the descendants of Seth had any influence for good upon the descendants of Cain. On the contrary, as is evident from Genesis 6, the influence was the other way around; through intermarriage, the Cainites began to corrupt the Sethites.

#### Questions:

1. How can we account for the long life of many of the people between Adam and Noah?

2. What unsatisfactory explanations of this long life have been held by some?

3. What is the significance of the repeated clause "and he died" in the record of the men between Adam and Noah?

4. Why did Adam call his wife Eve?

5. What is the bearing of Genesis 3:20 on the question of the organic unity of the human race?

6. What must be the true answer to the question "Where did Cain get his wife"?

7. Why is marriage between close relatives forbidden by legal and moral codes at the present day?

8. Was it sinful for Cain and Seth to marry their sisters or nieces?

9. Does the Bible treat Abraham's marriage to his half-sister as morally wrong?

10. How did God, in this period of history, manifest the true character of sin?

11. What is meant by saying that this period of history is predominantly negative in character?

12. When intermarriage between the lines of Cain and Seth began to take place, which line exerted the most influence on the other? Was this influence good or evil?

## LESSON 20

### THE FLOOD — GENESIS, CHAPTERS 6-9

In Genesis 6:5-7 God gives His summary of this period of history, especially the closing part of the period. The terrible wickedness which had become prevalent at the end of the period is emphasized. Human wickedness was "great in the earth"; it was a wickedness of heart and mind as well as of outward conduct ("every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil"); and it was a constant wickedness, without intervals of good behaviour ("continually").

"And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart" (Gen. 6:6). This, of course, is anthropomorphic language; it speaks of God as if He were a man. Actually, God does not repent (I Samuel 15:29); God does not change His mind; He has a single consistent purpose which He follows from eternity to eternity. Nothing ever surprises God. If He changes His mind, He does so according to plan. But a change of mind that is done according to plan is not a real change of mind at all. In the present passage the truth is expressed that God changed His attitude toward the human race. Human sin had developed to such an extreme degree that the purpose for which man had been created could no longer be accomplished. A new beginning must be made with the godly remnant of the race, while the mass of the wicked must be destroyed. This, of course, was known and planned by God from eternity; the change was in God's dealings with man, not in God's own plans.

Accordingly, God announced His intention to destroy the human race. "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." It is further stated that Noah was a righteous and perfect man. This does not imply that Noah was sinless. The word "perfect" here means well balanced, complete in all aspects of life with no part neglected. We might paraphrase the statement by saying that Noah was a good man with a balanced and mature character. The statement is added that Noah "walked with God" (an expression occurring only four times in the Old Testament), implying that Noah was a recipient of special revelations

from God. (If it meant only that Noah was a holy man, the expression would be **walked before God**, not **walked with God**).

"The earth also was corrupt before God; and the earth was filled with violence" (Gen. 6:11). Sin had reduced humanity to an all-time low of moral corruption. It was "before God" that mankind was corrupt; that is, in relation to God's will and character.

We shall now consider God's instructions to Noah concerning the construction of the ark. It was to be made of gopher wood. What kind of wood this was is unknown; no doubt it was specially suitable for the purpose.

The ark was to be coated inside and outside with "pitch" — probably asphalt or bitumen — to make it watertight. The dimensions of the ark were as follows: length, 300 cubits; breadth, 50 cubits; height, 30 cubits. The figure of 18 inches is commonly accepted as the length of a cubit. This makes the ark 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high. It has been observed that these proportions are not much different from those of modern ships. The ark, however, was not a ship. It could not be propelled, steered or navigated in any way. It was only intended to float.

While it is clear that natural forces were involved in producing the Flood, it should not be regarded as something brought about solely by natural forces. It is evident that supernatural factors were involved also. Certainly the exact timing of the Flood (Gen. 6:3b; 7:4) and the announcement of this timing by God in advance were miraculous. Beyond this, it is probable that a miracle set in motion the natural forces which deluged the earth.

#### Questions:

1. How is the wickedness of mankind, in the time just before the Flood, described in Genesis 6:5-7?

2. What is meant by the statement that "it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth"?

3. How can it be shown that this statement does not imply that God really changed His eternal purpose?

4. How is the character of Noah described?

5. What is meant by the description of Noah as "perfect"?

6. What is meant by the statement that Noah "walked with God"? How many times does this formula occur in the Old Testament?

7. What is the difference in meaning between "walked with God" and "walked before God"?

8. What is the importance of the phrase

"before God" in connection with the description of the world's corruption?

9. Of what kind of wood was the ark to be made? What is known about this wood?

10. What, probably, was the "pitch" with which the ark was coated inside and outside?

11. What were the dimensions of the ark in cubits? In feet?

12. How do the proportions (not the dimensions) of the ark correspond to those of modern ships?

13. Why is it incorrect to speak of the ark as a ship?

14. What can be said about the parts played by natural forces and by supernatural factors in producing the Flood?

## LESSON 21

### THE FLOOD (CONTINUED)

"But with thee (Noah) will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee" (Gen. 6:18). Here again the divine initiative should be noted. God takes the initiative in destroying the wicked; He also takes the initiative in saving His own people. God makes and establishes the covenant relationship. Men do not make a covenant with God; God establishes His covenant with men. This is the first occurrence of the word "covenant" in the Bible. It is a translation of the Hebrew word **Berith** (also written **B'rith**), which occurs 279 times in the Old Testament. The history of the Flood brings out the truth that to be in a covenant relationship to God is the opposite of perishing.

Some have wondered how Noah got the various wild and domestic animals into the ark. The clean animals (those that could be used for human food or offered in sacrifice to God) were to be taken by sevens (probably this means three pairs plus one extra specimen; possibly it means seven pairs), and the unclean animals by twos. The Hebrew verbs used imply that the animals would come voluntarily. It may be that the animals sensed impending disaster and instinctively sought safety in the ark.

Another question concerns how the ark could hold sufficient food for a whole year. No doubt a large supply was required, but the amount of food needed for the animals would be much less than they would require under more normal conditions. Without any opportunities for exercise, they would require comparatively little nourishment. It was not necessary to keep them in prime

condition; all that was necessary was to keep them alive until the end of the Flood. With regard to the wilder animals, such as lions, a restriction of their amount of food would perhaps help to keep them quiet. Perhaps some of the animals slept through the Flood as in hibernation.

"And it came to pass after seven days, that the waters of the flood came upon the earth" (Gen. 7:10). There had been a week of final preparations. Then the Flood came. It was when Noah was 600 years old. The water came from two sources: it rained heavily for 40 days and nights; also "all the fountains of the great deep were broken up." This expression, "all the fountains of the great deep," is understood by some scholars to mean sources of underground water. Others, perhaps more plausibly, hold that it refers to the oceans.

Various theories have been advanced to account for the rush of water from the ocean to the land. One theory is known as the glacial theory (George Frederick Wright). This holds that during the glacial period, as more and more ice piled up on the continents, they became heavier and began to sink, while at the same time there was less and less water pressing down on the ocean floor, which accordingly began to rise, resulting in an overflow of water onto the land surfaces of the globe. This theory is not accepted by all Bible scholars.

Another theory is that in some way the earth's axis was shifted a few degrees (due perhaps to some astronomical cause), resulting suddenly in tremendous climatic changes all over the globe. This, it is held, brought an immense flow of water over the land surfaces.

Still another theory is that seismic disturbances (earthquake shocks) of the ocean floors (that is, earthquakes at the bottom of the oceans) raised the level of the sea bottom, causing the surplus water to inundate the land.

None of these theories can be proved at the present time. The Bible simply tells us that "all the fountains of the great deep were broken up." As Bible students, we may regard these theories as to what happened with interest, but we need not commit ourselves to any of them.

At this point something may be said about the Babylonian and other accounts of the Flood outside of the Bible. There is an excellent brief summary of these in an appendix to **The Deluge Story in Stone** by Byron C. Nelson. It is a remarkable fact that traditions of a universal deluge are found all over the world. This fact is so striking that skeptics used to try to explain it by saying that the North American Indians, Chinese, Eskimos, etc., got their stories of the Flood from missionaries who had preached the Bible account of the Flood to them. This explanation, however, is entirely impossible. The fact is that these world-wide traditions of the Flood are entirely independent of the Bible. They existed long before the people concerned had any contact with missionaries. Also they differ in some important respects from the Bible account of the Flood, which would not be the case if they were derived from the preaching of missionaries.

The Babylonian story of the Flood is the one which most closely resembles the Genesis record. However, it differs from it in some important respects. For example, Genesis speaks of one God only, whereas the Babylonian Flood story speaks of many gods. Also there is a difference in the cause or reason for the Flood. In the Bible, human wickedness is represented as the real cause of the Flood; it is a divine judgment on a sinful human race. But in the Babylonian story the Flood is brought on by a quarrel among the gods. It is not surprising that a heathen people such as the Babylonians would tend to obscure the cause of the Flood, and put the emphasis on a dispute among the gods instead of on human wickedness. Sinful man naturally tries to blame his troubles on God or the gods!

## LESSON 22

### THE FLOOD (CONTINUED)

Those who are interested in reading more about the Babylonian story of the Flood are referred to **Archeology and the Old Testament**, by Merrill F. Unger. This book gives convincing reasons why the Genesis account cannot be regarded as borrowed from a Babylonian source.

### Questions:

1. What statements in Genesis 6 emphasize the divine initiative in connection with the Flood?
2. How many times does the Hebrew word for **Covenant (Be'ith or B'rith)** occur in the Old Testament?
3. What verse in Genesis 6 is the first occurrence in Scripture of the word **covenant**?
4. How many of each kind of animals did Noah take into the ark?
5. What is the probable meaning of the "sevens" of the clean animals?
6. What can be said about the question of how Noah got the animals into the ark?
7. How can we answer the objection that the ark could not hold sufficient food for a whole year?
8. How old was Noah when the Flood began?
9. From what two sources did the water of the Flood come?
10. What are the possible meanings of "the fountains of the great deep"? Which of these is the most probable meaning?
11. What is the glacial theory concerning the Flood?
12. What is the theory that the Flood was caused by an astronomical cause?
13. What is the seismic (earthquake) theory as to the cause of the Flood?
14. Why is it impossible to prove that any of these theories is true?
15. How can we account for the existence of traditions of a great flood among many races of people in countries all over the world?
16. Which of the non-Biblical traditions of a flood most closely resembles the Biblical record of the Flood?
17. What important differences exist between the Babylonian story of the Flood and the Biblical account of the Flood?

Mention has already been made of **The Deluge Story in Stone** by Byron C. Nelson. The appendix referred to presents a comparative tabulation of ethnic (non-Biblical) Flood traditions, showing at a glance their resemblances to and differences from the Biblical record.

Something should be said here about the claim of the British archaeologist Sir Leonard Woolley to have found actual physical evidence of the Biblical Flood. At Ur in lower Mesopotamia Woolley found a thick (6 to 8 feet) layer of clean, water-laid clay beneath many feet of deposits containing remains of human civilization. Beneath the clay layer more remains of human habitation were found. Beyond question this clay layer was the result of a very great flood. A similar layer was later found at Kish, some 150 miles up the Euphrates River. It was later proved, however, that the layer at Ur and the one at Kish were not deposited at the same time — in fact, not even in the same century. Woolley estimated the date of the clay deposit at Ur as about 3,500 B. C. Many conservative Bible scholars made great capital of Woolley's discovery, claiming that archaeology had proved the Bible story of the Flood to be true. Halley's **Pocket Bible Handbook**, which in general is a very good help to Bible study, is an example of this over-optimism. Halley made a great deal of the "flood layer" at Ur, Kish and one or two other places in Mesopotamia. But at most this was only a flood in the Tigris-Euphrates valley. There would be high ground a hundred miles or so away to which people could have fled for safety. Woolley thought of the Biblical Flood as local rather than universal. We must conclude, therefore, that the clay deposit found by Woolley cannot have been laid by the Flood of Noah's day.

Byron C. Nelson, in his book **Before Abraham**, argues with more plausibility that the Biblical Flood must have been a very long time ago — so long ago that absolutely nothing human has come down to us from before the Flood — not a bone, not a flint arrow-head, not a piece of pottery, nothing. He holds that all remains that have been found of palaeolithic and neolithic (old and new stone age) man come from **after** the Flood. Professor J. Barton Payne, of the Bible Department of Wheaton College, states that the Flood could have been before 10,000 B. C. (**The Sunday School Times**, August 15, 1959, page 4). The famous Lascaux cave in France, discovered in 1940, contains marvelous paintings of bison, cattle, horses, etc., done by paleolithic man. The remains in this cave are dated by the radiocarbon (carbon 14) method at approximately 15,515 years ago. It is an interesting question, which cannot yet be answered with certainty, whether the occupation of the Lascaux cave was before or after the Biblical Flood.

From time to time articles appear in magazines about an alleged discovery of the actual remains of the ark on a high mountain in eastern Turkey. It is said that aviators have seen them, and a French explorer claims to have chopped a piece of the ark's timbers from a mass of ice. While it is not absolutely impossible that remains

of the ark may still exist, still this is regarded as extremely doubtful by sober archaeologists and Biblical scholars, and the verdict to date must be "not proven."

That the Flood destroyed the entire human race except for the family of Noah is certain. But what about the question of whether the Flood was local or global in extent? Both views have been held by careful Bible scholars; there is good ground, however, for holding that the Flood was universal in the sense that it covered the entire globe. The objections urged against this view do not seem to be conclusive.

"And the ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat" (Gen. 8:4). This mountain range is located in the eastern part of the present-day country of Turkey. The highest mountain of the range is Mount Masis (altitude 16,916 feet above sea level). It is possible that the ark came to rest at or near the summit of this mountain, but this is not certain or even likely. It would be extremely difficult to bring the animals down safely from such an inaccessible peak high above the cloud and snow line. More probably the ark came to rest at a somewhat lower point in the Ararat range. The Jewish Targum has the interpretation that the ark ran aground in the Kardu mountains (south and west of Lake Van; see map of Bible lands.)

While the exact location of the spot where the ark ran aground is an interesting question, it is not really of any great practical importance. Much more important is the fact that the ark was safely grounded, without wreck or ruin, its intended purpose having been successfully accomplished. Suppose the ark had been violently driven by high winds against great rocks and boulders, and wrecked at the end of the Flood! Suppose, again, that at the end of the Flood the ark had been located somewhere in the middle of the Atlantic or Pacific Ocean, or in the polar regions! The ark had no human pilot, but it had a pilot, for God was the Pilot of the ark. The powerful, wonderful, all-embracing Providence of God was at work, and the ark was safely grounded at the end of the great Flood.

#### Questions:

1. What evidence of a flood did Sir Leonard Woolley find at Ur which he held to be proof of the Biblical Flood?
2. To what approximate date did Woolley assign the clay deposit which he found?
3. How can it be shown that the deposit discovered by Woolley cannot have been from the Biblical Flood?
4. What was Woolley's belief as to the extent of the Biblical Flood? Could a local flood covering a few hundred square miles at most be

identical with the Flood described in Genesis chapters 6-9?

5. How does Byron C. Nelson differ from Sir Leonard Woolley as to the time when the Biblical Flood occurred?

6. What does Nelson hold as to the age, relatively to the Biblical Flood, of the remains of stone age man that have been discovered?

7. How long ago may the Flood have been according to Professor J. Barton Payne of Wheaton College?

8. How old are the remains found in the Lascaux cave in France, as determined by the radiocarbon test? Would this be before or after the Flood of Gen. 6-9?

9. What is the attitude of archaeologists to the claim that the remains of the ark have been found in Turkey?

10. Should we think of the Biblical Flood as local or global in extent?

11. Where are the "mountains of Ararat" located? What is the altitude of the highest peak of this range?

12. What lesson concerning divine Providence is taught by the fact that the ark survived all the perils of the Flood and was safely grounded at last?

(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 editorial policy of Blue Banner Faith and Life each reviewer is solely responsible for the opinions expressed in his reviews. Please purchase book from your book dealer or direct from the publishers; do not send orders for books to the manager of this magazine.

**THE ESSENTIAL NATURE OF NEW TESTAMENT PREACHING**, by Robert H. Mounce. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1960, pp. 168. \$3.50.

The author states his purpose in the preface: "The aim of this book is to set forth the mission and message of the New Testament herald in such a way as to establish a new perspective into the life and thought of primitive Christianity."

The **kerygma** is not the message alone, nor its proclamation alone, but both; it is the message proclaimed.

It is no reflection upon the book, but rather upon the reviewer, to say that this is difficult reading. The author is an exegete. He is thorough in examining all sides of his subject. If he disagrees with C. H. Dodd (Dodd's **Apostolic Preaching** has been regarded as the standard work in this field) his criticisms are objective and reasonable.

"But now the question arises as the validity of the kerygma for modern preaching. Can we of the twentieth century, with all our cultural sophistication and scientific progress, still proclaim the same Gospel that the first apostles proclaimed? Can we preach the Cross and Empty Tomb with any confidence that they will be relevant to the needs of modern man, or must we exchange these ancient truths for a more up-to-date message, such as the irrepressible spirituality of human nature?" (p. 155).

Readers loyal to the Scriptures will be more than satisfied with Professor Mounce's answer.

— Robert McMillan

**THE CHILDREN'S SIMPLIFIED NEW TESTAMENT**, by Olaf M. Norlie. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1962, pp. 603. \$3.95.

This volume is identical with **Norlie's Simplified New Testament in Plain English for Today's Reader**, which was reviewed at some length in our January-March 1962 issue (even having the same Library of Congress card number), the two books being for page identical and obviously printed from the same plates. There are the following differences, however: (1) In the present volume the Psalms have been omitted; (2) the present volume is illustrated with colored pictures on the dust jacket, end papers and several color plates through the book.

We refer the reader to the review in our last issue for general comments. In spite of our criticisms, we have found many excellent features in this work — places where it seems exactly to hit the mark. The reviewer would however point out one more questionable translation: Romans 3:22b, "This justification is for all and upon all who believe, for no other requirement is made." The last clause is literally and correctly rendered in the King James Version, "for there is no difference." The Greek reads **ou gar estin diastole**. The translation "no other requirement is made"

conveys an idea foreign to the text. Calvin's **Commentary on Romans** explains the clause thus: "There is not one method for justifying some, and a different one for others, but all alike must be justified by faith, because all are sinners, and have therefore no cause for glorying before God" (Mackenzie's translation).

Part of the pictures in this book purport to be representations of our Lord. The reviewer is opposed on grounds of principle to attempts to portray Jesus Christ in religious art. We know nothing of the human appearance of Jesus and therefore all such attempts are products of artistic imagination. Inevitably this picturing of Jesus leads to over-emphasis on our Lord's humanity at the expense of His Deity (which of course no picture can show).

Apart from this general principal objection to pictures of Jesus (so-called) the reviewer objects in particular to the type of portrayal found in this book. In every case Jesus is pictured with long hair. Yet Scripture says (1 Cor. 11:14), "Does not nature itself teach you that it is a disgrace for a man to have long hair?" (Norlie's translation). Moreover, the portrayal of Jesus on the dust jacket and end papers gives our Lord a distinctly **feminine** appearance. This feminine cast of face will be apparent if one holds a card over the lower part of the face so as to cover the moustache and beard. In fairness it must be said that some of the other pictures show Jesus with a masculine type of face, though the long hair, flowing down below the shoulders, is everywhere in evidence. We are aware, of course, that Dr. Norlie is a Lutheran and so would presumably not share the principal rejection of pictures of our Lord which has historically been characteristic, by and large, of Calvinists.

Apart from the illustrations and an occasional misleading translation, this will be a good version of the New Testament for children of grade school age.

— J. G. Vos

**WHAT I CONFESS**, by Alexander C. De Jong. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1960, pp. 83. \$.85.

The purpose of this little book is to provide a brief, yet comprehensive introduction to the Reformed Faith for the interested inquirer. Today it is evident that we can take nothing for granted. We must assume that those reached by the evangelistic effort of our Churches will possess practically no accurate doctrinal information. The author of this brief text takes nothing for granted. And we believe that He has demonstrated that Calvinism is simply accurate teaching of the Bible and that it can be communicated clearly to an inquirer from the beginning of his instruction. The author evidently believes that such doctrines as predestination and election ought to be taught plainly at the very outset of the Church's instruction. We heartily agree.

The plan of salvation is treated in twelve chapters, the last two of which deal with the ten commandments under the heading of "The New Obedience." On the whole the treatment is excellent, even with respect to the second commandment. As the Author says: "To glorify God we must worship Him in the way in which He has commanded in His word. We must not try to improve on God's instructions" (p. 67). It is good to see this principle clearly stated in a manual of instruction such as this. However, we must regret that the author omits to mention the things that most need to be mentioned as examples of the breach of this commandment. He mentions "crucifixes, altars and statues of various kinds," but fails to mention pictures of Christ and the use of humanly devised hymns which are so often preferred today to the inspired psalms of God.

An interesting feature of this little book is the unusual summary found at the end of each chapter. At this point the author draws a very effective conclusion and application of the truth in the form of a personal confession. This ought to be of great help to a new Christian.

At the end of the booklet is an Appendix containing "A Basic Christian Vocabulary." It seemed to us a bit too technical for the manual's purpose. However, it is accurate and might stimulate further knowledge.

This is a manual that ought to have wide use among those who love the Reformed Faith, and are concerned to introduce men to nothing less. We heartily recommend it.

— G. I. Williamson

**MONSER'S TOPICAL INDEX AND DIGEST OF THE BIBLE**, Harold E. Monser, Ed. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1960, pp. 821. \$5.95.

As the preface notes "Monser's Topical Index and Digest of the Bible is the result of an effort to bring the topical analyses found in Monser's Cross-Reference Bible within the reach of the masses." It contains "all the topical analyses or footnotes of the Cross-Reference Bible." The work was originally published in 1914.

We believe that this would make a very useful hand-book for the home, for personal bible study, and for the teacher. It would be difficult to think of a biblical subject neglected. There is an outline study of each book of the Bible. And the integrity of the Word of God is maintained throughout. In some instances the amount of information is almost overwhelming. Under the subject 'Jesus Christ' there are 50 pages, double column, of tight-packed data concerning his life, miracles, titles, humanity, deity, teaching etc. Ten pages of similarly compact information concern 'Paul.' Yet there is room for Saraph, Sarid and Sashes. Certainly the publishers can

justly claim that it is a mine of organized information.

However, we must dispute the claim of the preface that the book is "strictly undenominational in character" merely because of the associate editors mentioned, especially Drs. Jacob and Weidner of the Lutheran Church. For one thing the handling of the second and fourth commandments are as 'denominational' as they are "Lutheran.' The second commandment is confused with the first, and we read that the fourth commandment is "not in force as a commandment after His (Christ's) death" (p. 115). The organization of material seemed to us quite inadequate, even misleading, in its failure to show man's **inability** as well as his sinfulness and guilt. The editors also failed of the opportunity to show by proper organization of biblical data such well known facts as (1) that bishop were elders, and vice versa, and (2) that the Bible itself contains spiritual psalms, songs and hymns. It also seemed to us that the authors wished to give the impression that the Church did not exist in old testament times. Thus our criticism is that in the selection and arrangement of reference material, there is plainly evident a point of view (be it denominational or undenominational) that is out of accord with the truth itself, and therefore with the Reformed Faith.

These reservations do not prevent us from recommending this as a useful tool in the hands of those who have sufficient discernment to use it wisely. But we could not unreservedly recommend it for a babe in Christ.

— G. I. Williamson

**THE PEOPLE OF THE WAY**, From a Saint to the Saints. Bible Truth Depot, Swengel, Pennsylvania, 1961, pp. 278. \$3.75

The author of this book remains anonymous, referring to himself simply as a "saint." He states that he has done this in order that the personality of the writer might be completely separated from the message. The book is a strong denunciation of the denominational system. Its charges have been documented with a large number of specific illustrations and quotations. The author, however, has used many extreme and sweeping statements. On p. 46 he describes Protestantism as an "unBiblical movement which stands condemned by the Word of God", because it is built upon doctrine. On the same page the term "Reformed Faith" is labeled a "blasphemous appellation", (although at least some who use it are innocent of blasphemy because they did not set out to blaspheme God.) Any church member is declared to be an idol-worshipper (p. 66). In fact, the author has chosen to use the phrase, "the Church", as synonymous with "anti-Christ's organization" (p. 12). In another place he declares, "Every seminary within all the branches

of Christendom is saturated with spiritual pride; every one of them claims to be teaching the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth" (p. 160).

This book sets forth the premise that the church should have no written creeds. Its only basis of fellowship should be the living Christ Himself, without any attempt to establish agreement in doctrine as a basis for fellowship. The author proposes that Christians should work toward the setting of a day when all believers would renounce their denominational connections and become known simply as "THE PEOPLE OF THE WAY."

The fatal weakness of such a position is best revealed by the author's own contradictions. In describing the blessings of such a unified, creedless fellowship, he states, "The Word of God will once again become authoritative! Every individual believer . . . will have to test all things in its light" (p. 270). A few paragraphs later he declares abruptly, "Remove creeds and **sacraments become impossible**" (p. 272) emphasis mine, J.M.M.). Nothing is said to explain or defend this statement. Here then is a fellowship which claims to be based on the living Christ, yet some of His plainest commands to His church are dismissed as impossible. The author, who is of evangelical Baptist persuasion, well knows that without some kind of doctrinal agreement not even the New Testament sacraments can be observed.

It is also significant that while the author deplores the uncharitable attitudes of Christians toward one another, he shows very little tolerance for those who might feel led to remain out of his proposed movement. Concerning this he says, "THE PEOPLE OF THE WAY is a name which not only will proclaim our relationship to Christ, the only way to God, but will also imply that all other ways are so many lies. Those bearing that name will claim to be the people, and the only people, on their way to heaven. The clear implication being that all others must join them or continue on their way to hell" (p. 254).

Much that this book says about the evils of denominationalism needs to be said. It is too easy to content ourselves with a smug denunciation of the other man's solution. Simply to ignore the differences which divide us, however, does not answer the problem. The forms may be changed, but the basic disunity still remains. The church belongs to Christ; it never has the right to discard its divinely-ordained functions for the sake of achieving unity. Only on the basis of truth and Scriptural order can the church be united; and only on that basis will it glorify the living Christ.

— John M. McMillan

**THE LIFE AND TEACHING OF JOHN CALVIN**, by Adam Loughridge and F. S. Leahy. Published by the Witness-Bearing Committee and the Committee on Protestantism of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland. Obtainable from the Convener of the Witness-Bearing Committee, The Rev. F. S. Leahy, 429 Cregagh Road, Belfast, N. Ireland. 1959, pp. 16; one shilling.

There are two lectures in this booklet, Professor Loughridge covering Calvin's life and the Rev. Mr. Leahy emphasizing his teaching. The lectures were delivered in 1959, at meetings to mark the 450th anniversary of the Reformer's birth.

For a short booklet, this publication contains a remarkable amount of information, and the person who wants to learn about Calvinism without reading a longer work will do well to secure this inexpensive one.

Calvin is too often considered a cold, calculating intellectual, out of touch with human needs. In truth, he was, as the authors here show, an humble, sympathetic person devoted to honoring Christ in all the affairs of man. The burning of Servetus is recognized as a blot upon Calvin's character, and an interesting addendum is about the monument erected where Servetus died, by followers of Calvin "condemning an error which was that of his age."

The Reformation is declared to be a revival in the true sense of the word. Care is given to defining the formative principle of Calvin's theology as the absolute sovereignty of God.

— Richard Hutcheson

**THE LIFE OF JOHN KNOX**, by Thomas M'Crie, a reprint published by the Publications Committee of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland, 4 Millburn Road, Inverness, Scotland, 1960, pp. 294. 8 shillings (\$1.12).

John Knox is the subject of several biographies, and because of his leadership in the first Scottish Reformation he is the hero of Presbyterianism to this day. Rightly so, the reader of M'Crie's volume will conclude. Of the biographies, this appears to the reviewer as a good choice to reprint.

The author is careful in his order of events, and the book is divided into eight periods, with the dates at the top of each page's margin. Another note on each margin indicates the subject of that page, a practice which makes it easy to follow the events of Knox's life. M'Crie is good at evaluating the events. Usually he comes to the defense of Knox, but occasionally acknowledges that a different course could have been taken to advantage.

Principle, integrity, devotion to truth —

these qualities characterized John Knox; and the author has described Knox exhibiting them in prosperity and in persecution.

The style of writing is not for elementary pupils; yet it is interesting, and packed with information.

— Richard Hutcheson

**THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**, by Octavius Winslow. Banner of Truth Trust, 78b Chiltern Street, London, W.1, England. 1961, pp. 223. 3 shillings.

Written more than a hundred years ago (originally published in 1843) this excellent study of the Work of God the Holy Spirit is a tract for our time. If only those who work so feverishly for 'revival in our time' would read it. "The coldness, formality, worldliness and divisions" of the Church (as Winslow says, p. 6) can be healed only as it ceases to "disown, dishonor, wound and grieve" the third person of the Trinity.

He begins with a splendid presentation of the witness of the scripture of the Godhead and personality of the Holy Ghost. And we were especially struck by the way in which the truth is constantly given practical application throughout the text.

The chapters on "The Spirit a Quickener" is alone well worth the price of the book. A sample: "the modern views of the doctrine of regeneration, as held and preached by many, are not only widely different from the old standards of doctrinal truth, but, which is more serious and deeply to be deplored, are such as the Word of God clearly and distinctly disowns, and upon which there rests the darkness of its frown . . . Surely this is a cause of deep humiliation before God: may He restore to His ministers and people a pure language, and graciously revive the precious, soul-humbling, Christ-honouring truths, once the safe-guard and glory of our land" (pp. 31, 32), With these telling words of introduction Winslow proceeds to expose errors and establish the truth. The crux of his doctrine may be stated in his own words: "The doctrine that assigns to human power an efficient part in the new birth. . .with all meekness and affection, yet uncompromising regard for the glory of God, would we expose, on scriptural grounds alone. the fallacy and the dangerous tendency of" same (p. 57). When the Spirit of God knocks at the door of the heart, every ally is summoned by the 'strong man armed' to 'resist' the Spirit, and bar and bolt each avenue to His entrance. . . If He that is in the regenerate were not greater and more powerful than he that is in the world . . . God would be for ever shut out, and the soul for ever lost" (p. 59). To read such sterling

passages as these is to strengthen our conviction that our Modern Arminian evangelists greatly dishonor this sovereign and true God the Holy Spirit.

Further chapters treat of the Holy Spirit's work in chapters entitled "the indwelling of the Spirit," "the sanctification of the Spirit," "the Sealing of the Spirit," "the Witness of the Spirit," "The Spirit the Author of Prayer," and "The Spirit a Comforter." They are, like the two chapters on the Spirit's work of quickening, clear, pure, and practical. There is no weary excess of words. It is to be very heartily recommended, and we congratulate the Banner of Truth Trust for making it available in this cheap paper back edition.

— G. I. Williamson

**DEVOTIONAL PROGRAMS FOR ADULT GROUPS**, by Leslie Parrott. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1961, pp. 63. \$1.00.

**DEVOTIONAL PROGRAMS FOR WOMEN'S GROUPS No. 3**, by Lora Lee Parrott. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1961, pp. 60. \$1.00.

In these paperback books are devotionals prepared for various times when mixed adult groups or women groups gather. The books are similar. Each includes 18 program suggestions with a title often suited for a holiday, suggested hymnal music, Scripture passage and a meditation. The leader might have to use some originality in music suggestions. Meditations are generally good with closing practical applications. For those who tend to shy away from prepared programs as such, ideas may be gleaned by the leader in planning a program for such groups.

— Mrs. John H. White

**MOTHER-DAUGHTER BANQUETS**, by Grace Ramquist. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids 6, Michigan. 1961, pp. 59. \$1.00.

This is a paperback handbook of skits, readings, toasts, and tributes appropriate for mother-daughter banquets. The material is compiled for the various school age groups, from Kindergarten, Senior High, and Mixed Age groups. Skits and pantomimes portraying Bible mothers and children make it useful for school, community or church.

— Mrs. John H. White

**TIME OUT**, by Al Bryant. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids 6, Michigan. 1961, \$1.95.

For those who need help in daily devotions, **TIME OUT** is a compilation of Scripture verses for each day with excerpts from Eugenia Price,

Martin Luther, Billy Graham, and **Shadow of The Almighty**. "The paragraphs are brief, but can provide incentive for meditation through the day, encouraging the reader to increase both the quantity and quality of his quiet time." Young people are confronted with the claims of Christ as well as the promises of the Word.

— Mrs. John H. White

**DID I SAY THAT?** by Leslie B. Flynn. Broadman Press, Nashville, Tenn. 1959, pp. 129. \$2.50.

A well-known publisher states, "If you are an articulate person, you utter some thirty thousand words each day." Yet very few books have appeared on the market to instruct the Christian in the right use of that tongue which he employs so much. This book, written by a Conservative Baptist minister, has been written to help fill this void, and to apply the abundance of Scriptural admonitions to our modern speech life. It is simple reading, abounds in practical anecdotes and humorous sayings, and yet presses home its point with vigor. Such speech problems as rumors, careless talk, exclamations, needling, jesting, self-praise, grumbling, and exaggeration are ably set forth and analyzed through the author's use of illustration and scripture. The presentation is light, humorous, yet serious in intent, and every Christian who likes to talk (the reviewer includes himself) can gain much help here in his struggle to bring his tongue "into captivity to the obedience of Christ."

— J. Paul McCracken

**THE MINISTRY OF MERCY FOR TODAY**, by Peter Y. DeYong. Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy Street., S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1952, pp. 261. \$2.50.

This is a 1961 paper-back reprint of a volume that was first published in 1952, and sold for a dollar more in that edition. **Blue Banner Faith and Life** printed a thorough review of this book in its October-December 1952 issue, Vol. 7, No. 4, page 201.

The material presented is largely the outgrowth of presentations and discussions by the author in Diaconal Conferences of the Christian Reformed Churches in and about Grand Rapids, Michigan. But the treatment of the office and labors of the deacon will be helpful to any communion, and ought to be of special interest and help to members of the Reformed Presbyterian Church.

The most hard-hitting feature of the book is its able demonstration of how far the Church has drifted from a Scriptural deaconry. Today, in many Reformed churches, the only functions delegated to deacons, if such an office still exists, are the administration of finances and the care

of church properties. The "ministry of mercy", which the author shows to be the primary reason for the Spirit's appointment of the office, has been all but forgotten. This "ministry of mercy", the care of the poor and the needy, has either been neglected, dealt with in extreme cases by the sessions, or left almost wholly to government agencies. It is not surprising that deacons have often lacked a sense of mission, and that the office itself has fallen into disuse. The Church must reapprhend the original purpose of the diaconate, and reestablish this important ministry, if she would see God's blessing on her total life.

The author speaks largely to the situation of the Reformed churches of Dutch origin, and refers repeatedly to the **Church Order**, which limits the book somewhat. But its lessons are universally needed and applicable. All deacons, and all other persons interested in a fresh evaluation of this office, would find here an invaluable aid.

— J. Paul McCracken

**THE MAN GOD MASTERED**, by Jean Cadier. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1960, pp. 187. \$3.00.

As Cadier says in his foreword "there are few figures as well known as that of Calvin." Yet few have so long suffered the reproach of this world, and at least partly because the true facts are not often enough told. We are therefore thankful that Cadier "yielded to the kindly insistence" that brought about this splendid brief biography of the great Reformer. And the translation of O. R. Johnston is worthy of high praise.

The beauty of this little volume is that it is brief enough that it will not seem forbidding to those who never read anything too long, and yet full of the sort of information that we would desire many to know. It handles the Servetus affair with just the right attention. And it calls attention to certain facts which show Calvin to be warmly and tenderly human rather than the 'ice man' so often caricatured.

This reviewer is not well acquainted with the ecclesiastical situation in France, but appreciated very much Cadier's attention to Calvin's attitude toward what Calvin called the 'Nicodemites.' These were the men who denied that there was any sin in remaining in a false Church while inwardly adhering to the Reformed Faith. Like Nicodemus they seemed afraid of compromising position. This section (p. 129f.) made us think of Machen. Only by unwavering courage in opposing the 'Nicodemites' was Calvin able to lead the emergent Reformation to safety.

It is always a blessing to be reminded of Calvin's discouragements. It strengthens us to know that He too felt strong desire to quit the field of battle. But in his still stronger fear of

God he was given the strength of ten men, as Cadier so carefully shows, even though his physical strength was hardly that of one man.

We can think of nothing better than to have at least this brief biography of Calvin 'required reading' for ministers, elders and members of those denominations that owe so much to John Calvin. It would also be good for many teachers and professors who say such evil things about Calvin without the least knowledge of the man.

Faithfulness to the truth requires, however, that certain faults be pointed out. They are the faults of Cadier rather than Calvin. We will mention two. Both have to do with the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Speaking of the controversy between the Lutheran and Reformed Churches Cadier says, "Let us hope that the time will shortly come when these quarrels will be forgotten and when, with all recognizing the affirmation of Christ's real presence, the unity of the Reformation Church will be established." Let us indeed hope that the unity of the Reformation Church will be established, but let us hope that it will **not** come except on the basis of the abandonment of the Lutheran error of consubstantiation. Cadier, in his admirable discussion of Calvin's insistence upon Church discipline in the hands of Church officers, says, "In our Churches in France there is no longer any check on those who come to the Lord's Supper" (p. 110). Cadier admits that this "is a mark of our having given up a corporate conception of the Church." (p. 111) But He seems to vacillate in his treatment of this vital issue. "If the present-day movement in the direction of a Christian community becomes stronger," he says, "the re-establishing of some form of order in the Church will become inevitable." We think not. And it ought to be insisted upon, as in Calvin's Geneva, whether it is inevitable or not because it is a requirement of the Word of God.

Fortunately Cadier rarely comes to the foreground. And for a brief biography of Calvin, this volume leaves little to be desired. With the above minor reservations the book as a whole is recommended.

— G. I. Williamson

**A CLOUD OF WITNESSES**, by Asa Zadel Hall. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1961, pp. 88. \$1.95.

This book presents pen portraits and character sketches of people around the apostle Paul. The author is a Christian medical man. The book is illustrated by a number of drawings showing what the men in Paul's life may have looked like. The studies include enemies as well as friends of Paul. The style is simple and the teaching evangelical.

— J. G. Vos

**FICTION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE.** The following books are all published by Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids 6, Michigan. Though not all are of equal value from the literary standpoint, they present Christian truth in story form and are suggested as suitable for Sabbath School lending libraries.

**TAUGHT BY A TIGER**, by Norma R. Youngberg. Adventure in the jungles of Indonesia. 1961, pp. 111. \$1.95.

**JACK DAWN AND THE CAPTAIN'S TREASURE**, by Joseph Coughlin. Mystery and adventure. 1961, pp. 95. \$1.95.

**NORTH OF THE BORDER**, by Gerald Wright. Adventure in northwestern Canada. 1961, pp. 119. \$1.95.

**THE SINGING ANGEL**, by Sallie Lee Bell. An unhappy, rebellious girl is transformed by the grace of God. 1961, pp. 147. \$2.50.

**CLOUDED GLASS**, by Adel Pryor. An 18 year old girl falls in love with the young agnostic son of the judge who has sentenced her father to prison for embezzlement, and what God did in this situation. 1961, pp. 192. \$2.50.

**HER BRIDGE TO HAPPINESS**, by Sallie Lee Bell. A girl, against her will, is sent off to a fashionable boarding school. This experience, which she feared and resented, is used of the Lord to bring her to salvation in Christ. 1961, pp. 117. \$1.95.

**THE SHATTERED WALL**, by Sallie Lee Bell. A wall of fear that confined two young people is shattered by a saving knowledge of Christ. 1961, pp. 149. \$2.50.

**THE HALL FAMILY OF MAPLE HILL**, by Harry E. Ezell. The personal tragedies and triumphs of three children in a Christian family. 1961, pp. 121. \$1.95.

**SOMEONE SPECIAL**, by Dorothy C. Has-kin. A Christian girl finds that faithfulness to the Lord is the key to the solution of her problems. 1961, pp. 128. \$1.95.

**MY HEART'S AT LIBERTY**, by Louise H. McCraw. A romance of Reconstruction days in Virginia. 1961, pp. 194. \$2.50.

**THE MYSTERY OF THE STAR SAPPHIRE**, by Elise Fraser. A mystery story with plenty of suspense, with the realization of God's purpose in the lives of a young man and a girl. 1961, pp. 153. \$2.50.

— J. G. Vos

**STUDIES IN THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT**, Volume II, by D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Michigan. 1961, pp. 337, \$4.50.

This is the second volume of a comprehen-

sive two-volume series. Volume one was reviewed in **Blue Banner Faith and Life**. Volume two contains an exposition of Matthew, chapters six and seven.

The author interprets chapter six as: "A picture of the Christian living his life in this world in the presence of God in active submission to God and in entire dependence upon Him." In the final chapter "we are reminded all along that our life here is a journey and a pilgrimage, and that it is leading on to a final judgment and ultimate assessment and determination and proclamation of our final and eternal destiny."

There are a total of thirty sermons in this volume and each is presented as a complete sermon, yet can only be understood in the light of the whole. The book has been written from tape recordings of the author's sermons exactly as he gave them at Westminster Chapel, London. Because of this the expression and flow of ideas is often abrupt, yet this very method has added to the color and forcefulness of the expositions. The author has achieved the very elusive balance between careful exposition and its application to life. These volumes serve as an example of true expository preaching rather than a series of mechanical expositions. His Calvinistic interpretation of the sovereignty of God, human depravity and Christian inconsistency helps to make these volumes a significant contribution. Throughout the expositions Dr. Jones emphasizes the need for an understanding of and commitment to the object doctrines of God's Word along with an application of them to the Christian's life here and now.

It is the reviewer's opinion that these sermons present something which is needed by the Reformed Faith in these days of compromise and superficiality. Both of these volumes are recommended as a worthwhile investment.

— John H. White

**THE BOOK OF REVELATION**, a simplified commentary, by Harry Buis. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Box 185, Nutley 10, N. J. 1960, pp. 124. \$1.75.

This is, as the sub-title indicates, a simplified commentary. It aims, according to its author, to expound the great positive message of the book of Revelation in a form that will be of greatest help to the average lay reader. Controversial points are discussed to a limited extent and such discussions are kept at a minimum.

After a brief description of the three main schools of interpretation, — Historical, Futurist, and Preterist, — the author announces that his commentary will follow the interpretation of the Preterite school, i.e. the view which holds that the entire book, except for the last few chapters, refers to the early church in its struggle with the

persecuting Roman Empire. He holds rather consistently to this view, except that now and again he admits that symbols in the book may illustrate events of a later time as well as those of the apostle John's own age.

The book is largely a verse by verse exposition, following upon a brief summary of each chapter. For example, — in chapter 20, the controversial chapter dealing with the millennium, the author says simply: "This chapter predicts a long period of victory for God's people followed by a brief struggle ending in the final defeat of Satan." Then the verse by verse explanation is taken up.

For anyone desiring to go deeply into the problems of interpretation this book would provide only a minimum of help. But for him who wishes only to get a broad view of the Preterist position, a layman let us say who inclines to this view, the book should prove quite valuable. It might even set others to thinking who had previously held to one of the other two main schools of thought. It is not a difficult book to read.

— F. F. Reade

**ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE NEW TESTAMENT**, by J. A. Thompson. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids 3, Michigan. 1960, pp. 151. \$1.50.

This is one of the Pathway Books. Professor Thompson also has contributed two other volumes to the series: **ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE OLD TESTAMENT**, and **ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE PRE-CHRISTIAN CENTURIES**.

This book is purposely small and inexpensive. It offers useful information about coins, the topography of Jerusalem, the places mentioned in Paul's missionary journeys, the seven cities of Revelation, plus a great deal more information useful for illustrating sermons and Bible studies.

The book is attractively printed, well illustrated, footnoted, and has an index of subjects, authors, and Bible references.

I recommend this volume as one which lives up to the high claim made for the Pathway series: "original monographs representative of the best of contemporary evangelical thought by leading writers in the world of Christian scholarship."

— Robert McMillan

**LOOKING UNTO HIM: A MESSAGE FOR EACH DAY**, by Frank E. Gabelein. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1961, reprint of 1941, pp. 208. \$3.00.

This is a book of devotional meditations, one for each day in the year. The messages are brief, averaging half a page each, with a Scrip-

ture text as the theme. They are simple and definite, and the theological viewpoint of the author is evangelical. They will prove to be spiritually edifying, comforting and stimulating. This book would make a good gift item. It is attractively printed and bound.

—J. G. Vos

**AN EXPOSITION OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS**, by John Brown. The Banner of Truth Trust, 78b Chiltern St., London, W.1, England. 1961 (reprint), pp. 728. 18 shillings.

This work is one of the **Geneva Series Commentary**, and is, like the others, an older work considered to be of value to a new generation. My review of the book is favorable, and I wish to recommend its use to pastors for the following reasons: (1) Good exegetical content. (2) The great number of sources consulted in the writing of the commentary. (3) The insight that Brown has into the interpretation of the Old Testament as related to Hebrews.

The exposition is done with careful regard for the Greek expressions of thought, and the shades of meaning in the words. Nearly every page has comments on words or constructions in the footnotes. By way of illustration I quote the following from the comments on Heb. 6:8:

"But that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected (**adokimos**), and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned." "This ground, fruitful only in briars and thorns, is rejected. The word rejected properly signifies, 'disapproved after trial.'" This is followed by a footnote on the word **adokimos** reading "**Adokimos**, disapproved. The words **dokimazein . . . adokimos**, properly refer to those who prove metals. The verb **dokimazein** signifies, to inspect coins, and distinguish the genuine from spurious or adulterated. **Dokimion** denotes that by which the proof is made, the fining-pot, the furnace. . . **dokimon** is that which is **tried and approved . . . adokimos** is properly applied to base or adulterated coins and therefore rejected.")

Secondly, the value of the work is that it gives quotations from old and hard to acquire sources. Kuinoel, from whom Brown quoted the remarks on the word **rejected**; Rosemuller, Owen, Abresch, Michaelis and Storr represent a few of the works from which he has cited comments, and these works range from the earliest literature to that of his own time.

Finally, it is well known that the Epistle deals extensively with the Old Testament. As often as it is edifying, Brown goes into the Old Testament setting, and seeks to give a reason for the reference or quotation used.

Commenting on Heb. 10:1, with reference to

the words **shadow** and **image** as used in the verse: "The word shadow is used by artists to denote the first rude outline which they take of an object which they mean to represent; the word image, of the complete picture or statue. . . what the Apostle says is, not that the law, taken in all its extent was a shadow, but that the law had a shadow."

The importance of this quotation needs to be viewed in the context of the whole argument which considered the typical significance of the Old Testament. His conclusions concerning types are as follows: "We are not warranted to consider anything as typical but what is distinctly stated in Scripture to be so. . . we are not to look for an entire correspondence between the type and the antitype. . . Even what was typical was imperfectly typical."

By way of general comment, Dr. Brown accepts the Pauline authorship of the letter, and also that it was composed for Jews who were in danger of regarding the Gospel as inferior to the Mosaic system. There is no index to the work, though the table of contents is useful, and throughout the work the chapter and verse being discussed head each page. It is attractively printed on good quality paper.

— Edward A. Robson

THE AMPLIFIED OLD TESTAMENT, PART TWO: JOB TO MALACHI. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1962, pp. 1213. \$4.95.

This production is similar to the well-known **Amplified New Testament** and is designed to meet the same kind of need. It is really something halfway between a translation and a commentary — more than a translation, but less than a real commentary. The advantages of this type of production are that it can afford some insight into shades of meaning of the original text of Scripture beyond what a mere translation can give, and it can often shed light on obscure or baffling passages. To achieve these advantages adequately, however, requires not only a very superior scholarship in the original languages of Scripture, but also a very high degree of scholarly objectivity and disciplined self-restraint in order to avoid the very real dangers of subjective or partisan interpretation which may be unconsciously injected into what purports to be simply a presentation of God's Word.

These dangers, obviously, cannot be avoided altogether, and they have not been wholly avoided in **The Amplified Old Testament** (Part I, Genesis to Esther, has not yet been published. The work under review is Part II). While very often **The Amplified Old Testament** seems exactly to bring out the real force of the original, never-

theless at numerous other places doubtful or even highly controversial ideas are introduced in the text or the footnotes. Thus, for example, the Song of Solomon is presented in terms of the very doubtful "Shepherd Hypothesis" according to which the book has three main characters instead of two. This is a fairly recent interpretation and one that is held by only a small minority of Biblical scholars. It involves regarding Solomon as a veritable monster of iniquity who vainly tries to seduce a country maiden who is betrothed to a shepherd lover. Moreover **The Amplified Old Testament** allegorizes the Song of Solomon and introduces the dubious idea that Solomon is a type of the world.

In the King James Version the text of the Song of Solomon contains approximately 2550 words. **The Amplified Old Testament** in attempting to present the book plausibly in terms of the very debatable "Shepherd Hypothesis" almost doubles this length, by adding 2338 words of "amplification" (actual count; all printed in italics), mostly in the text, but partly in an introductory note of one and one half pages. The impression is given to the ordinary reader that all of this "amplifying" material is really implied in the Hebrew text and serves to bring out the true meaning of the book. As a matter of fact, some of it is highly artificial and based on imaginative conjecture rather than on anything in the book itself. For example, the following (in italics) is included in the text of Chapter 1:

"There was an air of suppressed excitement throughout the great harem. Scores of beautiful women loitered here and there in the magnificent rooms, each in herself a picture to which not only nature but also art had contributed with masterly and painstaking touches."

And from Chapter 5 (in italics and enclosed in brackets): "Thoroughly aroused, with cheeks glowing and eyes snapping . . . She said . . ."

There are also several footnotes which are of the nature of sermonizing or hortatory application rather than serving to bring out the **meaning** of the text. For example: "Do I heed Christ when He bids me come away from the lions' den of temptation and dwell with Him?" (p. 455).

Doubtful interpretation is introduced, also, into other parts of the Old Testament. In a footnote on page 554 Isaiah 35:1 ("The desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose") is represented as being fulfilled by the airplane shipment of cut flowers from the present State of Israel to florists in other countries — surely a very doubtful interpretation of this chapter which is commonly understood to predict, in figurative language, the return of the Jews from the Babylonian Captivity. On page 640 the words of Isaiah 66:8 ("Shall a nation be born at once?") are stated to have been fulfilled on May 14, 1948 with the

establishment of the present Republic of Israel. This, of course, involves confusing the **meaning** of a prophecy with its **fulfilment** — and introducing a very doubtful “fulfilment” at that. This confusion of the meaning of prophecy with the fulfilment of prophecy is common among uninstructed Christians, but we have a right to expect clearer thinking from learned scholars. For someone to say that Revelation Chapter 13 predicts the rise and career of a world-dictator who will persecute God’s people is to set forth the **meaning** of the chapter. But when someone adds that Stalin (or Napoleon, or Hitler, or any other historical or contemporary figure) is the dictator, he has gone beyond the bounds of **interpretation** and is undertaking the difficult task of **pinpointing the fulfilment** — something which involves not merely understanding of Scripture, but a comprehensive knowledge of history and current events, for which we are dependent on fallible human records. Yet this sort of thing is found repeatedly in the footnotes of **The Amplified Old Testament** (see pages 237, 515, 802, 1020).

Reference may also be made to a very doubtful interpretation of Psalm 90:10 (“The days of our years are threescore years and ten”), found on page 237. This is said to refer, not to the lifespan of humanity, but to the Israelites who rebelled at Kadesh-barnea dying in the wilderness during the forty year period of wandering.

In the judgment of this reviewer, the Book of Ecclesiastes is wrongly treated in a manner which does serious injustice to the human writer of this book of Scripture. An antithesis is set up between the purpose of the human writer, which is said to be bad, and the purpose of the inspiring Holy Spirit, which is said to be good (page 429). H. C. Leupold’s treatment of Ecclesiastes in his masterful commentary seems far truer. Leupold holds that the real theme of the book is **Counsel and Comfort for Troubled Saints** and that the viewpoint and intention of the human writer are God-centered and devout throughout the book. According to Leupold’s very convincing treatment, the book’s exposure of the unsatisfying character of merely earthly values is strictly subordinate and contributory to the development of its positive theme for the edification of God’s saints in troubled, frustrating times.

Those possessing standard helps to Bible study (say two or three English versions of the Bible, Davis’ **Dictionary of the Bible** and a good commentary such as **The New Bible Commentary** by Davidson, Stibbs and Kevin) do not need the kind of help provided by **The Amplified Old Testament**. Those who lack such tried-and-true helps and are really baffled by the English Bible are in danger of being misled by **The Amplified Old Testament**, because of the very considerable

element of subjective opinion and debatable interpretation which is introduced, without qualification, as if it were actually and necessarily implicit in the text of the Scripture itself.

— J. G. Vos

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL LESSONS AND SUPPLIES, published by Great Commission Publications, 7401 Old York Road, Philadelphia 26, Pa. Complete sample kit for 1962, \$3.95. Returnable for refund or credit if in good condition and returned within three weeks.

It is a pleasure to recommend this excellent series of Vacation Bible School materials and lesson helps. These are distinctly high quality materials prepared by eminently qualified people. All materials are attractive and are well printed on good quality paper. The handwork is interesting and very usable. They compare favorably with the very best that this reviewer has seen from other sources.

Planned for a two weeks’ school (ten mornings), these lesson materials provide for Beginners, Primary, Junior and Intermediate groups. The themes are as follows: Beginners: “Homes that God Made”; Primaries: “Fathers and Sons”; Juniors: “The Ten Commandments”; Intermediates: “The Exodus.” For each of these levels there is a Teacher’s Manual and a Pupil’s Workbook. Also provided are handwork pads for the Beginners group, with pictures to color, cut out, etc. Included in the sample kit are other needed supplies such as attendance record cards, lapel buttons, invitation cards, achievement certificates, announcement notices, and the like.

A notable and highly commendable feature of these materials is the complete absence from them of pictures purporting to portray the Lord Jesus Christ. This reviewer knows of no VBS materials from any other source of which this is true.

Also included in the kit is a **VBS 1962 Idea Book and Catalog** describing all the materials and giving prices, terms, etc. It is possible to obtain this Idea Book and Catalogue (free) apart from the kit of sample materials, on request to the publishers.

By arrangement with the Board of Christian Education of the Reformed Presbyterian Church these Great Commission VBS materials are available in a Reformed Presbyterian Edition which contains Psalms instead of hymns in the pupils’ books and has some other changes requested by the Reformed Presbyterian Board of Christian Education. To obtain this special edition it is necessary in ordering to request specifically that the Reformed Presbyterian Edition be sent. Otherwise the ordinary materials (containing some hymns, etc.) will be sent.

These helps are eminently true to the Bible

and to the Reformed interpretation of Christianity. This cannot be said of all VBS materials by any means. Pastors and church leaders planning a Vacation Bible School for 1962 should by all means consider these Great Commission materials

before deciding on their VBS helps for the season. These are Biblically sound, pedagogically practical and attractive in appearance.

— J. G. Vos

## Acknowledgment of Contributions

The Manager of this magazine wishes to acknowledge, with hearty thanks, the following contributions to the cost of publishing the magazine since our last issue went to press.

**December 1961 (from December 20th):** No. 1033, \$5.00. No. 1034, \$5.00. No. 1035, \$1.00. No. 1036, \$4.50. No. 1037, \$3.00. No. 1038, \$3.00. No. 1039, \$1.00. No. 1040, \$14.50. No. 1041, \$1.50. No. 1042, \$3.50. No. 1043, \$5.00. No. 1044, \$5.50. No. 1045, \$25.00.

**January 1962:** No. 1046, \$5.00. No. 1047, \$5.00. No. 1048, \$5.00. No. 1049, \$5.00. No. 1050, \$2.00. No. 1051, \$3.50. No. 1052, \$5.00. No. 1053, \$2.00. No. 1054, \$10.00. No. 1055, \$15.00.

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**March 1962 (to March 6th):** No. 1063, \$1.50. No. 1064, \$10.00. No. 1065, \$23.50. No. 1066, \$10.00.

These generous contributions from friends and readers who have in this very practical manner shown their concern for the continued publication of **Blue Banner Faith and Life** are deeply appreciated. Less than half of the money needed is obtained from subscriptions; for the rest we are dependent on contributions. You can help the world-wide ministry of this magazine by contributing to the cost of publication as the Lord enables you.

### Circulation of this Issue

1200 copies of this issue of **Blue Banner Faith and Life** were printed. Most of these went immediately to subscribers. A small surplus was left from which future orders for back issues can be supplied. The circulation of this issue by countries is as follows:

U.S.A., 792. Australia, 54. Canada, 51. England, 42. Scotland, 38. Northern Ireland, 37. Japan, 30. Cyprus, 13. Ceylon, 7. New Zealand, 7. Formosa (Free China), 6. Syria, 5. India, 5. Korea, 4. Eire, 4. Netherlands, 3. South Africa, 3. Lebanon, 3. Peru, 3. Greece, 2. Ethiopia, 2. One copy to each of the following: Egypt, Hong Kong, Wales, France, Southern Rhodesia, Costa Rica, Switzerland, Argentina, Brazil, Sweden, Saudi Arabia. Number of countries, 32. Circulation outside U.S.A., 330. Total circulation, 1122.

You can help this world-wide witness to Scriptural truth by contributing to the cost of publishing the magazine, above the amount you pay for your subscription. Another way you can help is by sending your renewal promptly when notified that your subscription has expired.

### Change of Address

Every time an issue of the magazine is mailed a number of copies are returned by the postal service because they are undeliverable as addressed. This means that the addressees have moved without notifying us of the change. It costs us about 25c in every case for postage due on the magazine returned, cost of a new mailing envelope and new postage on the same magazine mailed out to the new address. Copies returned as undeliverable from foreign countries are returned free, but a new envelope and new out-bound postage are required. Our mailing list is kept strictly corrected to date, but we are helpless when subscribers move without notifying us.

Formerly the U.S. Postal Service would deliver magazines with a slightly incorrect address if the correct address was known and in the same town or city. Now, however, magazines are returned to the sender rated with postage due, even when the error in address is slight, such as "M.R." (Mounted Route) instead of "R.R." (Rural Route), or an incorrect street number. The result is expense, inconvenience, and delay in a subscriber receiving his paper. Please help by prompt notification of any change in your address. — Editor.

Safe where I cannot die yet,  
Safe where I hope to lie too,  
Safe from the fume and the fret;  
You, and you,  
Whom I never forget.

Safe from the frost and the snow,  
Safe from the storm and the sun,  
Safe where the seeds wait to grow  
One by one,  
And to come back in blow.\*

— C. G. Rossetti

\*blow: bloom

## *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 it proper to speak of God's first covenant with man as the "Covenant of Works"? This term seems to imply that man, before the Fall, was in a position to earn eternal life, so that God would owe man something. For this reason, is not the term "Covenant of Life" a preferable one?

### Answer:

Some of the Reformed creeds and catechisms speak of a Covenant of Works, and some call it a Covenant of Life. The Westminster Standards use both terms to describe the arrangement which God appointed for the probation of mankind.

It is certainly true that man, even when sinless, could not put God in his debt. Man already owed total devotion and service to God, therefore any meritorious works above and beyond this would be out of the question. If "Covenant of Works" means "Covenant of **meritorious Works**" or "Covenant of Works of Supererogation", then the term is improper. Romans 4:2 states that even if Abraham had been (hypothetically) justified by works, still he would have had nothing to glory of in the presence of God. From this we may conclude that if Adam had obeyed God perfectly, still he would have had no ground for glorying before God.

Yet the term "works" is the phrase "Covenant of Works" need not mean **meritorious** works. The idea of a Covenant of Works seems to be set forth in Galatians 3:12 ("the man that doeth them shall live in them"). A father may tell his young son, "If you will cut the grass, I will pay you 25 cents." It would be the child's duty to mow the lawn, even without payment, if instructed by his parent to do so. The 25 cents is not a legal obligation which the parent owes the child. Yet the parent may choose to set up such an arrangement, and in that case the child's obtaining the money is made contingent upon his performing the service specified. The cutting of the grass would be a **condition**, but the nature of this condition would not be meritorious, nor would the giving of the money by the parent be a legal obligation.

There may also exist a parallel in the matter of the rewards promised by the Lord to the Christian for faithfulness in service. The receiving of these rewards is contingent upon service rendered, yet they are not, strictly speaking, **earned**, nor does the Christian really have any legal

claim to the reward. It is really a gift of grace made contingent by the giver upon faithfulness in service rendered. This is true even though the desire of the Christian to render the service, and the ability to render it, are both gifts of the Lord to the Christian (Phil. 2:12, 13).

A pastor or parent may say to a group of children, "I will give a new Bible to any child who will memorize the Shorter Catechism." In this case the gaining of the Bible is contingent upon performance of the specific memory work by the child. Yet strictly speaking the Bible is not earned. The child learning the Catechism does not really do anything for the parent or pastor — the real benefit is to the child himself. Nor is there any real correspondence between the purchase price of the Bible which was paid by the parent or pastor, and the amount of effort expended by the child in learning the Catechism. This arrangement can be loosely spoken of as "earning a Bible", though strictly speaking it is a matter of meeting a specified condition for the gift of a Bible.

It would appear that the difficulty felt by those who object to the use of the term "Covenant of Works" is partly semantic — a matter of the meaning and usage of words. There does not seem to be any valid objection to the use of the term "Covenant of Works" as it is understood and expounded in standard works on Reformed theology. The idea that man could put God in his debt, as if man were an autonomous being independent of God, does not seem to be taught or implied in the standard treatments of this subject.

— J. G. Vos

### Question:

What attitude should we take toward the teaching of "British-Israelism"? What literature dealing with this subject can be obtained?

### Answer:

In reply we reprint a question and answer from the June, 1946, issue of "Blue Banner Faith and Life". In addition, the following can be recommended:

HERESIES EXPOSED, by William C. Irvine (pages 34-43). Published by Loizeaux Brothers, Inc., 19 West 21st St., New York 10, N. Y. 75 cents.

THE SEED OF ABRAHAM, by Albertus Pieters (pages 156-161). Published by Wm. B.

Eerdmans Pub. Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S. E., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. \$2.50.

THE CHAOS OF CULTS, by J. K. Van Baalen. Published by Eerdmans (see address above). \$3.00.

The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (11th ed., 1910. vol. 2, p. 31) defines "Anglo-Israelite Theory" as "the contention that the British people in the United Kingdom, its colonies, and the United States, are the racial descendants of the 'ten tribes' forming the kingdom of Israel, large numbers of whom were deported by Sargon king of Assyria on the fall of Samaria in 721 B. C." The *Encyclopaedia* adds that the theory "rests on premises which are deemed by scholars—both theological and anthropological—to be utterly unsound." The question from the June, 1946, issue follows immediately below.

**Question:**

Is the doctrine of British-Israelism true to the Bible?

**Answer:**

British-Israelism is a false and harmful system of interpreting the Bible which seems to be gaining popularity at the present time. Briefly, it holds that the Bible contains a double message, a double set of promises, and describes two distinct bodies of people on earth who may be called "the people of God". According to this system, the Christian Church is the spiritual people of God, to whom belong the spiritual message of the Bible, that is, the gospel of salvation through Christ, and the spiritual promises of forgiveness, eternal life, etc. Besides this spiritual people of God, British-Israelism holds that there is an earthly people of God, namely those who are descendants of Abraham according to flesh, to whom belong the earthly message of the Bible and the earthly promises of the Bible.

To this is added the peculiar idea that the Anglo-Saxon peoples are the descendants of the ten "lost tribes" of Israel and therefore are heirs of many Old Testament promises because of their (supposed) racial connection with Abraham. Some go so far as to maintain that it is the destiny of the Anglo-Saxon peoples, because of their race, to rule the world.

The promise of Jeremiah 33:17 ("For thus saith the Lord; David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel") certainly refers to the kingly office of Jesus Christ, as shown by Luke 1:32,33 ("And . . . the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end"); but British-Israelism claims that Jeremiah 33:17 and related promises are fulfilled in

the kings of Britain who reign in London. This is one of the most harmful features of this false system, for it takes these glorious promises of Christ's kingly reign and reduces them to the level of promises concerning an earthly, national kingship.

The notion that the Anglo-Saxon peoples are entitled to special standing or privileges because of a supposed racial connection with Abraham is certainly contrary to the Bible which teaches that in this New Testament age it is not physical descent but faith that makes a person a real child of Abraham (Galatians 3:7; Romans 9:6-8).

As for the claim that the Anglo-Saxon peoples are descended from the "lost tribes" of Israel, there is not any real historical evidence that such is the fact, nor is there a qualified historian in the world who accepts the claim as fact. The kind of evidence which is offered in British-Israel literature is wholly unconvincing.

— J. G. Vos

**Question:**

What should be thought of the idea that the Great Pyramid of Egypt contains, in its measurements or other features, a cryptic revelation of the true God?

**Answer:**

According to all orthodox Christian theology, God is revealed in nature, and by His special revelation which today exists only in the form of Holy Scripture. The notion that the Great Pyramid of Egypt contains a mysterious revelation of the true God is not only without foundation in fact, but is contrary to recognized Christian truth. Scripture teaches us that the Word (special revelation) of God was given exclusively to Israel. Israel, as the recipient of special divine revelation and supernatural redemption, is represented in the Bible as unique and without parallel among the nations of the ancient World (Deut. 32:31-33; 33:28,29. Psalms 147:11,20). Until the advent of Jesus Christ, the nations outside of Israel were in a state of ignorance which God "winked at" but did not dispel (Acts 17:30). Paul in Romans chapter 1 represents the nations of the ancient world, outside of Israel, as having deliberately suppressed the knowledge of the true God which they had from nature, and consequently having been given up by God to "a reprobate mind".

In the Bible Egypt, far from being represented as a recipient of special revelations and favor from God, is portrayed as a type of sin and evil (Ex. 20:2 Rev. 11:8).

The "Pyramid Theory", like the "British-Israel Theory", is utterly without foundation and is contrary to Scripture.

— J. G. Vos

## *Hope For Weak Christians*

**“Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my Spirit upon him. . . A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth”. Isa. 42:1-3**

This is a prophecy about our Saviour. He will not break a bruised reed, nor quench a smoking flax (“a dimly burning wick”, as the Revised Version translates it). A “bruised reed” is one that has been hit and bent over, but not broken clear off. The angle where the reed is bent means that the veins of the reed are constricted at that point; only with difficulty and to a limited extent can the life-giving sap of the reed reach the part beyond where it is “bruised”. The part beyond the bruise is alive, but it is not flourishing.

Consider the dimly burning wick — the chimneyless oil lamp or flare of ancient Palestine. Sometimes it would burn only dimly, with more smoke than flame. There is fire there; combustion is taking place; but the rate of combustion is slow, so that there is not a vigorous and bright flame. It is alive, but it is not what a lamp ought to be.

Is our Christian life a bruised reed, a dimly burning wick? Think of our failures, our inconsistencies, our weaknesses, our discouragements. How feebly we live for our Lord! How much of self, how little of Jesus, there is in our lives! How often we have turned aside from His way to our own way! How often we have followed Him afar off! How often our love to Him has waxed cold, our vision of Him grown dim! All of us will readily confess that sometimes — perhaps most of the time — our life has been a bruised reed and a dimly burning wick. We cannot honestly claim more.

Be comforted. Christ will not break a bruised reed, nor quench a dimly burning wick. He will not say, “I do not want this bruised reed;

break it off; pull it up by the roots; throw it into the fire to be destroyed.” He will not say, “This dimly burning wick is useless. It cannot serve the purpose of a lamp. Extinguish the smoldering, flickering flame; throw the worthless wick out on the rubbish heap.” No, Christ will not do that. For the life in the reed is His life, and the flame of the wick is His flame. Bruised as the reed may be, it is not dead; it is alive. That life in the Christian is Christ’s life, imparted in the new birth by the Holy Spirit. That flame of the dimly burning wick is Christ’s flame, the flame given by the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Christ suffered and died to give life to the reed, to kindle the flame on the wick. He will not abandon it; He will not reject it.

Perhaps we should lament that we are only a bruised reed, a dimly burning wick. But we should also rejoice and give thanks that by divine grace we are a reed with life in its cells, a wick with a living flame burning, however feebly, at its tip. What our Lord has undertaken, He will complete. Christ uses and transforms bruised reeds, dimly burning wicks. He can make the bruised reed grow straight and strong. He can fan the dimly burning wick to a brightly glowing, white-hot flame. It can become a beacon of light to the lost in this world’s darkness.

Moreover, we should understand, such is the real destiny of every Christian. Every bruised reed is to be a straight and strong reed someday, and every dimly burning wick is to burn with a white-hot flame someday. Our eternal destiny as Christians is to be strong and straight reeds, and brightly burning lamps, for our Lord’s honor and praise and glory. If you are truly in Christ, even though today you may be but a bruised reed and a dimly burning wick, yet your sure destiny is to be strong and straight and bright for Him, to all eternity. Let that be your encouragement in your struggle with sin, temptation and weakness.

— J. G. Vos



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JULY-SEPTEMBER, 1962

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# *The Covenant Banner*

By George Paulin

Blow softly, ye breezes, by mountain and moor,  
O'er the graves of the Covenant men;  
By the muirland and flood that were red with their blood,  
Can ye waft the old watchwords again?  
"For Scotland and Christ" the breezes of old  
O'er the wilds of the Westland bore,  
From the Lugar and Nith to the Lothian Frith,  
And the German Ocean's shore.  
And where'er they blew, a prayer was breathed,  
And a holy Psalm was sung;  
And hands were clasped and the banner grasped,  
When the Covenant watchword rung.  
O for the brave true hearts of old,  
That bled when the banner perished!  
O for the Faith that was strong in death—  
The Faith that our fathers cherished!  
The banner might fall, but the spirit lived,  
And liveth for evermore;  
And Scotland claims, as her noblest names,  
The Covenant men of yore.

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## *From "Lays of the Kirk and Covenant"*

By Harriet S. Menteth

Ah! the eye is sick with seeing;  
Ah! the heart is faint with fear.  
Clouds athwart the horizon fleeing,  
Harbingers of tempest near!  
God hath laid to sleep his chosen;  
Who the mighty shall withstand?  
And the tide of faith seems frozen  
In the winter of the land!  
For a space it darkens, darkens,  
Hope and promise in the tomb!  
But the Lord looks down and hearkens:  
Sobs of prayer amid the gloom!  
"Nay, my people—not forsaken,  
Though afflicted sore thou art.  
Of my strength thy hold is taken;  
Thy fresh springs are in my heart!  
From the deep vault of the prison;  
From the lone isle of the sea;

From thy banished ones hath risen  
An accepted voice to me!  
Chosen in affliction's waters,  
Chosen 'neath the oppressor's rod,  
I have sealed thy sons and daughters  
In a covenant with God!  
Pass thou on, a sign and wonder,  
As my nation was of yore;  
In the secret place of thunder  
I have laid thy help in store!  
Quit thy hold of earthly favor;  
Touch not the accursed thing!  
Monarchs **must** abhor thy savor  
While they set at naught thy King!  
Part not—halve not thine allegiance,  
Till I come to claim mine own;  
In the woe of thine obedience  
Bear my Cross and guard my Crown.

All its thorns in thy true sight,  
Transfigured into beams of light!"

---

"Blessed whoso loveth Thee, and his friend in Thee, and his enemy for Thee.  
For he alone loses none dear to him, to whom all are dear in Him who cannot be  
lost."—Augustine.



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From thy banished ones hath risen  
An accepted voice to me!  
Chosen in affliction's waters,  
Chosen 'neath the oppressor's rod,  
I have sealed thy sons and daughters  
In a covenant with God!  
Pass thou on, a sign and wonder,  
As my nation was of yore;  
In the secret place of thunder  
I have laid thy help in store!  
Quit thy hold of earthly favor;  
Touch not the accursed thing!  
Monarchs **must** abhor thy savor  
While they set at naught thy King!  
Part not—halve not thine allegiance,  
Till I come to claim mine own;  
In the woe of thine obedience  
Bear my Cross and guard my Crown.

All its thorns in thy true sight,  
Transfigured into beams of light!"

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"Blessed whoso loveth Thee, and his friend in Thee, and his enemy for Thee.  
For he alone loses none dear to him, to whom all are dear in Him who cannot be  
lost."—Augustine.

# BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

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## *Holy Days of Men and Holy Days of God*

By the Rev. G. I. Williamson

In the Gospel according to Luke, we read these words: "That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." These are the words of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. And please note their force: that which is placed by men in the highest category is placed by God in the lowest category possible.

And what are these things that men highly esteem but which God utterly abhors? They are the things of religion. That is what Jesus was talking about. To the Pharisees He said, "Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts, for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." It was precisely those things that they did in the sphere of religion, those things which they highly esteemed and which made them appear "just" before men, which rendered them abominable unto God. When Jesus went on to add this comment, his meaning became even more clear: "It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail." Their trouble was that they did not heed the law of God. As He said, "Laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men . . . ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition." Is it any wonder that the verdict was this: "They worship me in vain (that it, for nothing) teaching for doctrines the commandments of men?"

### I. OTHER MEN'S TRADITIONS

It is easy for us to see the error of the Pharisees. They added to the Word of God many humanly devised traditions. Gradually, as time passed, these traditions gained so high an esteem among them that they took a place along side the commandments of God. And by Jesus' time, these traditions had become more important to them (in practice if not in theory) than the commandments of God. Thus the Word of God was made of none effect by their traditions. Yes; and the special point to be observed is that those very traditions—time honored and sacred in the eyes of the Pharisees—were abomination in the eyes of God. Jesus said that they worshipped God in vain. That is, they might just as well have had no religious worship at all as to have had what they did. It was completely worthless.

When we recall the many instances in Biblical history when this same evil occurred, we shall

better understand Jesus' severity. Does not the Bible tell us that it was so even from the beginning? "Unto Cain and unto his offering He had no respect." (Gen. 4:5) The worship that Cain devised for himself was abomination to God, however highly esteemed by him. And we remember the sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, who took fire and incense and offered that before the Lord "which He commanded them not. And there went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord." (Lev. 10:1,2) That which they highly esteemed was quite obviously "abomination in the sight of God." To pass over many other instances, we may recall the question asked of Zechariah the prophet by those of the remnant which had come back from the Captivity. They inquired concerning a certain tradition that had "grown up" during the days of the captivity, and asked whether or not they should continue it. The Prophet said: "When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh month, even those seventy years, did ye at all fast unto me, even to me?" (Zech. 7:7:5) Then he informed them that since they had developed that tradition without a specific command of God, it was no more acceptable to God as an act of religious worship than was their eating and drinking. "Should ye not hear the words which the Lord hath cried?" concluded the Prophet.

It would be difficult to think of a lesson more often, and more emphatically, and more clearly taught in Scripture than this one: "that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God." And we must not think that this is merely an "old testament" doctrine. No principle of God's Word is taught in only one Testament. And this principle is no exception. The sinful tendency of man which we have seen in Old Testament history is evident in the New Testament also. Within the days of the Apostles, and in the Apostolic Church, we see this same tendency in sinful men, and we also find the same principle of divine revelation. The Church of Galatia is a case in point. It is clear from the contents of Paul's epistle to the Galatians that that Church which had made such a promising start had soon gone off on the wrong track. Paul said that he marvelled that they were so soon removed from the grace of Christ. And at least part of their trouble was this evil tendency under consideration. For the Galatians had decided that the pure religion delivered to them by the Apostles was not suf-

ficient. They wanted something better (although there is nothing better). So they began adding to it certain holy days and seasons of their own devising. We do not know just what those special days and seasons were, but we certainly do know what God's inspired Apostle had to say about them, for we find his words in Galatians 4:9-11:

“. . . after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.”

Observe, how serious a matter this was in the Apostle's eyes. What is it to be “in bondage” again, if it is not to be enslaved to false religion? How could he say that he was “afraid of them, lest he had bestowed his labour in vain,” except that such a religion as they were falling into was null and void before God? It is clearly another case of men highly esteeming the very thing that is abomination in the sight of God, and all because they were observing certain days and seasons without being told to do so by almighty God. Their sin was exactly the same as that of Cain, Nadab and Abihu, the Captives from Babylon and the Pharisees who made the Word of God of none effect by their own traditions.

## II. OUR TRADITIONS

It is one thing to condemn other men's sins, but it is another to mend our own. The Galatians would probably have had no difficulty condemning the wicked Pharisees, but it is not so certain that they were willing to hear themselves condemned. Paul said to them: “am I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?” (Gal. 4:16). The author of this article would ask the same question. Suppose I do say some things that “hurt” a bit. Suppose I do speak out against something sacred to you. Do I then become your enemy because I tell you the truth?

The truth is that Christmas (and Good Friday, and Easter, and Father's Day, and Mother's Day, and Children's Day, and any other “special holy day” except the weekly Sabbath) is an abomination to God. Now please note with care: we do not say that everything associated with these days is abominable. What we do say is that every special holy day (or season) is abominable to God.

(1) This is true, in the first place, because of the source of such. Let us consider Christmas as an example. It is admitted by Roman Catholics and Protestants alike that Christmas is not revealed in the Word of God. The Bible does not give us the date of Christ's birth. It does not even tell us the precise month or even the season. It is also generally admitted that there was no trace of Christmas observance in the Apostolic and post-

Apostolic Church. It was not until the third century that the celebration of Christmas began to appear in Christian circles, and even then there was no uniformity. Various dates were set for the “holy day,” including January, March, April and May. To this day the Greek Orthodox Church observes January 6th rather than December 25th. When, under the growing authority of the Roman Bishop, December 25th was adopted in the west, it was largely an attempt to engage in competition with a pagan celebration called Saturnalia. It was a time of celebration, merry-making and the giving of gifts. It was a pagan celebration in honor of the sun. They believed that the sun was a god, and that at this point it began to conquer over the darkness of winter. Gradually the Christian “holy day” and the pagan “holiday” coalesced into one. And the “tradition of Christmas” was firmly entrenched. On all this there is rather general agreement.

But there was a day in which Protestants and Roman Catholics disagreed strongly, not concerning what the source of Christmas (and other such holy days) was, but whether or not that source was valid. Then, as now, the Roman Catholic Church fully defended such man-made traditions, because, to quote its own words, “The Catholic Church has received from Jesus Christ the power to make laws for its members” (Baltimore Catechism). Among those laws we find the official designation of such “holy days” as Christmas and Easter, and such days are held by Roman Catholic dogma to be exactly the same as holy days designated by God himself.

There was, we repeat, a day when Protestants disagreed. There was a day when Protestants said that “the whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for (God's) own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from scripture — unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit or traditions of men.” (Westminster Confession of Faith, 1, 6). And concerning this matter of holy days, they said that the people of God are to keep holy “such set times as He has appointed in His Word, expressly one whole day in seven” (Larger Catechism, Q. 116). That is, the Sabbath day alone was regarded by them as “Holy”.

Suppose you were to imagine yourself to have the notion that it would be nice to observe the 3d of February as a special holy day in memory of Jesus' visit to the Temple at the age of twelve. What right would you have to make such a designation? What justification would others have in accepting your idea? And what if your Church said, “No, we will not listen to such nonsense! Jesus Christ alone is King and Head of the Church, and he alone has the right to designate a holy day, and he has given us to keep holy the Sabbath alone?” Of course you would say

that such a Church was simply keeping itself pure. Yet the truth is that Christmas (and Easter, etc.) has no more warrant from Christ than would such a day that were chosen by yourself. The **only** difference is that tradition through the process of time, raises something of purely human origin to the place that it is highly esteemed of men. But it is still an abomination to God because of its source.

(2) The second reason why such holy days are an abomination to God is that it is necessary to sanction error in order to give them our esteem. We shall again cite Christmas by way of example. If there were any possibility that the date of Christ's birth were preserved through tradition, then it would be January 6th rather than December 25th which deserved the preference. The Greek Church is an older institution than is the Latin. And if tradition has any validity, that validity depends upon antiquity. Even if we were to appeal to the false criterion of tradition we would be condemned! However, as tradition is condemned by Scripture we can neither build upon it nor be judged by it. Much more important is the fact that the celebration of Christmas (and other such humanly devised holy days) distorts the true gospel of Jesus Christ. By the special religious observance of certain days, certain aspects of the gospel are given a prominence which is not given them in the teaching of the Word of God itself. Christmas and Easter are the two 'holy days' that claim an inordinate amount of attention each year, and so the birth and resurrection of Christ receive a measure of attention which other aspects of the truth do not receive. But this emphasis is not found in the Apostolic writings. For in all the epistles of the New Testament we can discover no explicit reference to the so-called Christmas story. The resurrection of Christ does constantly receive much emphasis, but there is also much emphasis in the Apostolic writings on events which took place on other days that men have not memorialized with special holy days. This is a distortion of the truth of the Gospel, and a distortion of the truth is not the same as the truth itself. Thus to approve of such holy days we must approve of that which must be called error.

(3) And finally, Christmas (and other such holy days) is an abomination because of the fact that it shifts the thoughts of the Christian away from that which God requires, and toward that which He does not even sanction. The Word of God says nothing about keeping this day called Christmas. But it does say that almighty God would have us keep the Sabbath holy. More than that, God commands that we use the other six days for the works that belong to man. And this itself forbids men from doing what they have done in designating holy days. It is a scandal when men come along and take the Sabbath

and make it into man's day (such as Father's Day, Mother's Day, Children's Day and the like.) No one has a right to take that day which already has the Lord's name upon it, and give it to the honor of another. But on the other hand, God has given six days of every week to man, and neither can any one rightly take these days from man under the pretext of making them holy days of God. When human authority would say, "this day no longer belongs to you, for your works and recreations, but is a holy day unto God," that is quite as abominable as to give God's Holy day unto men. Man has no more power to make one of the six days a holy day, than he does to make the Sabbath day common, or even special in some humanly devised way.

We emphasize the fact that such holy days as Christmas are an abomination to God — not because of many of the things that are so often condemned (such as gifts, and the upturn in business, and the hearty smile and friendly greeting — why should these be condemned?) but precisely because of the things that are usually praised! It is the religious trappings, the so-called sacred tradition of Christmas, that exactly which men highly esteem, that is abomination unto God. And the most tragic thing about it is that the children of the Reformation are in the forefront of those who are trying to make it a "holy day."

The inevitable result of such a trend is today what it has always been. Whenever men highly esteem tradition, they make of none effect the Word of God. Not only the Pharisees of old, but today also men make the Word of God of none effect through their tradition. And wherever the emphasis on such holy days as Christmas, Easter, etc., has increased, there has also been a corresponding decline in the observance of the Sabbaths of God. (And conversely, where there has been a serious attempt to keep the Sabbaths of God, there has been a rejection of those holy days which are without warrant in the Scripture.) And so we say again, that such holy days are an utter abomination unto God, even though they are very highly esteemed among men. And they are an abomination because God has said, "What thing soever I command you, observe to do it; Thou shalt not add thereto nor diminish from it." No, not even by means of time-honored and custom-hallowed tradition. For the fact is that all religious worship, reverence, feeling and conscience which comes from any source but the infallible Word of God is just that — abomination in His sight.

Let me close with these words: "Am I become your enemy, because I have told you the truth?" And if I have not told you the truth, bear witness to the error. If I have told you the truth, then come, let us reason together. Is not the religion of God good enough for you? Are not the Sab-

baths which our Lord has called His own, sufficient for your soul? Are you not willing to rest content with that which the Master has given?

It is time that we Protestants, who condemn the Church of Rome for her superstitions, give up a few superstitions of our own.

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## *Sketches of the Covenanters*

By J. C. McFeeters

### Chapter LI

#### The Old Blue Banner Yet

The Covenanters in Scotland's struggle for liberty carried a significant banner. Letters of gold, on a field of blue, displayed the soul-stirring motto: "FOR CHRIST'S CROWN AND COVENANT."

The men of the Covenant unfurled their colors with dauntless spirit, and went forth in the name of the Lord, conquering and to conquer. And this is the victory by which they overcame the world, even their faith.

The Covenanters carried their banner as an emblem of the truth in Jesus Christ. The Bible focussed its light in the burning words that flashed on their ensign. These fathers accepted the Bible without reservation or apology, as God's Book, inspired, inerrable, authoritative, the rock foundation of faith, and the supreme law of life. They grasped the wondrous system of redeeming truth, as bearing on their own lives, on the Church, on the world, and on all generations to come. They embodied it in their Covenant, and wove it into their flag. They saw all Bible truth converge in Christ, the Only Begotten of the Father, the Mediator of the Covenant of grace, the crucified and risen Redeemer, the exalted Prince and Saviour; and on their banner they emblazoned their faith. But while their profession was embroidered on their colors, their creed was pulsating in their veins. This standard they carried boldly into the battle in defence of Christ and His Church. The deadly missiles that tattered its folds, and plowed through their flesh, could not subdue their spirit. Their blood often stained it, but it was never surrendered. One standard-bearer fell, and the flag-staff was grasped by another. Thus the Old Blue Banner, in all its significance, has come down through the ages; it is the Covenanter's banner yet.

#### **The Covenanters' Standard of Religion.**

The standard of truth is the real banner of the Covenant. The standard of religion in the Covenanted Church exalts the truth of Christ, and makes it most conspicuous. Nothing in a nation is so public as her colors. Where the flag flies, the power, honor, and greatness of the country are represented by the folds that flap on the

winds. The Covenant commits the Covenanted Church to the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth of God's Word. This obligation, when honored, carries the Covenanter into all truth, and all truth into the Covenanter. The doctrines of grace will throb in his heart, flow in his veins, illumine his mind, dominate his thoughts, deepen his life, enlarge his capacities, control his actions, and purify all the fountains of his being. To all such the truth is concrete, not abstract; it has form, color, action, energy, atmosphere, horizon, immensity. To the true Covenanter, knowledge is experience; he deals with God, worships in spirit, battles with sin, glories in Jesus, and listens to the Eternal Spirit. His faith is power; his love is life; his hope is realization. The invisible world looms up with awful visibility before him. Such is the life that is distinguished by Covenant fidelity; in it the truth of God has grandest publicity. It shines like the sun. The voice of that life has the majesty of thunder, testifying for Christ. They who are thus animated with the truth cannot hide the great principles of the Church. They will glory in her Covenant and publish the truth. Behold the martyrs, how they witnessed for Jesus Christ, while fire and sword had no more power over their faith than over the stars. The truth demands publicity. Our poor, deceived, demon-ridden world needs the truth, Gospel truth shining like the sun, convicting truth pointed like lightning; the sweet truth of love and the fiery truth of wrath; truth that reveals life, death, immortality, judgment, heaven, hell, and eternity. The world needs the truth that will rend the heavens with prayer, and make the earth quake with fear.

#### **The Highest Type of Christian Life.**

The standard of religion adopted by the Covenanted Church demands that Covenanters possess the noblest spirit. They, who rally in earnest under this banner, will be men after God's own heart. Such were the martyrs: kind, patient, self-sacrificing, passionately in love with Christ, and laboring diligently to bring others into the same sphere of blessedness. They were strong, heroic, and unconquerable; affectionate, intelli-

gent, filled with veneration for God, and aflame with zeal for His House. Those Covenanters knew that they were redeemed, and gloried in their relation and obligation to the Lord Jesus Christ, their Almighty Redeemer. They flew into every service at His command. Their obedience was accompanied with much assurance of salvation. They had heaven on earth. The heaven of glory was merely an extension of their vista, an enlargement of their horizon, higher up the mountain that they were climbing, more spiritual ozone in the air they were breathing. They dwelt with God, lived in Jesus Christ, felt the raptures of the Holy Spirit; they knew the mystery of the cross, the value of the Blood, and the power of the spiritual resurrection. Therefore were they swallowed up in love to God and man. Are we amazed at the divine beauty of the martyr's life? Let us have the same heartiness, the same vision of God, the same joy in the Holy Spirit, and we will have the key to the nobleness of the martyr. The Covenant with God, when kept, produces holiness, tenderness, charitableness, and divinest sympathy; turns life into an overflowing fountain of goodness. They, who follow the Banner of the Covenant in spirit and in truth, will aim at the very climax of Christian character, moral culture, and heroic service through Jesus Christ.

#### The Emblem of War

The standard of religion in the Covenanted Church recognizes an uncompromising conflict in the world. Where hostile forces are encamped, the banner means battle. The martyrs were carried into this conflict, by their zeal for God's House and love to Jesus Christ. Their fight was against the tyranny of Civil government and the corruption of the Church. They fought well, resisting the aggressor at every point of attack.

We must open our eyes wide, to see the forces on either side. The persecution was merely the crimson line, along which the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of Satan came into collision. These kingdoms stretch beyond our vision, far away into the spiritual world, each having immense resources and innumerable battalions for the war. The firing lines are merely the visible places that project themselves upon our horizon. The human struggle, the din of battle, the blood, the groans, the graves, are merely the evidence of the momentum of these tremendous powers, grinding each other at the points of contact. It is Satan against Christ, in his effort to waste the Church, suppress the truth, crush mankind, and despoil Jesus of His crown, people, and kingdom. It is Christ against Satan, determined to resist, defeat, enchain, and imprison that old dragon.

This war still rages. The powers are the same as in the days of old, though the methods of warfare be changed. Christ still calls for soldiers of

the Covenant, men of spirit, courage, and unshaken faith. He needs consecrated men, to hurl them against the organized powers, and inbreaking hordes, that are desecrating the Sabbath, corrupting the Church, maiming the truth, debauching morality, bribing conscience, licensing drunkenness, desolating the home, adulterating religion, worshiping wealth, crushing the poor, chaining manhood to secrecy, denying God in government, and the Lord Jesus Christ on His throne. Men are needed, men of the martyr type, men who count not heads, but principles. Men are in demand, men who find victory in defeat, men who see the mountains filled with horses and chariots, the mighty host of God.

#### The Great Inheritance.

The Church of the Covenanters has a precious inheritance. The achievements of the past, the privileges of the present, and the victories of the future — all, all are hers, if she be faithful. The Old Banner leads to the world-wide triumph of the principles it represents. This is no presumption; it is a foregone conclusion, the very language of logic. The certainty is based on God's revealed purpose, and glows in the richest hues of prophecy. Humility forbids boasting; we have not said that the Covenanted Church shall have this honor. But the Banner of the Covenant, by whomsoever borne, will surely be glorified with victory, as Jesus Christ, the great Captain, leads His conquerors to universal conquest.

The Covenant contains all Bible principles that apply to Church and State; it is neither sectarian nor sectional. The Covenant abhors sectarianism. It contains the universal principles which must become universal in practice ere the world bask in Millennial glory. The true Covenanter is no sectarian. He occupies the center of a circle that contains all revealed truth, and he is pledged to all known duty.

The martyrs died in the assurance of the triumph of the cause for which they suffered. "Do not weary to maintain the present testimony," said dying Renwick. "When Christ goeth forth to defeat anti-Christ, with that name written on His vesture and on His thigh, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS, He will make it glorious in the earth."

Marriage with the Son of God awaits the Church. Covenanting with the King of glory awaits the nations.

"And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to Him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready.

"Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb."

**Points for the Class**

1. Describe the Banner of the Covenant.
2. What motto on the Covenanters' Banner?
3. What large meaning in the motto?
4. Why ought the truth of Christ have wide publicity?

5. What should be the spirit and character of Covenanters?

6. What hope is there of the world-wide success of Covenanted principles?

7. What is the duty of the present generation in the great conflict?

The End

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## *The Hebrew Sanctuary, A Study in Typology*

By the Rev. Wallace B. Nicholson, M.A., B.D., M. Th.

### IX. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE COURT OF THE SANCTUARY

#### 1. The Altar of Burnt Offering.

It appears that no particular form of altar was used by the worshippers of God before the time of Moses so that the simplest structures were deemed sufficient, but even under the Mosiac dispensation with its elaborate ritual the altar of burnt offering was of the most unpretentious kind. Its importance however is indicated by the fact that instructions were given concerning it immediately after the delivery of the ten commandments at Sinai, and before any directions were given for the building of the Sanctuary.

This altar was placed in the court of the tabernacle, and as the name indicates was "the slaughtering place," and so set apart for the presentation of slain victims to God.

According to the directions given (Exod. 20: 24-26) this altar must be of the simplest kind composed of ordinary earth or unhewn stone, although for convenience sake this mound of earth was enclosed by boards overlaid with bronze, on the outside of which was placed a platform for the priests to perform the duties of their office. Steps to this elevated structure were also forbidden from motives of propriety and sanctity, and hence the path leading up to it was a paved incline. From certain points of view this altar was the most important vessel connected with the sanctuary, since in a manner, nothing could be done without it. It was the meeting place between God and man, and unapproachable except through an avenue of blood.

The elevation of the altar might serve to emphasize the direction and scope of its sacrifices, while the instructions given to make it of earth or unhewn stone would serve to indicate that man's workmanship was to be dispensed with at the point where God was to bestow mercy upon His people through the death of a substitute. The horns were clothed with peculiar sacredness since in cases of solemn sacrifice they were to be sprinkled with blood. These horns, which were placed at the four corners of the altar were

strongly constructed so that the animals to be sacrificed might be secured to them by cords. Most interpreters refer the horns to the strength or protection of Jehovah: and it was usual for those who fled to the altar for protection to lay hold upon its horns. Perhaps Joab, in his ultimate extremity sought the mercy of Jehovah, even when the mercy of man was denied to him for his cruelty and treason.

The altar was fed unceasingly with the sacrifice of life, which was consumed by a never-dying fire, and without this there was no approach to God. To a pious Israelite the ritual of the altar would be a continued remembrance of sin and its punishment; and of the mercy of God in accepting his person through the death of an innocent victim. The fire on the altar has been compared to the holiness of God Who thereby testified His approval by accepting the remedy provided to meet with sin. Others have maintained that the fire signified the wrath of God in its antipathy to sin. If we conceive that God's holiness as well as His wrath, represent His antagonism to sin, we can see that the two ideas are closely related if not identical. In considering the typological interpretation of the altar we should view it in its totality, as the meeting place between God and His sinful people, where they are restored to fellowship with Him through the medium of shed blood, and here surely we may discover the fundamental resemblance between the altar and Christ the Mediator.

The writer of the Hebrews has dealt with this subject in his reference to the sanctuary (Heb. 13:10). What the Israelites possessed in material form we have in spirit. As the Hebrews founded their spiritual hopes on the altar in the court, so the New Testament church founds her faith on the one altar of sacrifice where the Lord Jesus offered Himself. The Cross of Calvary was destined from all eternity to be the place where the greatest sacrifice of all time was to be offered, and from which issues an unspeakable and everlasting

efficacy. And this Altar is the source and centre of consolation for all time and for all worshippers who by faith gather to receive assurance of forgiveness and fellowship with God.

## 2. The Brazen Laver.

The laver was probably made of bronze such as was in use in Egypt. The material used to provide such a vessel was supplied by pious Hebrew women who surrendered their mirrors — important aids to personal adornment — for the service of God. There is no record given of the shape or size of the laver. We may assume that the "foot" was the receptacle where the priests performed their lustrations, the laver itself being properly the reservoir from which the water to be used was drawn off.

What concerns us here is the importance and significance of the ritual connected with this holy vessel. The priests were forbidden on pain of death to serve either at the altar or in the holy place, until they first washed their hands and feet at the laver. These officials were chosen and qualified by various rites for their sacred work, and yet this rite was a continual necessity during their ministrations; a fit emblem of the grace needful, and to be sought for in a special way, to enable believers to perform in the right spirit all the duties that pertain to the holy things of God. Doubtless the priests were continually reminded of their personal sinfulness and impurities by the ordinance given them to sanctify themselves before beginning their holy services. Their hands

were employed to offer the various sacrifices, and their feet trod sacred ground; the priests performed all their services barefooted as became the sanctity of the house of God — and it was needful that any stains contracted outside the sacred edifice should be washed away. The significance of the brazen laver is so common in New Testament times that detailed explanation is needless.

The ceremony signified not outward cleansing so much as inward purity. The holiness of all Israel was the aim of the Mosaic economy, without which it was impossible that they could worship or serve the Lord. This idea was carried through the whole religious dispensation of the Old Testament. The worshippers must be purified before they could serve Jehovah.

And when "the washing of regeneration" is spoken of in the New Testament it points to the purification of the soul of the believer who is sanctified by the Holy Ghost (Titus 3:5).

Some writers speak of the altar of burnt offerings as signifying the "justification" of the believer, and the brazen laver, his "sanctification," and there is good ground for insisting on this truth as a feature of the symbolism. At the same time it should not be forgotten that the altar and the laver represent the provisions made to bring about this blessed state and condition.

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(To be continued)

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# *Christian Education for Christian Youth*

By J. G. Vos

There is a great emphasis on education today. Some of this is motivated merely by fear of Russia—we must push education, it is said, to get ahead of the Soviets in developing missiles and satellites. We might, conceivably, beat the Soviets in this race and still not be really educated as a people. It is questionable whether the Russian mathematicians, physicists and technologists, brilliant as they may be in their own fields, are really educated. For, being atheists, they are blind to the real meaning of life; and their knowledge even of history, literature, philosophy and other fields is severely limited by the distorted ideology of a dictatorial government.

There are, surely, better reasons for promoting education. The word "educate" comes from the Latin *educō*, which means "to lead out." Education is intended to lead a person out—to bring out his possibilities and enable him to become a better, more effective person—more helpful to society and more satisfying to himself. It is meant

to help a person fully to realize his potential as a human being. The educated person has a grasp of things, a sense of values, an appreciation of life, an ability to judge and appraise ideas and things, a competence to ask relevant questions and to penetrate popular prejudices and fallacies—in other words, a balanced, all-around effectiveness as a person—which the uneducated person simply does not have. This is true of education as such, and it is much more true of Christian education, as will be shown presently.

Many people today confuse **training** with education. Training enables one to perform a job and earn money; education makes one a more effective personality. The areas may overlap, of course, but many people have no other idea of education than that it is training to enable one to get a better job and earn more money. A truly educated person may also have the specialized training needed to hold a particular job, and if so he will have a richer, more rewarding and useful

life than the one who has only the technical training. On the other hand, in our American life it has often been possible to attain a position involving specialized technical skills while still being an uneducated person—actually an **ignorant** person—in the whole field of human and cultural values, the things that give meaning to life.

Why seek education? The first Henry Ford is quoted as having said "History is bunk." After all, one can neither eat it, wear it nor put it in the fuel tank of his car. Yet the person who is unaware of history looks at the modern world with eyes that are at least half blind. Socrates said, "The unconsidered life is not worth living." He was in favor of education. For human beings are not mere machines; far less are they mere vegetables like cabbage or turnips. They have minds and hearts and immortal souls—in short, they are **persons** and will exist forever. Because we are persons, we need education. The Communist world, especially Red China and to a somewhat lesser extent Soviet Russia, is reducing people to the sub-personal, sub-human level, it is turning people into mere machines to grind out work for the all-powerful State. No wonder this system denatures education. The free world has something better; with all its faults and all its idolatries, it still respects human personality and maintains conditions in which that personality can be developed, and also expressed.

What is **Christian** education? Here again we often meet distorted views. The ordinary idea among Christian people is that Christian education is simply secular education with some Christian features added. The common idea of a Christian college, for example, is that it is just like any other college in most respects, but that in addition to the ordinary courses and features, a Christian college will have courses in Bible study, chapel services, seasons of evangelism, a religious emphasis week, prayer groups, Christian service organizations, and the like. These religious features are certainly important, but they do not make education Christian, any more than carrying a Bible in his pocket makes a man a Christian. Real Christian education is not secular plus some Christian features; it is education that is Christian through and through, in all its features, departments and aspects. Its basic guiding principle is faith in God, especially the great basic

truths of **creation, providence and redemption**. The world, life, nature, history, society,—these do not exist of themselves. They were created by God and they function by the providence of God. Therefore they can really be grasped and appreciated only when viewed in the light of God. In His light shall we see light (Ps. 36:9). Secular education is lacking in the things that matter most; a true standpoint from which to approach knowledge, and a realization of man's deep need of redemption if he is to be an effective personality. Something is terribly wrong when a volume on world history will devote pages to Julius Caesar and Napoleon and the French Revolution, and not even mention (or perhaps barely mention) Jesus Christ.

Real Christian education, in other words, will have a **Christian philosophy of education**. It will, necessarily, define the need for education and the goals to be sought by education differently from the way secular society defines these. For Christianity has a deeper view of what human personality is, and a more realistic view of what it needs, as well as a much truer appreciation of the meaning of the world and of life.

Most American church-affiliated colleges are simply ordinary colleges with the added religious features mentioned above. A very few are consciously seeking to implement a truly Christian philosophy of education all along the line—and this means in science, history, sociology, psychology, literature, as well as in religion. Perhaps none would dare to claim that this lofty aim has been truly achieved. These colleges that are seeking to be truly Christian in all parts of their inner life are facing a difficult task and cannot boast but only humbly claim to be seriously pursuing their aim—to take the knowledge of God seriously in every relationship of life and knowledge.

Geneva, our Church college, is a very good college as colleges go. It is fully accredited and offers the Church's youth a wide variety of educational opportunity. And the writer humbly asserts that Geneva is trying to become better as a truly Christian college, and that some real progress is being made in this effort. What Geneva seeks is not merely to become a better college plus Christianity, but to become a better, more radically, more consistently **Christian** college.

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## *Instrumental Music in the Public Worship of the Church*

By John L. Girardeau

(Continued from last issue)

In order to evince the fact that this view is not novel or singular, I adduce the testimony of a few distinguished theologians, showing, in gen-

eral, that instrumental music was typical, and, in particular, that it was typical of the graces of the Holy Spirit.

"To sing the praises of God upon the harp and psaltery," says Calvin, "unquestionably formed a part of the training of the law and of the service of God under that dispensation of **shadows and figures**; but they are not now to be used in public thanksgiving" (On Psalm 71:22). He says again: "With respect to the **tabret, harp and psaltery**, we have formerly observed, and will find it necessary afterwards to repeat the same remark, that the Levites, under the law, were justified in making use of instrumental music in the worship of God; it having been his will to train his people, while they were yet tender and like children, by such rudiments until the coming of Christ. But now, when the clear light of the gospel has dissipated the **shadows** of the law and taught us that God is to be served in a simpler form, it would be to act a foolish and mistaken part to imitate that which the prophet enjoined only upon those of his own time." (On Ps. lxxxi,3.) He further observes: "We are to remember that the worship of God was never understood to consist in such outward services, which were only necessary to help forward a people as yet weak and rude in knowledge in the spiritual worship of God. A difference is to be observed in this respect between his people under the Old and under the New Testament; for now that Christ has appeared, and the church has reached full age, it were only to bury the light of the gospel should we introduce the **shadows** of a departed dispensation. From this it appears that the Papists, as I shall have occasion to show elsewhere, in employing instrumental music cannot be said so much to imitate the practice of God's ancient people as to ape it in a senseless and absurd manner, exhibiting a silly delight in that worship of the Old Testament, which was **figurative**, and terminated with the gospel." (In Ps. xcii.1.)

"The first question," says Ames (Amesius) in his **Church Ceremonies, (P.404.)** "was, If the primitive church had such chaunting idol-service, as in our cathedral churches. The Rejoiner (Dr. Burgess) after some words spent about singing (about which he bringeth not the least resemblance of that in question, until the fourth age (century) after Christ) excepteth first, That organall music was God's ordinance in the Old Testament, and that not significant, or typicall; and therefore is sinfully called idol service . . . To this I say (1), That this denying of organall music to have been **significant or typicall** is without reason, and against the current of our divines (N. B.); taken, as it may seeme, out of Bellarmine (**On the Mass, B. 2, C. 15**), who useth this evasion against those words of P. Martyr: 'Musical organs pertaine to the Jewish ceremony, and agree no more to us than circumcision.' So that we may neglect it, and take him as saying, that nothing which was ordained in the Old

Testament (no, not sacrificing of beasts) is now an idol-service."

Yet, Bellarmin, who is here referred to by Ames as evading the judgment of Peter Martyr, himself expresses the same judgment in another place. (**De Bon. Operibus, Lib. i Cap. 17.** We appeal from Philip drunk to Philip sober—from Bellarmin the partisan to Bellarmin the theologian.) "Justinus," he observes, "saith that the use of instruments was granted to the Jews for their imperfection, and that therefore such instruments have no place in the church. We (Bellarmin and the Catholics) confess indeed that the use of musical instruments agreeth not alike with the perfect and the imperfect, and therefore they began but of late to be admitted into the church." Bellarmin lived from 1542 to 1621.

This last mentioned opinion of the great polemic Cardinal had been previously expressed by Thomas Aquinas, the angelic doctor of the Church of Rome, in his **Summa Theologica. (II.ii. 2, xci., A. ii., 4, et conclusio: Tom. iv., Ratisbonae, 1884, p. 646.)** "Instruments of music," he says, "such as harps and psalteries, the church does not adopt for divine praises, lest it should seem to Judaize." "Instruments of this sort more move the mind to delight, than form internally a good disposition. Under the Old Testament, however, there was some utility in such instruments, both because the people were more hard and carnal, and needed to be stirred up by instruments of this kind as by promises of earthly good, and also because material instruments of this sort **figured** something."

"It is evident," says Zwingle, (**Act. Disp. ii. p. 106, quoted by Ames.**) "that that same ecclesiastical chanting and roaring in our temples (scarce also understood of the priests themselves) is a most foolish and vain abuse, and a most pernicious let to piety. In the solemn worship of God, I do not judge it more suitable than if we should recall the incense, tapers and other **shadows of the law** into use. I say again, to go beyond what we are taught is most wicked perversity."

Voetius, in his great work, the **Ecclesiastical Polity**, elaborately argues against the use of instrumental music in the Christian church, and among the arguments which he advances employs this: "Because it savors of Judaism, or a worship suited to a childish condition under the Old Testament economy; and there might with equal justice be introduced into the churches of the New Testament the bells of Aaron, the silver trumpets of the priests, the horns of the Jubilee, harps, psalteries and cymbals, with Levitical singers, and so the whole cultus of that economy, or the beggarly elements of the world, according to the words of the apostle in the fourth chapter

of Galatians." (Lib. ii., Tract. ii., Cap. iii., Tom. i., Amstel., p. 554.)

Suicer, in his **Thesaurus**, (On word, **Organ**) argues at length to vindicate Clement of Alexandria from the representation that he favored the use of instruments in the church, and to show that he and Isidore of Pelusium regarded the instrumental music of the Old Testament as typical of the joyful praise of the New Testament church for the rich benefits of an accomplished redemption. He cites a canon of one of the Councils of Carthage to this effect: "On the Lord's day let all instruments of music be silenced;" and remarks that but few in his own time favored the use of instruments in the church.

George Gillespie, in his **Assertion of the Government of the Church of Scotland**, (Ch. iii., p. 13: **The Presbyterian's Armory**, Vol. I. says: The Jewish Church, not at it was a church but as it was Jewish, had an High Priest, typifying our great High Priest, Jesus Christ. As it was Jewish, it had musicians to play upon harps, psalteries, cymbals and other musical instruments in the temple."

David Calderwood, the author of the celebrated work, **Altare Damascenum (Altar of Damascus)** and of a valuable History of the Church of Scotland, says in his book, **The Pastor and the Prelate**: (P. 4, **Presbyterian's Armory**, Vol. iii.) "The **Pastor** loveth no music in the house of God but such as edifieth, and stoppeth his ears at instrumental music, as serving for the pedagogy of the untoward Jews under the law, and being **figurative** of that spiritual joy whereunto our hearts should be opened under the gospel. The **Prelate** loveth carnal and curious singing to the ear, more than the spiritual melody of the gospel, and therefore would have antiphony and organs in the cathedral kirks, upon no greater reason than other **shadows** of the law of Moses; or lesser instruments, as lutes, citherns and pipes might be (to be) used in other kirks."

"As good an argument," remarks Dr. James Begg, "can be made for the use of incense, priests, sacrifices, indeed of the whole temple system, as for the use of instrumental music in Christian worship." (On the Use of Organs, etc., p. 18.)

Dr. Killen, in his **Ancient Church**, says: (P. 216.) "As the sacrifices, offerings and other observances of the temple, as well as the priests, the vestments, and even the building itself, had an emblematic meaning, it would appear that singing, intermingled with the music of various instruments of sound, was also typical and ceremonial."

In a striking argument against the use of instrumental music in the worship of the Christian church, the Rev. Dr. Alexander Blaikie, an

American minister, says: (**The Organ and other Musical Instruments, as noted in the Holy Scriptures.**) "These (musical instruments) continued in the temple-service of Jehovah so long as 'the first tabernacle was yet standing,' and no longer; for so soon as the way into the holiest of all was made manifest (Heb. ix. 8,) the bondage (beloved by every Jew) of these 'weak and beggarly elements' was in the worship of God forever done away. He, 'in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily,' took the whole 'hand-writing of ordinances out of the way, nailing it to his Cross.' Instruments of music in the worship of God had there fulfilled their mission, in common with the blood of bulls, of goats, and the ashes of heifers, and they finished their course when Jesus died. No blast of 'rams'-horns,' nor other 'things without life-giving sound' had any longer a place with acceptance in the worship of Jehovah. The ceremonial, sensual, and ritual in his worship there forever ceased to be appointed by and acceptable to God, when he who 'spake as never man spake' exclaimed. 'It is finished.'"

In his reply to the statement of the Rev. Dr. Ritchie, submitted to the Presbytery of Glasgow in favor of the introduction of an organ in St. Andrew's church, Glasgow (the case was decided in May, 1808, adversely to Dr. Ritchie), the Rev. Dr. Porteous remarks: "It seems to be acknowledged by all descriptions of Christians, that among the Hebrews instrumental music in the public worship of God was essentially connected with sacrifice — with the morning and evening sacrifice, and with the sacrifices to be offered upon great and solemn days. But as all the sacrifices of the Hebrews were completely abolished by the death of our blessed Redeemer, so instrumental music . . . being so intimately connected with sacrifice, and belonging to a service which was ceremonial and typical, must be abolished with that service; and we can have no warrant to recall it into the Christian church, any more than we have to use other abrogated rites of the Jewish religion, of which it is a part." (Dr. Candlish, **The Organ Question**, pp. 87, 88. It may be said in answer, that on the same ground singing ought to be abolished. But, first, singing was not as peculiarly connected with sacrifice as was the blowing of trumpets; secondly, that the use of instruments was peculiar to the temple service, whereas singing was not. The argument only holds in regard to the specific and temporary elements of worship, not to the generic and permanent.)

That able and judicious theologian, Dr. Ridgley, speaks very expressly, not only of the typical nature of the instrumental music employed in the temple, but of that which it was designed to typify. He says: "It may be observed, that how much soever the use of musical instruments

which were in this worship may be concluded to be particularly adapted to that dispensation, as they were typical of that spiritual joy which the gospel church should obtain by Christ; yet the ordinance of singing remains a duty, as founded on the moral law." (*Body of Divinity*, Quest. CL-IV., Vol. iv., p. 82, Philadelphia, 1815.)

To the objection that "those arguments that have been taken from the practice of the Old Testament church to prove singing an ordinance may, with equal justice, be alleged to prove the use of instrumental music," he replies: "Though we often read of music being used in singing the praises of God under the Old Testament, yet if what has been said concerning its being a type of that spiritual joy which attends our praising God for the privilege of that redemption which Christ has purchased be true, then this objection will appear to have no weight, since this type is abolished together with the ceremonial law." (*Ibid.*, pp. 87, 88.)

I have heard the view maintained that the reason why this music was not in use in the synagogue worship was that it would have involved a violation of the law commanding the Sabbath day to be kept holy; that it required a species of labor which, as it was not necessary, would have violated the commandment enjoining abstinence from all unnecessary work on that day. And in support of this view, it is claimed that instrumental music was permitted and was actually employed on the week-days between the Sabbaths. In reply I would say:

In the first place, the allegation, that instrumental music was used on week-days in the synagogue before the Christian dispensation began, needs to be confirmed. The fact that such a practice now exists, or has existed for a long time, proves nothing. The rationalism and indifference of many of the modern Jews would be sufficient to account for the fact, just as that heterodox temper affords an explanation of the employment of organs in the synagogue-worship even on the Sabbath.

In the second place, if the allegation were true, it would establish nothing in opposition to

the view maintained in this discussion. For, during the Mosaic dispensation, the Jews ever manifested a tendency to disobey divine commands and contemn divine ordinances, in the assertion of their own will and the gratification of their own taste — a disposition which frequently incited them to flagrantly idolatrous worship. And although, after the Babylonian captivity open idolatry ceased, the same disposition continued, and called forth the rebuke administered by Christ to the Scribes and Pharisees for making void the commandments of God by human traditions. The oral law overlay the written, tradition superseded the Bible.

Furthermore, it may be questioned, whether this reputed worship of small numbers of persons in a synagogue on the days of the week could be put into the category of solemn, formal, public worship, such as that which obtained on Sabbath days.

In the third place, it is admitted that instrumental music was not employed in the synagogue on the Sabbath. The reason assigned is, that it would have infringed the law of the Sabbath requiring a cessation of all unnecessary work. Now, the question arises, how, in view of that law, it was employed in the temple on the Sabbath? The answer given is, that God, in that case, by his authority relaxed the rigor of the fourth commandment, and warranted work which otherwise would have been unjustifiable. I rejoin:

A relaxation of the Sabbatic law, in favor of the temple-services, is not granted. Whatever was necessary or proper, according to God's appointment, in order to the observance of his worship, was provided for in that law. It was not requisite for God to dispense with his own authority to secure compliance with it.

Further, if, according to the supposition, God relaxed his law in one case, the question is, Why did he not relax it in the other? If for the temple, why not for the synagogue? The same authority was sufficient for the relaxation in the latter case as well as in the former.

(To be continued)

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## ***A Believer's Life of Christ***

By the Rev. John C. Rankin

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### THE LAST DAYS OF THE LIFE

We now enter upon the story of the last days of the life of our Lord. Gratefully do we recognize God himself as the Author of the record, and

as we read and reflect we can only worship and adore.

For it is the history of God's eternal Son present in the world of his own making. It is

the life of that glorious, transcendent "Son of man" of Daniel's prophecy in the lowliness of his incarnate state. It is God the living Word, come down from above to dwell among us in sinless perfection, though in the likeness of our sinful flesh.

The life as a whole may be represented under the figure of a river which begins as a tiny rivulet far up in the hills. Its voice at the first is

"A noise like of a hidden brook  
In the leafy month of June  
That to the sleeping woods all night  
Singeth a quiet tune."

But this water of life grows as it goes, and presently appears as a river which in its lower reaches widens into a broad and mighty stream. It then expands into a great estuary of the sea and so merges with the vastness of the deep from which it came.

The fact of the matter is that the life of our Lord continues to grow throughout and this movement of enlargement is reflected in all the gospel narratives. It would almost seem that the writers hurry along with the story in order that ample space may be reserved for the final events and teaching of the Lord. Investigation shows that almost a third of the gospel record is devoted to the last week, the larger part of which is given to the last day of the life. If the last journeys to Jerusalem be included, the proportionate amount of space would be almost one half!

The great Passover celebration is again at hand and throngs of the devout coverage upon the capital and its environs. They come in groups and festal companies from all Jewry and indeed from all parts of the world. Most of these have laid their plans for early arrival. For many, the rites of ceremonial purification were a necessary preparation for participation in the feast.

Crowds of worshippers from the north traverse the upward road from Jericho. For Jesus and his disciples the journey up the steep ascent was probably made in a day. They arrive in Bethany and the date is probably the next to the last day of the Jewish week, the day before the Sabbath and our Friday.

As we come to this closing period we find the question of chronology still with us. The scholars themselves differ to some extent among themselves as to the precise order of events and the particulars of the days and the hours. For these problems we have no solution but can only adhere to the traditional view.

According to this view there was, as there is today, the Jewish mode of reckoning and the Roman; the latter corresponding to our own.

Both were apparently in use in those days, the latter especially among the city dwellers.

As for the days in terms of this reckoning, there was first a day of rest in Bethany, the Jewish Sabbath and our Saturday. Then came our Sunday and the so-called "triumphal entry." Monday witnessed the cleansing of the temple and Tuesday was the great day of controversy. Wednesday and most of Thursday were spent in retirement somewhere in Bethany. Thursday evening found Jesus and the twelve, or after the departure of Judas, the eleven, in the seclusion of the upper room somewhere in the city. The precise location was known beforehand only to the Lord. There followed on that night the scene in the garden of Gethsemane, with the arrest. So came the early morning trials and the crucifixion on our Friday, with six hours on the cross, from 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M., by our reckoning. And so there was another Sabbath and another first day of the week.

"It was a bright day in early spring," says Dr. Edersheim, when Jesus and the disciples set out from Bethany. A number of things would seem to indicate that it could not have been early in the day. The company leaving Bethany was soon joined by another from Bethphage. This was composed of the two disciples with the colt, the foal of an ass, and those who followed with them. Thus two groups merged to form the throng going up to the city.

Jesus took his seat and began his royal entry. But tidings of his approach had preceded him and so the multitude going in was met by another which came out of the city. This outgoing multitude, having come upon one going in, reversed its direction and went on before. Thus two multitudes combined to form one great procession with Jesus in the midst.

The throng of those that came out of the city was made up of the visitors, the pilgrim strangers, who had come up for the feast. So far they had been disappointed in their efforts to make the Lord into a Christ of their own liking. But now, from the inhabitants of the city, their hosts, they had learned of how Lazarus had been raised from the dead. It was like fresh fuel to feed the dying embers yet smoldering in their hearts. Evidently it was enough to raise their hopes in Jesus again. Taking branches from the palm trees of the city they came forth to meet the Lord with shouts of praise.

Their enthusiasm was infectious and quickly spread to the multitude coming in. They in turn began to pluck branches from the palms that lined the roadside and strew them in the rider's path. They even removed their outer garments and spread them in the way. Now all voices joined in the refrain "Hosanna to the son of David.

Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; hosanna in the highest" (Matthew 21:9).

Jesus held his peace for the most part and accepted the acclaim in silence. When certain of the Pharisees sought to intervene he spoke in defense of the people against them.

Later, along the line of march, the procession came to a place where the whole city burst into view. Jesus paused, and all the people with him, to behold the gleaming magnificence of walls and palaces and temple courts and tower. "And when he beheld the city he wept over it," "not with still weeping," as one has said, but "with lamentation loud and deep." A hush falls upon the throng and the voice of his lament goes out for all to hear. "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now are they hid from thine eyes" etc. (Luke 19:41-44).

The procession moves on through the gates and mingles with the vast assemblage gathered for the feast. "And the whole city was stirred," we are told, "saying who is this?" The marchers had acclaimed him as the Christ. But even in so short a time they are not so sure. "This is Jesus," they say, "the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee."

What did this "triumphal entry" mean? For Jesus himself the significance is inescapable. Dr. Purves says that "by this act he invited the anger of the rulers, offered himself publicly as the Christ and illustrated the peaceful character of the kingdom he had come to establish." Others of like faith agree that it was an unmistakable proclamation of "his claim to royalty." Dr. Edersheim says that "it behooved him so to enter Jerusalem because he was a King; and as a King to enter it in such a manner, because he was such a King."

As for the crowds it was certainly a spontaneous demonstration on their part, and only natural in view of all that he had done for them. The nature of the occasion was such as to revive their hopes in him for the time. Jesus welcomed it for what it was worth, though he knew so well how shallow and ephemeral it was and what the outcome of it all would be.

Now the shadows lengthen and the first of these last days draws to a close. Mark says that he went on "into the temple; and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve" (Mark 11:11).

Where and how they spent the night we do not know. A likely supposition would be that it was in the open where all could be together and where Jesus could remove himself a little way for prayer. At least we know that there was no breakfast for him that morning, no Martha to

scurry about and wait upon him. For on that second day an early start was made, and, "as he returned into the city, he hungered" (Matthew 21:18).

By the roadside a solitary fig tree grew and caught his eye long before he came up to it. But when he came he found no fruit; no, "nothing but leaves," and he cursed it. So the second day began with "the symbolic judgment of the leafy barren fig tree."

Very much in keeping with his roadside incident was the main event of the day which was the cleansing of the temple. It was the second action of the kind, though taken in a different spirit from the first. On the former occasion his word was one of admonition, "make not my Father's house a house of merchandize." This time, however, it was a word of accusation (just another item in the general indictment) "ye have made it a den of thieves."

It is further said that he taught in the temple that day and that the blind and the lame came to him and he healed them.

The last event of the day, which Matthew alone records, was the welcome sound of the children's praise. They cried in the temple in words they had learned from the lips of their elders on the day before "Hosanna!" "Hosanna to the son of David!" The chief priests and the scribes were much displeased and said: "Hearest thou what these say?" And Jesus said "yea; Have ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" It was a bad day for the leaders. So another day came to an end and "he left them and returned to Bethany."

We imagine another night in the open under the stars and perhaps an early morning hour of prayer. Again the stars faded as the light appeared and another of these last days began. "Two days had passed without any serious attempt to dispute his authority; but on the third day the conflict began. It was a dark and terrible day" and of its history we have a full account in the fourfold gospel story.

In the return trip to the city "as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots," and the disciples were amazed at the speed with which it had withered away. Peter called attention to it and Jesus drew a lesson, from his word of the previous day and its result, on the subject of faith and prayer.

They traversed the steep and rocky road, passed through the gates and went directly to the temple. Jesus knew what to expect and was ready for it. He was early on the scene and went walking through the temple courts while waiting for the arrival of his foes. They came; a full repre-

sentation of the Jewish authorities; chief priests, the scribes and elders, all present and accounted for. The adversaries launched their attack and the battle was on; and back and forth it went between these two through all this last long day of controversy.

It was the third day in "Passion Week"; the last of Jesus' public life and ministry. His next and last appearance would be as a prisoner in bonds; a son of Abraham in disgrace; the Servant of the Lord but "despised and rejected of men." Now, however, and especially on this day, he would be "the Lion of the tribe of Juda," a mighty warrior for the truth and for God.

Certain things need to be remembered at this point in the story. He was on the right side in the conflict. And that side is always the winning side, for God is always on the side of truth and right. Also he had been much in prayer about it and his preparation was complete. The great task of the day was to set himself completely and finally against all sin. (He would never condone our modern way of condemnation in one thing and toleration in another.)

That they would challenge him, he knew. But he would challenge them and their religion; their religious views and teachings and pretensions; subjecting all to his most pure and perfect and searching criticism. No area of sin must be left uncensured, uncondemned. And he was ready to pay the price of love and faithfulness. For the truth must yet be spoken. The Light of the world must shine in the darkness and bring to light all the dark places of the hearts and lives of men. Controversy for Jesus was never a mere war of words. It was ever also part of his great teaching ministry.

The teaching of the day throughout the hours was given in public. It came in the form of verbal encounters with the enemy in answer to their questions. It ended, insofar as the public was concerned, with final denunciation and declaration of the judgment due. "Your house is left unto you desolate," he said. But at the end of the day his disciples also had some questions for him. Later, sitting on the mount of Olives, he opened up the future for them.

One thing to be noted with regard to these last days was the continuing use of parables. We remember what use he made of them on the first great day of teaching by them. At that time they were given to illustrate the nature of the kingdom. At a later period they illustrated the kingdom in the individual life. Now at the end they taught the lessons concerning judgment and the consummation of the kingdom.

The motive of concealment passed with the passing of the crisis, when it had plainly appeared that both the leaders and the people were

against him. From that time on the parables were meant to be understood by all and they were. "When the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them" (Matthew 21:45).

The day began upon the note of challenge brought against him by the adversary. "By what authority doest thou these things? And who gave thee this authority?" Having successfully disposed of the initial attack Jesus took the offensive and spoke his parables against them and drove the lessons home.

The rulers renewed the attack with a veritable barrage of questions. They wanted to know about tribute to Caesar; seven men and one wife in the world to come, and the great commandment in the law. In all of these encounters Jesus put his answers forward with such skill as to make them their own judges. They declared their own guilt, decreed their own punishment and passed judgment on themselves. They themselves were dumbfounded by his answers and were finally so effectively silenced that "no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions" (Matthew 22:26).

It was a day of truth; especially of the truth of the justice and severity of God. And yet we observe that all that was said and done by way of this aspect of the truth was inspired by and suffused with love. At length the longsuffering and forbearance of God was almost at an end. They had sinned away their day of grace, and little more remained except the day of justice, the visitation of God's judgment upon them.

One further event of the day must yet be noted. It is the story of the approach of the Greeks, recorded in John 12:20 f. It was a last event of this last day, the conclusion of Christ's public ministry. These proselytes of the Gentile world, present at the feast, desired to see Jesus and speak with him. And no wonder after all that they had seen and heard during these days. But the time was past for personal work of this kind, for private interviews with even the most earnest seekers after truth.

For Christ it spelled "the knell of parting day" insofar as his public life and service was concerned. For now was the hour of suffering and death, the gift of life for the ransom of sinner-men. "The hour is come," he said, "that the Son of man should be glorified." What glory for him, that, in the depths of his humiliation, he should now humble himself and become "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross!"

It was to be a death that beggars all description, an ordeal beyond all that the mind of man could comprehend, however correctly it might be conceived. Now is he come to the very brink of

the abyss. Now for the first he looks down into the dark and fearsome depths into which he must descend; where, as it were, he must be overwhelmed by the floods of sin; immolated in the raging inferno of wrath, not of men and of the

devil only, but also of God. Only by such a death as he was destined to endure could atonement be made for the sins of men.

(To be continued)

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## George Gillespie on Church Censures

By R. D. Eagleson, M. A., Dip. Ed.

(Continued from last issue)

**Note:** This article by a scholar in Australia expounds the classic Presbyterian view of Church Discipline as held by the 17th century Scottish divine George Gillespie. — Editor.

So far we have considered only one portion of Scripture, Matthew 18: 15-18, in developing our understanding of discipline, although we have drawn on other verses to substantiate our interpretation and illustrate its tenets. Admittedly it is a signal text being the words of the Lord Jesus, the King of the Church, but we are not restricted to it alone in the New Testament. Chapter 5 in the First Epistle to the Corinthians is devoted to the same subject and similarly upholds an ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Here the apostle Paul writing under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is instructing the Church at Corinth in what it should do in a particular case. The sin of incest has been committed (verse 1); the elders of the church are to assemble together and to excommunicate the offender, to cast him out of their company (v. 4-5, 11). The apostle goes on to list other offences which deserve a similar punishment, all of which are scandalous sins (v.10). But he is not interested in private injury, even though it also is involved; rather he would have the whole church withdraw communion, not just the injured party, and for the purpose and in the hope that the sinner will be brought to realize the gravity of his position and repent (verses 11 and 5). It is the scandal with which Paul is concerned, namely, that the church would harbour a man whose actions the Gentiles would not countenance. And when he says, "with such a one no not to eat" he indicates a greater punishment than not eating: if the Christians are not to eat ordinary meals with the offender, then more so are they not to participate with him in the Lord's Supper. Finally, he writes to the whole church and not to private individuals, and it is to withdraw after a judicial sentence (c.f. **judge** in v. 12) which is passed only on church members. In this chapter then we have virtually a summary of all that we have been considering to date: it is an epitome of the doctrine of church censures.

Gillespie has pointed out a revealing parallel between this chapter and Exodus 12, which con-

tains the institution of the Passover. It is clear that verses 6-8 allude to Exodus 12, especially v. 15-20, and the **putting away** in v. 13 is equivalent to **cutting off** in Exodus 12:15 and 19. This commination, "that soul shall be **cut off** from Israel," (or "from the congregation of Israel" or "from among his people") occurs frequently in the Old Testament, e.g., Numbers 19-13, 20: Levit. 5:2; 7:20; 22:3. It is a much different phrase from that which is used to express cutting off from the world (i.e. capital punishment), e.g., Ezek. 25:7; Jer. 11:19; Zeph. 1:3, and unlike the death penalty could later be set aside by confession and a trespass offering (Levit. 7:20-21). It was thus an ecclesiastical censure equivalent to suspension and excommunication, and is further testimony to the existence of discipline in the church from its beginning.

In establishing the correctness of a practice it is always worthwhile to consider the procedure with similar ordinances. We have noted that excommunication comes into force particularly because of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper which, owing to its nature is the external seal of the membership of the church. Now there is a close analogy between it and the other Sacrament of Baptism. In this latter sacrament the church has always regarded it as a profanation to baptize a catechumen professing a resolution to turn Christian but manifestly under the power of abominable sins, even though able to give an orthodox confession of faith. The Scriptural warrant for such action is numerable and clear: Acts 2:38; Heb. 6: 1-2; 1 Cor. 6: 9-10; 2 Cor. 6:14-16; Mark 1:4, etc. If a wicked life keeps a man back from entering the visible church through the door of baptism, shall it not keep him back from fellowship with the saints at the Lord's Table?

The Temple also had a sacramental significance of Christ and a certain ceremonial holiness. If men were kept back from profaning it, then surely the same should apply to the Lord's table. We might consider in this regard Ezekiel 23:38-9, where it is declared that the Temple was profaned not only by the ceremonially unclean but also by the morally unclean, by idolaters and murderers.

We have now examined in detail most of the

texts in Scripture on this subject and can neither avoid nor deny the fact of church discipline and excommunication. It remains only to comment that natural reason also demands its existence. No one, rightly minded, would allow a promiscuous admission of all sorts of men to partake in all the public ordinances of God. The heathens, for example the Druids, forbade the flagitious, and even Erastus and followers were not prepared to go so far as to admit everyone. Quite inconsistently Erastus conceded that seven types of persons should not be in the church, and, if so, should be cast out. These persons were all guilty of scandalous sins of a directly spiritual nature: apostates, idolaters, heretics and such like. Admittedly, except in heathen countries, the Erastians would take the final authority away from the church and deposit it in the civil magistrate, a procedure which we have shown to be contrary to Scripture; nonetheless their concessions are forceful testimony to the reasonableness and necessity of church censures. Established by our King, censures must form an acknowledged part of our government, enacted according to the purposes and methods designed by Christ, if we would be His church.

#### **The Purpose of Censures.**

The Confession of Faith summarises the purpose of church censures in section 3 of Chapter 30:

Church censures are necessary for the reclaiming and gaining of offending brethren; for the deterring of others from the like offences; for purging out of that leaven which might affect the whole lump; for vindicating the honour of Christ and the holy profession of the gospel; and for preventing the wrath of God, which might justly fall upon the church, if they should suffer his covenant, and the seals thereof, to be profaned by notorious and obstinate offenders.

Jesus Christ in His institution of church discipline Matthew 18 stated the purpose succinctly as "gained thy brother," but in these brief words He has caught up all that is contained in the Confession. Love is the motivating, dominating, sole impulse; love of God and love of brother. We should be so sensitive that any sin against God and the holiness of His name and providence should distress us. The Psalmist expresses this state of soul when he says, "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? And am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee?" (Ps. 139:21). All sin is against God. We do not sin against man. He is the object of our sin, but it is against God that we sin. After murdering Uriah and committing adultery with his wife, David could still say, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." (Ps. 51:4). And so the concern in church censures is with the

sin of a brother: not with the physical evil done by one brother to another, but with the sin of the soul against God, the dreadful dishonour to God and fearful consequences to the soul evoked by such sin. Such a concern, truly felt, is born of love and we must never forget this quality in church censures. We love God and hate to see Him dishonoured; we love our brother in Christ and hate to see him so grievously harm his soul.

There is striking evidence in the Scriptures that it is solicitude for our brother's soul that prompts the church to discipline. Of course there are our Lord's words replete with love, "if he shall hear thee, thou has gained thy brother." But the remarkable piece of evidence occurs in the Epistles to the Corinthians. We have already examined 1 Corinthians 5 and shown how it commands censures. In the second Epistle and the second chapter, Paul refers to the action which was taken by the church after his first letter and pleads for love for the excommunicated brother (v.6-8). The church was right in censuring the brother, for Paul had criticised them in 1 Corinthians 5 for not doing so, but having taken this action they should still be anxious for his soul and be prepared not only to forgive him but also to comfort him, should he repent. Excommunication is not just a matter of getting rid of an offending member. It is for the good of the transgressor that he may be humbled and ashamed. (2 Thes. 3:14). By the blessing of God this afflicting of the sinner with chastisement and shame may be a means to the destruction of the flesh (1 Cor. 5:5). At the same time the love which moved the church to pronounce censure does not end with the execution of the sentence. The Church should watch their lost brother and when sorrow is engendered through the censure they should lead him gently back, forgiving him as they have been forgiven and confirming their love to him. What great care the Holy Spirit has taken to make clear to us the doctrine of church discipline. In the First Epistle the Church is reminded of its obligation to censure with reference to a particular incident. In the second Epistle, having obeyed, it is now reminded of the motive and the purpose for its action: the reclaiming and gaining of offending brethren.

If it be objected that discipline is a strange way of showing love, and that it would be far better to keep the scandalous sinner within the church, where he might hear the Gospel preached, rather than excommunicate him (to take the most extreme form of church censures), we refer to God's evaluation of chastisements:

My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:

For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son he receiveth.

If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons.

Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of Spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but be for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth joyous, but grievous; nevertheless it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby (Heb. 12:6-11).

Now church censures are none other than chastisements of a father to his son, of God to His children for they are executed in the name of Christ our Lord and according to His directions. If, moreover, the most grievous of censures, excommunication, should fall on a man, it will be shown fully in the next section of this paper that it will come on him only after lighter punishments and only because he thoroughly deserves it through obstinacy and persistence in sin. Let it be recognized that if any of us incur censure, we have bought it upon ourselves and by our sin have compelled the church to take action. Let us away with sentimentality and return to the wisdom and love of Almighty God, which teaches us that if we spare the rod we destroy the soul.

The Confession of Faith enumerates a number of purposes for censures in section 3. We have considered the first one and suggested in the beginning that all these other purposes were caught up in it. We might however now consider these in detail for they add to the necessity and urgency which should move us to reclaim a brother.

The second purpose listed in the Confession is "the deterring of others from like offences". We all know our perversity and proneness to error. That we are like sheep is sadly true and we are constantly in need of guidance to keep us on the right paths, and of deterrents to prevent us from straying. Nor is the use of church censures for such purposes unscriptural, for has not God from the beginning constrained His people with threatenings as well as commandments, exhortations and promises? Even in the New Testament there are examples of punishments, 1 Tim. 1:20 (of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander, whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme); Acts 5 (Ananias and Sapphira); and warnings. Matt 3:10 (the axe is laid to the root); John 15:2 (Every branch in me that beareth not fruit be taken away); 1 Cor. 10:12 (let him that thinketh

he standeth take heed lest he fall); Heb. 2:3 (How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation). There is no difference between these warnings and the warnings of church censures. Both make abundantly clear what will be our lot if we offend. This does not mean that the courts of the church punish an offender merely to make an example of him. Far from it, for the first purpose, the reclamation of the offender, is pre-eminent, but we should recognise that laxity in discipline could incite others to false conduct.

The connection between this purpose and the next, "the purging out of that leaven which might infect the whole lump," is thus very close. If the lack of correction can be dangerous, the very presence of an uncorrected scandalous sinner may well have dire consequences. The commissioners at the Westminster Assembly were not exaggerating when they indicated the possibility of a scandalous sinner infesting or defiling the whole church, for Gillespie at least had drawn attention to the Scriptures on this point:

"Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled; lest there by any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. (Heb. 12:15-16)."

And in the chapter which specifically deals with discipline we read:

"Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?"

"Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:

Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." (1 Cor. 5:6-8).

Foolish then are the congregations which heed not the advice of God, for disaster will surely follow, and if by the grace of God the whole church be not overcome, still many souls will be sorely troubled while the evil remains unchecked. There is a lesson in Jeremiah 35:12-17 which we should ponder well before we dare to set aside the solemn obligation of church censures: "Will ye not receive instruction to hearken to my words? saith the Lord . . . I have spoken unto you, rising early and speaking; but ye hearkened not unto me . . . Therefore . . . Behold, I will bring upon Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem all the evil that I have pronounced against them: because I have spoken unto them, but they have not heard; and I have called unto them, but they have not answered."

(To be continued)

## *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.

**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.

## *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 too 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

THERE IS AN IMPASSABLE GULF fixed between those who hang the efficacy of Christ's work upon the "free" action of man's will, and those who ascribe it all to God's free grace. They are of different religions.

— Benjamin B. Warfield

GIVE ME THE EVIDENCE that I am saved from the punishment of sin by saving me from its power.

— Thomas Chalmers

THE GREATEST ARGUMENT of the Saviour's power is His patience.

— Stephen Charnock

LIP-HOMAGE paid to all religions is the virtual denial of each.

— R. A. Vaughn

THE SECRET OF HOLY LIVING lies in the doctrine of the union of the believer with Christ.

— Charles Hodge

IT IS AN INEXPRESSIBLE GRIEF to me to see the church spending its energies in a vain attempt to lower its testimony to suit the ever-changing sentiment of the world about it.

— Benjamin B. Warfield

TAKING THE LINE of least resistance makes rivers and men crooked.

— Anonymous

LOVE will stammer rather than be dumb.

— Robert Leighton

FOR OURSELVES, we do not affect the designation of moderate Calvinists. We believe the whole Calvinism of the Canons of the Synod of Dort, and of the Confession of the Westminster Assembly, and we are willing to attempt to expound and defend, when called upon, the whole doctrine of these symbols, to show that it is all taught or indicated in Scripture. We have been only confirmed in our Calvinism by all the study we have given to this subject.

— William Cunningham

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

— Augustine of Hippo

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 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

# *Studies in Old Testament History*

## LESSON 23

### THE TOWER OF BABEL

We now come to the incident of the Tower of Babel. "And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech" (Gen. 11:1), What this original language of the human race was, is of course unknown. The suggestion that it was Hebrew is entirely without foundation. The fact that the first book of the Bible is written in Hebrew does not prove that the first people of the world spoke Hebrew.

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

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

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

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

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

But during the continuance of human sinfulness, it is absolutely necessary that sin be checked and limited by being divided up into many political units and many false religions. It is contrary to the will of God that the human race, while still sinful, be united in one single political sovereignty. The Old Testament prophets condemn all attempts at world-empire as contrary to the will of God; the very idea is pagan and

immoral. God therefore maintains the divided condition of humanity, of which the division of human language is an important factor, as a way of preventing the concentrated development of sin under a single power.

Those who think that world government is the answer to the present day's pressing problems of war and peace, should stop and ponder seriously the lesson of the Tower of Babel. We can think of no more terrible opening for tyranny and oppression than a world-government set up on a secular or non-Christian basis. Those who seriously suppose that a single world government would be a blessing are far too optimistic about the moral condition of human nature; they fail to realize the deep sinfulness of the human heart. A secular or non-Christian world government might indeed bring world-wide peace, but it would be the peace of a world-wide prison or a world-wide cemetery. We have a prophetic picture of something of the kind in Revelation 13. Note that the blasphemous power there described is bitterly opposed to the Kingdom of God (verses 5-7), that it holds absolutely world-wide dominion over the human race (verse 7), that it maintains universal, world-wide, absolute peace (verse 4), and that it persecutes true Christians unto the death (verse 10). May God grant that we may never in our time have to face such a humanistic tyranny! Terrible as it indeed is, the threat of atomic warfare is not the worst threat that hangs over the human race. There is one thing even worse. May God grant that the free nations may not as blind men stumble into that worst of all evils!

#### Questions:

1. What is known about the original language of the human race?

2. From what center did the human race spread after the flood?

3. How should the expression "from the east" in 11:2 be translated?

4. What two kinds of bricks existed in ancient Babylonia?

5. What kind was used for making the Tower of Babel?

6. How were the bricks joined together?

7. Why would the second sentence of verse 3 be included in the record?

8. What was the primary purpose of building the city and tower?

9. How did this purpose contradict the will of God?

10. What deeper purpose can be discerned behind the plan to build the Tower of Babel?

11. Why did God find it necessary to frustrate the purpose of building the city and tower of Babel?

12. When will the original true unity of the human race be restored?

13. Why would world-wide unity of the human race while man is still sinful be an evil rather than a good?

14. How do human divisions check the power of sin?

15. What should Christians think of present-day proposals for a world government?

## LESSON 24

### THE TOWER OF BABEL, CONTINUED

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

"And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained

from them, which they have imagined to do" (11:6). Human sin always leads man to try to become independent of God. This was the case even back in the time of Adam and Eve; they aspired to be "as God." Verse 6 shows the true spirit which was behind the architectural construction work going on at Babel in the plain of Shinar. The Tower of Babel was only the beginning. Once let this succeed, and one thing would follow another without any limits. What was really involved was man's atheistic desire to be independent, to be a law unto himself, to do that which was right in his own eyes, to stand on his own feet, to give answer to no higher Person or Power. Therefore we may properly describe this spirit as arrogant humanism. God fully discerned that this city and tower were only the

entering wedge. If allowed to succeed, man would soon be started again on a career of atheistic wickedness such as had existed in the period before the flood.

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

A good deal of ridicule has been heaped upon this story in Genesis 11. It has been represented as incredible, as a myth invented to explain differences of language, etc. All this scorn is heaped on the narrative simply because it involves a miracle, a direct action of God in human history, apart from the operation of the forces of nature. To those who believe in a God who can and does work miracles, the story of Babel presents not the slightest difficulty.

The present world-wide differences of language are well-known. The science of philology has attempted to trace existing languages back to their parent languages, and so to trace all languages back to their original source. This study has been carried on with remarkable results. Human languages have, in general, been shown to belong to several great families of languages. Then there are a number of separate languages which are unclassifiable. For example, the Basque language of the Pyrenees mountains between France and Spain is unclassifiable; it cannot be proved to belong to any of the great families of languages. One of the great families of languages is the Indo-European family, extending from India on the east to Ireland and Iceland on the west. All the languages of this family have come from a common parent language, called Primitive Indo-European. If we could trace them back far enough, we would come to a point where English, Russian and Sanskrit were identical. Another great family is the Semitic family of languages, extending in a broad belt across northern Africa and southwestern Asia, including Hebrew, Arabic, Aramaean, Phoenician, Assyrian-

Babylonian and several others. These are all closely related, more or less, and must all have come from a common parent language. Another great family of languages is found in eastern Asia, including Chinese, Burmese and several others. Scholars have done remarkable work in showing these affinities between various languages. But it has always proved impossible to trace all languages back to one single source or parent language. The most that can be done is to establish definite groupings or families of languages. The search for a single parent language has proved fruitless and baffling.

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

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

#### Questions:

1. What is meant by the statement that the Lord came down to see the city and tower which men were building?
2. What wrong desire does sin always lead people to have?
3. How may the spirit back of the building of the Tower of Babel be described?
4. What would be the result if the builders were allowed to succeed?
5. What was the real issue at Babel?
6. How did God frustrate man's plans and purposes?
7. Why have some scholars ridiculed the story of the Tower of Babel?

8. What effort have scholars made to trace the history of languages?

9. To what extent have these efforts in the study of language succeeded?

10. What attempt in the study of languages has always failed?

11. What is the Babylonian meaning of "Babel"?

12. What was the original meaning of "Babel", as shown by Genesis chapter 11?

13. What is the origin of the name "Babylon"?

## LESSON 25

### UR OF THE CHALDEES

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

The three sons of Terah were mentioned in 11:26, and now in the very next verse, 11:27, they are mentioned over again, the obvious reason being that a new division of the narrative has begun, shown by the formula "These are the generations of . . .". Haran died after the birth of his son Lot, in Ur of the Chaldees. It is stated that "Haran died before his father Terah". The Hebrew says literally "Haran died in the face of his father Terah," the obvious meaning being that he died during his father's lifetime. The place, Ur of the Chaldees, is also specifically mentioned. Formerly very little was known about this city, but between 1922 and 1934 the site was extensively excavated by a joint expedition of the British Museum and the University of Pennsylvania, under the leadership of Sir Leonard Woolley. Most remarkable and astonishing discoveries were made, showing that Ur was the seat of an ancient and highly developed culture and civilization going back to about 3,000 B. C. Ur might be described as the London or Paris of Abraham's day. Already ancient in Abraham's time, it was a great center of human life. The jewelry and other objects — many of pure, solid gold — which were found deep in the soil at Ur, show a very high degree of artistic skill, and some would require the most expert craftsmanship to reproduce today, even with modern equipment. Among other things, Ur was famous as the principal location of the worship of the moon-goddess Nin-gal. This idolatrous character of the great city may have been one reason why the Lord commanded Abraham to get out from it to another country.

Those who are interested in reading for them-

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

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

These marriages between close relatives would be regarded as both illegal and immoral today. We should, however, avoid the error of judging these early people by the standards that are valid at the present day. It was God's plan that the human race be descended from a single human pair — Adam and Eve. Obviously this plan made it necessary for close relatives to marry for a time. The laws against incestuous marriages are founded upon sound biological reasons, but evidently those reasons did not exist at the beginning of human history nor for a considerable time afterward. It is well known that marriage of close relatives greatly increases the tendency to inherit any bad characteristics of the parents. But at the beginning of human life on earth, there was no accumulation of bad heredity that would be intensified by close marriages. As a matter of fact, there is no reason to believe that the marriages of Abraham and Nahor were regarded as improper in any way — on either social or religious grounds. There is no suggestion in the

record that it was wrong for them to marry these women.

**Questions:**

1. What new history begins at this point in the book of Genesis?
2. What do we learn about Terah from Joshua 24:2?
3. What is the meaning of the statement that Haran died before his father Terah?
4. Where was Haran born, and where did he die?
5. When and by whom was Ur of the Chaldees excavated?

6. What kind of culture existed in Ur?
7. What form of religion was prominent in Ur?
8. What book tells the story of the discoveries at Ur?
9. What is the meaning of the name "Sarai"?
10. Besides being Abraham's wife, what was the relationship between Sarai and Abraham?
11. Whom did Nahor marry, and what was her relationship to him?
12. What would be the status of such marriages today?
13. Why were such marriages of close relatives not forbidden in the early times of the human race?

**LESSON 26**

**THE PROMISES OF GOD TO ABRAHAM**

After leaving Ur of the Chaldees at the command of God, Abraham and his group moved up the Euphrates valley to Haran, located on a small tributary to the Euphrates. From archeological investigation it is known that, like Ur, this was a center of moon-worship. Here the party remained for some years. Finally Terah, Abraham's father died, and at the age of 75 years Abraham, with his wife Sarah and his nephew Lot, moved into the land of Canaan.

We shall now consider the great promises of God to Abraham. These are first made in Genesis chapter 12, and later (chapter 15) confirmed by a special covenant. In chapter 12 where the promises are first revealed they are as follows: 1. Abraham will be blessed and will become a great nation. 2. God will bless those that bless Abraham, and will curse those that curse him. 3. In Abraham shall all the families of the earth be blessed. All of these promises, of course, were to be fulfilled in the future. The third promise, that in Abraham shall all families of the earth be blessed, is definitely Messianic. It is through Jesus Christ, the true Seed of Abraham, that all the families of the earth shall receive blessing. "All families of the earth" does not necessarily mean every particular household or family circle. The meaning is that the redemption which shall come through the Seed of Abraham shall not be limited to those literally descended from him, but shall be world-wide, transcending all barriers of race and geography. That "families" here means races, tribes or nations is shown by the usage of the word in 10:5,20, 31. The "families" of the world were divided by sin; they shall now be blessed by redemption. God's calling of Abraham to be the founder of a special, separated people

had for its background the universal purpose — the plan of God to provide a world-wide redemption. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son."

Next we may inquire as to the meaning of the promise, "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee." This promise was not made because of Abraham personally, but because of his unique place in the divine plan of redemption. Because, in that plan, Abraham is what he is, to bless Abraham is to bless the God of Abraham, and to curse Abraham is to curse the God of Abraham. To be really in favor of Abraham is to be in favor of the plan of redemption in which he had such an important part. To be opposed to Abraham is to be opposed to that plan of redemption, and to the God whose plan it is.

In the Hebrew two different words are used for "curse" and "curseth." One word describes God's righteous act of cursing; the other is used for man's sinful cursing. Those who object to the Old Testament idea of God, alleging that the Old Testament portrays a God of wrath whereas the New Testament speaks of a God of love, forget that the wrath of God is not the same thing as human anger, and God's cursing is not the same as man's cursing. Everywhere the Bible takes care to guard the righteousness of God. It is true that God is a God of love, but nowhere does God's love cancel His righteousness.

"So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him; and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran" (12:43). Here Abraham's obedience to the will of God is emphasized. He departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him. Whether it was

difficult for him to do this, whether or not it involved an inward struggle, we are not told. The important fact is that when Abraham knew what the will of God was, he acted accordingly. How Abraham felt about it is not specially important. In our own day and age, religion has become far too subjective. People say that they "feel" they should do this or that, or they "do not feel" that they should do this or that. Or they "feel" that they should accept a certain doctrine or principle, or they "do not feel" that they should do so. Nowhere does the Bible encourage us to go by our feelings. Back of this idea of believing or doing as we "feel" we should is the error that all religious truth and all moral standards are derived from within the human personality. This is an idolatrous, man-worshipping, man-centered age that we are living in. People object bitterly to the idea of a standard of faith and life imposed on them by the authority of God, external to their own personality and binding whether they like it or not. Even ministers in preaching sermons sometimes say "I feel that such-and-such is the case," where they should say "The Word of God says that such-and-such is the case." Many who have this manner of speaking are no doubt true believers, but they have been unconsciously influenced and swept along by the man-centered, subjective spirit of our times. At bottom this attitude is rebellion against the authority of God.

#### Questions:

1. What promises did God make to Abraham in chapter 12?
2. Which of these promises is definitely Messianic?
3. What is the meaning of the word "families" in 12:3?
4. What is the meaning of the promise that all the families of the earth shall be blessed in Abraham?
5. Why will God bless those who bless Abraham, and curse those who curse him?
6. What is the difference between God's cursing and man's?
7. What truth about Abraham is emphasized in 12:4?
8. Why is it wrong to believe and act according to our feelings?
9. What false idea lies back of the common notion that we should believe and act as we feel like believing or acting?

### LESSON 27

#### GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM

We now come to chapter 15 which records God's covenant with Abraham. The word "covenant" has appeared earlier in Genesis, at 6:18 and several times in chapter 9, in connection with the history of Noah. The provision made by God for Adam and Eve to come into full religious communion with Himself was truly a covenant, having all the elements of such a provision, yet the word "covenant" is not used of it in the Genesis record. In the history of Abraham the term "covenant" — Hebrew *berith* — is now introduced. This is one of the great concepts of the Bible, and without a grasp of its meaning, it is impossible truly to understand the message of the Scriptures. The student is referred to the series of articles on **The Covenant-Idea in Scripture** in this magazine, starting in the April-June 1953 issue. Mr. Frazer shows that the covenant-idea is rooted in the sovereignty of God, and that the rather common notion that the covenant is simply an agreement is wrong.

"After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward" (15:1). The vision here mentioned is the fifth recorded revelation of God granted to Abraham. The question may be raised why this revel-

ation of God came at this particular time. One possibility is that Abraham was somewhat fearful that Chedorlaomer and his allied kings would come back later to take vengeance on him. The fact that God's statement opens with the words "Fear not" and goes on to add "I am thy shield" seems to fit in well with this idea. Another possibility is that now that Abraham was remarkably successful, he might expect to be envied by local kings and chiefs. Calvin suggests the foregoing possibilities. Leupold admits that there is some probability in them, but adds that the rest of the chapter indicates that the fear which Abraham was to avoid was not a fear of military enemies, but a fear of remaining childless.

Abraham is not to fear, precisely because God is his shield and his exceeding great reward. The word "shield" conveys the idea of protection. Those who are shielded by God are always perfectly safe. "In calling Himself his 'reward' He teaches Abram to be satisfied with Himself alone. And as this was, with respect to Abram, a general instruction, given for the purpose of showing him that victory was not the chief and ultimate good which God had designed him to pursue; so let us know that the same blessing is promised to us all, in the person of this one man" (Calvin).

Calvin adds that "since God ascribes to Himself the office and property of a shield, for the purpose of rendering Himself the protector of our salvation; we ought to regard this promise as a brazen wall, so that we should not be excessively fearful in any dangers."

God declares that He Himself is Abraham's exceeding great reward. It is not merely that those who belong to God shall have a reward; it is that God Himself is their reward — He is their everlasting portion and possession. Here we see the God-centered character of the Biblical religion. Religion is wanted today for the benefits that can be expected from it — it can check crime, curb juvenile delinquency, prevent a third world war, promote social justice. Yet if we want religion only for such reasons as these, actually we are not religious at all. To serve God for what can be gotten from God (by the individual or by society) is not really to serve God at all. Really to serve God, we must serve Him for His own sake. The greatest benefit that God can give His own is the possession of Himself in the covenant bond. "Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever." Much that is called religion today is really only selfishness or at best humanistic concern for the welfare of society. Only when God is known and loved for His own sake does religion really exist.

This revelation of God came to Abraham in the form of a vision. The word used is not the ordinary word for vision, but a rare word which occurs only three times in the Bible (Gen. 15:1; Num. 24:4,16; Ezek. 13.7). Visions were something like dreams yet different from the latter. A vision was a supernaturally induced state in which God caused the person to see certain things. The person would know definitely and without any doubt that the source of the vision was God. Sometimes in visions actions took place, both on the part of God and also on the part of the recipient of the vision. This is the technical meaning of the term "vision." Later in the Old Testament the term "vision" came to be used also in a more general sense, as equivalent to "special revelation," regardless of the exact mode of revelation. The modern, purely metaphorical use of the term "vision" is not found in the Bible. This purely modern usage regards "vision" as equivalent to "intelligent and imaginative foresight," as when someone says: "By voyaging westward across the Atlantic, Columbus showed himself to be a man of vision." Endless confusion and harm results

from the all too common importing of this modern usage into the Bible, and interpreting the word "vision" in the Bible as having this wholly modern meaning. Countless sermons have been preached on the text "Where there is no vision the people perish," which completely miss the real meaning of this text and read into it a modern meaning which is really foreign to the Bible. The text really means that without the gracious, special revelation of God the people perish. It has nothing to do with the idea that the local merchants and professional people ought to be community-minded.

#### Questions:

1. Where does the word "covenant" first appear in the Bible?
2. Why is the provision which God made for Adam and Eve to enjoy religious fellowship with Himself rightly called a covenant?
3. In what fact is the Biblical covenant-idea rooted?
4. What may have been the reason why God revealed Himself to Abraham at this particular time?
5. Taking chapter 15 as a whole, what is the fear which God warned Abraham against?
6. What is the idea conveyed by the word "shield"?
7. What is the importance of God's promise in 15:1 to us today?
8. What reward was promised to Abraham?
9. How is religion often wrongly regarded today?
10. What is man's chief end, or real purpose in existence?
11. What is meant by the term "vision"?
12. How is the word "vision" used later in the Old Testament in a broader sense than that of Gen. 15:1?
13. How is the word "vision" often used today?
14. How does this modern usage of the word "vision" differ from the Biblical usage of the term?

## LESSON 28

### GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM, CONTINUED

"And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? And

Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and lo, one born in my house is mine heir" (15:2,3). God first give Abraham an opportunity

to express the thoughts that were troubling him, before revealing to him the promises which would afford new comfort and hope. Abraham wonders what God could give him; he is going on through life childless; as a runner approaching the goal in a race, he thinks of himself as having only a little distance yet to go.

The patriarch adds that his only heir is "this Eliezer of Damascus." In the Hebrew it is "my heir is Damascus Eliezer." This seems to imply that Eliezer originally came from Damascus. From this statement of Abraham grew the entirely unhistorical tradition that he once lived in Damascus and even was king of that city. "One born in my house" may be translated "one belonging to my household"; in the Hebrew it is "a son of my house." That is, Eliezer was not Abraham's son but his servant or slave. Leupold remarks that though this was tragic for Abraham, it shows the comparatively good treatment accorded to servants at that time, and in Abraham's establishment, for in the absence of children of the master, the children of the chief servant were regarded as heirs.

As to the problem of how Eliezer could be both a Damascene and also one born in Abraham's house, (1) he may be said to be "of Damascus" merely because his father or ancestors came from there; or (2) he may be called "son" of Abraham's house merely because he was attached to that household, not because he was really born in it.

"And, behold, the word of the Lord came unto him saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir" (15:4). This statement of God indicates that He approved of Abraham's wish to have a child of his own. The word "behold" in this verse, and the similar usage of it elsewhere, calls attention to the fact that something very remarkable and important is about to be related. A special, direct revelation of God is always a fact of outstanding importance, so attention is called to it by the word "behold" (sometimes translated "lo"). The language used proves to Abraham that God's promise that he would have a son is to be taken literally: "he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir."

"And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be" (15:5). This, of course, is still in the vision. Abraham is directed to look at the starry heavens and see if he can count the stars. The point of the comparison is the impossibility of counting either the stars or the descendants of Abraham. All allegorical meanings, such as the notion that this verse proves that the descendants of Abraham shall be

a heavenly people, are unwarranted. The only point of comparison is innumerability.

We must now consider the question as to the meaning of "thy seed" in this promise of God to Abraham. Calvin states that the posterity of Ishmael and of Esau cannot be counted, because the legitimate seed of Abraham was limited to those descended from Isaac through Jacob; yet even many of the descendants of Jacob became covenant breakers and cut themselves off from the divine redemptive promise and became aliens from the faith of their fathers. Calvin concludes that the term "seed" in this verse means "the whole people whom God has adopted to Himself. But since many were alienated by their unbelief, we must come for information to Christ, who alone distinguishes true and genuine sons from such as are illegitimate. By pursuing this method, we find the posterity of Abram reduced to a small number, that afterwards it may be the more increased. For in Christ the Gentiles also are gathered together, and are by faith ingrafted into the body of Abram, so as to have a place among his legitimate sons."

"And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness" (15:6). Here we have the first occurrence of the word "believe" in the Bible. "None of us would be able to conceive the rich and hidden doctrine which this passage contains unless Paul had borne his torch before us (Rom. 4:3)" (Calvin). Here at this early point of the Bible we find taught the doctrine of free justification by faith. All forms of human works and character as grounds of a right standing before God are excluded. Man gets a right standing before God in one way alone, by faith which grasps God's redemptive promise.

The Bible never regards faith from the psychological sense which is so common at the present day. Today we are told by many people that it is the attitude of faith that is important, regardless of who or what is believed. People speak of faith as if it meant something like "morale" or "self-confidence" or "courage", and they say that a man's theology is not important, so long as he has an attitude of faith. Nothing of this sort is to be found anywhere in the Bible. In the Bible it is not the act or attitude of faith that is important, but the object of faith—the doctrine that is believed, or the Person in whom one believes. Let us not be deceived by the many references to "faith" in the liberal religious propaganda of our day.

"And he counted it to him for righteousness." In New Testament terminology this might be paraphrased: "And he justified him through it." "Righteousness" means conformity to the moral requirements of God. By reason of his faith Abraham is regarded as a righteous person by God. The idea is not that God accepts faith as a substi-

tute for real righteousness, but that when a person has true faith, God "imputes" or credits the perfect righteousness of Christ to that person.

The Pharisees were quite blind to this truth that Abraham was justified by faith, and the Jews have been blind to it ever since. And even in nominally Christian circles, nothing is more common than to find the Biblical truth of justification by faith denied or distorted. Calvin remarks that "in all ages, Satan has labored at nothing more assiduously than to extinguish, or to smother, the gratuitous justification of faith, which is here expressly asserted. . . . Just as we understand that they to whom iniquity is imputed are guilty before God; so those to whom He imputes righteousness are approved by Him as just persons; wherefore Abram was received into the number and rank of just persons, by the imputation of righteousness."

#### Questions:

1. What thought was troubling Abraham at this time?
2. Who was Abraham's only heir at this time?
3. What is the meaning of the expression "one born in my house"?

5. What is the importance of the word "behold" in 15:4?

6. Why did God command Abraham to look at the stars?

7. What is meant by "thy seed" in God's promise to Abraham?

8. What important Bible word occurs for the first time in 15:6?

9. How did Abraham come to be counted righteous before God?

10. How is faith often wrongly regarded at the present day?

11. In distinction from modern religious thought, how is faith regarded in the Bible?

12. What important doctrine, fully revealed in the New Testament, is illustrated by the history of Abraham at this point?

13. Why has Satan always labored to abolish or distort this particular doctrine?

14. How is justification defined in the Shorter Catechism?

## LESSON 29

### GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM, CONTINUED

"And he said unto him, I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it. And he said, Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?" (15:7,8). This is still part of the vision. God has yet more to reveal to Abraham. By reminding him that God is the one who brought him out of Ur of the Chaldees, God causes Abraham to realize that his whole life is part of a divine plan. This plan is only partly completed; but God will carry it all to completion. So He promises Abraham that He will give him the land of Canaan to inherit it. The patriarch naturally asks for some token whereby he shall be fully assured of this inheritance. This request on Abraham's part is not to be regarded as indicating doubt, or lack of faith in God's promise, but rather the desire for an even fuller conviction than he already had. There are various analogies in the Bible, such as Gideon's request for a sign (Judges 6:17 ff.) and the question asked by Mary (Luke 1:34). Such requests proceed not from unbelief but from faith. Calvin states that the protracted delay in fulfilling the promise was a difficulty to Abraham's faith, so that his request for a token was not an improper one. "The more certainly Abram was persuaded that God was true, and the more he was attached to His Word, so much the more

familiarly did he disburden his cares into God's bosom" (Calvin). Calvin adds that the instances in the Old Testament of some of God's saints requesting signs or miracles (as Hezekiah and Gideon) does not constitute any warrant for us in this New Testament dispensation to do the same; rather, he says, "let it suffice us to seek for such confirmation only as the Lord Himself, according to His own pleasure, shall judge most eligible."

"And he said unto him, Take me a heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon. And he took unto him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another: but the birds divided he not. And when the fowls came down upon the carcasses, Abram drove them away" (15:9-11). What is stated here is the procedure for establishing a covenant. At this point we shall quote from the series of articles on **The Covenant-Idea in Scripture** by the Rev. Frank D. Frazer as found in the April-June 1954 issue of this magazine, page 65 (Vol. 9 No. 2):

"On that day Jehovah made a covenant with Abram.' This is the first occurrence in Scripture of the expression 'karath b'rith,' trans-

lated in our English version, 'made a covenant.' The verb, *karath*, in its simple active form always means 'cut off'; as, for example, a piece of anything, a limb of a tree, a tree from its roots; hence, 'cut down' a forest, etc. In effect, it means 'cut in two'; therefore as applied to a living body, it implies a **violent death** and a **shedding of blood**. In its passive and causative forms usually applied to persons, it means 'cut off' from the presence of God, from the covenant people, from the land of the living, by the act of God. It is often used for the execution of divine judgment; the death penalty; the curse of the covenant for disobedience. Yet this heavy and awful significance of the word has been obscured by an inadequate and confusing translation, 'make a covenant.' In our English usage, 'make a covenant' refers to the composing, and agreeing to certain terms, and the sealing of these by the parties. Here the reference is to a symbolic transaction by which Abram was to know **how** God Himself **mediated**, and so validated and put into effect, His own unilateral Covenant of Grace. . .

"There it is, pictured in symbols. See the heifer, the she-goat, the ram, the dove and the pigeon; **dead, cut in two, their blood poured out**. For Jehovah had said to Abram "Take for Me . . . and he took for **Him** all these and divided them in the midst." "Take for Me," since God Himself would provide the mediating victim. Here are not five victims, but all the kinds of animals afterwards used in sacrifice, each an appointed symbol of the one mediating victim, who would vicariously suffer the death demanded by the first covenant.

"Then, as the sun was setting, a manifestation of the divine presence appeared to Abram in his sleep. God told him his seed should be sojourners in a land not theirs, subjected to the oppression of evil; but that God would in due time, by judgment of their oppressors, separate them and bring them forth to possess their own inheritance. When it was dark, 'Behold a furnace of smoke, even a torch of fire, that **passed between those pieces**.' (Here were not two symbols, but one: the verb 'passed' is singular, whence we are to understand that the furnace and torch are one; the furnace appeared to be both smoking and blazing with fire.) 'For our God is a consuming fire' (Deut. 4:24. Heb. 12:28). He is also 'the Light of the World,' 'the Light of Life' (John 8:12). Compare 'the flame of the sword' (Gen. 3:24).

"Thus, in symbol, the curse of the broken covenant was executed; not upon the guilty sinner, but, by the determinate counsel of God, upon a clean, sinless **substitute** which God Himself provided; and then, by His visible presence and ac-

tion sanctioned the whole procedure as a true picture of how His covenant promises are made good, according to the greatness of His love and the exactness of His justice. 'On that day' Jehovah showed Abram **how** he was to know of a surety that the covenant was mediated, validated and put into effect for him and for his seed forever. This true symbolism of the sacrifice was kept by the faithful seed of Abraham until the fulness of the time had come, when **in reality** "the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world," 'was manifested in the flesh, and offered Himself without spot to God, to bear the sins of many—one sacrifice forever."

#### Questions:

1. What may be the reason why God reminded Abraham that He had brought him out of Ur of the Chaldees?

2. Why would Abraham naturally want a token or explanation from God as to his inheritance of the land of Canaan?

3. What Bible analogies exist to Abraham's request?

4. What would be the effect on Abraham's faith of the long delay in the fulfilment of God's promise?

5. In response to Abraham's request, what instructions did God give?

6. What is the literal meaning of the Hebrew word translated "made" in the expression "made a covenant"?

7. What is the significance of the fact that the animals and birds were killed?

8. Why were these five kinds of living creatures specified by God?

9. What revelation as to the future of Abraham's descendants was given by God at this time?

10. How was the divine presence manifested to Abraham in his sleep?

11. How can it be shown that the "furnace of smoke" and the "torch of fire" were one and the same symbol of God's presence?

12. Since the certainty of Abraham's inheriting the land of Canaan depended on a blood atonement provided by God, what does this teach concerning all blessings which we receive from God?

### GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM, CONTINUED

The record states that when the birds of prey came down upon the bodies of the killed animals, Abraham drove them away. The question may be raised, was this still a part of the vision, or was Abraham now awake and did he drive away real birds? We may further ask, was the bringing, killing and arranging of the animals and birds actually done with real animals and birds, or was all of this part of the vision only? These questions are easy to ask, but very difficult to answer. We shall quote from G. Vos, *Biblical Theology*, pp. 84-5:

"In Gen. 15 . . . the night-time is repeatedly spoken of (vs. 5, 12, 17); and undoubtedly vss. 12-17 describe a real visionary experience. In vs. 1 the word 'vision' occurs: 'The word of Jehovah came unto Abram in a vision, saying. . .'. Now the question arises: how much of the following occurrences does this cover? Does it relate to vss. 1-12 or is it used by way of anticipation of vss. 12-17? The latter is difficult, because the participle 'saying' links what immediately follows it closely to the expression 'came in a vision' (vs. 1). And a chronological difficulty also arises if vss. 2-12 are to be understood as plain unvisionary discourse. The marking of the points in time at which the several items happened is such as to be hard to conceive in ordinary waking experience. In vs. 5 it is night, for stars are shining. In vs. 12 the sun is 'just going down.' In vs. 17 'the sun went down' In a vision the ordinary laws of the sequence of time do not hold good. Consequently to place the whole disclosure in a vision removes the chronological difficulty, and enables us to consider the whole as a continuous narrative, the discrepancies of time notwithstanding. On this view the vision does not begin with vs. 12; the seeing of the starry heavens in vs. 5 already belongs to it. And yet the 'deep sleep' and the 'horror of a great darkness' (vs. 12) so unmistakably describe the phenomena of a vision coming on, that we shall have to speak of a vision within a vision, something like the play within the play in 'Hamlet.' Still the difficulty is not decisive. The sleep and the horror of a great darkness may perhaps stand for a heightened abnormal psychical state within the already abnormal visionary state as such. If the above, however, should appear too complicated, a simple, though drastic, remedy is afforded by understanding the word 'vision' in vs. 1 as meaning generic revelation. To be sure, this does not remove the chronological difficulty between vs. 5 and vs. 12; for this it will be further necessary to place an interval of at least one day between the two points mentioned."

The above quotation will be sufficient to show the great difficulty of deciding just how much of Gen. 15 was included in the vision experience, and how much, if any, was experienced by Abraham while awake. There is, however, no question about verses 12-17 being a vision experience.

In this deep and mysterious supernatural vision it is revealed to Abraham that his descendants shall suffer for a long time in a foreign land. We should remember that the starting point of all this was Abraham's complaint about being childless. Before Abraham has any descendants at all, it is revealed to him by God that his posterity shall suffer much and long. "It is, however, to be observed, that before one son is given to Abram, he hears that his seed shall be, for a long time, in captivity and slavery. For thus does the Lord deal with His own people; He always makes a beginning from death, so that by quickening the dead, He the more abundantly manifests His power" (Calvin).

God adds that He will later judge the nation that oppresses Abraham's descendants, and the people shall be brought out with great substance. Moreover, Abraham himself shall die in peace in a good old age, before these events take place. The expression "thou shalt go to thy fathers" is properly understood as meaning more than merely the fact that Abraham would die and be buried. For his ancestors were not buried in the land of Canaan at all. "So we find here a clear testimony to belief in an eternal life in the patriarchal age" (Leupold).

"But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full" (15:15). The Amorites were the most important tribe of the Canaanites. Because of this fact, the term "Amorites" is frequently used in the Bible as a general term for the inhabitants of the land of Canaan before its conquest by Israel. These Amorites were very wicked, but their guilt had not yet reached its extreme development. The language used, however, indicates that they were already, in Abraham's time, approaching the point at which divine judgment must fall upon them. God in His goodness allows them a few more generations in which to repent of their wickedness. In His divine foreknowledge He realizes that they will not repent, and must therefore be destroyed. But this is not to be done until they have had the additional opportunity to repent.

We may wonder how a period of about 400 years can be regarded as four generations, as we

are accustomed to regard a generation as about 30 years. We should realize that Abraham lived to the age of 175 years old, Isaac to the age of 180 years, Jacob to the age of 147 years, and Joseph to the age of 110 years. In view of these facts, it is not at all unnatural that the time of Israel's return from Egypt should be spoken of as "the fourth generation."

When we meet people who say they cannot believe that a good God would command the extermination of the Canaanites, we should remember that this extermination was an act of divine judgment executed only after long opportunity for repentance had been abused, and the people had only become worse.

#### Questions:

1. What difficulty exists as to the interpretation of the statement of 15.1 that "the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision"?

2. If we regard the vision as beginning at verse 12, what chronological difficulty is involved in the reference to the stars (verse 5) and the sun (verse 12a)?

2. If we regard the vision as beginning at verse 1, then what must we believe about the experience related in verses 12-17?

4. What great fact about Abraham's descendants was revealed to him in the vision?

5. What truth about life after death is implied by the statement that Abraham should go to his fathers in peace?

6. Who were the Amorites? Besides the actual Amorite tribe, how is the term "Amorites" used in the Old Testament?

7. What was the moral condition of the Amorites in the time of Abraham?

8. How could a period of about 400 years be regarded as four generations?

9. Why did God decree the extermination of the Amorites?

10. Why was the extermination of the Amorites not contrary to the goodness of God?

## LESSON 31

### GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM, CONTINUED

The "smoking furnace" and the "burning lamp" which passed between the pieces of the sacrificial animals, represented the presence of God passing between them, for establishing the covenant. Leupold rightly reminds us that covenants made by God with men are not mutual agreements as between man and man. They proceed wholly from God, who takes the initiative and the responsibility for putting the covenant into operation and carrying it out completely.

"In that same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: the Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaim, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites" (15:18-21). Ten tribes or nations are enumerated here. We shall say something about them presently.

The term "the river of Egypt" in the Old Testament usually means, not the Nile, but a small stream which marked the boundary between Canaan and Egypt, running into the Mediterranean Sea about 50 miles south of Gaza. This small stream or wady is usually dry, but contains water after a period of rains. But in Gen. 15:18 the expression "the river of Egypt" can hardly mean this small brook, for it is contrasted with

the Euphrates, which is one of the great rivers of the world. Therefore in Gen. 15:18 it must be the Nile which is meant. The promise that Abraham's descendants would inherit territory from the river of Egypt to the Euphrates need not be understood as meaning that Israel's inheritance would extend to the actual water's edge of the Nile River. It is simply a way of saying that Egypt would constitute the southwestern border of the promised land. "These two major rivers were the easiest way of designating within what limits Israel's boundaries should lie" (Leupold). In much the same way we often say that Philadelphia and Washington are cities on America's east coast and Los Angeles is a city on America's west coast, while actually each of these cities is located miles from the ocean.

We sometimes meet with the statement that the promise made to Abraham in Gen. 15:18 has never yet been fulfilled, therefore the fulfillment must be still future. This, however, is not in accordance with the historical facts. As a matter of fact Israel twice in its history possessed all the territory promised to Abraham: first during the reign of Solomon (1 Kings 8:65), and again during the reign of Jeroboam the Second of the Northern Kingdom of Israel (2 Kings 14:25). The failure of Israel to hold this territory permanently, of course, was due to religious apostasy from God.

The listing of precisely ten tribes or nations

here may be symbolic, indicating that a complete land was to be given to the posterity of Abraham. Actually there were other tribes, such as the Hivites, which are not mentioned in this verse. Moreover, some of those which are mentioned seem to overlap (Amorites and Canaanites).

The Kenites were originally inhabitants of the southern region, but later they lived also in the northern part of the land. Judges 1:16 informs us that Moses' father-in-law was of this people. About the Kenizzites little is known; possibly they too lived toward the south of Canaan. The name of the Kadmonites is derived from the word meaning "east," therefore it is thought that they lived toward the east of Canaan. The Hittites are well known. Their main territory was in Asia Minor, or what is today Turkey. But there were also Hittites in Palestine. It was from Hittites or "sons of Heth" that Abraham purchased the field and cave of Machpelah for a cemetery. The Perizzites have already been mentioned in Gen.13:7, along with the Canaanites. The name Perizzites may perhaps mean something like "village dwellers," thus distinguishing them from those Canaanites who lived in fortified cities. Next the Rephaim are mentioned (the ending -im indicates the plural of a masculine noun in Hebrew). The Rephaim were evidently of the earlier inhabitants of Palestine, holding the land before the Canaanites came. The Amorites were mountain-dwellers, and a principal tribe of the Canaanites. Practically nothing is known about the Gergashites, except that they were a tribe of

the land of Canaan. The Jebusites were a people living in and near Jerusalem, which they held until the time of King David, nearly a thousand years after the time of Abraham.

#### Questions:

1. What was the significance of the "smoking furnace" and "burning lamp" which passed between the pieces of the sacrificial animals?
2. What is the main difference between covenants made by God with men, and covenants made between man and man?
3. In God's promise to Abraham, what boundaries of the land to be possessed by his descendants were specified?
4. What is the ordinary meaning of the term "the river of Egypt" in the Old Testament?
5. Why can "the river of Egypt" not have this common meaning in Gen. 15:18?
6. At what periods in the history of Israel was the promise of Gen. 15: 18 literally fulfilled?
7. How can we explain the fact that Israel did not permanently hold all the territory promised in Gen. 15:18?
8. What may be the significance of the fact that exactly ten tribes or nations are listed in verses 18-21?
9. What is known about the Hittites?
10. Where did the Jebusites live?

### LESSON 32

#### THE LIFE OF ISAAC

We shall pass over the Abraham-Hagar-Ishmael affair except to make one or two comments. In the first place, Abraham's union with Hagar, which was originally suggested by Sarah, was an understandable but inexcusable attempt to do something by human expedience when faith in God's promise had wavered. In the second place, recent archaeological discoveries have proved that the practice of a childless wife providing a concubine for her husband in the hope of offspring was a recognized and legally sanctioned practice in the world of Abraham's day. This does not make it right from the standpoint of God's ordinance of marriage, but it does show that what Abraham did was not regarded as immoral or improper by the generally accepted social standards of respectable people of that time. The law codes that have been discovered also help to explain Abraham's extreme reluctance to turn Hagar and Ishmael out when Sarah insisted on this. What Sarah was asking Abraham to do was not only harsh but actually forbidden by statute laws of that day. Only at the express

command of God did Abraham acquiesce in Sarah's demand.

God's plan was not that Ishmael implement the fulfilment of the covenant promises, but that a son should be born to Abraham and his true wife Sarah. This son, Isaac, was born when Abraham was 100 years old.

We now come to Chapter 22, which gives the history of Abraham offering Isaac as a sacrifice. This constituted the supreme test of Abraham's devotion and obedience to God. This chapter, which contains important lessons of truth, has caused needless difficulty to many people. The present writer recalls reading a children's vacation Bible school lesson on this incident, issued several years ago by a large publisher of religious education materials. The author of the lesson stated that of course we could not possibly believe that God really commanded Abraham to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice. What really happened, she said, was that Abraham imagined that he had heard the voice of God commanding him to offer

his son as a sacrifice. Believing that God had actually commanded him to do this, Abraham in a commendable spirit of devotion to the Lord proceeds to execute the command, and is only prevented at the last moment by the intervention of God.

Such a reconstruction of the story not only falsifies the data given in the Scripture record, but is also quite unnecessary. There is no reason to doubt that God actually commanded Abraham to offer Isaac as a burnt offering. It was not, however, the purpose of God that this command should be actually carried out to the extent of killing Isaac. God intended from the beginning to prevent the death of Isaac, though this was not revealed to Abraham until the last moment. In order to grasp the real meaning of the incident we have to look at the whole picture, not just at one part.

Some Bible critics, who do not believe that Genesis is a genuine book of Moses, have held that this story in Gen. 22 reflects the attitude of the great prophets, centuries later, in opposing human sacrifices such as those offered to Moloch. There is no reason for such a supposition whatever. Scholars who reject the doctrine of the substitutionary atonement, calling it "blood theology" and regarding it as primitive and barbarous, are ready to reject or explain away the statements of Genesis 22, claiming that God could not really have commanded any such thing.

Over against these denials of the real truth of the record, we believe that God actually commanded Abraham to offer Isaac in sacrifice. The objections raised against God commanding Abraham to do this, would be equally valid as objections against the substitutionary sufferings and death of Jesus Christ — that is, these objections would not be valid at all.

The Bible teaches that sin can only be canceled by the sacrifice of life. God could require the life of the person who has sinned, but in His sovereignty He is willing to accept the sacrifice of the life of a substitute, therefore it is possible for Jesus Christ to die for sinners. This truth of a substitutionary sacrifice is clearly implied in the narrative of Gen. 22, as we shall see.

The command to offer Isaac as a sacrifice was a difficult one for Abraham to obey, not only because of his love for his son, but even more because it seemed to contradict the promises which God had made. God has given Abraham these promises, including the promise that through Abraham's seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. He has been told that it is through Isaac that these promises shall be realized (17:19). Now he is commanded to kill Isaac. If he obeys this command, how can the divine promises be fulfilled? So far as human reason can discern, it

would be impossible for the promises to come true if Isaac does not continue to live.

We gain some light on this matter from the New Testament. Hebrews 11:17-19 says: "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead . . .". Here we are told that Abraham believed that God was able to raise Isaac from the dead. This however indicates an amazing faith on Abraham's part. We must remember that no instances of the dead being raised were recorded in Scripture prior to this point. It was not as if Abraham could call to mind the Shunammite woman's son (2 Kings 4) or the daughter of Jairus or Lazarus of Bethany, and then been able to believe that the same kind of miracle would take place in the case of Isaac. The test of Abraham's faith was much more severe than this. What he believed, he believed by sheer inference from two facts about God which he knew to be true, namely, (1) God's power, and (2) God's reliability. He knew that God is Almighty, and he knew that God is faithful to His own word. Putting this knowledge alongside of the command to kill Isaac, he believed that God could and would raise Isaac from the dead in order that the promises should be fulfilled through him.

Abraham is commanded to offer his son Isaac upon one of the mountains in the land of Moriah. The meaning of the name Moriah is unknown. Davis' Bible Dictionary states that the land of Moriah was probably the region surrounding the hill on which Solomon's temple was later built. It has been suggested by some Bible scholars that the place where Abraham was commanded to offer his son links this event with the later offering of sacrifices in the Jerusalem temple (G. Vos, Biblical Theology, p. 108). It is highly probable that this connection is intended by the sacred record. Otherwise why should Abraham have been directed to go to a distant region, and to offer his son upon a particular mountain? The only plausible answer is that this particular mountain was to be of outstanding importance in the later history of redemption.

It is worthy of note that when this difficult command was given to Abraham he set about obeying it without delay. Abraham did not say, "This is a serious matter, which calls for much prayer. I will call my household together for a ten-day season of prayer, that we may know what the will of God is." Some modern-day believers use prayer as an escape from obedience. When confronted with a clear alternative between right and wrong, they will try to postpone making a decision by praying for "guidance." The present writer has known of Christians who prayed for

guidance as to whether they should leave a corrupt, apostate denomination and join one that is true to the Bible; he has known others who prayed for guidance as to whether they should render the things of God to Caesar by applying for a permit for the church to exist under a wicked, totalitarian law which constituted a pagan emperor the head of the church. When the will of God is known to a person, what is called for is not prayer but action. Prayer is a duty, and one that is too often neglected or slighted; but there are times when prayer is a sin. Prayer is a sin when we make it an escape route to avoid making a painful, unpleasant or embarrassing decision. Prayer is a sin when it becomes a substitute for obedience.

Abraham did not delay his decision under the plea of praying for guidance. He obeyed promptly, without delay or evasion. "And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him" (22:3).

#### Questions:

1. What objection has been raised by unbelieving

scholars against the story contained in chapter 22?

2. How can this objection to the story be answered?

3. What do scholars who reject the substitutionary atonement hold to be the real meaning of the story in Gen. 22?

4. What does the Bible teach about how sin can be canceled?

5. Why was the command to sacrifice Isaac difficult for Abraham to obey?

6. What New Testament passage sheds light on this narrative?

7. According to the New Testament, what did Abraham believe to be the solution of the apparent contradiction between God's promises and God's command?

8. What two facts about God did Abraham know to be true, which had a bearing on what would be the outcome of Isaac's death?

9. Where was the land of Moriah located?

10. Why was the region and the particular mountain important?

11. When is prayer sinful?

### LESSON 33

#### THE LIFE OF ISAAC, CONTINUED

The place where Isaac was to be offered was evidently some distance from the place where Abraham had been living. On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off (22:4). The two servants are commanded to wait, while Abraham proceeds further with Isaac. He tells the servants "I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you" (22:5). This statement of Abraham is definitely in harmony with the explanation given in Hebrews 11, namely, that Abraham believed Isaac would be miraculously raised from the dead.

As they proceed toward the mountain, Isaac asks a very embarrassing question: "Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" (22:7). Abraham replies, "My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering." This answer certainly proceeded from Abraham's faith in God's power and reliability. Abraham leaves everything in the hands of God. In the light of what followed, Abraham's statement seems prophetic. We may conclude that by divine guidance, the patriarch spoke a deeper and greater truth than he himself understood at this point.

Isaac has not yet been informed of what is to be done. But when they have arrived at the ap-

pointed place, this can no longer be withheld from Isaac. Although Isaac is described as a "lad" he was not a mere child. The Jewish historian Josephus suggests that Isaac was about 25 years old at this time. It is obvious that Isaac could have escaped from Abraham if he had desired to do so. The fact that he made no attempt to escape indicates that he willingly offered himself to be bound and laid upon the altar by Abraham. This reminds us of the truth that our Lord Jesus Christ willingly offered Himself to bear the sins of the world. Unbelievers and modernists have objected to the orthodox doctrine of the substitutionary atonement, saying that it would be unjust for God the Father to compel His Son to suffer and die for the sins of the world. This is of course a mere travesty of the orthodox doctrine of the atonement. It is not a case of God the Father compelling His unwilling Son to bear the sins of the world. Rather Christ willingly laid down His life for the sins of men. This is proved by John 10:17, 18 where Jesus says: "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again. This com-

mandment have I received from my Father." In these words we see two truths: (1) Jesus was not compelled against His will to suffer and die; (2) there was absolute harmony and unity of purpose between God the Father and God the Son. Similarly, Isaac was not compelled against his will to submit to being offered as a sacrifice; and it is also clear that there was complete harmony and unity of purpose between Abraham and Isaac. It would have been extremely difficult, if not impossible, for Abraham to bind Isaac against the latter's will.

The fact that Isaac willingly submitted to being bound for sacrifice is often overlooked when this chapter is read, while the whole emphasis is placed upon Abraham's heroic faith. The incident shows a magnificent faith and devotion on Isaac's part also.

When Abraham is actually on the point of killing his son with the knife he had brought along for the purpose, he is checked by the voice of the angel of the Lord calling to him from heaven. "God knew that the hand that had the courage to pick up the knife would not have hesitated to perform the sacrifice" (Leupold). The test of Abraham's faith need go no further. It has been demonstrated that God comes first in Abraham's life. While God did not want the actual sacrifice of Isaac to take place, still He did want Abraham to make the sacrifice in his heart. We should realize that God demands supreme devotion of every one of His children, not only of Abraham. Even though He does not put every one to such a supreme test, still He demands the same absolute spiritual devotion of every believer. God claims absolute priority in man's life. To the extent that we fail to give God that place in our lives, we are idolaters.

Abraham had proved that he feared God. Many people say that they fear God, or believe in God, or serve God, yet all the while they are living for self or the world. In our own day people will flagrantly violate the commandments of God, yet self-righteously claim that they have done no wrong. We recently read an argument which claimed that it is right for a certain commercial motion picture theatre to operate on the Lord's Day, inasmuch as the proprietor, projector operators and many of the patrons are Christian people! It is to be feared that this is a common attitude, not an isolated case. Today a mere nominal profession of devotion to God is often regarded as if it were the real thing. Abraham not only claimed that he feared God; he proved that he feared God.

In the New Testament (James 2:21,22) we read: "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?"

Here we have an inspired statement that Abraham's offering of Isaac was a proof of the reality of his faith.

"And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns: and Abraham went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son" (22:13). "Abraham is asked by God to offer life, that which in point of life is dearest to him, his only son. At the same time it is declared by the interposition of the Angel and the pointing out of the ram in the thicket, that the substitution of one life for another life would be acceptable to God" (G. Vos, *Biblical Theology*, p. 107).

The principle of substitutionary sacrifice is taught by the offering up of the ram caught in the thicket. This ram is offered in the stead of Isaac. This principle of substitution is the very core of the Biblical doctrine of redemption. A person who does not believe in this is rejecting, not some little point of doctrine out on the circumference of the circle, but the very center of the circle itself. Such a person is rejecting the main thing that makes Christianity what it is. The writer once knew a man who said he accepted all the teachings of evangelical Christianity except for one minor detail. Upon being asked what that one point was he replied that it was the substitutionary atonement. He thought it degrading for man to depend on the death of Christ for salvation; it would be more in keeping with human self-respect for a man to stand on his own feet before God. This, of course, was just another way of saying that he did not consider himself a sinner, felt no need of a Saviour and therefore was not a Christian. The fact that he was a member of a well-known "evangelical" church denomination did not alter the fact that he was essentially an unbeliever.

It is worth noting that the apostle Paul in Romans 8:32 in speaking of the sacrifice of Christ for our sins uses language which is strongly reminiscent of God's message to Abraham in Gen. 22:12: "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all . . ."; "thou has not withheld thy son, thine only son from me."

Both Abraham and Isaac must have been deeply moved by the outcome of their trip to the land of Moriah. The Genesis record deals with the event objectively, saying nothing about the emotional reactions of Abraham and Isaac. That Abraham was very deeply impressed is indicated by his naming the place Jehovah-jireh, meaning "Jehovah will provide." Moses in writing Genesis adds that even in his day the proverbial statement, "In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen (provided)", was in use, indicating the deep impression made on people's minds and memories.

**Questions:**

1. What light does the Epistle to the Hebrews throw on the history of Abraham offering Isaac?

2. How did Abraham answer his son's question about a lamb?

3. How old may Isaac have been at this time?

4. What is shown by the fact that Isaac made no attempt to escape?

5. What truth concerning Christ is suggested by Isaac's conduct upon this occasion?

6. What does John 10:17,18 teach about Christ, and in what ways is this parallel to the situation in Genesis 22?

7. What place does God claim in every human life?

8. What had Abraham proved concerning his own life?

9. What is the difference between mere nominal profession and real fear of God?

10. What does the Epistle of James say about Abraham's offering of Isaac on the altar?

11. What principle of redemption was involved in the sacrifice of the ram found in the thicket?

12. Why can a person who rejects the substitutionary atonement not be a Christian?

13. What name did Abraham give to the place where he had bound his son and laid him on the altar?

14. What is the meaning of this name?

15. What proverb came into use through this event?

**LESSON 34****THE LIFE OF ISAAC, CONTINUED**

Immediately after Abraham had met the supreme test of being willing to offer his son as a sacrifice to God, a further revelation was granted to him. The angel of the Lord calls to him out of heaven the second time (22:15). The great promises are repeated, this time with an oath on the part of God. "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord . . ." (22:16). The New Testament comments (Hebrews 6:13, 14): "For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee," adding the explanation: "For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife" (Heb. 6:16). An oath is stronger than a mere statement; it is used in matters of the greatest importance, and has a character of finality, or of settling a matter permanently. Wanting to give Abraham the strongest possible kind of assurance at this point in his life, God not only repeats the promises but actually confirms them by an oath. Essentially an oath is an appeal to God to witness the truth of what one is saying, or one's sincere purpose to carry out what he is promising. Men swear by God because He is the greatest of all beings; there is no greater by whom they could swear. For the same reason, when God swears, He can only swear by Himself; there is none greater than Himself to whom He can appeal.

The promises given in chapter 22 are essentially identical with those previously given (chaps. 12, 15, 17), yet there are some differences of detail in the wording. "Blessing I will bless thee" is a Hebrew idiom, which may be translated "I will very greatly bless thee;" and so also

in the case of the promise, "multiplying I will multiply thee." Compare the words of Gen. 2:17, "thou shalt surely die," which in the Hebrew is literally "dying thou shalt die."

"And thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies" (22:17). The word "gate" or "gates" is used in Scripture to mean the power of something; thus in Matthew 16:18 the expression "the gates of hell" means the greatest possible power of evil. Abraham is assured that his seed shall possess the gate of his enemies. As Leupold points out, this does not at all mean that Israel is to gain possession of the world by military conquest, but only states what the outcome will be when Israel is attacked by other nations; moreover this promise to Abraham's seed is conditioned by Israel's obedience to God. We know that as long as Israel remained faithful to God the nation was delivered from attacks by enemy nations; but when they became unfaithful to God, God punished them by delivering them up into the hands of powerful enemies, as happened several times in the period of the Judges; and as when the northern kingdom was destroyed by Assyria in 721 B. C., and Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B. C.

Of the promises granted to Abraham the greatest and most important is "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (22:18). Literally the Hebrew says "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth bless themselves." This promise is of course a prophecy of the coming of Jesus Christ and of the success of His redemptive work. We should note the universal element that is prominent here. It is not merely the physical descendants of the patriarch

Abraham that are to be blessed through His Seed, but all the nations of the earth. God called Abraham and made a covenant with him so that from his seed Christ could be born, and the real purpose of this was not merely to bring blessing to Israel, but to bring blessing to the world. If the operations of God's saving grace were confined to the narrow channel of Israel for some two thousand years, this was not because God's ultimate purpose was to bless Israel, but rather His ultimate purpose was that the river should overflow the channel and bring blessing to "all the nations of the earth." The Jews of our Lord's day and of the apostle Paul's day had forgotten this truth; they insisted upon regarding the narrow channel of the Mosaic system as permanently valid, as if it existed for its own sake and not for a purpose greater than itself. So they stoned Stephen and hated Paul.

We may pause at this point to note that the promise of a Redeemer is becoming more definite and explicit as history moves on. First it was a promise that the seed of the woman would finally crush the serpent's head (Gen. 3:15); then it is implied that the Redeemer shall be descended from Shem (Gen. 9:26); now it is revealed that the Redeemer shall be descended from Abraham and shall bring blessing to the world.

Following the reception of this divine revelation, Abraham and Isaac return to the point where the two young men and the ass had been left

(22:19, compare verse 5). The reunited party returns to Beersheba ("the well of the oath") in the south of Palestine.

#### Questions:

1. What experience did Abraham have immediately after offering the ram in place of his son Isaac?
2. What is remarkable about the way God's promises to Abraham are repeated in chapter 22?
3. What does the Epistle to the Hebrews say about the purpose and effectiveness of an oath?
4. Why do men swear by the name of God?
5. Why did God swear by Himself?
6. What is the meaning of "Blessing I will bless thee"?
7. What is meant by the promise that Abraham's seed shall possess the gate of his enemies?
8. What condition was implied in this promise about possessing the gate of the enemies?
9. What was the most important of the promises given to Abraham?
10. Why did God call Abraham and make a covenant with him?
11. What was the error of the Jews of Paul's day as to the purpose of the nation of Israel?

### LESSON 35

#### THE LIFE OF ISAAC, CONTINUED

We shall pass over the beautiful story of how Rebekah became the bride of Isaac, pausing only to note two lessons specially taught by this part of the history — the deep concern of the godly Abraham that his son Isaac should not marry a woman of the ungodly Canaanites, and the marvellous providence of God in working out everything for the fulfilment of the divine plan. We shall now pass on to Genesis chapter 25 and take up the birth of Esau and Jacob, the twin sons of Isaac and Rebekah.

Again we meet the expression "These are the generations of . . ." (25:19) indicating the beginning of a new subject or section of the book. This time it is the generations of Isaac. In 37:2 we meet the statement "These are the generations of Jacob." This may seem rather strange for there is much more about Jacob than about Isaac in the section called "The generations of Isaac." The explanation is evidently that the early parts of Jacob's life were dominated by the influence of Isaac, therefore they are included as part of the history of Isaac.

The first new fact stated in the history of

Isaac is his prayer to the Lord on behalf of his wife Rebekah, who had borne no children. The Lord answered this prayer of Isaac (25:21) and so Rebekah is soon to become a mother. She is to be the mother of twins, and before they are born there comes a revelation from God to Rebekah (25:22, 23). It is said to Rebekah that twin sons will be born and that two nations shall be descended from them. It is further revealed that "the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger" (25:23). That the one nation should be stronger than the other would occasion no surprise; but the prediction that the elder should serve the younger would cause wonder, because it runs contrary to nature and custom. Here in this history of Rebekah we see a profound truth disclosed. In God's dealings with mankind, grace is more important than nature, and takes priority over it. God's purpose of redemption is a sovereign purpose and cannot be limited to natural, reasonable and customary channels. God in His sovereignty chooses and decides as He pleases and no being in the universe has a right to challenge His decisions. Contrary to nature and human custom

God has chosen the younger in preference to the elder.

This revelation to Rebekah is developed later in the Bible. In Malachi 1:2, 3 we read: "Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau . . .". Then in the New Testament the apostle Paul comments on it in Romans 9:10-13, "And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac: (for the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of him that calleth;) it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."

The apostle Paul points out that this discrimination on the part of God was **sovereign**, not based on any merit of Jacob over against Esau, as proved by the fact that the discrimination was made before the children were born, or had done anything good or evil. We may pause a moment here to observe that Paul's argument holds good against the modern sophistry that God's election is based on foreseen faith and repentance. Clearly the apostle's concern is to show that God's choice was a sovereign one, not based on anything in the life of Jacob and Esau themselves. If Paul had believed, as some people do today, that God chose Jacob because He foresaw that Jacob would later of his own free will repent and believe in the Lord, then the choice would have been based on works after all — **foreseen** works, but still works. But Paul definitely says that it was "not of works, but of him that calleth," as proved by the fact that the decision was made before the sons were born. The modern sophistry of election being based on foreseen repentance and faith had not yet been invented in Paul's time, but in any case it is clear that such a scheme cannot possibly be fitted into the apostle's statements in Romans 9:10-13. The notion of election being based on foreseen repentance and faith does not really come from exegesis of the Scriptures, but from a persistent desire to maintain man's free will and moral ability over against God's sovereignty. This modern notion has been quite fairly described as the notion that "God elects those who elect themselves."

God chose the younger in preference to the elder, then, not because of a moral difference between the two sons (actual or foreseen) but because it was God's good pleasure so to decide. This is not to say that God had no reasons; it is only to say that God's reasons were not grounded in the superior merit or moral character of the one brother over against the other. The oft-quoted saying of Augustine is relevant here: "The grace of God does not find men fit for salvation, but makes them so." In other words, the truth is not that God chose Jacob because Jacob was

going to become a good man; but rather, Jacob finally became a good man because God had chosen him. For our part, we will take the theology of Augustine in preference to the popular man-pleasing Arminianism of the present day.

#### Questions:

1. At what point in the book do "the generations of Isaac" begin?
2. How can we explain the fact that a large part of the section designated as "the generations of Isaac" actually deals with Jacob?
3. What special prayer of Isaac is mentioned in 25:21?
4. What revelation of the Lord was granted to Rebekah?
5. What Biblical truth is exemplified by this revelation to Rebekah?
6. How does the prophet Malachi refer to this revelation to Rebekah?
7. In what book and chapter of the writings of the apostle Paul is the revelation to Rebekah cited and commented upon?
8. What inference does Paul draw from the fact that the revelation came to Rebekah before her two sons were born?
9. How can we answer the claim that God's election is based on foreseen repentance and faith?
10. What statement of Augustine is relevant to the revelation given to Rebekah?

(To be continued)

## *Help Me to Live*

Help me to live that other lives may see  
Some slight reflection of my Lord in me.  
I would not blaze before the world, a star  
Streaming its radiance on the earth afar:  
I would not lift my head so very high  
That men could say I sought to touch the sky  
In my ambitious efforts to be known;  
I would but seek Thy smile, and Thine alone,  
And at Thy feet in sweet submission prove  
The richness and the comfort of Thy love;  
For love alone can turn our life to light  
And make us luminous in God's own sight.

(Author unknown)

## 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 editorial policy of *Blue Banner Faith and Life* each reviewer is solely responsible for the opinions expressed in his reviews. Please purchase books from your book dealer or direct from the publishers; do not send orders for books to the manager of this magazine.

**THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION**, by James Buchanan. The Banner of Truth Trust, 78b Chiltern St., London, W. 1, England. (reprint) 1961, pp. 425. 15 shillings.

This volume contains a series of 15 lectures on the History (1-7) and Exposition (8-15) of the Doctrine of Justification.

The first seven lectures trace the history of the doctrine from the O.T., through the Apostolic age, the Fathers, and the Reformation to the time in which Buchanan lived (1804-70).

The historical discussion is for the most part interesting and informative. A great deal of work is written against the perversions of the doctrine within the Roman Church, and the historical sketch exhibits how this perversion developed.

The last eight lectures are subdivided into propositions wherein some aspect of the doctrine is stated, and then proved by appeal to the Scriptures.

Buchanan is a Covenant Theologian, and develops his arguments from this perspective. However, for reasons which cannot be justified here, we disagree with his basic definition of "Covenant." His definition is that which has been normally accepted by Reformed Theologians, and he also identifies the Adamic Administration as the Covenant of Works; but this definition and identification does not comport with the Biblical-Theological concept of Covenant. (Based upon Professor John Murray's lectures on *Cov. The.*)

The work is of value to students because of the manner in which it shows the development of a number of heresies as the result of an erroneous understanding of Justification. For example, "sects were formed under influence of one or the other of two great natural tendencies, . . . Licence . . . and Legalism. . . at direct variance with the doctrine of the Reformation. The one Antinomian, the other Socinian, system. They may be said to have appeared simultaneously, as reactions, in opposite directions, against the truth . . ." 171

In conclusion Buchanan remarks that all the speculations on the subject of Justification may be reduced to one of two opposing systems;—"the system, which ascribes our Justification entirely to the grace of God, . . . and the system which leaves it dependent . . . on man." "The one begins with God, the other with man." 423  
The work is recommended as a supplement to pastors and teachers.

— Edward A. Robson

**REVELATION AND THE BIBLE**, by Carl F. H. Henry et al. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1958, pp. 413. \$6.00.

With a book of this magnitude the Table of Contents speaks for itself. Some of the subjects listed are: 1. General and Special Divine Revelation. 2. Special Divine Revelation as Rational. 3. Special Revelation as Historical and Personal. 4. Special Revelation as Objective. 5. Special Revelation as Scriptural. 6. Contemporary Views on Revelation. 7. The Witness of Scripture to its Inspiration. 8. Our Lord's Use of Scripture. 13. The Church Doctrine of Inspiration. 14. Contemporary Ideas of Inspiration. 18. Principles of Interpretation. 21. Reversals of Old Testament Criticism. 22. Reversals of New Testament Criticism. 23. Authority of the Bible. 24. Unity of the Bible.

Some of the 24 authors are: Gordon H. Clark, Frank E. Gaebelin, Paul K. Jewett, James I. Packer, Bernard Ramm, Ned B. Stonehouse, Merrill C. Tenney, Edward J. Young and F. F. Bruce. This masterful work has been edited by Carl F. H. Henry, who is at present the editor of *Christianity Today*.

The thesis of this volume is that the entire Bible from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21 is the written Word of God, and that it is without error as it came from the pen of the original writers. This volume goes a long way in answering the exponents of the Documentary Hypothesis; it is the product of Higher Critical scholars whose investigation and study have led them to conclude without question that the Documentary Hypothesis is shallow and untenable. This refutation is accomplished by a positive

presentation of Biblical inspiration rather than shouting down the opposition.

Each chapter, needless to say, is well done, and the style is scholastic rather than popular. This style enables the authors to say more by the use of precise terminology. As a result the book should be read with pen and paper in hand ready to take notes as you would of a profound speaker. This volume would lend itself well as a syllabus for a study on the nature of the Bible.

This volume is a must for all serious students of Higher Criticism and of the evangelical doctrine of the inspiration of the Bible, because this is one of the key issues of today. The Bible is not being burned today but it is being torn apart page by page and left to the wind of disbelief. How well equipped are you to pull it out of **this** kind of fire?

— M. L. McFarland

**LUTHER'S PRINCIPLES OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION**, by A. Skevington Wood. The Tyndale Press, 39 Bedford Square, London, W.C. 1, England. 1960, pp. 36. 1 shilling sixpence.

The Reformation was born not on the Scala Sancta in Rome, but in the tower room of the Augustinian cloister where Martin Luther sat before an open Bible and allowed Almighty God to address him face to face, sometime in the fall of 1514 (p. 7).

Luther's great discovery was more than a matter of personal faith. Its real significance lay in the realm of interpretation (p. 7). He discovered that the "righteousness of God" was not something he did, but a gracious work of God in him through faith. So also the "power of God" and the "wisdom of God" are gifts of God's grace. He began to see it was necessary to interpret the whole Bible in accordance with Romans 1:17.

The opening pronouncement of his "Ninty-five Theses" is based on the interpretation of "penance" in the Vulgate of Matthew 4:17 (repent). Hence his principles of interpretation are of prime importance to the church today.

The author recognizes a danger in trying to draw a "system of interpretation" from Luther. For "unlike Calvin, Luther displayed a genius which was prophetic rather than logical, intuitive rather than analytical, and we shall go astray if we seek to squeeze his contribution into any conventional mould" (p. 11).

Luther's hermeneutic was based on his conviction that the Scriptures show themselves to have been spoken by the Holy Spirit, and that "the interpreter must begin by acquiescing to this distinctively biblical conception of the Bible" (p. 12). Apart from the Spirit no man

can know the Scripture. This experiential element is not to be considered license to a purely subjective activity, but simply freedom to follow the Spirit's instruction. Thus **sola Scriptura** and **sola fide** were the central watchwords of his interpretation.

Dr. Wood says that Luther's major contribution to hermeneutics lies in the fusion of the literal and the spiritual sense of Scripture into a new dynamic. The literal sense is primary and communicates the spiritual sense. Luther recognized the basic unity of Scripture and the essential Christocentric and Christological nature of it as dictating its meaning.

The reviewer found this a very stimulating and instructive study, and would recommend it as enlightening to layman and minister alike. Biblical scholarship needs to return to the Reformation principles of a plenary inspired Bible interpreted by men under the power and enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. And the believing servant of God can improve his preaching by reviewing from time to time the principles of the fathers of our faith.

— E. C. Copeland

**THE LIFE OF GOD IN THE SOUL OF MAN**, by Henry Scougal, InterVarsity Fellowship, 39 Bedford Square, London, W.C. 1, England. 1961, pp. 80. Two shillings.

The forward gives a brief account of the author's life and of the reasons for this publication. Henry Scougal's father was Bishop of Aberdeen 1664-82, and he himself "belonged to the school of Archbishop Robert Leighton" (p. 8). After a little over a year in the parish of Aucterless (Church of England), during which this treatise was written, he was made professor of divinity at Kings College Aberdeen where "he made it his aim to impress his students with a sense of the holiness of the office of the ministry, as well as to instruct them in theology" (ibid).

Prejudice should not cause Presbyterians to over-look this gem of devotional writing, a favourite of such men as John Newton, and the poet Southey. It had a profound influence on the Wesleys and George Whitfield. It has been described as "piety without pietism"; it is indeed an excellent summary of what true religion is as to its source and its outward manifestation. True religion is defined as life "having God for its author and being wrought in the souls of men by the power of the Holy Spirit."

This is obviously the confession of one who has experienced the things he is describing in simple, clear and easy language. It will give your soul a lift as it humbles you before God.

— E. C. Copeland

**THE PREACHER'S PORTRAIT**, by John R. W. Stott. The Tyndale Press, 39 Bedford Square, London, W.C. 1, England. 1961. pp. 111. Five Shillings.

This book is an expansion of the 1961 Payton Secutres delivered at Fuller Seminary, Pasadena, California, by the rector of All Souls (Church of England), London. The author is well known as a forthright preacher of the Gospel, and a writer on evangelical subjects.

We have here a stimulating presentation of five aspects of the life of a minister through a study of five words the New Testament applies to him.

I. A Steward. The Preacher's Message and Authority.

II. A Herald. The Preacher's Proclamation and Appeal.

III. A Witness. The Preacher's Experience and Humility.

IV. A Father. The Preacher's Love and Gentleness.

V. A Servant. The Preacher's Power and Motive.

They come from the heart of an earnest preacher to young men preparing for the ministry. They are loaded with Scripture quotations and quotations and references to the works of such men as Richard Baxter, Phillips Brooks, J. H. Jowett, E. M. Bounds, J. G. Machen, James Denney, Leon Morris, and many others. They are written in the author's usual lively, clear style which brings the truths forcibly upon the heart. The reviewer found them soul searching and challenging.

Every minister should read this or a similar book yearly. This would make a fine gift for a seminarian or your pastor.

— E. C. Copeland

**THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH**, The Publication Committee of the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland. % Mr. John Grant, Palmerston Villa, Millburn Road, Inverness, Scotland. 1958, pp. 438. Eight shillings six pence. (\$1.25.).

This is photo-lithic printing of the complete Westminster standards, the Catechisms, Larger and Shorter; The Sum of Saving Knowledge; the Covenants, National and Solemn League, etc. The Scripture proof texts are printed out in full. The production is on good quality gloss paper, and the print, though small is clear. Covenanters should welcome this publication since our constitution does not include all of these articles, nor does it have the proof texts printed out in full.

— E. C. Copeland

**THE EARTHBOUND VISION — A Critical Examination of Pre-Millennialism**, by Rev. Murdoch Campbell, M.A. Westminster Standard Bookcentre Publications, 183 Rutene Road, Gisborne, New Zealand, 1960, pp. 30. (appr. 35c).

This book is the substance of two lectures given by the author in Inverness. He sharply criticizes the Pre-millennial view of eschatology and includes a more mild criticism of the A-millennial view, while defending the Post-millennial view. He reasserts the Reformers' conviction that the Antichrist is to be identified with the Roman Catholic Church.

— Raymond P. Joseph

**THE SHADOW OF ROME**, by John B. Wilder (author of "The Other Side of Rome"). Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids 6, Michigan, 1960, pp. 128, \$1.95

This book will appeal to two classes of people in particular, the unthinking Protestant, and the thinking Catholic. It is timely in a day when Christians hear so much of the danger of Communism that they tend to underestimate the equally potent threat of the Romanist hierarchy.

He opens his book with a complimentary nod to "many Catholic people" and "many priests and nuns" for their humanitarian service, a feature which will tend to encourage the truth-seeking Catholic reader to read on.

We quote on paragraph: (p. 15) "If it is reasonable to judge an institution by its past record in every land where it has held power, then one can only believe that if the Roman Catholic Church becomes dominant in the United States, every human being in the nation will become a Roman Catholic or he will be made to suffer for his refusal to do so."

— Raymond P. Joseph

**THE CHRISTIAN ANSWER TO COMMUNISM**, by Thomas O. Kay, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan. 1961, pp. 125, \$1.95.

This is the "Popular Study Guide" on Communism adopted by the National Association of Evangelicals, with questions for discussion, and study suggestions following five of the ten chapters, which outline the beginnings of communism, its spread, its techniques, and characteristics. The last two chapters deal with "The Christian Answer" and "What You Can Do."

The author in attempting to summarize the basic tenets of the Christian faith in Chapter 9 fails to satisfy those of us of the Reformed persuasion. However in Chapter 10 he outlines several practical steps which the Christian may take to combat Communism. He begins with re-

pentance of personal sin, and extends it to suggest many "practical" ways to fight Communism.

On page 114 he says "Anti-Communist activity can be divided into two basic types, participation, and infiltration." He defines the first, but not the second. Nevertheless his suggestions are useful, and the book is recommended as a useful study guide, when supplemented by other analyses of Communism as J. Edgar Hoover's "Masters of Deceit" and Dr. Fred Schwarz's "You Can Trust The Communists."

— Raymond P. Joseph

**THE THREAT OF COMMUNISM AND THE TASK OF CHRISTIANS — A Stand Against Dangerous Trends Within Protestantism**, by Prof. A. Voebus. Etse, 243 E. 34th St., New York. 1960 pp. 28, (cost?).

The author is a professor at the Chicago Lutheran Theological Seminar (sic). He has written 3 other treatises against Communism.

He analyzes the rise of Communism effectively, and their present day tactics (e.g., he points out the Communist use of the National Council of Churches), but fails to basically describe the Christian stand against it. On page 26 he says "the only security God gives His church is in solidarity. This is the heart of the message of Christ . . . our willingness to create a new relationship with our fellow men. Christ's message stands or falls with this mutually redemptive deed." The author is aware of the disease, but fails in describing the antidote.

— Raymond P. Joseph

**CALVIN'S NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARIES. THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN, Part Two — Chapters 11-21.** Translated by T. H. L. Parker. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. Grand Rapids 3, Michigan. 1961, pp. 327, \$4.50.

The first volume in this series was published in 1959. See this reviewer's comments in B.B.F. & L. July-Sept. 1961 issue.

— Raymond P. Joseph

**THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD**, by A. W. Pink. Banner of Truth Trust, 78b Chiltern St., London, W.1, England. (British revised edition by courtesy of I. C. Herendeen), 1961, pp. 160. 2/6 (appr. 35c).

This is an abridged paperback edition, attractively bound, of the original book of the same title (for review, see B. B. F. & L. Jan.-March 1950).

Three chapters have been omitted, "The Sovereignty of God in Reprobation," "The Sovereignty of God in Human Moral Responsibility," and "Difficulties and Objections." The concise cutting

edge of the author's thought on the subject has not been marred by the abridgements. The book is 7x5x½, a handy size, which, when considered with the small cost, we hope will give the book a wide circulation.

The sovereignty of God is a precious truth, and A. W. Pink presents it adequately. It is this reviewer's opinion that there is need for a companion volume by a Reformed scholar on "The Responsibility of Man."

— Raymond P. Joseph

**THE BOOK OF MORMON — True or False?**, by Arthur Budvarson. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan. 1961, pp. 63, \$1.00.

Your reviewer phoned the author of this book who lives in a city adjacent to San Diego. He is a retired businessman, a convert to Christianity from Mormonism, who evidences a deep concern for the souls of the deluded people in this false system. He has visited the places of historic interest to Mormons, and is available to give a series of illustrated lectures on their cult.

His book, a paper backed volume, is primarily an examination of the Book of Mormon itself, comparing the 1830 edition with later editions, thus revealing the many changes that have been made. Photo reproductions of the 1830 edition are included, so there can be no question as to the facts of the case. Documented evidence is given, also, to show that the major doctrines of the Mormon church are contrary to the teachings of the Book of Mormon.

In addition, copies of correspondence with some Smithsonian Institute officials are printed to establish the point that, as far as these officials are concerned, the Book of Mormon is pure fiction, when it dwells on matters of archaeological import.

— Raymond P. Joseph

**WHAT IS IT THAT SAVES A SOUL?** by J. C. Philpot. The Message of Truth, c/o Wylie W. Fulton, Grover, North Carolina. pp. 12, 3c ea.

The burden of this little tract is that for a man to be saved, he must have realized the spiritual darkness and hopelessness of the unsaved state. The tract emphasizes the necessity of a personal feeling and experience to be saved, which the author calls "salvation inwardly" (as opposed to "outwardly"). He says that a man must have salvation " . . . as a known, enjoyed, tasted, felt, and handled possession, or he will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

It is this reviewer's opinion that for our salvation to be felt is a desirable, and indeed, a blessed experience, but that our salvation does not depend on that experience. It rather depends on the objective finished work of Christ on the

Cross, Who died there to satisfy the wrath of a holy God for our sins.

— Raymond P. Joseph

**THE CHALLENGE OF THE CULTS**, (A "Christianity Today" symposium on Spiritualism, Unity, Mormonism, Seventh-Day Adventism, Christian Science, Zen-Buddhism, Jehovah's Witnesses). Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan. 1961, pp. 80. \$76.

This volume is to be classified as an abbreviated handbook on the above named cults, and when considered as such, it is valuable. It cannot be considered to be as thorough as the well known "Chaos of Cults" by J. K. Van Baalen (who writes the chapter on Unity).

The authors, in order of their subjects, are: Peter Fingesten, J. K. Van Baalen, Wesley P. Walters, Walter R. Martin, John H. Gerstner, Lit-Sen Chang, Wilbur M. Smith, Harold Lindsell writes the first chapter of the symposium on "Are Cults Outpacing Our Churches?" and gives some enlightening statistics concerning the growth of the cults relative to the growth of the "established" churches. The final chapter on "The Challenge of the Cults" is an editorial from the Dec. 19, 1960, issue of "Christianity Today."

The burden of this symposium is that we ARE being challenged by the cults, which have served to point out some of the weaknesses of our Christian witness, and the need to remedy them.

— Raymond P. Joseph

**ANDREW BONAR: Diary and Life**, edited by Marjory Bonar (daughter). Banner of Truth Trust, 78b Chiltern St., London, W. 1, England. 1960, pp. 535, 12s. 6d. (appr. \$1.76). (Well bound, attractive celluloid dust cover).

Never has the heart of this reviewer been moved by the reading of any book, other than the Bible, as he was by the reading of the diary and life of this godly minister of the Free Church of Scotland. He is the author of "The Life of Robert Murray McCheyne" and the brother of Horatius Bonar. His excellent commentary on the Book of Leviticus has been republished by the Sovereign Grace Book Club and has been a source of great help to many.

Andrew A. Bonar's ministry extended from 1838-82, through the period of the Disruption of 1843, when the Free Church separated from the Establishment. A civil suit had ensued, and an issue had arisen concerning the extent of authority of the civil courts in the religious and spiritual sphere, which issue generally reflected an Erastian encroachment of the state upon the church. The Free Church of Scotland was thus formed, and 33 years later the Reformed Pres-

byterian Church of Scotland, consisting at that time of 36 ministers and 36 congregations, joined with the Free Church. In 1878, Dr. Bonar was elected Moderator of the Free Church Assembly.

A recurring theme of Dr. Bonar's thoughts: "I felt deeply grieved over my own sinfulness." Other choice thoughts: p. 50, (Thursday, Jan. 12, 1837) "Led to reflect much upon the fact that our place in Christ's kingdom will be determined by our progress in holiness personally, as much as by the efforts we have used for converting men to Jesus." p. 92, (Saturday evening, April 9, 1842) ". . . much labor, but learned by experience that much prayer is the only means to success. Twice I had blessed hours in the church alone praying. I see so few conversions. Ah, this must be the cause, as well as my not dwelling enough upon a free Gospel." And on p. 106, (Friday, July 21, 1843) "I see plainly that **FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD IS NOT A MEANS TO AN END**, but is to be **THE END ITSELF**. I am not to use it as a preparation for study or for Sabbath labor, but as my chiefest end, the likeliest thing to heaven."

It would be a good omen for our (or any) church if all the ministers and ruling elders would read this book and try to imitate the thoughts and heart attitudes of this man of God. His life reaches down to us over the span of a hundred years and inspires and challenges us to do likewise. We are grateful to the editors for reprinting it.

— Raymond P. Joseph

**WHEN THE MOUNTAINS FALL**, by Randall E. Burchett. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1962, pp. 151. \$2.50.

This story for teen-age young people moves within the framework of eschatology. A young lawyer and his fiancée are led to Christ through the study of Bible prophecies. The Battle of Armageddon takes place — in the literal Valley of Megiddo near Mount Carmel in Palestine. The Pre-Tribulation Rapture, the seven years of the Great Tribulation, and other concepts of futurist Dispensational Premillennialism are woven into the plot. The book ends with the Revelation of Christ from heaven to destroy His enemies and begin His millennial kingdom.

This book is not recommended to our readers because it assumes the truth of a highly debatable viewpoint in eschatology — a view that is held by a minority of a minority of Christians. This is presented as if it were the obvious and unquestionable teaching of Scripture. Young readers, influenced by the story, are likely to accept this very questionable type of eschatology uncritically, without being aware of its many difficulties and without realizing that only a rather

small minority of Bible-believing Christians accepts this specialized scheme.

— J. G. Vos

**CHRISTIAN FICTION FOR TEEN-AGE YOUNG PEOPLE.** The following books are all published by Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. They are suitable as gift items and for church libraries.

**LAUGHTER IN THE HOUSE**, by Marie Chitwood. 1961, pp. 157. \$2.50. A Christian kindergarten teacher wins an agnostic medical doctor for Christ.

**THE LOVE THAT LINGERED**, by Sallie Lee Bell. 1962, pp. 151. \$2.50. A homeless, abandoned child is cared for and later adopted by a family. She grows up to be a beautiful, lovable girl, but is filled with bitter resentment when she learns of her real background. Through coming to know Christ as her Saviour she finds peace and happiness.

**THE MYSTERY GIRL**, by Mildren Ann Davis. 1962, pp. 117. \$1.95. A young girl is rebellious at having to live with her grandmother for a year while her parents take a trip abroad. But while living with her grandmother, she comes to know a group of Christian young people — something new to her — but she draws back into worldly situations, and is finally saved in an evangelistic meeting.

**CUBA'S MIRACLE LAD AND OTHER MISSIONARY STORIES**, by Don W. Hillis as told to Naomi A. Dallas. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1961, pp. 104. \$1.50.

Sixteen missionary stories for children 10-14 years old, mostly based on actual incidents in missionary work. This book is easy reading and suitable for Sabbath School libraries.

The characters in the stories, who in real life would be speaking their own languages such as Chinese, Hindi, Swahili, etc., are presented as speaking a stilted "foreign-English" — the type that serves as a makeshift for Orientals who cannot speak correct English but have some dealings with foreigners. For example, an African boy says to a missionary about an elephant: "She jerking off everything she can, Bwana. And once elephant start smashing it never quit till stuff flat on ground! What we do, Bwana?" (p. 23); a boy in India says: "I not wanting god I cannot at all see" (p. 38). Ordinary idiomatic English would be the true equivalent of the other languages and would surely be better than this awkward hybrid.

— J. G. Vos

**TYNDALE BIBLE COMMENTARIES, Vol. 2. THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MARK**, by

Alan Cole. W. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1961, pp. 263. \$3.00.

Agreeable to the aim of the Tyndale Commentaries, we find this volume helpful to not only the minister but to any lay student of the Bible. The author deals with the scriptures in a simple, refreshing, and understandable manner. He does not go into long detail concerning some of the problems involved in some of the passages and yet, he does not pass over problems without dealing with them to some extent and recognizing them.

The Introduction gives a good background for a better understanding of how the Gospel account was written, of the textual support, and of what to anticipate in studying the Gospel. With such a background we expect and find the author emphasizing the inspiration of the Bible.

His discussion of the "signs of the end" is very well put and is refreshing in that the reader does not have to be on his guard as to extreme prophetic thoughts. He recalls the immediate history in the time that the Gospel was written in a natural way that helps the reader in understanding the thought of the early readers of the Gospel.

The approach that is given to the teaching of the multitudes and of the miracles is somewhat distinct and yet plain. It does not come from imagination but rather from an understanding of human nature which the author seems to have.

This commentary is far from exhaustive in its treatment of the Gospel but it was not written for that purpose. This must be kept in mind as it is used. Still the reader will be continually amazed at the amount of information that is given in the author's concise manner of writing.

— Robert A. Henning

**THE WAY OF SALVATION**, by Gordon H. Girod. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1960, pp. 157. \$2.95.

Written by a minister of the Reformed Church in America, this is a satisfactory exposition of the *Ordo Salutis*. The chapters are evidently compiled from the author's sermons, and in many places retain the direct address of pastor to congregation. It would therefore appear to be well adapted as a means of introducing inquirers to these truths. Certainly the treatment is plain and simple. There is a simple and effective criticism of certain teachings and practices of some evangelists.

This reviewer, however, feels that the chapter on "mystical union" was somewhat lacking. It is true that the elect have union with Christ prior to regeneration. But this is federal union. Subjectively, there can be no union of the elect

with Christ prior to regeneration. This is mystical union, or vital union. Girod appears to confuse these.

On p. 105 the author asks, concerning the sacrifices of Cain and Abel, "Why did God accept the one and reject the other?" His answer: "Not, basically because, as some have naively suggested, the one offered a lamb for sacrifice while the other offered the fruits of the field, but rather, because the eye of God pierced the hearts of these men and saw what the human eye could not see; one was a man of faith; the other was not. One man accepted of God; one man rejected of God; the sole distinguishing characteristic: the attribute of faith." This simply is not true. For as Warfield reminds us (and certainly he was not naive), "we are told that Jehovah had respect not merely unto Abel and not unto Cain, but also to Abel's offering and not to Cain's." (Gen. 4:4,5) ("The Person and Work of Christ," B. B. Warfield, The Presbyterian and Reformed Pub. Co., p. 395).

Apart from flaws such as these, this is nevertheless a useful restatement of the "ordo salutis" by one who evidently heartily believes the reformed faith.

— G. I. Williamson

**THE NEW ENGLISH BIBLE: NEW TESTAMENT.** Oxford and Cambridge University Presses, 114 Fifth Avenue, New York 11, N. Y. or 32 East 57th St., New York 22, N. Y. 1961, paper binding. \$1.45.

It has been said that the present is not a creed-making age. Back of this statement is the view — and certainly it contains much truth — that the Church of today lags far behind the Church of former times in theological awareness and acuity. Not only are we not ready to advance beyond our forefathers in theological formulation and definition; we have not even caught up with them. Before we can advance beyond the theological landmarks of, say, the Westminster divines, we must first have stood upon their shoulders. A generation that lacks the patience or the capacity to study and appreciate, say, the Westminster Confession, will hardly succeed in producing a better formulation of Biblical truth.

The same characteristics which prevent the Church of the present, in general, from achieving truly progressive creed-revision, prevent the present generation of Biblical scholars, in general, from producing a new version of the Bible which will not only speak the language of today but will also reproduce the thought of the original with real accuracy and faithfulness. Biblical scholarship today has a vastly better understanding of the historical and social background of the Bible, and of the original languages of Scripture, than was available to the scholars

of the past. But modern Biblical scholarship, with all its very real gains, lacks something which is of supreme importance, namely, theological acuteness and awareness. We live in an age of general and approximate beliefs and of vague and ambiguous statements of doctrine. It is not surprising that scholars who are at home in this theological climate will produce a Bible translation which is unsatisfactory from the standpoint of theological precision. **The New English Bible (New Testament)** published by the University Presses of Oxford and Cambridge is in many ways superior to the King James Version, but in what is of greatest importance, namely, accurate communication of theological truth, it must be pronounced retrogressive. Its principal defect is lack of theological acuteness or precision. The specifics of Scripture are made less specific and more general, and the work lacks theological focus.

Other reviewers have called attention to a certain sophistication in this new version of the New Testament, a characteristic which appears here and there in the use of rare or unusual words where a common word would do just as well. In this category the following may be mentioned: **Calumny**, Matt. 5:11. The ordinary reader will need a dictionary to know what this word means. Rev. 17:4; 18:16, **Bedizened**. This is hardly an improvement over the word **decked** in the King James Version. Various other examples of this unnecessary sophistication could be cited.

Another questionable feature consists in the use of the word **Sunday** in place of **the first day of the week** in the following places: Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:9, Luke 24:1; John 20:1, 19; 1 Cor. 16:2. **Saturday** appears in Acts 20:7.

Turning now to passages where the new version manifests lack of theological precision, mention may be made of Matt. 28:18, "Full authority in heaven and on earth has been committed to me." The Greek here is **pasa exousia** which means **all authority**. The Greek word for "full" would be a different word entirely, and of course the meaning is different. "**All authority**" refers to the **extent** of the authority; it covers everything in heaven and earth. "**Full authority**", on the other hand, would refer to the **degree** of authority. A policeman has **full authority** to arrest lawbreakers, but he does not have **all authority** in the sphere of law enforcement. For example, he has no authority to determine the punishment to be meted out to those who have been convicted of crime.

Luke 1:26,27, "In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town in Galilee named Nazareth, with a message for a girl betrothed to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David; the girl's name was Mary." The Greek word here translated "girl" is **parthenos** which

means strictly **virgin**. To translate this by "girl" is apparently an attempt to obscure the doctrine of the Virgin Birth of Christ, and open the way for the modern rationalistic notion that Mary was **not** a virgin. Luke could have used the ordinary Greek word for "girl" had that been what he meant.

Romans 1:18. Here "the wrath of God" is changed to "divine retribution." The Greek word is **orge** which means wrath. "Retribution" merely means treating people as they deserve, and includes rewarding righteousness as well as punishing wickedness.

Romans 3:30, "and he will therefore justify . . . the uncircumcised in virtue of their faith." The Greek preposition here is **dia** which means "by," "from," or "out of." When this is translated by "in virtue of" the truth of salvation by grace is obscured, and the idea that faith is a ground or basis of salvation is introduced. The truth is, of course, that we are justified **by** faith, but **in virtue of** Christ's blood and righteousness.

Romans 8:33, "It is God who pronounces acquittal: then who can condemn?" Here "justifies" is reduced to "pronounces acquittal." But in Scripture justification is much more than acquittal. The person who is acquitted is merely pronounced not guilty. The person who is justified, on the other hand, has in addition a **positive righteousness** (that of Christ) imputed to him or credited to his account. Mere acquittal could never bring us to heaven. For that, possession of a perfect righteousness is required. The Biblical Greek word for "justify" means to **declare or pronounce a person just** (or righteous). This goes far beyond merely pronouncing a person not guilty.

1 Cor. 7:36,38. Here "virgin" is translated "partner in celibacy," though "virgin daughter" is given as an alternate translation in a footnote. The translation "partner in celibacy" is open to objection because this is an **interpretation** of a passage of disputed meaning. Where varying interpretations are possible and are held by Bible scholars, it is not the function of a translation to decide between them. That is the function of an exegetical commentary. The translation should simply translate the original without leaning toward one or another partisan viewpoint. Any ambiguity that may exist in the original should not be removed, but allowed to stand in the translation.

1 Cor. 11:23, ". . . the Lord Jesus, on the night of his arrest, took bread. . .". The Greek word here translated "arrest" is **paredideto**, meaning "was betrayed" or "was given over." This implies moral guilt on the part of a betrayer (Judas), and in connection with the Lord's Supper it calls the communicant's attention to the fact that he and every Christian may be, and indeed

is in some degree, guilty of betraying the Lord. The term "arrest," on the other hand, is a perfectly neutral term and implies nothing as to the propriety or impropriety of the act.

1 Cor. 15:44, "If there is such a thing as an animal body, there is also a spiritual body." The Greek term here translated "animal" is **psychikon**, which is translated "natural" in the King James Version. The translation "animal" is misleading, and apparently was used from an over-stress on the fact that the word "animal" is derived from the Latin **anima**, meaning "soul," which is roughly equivalent to the Greek **psyche**, meaning "soul." But to the ordinary reader "animal" means **pertaining to the brute creation as distinguished from human life**. Man is not an "animal" in the common usage of the word, and ordinarily instead of saying that man has "an animal body" we would say that man has a **physical** body. One goes to a physician to have a physical examination, not an animal examination. When the human body dies, we call it physical death, not animal death.

Eph. 1:22, ". . . appointed him as supreme head to the church . . .". Here the King James Version has "head over all things to the church," which is a correct and very closely accurate rendering of the Greek. An important theological difference is involved here. According to the Greek and KJV Christ is head **over all things**, that is, head over everything whatsoever, both on this earth and in outer space, **for the benefit of the church**. The word "church" is in the dative case (dative of interest), showing that Christ is not merely head over all things **IN** the church, but head over **all things FOR** the church. The new translation makes Christ merely the head of the church, not head over all things for the benefit of the church. Thus it nullifies one of the principal proof texts for the Biblical doctrine of the Mediatorial Kingship of Christ over the universe.

1 Cor. 7:1, "It is good for a man to have nothing to do with women." The Greek here has **gunaikos me haptesthai**, "not to touch a woman." This is a euphemism for sexual intercourse, as is shown by the next verse, where the apostle urges marriage for most Christians as a safeguard against the temptation to sexual immorality. "Nothing to do with women" is not what Paul said and is much too inclusive an expression. If taken literally it would mean that a man could not even speak to a woman in the ordinary legitimate contacts of social and business life. This phrase, "nothing to do with women," gives a false impression of the apostle Paul's attitude toward the female sex.

Heb. 4:1, "Therefore we must have before us the fear that while the promise of entering his rest remains open, one or another among

you should be found to have missed his chance." The Greek term here translated as "missed his chance" is **hustereekenai**, which is translated as "come short of it" in the King James Version. The new translation here introduces the Arminian idea of a "chance" of salvation — an idea foreign to the Bible, and certainly not a proper translation of the Greek word in question. There is no chance about salvation, and this word should certainly not be used in this connection.

James 2:16, "Good luck to you." In Greek this is **hupagete en eireenee**, which is rendered in the King James Version perfectly correctly as "depart in peace." The concept of "luck" is a heathenish one, and James does not represent the early Christians as believing in it or wishing it to anyone. Modern Christians who wish people "good luck" are indulging in a sinful abuse of speech. The usage, of course, is all too common. The translators here seem to have inquired "What would James say if he were living today?" but the only question really relevant for them is the question "What did James actually say?"

James 2:26, ". . . the body is dead when there is no breath left in it. . .". This is a grammatically possible but an unnecessary and unfortunate translation. The King James rendering, "the body without the spirit is dead," is much better, and moreover more in line with scientific truth. Many an apparently dead person who has completely stopped breathing has been revived by oxygen and artificial respiration. But when the human spirit has departed, there is no reviving the body.

James 4:1, "the aggressiveness of your bodily desires" is a translation of a Greek phrase which the King James Version renders as "lusts which war in your members." The next verse gives **coveting** as an example of these "lusts." They are therefore not primarily "bodily desires," but desires of the sinful nature of fallen man.

Rev. 20:4,5. Here the new version has "came to life again" and "did not come to life again" where the King James Version, closely accurate according to the Greek, has merely "lived" and "lived not." The Greek verb in both verses is **ezeesan**, a simple aorist which means just "lived," neither more nor less. There is absolutely no such idea as "coming to life again" or "living again" in the Greek here. The translators of the new version have again ventured to decide between possible **interpretations** in a passage of disputed meaning. Note that it is **souls** that are being described. These are souls of persons who had suffered the death of martyrdom. Though their bodies had been killed, this could not kill their souls, of which it is affirmed that they "lived" and "reigned with Christ." The verb "reigned with Christ" (**ebasileusan**) is an aorist exactly parallel to **ezeesan** ("lived"). If **ezeesan** is to be translated "lived again," then **ebasileusan**

should be translated "reigned again," which would be manifestly absurd. The translators of the new version have taken it upon themselves to interpret **ezeesan** as meaning a bodily resurrection, and in doing this they have ventured beyond the proper function of translators and have become commentators and, it may fairly be argued, have decided in favor of the weaker and more improbable interpretation of the verse.

We shall now consider a large group of passages in the new version in which the word **sarx** ("flesh") is regularly translated by "the lower nature" or something similar. In every one of these passages the Greek word **sarx** ("flesh") is used as connoting **man's sinful nature**. This sinful nature, according to the Bible and sound theology, includes the whole of man's personality. Man as a person has become sinful; there is no part or element of his personality that has not come under the blight of sin. The seat of sin, however, is not in **the body**, according to Scripture, but in what the Bible calls **the heart**, out of which are the issues of life. This is the deepest level of personality, which determines the character and actions of all the more external levels.

The idea that man's sinfulness is primarily connected with **the human body** is not taught in the Bible, but came into Christian circles from Oriental and Greek philosophy. According to this non-Biblical philosophical view, man has a higher nature (the spirit or mind) and a lower nature (the body). It is held that the higher nature (spirit or mind) is clean, noble and pure, but the lower nature (the body) is low and base and evil. Christianity has never been able completely to rid its membership of the erroneous notion that sin is primarily connected with the body. This basic error is surely at the root of much of dubious asceticism, of some people's prudish views of sex and marriage, and of some people's views on the subject of temperance (those who hold that the problem of intemperance is to be solved, primarily, by preventing a certain chemical compound from coming in contact with the cells of the human body). This error as to the nature and seat of man's sinfulness is rejected by the great creeds of the Church. The Westminster Confession, for example, states that sinful man is "wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body." The Shorter Catechism defines the "sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell" as involving "the corruption of his whole nature" (Q.18). That the term "the flesh" in the Bible cannot mean primarily the human body can be seen by a glance at Paul's list of "the works of the flesh" in Gal. 5:19-21. Here 17 kinds of sin are listed as examples of "the works of the flesh," and more than half of them are pre-eminently **sins of the mind**, such as hatred, wrath, heresies, seditions, witchcraft, etc.

The notion that man's sin is identified with a "lower nature" is contrary to the clear teaching of the Bible that man's **whole** nature has been corrupted by sin. The error we are considering also leads to a false view of sanctification, namely that sanctification consists in the "higher" part of man gaining control and mastery over the "lower" part. This is a notion found in Greek philosophy but it is foreign to the Bible. There is no "higher nature" in man which remains uncorrupted by sin. He is sinful, body, mind, emotions, intellect, will, relationships and all. Sanctification is not a matter of our "higher" nature controlling our "lower" nature, but of the Holy Spirit of God transforming our **whole** nature, beginning with the new birth by which the **heart** is renewed after the image of God.

It may be argued that the thinking of the translators of the new version has been influenced by the philosophy of evolution which would hold that man's moral improvement consists in progressively sloughing off his brute ancestry ("lower nature") while increasingly cultivating his human characteristics ("higher nature"), as Tennyson suggested in his poem **In Memoriam**, when he wrote:

"Move upward, working out the beast,  
And let the ape and tiger die."

Alas, it is not the ape and tiger in us that is sinful, it is precisely **the man** in us that is totally corrupted by sin. This is rejected by modern Liberal theology, but it is the teaching of the Bible. The reviewer fears that the usage of the new version will greatly obscure in the minds of many readers the Biblical teaching on the nature and location of man's sinfulness — a matter on which many are already confused, and will now probably become further confused, or confirmed

in their confusions. It is possible to counteract and correct this error by the use of the King James Version or some other which translates the term **sarx** or "flesh" properly. But the person who would attempt to correct people's erroneous views about human sinfulness by the use of **The New English Bible** must find himself frustrated again and again because the errors he would rectify are themselves implicit in the rendering of **sarx** in the new version.

The passages in question are as follows:

**Sarx** or "flesh" translated as "lower nature": Rom. 8:3, 4, 5, 7, 12. Gal. 5:13, 16, 19, 24; 6:8. Col. 2:11.

**Sarx** or "flesh" translated as "unspiritual nature": Rom. 7:18, 25.

**Sarx** or "flesh" translated as "bodily appetites": Rom. 13:14.

**Sarx** or "flesh" translated as "sensuality": Eph. 2:3.

**Sarx** or "flesh" translated as "instincts": Eph. 2:3.

To summarize: the reviewer feels that the errors and wrong tendencies of **The New English Version** outweigh its excellencies, that it is marred by a lack of theological precision and focus at many points, that at various important points it definitely suggests erroneous concepts, and that for these reasons those capable of evaluating it critically should use it only with due caution, while it should not be recommended at all to the ordinary reader who has no knowledge of Greek.

— J. G. Vos

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## *Acknowledgment of Contributions*

The Manager of this magazine wishes to acknowledge, with hearty thanks, the following contributions to the cost of publishing the magazine since our last issue went to press.

**March 1962 (from March 6th):** No. 1067, \$10.00. No. 1067, .50. No. 1069, \$22.00. No. 1070, \$5.00. No. 1071, \$1.00.

**April 1962:** No. 1072, \$40.00. No. 1073, \$30.00. No. 1074, \$100.00. No. 1075, \$50.00. No. 1076, \$25.00.

**May 1962:** No. 1077, \$20.00. No. 1078, \$5.00. No. 1079, \$10.50. No. 1080, \$30.00. No. 1081, \$25.00. No. 1082, \$5.00. No. 1083, \$12.00. No. 1084, \$4.00.

**June 1962 (to June 26):** No. 1085, \$5.00. No. 1086, \$2.00. No. 1087, \$7.20. No. 1088, \$3.50.

These generous contributions from friends and readers who have in this very practical manner

shown their concern for the continued publication of **Blue Banner Faith and Life** are deeply appreciated. Less than half of the money needed is obtained from subscriptions; for the rest we are dependent on contributions. You can help the world-wide ministry of this magazine by contributing to the cost of publication as the Lord enables you.

### **Circulation of this Issue**

1200 copies of this issue of **Blue Banner Faith and Life** were printed. Most of these went immediately to subscribers. A small surplus was left from which future orders for back issues can be supplied. The circulation of this issue by countries is as follows:

U.S.A., 796. Australia, 54. Canada, 51. England,

43. Scotland, 39. Northern Ireland, 36. Japan, 30. Cyprus, 13. Ceylon, 9. New Zealand, 7. Formosa (Free China), 8. Syria, 5. India, 5. Korea, 4. Eire, 4. Netherlands, 3. South Africa, 3. Lebanon, 3. Peru, 3. Greece, 2. Ethiopia, 2. Indonesia, 2. One copy each to Egypt, Hong Kong, Wales, France, Southern Rhodesia, Costa Rica, Switzerland, Argentina, Brazil, Sweden, Saudi Arabia, Germany. Total circulation, 1134. Total outside U.S.A., 338. Number of countries reached, 34.

You can help this world-wide witness to Scriptural truth by contributing to the cost of publishing the magazine, above the amount you pay for your subscription. Another way you can help is by sending your renewal promptly when notified that your subscription has expired.

#### Change of Address

Our mailing list is kept strictly corrected to date, but we are helpless when subscribers move without notifying us. Several cases of this happen prior to the mailing of every issue. Each case involves expense to us and delay in a reader receiving his magazine. The return and re-mailing of an undeliverable copy in the U.S. domestic mails costs us about 25 cents — if we have to write one or more letters to find out the new address, it costs even more, not to mention the work involved. Please help by prompt notification of any change in your address. — Editor.

## 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 *Studies in the Teachings of Jesus Christ* in *Blue Banner Faith and Life* for April-June 1961, pages 83 and 84, you present the rather shocking views of one Albert Schweitzer. Is this Albert Schweitzer the famed missionary to Africa? If so, with what church is he affiliated? How could any Christian Church tolerate his unscriptural views regarding Jesus Christ? Why publish them in the "Blue Banner"? If he is the man renowned for his work in Africa, how could he possibly teach heathen about Jesus Christ, if he holds his Saviour in such low regard?

#### Answer:

With regret it is necessary to reply that the Albert Schweitzer is indeed the famous missionary to Africa. Some additional information about his views will be found in the January-March 1962 issue of *Blue Banner Faith and Life*, where his "explanation" of the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand is given (page 45).

Albert Schweitzer was born in 1875. As his name suggests, he is of German descent, though of French nationality. He is a triple genius, having achieved outstanding renown in the three fields of theology, surgery and music. In 1906 he published, in French, a biography of the great musical composer Johann Sebastian Bach. In the same year he published the theological book which immediately made him a famous (and controversial) figure in the theological world of that day. This book was a study in the field of New Testament Criticism and was first published in German. The German title was *Von Reimarus*

*zu Wrede*. This was translated into English and published in 1910 with the title *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*. This book is still being printed, sold and read, the latest edition being a paperback published 1961 at \$1.95 by The Macmillan Company, New York (413 pages).

As shown by his book *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, Schweitzer regards Jesus as a good man, the greatest man that ever lived, but certainly not the Son of God. He regards Jesus as only human. According to Schweitzer, Jesus expected the coming of the perfect, absolute Kingdom of God during His own lifetime, or at any rate during the lifetime of His immediate disciples. When He realized that things were not working out that way, He died on the cross a broken and disillusioned man. This involves holding that Jesus was *mistaken* concerning a major element of His teaching, namely, the nature and time of the coming of the Kingdom of God.

The publication of *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* shook the theological world like the explosion of a bomb. This book was tremendously influential. Schweitzer's book was a strong reaction against the "Liberal" view of the "Historical Jesus." For an account of the background of the publication of Schweitzer's book, see the article *Jesus and the Critics*, by the Rev. Leslie W. Sloat, in *Blue Banner Faith and Life*, January-March 1949, pages 12-14.

Until 1913 Schweitzer was pastor of a church in France. He became disillusioned about faith in the Christian Gospel as historically understood. In 1913 he resigned his pastorate in France and

went to Lambarene in what was then French Equatorial Africa as a medical missionary. Schweitzer had already studied medicine and had become a qualified surgeon. He felt that although it is impossible to believe in Jesus Christ in the orthodox sense, still he could do some good by relieving suffering among the people of Africa. He has worked there most of the time since 1913. Schweitzer had also become famous as a musician before he went to Africa. Occasionally he has emerged from Africa and gone on a tour in Europe or America giving pipe organ concerts, by which he has raised funds to support his hospital in Africa.

Schweitzer is a member of a French Protestant body and is supported by a French missionary society of theologically "liberal" or "modernistic" tendencies. Our correspondent expresses astonishment that any church could tolerate a missionary with such radical views about Christ. Schweitzer's views are indeed unscriptural and highly shocking to the evangelical Christian. Yet it should be realized that such views are far from unique, even among missionaries on the foreign fields. There are not a few, but **very many** missionaries today whose views about Jesus Christ are just as radical and unscriptural as those of Albert Schweitzer. Denominations and mission boards that are dominated by "modern" theology do not hesitate to send out missionaries who doubt or deny the Deity of Jesus Christ, His bodily resurrection, substitutionary atonement, etc. This kind of unbelief is common among missionaries of some denominations. Right here in America some twelve hundred ministers of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. signed a document called the Auburn Affirmation, in which they publicly declared that the infallibility of the Bible is a **harmful** doctrine, and the virgin birth of Christ, his supernatural miracles, His Substitutionary Atonement and His bodily resurrection are **only theories**, which need not be accepted even by persons to be ordained to the ministry in that denomination. Quite a number of missionaries signed the Auburn Affirmation. The viewpoint of the Auburn Affirmation has since then become the dominant viewpoint or position of that denomination, which by a merger has become the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

Dr. Schweitzer should properly be called a **Humanist**, not a Christian. What he is doing for people in Africa is really **humanitarian social service**, not preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ or really gaining converts to Bible Christianity. By his medical work Schweitzer can do much good and relieve much suffering, but he cannot really proclaim the Gospel of Christ, because he himself does not believe it. As to the question of

how any Christian Church could tolerate such views as those of Schweitzer, this apparently does not bother the French Protestants who support him at all. Many of them hold views about Christ which are as unsound as Schweitzer's own, regarding Jesus as simply a good man.

Unfortunately some religious and secular newspapers and magazines in America have publicized Albert Schweitzer as "the greatest Christian in the world of our day." These magazines are not interested in Schweitzer's theological views, and they say nothing about them. They only describe and praise Dr. Schweitzer's humanitarian medical work in Africa. Of course Dr. Schweitzer is not a Christian at all according to any Biblical definition of what a Christian is. That he is a very great man we would not for a moment question or deny. But he cannot be a Christian, for he does not believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

One further question of our correspondent remains: **Why publish such views as Schweitzer's in *Blue Banner Faith and Life*?** Of course, we did not publish Schweitzer's views to endorse them, but rather to expose their falsehood and danger. Why is this necessary? Because Schweitzer's views are influential and widespread. They have influenced many thousands of ministers and theological students. If we are to hold the truth intelligently, we must bear a witness against the errors of our day. And to bear a witness against them, we must know what they are and what is wrong with them. In this day of mass communications we cannot live in theological isolation. Inevitably we will come in contact with the theological errors of our time and we will have to decide what attitude we will have toward them. Any Covenanter young person who attends a State university will almost certainly be exposed to views about Jesus Christ as radical as Schweitzer's, or even more so. These views will be propounded by confident, authoritative professors who will say that educated, intelligent people can no longer believe the "old fashioned" views about Christ, the Bible and religion. If young people have come out of a sheltered "hothouse" Christian atmosphere where they have never even heard of such radical unbelief, their faith will be subjected to a very severe strain indeed. Such young people often jump to the conclusion that their radical professor knows it all, and their home church pastor is ignorant and hopelessly behind the times. Our aim in the lessons on the teachings of Jesus Christ was to present our Lord's true teachings in contrast to the actual errors of the world of today.

— J. G. Vos



# BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

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NUMBER 4

We therefore oppose all the systems, religious and secular, that undermine faith in the Scriptures, in the deity of Jesus Christ, and His redemptive work.

— Covenant of 1954

For he that biddeth him God-speed is partaker of his evil deeds.

— 2 John 11

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

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# *Until the Break of Day*

By Christina G. Rossetti

When will the day bring its pleasure?  
When will the night bring its rest?  
Reaper and gleaner and thresher  
Peer toward the east and the west:  
The Sower He knoweth, and He knoweth best.

Meteors flash forth and expire,  
Northern lights kindle and pale;  
These are the days of desire,  
Of eyes looking upward that fail;  
Vanishing days as a finishing tale.

Bows down the crop in its glory,  
Tenfold, fiftyfold, hundredfold;  
The millet is ripened and hoary,  
The wheat ears are ripened to gold:  
Why keep us waiting in dimness and cold?

The Lord of the harvest, He knoweth  
Who knoweth the first and the last:  
The Sower Who patiently soweth,  
He scanneth the present and past:  
He saith, "What thou hast, what remaineth, hold  
fast."

Yet, Lord, o'er Thy toil-wearied weepers  
The storm clouds hang muttering and frown:  
On threshers and gleaners and reapers,  
O Lord of the harvest, look down;  
Oh for the harvest, the shout, and the crown!

"Not so," saith the Lord of the reapers,  
The Lord of the first and the last:  
"O My toilers, My weary, My weepers,  
What ye have, what remaineth, hold fast.  
Hide in My heart till the vengeance be past."

---

## *All Saints*

By Christina G. Rossetti

As grains of sand, as stars, as drops of dew,  
Numbered and treasured by the Almighty Hand,  
The Saints triumphant throng that holy land  
Where all things and Jerusalem are new.

We know not half they sing or half they do,  
But this we know, they rest and understand;  
While like a conflagration, freshly fanned  
Their love glows upward, outward, through and  
through.

Lo like a stream of incense launched on flame  
Fresh Saints stream up from death to life above,  
To shine among those others and rejoice:  
What matters tribulation whence they came?  
All love and only love can find a voice  
Where God makes glad His saints, for God is love.

---

## *A Pure River of Water of Life*

By Christina G. Rossetti

We know not a voice of that River,  
If vocal or silent it be,  
Where for ever and ever and ever  
It flows to no sea.

More deep than the seas is that River,  
More full than their manifold tides,  
Where for ever and ever and ever  
It flows and abides.

Pure gold is the bed of that River  
(The gold of that land is the best),  
Where for ever and ever and ever  
It flows on at rest.

Oh goodly the banks of that River,  
Oh goodly the fruits that they bear,  
Where for ever and ever and ever  
It flows and is fair.

For lo on each bank of that River  
The Tree of Life life-giving grows,  
Where for ever and ever and ever  
The Pure River flows.

# BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

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## *Adaptability*

By the Rev. Hugh Wright, B.A.

**Note:** For this summary of the sermon preached by the Moderator at the opening of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland, June, 1962, we are indebted to **The Covenanter** (Ireland). — Editor.

In I. Corinthians 9:22 Paul states "I am become all things to all men that I may by all means save some." Versatile, adaptable, suiting his words and actions to the various circumstances that he encountered from time to time, he sets us an example that may help us to discharge our own duties and responsibilities to-day. The world, and for that matter the various denominations too, are in a state of flux. Changes are taking place. What then is to be our relationship to other people? Are we to keep ourselves to ourselves and have nothing to do with them, whether they make any profession of Christianity or not? Shall we just let the world go by? Surely not! Along with others we have been given a commission that is world-wide in its scope, and in the discharge of that commission we might follow the same principle that guided Paul and take him as our example.

### THE ADAPTABILITY OF PAUL.

Paul had the ability to make himself at home with all kinds of people. Though he developed this gift he must still have had something of the raw material in himself to begin with. Such a practical capacity is not one that can be learned like an art or a trick. It must be rooted in and spring from those affections and sympathies which are at the base of human character. Paul mentions various fields of operation in which his sympathetic adaptability may be discerned.

**To the Jews he became as a Jew that he might gain the Jews.** The Jews were his own people, and the fact that they had rejected their Lord only made him all the more tender and affectionate in his dealings with them, doing nothing to wound their susceptibilities. Though he could be, and often was stern in his denunciation of those who rejected Christ, and persisted in that rejection, he would soften the message as much as possible with all the resources of sympathy and affection.

**To them that were without law he became as without law.** He sought to make himself at home with the men and thoughts of the heathen world. We find, for instance, how he can sympathise with

the victor in the Grecian games, and we note how he surveyed the heathen world of Athens in tender fashion as it felt after God.

**To the weak he became weak.** And there were weak Christians in his day, just as there are to-day. Some of them had honest scruples, but we do not find Paul pouring contempt on those scruples. When great principles were at stake he could, and did, express himself clearly and forcibly, but on lesser matters he could be very charitable towards another person's point of view, even if he could not hold it himself. The strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, he said, and he practised what he preached.

If we do not grasp this ruling principle on the part of Paul his actions at times must seem very inconsistent. Why, we might ask, did he permit Timothy to be circumcised, conceding so much to Judaism in that respect, when he refused everything to it in the case of the Galatians? He was simply seeking in every possible way to force an entrance for the truth which would save a soul from self and sin and gain it for God. To do that he was very adaptable.

### THE USES OF ADAPTABILITY.

Paul has set a precedent for Christian workers in every age. Like him they must become all things to all men. What a difference it would make if they all were so endowed that by intuition they could enter into the feelings of others and appreciate their condition so that they would know instinctively how best to deal with each particular case! If only they had more of the adaptability of Paul!

If there is to be efficient **Personal Christian Service**, behind it there must be this principle of adaptation. The Christian worker must be able to put himself into the position of the one he is seeking to help. He must have respect for the **views** of others; he must have respect for their **convictions**, and he must have respect even for their **prejudices**. Only in this way will he make any progress towards leading them to see their errors and to get rid of them.

If there is to be efficient **Evangelisation** then behind it there must be this principle of adaptation. Christ has called us to be fishers of men and we must use the bait most likely to catch the fish for which we angle, rather than the bait that would be most pleasing to ourselves.

We must seek to understand the intellectual difficulties of others, and we must try to put ourselves into the different mental and moral states of those whom we would seek to help or win to Christ. We must be willing to adapt ourselves. Methods that were good enough in our fathers' days are not necessarily the most suitable for to-day. We might well consider whether there may not be room for change in our methods of dealing with children and young people, and our methods of dealing with those who have no use for the church and who think that the church has nothing for them.

If there is to be efficient **Missionary work**, then behind it there must be this principle of adaptation. We just cannot put all those who are the objects of missionary labours into one class and label them "heathen." They embrace many different races and many different religions. Hence there must be a real effort on the part of missionary workers to understand those among whom they labour. How necessary it will be for our missionaries when they reach Ethiopia to adapt themselves to the ways and customs of the people there. If they are unable to do that they had far better stay at home, for they will never be able to reach them and win them. Ruskin once said, "Do not think that you will ever get harm by striving to enter into the faith of others, and to sympathise, in imagination, with the guiding principles of their lives. So only can you justly love them or pity them, or praise." How true! How can you win them if you don't love them?

#### THE LIMITS OF ADAPTABILITY.

Whether in personal christian service, in evangelistic work or in missionary effort we must be adaptable. It may well be that in some respects we may have been too rigid in the past. But a word of warning is necessary, for it is not right and necessary that we should be adaptable in all circumstances. There are limits to our adaptability, limits beyond which we must not go. There are certain principles which we must observe to keep us from going too far.

We must ever keep before us **The Right Aim**, when we seek to adapt ourselves to others. There is a grave danger that in the present drive for unity of the churches and for the forming of one great world church, that this aim is being lost sight of. Paul did not lose sight of it. He puts it before us plainly. His one great purpose in becoming all things to all men was **that he might by all means save some**. Some people put on a great show of Christianity when they are in the presence of christians, but once they get out of that environment into worldly society they adapt themselves to their worldly companions and you would not recognise them as christians. Their guiding aim is not that "by all means" they may "save some." Is that our aim? Is that the watch-

word of our lives? Or are we indifferent to the salvation of others?

We must also have **The Right Motive**. Mere human sympathy will soon wear itself out. But there is one motive that is enduring — the love of God. It really lasts. And of that love of God the love of man, whom God has loved so well as to create and to redeem him, is in reality the consequence and the attestation. Is love then the great motive behind our adaptability?

**Never must we follow the principle that the end justifies the means.** Paul adapted himself only so long as he could do it consistently with his christianity. There is no room for infidelity to conscience, no room for compromise with wrong, even though we may think that by so doing we may save some. We cannot tone down or gloss over the truth because that truth in its nakedness might be unwelcome to those to whom we would present it. Paul did not hesitate to reason before the licentious Felix of righteousness and temperance and judgment to come, and it is this same Paul who is set before us as the model of tact and adaptability.

**Never must we sacrifice convictions to expediency** even though we may sacrifice almost everything else. Paul was ready to waive his own personal rights and to sacrifice his own individual liberties in all matters that did not involve evil in the hope that by so doing he might influence some soul for good. But he always stood firm where principle was involved.

Nothing on earth is so winning, so subduing, as the spectacle of a man who forgets his self-importance for the sake of doing good to others. The real triumphs of the gospel involve the humility and self-suppression and self-effacement of its teachers. And the Gospel of Love can prevail only as it is preached lovingly, with endless tenderness and tolerance and patience and long-suffering.

What then is our aim in our Christian service? What is our motive? Are they what they ought to be? There are those to-day who feel that the Church is not interested in them, that she has shut her eyes to the problems around her doors, that she is complacent and doing nothing about these problems, that she is really "out-of-touch" with the masses. Would it not be terrible if that charge were true, as it may be to some extent? May the Lord open the eyes of each one of us that we may see what He wants us to do, that we may be willing to spend and be spent for Him, and that we may indeed become all things to all men, that by all means we may save some. And to Him who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many, be all the praise and the honour and the glory, both now and evermore. Amen.

## Wide Grace Through a Narrow Channel

An Exposition of 2 Kings 5:1-16

By J. G. Vos

Naaman was commander-in-chief of the army of Syria. He climbed the ladder of success to the top rung, so far as worldly achievements were concerned. He was regarded with great honor by the king and people of Syria, because God had enabled him to lead his country's forces to victory in war.

Yet there was a shadow over Naaman's life, for he had leprosy. In Bible times this was an incurable disease, so Naaman was a doomed man. His honored and successful life was pierced with tragedy — the kind of tragedy for which there is no human remedy.

The Syrians had raided the northern part of the land of Israel and had captured some prisoners, whom they brought back to Syria to be held as slaves. Among them was a little Israelitish girl, who became the slave of Naaman's wife. We do not even know her name, nor her age, yet she is the real heroine of this story. Kidnapped away from parents and friends, taken to a strange country with a strange language; separated, too, from the religion of Israel — it is truly remarkable that this child maintained her faith and could witness a good confession for the Lord, even before her enemies.

When we consider that at this time religion was at a low ebb in the kingdom of Israel, we will realize how remarkable it was that this girl was faithful to the Lord in spite of adversity. Israel, the northern kingdom, was mostly apostate from the Lord. Golden calves had been put up at Dan and Bethel. The king of Israel at this time was probably Joram, son of the wicked Ahab and Jezebel. The true priests of the Lord had largely left the kingdom of Israel to live in the kingdom of Judah where the true religion was maintained. So the religion of the Lord was at a low ebb in the kingdom of Israel. Yet this child who was stolen by the Syrians knew the Lord and could witness for her faith.

One would naturally expect that she would be filled with bitterness and hatred against the Syrians, and that if her master had leprosy she would say, "Serves him right for leading his army against the people of Israel and stealing children away from their parents! I hope he dies of it!" Yet this child harbors no bitterness, for in her heart there is a real faith in the Lord, the God of Israel. So, contrary to what we might expect under the circumstances, she wishes Naaman nothing but good.

Noticing Naaman's affliction, she speaks to her mistress, Naaman's wife: "Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy." We know of no instances prior to this of Elisha miraculously healing lepers. This girl evidently based her statement entirely on faith in the power of God, which she knew worked through the prophet Elisha. The remark reaches the ears of the king of Syria, who decides to send Naaman to the land of Israel to seek cleansing of his leprosy by the prophet in Samaria. But kings deal on the royal level, so the king of Syria writes an official letter to the king of Israel, who at this time was probably Joram the son of Ahab, but just possibly Jehu. The letter reads: "I have sent my servant Naaman to thee, that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy."

The king of Syria evidently supposes that the services of such a remarkable prophet would surely be at the disposal and command of the king of Israel. So Naaman starts out in his pomp and dignity, accompanied by a train of retainers and servants, and taking along a costly present of 10 talents of silver, 6,000 shekels of gold and ten outfits of new clothing. I shall say something presently about the dollar value of this present. Meantime, we may note that Naaman has with him about half a ton of silver, 187 pounds of gold, and 10 new suits of the best Damascus clothing. Arriving at the royal palace in Samaria in all this pomp and style, Naaman delivers the letter to the king of Israel, who in turn is filled with dismay and says, in effect, "The king of Syria is trying to find an occasion to renew the war. He wants to provoke an incident. Am I God? Why should he send a man to me to be cured of leprosy? Can I kill, and make alive, as if I were God? It is a Syrian trick. When I cannot do what he demands, he will invade us again with his armed forces."

Kings used to manufacture "incidents" in those days, as nations sometimes do today. It is recorded that a king in Egypt once tried to provoke an incident with one of his subordinates who lived 300 miles away. He wrote a letter saying: "Your sacred hippopotamus that you have in your sacred pool near your royal palace, makes so much noise with his constant roaring, that I cannot get any sleep." The hippopotamus was 300 miles away, yet this king claimed it was disturbing his sleep! No wonder king Joram of Israel thought the king of Syria was trying to start something.

So the king of Israel rent his robes — the sign of extreme emotional tension. But the matter, which no doubt soon became barber-shop gossip all over Samaria, reached the ears of the prophet Elisha, who was not living at the king's court but in his own humble dwelling in a different part of the city. "Send him to me," said Elisha, "and he will find out that there is a real prophet in the land of Israel." So Naaman with his chariot and his horses and servants proceeded to the prophet's house. But the prophet did not even come out to meet him personally. Instead, he sent his servant to tell Naaman to dip in the Jordan River seven times and he would be healed of his leprosy.

At this, Naaman was affronted and flew into a rage. There were better rivers in Syria; why must he bathe in this contemptible Jordan? Refusing to obey, he started home furiously angry. But as Naaman's servants quietly reasoned with him his blood pressure began to go down again and finally he was persuaded at least to try doing what the prophet had said. And when he tried it, he was astonished to find that it worked! His flesh became clean again, and fresh like that of a little child.

Naaman returned and tried to reward the prophet for this wonderful cure, but Elisha, swearing a solemn oath, refused to accept anything; "As the Lord liveth, before whom I stand, I will receive none." So Naaman, unable to pay for what he has received, starts out on his homeward journey.

We shall now consider three lessons of this story:

1. God helps Naaman the leper, not Naaman the general.
2. God uses the Jordan, not Abana and Pharpar.
3. God provides salvation free, and it cannot be purchased or paid for.

#### **I. God Helps Naaman the Leper, not Naaman the General**

In man's need before God, there are no distinctions of rank, wealth or importance. We are all poor and needy sinners whose only hope is an absolutely gracious salvation. Naaman has come with 10 talents of silver, calculated to be equivalent approximately to \$20,000; 6,000 shekels or half-ounces of gold, worth about \$60,000; and ten suits of Damascus clothing. These equivalents are based merely upon the weights of metal involved. In terms of purchasing power the value would be much greater, but even eighty thousand dollars is no trifle. A fortune was packed away in the bags loaded on Naaman's mules. In addition to all this, there was a letter from a king of a powerful country introducing him to the king of another country. But all this wealth

and prestige was completely useless and irrelevant so far as getting leprosy cured was concerned.

You see, Naaman was in an embarrassing position. It so happened that Naaman had to ask a favor of the very people whom he had wronged. It was these Israelites, whom he had attacked and defeated, and some of whose people he had kidnapped into slavery, of whom he must ask a great favor. Did you ever have to ask a great favor of someone whom you had previously treated very badly? If so, you will realize something of how Naaman must have felt. It was a deep wound to his pride to have to come, hat-in-hand as it were, asking for something that only Israel could give.

So Naaman bolsters his pride, he reinforces his ego. He will not come to Samaria as a beggar but as the envoy of a king — not as a pauper asking a favor, but as a very important person, a tremendously wealthy man, well able to pay handsomely for whatever he wants.

It is not Naaman the leper but Naaman the general that comes and stands before the door of the prophet Elisha. Naaman the general is accustomed to getting what he wants, and would be ashamed not to pay liberally for it when he gets it. The prophet Elisha, on the other hand, did not have many dealings with the great men of the world. His associations and benefactions were mostly for the poor and humble folk of his day. The great and mighty had mostly become apostate from the God of Israel. Elisha devoted himself mainly to helping the poor and humble minority that still loved and worshipped Jehovah, the covenant God of Israel, the God of grace and salvation.

Naaman is an exception. He is a great man as the world counts greatness. But he must become as a poor and humble person if he is to get any benefit from Elisha and from Elisha's God.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit", said Jesus our Lord. Naaman comes as a rich man, but before he can get any benefit he must come to think of himself as a poor man. Samuel Rutherford once wrote, "Stoop, sinner, stoop! It is a low, low door through which we enter the kingdom of God." So Naaman is told to do something which will strip him of all his pompous pride and sense of self-importance. He is to go down to the Jordan River and bathe seven times in its waters.

We are all sick with a leprosy worse than Naaman's and we all have by nature a pride like Naaman's — a pride that must be humbled and renounced if we are to receive any spiritual help from God. Before God we are not successes; we are failures. We are just poor and needy lost sinners in God's sight. To get God's help we must give up all our shams and pretences and claims of every kind. We have to become as

poor persons and as little children in our attitude before God. If Naaman gets anything from Elisha and from Elisha's God, it will be as Naaman the leper, not as Naaman the general. God has abundant help for Naaman the leper, but no help at all for Naaman the general.

## II. God Uses the Jordan, not Abana and Pharpar.

Naaman did not like the idea of washing in the Jordan. He said, "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them, and be clean?"

Abana means stony, and Pharpar means swift. Very possibly these two streams, as rivers, were more desirable than the rather muddy Jordan. But that was not the point. Abana and Pharpar were rivers of Damascus, while the Jordan was a river of Israel. Therefore God specified the Jordan, not Abana and Pharpar, as the method by which Naaman was to seek cleansing from leprosy.

God's salvation is mediated through a particular historical plan, not through human nature, culture and life in general. It is the Gospel, not human culture, that counts in a man's standing before God. Christianity is "local" and it is "dated." It all depends on particular events that happened at particular times and places. It is not a matter of universal, general truths or "principles." A prominent man is quoted as saying, "My religion is just goodness, truth and beauty." Very wonderful, no doubt, but no help at all to a man dying of leprosy, and no help at all to a man sunk in sin with a mountain of guilt on his conscience. What saves men from sin is not principles or universal ideas, but particular historical events, particular acts of God in history. These events are anchored to history — they happened at particular times and places. It is not universal principles or ideals that save men — it is Calvary, it is Jesus Christ and Him crucified and risen from the dead.

But Naaman lived before Calvary. Still it is true for him also. But in his case the land of Israel stands in place of the future event that would take place centuries later outside the city wall of Jerusalem, where the Son of God would be nailed on a wooden cross and would suffer and die in agony for the sins of men.

God had chosen Israel, not Syria, as the place where redemption would be accomplished. So when Naaman was to bathe in a river to show his faith, God chose the Jordan, not Abana or Pharpar. Abana and Pharpar may be more attractive rivers than the Jordan, but they are not the channel of God's saving grace in the world. In the story of Naaman, the Jordan stands for God's particular historical plan of redemption through Jesus Christ. Dipping in the Jordan shows Naaman's faith — his faith in God's par-

ticular plan of redemption. If Naaman had dipped in Abana or Pharpar, this would have shown a general faith in human culture and "religion." To dip in Abana or Pharpar would be like the person who says today, "I believe in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man and that all religions are ways to God." But dipping in the Jordan means faith in God's plan of redemption through Jesus Christ. Dipping in Abana and Pharpar means only general faith in human culture, progress and "religious values."

God mediates His saving grace through a very narrow channel. He chose Abraham, rejecting the possibilities of the rest of the world's population. From Abraham's seed He chose Isaac; from Isaac's seed, He chose Jacob. Thus the land of Israel and the people of Israel became the location and the context of God's work of redemption in human history. Here, not elsewhere, the hypodermic needle is inserted by which God brings about the healing of the disease of sin. Not in Syria, but in Israel; not by human culture and "values", but by the cross and shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The land of Israel was not merely a sample or illustration of universal truths of religion. It was chosen to be the particular spot on this planet where the Son of God would offer the great sacrifice which would, in the fulness of time, redeem mankind from sin and evil. Here, in the land of Israel, the Second Adam would finally undo the ruin wrought ages before by the first Adam. If Naaman is to get any benefits of that redemption, he must submit himself to God's plans and specifications as to the means to be used.

It is a narrow channel and has been despised by many, not least in our own day. It is all so very local, so very dated, so very insignificant, so very particular. Israel was devoid of science, or art, of contributions to the general cultural development of mankind. Israel was far outstripped in antiquity by the Egyptians, Greeks and Romans, and later by the Arabs. Still it is true — God has chosen the weak things of the world to set at naught the things that are mighty. God has chosen Jordan, not Abana and Pharpar.

A professor in one of the so-called Christian universities of China, years ago, compiled a book called "Material from the Cultural Heritage of China for the Religious Instruction of Chinese Youth." This book was not intended for the religious education of Buddhist or Confucianist youth — it was intended for the religious education of Christian youth. It was supposed to be a Christian book. The professor thought he might as well choose stories from Chinese history as from the history of Israel, for the instruction of Chinese Christian young people in right living and good ideals. And well he might, if Abana and Pharpar are as good as Jordan. But they are not, as surely as human culture is not the same thing as Christianity. Chinese youth are to get

their religious instruction from the history of Israel, not from the history of China. And American youth are to get their religious instruction from the history of Israel, not from the history of America.

Abana and Pharpar are all right as rivers, but as channels of divine saving grace and power they are utterly useless. Human culture is all right as culture, but it will not save your sinful soul and it will not save the world. It takes the cross of Calvary to do that. The only religion that saves is the religion of the shed blood of the Son of God. As long as we think Abana and Pharpar will do, we will not proceed to the Jordan. As long as we stay away from the Jordan, we will only sink deeper in the plague of sin.

### **III. God Provides Salvation Free and it Cannot be Purchased or Paid For.**

Elisha refused payment. He wanted to make the free, gracious character of God's mercies crystal clear to Naaman. Naaman was not to be allowed to think what he, with his Syrian background would naturally and inevitably tend to think, that the help of God is a commodity that can be purchased and paid for.

Man's sinful pride reacts violently against the idea of an **absolutely gracious salvation**. "God helps those that help themselves" — so runs the oft-quoted proverb, which is one of the most harmful half-truths in circulation. When we stand guilty and sick before God it is a case of God helping those who **cannot** help themselves.

All attitudes toward God can be reduced to two: one says, "Something in my hand I bring." The other says, "Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to Thy cross I cling." The latter is the theology of grace, salvation as a free gift, without money and without price. Mankind has always been objecting to it — ever since the time of Cain and Abel. Mankind has always been reacting against it, seeking to subvert it, trying to undermine the very idea of it. Almost always it has been under attack in the church, and nearly always the tendency of the majority has been to obscure it, to tone it down, to dilute it with an element of human payment. If not a money payment, then a payment in terms of life: character, ideals, achievements. Something in my hand I bring. But Elisha refused to accept any of it. He would not touch a penny of it. "As the Lord liveth, before whom I stand, I will receive none."

This message of grace, which is in reality the theology of Jesus Christ and Him crucified, was to the Jews a stumblingblock and to the Greeks foolishness. And to the Jews among modern men, as Dr. J. Gresham Machen reminded us, it is still a stumblingblock, and to the Greeks among modern men it is still foolishness.

But how is it with us? Is the theology of grace offensive to us? Do we seek to evade it? Do we raise objections against it? Do we try to tone it down with our miserable self-righteous moralism? The really poor in spirit will glory in it. They will realize that payment is forever impossible. What shall a man give in exchange for his soul? As little as Naaman's \$80,000 and ten suits of Damascus clothing could pay the bill for cleansing from leprosy, so little can our "good character" or "high ideals" pay for redemption from sin by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.

Salvation is free, but it is not cheap. For it cost the precious blood of Christ to make it free. There is a story about a minister who visited a coal mine. This was a deep shaft mine, not a surface or strip mine. The minister was being shown the mine by a foreman. "Now, Sir," said the foreman, "if you will please step into this cage, we will be lowered to the place where the mine is being worked." As the minister and the foreman were being lowered deep below the surface of the earth, the minister asked, "Are you a Christian?" "No," replied the foreman. "Wouldn't you like to become one?" countered the minister. The foreman replied, "No, Sir, I would not. To my way of thinking it is just too cheap. You Christians believe that Jesus Christ paid it all and you go to heaven scot free. That is too humiliating to a man's self-respect. I prefer to stand on my own feet and feel that I am earning my salvation by my good life. That way I can feel I am really contributing something and not just accepting a cheap gift."

The minister made no reply to this. The two men inspected the working of the mine. Then the foreman said, "Now, Sir, if you will just step into this cage again, we will be hoisted back to the surface." To this the minister replied, "I don't intend to do anything of the kind." "Why not?" asked the foreman. The minister answered, "Well, to my way of thinking, it is just too cheap. You get in this cage and are lifted up by power machinery to the surface without contributing any work or energy yourself. I prefer to climb out of the mine. That way, I will feel I have really accomplished something." To this the foreman replied, "Sir, it cost the company many thousands of dollars to make this shaft and install this hoist; surely you cannot call that cheap. And besides, it is the only way out of the mine."

If we are out of Christ, we are sick with a worse disease than leprosy. It is an incurable disease, too, so far as human remedies are concerned. But the God of Elisha and of the Jordan is still alive and mighty to save, and on the same kind of terms as those that Naaman had to accept. We must stoop very low, we must not despise the

method appointed by God, and we must realize that payment is forever out of the question.

Can peace renew lost bloom,  
Or violet lost perfume,  
Or sullied snow turn white  
As overnight?  
Man cannot compass it,  
Yet never fear!

The leper Naaman  
Shows what God will and can.  
God who worked there is working here.  
Wherefore let shame, not gloom, betinge thy  
brow.

God who worked then is working now.

(Christina G. Rossetti)

## *The Hebrew Sanctuary, A Study in Typology*

By the Rev. Wallace B. Nicholson, M.A., B.D., M. Th.

### X. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MINISTERS OF THE SANCTUARY

#### 1. The Levites.

God separated the tribe of Levi from all other tribes to attend to the services of the sanctuary. After Israel was redeemed the first-born was dedicated to Jehovah, and later the Levites were substituted for the first-born. The Levites had charge of such religious duties as did not belong to the superior order of the priests. They were consecrated by sprinkling with water, shaving, and the washing of their clothes, which was followed by the customary sacrifices. According to Numbers 4:3, 23, 30, they were called to service from the thirtieth to the fiftieth year; but later (Num. 8:24, 25) we are informed that their period of service began at twenty-five. Those statements may be reconciled on the basis of the difference between a probationer and a qualified Levite. According to some writers the former passages refer to the transportation of the tabernacle, and the latter, to the Levitical services in general. The explanation given is that the younger age was a period of preparation for full service. No special garments for the Levites are mentioned in Exodus. In general, their services were "about" the sanctuary and not "in" it as the latter was restricted to the priests.

#### 2. The Priests.

It must be kept in mind here, that all the priests were Levites, but the Levites were not necessarily priests. All the male Levites in the tribe were eligible for office, but the priesthood devolved upon Aaron and his sons. The attempt of a Levite to intrude into the priests office was considered a capital offence.

The design of the priestly office was to represent the children of Israel and bring them into communion with God. The priests were chosen to mediate between God and the nation. The office of the priest however was ineffective without sacrifice. The nature of their office required the possession of the highest purity and devotion, and hence those affected with physical blemishes

were debarred. Their sanctity also imposed upon them certain restrictions which did not apply to others in Israel. Their consecration is prescribed in Exodus 29:1-37; 40:12-15, the main element of which was the priestly anointing, a symbol of the sanctifying influences of the Spirit of God. Their duties primarily consisted of their services at the altar and in the holy place; while it is generally understood that with the help of the Levites they prepared the sacrifices and attended to the various ordinances of religion. They also expounded the law and taught the people (Lev. 10:11; Ezek. 44:23, 24; Mal. 2:7).

#### 3. The High Priest.

The high priest was chosen to the office of the high priesthood by divine appointment from the first-born in the line of Aaron in regular succession. This office embodies all the functions of the priesthood, and comprehending in one single whole the priestly hierarchy in Israel. In conformity with the exalted nature of the office the priestly dress was costly and beautiful, and the rites of consecration were peculiarly solemn: while the highpriest's qualifications and his separation from all others in his public and private life testified that he, above all others, was set apart to mediate between a holy God and a sinful people.

The high priest must be free from all physical blemishes to signify the holiness of his person, while the external restrictions laid upon him were symbols of the sanctity of his conduct as became a priest of the most high God. The sacred rites of consecration and the copious anointing with holy oil which ran down upon his garments symbolized the plentiful supply of manifold grace imparted to him.

The high priest affected eight articles of clothing, four of which were common to his subordinates, namely the breeches, the bonnet, the girdle, and the tunic. The last reaching from the neck to the ankles, with sleeves woven of white linen and embroidered, was completed by a girdle of the same materials, variegated in blue-purple and crimson and surmounted by the Robe of the

Ephod, a blue coat without sleeves extending from the shoulders and reaching below the knee with an opening in the top. From the lower edge of the hem were suspended numerous tassels shaped like pomegranates alternating with golden bells. According to Fairbairn the bells and pomegranates "bespoke the distinct utterances he was to give of the divine Word, and the fruitfulness in righteousness of which this should be productive." (*Typology*, Ed. 4, p. 275.) Atwater suggests that the pomegranates symbolized the **Law in its totality** as including every specific requirement, and that the bells signified that "obedience to the commandments was to proclaim" them. (*Tabernacle*, p. 335.)

The Ephod itself was a short garment suspended from the shoulders behind and before like two aprons and joined at the shoulders. It was woven with figures in threads of gold, blue, purple, and crimson. A girdle of the same materials fastened the two parts around the body. Two onyx-stones set in gold engraven with the names of the tribes of Israel, six names being inscribed on each stone, were placed one on each shoulder. The significance of the Ephod seems to concentrate on the onyx-stones and is suggestive of the high priest's authority and power to shoulder all the responsibilities of his people.

The breastplate of judgment was a piece of tapestry a span square (nine inches), which was suspended from the shoulders by two chains of gold and attached to the outside of the Ephod on its lowest corners. On the external side of this cloth were placed twelve precious stones of different kinds set in gold and arranged in four rows, three in a row. In connection with the breastplate mention is made of the "Urim and the Thummim," "lights and perfection." What these were and how decisions were given through them in cases of exigency we have no certain means of knowing. The representative character of the highpriest, his close union in heart and life with his constituents, as bearing them on his heart when he appeared on their behalf in the presence of Jehovah, seems to be the lesson taught by the breast-plate, while the "Urim and the Thummim" may symbolize his fitness to lead and guide them in all emergencies.

The mitre, or bonnet, was distinguished from that of the subordinate priests perhaps in appearance, but especially by a plate of gold attached to its front engraven with the words "Holiness to Jehovah." This inscription signified the complete and peerless sanctity of the Mediator, of the New Covenant through whose ministration sin, as a manifold evil, and in all its aspects, was totally cancelled, and holiness imputed and imparted to the people for whom he officiated.

The high priest though such an exalted figure in Israel and so manifestly distinguished from the body of the people stood in a peculiarly

close relationship to them. He was chosen from among themselves partaking of their nature and identified with them in their guilt and holiness, being held responsible for their sins while his sins were imputed to them (Lev. 4:3). If they sinned he must atone; and their holiness was reflected in the success of his priestly ministrations. At the same time there were manifest imperfections attaching to his sacred office, in respect of the sinfulness of his person; and the nature, multitude and repetition and effects of his offerings.

The significance of the Aaronic priesthood in general and the high priesthood in particular is set forth by the writer to the Hebrews. The Apostle dwells at large on the priestly office of the Redeemer as compared and contrasted with the ministry of the old dispensation. Like the high priest He was a mediator and must have something to offer; and although He was highly exalted above His people He was one with His brethren in all respects, sin excepted. But in contrast with the Old Testament priest He needed no offerings to consecrate Him to his office since peccability was foreign to His nature. And by one grand offering of eternal efficacy He offered Himself for the sins of His people by which He finished transgression, made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness.

Christ, as the Great High Priest was clothed with all the graces necessary for the complete salvation of a countless multitude whom no man can number. He was anointed in His human nature without measure so that His garments were redolent with myrrh, aloes and cassia. As the eternal Son of God possessing in Himself all the attributes of Deity He came down from the ivory palaces of heaven and assuming to Himself our nature with all its infirmities He offered up Himself. And having completed the work the Father gave Him to do, He returned to those palaces of ivory bearing with him on His breastplate the names of all His redeemed, which had been inscribed by His own hand in the lamb's Book of Life.

The Lord Jesus is the one mediator between God and men, and any attempt to minimize the completeness of His work, or to supersede His office issues in disaster. The sanctity of the high priest and his acceptance with God is fully embodied in our Great High Priest, while the knowledge of God's will and the needs of His people, is possessed by One who is invested with all the functions required, not only to teach, but to save and sanctify His church, being made after the order of Melchizedec, and so constituting an endless priesthood and an infinite potency to save to the uttermost and to sanctify completely those who come to God by him.

Figuratively, believers in Christ are called priests. Through His redeeming work they are purified and arrayed in robes of righteousness.

Consecrated by His blood and by the anointing of God's Spirit they are separated from the world and qualified to offer the sacrifices of praise and prayer.

The Priesthood of Christ must be distinguished from the other functions of His office and brings into prominence the unsurpassing glory and suitability of the Mediator; and though the importance of His prophetic and kingly functions must not be minimized, these derive their infinite potency from the functions of His priesthood. We must conceive of a vicarious atonement as adequate to meet the claims of justice and redeem a sinful people, yet the constitution of the Son of God as a priest brings to light other ideas besides that of the satisfaction for sin demanded by strict justice. The priesthood of Christ magnifies the love of God and His own and so crowns the perfection of His work. It was God Who chose His own Son to be a priest: and Jesus, inspired by the same love was willing to be so; and in the exercise of His functions He approved of all the sorrows and penalties which were involved in His work when as a priest He offered up Himself.

That Christ is a Priest is a source of consolation to His people. Their Saviour was accepted

and so will they be accepted. His services were accepted and so will theirs be accepted, which though sinful in themselves are purified in the golden censer and so presented to the Father by our Great High Priest. As a Priest He possesses the nature of a brother and is able at all times to understand our sorrows and our temptations, because He has experienced all those; and although, in the depth and shamefulness of our sin, all would leave and forsake us He is ready to compassionate us, for though He is without sin He can have compassion on the ignorant and on them that are out of the way.

"Seeing then that we have a Great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities: but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. 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. 4:14-16).

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(To be continued)

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## *A Believer's Life of Christ*

By the Rev. John C. Rankin

### THE GREAT ATONEMENT DAY

The third day of the week witnessed the end of Jesus' public life and work and his last word to the nation. At the close of the day the noise of battle ceased and the Master was alone with his own. As always, they, at least, were ready and willing to listen and learn. It must have been a welcome relief from the rigours of the conflict that had raged throughout the day.

As there had been a prophetic element in the last word to his foes so also in the closing discourse with his friends. Things to come were still very much upon his mind and heart. And it was all there. "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." Up went the curtain on the future events of their own life and time. Presently in clear prophetic vision there appeared the very consummation of the age and of all ages. It was a feast of the soul we may be sure both for him who spoke and for those who heard.

But life has to be lived where we are and the affairs of the present and of the immediate future must be faced. For Jesus, the Saviour of men, there was a cup to drain and a baptism of fire which must be endured. And so Matthew records the last words of the day. "And it came

to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples, "Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be "crucified" (Matthew 26:1, 2).

By this we know that Jesus faced the immediate prospect in the strength and vigor provided by his vision of the future. Also a few hours of rest and reinvigoration were in store. For as he said and the record states there was to be a two day respite.

### THE BETRAYAL

The record of these days which would be our Wednesday and most of Thursday is silent concerning how they were spent and what occupied the hours upon his part. Rather are we advised concerning what was going on in the camp of the enemy, as also in the heart and life of one of his own. "The Son of man," he said, "is betrayed to be crucified."

Jesus had known about Judas all along and once had said that one of his close associates was "a devil" (John 6:70, 71). He had also said that he was to be betrayed. Jesus was very sensitive to all that was going on around him and to

all those about him who were in any way vitally concerned in the course of his life. And the poor, evil, miserable traitor in his own camp was one of these. Poor Judas — yet so it was, and so it had to be.

Now was his time, and these two days provided the opportunity he was seeking. He was the one who "carried the bag"; in other words, he was the treasurer and it was his task to do the marketing. So under cover of a shopping expedition into town he went over to the camp of the enemy. He sought out the rulers and entered into a conspiracy with them to betray his friend and benefactor into their hands. How utterly wicked and how sad! What a terrible thing to do! and yet he did it.

How did he come to be in such a state? Both Matthew and Mark explain it by a flash-back introduced at this point. They recur to the supper which had been given in honour of the Lord in Bethany several days before, when Judas' real nature had been plainly revealed.

Evidently the love of money was his sin. Mammon was his god and covetousness ruled his heart. It was this trait, together with the continual disappointment of his hopes and plans, his selfish desires and ambitions as an attache of the Man of Nazareth that was the undoing of this man of Kerioth; which finally bore fruit in the betrayal. Doubtless a state of unbelief had also taken hold upon him. This man, the Christ! What kind of Christ was this! In his heart he, too, could only despise and reject him. He was already one of his murderers even before the hatred of his heart emerged in the overt act of the betrayal.

Under cover of his performance of his duty as purchasing agent for the twelve "he went to the chief priests to betray him unto them. And when they heard it they were glad and promised to give his money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray him" (Mark 14:10, 11 and Matthew 26:14-16).

Luke tells how the rulers "sought how they might kill" Jesus and then relates how Judas "sought opportunity to betray him unto them in the absence of the multitude" (Luke 22:1-6). Thus all things were working together to bring about the death of Christ in his and God's own time and way.

The rulers had decided to postpone the attempt to the very end of the passover celebration, "for they feared the people." With the tremendous effect of the resurrection of Lazarus together with the royal entry on Jesus' popularity, they feared to do other than to wait. But with the coming of Judas they realized that their design might be accomplished any day; in fact that they might seize upon his person and take him prisoner in his very observance of the pass-

over. Hence the strict secrecy which the Lord maintained concerning the place of this observance. So "not for nine days" they had decided, but God ordained that it would be "after two days."

The opportunity which was desired on both sides was sought and found. The expectation for seizure in the city was foiled. But the traitor was very sure about where Jesus would go that night and where he could be found when the passover feast was over.

The Master, however, was still in command and was disposed to hasten the deed and have it over. Hence the sad dismissal of the traitor and his departure from the upper room, his report to the authorities with the result of his arrival at the garden under cover of the night. He came at the head of a deputation of the rulers and their followers and a band of temple soldiers. Later we read of his "repentance" (Matthew 27:3), his return to the rulers, their repudiation of him and his own self-destruction.

#### DRAMATIS PERSONAE

We are interested in all of the actors in this fearful drama of redemption in which so much of tragedy was involved. As the event unfolds in the sacrificial death of God the Son, the full cast of characters appears. Each has his place upon the stage and plays his part.

There were the actors on both sides. On the one hand was Annas and Caiaphas; on the other Jesus and his little band of followers. In between was Judas, the go-between, the man in the middle, caught between the upper and the nether millstones. Others were Simon Peter and John and the other apostles; all of whom in the hour of trial forsook their Lord and fled.

As the action proceeds, besides the Jewish leaders, their coterie, attendants and the rabble; there were the Gentile rulers, their courtesans and soldiers. And there were the women, Mary the mother of the Lord and many others. And there were the two thieves crucified with him "one on the right hand and the other on the left"; one forgiven and saved, the other lost.

Present also behind the outward scene, although invisible, were the other-worldly participants and powers, the demonic and the divine. It was the hour of God and of the good but it was also the hour of the evil. "This is your hour," said the Saviour, "and the power of darkness" (Luke 22:53).

Demons were there and also angels. There was the one who appeared with Jesus in the garden "strengthening him" (Luke 22:43). And other angels, whole legions of them; present, ready and willing and anxious to intervene. In that hour it must have been heartening to him to have a manifestation of the fact that the angels were on

his side though men were not. And God the Father and God the Holy Spirit were there with God the Son. As for the angels their time was yet to come when the Son of man should come "in his glory and all the holy angels with him."

### THE WRITER'S CONTRIBUTIONS

It is the glory and crown of "the old, old story of Jesus and his love." We open the book and there it is. Each writer is still reporting in his own way; and all under the all-controlling inspiration of the Spirit.

There are the usual variations, some substantial and others not. All is in perfect unity and accord. There are many minor differences of detail. Matthew speaks of those that were sent to make ready the passover as "the disciples." Mark says that there were two. Luke tells who they were. The name for the hill of crucifixion as given by Matthew, Mark and John is "Golgotha"; in Luke it is "Calvary." This difference arose from the different languages in use in the land in those days.

In close correspondence are the accounts as given by Matthew and Mark. Special contributions provided by Luke include the renewal of the strife as to who should be the greatest, which came in connection with the meeting in the upper room. He also records the warning given to Peter on that occasion and the advice now to take purse and scrip ("scrip" — "a bag or wallet for carrying provisions or articles required on a journey.") and sword (Luke 22:24-38). Luke alone tells of the transference of the case to Herod's court and back again.

John's special contributions pertain to Jesus' washing of the disciples' feet, Judas among them; the conversation with the disciples and the accompanying discourse in the upper room, and the great high priestly prayer of the Lord (chapters 13-17). In 13:18-30 he records how Judas was unmasked and dismissed and how Jesus felt about it. There is also a more complete record of Jesus' conversation with Pilate and of the latter's final efforts to save him from his foes.

The four writers tell of Peter's difficulties and his denial, under threat of exposure as one of the twelve. All unite to report this last great day with a fulness of particulars appropriate to its place and importance in the gospel story.

### THE UPPER ROOM AND THE GARDEN

The swift moving sequence of events begins with the scene in the upper room; the observance of the passover and, in immediate connection with it, the institution of the Lord's Supper, the Communion. Less than twenty-four hours remain; and when next the sun goes down and yet another Jewish day begins, the cold and lifeless body will be lying in the darkness and silence of the tomb.

The little group with Jesus in the lead emerges from the place of meeting. Now it is night and the city is asleep. They pass through dark and silent and deserted streets, out through the city gate, down the steep slope, across the brook to the garden. Again, as oft before, he enters among the olive trees.

Now indeed the Servant of the Lord, the Saviour of men really looks into the depths of the bottomless pit of his suffering and shame. Again he is tempted and tried and all his powers of endurance are stretched to the utmost in preparation for the sufferings he must endure. It is the agony of final surrender to the consummation of all his work of atonement for the sins of men.

Out of this agony of final decision and choice he presently emerges; now perfectly ready, fully prepared. "Sleep on now," he says, "and take your rest." But even as he speaks the first sights and sounds of the approaching throng are seen and heard, and with it comes a sudden change of attitude and tone of voice. "Behold the hour is at hand and the Son of man (the Son of man!) is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise! let us be going; behold he is at hand that doth betray me" (Matthew 26:45, 46).

It is only fair to observe that the traitor played his part extremely well. According to previous arrangement it was understood that the identification would be made by means of the customary greeting. Judas of course was in the lead; and upon arrival went forward and "forthwith came to Jesus and said Hail, master; and kissed him" (Matthew 26:48, 49).

### GETHSEMANE TO CALVARY

So we come to that portion of the great atonement day which may be described as Gethsemane to Calvary. To a large extent we must let the writers tell the story in their own words. See references (Matthew 26:36 — 27:34; Mark 14:32 — 15:23; Luke 22:39 — 23:32; John 18:1 — 19:18.)

A multitude of thoughts arise and we are never so sensible of the extreme inadequacy of words. There are doubtless many points that call for consideration, many things to be explained. For now we are at the very heart of the gospel, indeed at the very center and soul of the created universe and of the plan and purpose, the life and work of God in the world for his own glory and man's salvation, faith and life.

Among other things we take note of the extremity of fear and loathing in which the Lord fell upon his face and cried out in the garden. Again we note his perfect poise and self-containment through all that followed; his firm and just and gracious bearing through it all. We note that he is still the same Lord Jesus in his unflinching love and meekness; his consideration for all

concerned; his constant unforgetfulness of other's good. "If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way," he says (John 18:8, 9). We note the reparation of the damage done to Malchus, the servant of the high priest (Luke 22:50, 51 and John 18:10). We see the look with which he looked on Peter in his sin (Luke 22:61).

Noticeable too is the fact that he has not forgotten the demands upon him for his great teaching ministry. Examples of this appear in such deathless sayings as "the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41); and "all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword" (Matthew 26:52). And there is his exposition of the nature of his kingship and his kingdom to the time-serving Pilate (John 18:33-38).

He appears in his constant reliance on the governance and guidance of the Word of God in all things (Matthew 26:54); and speaks in expression of his perfect resignation to the will of God; "the cup which the Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18:11). His vision of the future, his own and the world's, is ever before him (Mark 14:62).

Above all does he not forget his high duty of faithfulness to God and to himself in his own self assertion. Witness his answer given in the garden, "I am he," and again, "I have told you that I am he." It is true that he so identified himself as the man of Nazareth, but the form of the reply is not a little reminiscent of John 8:58, "Before Abraham was, I am." His answer before the sanhedrin was, "I am" (Mark 14:26) and "Ye say that I am" (Luke 22:70). The form of expression, "Thou hast said" or "Ye say that I Am" was a colloquialism for positive assertion. The content of this self assertion on his part harks back to God's name for himself as given to Moses, "I am that I am"; "Thus shalt thou say to the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you" (Ezekiel 3:13, 14).

In these words they heard, and we hear, the eternal Son of God as he speaks in the consciousness of his eternal self-contained and self-existent deity. In expression of his uprightness and unfailing goodness in all things he says "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but, if well, why smitest thou me?" (John 18:23).

The record tells how he gave himself into the custody of the Jewish authorities to be bound and led away first to Annas, then Caiaphas. There were in reality three trials. The examination in the night produced the verdict. At dawn the sanhedrin met again in formal session and so gave legal sanction to the decision of the night. Then came the so-called trial before Pilate. This time there was no real verdict, no condemnation. Pilate defended the innocence of the prisoner to the last and then weakly gave him over to the will of his foes.

Jesus was twice mocked; indeed three times. By the palace servitors he was mocked as a make-believe or would-be prophet. By the courtesans and soldiers of the court of Herod, as a king; and also again by Pilate's soldiers. Having been scourged, he was handed over to be crucified. The blood which had started from his pores in the garden flowed again from the wounds of the thorns and of the scourge as on the cross by the intrusion of the nails and spear.

Having been crucified he was reviled. At the last in the darkness which encompassed him, grievously wounded in body and soul, he was cast off by man and forsaken of God. "But he was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him and with his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5).

### THE CROSS OF CHRIST

Now we are at the very place of Jesus' final sufferings and death for sin. See references (Matthew 27:35-54; Mark 15:24-39; Luke 23:33-49; John 19:19-37). They offer the customary sedative which he refuses. The Roman gibbet, the cross, with its precious burden is set up. So they crucify the Lord of glory. The soldiers part his garments among them, casting lots; and sitting down they watch him there and set up over his head his accusation written "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."

Jesus is the center of attention and has the central place among the criminals. Waves of scorn and derision break over him from priests and scribe and passer-by and even from his companions in misery and shame. Six hours he hangs impaled; three hours of light and three of darkness.

Seven words pass from his lips. "Father forgive them for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). "Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). "Woman, behold thy son! Behold thy mother" (John 19:26, 27). "I thirst" (John 19:28). "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me" (Matthew 27:46 and Mark 15:34). "It is finished" (John 19:30). And "Father into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23:46). Having thus said, he bowed his head and gave up the ghost.

Of these it will be noted that three were spoken in consideration of the needs and good of others; only one for any desire of his own. And two were prayers in the ordinary sense of the word. A third was addressed to God, but it was an outcry of purest anguish, the token of the abandonment which he endured as God the Father, God the King, revealed his wrath for sinners represented in and by him.

At no point in the life of Christ can it be said that his suffering began. One way or another it

was ever present and increased and enlarged to the end. Not until the final outcry, "It is finished!" did it cease. But this is also to be said that only in the last three hours, the hours of darkness, did he suffer the full force of the eternity of suffering due to us for sin. Only in that hour did he endure the full infliction of the penalty. Surely it must have been an eternity of suffering for him. But at length it passed and all suffering, inclusive of the pain of hell itself, was over for him. The atonement was complete. "Mission accomplished" could be written over it; "The ransom paid." The demands of law and justice now were fully satisfied; the world delivered, and all for whom he died redeemed and saved.

In conclusion, by way of exposition of the factual meaning of the event, we append the following. "Notice that three things are to be said of the death of Christ:

1. It was penal. It was not the result of unavoidable circumstances, for Jesus said, I lay down my life; no man taketh it from me. Nor was it didactic, merely; intended as a manifestation of sympathy or an illustration of heroism. It was judicial. He was delivered for our offenses. He was made a curse for us.

2. It was vicarious. He knew no sin; and if he stood in legal relations and endured penalty, it must have been for others. He bore our sins in his own body on the tree. He died, the just for the unjust. He gave his life a ransom for many (in the place of many).

3. It was expiatory. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." (Summary of Christian Doctrine by Dr. Francis L. Patton, p. 43.).

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(To be continued)

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## **George Gillespie on Church Censures**

By R. D. Eagleson, M.A., Dip. Ed.

(Continued from last issue)

**Note:** This article by a scholar in Australia expounds the classic Presbyterian view of Church Discipline as held by the 17th century Scottish divine George Gillespie. — Editor.

It is significant that "the vindicating of the honour of Christ and the holy profession of the Gospel" should be fourth amongst the purposes for church censures in the Confession. The earlier purposes are concerned with the reclamation of the offending brother and the protection of the other members, in other words, with the human element in the Church. It is not until we reach the fourth purpose that the honour of Christ and God is mentioned. This may seem back the front, an erroneous reversal, but there is much to justify it. Considering the rest of the Confession, it is inconceivable that the majesty of Christ would have been last in the commissioners' deliberations. Rather, it could well be a precaution against religious fanaticism and an intolerant misuse of church censures.

The gaining of a brother is put first to maintain the emphasis on love in church censures. We act to preserve a brother, and this motive of love restrains every step in discipline which would put him further away from the saving influence of the preaching of the Gospel. While censures are a power and right of the church and required of us as necessary, they are not to be undertaken lightly nor with the pharisaical self-righteousness, but humbly with a fervent love for our brother. There is nothing which will prevent

us from abusing church censures more powerful than this, that God has committed to us as the Church an erring soul which is to be led back to Him. The verses preceding our Lord's institution of discipline are illuminating here. We are to pursue our brother, not with unfeeling zeal, but as a shepherd seeks the one sheep that has gone astray. (Matt. 18:12-14), and should our brother be rightly offended and driven out of the church by our actions, that is, should we not warn him properly, the blood of his soul might well be required at our hands. (Matt. 18:7), (Ezekiel 33:6). The compassionate, forbearing tenderness that should mark our behaviour to our brother could not be drawn in finer lines than the words of our Master, "Go and tell him his fault between thee and him **alone**" (Matt. 18:15). Until we have individually striven with our brother, his fault is to be a secret locked in our hearts, and the words of our Saviour suggest that it is to be a tragic sorrow to us that we should have to reveal it more widely to one or two and then to the Church.

There is further justification for preserving the order of purposes in the Westminster Confession of Faith. Our Lord Himself had prophesied that men would misuse discipline, and against members of the Christian Church. He further stated that they would be killed for their allegedly false doctrines, and that their slayers would think that they were doing God a service (John 16:2). Similar conduct had already oc-

curred against the servants of God and is recorded in Isaiah 66:5.

Nor is the Christian Church peculiarly exempt from such an error, and in the weakness of our flesh we must acknowledge that the temptation to persecute is sometimes very potent. Hence the emphasis by Christ in Matthew 18:15, on the loving concern for our brother and the earnest request in 11 Corinthians 2:7 for a persevering love. That this is not an inconsistent emphasis, nor an undivine order, is attested by 1 John 4:20, "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"

That the honour of Christ comes so late in the list of purposes in section 3 does not mean that it is of minor importance. This is the aspect of the brother's transgression with which we are concerned, as we have already shown, and not the wrong done to us personally. It cannot be the reparation of our own wrong, for Christ bids us to act **to gain our brother** and this can only mean leading him to walk humbly before God. There can be no point in doing this unless he is not so walking, and hence is dishonouring Christ. So we see that there is no disrespect done to Christ by leaving the vindication of His honour so late in the purposes. Indeed there is little need to mention it because of its implication in the other purposes of censures, except that it is an important inducement to us to carry on with the processes of discipline, which must always be an unpleasant task.

It is important, too, that we remember that the honour of Christ is at stake in every one of our actions, and nothing is more likely to bring His name into disrepute and open reproach and hinder the faithful preaching of the Gospel than the open flaunting of His commandments in the midst of the church by an avowed church member. Although in John 16:2 and Isaiah 66:5 we see the doleful effects of misapplied censures, never-

theless no denunciation is made of the attested purposes. The ends were sacred: to glorify God (Is. 66:5) and to do Him a good service (John 16:2) in that which touched His name and glory. If those men who wrongly perceived the truth of God could be so zealous, how much more should we be on whom have been bestowed the riches of His mercy and illumination. Let us remember that since a scandalous sinner is likened unto a leaven which can spoil the whole lump, we must equate him with that offender of whom Christ said, "It were better for him that a millstone was hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matt. 18:6). If he remain obstinate in his sin, therefore, excommunication, the worst of censures, will not be too harsh for him. We would do well to cast him out of the church, for if we let him remain, we would be conniving in his defiling, 'offending,' one of the little ones who believe in Christ.

Moreover, we must remember that our Lord taught us to pray, "Hallowed by thy name." (Matt. 6:9). It is idle to pretend that God's name is holy to us, if our actions are unholy and it can hardly bring our life, if we persist outrageously in sin. There is no one more hated by believer and unbeliever alike than the hypocrite, and no one can be a greater embarrassment to an ethical organization. Church censures, then, are essential for vindicating the honour of Christ and the holy profession of the Gospel. They declare to the church and to the world that the sins of men have no standing with God. They also remove any accusation of hypocrisy against the Church for they show that the Church is prepared to pronounce as much against the sins of its members as against those of unbelievers. Inasmuch also as church censures are duly executed and heeded, they are a testimony of the desire of church members for self-correction and for the removal of unintentional hypocrisy, and consequently reflect to the honour of Christ and attest a holy profession of the Gospel.

(To be continued)

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## *Instrumental Music in the Public Worship of the Church*

By John L. Girardeau

(Continued from last issue)

But this hypothesis of a relaxation of the law being discharged, the question returns, Why was not instrumental music employed on the Sabbath in the synagogue as well as in the temple? The answer is, Because God did not so command. He commanded it to be used in the temple; he did not, as he might have done, command it to be used in the synagogue. Now, why? There must be an

adequate reason for the difference. What was it? The only reply which appears to furnish a solution of the difficulty is, that the temple-worship was typical, that of the synagogue not. The employment of types in the synagogue would have contradicted the very idea of the temple. The reason of the singular and exceptional existence of the latter was that it embraced a typical serv-

ice. To have made the types common would therefore have subverted the temple.

The argument may be made still clearer by testing it upon the instance of sacrifices. They were offered at the temple on the Sabbath. Why were they not offered in the synagogue on that day? Will the Jew himself contend that the reason was that the law of the Sabbath would have been violated? He himself will concede that sacrifices, as typical, could only have been offered at the temple. If he deny, he denies the meaning of the sacrifices and the genius of the Jewish religion. So was it with all the types, including instrumental music. Would he say that sacrifices were permissible in the synagogue on other than Sabbath days? Would he say that such a practice ever actually obtained? He must find, then, another reason why sacrifices were not offered in the synagogue on the Sabbath, than the infraction of the Sabbatic law which they would have involved. The same argument holds good in relation to instrumental music. But the question here is with the Jew, and the attempt to convince him, without the concurrence of almighty grace, would be as operative as an effort to reduce Gibraltar with an argument.

It has been proved by this special line of argument that, in consequence of the absence of a divine command justifying its use, instrumental music was not included in the synagogue-worship; that, as Christ, the procurer of redemption, was promised, so also the Holy Spirit, the applier of redemption, was promised, in the Old Testament — that a whole salvation by blood and by water was revealed in its didactic statements, its prophecies, and its types; that the elements in the temple service, which were not embraced in that of the synagogue, were typical; that some of these were typical of the Holy Ghost and the effects to be produced by his grace in New Testament times; and that among them instrumental music must be classed. From all this it follows, first, that to bring over into the new dispensation the features of worship which belonged to the temple, and not to the synagogue, is more unwarrantable in us than the importation of the distinctive elements of the temple-worship into the synagogue would have been to the Jews; secondly, that, as the types of the Holy Spirit in the temple-service are fulfilled in his application to believers of the benefits of a purchased redemption, to retain them in the Christian church is as much to dishonor him as to retain bloody sacrifices would dishonor Christ; and thirdly, that therefore, as instrumental music in the temple-worship was one of those types, its employment in the public services of the Christian church is at once unwarrantable and dishonoring to the ever-blessed Spirit.

4. To all this argument derived from the Old Testament it is triumphantly objected that the

Psalms exhort all men to praise God with instruments of music, and that they were designed to be sung in every age of the church. The objection is as futile as it is popular.

In the first place, why did not David, who was one of the principal authors of the Psalms, introduce at an earlier period than he did instrumental music into the tabernacle worship? The reply is, that he was not divinely commanded to do it. Why did not Moses, who was an accomplished psalmist, and who heard the thrilling sound of timbrels in the great rejoicing over the discomfited host of Pharaoh on the shore of the Red Sea, incorporate this kind of music as an accompaniment of singing into that worship? The answer is, Because he had no divine warrant for such a measure. We have seen that David, by divine command, prepared instruments of music, and directed them to be used in the temple when that edifice should be erected. He would have had no right to take that step had he not been inspired and commanded to do so by God, who alone possessed the prerogative to dictate the mode in which he should be worshipped. It deserves inquiry, too, whether any of the Psalms which are ascribed to David, in which musical instruments are mentioned, have any reference to their employment in the public worship of God's house. Let those who are wont to plead the authority of his name examine the 57th, 108th, and 144th Psalms, and discover in them, if they can, anything more than references to his individual worship. The 81st is attributed to Asaph, and may well have been composed after the dedication of the temple.

It may also be observed, while this Psalm is under notice, that the argument derived from it in favor of the early use of musical instruments by the Israelites has no value. The words are: "Take a psalm, and bring hither the timbrel, the pleasant harp with the psaltery. Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn feast day. For this was a statute for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob. This he ordained in Joseph for a testimony, when he went out through the land of Egypt." The statute, law, ordinance here mentioned manifestly relates especially to the feast of the Passover, which, when it occurred at the new moon, was attended with the solemn blowing of trumpets, as the parallel passage shows: Ex. xiii. 8, 9, 14-16. If this is not deemed satisfactory, let the statute, law or ordinance be pointed out which enforced the use of timbrels, harps and psalteries upon the Israelites in connection with their exodus from Egypt. Until that is done loose assertion will avail nothing.

The ninety-second Psalm is anonymous, and refers to individual worship. The thirty-third, which is anonymous, does not necessarily relate to public worship. The ninety-eighth, one hundred and forty-ninth and one hundred and fiftieth are also anonymous, and, while they summon all

creatures to praise God, cannot be proved to have reference to the public worship of his house. But if they do, so far as they inculcate the use of instruments they relate to a ceremonial and typical worship.

Unless, therefore, the temple-worship, in which alone that sort of music as an accompaniment of singing in public worship was divinely authorized, can be legitimately brought over into the New Testament dispensation, the appeal to the Psalms in favor of instruments in the public worship of the Christian church is destitute of the slightest force.

In the second place, the argument from the Psalms proves too much, and is therefore worthless. In the fifty-first Psalm, which has been in all ages since its incorporation into the sacred canon a vehicle for expressing the penitential confessions of God's people, David prays: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." The hyssop dipped into the blood of the paschal lamb was used to sprinkle the lintels and door-posts of the Israelites, as a token of their salvation from the doom which impended over the first-born of Egypt, and as a type of a greater deliverance to be afterwards accomplished by God's appointed Lamb. (Ex. xii. 21-24.) It was also employed in connection with the cleansing of the leper (Lev. xiv.), and with the burnt-sacrifice of the red heifer without the camp. (Num. xix.) In the fiftieth Psalm, the Lord, addressing Israel, says: "I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt-offerings to have been continually before me;" and in the conclusion of the fifty-first, David, after praying that God would do good in his good pleasure to Zion, and build the walls of Jerusalem, exclaims: "Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt-offering and whole burnt-offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar." While these passages partly refer to individual cleansing, it cannot be denied that they, far more clearly than those cited in favor of instrumental music, relate to the public worship of God's house. If, now, the argument holds good, which is derived from the Psalms in support of the use of instruments in the public worship of the Christian church, it equally holds in justification of the offering of bloody sacrifices in that worship. The absurdity of the consequence completely refutes the argument.

The only way in which I can conceive that an attempt may be made to evade the point of this fatal consideration, is by maintaining that the sacrifices of the ancient worship were types which have been abolished in consequence of their fulfilment by Christ, the great expiatory sacrifice, but that instrumental music was not typical, and therefore remains. One can now see why the preceding argument, to prove the typical character of instrumental music as a part of the temp-

le worship, was so elaborately pressed, and sustained by so long a *catena* of authorities. If that argument was conclusive, this method of escape is nothing worth. Only what was generic, essential, permanent in the worship of God's ancient people passes over into the new economy; what was specific, accidental, temporary has vanished with the old; and it has been shown by conclusive proofs that to the latter kind of worship instrumental music must be assigned. It was a temporary environment by which it pleased God to surround the singing of his praise, and as typical it has been stripped away by its fulfilment in the copious effusion of the Holy Spirit, and the glorious effects of his grace in applying the accomplished atonement of Christ. We are Christians. Jews we are, if believers, "inwardly," as Paul declares; Jews as we are the spiritual seed of Abraham, and partake of his faith, as we possess, at least are entitled to possess, and possess more fully, the benefits of that unchanging covenant of grace which, in its *essential* provisions was administered in the Patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations, is administered in the Christian, and will, in the Heavenly, be administered "throughout all ages, world without end." Jews we are not, as says the same apostle, "outwardly;" Jews, not by carnal descent or national lineage, not as bound by the positive enactments of the ceremonial law, not as subject to the *accidental* provisions, the specific, peculiar, typical elements which constituted the temporary shell of that immutable covenant.

This argument from the Old Testament Scriptures proves vastly too much. Those who have most urgently insisted upon it have acted with logical consistency in importing priests into the New Testament church; and as priests suppose sacrifices, lo, the sacrifice of the Mass! Instrumental music may not seem to stand upon the same foot with that monstrous corruption, but the principle which underlies both is the same; and *that* whether we are content with a single instrument, the cornet, the bass-viol, the organ, or go on by a natural development to the orchestral art, the cathedral pomps, and all the spectacular magnificence of Rome. We are Christians, and we are untrue to Christ and to the Spirit of grace when we resort to the abrogated and forbidden ritual of the Jewish temple.

(To be continued)

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The Christian man is not the product of the regenerative forces of nature under however divine a direction; he is not an "evolution" out of the natural man: he is a new creation. . . We confess that it was God who made us men: let us confess with equal heartiness that it is God who makes us Christians.

— B. B. Warfield

## *Religious Terms Defined*

A few definitions of important religious terms will be given in this department in each issue of "Blue Banner Faith and Life". The aim will be conciseness without the sacrifice of accuracy. Where possible the Westminster Shorter Catechism will be quoted.

**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 not sufficient without personal trust.

**TEMPORARY FAITH.** A faith with 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 Calvin-

istic 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 irresistibility 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 five truths by which Calvinism is distinguished from 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 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. 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 imputed (reckoned) 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 vacuously 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 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 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).

**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 man 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" (1 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.

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## *Some Noteworthy Quotations*

Our faith, and all right worship of God, depend, in no small degree, upon our knowledge of the doctrine of predestination.

— Martin Luther

I do maintain that the Shorter Catechism, with its marvellous comprehensiveness and its faithfulness to Scripture, with its solemnity and its tenderness, is the truest and noblest summary of what the Bible teaches that I have ever seen.

— J. Gresham Machen

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

— The Belgic Confession

The highest privilege of New Testament saints is to be partakers of the inheritance promised to Abraham.

— Charles Hodge

There is little we touch but we leave the print of our fingers behind.

— Richard Baxter

I see mustering within the ranks of the Church of God men who say they hate all creeds, meaning that they despise all truth, men who would fain be ministers amongst us and yet tread under foot all that we hold sacred, not teaching at first the fulness of their infidelity, but little by little gathering courage to vent their unbeliefs and heresies. Credophobia is maddening many. They appear to hope there is something good to be found in Atheism, or devil worship, — indeed in all religions except the only true one.

— Charles H. Spurgeon

Let us have comfort, for despite all that can be done by men and devils not one elect soul shall be lost, not one soul redeemed by blood shall be snatched out of the Redeemer's hand. Christ shall

not lose so much as a grain of glory, neither in earth nor in heaven.

— Charles H. Spurgeon

Church membership today often means nothing more, as has well been said, than a vague admiration for the moral character of Jesus; the Church in countless communities is little more than a Rotary Club.

— J. Gresham Machen

The Bible is fitted and intended, when rightly used and improved, to be far more extensively useful and effectual, as a rule or standard of faith and practice, than men commonly suppose or experience.

— William Cunningham

It is an evidence that we are gracious men if we can look upon the lives of others that are better than we, and love and esteem them glorious.

— Richard Sibbes

Spiritual convincing is not total in this life, but always leaves in the heart some dregs of doubting. As a ship that rides at anchor is tossed, but the anchor holds it, so it is with the soul that is convinced weakly; it is sure of the main, yet it is tossed with many doubts and fears, but the anchor is in heaven.

— Richard Sibbes

Every sin is a kind of cursing God in the heart (Job 1:5), an aim at the destruction of the being of God, not actually, but virtually; not in the intention of every sinner, but in the nature of every sin. That affection which excites a man to break His law, would execute him to annihilate His being if it were in his power. A man in every sin aims to set up his own will as his rule, and his own glory as the end of his actions, against the will and glory of God; and could a sinner attain his end,

God would be destroyed. God cannot outlive His will and His glory; God cannot have another rule than His own will, nor another end that His honor.

— Stephen Charnock

The Lord Jesus Christ hath instituted Church Discipline, in order to remove scandals, and prevent their unhappy effects; and no Church can, without the faithful and spiritual application of it hope for His countenance and blessing.

— R. P. Testimony

The impartial and prudent exercise of Church Discipline is useful for vindicating the honor of Jesus Christ, maintaining the dignity of His ordinances, preserving the purity of the Church, averting the judgments of God, and for the benefit of the offender himself, that by the administration of this ordinance of Christ, through grace, he may be humbled and recovered.

— R. P. Testimony

Experience shows that the neglect of disci-

pline is speedily followed by corruption of worship, of doctrine and of government.

— R. P. Book of Discipline

The Kingdom of God among men is nothing else than a restoration to a happy life; or, in other words, it is true and everlasting happiness.

— John Calvin

The beginning of true nobility comes when a man ceases to be interested in the judgment of men, and becomes interested in the judgment of God.

— J. Gresham Machen

Open communion logically leads to open church membership, and a church membership open to all, without reference to the qualifications required in Scripture, or without examination on the part of the church as to the existence of these qualifications in those who unite with it, is virtually an identification of the church with the world, and, without protest from Scripturally constituted bodies, would finally result in its actual extinction.

— Augustus Hopkins Strong

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## *Studies in Old Testament History*

### LESSON 36

#### THE LIFE OF JACOB. GENESIS CHAPTER 27

Chapter 27 opens with Isaac in advanced age, his eyesight failing — if indeed he was not already totally blind. The patriarch's age at this point is computed as 137 years (cf. 25:26; 31:38; 41:46; 47:9). At this time Jacob was about 77 years old, and Esau of course was of the same age. The common idea that Jacob at the time of his going to Laban was a mere youth in his teens is therefore contrary to the facts.

Isaac evidently feels that his death is approaching. It is possible that he was influenced by the fact that his half-brother Ishmael had died at the age of 137 years (25:17). As a matter of fact, Isaac lived 43 more years, and died at the age of 180 years (35:28, 29). But the patriarch of course did not know that he still had 43 years to live. Some commentators have supposed that Isaac had been sick and that this led him to suppose that his death was near.

Believing that he would soon die (27:2) Isaac calls for his son Esau, who seems to have been his favorite. Esau is commanded to take his bow and arrows and shoot a deer, that he may prepare venison such as Isaac loved. Isaac will eat the venison and bless Esau before he dies.

This raises the problem how Isaac could propose to give the blessing to Esau, knowing as he did that God had chosen Jacob (25:32). True

Isaac's action is overruled by God, and Jacob gets the blessing, but still we cannot understand how as godly a man as Isaac could disregard so clear a revelation of God's purpose as 25:23. Leupold's comment is perhaps the best explanation possible: "He that knows the duplicity and treachery of the human heart will not find it difficult to understand how a man will circumvent a word of God, no matter how clear it be, if his heart is really set on what is at variance with that word" (Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, II, p. 736).

Isaac's request for venison reminds us that conditions have changed vastly in Palestine since the days of the Patriarchs. There is little or no forest in Palestine today except the rank jungle at the bottom of the Jordan Valley. In Patriarchal times, however, a large part of the country was still wooded. The watershed ridge and the western slope were heavily forested (Unger, *Archaeology and the Old Testament*, p. 113).

It seems to have been a custom of those times that pious men should pronounce a formal blessing upon their sons before their death. In the case of ordinary godly people, such blessing would be the expression of pious wishes or perhaps we could regard them as equivalent to a prayer. But the blessing which Isaac proposed to pronounce upon his son involves more than this. It involves a supernatural factor and is really a prophecy.

We may say that it is not merely a wish or a prayer for the blessing, but a conferring of the blessing. God would honor it and it would come true in due time. That the blessing was regarded as being supernaturally effective is proved by Isaac's statement in 27:33 ("I have blessed him. Yea, and he shall be blessed").

The question has been asked, Why did Isaac want to partake of specially prepared venison before pronouncing the patriarchal blessing? Some have suggested that he needed this to get bodily strength to pronounce a good blessing. Others have supposed that it was needed for a psychological reason, to get Isaac in the proper mood for the occasion. Leupold rejects both of these ideas, holding that the probable reason was that a festive meal would impart solemnity to the occasion.

The expression "that my soul may bless thee" requires some explanation. While the word "soul" is often used without any distinctive meaning, being simply the equivalent of "I" or "me" still in the present case more seems to be meant than merely "that I may bless thee." The use of the word "soul" here seems to imply that Isaac's inner or deepest personality would participate in imparting the blessing on his son.

Esau, as instructed, has gone off to the hills to hunt deer. Meantime, Rebekah becomes active. She was eavesdropping when Isaac gave his instructions to Esau. Immediately she forms a scheming plot to gain the blessing for Jacob, her favorite son, instead of Esau. The story of how Rebekah conspired with Jacob to deceive Isaac is too well known to require long discussion. Goat meat is to be prepared as imitation venison; Jacob is to be fitted out with goat-skin to make him resemble his hairy brother Esau; Jacob is to impersonate Esau and gain the blessing by deceiving his blind father as to his identity.

As to the cleverness of this scheme there can be no question. Its cleverness is shown by the fact that it worked. The ethics of Rebekah's clever plan are however open to serious question. Calvin in his Commentary on Genesis is very outspoken as to the wrongness of Rebekah's action: "And surely the stratagem of Rebekah was not without fault; for although she could not guide her husband by salutary counsel, yet it was not a legitimate method of acting, to circumvent him by such deceit. For, as a lie is in itself culpable, she sinned more grievously still in this, that she desired to sport in a sacred matter with such wiles. She knew that the decree by which Jacob had been elected and adopted was immutable; why then does she not patiently wait till God shall confirm it in fact, and shall show that what he had once pronounced from heaven is certain? Therefore, she darkens the celestial oracle by her

lie, and abolishes, as far as she was able, the grace promised to her son." Calvin goes on to say that Rebekah's motive was a good one, even though her method was wrong. She was actuated by faith in the revealed promise of God.

Jacob, instructed by his mother, cooperates in her plan. The imitation venison is prepared; the rough goat skins are placed upon Jacob's smooth hands and neck. Thus prepared and coached by his mother, he enters his blind father's presence intent upon obtaining the patriarchal blessing by deceit.

#### Questions:

1. How old was Isaac at the opening of Chapter 27?
2. How old was Jacob at this same time?
3. What was Isaac's physical condition at the time?
4. What may have led him to think he would die soon?
5. How can we explain Isaac's preferential treatment of Esau when he knew the divine revelation of 25:23?
6. How much of Palestine was forested in patriarchal times?
7. How much of Palestine is forested at the present day?
8. What custom is reflected in Isaac's desire to bless his son?
9. How did the blessing pronounced by Isaac differ from the blessing any godly father might invoke upon his son?
10. What may have been Isaac's reason for wishing to partake of venison before blessing Esau?
11. What is implied by the use of the word "soul" in the expression "that my soul may bless thee"?
12. What was Rebekah's scheme for getting the patriarchal blessing for Jacob?
13. What can be said about the ethics of Rebekah's scheme?
14. What was Calvin's view of Rebekah's actions?

## LESSON 37

## THE LIFE OF JACOB, CONTINUED

When Rebekah's scheme was first proposed to her son Jacob, he raised an objection: "Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man: my father peradventure will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver; and I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing" (27:12). It should be noted here that Jacob is not objecting to the use of deceit on the ground that it is wrong, but because of the probability of getting caught. He does not shrink from sin, but only from the consequences of sin. This shows us how far short Jacob fell at this time from God's standard of moral uprightness. He is not worried about the sin of deceiving his father, but only about the difficulty of doing so successfully.

As for his mother Rebekah, her aim was clearly to obtain the covenant blessing for her son Jacob. That Jacob was destined to have this blessing was already a certainty, from the divine revelation and promise of 25:23. But Rebekah feels that she must do something to help make the promise come true, and she does not hesitate to use means which are sinful to accomplish her purpose. Rebekah in this situation is therefore doing evil that good may come. This was overruled by God and all worked out toward the accomplishment of the real divine plan. But certainly this history, with its use of unethical means, should serve to remind us that God's election is not based upon man's character and conduct but upon the sovereign grace of God. God did not choose these people because they were morally upright; on the contrary, they finally became upright because God had chosen them.

The fact that all this history was the working out of the purpose of God, of course in no way excuses the human sin that was involved. God makes the wrath of man to praise Him, it is true, but man is guilty nonetheless. Nor can unethical methods, such as the use of deceit, be excused because they are used with the intention of accomplishing a good purpose.

In addition to the goat skin disguise, Jacob was also dressed in Esau's clothes (27:15). These were "goodly garments", that is, they were Esau's better clothes, which he would wear on special occasions. Thus Rebekah overlooks nothing that might help to deceive her husband.

The imitation venison is ready at last, and Jacob, fully disguised, takes the meat, with bread,

to his father Isaac. In the next few minutes Jacob tells one lie after another (verses 19, 20, 24). Particularly outrageous is Jacob's lie in answer to the question how he had killed a deer so quickly (verse 20): "Because the Lord thy God brought it to me." Leupold calls this "almost the most flagrant instance of abuse of the divine name recorded anywhere in the Scriptures." Jacob attributes to God's providence what in reality was only his own deceit.

Although Isaac is somewhat suspicious, especially because "the voice is Jacob's voice" (27:22), he finally decides that the weight of the evidence shows that it is Esau that he is dealing with. Accordingly, he eats the venison and drinks the wine which Jacob has brought, and then proceeds to pronounce the patriarchal blessing upon him.

"And his father Isaac said unto him, Come near now, and kiss me, my son. And he came near, and kissed him. . . ." (27:26, 27). This is the first occurrence in the Bible of the kiss as a token of love. Jacob does not hesitate to use this token of love as a part of his program of deceit. We recall the treachery of Joab (2 Sam. 20:9, 10) and the base act of Judas in betraying our Lord with a kiss (Luke 22:47, 48).

**Questions:**

1. What objection did Jacob raise to his mother's scheme?
2. What was Jacob seeking to avoid?
3. Why is it wrong to do evil that good may come?
4. What does this story, with its use of unethical means, show concerning God's election?
5. Why is not sin excusable on the ground that it accomplishes God's purpose in the end?
6. What disguise did Jacob use in addition to goat skin on his hands and neck?
7. How many lies did Jacob tell after entering his father's presence?
8. Why is Jacob's lie recorded in 27:20 particularly flagrant?
9. What was shameful in Jacob's kissing his father?
10. What parallels exist in the Bible to Jacob's misuse of the kiss?

## LESSON 38

## THE LIFE OF JACOB, CONTINUED

The blessing which Isaac pronounced upon Jacob is recorded in 27:27-29. The language used

is poetical, as shown both by poetic Hebrew words and by the parallel structure. While Hebrew

poetry is devoid of rhyme and does not have metre as we think of it, it is marked by parallelism, that is, by expressing the same thought over again in different words. Note the parallels which occur in these three verses:

“God give thee of the dew of heaven — and the fatness of the earth.”

“Let people serve thee — and nations bow down to thee.”

“Be lord over thy brethren — and let thy mother’s sons bow down to thee.”

“Cursed be every one that curseth thee — and blessed be he that blesseth thee.”

Sometimes the second member of a parallelism expresses the same thought as the first member, sometimes a similar but slightly different thought, and sometimes a contrasting thought.

Isaac has caught the smell of fragrant herbs from Esau’s clothes which Jacob is wearing. He uses this thought to suggest the blessings which will come to Jacob from the Lord: “See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed” (27:27). Naturally the good smell of earth and fields calls to mind the kindness of God. The blessings mentioned by Isaac are partly natural, and partly social or political. Fertile soil, abundant harvests — these are the natural blessings. The social and political are expressed in verse 29. Jacob (whom Isaac supposes to be Esau) is to be lord over his brethren. Besides this, those who curse him shall be cursed, and those who bless him shall be blessed.

Isaac’s blessing pronounced upon Jacob is remarkable for what it leaves out as well as for what it contains. To understand this we must keep in mind the fact that Isaac thinks he is blessing Esau. The missing element is the redemptive or Messianic promise. In Gen. 12:3 the Lord says to Abraham, “And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: **and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.**” This last promise, of course, implies that the Saviour of the world shall be born from the seed of Abraham. Later it was revealed to Abraham that this Messianic or redemptive promise should be transmitted to the future through Isaac: “In Isaac shall thy seed be called” (21:12b). Still later, divine revelation granted to Rebekah and made it clear that the Messianic promise is to be transmitted through Jacob, not through Esau (Gen.

25:23; Mal. 1:2, 3; Rom. 9:11-13). Isaac of course knew that the future of God’s redemptive program was tied to Jacob, not Esau. He naturally does not dare disregard the revelation of Gen. 25:23. If he had known that he was blessing Jacob, it would have been another matter. But as matters stood, Isaac thinks he is pronouncing a blessing upon Esau. Esau is his favorite and he wants to give him the best possible blessing, short of actually contradicting the revealed purpose of God. This may explain why the Messianic promise of 12:3b is not found at the close of 27:29. In 28:4, where Isaac knows that he is dealing with Jacob not Esau, he does not hesitate to invoke “the blessing of Abraham” upon Jacob. This “blessing of Abraham” is of course the special covenant blessing which included the Messianic promise.

It was a fine blessing that Jacob received, even though it did not include the “blessing of Abraham” and even though it was marred by the unethical manner in which Jacob and Rebekah had acted in connection with it. All of this would be overruled by God for the accomplishment of His redemptive purpose. And by the grace of God Jacob would eventually become honest and upright in his character and conduct. As Augustine said, the grace of God does not find men fit for salvation, but makes them so.

#### Questions:

1. How is the poetical character of the blessing which Isaac pronounced on Jacob shown?
2. How does Hebrew poetry differ from English poetry?
3. What is meant by “parallelism” in Hebrew poetry?
4. What instances of parallelism can be seen in the blessing?
5. What did the odor of Esau’s clothing, being worn by Jacob, call to Isaac’s mind?
6. In the blessing pronounced upon Jacob, what two elements can be distinguished?
7. What element is conspicuously absent from the blessing which Isaac pronounced upon Jacob?
8. Why would Isaac hesitate to pronounce the Messianic or redemptive blessing upon Esau?
9. What was included in the “blessing of Abraham”?

### LESSON 39

#### THE LIFE OF JACOB, CONTINUED

The stratagem of Rebekah and Jacob in obtaining the blessing was of course discovered as soon as Esau returned from his hunting and presented Isaac with the real venison stew. Esau

was understandably furious at what Jacob had done and threatened to kill him. He said he would wait, however, until the death of his father Isaac before carrying out his threat to kill Jacob.

Rebekah, alarmed at the danger to Jacob, proposes to Isaac that Jacob leave home for a time and go to Mesopotamia to her old home. This proposal is made on the plea that it would be a tragedy for Jacob to marry one of the local women — Rebekah wants him to marry a godly woman from among her own kindred.

Isaac agrees to Rebekah's proposal, and Jacob is sent to Padanaram with the approval of both his parents. Before his departure from home he is given a further blessing, and this time it is the real "blessing of Abraham" conveying the redemptive promise:

"And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people; and give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham" (28:3, 4). The term here translated "God Almighty" is *El Shaddai* (cf. 17:1; 35:11; 48:3; Ex. 6:3). This divine name stresses the sovereignty and power of God. Salvation and all blessings depend ultimately upon the fact that God is almighty. Without the almighty power of God there could be no Christianity. Note here how God is regarded as the source of all good and the one who takes the initiative and carries out the redemptive purpose. God is the Agent of redemption; man is only the recipient of redemption. So everything is ascribed to God. It would be an anachronism to call Isaac a Calvinist, yet Calvinism is precisely that system which ascribes all our salvation and good solely to the power and grace of God. The Reformed or Calvinistic theology is deeply rooted in the Biblical conception of God, which is so clearly exemplified by such passages as the one we are considering.

The blessing now given to Jacob on the occasion of his departure to go to Mesopotamia is "the blessing of Abraham" (28:4). Therefore it includes the specifically Messianic element. Isaac is now no longer seeking to give the main blessing to Esau contrary to the plan of God. He now willingly and freely invokes the Messianic blessing on Jacob. This promise includes a numerous posterity and the possession of the land of Canaan. By implication it includes what God had promised in addition to Abraham, namely that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed — that is, that the redemption of the world from sin would finally come through one descendant from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Thus blessed by his father Jacob leaves home for Padan-aram where his uncle Laban lived.

"And Jacob went out from Beer-sheba, and went toward Haran" (28:10). The last clause may be translated "and came to Haran." The verse exemplifies something that is common in the Old Testament, namely the use of a topic

sentence which briefly states the whole matter, after which the details are given in following sentences.

"And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night" (28:11). The common notion that this was Jacob's first stopping place after leaving home is without foundation. This "certain place" was the locality originally called Luz, and later named Bethel. It was a good 70 miles or more from Beer-sheba. Obviously Jacob could not have traveled that far in a single day. The record does not state that he was travelling on foot, nor on the other hand does it mention his riding a donkey or other beast. Even if mounted, however, he could not cover the 70 miles distance in one day. Moreover, there was no need for urgent haste. Esau's plan was not to murder Jacob at once, but only after the death of Isaac. So we may conclude that the night at Bethel, where Jacob had his vision of the ladder, was perhaps his third or fourth night away from home.

Jacob has reached a "certain place" (which we later learn was called Luz, later called Bethel), and because the sun had set, he stops there all night. No doubt Jacob was accustomed to a shepherd's outdoor life and would not hesitate to sleep under the stars with a stone for a headrest. It is said that shepherds in Palestine and Syria often do the same at the present day.

During that night Jacob dreams a dream of a ladder set up on the earth, the top of which reaches heaven, and the angels of God are seen ascending and descending on it. This is the first known divine revelation granted to Jacob, but by no means the last. The ladder seen in the dream was alluded to by our Lord in his statement to Nathanael (John 1:51). In view of this statement of our Lord, we may say that the ladder seen by Jacob represents Christ, the Mediator between God and man, who bridges the gap between heaven and earth.

#### Questions:

1. What was Esau's attitude toward Jacob when he found that Jacob had succeeded in obtaining the blessing?
2. What does Esau's attitude show concerning his real character?
3. What course of action did Rebekah enjoin upon Jacob?
4. How did Rebekah gain Isaac's consent for Jacob to leave home?
5. What may be said about the ethics of Rebekah's way of gaining Isaac's consent?
6. What is the Hebrew term for God which is translated as "God Almighty" in Genesis 28:3?

7. What does this divine name emphasize concerning God?

8. What is the relation of the idea of God represented by this name to the Biblical doctrine of salvation?

9. What was included in the blessing invoked on Jacob on the occasion of his departure from home?

10. What literary device common in the Old Testament is exemplified by Gen. 28:10?

11. How may the last clause of Gen. 28:10 be translated?

12. How far was the "certain place" mentioned in verse 11 from Beer-Sheba?

13. How long may this have been after Jacob's departure from home?

14. Why would it not be a great hardship for Jacob to sleep under the stars with a stone for a pillow?

15. What did Jacob see in his dream?

16. What statement of Christ contains an allusion to Jacob's dream?

17. What may the ladder have symbolized?

## LESSON 40

### THE LIFE OF JACOB, CONTINUED

What Jacob saw in his dream was accompanied by what he heard. "And behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac. . ." (28:13). God reveals Himself to Jacob, not simply as God, but as Jehovah, the God of Abraham and Isaac — the God, therefore, of the gracious covenant promises.

These gracious promises are now repeated and confirmed to Jacob. What was implied in the "blessing of Abraham" invoked upon the departing Jacob by Isaac, is now specifically promised to Jacob by God Himself. As in the case of Abraham, three great promises are included: (1) the promise of inheritance of the land; (2) the promise of a very numerous posterity; and (3) the promise that in Jacob and his seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. We have already considered the meaning of these promises in a previous lesson on the history of Abraham.

To these great covenant promises there is now added another which specifically promises divine guidance and protection to Jacob: "And behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of" (29:15).

We should note the sovereign, gracious, unconditional character of these promises made to Jacob. God takes the initiative and undertakes to bring all these things to pass. The promises are not made contingent upon Jacob's faithfulness; rather, they proceed from God's faithfulness. This divine initiative and monergism (it all starts with God and all the power is of God) is the very heart of what is known as Calvinism or the Reformed Faith. Calvin did not invent this theology; neither did Augustine or the Apostle Paul. It is deeply imbedded in the Scriptures, and in the Old Testament no less than in the New. Calvinism does not depend upon a special

interpretation of a few selected texts; it is the very warp and woof of the Bible, it is woven into its very texture and built into its very structure.

It has been held by some commentators that Jacob must have repented of his misdeeds and wrong attitudes before this revelation of God could have been granted to him. If he had repented already, there is no mention of it in the passage. The only thing that could in anyway suggest it is the fact that he obeyed his father and mother in leaving home. But this does not necessarily imply any spiritual change on Jacob's part. To leave home was the sensible thing to do, in view of the fact that Esau was planning to kill him. Whether Jacob was at this point truly repentant and truly in a right subjective relationship to God, we cannot say. But at any rate we are safe in saying that his receiving a revelation from God does not imply that he was already repentant. It can with equal plausibility be argued that Jacob's repentance was the result of his having been granted this revelation.

"And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven" (28:16, 17) Jacob's reaction to the divine revelation is a reverential awe. Jacob's statement, "the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not," must not be taken as implying that Jacob thought of God as limited to a particular locality. The Hebrew patriarchs knew more about God than modern critical scholars are willing to concede to them. Jacob must have had some knowledge of the spirituality and omnipresence of God. God is everywhere, He fills all things (this is sometimes called the cosmic presence of God). But God does not manifest Himself everywhere as the Lord, Jehovah, the covenant God of grace and redemption and revelation. Jacob's statement, "the Lord is in this place, and I knew it not" means "This is a

place where God manifests Himself as Jehovah; I had not realized that before."

"How dreadful is this place!" Jacob is filled with awe and wonder. This sense of awe and wonder seems to be largely lacking from the popular religion of our own day. Many people — sometimes even ministers in their public prayers — seem overly familiar in their approaches to God. Whereas the Bible speaks constantly of the fear of God, people today prefer to speak of religion as "a personal relationship to God" or "accepting Christ" — modes of expression which tend to obscure the divine majesty, and to regard God and man as more or less equal partners in a project.

"This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven" (28:17b). It was "the house of God" and "the gate of heaven" because in that spot God had supernaturally revealed Himself as Jehovah, the God of redemption. And surely such a spot would be regarded as holy ground. For God might reveal Himself there again; or at any rate, it would be a suitable spot for worshipping God and offering sacrifices to Him.

In the morning, Jacob set up the stone that he had used for a head-rest as a marker to identify the spot. He poured oil on the top of it, as a sign that it was marked as sacred and special. Possibly the oil may be regarded as a sort of token sacrifice (cf. 35:14), though this is not certain.

Jacob named the place Bethel, which means "House of God" ("Beth" means "house" and "El" means "God"). Moses adds that the name of the city was originally Luz. Presumably Jacob had slept out in the open country. The city mentioned, if it had already been built, must have been located somewhere not far away; or it is possible that it was built by the Canaanites between the time of Jacob and the time of Moses, and called Luz by the Canaanites, though the site was called Bethel by Jacob (and, of course, by the later Israelites).

Next we read of Jacob's vow. This is part of his response to the divine revelation with its gracious promises. Since God has promised him safety, protection and everything needful, so that he is assured of returning home to his father's house in peace, Jacob confesses "then shall the Lord be my God." Spurgeon once preached a remarkable sermon upon the brief phrase "My God" which occurs many times in the Scriptures. To possess God as "my God" in the true sense is to have the sum total of all good— forgiveness, salvation, eternal life, all are included in this covenant relationship to the living God. God has granted gracious promises to Jacob. Jacob responds by declaring that Jehovah shall be his God.

This confession of Jehovah as "his God" will be outwardly manifested in two ways. First, the stone which has been set up shall remain as a marker of a spot dedicated to the worship of Jehovah; and secondly, of all that God gives Jacob, he will surely give the tenth part back to God.

The "if" in verse 20 should be understood in the sense of "since" or "because" — "inasmuch as". Jacob is not bargaining with God and trying to obtain blessings on a commercial basis. The blessings have already been promised him upon an absolutely unconditional and gracious basis, which Jacob doubtless understood. In verses 20-22 Jacob is not bargaining with God; he is responding to God's gracious promises. God will take care of Jacob; therefore the Lord shall be Jacob's God and this will not be a mere profession, formal and empty, but it is to be manifested in Jacob's daily life.

This is the second reference to the tithe in the Bible, the first being in the history of Abraham (14:20). Nothing is said as to the disposition of Jacob's tithes. Possibly they were to be used to maintain Bethel as a sacred place unto the Lord. Obviously in that day when religion was constituted upon a patriarchal basis and there was neither temple nor tabernacle, priesthood nor ministry, home missions nor foreign missions, Jacob's tithes could not be expended for objects similar to those for which the tithes of God's people are expended today. This is one of the matters concerning which the Bible does not satisfy our curiosity. It tells us what we need to know, not all that we would like to know.

#### Questions:

1. How did God introduce Himself to Jacob?
2. What three great promises were confirmed to Jacob?
3. What special additional promise was given to him?
4. What is meant by the divine initiative and monergism?
5. What is meant by saying that the promises made to Jacob were sovereign, gracious and unconditional?
6. What can be said about the question of whether Jacob had repented of his sins before he received the revelation from God at Bethel?
7. What was Jacob's reaction to the divine revelation that had been granted him?
8. What did Jacob mean by his statement, "The Lord is in this place, and I knew it not"?
9. What evidences are there that the sense of awe and wonder at the greatness of God is lacking in present-day popular religion?

10. What did Jacob mean by saying that the place where he had had his dream was the house of God and the gate of heaven?

11. How did Jacob mark the spot?

12. What may have been the meaning of pouring oil on the stone?

13. What is the meaning of the name "Bethel"?

14. What vow did Jacob make in response to God's promises?

15. How was Jacob's allegiance to God to be manifested in his daily life?

16. What may have been the use to which Jacob's tithes were put?

## LESSON 41

### THE LIFE OF JACOB, CONTINUED

We have come to chapter 29, which narrates Jacob's arrival at the home of his uncle Laban. "Then Jacob went on his journey, and came into the land of the people of the east" (29:1). This expression, "the land of the people of the east," as used here, evidently means the area between Palestine and Mesopotamia. Nothing further is said about Jacob's journey through "the land of the people of the east." In verse 2 he has already arrived at Mesopotamia where his kindred lived.

Two words in verse 2 — "behold" and "lo" — indicate that the fact stated in the verse is a remarkable one, namely that Jacob had reached the very locality where his kindred lived. Jacob has reached a well where flocks of sheep were regularly watered. "A great stone was upon the well's mouth." Discoveries in Bible lands indicate that such wells ordinarily were not springs of "living water" but rather supplies of stored-up water. The narrative explains that it was the custom to wait until all the flocks of the various shepherds were assembled, then open the well, water the sheep, and cover the well again. In verse 7 Jacob expresses surprise that they should be waiting there with sheep long before evening, thus losing time that could be spent in grazing, but he is told that the sheep cannot be watered until all have arrived. This apparently means that there was a common custom or agreement that the well was to be opened but once, for all the flocks together, and some shepherds would arrive early in the hope of being first to water their sheep; then they would have to wait there in idleness until the rest had arrived.

Jacob inquires of the shepherds as to whence they are and is told that they are of Haran. Asked whether they know Laban the son of Nahor, they reply that they do. It seems that Jacob and these shepherds spoke the same language, or at any rate that his language and theirs were close enough that they could understand each other without difficulty. Doubtless Jacob was surprised to learn that he had arrived at his exact destination. He inquires whether Laban is well, and is told that such is the case. In addition, Jacob is told that Rachel, Laban's daughter, is soon to arrive with a flock of sheep. Very likely Jacob may have wished that the shepherds would water their

sheep and move on, while they on their part wanted to be present to witness the meeting of Jacob and Rachel.

Presently Rachel arrived with her father's sheep. Jacob first looks at Rachel, then at the sheep. Rachel, of course, was his first cousin, the daughter of his mother's brother. Jacob then by his own unaided strength removes the great stone from the top of the well, and waters Rachel's flock of sheep, no doubt to the surprise of the other shepherds who would be accustomed to move the stone by the united strength of two or three men.

First Jacob kisses Rachel, then tells her who he is. We might think it would have been more proper for him to disclose his identity first, and kiss her after that, when she knew he was her cousin. Rachel must have been rather surprised at being kissed by a total stranger. The record does not indicate whether this was "love at first sight" or only Jacob's joyous surprise at meeting one of his kindred. Jacob was evidently a man of powerful emotions, for having kissed his cousin, he "lifted up his voice, and wept" (29:11). After this, Jacob tells Rachel that he is "her father's brother", that is, her father's relative or kinsman, the son of Rebekah. Rachel in turn runs — apparently leaving the flock of sheep at the well — to tell the news to her father.

We have met Laban earlier in the book of Genesis. It was in chapter 24 where he as Rebekah's brother took a leading part in the negotiations for the marriage of Rebekah to Isaac. In the same chapter Laban's acquisitive nature was brought out, when having noted the valuable gold nose-ring and bracelets displayed by his sister, he said to Abraham's servant, "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord; wherefore standest thou without?" (24:31). As we shall soon see, Laban has not changed in character but continues true to form.

Laban runs to the well to meet Jacob, greets him according to custom, and brings him to the family home as a guest. Jacob then gives Laban a report of himself, including no doubt how he came to meet with Rachel, and perhaps also his reasons for leaving his home.

Laban treats Jacob as a welcome guest, say-

ing "Surely thou art my bone and my flesh" (29:14), that is, a near relative who would have a special claim to hospitality. Jacob remains there as a guest in the household for one month.

Next Laban proposes a more permanent arrangement. He recognizes that Jacob will make a competent shepherd, and proposes that he, Laban, shall employ him at wages to be agreed upon. This proposal of Laban may have been in good faith, even though we know that Laban was a selfish and tricky person in his dealings with others.

The record states that Laban had two daughters, of which the elder was Leah and the younger Rachel. Leah means "wild cow," while Rachel means "ewe." Leah was "tender-eyed," Leupold in his commentary states that this does not imply any diseased condition nor even defective vision, but merely the lack of "that clear-cut brilliance and lustre that the Orientals love" (Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, II, p. 793). Rachel, on the other hand, is described as "beautiful and well-favored," that is, beautiful in form and looks (Leupold). Jacob definitely prefers Rachel, and proposes to Laban that he serve him seven years for his younger daughter Rachel. We should remember that when this proposal was made, Jacob had been living in Laban's household for a month already, therefore this was not exactly a sudden proposal of marriage.

Laban agrees to Jacob's offer, saying that he would rather have his daughter marry Jacob than some other man. The offer is therefore accepted and Jacob serves the seven years that he has promised in order to marry Rachel. "And they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her" (29:20). Jacob is looking forward to marriage with his beloved Rachel, quite unsus-

pecting of the mean trick his uncle Laban is planning to play on him.

#### Questions:

1. What is meant by "the land of the people of the east"?
2. What kind of well, probably, was the well which Jacob came to?
3. Why was Jacob surprised at the gathering of the shepherds at the well long before evening?
4. What explanation of this was given him by the shepherds?
5. What did Jacob do immediately after meeting Rachel?
6. What is strange about the circumstances of Jacob's kissing Rachel?
7. Where in the Book of Genesis have we already met Laban?
8. What trait of his character was revealed there?
9. How did Laban welcome Jacob, and what hospitality was given him?
10. What arrangement does Laban propose to Jacob?
11. What is the meaning of the names Leah and Rachel?
12. What, probably, is implied by the statement that Leah was tender-eyed?
13. What agreement was made between Laban and Jacob?
14. What fact indicates Jacob's love for Rachel?

### LESSON 42

#### THE LIFE OF JACOB, CONTINUED

The seven years that Jacob promised to work for his marriage to Rachel have passed. The proper thing at this point would have been for Laban to take the initiative and arrange for the marriage feast. But the true character of Laban is suggested by the fact that he neglects to do so, thereby forcing Jacob to demand that Laban keep his agreement. "And Jacob said unto Laban, Give me my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may go in unto her" (29:21). This is a rather short and plain-spoken demand. It may be regarded as an indication that Jacob has already sized up Laban's character and realizes that he will not do the honorable thing without some pressure.

Upon Jacob's demand, Laban prepares a marriage feast. It is to be a community affair: "And Laban gathered together all the men of the place, and made a feast" (29:22). Laban's tricky char-

acter here comes more fully to light. While it was probably customary to invite the public to a marriage feast, still, as Leupold points out, this fitted in exactly with what Laban was secretly plotting. When Jacob finally finds himself married to Leah by fraud, the fact that there were many guests present at the feast will make it difficult and embarrassing for him to reject Leah. Laban, of course, is deceitfully plotting to get his elder daughter Leah married off.

"And it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter, and brought her to him; and he went in unto her" (29:23). This was indeed a mean, dishonorable and shameful trick to play on a man. Jacob's mean deceiving of his aged father Isaac is coming home to him now in personal experience. He is learning by bitter ex-

perience how it feels to be deceived by a near relative in a supremely important personal matter.

Some have wondered how Laban could deceive Jacob successfully. It has even been suggested that Jacob must have been drunk at the time, or that Laban had intentionally gotten him drunk. This supposition is quite unnecessary, and there is nothing in the narrative to support it. While it would indeed be quite impossible to palm off the wrong woman on a bridegroom at an American wedding of the present day, things were different in Mesopotamia three thousand and more years ago. Leupold in his commentary suggests several considerations which adequately explain how Laban could successfully deceive Jacob. For example, it was already dark when Leah was brought to Jacob. Probably there was no artificial illumination in the tent. Leah would be heavily veiled, according to the prevailing custom of the day. Very likely the two sisters differed only in facial appearance, not in size or height. Presumably, too, conversations would be whispered during that night, and the bride would naturally be reticent. Also betrothed persons did not associate closely prior to marriage as is customary today. These and other considerations that can be suggested seem quite sufficient to account for the possibility of Jacob having been successfully deceived by his uncle Laban.

The guilt of this shameful deceit rested primarily upon Laban, but part of the blame must be borne by Leah. Even allowing for the weight of parental authority in those days, Leah's connivance in her father's plan cannot be excused. It was a clear-cut issue of right and wrong. It is unquestionable that Leah must have realized this. The only right course would have been to refuse to be a party to such disgraceful deception. Leah could have refused when the matter was first proposed to her by her father. Or she could have revealed her true identity to Jacob as soon as she was brought to his tent. But she did not, and thereby she became guilty along with Laban of the sin that was committed. As to Leah's motives, the record gives us no information. She may have been secretly in love with Jacob; she may have been jealous of her younger sister; she may have regarded this as her last and only chance to get a husband.

Laban at the same time gives Leah Zilpah his maid for a maidservant. Leah is treated less generously than Rebekah had been, for Rebekah on the occasion of leaving home for marriage to Isaac had received both a nurse and a group of damsels (24:59, 61). The stingy character of Laban becomes more and more evident.

The next morning, of course, Laban's outrageous deceit is discovered. We can only imagine the shock that this must have been to Jacob. After patiently working seven years for Rachel, the unwanted Leah has been palmed off on him by

base trickery. The feelings of disillusionment, anger and disgust must have been mingled in Jacob's mind.

Jacob immediately takes Laban to task for his deceit. "What is this that thou hast done unto me? did I not serve with thee for Rachel? wherefore then hast thou beguiled me" (29:25). Jacob thus charges Laban not only with deceit, but with breaking his agreement.

Laban's reply is apparently based on the notion that "a poor excuse is better than none." He lamely states that the common custom of the community requires that the elder daughter be married before the younger. This may, of course, have been true. If so, the time for Laban to mention it would have been at the time of making the original agreement, not after Jacob has served seven years for the younger daughter. On the other hand, Laban may have been lying or at any rate distorting the truth. It is possible that there was only a certain amount of public opinion in favor of the elder daughter marrying first, rather than a hard and fast custom that amounted practically to law. If Laban is not actually lying, he may be exaggerating a good deal in his statement to Jacob about the local customs.

#### Questions:

1. How was the stingy and base character of Laban evidenced at the end of Jacob's seven years of service?
2. What action was Jacob forced to take to obtain his rights?
3. What preparation did Laban make for the marriage feast?
4. Why may Laban have wanted to have a large number of guests?
5. What event in Jacob's earlier life is similar to Laban's treatment of him?
6. How can we explain Laban's success in deceiving Jacob?
7. Why can Leah not be excused for her share in the deceit?
8. What may possibly have been Leah's motives?
9. What feelings must Jacob have experienced when he discovered how his uncle had deceived him?
10. What accusations did Jacob make against Laban?
11. What reply did Laban make to Jacob's charges?
12. How can it be shown that Laban's reply was insincere?

## LESSON 43

## JACOB'S RELATIONS WITH LABAN

Having blamed his deceitful conduct on the customs of the country, Laban next says to Jacob: "Fulfil her week, and we will give thee this also for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years" (29:27). This statement of Laban has sometimes been misunderstood, as if the statement "Fulfil her week" was a reference to the additional seven years of service necessary if Jacob was to marry Rachel. The idea of this interpretation is that the term "week" means a period of seven years. It is, however, highly improbable that this is the correct interpretation. Much more probable is the view that "her week" refers to the week-long festivities accompanying Jacob's marriage to Leah. That is, Laban is asking Jacob to keep up appearances as if everything were all right as to his marriage with Leah, through the week-long marriage feast.

It will be realized that if Laban has gotten Jacob into a tight spot, it is also true that Jacob has Laban in a tight spot. If Jacob now backs out of his marriage to Leah on the ground that he has been imposed upon by fraud, he will be a laughingstock of the entire community. On the other hand, if Jacob backs out of the marriage to Leah, Leah herself will be a laughingstock to the community and a permanent embarrassment to her father Laban. If Jacob refuses to keep her as his wife, certainly no one else will want to marry her. Therefore neither Jacob nor Laban is in a position to act freely as he may please. Both men are under considerable pressure of circumstances. Jacob is not in a position to insist upon his strict legal rights, because if he does he will appear as a fool to the community. Laban, on the other hand, cannot venture to press Jacob too hard, for fear that Jacob may repudiate Leah regardless of the consequences. Under these circumstances Laban makes a plea and a proposal which Jacob decides to accept.

Under the circumstances, Jacob's attitude toward Laban seems remarkably meek. It is possible that this is partly caused by Jacob's guilty conscience concerning the somewhat similar deceit which he had perpetrated upon his aged father Isaac. Perhaps Jacob sees the justice of God in the fact that he, erstwhile deceiver, is now the victim of deceit. This may have led Jacob to expostulate only mildly to Laban concerning the latter's outrageous conduct.

Laban was probably somewhat surprised that Jacob did not become violently angry. Perhaps Laban, noting the rather meek and mild character of Jacob's reaction to the fraud, decides to be as reasonable as possible, and let Jacob have Rachel after all. However, the stingy meanness of Laban comes to light in this also. He proposes to give Rachel to Jacob, but only on condition that Jacob

shall serve an additional seven years for Rachel. In view of the fact that Jacob has already served seven years for Rachel, according to agreement, and never did want Leah, and has been grievously tricked into marrying the unwanted Leah, it would seem that this latest proposal of Laban involved a remarkable amount of "cheek" or "nerve." One would think that the proper thing would have been for Laban to apologize humbly for his deceitful conduct, beg Jacob to keep Leah as a matter of grace, and immediately give him Rachel without demand for further service. But it is not in Laban to do anything out of sheer justice, let alone anything out of generosity. So, even though in a sense Jacob has him in a tight place, Laban proceeds to drive an additional hard bargain. Jacob can have Rachel, but to obtain her he must first go through the week's feast of Leah's marriage, and then he must agree to work seven more years for Rachel. Jacob, under the circumstances, agrees to this proposal.

The question has been raised as to whether Jacob married Rachel before or after the second seven years of service. It has sometimes been assumed that the marriage to Rachel did not take place until the second seven years of service had been actually rendered — in other words that Jacob really had to serve Laban for fourteen years before he could marry Rachel. The probability is that this view is incorrect, and that Rachel was given to Jacob immediately after the completion of the week's festivities of the marriage to Leah. This is Leupold's view of the matter. He states: "Then, not waiting till the second period of seven years' service was terminated, Laban at once gave Rachel to Jacob. Very likely, Laban sensed that Jacob would be adamant in insisting on his right, at least on this one point, and so Laban conceded what could not be avoided" (Exposition of Genesis, II, p. 799).

An ethical question may be raised as to the moral rightness of Jacob continuing to keep Leah as his wife, and also as to the moral rightness of Jacob being a polygamist. In law a marriage brought about by fraud is not valid and can be annulled by a court order. Jacob had been tricked into marrying Leah by fraud. He could have rejected her as soon as the fraud was discovered without guilt. Originally the marriage between Jacob and Leah was not a true marriage because it was not based upon free consent between the parties. Later, however, it seems clear that real love, and therefore consent, came to exist between Jacob and Leah. As to the moral rightness of a polygamous marriage, it must be pronounced wrong in the sense of being out of accord with the original institution of marriage as ordained by God. However, polygamy was an evil which

existed as a matter of fact in the Old Testament period, and while not sanctioned or condoned by God, it was temporarily tolerated until in the course of time it would be eliminated by the greater religious enlightenment and progress of the people of Israel. It is with this consideration in view that the conduct of Jacob should be appraised.

#### Questions:

1. How has Laban's request to Jacob, "Fulfil her week," often been misunderstood?
2. What is probably the true meaning of Laban's request to Jacob to "Fulfil her week"?
3. What embarrassing situation has Laban gotten Jacob into?

4. Why was Laban not in a position to act with complete freedom?

5. What may be the reason for Jacob's meekness in dealing with Laban?

6. How does the mean, stingy character of Laban come to light in his next proposal?

7. What would have been the proper thing for Laban to do under the circumstances?

8. Why did Laban probably give Rachel to Jacob at the beginning rather than the end of the second seven years of service?

9. What can be said about the moral rightness of Jacob's continuing the marriage to Leah?

10. What is the status of polygamy in the Old Testament?

### LESSON 44

#### JACOB'S RETURN TO THE LAND OF CANAAN

Rebekah had sent her son Jacob away from home for "a few days", intending to send for him as soon as Esau's murderous wrath had cooled off. However, the "few days" stretched into more than twenty years. She never did send for Jacob; finally she died without having sent for him. Jacob, who only wanted to marry Rachel, had been tricked by Laban into marriage with Leah, and had to work fourteen years in payment for Laban's daughters. Later Rachel and Leah persuaded Jacob to take two maidservants, Bilhah and Zilpah, as concubines, so Jacob became involved in a four-way polygamous marriage. He also worked six more years for Laban for compensation in the form of live stock. By the blessing of God, Jacob became a rich man in his own right. Eleven sons have been born to him, besides one daughter whose name is recorded (it is possible that there may have been other daughters, whose birth and names are not recorded).

Finally it becomes clear to Jacob that his uncle Laban is no longer friendly toward him. The miserly, stingy Laban cannot look upon Jacob's increasing wealth without a mean covetousness and envy. Jacob finally, therefore, decides that the time has come to return to his homeland. He realizes, however, that Laban will not voluntarily consent to this, therefore he leaves secretly, taking with him his entire establishment, wives, children, servants, livestock, tents and personal property. These developments are recorded in Genesis chapters 29, 30 and verses 1-18 of chapter 31.

Jacob seizes a good opportunity to escape from Laban. He does this at a time when Laban is extremely busy with shearing his sheep. Shearing the sheep would not only keep Laban and his family busy, but would probably involve a big feast and a good deal of entertaining. It was a

good time for Jacob to get away without any formal farewells. Assembling all his livestock and household goods, with his wives and children and servants, he "stole away unawares," without notifying Laban of his departure. Some may question the rightness of this act. We believe that, under the circumstances, Jacob was fully justified. As the sequel showed, Laban would never have given the consent voluntarily for Jacob and family to depart.

Along with the possessions which rightly belonged to Jacob and his family, Rachel stole "the images that were her father's". These "images" were **teraphim**, apparently a kind of local household gods. It is possible, and there seems to be some evidence to suggest this, that the possession of these household gods had something to do with the inheritance of the family name and property. Or it is possible that Rachel wanted the images simply out of her own tendency toward superstition and idolatry. As Leupold suggests, she may have been a believer in Jehovah, and yet inconsistently believed that the teraphim would bring a person good luck. The theft of the teraphim was, of course, unknown to Jacob. Perhaps Rachel did not dare to tell him what she was doing, realizing that he would not approve of it. What Jacob thought of the teraphim comes to light later (35:2-4) when we are told that Jacob buried them, with other objects, under an oak tree.

Jacob and his household make a clean getaway and succeeded in crossing the Euphrates River. From there the objective is "the mount Gilead," that is, the highlands on the east side of the Jordan River.

Three days have passed since Jacob's departure. Suddenly Laban's sheep-shearing and accompanying festivities are rudely interrupted by the news that Jacob and family are gone. La-

ban at once assembles a party of his relatives and starts out in pursuit. In the mountains of Gilead Laban overtakes Jacob. At this point God intervenes directly, warning Laban in a dream: "Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad" (31:24). Laban has been warned, but he does not need the warning.

The meeting of the two men is marked by angry accusations on Laban's part. Why has Jacob stolen away without formal farewell, taking Laban's daughters as if they were prisoners of war? Why did Jacob not give Laban an opportunity to give a grand farewell party, with music and feasting and general rejoicing? Why has Jacob not even allowed Laban to kiss his daughters good-bye?

Laban was very angry, and anger, like envy, is never logical. Most of Laban's charges suggest their own answer. Jacob has not forced Laban's daughters to accompany him; they are doing it of their own free will. As for the farewell party with music and mirth, Laban was too stingy a man to spend very much on that sort of thing; instead, he would have taken measures to try to prevent Jacob's departure. As to the matter of not letting him kiss his daughters — probably he had not bothered to kiss them for the past several years, when they were living near him; why should he suddenly want to kiss them now? His treatment of them was mercenary, and showed little paternal love. But now, in his anger, he makes an issue of all these matters.

Laban goes on: "It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt: but the God of your father spake unto me yesternight, saying, Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad" (31:29). Laban's claim that it is in his power to harm Jacob is an arrogant boast. He as much as admits that he does not dare to do anything to hurt Jacob, for he repeats the divine warning given him. We repeat, anger is never logical. If Laban had been cool and logical, he would have realized that the warning from God which he had received, meant that Jacob was right and Laban was wrong. If God is protecting Jacob, then Laban's wild charges must be without real justification.

Finally Laban mentions the matter of the stolen idols. "Wherefore hast thou stolen my gods?" (31:30). Jacob replies, quite truthfully, that he had been afraid that Laban would not allow him to take Rachel and Leah away with him. As for the missing images, "With whomsoever thou findest thy gods, let him not live: before our brethren discern thou what is thine with me, and take it to thee" (31:32). Jacob, as is stated in the last part of verse 32, is unaware of the fact that Rachel had stolen the images.

Jacob, of course, should never have conceded

that the person guilty of stealing the images should suffer the death penalty. But Jacob was doubtless agitated at the moment. Laban undertakes a systematic search, going through Jacob's tent, Leah's tent, Bilhah's tent, Zilpah's tent — all without finding what he was looking for — and finally coming to Rachel's tent. Now Rachel proves herself to be not only a thief but also a liar. Having concealed the idols in the camel's furniture, she sits on them and falsely tells her father that she is ill and cannot rise up to honor him as he enters the tent. While she may have been ill, still her statement to her father was a lie because it was intended to deceive him into believing that the images were not in the tent.

#### Questions:

1. What opportunity did Jacob seize for escaping from Laban?
2. Why was sheepshearing always a specially busy time?
3. Was Jacob justified in stealing away without notice to Laban?
4. What theft was perpetrated by Rachel on the eve of departure?
5. What may have been Rachel's motive in this theft?
6. What disposition did Jacob finally make of what Rachel stole?
7. What great river did Jacob cross on his way to Canaan?
8. How far had Jacob gotten before Laban overtook him?
9. How much time had elapsed when Laban learned that Jacob was gone?
10. What warning came to Laban from God?
11. What accusations did Laban make on meeting Jacob?
12. To what extent were Laban's charges justified?
13. What empty boast did Laban make in speaking with Jacob?
14. What rash promise did Jacob make to Laban concerning the unknown person guilty of stealing Laban's images?
15. What act of Rachel showed her to be untruthful as well as dishonest?

## LESSON 45

## JACOB'S RETURN TO CANAAN, CONTINUED

Up to this point it has been Laban that was angry. Now, after Laban's unsuccessful search of the tents for his teraphim, Jacob becomes angry and berates Laban for his ungenerous and unfair conduct. "And Jacob was wroth, and chode with Laban" (31:36). For years Jacob has kept his temper under control, so far as we have any record. Now, at last, he has had more than he can take. He lets go, and the angry words pour out, one statement on top of another. We must remember, of course, that Jacob does not yet know that Laban was right about the theft of the idols; he does not yet know that his beloved Rachel had stolen them.

Angrily protesting his innocence, he charges Laban with having "hotly pursued" after him. Laban has chased after Jacob as if Jacob were an escaped criminal. Laban has searched through all the household effects of Jacob's family, but has found nothing that belonged to him. Loudly and boldly Jacob challenges Laban to lay before their brethren whatever he has found. Of course Laban has found nothing, but this gives all the more effect to Jacob's demand that the kinsmen serve as a jury to decide matters between the two men. Laban, of course, could not reply a word to all this.

Following this, Jacob rehearses the history of his relations with Laban. He has served Laban faithfully and with the most scrupulous honesty. He, Jacob, has personally borne the loss of sheep torn of beasts; he has strictly refrained from butchering for the use of his family animals that belonged to Laban. He has served Laban twenty years, suffering hardships by day and by night — fourteen years for Laban's two daughters, and six years for livestock — during which time Laban has changed his contract "ten times".

Last of all, Jacob ascribes all his own success and prosperity to the blessing of God: "Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away empty. God hath seen mine affliction and the labor of my hands, and rebuked thee yesternight" (31:42). It is clear that Jacob does not believe a word of Laban's loud protestations of love and friendship. He ascribes his success solely to the providence and intervention of God.

It would seem that there really was nothing that Laban could not say in reply to this speech of Jacob (31:36-42). At the end of Jacob's speech Laban does make a reply, but it is in a greatly subdued tone as compared with his previous arrogance. He makes one last claim that "These daughters are my daughters", etc., and then confesses that, as they are in fact his own daughters,

of course he will not harm them: "And what can I do this day unto these my daughters, or unto their children which they have borne"? (31:43). After all, a man does not wish to injure his own children and grandchildren.

These words of Laban in verse 43 we take to be mere bluff and bluster. He has been decisively beaten in the argument; the justice of Jacob's defence is evident to all; but in order to avoid "losing face," Laban continues his blustering claims a bit longer. Then he subsides, and proposes a peaceful settlement: "Now therefore come thou let us make a covenant, I and thou; and let it be for witness between me and thee" (31:44). Knowing himself to be definitely in the wrong and perhaps fearing that Jacob may at some future time seek revenge, Laban seeks a covenant between Jacob and himself. It is noteworthy that Laban evidently believes that Jacob is a man who will keep a covenant once he has made it.

Laban proposed the covenant; it was he that needed it rather than Jacob. But it was Jacob who set up a stone for a pillar, and called upon his brethren to gather stones to build up a heap. This indicates Jacob's love of peace. He is not seeking revenge against Laban; he only wants to be able to depart to his own country and kindred in peace. So Jacob takes the initiative in setting up the pillar and building the heap of rocks.

The heap of rocks built, the assembled company sat down upon it to partake of a meal. This feast was regarded as necessary to make the covenant between the two men fully binding.

"And Laban called it Jegar-sahadutha: but Jacob called it Galeed" (31:47). This interesting item is included by Moses in the narrative. Laban spoke Aramaic, the language of Mesopotamia; Jacob spoke Hebrew, the language of Canaan. Jacob, of course, having lived twenty years in Mesopotamia must have been able to speak and understand the Aramaic language. But in this sacred matter of a covenant he uses the language of Canaan, the land of promise. The two names, in Aramaic and Hebrew, mean approximately the same thing: "heap of testimony" or "heap of witness."

Leupold comments at this point on the interesting fact that the ancestors of the Hebrew nation were of a stock that originally spoke Aramaic, but in Palestine gave up Aramaic for Hebrew. Hebrew was their language for many centuries, only to be replaced by Aramaic after all, following the Babylonian Captivity of the sixth century before Christ. In the time of Christ Aramaic was the spoken language of the Jews of Palestine. This brings out the interesting fact that the language ordinarily spoken by Jesus was that of

Laban, not that of Jacob, though Jesus certainly was able to read and understand Hebrew.

“And Laban said, This heap is a witness between me and thee this day” (31:48a). Moses comments. “Therefore was the name of it called Galeed, and Mizpah; for he said, The Lord watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another” (31:48, 49). Mizpah means “watch” or “watch-station”. From this verse the so-called Mizpah Benediction is derived. Often used as a prayer or benediction at the close of religious meetings, it is almost never correctly quoted. The writer has heard it so used probably hundreds of times and cannot recall hearing it correctly quoted a single time. The incorrect form in which it is commonly quoted is “The Lord watch between me and thee, while we are absent one from the other”, instead of “The Lord watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another.” The differences are slight and verbal, of course, but when we quote the words of Scripture we should quote them with precision.

Apart from the common incorrect quotation, we may comment that it is a strange example of accommodation of Scripture that this verse has ever come to be used as a blessing in religious meetings. Probably the Christian Endeavor movement popularized it. As commonly used, it means something like this: “The Lord take good care of us all, until we meet again next Sabbath evening or at some future time.” But as used by Laban it had no such implication of blessing. The saying was Laban’s, not Jacob’s, and it is full of unkindness and suspicion. The obvious meaning is: “The Lord watch to see that neither of us breaks the terms of this covenant by harming the other.” It is an invocation of God to stand guard between two men, neither of whom really trusts the other. Leupold is correct in saying that the common use of the verse as a benediction “almost amounts to a wicked perversion of Scripture” (Exposition of Genesis, II, p. 856). A better character than Laban should be chosen from Scripture when we are looking for a form of benediction to use.

#### Questions:

1. At what point in the proceedings did Jacob become angry?
2. What fact was unknown to Jacob at the time when he became angry at Laban?
3. What challenge to Laban did Jacob utter?
4. What accusations did Jacob bring against Laban?
5. To what did Jacob ascribe his own prosperity and success?
6. What was the real character of Laban’s reply to Jacob’s speech?
7. What proposal did Laban make for a final settlement of the dispute?
8. What action was taken by Jacob to establish the settlement?
9. How was the covenant ratified?
10. What was the purpose of the heap of stones that was built up?
11. What language was spoken by Laban? What by Jacob?
12. Which was the original language of the ancestors of the Hebrew nation?
13. Which was their language in the time of Christ?
14. Which was their language during the greater part of their history?
15. What is the meaning of the name Mizpah?
16. How is the “Mizpah Benediction” often incorrectly quoted?
17. What is meant by “accommodation of Scripture”?
18. Why is the common use of the “Mizpah Benediction” an instance of accommodation of Scripture?

### LESSON 46

#### JACOB’S RETURN TO CANAAN, CONTINUED

Laban continues his admonitions to Jacob: “If thou shalt afflict my daughters, or if thou shalt take other wives beside my daughters, no man is with us; see, God is witness betwixt me and thee” (31:50). Here Laban suddenly shows an unusual concern for the welfare of his daughters. He casts a reflection on Jacob’s character by suggesting the possibility that Jacob may treat Leah and Rachel badly, or may even marry new wives in addition to those he already had. This insinuation of Laban, we must say, is entirely uncalled for. As a matter of fact, Jacob had never really wanted more than one wife. It was, in

fact, Laban’s own fault that he had two. As for the addition of the maidservants Bilhah and Zilpah, Jacob was not primarily to blame for that either; he had yielded to the wishes of Rachel and Leah, but the idea had not been his in the first place. So for Laban at this time to insinuate that Jacob may be an abandoned and unprincipled polygamist, and perhaps also likely to treat his wives cruelly, was really adding insult to injury. Solemnly Laban calls upon God to be a witness between himself and Jacob if this (purely hypothetical) situation should ever arise. Laban is here trying to save his own face and make him-

self appear righteous by casting slurs upon a better man than himself.

Next, Laban suggests that Jacob might at some future time return with an expedition to take revenge. The heap of stones is to be a witness between himself and Jacob, that neither party is to advance beyond this spot to do the other harm. To add a color of piety to his insulting insinuations, Laban solemnly calls upon "the God of Abraham, and the God of Nahor, the God of their father" to act as judge between himself and Jacob. We must remember that the man who is thus solemnly pronouncing the name of "the God of Abraham," etc., is the same man who a little while before was complaining because someone had stolen his idols. It is possible that by "the God of Nahor" Laban means a different deity from "the God of Abraham." In fact, this seems to be indicated by the fact that the verb "judge" in the Hebrew is in the plural, not the singular number. Laban evidently believes in more than one god; he is a polytheist; if deities are to be called upon, Laban apparently thinks, then the more the better.

Jacob, on his part, swears "by the fear of his father Isaac." It is possible that this form of the name of God was deliberately chosen by Jacob in order to avoid use of the form employed by Laban, inasmuch as Laban seemed to be identifying the God of Abraham with his own God (Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, II, p. 858).

"Then Jacob offered sacrifice upon the mount, and called his brethren to eat bread: and they did eat bread, and tarried all night in the mount" (31:54). Note that it does not say that Jacob and Laban offered sacrifice jointly. This was not a union service. It was an act of worship on the part of Jacob, who certainly would not participate in the offering of sacrifice with a known idolater such as his uncle Laban was. The eating of bread which is mentioned in the latter part of verse 54, therefore, is to be regarded as something separate from the actual offering of the sacrifice itself. Or possibly the "brethren" who are mentioned included only the men of Jacob's establishment, not Laban and his party.

"And early in the morning Laban rose up, and kissed his sons and his daughters, and blessed them: and Laban departed, and returned unto his place" (31:55). The "sons" here mentioned

are, of course, Laban's grandsons. The "daughters" would be both his granddaughters and his actual daughters. This marks the exit of Laban from the history.

Attempts have been made to identify the site of the heap of stones built by Jacob and called Galeed or Mizpah. The only thing that is certain about the location is that it must be somewhere in Transjordan north of the Jabbok River. As to the actual site, it is unknown. It is unlikely that it will ever be discovered, for the record mentions no identifying features such as an inscription. Obviously any great heap of stones in the area might be the right one, but there is no way of determining which it is.

#### Questions:

1. How did Laban cast an unnecessary reflection on Jacob's character?
2. Why was this reflection on Jacob's character uncalled for?
3. How many wives did Jacob really want?
4. What must be regarded as Laban's real reason for casting slurs on Jacob?
5. What action did Laban insinuate Jacob might take at some future time?
6. Upon what God or deities did Laban call to ratify the agreement?
7. Why was Laban's calling upon "the God of Abraham" out of place and inconsistent on his part?
8. What may Laban have meant by "the God of Nahor"? What word in the Hebrew suggests this?
9. By what name of God did Jacob swear his oath?
10. Who offered sacrifice upon the mount? Why are we warranted in saying that this was not a union service?
11. What did Laban do early the next morning?
12. What was the general location of the heap of stones called Mizpah and Galeed?
13. Why can the exact location of the heap not be known?

### LESSON 47

#### JACOB'S PREPARATIONS FOR MEETING ESAU

Jacob is now almost home. "And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim" (32:1, 2). It is upon Jacob's entrance to

the Promised Land that he encounters the angels of God. It is possible that angels had been accompanying Jacob all the way, but that at this point, as he again treads on the sacred soil of the Promised Land, they are visibly manifested.

In any case, this supernatural manifestation would serve the necessary purpose of reassuring Jacob. He has now safely escaped from his uncle Laban, but another trouble looms on the horizon — soon he must meet his brother Esau. The last time he saw Esau, the latter was “comforting himself” with plans to kill Jacob. The appearance of angels betokened the near presence and special protection and favor of God. Jacob names the spot Mahanaim. This Hebrew noun is the dual number and means “two camps” or “two hosts”. The “two hosts” would be the host of angels, and the host of Jacob’s company. As in the case of Mizpah, the location of Mahanaim is unknown today. It is, however, repeatedly mentioned in the historical books of the Old Testament, so the location must have been known long after the time of Jacob.

Another question concerns whether the angels were seen by Jacob alone, or by all in his company. This cannot be positively answered, though it is possible, perhaps probable, that Jacob alone saw them. Certainly Jacob was the only one present who possessed, so far as we know, any real spiritual maturity.

The appearance of the angels is followed by Jacob’s careful preparations for meeting his brother Esau. Jacob sends messengers to Esau in advance, to the land of Seir, the country of Edom. This is the region directly south of the Dead Sea. It is some distance from the Jabbok River, which Jacob is now approaching, perhaps about 75 miles. It will be recalled that Jacob’s mother, Rebekah, promised to send for Jacob to come home when Esau’s anger had cooled off (27:44, 45). But the promise has not been kept. Jacob is returning home without having been sent for. The implication would seem, in his mind, to be that Esau is still angry, and therefore that Esau still plans to kill him. As a matter of fact, Esau’s murderous wrath has cooled and he is no longer planning to murder Jacob, but Jacob of course has no way of knowing this. Therefore he carefully plans and carries out conciliatory measures. The messengers are to find Esau, then they are to convey a message from Jacob to him. Esau is to be addressed as “My lord Esau” and Jacob is to be referred to as “thy servant Jacob.” Esau is to be informed that Jacob has sojourned with his uncle Laban until now; that Jacob now is a man of property, possessing oxen, asses, flocks, menservants, and womenservants; and that Jacob entreats his favor wishing to find grace in his sight. It is a very diplomatic procedure, calculated to win the good will of Esau (32:3-5).

The messengers have carried out their commission. They have found Esau and have conveyed the message. They also bring a reply. Esau is coming in person to meet Jacob, accompanied by four hundred men. (It is possible that the messengers did not have to travel all the way to

Edom. Esau may have received advance news of Jacob’s imminent arrival and have already set out to meet him. The messengers may have met Esau when but a couple of days’ journey from Jacob’s camp). In any case, Esau has not sent a favorable reply. He has not replied that Jacob has found grace in his sight. Instead, he is coming in person. The mention of four hundred men accompanying Esau would naturally alarm Jacob. People on peaceful and friendly errands do not usually travel accompanied by 400 men. Not unnaturally, Jacob feels dismayed. He was “greatly afraid and distressed” (32:7).

Taking precautionary measures, Jacob first divides his entire party into two bands — both the people and the animals. If Esau destroys one band, at least the other band may escape. Next, Jacob resorts to prayer, a very earnest prayer for protection from the malice of Esau (32:9-12). Some may be inclined to criticize Jacob for resorting to action first and leaving prayer until afterwards. We do not feel that way about it. While it sounds pious to say that prayer should always come first, the truth is that in emergencies sometimes action is our first duty. Action can be performed in the spirit of prayer even when our whole attention is necessarily absorbed by the action. If our house is on fire, it is our duty to devote all our energies to putting the fire out first; prayer properly comes afterwards.

In Jacob’s prayer, note that he addresses God as “God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac.” This does not mean that he fails to recognize God as his own God, but rather that he pleads for like covenant mercies and blessings for himself, as had been given to Abraham and Isaac. Jacob pleads God’s promises and his own need. He disclaims any personal worthiness, but mentions past blessings received from God. Coming directly to the point, he pleads for divine deliverance from his brother Esau, adding “for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children.” Finally, he recalls the covenant promise of God which had been given to him (28:13, 14).

The critics have taken this prayer of Jacob to pieces and raised various objections against it. In spite of the critics, we believe it to be a genuine prayer of Jacob and a splendid example of believing prayer in time of need. To the charge that this prayer contains no confession or sense of sin, it is sufficient to reply that Jacob professed utter unworthiness over against God. As Leupold points out, the thing that makes us unworthy is just sin.

Spending the night at that spot, Jacob assembles a present for his brother Esau, calculated to pacify his wrath if it is indeed in wrath that Esau is approaching. The gift was a lavish and costly one, such as might be expected to influence

a man like Esau and win his favor. The total number of animals set apart and sent on to Esau is 580, so the value must have been correspondingly great. It indicates something of the great wealth of Jacob that he was in a position to send such a rich gift to his brother. The droves, one kind of animals in each drove, are properly spaced and sent on ahead at intervals. Esau, of course, would be duly surprised when the first drove reached him, and his astonishment would mount as drove followed drove. There were five droves in all. The servants who convey the droves to Esau are to state that the animals are a present from Jacob to Esau, and that Jacob himself is following them. They are to remember to address Esau as "my lord Esau" and to speak of Jacob as Esau's "servant." Thus the costly present has been dispatched to Esau's hands. "So went the present over before him: and himself lodged that night in the company" (32:21).

#### Questions:

1. What supernatural manifestation was granted to Jacob at the time of his re-entrance to the Promised Land?
2. What purpose would be served by this supernatural visitation?
3. Why would Jacob specially need reassurance at this time?
4. What had been Esau's attitude toward

Joseph when the two brothers had last seen each other?

5. What is the meaning of the name Mahanaim? Why did Jacob choose this name for the place?
6. What preparations did Jacob make for meeting Esau?
7. How far was Edom from the Jabbok River?
8. What fact would lead Jacob to conclude that Esau was still angry at him?
9. How are Jacob's messengers to address Esau? How are they to refer to Jacob?
10. What kind of reply did the messengers bring back to Jacob?
11. Why was Jacob "greatly afraid and distressed"?
12. What special precautionary measure did Jacob take as soon as he learned of the approach of Esau?
13. Was Jacob justified in taking action first, and leaving prayer until afterwards?
14. How can we answer the charge that Jacob's prayer contain no confession of sin?
15. What gift did Jacob send to Esau to conciliate him?
16. How was the arrangement and timing of the gift calculated to impress Esau and win his favor?

### LESSON 48

#### JACOB MEETS GOD AT THE JABBOK

At the end of the last lesson we learned that Jacob, having dispatched his rich gift to Esau, himself "lodged that night in the company" (32:21). Apparently, however, it was only for part of the night. For during the night he took further action. "And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two womenservants, and his eleven sons, and passed over the ford Jabbok. And he took them, and sent them over the brook, and sent over that he had. And Jacob was left alone. . . ." (32:22-24).

Obviously it would be foolhardy to allow Esau to meet him while his establishment is involved in the difficult matter of crossing a stream; therefore Jacob undertakes to get this matter over with in advance. Jacob now remains alone on the north side of the Jabbok.

The Jabbok is a stream which flows into the Jordan from the east. In its last few miles before entering the Jordan it flows through a deep gorge. The stream is said to be about thirty feet wide, the depth of the water varying with the season, but clearly not being too deep for fording at the time.

We have now come to the study of one of the strangest, most mysterious incidents recorded in the Bible — Jacob's wrestling with "a man" until the break of day. This incident is so strange and mysterious that some scholars have pronounced it mythical rather than historical. Those who regard it as a myth, however, do not agree among themselves as to what idea the story is intended to represent. Over against the view that this experience of Jacob is mythical, we hold that it is historical and, moreover, that it was not a merely spiritual or subjective experience, but involved real wrestling with a person who was objectively present and was manifested in a bodily form.

"And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day" (32:24). That this "man" was not really a human being is proved by a reference in the book of the prophet Hosea (12:2-5), which states of Jacob: "Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us; even the Lord of hosts; the Lord is his memorial."

Here the "man" is called the "angel," and what follows implies that this "angel" is not an ordinary angel but is a theophany, a manifestation of God Himself.

Jacob has been up against strong opposition for years. Having finally gotten clear of his uncle Laban, he is still concerned and anxious about the coming meeting with his brother Esau. By his own admission, Jacob is afraid of Esau. His previous actions on this might show that the problem of meeting Esau was uppermost in his mind. Jacob regards his relationship to Esau as his great problem. But Jacob needs to learn the lesson that his **greatest** problem is not his relationship to his brother but his relationship to God. Really that is everyone's greatest problem — it is a problem which, when faced and solved, furnishes the key to the solution of all other problems. Jacob, then, needs to realize that his greatest and deepest concern must be, not about Esau, but about God.

Jacob's conflict with this mysterious stranger on the bank of the Jabbok is marked by distinct stages. The first stage is that mentioned in verse 24, the wrestling through the night until the break of day. The point of this part is that by reason of his heroic persistence Jacob obtained the blessing from the stranger in the end. Jacob persevered and overcame what seemed to be an insurmountable obstacle. Jacob's persistent wrestling with the stranger — really with God — has been compared to Christ's encounter with the Syro-Phoenician woman. The woman persisted in the face of apparent rejection by Christ, until she obtained the blessing which she sought.

It should be noted that the record does not merely state that Jacob wrestled with the stranger, but that the stranger wrestled with Jacob. The stranger's wrestling with Jacob is what is primarily important in the incident. "We must, therefore, take into account the element of divine displeasure Jacob had to overcome always remembering that this entered into the whole transaction from beginning to end. And this fact colored the frame of mind in which the patriarch prayed, and makes his experience an example for us of prayer, not so much in general, but of a specific kind. It is prayer for forgiveness of sin and the removal of divine displeasure on account of sin that we here find illustrated. And in consonance with this the blessing craved and received was the blessing of pardon and a return to normal relations with God. The event taught Jacob that inheritance of the promises can rest on forgiveness of sin and a purified conscience only" (G. Vos, *Biblical Theology*, pp. 113, 114).

The second stage of the encounter begins at the point where the mysterious stranger touches the hollow of Jacob's thigh, putting his thigh out of joint. Jacob thus learns that in the real conflict of life, the true victory is that of surrender

to the will of God. God seems to be our adversary as we struggle in prayer, but as God prevails in our life and our will is surrendered to the will of God, we gain the real victory. Jacob must always remember this experience, therefore a physical disability is placed upon him as a reminder. In later life Jacob's limp will remind him of the night on the bank of the Jabbok where he wrestled with God and finally by persistence won the victory.

As day is breaking, the stranger asks to be let go. Jacob, however, refuses, saying, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." This is a truly heroic faith, a truly heroic persistence in prayer. So far from being presumptuous or improper on Jacob's part, as some have held, it is highly commended and indicates his real victory in the conflict. Jacob holds on to the very last, he does not give up even when there seems to be good reason for giving up. His thigh is out of joint; the day is breaking; yet Jacob keeps on and will not give up until the blessing has been granted.

Before departing, the stranger changes Jacob's name to Israel. "For as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed" (32:28). This verse proves that Jacob's continued struggle was commendable, not blameworthy. He is declared to have won the victory. The change of name indicates a change of character. Jacob means "Supplanter" — a name well fitted to Jacob's past history and character. Israel means "he who strives with God" — a name suited to Jacob's new life and character. It should be observed that in the Old Testament both names, Jacob and Israel, continue to be used interchangeably. We may say that "Jacob" stands for Jacob's old nature, while "Israel" stands for his new nature. But in his previous life Jacob had real faith in God as his Saviour, and in his later life he was not perfect but was still involved in some evil. Therefore it was fitting that both names should be used, even after his experience by the Jabbok "As before, side by side with Jacob's perversity, there had been an element of spirituality, so also afterwards, side by side with the now matured spirituality, there remained traces of the old nature. Hence God continued to subject the patriarch to discipline of affliction even to his old age" (G. Vos, *Biblical Theology*, p. 114). That is to say, though Jacob is now in a right relation to God, and can properly be called "Israel," he is not yet completely sanctified, nor has his old "Jacob" nature been completely eradicated; therefore he can also properly be called "Jacob."

#### Questions:

1. Why did Jacob send his household across the Jabbok by night?
2. How large a stream is the Jabbok? Where is it located?

3. What view of Jacob's wrestling with a mysterious stranger is held by some scholars?

4. Why should this incident be regarded as historical fact?

5. What Scripture text proves that the "man" who wrestled with Jacob was not a human being?

6. What was the real identity of the stranger who wrestled with Jacob?

7. What did Jacob regard as his greatest problem at this time?

8. What was really Jacob's greatest problem at this time?

9. What was the first stage of Jacob's conflict on the bank of the Jabbok?

10. To what New Testament incident has Jacob's wrestling been compared?

11. What kind of prayer is represented by Jacob's struggle?

12. At what point did the second stage of Jacob's struggle begin?

13. Why was a physical disability placed upon Jacob?

14. Why was Jacob's refusal to give up until he received the blessing commendable?

15. What victory did Jacob win?

16. What is the meaning of the name "Jacob"? Of "Israel"?

17. What fact concerning Jacob's life was indicated by the change of name?

18. Why was the name "Jacob" used along with "Israel" in the Old Testament from this point onwards?

(To be continued)

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## *Reviews of Religious Books*

The favorable reviewing of a book here is not to be understood as necessarily implying an endorsement of everything contained in it. Within the 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.

**ISRAEL IN PROPHECY**, by John F. Walvoord. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1962, pp. 138. \$2.50.

This is a study of prophesy based upon the premillennial point of view. He mainly opposes the amillennial point of view with only a mention of the postmillennial view. He considers the postmillennial view as out of date and therefore does not consider it.

His basic premise is that the founding of the nation of Israel is one thing that no Bible scholar should discount because it fulfills the requirement of prophecy. He berates the thoughts of the amillenarians on the basis that they spiritualize all prophecy dealing with the nation of Israel.

If you want a book that gives a brief review of such thinking in direct opposition to the Reformed Doctrine, the writer does this and leaves no doubt of his belief that the Reformed Faith has no understanding of Bible prophecy.

— Robert A. Henning

**PENTECOST AND MISSIONS**, by Harry R. Boer. W. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1961, pp. 270. \$5.00.

A valuable study not only on the study of

the place of the Holy Spirit in Missions but also on the subject of the place of the Great Commission in the vision of the Church. It emphasizes the need of Christians today to think of mission work under the scope of the Churches' work and not of individual missionary societies. However, he shows that Societies have sprung up in many cases because the church has not carried out its responsibility. When the church falls down in its vision, the Holy Spirit keeps the vision alive in the hearts of individual Christians so that the work of the expansion of Christ's kingdom continues.

All chapters begin with some thoughts that make you wonder whether or not the author is going to be radical in some of his thoughts. This seems to be his style. He stirs up the reader and brings him back to the thought that he wants to leave in the mind of his reader.

The last two parts of the last chapter are rather disappointing in many ways. He deals with the subject of the "Comprehensive approach or comprehensive message" but does not mention the pitfalls of such an approach which I am sure, with his experience, he must be aware of. Following this, he speaks of the "Unity of Witness". He seems to be desiring a unity regardless of the

basis of that unity, although he is rather vague in spelling out some of his thoughts. He would state that we are "Quenching the Spirit" unless we follow the pattern of common thought in ecumenicity as it is presented today.

I would recommend this book highly for a study of this subject. It was prepared as a thesis and takes more than casual reading to follow the line of thought presented. It should stir up the reader to further study in this subject, not by other writers, but in the Word of God.

— Robert A. Henning

**TYNDALE BIBLE COMMENTARIES, Vol. 1, THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW**, by R. V. G. Tasker. W. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1961. pp. 285. \$3.00.

There is much to be desired in this volume of the Tyndale Commentaries. While it is written for lay students of the Bible, as well as ministers, it would leave the layman somewhat confused as to the authority of scripture or the authenticity of some of the parables. The author makes such statements as, "the scribe left out a word" or "some copyist added this phrase", too freely. The main reasoning for such statements seems to be that the passage under study does not fit in with the author's understanding of that passage, and he is trying to make it fit. This is not true in every case but without further explanation or background in Bible study such statements could be disconcerting.

The introduction gives a good background for the study of the Book of Matthew, but it is not complete enough for the way the body of the commentary is written. A fuller introduction might have helped some.

The Appendix seems a little out of place because it seems more like an argument for using the New English Bible than a help in studying the Book of Matthew in particular.

I would find it difficult to recommend this book to a lay Christian for Bible study. It would be helpful to a minister who wants a fresh approach to a study in Matthew because the author's style is thought provoking.

— Robert A. Henning

**THE KINGDOM OF LOVE AND THE PRIDE OF LIFE**, by Edward John Carnell. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 1960. pp. 160. \$3.50.

Dr. Carnell is attempting in this book to gain a fruitful point of contact between the gospel and culture. Several of E. J. Carnell's articles and volumes have centered in this idea of a point of contact between Christianity and non-Christian culture. In this present volume he appeals to love

as a meaningful point of contact. The book uses the story of the raising of Lazarus as a point of departure.

This book has some significant contributions. It is a unique treatment of the subject of apologetics for it is more than just a defense of the faith, but a practical guide for the Christian life. The book is written with illustrations from concrete human experience and thus it is more than just a scholar waxing eloquent from his aloof ivory tower. Dr. Carnell seeks to interact somewhat significantly with the discipline of psychotherapy. For these attempts, the author is commended.

However some of the basic presuppositions of this book are wrong. Carnell has heretofore espoused what might be called Christian Rationalism, but here he seems to abandon it for an Intuitionist Rationalism. For example, Carnell says: "When a philosopher drinks coffee in the philosophic Fraternity, or when he embraces his wife and children he knows what is real. He is able to enter into spiritual realities . . . His intellectual life is firm because his moral life is firm." (P. 49). He also says that "the heart has immediate access to the elemental particles of virtue." This reviewer feels these statements and others in the book are Scripturally untrue. The author needs to answer some basic questions. How extensive were the effects of the fall? Where does Common Grace leave off and Special Grace begin? What is the foundation of rationality and intuition? These questions must be dealt with before a "fruitful point of contact" can be made between the gospel and culture. The author has again demonstrated that he is neutral in epistemological method. This reviewer would not recommend this book to a person who has not dealt with some of the basic presuppositions necessary for a sound and meaningful system of apologetics.

— John H. White

**THE LORD'S PRAYER**, by Thomas Watson. The Banner of Truth Trust, 78B Chiltern St., London, W. 1, England. 1960 reprint, pp. 241. 8 shillings.

This reprint is one third part of a volume originally known as **A Body of Practical Divinity**, a study of the Westminster Shorter Catechism in a series of one hundred and seventy-six sermons. It was published in one volume folio form in 1692. Its purpose was to train the common people in theology, the solid Orthodox theology of the Westminster Divines. Certainly it should be returned to such a happy task in modern America, which knows much of emotional experience in her Christian faith, but very little of real doctrine unto life.

This reprint edition of "**The Body of Practical Divinity**" is printed in three volumes by The Banner of Truth Trust as follows: "The Body of Di-

vinity", "The Ten Commandments", and the volume under review "The Lord's Prayer." **The Lord's Prayer** follows the outline of the Shorter Catechism and thus deals with the preface to the Lord's Prayer and then the six petitions.

A thorough reading of this volume will indicate that this book was written from a practical point of view in seeking to apply the Word of God to every day life. Following are just a few jewels:

"when the heart shall be freed from sin, the head shall be freed from care," p. 60.

"What a shame is it, that the soul, that princely thing, which sways the sceptre of reason, and is akin to angels, should be enslaved by sinful pleasure," p. 84.

"A saint's perseverance is built upon the covenant of grace," p. 96.

I could go on but these are three of the jewels of the book. However, I would like to give personal testimony. As I put down the book from finishing reading the chapter on petition three "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven", I was caused of the Lord to go through a deep and trying experience and through being brought face to face with God's providential care in this chapter, as displayed by Dr. Watson, I was able to say "Thy will be done, O Lord."

There are no criticisms against the theology and doctrine of the book as far as I can determine. However, the print is very fine so that I feel the average person will not desire to read it unless hungry for a blessing. Secondly, if the average person is to read it, all of the Latin should have been translated (not just part) for there are places the meat is lost due to lack of translation.

Without a qualm I recommend this book to the Christian and even the non-Christian public to read, study and meditate with the hope it will go far in bringing about a deeper, fuller, richer Christian life based upon the solid foundation of God's Holy Word. Laymen need not fear this book as it is filled much with Scripture and even more with practical explanations thereof.

— Darrell C. Harris

GENESIS AND EVOLUTION, by M. R. DeHaan. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1962, pp. 152. \$2.50.

This book is an outspoken polemic against the theory of human evolution — one might better say the **dogma** of human evolution, since most scientists seem to hold that evolution is not theory but unquestionable fact. The author holds firmly to the Bible as the fully inspired, infallible Word of God, Certainly he is on the right side of the controversy about evolution. We cannot but rejoice at the raising of an emphatic voice in favor

of the direct divine creation of man and against the false dogma of evolution.

At the same time, the reviewer finds many weaknesses in this book. First of all, it lacks an index and a bibliography. The section headed **Archaeology** (pp. 53, 54) contains **nothing** about archaeology. On page 75 it is stated that "The test of a species (admitted by scientists) is the fertility of its offspring. If the children or offspring of parents are fertile, able to reproduce, it is proof positive that the parents were of the same species." Perhaps scientists **ought** to recognize inter-fertility as the test of true species, but as a matter of fact they certainly do not. For example, in botanical classification the African Violet is listed as a **genus** (Saintpaulia), and under this genus there are classified no less than 19 distinct species, such as Saintpaulia ionantha, Saintpaulia orbicularis, Saintpaulia tongwensis, etc. These are classified as distinct species because each was discovered in a particular locality, different from others, and each has recognizably distinct features, whether of flowers, foliage, or growth habit. Yet, with one or two possible exceptions, these 19 species of Saintpaulia can all be inter-crossed with perfect fertility, and the offspring are also perfectly fertile. Perhaps the scientists ought to classify them all as varieties of a single species, but as a matter of fact they do not.

On page 39 author DeHaan affirms that the earth is billions of years old. This is speculative and should be qualified. The author's belief that the earth is billions of years old is connected with his belief in the "Restitution Theory" of Genesis 1:1, 2 — the theory that God cursed the earth after the original creation, and so it "became" waste and void for vast ages of time. DeHaan identifies this immense interval with the glacial age (pp. 27, 28). The "Restitution Theory" of Gen. 1:1, 2 is without any substantial exegetical foundation. See the **Question Box** in this issue for a discussion of the theory. Incidentally, the scientific evidence indicates that man existed **before** the end of the glacial age, which is contrary to De Haan's scheme.

Another weakness, from the standpoint of orthodox Reformed theology, is the advocacy by the author of trichotomy, or the view that man is made up of three essential elements, body, soul, and spirit (pp. 133-4). On page 133 man's being created in the image of God is said to consist in man's **threeness**. Sound theology holds that the image of God consists of knowledge, righteousness and holiness. Apart from this, even if the three-fold division of human nature were true, it would not be parallel to the Divine Trinity, for each of the Divine Persons is fully God. The three Divine Persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit are not three elements or parts of God as body, soul

and spirit would be three elements or parts of man.

Author DeHaan rightly rejects allegorical interpretations of Genesis (pp. 67-8), yet he falls into the same error himself, namely allegorizing of historical narratives, when he suggests on page 114-117 that the creation of birds teaches lessons about sanctification. By divine grace the Christian is to rise like a bird above the circumstances of life. This is true, but surely it is not taught, or even implied, in the account of the creation of birds in Genesis 1. At most, it may furnish a more or less apt illustration; Genesis 1 does not deal with the subject of sanctification.

— J. G. Vos

**ALL THE MIRACLES OF THE BIBLE**, by Herbert Lockyer. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids 6, Michigan. 1961, pp. 480. \$5.95.

The sub-title of this book is **The Supernatural in Scripture: Its Scope and Significance**. Author Lockyer believes in the miracles — he is concerned to expound them, not to rationalize them or explain them away. In introduction he rightly says that “the miracles provide us with a special exhibition of supernatural power” (p. 13). He cites various definitions of the term **miracle**, concluding with the statement that “The Biblical conception of a miracle is that of some extraordinary work of deity transcending the ordinary powers of nature and wrought in connection with the ends of revelation” (p. 14). Lockyer has no hesitation in affirming that miracles may involve the suspension or even reversal of the forces of nature. He used the term “laws of nature”, but certainly what he means is **forces** of nature. The “laws” of nature are merely man’s formulation of how nature has been observed to act. It is not the “laws” of nature that make things happen; it is the **forces** of nature that make things happen. The “laws” of nature only tell what has been observed to happen under given circumstances, and thus may be expected to happen again under the same circumstances. It was not the law of gravity, but the force of gravity, that caused the apple to fall on Newton’s head. The **force** of gravity was created by God; the **law** of gravity was formulated by Newton.

The author rightly shows that present day intellectual opposition to miracles is rooted in rationalistic pre-suppositions. He calls on Christian believers to free themselves from the chains of such thinking and take a truly Biblical view.

The main body of the book is a chronologically arranged expository treatment of the miracles of the whole Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. The material is readable, understandable and edifying.

There is a long Bibliography, as well as an

Index, at the end of the volume. A strange omission from the Bibliography is C. S. Lewis’ notable work, **Miracles: A Preliminary Study**. Surely this outstanding recent work should have been included.

— J. G. Vos

**THE MAZE OF MORMONISM**, by Walter R. Martin. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1962, pp. 186. \$2.95.

The main body of Mormons or Latter Day Saints in the United States is listed in the **World Almanac** (1961) as having 3,290 churches and 1,457,735 members. In two years’ time they gained 288 churches and 118,097 members. Any religious body showing such remarkable vitality challenges our attention. What is this religion? How did it originate? What is its theology? How should it be rated in the light of the Bible?

Walter R. Martin has done extensive research and he presents in this volume a factual and discerning account of Mormonism. Its unbiblical character is clearly brought out under the searchlight of the divine Word. Included is a valuable treatment of the methods of Mormonism, its public relations, and how Christians can witness effectively to Mormons.

This book is heartily recommended to our readers.

— J. G. Vos

**MODERN KING JAMES VERSION OF THE HOLY BIBLE**. McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 330 West 42nd St., New York 36, N.Y. 1962, pp. 1533, black cloth binding. \$7.95.

This is the King James Version of the Bible edited to bring it into line, where really necessary, with modern English usage. Obsolete words (such as “amerce”, “neeing”) have been replaced by current terms, Old English verb endings (“doeth”, “didst”, “heardst”, etc.) have been changed to the forms used today, and a very few places have been changed where the King James Version was unquestionably wrong (such as the word “Easter” for “Passover” in Acts 12:4, and the name “Jesus” for “Joshua” in Acts 7:45 and Hebrews 4:8).

The beautiful English diction of the King James Version has been retained, which will make this Bible welcome to many. The old usage of setting up each individual verse as a paragraph has been abandoned, and the material paragraphed like modern books, but with the verse numbers given so that a reference can easily be located.

The print is clear and the paper of good quality. The book measures 6x9 inches, is two inches thick and weighs 3 pounds. It is thus a convenient size for holding and reading.

The King James Version is a very good translation of the Bible, though it was translated from Hebrew and Greek texts inferior in accuracy to the best critical texts available today. Though the text from which it was made is faulty in some particulars, the King James translators were equipped with immense scholarship and were characterized by a very high degree of concern for faithfulness to the original. Their work shows theological discernment and precision, and is therefore a very accurate rendering of the original Hebrew and Greek Scriptures. It is unfortunate that most of the modern versions of the Bible in English, in seeking to remedy the partly archaic English of the King James Version, have at the same time (in varying degrees) introduced changes which have modified or obscured important theological teachings of the Word of God. The work presently under review aims at retaining all that is good in the King James Version, while correcting that which obviously needs correction if the Bible is to be read understandingly by people of today. Needless to say, the content of the King James Version is not changed; it is merely the mechanics of the language and its form that have been edited in the interest of intelligibility and readableness.

Mr. Jay Green, in the Preface, explains just what has been done and why it has been done. With most of what he says the reviewer is in accord. It is a matter of regret, however, that textual criticism seems to be rejected out of hand as improper, when Mr. Green says: "No deletion of any portion of the Bible was to be made, even when there was a general agreement among 'experts'" (p. 11), and the dust cover says: "No phrases or verses have been deleted from this Bible. It still has all the Lord's Prayer, all of God's words everywhere." The reviewer must ask, What is this Bible from which nothing must be "deleted"? Apparently it is the King James Version of 1611. But the fact is that there are many manuscripts of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, and no two exactly alike. Where the manuscripts differ, of necessity a decision must be made as to which manuscript(s) have a corrupted text and which most closely represent the original autograph as written by Moses or Matthew or Paul. (The autographs, of course no longer exist; they were lost ages ago). Even the King James translators had to make decisions between variant readings in the manuscripts available to them. If they decided that the weight of the evidence indicated that a particular word or phrase was not genuine, that is, not part of the book as originally written by the inspired writer, they left it out of the King James Version. For example, some Greek manuscripts have an entirely different ending to the Gospel of Mark from that which appears in our Bibles as Mark 16:9-20. The King James translators (they were the "experts" of that day) did not include this variant ending

of the Gospel of Mark. By leaving out something that was found in some Greek New Testament manuscripts, were they thereby "deleting" a portion of the Bible?

The King James Version is not our authority; the original Greek and Hebrew in the most accurate text available is our authority. And since the manuscripts vary, there is no escaping the task of deciding between them. This is Textual Criticism, and it is by no means a monopoly of unbelievers or modernists. In the hands of believing Christian scholars it is an indispensable tool and absolutely necessary for the production of a reliable translation.

We have emphasized this matter of Textual Criticism somewhat because the Preface and dust cover of the work under review seem to give the impression, to the uninformed reader, that Textual Criticism is something evil and to be rejected by the true Christian. The reviewer does not want anything "deleted" from the Word of God either, but he wants to make sure that the choice between varying manuscript readings has been intelligently and reverently made in accordance with sound principles. This task was not completed for all time in A.D. 1611.

The publication of the **Modern King James Version of the Holy Bible** is a matter of rejoicing. This Bible is heartily commended to our readers. Many will profit by reading it and will come to value it highly.

— J. G. Vos

**O ANGEL OF THE GARDEN: SERMONS FOR THE EASTER SEASON**, by G. Hall Todd. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1961, pp. 96. \$1.50.

The author is pastor of the Arch Street Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, where he succeeded the late Dr. Clarence E. McCartney. The book contains eight very brief sermons on the resurrection of our Lord and related themes. They are readable, orthodox and edifying. Even though we do not believe in observing "Easter" as a special religious day, we certainly believe in the resurrection of Christ, and consideration of this earth-shaking theme is always timely.

— J. G. Vos

**EXILE AND RETURN**, by Charles F. Pfeiffer. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1962, pp. 137. \$3.50.

This book by an outstanding Old Testament scholar deals with a difficult period of Biblical history. Those who have read the book of Ezra seriously have often experienced a kind of frustration in their effort to trace the sequence of events and the chronology. The present work endeavors to clear up some of the difficulties by

covering the whole period, step by step, in an orderly manner. There are twenty chapters, entitled: The Campaigns of Nebuchadnezzar, Judah's Last Kings, Egypt and the Exile, Jeremiah of Jerusalem, The Lachish Letters, Judah During the Exilic Period, The Crisis of Exile, Life Among the Exiles, Nebuchadnezzar's Babylon, The Wisdom of Babylonians, Babylonian Religion, The Babylonian Priesthood, Babylon's Last Kings, Daniel of Babylon, Ezekiel and the Exiles, Return from Exile, Ezra the Scribe, Nehemiah the Builder, Esther and the Persian Court, The Emergence of Judaism. There are several photographs of archaeological sites, an index and an excellent bibliography. The theological viewpoint is sound; the author accepts without qualification the full inspiration and infallibility of the Scriptures.

— J. G. Vos

JOSEPH THE PRIME MINISTER, by William M. Taylor. 1961 (reprint of 1886), pp. 241. \$2.95.

MOSES THE LAW-GIVER, by William M. Taylor. 1961 (reprint of 1886), pp. 482. \$2.95.

RUTH THE GLEANER AND ESTHER THE

QUEEN, by William M. Taylor. 1961 (reprint of 1886), pp. 269. \$2.95.

DAVID KING OF ISRAEL, by William M. Taylor. 1961 (reprint of 1886), pp. 443. \$2.95.

All published by Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich.

As these Bible biographies are reprints of studies originally published over 75 years ago, it is not to be expected that they will take account of the wealth of light on Old Testament history which has come through the amazing discoveries in the field of archaeology. Scholars of today have a vastly increased knowledge of the world of the ancient Near East, in comparison to what could be known in 1886. These biographical studies, therefore, are almost entirely based on what can be learned from a study of the Bible itself. However, even though thus dated, they are not without value at the present day. The author's theological position is that of unqualified faith in the Bible as the inerrant Word of God.

These books are readable as well as edifying. They would be very suitable for church and Sabbath school libraries, as well as for prizes or gift items. They are recommended to our readers.

— J. G. Vos

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## *Blue Banner Question Box*

Readers are invited to submit Biblical, doctrinal and practical questions for answer in this department. Names of correspondents will not be published, but anonymous communications will be disregarded.

### Question:

What should be thought of the interpretation of Genesis 1:2 which holds that the earth as originally created was not "without form, and void", but was wrecked by God as a judgment upon the devil?

### Answer:

Gen. 1:2 reads: "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." The question concerns whether the clause "was without form, and void" ought to be translated or interpreted as meaning "became without form and void." The Scofield Reference Bible places between verse 1 and verse 2 the caption "Earth made waste and empty by judgment." The theory is that after the original creation, mentioned in verse 1, this earth was the habitation of angels, and that when Satan and other angels fell into sin, God wrecked the earth in His righteous wrath, with the result that the earth "became" waste and void.

This is an interesting theory, but it is purely speculative. There is no real ground whatever for holding it to be true. An excellent comment on it is found in *Prophecy and the Church*, by Dr. Oswald T. Allis, pages 268-9. Dr. Allis states that "There is no convincing reason for changing the first 'was' of Gen. 1:2 into 'became'." "The most natural interpretation of this verse is, we believe, that it describes the state of created and unorganized matter, when God began to fashion the cosmos by the eight creative fiat of vss. 3-27" (page 269).

We believe that Dr. Allis' interpretation of verse 2 is correct. Verse 1 states the creation of the universe out of nothing; verse 2 is a description of the created earth in its original condition, unordered and confused, as it existed prior to the acts of God which are described in the rest of the chapter.

The late Rev. Frank D. Frazer discussed this question in the January-March 1949 issue of this magazine (pages 41-2). We shall reproduce here Mr. Frazer's scholarly treatment of the subject:

First, for additional light on this question, we add a further quotation from the same source: "There are other texts in the Bible which tell us that God did not create the earth originally waste and void (Is. 45:18). What we have in the first chapter of Genesis from verse 3 is re-creation. The order of this chapter is creation, degeneration, and re-creation."

From these and other statements in the article quoted, it is evident that the writer was following the teaching of the Scofield Reference Bible — so called. Unfortunately, this book is being used by many as if it were the Bible. It is not the Bible. It is an attempt to read into the Bible certain erroneous ideas of men; a system of Dispensationalism, in particular. It does this by inserting headings, notes, and comments between the verses of Scripture, and by footnotes on the pages. Before the first verse of Genesis; between verses 1 and 2; between verses 2 and 3; and with a footnote attached to verse 2, it injects the ideas expressed in other words by the above quotations.

Without any tampering, the Genesis account of creation is simple and straightforward; it is brief, but plainly presents the essentials for a correct understanding of what follows. The first verse appears to be neither a heading nor a paragraph by itself, but part of a continuous narrative, connected with the following, in the usual Hebrew manner, by the conjunctive "and". In the second verse we note that the "and" is attached to the nouns of its three clauses, not to the verbs. The second verse, therefore, does not describe a series of events, but states three conditions concerning the earth that obtained at the time God began His work of "finishing" it, of arranging, fashioning, and filling it with the forms of life as described in verses 3-31, and summarized in Gen. 2:1. The latter verses of chapter 1 do describe a series of events, the "and" being attached to the verbs.

In the first clause of the second verse, "And the earth was without form and void", the verb is a Hebrew "perfect"; it denotes a definite, completed state, or condition up to the moment. No reason appears in the context why its simple, basic meaning, "was", should be changed in our version to "became".

The third condition mentioned is to the effect that GOD HAD NOT ABANDONED THE EARTH, OR WRECKED IT IN WRATH, for, "the Spirit of God was brooding over its waters" (as an eagle over its young). The Hebrew participle here indicates continued activity.

In support of its theory, the Scofield "Bible" refers the reader to the following Scriptures, (which, presumably, are the best that could be found for the purpose): Jer. 4:23-26; Isa. 24:1 and 45:18; Ezek. 28:12-15; Isa. 14:9-14. When these

prophecies are examined in the light of their respective contexts, without reading preconceived opinions into them, they are found to give no support whatsoever to the notion in question.

Jer. 4:23-26 contains the identical Hebrew word translated "without form and void", or "waste an empty". But Jehovah and His prophet are here looking, not at the earth as a whole, as we commonly use the word. They are looking at the land of Judea, and the words of the prophecy are directed to the inhabitants of Judea and Jerusalem, who called their little bit of land "the earth", for that was about the extent of their knowledge of the earth. Verse 27 reads, "For thus hath Jehovah said, The whole land shall be desolate", The same word before translated "earth" is here translated "land", as it should be. And the statement here is that "The whole land (not 'was', but) shall be desolate". It looks to the future, not the past. However, this passage is a safe guide for us to the real meaning of the expression, "without form and void". Read the whole prophecy and the meaning lies plain on the face of it, namely, such disorder as makes the land: "unfit for the habitation of man, and uninhabited". This meaning is confirmed by other passages in which the same two words occur separately.

Isa. 45:18 declares God's far-reaching PURPOSE in creating the earth. "He created it not to be a waste; he formed it to be inhabited". The first two verses of Genesis, taken together, imply that there was a period during which the earth was not inhabited; was not yet prepared for the habitation of man. How long that period was the Bible does not tell. Gen. 1:3-31 informs us that God carried out His purpose of fitting the earth for the habitation of men. Then He created man and gave him possession.

Again, there is nothing in Ezek. 28:12-15, or in any other Scripture that affords any support whatever to this screwy idea that God originally created the earth for the devil and other "angels that kept not their first estate", and then, after they fell, destroyed the earth and re-fashioned it for men. The devil fell from heaven, not from earth.

Through a telescope that gives an image sharp enough to be highly magnified, any one can see the surface of the sun, that it is, even now, in great disorder. He can watch the progress there of terrific storms and cyclones of almost unbelievable extent, intensity and velocity. We know that the sun is composed of the same material elements as is the earth, yet, very evidently, it is not fit for habitation and is not inhabited by any form of life of which we have any conception. Again, with the same telescope, one may view the surface of the moon. His immediate impression is, No air, no water, no building or adorn-

ing of the wastes, no life. It is unfit for habitation, and uninhabited.

God created the sun and the moon a long time ago. In their present state they have been good and true witnesses to His glory for a long time. It is His right to leave them in their present condition as long as He pleases. So it was His right to do as He pleased with the earth.

(End of material written by Mr. Frazer).

With the above conclusions of Mr. Frazer, the present writer is fully in agreement. A sound and sober study of the Word of God shows that the "Restitution Theory" of Genesis 1:1, 2 is without Scriptural foundation.

— J. G. Vos

#### Question:

A newspaper item dated February 11, 1962 from Damascus, Syria, is headed "Tower of Babel May Rise Again" and says that "The reconstruction of the Tower of Babel is scheduled to begin this year. Its blueprints were finished a few months ago and the architects expect to have the edifice completed by the end of 1968." (The Pittsburgh Press, Feb. 11, 1962, Sec. I, Page 25). Does this present-day construction project have any real connection with the Tower of Genesis chapter 11?

#### Answer:

The press clipping from which the question quotes contains an interesting account of ancient Babylon and its archaeological excavation by Robert Koldewey about half a century ago. One of the discoveries at Babylon was the ruins of a ziggurat or staged tower, on the top of which there was once a temple dedicated to Marduk, the special god of Babylon (spelled Merodach in the Bible). The present-day government of Iraq is reported as planning a reconstruction of this ziggurat as a monument and tourist attraction. That this project may be actually carried out and completed by 1968 is quite possible. But it has nothing whatever to do with the Tower of Babel mentioned in Genesis 11.

About twenty of these ziggurats or staged towers have been discovered, in various degrees of ruin, in Iraq, the ancient Mesopotamia or Babylonia. The best preserved one is at the ruins of Ur, the birthplace of Abraham — an imposing structure even today after the ravages of millenniums of time. But these Mesopotamian ziggurats were foundations for temples to the gods of the ancient Sumerians and Babylonians. Their purpose was definitely religious.

The Tower of Babel in Genesis 11, on the other hand, was not a religious structure. The motivation behind the project was rather human-

istic and anti-religious (Gen. 11:4). There is not the slightest suggestion that worship of God or the gods had anything to do with it. It was in defiance of God that men tried to build the tower. The Tower of Babel of Genesis 11 was social and political in aim; the ziggurat of ancient Babylon was definitely a religious structure. Moreover, the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11 was never finished. God interfered and the builders abandoned their work without ever completing it. The ziggurat which supported Marduk's temple in Babylon, on the other hand, was certainly completed and stood for many centuries as a monument to the god of Babylon.

This easy-going but entirely fallacious identification of the Biblical Tower of Babel with the ziggurat of ancient Babylon is found in the captions to illustrations in many books on archaeology and ancient history. It indicates a careless attitude toward the text of Scripture — an attitude that does not take the trouble to note the precise statements of Scripture.

The real parallel to the Biblical Tower of Babel is not a construction project in modern Iraq, but the concept of world government which some earnest and idealistic but very misguided people represent as the only hope of the world in the face of the threat of nuclear destruction. Atomic warfare would be an indescribably terrible evil, but there is one thing, we believe, that would be even worse, namely world government on a humanistic or "faith in man" basis. Something of this sort is predicted in Revelation chapter 13. Read this chapter and note its prophecies. Note that the "beast" there described has worldwide, universal dominion (verse 7), that there is absolute world peace with no possibility of war (verse 4b), that the saints of God are persecuted unto death by this evil power (verses 7-10, 15), and that an absolute economic boycott enforces submission to this terrible tyranny (verses 16, 17). The number of the beast is "the number of a man" (verse 18), which may be translated "the number of man". The unregenerate human heart is in rebellion against God today as in the time of the Tower of Babel. Only the restraining common grace of God holds this rebellion in check. If and when the restraining hand of God is removed, the hatred of God and God's saints which is within the human heart will burst forth into vicious, deadly attack upon the true children of God in human society.

— J. G. Vos

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There is an impassable gulf fixed between those who hang the efficacy of Christ's work upon the "free" action of man's will, and those who ascribe it all to God's free grace. They are of different religions.

— Benjamin B. Warfield

## **Acknowledgments and Announcements**

### **Contributions Received**

The Manager of this magazine wishes to acknowledge, with hearty thanks, the following contributions to the cost of publishing the magazine received since our last issue went to press:

**July 1962:** No. 1089, \$2.00. No. 1090, \$1.00. No. 1091, \$.25. No. 1092, \$7.00.

**August 1962:** No. 1093, \$3.50. No. 1094, \$2.50.

**September 1962 (to September 15):** No. 1095, \$10.00. No. 1096, \$10.00. No. 1097, \$24.50. No. 1098, \$10.00. No. 1099, \$5.00. No. 1100, \$25.00.

These generous contributions from friends and readers who have in this practical manner shown their concern for the continued publication of **Blue Banner Faith and Life** are deeply appreciated. Less than half of the money needed is obtained from subscriptions; for the rest we are dependent on contributions. You can help the world-wide ministry of this magazine by contributing to the cost of publication as the Lord enables you.

### **Circulation of this Issue**

1200 copies of this issue of **Blue Banner Faith and Life** were printed. Most of these went immediately to subscribers. A small surplus was left from which orders for back issues can be supplied. The circulation of this issue by countries is as follows:

U.S.A., 820. Australia, 56. England, 49. Canada, 40. Northern Ireland, 38. Scotland, 37. Japan, 29. Cyprus, 14. Ceylon, 9. New Zealand,

9. Free China (Taiwan), 7. South Africa, 6. Syria, 5. India, 5. Eire, 4. Korea, 4. Peru, 3. Netherlands, 3. Lebanon, 3. Indonesia, 2. Ethiopia, 2. Greece, 2. One copy each to Egypt, Argentina, Hong Kong, Germany, Costa Rica, Brazil, France, Wales, Switzerland, Southern Rhodesia, Sweden. Total circulation, 1158. Total outside U.S.A., 338. Number of countries reached, 33.

### **Change of Address**

Our mailing list is kept strictly corrected to date, but we are helpless when subscribers move without notifying us. Each case involves expense to us and delay in a reader receiving his magazine. The return and re-mailing of an undeliver-

able copy in the U. S. domestic mails costs us about 25 cents. If we have to write one or more letters to find out the new address, it costs even more, not to mention the work involved. Please help by prompt notification of any change in your address.

### **Time to Renew your Subscription**

For most of our subscribers, the mailing of the present issue marks the expiration of their subscription. A few subscribers have already paid for 1963 and some even beyond that. Notifications and invitations to renew will be mailed out soon to all whose subscriptions have expired. Please send your renewal promptly, either as an individual subscriber (\$1.50) or through your

congregational or group agent (\$1.00). You may wish to send a gift subscription to a friend. We will mail a card to the recipient notifying him that he will receive the magazine during 1963 as your gift.

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

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"The doctrine of God's eternal predestination is so necessary to the Church of God, that without the same, faith can neither be truly taught, nor surely established."

— John Knox

"Why doth God open one man's eyes and not another's? Paul (Romans 9) forbiddeth us to ask why; for it is too deep for man's capacity. God we see is honored thereby . . . Faith cometh not of our free-will; but is the gift of God."

— William Tyndale

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## *When I Read the Bible Through*

By Amos R. Wells

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

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

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

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

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

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