
BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

J. G. VOS, Editor and Manager

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Avenue of Hours

By Esther Belle Heins

How quickly, Lord, this lovely day has gone!
Thou dost remember, wakening I gave
My day to Thee to keep from time of dawn,
That memories would future pathways pave.
The Avenue of Hours I walked with Thee
Was one of quietness, but beauty spread
Her skirts on either side, and every tree
Bent low to lovingly caress Thy head.

Thine hand made safe each crossing of the way,
My heart was warm, my step was sure and light;
The glory of Thy presence on our way
Dispelled the shadows of the coming night.
House all tomorrows, grant Thy company
On Avenue of Hours allotted me!

Hold High the Torch!

Hold high the torch!
You did not light its glow —
'Twas given you by other hands, you know.
'Tis yours to keep it burning bright,
Yours to pass on when you no more need light;
For there are other feet that we must guide,
And other forms go marching by our side.

Hold high the torch!
You did not light its glow —
'Twas given you by other hands, you know.
I think it started down its pathway bright
The day the Maker said: "Let there be light."
And He once said, Who hung on Calvary's tree:
"Ye are the light of the world". . . .
Go! Shine — for Me.

(Author unknown)

Silent Trumpet

By Esther Belle Heins

The entrance to a lily's heart
Is open, white and pure,
The pathway straight and narrow
To its throne room, deep, secure.
The lily is a trumpet which
In silence speaks to me —
Its stamen hints of riches that
Are ours through Calvary.

Eternity

By Esther Belle Heins

A hundred years I'll kneel at Thy scarred feet
In worship, reverence, humility;
I am so small, my Lord, can it be meet
That I should stand on holy ground with Thee?
A hundred years! Yea, still a hundred more,
That I might see the hands which bled for me;
The hand outstretched to open Heaven's door,
The hand that reached for Peter on the sea.

And though I rise at last to see Thy face —
My heart shall always bow, and lovingly,
Now, cleansed of self, and seeing all Thy grace,
I marvel that such love could ever be!
How long, dear Saviour, is eternity?
Yet one day more, so sing Thy praise, I plea!

They Could Not Break Him!

By Edna Janes Kayser

They sought to crush His love
With every deadly blow;
No, they could not break Him
Because He loved you so!

They trampled love divine
With careless feet that day,
And watched with heartless eyes
His life that ebbed away.

No, they could not break Him —
His eyes upon your face,
He held you close in love
With arms of tender grace.

They smashed the face of God —
He held you closer still;
His heart was pledged in love
To do the Father's will.

(Isaiah 50:6, 7. John 10:28, 29)

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Psalm 119:11 --- A Meditation

By Joseph P. Duggan

THE WORD OF GOD IN THE HEART

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9)

This is the testimony of the prophet Jeremiah concerning the heart of man. In substance it is also the witness of Moses and of Paul and of our Lord Jesus Christ.

However, it should not be descriptive of the function of the heart of the godly man. The high and holy calling of the heart of the redeemed is set forth in Psalm 119:10: "With my whole heart have I sought thee. . ." and in our text, verse 11:

"Thy word have I hid in mine heart that I might not sin against thee."

First, notice that the Psalmist regards sin as being against God. The nature of sin has been variously described by theologians and philosophers. Some have emphasized the fact that sin is against the principle of rationality in the universe; that sinful behaviour is foolish behaviour, activity contrary to reason and thus doomed to frustration and failure.

Some have made special note that sin is sin against one's self; that it is grossly injurious to the person of the sinner, that it is self-destructive. Some have stressed the antisocial nature of sin, declaring that the pain and misery wrought upon his fellow man by the sinner constitutes the awfulness of sin.

All of these concepts are quite correct. Sin is all of these things and many more such. But with the Psalmist we must recognize that such descriptions of sin are not only incomplete, but also merely secondary. They do not get to the heart of the matter, which is that sin is — when considered most basically, going to its very root — against God.

Thus the Psalmist does not say: Thy word have I hid in mine heart that I might not sin against **reason**, or **society**, or **my fellow man**, or **myself**, but rather:

"Thy word have I hid in mine heart that I might not sin against **thee**."

When we contemplate the sin which inheres in ourselves — or better yet let us say, when we

beseech God to deliver us from the sin which so easily besets us — let us not think of sin merely as socially unacceptable behaviour, or in any other way which only takes note of its secondary nature and which neglects the fact that sin is primarily offence against God. As the Book of Psalms elsewhere reminds us:

"Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." (Psalm 51:4)

Unless we maintain such a view of sin we will find it too easy to find false substitutes for the Biblical antidote for the overcoming of sin.

Also, bear in mind that when we speak of sin as being "against God" we are not using empty words. Our sin is heinous, it is monstrous, it is the blackness of nameless terror, because it is the rejection of the love of God, the spewing forth in disgust of the grace and goodness of our Father, the pollution of commanded holiness, the defilement of the white robes by which God clothes His beloved children.

By way of illustration, when we break the Sabbath, we do not simply injure our own religious welfare, we do not only harm the church, but we say to God: I am wise, you are foolish; man and his activities are superior to you, God, and your grace.

If we do not honour our father and mother, we do not simply corrupt our own ethical standards, we do not only confirm and strengthen the disruptive influences corroding society, but we dishonor God Himself by scorning the precepts of His lordship over us.

If, in our religious exercises, we make or use likenesses of things in heaven or on earth, we not only destroy the spiritual nature of our own faith, we not only offend the church with seductions to idolatry, but we defile the holiness of the name of God by substituting vanity and miserable imitation for His exalted fulness.

Yes, let us beware of sinning against our fellow man, of sinning against truth and rationality, of sinning against our own selves, but above all, let us hide God's word in our heart **that we might not sin against God.**

Second, let us mark well that it is the word of God which must be hidden in the heart. There are many good and wise words of men; words, dissertations, pronouncements, meditations and the like which can and should be of tremendous value to us. There are words to be remembered, to be studied, to be meditated upon; words of immense value and significance. We would be foolish indeed to take no note of what our fellow men have said or written.

But, when we speak of the word of God we speak of something utterly unique and not to be confused with human wisdom. While we ought to render unto the words of men the esteem and response which they merit, we must ever bear in mind the distinction to be made between them and the revelation of divine wisdom from on high.

The gulf between the human and the divine is beyond our comprehension:

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:8,9)

We must hide **God's word** in our hearts: not the words which we think are wise and good, not those which we judge to be appropriate and useful.

To confuse the word of God with human wisdom is to confuse power with weakness, purity with corruption, and wisdom with folly. It is to substitute temporal vanities for eternal truth, to eschew true nourishment for poison or, at best, husks which cannot profit us.

Why must the child of God devour and digest and incorporate into every fiber of his being the word of God? Why must it be God's word that is hidden within his heart? It is because of the tremendous power of that word of God upon those that truly bathe their souls in it. Its power is set forth in the words of God's Spirit as He speaks through His servant David:

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes." (Psalm 19:7, 8)

It is, as Peter reminds us, "a light that shineth in a dark place." (2 Peter 1:19)

The word of God is something which the word of man is not. Men's words may tell us about truth, or about freedom, but God's word alone is the truth that makes us free. (John 8:32) As Proverbs asserts, the words of the Lord "are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh." (4:22)

Think of all those things which we cherish most: freedom and deliverance, enlightenment, joy, life, health, peace, comfort, cleansing and so forth. Again and again the Scriptures proclaim that these things come to us through the word of God. The words of men may concern themselves with these things, they may point us to them, or urge upon us their value, but only the word of God operates with that supernatural power that brings down from above us these blessings of God, and it is the word of God upon which we must feed and to which we must cling if we would apprehend them.

Above all, however, let us put the reason for so using the word of God outside and above ourselves and such blessings which God bestows upon us through it. As noted earlier, sin is primarily and ultimately against God. Yes, we do sin against our own freedom, our light, our joy, our life, our health, peace and comfort, but above all our sin is against God; and it is for this reason — above all — that it must be the word of God that is hidden in the heart, for no other word can have the proper concern for God's holiness. No other word can serve as a guide to the perfection of absolute righteousness which is in God. Man's word is vain, futile and utterly hopeless in this regard.

Do we fear to sin against God? Then we will cleave with all our strength — with love and desperation — to nought but His own revelation.

Third, observe that it is in our hearts that the word must be hid. When we consider the sin and corruption which flourishes about us, the principalities, powers, and rulers of darkness. . . When we see the spiritual wickedness even in high places. . . When we take note of the fact that we dwell in the midst of a society which is filled with "all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity". . . Then with fear and trembling in the presence of a holy God, we will know that we must cleave to Him as He reveals Himself in the word; we will be driven inexorably to the conviction of the necessity of hiding the word in our hearts, so that it should constantly be with us, serving as an antidote to the poisons which fill the atmosphere.

When we consider that our hearts are naturally inclined strongly to iniquity, being deceitful and wicked beyond human comprehension, we see further the necessity for hiding the word in our hearts. Shall we reply: "We are Christians, this doesn't really apply to us, for we are subject to the sanctifying and purifying operations of the Holy Spirit"? Not at all, for the Spirit of God works through and in the word of God. If we have no room for the word of God in the depths of our being, then neither have we room for His Spirit there. To the extent that the word is not hidden in our hearts, then in that degree our hearts remain deceitful and desperately wicked — to that extent we have not been subjected to the sanctifying influence of God's Spirit.

Similarly, no one can say: "We are saved by faith, there is no need to be diligent in such spiritual exercises as devouring and digesting and being nourished by God's word." Certainly we are saved by faith, but what kind of a faith is it that is not conjoined to a repentance which forsakes our own wills and cleaves to the will of God, that is, the word of God? And what kind of salvation is it which does not increasingly bring us into conformity with this revelation of God's holiness?

There is necessity that God's children hear the Scriptures and that they read the word of God. This is certainly contained within the scope of our text — but this is only part of it, in itself it is not enough.

There is necessity that we study the Bible, that we meditate upon it and seek out its meaning. This is a vital and significant part of hiding the word in the heart — but we must go further.

We ought to memorize Scripture texts. This too is involved in hiding the word in the heart — but God forbid that we should be satisfied with mere intellectual pursuits of the reason and the exercise of the power of memory.

The necessity is that we hide the word of God in the very depths of our souls. Let the word be in our ears and upon our eyes; let the word be upon our tongues; let it be in our minds, but above all let it be in our hearts.

With great urgency, with strenuous effort, with agonizing fervor, let every one of God's people read and study and meditate upon God's word, praying to God — for it cannot be done by human power alone — that His word be grafted upon their souls, that, as a seed, His word should be planted upon fertile ground, so that it sprout and flourish and bear much fruit to the glory of God, being watered by tears of repentance and fed by a faith which relies upon God for the fulfilment of all His promises of grace. Anything less than this is to relegate our relationship to the word to a purely intellectual level, when in fact it must be a matter of the soul; of the heart, not merely the mind. To fail to do so is to make a mockery of our profession of faith in Christ; to

confirm the sterility of a vain and empty religion which may have the form of godliness, but which denies and rejects the power thereof.

What is the necessity of hiding the word in the heart? It is this: sin is primarily against God, and this offence to God arises not in the mind, but in the heart which motivates the mind and all the faculties of man. So then, the antidote for sin can avail us only if it goes to the root of our sickness — it must be applied to the heart.

To conclude let us take note of two verses from Jeremiah which bear on this text: first, a promise, and second, a warning:

The promise: Jeremiah 31:33:

"But 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."

This is not a promise of some distant millennium or a picture of the end of time, but rather is, as the two citations of this text in Hebrews show, a present reality — a part of the blessing of the gospel age, the grace of God to be laid hold of today.

The warning: Jeremiah 23:9:

"Mine heart within me is broken because of the prophets; all my bones shake; I am like a drunken man, and like a man whom wine hath overcome, because of the Lord, and because of the words of his holiness."

To hide the word in our hearts will sometimes involve anguish and pain. Be warned — count the cost! Expect the agonizing rending of your heart when the word within strives with sin from both without and within.

But, having counted the cost, be diligent to hide the word in your heart, that you may lay hold of all the inheritance of God's people, all of God's blessing, and — above all — that God's name be honored, His holiness sanctified, and His will be done.

The Lord's Great Controversy

By the Rev. John C. Rankin

VII. God's Contention in His Grace

In the light of the facts thus far considered we are ready for the teaching concerning God's contention in his grace. Now indeed are we standing in the holy place, in the very holy of holies of the truth of God.

Let us take a preliminary survey of the field

of the divine activity in this particular form of his contention. What is meant by God's contention in his grace? And what, by the exhortation to "earnestly contend?" What definitely is involved in his and our contention for the faith?

Three aspects claim our attention: (1) in-

struction and argumentation (2) invitation and persuasion and (3) the distinctive quality of the divine and human approach to sinner-men in the gospel of God's Son.

(1) Instruction and argumentation.

Sinners must be persuaded to read and study the Word of God and so learn the message of his grace. They must be confronted with the message from the lips of those who know and believe. The gospel begins and continues in and with instruction, education and enlightenment. The Spirit of God uses means, "the means of grace," first among which is the Word of God; for the effectuation of His work of grace.

The truth must be known in order that Christ may be received. And the Bible is God's Word of truth. The Bible and the Bible alone is always the first place to look for the knowledge of the truth of God. It is given as man's supreme and perfect counsellor and guide, the governing principle of all thought and life. It tells us what we are to believe and how we are to live. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. 10:17). And "without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6).

All of the teaching of the Word is teaching for all men always and everywhere. All education should be Christian and all schools, Christian. All education that is based on underlying principles of unbelief is false. The instruction of our schools may be loaded with facts. These facts, however, by virtue of the fact of their position in a system that is false, themselves partake of the falseness of the system in which they are placed.

But what about argumentation? Certainly it is not excluded anywhere in Scripture and is not definitely permitted but also enjoined. "Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord" (Isa. 1:18). "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man" (Col. 4:5, 6). "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason for the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (I Pet. 3:15).

But besides the precepts given are the examples afforded. Given for our guidance is the practice of the preaching and the teaching of the prophets and the apostles, above all, of the Lord himself. The life of Christ reveals his constant readiness to reason it out with friend and foe alike, to explain the matter in question and set everything right.

It is true that "the servant of the Lord must not strive," that is to say he must not engage in controversy simply for the sake of argument, or

argue in a merely argumentative spirit. Certainly we are not to "contend" **contentiously**, but rather in a spirit of "meekness and fear." And the basic reason for this kind of reasoning is that otherwise there is no real contention at all. For our contention to be real, it must be conducted in the spirit of him with whom and for whom and for the cause of whom it is that we contend.

But to contend in this spirit does not mean that we are not to be dogmatic in it. We have the advantage over others because we know that we are, and that God has given to us to be, in the right. It is a great advantage to be able to argue in the consciousness of the essential rightness of what we have to say. As a matter of fact all truly Christian argumentation is completely one-sided in favor of the Christian contender. Of course more, much more, than argument is needed, but that is God's part, not ours. The unbeliever's case is never valid. From top to bottom it is always open to complete and devastating refutation.

(2) Invitation and appeal.

In this category are the "comes" of the Bible. The note of gentle persuasion and tender appeal ever characterizes the gospel message and the gospel call. "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (II Cor. 5:20).

The call of God speaking to us in his Word is couched in the language of invitation and earnest entreaty: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price — Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live — Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isa. 55:1-7f). And, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Mt. 11:28-30).

God, it is true, makes use of every kind of motivation. There is threatening, warning and denunciation — the motive of fear, which, of course, is unavoidable and inescapable. And the note of command sounds through all, not only in the law but also in the gospel.

Of special moment, however, is the note of sweet and loving persuasion, the presentation of every kind of legitimate inducement from the least to the greatest, from the lowest to the high-

est and best. This is the motivation of desire awakened in response to the mighty influence of the promises of God inclusive of the promise of reward. The promises of God are both conditional and unconditional. They are conditional in that we must believe, repent and come to Christ, putting all our trust and confidence in him. We must return unto the Lord if we are to have his mercy upon us.

In the plan and program of God all the forms of motivation have their place, and are brought to bear upon "the prospect" in God's "super-salesmanship" and "sales promotion." As has been said the religion of the Bible "seeks our good and offers us a priceless gift." The gift of God, freely offered in his Word, we are required to accept for the attainment of our highest good, or may reject it at our peril to our everlasting shame and remorse.

(3) Lastly there is the distinctive quality of God's approach to sinner-men in the gospel of his Son which we may characterize as the love-approach of our Father and our God.

And first of all we note that God's approach to sinners in the gospel is not that of condemnation but of salvation through Christ. It is the expression of his desire for faith and acceptance on our part to the end of justification unto life. "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (Jo. 3:17). "If any man hear my words and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world but to save the world" (Jo. 12:47).

It is noteworthy that all of the miracles of Christ, in contrast with many of those of the dispensation preceding, with one exception which only serves to emphasize the fact, were performed in this spirit.

Jesus himself was the living embodiment of the grace of God. He went about doing good. The life of Christ itself was the perfect exemplification of God's grace. The whole attitude and spirit of the Lord during his lifetime was that of grace and faithfulness (Jo. 1:14). Thus God's whole manner of approach in Jesus and the gospel was and is that of quiet and peaceable approach, of firm and imperative, it may be, but gracious invitation and gentle persuasion. The fact is as clear as day that Jesus sought the lost where and as they were, not to judge but to deliver, not to condemn but to justify and save.

The gospel call proceeds on the basis of Christ's redemption and its application. The evangelical appeal wherever and whenever sounded is that of loving kindness and earnest entreaty. "Repent and be converted" is the message. "Be ye reconciled to God." "Ho, every one that thirsteth" and "Come unto me."

The gospel offer comes to us in a gracious and life-giving spirit and is altogether and only for our good. The godliness enjoined "is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come" "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." The old, old story "of Jesus and his glory, of Jesus and his love" is heard, and our hearts are captivated and enthralled. With Paul we say: "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ" (Phil. 3:4-17).

But the love of God and of Christ is of a certain kind and there are many different kinds as well as degrees of love. Unbelievers have their love both for themselves and for others. But at bottom it is always an ill-conceived and misguided affection that does no real or lasting good.

And then there are also different kinds of good and true and holy love. There is for instance, "the love of complacency." There is for example the love in exercise among the persons of the Trinity, where there is a love of each for himself and for each other. And there is the love which they have in common for the holy angels. And there is the love of the angels of God for God and for each other in heaven. All of which love is, of course, pure and holy and perfect love.

And yet again there is the love of the saints in heaven and on earth. This is a love which though perfectly attained in heaven is never perfect here. Nevertheless, as it is in itself and as far as it goes, this also is a love of complacency which finds no fault but has only perfect joy and pure delight in the glorious objects of affection.

But God's love for the sinner and for the world is not of this sort. It is quite another and a different kind of love, namely, that of compassion and pity, of mercy and grace. It is described in terms of "merciful kindness" and "tender mercies." "The Lord," it said, "is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy" (Ps. 103:8). It is true that God "hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth" (Rom. 9:18). But for the objects of his mercy he is "the Father of mercies" and "the God of all grace."

And the greatness of God's love is represented in the gift of His Son, and in the very Son of God himself and his love, a love in which and by virtue of which he "receiveth sinful men." The love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord is a veritable passion of holy condescension and of compassionate yearning for and over sinner-men. This is the love-approach of God.

Ways of God in His Love

Illustrative of the mode and manner of the divine contention in his grace are three effects of the operation of his grace in the hearts of men. These aspects of his work of grace are (1) to soften, (2) to subdue and (3) to overcome our evil with his good. Certainly God softens, subdues and overcomes, for every sinner called, regenerated, converted and saved is added to the Church of God and is thenceforth arrayed on the side of God as one of the army of the Lord. When a sinner repents, besides another soul saved from eternal death, there is one less enemy of God on earth and one more servant and friend of Christ.

(1) First there is God's work to soften the rebellious heart, break down our resistance and melt the hardness of our hearts.

God of course is "most free," and, among other things is free to soften or to harden as the case may be. But God's great work of grace in us is done in and upon the heart. And so we hear him speaking in Ezekiel's prophecy: "I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh" (Ez. 11:19). And again: "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" (36:26, 27). On this basis comes the exhortation of the prophet: "Repent and turn from all your transgressions" and cast them away and "make you a new heart and a new spirit" (18:30, 31).

Those who have been and are the subjects of precious inward change and work of the Spirit know what the change so wrought really means and how soft and pliable they become and how amenable to the Word and the will of God. As the hard soil is softened by the showers, so the hearts of men by the snow and the rain of the Word of God.

(2) Another of these ways of God in his love is to subdue us to himself, putting us into a mental state of willing subjection, obedience to and ready compliance with the will of God as revealed. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth" (Ps. 110:3).

God works a meek and humble, a lowly and a childlike spirit in the hearts of his elect. The work of grace is always an humble and a contrite heart. The effect is ever to cause us to "abhor" ourselves and "repent in dust and ashes." The true believer in his own eyes, as in the eyes of him who is at once his Judge and Saviour, is made to realize what he is and what he deserves. Before God he sees and knows himself to be just the

miserable, wrath-and-hell-deserving sinner that God says he is. When God's work of redemption accomplished in and by the death of Christ is applied, pride is put down, the pride of life is gone and we learn to say with Paul "for me to live is Christ and to die is gain" and "I am crucified with Christ."

Christ as our King subdues us to himself and dwells in state within the throne-room of our hearts, and rules and governs all within. When this blessed event takes place in us we bow in humble, reverent submission and subjection to him in his most gracious and benevolent Kingship.

Concerning the King of love and his conquest and subjugation of the soul it is said that "the Spirit of Christ subdues and enables the will of man to do that freely and cheerfully, which the will of God, revealed in the law, requireth to be done" (Conf. of Faith Chapt. XIX, sect. VII).

(3) Finally, God overcomes our evil with his good. We remember that we are exhorted in his Word not to be overcome of evil but to "overcome evil with good." But why? unless it be that this is first of all his own modus operandi, his method of procedure? Among the various injunctions of the Lord to his disciples the Saviour said: "But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward will be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful" (Lk. 6:35, 36). And the teaching of the epistles echoes the refrain: "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." "As we therefore have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Rom. 12:18; Gal. 6:10).

As Christians we know and have seen that "a soft answer turneth away wrath" and that "a man that hath friends must show himself friendly." And it is not only that we must be friendly but we must be humble, considerate and helpful. People as a rule react unfavorably to pride. They may be proud themselves, but little relish pride and boasting in others. On the other hand we discover in our daily contacts and relations how true it is that the good effects of God's grace in us has the effect of drawing others to us and often wins them over to share at least something of our viewpoint.

This, in a dim, imperfect way, is just a human reproduction of God's own method in his grace. Consider Jeremiah 31:1-3 and what God said to his people of old: "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee."

As the Saviour said: "No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him." And concerning his own drawing power in his grace: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth,

will draw all men unto me" (Jo. 6:44 and 12:32). Consider what John Murray says in Part II, chapt. 2 of his **"Redemption — Accomplished and Applied"** about God the Father and his "calling." God's "effectual calling" is ever attended by the outward calling of the Word. The message of the grace of God is or is about to be heard and the Spirit of God works with it or uses it to impart a willing response in the heart of the hearer. Men say "I can't" do this and "I can't" do that, and of course it is true that we can only do what we can do. But God calls, as he commanded the light to shine out of darkness, and so orders the work of his Spirit as not only to "persuade" but to **"enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the gospel."** The believer knows that when God sets his love upon him, calls and draws and lays hold upon him he has no choice except to accept and serve and love and follow Christ.

Yes, God softens, subdues and overcomes our evil with his good. He does this by means of the outward gospel call as given in his Word and the preaching of the Word. But the word of his grace finds additional expression not only in the words but in the lives of his people. God's **Word** is his epistle which he has written us. But as Paul says: "Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men: Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart" (II Cor. 3:2, 3).

The fact is that those who come to God often may and do begin to know of him in and by their knowledge of the godly. The approach of God to sinners in the gospel is accomplished, to some extent at least, in the hearts and lives of his own people.

The Human Analogy

So we come to the concluding topic concerning God's contention in his grace, namely, the human analogy. For as God is, so are we; and contrariwise, as we are, or ought to be, so too is God.

The manifestation of God in us to those who seek him is somewhat after the manner of the Lord's own revelation of the Father. As Jesus publicly declared: "he that seeth me, seeth him that sent me" (Jo. 12:45). And as he said to Thomas: "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him." And as he replied to Philip: "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? (Jo. 14: 5-12).

Likeness to God is not only the ultimate objective, but also to some extent, the present at-

tainment of the believer. **"Like parent, like child"** holds true otherwise than in our merely human relationships. Even as it is in family relationships so is it also in the spiritual relationship which obtains between us and the Father.

"Ye must be born again," it is said, and we are. And as our Saviour says: "ye are not of the world even as I am not of the world." We are to be holy as God is holy and merciful as our Father is merciful. And we are to forgive even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven.

God's own love and pity for the lost is the type and pattern for the manifestation of his Spirit in us so that insofar as the human manifestation is analogous to the divine do we show forth the praises of him that hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light. God's plan and program for his people is evidently to provide an easy ascent for those who know him not to somewhat of the knowledge of him.

"Ye are the light of the world" says Christ, for Christ is "the light of the world" and "God is light," and we are to "let our light so shine before men that they may see our good works and glorify our Father which is in heaven."

Peter intimates that we are "partakers of the divine nature" here and now (II Pet. 1:1-4). The new nature imparted to us is similar in all respects, save those of the incommunicable attributes, to that of God himself. "Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin and live unto righteousness" (West. Shorter Cat. No. 35).

We count not ourselves to have attained and yet the very holiness and love of God are not only enjoined upon us but also to some extent represented and reflected in us. Others should see, or at least ought to be able to see, something of the Father in the children to whom he says: "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (II Cor. 6:17, 18).

Finally and in conclusion let us consider the human analogy not so much as it is represented in us, as it is enjoined upon us.

It is true, of course, as the Saviour says: "If ye were of the world the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you" and, "they are not of the world even as I am not of the world" (Jo. 15:19 and 17: 14-16). So the spirit of truth and grace as it dwells and is exemplified in the believer is contributory to the knowledge and understanding of the same spirit as it lives and glows in the very heart of God. For, "we all, beholding as in a glass

the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (II Cor. 3:18).

But as for the manner in which a spirit like unto that of God himself is enjoined upon us, consider the following: "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace" (Jas. 3:17, 18).

"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Be ye therefore followers of God; as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour" (Eph. 4:31-5:2).

"By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, etc." "In all things commending ourselves as the ministers of God" (II Cor. 6:6, 7 and verse 4).

"But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance unto the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will" (II Tim. 2: 23-26).

Such is the spirit and manner of approach to others which God enjoins upon us in his Word. And as he wants us to and requires of us, so is he.

It would be edifying also to go beyond the Christian spirit of contention for the faith and consider for example Paul's manner of approach to men as reported in his letters and as exemplified in his life. We are amazed at the consummate tact and diplomacy which he displayed in the conduct of his ambassadorship for Christ.

"Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord," he says, "we persuade men" (II Cor. 5:11). And there is I Cor. 9:19-23, which we may not quote in full, but in which he says: "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." His address "in the midst of Mars' Hill" (Acts 17) and his speech before Agrippa (Acts 26) highlight the point.

It is true of course that Paul could use severity when that was called for. He knew how to blame as well as to praise, to condemn as well as to commend. He realized the importance of protest and dissent. He understood the need and exercised the right of dissociation and separation and never failed when adverse action and expression were required.

But otherwise his governing principle was a policy of friendly association with others where and as they were in all possible adaptation to them. He mightily opposed "the works of the flesh." But he ever encouraged and enjoined "the fruit of the Spirit" — "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, self-control" (Gal. 5:19-23).

(To be continued)

Biblical Interpretation

By the Rev. Robert More, Jr., Th.M.

True interpretation of the Scripture is not an option or fringe matter in the life of the Christian. The words of Scripture, being the words of life consistently pointing to Jesus Christ, must therefore be of primary concern to the believer. There is, however, a science or discipline involved in interpreting the Bible. One major segment of seminary training is the field of Biblical Hermeneutics or Interpretation. The term hermeneutics is a biblical word, Heb. 7:2 showing two examples of it, namely the interpretation that Melchizedek means King of Righteousness and that Salem means peace.

At this time a fierce struggle continues over Biblical Interpretation. With the "status sym-

bol" of churches seemingly being the production of new curriculum (such as the U.P.U.S.A. church plus Canadian Presbyterians, the United Church of Canada, Anglicans of Canada and even the Reformed Presbyterian Church), it grows increasingly more important that the Christian possess some of the basic tools for a thorough and correct study of the Scripture, since, in many cases, the materials are distressingly deceiving or inadequate.

In Biblical Interpretation, there are several major methods along with minor of subordinate literary forms common to all. The foundational methods will be discussed first with the lesser forms being mentioned secondly.

I. Major Methods

While perhaps others can be listed, and definitely different terminology, possibly the most common of the primary styles are (1) Literal; (2) Allegorical-Mythological; (3) Symbolical; (4) Typological; (5) Sensus Plenior.

(1) Literal. Modernistic scholars rail against this method and have so obscured its nature by false accusations and incriminating implications that believers may feel something of a repugnancy to it. But such should never be the case, for the Scripture did not take this attitude to the literal method. Paul built theology on it in Gal. 3:16; Luke used it in writing Lk. 1:1-4; and Jesus confirmed the Scripture by it in Matt. 5:18. What therefore is meant by literal?

At the outset, a difference should be made between literal and, as others have done, literalistic or letteralistic. The latter demands a crass, material happening while literal presupposes literary types — literature written in different verbal forms. Literal therefore, by evangelical definition, only requires the normal, commonly understood, or real meaning of the ancient writer. Thus if the Biblical author wrote a metaphor (like Jn. 6:35ff), to be literally, correctly, really, or normally understood, it must be interpreted as a metaphor. So too if it were poetry, or pun, or promise, or prophecy. Thus it is precisely proper to talk about a literal parable, even as the first definition of Webster's dictionary gives sufficient grounds for this explanation.

Historically this has been the method of believers. The church father Origen was a learned Christian who did not use this method and so brought upon himself the suspicion of error. On the other hand John Chrysostom, the greatest preacher of his day, held to the literal method and is widely quoted even today. And of course the Reformation, Luther and Calvin especially, was totally built around the literal method. Today evangelicals the world over are pressing for the supremacy of the literal method, which widely diffused and symphonic voice of God's elect expositors is not to be lightly disregarded.

(2) Allegorical-Mythological. It is recognized largely in conservative Christian circles that the old allegorical method has the same basic nature as the current mythological emphasis. In both cases the essential historicity of the words is subordinated (if not actually annihilated) to the mystical, moralistic principle attempting to be conveyed. In the old allegorical method (by Philo the Jew, a contemporary of Christ), Adam was not a historical man, being treated rather as the symbol of understanding or mind; Eve was equated with sensuality; the serpent was explained as pleasure and the beasts were declared to be passions. By the present day mythological method, the same end is achieved by explaining Adam as evolving humanity, the fall into sin as the misuse

of God's gifts, and the serpent as the temptation to wrong-doing.

This primary method therefore considers history as utterly peripheral with the moral of the story being the all-important factor. It should not be confused with the subordinate form to be mentioned later.

(3) Symbolical. This too, along with the following one, is also a subordinate form. But in some circles it has become the major method of interpretation. By it the stark realities of truth are often generalized away. Jehovah Witnesses (say on hell) use it well. To ethical, socio-theologians (such as the present 'God-is-dead' hallucination), the Scripture is merely a finely printed book of moral precepts, an ethical guideline — impossible to reach for sure but nonetheless of some value for a model life.

(4) Typological. This is more often used by devout believers who want to put more of Christ in the O.T. than God placed there. Of course the N.T. knows of types (see later), but there are also major requirements surrounding typology which dare not be disregarded. These will be listed under it.

(5) Sensus Plenior. This is a Roman Catholic emphasis of this century. It attempts to "biblicize" tradition by saying that subsequent history must be attached to, intended by, and interpret previous history. Thus they claim that the earlier had historical reality and significance in its day but that later history was also designed to be included in the former. Thus the Virgin Mary being a partner in destroying Satan (based on Gen. 3:15) is said to be required by this method. It is thus basically the addition of tradition to the literal method.

Those are the battle lines of the different methods. And it is not without significance that the literal method was placed first, for in historical Protestantism this has been the supreme method. By this the interpreter studies out the grammar of the words (for instance the deity of Christ is proven this way in Tit. 2:13 and II Pet. 1:1), the history of the situation (the lie about Felix in Acts 24:1-9 is proven from the contemporary secular historian Tacitus in Hist. 5:9; Ann. 12:54), the order of words (Matt. 23:35) the vocabulary used (Jn. 21:15-17), the geography of the place (1 Cor. 7:21-24 and the selling slaves their freedom just outside town), plus sundry other items. Then the reader can say with truthfulness, "thus saith the Lord." The literal meaning is therefore the one meaning, not allowing secondary or tertiary meanings (as with mythological and sensus plenior) and is the axiomatic or presumed meaning until demonstrated otherwise.

In strenuously defending the primacy of the literal method though, the interpreter should never trespass the line of demarcation into literalistic.

The secondary or subordinate literary forms all should be recognized and be treated in the way their form requires. Thus the second division of this study arises.

II. Minor Forms

In the Scripture there are literally dozens of these, most being called by foreign language words (often Greek) and often not easily perceived or occurring with any frequency. Thus only a selection will be presented here with the way they should be interpreted.

Accommodation. This is often called "application." It is allowable as a practice (it is not actually a genuine literary method nor a subordinate form) only for the sake of the edification possible by all the Scripture but is valid **ONLY** (let's repeat) **ONLY** if the literal method substantiates it and if it does not go contrary to any of the forms based on the literal method. It should never be thought of as "meaning of the text" (that is, the literal method) since it is easily only a possible, or imagined, **application** of the text.

Allegory. Gal. 4:22-26 is specifically said to be an allegory. But it is not of the same kind as the major method seen in history, for all the characters in Paul's allegory have retained their historical reality throughout. Biblical allegory therefore retains the historicity of the persons and places but **ADDS** that here they also incidentally portray the bondage of the Law and the freedom of evangelical Grace. The fact that the inspired Paul does this does not allow anyone else to do it, and secondly, nowhere does he command his readers to do it. Rather, just before and just after the allegory he literally applies the Scripture and says this is the meaning or point; my allegory only illustrates the literal truth.

Analogy. This is the comparing of two things on the basis of partial resemblance between the two. For the difference between it and simile, see the latter. John 10 is a classic analogy.

Anthropomorphism. This is the practice of describing spiritual realities in terms of humans. Gen. 6:3, 6 and numerous other places use it.

Euphemism. This uses sweet sounding words to describe harsh realities. Lk. 8:52, 3 is this.

Fable. See myth too. Judges 9:7-15 is a Biblical fable. It is a literary device where things or animals are made to speak a moral or warning to humans.

Figurative. This is the general category which describes one thing in terms of another or in graphically descriptive terms. The Psalms abound with this.

Metaphor. This uses a word or phrase which really applies to something else but is nonetheless written in describing another item by reason of its

appropriate associations. John 14:6 is another example.

Myth. This is both a major method as well as, some claim, a minor form. The word is used in the Greek N.T. (as in II Tim. 4:4, et. al.) and is translated as "fable," which is unfortunate. In those references its meaning is not identical with the modern definition (which is expressed as a religious piece of folklore with a moral) but rather refers to the fantastical vagaries and legalistic encroachments of paganism and Judaism. There is, to a very slight degree, literary form in the N.T. which approaches a myth. The moral about Jesus being light which repels spiritual darkness is stated in Jn. 8:12. Then the physical and spiritual proof of this is documented by the miracle of Jn. 9 with the moralistic conclusion being drawn in Jn. 9:41. However, because of the wicked connotations of "myth" today, evangelicals should abstain from calling this passage by that word, but it should be recognized that it does carry as its literary center certain of the basic features of the modern definition.

Numerology. On occasions numbers are made to convey spiritual truth. Seven signifies completeness. Forty was held to be number of a generation on earth. Rev. 13:18 is an example from the Bible.

Parable. This is a short, fictitious story aimed to convey but one thesis while the details merely guide to the point. Many people deny that only one point is intended by the parable, but believers in all ages have accepted this norm. Thus in Matt. 13 (the "parable chapter" as it is called) the parable of the sower is declared by Christ Himself (Matt. 13:18-23) to prove the point of the different ways individuals receive God's word. It is not how they receive salvation; it is not trying to show different stages of reception by one person. It is how different types of people receive God's word. Parables, furthermore, are not of the same basic nature as a myth (as modernists are wont to claim) since myth arises from popular folklore while parable comes from the creative, oratorical ingenuity of a speaker.

Paradox. This is where two statements, both true, are outwardly (only seemingly it should be noted) contradictory. Gen. 2:2 and Jn. 5:17 are indicative of the paradoxes replete in the Scripture.

Personification. This attributes human characteristics to nonhuman objects. Ps. 40:11 is a case. In the latter days of the O.T. and intertestamentary period the "word of God" became personified but only in N.T. revelation (Jn. 1) did it actually become personal.

Poetry. Biblical poetry mostly consisted of tempo (that is, many accents to the line) and, perhaps, on rare occasions rhyme. It could be written in a straight forward historical way (as

in Ps. 104 which recounts creation) or figurative way (as in Ps. 148). Within it were other subdivisions, such as acrostic (beginning the section with a letter of the alphabet — Ps. 119), climactic (Ps. 55:6), Messianic (Ps. 22 with Jn. 19:24, 28), and synonymous parallelism (plus others) as in Ps. 59:1.

Principlizing. This draws the timeless principle out of a Scripture passage and then places it in a modern day setting. It differs from accommodation which presumes on the applicability by first detecting the point of the words by the literal method and then transporting that to the new situation. Heb. 11 and I Cor. 9:9, 10 show two examples of this form.

Promises. All the promises of the Scripture (estimated by one as high as 30,000 or about one to a verse of Scripture) do NOT belong to every reader. Their scope (whether universal or limited); whether personal or not; whether conditional or not; and applicability to the present must be determined first by the literal meaning and only if all point to the reader can they be claimed as their promise. Jas. 4:8 is a conditional promise for instance and Rev. 2,3 was a historically past promise to those churches.

Prophecy. In the narrow sense it means foretelling things to come by the direct revelation of God. If spoken after an event but in a way which makes people think it was spoken before, then it is called *vaticinium ex eventu* — pretending to foretell what has already happened. Modernists by and large treat Daniel this way. Deut. 18:22 shows the O.T. way of telling prophecy and for us, something is prophecy if the N.T. says it was (as Is. 53:12 with Lk. 22:37) or if unfulfilled yet. Prophecy in the wider sense means anyone who spoke to men on God's behalf. II Pet. 2:16 calls Balaam this; Jude :14 and Gen. 20:7 call the patriarchs this; and I Tim. 1:18 calls preachers this. Prophecy too only has one meaning, but is capable of multifulfillment.

Proverb. This is a compact maxim, either primarily earthly in outlook (as in Prov. 27 mostly) or heavenly (such as Prov. 26.) Proverbial statements are found throughout Scripture, Lk. 12 being full of them (as vs. 56).

Pun. This is a play on the sound or appearance of words. Gen. 2:23 is about the first with Matt. 16:18 probably being the most famous N.T. one. Prov. 13:20 in the A.S.V. is an English example. "Walk with wise men, and thou shalt be wise; but the companion of fools shall smart for it."

Reductio ad absurdum. This Latin phrase means carrying a principle to its consequence. It is often used in pointing out the results of holding an incorrect thesis. I Cor. 15:12-19 displays it.

Riddle. This is a terse, deliberately obscure, and often seemingly contradictory statement which attempts to hold truth in a dark and evasive manner. Judg. 14:12ff shows it.

Satire. This is a statement which on the surface is not offensive and yet which strikes at the core of the hearer by reason of its appearance or association. Phil. 3:2 ("concision" with "circumcision" in the following verse) is specifically this.

Simile. This is when an author compares two things not by reason of partial similarity (as in analogy) but because the two are essentially of a different, though compatible, nature. The words like and as are generally used in the simile. Acts 2:2, 3 display both.

Symbolism. This minor form has given rise to the major method. It describes specific truth in general, timeless words with the interpreter attempting to detect what the specific point is. Apocalyptic literature (as in the book of Revelation) abounds with it. Colors and metals often had symbolical values in the Scripture.

Typology. The Greek word originally meant the mark a hard object left in a softer one. In this sense Jn. 20:25 uses it. As a subordinate form, it gave rise to the primary method which proceeded to carry it to unwarranted extremes. Many Christian interpreters say the only sure way to tell an O.T. type is if the rest of the Scripture declares it is. To be a type, the later writer had to manifest not only a characteristic similarity in appearance between the two but also the earlier writer had to design that the earlier be specifically fulfilled in the later. Thus Adam in Gen. 3 is a type for Rom. 5:12ff relates that it is. By this criterion, Rahab's scarlet thread (Josh. 2:18) is NOT typical (since the rest of Scripture does not confirm it) although she herself is (Jas. 2:25). The Song of Solomon has often been treated as typical of Christ and the church but notable evangelical writers fail to find later confirmation of this and say it should be interpreted literally as the record of sanctified human love between the sexes. The exodus is also typical since Hos. 2:15 agrees on this happening, showing O.T. writers recognized types also. The later fulfillment is called the antitype with the type being positively viewed as historical.

Vision. This was a mode of godly revelation but which (according to II Pet. 1:20, 21 with vs. 17) is now totally superseded by the primacy of the Scripture.

The Bible is, in one sense, human literature and to wring out of it on this level what God did not declare is to be as guilty of breaking the Scripture as the person who outright denies its authority. Thus the principles of Biblical Interpretation are a must for every believer. But to

remain on this literary level is also to do injustice to the Scripture, for its author, in another sense, transcends this earthly sphere, being God Himself. Therefore the reader must approach it

with both his mind as well as his soul; with both his spirit as well as his body. Then it is that Jesus Christ, the Word of God, is revealed by the Scripture, the word of God written.

The Philosophical Foundation for Evangelical Christian Education

By the Rev. Marion L. McFarland, M.Ed.

This paper will not suggest any new or sensational concept of Religious Education. It will present some of the ideas which have been said for generations but it will say it via the mind of one who is in the process of re-thinking the old in the light of the new. This mere re-wording often receives much criticism. "It is like the Sophist who objected that Socrates always said the same thing. And Socrates relied pointedly that the same objection could not be leveled at the Sophist, for he never said the same thing." (Gordon H. Clark, *A Christian Philosophy of Education*, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. Eerdmans Co., 1946), pg. 160.)

With regard to Religion some keep drumming at the same basic assumptions, no matter how many other religionists revise, criticize and propagandize. However, it must be said that much is owed to the critic who sharpens our thinking on these basic assumptions. We are in debt to the thinker who critically examines the old, but the critic is over stepping when he says that the old never changes. True the basic assumptions remain the same but these assumptions and the consequential implications are continually re-evaluated and up-dated. Up-dated in the sense that foggy areas are more clearly and sharply brought into focus as a result of the re-examination in the light of current "break-throughs" in human knowledge. What are these basic assumptions?

I. "In The Beginning God"

Just this past week the author was asked the question, "Where did God come from?" If God had a beginning we would need to take as our starting place a point in eternity which would be the first cause, i.e. we must begin at the beginning.

A. Christian Education begins with a world view.

Any philosophy of Religious Education must come to grips with the question of the origin of the universe, the world and man. According to recent data it is clear that our world is not as young as has been thought for many centuries. In fact, geologists declare that the world's age is given in terms of millions of years. On the other hand few hold that the world or universe is eter-

nal in that it had no beginning. This opens the area of speculation as to how the world came into being. There had to be a source — it had to be formed from something, for "out of nothing, nothing comes." Thus what is the source of the matter which has formed this world and the universe? In short, what or who is the first cause? The term "first cause" implies that it is eternal — having no previous cause. This question of first cause involves two extremes.

B. The Two Extremes.

These two extremes are Atheism and Theism. It is not enough to label this primal cause "God" for the atheist also holds to a primal cause. The point of difference comes in describing the nature of this first cause. Our definition of theism would be summarized by the term "personal." God, to be God, is a personal God. Not only a God who can be personally known but a personal God in that He has a personality and is Himself a person. This would include the idea that He has life apart from anything, i.e. He depends upon nothing for life but is a self-existent being. Any concept of God less than this we label as atheism. Therefore, for our purpose Atheism includes any concept other than a personal God, be it pantheism, agnosticism or skepticism.

C. A Matter of Choosing.

There are multitudes of speculations about the origin of the universe, each proponent declaring that he can demonstrate by mathematics, logic or geological data that his conclusions are correct. The problem is that this has never been accomplished. Thus man is left to the realm of speculation. Gordon Clark sets forth the idea that the first cause cannot be demonstrated. "... the first principle cannot be proved — precisely because it is first. It is the first principle that provides the basis for demonstrating subordinate propositions. Now if such be the case, the thoughtful person is forced to make a voluntary choice." (Clark, *Ibid.*, pg. 41.)

Scientific man seeks to base all assumptions on facts or to hold assumptions which agree with most of the known data. However, the data (known facts of nature) can be evaluated and sys-

tematized into any world view pattern which suits the fancy of the evaluator. What we are saying is that almost any reasonable world-view presupposition can be apparently verified by "appropriate" categorizing of the data.

We conclude that the world-view is a "voluntary choice." Let us hope the best choice is made. The pragmatist would raise his voice in cheers until he heard that there was a "best choice." He would hold that God is found on the basis of choice but that whatever the choice is, for that person, it is the "best choice" if it works for him. For the pragmatist the choice is not important but a choice is necessary. We would agree that a choice is necessary but we hastily add that the best choice must be made. What is the best choice and who says that it is the best choice?

D. Theism as the Best Choice.

Humanly speaking we have only reason, speculation and imagination to guide us; therefore, let us use them to their highest potential by imagining the "biggest" God possible. This would include a perfect and complete being, one who never changes because He is complete. A perfect God would be one of love, goodness, mercy, justice, truth, wisdom, holiness, kindness and power, thus many other parts which go into making completeness. Just to see this array is enough for many people to make a theistic choice. It seems irrational to the author for any choice to be given even a hearing. Why would any thinking person want a God less than this? More than this we would quickly agree, but less, no. The answer to our dilemma is in the point that this is a choice and this implies **freedom** to choose any world-view.

Our choice is a personal God who is apprehensible but not comprehensible, a sovereign God in all His infinite realm.

II. The Nature and Source of Knowledge

A. Knowledge is Possible

1. By experience we know that we grow in knowledge. As evidence let us contrast our experience from the age of one to the present age. Our behavior is different; therefore, we must have gained in knowledge. Also comparing our nation today and 60 years ago, we now know that a camera can take a picture of the earth's cloud cover from a height of over 400 miles. Jules Verne would hardly have dared to write about this some 60 years ago.

2. Even reason and logic would indicate that knowledge is possible. When we know that we do not know, then we know something. After this fact is known then it is a short step to the next fact that we know that we know one fact. Thus knowledge must be possible for we already know

two facts. The skeptic would agree that knowledge is possible but it is uncertain and not to be relied upon. Two points which make skepticism untenable: a) experience alone shows that knowledge is reliable. The physician knows that Polio is caused by a virus and that the Salk vaccine gives protection against this. Examples can be multiplied which show that experience indicates a consistent reliability of knowledge. b) skepticism, taken to its logical conclusion leads to an extreme form of pessimism.

B. Knowledge is an Awareness of Reality

The assumption of the existence of God includes an assumption of reality. God is not an idea but He is reality and the source of reality. Knowledge is an awareness of reality, either ultimate reality or created reality. All reality is (1) communicated by the five senses, viz: sight, hearing, smelling, feeling and tasting, whereas intuition is nothing more than the best guess based on years of experience. (2) All reality is systematized by reason. Reality is understood by the process of classification, categorization and systematization in order to **know** which is real and which is fantasy.

It follows that the more of reality we know (and if God is ultimate reality and the source of reality), the closer we are coming to God Himself in what we know.

C. Man Cannot Know all Reality; thus the burden is upon God to Communicate the Necessary Facts.

It is admitted that man's knowledge is incomplete, not only in knowledge of the natural sciences but also in the knowledge of a reality apart from this world. The Agnostic says that we cannot know. Humanly speaking this is true. But if one chooses a theistic world-view this "cannot know" is answered by "We can if we are given the facts." Thus Agnosticism is nothing more than a denial of communication. However, the agnostic does clearly focus our attention on the fact that we do not know, which makes out point all the more important, that the burden of communication is upon God.

The best that man can do is to hypothesize — a best guess. However, this is unsatisfactory when we are faced with the fact of a short life and the reasonable possibility of an after-life. We can try to solve the dilemma by concluding that we cannot know, but is this not merely a form of procrastination? Would it not be better to seek out a possible source for knowledge? Thus the responsibility is mutual in that God must communicate that which we do not know and that we must look for this communication.

Our assumption is now enlarged to that of a personal-communicating God. "The possibility of

rational communication between God and man is easily explained on theistic presuppositions." (Gordon Clark, *Revelation and the Bible*, Carl F. H. Henry, ed., Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1958, pg. 41.) This involves the area of a Philosophy of Language. For our purpose let it suffice to say that knowledge of ultimate reality is possible in as far as finite mind can comprehend infinite reality and in as far as infinite reality is communicated. Not all ultimate reality needs to be communicated, even if it could be comprehended.

D. Knowledge Comes from Two Sources.

1. Internal sources or reason. The internal source does not imply that truth or reality lies within the individual. It is called internal because the process of knowing is carried on within the organism and the data coming from the environment via the five senses. The source of knowledge being primarily the reasoning process, e.g. it is possible for two people to see the same thing but one gain a new piece of knowledge and the other be unchanged by the sight, the difference being the process of reasoning.

Reasoning as a source provides a valid means of developing a Philosophy of life, of Religion and of Education. This source would include all the basic scholastic discipline such as Sociology, Psychology, Anthropology, Archeology and Philology to name only a few. In short a knowledge of truth based upon sound scientific experimentation and rational observation. Assuming that these studies begin with our basic theistic presupposition.

A measurement or standard of measurement is implied. The scientist is constantly in search of new and better tools of measurement. He is concerned about the norm, the distance of variation and the extremes from the norm. This means tools of measurement. Tools of measurement are necessary but they are only as valid as the norm. Some scientists hold that the norm cannot be a fixed point but must change to keep pace with changing society. We set forth the idea that there is a norm or an absolute but that it is not related to man in that it proceeds from man or from society. To be an absolute norm it must be external and not only is it external but man cannot perceive or reason as to where this fixed point should be. This fixed point does not deny change. It gives change a goal or target.

The absolute or true norm is outside of man and society and cannot be understood apart from revelation.

2. External Source or Revelation. It has been established that reason is limited. It is limited by lack of sufficient data. In many areas of human investigation, reason alone cannot go beyond a hypothesis or a theory. We cannot possi-

bly know whether we are a race of giants or pygmies. It has been suggested that if the human race were put into a sleep and the universe were enlarged or decreased and everything in it including man were proportionately enlarged or decreased that man, upon awakening would not know the difference. A standard of measurement must be introduced — it must be external and absolute or it too would have undergone relative change. Again we illustrate, this time by the means of a puppet show on film. There is no way of perceiving the scale size until a human hand is introduced into the show. Immediately, after the hand is introduced an estimated scale is possible.

To what scale is the universe drawn? Only a glimpse of the absolute norm will give us the clue. The only absolute norm in the universe is God. He alone is the fixed norm. All dimensions are measured from Him. He is the standard of life. However, let us be quick to add that God is man's moral standard. He expects man to live to full capacity. Man was not created as a god so man cannot live as a God. However, man was created in the moral image of God. The absolute norm is holy and righteous and man was created in this same image. God was man's moral standard at creation and God remains man's moral standard for life.

Revelation is the only way that man can know that God is the moral standard and know the precise nature of the standard. The norm must be communicated to man from without or from the one who is that standard. This revelation takes two forms, via: (a) general revelation and (b) special revelation. General revelation is simply the revelation that all mentally normal people have in the revelation of nature. Nature is the external data and reason is the process of classification and assimilation. The Apostle Paul, writing to the Roman Christians says this about the revelation in nature: "For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Even since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made." (Romans 1:19, 20. R.S.V.) Nature is not the revelation of a personal God but it is enough to indicate that nature had a wise creator. Thus general revelation is a beginning but it is not enough.

Special revelation is merely God's revealing to man ideas, concepts and principles — the truth about reality — which man could not have obtained by reason alone. Gordon Clark, writing in his article: "Special Divine Revelation as Rational," says

"When Adam was created and placed in the Garden of Eden, he did not know what to do. Nor would a study of the Garden have led to any necessary conclusion. His duty was imposed upon him by a special

divine revelation. God told him to be fruitful and multiply, to subdue nature, to make use of the animals, to eat of the fruit of the trees, with one fateful exception." (Henry, *op. cit.*, pg. 29.)

This indicates the need of special revelation. God not only is guiding history through a series of secondary causes but is also directly entering into history. This entering into History was accomplished in two ways: 1. The incarnation and 2. Written Revelation. The fact of the incarnation can be summarized by saying that the Son of God came to earth taking human flesh and lived like man — except without sin. He lived the norm. The important point is that Jesus Christ must be received as the one from God — the living word or communication — the eternal Son of God. This revealed to man a God who is loving, merciful and forgiving. This data can be known only as Peter the disciple knew it. “. . . For flesh and blood hath not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 16:17b. R.S.V.) Thus the “leap of faith” is the result of irrationalism, whereas our “leap of faith” is based on the testimony of absolute reasonable authority. We can only have faith in that which we can know by reasoning, using the data of nature and that data which comes from special revelation based on the authority of God.

The written revelation is that part of special revelation which has been committed to writing. It is that part which God had determined should be a revelation in writing. It is more than the testimony of men who had witnessed God entering history, but it is that body of writing which God guided the recorder to write. It is quite possible that the writer had no thoughts of his writing being listed as God's Word but God determined that these men in writing their reasoned thoughts and observation would write the precise words he wanted written. A possible reason is to give the Scriptures a divine authority. A “thus saith the Lord” which brings comfort, reassurance and many other psychological necessities which God knows that man's mind-soul needs for emotional stability. We are saying that the Scriptures having a supernatural origin not only communicate God's truth but meet other needs of man which man, as yet, knows not of. Only God's wisdom knows the reason for using written revelation in communicating Himself to man. We simply set forth that He did and speculation as to motive remains speculation.

The Bible has been misused, misquoted and misunderstood by many for generations. Let it suffice to say that the Scriptures must be scientifically studied beginning with sound (reasonable) principles of interpretation i.e. Hermeneutics. Also it must be pointed out that Scripture is not a source book for history, psychology, geology, etc. It is a book of principles. These principles are conveyed in real life situations of people who had real life problems and needs. The

Scripture presents examples of people who lived by God's revealed norm and people who lived by other “norms.” It shows the consequences of both. It presents a picture of God as seen in His laws, His love and His teachings (doctrine). This all adds up to a revelation of God but not a complete revelation for we do not know all there is to know about God. Nevertheless the important fact is that written revelation gives man a far better view of the norm than man could see in nature and understand by reason alone. What is revealed is enough to provide man with the answers to His most important questions. “Who am I, Where am I going and is there someone to show me the way?” Basically it is what God wants man to know in written form. It is a road-map of life giving man the route numbers but not a description of everything he will see on the way. Nor is it a world-map when man is going only as far as California. It is a map sufficient to lead man to his guide and to give him an introduction to the guide — the Son of God. After the introduction to the guide, Jesus Christ, the map becomes more relevant for man sees it through the eyes of one who has gained much new data. Thus man's reason has been enlightened by revelation and a commitment has ensued.

There is an inherent harmony between reason and revelation. The two work together to result in added knowledge. The two cannot find the answers alone. Reason without revelation is incomplete and revelation without reason is of no use. Reason helps understand revelation and revelation enlightens reason.

III. The Nature of Man

A. Man's Nature is Known by Reason and Revelation.

A man can look at himself in the mirror and judge himself handsome if he likes what he sees, but when he sees someone more handsome than himself he must readjust his standard of “handsomeness.” The terms “good” and “bad” are also relative terms and the goodness of man can be expressed only in relative terms. Experience tells us that man has the capacity to be extremely bad and also extremely good. However, notice the standard — it is a human standard. A person to the right of the norm is considered good and a person to the left of the norm is considered bad. A man who lives only for self and attempts to turn the world to his own self-interests is considered a “bad” person. The person who forgets self and lives for others is considered a “good” person. Notice again what happens when all men, both good and bad, are confronted with the ultimate embodiment of good — the Son of God. Even the “good” person is found to fall short of the norm.

Reason tells us that there is something wrong with man. But reason cannot provide a measurement which can declare how wrong. This can only come from an external norm. The norm is

seen in revelation. Thus reason and revelation show a coming short of the ultimate norm; but why? Is it man's heredity or man's environment?

B. The Two Extremes.

1. **Environment:** Jean-Jacques Rousseau set forth the concept that man is born with a clean slate and the tendency toward good. He continues to declare that experience and observation show that man only becomes corrupted when he associates with corrupt society. Put a good person in a corrupt society and a corrupt person will emerge. A few objections will show the Rousseau's "sociology" is not tenable. For example, how can the uncorrupted person be explained in Rousseauan terms. Or the instances of those who have been brought up in seclusion — in the absence of society and have turned out "bad." Rousseau's concept is popular but it leaves too many unanswered questions.

2. **Heredity:** John Calvin, following the hint of Augustine and the presentation of the New Testament writers, organized into a system the theological data up to his day, beginning with a personal sovereign God. Calvin rejected any thinking which denied this. As a result he emerged with a system taken primarily from the Bible which set forth the "total depravity" of man. That when man rebelled against God in the Garden of Eden he came out a depraved man. Not merely a "sick" man nor a "deprived" man but a "dead" man. Man was dead in that all parts of his being were twisted. Man no longer looked up. He did not want to look up for his will was turned in toward himself. He did not think about God for reason became blurred. He had lost the norm of life and thus judged things only on a mundane bases. This man in rebelling against God had ceased to live but merely existed. The seeds of disease, disintegration and psychosis had been planted and were taking firm root. Man was now empty; the core of his life was gone. Thus man's search begins. Man seeks to fill the void and runs after anything and everything which might fill the void. However, in the process man wants to be the big-wheel — he wants a religion without a god, a life where he makes the standards, or where he is his own standard. The picture of this man is basically man-centered; he is man-centered because he comes from a race of people who are also man-centered. He comes by it honestly because he got it from his ancestors — from the first man. Call it "original sin" but it means the same. Man is self-centered because his ancestors were. Man's condition is a result of his rebellion and revelation merely points out the fact of this rebellion and "total depravity" is the term which Calvin thought best defined the consequences of this rebellion.

IV. The Mystical Union of Christ and the Believers

A. The Old Story of Salvation.

There is a bright side to the dark picture of

"total depravity." If there were no bright side it might be that God's wisdom could have been questioned in allowing the revolt. But it must be remembered that the revolt was man's choice and God could most justly leave men to the consequences of this choice. However, the fall of man and the plan of salvation shows God's love and wisdom even brighter.

The old story of salvation is the story of the fall of man, the redemption made possible in Jesus Christ and received by an unconditional surrender and commitment to Christ as Lord and Saviour. The result being the forgiveness for the rebellion, a new center to life and the beginning of a growth back to integration — an abundant life. Thus in Christ real life has just begun — a new birth.

B. Mystical Union Described.

It is not a trance-like state where reason is "surpassed" with the soul being brought into a unique union with God or the cosmic force. It is a union where true reason is exalted in that the more man understands about God and Christ the closer He is to man. The union begins with a faith in the testimony of God's revelation that Christ is truly and really with the believer at all times — a constant companion. The one-to-one relationship. Sadly to say, but to many believers Christ is little more than a concept. To the growing Christian He is a living person in whom there is constant fellowship and companionship in faith.

C. The Focal Point of Christian Education.

It is obvious that Christ is the focal point of all Christian Education. For the more man learns of Christ the closer to Him he can live. Therefore, the primary subject of Christian Education is the person of Jesus Christ. Not fantasy or myth but the real historical Son of God must be "transmitted." It must be kept in mind that Christian Education can never transmit the person of Christ, but it can give the data which the Holy Spirit uses to seal the Christ-believer relationship.

Christian Education is two-fold in that the focal-point is a Christ to whom man is to give a complete commitment or has given a complete commitment. Both before and after areas of Christian Education are valid and are a part of the total program of Christian Education. The meeting of Christ and commitment experience is called the vital-experience. Christian Education taking place before and after the vital-experience. Both areas are a part of the total program and as such there must be two main goals. For the desired result is two different things but Christ is the center of both.

This shall be further developed under the topic of "The Church As Educator." Our purpose here is to point out that Christ is the center of

Christian Education whether it be a leading up to the vital-experience or growth-education after the vital-experience.

V. The Church of Jesus Christ

A. The Church Defined.

By some twist of word usage the word "church" now refers to a building used for Christian Worship. However, its original meaning referred to the people who made up the worshipping community. Taking our cue from the original meaning we would give to understand that the Church of Jesus Christ is a group of people who have united in a congregation for the purpose of working and living together on the basis of the common bond. The common bond being that all (except children) have "professed" that they have met Jesus Christ and that their life began anew due to their vital-experience. In uniting together they have become the "body of Christ" with Christ as the head. As the head, Christ becomes the authority for His body, or it might be better to say that since Christ has been given authority from the Father, he becomes the head of His Church. The point being that it is Christ's will which becomes the authority for His body. In uniting together there are certain truths or facts which must be held in common. These truths are nothing more than the teachings of Christ interpreted by common consent and witnessed to by the group. Therefore, the church as the body of Jesus Christ is a fellowship of believers who have come to an understanding and experience of Christ and who desire to mutually learn more of Christ's teachings — holding to what they are reasonably convinced He has taught and looking for more clarification on all points. It is a progressive community — progressing not toward human norms but toward the ultimate norm.

B. The Value of the Church.

The value of the Church is twofold: First, the group is able to accomplish more as a united body than could be accomplished individually. Second, the group as a fellowship can encourage, share and challenge each other in growth. This can be accomplished in various ways, whether it is called "group therapy" or "group dynamics" or fellowship it all means that understanding is shared and that the group is in the process of undergoing change. Not change in any direction but change in that the individuals gain in understanding of Christ and the normal "change of behaviours" which results from new understandings of the Norm. The implication is clear — Christian Education. Christian Education on a group basis. Thus one value of the group lies in the education, in terms of new understanding, which it stimulates.

C. The Task of the Church.

"And Jesus came and said to them, "All au-

thority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. . ." (Matthew 28:18, R.S.V.) Christ has all authority and as the head of the church must be obeyed as the one in authority. Thus the primary task of the church is to be obedient to its head, Jesus Christ.

Christ continued by saying, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. . ." (Verse 19, *Ibid.*) The second task is to evangelize — to declare that the Son of God has come to lead man back to his creator God.

". . . teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age." (Verse 20, *Ibid.*) The third task of the church is to educate. The body of Christ has been commissioned by Him to instruct the hearers to "observe all" of His commandments.

VI. The Church As Educator

A. The goal.

As mentioned above the goal of Christian Education is twofold in that Christian Education leads to or prepares the way for a vital-experience and after the vital-experience, Christian education takes on the goal of helping this experience to be a continuing and growing experience. The goal therefore is to transmit that body of truth which is known, by reason and revelation, about the norm; that Christ is man's norm and that man's life can become more "normal" as his faith is increased through the Educational experience. The educational experience alone does not transform the life but the education guides the way for the individual to increase his faith by a continual process of commitment. Each new fact that is learned requiring new commitments before faith can grow.

B. The Content.

The body of Christ is commissioned to teach but it is not commissioned to determine the content. The church is to teach only the proven words of Christ the authority. This includes all of Scripture. All which the Godhead has given by revelation. Thus all truth whether it be of nature or above nature is the content of Christian Education. However, more specifically the church teaches that part of revelation which most clearly reveals the norm or standard for life. Nevertheless, in unusual circumstances the church and the home are the primary educators of her children. The ideal is for the Christian Civil Government to educate its children in the natural sciences and the church in "supernatural sciences."

C. The Teacher.

The church of Jesus Christ has only one real teacher and He is the Holy Spirit. For it is the Holy Spirit which seals or connects the educa-

tional process with the vital-experience of commitment to Christ. This is the mystery of redemption and transformation of life. The important point is that the Holy Spirit is the real educator and the teachers are the secondary instruments which the Holy Spirit uses. Because human teachers are secondary causes does not mean that they are unimportant. They are just as important as the doctor who delivers a baby to whom God has given life. Implication: Teacher Education.

D. The Method.

Not every method is acceptable. It must be a method which best conforms to the presupposition and is consistent with the entire philosophy. We would not agree with the Catholic church that method is unimportant for an inappropriate method will unwittingly communicate undesired attitudes and concepts.

Consistency demands that the method of Christian Education is also revealed. Certainly this is true. The Educational Psychologist plays a role in the method; for his findings throw much light on the process of learning. However, to be valid the findings must either be consistent with our presuppositions or better still, the Educational Psychologist must begin his work on these same presuppositions. Validity is not always judged on the basis of the starting point but on the basis of nearness to the truth. Therefore, any investigation that brings man nearer to the truth is valid. The truth of course can be determined only by the one who claimed to be "truth."

In a limited sense the "eclectic" method can be employed in arriving at suitable and workable methods. Of course that which is chosen is to be measured in terms of the revealed norm. "By all means use your judgment and hold on to whatever is really good." (J. B. Philips, *Letters to Young Churches*, pg. 138.)

In recent years there has arisen much controversy over the place of **creeds**, **discipline** and **experience**, to mention only a few. Let us say that those who doggedly hold to **creeds** have brought the criticism upon themselves for they have lost the true meaning and purpose of creeds. Creeds were never intended to be the last word but were the written expression of the best understanding of Scriptural teaching. They were to be nothing more than teaching aids. However, it soon grew up that these were tests of faith. How could they be tests of faith if the individual tested had never been educated in the "faith"? The primary function of a creed should be to give the Christian student a clear outline of revealed truth. As the student studies it may be that he can see it more clearly. If the Christian community, as a result of this re-studying, sees the teaching more clearly, then the creed should be up-dated. In short, a creed is a progressive out-

line of the revealed truth for the purpose of Christian Education.

Discipline has almost fallen by the wayside. Again due to misuse and misunderstanding. Discipline is an educational method used to sharply point out that a transformed life is expected when the norm is revealed and obedience has been promised. When all educational processes have been employed and a break-down (disobedience) results then discipline is the last resort. If the goal of discipline is only to punish it has lost all value. But if the goal of discipline is to restore and educate, it has much value and done in love it brings God honoring results.

Experience is essential in Christian Education. However, it is not the determiner of truth. Truth is absolute but man's understanding of it is not. Thus it is conceivable that experience helps in understanding truth but it does not change the truth nor does it arrive at truth as though it were a new creation at each experience. When an individual has a vital-experience with Christ he has not "created Christ" but has met the reality of realities. For the individual this has been a "real" experience. Truth therefore is absolute and as such is the guide to experience.

The goal of Christian Education is experience. The teacher cannot "experience" for the individual but can only transmit the data which the Holy Spirit uses to confront man with the reality and the person of Jesus Christ. Christian Education without experience is petrification. Christian Education with the vital-experience is redemption. Christian Education with continuing experiences in Christ is sanctification — the only way to a "normal" life.

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"To sing the praises of God upon the harp and psaltery unquestionably formed a part of the training of the law and of the service of God under the dispensation of shadows and figures; but they are not now to be used in public thanksgiving." (Calvin on Psalm 71:22).

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.

GOSPEL. The good news of salvation provided for sinners by the grace of God through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ the Mediator. (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

GRACE OF GOD. The Favor of God bestowed on human beings who deserve His wrath and curse on account of sin.

SPECIAL GRACE OF GOD. That grace of God which is bestowed on His elect only, and which brings about their eternal salvation.

COMMON GRACE OF GOD. That grace of God which is bestowed on all mankind alike, both the elect and the reprobate, bringing certain benefits during this life, but not bringing about eternal salvation.

HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS. A book which combines the four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John into one continuous narrative, avoiding repetition, or which arranges the contents of the four Gospels in such a way that the reader can easily see what parts are peculiar to a particular Gospel and what parts are common to two, three or all four Gospels.

HEAVEN. (1) The sky (Gen. 1:1). (2) That place in the created universe where the presence and glory of God are specially revealed (Matt. 6:9). (3) The eternal home of the redeemed (2 Cor. 5:1; Heb. 10:34).

HELL. The place of eternal punishment, originally prepared for the devil and his angels, where all human beings who are out of Christ will for ever be isolated from the favorable presence of God and from all that is good (Matt. 25:41, 46).

HERESY. (1) In the New Testament, originally a party or sect (translated "sect" in Acts 5:17; 15:5); later, false doctrine stubbornly adhered to (2 Pet. 2:1). (2) In church government today, false doctrine which is definitely contrary to the accepted creed or doctrinal standards of a church. (Note: doctrine which is alleged to be contrary to the Bible, but not contrary to definite statements of the Church's creed, is called "error", whereas doctrine which is not only alleged to be contrary to the Bible, but is also contrary to definite statements of the Church's creed, is called "heresy").

HERETIC. A person who adheres to a heresy.

HERODIANS. A Jewish party of the time of Christ, who supported the political power of the

Herod family and favored the Romans, thus being opposed to the Pharisees (Matt. 22:16; Mark 3:6).

HETERODOX. Unsound or erroneous; the opposite of orthodox (used of either a doctrine or a person).

HOLINESS. The state of freedom from sin, with the heart in conformity to God; a state of the heart which is manifested in the life.

HOLINESS OF GOD. (1) God's supreme majesty and exaltation far above and beyond the universe and all created beings. (2) God's infinite, absolute separation from all that is sinful.

HOPE. The Christian's sure expectation and eager anticipation of the supreme glory and blessing which shall be his in the life of eternity, following the second coming of Christ and the resurrection (Rom. 8:18-25; Heb. 6:18-20).

HUGUENOTS. A name, originally given in contempt, for the Reformed or Calvinistic Protestants of France.

HUMANITY OF CHRIST. The human nature of Christ, consisting of body and soul, which He took into union with His divine person and nature. "Christ, the Son of God, became man by taking to himself a true body and a reasonable soul, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin" (S.C. 22).

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

HUSSITES. A reforming party in the Church in Bohemia (Czecho-Slovakia) in the 15th Century and later. Named their leader John Huss who was burnt at the stake in 1415 for his faith.

IDOLATRY. (1) In the narrower sense, the religious worship of idols, that is, images or pictures. (2) In the wider sense, all religious worship other than that offered to the true God.

ILLUMINATION. The progressive work of the Holy Spirit in the mind of a Christian, whereby he is enabled to see and understand the truth revealed in the Scriptures (Eph. 1:18). (Illumination is the intellectual counterpart of sanctification. By sanctification a Christian is made to love

and practice holiness; by illumination he is made to know and understand the truth).

IMPLICIT FAITH. That faith by which a person accepts on the authority of another some doctrine or system which he has not himself considered, or of which he is personally ignorant. (Cf. Westminster Confession of Faith, XX. 2. When a person says that he accepts the doctrines of the Westminster Confession and Catechisms, yet admits that he has never read those documents, he is guilty of the sin of accepting them with an implicit faith," that is "sight-unseen", by a blind faith).

INABILITY. The condition of the unsaved sinner by reason of which he is unable, not merely to save himself from sin, but even to desire

salvation. (Note: Inability is not inconsistent with free agency. The unsaved sinner is free to turn to God, but not able to turn to God, just as a bird with a broken wing is free to fly, but not able to fly).

INCARNATION. The act by which God the Son took to Himself a human nature (body and soul) and thus became man, to accomplish the work of redemption. (John 1:14).

INDEPENDENCE OF GOD. The truth that God is in no sense whatever dependent upon, limited by, or in need of anything or anyone in the created universe, but is absolutely self-sufficient and self-existent. (It is wrong to use the verbs "cannot" and "needs" in connection with God. Mark 10:27; Acts 17:25).

Did you ever worship in a Greek Temple?

There is scarcely a village in this country, you know, that doesn't have one. We refer not to the architecture of the building, but to the spirit of the worship. A church may be built along dignified Colonial lines; or in the form of a cross, with towering Gothic spires; or it may more nearly resemble a barn than the Parthenon, and nevertheless be in essence a Greek temple.

The ancient Greeks, of course, were pagans. Glorious pagans. A pagan is one who believes the highest goal of life to be the healthy, harmonious, joyful development of human nature as it is. In this buoyant optimism the Greeks lived and loved and fought with gusto. It was this view of life they cut in the marble of their statues and enshrined in their temples.

Very different from this is the Christian view of life. Christianity is the religion of the broken heart. This does not mean that paganism is all light and laughter, and Christianity all gloom and sobbing. That is far from the truth. But it does mean that the Christian has been brought to see God in His Holiness and therefore takes seriously the fact of his own sin. At the heart of Christianity stands the cross, and the cross can never be understood apart from sin.

To the Greeks the preaching of the cross was foolishness: to the modern pagan it is still foolishness. Testimony to that sad truth is borne in thousands of churches in every Sunday's preach-

ing. The "modern" preacher recoils in distaste from the Biblical doctrine of Christ's death in the place of those who believe on Him, to satisfy God's justice. He hastily attempts to evaporate in poetry the grim reality of the Lord's Supper, which teaches so plainly the meaning of the broken body and shed blood of Christ. Instead he would dwell on social preaching: tracing the course of the war, planning the economics of the post-war world. For him as for the Greek pagan the goal ahead is the development of human nature as it is: there is no evil in men's hearts which the good in men's hearts cannot eventually overcome.

This message of the modern Church is not the message of Christianity. It is the message of paganism, of the Greek temple. And all the eloquence with which today's pulpiteers proclaim its values serves only to aid modern worshipers in Greek temples to do what they are most eager to do: escape conviction of sin.

With the Christian it must not be so: he alone can know true joy, not by trying to forget sin, but by acknowledging his guilt and knowing its removal by the grace of God in Christ. The Christian life begins with a broken heart, but it does not end there.

Worship in a modern Greek temple may be beautiful and comfortable, but there is no real beauty without truth; there is no salvation without the gospel of the cross. — Selected

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 regenerate 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

How can he who is not strict in his duty hope, or even pray, for the full blessing of God?

— Lange's Commentary

There is no keeping foot without new supplies from the Lord.

— Thos. Boston

To forsake Christ for the world is to leave a treasure for a trifle, eternity for a moment, reality for a shadow, all things for nothing.

— Wm. Jenkyn

A saviour not quite God is a bridge broken at the further end.

— Bishop Moule

For feeling, will-power and heroic courage every child of God supplicates his Father.

— Dr. Abraham Kuyper

Two sentiments have built two cities. The principle of self-love merging in disdain of God has built the world's city; the love of God issuing in contempt of self has built the heavenly city. Let each man scan what he loveth, and he shall ascertain of which city he is a citizen.

— Augustine

Arise, O Lord, and let Thy enemies be confounded: let them flee from Thy presence that hate Thy godly name: give Thy servants strength to speak Thy Word in boldness: and let all nations attain to Thy true knowledge.

— Prayer at close of Scots' Confession, 1560

"Psalms and Hymns and Spiritual Songs"

By the Rev. Frank D. Fraser

Question:

Will a strict exegesis of Eph. 5:19 and Col. 3:16 apply to the 150 Psalms only, thus excluding all human compositions?

Answer:

The texts referred to are as follows: "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in

psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:18, 19); "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. 3:16).

A strict exegesis of these passages requires, of course, that the words in them be taken in the sense obviously intended by the writer, and reasonably to be understood by those to whom the epistles were addressed, not in some other sense they might acquire at a future time.

Controversies within the Church have produced, for us, a sharp differentiation between "Psalms" and "Hymns", "Psalms" being the accepted name for the God-inspired songs of praise collected in one book of Scripture, while "Hymns" has become the common designation of human compositions for singing in worship. But, so far as the records show, no such difference was attached to these words in the original apostolic Church, and this for the simple reason that, at that time, there were no uninspired songs used, or to be used, in the worship of the true God. Repeated assumptions and assertions to the contrary have never been substantiated.

The Christian Church had but recently emerged from the confines of the Jewish Synagogue, where only the Scripture Psalms were used in the praise service. No others were available for the praise service of the Church. Note that Paul does not tell his readers to **make** Psalms, Hymns or Songs, but to **sing** them to God, and **talk** of them to men, thus taking it for granted that these things were already at hand; things, indeed, which he regarded as of the greatest importance for Christians. And, while special gifts of the Spirit were promised to meet the needs of the Church (e.g., Eph. 4:7-16), none were promised for the making of songs of praise to God, nor for "singing the gospel" to men.

We know well that the preaching, teaching, and writing of Paul, preserved for us, is based on the Old Testament Scriptures; his constant appeal is to their very words.

In the providence of God, these Scriptures, originally written in Hebrew, were translated into Greek before the coming of Christ. This Greek version, called the Septuagint (often denoted by the abbreviation "LXX") was available wherever there were Greek-speaking Jews, and they were in all the important centers of the Mediterranean world. It was the only version available in the days of Christ and the apostles. Christ put the stamp of His approval on it by quoting from it. The original Hebrew, of course, remained as the standard, but, outside of Palestine, there were few who could understand it.

Paul wrote to the Greek-speaking Ephesians

and Colossians in Greek. He assumed that they had this LXX version at hand, for he quotes frequently from it, and makes many references to it without taking the trouble to state his source. He assumed that his readers would recognize the words he used. In particular, without mentioning his quotations from other books, there are at least twelve quotations from, and direct references to, the Book of Psalms in Ephesians; at least three in Colossians. How do we know this? By the words he used. For instance, in Eph. 4:26, his Greek for "Be ye angry, and sin not" is found word for word in the LXX version of Psalm 4:4, a comparatively unusual, but very striking, rendering of the Hebrew.

Now when we examine the LXX, still used by the Greek Orthodox Church, we find these three words, "psalms", "hymns", "songs". We find them, generally, in place of three Hebrew words, **mizmor** (a psalm), **t'hillah** (a praise), **shir** (a song) without any hard and fast distinctions being observed.

The Greek "psalm", while it usually stands for "mizmor", also stands for "shir" and for "t'hillah". Indeed, the Hebrew title for the whole book is "T'hillim" (Praises), but the Greek title is "Psalms".

The Greek "hymn" is used for "t'hillah" and also for "shir". "Psalm" and "hymn" are both Greek words which we have taken bodily into our language. Yet "hymn" is nowhere used in our English version of the Old Testament, although it is used in the LXX at least 16 times, and the verb "hymneo" (meaning "to sing hymns") at least 13 times; in every instance obviously meaning the songs given of God, synonymous with "psalm" and "sing psalms". The plural "hymns" is frequently used to designate these songs in general, without discriminating. For example, at the end of Psalm 72 we read, "The hymns of David, the son of Jesse, are ended". In Psalm 100:4 we find "Enter . . . into his courts with hymns". The Hebrew reading of 1 Chron. 16:8 is identical with that of Psalm 105:2; but the LXX translates the first, "Sing to him, sing hymns to him"; the second, "Sing to him, sing psalms to him". In 2 Chron. 29:30 we read that the Levites were commanded "to sing hymns to the Lord in the words of David and Asaph, the prophet; and they sang hymns with gladness".

Many individual Psalms have headings of their own. Some are marked "Psalm"; some "Song". Some have both titles, "A Psalm, a Song"; "A Psalm of a Song"; "A Song of a Psalm". Psalm 65 has both "Psalm" and "Song" in its title, and its first line is, "To thee, O God in Zion, a hymn is befitting". The heading of Psalm 76 reads, "For the Precentor in hymns, a Psalm of Asaph, a Song with reference to the Assyrian".

The Greek word for "song" (ode), occurs, for the most part, in place of "shir", but also for "mizmor". In Psalm 137:3 we read, "There those

who took us captive demanded of us words of songs; And those who carried us away (demanded of us) a hymn, saying, Sing for us from the Song of Zion. How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" Here the "songs of Zion" meant, to a Hebrew, "the song of the Lord", i.e., "the song of Jehovah" as written in the book of Psalms. But note that either a "song" or a "hymn" was to be selected at random from these Psalms.

These examples, a few among many, are sufficient to show that each of the three words in question was applied to the 150 Psalms. They were applied to the 150 Psalms collectively. They were applied to the 150 Psalms individually, without discrimination between them. Yet, as anyone can see, these three words, "psalms, hymns, songs" are distinctly, etymologically different. Such free interchange of different names for the same thing is permissible only if it does not affect the writer's meaning and the reader's understanding. Therefore, such usage in the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures is conclusive proof that there was, at the time of writing, no doubt in anyone's mind as to the exact reference of these words.

That they were applied to the 150 Psalms **only** follows from the fact that no others are mentioned in the entire record as having been used in the temple, synagogue or apostolic Church worship of God. If there were any others, what became of them? Where is any proof that others existed, or were so used?

But, what is the use of so many names for the same thing? Why pile up words? Well, it usually takes more than one word even to begin to define a thing of such dimensions and importance as the praise of the infinite, eternal and gracious God. Why is the law of God so often described by a group of three terms, such as "testimonies, statutes and judgments" (Deut. 4:45)? Why are prayers called "supplications, intercessions, thanksgivings" (1 Tim. 2:1)? "Psalms, hymns, songs" reveal the different aspects which our praise to God should have, according to the mind of His Spirit.

The word, "psalm" refers to the instrumental accompaniment, as does "mizmor", for there were musical "instruments of the songs of God" (1 Chron. 16:42), as long as the sacrifice was physical and symbolic. Now, however, **THE SACRIFICE** has been offered; Jesus Christ, "offered Himself", "laid down His life", "yielded up His spirit" on the cross, quoting, as He did so, the precise words of the LXX version of Psalm 31:5, "into thy hands I commit my spirit", changing only the tense of the verb to "commit" instead of "shall commit" (Luke 23:46). Now, the Holy Spirit has come to be "in you", believers, that you may "be filled with the Spirit". He has come to teach you, that you may understand and use His songs "in all wisdom". He has come to put "grace" in your hearts for singing to God. So when we sing a

"psalm" we are to do so with our **spiritual instruments**, that is, our heart and understanding.

The word "hymn", as also "t'hillah", has to do exclusively with praise offered up to God. When we sing a "hymn" from the Psalm Book, we are to do so to God, not to men.

The Greek word for "song" indicates, as does "shir", the **manner** in which praise is to be offered to God, namely, by singing. But it was a word used for all kinds of song. The Asians were notably fond of drinking and singing. They had songs for their idol feasts which so often ended in drunken carousals. Hence it was necessary, especially for those just turning from heathenism, to limit "songs" by defining the category to which they, as well as the "psalms" and "hymns" here spoken of, belong, that is, that they are "of the Spirit of God" (2 Sam. 23:1; Matt. 22:43).

The Greek name (**pneuma**) for wind, air, breath, ethereal substance, was used in the LXX for the Spirit of God and the spirit of man. Accordingly, under the continued control of the Spirit, Paul had already adapted a cognate Greek adjective, **pneumatikos**, to his use. This word we translate "spiritual". It is a word almost peculiar to Paul, for of its 26 occurrences in the New Testament, 24 are in his epistles. He applies it (a) to persons, as regenerated by the Spirit; (b) In at least 18 places he applies it to things (gifts, blessings, etc.).

Excluding one doubtful case and the two verses now before us, there are 15 places in which he uses this word as indicating, not merely the spiritual nature of the thing (as distinct from the physical or carnal), but clearly and emphatically, that it exists **in dynamic connection with the Holy Spirit of God** as author or source, therefore as derived from, or given by, the Spirit.

The one doubtful case is in Eph. 6:12, where he speaks of 'the spiritual things of wickedness'. In our Revised Version this is interpreted as of "hosts" of wicked persons, of course in their fallen condition. It may rather refer to their power and activities. This is a perfectly proper use of the Greek word, and if it applies to things with which, as everyone knows, the Holy Spirit has no connection except to overrule them, it can occasion no confusion in the reader's mind. Therefore this exceptional case may be set aside.

The remaining 15 places are sufficient to establish Paul's uniform usage of the word, and to fix that meaning here. Therefore, the "songs" here specified are "spiritual", not because they express spiritual thoughts and aspirations, but because they are inspired and given by the Holy Spirit. It goes without saying that the same defining word is to be understood with "psalms" and with "hymns", for "songs" includes them both.

Thus all mere human compositions are excluded.

Studies in the Covenant of Grace

This series of 35 lessons is being reprinted because of continued demand.

In class or group use, it is suggested that the leader propound each question but withhold the printed answer until the members of the group have had an opportunity to discuss the question. Then the printed answer may be read and compared with the answer or answers that have already been given, and discussed in the light of the relevant Scripture references.

The Scripture references should always be looked up, and an effort should be made to show how each particular reference is related to the subject under discussion. There is little or no value in merely reading a large number of verses, unless the leader or members of the group try to show the relation of each Scripture verse or reference to some element of the doctrine set forth in the lesson.

It is suggested that a group of adult church members study these lessons during the Young People's Hour on Sabbath evenings. Such a group could be led by the minister part of the time, and at other times by the elders or by other members taking turns. The leader should always study the material in advance of the group meeting, and each member of the group should have a copy of the magazine containing the lessons.

The aim of these studies is to aid Christian people in gaining an adequate understanding of one of the most important and central doctrines of the Bible and of our Reformed Faith — the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace — a doctrine which has been somewhat neglected by the present generation of church members, and which must be known and honored if there is to be a real revival of Biblical Christianity among us.

Besides the Bible itself and the lessons in *Blue Banner Faith and Life*, the following are

recommended as helps toward on understanding of the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace:

The Constitution of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, obtainable from Mr. Chester R. Fox, Treasurer, Empire Bldg. Pittsburgh 22, Pa. This volume contains the Westminster Standards complete, together with the Reformed Presbyterian Testimony and other standards of our Faith. \$1.50.

Bible Truths for Young Christians: A Series of Lessons in Preparation for Communicant Church Membership, by J. G. Vos. Obtainable at 25 cents per copy from Mr. Fox (address given above). This booklet contains concise definitions of many terms.

The Covenant Idea in Scripture, by F. D. Frazer. Ministers may possess a mimeographed copy of this 55-page study as it was issued in 1937. It was also published in installments in *Blue Banner Faith and Life* (April, 1953 through September, 1955).

The Covenant of Grace, by John Murray. Published in England by The Tyndale Press, 39 Bedford Square, London. W.C. 1, England. Available in U.S.A. from Great Commission Publications, 7401 Old York Rd., Philadelphia, Pa. 19126. 50c. This is a 32-page booklet first issued in 1954. It was reviewed in *Blue Banner Faith and Life*, July-September, 1954, pages 157-8. Price in Britain and Ireland, 1s. 6d.

The Covenant of Grace, by Calvin K. Cummings. Great Commission Publications, 20c.

Basic Principles of Covenant Theology, by J. G. Vos, in July-Sept. 1966 issue of this magazine.

Dispensationalism Explained and Appraised, by J. G. Vos, in April-June 1963 issue of this magazine.

LESSON 1

The Idea of a Covenant Between God and Man

"The distance between God and the creature is so great, that although reasonable creatures do owe obedience unto Him as their Creator, yet they never have any fruition of Him as their blessedness and reward, but by some voluntary condescension on God's part, which He hath been pleased to express by way of covenant." — The Westminster Confession of Faith, VII. 1.

Scripture References:

Isa. 40:13-17. The immeasurable distance between Creator and creature.

Job 9:32, 33. 1 Sam. 2:25. The distance be-

tween God and man is so great that man could never fully glorify and enjoy God unless God took the initiative and bridged the chasm between Himself and man.

Psalm 113:5, 6; 100:2, 3. Job. 22:2, 3; 35:7, 8. Luke 17:10. Acts 17:24, 25. It is an act of voluntary condescension on God's part to establish a religious relationship (covenant) between Himself and man.

Questions:

1. What does the Bible mean by a covenant of God with man?

According to the teaching of the Bible, a covenant of God made with man is an arrangement for a certain purpose, made by God and imposed on man, involving certain promises on God's part and certain obligations on man's part. By such a covenant, a religious relationship between God and man is constituted or restored.

2. What common error exists concerning the nature of God's covenant with man?

It is very commonly, but wrongly, stated that God's covenants with man are of the nature of compacts, agreements or bargains mutually entered into by God and man. There is indeed an element of truth in this idea, for man (through his representatives, Adam and Christ) is a party to the covenants, and must agree to the terms laid down by God. But the idea that a covenant is a compact or agreement tends to lead people to think of God and man as more or less equal parties who mutually **NEGOTIATED AND ESTABLISHED** the covenant relationship. Such is a serious error. In every covenant of God with man, the initiative is always taken by God; it is God who lays down all the requirements; man's part is simply to accept what God provides and obey what God requires. Note, for example, God's words to Noah: "And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you, . . ." (Gen. 9:9), and to Abraham: "And I will make my covenant between me and thee. . ." (Gen. 17:2); again, "And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee" (Gen. 17:7). God constituted the covenant relationship; Abraham's part was to believe and obey. The covenant was not negotiated between God and man, it was made by God and sovereignly imposed on man.

3. Why must the covenant relationship be constituted by God rather than by man?

Because of the essential difference between Creator and creature, God and man are not on a plane of equality with each other. God is never dependent on man for anything, but man is always and at every point wholly dependent on God for everything. God is infinite; man is finite. God is eternal; man is subject to time. God is sovereign; man is subject to God's authority and power. (In this lesson we are not considering human sinfulness, which by Adam's fall added a new factor to the distance between God and man; we are now considering only the idea of a covenant between God and man; that is, we are considering the situation that existed even before mankind fell into sin). Because of God's infinite greatness and man's total subordination to and dependence on God, the covenant relationship could only be constituted by God, not by man nor by God and man mutually negotiating it. If man is to be in a religious relationship to God, that relationship must be established by God; man

could never lift himself up to the plane of religious communion with God.

4. Why was a covenant relationship to God necessary for man?

As created, mankind existed in a **NATURAL** relationship to God, that is, the relationship of creature to Creator. Being a rational creature, man owed obedience to God as his Creator. On the basis of that Creator-creature relationship, mankind might have had some experience of rendering service to God and receiving blessing from God. But it would have been far short of the destiny God intended for man in creating him. Man was created in the image of God, for the purpose of glorifying and enjoying God in **RELIGIOUS** relationship. Therefore, as the Confession of Faith rightly states, mankind "could never have any **FRUITION** of Him as their blessedness and reward, but by some voluntary condescension on God's part, which he hath been pleased to express by way of covenant" (VII. 1). "Fruition" means bearing fruit. It is the purpose of a fruit tree to bear fruit. Mankind was created to bear the fruit of glorifying and enjoying God. God purposed to make Himself man's blessedness and reward. Therefore the distance between Creator and creature must be bridged in some way, so that a truly religious relationship and communion could exist between God and man. Only God could bridge the gap between Himself and man. God did it in order that man could really bear the fruit God had created him to bear — so that man could really possess God as his blessedness and reward. "From me is thy fruit found" (Hos. 14:8).

5. What is meant by a "voluntary condescension on God's part"?

This means an act done by God's own free choice, not because of any necessity of His nature, nor because of pressure from any outside source. For God to be Holy is not an act of voluntary condescension on God's part; holiness is an aspect of God's essential nature; God could not will or choose to be otherwise than holy. But to bridge the chasm between Himself and mankind was not a part of God's essential nature. There was no necessity or obligation resting on God to take such a step. He could do it, or not do it, and still He would be God. Consequently, when God bridged the chasm, by making a covenant with man, it was an act of voluntary condescension on God's part. It was **VOLUNTARY** because it was not necessary for God to do it; it was **CONDESCENSION** because it involved God stooping to the level of His creatures.

6. Was it contrary to democracy for God to make and impose a covenant on man?

The very idea of a covenant of God with man requires that the covenant be made by God, not by man. The covenant must originate with God; all its terms and conditions must be laid down by

God; none of them can be made or decided by man. Such a covenant is not proposed by man to God, but imposed by God on man. God does not consult man as to the terms and conditions. Some people today call this "undemocratic", but by doing so they betray the fact that they think of God and man as virtually on a plane of equality. We should always remember that the Kingdom of God is not a democracy but a monarchy, and an absolute monarchy at that; God's rule over His creatures does not depend on "the consent of the governed". When people object to this idea, it is because they have failed to grasp the Bible view of God as sovereign. Such people cannot enjoy the benefits of a covenant relation with God, for they exclude themselves from this by their irreligious attitude toward God — an attitude of un-

belief, disobedience and rebellion against God's sovereignty. The first requirement for a covenant relationship with God is an unquestioning faith in God and everything God has said, with a willing obedience to all of God's requirements, and acceptance of whatever terms and conditions God in His divine wisdom sees fit to lay down. Any notion of "democracy" between God and man is essentially impious and irreligious. It was Satan's suggestion that man could become "as gods" (Gen. 3:5; ARV "as God") that led Eve to her first act of rebellion against the divine authority. Ever since that early day, man has rebelled against submitting to the sovereignty of God, and has cherished the ambition of being "as God". This was never more obvious than in the humanism of our own day.

LESSON 2

The Covenant of Works: I. In Eden

"The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam, and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience." — The Westminster Confession of Faith, VII. 2.

"God created man male and female; and having purposed that this first pair, Adam and Eve, should have a numerous offspring, he appointed Adam the public head and representative of all mankind, and entered into a covenant with him in behalf of himself and all posterity: In this covenant God promised to the whole human family eternal life and happiness (with the preservation of men in their natural holiness) upon condition of Adam's perfect obedience in his state of probation, and threatened eternal misery (implying the total depravity of their nature) in case of disobedience; pointing out to Adam, at the same time, the tree of knowledge of good and evil, as the special sign of his probationary state, and prohibiting him to eat of its fruit." — The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, V. 2.

"Our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created, by sinning against God." — The Shorter Catechism, 13.

"The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity; all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression." — The Shorter Catechism, 16.

Scripture References:

Gen. 2:15-17. God's provision for testing Adam's obedience.

Gen. 2:9. The tree of life; the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Gen. 3:1-19. The outcome of the Covenant of Works.

Rom. 5:12-19. The effect of Adam's first sin on the human race.

Questions:

1. What was the first covenant that God made with man?

The first covenant that God made with man was the covenant made with Adam in the Garden of Eden, which is commonly called "the Covenant of Works", and sometimes referred to as "the Covenant of Life", as in the Shorter Catechism, Q. 12.

2. What was the objective of the Covenant of Works?

The ultimate objective was eternal life, that is, the highest glorifying and enjoying of God by man. Specifically, God constituted Adam as the representative or "federal head" of the human race, and ordained the Covenant of Works as a probation of the human race through Adam, its official representative. Mankind was created in a state of real, but untested, righteousness and holiness. There was no evil in man's nature at the time of his creation by God, but he did not then exist in the highest state possible for him, because it was still possible for him to commit sin and fall from his original righteousness and holiness. Therefore man must go through a period of probation, that is, his obedience to God must pass through a test. If Adam, humanity's representative, had passed this test successfully, he would have then been confirmed in his holiness. It would have become impossible for him to sin. Then he and all his posterity would have

received eternal life (the highest glorifying and enjoyment of God).

3. Who were the parties to the Covenant of Works?

The parties to the Covenant of Works were God, and Adam as the head of the human race and official representative of his posterity. If we wish to say that the parties to the Covenant of Works were God and man, or God and every human being, this is correct provided we bear in mind that this covenant was not made DIRECTLY with every human being, but only through Adam as the official representative of the race.

4. What was the content of the Covenant of Works?

The condition of the Covenant of Works was perfect obedience to the will of God. The test provided to prove man's perfect obedience to God's will was God's command not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This was a sheer, arbitrary test of obedience to the will of God — the only reason for abstaining from the fruit of that particular tree was that God had said "Thou shalt not eat of it". The penalty provided for breaking the Covenant of Works was death, and this means not merely the death of the body, but death in the widest sense, including eternal death or "the second death". There was also a reward provided for obedience to God in the Covenant of Works, the right to eat the fruit of the tree of life, symbolizing eternal life (Gen. 3:22; Rev. 22:2).

God revealed Himself to Adam and Eve by certain symbolic objects as well as by spoken words. Four principles were involved in the Covenant of Works, and each was pictured or symbolized to Adam and Eve. (1) The principle of probation, or divine testing of man, was symbolized by the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (2) The principle of temptation, or Satanic seduction of man, was symbolized by the serpent which was Satan's mouthpiece in tempting Eve. (3) The principle of life was symbolized by the tree of life. (4) The principle of death was symbolized by the curse upon nature and the final return of the human body to dust.

Thus man was provided with a sufficient revelation of God's will so that he was left wholly without excuse. God's will was as clear as daylight: "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it". Mankind stood at the dividing of the roads. Before him the path divided into two branches — the way of obedience to the will of God, leading to eternal life; and the way of rebellion against the will of God, leading to eternal death. An immediate decision had to be made between obedience and rebellion. What would the issue be? If mankind obeyed the will of God, he would thereby, as a race, earn eternal

life once for all. But we know the sad result of this probation of man. The human race had a fair test, and failed through misuse of man's free will.

5. Is the theory of the Garden of Eden to be understood as a record of history, or as a myth?

Although both Modernism and "Neo-orthodoxy" consider the story of man's probation in the Garden of Eden as an early myth invented by someone to explain the existence of evil in the world, there can be no doubt that the Bible treats this account as sober, actual history. Jesus Christ regarded Adam and Eve as historical persons (Matt. 19:8), and the apostle Paul in Romans 5:12-20 makes his whole argument contingent upon the historical character of Adam. If the account in Genesis 2 and 3 is mythological rather than historical, then we can no longer believe in the infallibility of the Bible, nor in the authority of Jesus Christ.

Really there is no reason for hesitating to regard Genesis 2 and 3 as historical. If we believe that mankind was specially created by God, not produced by evolution from the brutes, we will find nothing incredible in the Genesis account of the Garden of Eden. Evolutionists stumble over the idea of the creation of a single original pair of human beings; it is the idea of a historical Adam and Eve that they find it hard to swallow. The existence of a particular, historical Adam is essential to the Christian Faith (Rom. 5:12-20), and this is one reason why we cannot accept the theory of evolution.

6. What was the outcome of the Covenant of Works?

Satan appeared in the Garden of Eden in the form of the serpent, and seduced first Eve, and through her, Adam, to disobedience against God. The penalty of the broken covenant, death, came into effect. Because they had forfeited the right to eat the fruit of the tree of life, Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden. The ground was cursed because of man's sin (Gen. 3:17-19), and man condemned to laborious toil until his body should return to dust.

Besides these penalties, there were also subjective consequences of the fall in the human consciousness. Instead of enjoying communion with God, Adam and Eve immediately realized that there had come to be a barrier between themselves and God, and they were filled with a sense of sin and shame; they became afraid of God, and attempted to hide from God's presence (Gen. 3: 7, 8). In the following generations, there was a very rapid development of sin, reaching murder in the immediate children of Adam and Eve, and by the time of Noah reaching a state in which "the earth also was corrupt before God; and the earth was filled with violence" (Gen. 6:11).

LESSON 3

The Covenant of Works: II. In Relation to Mankind Today

"The Covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but his posterity; all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression." — The Shorter Catechism, 16.

"The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery." — The Shorter Catechism, 17.

"The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consists in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature, which is commonly called original sin; together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it." — The Shorter Catechism, 18.

"All mankind, by their fall, lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all miseries in this life, to death itself, and to the pains of hell for ever." — The Shorter Catechism, 19.

"The covenant of grace was made with Christ as the second Adam, and in him with all the elect as his seed." — The Larger Catechism, 31.

Scripture References:

Rom. 5:12, 19. By Adam's disobedience, all his posterity became sinners.

1 Cor. 15:21, 22. Death came upon the human race by Adam's sin.

Rom. 5:18. The guilt of Adam's first sin is imputed to all whom he represented in his probation.

Eph. 2:1-3. Since Adam's fall, mankind have been dead in trespasses and sins and children of wrath.

Rom. 3:10-18. The moral and spiritual state of fallen man is totally corrupt and depraved.

John 3:36. The wrath of God abides on all who are not in Christ.

Rom. 5:14. Adam prefigured Christ.

1 Cor. 15:45. Christ is the second Adam, who succeeds where the first Adam failed.

Questions:

1. Was it fair for God to hold the whole human race guilty because of Adam's sin?

Adam was not only our first ancestor, but also, by divine appointment, the official representative of the human race in the Covenant of Works. A great deal depended on Adam's conduct in the Covenant of Works. In fact the whole future happiness or misery of the entire human race was dependent on the representative

act of the first man. Some people dislike the idea of Adam being the representative of the human race, and accuse God of being "unfair" in making this arrangement. But we should realize that God is SOVEREIGN and not responsible to His creatures, and therefore no creature may accuse the Creator of unfairness. Also the Bible presents a parallel between Adam and Christ. As Adam was our representative in the Covenant of Works, so Christ is our representative in the Covenant of Grace (Rom. 5:12-21). Those who object to Adam being their representative in the one covenant have no right to claim Christ as their representative in the other covenant, for these two representative relationships are parallel and stand or fall together. Whether we like it or not, the Bible expressly teaches that Adam's act made us sinners (Rom. 5:19), rendered us liable to the condemning judgment of God (Rom. 5:18), and rendered us liable to death (Rom. 5:12, 15).

2 What is the natural state of fallen man?

The natural state of fallen man, that is, the state people are born in today, is a state of sin and misery. "Mankind are all now, by nature, the children of wrath, conceived in sin, brought forth in iniquity, sunk in total depravity, become mortal in their bodies, subject to disease and pain, incapable of doing anything spiritually good, in a state of enmity against God, and condemned to endless misery in the world to come." (Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, V.4). By reason of Adam's first transgression, people are born into the world (a) guilty before God and objects of His righteous wrath; (b) corrupt in their "heart" or moral and spiritual nature; (c) spiritually helpless and unable to lift themselves out of their fallen condition; (d) miserable and faced with endless suffering and unhappiness in this life and the life to come. This is not a bright picture, but it is a true one, for every element of it can be substantiated from the Bible. From this condition of "original sin" in which people are born, proceed all the actual transgressions which they commit in the course of their lives.

3. Is the Covenant of Works still in effect today?

When Adam broke the Covenant of Works by disobeying God, that was the end of all prospect of earning eternal life by obedience to God. Those who attain eternal life today do so by another covenant, the Covenant of Grace, which was made with Christ, the Second Adam. But the Covenant of Works is still in effect for all people who are not under the Covenant of Grace. All who are out of Christ are still under the curse and penalty of the broken Covenant of Works. All those who are not in Christ are still

"in Adam". The penalty of eternal death hangs over every human being who has not received life in Christ. If we have not been saved from the curse by the works of Christ as our Redeemer, then we are still under the curse of the broken Covenant of Works. Dare we try to face it standing on our own feet, on the basis of our own life and works? Rather, let us place our faith in Christ, the Second Adam.

4. Why is Christ called "the Second Adam"?

Christ is called "the Second Adam" because like the first Adam, He is a "federal head" or representative of human beings in a covenant with God. There is a true parallel between Adam and Christ, which is drawn in Romans 5 and other places in the Bible. Christianity can be summarized in (a) What we get from Adam, and (b) What we get from Christ. From Adam, we get the imputation of the breach of the Covenant of Works, together with the penalty and consequences of that breach. From Christ, under the Covenant of Grace, we get the imputation of His righteousness and its reward and consequences; that is, Christ, as the Second Adam, fulfills the Covenant of Works, and BY GRACE the benefits of this fulfillment are bestowed on the elect of God.

5. How did Christ, as the Second Adam, fulfil the Covenant of Works?

God requires perfect, absolute obedience to His will. Adam, as the representative of the human race, failed to render perfect obedience to the will of God. But God's requirements could not be changed. God still required perfect

obedience to His will as the condition of human beings enjoying His favor. So God provided Christ, the Second Adam, as the representative of all the elect of God. Christ succeeded where the first Adam had failed. He lived a life of absolute, flawless obedience to the will of God.

Our Saviour was assulted by powerful Satanic temptations, yet He never yielded. Throughout His earthly life, he never deviated a hair's breadth from absolute moral perfection. He not only shed His precious blood to atone for the sins of God's elect; He also lived a life of perfect righteousness and obedience which could be imputed to the elect as if it were their own personal achievement. Thus Christ, as the Second Adam, fulfilled the condition of the Covenant of Works on behalf of His people.

Therefore it is correct to say that when Adam sinned, the Covenant of Works was not really abolished, but it was taken up into and made a part of the new covenant, the Covenant of Grace and there fulfilled by the new representative, the Second Adam, Jesus Christ. We should always realize that the Covenant of Grace is NOT a provision of eternal life on lower terms than those of the Covenant of Works. The terms never changed; they remained the same — perfect obedience to the will of God. But there was a substitution of the person who, in a representative capacity, complied with the terms. We still get eternal life by perfect obedience to the will of God; only now (under the Covenant of Grace) it is not obedience rendered by the first Adam nor by ourselves personally, but by the Second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ.

LESSON 4

The Eternal Basis of the Covenant of Grace

"It pleased God, in His eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus. His only begotten Son, to be the Mediator between God and man; the Prophet, Priest, and King, the Head and Saviour of His Church, the Heir of all things and Judge of the world; unto whom He did from all eternity give a people, to be His seed, and to be by Him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctioned, and glorified." — The Westminster Confession of Faith, VIII.1.

"God having, out of His mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer." — The Shorter Catechism, 20.

"The Covenant of Grace is an agreement between God, in the person of the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ as the public head of elect sinners, in which God engages to bestow eternal life and glory upon all the elect on condition that

Christ shall fulfill all righteousness as their representative." — The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, IX.1.

Scripture References:

John 17:1-10, 24. The eternal covenant between the Father and the Son for the redemption of the elect.

Eph. 1:4. Rev. 13:8; 17:8; Rom. 8:29; 9:11. God's eternal decree of election.

Zech. 6:12, 13. Isa. 53:10-12. The condition of the Covenant of Grace fully performed by Jesus Christ.

Questions:

1. What is the meaning of the word "grace" in the term "Covenant of Grace"?

It means God's special kindness and love — eternal life and the Kingdom of God — given as a

free gift to sinful people who deserve to be punished for their sins to all eternity in hell.

2. When was the Covenant of Grace made?

It was made in eternity, before the creation of the world, but it was not revealed to mankind until after Adam had broken the Covenant of Works. Back in eternity God the Father entered into the Covenant of Grace with His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, the Second Adam, as the representative of all the people whom God had elected to eternal life. John 17:2. This Covenant of Grace was made in the counsels of eternity, but was put into operation in human history after Adam's fall. Thus the Covenant of Grace has two phases — an eternal phase and a historical phase. The plan was laid in eternity but the execution of the plan was carried out in time.

3. What name is given to the eternal phase of the Covenant of Grace?

It is called the "Covenant of Redemption", because in it God the Son covenanted and undertook to purchase and procure the redemption of the elect.

Note: Our Standards teach that there are not, "besides the Covenant of works, two distinct Covenants—one, a Covenant of Redemption made with Christ; and the other, a Covenant of Grace made with us, DISTINCT from the Covenant of Redemption." (The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, IX. 4 and Error 3). It will be observed that the force of the above quotation turns upon the word "distinct." The Testimony is concerned to rule out the idea that there are two DISTINCT covenants, one made with Christ, and the other made with the elect. Section 4 Chap. IX says: ". . . the same establishment, which is to them a Covenant of free Grace, is to Him a Covenant of Redemption." It is correct to say that the one covenant has two ASPECTS, an eternal aspect and historical aspect. The eternal aspect may properly be called the "Covenant of Redemption," and the historical aspect the "Covenant of Grace," so long as we bear in mind that these are only two aspects or phases of one and the same covenant, not two distinct covenants made by God with different parties.

4. What is the importance of the eternal Covenant of Redemption?

It is of absolute importance for the reality and validity of Christianity, for it lays the solid foundation for the redemption of God's elect. That the elect of God shall certainly receive eternal life and glory, is guaranteed by the eternal counsel and decree of God, which cannot change or fail. The heavens shall wax old as doth a garment, and be folded up as a vesture, but the eternal covenant of Redemption between the Father

and the Son shall stand and shall be accomplished to the last detail. The accomplishment of it is anchored to the omnipotence, unchangeability and veracity of the living God.

5. Who are the parties to the Covenant of Grace?

The parties are God, in the person of the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ as the representative of elect sinners (those given Him by the Father, John 17:2).

6. What common errors exist concerning the parties to the Covenant of Grace?

Some say that the parties are "God and the human race"; or, "God and all sinners". This is a wrong idea, and cannot be harmonized with the statements of the Bible, especially the words of Jesus in John 17:9. Those who think of the parties as "God and the human race" always have a reduced idea of what Christ came to earth to accomplish. They say that Christ came to make the salvation of all sinners possible, that He came to provide an offer of salvation for all men, etc. They do not believe that the purpose of the work of Christ was actually to SAVE anyone, but only to make available a general offer of salvation on a "take-it-or-leave-it" basis, leaving the results to human free will. But according to the Bible, Christ came, not merely to offer men salvation, but to bring about their salvation: "He shall SAVE HIS PEOPLE from their sins" (Matt. 1:21); "that he should GIVE ETERNAL LIFE to as many as thou hast given him" (John 17:2).

7. Is it correct to say that the parties to the Covenant of Grace are God and elect sinners?

This mode of statement is correct, provided we bear in mind that the Covenant of Grace is not made with elect sinners DIRECTLY, but only through Christ, their representative and Mediator. We have no quarrel with those Reformed theologians who speak of the Covenant of Grace being made between God and elect sinners, for they fully realize that it is made on the basis of the redemptive work of Christ as their representative and head. This difference is really a matter of terminology, rather than an actual doctrinal difference.

8. What is the objective of the Covenant of Grace?

The objective is the eternal redemption of the elect of God. Thus the objective is ETERNAL LIFE, just as in the case of the Covenant of Works. The difference consists (a) in man's own condition; man has become a sinner, and needs divine redemption from sin; and (b) in the method by which eternal life is to be obtained — i.e., by Jesus Christ, the divinely-provided Substitute not by Adam nor yet by the sinner's own personal obedience to God.

9. What are the terms of content of the Covenant of Grace?

God the Father having chosen a particular body of human beings to eternal life, planned to send His only begotten Son to this world to redeem them from sin. Accordingly, the Father planned to make all things ready for the entry of His Son into the world. The Father agreed to give the Son "power over all flesh" (John 17:2), and to SEND the Son on a definite task or mission (John 17:4). God the Son agreed to this plan or covenant, and engaged to accomplish fully the will of the Father. He agreed to be born as an infant, taking human nature upon Himself; to live a perfect life of obedience to the law and will of God among men; to accomplish perfectly every detail and item of the task appointed for Him according to the plan; and finally to suffer and die on the cross as the Substitute for sinners, to be buried, to rise again the third day, to send the Holy Spirit, and to come again to judge the living and the dead at the Last Day. All these items fit perfectly together as parts of the great plan which in its eternal aspect is called the Covenant of Redemption and which in its historical aspect is called the Covenant of Grace.

10. Is the Covenant of Grace conditional or unconditional?

Viewed as a covenant made between God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, it is conditional, the stipulated condition being Christ fulfilling all righteousness as the representative of the elect. Thus the righteousness of Christ is the condition of the Covenant of Grace, a condition that has been fully met by our Saviour.

Viewed as a covenant made between God and elect sinners through Christ their representative the Covenant of Grace is unconditional. That is, there is no condition, in the strict sense of the term, that must be met or carried out by the elect. Christ has paid it all; He has completely purchased and guaranteed their eternal salvation.

Note: The Larger Catechism. Q. 32, says: "The grace of God is manifested in the second cove-

nant, in that he freely provideth and offereth to sinners a Mediator, and life and salvation by him; and, **REQUIRING FAITH AS THE CONDITION TO INTEREST THEM IN HIM**, promiseth and giveth his Holy Spirit to all his elect, to work in them that faith, with all other saving graces; . . . ". Though the word "condition" is used here, still the Catechism does not represent faith as a condition in the strict and proper sense of the term, for it immediately proceeds to state that the very faith which God requires is wrought in the elect by the Holy Spirit, promised and given to all the elect. Thus it is clear that the Catechism uses the word "condition" in the old-time sense of "means" or "instrument". Faith is the God-appointed means by which sinners are to receive Christ; but since that very faith is itself a **BENEFIT** of the Covenant of Grace, purchased by Christ for the elect and bestowed on them by Christ's Holy Spirit, it cannot be a **CONDITION** of that covenant in the strict sense. See Eph. 2:8, which proves that saving faith is itself a gift of God.

11. What is the relation of the Covenant of Grace to the Trinity?

(1) Redemption was **PLANNED** by God the Father, who elected sinners and commissioned the Son to redeem them.

(2) Redemption was **PURCHASED** by God the Son, through His incarnation, obedience to the law, atonement, resurrection, etc.

(3) Redemption is **APPLIED** to the elect by God the Holy Spirit, through the Word of God, the new birth, the means of grace, etc. Thus the Plan of Salvation, as revealed in the Bible, depends wholly upon the truth of the doctrine of the Trinity. Salvation is the product of an eternal covenant between the Persons of the divine Trinity. If God is not a Triune God, then there is no Plan of Salvation as held by historic Christianity. The doctrine of the Trinity is not a philosophical abstraction; it is eminently practical, and absolutely essential to the Christian view of salvation.

LESSON 5

The Implementation of the Covenant of Grace

"It pleased God, in his eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus. His only begotten Son, to be the Mediator between God and man; the Prophet, Priest, and King, the Head and Saviour of His Church, the Heir of all things, and Judge of the world: unto whom He did from all eternity give a people, to be His seed, and to be by Him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified and glorified." — The Westminster Confession of Faith, VIII.1.

"This office the Lord Jesus did most willingly undertake; which that He might discharge, He was made under the law, and did perfectly fulfill it, endured most grievous torments immediately in His soul, and most painful sufferings in His body, was crucified, and died; was buried, and remained under the power of death; yet saw no corruption. On the third day He arose from the dead, with the same body in which He suffered, with which also He ascended into heaven, and

there sitteth at the right hand of His Father, making intercession, and shall return to judge men and angels at the end of the world." — The Westminster Confession of Faith, VIII.4.

"The Lord Jesus, by His perfect obedience, and sacrifice of Himself, which He, through the eternal Spirit, once offered up unto God; hath fully satisfied the justice of His Father; and purchased, not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto Him." — The Westminster Confession of Faith, VIII.5.

Scripture References:

Isa. 42:1. 1 Pet. 1:19,20. John 3:16. 1 Tim. 2:5. Heb. 12:24. Christ chosen and ordained by the Father as the Mediator of the Covenant of Grace.

1 Cor. 15:1-4. Christianity is dependent on the historical facts of redemption, especially the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Rom. 5:19. Heb. 9:12-16; 10-14. Rom. 3:25,26. Christ's work as Mediator is fully effective for its intended purpose, the eternal redemption of the elect of God.

Questions:

1. How was the eternal plan of God for the redemption of the elect implemented, or put into effect?

It was implemented, or put into effect, by a series of acts of God in human history, culminating in the death, resurrection and ascension of the Mediator, Jesus Christ. Thus, unlike other religious systems, Christianity is a religion of HISTORICAL FACTS, not a mere system of ideals or abstract truths. Christianity is dependent on events that happened — it is anchored to historical facts from beginning to end.

2. How is this historical or factual nature of Christianity denied at the present day?

At the present day, many people who suppose that "science" has disproved the historical facts of Christianity (especially the miracles, including the resurrection of Christ), vainly imagine that they can let the facts go and still retain the spiritual "essence" of Christianity in the form of "eternal truths" or "timeless verities" such as goodness, beauty, unselfishness, reverence, etc. A renowned novelist is reported to have said that she could still be a Christian even if it could be proved that Jesus Christ never lived. That is just another way of saying that historical facts do not matter, that Christianity is not a matter of redemption but of ideals. If we get our ideas of Christianity from the Bible instead of from modern novels, we will realize that Christianity is absolutely dependent on historical facts which happened at particular times and places. "If Christ

be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (1 Cor. 15:17).

3. When did the central facts of redemption take place?

At a point in world history which the Bible calls "the fulness of the time" (Gal. 4:4,5) when the Mediator, the eternal Son of God, became incarnate in human flesh in order to fulfill the commission He had received from the Father. The pivotal character of that brief period is reflected in the fact that all human chronology is divided into B.C. and A.D. The advent and work of the Mediator forms the central fact, not only of redemption, but of world history as well.

4. How may the implementation of the Covenant of Grace be divided?

It may be divided into three periods, as follows (a) The Period of Preparation, from Adam to Christ. (b) The Period of Realization, from the birth of Christ to His ascension. (c) the Period of Application, from the ascension of Christ to the end of the world. It will be noted that the central period in this scheme is the Period of Realization, when the Mediator was on earth in person achieving the redemption of the elect. The whole history of the world before that—from Adam to Christ—was divinely-ordained preparation for the coming of the Mediator. The whole history of the world after that—from Christ to the end of the world—is a period of application of the purchased redemption to the elect of God throughout the world.

5. What preparations did God make, in the period from Adam to Christ for the coming of the Mediator?

For a complete view of the preparations, it would be necessary to consider the entire body of history recorded in the Old Testament, and at the same time to realize that by His providence God also carried out preparations among the Gentile nations of ancient times (for example in the rise and expansion of the power of Rome, the Roman network of highways, the wide diffusion of the Greek language, etc.). More narrowly, we may say that the preparations took the form of preserving the knowledge and worship of the true God in a separated people, to whom God specially revealed Himself and His will, whom He delivered from their enemies, with whom He entered into a covenant relationship, and specially prepared them for the coming of the Mediator. It was necessary, according to God's plan, that there be such a separated, covenant people, in order that from them the Mediator (as to His human nature) could be born, and that among them He could live and carry out His redemptive acts. From the time of Adam and Eve, there always existed in the world a body of people who knew and worshipped the true God. At the time of Noah this body

of people—the Church of that day—was reduced to an extremely small fraction of the human race, eight individuals, but still it existed. With God's call of Abraham the preparations took a big step forward toward a separated, covenant nation. With the redemption of the children of Israel from Egypt under Moses, the covenant nation became an actuality. The rest of the Old Testament records God's dealings with the covenant nation of Israel, in preparation for the coming of Christ, the Mediator. The final stage of preparation is recorded in the New Testament: the ministry of John the Baptist, God's final messenger to Israel, commanding the people to prepare for the coming of God's Son.

6. What was accomplished during the Period of Realization?

During the Period of Realization, the Mediator, Jesus Christ, was born in Bethlehem of Judea, grew to manhood, received John's baptism at the Jordan, was anointed with the Holy Spirit above measure to equip Him for His redemptive work, went about doing good, preached to the multitudes, taught those who became His disciples, performed mighty miracles, trained the twelve apostles for their future tasks, bore a faithful witness to the truth before Pontius Pilate, was despised and rejected of men, submitted to the accursed and agonizing death of the cross, endured the weight of the wrath of God by reason of the sins that had been laid upon Him, was buried, rose again the third day, appeared repeatedly to His disciples during a period of 40 days, promised that the Father would soon send the Holy Spirit in His name, and finally ascended visibly and bodily to heaven. Throughout this entire ministry, the Lord Jesus Christ (a) perfectly fulfilled all righteousness, completing every detail of the commission given Him by the

Father in the eternal covenant; and (b) lived a blameless life of obedience to the law of God. By His life and ministry as a whole and especially by His sacrifice of Himself on the cross, He satisfied the justice of God on account of human sin, and purchased the eternal redemption of God's elect. This included the purchase of the Holy Spirit to work in the hearts of the elect, persuade and enable them to repent and believe in Christ, sanctify them and bring them to eternal glory. All this, with its eternal fruits and blessings, was achieved and purchased by the Mediator, Jesus Christ, during His life and ministry on earth.

7. What is the character of the Period of Application?

The period of Application is the period from the ascension of Christ to the end of the world. This is also known as "the age of the Holy Spirit," because it is the special work of the Holy Spirit to apply the redemption purchased by Christ to the elect of God throughout the world. The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God — the external call of the Gospel message—as a means toward the salvation of the elect. In the case of elect persons, this external call of the Gospel is accompanied and followed by a direct work of the Holy Spirit in the person's soul, known as internal or effectual calling. By this inward work of the Holy Spirit the elect are born again, enabled to have saving faith in Christ, to repent of their sins, are sanctified and enabled to persevere to the end. The preaching of the Gospel alone cannot bring a person to salvation; it requires in addition the almighty, inward working of the Holy Spirit in the person's soul to bring about personal salvation, or vital union with Christ.

LESSON 6

The Revelation and Administration of the Covenant of Grace

"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 sins, and eternal salvation; and is called, the Old Testament." — The Westminster Confession of Faith, VII. 5.

"Under the gospel, when Christ, the substance, was exhibited, the ordinances in which this covenant is dispensed are the preaching of the Word, and the administration of the sacraments of

Baptism and the Lord's Supper: which, though fewer in number, and administered with more simplicity, and less outward glory; yet, in them, 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 therefore two covenants of grace, differing in substance, but one and the same, under various dispensations." — The Westminster Confession of Faith, VII.6.

Scripture References:

2 Cor. 3:6-9. The Covenant of Grace administered differently in the time before and that after the coming of Christ.

Rom. 4:11. 1 Cor. 5-7. Hebrews chapters 8-10.

Under the Old Testament, the Covenant of Grace was administered by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, etc.

1 Cor. 10:1-4. Heb. 11:13. John 8:56. The promises, prophecies, sacrifices, etc., were sufficient, for that time, to build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah.

Gal. 3:7-9,14. Believers under the Old Testament received full remission of sins, and eternal salvation.

Col. 2:17. Christ is the "substance" or fulfillment of the prophecies, types, sacrifices, etc., of the Old Testament.

Matt. 28:19,20. 1 Cor 11:23-25. Under the New Testament, the Covenant of Grace is administered by the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Heb. 12:22-28. Jer. 31:33,34. The ordinances of the New Testament are fewer and simpler, but more spiritual and effective, than those of the Old.

Eph. 2:15-19. Under the New Testament, the Covenant of Grace is administered to all nations, including both Jews and Gentiles.

Gal. 3:14,16. Rom. 3:21-30. Psalm 32:1 compared with Rom. 4:3,6,16,17,23,24. Heb. 13:8. One and the same Covenant of Grace was administered under the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Questions:

1. When was the Covenant of Grace first revealed to mankind?

Immediately after Adam's fall, in God's words addressed to the serpent: "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel!" (Gen. 3:15). This statement includes the promise that at a future day the seed of the woman would destroy the serpent; that is, that Jesus Christ would be born and would destroy the works of the devil. Though the language is not detailed, it is very specific and very inclusive. This declaration on God's part amounted to an INFORMAL establishment of the Covenant of Grace with God's elect in this world.

2. How was the Covenant of Grace further revealed to mankind in early times?

By the institution of sacrifice, which pointed forward to Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. We do not know when God first commanded sinful men to approach Him by means of a sacrifice which involved the shedding of blood, but presumably it was soon after the fall, for we find Abel of-

fering "of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof" (Gen. 4:4), and it is recorded that "the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering," and also that Abel's sacrifice was offered to God "by faith" (Heb. 11:14)—therefore it was done with the approval of God, and presumably in obedience to a revelation of God's will.

Again, immediately after the Flood, we find Noah offering sacrifices to the Lord, and it is recorded that "the Lord smelled a sweet savour" (Gen. 8:20,21). The institution of sacrifice taught God's people the lesson that salvation is not by personal efforts or moral culture, but by the shedding of the blood of a Substitute. This is the heart of the Biblical Plan of Salvation, and throughout the Old Testament period it was kept before the minds of the people of Israel by continually repeated blood sacrifices.

3. How was the Covenant of Grace formally established with the people of God on earth?

By God's call of Abraham to be the father of a peculiar people, and the establishment of the covenant relationship between God and Abraham (and Abraham's descendants). This is recorded in Genesis 17:1-14. Note that the covenant was established by God, not by Abraham; that it involved promises on God's part, and obligations on Abraham's part; that it included Abraham's posterity as well as Abraham himself; and that there was an appointed external sign or token of the covenant relationship. From the time of Abraham to Moses, the Covenant of Grace was administered to Abraham and his descendants on a family or patriarchal basis. It was made perfectly clear that this family or clan was to be different from all other people in the world. God's special revelations came to them. The special promises of God belonged to them. As signs and seals of the covenant they had the ordinances of circumcision and sacrifice.

4. What great change in the administration of the Covenant of Grace took place in the time of Moses?

By the time of Moses, the descendants of Abraham had increased to a very large number of people. They had become a nation. Accordingly, the administration of the Covenant of Grace was broadened to a national basis, in place of the family or patriarchal basis that had existed previously. There was the divine deliverance of Israel from Egypt, prefiguring Christ's redemption of His people from sin. There followed a very full and extensive revelation of God's truth and God's will, which is recorded in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. The Ten Commandments were revealed, and the covenant bond was formally confirmed at Mount Sinai. Many ceremonial or ritual ordinances were prescribed, which pointed forward to Christ, the Mediator of the

Covenant of Grace. The people of Israel became a nation in covenant with God, whose very life and activities were to act out, as in a pageant, the essential meaning of the Covenant of Grace—the Plan of Redemption which would “in the fulness of the time” be accomplished by Jesus Christ.

5. What difference in the administration of the Covenant of Grace was made by the coming of Jesus Christ?

(a) The administration of the Covenant of Grace was shifted from a national basis (Israel) to a universal basis (world-wide, Jews and Gentiles); the covenant nation of Israel gave way to the New Testament form of the Church. (b) The ordinances by which the Covenant of Grace is administered under the New Testament (the preaching of the Gospel, the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper) are much simpler and fewer in number than the many and complicated ritual ordinances of the Old Testament. (c) The New Testament ordinances have less external display, and are more spiritual in their character, and more effective in giving believers an assured consciousness of their salvation, than the ordinances of the Old Testament. (d) Yet the essential meaning of the two dispensations of the Covenant of Grace is exactly the same. The one pointed forward, the other points back-

ward, to the same Christ, the Mediator of the Covenant of Grace. The essential meaning of baptism is identical with that of circumcision; the essential meaning of the Lord's Supper is identical with that of the Passover. The difference between the two dispensations is partly a matter of degree, partly a matter of external form; it is in no sense a matter of essential meaning.

6. Were the Old Testament Israelites saved by grace, or by works?

Certainly they were saved by grace alone, not by works. It is an old but persistent error that the Jews were saved by works, or by obedience to the law of God. If the Bible teaches anything clearly, it teaches that no one was ever saved by the works of the law (Rom. 3:20). The error mentioned above teaches that the Covenant of Works was from Moses to Christ, and the Covenant of Grace from Christ's crucifixion to His second coming. This is entirely wrong and contrary to the Bible. The Covenant of Works was from the creation of Adam and Eve until they fell into sin. Then the Covenant of Grace was revealed, and it has been the only way of salvation and eternal life since Adam's fall. Believers under the Old Testament were saved by grace, through faith, just as Christians are today. They participated in the same Covenant of Grace that Christian believers share in today.

LESSON 7

The Covenant of Grace and the Salvation of the Christian

“The grace of God is manifested in the second covenant, in that he freely provideth and offereth to sinners a Mediator, and life and salvation by him; and, requiring faith as the condition to interest them in him, promiseth and giveth his Holy Spirit to all his elect, to work in them that faith, with all other saving graces; and to enable them unto all holy obedience, as the evidence of the truth of their faith and thankfulness to God, and as the way which he hath appointed them to salvation.” — The Larger Catechism, 32.

“The Covenant of Grace being formed with Christ as a Federal Head, all the elect are in him as their representative, a party with God in the Covenant, and to this each individual shall consent, when, effectually called to choose the Mediator as his Representative in particular; every true believer has to say, God hath made with me an everlasting Covenant, ordered in all things, and sure.” — The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, IX. 7.

“The goodness of the elect is not the cause of their being taken into this Covenant, neither is faith, repentance, sincere obedience, or any other thing, except the righteousness of the surety, the condition of it; but God has promised,

in this Covenant, to bestow on all the elect, faith, repentance, and holiness, as well as happiness; and Christ, their glorious head, enables them to believe, repent, and live a life of sincere godliness.” — The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, IX.9.

Scripture References:

Gen. 3:15. Isa. 42:6. John 6:27. In the Covenant of Grace, God freely provides and offers to sinners a Mediator.

1 John 5:11, 12. In the Covenant of Grace, God offers sinners life and salvation through the Mediator.

John 1:12; 3:16. God has appointed faith as the means by which sinners are to be united to Christ.

Joel 2:28,29. Ezek. 37:14. Isa. 44:3; 59:21. God has promised to give the Holy Spirit to all His elect.

2 Cor. 4:13. Gal. 5:22,23. Faith, and all other saving graces, are produced in the elect by the work of the Holy Spirit.

Ezek. 36:26,27. All holy obedience and godly living is the product of the working of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the elect.

James 2:18,22. 2 Cor. 5:14,15. Eph. 2:10. A holy obedience is an evidence of the reality of a believer's faith, and of his thankfulness to God; also it is the God-appointed path for the believer to walk in.

Isa. 55:3, 2 Sam. 23:5. Every believer can be assured of his personal participation in the Covenant of Grace.

Titus 3:5-7. The elect are not included in the Covenant of Grace because of their own goodness, but by God's mercy.

Jer. 23:6. The righteousness of Christ is the only condition of the Covenant of Grace.

Phil. 1:29. Heb. 12:2. Christ enables the elect to believe, repent and live a godly life.

Questions:

1. How has God, in the Covenant of Grace provided for the salvation of the elect?

God's provision, in the Covenant of Grace, for the salvation of the elect is a complete provision, including everything necessary to bring the elect to eternal glory without fail. This provision, which has been completely purchased and guaranteed by Christ, includes both the OBJECTIVE and the SUBJECTIVE factors in salvation.

2. What is meant by the objective side of salvation?

The objective side of salvation consists of what Christ has done FOR the elect, in the great historical facts of His redemptive work. This includes Christ's being born and His entire earthly life and work, but especially it includes (a) His perfect life of obedience to the law of God, by which He provided a perfect righteousness; (b) His sacrificial death as an atonement for sin; and (c) His resurrection and ascension to the right hand of the Father in heaven. All of this Christ has done FOR the elect, and by it He has purchased salvation and eternal life, with all graces and blessings, for them. Thus the objective side of salvation is really the foundation of our salvation, which was built by the redemptive work of Christ in history.

3. What is meant by the subjective side of salvation?

The subjective side of salvation consists of what Christ does IN the elect, by His Holy Spirit, who takes the purchased salvation and applies it to the elect, working faith in them, persuading and enabling them to come to Christ, etc. The subjective side of salvation includes all that the Holy Spirit does IN the elect, just as the objective side includes all that Christ has done FOR the elect. The elements of the subjective side of salvation may be summarized as: the new birth, faith, repentance, justification, adop-

tion, sanctification, assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Spirit, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end (See The Shorter Catechism, Q. 30-36).

4. Why is it important to believe that Christ has purchased both the objective and the subjective factors in salvation for the elect?

This is very important, for only so can we believe that Christ provides a complete salvation, or really saves His people from their sins (Matt. 1:21). Many people today say that Christ provides the objective side of salvation (His blood and righteousness), but the subjective side is left up to human free will, (faith, repentance, etc.). They say that we have to repent and believe first by our own free will, and then after that we will be "born again" and receive the Holy Spirit. Such people believe Christ has provided HALF of our salvation (the objective side), and left the other half up to us to provide (repentance, faith, etc.).

The Bible states that Christ shall save His people from their sins (Matt 1:21). Surely one of the sins that they need to be saved from is the sin of UNBELIEF or LACK OF FAITH. If Christ really SAVES His people from the sin of unbelief, then faith must be a gift which Christ bestows on His people through the work of the Holy Spirit in their hearts.

Salvation consists not merely of what Christ did FOR us long ago, but also of what He does IN us here and now, by His Holy Spirit. Both parts are included in the Covenant of Grace, purchased and guaranteed by Jesus Christ the Mediator. He has not thrown us a life-preserver and then left us to reach it and grasp it in our own strength if we can; He has provided the life-preserver and He also, by the Holy Spirit, works in His elect the desire and the ability and the decision to grasp and cling to it.

It is very dishonoring to Jesus Christ, and to the Holy Spirit, to imagine that repentance, faith, etc., are the products of our own free will, when they are really the products of the almighty, special working of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. Read Ezek. 36:25-27 and note the bearing of those verses on this question.

What is the function of faith in receiving salvation?

Faith is the God-appointed means or channel by which sinners receive Jesus Christ as their Saviour. Faith is a "condition" of salvation only in the sense that it is the appointed means by which sinners embrace 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" (The Shorter Catechism, Q. 86).

Faith is not the condition of the Covenant of

Grace in the proper and strict sense of the term "condition", for in the strict legal sense the only condition of the Covenant of Grace is that Christ fulfill all righteousness as Representative of the elect. Strictly speaking, the Covenant of Grace is to the elect an UNCONDITIONAL covenant of promise. But faith is required as the channel or means of receiving the benefits.

However we should understand that faith is itself one of the benefits included in the Covenant. And the faith which God requires, He himself bestows as a free gift by the work of His Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22. Eph. 2:8). Therefore faith is not a "work" in the Bible sense, has no "merit" attached to it, and cannot be a real condition of the Covenant of Grace.

6. What is the relation of the Covenant of Grace to the Christian's perseverance in grace and assurance of salvation?

Salvation ultimately depends not upon anything human but upon the finished work of Christ and the covenanted promises of God. Since the redemptive work of Christ is absolutely complete and perfect, and the promises of God are absolutely true and reliable, it follows that the Christian's perseverance in grace and his eternal security are guaranteed by the Covenant of Grace. If the Christian's perseverance and his eternal security depended on his own will power,

there would be no real guarantee of his final salvation. He might be saved today and lost again tomorrow. He could never be sure he would be able to hold out to the end. But since the Christian's continuance in grace and his eternal security depend upon the unbreakable covenant of the God who from all eternity elected him to everlasting life, his final salvation is guaranteed.

Since the final salvation of the elect is guaranteed by the Covenant of Grace, personal ASSURANCE of salvation is possible. If the final issue were still uncertain, personal assurance would always be impossible; a person could never be sure of his salvation until his actual entrance upon the life of glory in heaven. A person cannot be sure about something which is itself uncertain. But since the final salvation of the elect is an absolute certainty, being purchased by Christ and guaranteed by the Covenant of Grace, it is possible for a Christian to attain full assurance of his salvation in his own mind. The true believer can reach the place where he can say: "God hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure" (2 Sam. 23:5).

On the subject of the possibility of assurance, and its degrees, the student is referred to The Larger Catechism, Q. 80, 81.

LESSON 8

The Covenant of Grace and the Christian Family

"The family is a moral person. It is to be in covenant with God. It has institutions of worship peculiar to itself. It is embraced in the bosom of the church. These are principles which the Covenanter Church has always recognized. The children born in a Christian home are born church members, and entitled to the sacramental seal of baptism. The church imposes obligations upon her members to maintain family religion, and one purpose of family visitation is to see that these engagements are kept." — R. J. George, "Lectures in Pastoral Theology: Series I. The Covenanter Pastor", p. 163.

"The children of believing and professing parents are born in the church. 'Else were your children unclean, but now are they holy.' To treat the children of the covenant as if they were aliens, is to despoil them of their birthright." — R. J. George, as cited above, p. 135.

"Children of professing parents are born in the Church and are entitled to the initiatory rite of baptism. To speak of persons already baptized in our Church as 'joining the Church' when they are received into full communion, is not strictly correct and is productive of error, because it leads such persons to regard themselves as free from all covenant obligations until they

make a public profession. The truth is, that they are children of the covenant, and, if they refuse or neglect to make a public profession, they despise their birthright and become covenant-breakers. N. B. — The record as to their reception should differ from that taken in from the world. It should state distinctly that they were baptized members of the Church, and were admitted to full communion on examination and profession of their faith." — R. J. George, "Lectures in Pastoral Theology: Series II. Pastor and People", p. 168.

"Family worship is the daily gathering of the household for the purpose of praise, Scripture reading and prayer. . . This service, conducted morning and evening, is a distinguishing mark of a Christian home, and is essential to the development of family religion. The head of the family is responsible for this important service and all available members of the household should be present and may be invited to take some part." — The Directory for the Worship of God (adopted 1945 by the R. P. Church), V. 2.

Scripture References:

Gen. 2:18, 24. The family is a divine institution,

Mal. 2:14, 15. The Christian family is a divine institution within the sphere of the Covenant of Grace.

Gen. 17:7-10. The Covenant of Grace is established by God with believers and their children after them.

Acts 2:39. The covenant promises are made to believers and to their children.

Gen. 18:19. Deut. 6:6, 7. Josh. 24:15. Religious duties of the covenant family.

Questions:

1. What is the origin of the institution of the family?

The family is a divine institution, established by God at the creation of the human race. Therefore the speculations of anthropologists concerning the origin of the family are false and wrong. These experts almost always take for granted that the human race came into existence by evolution from a brute ancestry. Therefore they try to explain the existence of the family on an evolutionary basis. Their diverse theories and speculations can be seen by consulting an encyclopedia. Most of them try to explain the family as a gradual development out of the social conditions of the jungle. At best, according to evolutionary speculations, the family is a product of experience and expediency — it is what the human race has found to be best for the welfare of society, but it has no absolute divine authority back of it. As believers in the Word of God, we know that humanity is a special creation of God, and the family is a divinely ordained institution.

2. Is the family a covenant institution?

Since marriage and the family are not confined to Christian people, but are co-extensive with the human race, the family AS SUCH cannot be a covenant institution. There are families among atheists, as well as among Christians. The family is indeed a divine institution, but it is not peculiar to Christianity; it pertains to the sphere of "nature" or "common grace" rather than to the sphere of "salvation" or "special grace".

But in the case of Christian people, the institution of the family takes on a new significance. It is related, in their case, to the Covenant of Grace; it exists within the sphere of the Covenant of Grace. As Dr. R. J. George pointed out many years ago: "The family is a moral person. It is to be in covenant with God. It has institutions of worship peculiar to itself. It is embraced in the bosom of the church. These are principles which the Covenant Church has always recognized."

3. What is a Christian family?

A Christian family is one in which the par-

ents make a public profession of the Christian Faith. The Westminster Confession of Faith warns against marriages between "such as profess the true reformed religion" and "infidels, papists, or other idolaters", and adds, "neither should such as are godly be unequally yoked, by marrying with such as are notoriously wicked in their life, or maintain damnable heresies" (XXIV. 3). Obviously there cannot be truly Christian families unless Christian people are careful to avoid marriages with persons who do not profess the Christian Faith, make no effort to live as Christians, or are "just not interested in religion." Read 2 Cor. 6:14-18 and note its bearing on this question.

4. How can it be shown that the children of believers are included in the Covenant of Grace?

This can be shown by a number of arguments from Scripture, some of which may be summarized as follows: (a) By God's statements to Abraham, Gen. 17:7-10, including the rite of circumcision which proves that the children of believers are included in the covenant, for the rite was the sign of the covenant relationship. (b) By the apostle Peter's statement in his sermon on the day of Pentecost, Acts 2:39. (c) Mal. 2:15 shows that a divinely-ordained purpose of marriage between believers is that there may be "a godly seed", that is, children, a new generation also in covenant with God. (d) The apostle Paul in 1 Cor. 7:16 affirms that where both parents are non-Christians the children are "unclean", but where one parent is a believer the children are "holy": therefore we may rightly conclude that the children of one or both believing parents are included in the Covenant of Grace.

5. If the children of believers are included in the Covenant of Grace, how can we explain the fact that some grow up to be ungodly?

This is a very real difficulty and it must be frankly faced. Hebrews 8:9 speaks of some of the children of Israel as covenant-breakers: "they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord." Also Romans 9:6-13 shows that not all children born to believers are of the elect; Esau was born in the covenant, a son of Isaac, yet he was not an elect person (verse 13). If we think over the Christian families we have known, we will easily be able to recall some child of godly parents who grew up to be irreligious. Thus it must be admitted that the fact that the children of believers are included in the Covenant of Grace does not imply that all children of believers, without exception, are elect persons who shall receive eternal life. All are born in the covenant, but some turn out to be covenant-breakers and are eternally lost.

What is the explanation of this paradox, or apparent contradiction? We should realize that there are two phases of the Covenant of Grace, (a) a legal or external phase, and (b) a vital or

spiritual phase. We may think of these two phases as two circles, one within the other — an outer and an inner circle. Every child born of believing parents is in the outer circle, the legal or external sphere of the Covenant of Grace. But only those truly born again are in the inner circle, the vital or spiritual sphere of the Covenant of Grace. Some people born in the external sphere, the outer circle, are non-elect persons and never come to Christ. Every one that is of the elect will, at some time in his life, come into the inner circle, the vital or spiritual sphere.

When the apostle Paul affirms that the children of one believing parent are “holy” (1 Cor. 7:16) this obviously does not refer to personal holiness of heart and character, for the apostle argues that “the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband”. Clearly the “holiness” and “sanctification” of which the apostle speaks is an external matter of position, standing or privilege, not a matter of vital spiritual life. He is speaking of the outer circle, the legal or external sphere of the Covenant of Grace. Even if the husband or wife is not a Christian, he or she is “sanctified” by the believing partner, and thus has a “holy” standing. This carries with it certain valuable opportunities and privileges, as well as solemn obligations, but it does NOT guarantee that the unbelieving partner will certainly become a Christian.

It should be the constant aim of Christian parents, and of the Church, that all children of the covenant should be brought into the INNER circle, and have a personal faith in Christ as their Saviour.

6. What is the importance of family worship, religious instruction and a godly example in the Christian family?

The importance of these elements of family religion cannot be overstressed. In our day the increasing complexity of life has tended to crowd family worship out entirely, or make it very difficult to attend to. The result is not only a great sin, but a tragic loss to the family and especially to the children. Of course there is little value in a merely formal observance of family worship. Yet it is better that family worship be held briefly than that it be omitted altogether. And while family worship ought to be conducted in a Christian home both morning and evening, it is far better to have it once daily than to omit it altogether. We should resist the steady encroachment of the world upon the home, and maintain the ordinances of family religion faithfully.

When Sabbath Schools were first introduced, some godly people objected to them on the ground that parents would thereafter neglect the instruction of their own children and shift the burden to an (often incompetent) teacher. While we are not opposed to Sabbath Schools, we should

realize that time has proved that there was some basis for the objection. God has entrusted the religious nurture and instruction of covenant children to their parents. It is the parents that will be held responsible for this task. It cannot rightly be shifted to anyone else. The Sabbath School can be a supplementary help, but it cannot be an adequate substitute for parental instruction.

7. What is the relation of the Covenant of Grace to Infant Baptism?

This question will be taken up in detail in Lesson 9. Briefly, the relation may be summed up as follows: (a) Baptism is a sign and seal of the Covenant of Grace. (b) The children of believers are included in the Covenant of Grace. (c) Therefore the children of believers are entitled to Baptism which is a sign and seal of the Covenant of Grace.

Note: Infant Baptism is not dependent on isolated “proof-texts” for its validity. It follows from the doctrines of the sacraments and of the Covenant of Grace. For centuries Infant Baptism has been argued pro and con on the basis of “proof-texts” and hardly anyone has been convinced by the arguments, one way or the other. The real proof of Infant Baptism depends on the truth that the children of believers are included in the Covenant of Grace. Those who reject that truth, will inevitably be opposed to Infant Baptism. But for those who accept that truth, the “proof-texts” that can be cited form a valuable line of corroboratory evidence.

8. What is the relation of the Covenant of Grace to the question of the Church membership of the infant children of believers?

This question will be taken up in detail in Lesson 10. Briefly, the children of believers are born in the Church, and are members of the Church from birth because of God’s covenant with their parents. However they do not have all the privileges of Church membership until they reach years of discretion and themselves make a public profession of faith in Christ and obedience to Him.

9. What is the relation of the Covenant of Grace to the question of the salvation of infants dying in infancy?

This question will be taken up in detail in Lesson 11. Briefly, (a) the Bible says nothing whatsoever about the salvation of non-covenant infants dying in infancy, one way or the other, and therefore we cannot prove from the Bible that such are saved, though we may cherish a probable hope based on general considerations concerning God’s mercy, etc.; (b) the Bible warrants us in holding that the salvation of covenant infants dying in infancy is an absolute certainty, concerning which we should entertain no doubts whatever.

LESSON 9

The Covenant of Grace and Infant Baptism

"Not only those that do actually profess faith in and obedience unto Christ, but also infants of one or both believing parents, are to be baptized." — The Westminster Confession of Faith, XXVIII. 4.

"Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible Church, and so strangers from the covenant of promise, till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to him; but infants descended from parents, either both or but one of them professing faith in Christ, and obedience to him, are, in that respect within the covenant, and to be baptized." — The Larger Catechism, 166.

"One of the chief sources of the church's membership is her own children. In presenting them for baptism, parents not only claim for their children the privileges of the church, but dedicate them to God and the service of Christ. They obligate themselves to teach them to fear God and keep his commandments; to respect and honor the church and her worship; and in due time to profess their faith in Christ, and to seek full membership in the church. . . . In administering baptism to her children the church recognizes their rightful place within the Covenant, and her obligation to give them pastoral care and oversight, and to assist the parents in carrying out their vows. . . ." — The Form of Church Government (adopted 1945 by the Reformed Presbyterian Church), 1.8, 9.

Scripture References:

Rom. 6:4. Gal. 3:27. Baptism is a sign and seal of the Covenant of Grace.

Gen. 17:7-9. The children of believers are included with their parents in the Covenant of Grace.

Gen. 17:10. Under the Old Testament, the appointed sign and seal of the Covenant of Grace was the rite of circumcision.

Col. 2:11,12. Under the New Testament, baptism has taken the place of circumcision as the appointed sign and seal of the Covenant of Grace.

Acts 2:39. The covenant promises belong not only to believers, but also to their children; therefore the sign and seal of the covenant belongs to them too, and they should be baptized.

Questions:

1. What unsatisfactory method is often used in an attempt to prove the propriety of Infant Baptism?

See the note appended to Question 6 of the

previous lesson (Lesson 8). Infant Baptism is a Scriptural practice which does not depend upon isolated "proof-texts". It follows logically from other truths of the Scriptures; the proof may be stated, essentially, in the following form; (a) Baptism is a sign and seal of the Covenant of Grace. (b) The children of believers are included in the Covenant of Grace. (c) Therefore the children of believers are entitled to Baptism, which is a sign and seal of the Covenant of Grace.

2. What is meant by saying that Baptism is a sign and seal of the Covenant of Grace?

A "sign" is that which portrays or represents something. The sacraments SIGNIFY the benefits of Christ's mediation unto those that are within the Covenant of Grace. Spiritual realities are represented by material elements and external actions.

The word "seal" is used in the sense of "a pledge", "a guaranty", or "a legal certificate". The sacraments were instituted by Christ to SEAL the benefits of His mediation to those that are within the Covenant of Grace; that is, to guarantee or legally to certify these benefits to those persons. This does not of course mean the Baptism as a mere outward ordinance can guarantee anything to those who are baptized. It rather means that where Baptism is rightly used, with true faith in Christ, it serves as a "seal" or divinely-given certificate of the benefits of Christ's redemption.

Baptism is a sign and seal of partaking of the benefits of the Covenant of Grace, under the New Testament, just as truly, and in the same sense as circumcision was a sign and seal of partaking of the benefits of the Covenant of Grace, under the Old Testament. Gen. 17:10,14.

3. What is meant by saying that the children of believers are included in the Covenant of Grace?

See questions 4 and 5 of the previous lesson (Lesson 8). To affirm that the children of believers are included in the Covenant of Grace does not imply that all children of believers are elect persons and will be saved. It means: (a) that all children of believers are born in the external sphere of the Covenant of Grace; (b) that the covenant privileges belong to them by birth; (c) that the covenant obligations rest upon them from infancy; and (d) that it must be assumed that they are elect and regenerate in the absence of evidence which would lead to the contrary conclusion.

God in His eternal decree of election has been fit to take account of family ties between parents

and children. God not merely elected individuals to eternal life — He elected individuals and their children after them. The fact that there are some exceptions to this rule does not cancel the general truth that God has elected the children of believers unto salvation and eternal life. Just as some children of unbelievers turn out to be elect persons, and come to Christ, so some children of believers turn out to be non-elect persons, and never come to Christ. But in ordinary cases, God has elected the children of believers unto eternal life; note God's promise to Abraham: "I will establish my covenant between me and thee AND THY SEED AFTER THEE IN THEIR GENERATIONS" (Gen. 17:7).

God's eternal decree of election is sovereign, but it is not arbitrary. God did not elect particular persons to eternal life on the basis of their own faith, moral character, good works, etc., for election is of grace, not of works (Rom. 9:15,16). But God's decree of election was not ARBITRARY — it was not a decision without any reasons back of it. God always has the best of reasons for whatever He does, only He has not seen fit to reveal all His reasons to us. When God said "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (Rom. 9:13), certainly He had good reasons for His choice of Jacob and His rejection of Esau, but certainly those reasons did not consist in Jacob's good works, moral character, etc.

One of the factors that God has taken into account in His eternal decree of election, is the factor of family relationship or descent from believing parents. This is reflected in the inclusion of the children of believers in the Covenant of Grace, which the Bible so clearly proclaims. This inclusion of the children of believers in the covenant is not a "legal fiction" — it is a reality, and it is based on the eternal reality of God's decree of election unto eternal life.

4. How can it be shown that the children of believers are entitled to receive Baptism as the sign and seal of the Covenant of Grace?

It has already been proved that the children of believers are included in the Covenant of Grace. If they have the reality, then surely they are also entitled to the external sign and seal of that reality. If they have what Baptism stands for, then they also ought to be baptized. If a man has inherited a piece of property by bequest, no one will deny that he is also entitled to receive the title-deed to that piece of property. Possession of the title-deed would not necessarily imply actual possession of the property; but actual rightful possession of the property implies that the title-deed should be made over to the possessor.

5. How can we answer those who say that the infant children of believers may be unregenerate, and therefore they should not receive Baptism?

Adults who make a profession of faith and

apply for Baptism may also be unregenerate, and yet the Church does not hesitate to baptize them if they made a credible profession of faith in Christ and obedience to Him. The idea that participation in the sacraments depends on proof of being born again is an error. The Church has no way by which it can X-ray people's souls and find out with certainty whether they are regenerate or not. So far as the Church is concerned, admission to membership and to the sacraments is based on presumption, not on proof. It is presumed that the person who makes a credible profession of faith and obedience is a regenerate person.

Similarly, in Christian charity we must presume that the infant children of Christian believers are regenerate, unless and until there is definite evidence that would lead to the contrary conclusion. John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit before he was born (Luke 1:15); therefore there is nothing unreasonable or unscriptural in assuming that the infant children of Christian believers are regenerate. The fact that there may be some that are not regenerate does not cancel the general rule.

6. What is meant by "Baptismal Regeneration"?

This is the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church and of some Protestants, to the effect that regeneration or the new birth is effected by the instrumentality of Baptism. The Church of Rome teaches that the sacraments work automatically (as an "opus operatum", or "a work performed") unless there is a deliberate intention to hinder the effect. Thus Rome teaches that Baptism effects regeneration, and the baptized person is born again. This teaching is rejected by our Church, which condemns as an error the proposition "That infants are as heathens until they are baptized, and that baptism regenerates and christens them" (The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, XXV, Error 6).

7. What abuses of Infant Baptism are common in American Protestantism?

(a) Promiscuous Infant Baptism, that is, the practice of baptizing any and all infants whose parents request it, regardless of whether or not the parents are themselves professing Christians and members in good standing in the Church. This practice cannot be too strongly condemned. It is unscriptural, ignores the relation of the Covenant of Grace to Infant Baptism, and brings the whole practice of Infant Baptism into contempt.

(b) Formalism and neglect of baptismal vows, on the part of both parents and children. If Infant Baptism is to be a mere formality, or a mere ceremony for attaching a name to a baby, it cannot be justified. Rightly considered, it involves the most solemn obligations on the part of the parents — obligations which descend to the children when they reach years of discretion. Gross formalism

and gross neglect of baptismal vows, especially on the part of parents, has become a terrible scandal in American Protestantism, and like the practice of promiscuous Infant Baptism, this formalism and neglect threatens to bring the whole practice of Infant Baptism into general contempt.

For a statement of the vows taken by parents when their children are baptized, see "The Directory for Worship", III.3, in "The Constitution of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America", p. 333-315.

8. Does Infant Baptism deprive the child of a valuable privilege?

Opponents of Infant Baptism often argue that it does, but really their argument is without weight. The chief captain told Paul that he had become a Roman citizen by the payment of a great sum of money, but Paul immediately replied that he was a Roman citizen by birth (Acts 22:29). To be a Roman citizen was a coveted

privilege in those days; it conferred special rights and benefits. Paul was a Roman citizen by birth. Did Paul's birth as a Roman citizen deprive him of the valuable privilege of being naturalized as a Roman in adult life? Obviously Paul did not think so. Most of us are American citizens by birth; perhaps a few of us were born in foreign countries and have become American citizens by naturalization. Do we who are Americans by birth deplore our birthright, and say that being born as Americans has deprived us of the privilege of being naturalized in adult life?

Infant Baptism deprives the child of no real right or privilege. The parent takes the vows on the child's behalf, as the child's representative. Later the child is to ratify that profession of faith, and take those vows on himself by personal faith, in order to be admitted to the Lord's Supper. Those who oppose parents taking vows for their children, are dominated by an individualism which is unrealistic, contrary to the nature of the family, and utterly alien to the spirit and teaching of the Bible.

LESSON 10

The Covenant of Grace and Church Membership of Children

"The visible Church, which is also catholic or universal under the Gospel (not confined to one nation as before under the law), consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion; and of their children; and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation." — The Westminster Confession of Faith, XXV.2.

"The visible Church is a society made up of all such as in all ages and places of the world do profess the true religion, and of their children." — The Larger Catechism, 62.

"The Church visible, standing in an external relation to Christ in the visible dispensation of the covenant of grace, comprehends all adults who profess faith in Christ, and give obedience to his law, together with all their children." — The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, XXI.2.

"The authority and discipline of the church extends to all members, irrespective of rank and station in life. Children who are baptized members, whether or not they have made their own profession of faith, are under the care of the church and subject to its discipline." — The Book of Discipline (adopted 1945 by the Reformed Presbyterian Church), I.8.

"The Church Visible consists of all those throughout the world who publicly profess their faith in Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord, promise obedience to Him, and unite with an organized congregation. The children of members are also included in this number." — The Form

of Church Government (adopted 1945 by the Reformed Presbyterian Church), I.1.

"If the member received be the head of a family, it is well to record the names of all the minor children of the family who are not yet in full communion. The reason for this is that God includes children with their parents in the Church covenant; and when the parents are received the children are also taken under the care of the session and should be enrolled, as connected with the flock. Their names cannot appear on the roll of communicants, but may very properly appear in the minutes of session." — R. J. George, "Lectures in Pastoral Theology: Series II. Pastor and People", p. 167.

Scripture References:

1 Cor. 7:14. Acts 2:31. Ezek. 16:20, 21. Rom. 11:16. Gen. 17:7. The children of true believers are members of the visible Church from birth.

Luke 12:42,43. 2 Tim. 4:2,5. John 21:15,17. The Church has a responsibility for all its members, including the children who have not yet made a public profession of faith.

Questions:

I. What error concerning the membership of the visible Church is very common in evangelical Protestant circles in America?

The idea that the membership of the visible Church consists solely of COMMUNICANTS, that is, of those who have made a personal profession

of faith in Christ and have been admitted to the Lord's Supper. This is a wrong and unscriptural view of the membership of the visible Church, for it excludes the children of believers from Church membership.

This wrong view of the membership of the Church is held in two ways. (a) It is held by such denominations as Baptists, Disciples, etc., which reject Infant Baptism, and administer Baptism only on a personal profession of faith by those who have attained years of discretion. These denominations are perfectly consistent in regarding the infant children of believers as non-members of the Church; this fits in precisely with their views of Baptism, of the Church and of the Covenant of Grace. Although they are consistent, we believe they are in error and have committed a serious distortion of the Christian Faith. (b) This wrong view of the membership of the Church is held by multitudes of members and ministers of most of the large denominations which practice Infant Baptism, such as Presbyterians, Methodists and Congregationalists. Although Infant Baptism is the accepted practice of these and many other denominations, the children, both before and after being baptized, are spoken of as if they were non-members of the Church; and when they make a public profession of faith and are admitted to the Lord's Supper, this is almost always called "joining the Church". Those who practice Infant Baptism, and still speak of the baptized children several years later "joining the Church" are certainly inconsistent, as well as involved in error concerning the membership of the Church.

2. What is the true Biblical view of the membership of the Church?

The true Biblical view of the membership of the Church is that set forth in the Westminster Confession of Faith and other standards, which affirms that "The visible Church . . . consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion; and of their children" (XXV.2.) The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony uses the expression: "together with all their children" (XXI. 2), showing that even the youngest children are included as Church members.

3. Why are the children of believers members of the visible Church?

The children of believers are members of the visible Church because they are included with their parents in the Covenant of Grace, as has been shown in Lesson 8 of this course. According to the Bible, the family, not the individual, is the real unit of church membership; and therefore children are included with their parents and counted as Church members. Many people who profess to adhere to the Westminster Standards are surprised at this doctrine of the Church membership of children, and seem to consider it some strange or peculiar teaching. This doctrine, however, is nothing new. It is not only clearly taught

by all the standards of our Church, but it has always been a recognized doctrine of the Reformed Faith. However this doctrine of the Church membership of believers' children has been neglected and almost lost sight of for a generation or more, while individualistic and Baptist ideas of Church membership have become quite general. Though some may regard this change as a sign of religious progress, in reality it is an evidence of doctrine decadence and retrogression, of a trend which needs to be checked and reversed.

4. Is counting infants as Church members a Roman Catholic error?

The fact that the Roman Catholic Church does something, of course does not prove the practice to be wrong. The Roman Catholic Church with perfect propriety counts as members all who have been baptized. Rome's error in this matter does not consist in counting baptized persons as members, but rather in administering Baptism to infants otherwise than on the basis of the Covenant of Grace.

5. Are infants baptized because they are Church members, or are they Church members because they are baptized?

Apparently there is some confusion on this point at the present day. Because we speak of "communicant members" and "baptized members", the idea has apparently arisen that children are members because they have been baptized, that is, that Baptism confers Church membership on them. However this is not correct, and the true doctrine is that infants are baptized because they already are Church members (from birth). Dr. J. R. George made this point very clear when he wrote: "The children born in a Christian home are born church members, and entitled to the sacramental seal of baptism." ("The Covenanter Pastor", p. 163). They are entitled to Baptism because they are born Church members; therefore Church membership is prior to Baptism. This is the accepted view of orthodox Reformed theologians on this matter. Baptism is a badge or recognition of Church membership, but it does not make a person a Church member. A birth certificate or passport is a badge or evidence of American citizenship, but it does not make a person a citizen. He is a citizen first, and gets the passport later as evidence of his citizenship.

6. Are children an inferior or secondary kind of Church members?

The analogy of citizenship may help us here again. There exists in the United States only one kind of citizenship. A person is an American citizen, or he is not. An infant one day old, if born in the United States, is an American citizen. It is not a second rate citizen; even though only one day old, it is entitled to the full protection of the government and laws of the United

States. But it does not have all the privileges of citizenship; for example, it cannot vote nor hold public office until it reaches the legal age for exercising these privileges.

Similarly, there is really only one kind of membership in the visible Church. A person is a Church member or he is not. An infant one day old (regardless of whether baptized or not), provided it is the child of Christian parents, is a Church member. It is not a second rate member; throughout infancy and childhood it is entitled to be regarded and treated as a member of the covenant people of God. But still it does not have all the privileges of Church membership; for example, it cannot partake of the Lord's Supper, cannot vote in a congregational meeting nor hold office in the Church, until a proper age is reached for each of these privileges.

The Form of Church Government adopted by the Reformed Presbyterian Church in 1945 speaks of the duty of baptized children "to seek full membership in the Church" (II.8) and of the duty of the Church to instruct such children "with a view to preparing them for full membership" (II.9). This language must be understood to mean "to seek the full privileges of membership in the Church" and "with a view to preparing them for the full privileges of membership". If not so understood, it could easily give rise to the notion that there are two classes of membership in the Church, namely full and partial — a notion which would be contrary to the Reformed doctrine of the Covenant of Grace, as set forth in the Westminster Standards. Dr. R. J. George's language ("the minor children of the family who are not yet in full communion") seems preferable to speaking of "full membership", because the word "communion" involves the idea of the enjoyment of the privileges of membership.

7. Should we continue to use the phrase "joining the Church" concerning covenant children who make a public profession of faith?

Certainly this phrase should be abolished, except when it is used in its proper meaning, namely, of those received from the world. When used of covenant children and youth, the phrase "joining the Church" betrays an ideology which cannot be reconciled with the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace and the standards of our Church. This is not a mere matter of words and names; it involves the conflict of two irrescon-

able ideas of the visible Church and the Covenant of Grace. We should say that our covenant children "make a public profession of their faith", which exactly describes the step taken, and cannot foster any false notions of Church membership. (We should avoid the use of the word "confirmation", which is almost as bad as the phrase "joining the Church", in that it seems to imply that those "confirmed" were not previously real members of the Church).

8. What are the duties of the Church to the children in its membership?

Adequately to answer this question would require far more space than is available here. The most important matters may be briefly mentioned: (a) The Church should administer the sacrament of Baptism to them. (b) The Church should teach them that they are Church members, and that this is a high privilege and honor. (c) The Church should teach its children the Word of God and the way of salvation, and, in the name of Christ, should urge and command them to receive Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. They should be made conscious of their covenant obligations as well as of God's covenant promises. (d) The Church should impress upon its children the duty, when they reach the proper age, of making a personal, public profession of faith and partaking of the Lord's Supper. (e) The children of the Church are subject to the discipline of the Church, regardless of whether or not they have made a public profession of faith and been admitted to the Lord's Supper.

9. What is the proper age for covenant children to make a public profession of faith and be admitted to the Lord's Supper?

No definite answer can be given to this question. The customary practice varies somewhat in different denominations, and also to some extent in different congregations of the same denomination. Under the Old Testament Jewish boys were expected to begin to participate in the Passover at the age of 12 years (Luke 2:41-32). From this we may perhaps infer that 12 years is a proper age, in ordinary cases, for covenant children to make a public profession of faith and be admitted to the Lord's Table. However, age is only one of the factors that must be taken into account. Much more important are the degree of knowledge and the seriousness of purpose of the applicants.

LESSON 11

The Covenant of Grace and Infant Salvation

"Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated, and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how He pleaseth; so also are all other elect persons who are incapable of being outwardly called by the minis-

try of the Word." — The Westminster Confession of Faith, X.3.

"Since we are to judge of the will of God from His Word, which testifies that the children of believers are holy, not by nature, but in vir-

tue of the covenant of grace in which they together with their parents are comprehended, godly parents have no reason to doubt of the election and salvation of their children whom it pleaseth God to call out of his life in their infancy." — The Canons of the Synod of Dort, XVII.

"Infants as well as adults, are rational and moral agents, and by nature totally depraved. The difference is, that the faculties of infants are in the germ, while those of adults are developed. As regeneration is a change wrought by creative power in the inherent moral condition of the soul, infants may plainly be the subjects of it in precisely the same sense as adults; in both cases the operation is miraculous, and therefore inscrutable." — A. A. Hodge, "Outlines of Theology", XXVI.20.

"There are two ways by which God saveth infants. First, by interesting them in the covenant, if their immediate or remote parents have been believers. He is a God of them and of their seed, extending his mercy unto a thousand generations of them that fear him; secondly, by his grace of election, which is most free, and not tied to any conditions; by which I make no doubt but God taketh unto him in Christ many whose parents never knew, or were despisers of, the gospel." — John Owen, "Works", Gould edition (1852), vol. X, p. 81.

Scripture References:

Luke 18:15,16 and Acts 2:38,39 and John 3:3,5 and 1 John 5:12 and Romans 8:9 compared together. Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the sovereign actions of the Holy Spirit.

John 3:8. The regenerating work of the Holy Spirit is hidden from human observation.

1 John 5:12. Acts 4:12. The same principle applies to all other elect persons, regardless of their age, who are incapable of being called by the ministry of the Word; that is, those that are insane, mentally deficient, etc. Such are saved by Christ through the miraculous working of the Holy Spirit, apart from the preaching of the Gospel and personal faith.

Questions:

1. What is the popular idea concerning the salvation of infants dying in infancy?

The popular idea concerning the salvation of infants dying in infancy is that such infants are saved because they have never committed sin and are therefore regarded as "innocent". The idea is that infants are born sinless, and become sinners only when they reach years of discretion and voluntarily choose evil rather than good.

2. How can it be shown that this popular

idea of the "innocency" of infants is contrary to the Bible?

According to the Bible all human beings are both sinful and guilty from birth. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalm 51:5). "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one" (Job. 14:4). "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12; in verse 14 the apostle argues that from Adam to Moses death reigned even over infants, who had not committed a deliberate transgression as Adam had; therefore, since death is the wages of sin — Rom. 6:23 — the infants who died must be regarded as guilty of sin).

According to the Bible, the guilt of Adam's first sin is imputed by God to all whom Adam represented in the Covenant of Works; that is, to all human beings with the single exception of Jesus Christ the Second Adam. This is proved by Rom. 5:18, ". . . by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation". Judgment to condemnation implies guilt before God. Those whom God judges and condemns must be guilty. But Rom. 5:18 teaches that this judgment to condemnation came upon all men "by the offense of one"; that is, by Adam's first sin. Therefore the guilt of Adam's first sin is charged by God against every human individual (except Jesus Christ). Because of the imputed guilt of Adam's breach of the Covenant of Works, every human individual is also born with a corrupt and sinful "heart" or nature, and in due time proceeds to commit all kinds of actual transgressions, in thought, word and deed.

The notion that infants and little children are "innocent" or sinless is a piece of popular sentimentalism which is not based on the Bible. The Bible doctrine of Original Sin teaches that infants are guilty before God and have a sin-corrupted nature. If infants dying in infancy are saved, it cannot be because of their "innocence" but must be solely by the grace and mercy of God through Christ's redemption.

3. What are we to believe concerning the salvation of covenant children which die in infancy, or before reaching years of discretion?

We should not entertain the slightest doubt that all covenant children which die before reaching years of discretion are of the elect and are saved by the mysterious operation of the Holy Spirit. This conviction is not based on the notion of "innocency", but on the Bible doctrine of the Covenant of Grace. David was comforted by the knowledge that his child that had died was not lost forever; he said, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me" (2 Sam. 12:23). The infants of Bethlehem that were murdered by orders of king Herod (Matt. 2:16-18) were not forever lost; Jeremiah's prophecy (31:15-17) proves that

they were saved: "There is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that thy children shall come again to their own border". ("The words, "There is hope in thine end", are to be fulfilled ultimately, when Rachel shall meet her murdered children at the resurrection. . .", J. F. & B., "Commentary on the Whole Bible").

Christian parents who have been bereaved of their little ones should be comforted. They are not lost, nor have they been separated from them forever. The great and precious promises of the Covenant of Grace — that everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure — afford a solid basis for the sure conviction that their little ones are "with Christ, which is far better" (Phil. 1:23). There shall be a blessed reunion in heaven, and a still higher enjoyment of blessedness and glory at the resurrection day. For those who can say "The Lord has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure", this hope is not a mere probability but a certainty.

God's covenant established with Abraham (Gen. 17:1-14) proves that every child of believing parents is born within the Covenant of Grace. It is true that some of the children of believing parents are not of the elect, and turn out to be covenant-breakers. But an infant that dies before reaching years of discretion cannot be a covenant-breaker; it cannot despise and violate the obligation of the Covenant of Grace. Therefore we have the best of reasons for believing that all children of believing parents dying in infancy are not only within the Covenant of Grace, but also of the number of the elect and shall certainly be saved. Just as they were made guilty and sinful by Adam's fall, apart from any act of their own, so they are made righteous and holy by Christ's redemption, apart from any act of their own. If anyone should say that regeneration cannot take place in infancy, it is sufficient to cite Luke 1:15, which proves that this miraculous act of the Holy Spirit can take place even before birth.

4. What does the Bible teach concerning the children of non-Christian parents, that die in infancy?

The Bible is silent concerning the question of whether the children of non-Christian parents, dying in infancy, are saved or lost. Since the Bible says nothing on this subject, nothing can be proved concerning it, one way or the other. We must respect the silences of Scripture. This is a question that may safely be left to the justice and mercy of God. If we needed to know the answer to it, God would have revealed the answer in His Word. The fact that Scripture is silent on the matter indicates that the answer would not be of value or benefit to us if we knew it.

In the early centuries of the history of the Church, this question was complicated by a belief in the false doctrine of baptismal regener-

ation. Because of the belief that baptism is absolutely necessary to salvation, it was common to teach that all infants that died without baptism were inevitably eternally lost. This meant, of course, that all infants dying throughout the vast non-Christian world would inevitably perish eternally, and even the infants of Christian parents, if they should die without having been baptized, could never enter heaven. But this linking of the question of infant salvation to Baptism (and to the false doctrine of baptismal regeneration at that) was basically wrong, and only gave rise to more errors, as well as causing limitless pain to Christian parents whose children, for any reason, had died unbaptized. Having come to a clearer understanding of God's Word, we know that if infants are saved, it is not because of Baptism, and if they are lost, it is not because of the lack of Baptism. God has not made salvation contingent upon a sacrament.

Many orthodox Reformed theologians have held, as a matter of opinion, that all infants dying in infancy are saved. Those who hold this opinion base it on general consideration such as the great mercy of God, the fact that infants have only original sin (never having committed actual transgressions), the truth that God's election unto eternal life is absolutely free and not limited by any conditions, etc. It is usually admitted that this view that all infants are saved cannot be proved or demonstrated in the sense that the doctrine of justification by faith can be demonstrated, for the Bible is silent on the subject.

It is also generally admitted that the Bible warrants us in saying that the salvation of covenant infants is a certainty, whereas in the case of non-covenant infants we are not warranted in speaking of the certainty of their salvation, but may at most entertain a probable hope of it based on such general considerations as are mentioned above.

We should realize clearly that **IF** all infants dying in infancy are saved, this is not because of "innocency" but only because of the free mercy of God, by the redemption of Christ being applied to them by the Holy Spirit. The popular notion that all infants are saved because they are "innocent" is a heresy and is definitely contrary to the Scriptures. Only the Reformed theology (Calvinism) affords any ground whatever for even a probable hope that all infants will be saved, for only the Reformed theology teaches that salvation proceeds wholly from God and not at all from man. If salvation is dependent on Baptism, or on a "decision" made by human free will, then there is no hope for the salvation of all infants, for millions die without Baptism, and none can exercise free will in infancy. If salvation depends on "innocency", then there is no hope at all for the salvation of infants, for they are not "innocent" — the Bible teaches that they are born guilty and with a corrupt nature. But if the Reformed Faith

is true, then salvation depends on (a) God's decree of election, (b) the finished work of Christ, and (c) the almighty work of the Holy Spirit. On this basis, and on this basis alone, can we entertain a probable hope of the salvation of all infants dying in infancy.

Some people would like to say positively that the Bible teaches that all infants will be saved. However, we have no right to say this positively unless at the same time we can show where and how the Bible teaches it. Actually, reverence requires that we must respect the silence of the Scripture on this subject.

Note: Ministers who wish to study the history of the doctrine of Infant Salvation are referred to B. B. Warfield, "The Development of the Doctrine of Infant Salvation", in "Studies in Theology" (Oxford Univ. Press, N. Y., 1932), pp. 411-444.

5. Does the Westminster Confession of Faith teach the doctrine of infant damnation?

Although it has been repeatedly charged that the Westminster Confession of Faith teaches this doctrine, the charge is without foundation and is due to a very stupid failure to read carefully the exact words of the section of the Confession in question. The Confession says: "Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated, and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how He pleaseth" (X.3). Note that this sentence occurs, not in the chapter on election, but in that dealing with the subject of regeneration ("effectual calling"). The question being discussed is NOT whether some infants are non-elect, but how elect infants are regenerated (in view of the fact that they cannot attend upon the ministry of the Word).

It is generally recognized that there are elect

infants, dying in infancy. Whether or not there also exists such a class as "non-elect infants dying in infancy", the Confession does not undertake to decide. Because the Bible itself is silent on this question, the Confession of Faith, respecting the silence of Scripture, also leaves the question undecided. If there are non-elect infants that die in infancy, they are not under discussion in the Confession of Faith Chapter X, Section 3. This section deals only with the question of how ELECT infants are saved.

Yet it has been repeatedly claimed that the Westminster Confession teaches the doctrine of "infant damnation". For example, A. H. Strong says: "The Westminster Confession, in declaring that 'elect infants dying in infancy' are saved, implies that non-elect infants dying in infancy are lost" (Systematic Theology" p. 663). We reply, it implies no such thing, and has never been so understood by theologians who adhere to the Westminster Confession. The implied contrast is not between "elect infants" and "non-elect infants"; it is between "elect infants dying in infancy" and "elect infants living to grow up to years of discretion". The latter are saved in the ordinary way, through the ministry of the Word; the former are saved "by Christ through the Spirit, who worketh when, and where, and how He pleaseth."

The Westminster Confession carefully refrains from saying that all infants dying in infancy are saved. That is, it leaves the question undecided. That is very different from the doctrine of "infant damnation" which is unjustly and slanderously attributed to the Westminster Confession of Faith. This unjust slander has doubtless been repeated by many who have never taken the trouble to read the Westminster Confession for themselves.

LESSON 12

The Covenant of Grace and the Unity of Scripture

"Under the name of Holy Scripture, or the Word of God written, are now contained all the books of the Old and New Testaments. . . All which are given by inspiration of God, to be the rule of faith and life." — The Westminster Confession of Faith, I.2.

"And. . . the consent of all the parts, . . . the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God: . . ." — The Westminster Confession of Faith, I.5.

"God hath, from time to time, made known to men his will respecting the salvation of sinners, and hath authorized certain persons qualified for the work, to communicate a Divine Revelation to

mankind, specifying the only method of escaping eternal punishment on account of sin, and accompanied with sufficient evidence of its authenticity." — The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, III.2.

"It hath pleased God, in condescension to human wants and weakness, to inspire, and infallibly to guide, chosen men to commit to writing the Revelation of his Will, for the instruction and comfort of his Church in the world." — The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, III.3.

Scripture References:

Luke 16:29,31. Eph. 2:20. 2 Tim. 3:16. All the books of the Bible are the Word of God, and constitute the rule of faith and life.

Heb. 1:1. Eph. 3:9. 2 Tim. 3:16,17. God has not

only revealed His will to mankind, but has committed the revelation to written form for the permanent instruction of His Church.

Questions:

1. What is meant by "the unity of Scripture"?

This phrase means that the Bible, in spite of the fact that it consists of 66 books in two Testaments, written by some 40 different writers, is nevertheless truly ONE BOOK, because it is inspired throughout by the Holy Spirit and is entirely self-consistent, presenting a single consistent message from Genesis to Revelation. When we speak of the unity of Scripture, we mean that the unity of the Bible is more basic than its obvious diversity.

Of course there is diversity in the Bible. It is obvious that there is in the sacred volume great diversity of human authorship, language, subject matter, literary style, historical circumstances, and the like. When we speak of the unity of the Bible, we have no thought of denying the obvious diversity that exists in the Bible. But we mean that in spite of all this diversity, there is a true and deeper unity. Only one person was THE REAL AUTHOR of the Bible — the Holy Spirit; the human writers were His organs in this process. And from Genesis to Revelation a single, consistent message (or system of truth) is presented.

2. What is the importance of the unity of the Bible?

If the Bible is not really a unity, then the Bible is not really the Word of God. If the Bible presents fragments of irreconcilable viewpoints, contains mutually contradictory statements, etc., then it is merely the reflection of the various opinions of the human writers. If the Bible is not an organic unity, it cannot be the Word of God; if the Bible does not present a consistent message throughout, it cannot really be the Word of God; if the Bible is not really the Word of God, then it cannot be our authority for faith and life; and so, if the Bible is not a unity, we are left with no authority beyond human reason.

3. How is the unity of the Bible denied today?

The unity of the Bible is denied or destroyed today by three wrong approaches to the Bible, namely (a) the atomistic view of the Bible; (b) the higher critical view of the Bible; and (c) the modern dispensational view of the Bible. Each of these views of the Bible is held by multitudes of people at the present day, and each undermines the true unity of the Scriptures.

4. What is meant by the atomistic view of the Bible?

This is the error of those who fail to realize that the Bible is an organism. They take each verse or portion of Scripture more or less by itself, without realizing that it has an organic con-

nection with all other parts of the Bible. This may be called the "Sears, Roebuck catalogue view of the Bible". In a mail-order catalogue there is no organic relation between a suit of clothes on one page and a washing machine on another page; the only relation is a mechanical one; they just happen to be listed in the same book. But in the Bible everything is organically related in everything else. For example, the fall of Jericho in Joshua chapter 6 is organically related to the birth of Christ in Bethlehem in Matthew chapter 2, and this again is organically related to the Christian being justified by faith and having peace with God in Romans chapter 5. It all fits together and one part depends on another part. The Bible is not a miscellaneous collection of moral and religious truths as a mail-order catalogue is a miscellaneous collection of merchandise; the Bible is an organism like a tree; every part is organically related to every other part. Multitudes of people fail to realize this, and the result is that they approach and use the Bible in a very mechanical manner, to their own great error and loss.

5. What is the higher critical view of the Bible?

The "higher criticism" claims to subject the Bible to a close study in the light of historical circumstances, conditions, etc., to discover the origin, character, purpose, authorship, time of composition, etc., of the various Biblical writings. There is no objection to such investigations if rightly carried on.

But the "higher criticism" has become so dominated by unbelief in the Bible as the Word of God, that the very term "higher criticism" has acquired a bad reputation in Christian circles. As long ago as 1895 Dr. William Henry Green wrote: "The Higher Criticism has been of late so associated with extravagant theorizing, and with insidious attacks upon the genuineness and credibility of the books of the Bible that the very term has become an offense to serious minds. It has come to be considered one of the most dangerous forms of infidelity, and in its very nature hostile to revealed truth" ("The Higher Criticism of the Pentateuch", p.v).

The higher criticism holds that the Bible is a human product, filled with errors and contradictions. Its divine inspiration and authority are denied or explained away. The Pentateuch is split up into fragments assigned to various hypothetical documents, alleged to have been written at various times, for diverse purposes, by different authors, and later combined in a patchwork or crazy-quilt pattern by an editor or "redactor", or by a number of such "redactors", the whole being finally (falsely) attributed to Moses. The book of Deuteronomy is said to have been written at the time of Josiah; Daniel is said to have been written subsequently to the events proph-

sied in the book; Isaiah is said to have been written by two or even by three different "Isaiahs", and later welded into a single book by some unknown "redactor". The four Gospels are said to be largely unreliable and probably not written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; in particular, the Gospel of John is said to be not historical, but a piece of philosophic interpretation of the life of Jesus, written long after the events it purports to record.

6. What is the importance of the higher critical view of the Bible today?

The answer to the previous question quoted from a book written by Dr. W. H. Green in 1895. It may safely be said that the situation is even worse at the present day. What was being valiantly resisted in Dr. Green's day has been accepted as truth, in general, by the theological world of 1967. Just as evolution is taken for granted by the scientific world today, so the higher critical view of the Bible is taken for granted, by and large, by the theological world of our day. There are exceptions to this statement, of course; there remain a few fairly large and many small denominations that have not surrendered to the higher critical view of the Bible. The same is true of the theological seminaries of the world; but most of the large and influential ones are dominated by the higher criticism. Their scholars are so sure that the higher criticism is valid, that they do not even take the trouble to read and answer the books written in defense of the Bible by orthodox scholars. The sentiment among Modernists is that their battle has been won; they feel that the idea of an infallible Bible is dead, and the few who still try to believe in it are not important. We should realize that this higher critical view of the Bible is not only tolerated, but actually dominates, most of the large Protestant denominations in

America today. The seriousness of the situation cannot easily be exaggerated.

7. How does the higher critical view of the Bible destroy the unity of the Bible?

It destroys the unity of the Bible by denying the real divine authorship back of the human writers, and by holding that the Bible is a scrapbook of contradictory records and viewpoints. If the Bible is the composite patchwork the critics claim, then it is not a unity except in the merely mechanical sense that it is printed and bound in a single volume. If the critics are right, the Bible possesses no organic unity; it is not a divine guidebook, but a human scrapbook.

8. Over against the atomistic and higher critical views of the Bible, how does the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace safeguard the unity of the Bible?

Both the atomistic view and the higher critical view rule out and render impossible any real plan in the Bible. The atomistic view makes the Bible a hodge-podge of miscellaneous ideas; the higher critical view makes the Bible, at best, a patched-up record of "man's age-long search for God". But the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace really maintains the unity of Scripture. For it teaches that the whole Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, is the divinely-inspired record of God's redemption of sinful man. It shows how the whole Bible deals with the working out of God's eternal Covenant of Redemption on the field of human history. Every book, chapter and verse of the Bible fits into this plan, like the pieces of a jig-saw puzzle. Viewed from the standpoint of the Covenant of Grace, as the infallible revelation of God to man, the Bible is seen to be a harmonious and consistent whole from beginning to end, the grand theme of which is Jesus Christ the Redeemer of God's elect.

LESSON 13

The Covenant of Grace and the Unity of Scripture, Continued

"The covenant of grace was not always administered after the same manner, but the administrations of it under the Old Testament were different from those under the New." — The Larger Catechism, 33.

"There are not therefore two covenants of grace, differing in substance, but one and the same, under various dispensations." — The Westminster Confession of Faith, VII.6b.

Scripture References:

2 Cor. 3:6-9. The administration of the Covenant of Grace was different under the Old Testament from that under the New.

Gal. 3:14,16. Acts 15:11. Rom. 3:21-23, 30. Psalm 32:1 compared with Rom. 4:3,6,16,17,23,24. Heb. 13:8. Though the administration differed

under the two Testaments, there were not two covenants, but only one throughout.

Questions:

1. What is modern dispensationalism?

In a certain sense all Christians are "dispensationalists", for all believe in at least two dispensations, one before and the other after the crucifixion of Christ. But properly speaking, "modern dispensationalism" is the special scheme of Bible interpretation based on the writings of J. N. Darby and popularized largely by the Scofield Reference Bible and by many Bible institutes and conferences.

2. What is the modern dispensationalist view of the Bible?

Modern dispensationalism is a false system of categories imposed on the Bible, which divides the history of the world into seven distinct periods or dispensations, from Adam to the end of the world, and asserts that in each of these dispensations God tests the human race with respect to some specific revelation of His will. The seven dispensations, as given in the Scofield Reference Bible, are as follows: Innocency, Conscience, Human Government, Promise, Law, Grace, Kingdom. Of these seven dispensations, only three can actually be found in the Bible, and those three (Innocency, Law and Grace) correspond, respectively, to (1) the Covenant of Works; (2) the Old Testament dispensation of the Covenant of Grace; and (3) the New Testament Dispensation of the Covenant of Grace. The other four of the Scofield Bible's dispensations (Conscience, Human Government, Promise and the Kingdom) are not to be found in the Bible as periods of time **DISTINCT FROM THE COVENANT OF GRACE**. Moreover, what the Scofield Bible calls "the dispensation of Law" was actually a dispensation of the Covenant of Grace (the period from Moses to Christ).

3. What is the harm in the modern dispensational view of the Bible?

The harm in the modern dispensational view of the Bible consists in the fact that this popular system virtually nullifies the unity of the Bible by so sharply setting off one part of the Bible against another part of the Bible. For example, the dispensation of Law against the dispensation of Grace, and vice versa. Scofield actually asserts that at Mount Sinai the people of Israel "rashly" accepted the law (p. 20), and even that at Mount Sinai the Israelites "exchanged grace for law" (p. 20). The result of this is the notion that the approach of sinful men to God was on a radically different basis in different dispensations. Even the Lord's Prayer is declared to be "on legal ground" (p. 1002), and, as a form of prayer, to be unfit for Christian use (p. 1089-1090).

Thus this system tends toward the idea that there is no law in the dispensation of Grace, and that there was no grace under the dispensation of Law (although this antithesis is by no means consistently carried out, for there are apparent contradictions within the Scofield Bible's statements). Darby-Scofield dispensationalism regards law and grace as mutually exclusive principles, instead of recognizing the truth that the law, in the period from Moses to Christ, was a part of the system of grace, and subsidiary to the administration of the Covenant of Grace.

4. How does the dispensational view of the Bible affect the unity of the Bible?

According to the orthodox Reformed theology, there was first the Covenant of Works (from the creation of man until Adam's fall), and then the Covenant of Grace (from Adam's fall to the end of the world). According to the Reformed theolo-

gy, the entire span of world history between Adam's fall and the end of the world comes under the one Covenant of Grace, and throughout this entire period God's dealings with mankind are based on **ONE SINGLE PRINCIPLE, NAMELY, THE REDEMPTION PURCHASED ON CALVARY BY THE LORD JESUS CHRIST**. There are differences of external administration in the different periods, but the underlying principle, the essential meaning of God's relation with men, is identical from Adam's fall to the end of the world.

According to modern dispensationalism, on the other hand, God's dealings with men (subsequent to Adam's fall) are based on **SIX DIFFERENT PRINCIPLES, EACH OF WHICH IS THOUGHT OF AS IMPARTING A SPECIFIC CHARACTER TO A PARTICULAR PERIOD**. Thus one period of history is set over against another, and one part of the Bible is set over against another, and sometimes even in opposition to another (e.g., the Scofield Bible's teachings about the Lord's Prayer, as cited above).

The result of this system is that the Bible ceases to have one consistent message from beginning to end. The sweep of the Covenant of Grace from Adam to the end of the world is nullified, and the Covenant of Grace is virtually limited to the period between the crucifixion of Christ and His second coming.

Scofield states (p. 1343) that **FOUR** forms of the Gospel are to be distinguished, namely, (1) the Gospel of the Kingdom, or "the good news that God purposes to set up on the earth. . . a kingdom, political, spiritual, Israelitish, universal, over which God's Son, David's heir, shall be King. . . for one thousand years." (2) The Gospel of the Grace of God, or "the good news that Jesus Christ . . . has died on the cross for the sins of the world." (3) The everlasting Gospel (Rev. 14:6), which is "neither the Gospel of the kingdom, nor of grace". (4) What Paul calls "my Gospel" (Rom. 2:16), which is "the Gospel of the grace of God in its fullest development."

Over against this scheme, we believe that there never has been nor will be but **ONE TRUE GOSPEL**, namely, **THE GOSPEL OF THE GRACE OF GOD**, and that all possible benefits and blessings that sinful men can receive from God are included under that one true Gospel of divine grace. Christ purchased all blessings and benefits for all the elect of God by His perfect life and sacrifice on the cross. The "Gospel of the kingdom" mentioned in the New Testament is identical with "the Gospel of the grace of God" — "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32) — the "kingdom" is a **GIFT** of God's **GOOD PLEASURE**; what is that but the Gospel of God's grace?

5. What does modern dispensationalism teach concerning Israel and the Church?

Modern dispensationalism draws a very sharp distinction between Israel and the Church. It is asserted that God has TWO bodies of people in Covenant with Himself, namely an earthly people (Israel) and a heavenly people (the Church). It is an axiom of dispensationalism that Israel is Israel, the Church is the Church; that is, these two are distinct and cannot be identified. Dispensationalists distinguish carefully between promises intended for Israel and promises intended for the Church.

Over against the idea, the Reformed theology teaches the CONTINUITY and SPIRITUAL IDENTITY of Israel with the Church. It teaches that from Adam and Eve to the end of the world, God has only ONE body of people on earth in covenant with Himself, namely, the Church. The form of the Church has changed, but the life and essence has remained identical. Israel was merely the form of the Church in the period from Moses to Christ. After the Day of Pentecost, the true spiritual life of Israel was continued in the

New Testament form of the Church. Today the Church is the true Israel, just as in David's day every true Israelite was a member of the Church.

6. How does the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace guard against these errors of modern dispensationalism?

The doctrine of the Covenant of Grace guards against these errors of modern dispensationalism (a) by making it clear that the Bible has one single consistent theme from beginning to end, to which all parts of the Bible are subsidiary and to which all contribute. That one theme, of course, is the accomplishment in history of God's eternal Covenant of Redemption; the Bible is the record of the preparations for, realization of, and application of, Christ's redemption. (b) By making it clear that from the creation of mankind to the end of the world there is one single body of people on earth in covenant with God, namely, the Church, of which the Old Testament Israel was a temporary, preliminary form or phase.

LESSON 14

The Covenant of Grace and the Permanence of the Church

"The purest Churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error; and some have so degenerated, as to become no Churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan. Nevertheless, there shall be always a Church on earth, to worship God according to His will." — The Westminster Confession of Faith, XXV.5.

"The Church visible, standing in an external relation to Christ in the visible dispensation of the covenant of grace, comprehends all adults who profess faith in Christ, and give obedience to his law, together with all their children . . . No association of men on earth is infallible, and there is no certainty that any one particular Church, in any particular place, shall always remain pure. But God has engaged to preserve a visible Church of Christ somewhere upon the earth, until the end of time." — Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, XXI 2, 7.

Scripture References:

Gen. 17:7; 22:17, 18; 26:4. God's covenant established with Abraham and his seed forever.

Deut. 4:37; 10:15; 30:6. Isa. 59:21. God has promised that the covenant blessings shall be continued to His people, from one generation to another, forever.

Rom. 9:7, 8. Gal. 3:29. Believers are the true seed of Abraham, regardless of Jewish or Gentile descent.

Matt. 16:18. The powers of evil cannot destroy the Church.

Eph. 3:21. The Church will exist to all eternity.

Questions:

1. When and where did the visible Church originate?

The visible Church originated in the Garden of Eden when God entered into covenant with Adam and Eve. Though Adam broke the Covenant of Works, God immediately announced the Covenant of Grace (Gen. 3:15), so that Adam and Eve were restored to a covenant relationship to God. The visible Church is essentially a body of people in religious communion with God by virtue of a covenant established by God Himself, and such a body of people has existed since the time of Adam and Eve. The often-heard assertion that the Church originated on the day of Pentecost is wrong. It confuses the form of the Church with the essence of the Church. The New Testament form of the Church came into being at Pentecost, it is true, but the Church itself had existed since Eden.

2. What is the relation between the Old Testament Israel and the Church?

The relation between the two is one of continuity and spiritual identity. Both are forms of the visible body of the covenant people of God on earth. The Old Testament Israel is the form of this body of covenant people during the period from Abraham to Christ. The New Testament Church is the form of the same body from Christ to the end of the world (and, in its glorified form, the Church will continue to all eternity).

3. How is this truth denied by modern dispensationalism?

As pointed out in the previous lesson, the system of Bible interpretation called "modern dispensationalism" draws a very sharp distinction between Israel and the Church, asserting that these two are distinct and cannot be identified. Dispensationalism teaches that God has TWO covenant peoples on earth today, an earthly people (Israel) and a heavenly people (the Church). It denies the continuity and spiritual identity of the New Testament Church with the Old Testament Israel. We believe that this system is erroneous and that there are good reasons for holding the continuity and spiritual identity of the Christian Church with the Old Testament Israel.

4. How do God's covenant promises guarantee the permanence of the Church?

The promises are part of the Covenant of Grace, and the Covenant of Grace is God's way of accomplishing His eternal counsel or plan for the redemption of His elect. Many Bible promises guarantee the permanence of the Church to the end of time and to all eternity (see the Scripture references at the beginning of this lesson). These promises are anchored to the eternal, unchangeable counsel of God, and they are therefore absolutely reliable. The gates of hell shall not prevail against the Church.

5. How do we know that these promises concern the Church rather than the natural descendants of Abraham?

If it is true that the Christian Church is spiritually identical and continuous with the Old Testament Israel, it would follow from this that promises made to Israel in the Old Testament belong with equal propriety, in their true meaning, to the Christian Church. Moreover the New Testament plainly teaches that the real descendants of Abraham, in God's reckoning, are not necessarily his natural posterity, but those who have the faith, that he had (Rom. 9:7, 9; Gal. 3:29). Since believers are the real seed of Abraham, the covenant promises are made to them, regardless of whether they are Jews or Gentiles by physical descent. On the other hand many a physical descendant of Abraham, because of unbelief, is an alien to the covenant promises (Rom. 11:20; Heb. 4:2). Think of Esau, Hophni, Phinehas, Saul, Jeroboam the son of Nebat, Judas Iscariot—all of these were of the "seed of Abraham" in the sense of physical descent, but they were not of the true "seed of Abraham" in the spiritual sense, for they lacked the faith of Abraham, and were strangers to the promises of the Covenant of Grace. The Church is the true Israel of God today, and the promises to Israel belong to the Church. These guarantee the permanence of the Church on earth.

6. Is it possible for particular churches to become apostate?

Yes. Note the statements of the Confession of Faith and R. P. Testimony cited at the beginning of this lesson. By becoming "apostate" is meant departing so seriously from the Christian faith "as to become no Churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan", that is, false churches. A church may retain the name "Christian" and the outward forms of Christian worship and yet substitute an essentially false message for the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:6, 7). Churches become apostate when they tolerate denial of basic truths of Christianity on the part of their ministers and members, and when such heresy is officially shielded and protected by the government of the denomination, so that those who try to purify the church are censured, silenced or cast out of the denomination. The mere existence of some heresy or form of unbelief in a denomination does not render it apostate. It must be a heresy that is destructive of Christianity, and this heresy must be officially shielded and protected by the government of the Church. When that situation exists, reformation is no longer possible and the church has become apostate.

7. Why can the visible Church as a whole not become apostate?

Because of the covenant promises of God, which guarantee the continuance of a true visible Church of Christ on earth to the end. We should recall the history of Israel in the Old Testament. Even when the majority became apostate, as in the days of Ahab and Jezebel, there was always a remnant that remained faithful to their covenant God. That remnant was the true Israel, just as Noah and his family constituted the true Church at the time of the flood. The visible Church goes through periods of declension and periods of revival. The Bible even speaks of a great "falling away" or apostasy. But there will always remain a true Christian Church.

8. What grounds do we have for optimism concerning the future of the Church?

We have the best of grounds for optimism concerning the future of the Church, but our grounds for optimism do not consist of statistical reports nor of the status quo of the Church today. Statistical reports, even when they report many thousands of new members added to various denominations, mean very little. For one thing, large numbers of these people may be merely "joining a church" without being born again or truly converted to Christ. Again, the statistics seldom report how many members ceased to attend and support the churches during the year, and they never report how many ought to have been suspended because of scandal or unfaithfulness, but were not.

Nor is our optimism based on the present

condition of the churches, for in general the picture is a very dismal one today. In most of the large denominations it is a picture of modernism, unbelief, formalism, ritualism, preaching of salvation by character, and of gross lukewarmness. Even the small denominations which are more pure and faithful are having a desperately hard struggle to hold their own, not to mention the difficulty of growth in membership.

Our optimism is rather based on the infallible covenant promises of God, by which we are enabled to take the long view and walk by faith

in spite of present conditions. The future is as bright as the promises of God. Bible history and Church history help us to take the long view. The covenant people of God have been very low many times before, but God kept His covenant promises and revived them in due time. The present is a time of the ebb tide in spiritual things, but the tide will turn. Even if it does not turn before Christ's Second Coming, it will turn then and the Church will shine and reign in glory to all eternity.

(To be continued)

Reviews of Religious Books

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

PROVERBS, An Introductory and Commentary, by Derek Kidner; Inter-Varsity Press, 1519 North Astor, Chicago 10, Illinois (1964), pp. 192, \$3.00.

One of the most sadly neglected areas of the Bible is the Proverbs. They are difficult to understand, but they are understandable when studied. The Reverend Kidner has given us a tool in his work on the Proverbs which every minister should own. Everything about his book is good and worthwhile. Seminaries and college Bible courses should study it as required reading.

— Edward A. Robson

THE EPISTLE OF JAMES, by Thomas Manton. The Banner of Truth Trust, 78b Chiltern Street, London, W. 1, England. 1962 Reprint, pp. 481. \$4.00, or 15 shillings.

Manton's work is old, but of value because of his good understanding of the Word of God and the heart of man. He was guided by the Holy Spirit in his expositions and observations on James. I have studied this work with enjoyment and much personal profit.

— Edward A. Robson

THE ADVANCE OF CHRISTIANITY THROUGH THE CENTURIES, Vol. VIII: THE LIGHT OF THE NATIONS, by J. Edwin Orr. William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49502. In Britain Paternoster Press. 1965, pp. 302. \$5.00.

The work is a rather tiring collection of accurate dates, names, and church statistics. There is an average of five footnotes per page. The

later chapters are better than the former, but all of it is written in a style which will not attract the general reader of Church History. It has an excellent bibliography on nineteenth century church literature.

— Edward A. Robson

ARCHAEOLOGY AND OUR OLD TESTAMENT CONTEMPORARIES, by James Kelso. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1966, pp. 191. \$4.95.

In my judgment the price for this book should be about \$3. This is a very interesting volume, written in a popular style and the reader need not have had theological training. Its 14 chapters survey a 2000 year period from Abraham to the beginning of the New Testament era. Most of the chapters are biographic (example: Solomon, the King With Many a Ph.D). Dr. Kelso has effectively interwoven four things: 1) an Old Testament survey, 2) archaeological discoveries, 3) the bearing of the New Testament on the Old, and 4) twentieth century parallels. He concludes, "Archaeology and history have demonstrated that people are pretty much the same in all generations. The one and only overwhelming difference in all the world is that between those who worship the God of the Bible and those who reject Him. . . ." The book is recommended.

— David R. Armstrong

CONCORDANCE TO THE NEW ENGLISH BIBLE, compiled by E. Elder. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich., 49506. 1964, pp. 401. \$4.95.

In 1962 a detailed review of the New English Bible was printed in the Blue Banner (pp. 159-162). It closed with this warning, ". . . 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." Thus we can only say of the concordance under review that it is a good tool to aid those who persist in using a poor translation of the New Testament. It should be noted that this volume claims only to be a supplement. It is "A Concordance of words not in, or not in the same verses as the King James Version."

— David R. Armstrong

MINISTRY, by Robert S. Paul, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan, 49502. 1965, pp. 252. \$5.00.

The author's stated purpose is to study the meaning of ordination. Dr. Paul, Professor of Church History at Hartford Theological Seminary, does not approach this study from an orthodox position, such as the authority of Scripture as God's infallible revelation, and thus the entire book is thrown off course as far as any basic evangelical conclusions are concerned. The author has made tremendous use of Scripture, but in a selective manner and out of context. We are told to search deeply for the historical Jesus, the man from Nazareth, who is the divine revelation. **The Scriptures bear witness to this revelation, but not with full accuracy**, but simply witnessing to that which was typical (pp. 71, 72). "Final authority is to be found in the living Christ (the Word of God), as revealed first in the historical record (the Bible), to whom the faithful in all generations (the Church) bear their historic witness, and to whom in the gift of the Holy Spirit the Christian gives the assent of faith" (p. 175). The work of Jesus was one of reconciliation of the whole world (universalism) and the task of "the people of God is to interpret this in community" (p. 102). The W.C.C. has a basic position in this interpretation of reconciliation. "The W.C.C. through its service has become an **instrument of the Holy Spirit** that the denominations cannot ignore — it speaks to us with an authority that is unlike 'that of the scribes'" (p. 185). . . I do not question the right of a publisher to print that which they desire, but since the vast majority of evangelicals consider any Eerdmans' publication as conservative, the publication of this book is nothing less than a betrayal of confidence. **The book is not recommended** to the average reader, nor to anyone who purchases books with a limited budget. **It is interesting, but not worth the price.**

— R. N. Olson

WHAT ABOUT TONGUE SPEAKING? by Anthony A. Hoekema. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub-

lishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich., 49502. 1966, pp. 161. \$3.50.

Within the pages of this small book we find presented an excellent study of the gift of the Holy Spirit in relation to the gift of tongues. Dr. Hoekema, Professor of Systematic Theology at Calvin Theological Seminary, after giving a brief but complete history of the tongue-speaking movement, **approaches his subject from the view point of the Scriptures as final authority and judge.** Throughout the entire book there is an attitude of Christian Love for those involved in the 20th century tongue-speaking movement. In full agreement with this attitude, the author faces in full, all of the pertinent Scriptural passages used in defence of the special gifts of the Holy Spirit, and provides us with an excellent exegetical study of the subject. There is extensive reference material from the best of the Pentecostal and Neo-pentecostal writers, insuring a fair and honest presentation of all sides of this important study. This book is recommended not only as a must for all pastors, but also as a possible text for class discussion.

— R. N. Olson

THE DOCTRINE OF SANCTIFICATION, by Arthur W. Pink. Reiner Publications, Swengel, Pa. 17880. 1966, paperback reprint of 1955, pp. 206. \$1.95.

The hardbound edition of this book was reviewed in our October 1955 issue, page 199, to which readers are referred. This is a good book and worthy of hearty commendation. We disagree, however, with the author's pronouncement that the definition of sanctification in the Westminster Larger Catechism is not only "inadequate" but also "faulty and misleading" (pages 113-115). We believe that at this point Mr. Pink to some extent confused sanctification with justification, though elsewhere he is quite clear as to the distinction between the two (for example, pages 16, 17). For a more extended discussion of this point, see the review in the October 1955 issue, page 200.

This book contains a great wealth of precious and edifying truth and should be a great help and encouragement to any Christian who studies it carefully. We are confident that it will be used to bring blessing to many.

— J. G. Vos

THE JUDAEO-CHRISTIAN TRADITION, by J. H. Hexter (J. A. Hexter on cover). Harper and Row, New York. 1966, 114 pages, paper cover, price not stated.

The author of this little book is professor of history in Yale University. It purports to be a brief summary of the history of Israel and of the Christian Church to about A.D. 300. It presents Biblical history in a naturalistic, "higher critical" frame of reference. Especially it treats the early

part of the Old Testament as a composite of legends, folklore, myths, and some real historical traditions. (Cf. pages 9, 17, 19; footnote 3 on page 28; pages 20, 21, 28; also the paragraph beginning slightly above the middle of page 8).

The part of the New Testament seems on the whole to be less open to objection. The treatment of the atonement and the resurrection on pages 68, 69 seems fairly satisfactory, though the ideas are presented not as historical facts but rather as beliefs of Paul and the early Christians.

Note for example the following statement: "Soon under the influence of the Oriental religious habits of gentile converts, stories began to circulate that transformed Jesus into a great worker of magic or a demi-god." It is not clear from the book whether this refers to the Gnostics, the apocryphal Gospels, or the ordinary Christian movement. In any case, the insight this statement gives into the author's basic philosophy of religion is disturbing to the evangelical Christian student.

Again, note page 60, ". . . Jesus did not specifically deny that he was the Messiah. Indeed, according to the stories about him later collected, he too believed that he was the Messiah . . ."

The idea of historical scholarship that is implicit in a book of this type is that nothing supernatural can be regarded as historical fact. The author, who claims to approach all historical data with an unbiased scholarly objectivity, actually approaches the data strongly biased by his basic assumption, the philosophy of naturalism. Thus the resurrection, for example, can be treated as a belief of the early Christians, but not as an objective fact of history attested by evidence. This type of historical scholar assumes that in order to study the Bible in a valid and scholarly manner, **it must be assumed at the outset that the Bible is not what it itself claims to be, the documentation of the supernatural acts of God in the field of time and space.** This assumption is all the more insidious because it is not openly stated but tacitly assumed and concealed in the background of the author's mind.

A book of this type, unless strongly and extensively corrected by other teaching which exposes its hidden assumptions and approaches Biblical history with the assumption that the Bible is what it claims to be, can only do damage to the faith of students. It is of value only as an example of the betrayal of Biblical truth by the sophisticated unbelief of our time.

— J. G. Vos

PELOUBET'S SELECT NOTES FOR 1967, by Wilbur M. Smith. W. A. Wilde Company, 10 Huron Drive, Natick, Mass. 01760. 1966, pp. 436. \$3.25.

This is the 93rd annual volume of the old,

dependable Peloubet's Notes on the International Bible Lessons, prepared again by Dr. Wilbur M. Smith. This material is very usable and always true to the Bible as the infallible Word of God. Our readers will find an occasional interpretation with which they cannot agree, but this need not deter anyone from using and profiting from the book. Helps are provided for all age groups, excellent illustrations are given, and for those who wish to do further reading, there are listings of relevant books attached to every lesson. If you are using the International Lessons and are not satisfied with the helps you have been using, try this book. That it can be sold for \$3.25 is indeed remarkable in these days of inflation. The publisher is to be commended for continuing to publish it and for keeping the price down where anyone can afford to purchase it.

— J. G. Vos

AN HISTORICAL SURVEY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, by Eugene H. Merrill. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., P.O. Box 185, Nutley, N.J. 07110. 1966, pp. 343, paper cover \$4.50.

The author is a member of the faculty of Bob Jones University, and has done graduate work at Columbia University, Michigan State University and elsewhere. The book is based on a view of the Old Testament as inerrant divine revelation.

The book goes considerably beyond an historical survey — it contains considerable material that would be classified as "Biblical Introduction", dealing with the authorship, time and circumstances of writing, and interpretation of various books, including the prophetic, poetic and wisdom literature of the Old Testament. This material is good and of value, but not strictly historical survey.

The author is clear and positive in affirming direct creation and rejecting evolutionism. The genuineness and literary unity of the whole of Isaiah and Daniel are strongly affirmed, and the corresponding "negative" critical positions rejected. Negative divisive criticism of the Pentateuch is rejected forthrightly, after a rather full and fair statement of what it is and the assumptions on which it rests. Summing this up the author rightly says, "The Old Testament has been made to fit a prearranged philosophical and historical framework, even though on every page it cries out against such an artificial and untenable reconstruction" (p. 17).

The author devotes several pages to consideration of the controversial subject of the date of the Exodus — a date which is crucial for the determination of Old Testament chronology between the time of Abraham and that of David. The author defends the date B.C. 1446 for the Exodus and 1406 for the Fall of Jericho, and rightly points out that the "late chronology" held by Al-

bright and many others, does extreme violence to statements of Scripture. The "early chronology" which places the Exodus at 1447, 1446 or 1440 is the only one which is compatible with acceptance of the inerrancy of the Old Testament. The "late chronology" which places the Exodus about 150 years later, does violence to Exodus 12:41, I Kings 6:1, and the entire structure of the Book of Judges (which must then be drastically compressed beyond the 300 year **minimum** required by Judges 11:26).

This book is heartily recommended to our readers.

— J. G. Vos

DAILY MANNA CALENDAR FOR 1967, ed. by Martin Monsma. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506. 365 pages. \$2.00.

Edifying, spiritual material for every day in the new year, in a neat box $1\frac{1}{4} \times 4 \times 6$ inches in size which is so made that it can be easily hung on the wall or placed in a leaning position on a desk or table. There is one page for each day, with Scripture and expository, devotional and practical comments. True to the Bible, this material will bring benefit to those who use it regularly. It is recommended to our readers.

— J. G. Vos

HYMNS FOR CHILDREN, by Isaac Watts. The Sovereign Grace Union, Linkfield Corner, Redhill, Surrey, England. 1966, reprint, 53 pages, pocket size, paper cover. Price not stated.

Watts wrote his hymns two hundred and more years ago. Among hymns they are considered very good, though like all such compositions

are in a sense "dated" by the flavor and literary style in vogue at the time. Committed as we are to the exclusive use of the Biblical Psalms in the praise of God, we can naturally not give our endorsement to any hymnbook, however good among hymnbooks it may be.

Isaac Watts was the man who said he would make David talk like a Christian. In undertaking this, many feel that Watts ruined the Psalms, and that he quite failed to appreciate the Biblical flavor and imagery of the Old Testament Psalter. We would rather teach our children the 23rd, 34th, 51st, 103rd and all the other Psalms than anything in this booklet of Watts' productions.

— J. G. Vos

A BURDENED CHRISTIAN, by Dick Kort. Published by the author, 9600 Parkside, Oak Lawn, Illinois 60453. 1966, pp 25, paper cover. 20 cents. 50 or more copies, 15 cents each.

The sub-title of this booklet tells us that it is "Based on problems seen in the Christian Reformed Church and her Sister-Church in Holland." The author is an elderly Christian Reformed layman who is deeply concerned about some present tendencies in his denomination and in the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands. Among these tendencies, he deals with concessiveness toward Arminian errors, concessiveness toward theories of theistic evolution, and extenuating the evils of the ecumenical movement of the National and World Councils of Churches. The author feels deeply disturbed by a general decline from truth once firmly held and defended. We believe he has reason for feeling disturbed. May this little tract have wide circulation and a wholesome influence.

— J. G. Vos

Blue Banner Question Box

Readers are invited to submit Biblical, doctrinal and practical questions for answer in this department. Names of correspondents will not be published, but anonymous communications will be disregarded.

Question:

In an article dealing with the new hallucination-producing drug LSD I read the statement that the "shewbread" or "showbread" of the Bible was supposed to confer the gift of prophecy by reason of the delirium-producing herbs which it contained. What should be thought of such a statement?

Answer:

Several terms are used in the Bible to describe the "showbread", the earliest being **lechem panim**, "bread of the presence." (Ex. 25:30; 35:13; 39:36).

In Levit. 24:5-9 this ordinance is treated in greater detail. Here the term used is "cakes" (**challah**). Frankincense was to be placed "beside" each row (more accurately, thus understood, than "upon"). The loaves or cakes were eaten by the priests at the end of the seven-day period, but the frankincense, according to later Jewish tradition, was burned at the altar.

That there was anything intoxicating, delirium-producing or hallucination-producing about the showbread is completely without proof or foundation. No one who regards the Bible as the Word

of God will confuse the Biblical gift of prophecy with an abnormal mental state produced by drugs. Besides, it was the **priests**, not the prophets, that were to eat the showbread.

— J. G. Vos

Question:

What is the source of the idea that in the New Testament Church the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was preceded by a "love feast"? If there was such a practice, was it by divine appointment and is it binding on us today?

Answer:

Baker's Dictionary of Theology (published 1960; Everett F. Harrison, editor) has a two page article under the title "The Love Feast" (pages 333-335). Those wishing a full discussion are referred to that article.

The word used for "love feast" in the New Testament is **agape** which is also the word for love in the highest sense of the term. In one place the expression "feasts of charity" occurs (Jude 12). The Greek word is simply the plural of **agape**, "loves".

The article in **Baker's Dictionary of Theology** states: "Certainly by the time of Paul's writing to the Corinthians (about A.D. 55) it is evident that the church observed the practice of meeting together for a common meal before partaking of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:17-34)" (p. 334).

There is no evidence that the love feast was ever a part of the appointed worship of God. It appears rather to have been a mere custom, originating from the strong feeling of fellowship which existed among the early Christians, and not regarded as an act of worship as such.

As time went on, in the period after the time of the apostles, the custom began to be regarded with disfavor because of increasing abuses which occurred in connection with it. It is said to be continued at the present day in certain parts of the Eastern Orthodox communion, and the Church of St. Thomas in India. There is no reason why it should be regarded as binding upon churches or Christians today.

— J. G. Vos

Question:

Why does the Reformed Presbyterian Church endorse the practice of displaying the American flag in the sanctuary where God is worshipped? Can this practice be justified on the basis of sound principles?

Answer:

(a) The Reformed Presbyterian Church as a denomination does **not** endorse the practice mentioned in this query. There is nothing in the of-

ficial standards of the denomination providing for or in any way sanctioning such a practice. The editor knows of no decision of the Synod approving it. Those congregations which display our national flag in their church auditoriums do so wholly on their own initiative and responsibility. It is purely a matter of local custom, not a matter of church law.

(b) As to the question of whether this practice can be justified on the basis of sound principles, the following considerations are suggested as bearing on this matter. Our Saviour has commanded us to render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. This implies that it is our duty to render a proper civil loyalty to our country in "the things that are Caesar's", that is, in the legitimate civil sphere. But of course our supreme loyalty in every sphere must always be to God, and there is one sphere of life that is reserved strictly for the expression of our allegiance to God, namely, the sphere of religious worship. It is in religious worship that we pre-eminently render to God the things that are God's. Religious worship of course requires a time and place, so church services are held at stated hours in an appointed sanctuary. This sanctuary is not holy of itself, as a place, but while a Christian congregation is assembled in it to worship God it constitutes the necessary physical equipment for rendering the things of God to God. Now the furnishings and contents of such a place of worship should be strictly in keeping with its purpose as the place for publicly expressing our supreme loyalty to God.

Certainly there are proper times and places for expressing our patriotic loyalty to our country. But it seems highly inappropriate that the symbol of loyalty to our country must be prominently displayed in the one place that is reserved for publicly expressing our supreme loyalty to God. At all events, the practice of displaying the national flag in a church pulpit would seem to break down, rather than to preserve, the distinction between rendering the things of Caesar to Caesar and rendering the things of God to God.

Civil allegiance, after all, is the duty of citizens as individuals; it is not the duty of citizens in the corporate capacity of church members. It is probable that where national flags are displayed in church pulpits, this has been done in patriotic zeal and without any real study of the principles that are involved. And once the flag has been placed in the pulpit, it may be extremely difficult to get it removed. This matter is of course properly under the jurisdiction of the Session of a congregation.

— J. G. Vos

Question:

In a tract published by an agency carrying on mission work among the Jews, the following appears:

"If God made a clear, solemn promise to Israel and then switched, as many claim, from 'literal' to 'spiritual' Israel, how may we be assured that He will not, by some quirk, set us aside? If He made specific promise to Judah and Jerusalem (Isaiah 2) and then as many claim He meant the Church, how can we do business with a God that switches names in a contract after the name has been in operation for generations? The business world has a better sense of morals and would not tolerate the practice of such a fraud. We still have just sense enough to believe 'that God said what He meant and meant what He said'".

Is this viewpoint sound and Scriptural? If not, how can it be answered?

Answer:

The above quotation presents a mere caricature of the orthodox Reformed covenant theology which affirms the essential unity and continuity of the Christian Church with the Old Testament Israel. It is very easy to set up a straw man and then knock him down, but not so easy to dismiss the real position of the covenant theology. Of course those who hold the Reformed position do not for a moment believe that God "switched from 'literal' to 'spiritual' Israel", nor that God "switches names in a contract after the name has been in operation for generations". Nor do believers in the covenant theology for a moment question that "God said what He meant and meant what He said." Of course God said what He meant and meant what He said; the real question is, however, **what did God really mean by what He said?**

The real crux of the question raised by the above query is this: **To whom were the gracious promises of God in the Old Testament addressed?** Were they addressed to the nation of Israel as such, or were they addressed to the believing, covenant-keeping element of the nation? In other words, what was **the real Israel** in Old Testament times? It is mere question begging to assume without proof that the real Israel to whom the promises were addressed was Israel after the flesh, and then to insinuate that those who hold the contrary view represent God as practicing "a fraud".

In Genesis 17:7 God promised Abraham: "I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee." To whom, besides Abraham himself, was this promise made? Who constituted the real seed of Abraham, in God's reckoning? Everyone descended physically from Abraham? This cannot be, because God rejected Ishmael and said "In Isaac shall thy seed be called" (Gen. 21:12). Does it, then, mean all the descendants of Isaac? This cannot be, for God said "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (Rom. 9:13). Does it, then, mean all the descend-

ants of Jacob? This also cannot be, for large numbers of them became apostates from God, so that God even forbade the prophet Jeremiah to pray for them (Jer. 7:16, 11:14, 14:11, 12). The promise of Genesis 17:7, then, was addressed, not to the covenant-breakers and apostates among Abraham's descendants, but to the believing, covenant-keeping portion of his posterity.

In Galatians 3:16 the apostle Paul writes: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made, He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one. And to thy seed, which is Christ." The apostle's argument here turns on the distinction between the singular (seed) and the plural (seeds). Paul points out that the word "seed" is singular, not plural, and that it refers specifically to Jesus Christ. Certainly this has a bearing on the question we have been considering. The promises were made to Abraham's **seed** (singular), namely to Jesus Christ. The promises were not made to Abraham's **seeds** (plural), namely to all the descendants of Abraham. If the promises were made definitely to one, namely Christ, **then they were not made to the nation of Israel as such; they were not made to Israel after the flesh.** The promises were made to Jesus Christ and those in Christ, those represented by Him in the Covenant of Grace, which included the believing, covenant-keeping portion of Abraham's posterity.

We prefer to avoid the use of the term "literal Israel" because this term is ambiguous. Greater clarity will result, and the real issue will be more plain, if we speak of **an external Israel**, an Israel after the flesh, a nation of Israel as such, in distinction from the believing covenant-keeping core of the external nation. This believing, covenant-keeping core, often called "the remnant" in the Scriptures, is truly called **the spiritual Israel.**

Let no one accuse us of "switching names" because we maintain that the word "Israel" is used in more than one sense in Scripture, and that the spiritual Israel is the genuine Israel which really has the right to the name. We can give Scripture proof for these propositions. In Romans 9:6 the apostle Paul says: "For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel." Will anyone venture to assert that the first "Israel" in this verse is identical in meaning with the second? Can anyone deny that Paul by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, in this verse used the term "Israel" in two different senses? Was Paul "switching names"? Can there be any doubt that in Rom. 9:6 the apostle Paul teaches that the spiritual, believing Israel is the genuine Israel which really has the right to the name "Israel"?

Again, in Rom. 2:28, 29 the apostle Paul says: "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly. . . . But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly . . . whose praise is not of men, but of God". Here Paul uses the term "Jew" in two distinct senses, corresponding to the two senses of the term "Israel" in Rom:

9:6, and with the distinct implication that **the real Jew**, the one who really has a right to the name "Jew", is the person who is a Jew **inwardly**, "in the spirit, and not in the letter".

We have proved that the Scripture itself uses the terms "Israel" and "Jew" in two distinct senses, which may be designated the **external** sense and the **spiritual** sense. We have also shown that the Scripture implies definitely that it is not the external Israel but the spiritual Israel that is the genuine Israel, which really has a right to the name "Israel". Now this certainly has a bearing on the question: **To whom were the gracious promises of God in the Old Testament addressed?** No doubt many a rebellious, stiff-necked, covenant-breaking sinner among the descendants of Jacob considered himself a genuine Israelite and held that the promises of God belonged to him. But did such people have any real right to claim that the promises were addressed to them? Alas, their claim to be "Israelites" was mere presumption, for they were strangers to the real meaning of the name "Israel". No doubt king Ahab considered himself a regular Israelite; but did God consider him one? No doubt king Saul felt that he had a right to the promises of God; but did God regard him as having a right to them?

In Ahab's day there were seven thousand whom God had reserved to Himself, who had not compromised with Baal-worship. These seven thousand, and not the apostate majority of the nation, constituted the real Israel of that day, to whom the promises of God really belonged. In Jeremiah's day the whole nation was apostate except for a very small remnant — so sunk in apostasy that God even forbade the prophet to pray for them. But that small remnant, and not the apostate majority, constituted the real Israel of that day, to whom the promises really belonged, and for whom the prophet could and did pray. Similarly, in Isaiah 1, the gracious promises in this chapter (verses 24-27) are not addressed to the population of "Judah and Jerusalem" promiscuously, but to the elect remnant. The distinction is carefully maintained:

"Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness. And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the Lord shall be consumed" (27, 28). **Zion and her converts shall be redeemed; the transgressors and sinners, that forsake the Lord shall be destroyed.** "Zion and her converts" constitute the true, spiritual Israel; "the transgressors", etc., on the other hand, constitute the apostate nation. The same distinction applies to chapter 2 and, indeed, the entire book of Isaiah.

That the genuine "Zion", "Jerusalem", etc., is the believing, covenant people of God (under both Old Testament and New Testament) is abundantly

proven by the Scripture. The **genuine** Jerusalem is not a city made of bricks and stones, but the body of redeemed people in covenant with God: "But ye (Christians) are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem" (Heb. 12:22.) Again, the apostle Paul uses the term "Jerusalem" in two distinct senses, just as he uses "Israel" and "Jew" in two distinct senses; Galatians 4:25, 26: ". . . Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all." Which is the **real** Jerusalem, which really has the right to the name "Jerusalem" as God uses the name? Note that Paul, immediately after speaking of **the spiritual Jerusalem** as "free" and "the mother of us all", quotes Isaiah 54:1 as a description of, and promise to, not the city of Jerusalem in Palestine, but **the spiritual Jerusalem**. We have, thus, clear Scriptural warrant for holding that the gracious promises of God in the Old Testament addressed to "Zion", "Judah", "Jerusalem", are really addressed to the body of people which possesses the spiritual reality and true meaning of these names. In the Old Testament period that body of people was the "remnant", the inner, believing, covenant-keeping core of the external nation of Israel; in the New Testament period that body of people is the Christian Church.

Lest we be accused of "switching names" in affirming that the Christian Church of the New Testament is the true continuation of the believing core of the Old Testament nation of Israel, we shall cite Paul's figure of the olive tree, Romans 11:16-24. Note well that the apostle speaks of **one good** olive tree, not two; branches are broken off; other branches are grafted in; but the tree lives on. It is one and the same tree. Those who say "Israel is Israel, and the Church is the Church" cannot do justice to Paul's figure of the olive tree. Gentiles who become Christians are not grafted into a new olive tree, but into the same old olive tree from which Jewish branches were broken off; it remains the same tree. Now, what shall we call this tree? Was it the nation of Israel as such? When Greeks at Athens and Corinth and Philippi became Christians, did they become Jews? We know the answer: they did not. Yet they were grafted into the olive tree. Now if the olive tree was not the nation of Israel as such, what was it? What were the Gentiles who became Christians grafted into? (Remember, they were grafted into the same tree from which Jewish branches had been broken off.) We maintain that the Jewish branches were broken off from, and the Gentile believers were grafted into **the spiritual, covenant people of God which is a continuous unity under both the Old Testament and the New Testament.** This covenant people of God is the genuine Israel, it is the true Zion, it is the real Jerusalem, it is the invisible Church, it is the body of Christ. To it the gracious promises of God in both Testaments were addressed, and to it those promises belong.

To the Ephesian Christians Paul wrote that before they became Christians they were "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel", clearly implying that after they became Christians they were **members of the commonwealth of Israel**. Now, what is this "commonwealth of Israel"? Is it the external, earthly nation of Israel, commonly referred to as "the Jews"? It cannot be, because the Ephesian Christians had not become members of "the commonwealth of Israel" in any such sense as that. What, then, can Paul mean by his implication that the Ephesian Christians had become members of "the commonwealth of Israel"? Let those who accuse others of "switching names" explain this verse, if they can. We submit that in Eph. 2:12 "the commonwealth of Israel" clearly means the body of the believing, redeemed people of God, into which the Ephesians had been incorporated.

If the genuine Israel of the Old Testament and the invisible Church of the New Testament are not one and continuous, why should the apostle Paul say that the Ephesian Christians, before their conversion, had been "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel"? Note the exact language used: "At that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. . .". To be **without Christ** is to be **an alien from the commonwealth of Israel**; to **possess Christ** is to be **member of the commonwealth of Israel**.

In conclusion, we feel that it would have been much more charitable and brotherly on the part of the author of the tract we have been answering, and on the part of the organization that published

the tract, if they had simply stated that they regard some of their brethren as mistaken in their interpretation of the Scriptures, without insinuating that those who disagree with them are guilty of tampering with or denying the truth of what God has revealed in His Word. — J. G. Vos

Question:

Would it not be better to devote our energies to making a better world here and now, rather than looking forward to heaven as our hope?

Answer:

This is a false antithesis. It is not a case of "either . . . or" but of "both . . . and". Christian people are to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth, and they are also to look forward to heaven as their hope. The Christian who is not concerned about making a better world here and now thinks it is not necessary to glorify God in ordinary affairs. The Covenanter martyr Donald Cargill is quoted as saying that the Covenanters meant to get God glorified on earth, which was more than a mere entrance into heaven. We should heartily endorse this sentiment. However if we raise the question of **relative emphasis**, it must be affirmed that Biblical Christianity places the chief emphasis on the future life. If we disagree with this attitude, that only shows our lack of attachment to the system of truth revealed in the Word of God. The Scriptures regard the present life not as the main thing in itself, but as a preparation for "the life that is life indeed," the life of eternity. — J. G. Vos

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Circulation of this Issue

At the time of going to press many renewals for 1967 have not yet been received. We shall therefore postpone publication of the statistics of circulation until the April-June 1967 issue.

Special Announcement

Blue Banner Faith and Life does not accept any advertising. However, as a special service to our readers we wish to announce that many excellent publications of the Banner of Truth Trust (London, England) and some other sources are now available from one of our subscribers, Mr. Ernest C. Reisinger. Many books published today will be forgotten in five or ten years, but the great Puritan classics will live on. It is this type of substantial, edifying literature that Mr.

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ALL SAINTS NEW. C.M.D.

PSALM 110

Henry S. Cutler

1. Je - ho - vah to my Lord hath said, Sit Thou at My right hand

Un - til I make Thy foes a stool Where-on Thy feet may stand.

Je - ho - vah shall from Zi - on send The rod of Thy great power;

In midst of all Thine en - e - mies Be Thou the gov - er - nor.

2. A willing people in Thy day
Of power shall come to Thee;
Thy youth arrayed in holiness
Like morning dew shall be.
Jehovah sware, and from His oath
He never will depart:
Of th' order of Melchizedek
A priest Thou ever art.

3. The Lord at Thy right hand shall smite
Earth's rulers in His wrath;
Among the nations He shall judge;
The slain shall fill His path.
In many lands He'll overthrow
Their kings with ruin dread;
And in His march He'll quaff the brook,
And so lift up His head.

(Reprinted from **The Book of Psalms with Music**. Copyright 1950 by the Trustees of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. Price of book (359 pages) is \$1.75 postpaid. Copies can be ordered from Chester R. Fox, Treasurer, 306 Empire Building, 537 Liberty Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15222, U.S.A.)



BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

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The Wigtown Martyrs

(Author unknown)

On Solway sands the tide flows fast,
The waters swiftly rise;
Alas for him whom lingering there
The rushing waves surprise!
Full quickly must he hurry thence,
Full swiftly must he ride,
Who tempts his fate on Solway shore
And races with the tide.
Past Wigtown Borough to the sea
The Blednoch River goes,
With many a pool and shifting shoal
Across the sand it flows.
Ah! Blednoch's stream and Wigtown bay
Have sights of sorrow seen,
When ships were stranded on the shore,
And boats have shipwrecked been.

There many a time has woman wept,
And wrung in grief her hands,
When loved ones she longed for have been
Found dead on Solway's sands.
But sight so strange was never seen
As when those martyrs died,
And gave their life on Wigtown shore,
And perished in the tide.
For many years ago 'tis now,
'Twas in the month of May;
The level sands were smooth and dry,
The tide out in the bay:
'Twas then the brother of fierce Graham
Of Claverhouse rode down,
With Winram, Strachan, and with Cultron
The Provost of the town.
And cruel Grierson of Lagg
The persecutor came,
To do that day on Blednoch's bank
A deed of sin and shame.

At ebb of tide two stakes of wood
Were driven in the sand,
And fastened there two prisoners were,
At Grierson's command.
An aged widow one of them,
And one a maiden young;
And thus amid the rising waves
The virgin martyr sung:
"To Thee I lift my soul, O Lord,
My God, I trust in Thee;
Let me not be ashamed; let not
My foes triumph o'er me."
The aged widow was the first
Drowned by the rising tide.
"What think you of her now?" in scorn
The persecutors cried.

"What think I of her? In that saint
Whose soul is on the wing
I see but this," the maid replied:
"My Saviour suffering."
Still ever deeper flowed the tide;
The billows higher rose,
And there that young defenceless girl
Was tempted by her foes
To buy her life by breach of faith
To him who was her Lord;
Oh, she was young, and life is sweet,
And it was but a word.

Yet was temptation vain. She chose
For Christ to suffer wrong;
And still amid the rush of waves
The men could hear the song:
"Let not the errors of my youth,
Nor sins remembered be.
In mercy, for Thy goodness, Lord,
Do Thou remember me."
By this the waves rose to her lips;
The voice that sung was still.
They raised her head: "Pray for the King!"
"God save him if He will,"
She answered. Then they dragged her forth
Half drowned amid the tide.
"Will you renounce the Covenant?
Abjure your faith!" they cried.

She raised her eyes nigh dimmed in death:
"Renounce my Saviour? No!
I'm one of Jesus' little ones.
I pray you, let me go!"
They let her go. The waters closed
Above her youthful head.
One of the glorious martyr throng,
One of the deathless dead.
Her name shall never be forgot,
While Blednoch's waters run,
And Solway kindles into gold
Beneath the setting sun.
They speak it oft in Scotland's homes;
'Tis told in far-off lands,
How in the bloom of youth she died
Upon the Solway sands.

And souls are thrilled, and hearts beat high
To hear the story told,
How nobly she maintained her faith
In days that now are old;
And how she kept her trust in God,
And how she scorned the foe,
And how she lived and how she died,
So many years ago.

Note: Margaret MacLachlan, a widow aged 63, and Margaret Wilson, a girl of 18, were drowned in the tide at Wigtown, Scotland in the year 1685, because of their loyalty to Christ, His Crown and Covenant.

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GOSPEL HONEY

By Dr. A. A. Bonar

"The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet." — Provs. 27:7.

In the revelation God has given us of His will regarding the salvation of sinners, the grace of the gospel is compared to honey. It is more to be desired than honey, yea than the honeycomb. And again, the Lord promises His people that when they should regard His commandments, they should be fed with the finest of the wheat. May we not then suppose that by **honey** we are here warranted to understand the gospel of salvation flowing from the life and death of Christ, which like honey from the rock becomes sweet to the spiritually living soul? To this there is nothing to be compared: as not only affording sweetness in partaking of it, but strength and nourishment, support and consolation.

The leading characteristic of honey is sweetness.

When the Lord awakens a sinner to a sense of his lost and undone condition — makes him taste of the bitterness and evil of his ways, and puts the cry in his mouth, "What must I do to be saved," surely it is glad tidings to him to be told that God is in Christ reconciling sinners to Himself. How sweet to him now is the pardon of sin, acceptance of his person and services in the Beloved, — communion with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, — the sure prospect of being forever with the Lord!

There is often a sweetness experienced by a believer in a single sentence of the Bible, which it will take eternity to express.

The full soul loatheth this sweet food; not only despises it, but entertains a kind of aversion to it, so as not to be willing to hear or think of it, much less taste or relish it. This loathing arises from the fulness already in him. When the stomach is full one does not like any kind of food however palatable, it is owing to his being full that he loatheth it. It is full not of honey, but of things contrary to its quality. The soul is full of the pleasures of sin; for sin has so defiled every faculty of our nature, so filled every power of the soul, as to leave no room, and no taste for the gospel of the grace of God. From this arises another reason, the **pursuit of the world**. The soul

is full of the world, of its cares, and snares. Many would divide the heart between God and the world. They trust they do not despise the gospel, but they cannot neglect the things of the world. Yes, he who does not work shall not eat; but let not the world be your master. Christ is in the head, and on the lips, but the world is in the heart. It reigns where Christ should have the supremacy. If there is a spark of the love of the world, it reigns there as certainly as if you possessed it.

The soul is full of **self-religion** — of self-created religion. Many among us take up religion as a matter easily attained; they begin to go to hear the gospel. Every kind of doctrine will not satisfy them. There are religious characters, but their religion is of their own formation. It is not the religion of the cross. It is a religion God will never own, as imparted and inwrought by His spirit in the soul. There may be much delight in talking of the externals of religion — in outside things, — while there is all the time a neglect of heart examination. It is this selfish and self-formed religion that fills the soul to the exclusion of true godliness — of "the honeycomb". Have you been loathing this honeycomb? How often has it been pressed on your acceptance? Much, much have you heard of the sweetness of Jesus Christ, often have you heard His beseeching voice. Examine yourself. Do not take your religion for granted. You may approve of the doctrine, and it never sink into your hearts. You may approve of a system, and be pleased with the way it is dressed up, and yet be total strangers to its power in your hearts.

"But to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet." The hungry soul — that is, the reverse of the full soul. This is a **spiritually living** soul. Never did a dead soul mourn for the honeycomb! Never did it hunger and thirst for the living God. A sense of hunger is an evidence of life, of a healthful state of soul. This hungry soul was dead in trespasses and sins, but is quickened and made alive to God. He was full of sin, like a cage of unclean birds; but he is made to see his need of the bread of life, the righteousness of Jesus Christ. He is a self-emptied soul. He feels his need of going forth to Him with whom is the honeycomb. He is much pained till his hunger is gratified. He has been fed, has already tasted that the Lord is gracious. The more he feeds on

the promises of Zion, the more hungry he becomes. To him it is said all bitter things become sweet. Of course it is not meant that sin which was made bitter is now sweet; nor that affliction, the bitterness of which he feels, is become sweet. For sin remains bitter all the days of his life, and no chastisement for the present is joyous but grievous, every species of trial and suffering is not said to be sweet to him; yet there may be sweetness connected with them. They sorrow most because they are not able to sorrow enough. They weep most over unweeping hearts. The Lord can sweeten affliction by imparting His presence

in it. A sense of the divine flavor sweetens all earthly trials. What becomes peculiarly sweet is what was formerly bitter to him — "the honeycomb".

This honeycomb is **just as full as ever**. There is enough in the honey that drops from the rock for all that hear me, for every sinner on earth. O, that we all had a greater desire for it! Let not believers be displeased for feeling hungry. Let them not fret, but come to the Lord, for at His right hand are pleasures for evermore. O, that the Spirit were poured out on all of us to make us relish this honeycomb!

KEEP THE CHURCH PURE!

Temple-Destroyers -- The Holiness Of The Church

By J. G. Vos

"If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" 1 Cor. 3:17.

What temple is this? It is not a literal temple or church building. It is not the temple of the human body, though that is truly called a temple of God. It is the visible Church, the body of which Christ is the Head, as shown by the context (verses 9, 10): "Ye are God's building — I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon —."

In the Greek, the words "defile" and "destroy" are the same verb. It can properly be translated as "defile" "corrupt," "destroy." Those who destroy the temple of God by defiling or corrupting it, will in turn be destroyed by the holy God.

There is a difference between the temple destroyers mentioned in verse 17 and the unwise builders spoken of in verses 12-15. The unwise builders built on the true foundation. Their work did not stand the test, so they lose their reward. But they did not reject the true foundation, namely, Jesus Christ: therefore they themselves are saved, though the reward is forfeited. The temple destroyers, on the other hand, do not have the true foundation. They are on a false foundation; they are not really Christians, and so they will finally perish in hell. Them shall God destroy, because they destroyed the holiness of God's temple, the Church.

WHY THE CHURCH IS HOLY

The Church is holy because it is God's temple, or special habitation, as the Jerusalem temple was His special habitation in the time before the

coming of Christ. There God's presence is revealed; there God manifests himself. In the Jerusalem temple there was the Shekinah, the revelation of the glory and power of God among his covenant people in the place where an atonement was offered for sin. Today the Church is the sphere of the saving power of God, and manifestation of his salvation and glory. Therefore the Church must be holy, because it is so closely connected with God, the holy God, who cannot tolerate sin.

The Church is holy because it is made up of sinners called to be saints. Many people have a wrong idea of the meaning of the word "saints." It does not mean a few eminent religious figures in history. Every Christian is called to be a saint, and every genuine Christian really is a saint. The word "saint" simply means a holy person. Christians are called to be holy people. They are in process of being sanctified, that is, made holy in character and life. Because the Church is the body of the saints it is holy and its holiness must be protected and preserved.

The Church is holy because it is the body of which Christ is the Head. As Christ is holy, so his body must be holy. A holy head and unholy body cannot live together in harmony. The person of wicked life who wants to be a member of the church without forsaking his sinful practices is the destroyer of the body of Christ. He is a perverter and corrupter of the holiness of the Church. The person who is a stranger to the saving power of Jesus Christ, and yet joins a church and continues a nominal member of it while he goes on living like any worldly person, is a temple destroyer. Him shall God finally destroy, unless he repents before it is too late.

WHAT THE HOLINESS OF THE CHURCH INVOLVES

The holiness of the Church involves a converted, spiritually alive membership. This cannot be absolutely attained on earth; it is an ideal condition and can only be approximated during this present life. Yet the fact that it cannot be absolutely attained does not imply that we may complacently tolerate a worldly, broken-down condition of the Church. We may not accept it as a proper state of affairs that many members show little or no sign of conversion to Christ.

Those to whom religion is a very minor incidental concern in their life have no ground for thinking themselves converted and on the road to heaven. Those who attend church services only occasionally, who practically never attend prayer meeting except when it happens to be in their home, who take no delight in fellowship with Christian people, but prefer to associate with worldly people — such have no ground for thinking themselves Christians. "By their fruits ye shall know them." "Bring forth fruits meet for repentance."

The holiness of the Church involves consciousness of being a body of people in covenant with God. True Christians do not just "go to church", true Christians are the Church. They are conscious of their unique position and privilege as the dwelling of God on earth. This means more to them than being American citizens, it means more to them than any family or business relationships, it means more to them than any other social relationships. If a person is really a Christian, he must realize consciously that the most important thing about himself and his life is that he is a part of the temple of God on earth, that he has a position and a privilege that other people do not have. When a Church has a real consciousness of its unique position and privilege as the temple of God, the body of Christ, the body of people on earth in covenant with God, then the members will take a delight in the ordinances of God. The prayer meetings will no longer be meagrely attended by one-fifth or one-third of those who ought to be there. The Sabbath services will be well attended, regularly, both morning and evening, not just occasionally. The Christian who is conscious of being a member of the temple of God will not have to be urged and persuaded to attend church services; he will do it spontaneously.

When the members of a church have a real consciousness of their unique position and privileges, they will willingly and gladly set aside more of their time for spiritual things. Family worship will not be neglected or hurried through in a merely formal manner. All divine ordinances will be a delight to such Christians. The minister and elders of such a church will be free from the dead weight of concern for unconverted, lifeless, nomin-

al members on the church membership roll. The pastor will not have to go through the hopeless farce of trying to persuade unconverted members to go through the motions of Christian profession and duty. Spiritual energies will be released for evangelism among the unsaved outside the church membership.

The holiness of the Church involves separation from the world and from worldly people. "Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord; and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters saith the Lord Almighty." (2 Cor. 6: 17, 18).

True Christians will not willingly associate intimately with those to whom Christ means nothing. There must be a clear line of demarcation maintained between the Church and the world. The holiness of the Church requires this. The true Christian will never feel entirely comfortable or at ease among those who are not Christians. He will delight rather in the fellowship of Christian people, the saints.

The holiness of the Church demands separation from worldly conduct of all kinds. In our day the boundary line between the Church and the world has been so broken down that it is often difficult to distinguish between the two. There is so much of the world in the Church that the members of the church feel at home in the Christless world. We live at peace with secularism today, we feel at home in a world to which Christ means nothing. That is the tragic weakness of present-day Christianity.

It was an astonishment to the heathen of the Roman Empire to note how the early Christians loved each other. The same is true on many foreign mission fields today. But how easily we feel satisfied and at home in the secular, Christless society of America today! How much we are absorbed in the non-Christian world, how little we care for the company of the saints!

HOW THE HOLINESS OF THE CHURCH IS TO BE MAINTAINED

The holiness of the Church is to be maintained, first of all, by a proper caution in the admission of new members. A credible profession of faith and obedience is to be required.

This will not guarantee absolute purity of the Church, since the Church's officers cannot see people's hearts or motives. But it will accomplish much. There must be no open church membership, no open baptism and no open communion. Many churches today have virtually open membership, open baptism and open communion — their highest privileges are available to all comers without any requirements of faith and life except the most general and formal. It

is far easier for a person to become a member of such a church than it is for an alien to become a citizen of the United States.

Biblical standards of faith and life are to be insisted on. Those who are not willing to accept Biblical standards are to be excluded from the membership of the Church.

Many a church has been broken down and destroyed by lack of a proper caution in admitting members from the world. It is very easy for the sake of human friendliness and good will to open the door of Church membership. But if wrongly done it only admits another temple destroyer to the temple.

This is even more true and important in the case of church officers, such as elders, deacons and ministers. Those who do not possess the Scriptural qualifications of faith and life are not to be ordained to office in the Church, lest the temple destroyers be placed in positions of authority in the temple. Neglect of this caution with respect to ordination of ministers has destroyed some of the most prominent denominations, and broken down their witness for the truth. Those who deviate from the truth or who live ungodly lives are not to be received as members, far less are they to be exalted to official responsibility in the Church. It is not popular to be strict, but strictness of the right kind keeps the temple from going to pieces. We should just be as strict as the Bible, no more and no less.

The holiness of the Church is to be maintained by mutual admonition on the part of the members. Cain's answer to God. "Am I my brother's keeper?" was an evasion of responsibility. Every member of the Church has a responsibility for the spiritual welfare of the others.

The members are to have "the same care one of another." This may not be easy, but it is a Christian duty. Many troubles can be prevented or healed by it.

If you see a fellow Christian doing something

which is wrong, try to persuade him not to do it. If you know of one who is living in violation of his covenant vows, think whether it may be your part to speak a word to him about it.

The holiness of the Church is to be maintained, in the last resort, by official discipline of the scandalous. Scandal is not any and every sin, but something which destroys the temple. "A scandal is not everything which is sinful, or displeaseth; but something in a professor's carriage, which either in itself or from its circumstances, may tempt others to sin, expose the Church to just reproach, or mar the spiritual comfort of the saints." (RP. Testimony XXI2).

Put away from among yourselves that wicked person (1 Cor. 5: 13). What are some forms of scandal that may call for such drastic action? First, grossly and openly sinful conduct stubbornly persisted in after faithful admonition, for example, Sabbath-breaking, slander, participation in the worship of a false religion such as Masonry. Secondly, notorious and continued violation of covenant vows (that is, of the person's own profession and promises), in spite of faithful efforts made to win the person back to the right way.

Those who continue without attending divine worship or partaking of the Lord's Supper must eventually be separated from the membership of the Church. To allow them to remain as nominal members is to allow the temple to be defiled and destroyed.

The honour of Christ requires that the holiness of the Church be maintained. The tendency is to hush things up, to smooth things over, and silently to tolerate an unholy condition in the Church. But we are to be most concerned about what is right, not just what may be pleasant or comfortable to particular people.

The Church is not merely a life-saving station. It is also a King's palace, a holy temple, of God. It must be kept holy because God is holy and cannot tolerate sin in his habitation.

The Lord's Great Controversy

By the Rev. John C. Rankin

VIII. The Conflict in the Old Testament

So far in our study of the Lord's Great Controversy our aim has been to survey the total view in which we find God's great division and in which God himself appears as the Contender.

Two aspects of the divine contention have been noted; one in his law and the other in his grace. So it is, we trust, the ground work has

been laid for further consideration of the conflict as set forth in God's Word.

Our primary interest has to do with the biblical basis which defines and governs the conflict as a whole. The God-given foundation is contained in the Scriptures which are all-determinative for the matter as a whole. As the founda-

tion of a building has a determining influence for the superstructure, so the Bible for all theistic-Christian thought and life.

General Survey

So then — “to the law to the testimony.” And first of all to Bible history and teaching with respect to the subject as given in the Old Testament; as it unfolds in the old dispensation, the time period which extends from Adam to Christ.

The Christian religion came by way of special revelation in a process of development from relatively plain and simple beginnings. As Prof. J. G. Vos has shown, our religion began with mankind as a whole as derived from our first parents. But from the time of Noah on it has been conditioned by the fact that it was confined at the first to Shem, the first born son of Noah, and so descended to his descendants, the Semites; that is to say: the Hebrews, first known as the Israelites, and in later times the Jews. (*Ashamed of the Tents of Shem?* by Dr. Vos.)

With the deliverance of the children of Israel from their bondage in Egypt, the original comparatively simple forms of religion were transformed under God by the hand of Moses into an elaborate system. To this worship and service of God other elements were added in the time of David and Solomon. It was at this time, and especially in connection with the temple service, that the true religion, given of God, was enshrined in the praises of Israel in the book of the Psalms.

As time went on other prophets appeared and performed their part and revealed religion received yet further expansion and enlargement. We read about Elijah and Elisha, and peruse the writings of Isaiah, Jeremiah and the others. But what about the conflict in these pages? How it echoes and resounds in all they said and did! And how plainly God himself is revealed in his own conflict and controversy!

For the remainder of our consideration of the Conflict in the Old Testament we shall limit our attention to three heads: (1) The Conflict in the Psalms, (2) The Conflict in Jeremiah, and (3) The Conflict in Ezekiel.

The Conflict in the Psalms.

The whole scheme of Christian truth and life is embodied in the Psalter. Here, in inspired hymnody, we have the truth of God in all its parts faithfully represented and applied. It goes without saying that all aspects are involved in the one we are considering. For, we repeat, God's great conflict is that of truth against error; right against wrong; God and his kingdom against Satan and his. Consequently no apology is needed for these song-writers in the intensity of their zeal and devotion for the holiness and justice of God

as well as for the blessedness of his mercy and grace.

The conflict, otherwise known as the antithesis, comes to clear and full expression in Psalm I. “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.” The distinction of persons here described is that of the godly vs. the ungodly, the righteous vs. the sinner. The godly way of thought and life is set forth in sharpest contrast to that of the ungodly. “His delight is in the law of the Lord” and he does not consort with those who scorn the Word of God.

Immediately conjoined to this distinction of persons and ways of life is the difference in their respective life-experience under God. The one is blessed in his deliverance from evil; the other not so delivered, continues in the way of separation from God. Of the one it is said: “he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water;” of the other: “the ungodly are not so but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.”

As these are two distinct and separate kinds of people here and now so are they in the judgment of God and so shall they be divided at the end of life. “For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish.”

As the distinction of kinds is here so plainly drawn, so with equal clearness is it set forth from the beginning to the end of the Psalter. A notable example of this comes in the concluding verses of Psalm 34 (vss. 12-22). “The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous and his ears are open unto their cry. The face of the Lord is against them that do evil to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.”

The theme of conflict reaches its climax in Psalm 149, vss. 6-9, where, speaking of the saints, the Psalmist says: “Let the high praises of God be in their mouths and a two-edged sword in their hand to execute vengeance upon the heathen and punishments upon the people — this honour have all his saints.”

We are reminded of the fact that David, though not alone among the writers of the Psalms, is known by way of eminence as “the psalmist.” Now David, in his day, was a mighty warrior for God; and the conflict as expressed in the psalms of David is closely related to the conflict as it raged in his own life.

David was raised up of the Lord to fight against the enemies of God and his people. His special assignment was to forward the unfinished business of Israel in her conquest and possession of the land of promise. His calling was to crush and subdue her foes on every hand and bring peace

to the people in his time. So preoccupied was he in the process that there was insufficient time for the second great project that engaged his attention; the construction of the temple, which he had to leave to his son and successor.

As a rule in all of his campaigns he was successful; that is to say he was mightily used of God to subdue the heathen under God and to magnify the Lord and his people in the sight of the nations. David's quarrel with the heathen, however, was none other than the Lord's great controversy come to expression in the situation. God's enemies were his enemies and God's conflict was his. God's hatred of all opposition to the right ways of the Lord was David's hatred. God's chosen and beloved king and people were his instruments in the visitation of his wrath and condemnation on the wickedness of men.

All of this comes out in the songs of David, his inspired poetic compositions. It is easy for one to say that God is cruel and unjust in his judgments on the heathen as well as on his own king and people. But it is not so; for God is the Judge and the Avenger of all wrong and the executor of his perfect judgment of condemnation upon all forgetfulness and disobedience of men. God is "terrible in his doings toward the children of men," and it should be distinctly understood that when we find fault with God we are lifting up ourselves to be the judge of the one and only, high and holy, King and Judge.

The Conflict in Jeremiah

As with the Psalms, so with the Proverbs, and so also with all of the prophets. Isaiah, of course, is outstanding among the latter in his superb proclamation of the truth of God for his own and for all days. Isaiah was a prophet of seraphic fire, with lips of flame set on fire with the live coal taken with tongs from off the altar. Even a cursory reading of his prophecy leaves no doubt about how he stood in relation to the Lord's controversy.

As David begins in the book of the Psalms, so Isaiah in his own poetic prose. "Hear, O heavens and give ear, O earth; for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me." "Except the Lord of hosts had left us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah." "The destruction of the transgressors and of sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the Lord shall be consumed" (Isa. 1:2, 9 and 28).

So runs the word of the vision of Isaiah and his message to the men of his own and every day. His mission was to "cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression and the house of Jacob their sin" (58:1) as when he says "your iniquities have

separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (59:2).

We would love to linger longer with this prophecy but must needs pass on to another of the major prophets who is especially noteworthy in his contribution to the subject.

Jeremiah stood in the illustrious succession of those who of old were privileged to stand alone in the conflict of the Lord. As Abel in his day; as Noah, Abraham, Moses, Samuel, David, Elijah, and Isaiah, each more or less alone in their own, so also Jeremiah in his day.

If there is a great preponderance of the negative in his prophecy; a preeminence of the note of threatening and condemnation; the fault is not with the prophet but with the situation as it existed in his day. Wickedness of every kind and description was rampant in the land and was all-inclusive in its scope; a wickedness of prince and prophet, priest and people (Jer. 1:10 and 18).

It is important to have the historical setting clearly before us. To be observed is the fact that the prophecies are commonly dated with reference to the kings in whose reigns they were given. See Isaiah 1:1; Jeremiah 1:1-3 and Ezekiel 1:1-3.

Isaiah's prophecy belongs in the general historical framework of the period of the Assyrian Empire and her kings. As for Jeremiah, the period in which he served was that of the Chaldean or Babylonian. The northern kingdom of the ten tribes passed into oblivion during the latter years of Isaiah's ministry. The destruction of Jerusalem at the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came in the year 587 B. C., or about 135 years after the fall of Samaria and the deportation of the ten tribes of the north. Jeremiah prophesied during a period of approximately 40-45 years prior to the Babylonian conquest and for a few years following, as a fugitive in Egypt.

Beginning his prophetic career in his youth, it was a long life-time of service which Jeremiah rendered to his God and King. He served almost alone as God's prophet of the day and in one of the worst of evil days.

As often the case before and since, the true men of God were few and far between. It may be that Zephaniah and Habakkuk were associated with him though no mention is made of them in his prophecy. The last seven years of his ministry coincided with the first seven of Ezekiel, but Ezekiel was 500 miles away. So he was lonely, his life was difficult in the extreme and his heart was sad. And no wonder, for sin abounded in the situation which confronted "the weeping prophet" in his day.

We cannot but be impressed by the scope

of the divine indiotment. "From the least even to the greatest of them everyone is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even to the priest everyone dealeth falsely." "To whom shall I speak and give warning that they may hear? Behold their ear is uncircumcised and they cannot hearken: behold the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach; they have no delight in it." "Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it" (Jer. 6:10, 13, 14 and 5:1).

It is a truly amazing thing that God is saying here. In the case of Sodom and Gomorrah God would have spared for ten. But with Jerusalem, at this advanced stage of wickedness, God would pardon all for the sake of only one! God is speaking, and challenges the people to produce one; just one! who can be counted as obedient. The language may of course be figurative and probably is; but, if so, it reflects a condition of great and general, wide-spread and almost all-inclusive departure from God and His Word.

(To be continued)

The Bearing Of Scriptural Revelation On The Evolutionary World View

By J. G. Vos

WHAT IS THE EVOLUTIONARY WORLD VIEW?

A. It is a Non-Theistic Conception of Reality.

Classic evolutionism is essentially atheistic or pantheistic. The postulate of Biblical Theism is inherently foreign to evolutionistic thought. This is not to say that all evolutionists are atheists or pantheists, or that no evolutionist sincerely professes the Christian Faith. People are very inconsistent and harbor the most incompatible ideas in their minds. But evolutionism as a self-consistent system of thought is inherently incompatible with Biblical Theism.

A popular writer on science has said that psychologists do not believe in God except on Sundays. This is not true of all psychologists, of course, but it is true of many. And the same could be said about the great majority of evolutionists. Indeed, it is difficult to avoid concluding that much of the appeal and popularity of evolutionary thought has been its seeming effectiveness in eliminating God from man's understanding of his world.

It is recorded that the entire first printing of Darwin's *Origin of Species* was sold on the day of publication. Darwin seemed to the public of his time to have found a way to explain living organisms without needing belief in God.

Gregor Mendel lived at the same time as Darwin, and published his epoch-making discoveries in the field of Genetics in 1865, six years after Darwin's book appeared. Unlike Darwin, Mendel was ignored by the scientific, scholarly and popular world of his time. Mendel was a Theist and a Christian believer, and his work has stood the test of time and research far better than Darwin's, but Darwin was applauded and Mendel was ignored. As a matter of fact Men-

del's work, although duly published in a scientific journal at the time, was simply ignored — indeed, was virtually unknown — until 35 years later, when his principles were independently re-discovered by three other investigators.

Who can believe that pure zeal for scientific truth has been the chief motivating force which has made evolutionary thought the dominant world view today? A truer explanation may be suggested by Romans 1:28: "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind. . . ."

That the much-boasted zeal for pure truth is not the real or main motive which actuates evolutionists is demonstrated by the way they act when someone dares to challenge the validity of the evolutionary scheme. In the science departments of university faculties it is considered virtually academic suicide to be known as a non-evolutionist. There are many biologists and other scientists who do not accept evolution, but nearly all of them, in the fields of biology and geology at any rate, are employed by the government or by private business corporations. So complete is the dominance of the evolutionary world view that it is often difficult for a non-evolutionist to obtain a position as a high school teacher of science. Academic freedom and tolerance are ideals which vanish when a scientific scholar is critical of evolution. Evolution is a **loaded** world view. It involves a built-in emotional and popularity appeal.

The late Samuel G. Craig in his book *Jesus of Yesterday and Today* raised the question of where-in the offense of the miraculous lies. In answering this question he wrote: "We are sure that the real offense of the miracle lies in the fact that it is an event that posits God as its only adequate explanation, and so an event that thrusts God,

as it were, directly on the attention of men. It may seem strange, that men do not like to retain God in their knowledge. They do not object to admitting that God exists as long as it is confessed that He acts always and only through general laws; for in that case these 'general laws' stand between the individual and God and more or less effectively blunt their consciousness of God as a living reality to whom they are personally responsible. They do object, however, to admitting that God acts in a miraculous manner; and that because a miracle, being an event that posits the direct activity of God as its only adequate explanation, obtrudes God, directly and immediately, upon their attention" (p. 142).

The offense of the Biblical doctrine of Creation is of course equally real, and for precisely the same reason. Direct creationism explains origins in terms of acts of God, and this is deeply offensive to the sin-darkened and rebellious human mind. A scheme of things which purports to remove God from direct action in origins and to place Him far in the shadows of the background, or to eliminate Him entirely, is welcomed by the fallen human intellect as a relief from the intellectual and spiritual discomfort which direct facing of God causes. It was not without reason that Adam and Eve "hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden" (Gen. 3:8).

B. It is an Irrational Conception of Reality.

Belief in the ultimacy of what men call "chance" is essentially irrational. It stands opposed to the view that the universe is rational because it is based on mind — the infinite, absolute mind of God. Evolutionistic science regards the term **teleology** as a sort of scientific blasphemy. A recent writer on the philosophy of science, Ernest Nagel, rejects traditional ideas of teleology and coolly informs us that any apparently teleological functions in nature can be re-formulated in terms of non-teleological explanations (**The Structure of Science**, pp. 402-3).

To hold that nature or the universe embodies a plan and manifests design or purpose implies, of course, that there must be a Planner, Designer or Purposer, and this can be no other than God. But this is regarded as a very objectionable concept from the scientific point of view, so teleology is dismissed as a pre-scientific concept, or re-defined in non-teleological terms. Any apparent design in nature is regarded as merely the fortunate result of chance. Martin Gardner in **The Ambidextrous Universe** says:

"Given a billion years of time, a chemical mixture as large as the earth's seas and atmosphere, and various energy sources more intense than today, and who can say that no self-replicating molecules can have formed fortuitously? For all

we know they may have formed by the billions. . . . In a few thousand million years (all of this is sheer guesswork) the primordial soup may have swarmed with these primitive, half-living organisms. The great epic of evolution would then have been under way" (pp. 152-3). (This and the following quotations are used by permission from **The Ambidextrous Universe**, by Martin Gardner, Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, New York, 1964.)

This same author says: "Evolution is simply the process by which chance (the random mutations) cooperates with natural law to create living forms better and better adapted to survive" (**The Ambidextrous Universe**, p. 145).

This author who frankly admits that what he is setting forth here is "sheer guesswork," nevertheless lampoons the Biblical doctrine of direct creation by referring to it as "a series of stupendous magic tricks" (*ibid.*, p. 144).

One evolutionist has said that the chances were two billion to one against the original primal cells ever evolving to mankind, but the human race was amazingly lucky, so here we are!

The evolutionary world view holds that chance, not mind, is the ultimate basic principle of explanation. Belief in chance, I would repeat, is essentially irrational. To say that something is caused by chance is to say that it has no cause. Chance is the denial of a cause, it is the negation of all causation. It is the opposite of law, it is the enthronement of utter chaos. So nature becomes a book without an Author, a composition without a Composer, a building without an Architect. It was not planned — it just happened.

Billions and billions of years of time, plus oceans and oceans of chance, are supposed to account adequately for the existence of such unfathomable examples of complexity as the human brain. Time plus chance equals organism, is the equation involved. A popular newspaper commentator recently dismissed some of this nonsense with the terse comment: "Go make a seed!"

C. It is an Immoral Conception of Reality.

It is no wonder that we face unprecedented moral evil today. The only real basis for any morality worthy of the name is belief in God. When God is removed from people's understanding of themselves and their world, they will inevitably lose their sense of moral responsibility, with the result that selfish, criminal and anti-social tendencies will reign unchecked.

Adolph Hitler was an enthusiastic evolutionist, and the horribly evil practices of German National Socialism under the Third Reich were theoretically grounded in evolutionary ideology which had, supposedly, cut the ground out from under the Biblical view of a moral law and Lawgiver. Let the fittest survive; let the defenseless and

weak perish in concentration camps and gas chambers.

Here in America our public educational system, from kindergarten to university, is deliberately being made more and more rigidly secular. At the same time our sages and experts stand aghast at the boldness and increase of evil. These men pontifically tell us that mankind's moral or ethical sense has not kept pace in development with his technological achievements. Of course they never suggest a return to the God of the Bible and the moral absolutes of the Decalogue. Rather, the new religion of scientific research is supposed, by emphasis on the need for ethical development, to come up with the answers. Alas, it is a vain hope, and doomed to disillusionment and failure. When men have cut themselves off from the Source of all righteousness, they are certain to live in violence, selfishness and hatred.

Just because evolutionism is more than a biological theory — just because it is a comprehensive world view — its general and uncritical acceptance by the public, and the utter pervasiveness of its penetration through our educational system, from the university level down to the elementary grades, is bound to bring an increasing harvest of crime, lawlessness and moral evil of all kinds. There is nothing in this world view which can provide a corrective.

Our public educational system is in an intolerable predicament. Supposed to turn out a product which will be honest, law-abiding, mutually helpful citizens, the educational system is on the one hand rigidly prevented from inculcating the Biblical world view which is the only ground for morality, and on the other hand it is given over almost universally to the anti-theistic, idolatrous, man-centered false world view of evolutionism.

Public and private morality will never thrive again until the Biblical world view once again becomes **dominant** and the evolutionary world view is rejected for what it really is — a mere hypothesis, resting on unproved assumptions, which all too effectively removes God from a relevant place in people's thinking about the world and human society.

The evolutionary world view is no mere harmless technicality of academic biological theory. It is a comprehensive philosophy of life which is at the crucial points antithetic to the Biblical and Christian world view.

With God all things are possible, but it seems unlikely that the Christian believers of the world, divided and confused as they are, can in the foreseeable future reverse this all-but-universal trend of human thinking. Martin Gardner says: "Today it is hard to find a single biochemist or geologist, even among the most devoutly religious, who has the slightest doubt about the essential soundness of the theory of evolution" (*The Ambidex-*

trous Universe, pp. 144-5). In this state of affairs, it becomes our solemn duty to **witness** for the truth and against the dominant lie. And especially it becomes our duty to guard earnestly and jealously all Christian educational institutions lest the tares be planted while men sleep, and Christian education become hospitable to, and tolerant of, this anti-biblical system.

WHAT IS THE RELATION OF THE THEISTIC EVOLUTION TO THE EVOLUTIONARY WORLD VIEW?

Theistic evolution, as a matter of fact, is held by only a very small minority of evolutionistic scientists. It is a view held and promoted chiefly by religious scholars. Scientists and philosophers who accept evolution and at the same time profess belief in God are frequently found, upon closer examination of their positions, to hold a non-theistic view of God — either a Deistic or a Pantheistic view.

Theistic evolution is essentially a compromise view. It did not originate with the scientists, most of whom have little use for it. Classic evolutionary science came first, then afterwards came the attempt to adjust Christian belief to the evolutionary scheme of things. Religious scholars who have been impressed, not to say frightened, by the confident assertions of scientists about evolution being not a theory but "proved fact" have reacted to their embarrassment by the attempt to adjust their interpretation of Scripture to the evolutionary scheme.

Theistic evolutionism has been and is embarrassed by attempting adjustment of Christian belief to a scientific **variable**. Evolutionary thought has been and is fluid. It has moved from phase to phase. Darwin, Lamarck, DeVries, Spencer — they have all had their day and been passed by. Christianity can be adjusted to such a scheme only with serious sacrifice and loss.

The common disjunction between the **Who and Why?** and the **When and how?** of origins, as set forth by theistic evolutionists, is false and illusory. We are told that evolutionary science can tell us the "when" and the "how" of creation, or of origins, while only Scripture can reveal to us the "Who" and the "Why." This disjunctive formula is often presented in a very plausible manner. Yet it is basically misleading and false.

When we begin to speak of God's "method" or "how" in His work of creation, we have already assumed that it was not really a work of creation at all. When we say "method" or "how" we say **process**. By any sound definition of creation it is not a process but an **act** and does not involve the use of methods or means. "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (He-

brews 11:3). Like miracle, creation is an act of God's direct supernatural power. It is an act of omnipotence. It is an event with no cause except the will of God. "For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast" (Psalm 33:9). Shall we interpret this last text as really meaning, "For he spake, and a chain reaction began which ultimately produced what we see in nature today" . . . ?

The tendency to speak of God's **method of creation** betrays an unconscious but real denial of the reality of creation — it reduces all creation to the category of a providential **process**. Creation means God's act of producing the truly new — new as to matter, new as to form, or new as to both form and matter. God used dust to create Adam's body, but the creative act did not involve process. It was an act of the divine will, a "fiat." Some philosopher once said, "What is mind? No matter. What is matter? Never mind." In like vein we may truly say, "What is creation? No process. What is process? Never creation."

SCRIPTURE AND NATURE ARE NOT CO-ORDINATE REVELATIONS OF GOD

According to Scriptural teaching, natural revelation serves as a **witness** to God. It is chiefly significant for the heathen, who are without the light of Scripture. From natural or general revelation those without the light of Scripture can learn that God exists, that He is very great and that mankind ought to glorify and worship Him. Natural revelation also conveys some basic but limited knowledge about morality. "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another" (Romans 2:14, 15).

While general or natural revelation bears a true, though limited, witness to God and morality, its effectiveness in this function has been diminished by the fall of the human race into sin. Men "became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened" (Romans 1:21). The fall of man had a damaging effect both on humanity's moral sense and also on the human intellect. The result is that the revelation of God in nature, including that in human nature or the human consciousness, being apprehended by a darkened mind and a corrupted conscience, is inevitably misinterpreted and distorted, so that only a very limited and obscured knowledge is derived therefrom. The religious systems of the heathen world amply demonstrate how far fallen mankind, when without the special revelation of God and without regeneration by the Holy Spirit, inevitably wanders from the pathway of truth and righteousness.

The notion that nature and Scripture are co-

ordinate revelations of God, each equally valid and sufficient in its own field, is one of the most harmful errors of our time. Nature, whether internal or external to the human personality, is in no sense co-ordinate with Scripture. Both as **witness** and as **revelation** nature apart from Scripture is inadequate and, because of man's sin-darkened mind and heart, misleading. The most that can be said for natural revelation is that it leaves mankind **without excuse** before God (Romans 1:20); it does not of itself impart an adequate knowledge of God nor a sufficient standard of ethics.

The idea that Scripture and nature are co-ordinate revelations of God, each adequate and definitive in its own field, sometimes called the "double revelation theory," has been very well exposed as untenable by Dr. John C. Whitcomb in his monograph on **The Origin of the Solar System**. As **revelation** nature conveys absolutely no knowledge that is not already conveyed in fuller and clearer form in Holy Scripture. To place nature on a par with Scripture as divine revelation betrays a basic misconception of the character, functions and limitations of the revelation of God in nature.

Nature is, of course, the proper object of scientific study. Legitimate science is the study of the phenomena of nature. This is properly regarded as included in the cultural mandate of Genesis 1:28 — the command of God to mankind to subdue the earth and have dominion over its contents. But a recognition of the God-given cultural mandate and the proper inclusion of natural science within the scope of that mandate, does not amount to making nature co-ordinate with Scripture as a revelation of truth and duty.

Those who regard nature and Scripture as co-ordinate revelations of God commonly make the mistake of disregarding the necessity of spiritual regeneration for an ultimately valid knowledge of truth in any field, including both theology and the natural sciences. The scientist whose foolish heart is darkened by sin and who lacks the opening of the eyes of his understanding by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit will inevitably misinterpret what he observes in nature.

The unregenerate scientist **always** implicitly denies the truths of creation and providence. He **always** believes in brute facts — what Dr. Van Til has called the "just-thereness" of facts, that is, their non-created character. Those who place the "findings" of science (or rather, of certain scientists) on a par with theological doctrines derived from Holy Scripture, as statements of truth, almost invariably fail to make any distinction between the regenerate and the unregenerate intellect. The fall of mankind and its effects on the human intellect is the great blind spot of those who desire to regard nature as a co-ordinate revelation with Scripture.

But even in the case of regenerate scientists, the products of scientific research cannot be equated in validity with theological truth derived from Scripture. The two are not parallel. In the case of Scripture we have, first, the revelation of God in His acts or deeds; secondly, we have an infallibly revealed and inspired interpretation of the meaning and significance of God's deeds, given to us in propositional form in the Bible; and thirdly, we have systematic formulations of the truth embodied in this propositional revelation, in the historic creeds and confessions of the Church and in the works of believing, regenerate systematic theologians. Thus between the basic data (God's acts or deeds) and man's formulations of systematic truth (creeds, theology), there is the middle stage, namely divinely revealed and inspired propositional statements of the meaning of the divine acts.

Admittedly the Church councils which formulated the creeds, and the theologians who have produced systematic treatments of theology, were not infallibly inspired, though they were, indeed, illuminated by the Holy Spirit and providentially guided in their work. Still, we must admit that they were fallible men. But these fallible men were not dealing with the raw data or unprocessed factuality of God's work; they were studying and systematizing a body of propositional truth given by infallible revelation and inspiration.

The scientist who deals with the phenomena of nature, on the other hand, is working with the raw data, the unprocessed factuality of nature. If he is unregenerate he is bound, inevitably, to misinterpret this factuality as to its ultimate significance. In matters of detail, of course, the unregenerate scientist may discover valid truth; the number of chromosomes in a cell of a plant or animal can be determined equally well by a Christian researcher or one who is an atheist, provided he possesses the requisite technical qualifications. But as to all ultimate matters of significance and value, the unregenerate worker can only go astray. No matter how sincere he may be, and how hard he may try to attain a scholarly scientific objectivity, in spite of himself he is powerfully biased against the reality of God, creation and providence. And lacking the middle stage of infallible propositional truth which the Christian theologian has, the scientist — even the regenerate scientist — has no **infallibly sure** corrective of mistaken interpretations, unless, of course, he is willing to accept Holy Scripture as such a corrective.

The unregenerate scientist is **bound** to go astray from ultimate truth. The regenerate scientist **may** go astray from ultimate truth. This is not to say that the regenerate scientist cannot discover truth from nature; it is only to affirm that the truth which he discovers from nature is relative and provisional, lacking the absolute and final character of truth derived from Scripture.

That the products of scientific research cannot properly be placed on a par with formulations of truth derived from Scripture, is further manifested by the fluid, constantly changing character of scientific thought. As Tennyson wrote, "Science moves, but slowly, slowly, creeping on from point to point." Though we readily concede that there has been real progress in the discovery of truth by science, still ultimate truth is never reached, and whole blocks of scientific theory, once accepted as truth, have had to be given up or changed because they were suspended upon assumptions which further discovery proved to be untenable. The attempt to adjust theology and Christian belief to the "conclusions" or "findings" of science is wrong and futile because science itself is constantly moving on and changing its conclusions. A theology adjusted to the science of 150 years ago would be badly out of adjustment to the science of the present day. Theology based on the granite rock of infallible propositional truth given in Holy Scripture does not have to be changed or adjusted with every new development in the natural sciences. But there have been cases of theology after painfully getting adjusted to the science of the day, becoming embarrassed by the fact of the scientific world changing or abandoning the "findings" which the theological scholars felt they must at all costs get adjusted to.

Nobody today believes in the notorious Piltdown Man — the fossils have been conclusively proved to be fraudulent — but there was a time not many years ago when a large number of eminent biologists and palaeontologists held that the Piltdown Man was a genuine ape-like ancestor of modern man. He was given a scientific name, **Eoanthropus Dawsoni** — Dawson's Dawn Man — and high school textbooks on science confidently presented him, and even pictured him, complete with whiskers, as incontrovertibly real and important.

A dozen years ago astrophysicists confidently set forth two billion years — two with nine zeroes after it — as the age of the earth. This has been successively modified to three billion, four billion and now four and a half billion years. Yet George Gamow in his **Biography of the Earth** (first published in 1941; reprinted 1948 and 1949) set forth the age of the earth as "about two billion years" and supported this figure by three lines of evidence (astronomy, radioactivity of rocks, salinity of oceans). Gamow no longer adheres to the two billion figure. But before I commit myself to any of these figures as unquestionable truth, I want the astrophysicists to come to final agreement among themselves as to the age of the earth, and promise me that they will not drastically revise their figures in a few years' time!

THE BEARING OF SCRIPTURE ON THE AGE OF THE EARTH AND OF THE HUMAN RACE

One point at which the evolutionary world

view presses upon us concerns the interpretation of the six creation days of Genesis. Related to this are the two questions of the age of the earth and the antiquity of the human race.

We should realize that it is possible for a person to believe in an old earth, and to believe that mankind is much older than Ussher allowed for, without being an evolutionist. Age and origin are not the same question. No doubt most of those who hold that the earth is very old are evolutionists, but still it is quite possible to hold this opinion without being an evolutionist.

Ussher's figure of 4004 B.C. for the creation has been generally abandoned, even by scholars who are strict believers in Biblical inerrancy. Ussher's scheme rests upon unwarranted assumptions. I once accepted Ussher's chronology, but later gave it up. A brief, popular type but very cogent treatment of this subject is found in **Before Abraham**, by Byron C. Nelson — unfortunately now out of print. This book convinced me that Ussher's figure cannot stand.

Among strictly orthodox Reformed theologians, Dr. Benjamin B. Warfield was quite tolerant of views of the age of the earth and the antiquity of man far in excess of Ussher's figures. (Reference: **On the Antiquity and the Unity of the Human Race**, in **The Princeton Theological Review**, ix, 1911, pp. 1-25; reprinted in **Studies in Theology**, Oxford University Press, New York, 1932, pp. 235-258).

As to the nature of the six creation days, three generic views have been held by orthodox theologians. These may be called the Literal View, the Figurative View and the Literary Framework View. The literal view maintains that the six days are ordinary 24-hour days. The figurative view holds that they are long periods of time, of indeterminate length. The framework view holds that the six days schematism is merely a literary device and really has nothing to do with time. No less a theologian than St. Augustine held this literary framework view (cited in Bavinck, **Our Reasonable Faith**, p. 172). Augustine held that the whole creation was complete in an instant of time, and that it is only described under the six-day scheme to make it humanly apprehensible. Dr. Bavinck himself was reluctant to affirm the literal view of the six days. He wrote:

"Scripture speaks very definitely of days which are reckoned by the measurement of night and morning and which lie at the basis of the distribution of the days of the week in Israel and its festive calendar. Nevertheless Scripture itself contains data which oblige us to think of these days in Genesis as different from our ordinary units as determined by the revolutions of the earth" (**Our Reasonable Faith**, p. 172).

Each of the three generic views has something in its favor and each is involved in some problems

or difficulties. On the whole, the literal interpretation deserves the preference. The arguments brought against it are not really conclusive. Remember, we are here dealing not with how nature functions today, but with God's actions in setting nature to functioning in the beginning.

Still there may be just enough uncertainty about this matter that perhaps the path of wisdom for us is to avoid an absolute and dogmatic pronouncement about the nature of the six days. The age of the earth, like the age of the solar system, is still a speculative problem in scientific circles, and the last word has certainly not yet been said on it. We have good reason, it may be, to discard Ussher's calculation — good reason derived not from science but from considerations internal to Scripture itself. But certainly this does not mean that we must jump to the opposite extreme and begin speaking of billions of years.

It is one thing to say that the modern scientific view of the earth has motivated Biblical scholars to undertake a re-study of the Biblical data. It is quite another, and an improper thing, to say that formerly we believed in Scripture but now we are going to base our belief on the "findings" of science. Christian belief may never be based on any other standard than the written Word of God.

Incidentally, even in the field of scientific research, the Carbon-14 or radiocarbon method of dating ancient organic remains has resulted in drastically scaling down some datings which were formerly set high on the basis of evolutionistic geology. A striking example is cited by John Klotz in **Genes, Genesis and Evolution**, pages 112-3. When the Ohio Turnpike was being constructed, a deep cut was made through a hill near Streetsboro, Ohio. Wood was found deep underground, which when tested by the radiocarbon method yielded an age of 8600 years plus or minus 300 years. The scientists could hardly believe that this figure was correct, because the peat deposit in which the wood was found had been geologically dated as 35,000 years old. So a second sample of the wood was tested, and this time the figure was 8450 years old plus or minus 250 years. In either case the radiocarbon method resulted in a reduction of about 75% of the age as determined by geology. It is now recognized by many geologists that the melting of the last continental glacier in North America occurred about 12,000 years ago instead of 20,000 years ago as formerly believed (Klotz, **Genes, Genesis and Evolution**, p. 377).

THE BEARING OF SCRIPTURE ON THE UNIQUENESS OF THE HUMAN RACE

Man alone was created in the image of God. Biological or genetic continuity of man with any other form of life has never been proved and remains to this day a dogmatic philosophic faith of evolutionistic science. Evolutionistic scholars start

by eliminating the idea of God by an exclusively naturalistic *a priori* or basic assumption. Then they decide what they think may have happened; then they proceed to build on this an immense superstructure of systematic thought as if it had been demonstrated that it really did happen. Nagel, *The Structure of Science*, is a good example of this, as is also *The Ambidextrous Universe* by Martin Gardner. On the other hand, *Implications of Evolution* by G. A. Kerkut distinguishes fairly and clearly between a *priori* assumption and factual data, and thus forms a good corrective to books of the other type.

Adam as the first man, created in the image of God, is of course indispensable to Christian theology. A religion without the first Adam will soon become a religion in which the second Adam is regarded as unnecessary. Thus theological Liberalism today regards Jesus, not as the *object* of Christian faith, but merely as a *subject* of faith, the first of the series of people called Christians.

Psalm 8:4-8 teaches that God made man a little lower than the angels, and crowned him with glory and honor. This certainly cannot be reconciled with the evolutionistic notion that *man at his origin was at his lowest*, barely above the brutes. Can you think of the Neanderthal Man, Peking Man, Java Man, etc., pictured in standard biology textbooks as pitifully grotesque, barely human specimens — can you really think of these caricatures of early mankind as a little lower than the angels, and crowned with glory and honor?

I Corinthians 15:20, 21 states that "All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds." Granted that this chapter of Paul was not intended to teach scientific knowledge, yet it does teach something definite, and what it does teach cannot be reconciled with the notion of a basic continuity between mankind and the sub-human creation. At least it teaches that there is a radical difference between man's bodily organism and that of beasts, birds and fishes.

In Ecclesiastes 3:20, 21 we read, "All go unto

one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?" Here we are taught that man resembles the animals in that his bodily organism was formed from dust and turns to dust again. Like the animals, man is mortal and subject to death and decay. But there is a difference, and the inspired writer asks the question: Who gives adequate attention to this difference? Who recognizes as he should that the spirit of man goes upward while that of the beast goes downward to the earth? The treatment of this passage in H. C. Leupold, *Exposition of Ecclesiastes*, pages 96-101, is most illuminating.

This text in Ecclesiastes 3 should be taken along with Eccles. 12:7, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." The evolutionary world view, in its common and prevalent form, regards man as an advanced or improved animal. Nowhere is this more evident than in some schools of academic psychology where the behaviour of human beings is studied in the light of experiments on dogs and white rats. Evolution-based psychology emphasizes that man shares with animals the conditioned reflex; it is commonly blind to the truth that man is a person made in the image of God with a spirit that transcends the material and the mechanical. This type of evolutionary psychology even tends to hold that human freedom is an illusion, and that a man's acts are determined by hidden impersonal factors which he cannot control and is not even aware of.

The uniqueness of humanity is absolutely essential to Christianity. Any teaching which tends to undermine this, as the evolutionary world view does, is destructive of the Christian Faith.

As Joshua said to Israel long ago, so we can and should say to the Christian Church and its institutions at the present day: "Choose you this day whom ye will serve" (Joshua 24:15). Shall we compromise with the evolutionary world view, or shall we remain faithful to the Theistic and Christian view as taught in the Word of God?

POSTSCRIPT

The foregoing article was originally presented as a lecture at the annual meeting of Reformed Fellowship, Inc., Grand Rapids, Michigan, October 1966. It is reproduced here by special permission of *Torch and Trumpet*, in which it was first published (December 1966). Since the presentation of this lecture at the meeting of Reformed Fellowship, Inc., additional evidence has appeared on the tendency of theistic evolutionists to surrender Biblical truth for the sake of evolutionary consistency. In an article in *The Banner* (January 13, 1967) Dr. Simon Kistemaker, a valiant defender of

the truth and a member of the faculty of Dordt College, reports the very disturbing views of two members of the faculty of the Free University of Amsterdam, which a generation ago was a bulwark of Biblical orthodoxy. One of these professors questions whether death can rightly be regarded as a consequence of the fall of Adam; the other boldly denies the historical character of Adam and Eve.

According to the Word of God, "by man came death" (Rom. 5:12; 1 Cor. 15:21); according to ev-

olutionary thought, by death came man. According to the Bible death is an evil, an enemy to be destroyed by Christ's work of redemption (1 Cor. 15:26). According to evolutionary thought, death is a necessary factor in progress and hence must be regarded as beneficial to the race. Thus evolutionary thought breaks the connection between sin and death (cf. Rom. 6:23). It is small wonder that a world which has come to believe that science has proved death normal and beneficial, no longer takes sin very seriously.

All theistic evolutionists are inevitably embarrassed by the Biblical teaching on the origin and character of death. Pressure for consistency drives them relentlessly toward the mythical view of the matters related in Genesis chapters one to three. Taken as historically true the Biblical teaching is inherently incompatible with basic evolutionistic postulates.

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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.

INFINITY OF GOD. That quality of God by which He is absolutely perfect and boundless, without any limits, both in His being and in all His attributes.

INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE. An activity of God the Holy Spirit by which the writers of

the books of the Bible were so influenced that the product of their writing is truly the Word of God.

INTERCESSION OF CHRIST. The heavenly ministry of Christ as the High Priest and Advocate of His people, whereby He pleads the merits

of His own shed blood and perfect righteousness for each and every one of the elect, for whom He died and to whom He has given His Holy Spirit.

JUDAIZERS. A party of Jewish Christians in the Early Church, who regarded Christianity as a branch of Judaism, and taught that salvation is partly based on the work of Jesus Christ and partly on man's obedience to the requirements of God's law. (Paul's Epistle to the Galatians was written to refute the errors of Judaizing teachers who had confused and misled the Galatian Christians).

JUSTIFICATION. "Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone." (S. Cat. Q. 33).

KEYS OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. The authority of church government and discipline committed by Christ, the Head of the Church, to the lawful officers of His Church. (Matt. 16:19; 18:17, 18. Westminster Confession of Faith, XXX. 1, 2).

LEGALISM. The false notion that salvation, or a righteous standing before God, is attainable, in whole or in part, by human works of obedience to the law of God. (All legalists lack a proper conviction of sin; consequently they vainly imagine that their external and mechanical compliance with the commandments of God is the righteousness which God requires of man. Legalism was the blight of the Pharisees, as it is the terrible error of modern Judaism).

LENT. The period of 40 days ending with Easter, observed by Roman Catholics and some Protestants as a special period of self-denial and humiliation. (The observance of Lent is a mere human custom based on ecclesiastical tradition; there is no warrant for it in Scripture).

LEVITY. Excessive lightness of spirit, or frivolity, which is inconsistent with Christian soberness, seriousness and earnestness, and which is a base counterfeit of true Christian happiness and cheerfulness. (Those who try to drown the voice of conscience by constant levity and jesting may be laughing themselves to hell).

LIBERTY, CHRISTIAN. The freedom of a Christian from the guilt of sin, the condemning wrath of God, the curse of the moral law, and the bondage of sin and Satan, as well as his future deliverance from all evil of every kind. (Westminster Confession of Faith, XX. 1).

LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE. The freedom of the human conscience from all doctrines and commandments of men which are in any respect contrary to the Word of God, and the freedom of the conscience from all requirements in matters of faith or worship which are in addition to the Word of God. (Westminster Confession of Faith, XX. 2).

LOT. "A mutual agreement to determine an uncertain event, no other way determinable, by an appeal to the providence of God, on casting or throwing something" (Buck's Theological Dictionary).

MARTYR. (1) A witness. (2) A person who suffers death rather than renounce or compromise his religious faith.

MATERIALISM. The false doctrine that nothing exists except material substance and energy. (Materialism denies the existence of God and of the human soul, and the reality of life after death).

MEANS OF GRACE. "The outward and ordinary means whereby Christ communicateth to us the benefits of redemption are, his ordinances, especially the Word, Sacraments and prayer; all which are made effectual to the elect for salvation." (S. C. 88)

Some Noteworthy Quotations

TO NEGLECT CHURCH DISCIPLINE, as has been proved by all history, is only to forfeit purity and spiritual influence. Of this the Greek Church is a striking monument. Her downfall to the lowest degradation is traced by Sozomen — one on her own historians — to the dilapidation of her discipline.

— George Smeaton

HOW WONDERFUL is the providence of God in over-ruling things most disorderly, and in turning to our good things which in themselves are most pernicious!

— Arthur W. Pink

THE WAY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS is a difficult pass between two mountains of error, and the great secret of the Christian's life is to wind his way along the narrow valley.

— Charles H. Spurgeon

COST WHAT IT MAY, to separate ourselves from those who separate themselves from the truth of God, is not alone our liberty, but our duty.

— Charles H. Spurgeon

THE JEWEL OF ASSURANCE is best kept in the cabinet of a humble heart.

— Thomas Watson

THAT WE MAY NOT COMPLAIN of what is, let us see God's hand in all events; that we may not be afraid of what shall be, let us see all events in God's hand.

— Matthew Henry

THE MODERNIST PROFESSOR clutches at any explanation of Divine acts exclusive of Divine agency.

— E. K. Simpson

"Of all the temptations that ever I met with in my life, to question the being of God and the truth of his gospel is the worst, and the worst to be borne. When this temptation comes, it takes away my girdle from me, and removes the foundation from under me. Oh, I have often thought of that word, 'Having your loins girt about with truth' and of that, 'When the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?'"

— John Bunyan

"Now, my dear friends in precious Christ, I think I need not tell you that, as I have lived, so I die, in the same persuasion with the true reformed and covenanted Presbyterian Church of Scotland. I adhere to the testimony of the day, as it is held forth in our Informatory Vindication, and in the testimony against the present toleration; and that I own, and seal with my blood, all the precious truths, even the controverted truths, that I have taught. So I would exhort every one of you to make your personal reconciliation with God in Christ, for I fear many of you have that yet to do; and when you come where I am, to look pale death in the face, ye will not be a little shaken and terrified if ye have not laid hold on eternal life. I would exhort you to much diligence in the use of means; to be careful in keeping your societies; to be frequent and fervent in secret prayer;

to read much the written Word of God, and to examine yourselves by it."

— James Renwick

(Written four days before he was executed)

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

— Matthew Henry

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

— George Swinnoek

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

— Samuel Rutherford

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

— Thomas Boston

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

— Dr. Loraine Boettner

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

— Dr. Loraine Boettner

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

— Herman Bavinck

Studies in the Covenant of Grace

(Continued from last issue)

LESSON 15

The Covenant of Grace and the Church's Obligations to its Own Membership

"Unto this catholic visible Church Christ hath given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints, in this life, to the end of the world; and doth by His own presence and Spirit, according to His promise, make them effectual thereunto." — The Westminster Confession of Faith, XXV. 3.

"The end of church fellowship is to exhibit a system of sound principles, to maintain the ordinances of Gospel worship in their purity, to promote holiness, and to prepare the saints for heaven." — The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, XXII. 3.

Scripture References:

John 21:15-17. The duty of feeding Christ's sheep and lambs.

Acts 20:28. 1 Pet. 5:2. The duty to feed the Church.

Heb. 13:17. The Church's obligation to watch over the members' souls.

1 Tim. 3:5. The minister's duty to take care of the Church.

1 Tim. 5:20, 21. The duty of impartial church discipline.

Questions:

1. In what two spheres does the Church have an obligation to serve?

(a) The sphere of its own membership. (b) The sphere of those outside of its own membership. It is not correct to say, as some people do, that the Church exists solely to carry on missionary work and evangelism. The Church has a responsibility for those who are already saints, as well as for reaching the unsaved people of the world.

2. Why is it important that these two functions be kept in balance?

Both the internal and the external function of the Church are God-given responsibilities, and both are extremely important. If either is slighted or neglected, the results will be serious. A church which pays no attention to the indoctrination and spiritual nurture of its members, and has no message other than an evangelistic message for the unsaved, will cease to be a genuine church and will become merely a rescue mission or Gospel hall. On the other hand, a church that does not carry on or support missions and evangelism will soon stagnate and become self-centered and spiritually sleepy. The internal and external functions of the Church are both included in Christ's "Great Commission". The Church should pay due attention to both, and keep a proper balance between them.

3. Which is primary, the internal function of the Church or the external function?

Clearly the internal function of the Church is primary. A man's first duty is to provide for his own house; a church's first responsibility is to provide for the spiritual welfare of its own membership. Really the discharge of the external obligation of the Church depends wholly on the prior adequate discharge of the internal obligation. If the Church itself is not kept sound and strong, it will soon cease to be an effective

missionary agency. On the other hand, the proper discharge of the missionary obligation helps to keep the Church itself spiritually alert. But the internal function is the primary one.

4. How does the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace stress the obligation of the Church to its own membership?

The doctrine of the Covenant of Grace draws a sharp line of distinction between the Church (the covenant people of God) and the world (those outside the covenant). It emphasizes the primary obligation of the Church to minister to those within the covenant since they are in a special relationship to God. Those within the covenant are to be prepared for heaven, and this task has been committed by Christ to the visible Church.

5. What are the duties of the Church to its own membership?

The duties of the Church to its own membership are (a) preaching and teaching them the Word of God; (b) pastoral care; (c) administration of the sacraments; (d) Christian fellowship of the communion of saints; (e) the proper use of church discipline.

6. How should the Church discharge its responsibility to the children in its membership?

(See Lesson 10 of this series, in "Blue Banner Faith and Life", January-March 1967, pp. 44-46, especially Q. 8 on p. 46).

The Church's obligation to its children is the same as its obligation to communicant members, with the following exceptions: (a) the children are not to be admitted to the Lord's Supper; (b) they are to be urged and commanded to make a public profession of faith.

Our standards expressly state that baptized children of the Church are subject to the admonition and judicial discipline of the Church.

LESSON 16**The Covenant of Grace and the Importance of Church Ordinances: 1. Choosing the Right Church**

"It is the duty of a Christian to pray for the reformation of every part of Christ's Church, to inquire what part adheres most closely to the Scripture plan; and without prejudice join in that communion which is most pure, and in which he may prove most useful in the service of Christ."

"When any Church imposes sinful terms of communion — when the constitution is anti-scriptural — when the administration is corrupt, and attempts at its reformation have proved ineffectual, it is the duty of Christians to separate from it; and if the majority should violate the terms upon which the Church members were united, it is lawful for the minority to testify

against the defection, and to walk by the rule of their former attainments." — The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, XXI. 4, 5.

Scripture References:

Jude 3. It is our duty earnestly to contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints.

1 John 4:1-6. The Christian must discriminate between true and false doctrines and religious teachers.

2 John 10, 11. It is sinful to maintain religious fellowship with those who depart from the truth.

2 Thess. 3:6. 1 Tim. 6:3-5. It is a Christian duty to withdraw from those who deviate from the truth.

Questions:

1. How does the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace stress the importance of Church ordinances?

God has chosen the elect to eternal life and the means thereto. These means are chiefly the visible Church and its ordinances, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation (Confession of Faith, XXV. 2). Therefore the Church and its ordinances have a most important function in the working out of the Covenant of Grace. The Reformed theology is opposed to every tendency that minimizes or belittles the importance of the visible Church.

2. Does it make any difference what denomination we are members of?

Indeed it does. In the church situation as it exists today the choice of a denomination may mean the choice between biblical Christianity and a counterfeit system of religion. Even where the difference is not so extreme, it is our duty to join the church that maintains the fullest testimony for the truth of God. In every case our church membership determines our real testimony for or against the truth of God.

3. What texts of Scripture deal with the question of a choice between various denominations?

No text of the Bible deals with this matter directly, for the question of denominationalism had not yet arisen when the Bible was written. We will not find a ready-made formula for choosing between different denominations. Yet there are texts of Scripture from which we can learn the PRINCIPLES that should determine our decision. All those passages of the Bible that speak of witnessing for the truth, and withdrawing from error, and avoiding teachers of false doctrines, have a bearing on the question of a choice between denominations.

4. How is the question of denomination often wrongly faced and decided?

It is often wrongly faced and decided on a basis of convenience, emotional preference, family relationship, etc. These are all to be kept strictly subordinate to the real question, the question of TRUTH versus ERROR. We are to choose the church whose creed we believe to be closest to the truth of the Bible, not the church whose minister has the most pleasing personality.

5. What is the denominational picture in America today?

Besides a multitude of independent congregations of varying character, there exist in

America today four main types of denominations, namely: (a) Out-and-out modernist denominations, that are virtually Unitarian in their faith; (b) Sleeping denominations managed by an unchallenged modernist leadership in their key positions; (c) Evangelical denominations of varying degrees of purity and faithfulness; (d) Churches that witness consistently to the Reformed Faith, in its fulness and purity. Of this fourth category, there exist in the United States several denominations, most of which are quite small. We believe that our Covenanter or Reformed Presbyterian Church, though certainly far from perfection, maintains the fullest and most consistent testimony to the truth.

6. Should Christian people separate from modernist-dominated denominations?

They certainly should. Failure to do so is one of the major sins of Christians today. Note the following statement of the Reformed Presbyterian Testimony: "There may be associations of men called Churches, which are founded upon Antichristian principles, and some Churches have degenerated into synagogues of Satan. Such are not to be considered as branches of the true Christian Church" (XXI. 6). Note also Section 5, as quoted at the beginning of this lesson.

7. If a denomination is not modernistic, is it all right for Christians to be members of it?

Not necessarily. Modernism is extreme unbelief, but there are many less serious errors which are still false and wrong. Many Christian people hold these errors as truth, but that does not make them true, nor make it right to join a church that maintains them. We are to witness, not only against modernism, but against all kinds of error. It is not enough to find a church that is against modernism. We are to decide which denomination "adheres most closely to the Scripture plan" and then become members of it. It is better, no doubt, to be a member of an evangelical Arminian church than to be a member of a modernistic or Unitarian church; but to support Arminian error is wrong, too. We should not support any form of error.

8. Must we look for a perfect church to join?

No, for such does not exist on earth, but only in heaven. It is our duty to seek the purest and most Scriptural church, and then join it. Perfect orthodoxy, like perfect holiness, is found only above. We are not to expect absolute perfection, but we are to seek, join and support the church that is nearest to the truth revealed in the Bible.

9. How can the present tendency of people to forsake a strict and faithful church and join a more popular one be overcome?

(a) Not by "letting down the bars" of the strict and faithful church. (b) Not by harsh

criticism or stern denunciation of those who decide to forsake the strict church. (c) But certainly something can be done to check this deplorable tendency by a PERMANENT program of sound indoctrination in the Bible principles of truth. It cannot be done by "inspiration"; what is needed is more INFORMATION. It cannot be accomplished by vague preaching on "high ideals" or "the challenge of our time"; what is needed is SYSTEMATIC and CONTINUED preaching of the great truths of the Reformed Faith. (d) Much could also be accomplished, no

doubt, by a return to the Scriptural exercise of church discipline so that membership in the church would mean something and it would be evident to all that there is a difference between faithful and unfaithful churches. This does not mean that the judicial discipline of the Church should be invoked for trifling matters, but it does mean that serious breaches of members' profession and vows should not be complacently winked at. We should be more concerned about TRUTH and RIGHT than about "how to win friends and influence people".

LESSON 17

The Covenant of Grace and the Importance of Church Ordinances: 2. Loyalty to the Church

"The Christian Church, as a society of rational beings, must have explicit terms of communion, to which every member gives his assent. It is not to be expected that all men shall think alike about every object of thought; but Christians cannot co-operate, unless they are of one mind about the general principles of Christianity. Terms of Christian communion should embrace nothing but what is Divine truth, and reject nothing for which the Church has faithfully contended." — The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, XXII. 4.

Scripture References:

Amos 3:3. Phil. 1:27; 2:2; 3:16. The duty of unity in church fellowship and loyalty to the truth.

Matt. 15:9. Loyalty to the Church is a duty only in so far as the Church itself is loyal to the truth of God.

Acts 2:42. The early Christians' example of loyalty to the Church.

Questions:

1. What two wrong tendencies exist today with respect to the question of loyalty to the Church?

(a) In some Fundamentalist circles, there exists a minimizing of the importance of the visible Church that almost amounts to a contempt for the Church and its ordinances. This tendency is abetted by modern dispensationalism which virtually limits the Church on earth to the period between Pentecost and Christ's Second Coming. The idea of many Christians seems to be that the Church is only a means to an end, or a tool for the accomplishment of certain purposes; that it serves a useful purpose, but is not indispensable; and that almost all Christian fellowship and activity can exist equally well without the visible Church as such. This is all wrong. The visible Church is not only a means, but an end in itself.

(b) In Modernist circles, there is a demand for an absolute and excessive loyalty to the Church as an institution, to its human leaders and their man-made program. One large denomination has officially declared that to refuse to obey the mandate of its highest court is a sin of the same kind as a refusal to partake of the Lord's Supper. Thus the word of man is put on a par with the Word of God. The great evil in all this is, that the churches which demand this totalitarian loyalty of their members have themselves grievously departed from loyalty to the Word of God, so that it becomes a choice between loyalty to the Church and loyalty to God.

2. Is loyalty to the Church good or bad?

This depends wholly on the character and doctrines of the Church. To be loyal to a church which is untrue to the Bible is certainly bad. On the other hand, when a person has conscientiously joined a church which he believes to be true to the Bible, then loyalty to such a church is certainly a Christian duty. Someone once said, "My country, right or wrong!" There exists in some circles a similar attitude toward the Church: "My denomination, right or wrong" — that is, "I will be loyal and obedient to my denomination no matter whither it leads me, regardless of any higher loyalty to the Word of God". Someone amended the slogan concerning "My country" by saying: "My country right or wrong. If right, to be kept right; if wrong, to be set right!" We should imitate this in our attitude to the Church. We should say: "My denomination, right or wrong! If right, to be kept right; if wrong, to be set right!"

3. What is a Christian's duty with respect to a Church which is untrue to the Bible?

If he is not a member, it is his duty to remain separate from such a church. If he is already a member, it is his duty to make every possible effort to bring about such reform as will bring the church into harmony with the teachings of God's Word. This does not refer to every minor detail of faith and life, for com-

plete mutual agreement on every point is not possible on earth; see R.P. Testimony XXII. 4 as cited at the head of this lesson. It concerns radical departures from the teachings of the Bible. Duty requires, in such a case, that the matter be pressed to the final court of appeal (Synod or General Assembly, as the case may be). The Christian who is a member of a church which is untrue to the Bible may never rest complacently until his church is brought into harmony with the Word of God.

4. What is a Christian's duty with respect to a church which cannot be reformed so as to be true to the Bible?

When serious and persistent efforts at reformation have proved to be finally ineffectual, it is a Christian's duty to separate from such a church. See R.P. Testimony, XXI, Section 5 and also Error 4. No Christian has a right, before God, to remain complacently in the membership of a denomination that is "corrupt or declining". As the Testimony rightly affirms, separation from such a church is a Christian duty. The only condition that can justify continued membership is the continuance of an active, positive attempt at reformation. When it finally becomes clear that reformation cannot be effected, it is the Christian's duty to separate from the denomination.

5. What is the Christian's duty with respect to the further reformation of a church that is already essentially pure and Scriptural?

The "status quo" is never good enough; we may never rest satisfied with it. Reformation of the Church is not an act, but a continuous

process. Our Covenanter forefathers in Scotland realized this when they called for a "Second Reformation" following the success of the "First Reformation". The church which rests on past attainments and seeks no progress for the future will become a stagnant church. The Christian must always seek the FURTHER and MORE COMPLETE reformation of his church along Scriptural lines. "It is the duty of a Christian to pray for the reformation of every part of Christ's Church" (Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, XXI. 4). If it is the duty of a Christian to pray for the reformation of EVERY part of Christ's Church, this must include HIS OWN denomination as well as others, and it certainly implies working for it as well as praying for it. There is no point on earth at which the progressive reformation of the Church can be halted with the decree "Thus far but no farther". Like the sanctification of the individual, the reformation of the Church is to be continued progressively until the end of its stay in this world.

6. How does the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace tend to strengthen loyalty to the Church?

The Bible teaches that the visible Church is a divine institution which is the appointed sphere within which the benefits of the Covenant of Grace are bestowed on the elect of God. Because of its character as a divine institution and the God-ordained sphere of saving power in the Covenant of Grace, the visible Church is most important, and the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace emphasizes its importance. It shows the great importance of holding membership in a pure and Scriptural church, and the importance of loyalty to the Church because it is a divine institution.

LESSON 18

The Covenant of Grace and the Importance of Church Ordinances: 3. The Preaching of the Word

"The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the Word, an effectual means of enlightening, convincing, and humbling sinners; of driving them out of themselves, and drawing them unto Christ; of conforming them to his image, and subduing them to his will; of strengthening them against temptations and corruptions; of building them up in grace, and establishing their hearts in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation." — The Larger Catechism, 155.

Scripture References:

Psalms 19:7; 119:50, 130. The Word a means of grace in the conversion of sinners.

2 Tim. 3:15-17. James 1:21. 1 Pet. 2:2. The Word used by God as a means to the salvation of sinners.

1 Tim. 5:17. 2 Tim. 4:2. Tit. 1:9. The importance of preaching the Word.

Questions:

1. What wrong attitudes toward the preaching of the Word should be avoided?

(a) We should avoid underrating it, as the mystics do, who belittle the importance of preaching and the Bible, and depend more on their so-called "inner light", their feelings, inner impulses, "hunches", "guidance", and so forth.

(b) We should avoid overrating it, as some do who assert that the Word possesses an inherent power, apart from the work of the Holy Spirit.

2. What is the true function of the preaching of the Word in the salvation of the elect?

The preaching of the Word is an appointed means, honored and used by the Holy Spirit to the salvation of the elect, and in all ordinary cases, it is the indispensable means. The exceptions are infants, the insane, and the mentally deficient. Of course some are brought to salvation by reading the Word in printed form, who have not heard the Word preached. But none are saved apart from THE WORD, with the exceptions noted above.

3. How does the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace emphasize the importance of the preaching of the Word?

It shows that the preaching of the Word is a covenant ordinance, for the accomplishment of the covenanted salvation of the elect. It is the God-ordained means by which the covenant institution, the Church, is built up, both in numbers and in character.

4. What does the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace imply concerning our duty in connection with the preaching of the Word?

(a) Regular attendance upon preaching. (b) Bringing up our children in the habit of attendance upon preaching from their infancy. (c) Reverent attention during preaching. (d) Recognition of the official character of preaching by an ordained minister, in distinction from voluntary exhorting by an unordained person.

5. What wrong tendencies are noticeable at the present time with respect to the preaching of the Word?

(a) In some churches, the encroachments of ritual upon the time for the sermon; likewise, the frequent observance of special days (Mother's Day, Father's Day, Red Cross Day, etc.), which makes it impossible to do justice to the great truths of the Bible. (b) The tendency to supplant preaching by motion pictures, or other "entertaining" features, in some denominations. (c) The frequent turning over the time of the preaching service to young people's groups and representatives or promoters of various organizations and causes (often worthy enough in themselves, but not a proper substitute for the regular preaching of the Word of God).

6. What kind of preaching is most needed today?

Doctrinal preaching, because many church members, especially in the young people's and young adults' age groups, are grossly ignorant of the great truths of the Reformed Faith. Doctrinal preaching is needed, not for a few weeks or a year, but PERMANENTLY, year after year, until the end of the world. After all, Christianity is first of all a body of truth. Not all sermons need be formally doctrinal, of course. But the crying need of the hour is not for more "inspiration", but for more INFORMATION. People's capacity to receive doctrinal instruction has become so weakened that ministers must go back to the A.B.C.'s and lay "line upon line" and "Precept upon precept" patiently, being careful not to dispense too heavy doses at one time.

LESSON 19

The Covenant of Grace and the Importance of Church Ordinances: 4. The Sacraments

"Sacraments are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace, immediately instituted by God, to represent Christ and His benefits: and to confirm our interest in Him; as also, to put a visible difference between those that belong unto the Church, and the rest of the world; and solemnly to engage them to the service of God in Christ, according to His Word." — The Westminster Confession of Faith. XXVII. 1.

Scripture References:

Rom. 4:11. Gen. 17:7, 10. Matt. 28:19. 1 Cor. 11:23. The sacraments are signs and seals of the Covenant of Grace.

Ex. 12:48. Gen. 34:14. 1 Cor. 10:16, 21. The sacraments are intended to put a visible difference between the covenant people of God and the rest of the world.

Questions:

1. What is the relation of the sacraments to the Covenant of Grace?

They are signs and seals of the Covenant of Grace. Under the Old Testament circumcision and the passover were the sacraments that constituted special signs and seals of the covenant relationship to God. Under the New Testament Baptism and the Lord's Supper have taken the place of the Old Testament sacraments. The essential meaning is still the same as under the Old Testament. The Covenant is one and the same; only the administration of it has changed to the New Testament form.

2. What is meant by saying that the sacraments are church ordinances?

Because they are signs and seals of the Covenant of Grace, the sacraments are church ordinances, committed for their administration to the visible Church, for the visible Church is the institution and sphere of the covenant. Therefore the sacraments are to be administered only by lawful ministers of the Church, who are the Church's organs and Christ's servants in this administration.

3. What should we think about private administration of the sacraments?

Private administration of the sacraments is NEVER proper. The sacraments are church ordinances, not a private privilege of individuals. They should NEVER be administered privately, nor otherwise than in the congregation of believers. Not only is private administration of the sacraments wrong — administration in any other assembly than the congregation of believers under lawful officers is improper. For example, it is improper to administer Baptism in a private home with only family and relatives present; even though they may all be believers, still it is not a church congregation. Similarly, it is improper to administer the Lord's Supper in a missionary convention, or in a gathering of the students and professors of a Christian college. The sacraments pertain to the Church itself, not to any and every gathering of Christian people. (In exceptional cases, such as illness, or the baptism of a person serving a prison sentence, a service may properly be held, and the sacraments administered, with only the minister and elders and a few other members present, but it should never be done by a minister alone.)

4. Is it proper to administer Baptism and the Lord's Supper apart from the preaching of the Word?

Certainly not. In the Roman Catholic system, sacraments have virtually usurped the place of preaching. The Reformed theology teaches, in harmony with the Bible that preaching is central and more important than sacraments (1 Cor. 1:17, 18). The divorcement between the Word and the sacraments, and the frequent administration of the sacraments apart from the preaching of the Word, became prevalent in the middle ages, and was one of the corruptions of the Church of Rome that called for reformation.

The Reformers of the Calvinistic Reformation rightly regarded the pulpit as more central in Christian worship than the communion table, and assigned it the place of prominence in church sanctuaries. But today in some Protestant denominations we see the tendency to administer the sacraments apart from the preaching of the Word reappearing and gaining ground. But the Reformers were right. We should follow in their train, and insist that the sacraments be never administered apart from the preaching of the Word.

The sacraments do not work automatically, or "ex opere operato" as Rome wrongly teaches; their efficacy is dependent on FAITH, and faith is dependent on THE PREACHING OF THE WORD.

5. How do the sacraments mark the distinction between the covenant people of God and the World?

As administered in some churches, the sacraments cannot mark any such distinction, for children are baptized regardless of whether or not the parents are church members in good standing and all who wish to partake are admitted to the Lord's Supper with no questions asked. This breaks down the line of demarcation between the Church and the world.

But where the sacraments are properly limited to the covenant people, that is, to those in good standing as members of the visible Church and (in the case of Baptism) to their infant children, they serve as a badge or emblem of membership in the covenant society of the people of God. ONLY those who make a credible profession of faith in Christ and obedience to Him, and their infant children, are to be baptized; ONLY those who profess personal faith in Christ and obedience to Him, and who have been examined as to their knowledge and their purpose to live godly in Christ Jesus, are to be admitted to the Lord's Supper. (Concerning the question of open, close and restricted communion, see "Blue Banner Faith and Life", 1949, pp. 31-33).

6. What form of covenant-breaking is common among Christian people today?

Neglect of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Under the Old Testament, neglect of the signs and seals of the covenant was pronounced covenant-breaking by God (Gen. 17:14; Num. 9:13). We may rightly infer that neglect of Baptism and the Lord's Supper is also regarded by God as covenant-breaking, a very heinous sin. Those who believe that Infant Baptism is Scriptural, and yet carelessly neglect or long postpone the Baptism of their children, are guilty of this sin; and so are those who remain absent from the Lord's Supper without necessary reasons. But God is gracious and ready to forgive even such careless disregard of the signs and seals of the Covenant of Grace when the guilty person repents and confesses his sin.

LESSON 20

The Covenant of Grace and the Importance of Church Ordinances: 5. Church Discipline

"Church censures are necessary, for the reclaiming and gaining of offending brethren, for deterring of others from the like offences, for purging out of the leaven which might infect

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."

"For the better attaining of these ends, the officers of the Church are to proceed by admonition; suspension from the sacrament of the Lord's Supper for a season; and by excommunication from the Church; according to the nature of the crime, and demerit of the person." — The Westminster Confession of Faith, XXX. 3, 4.

Scripture References:

1 Cor. 5:1-13. The Church at Corinth directed to exclude an ungodly person from membership.

1 Tim. 5:20, 21. Church discipline to be exercised according to righteousness and without partiality.

Matt. 18:17. A person who refuses to submit to the lawful discipline of the Church is to be regarded as a non-Christian.

1 Cor. 5:5. 1 Tim. 1:20. An excommunicated person is delivered unto Satan.

Tit. 3:10, 11. A heretic (or factious person), after due admonition, is to be excluded from the Church.

Questions:

1. What is the relation of the Covenant of Grace to church discipline?

The Covenant of Grace requires that there be a clear distinction and separation between the covenant people of God and the general population of the world. It requires that the covenant institution, the church, be kept pure and holy, and not profaned by those who propagate false doctrines or live scandalous lives. This can be accomplished only by church discipline, that is, by the official, authoritative administration of church censures according to the appointment of Christ.

2. What are the ends of church discipline?

(a) Medicinal, to bring about, if possible, the reformation of the offending member. (b) Surgical. Where the reformation of the offending member proves finally to be impossible, he must be excluded from the membership of the Church, in order that the whole body may not be affected by his sin.

3. What is the present status of church discipline in most denominations of the Presbyterian and Reformed family?

In most Presbyterian and Reformed denominations church discipline has almost ceased to exist except in the most flagrant cases of gross immorality. Many church members today regard church discipline as merely a relic of the past,

a peculiar, narrow-minded custom of a bigoted past when the churches were terribly strict. Many church members of today will not tolerate any suggestion of church discipline, but will ask for their certificates and leave their denomination if there is a likelihood of it.

4. Can there be a real spiritual revival without a return to Scriptural church discipline?

Certainly there cannot. Note the solemn assertion of the Reformed Presbyterian Testimony (XXXI. 3, 4):

"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.

"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."

5. Whose duty is it to safeguard the soundness and purity of the Church?

Too often the tendency is to leave all such matters to the Session, that is, the minister and elders. While the pastor and elders have a special official responsibility for guarding the soundness and purity of the Church, they are not solely responsible for it. Every member of the Church has a responsibility. Members should admonish one another as occasion may require (Col. 3:16; Rom. 15:14; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14, 15; Gal. 6:1; Matt. 13:15, 16). The shirking of this responsibility, in the spirit of "Am I my brother's keeper?" is the cause of much corruption in the Church. It is made even worse when those who should admonish some wayward church member, not only fail to do so, but gossip about him to others instead.

6. Should church members report serious scandals to the Church Session?

Certainly they should. If it is the solemn duty of the Session to adjudicate such matters, it is also the solemn duty of other members to bear witness as occasion may require. One reason for the almost complete breakdown of church discipline today is the extreme unwillingness of most church members to testify before the Session of their congregation. This is a great evil and is very unfair to the pastor and elders. The members have elected the pastor and elders and have promised to support them in the lawful discharge of their duties. The "know-nothing", "do-nothing", "don't-ask-me" attitude makes it

difficult or impossible for a church Session to act according to righteousness.

7. Are the baptized children of the Church who have not yet made a public profession of faith, subject to the censures of church discipline?

Yes. The Book of Discipline of the Reformed

Presbyterian Church, I. 8, states: "The authority and discipline of the church extends to all members, irrespective of rank and station in life. Children who are baptized members, whether or not they have made their own profession of faith, are under the care of the church and subject to its discipline" (p. 281).

LESSON 21

The Covenant of Grace and the Importance of Church Ordinances: 6. Church Government

"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.

"For the better government, and further edification of the Church, there ought to be such assemblies as are commonly called synods or councils." — The Westminster Confession of Faith, XXXI. 1.

"The government of the Church is Presbyterian: Ministers or teaching Elders are the highest officers, and among these there is a perfect parity of power: with teaching Elders are associated, in the exercise of ecclesiastical government, other Elders who only rule. These ministers and ruling Elders meet in courts, congregational sessions, presbyteries, and synods, in regular subordination, the one to the other: to these courts Christ has given the power of governing the Church and ordaining officers, and this power is entirely ministerial and subordinate to his law. The deacon has no power except about the temporalities of the Church." — The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, XXIII. 3.

Scripture References:

Isa. 9:6, 7. Luke 1:32, 33. Christ is King forever over His covenant people, which implies a government in the Church under Christ, distinct from the civil magistrate.

1 Tim. 5:17. 1 Thess. 5:12. Acts 20:17, 28. Heb. 13:7, 17, 24. 1 Cor. 12:28. Christ has appointed a government of the Church by elders.

1 Tim. 4:14. The elders are to govern the Church jointly, as a court or "presbytery".

Act. 15:2, 6, 22, 23. A court governing a particular part of the Church is subject to the jurisdiction of a court governing several such parts or governing the whole Church.

Questions:

1. What is the relation of the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace to the subject of church government?

The doctrine of the Covenant of Grace re-

quires that the visible Church maintain its own orthodoxy, integrity and holiness over against the world. As all the saints are included in one and the same Covenant of Grace, it implies a responsibility of each congregation for the purity of the other congregations and of the Church as a whole. Therefore no congregation can rightly stand aloof from other congregations and their concerns. For the proper discharge of the obligation to other congregations, there must be a church government having jurisdiction over all the congregations.

Ideally, this would be a government having jurisdiction over all Christian congregations in a particular country, or all in the world. But the rise of denominationalism has prevented this, and the nearest approach that is possible at the present time is a government having jurisdiction over all the congregations of a particular denomination.

The Church is an organism, not merely a collection of individual congregations and members. It has a unified corporate life. This involves the necessity for a church government having jurisdiction over the whole body.

2. What is the prevalent attitude toward the question of church government today?

The prevalent attitude today in American Protestantism is that the Bible does not require any specific form of church government, that church government is a matter of expediency or human preference, and that any form is proper if the majority of the church favors it.

There is also observable today a tremendous swing toward independentism — the idea that there is to be no authoritative church government having jurisdiction over more than a single congregation. Where this conception prevails, all responsibility for the condition of other congregations and for the Church as a whole is renounced.

3. In contrast to these attitudes, what do we believe concerning church government?

(a) We believe that the Bible requires authoritative church government having jurisdiction over all the congregations of a denomination.
(b) We believe that the FORM of church govern-

ment is important, and that it has been appointed in the Bible and not left to human prudence to determine. (c) Of the various historical forms of church government, we believe that the PRESBYTERIAN form, or government by elders in a series of graded courts, has the sanction of the Scriptures.

4. What are the essential elements of the Presbyterian form of church government?

(a) The Church is to be governed by elders, of which there are two kinds: elders which only rule (called "ruling elders") and elders which both rule and preach (called "preaching elders", "pastors", or "ministers").

(b) The elders are to govern the Church in a series of graded courts, as follows: Session or Consistory, having jurisdiction over a single congregation; Presbytery or Classis, having jurisdiction over a number of congregations; Synod, having jurisdiction over a number of presbyteries or classes; General Synod or General Assembly, having jurisdiction over the entire denomination.

(c) All the officers of a particular congregation, including the pastor, are to be elected by the members of that congregation, but they receive their commission and authority from Christ, the Head of the Church.

(d) Ruling power in the Church is always to be exercised by a group of elders acting jointly, never by a single individual (minister or ruling elder) acting alone.

Of course we do not profess to find every detail of the Presbyterian system of church government in the Bible. But we believe that the framework or essential structure of the system, as outlined above, is set forth in the Bible, especially in the example of the apostolic Church and in the teaching of the New Testament Epistles.

5. What attitude should we, as members of the covenant society, have toward the government of the Church?

We should regard the government of the Church seriously, recognize its great importance, strive to keep it soundly Scriptural and to prevent all wrong tendencies, and support church officers in the lawful discharge of their duties. In addition, those who have been chosen to church office should regard their office as a sacred trust, for which they must give answer to God.

6. What is the nature of the office of deacon?

The deacon is not a ruling or governing officer, but an administrative one. His province is the temporal side of the Church's affairs, including the business administration of the Church, collection and handling of offerings, and, in cases of need, ministering in the name of the Church to the relief of members. The deacons, like the elders, are to act jointly in a board, and the board of deacons is responsible to the Session and congregation for its acts.

LESSON 22

The Covenant of Grace and the Church's Obligations of the World: 1. Evangelism

"The Gospel is the Revelation, which God has given to man, of the plan of salvation by a Redeemer; this is glad tidings worthy of all acceptance by sinners.

"Preaching the Gospel consists in the offer of salvation through Christ to sinners, accompanied with such an explanation of the various parts of God's word as may tend to persuade men to receive Christ as a Saviour, and to live and walk in him.

"The Gospel offer is not a declaration to any individual sinner, that his particular name is in the book of life; it is not immediately founded upon the decree of election, but upon the commandment of God, authorizing the minister of the Gospel to offer Christ and all his benefits to sinners, as such, however aggravated their crimes may have been, accompanied with information that every one who accepts the offer shall be saved.

"Preaching the Gospel does not consist in promising salvation to all who hear it, or in af-

firming that Christ has redeemed each of them; but in a free and full offer of a Saviour to every individual, declaring that he who believeth shall be saved, and he who believeth not shall be damned; there is no inconsistency between the doctrine of particular redemption and the unlimited Gospel offer." — The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, XI. 1, 2, 3, 4.

Scripture References:

Rom. 1:15-17. The preaching of the Gospel is God's appointed way of saving the elect, both Jews and Gentiles.

2 Cor. 5:18-20. The Gospel message announces Christ's redemption, and urges sinners to be reconciled to God.

Isa. 55:3. Those who accept the Gospel are brought into a covenant relation to God.

Acts 2:38-40. The Gospel promises free salvation to all who repent and believe on Christ.

John 10:15, 26-28. Preaching the Gospel does

not mean proclaiming that Christ has redeemed every individual human being. The Gospel is to be offered freely to all, but only the elect, for whom Christ, died, will accept the offer.

Questions:

1. What is the literal meaning of the word "evangelism"?

The Greek word "evangel" means "good news" or "good message". Thus "evangelism" means literally "good message teaching". "Evangelization" means the carrying on of a program or work of evangelism. The words "evangelistic" and "evangelical" are sometimes confused. "Evangelistic" means "pertaining to evangelism, or preaching the Gospel to the unsaved"; in America, at least, the term "evangelical" is used to describe the character and content of a person's faith. A person is "evangelical" if he believes in salvation by free grace through the substitutionary atonement of Christ; a person is "evangelistic" if he is concerned about the proclamation of the Gospel to the unsaved.

2. How is the term "evangelism" sometimes misused?

In recent years, members of "liberal" churches have applied the term "evangelism" to various forms of activity which are quite foreign to the true meaning of the term. (a) It is applied to church membership campaigns in which almost the whole stress is laid on joining some church, while little or nothing is said about sin, repentance, and salvation by the blood of Christ. (b) By a strange abuse of words, "evangelism" is being applied to certain foreign missionary activities which certainly are not preaching of the Gospel, but at best only adjuncts or by-products of the Gospel. Thus we read of "agricultural evangelism", "industrial evangelism", and the like. The idea is, apparently, that these various lines of activity are intended to influence people for good. There may be such a thing as evangelism accompanied by agricultural or industrial training. But evangelism is evangelism; it is not a quality of human activities, but the proclamation of a definite message about God and the way of His salvation.

3. Is evangelism the sole purpose and task of the Church?

No. The Church has a double obligation in its service to God. It has an obligation to its own membership and it has an obligation to the world, or the general public. These two must be kept in balance. If either of them is disregarded or neglected, evil results will follow.

Some people think that evangelism and missions are the sole purpose and function of the Church. This is untrue. Note the sound statement of the Reformed Presbyterian Testimony,

XXII. 3: "The end of church fellowship is to exhibit a system of sound principles, to maintain the ordinances of Gospel worship in their purity, to promote holiness, and to prepare the saints for heaven." There are some who seem to think that more evangelism is the answer to all problems and the remedy for all the Church's ills. But this is an untrue and unbalanced view of the matter. Just as a man's first obligation is to provide for his own family, so the Church's first obligation is to maintain its own soundness and integrity. Really, the future of evangelism and missions depends on keeping the Church itself sound and pure. To branch out into wide fields of external activity while neglecting sound preaching, doctrinal instruction and Christian nurture of the Church's own covenant children and youth, and Biblical church discipline, is a great mistake and will prove disastrous in the end. First of all we must make sure that the root and trunk of the tree are sound and remain so.

4. What is the relation of the Covenant of Grace to evangelism?

Evangelism is God's way to bring about the salvation of the elect, which is guaranteed by the Covenant of Grace. This includes, of course, all preaching of the Gospel of Christ, whether addressed to the Church or to those outside of the visible Church, whether at home or abroad. The Gospel is to be proclaimed to all human beings, and in God's appointed time the elect will obey the Gospel command and come to Christ and be saved. "Every one of God's elect is, in the time appointed in the council of peace, apprehended of Christ by his Spirit, as one of his redeemed children; is regenerated, and thereby enabled to embrace the Saviour; and thus through faith becomes one with Christ in the covenant of grace, and acknowledging Jesus as his head and representative, is justified from all his sins" (Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, XIV. 2).

5. What is the best method of evangelism?

Simple methods are best, and sometimes methods need to be changed or improved, but the stress should never be on the method. The stress should be on the CONTENT of evangelism — on the message itself, not on the package it is put up in. We are to stress the MESSAGE rather than the method. Our American worship of "methods" amounts almost to a form of idolatry. The important thing is that the real, Biblical message be preached, not the particular method by which it is accomplished (Phil. 1:15-18). Of course some methods are definitely unscriptural and should be avoided.

6. What special emphasis should be included in the message of evangelism in a country which has long known the light of the Gospel, such as America?

Those who hear the Gospel must be told that

they are covenant-breakers. Not only are all human beings guilty of Adam's breach of the Covenant of Works (for Adam acted as their representative), but in America the great majority of non-Christians are first, second or third generation breakers of the Covenant of Grace. That is, their parents, grandparents, or great-grandparents were Christian believers. Such covenant-breakers are even more guilty before God than the heathen in the heart of Africa who have never seen a Bible nor heard the name of Jesus Christ. Covenant-breakers are under an added obligation to repent and return to the covenant God of their fathers, and if they do not do so, they will to all eternity suffer added ruin, remorse and loss in hell.

7. Is there a contradiction between Christ's redemption, which is limited to the elect, and the Gospel offer, which is addressed to all mankind?

No. There is involved in this a paradox, or apparent contradiction, but there is no real contradiction, even though human reason cannot

solve the problem. It is the strength and glory of the Reformed theology that it does not attempt to cut the knot and solve such paradoxes by human reason. The Bible teaches that Christ died to redeem the elect, and the elect only; the Bible also teaches that the Gospel is to be proclaimed to all mankind. Our human minds cannot fully harmonize these two teachings, yet we know that they are both true, because both are taught in the Bible.

8. In evangelism, is it proper to tell unsaved sinners: "Christ died for you"?

No. Note the statement of the Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, XI. 4, quoted at the head of this lesson. Christ died for the elect, not for all men individually. We have no way of knowing whether Christ died for a particular individual until that person actually comes to Christ in repentance and faith. We should preach that Christ died to save sinners and that all men are commanded to repent and believe on Christ and that those who do repent and believe will be saved.

LESSON 23

The Covenant of Grace and the Church's Obligation to the World: 2. Missions

"In the second petition, (which is, "Thy kingdom come"), acknowledging ourselves and all mankind to be by nature under the dominion of sin and Satan, we pray that the kingdom of sin and Satan may be destroyed, the gospel propagated throughout the world, the Jews called, the fulness of the Gentiles brought in . . ." — The Larger Catechism, 191.

Scripture References:

Gen. 12:3, 18:8. The world-wide redemptive purpose of the Covenant of Grace as announced to Abraham.

Psalms 2:8. Isa. 11:10; 42:6; 60:3; 66:18-21. The Gentile nations to be Christ's inheritance and to receive salvation in Him.

Matt. 28:18-20. Christ's Great Commission to teach all nations.

Acts 9:15; 11:18; 13:46, 47; 15:3, 7, 12-18; 22:21; 28:28. It is God's command that the covenant salvation be preached to all nations.

Rom. 11:25-27. All of God's elect of Israel and of the Gentiles shall be brought to salvation in Christ.

Questions:

1. How is the Covenant of Grace the basis of the Christian missionary enterprise?

When God established His covenant with

Abraham, it was in order that all the nations of the earth should be blessed in him. Thus the covenant salvation was to be for all nations. During the period of preparation, from Abraham to Christ, the Covenant of Grace was limited to the people of Israel. This was not for the sole benefit of Israel, but for the ultimate benefit of the Gentiles. It was not intended to be a permanent limitation, but only a temporary restriction of the covenant to the narrow channel of Israel in order that in due time it might overflow to all the nations of the world.

The elect of God are from every nation and race on earth (Rev. 7:9). Because God has chosen His elect unto salvation from all nations, the Gospel of salvation must be preached to the people of all nations. Both the eternal decree of election, and the preaching of the Gospel to all nations, are included in the great plan of God. Rom. 10:13-15.

2. How is the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace a strong incentive to carry on missionary work?

The doctrine of the Covenant of Grace is a strong incentive to carry on missionary work because the Covenant of Grace guarantees the salvation of the elect. God has His elect in every part of the world, and they will certainly be saved through the preaching of the Gospel. Thus true missionary work cannot fail of its God-intended purpose. The missionary is not engaged in a useless task, nor a task the success of which

is doubtful or uncertain. His success is as sure as the promises of God. This does not mean that churches and missionaries do not sometimes fail to do their duty; it means that when they do their duty, their labor is never in vain in the Lord (1 Cor. 15:58).

3. Why should the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace be a comfort to the Church concerning the future of the fruits of missionary work?

The future of the fruits of missionary work is guaranteed by God's faithfulness in the Covenant of Grace. The permanent endurance of the Church established through the labors of missionaries does not depend upon the toleration extended by earthly kings and rulers, but upon the promises of God in the Covenant of Grace.

Persecution cannot really destroy the fruits of missionary work. The outward form of the Church may be affected for a time; the Church may even be driven "underground" and believers reduced to worshiping God "in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth" (Heb. 11:38), as happened, by the providence of God, to the faithful Covenanters in Scotland. But such things do not really liquidate the Church. It is the bush that ever burns, yet is not consumed, for God is in the bush.

At the present day when we see the lights going out almost all over Asia, especially in the great country of China where the people of God have invested so much "blood and sweat and tears", we should realize that God is still on the throne of the universe and His covenant cannot fail. God will keep His covenant with His Church. It will endure, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. The truth of God, and the

covenant salvation, will pass down from parents to children, generation to generation, in multitudes of instances, in spite of the devil and all his works.

4. Is the purpose of missions limited to the salvation of individuals?

No. The real purpose of the missionary enterprise, according to the Bible, is the salvation of the human race as a whole. This is shown by many texts of Scripture, such as Gen. 3:15; Psalm 65:2; 67:7; Isa. 3-5; John 4:42; 12:32; 1 John 2:2. This of course does not imply that every individual is to be saved. It does not imply anything concerning the number of the saved in proportion to the number of the finally lost, although the Bible teaches that the elect from all nations constitute "a great multitude which no man could number" (Rev. 7:9). When the Bible calls Christ "the Saviour of the world" and teaches us that the Covenant of Grace will bring about the salvation of the world, or of the human race as a whole, this means that the kingdom of God to all eternity, will include THE HUMAN RACE AS AN ORGANISM UNDER CHRIST ITS HEAD. The redeemed will constitute the real, abiding humanity. The reprobate, who are eternally lost, are like branches pruned off a tree; the elect are like branches living and growing on the tree; the human race is the tree. God's great purpose, in the Covenant of Grace, is the salvation of humanity as an organic whole, a purpose which cannot fail. We should not think of humanity as a tree destined to be cut down and burned, while a few branches are taken away and saved. It is the other way around — part of the branches are cut off and burned, but the tree itself, as an organism, is to live on.

LESSON 24

The Covenant of Grace and the Church's Obligations to the World: 3. Social Applications of Christianity

"Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever." — The Shorter Catechism, 1.

"The preface to the ten commandments is contained in these words, 'I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage'. Wherein God manifesteth his sovereignty, as being Jehovah, the eternal, immutable, and almighty God; having his being in and of himself, and giving being to all his words and works: and that he is a God in covenant, as with Israel of old, so with all his people; who, as he brought them out of their bondage in Egypt, so he delivereth us from our spiritual thralldom: and that therefore we are bound to take him for our God alone, and to keep all his commandments." — The Larger Catechism, 101.

"The sum of the ten commandments is, to

love the Lord our God, with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind; and our neighbor as ourselves." — The Shorter Catechism, 42.

Scripture References:

1 Cor. 10:31. Rom. 11:36. It is our duty to glorify God in every part of our life.

Luke 1:69-75. Being delivered from the kingdom of evil by God's Covenant of Grace, we are bound to glorify Him in all our life.

1 Pet. 1:15-21. The recipients of redemption are bound to live a God-glorifying life.

Lev. 18:30; 19:37. The covenant relation to God implies an obligation to live unto the glory of God.

Questions:**1. Why are Christian people bound to glorify God by their life?**

For two reasons: creation and redemption. They have a NATURAL obligation to God (by creation), and a COVENANT obligation to God (by redemption). Because God is our God and Redeemer, because He has brought us out of the land of Egypt and the house of bondage — redeemed us from the kingdom of evil — therefore we are bound to keep all His commandments, and live a God-glorifying life.

2. What mistake do Christian people often make concerning their obligation to live a God-glorifying life?

Christian people often fail to realize that God must be honored and glorified in ALL parts and areas of their life. It is common tendency, even among earnest Christian people, to think of their duty to glorify God too narrowly, limiting this obligation to certain special spheres of life and leaving others outside of it. Some tend to limit their service to God to the ordinances of religious worship, prayer, Bible reading, giving some money to home and foreign missions, and perhaps doing some personal or public evangelistic work from time to time, while they never think of their business, recreation, political life and social life in relation to God's Kingdom. Some indeed regard the whole realm of politics as separate from the duty to glorify God, saying that "Religion and politics will not mix". Others can see no connection between their Christian faith and the kind of schools their children attend. Still others fail to see any bearing of Christianity on the arts and sciences. This too-narrow individualism is certainly wrong. We are to glorify God — and to AIM at glorifying God — all along the line, in every sphere of life.

3. What is the bearing of the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace on the social problems of our time?

The doctrine of the Covenant of Grace implies that the Christian must glorify God in all departments of life. This includes all phases of the Christian's relation to human society. Therefore the Christian is under obligation to apply the teachings of the Bible to the social problems of the day. Especially the Church, through the preaching and teaching of its ministers and the acts of its assemblies, must endeavor to apply the Word of God to social problems.

4. Why is it very difficult to apply the Word of God to present-day social problems?

Because the social problems of the present day are mostly different from those of Bible times, and therefore we do not find ready-made solutions of these problems in the Bible. For in-

stance, the problems of relations between capital and labor in this industrial age are quite different from, and much more complicated than, any problems of employer and employee in Bible times. We cannot solve today's social problems by merely quoting a text or two. We must search the Scriptures patiently for the PRINCIPLES that bear on social problems, and then apply these principles patiently and conscientiously to the social problems of our day.

5. What special danger is involved in attempting to apply the principles of the Bible to today's social problems?

The danger that we may read our own ideas or prejudices into the Bible, and then draw conclusions which are not really Scriptural but are merely our own notions. The contradictory conclusions which many Christians come to with respect to the teaching of the Bible on temperance, socialism, pacifism, the race problem, the amusement question, etc., show that not everything which is called Christian teaching is really such. Where two people reach contradictory conclusions, at least one of them must be mistaken. Some people are so sure that war is always wrong, for example, that they inevitably interpret the Bible in harmony with this idea, and discount or explain away all the Scripture passages that can be adduced on the other side of the question. Others take it for granted that some form of socialism must be the will of God, and read the Bible accordingly. Some even go so far as to claim that Christianity requires all national sovereignties to be pooled in a single world government, and seem unable to comprehend the objections to such a scheme which their fellow-Christians point out.

6. Is not the application of Christian principles to society a hopeless task, in view of the prevailing wickedness of the human race?

Even if there were only one Christian in the whole world, and all the rest were wicked people, it would still be that one Christian's duty to try to apply Christianity to society. Noah and his family were the only godly people of their time, and surely Noah might have regarded the situation as hopeless. Yet Noah did not limit himself to building the ark by which his family survived the Flood. He also preached righteousness to his own generation (2 Pet. 2:5), and we may be sure that Noah did not preach righteousness merely in the abstract, but in application to the concrete situation of his own day and age — a situation which is very vividly described in Gen. 6:5, 11-13. Noah preached righteousness to his own generation, not because he considered it probable that his preaching would be successful and human society reformed, but because it was HIS DUTY BEFORE GOD to preach righteousness. We are to do our duty; the results are in God's hands.

LESSON 25

The Covenant of Grace and the Christian's Relation to the World: 1. The Basic Antithesis

"Our first parents, being seduced by the subtlety and temptation of Satan, sinned in eating the forbidden fruit. This their sin God was pleased, according to His wise and holy counsel, to permit, having purposed to order it to His own glory.

"By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and communion with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body.

"They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature conveyed, to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation.

"From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions." — The Westminster Confession of Faith, VI. 1, 2, 3, 4.

"Mankind are all now, by nature, the children of wrath, conceived in sin, brought forth in iniquity, sunk in total depravity, become mortal in their bodies, subject to disease and pain, incapable of doing anything spiritually good, in a state of enmity against God, and condemned to endless misery in the world to come." — The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, V. 4.

"Works done by unregenerate men, although for the matter of them, they may be things which God commands, and of good use both to themselves and others: yet, because they proceed not from a heart purified by faith; nor are done in a right manner according to the Word; nor to a right end, the glory of God; they are therefore sinful, and cannot please God, or make a man meet to receive grace from God. And yet, their neglect of them is more sinful, and displeasing unto God." — The Westminster Confession of Faith, XVI. 7.

Scripture References:

Gen. 3:15. The divinely-ordained enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman.

Gen. 12:1. God's command to Abraham to separate from country and kindred.

Lev. 20:22-26. 1 Kings 8:53. The divinely ordained separateness of the covenant people.

Psalms 1. The basic antithesis between the righteous and the ungodly.

Psalms 2. The conflict between the heathen (seed of the serpent) and the Son (seed of the woman).

Psalms 10. The bitter opposition of the world to the covenant people of God.

John 3:3-6. The new birth divides humanity into the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan.

John 8:44. Those who are not children of God, are children of the devil.

2 Cor. 5:17. The new birth gives everything in life a new meaning for the Christian, which the unsaved person cannot share.

Questions:**1. Is the human race a unity today?**

The human race possesses unity today only in the biological sense that all human beings constitute a single natural species descended from Adam and Eve. The human race does not possess spiritual unity today. When God created mankind, the race possessed spiritual unity. But this unity was shattered by the fall into sin. The result was not merely a wall of division between man and God, but the introduction of many divisions into the human family. The true source of solidarity — a right relation to God — having been lost, mankind inevitably fell a prey to divisive forces.

2. How was the human race divided during the period from Adam to Noah?

After man fell, the dire effects of sin multiplied and increased. Soon Cain killed his brother Abel. Following the birth of Seth the race was sharply, radically divided into two lines: (a) the godly descendants of Seth, and (b) the ungodly descendants of Cain. Among the latter, wickedness increased by leaps and bounds. By the time of Lamech, the seventh generation from Adam (Gen. 4:16-24) all consciousness of sin and all sense of dependence upon God seem to have been lost; Lamech lived an "uninhibited" life. Soon the earth was filled with the most terrible wickedness, crime and violence.

Meantime the godly descendants of Seth were quietly maintaining their faith and their principles (Gen. 4:26). It is clear that there was a definite, marked distinction between the two groups of human beings. It appears also that the breakdown of this separation by intermarriage between the godly and the ungodly (Gen. 6:1-8) brought on the extreme development of wickedness which called for the judgment of the Flood.

3. What wrong attempt was made soon after the Flood to restore the broken unity of the human race?

The construction of the Tower of Babel (Gen.

11:1-9). We read that the whole earth was still one in language at that time. The erection of the tower was an attempt to establish a center of unity on a humanistic basis, without recognizing God or giving glory to Him (verse 4). This proud attempt was frustrated by the intervention of God, who introduced a new division into the human race, the division of languages — a divisive force that has proved very powerful and very difficult to overcome through the history of the race.

Since then, numerous attempts have been made by ungodly men to restore the shattered unity of the race on a secular or merely human basis. Some of these have sought world unity by conquest, others by agreement, but all have ignored the living God. History is strewn with the wrecks of these vain attempts at a restoration of world unity on a human basis, without recognizing God or the fact of sin. Every such attempt is foredoomed to failure. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" (John 3:6).

4. How does regeneration, or the new birth, divide the human race into two radically different kinds of people?

Mankind by nature, apart from the saving grace of God, are totally depraved and corrupted in sin, unable to do anything spiritually good, filled with enmity against God, and under the wrath of God (Rom. 1:18). In carrying out the provisions of the Covenant of Grace, God has stepped into this situation and saved A PART of the human race by Christ's redemption and the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit bestows on the elect the new birth, by which their "heart" or inmost nature and personality is radically changed and inclined toward God and holiness.

The divinely-wrought change makes the person a new creature in Christ Jesus, and changes his entire life. Old things have passed away, all things have become new. The unsaved person, on the other hand, is a stranger to this exper-

ience of the new birth. His whole life is set against God and against holiness. He is deeply selfish, and his noblest devotion never rises higher than humanity. In the bottom of his heart, he hates God and the people of God.

There is no middle ground between the person who is born again and the person who is not born again. Every person is on one side or the other of this dividing line. Only the restraining hand of God prevents the ungodly from rising up and killing every Christian in the world. The enmity in their hearts would have this result, if not restrained by God. Every persecution of God's covenant people by the world arises from this deep-rooted enmity in the hearts of unsaved people — enmity which is stirred up by Satan from time to time, as God in His providence may permit.

5. What happens when Christian people forget the radical difference that exists between them and the children of the world?

When this basic antithesis is forgotten, several dire results soon follow. (a) Christian people begin to associate freely with ungodly people, even to the extent of intermarrying with them, so that the salt loses its savor and the Church becomes almost indistinguishable from the world. (b) Christian people begin to cherish a false optimism concerning the probable success of plans for world improvement on a merely human basis — schemes which disregard the sinfulness of the world and the need of the new birth, and which leave God out of account. Christian people begin to pin their faith to such human schemes as social service, political action on a merely human basis, etc. (c) Christian people begin to cultivate religious fellowship with the adherents of other religions; Jewish rabbis are invited to occupy Christian pulpits; religion, rather than Christianity, comes to be regarded as the important thing.

LESSON 26

The Covenant of Grace and the Christian's Relation to the World: 2. The Duty of Separation

"When we hear any mention of our union with God, we should remember that holiness must be the bond of it. . . because it is a peculiar property of his glory not to have any intercourse with iniquity and uncleanness. Wherefore also it teaches, that this is the end of our vocation, which it is requisite for us always to keep in view, if we desire to correspond to the design of God in calling us. For to what purpose was it that we were delivered from the iniquity and pollution of the world, in which we had been immersed, if we permit ourselves to wallow in them as long as we live? Besides, it also admonishes us that, to be numbered among the people of God, we must inhabit the holy city

Jerusalem; which, he having consecrated it to himself, cannot without impiety be profaned by impure inhabitants. Whence these expressions: 'He shall abide in the tabernacle of the Lord, that walketh uprightly and worketh righteousness', etc., because it is very unbecoming the sanctuary which he inhabits to be rendered as filthy as a stable." — John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, Book III, Chap. VI, Sec. II.

Scripture References:

John 14:30. Eph. 2:2. 1 John 2:15. The world of sin is Satan's kingdom.

2 Cor. 6:17, 18. 1 Tim. 5:22. James 1:27. Rev.

18.4. Separation from the world is a Christian duty.

1 John 2:15-17. God commands His children not to love the world.

John 7:7. The Christian should follow Christ's example and testify of the world, that its works are evil.

Questions:

1. In what two senses is the term "world" used in the Bible?

(a) In a good sense, to designate the world of human society regarded as God's creation and property; for example, Matt. 13:38. "The field is the world"; Psalm 24:1, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." (b) In a bad sense, to designate that sinful world-system which, as Satan's kingdom, is against God; for example, 1 John 2:15, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him"; Eph. 2:2, "according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air."

2. Is the Christian required to separate from human society, or the world itself?

No. Medieval monasticism was an attempt to separate from the world itself by withdrawing from human society to a monastery or convent, an attempt to escape from corruption by abstaining from all association with the corrupt, but it resulted in dismal failure. In 1 Cor. 5:9, 10, the apostle Paul shows that God does not require His children to withdraw from human society; He does not require them to refrain from all civil or business dealings with sinful, unsaved people, though religious fellowship with such is forbidden.

3. What kind of separation from the world is required by the Covenant of Grace?

The Covenant of Grace requires an obedient life of godliness and holiness of the covenant people of God. This involves a clear line of distinction and separation between the covenant people and the world that is Satan's kingdom. As pointed out in the preceding question, the Christian is not required to separate from human society or the world itself; he is not required to separate from anything that is good or innocent, but only from that which is contrary to God and to holiness. The Covenant of Grace definitely involves the obligation to separate from all participation in the sins of the world. The covenant people of God are not to be identified in any way with Satan's kingdom. They must separate from all that marks the world as Satan's kingdom.

4. What is involved in a consistent separation from the sinful world?

Separation from the sinful world means little or nothing unless it is carried out consistently. A consistent separation from the world involves abstinence from all conduct that is characteristic of Satan's kingdom. Some practices are characteristically worldly; the Christian must avoid them. Some places have become identified with the sinful world-system; the Christian should avoid them. The warning to God's people to separate from Babylon (the anti-Christian world-system) is relevant here: "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Rev. 18:4).

5. In considering the subject of worldliness, what error must be avoided?

The error of externalizing worldliness, or regarding it as consisting essentially in external actions or things. Worldliness is first and foremost a sin of the heart; its essence consists in the lust of the heart for something that God forbids (1 Cor. 10:6). That worldliness is essentially a matter of the spiritual state of the heart is shown also by the words of our Saviour in Mark 7:21-23, "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man."

It is true that worldliness has external manifestations, and it is true that the Christian duty of separation from the world has implications concerning external conduct. But we should remember that the antithesis between the covenant people and the children of this world is not PRIMARILY an external matter; it is a spiritual antithesis. Any attempt to define worldliness and decide questions about practical matters of conduct should proceed from the realization that the antithesis is basically not external but spiritual. If this is forgotten, worldliness will be too narrowly defined in terms of particular patterns of external conduct, and the result will often be a Pharisaic spiritual pride on the part of people who abstain scrupulously from those particular patterns of conduct, but whose hearts are really worldly to the core.

6. Why should a Christian bear witness against the sins of the world?

Our Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ testified of the world, that its works are evil (John 7:7). The Christian should follow Christ's example and bear witness against the sins of the world, as occasion may require. The fact that this testimony of the Christian may have no apparent result should not discourage him from discharging the duty. For Christian people to protest publicly against the Sabbath desecration involved in a state fair being open on the Lord's Day, with all kinds of amusements going on, may seem at first

sight to be a useless gesture, in that it can hardly be expected to accomplish the closing of the fair. But it is not useless. It is the discharge of a Christian duty, and it will be for the honor and

glory of God at the Judgment Day that a witness was borne against that sin at that time. More over it will leave the guilty persons even more without excuse than they would otherwise be.

LESSON 27

The Covenant of Grace and the Christian's Relation to the World: 3. The Sphere of Cooperation.

"It is the duty of people to pray for magistrates, to honor their persons, to pay them tribute and other dues, to obey their lawful commands, and to be subject to their authority, for conscience' sake. Infidelity, or difference in religion, doth not make void the magistrates' just and legal authority, nor free the people from their due obedience to them . . ." — The Westminster Confession of Faith, XXIII. 4.

"It is the duty of Christians who reside within the bounds of such nations as do not make a fitting acknowledgment of divine authority to live in submission to the existing government, provided that in so doing they are careful to regulate their conduct according to the Scriptures, and to preserve a conscience void of offence toward God and man. It is also the duty of Christians, for the sake of peace and order, to conform to the common regulations of society in things indifferent or morally commendable". — The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, XXIX. 5.

"It is lawful for Christians residing in nations in which the light of the gospel has not been generally diffused, to continue submission to such authority as may exist over them, agreeably to the law of nature, which, where revelation does not exist, is the only standard of civil duty. In such cases the infidelity of the ruler cannot make void the just authority conferred on him by the constitution." — The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, XXIX. 6.

Scripture References:

Matt. 22:17-21. It is a Christian duty to render the things of Caesar to Caesar.

Jer. 29:4-7. It is our duty to seek the peace and welfare of the nation in which God's providence has placed us.

1 Peter 2:13-17. Christians are to glorify God by conscientious conduct in the relationships of human society.

2 Cor. 6:14-18. Fellowship and cooperation between Christians and unbelievers, in religious matters, is forbidden by the Word of God.

Acts 27:30-32. An example of legitimate and commendable cooperation between a Christian and unbelievers.

Rev. 2:14, 20. Two examples of forbidden fellowship and cooperation between a Christian and non-Christians.

1 Cor. 10:27. An example of legitimate social fellowship between a Christian and non-Christians.

Questions:

1. Does the Covenant of Grace require separation between Christians and non-Christians in every sphere of life?

No. There are certain areas of life in which separation between Christians and non-Christians is a duty, and there are other areas of life in which cooperation between Christians and non-Christians may be legitimate, and even commendable.

2. In what areas of life is separation between Christians and non-Christians required by the Word of God?

God's Word requires Christians (a) to refrain from marrying unbelievers; (b) to refrain from choosing non-Christians as their close friends and intimate companions; (c) to abstain absolutely from any cooperation or fellowship with unbelievers in the spheres of religious activity and religious worship.

3. Is the expression "the world," in the bad sense, equivalent to "human society"?

No. Although the Bible requires Christians to maintain separation from "the world" in the bad sense, separation from human society as such is not required. Even though the Christian's citizenship is in heaven, he is still living here on earth and is a member of human society, which involves certain legitimate obligations and relationships. Our duty as Christians does not cancel the relationships and obligations of human society, except in certain cases where special sinful conditions are involved. In case of conflict between our duty to God and the requirements of human society, we must of course obey God rather than men. But there are many matters in which every Christian must discharge his duty to human society. Thus cooperation between Christians and unbelievers is inevitable. It is important for us as Christians to understand the nature of this cooperation, and its proper limits.

4. Is there any area of life in which the difference between Christians and non-Christians does not count?

No. There is always a deep, radical difference between the Christian and the non-Christian. The Christian has been born again of the Holy Spirit; he knows and loves the true God; he is on the road to heaven. The non-Christian has not been born again of the Holy Spirit; he does not know nor love the true God; he is on the road to hell. Even though the external action of a Christian may be identical with that of a non-Christian, still the motive, meaning and consequences of the act always diverge widely. Suppose that a Christian and a non-Christian each pay taxes amounting to \$100.00. It might appear that in this matter there is no difference between the Christian and the non-Christian. But the Christian pays his taxes because he fears the living and true God, and regards civil government as God's ordinance. His payment of his taxes is an act of obedience to the true God. For that act of obedience, he will receive a reward in eternity. The non-Christian, on the other hand, pays his taxes either because he cannot avoid it, or at best merely because he loves his country. He does not do it to please and honor God; therefore his paying his taxes, like everything that he does, is really a sin, which must come under the righteous judgment of God. (See the Confession of Faith, XVI. 7). When we look beneath the surface of things, we see that the difference between the Christian and the non-Christian always counts, in every area of life.

5. Is the Christian's cooperation with non-Christians voluntary or compulsory?

It is compulsory in the matter of obedience to the laws of the State, and voluntary with respect to other matters. Thus, for example, a Christian cannot choose whether he will pay his lawful taxes or not, nor whether he will testify as a witness if lawfully summoned to do so. God has authorized civil government, or the State, to use physical force, if necessary, to bring about obedience to its laws (Rom. 13:4).

On the other hand, there are many matters outside the sphere of civil government, or the State, in which cooperation between Christians and non-Christians is voluntary. These include all "voluntary associations" which exist either for a good or a morally indifferent purpose, but are not limited to Christian people. Examples of such "voluntary associations" are the American Red Cross, Parent-Teacher associations, stamp-collectors' societies, poultry breeders' associations, literary, historical and scientific associations, and business and professional organizations. No Christian is under any obligation, as a matter of Christian duty, to join or cooperate with any of these "voluntary associations"; he is free to act according to his own choice, so long as cooperation does not necessarily involve support or endorsement of something contrary

to the law of God. (See Blue Banner Faith and Life, Vol. 3 No. 4, October-December 1948, pages 176-178, for a full discussion of the problem of membership in "voluntary associations").

6. Must Christians always obey the law of the State?

While the Bible repeatedly enjoins obedience to the laws of the State and the commands of magistrates and rulers, it also teaches that the Christian's first and highest allegiance is to God, and that in case of a conflict between the law of God and the commands of earthly rulers, it is the Christian's duty to obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29). Thus, for example, Christian people ought to disobey a law of the State requiring participation in the rites of a false religion, or requiring that ministers and missionaries obtain a permit from the State before engaging in the work of preaching the Gospel and organizing churches.

Such laws, though enacted by earthly legislatures, are null and void in the sight of God, and Christian people should resolutely refuse to obey them, even at the cost of persecution and suffering.

On the other hand, where there is no clear-cut issue between the law of God and the commands of the State, Christian people should conscientiously obey the laws of the State, even though they may regard the laws as unwise, or may suffer some personal loss or injustice because of obedience. Mere belief that a law of the State is unwise or unjust does not warrant disobedience. Christians are justified in refusing to obey only when the law of the State requires them to do something that is definitely contrary to the law of God.

7. Is it proper for Christian people to hold office, or elect others to do so, under a constitution of civil government which does not recognize the true God and His Son Jesus Christ?

The duty of Christian people to obey the laws and cooperate in civil matters does not involve incorporation with a non-Christian government (by voting or holding office). Such political incorporation would make the Christian morally responsible for the government's secular character — its ignoring God and Christ. That is to say, it would involve the Christian in sin. It is a sin for a nation to make no acknowledgment of God and His Son in its constitution. The Christian who votes or holds office under such a constitution becomes a party to this sin of omission, and therefore a sharer in the guilt that is involved. For a fuller discussion of this matter see Blue Banner Faith and Life, Vol. 4 No. 1, January-March 1949, pages 8-12.

LESSON 28

The Covenant of Grace and Holiness

"The Holy Spirit, according to the promise of the Father, is commissioned by Jesus Christ, the administrator of the Covenant of Grace, to sanctify justified sinners, and to prepare them for heaven." — The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony, XVII. 2.

"Sanctification is a work of God's grace, whereby they whom God hath before the foundation of the world chosen to be holy, are in time, through the powerful operation of his Spirit, applying the death and resurrection of Christ unto them, renewed in their whole man after the image of God; having the seeds of repentance unto life, and all other saving graces, put into their hearts, and those graces so stirred up, increased, and strengthened, as that they more and more die unto sin and rise unto newness of life." — The Larger Catechism, 75.

"The souls of believers are, at their death, made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; . . ." — The Shorter Catechism, 37.

Scripture References:

Ezek. 36:25-27, 31. Sanctification by God's Spirit is promised to the covenant people of God.

1 Pet. 1:13-16. Heb. 12:14. The duty of those whom Christ has redeemed to cultivate holiness.

1 Thess. 5:23, 24. Jude 24, 25. Perfect holiness is the promised and assured destiny of every true member of the people of God.

Questions:

1. What is the meaning of the words "sanctify" and "sanctification"?

These words, which are derived from the Latin, concern the subject of holiness. "Sanctify" means "make holy"; "sanctification" means "making holy" or "being made holy." These terms designate that progressive change of character which is carried on by the work of the Holy Spirit in those who have been born again, throughout their life on earth, until they are made perfect in holiness on entering the state of glory at their death.

2. Is sanctification a work of God, or a work of man?

Sanctification is a work of God, wrought by the almighty operation of the Holy Spirit. It is, however, a work of God in which the Christian

is called to cooperate. This does not mean that God and man are joint partners, on equal basis, in the work of sanctification. It means, rather, that the Holy Spirit's work of sanctification is wrought partly through the instrumentality of the human personality, which involves the Christian's earnest cooperation with the Holy Spirit's work. Thus in the Bible we are commanded "Grieve not the Holy Spirit" (Eph. 4:30), "Quench not the Spirit" (1 Thess. 5:19), and we are warned against the sin of resisting the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51). Again, we are commanded: "yield yourselves unto God" (Rom. 6:13), and "present your bodies a living sacrifice" (Rom. 12:1).

3. What spiritual danger is involved in the fact that sanctification is a slow process?

The danger of discouragement, or becoming weary and faint in our minds (Heb. 12:3). The fact that sanctification is not only a life-long process, but also involves a bitter struggle against the world, the flesh and the devil, often tempts the Christian to discouragement and faint-heartedness. Because of the severity of the conflict with sin and temptation, his faith may falter and his enjoyment of the light of God's countenance may grow dim. To warn and guard against these spiritual perils, the Bible presents numerous exhortations to earnestness, constancy and unwearied striving against sin.

4. How does the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace help the Christian to throw off spiritual weariness and discouragement?

The doctrine of the Covenant of Grace teaches the Christian that the outcome of his conflict with sin is a certainty. His final salvation and his final attainment of absolute moral perfection are not in doubt — they are sure. They are as sure as the faithfulness of the eternal God, who cannot lie, by the terms of that "everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure" which is all the Christian's salvation, and all his desire. To the Christian, the Covenant of Grace is an unconditional covenant of promise. The only real condition of this covenant has been fully met and provided by the Surety, the Lord Jesus Christ — even His own precious blood shed on Calvary, and His own perfect righteousness of His life under the law. Thus Christ by His blood and righteousness has purchased and paid for the Christian's final attainment of absolute moral perfection. That which the Lord Jesus Christ has already purchased and paid for cannot fail to be accomplished. The knowledge, from the Word of God, of this absolute certainty, provides the Christian with a strong encourage-

ment in his desperate battle with evil, especially the evil which he finds in his own nature.

5. Does the certainty of the Christian's attaining absolute holiness, which is promised in the Covenant of Grace, imply that the Christian need not exert himself against sin, but can "let go" and leave the work of sanctification to God?

Certainly not. No true Christian will ever

take any promise of the Bible as an excuse for sluggishness or sins of neglect. If anyone urges God's promise of absolute holiness as a pretext for lack of effort, that only shows that that person does not really know God. To the born again Christian, the promise will lead to earnest effort in resisting sin.

(To be continued)

Reviews of Religious Books

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

CHRISTIAN REFLECTIONS, by C. S. Lewis. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 255 Jefferson Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49502. 1967, pp. 176. \$3.95.

C. S. Lewis died in 1963. The present volume is a collection of essays, partly published in journals and periodicals during his lifetime, partly previously unpublished. The material has been collected and edited by Walter Hooper, a friend and colleague of Lewis at Oxford University.

All who have a serious interest in the writings of C. S. Lewis will want to read this book. Some of the subjects dealt with are Christianity and Literature, Christianity and Culture, Ethics, the Poison of Subjectivism, Evolutionism as a pseudo-philosophy of life and progress, Church Music, Historicism, the Psalms, Prayer, Modern Theology and Biblical Criticism.

The reader who is intelligently committed to the Reformed Faith will find here some things which he cannot accept. All the same, the reading of the book will serve to sharpen his mind and bring out all the more clearly the necessity for a distinctively Reformed witness. Lewis' treatment of the Psalms, in particular, is definitely unsatisfactory from the Reformed point of view. The material on the Psalms in this volume follows the same line as that taken in his earlier book, **Reflections on the Psalms** (published in 1958). In dealing with the so-called imprecatory Psalms Lewis fails to do justice to their character as divine revelation and as infallibly inspired Scripture. He treats the prayers for judgment and destruction as sinful outbursts of hatred and desire for vengeance on the part of victims of injustice that can no longer be borne. This does not fit in with the treatment of these Psalms in Scripture itself, — for example, the way the New Testament quotes

them as fulfilled in the history of Judas Iscariot. Moreover, the New Testament represents the redeemed souls in paradise crying out to God for judgment upon those who had persecuted them on earth (Rev. 6:9, 10), and this prayer is certainly not treated as evil or sinful but quite the contrary. In place of Lewis' inadequate treatment of the "imprecatory" Psalms, we regard them as the expression, in infallibly inspired sacred song, of the absolute antithesis between the seed of the serpent and the Seed of the Woman, first revealed to mankind in Genesis 3:15. It is God who sovereignly places enmity — bitter conflict and opposition — between the two. It cannot therefore be wrong for the children of God to recognize this basic fact in song and prayer.

Some of the essays in this volume are of outstanding merit and relevance for our day. The one on "The Poison of Subjectivism" provides an ample dose of a medicine desperately needed by modern Protestantism. Lewis writes: "Unless we return to the crude and nursery-like belief in objective values, we perish" (p. 81). "'Vision' is for sale, or claims to be for sale, everywhere. But give me a man who will do a day's work for a day's pay, who will refuse bribes, who will not make up his facts, and who has learned his job" (p. 81).

In dealing with "Modern Theology and Biblical Criticism", Lewis is thinking chiefly of recent "form criticism" and "demythologizing" on the part of New Testament scholars such as Bultmann. He does not deal specifically with Pentateuchal and Old Testament criticism such as that of Wellhausen, Driver, etc. Lewis confesses himself a layman so far as the technicalities of Biblical Criticism are concerned. Yet he makes some exceedingly sharp observations, and they are in favor

of the integrity of the Biblical documents taken at face value as what they claim to be. In effect he accuses the critics of making their own feelings, thoughts, reactions and mental traits — those of typical children of the twentieth century — the test of what people thousands of years ago could have thought, felt, said or written.

In dealing with the subject of History, Lewis shows himself a thorough supernaturalist. He deals devastatingly with the axiom of modern "scholarly" historical study, that if anything is miraculous or supernatural, it is necessarily un-historical and must be explained away or its factual reality denied.

In spite of some points and emphases where we cannot agree, the over-all effect of this book will be good. It is thought-provoking in the best sense, and it gives eye-opening insights and satisfying conclusions on quite a number of matters.

— J. G. Vos

ORPHANS OF THE ORIENT, by Bob Pierce. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506. 1964, pp. 96. \$2.50.

The hearts of children and adults alike will be touched by the stories of these unfortunate children of the Orient. Side by side with their suffering and misery God's messenger is to be found bringing comfort and cheer. Children from 8 to 14 would enjoy reading this book for themselves. This book is also recommended for a study book on missions for Junior societies.

— Marian M. Vos

WALTER KNOTT, TWENTIETH CENTURY PIONEER, by Norman Nygaard. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506. 1965, pp. 118. \$1.95.

Great faith in God's providence and scrupulous honesty were the basic characteristics of the pioneering spirit of Walter Knott. The story of the man behind the internationally-known tourist attraction begins with Knott's grandparents in Texas near the close of the Civil War. This light but enjoyable reading follows him through many hard struggles to the present day where with his large and devoted family he manages Knott's Berry Farm in California.

— Marian M. Vos

CALVIN'S NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARIES, VOL. VI, "THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, VOL. I," translated by W. J. G. McDonald and J. W. Fraser. Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49502. 1965, pp. 410, \$6.00.

With works as well known and as valuable as Calvin's, this review deals only with questions concerning the technical aspects of the translation: a.) It is attractively printed. b.) The translation is in idiomatic, quality-style English. c.) Names,

themes, and Scripture passages are indexed. d.) The work was printed in Great Britain. In keeping with current prices, it is too expensive.

On the Church and the ministry Calvin said: ". . . the Church cannot be formed all at once in such a way that nothing remains to be corrected." (p. 157)

". . . the ministry of the Word is so demanding that it occupies a man entirely, and does not allow him to be free for other occupations." (p. 160)

— Edward A. Robson

FOR A TESTIMONY, by Bruce F. Hunt. The Banner of Truth Trust, 78b Chiltern Street, London W. 1, England. In U.S.A., Puritan Publications, Inc., P. O. Box 652, Carlisle, Pennsylvania 17013. 1966, pp. 159, paper cover. 5 shillings or \$1.00.

As I closed the book "For a Testimony" I was led to exclaim, "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together" (Psalm 37:3). The author, Bruce F. Hunt, was born and raised in Korea, and writes in vivid style his personal account of his imprisonment in Manchuria. I would recommend this book for personal reading as well as for women's circles and societies. It will strengthen your faith and enlarge your circle of intercessory prayer. It is indeed "For a Testimony" to the power of God.

— Marian M. Vos

GOD IN AMERICAN HISTORY, by Benjamin Weiss. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49502. 1966, pp. 256. \$4.95.

One quiet gentleman, a cultured veteran of the teaching profession, is Dr. Benjamin Weiss, the founder of the "Christian Educator's Fellowship" in Pasadena, California.

Dr. Weiss is a faithful member of the California Christian Citizens Association and has been quite sympathetic to the Christian Amendment Movement. His book is a collection of patriotic materials showing how much faith in God has dominated the governmental life of the United States during the entire history of our nation. He gives samples of early Colonial documents to show our Christian background. He quotes from the inaugural address of all Presidents from George Washington to Lyndon Johnson, showing how personal faith in God emerged in these speeches. He quotes religious statements in the state constitutions of our nation. He shows how faith in God is inscribed on Capitol buildings and monuments in Washington, D.C. Finally, Dr. Weiss points out the religious faith expressed in our National Anthem and other songs.

The manual is neat and well-planned for convenience as a reference book. There might have been a quoted statement from Justice David Brew-

er of the Supreme Court that all these references to God, which are so liberally illustrated here, were obviously intended to mean the God of the Christian religion and not the gods of Moslems, Shintoists, Jews, Buddhists or Hinduists. The good is ever enemy of the best, and Congress is ready to do almost anything to express faith in God, but not to honor the name of Jesus Christ lest it offend somebody who hates Christ. Our task as Christians is to take the "Unknown God" of political sentimentality, as Paul did in Athens, and bring the thinking of men direct to the Risen Lord Jesus Christ, the only Mediator between a nation and the Creator God of whom political leaders so glibly speak in public.

— Samuel E. Boyle

KARL BARTH'S THEOLOGICAL METHOD, by Gordon H. Clark. The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Box 185, Nutley, N. J. 07110. 1963, pp. 229. \$5.00.

If Karl Barth can be classified as having a theological method, Dr. Clark can certainly be credited for bringing it to light. With his usual clarity and careful scholarship, Clark opens up sides of Barth previously hidden to less observant eyes. He spells out the irrationalistic elements in Barth's theology and lays bare the philosophic influences that operate upon Barth's thought. To set the pace, Clark says, "The present writer largely agrees with Barth on the matter of method. . . Barth clearly claims to be Reformed. . . Documentation to show to what extent this claim is justified will be provided in the chapter on modernism, and the question of deviations will recur in the later analyses." (pg. 5.)

In many places he is more than kind to Barth, taking statements at face value while refusing to hold Barth to the logical conclusions of his own system of theology. With all of his denials of such, Barth does have an underlying set of presuppositions which do not coincide with the facts of Scripture and this must be kept in mind. Clark speaks with gentle criticism of "traces" of irrationalism in the *Church Dogmatics*, bending over backward to exude friendliness toward Barth in place of the animosity shown by other Reformed critics, notably Van Til.

The criticism of Barth's view of Scripture is comparably sharp, and Clark presents a clear case for Biblical orthodoxy. In fact, as the book moves on, the critique becomes less and less favorable and the points of divergence heightened. But even such a defense of orthodoxy appears secondary in Clark's mind to the defense of rationalism if we are to take his words on page 224 seriously: "There is no Christianity without verbal inspiration because Christianity is rational and rationality requires verbal inspiration.

"Christianity is rational because the God who made the Bible his revelation declares that he is

a rational Being of wisdom and understanding. He created man in his own rational image; and these two rationalities, if they are to communicate at all, must because of their nature communicate intelligibly."

Are we to assume that man's rationality was unimpaired by the fall? Is Barth's greatest error the fact that he is anti-reason or anti-Christ as he is revealed in the Scriptures? Clark is himself inconsistent in not exposing the anti-metaphysical, anti-supernatural presuppositions and implications of Barthian thought.

— R. W. Nickerson

THE AUTHORITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES, by H. N. Ridderbos, International Library of Philosophy and Theology. (BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL STUDIES SERIES: J. Marcellus Kik, Editor), Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Box 185, Nutley, N. J. 07110. 1963, pp. 93. \$2.50.

This book should be read and studied by everyone about current attacks on the authority of Scripture. In a scholarly manner, Dr. Ridderbos presents what he considers to be the Reformed view of the New Testament canon in contradistinction to Lutheran, Roman Catholic and modernist views. The relation of the canon to the history of redemption is masterfully worked out, as is the careful explanation of "tradition" as it is used in the New Testament itself.

The author does not oversimplify issues. Instead he shows the natural historical development of the church's acceptance of the 27 New Testament books without crossing over into the area of internal canonicity. Thus, "The canon is not the product of an ecclesiastical survey nor is it the result of the adoption and application of one or more formal criteria of canonicity. . . In our recognition of the canon we must, therefore in the last analysis stand upon our faith that the church has really received its foundation from Christ." The unbreakable link between *Kerygma* and doctrine, faith and knowledge is set forth against the subjective theologies of our day to authenticate New Testament authority.

This is no book-by-book analysis of historical debates over authorship and the like. Ridderbos comes to grips with the deeper philosophy of canonicity itself as a necessary aspect of Christian faith.

Regrettably, certain conclusions do not support what we commonly refer to as verbal inspiration. For example, Ridderbos maintains "The revelatory character and authority of the New Testament Scripture, therefore, undoubtedly has its limitations and limits. It has authority as *Kerygma*, as the proclamation of the great works of God in Christ. The apostles, as the inspired heralds of the redemption provided by Christ, have

for the fulfillment of their task, not acquired any divine omniscience nor were they commissioned to reveal the mysteries of nature, to unlock the structures of the cosmos, or to solve the problems of science, The New Testament is not a revealed book in the sense that in all its pronouncements it directly or indirectly intends to give an answer to the questions before which human life is placed." (p. 61.)

Speaking of apparent historical and chronological problems in the synoptics he goes so far as to say: "The Spirit not only inspired (New Testament writers) to speak and write what they received from him, but caused them to speak and to write that which they themselves had seen with their human eyes and heard with their human ears. For this reason the written word of the New Testament is written and expressed in human language and human writing. It is also an eye witness report, and as such it remains human, i.e., it is the product of a perception that was not infinite. It is subject to human limitations, its record does not exceed the limits of the human memory. . . And it also accounts for the various uncertainties that are found in the New Testament with respect to the sequence of events, the circumstances under which something was said, and the phraseology that was used. . ." (p. 67,) and further "This variety and divergency in no-wise detracts from the trustworthiness of what the Spirit would teach us, in and by the witness of the apostles. . . It is therefore not the task of the textual criticism or exegesis to correct or to harmonize material that obviously was never intended to be so harmonized." (pg. 68.) The implications of such statements are far-reaching, making the text of the New Testament less than the propositional revelation of the absolute truth of God. If Matthew and Mark are "honestly" and "humanly" self-contradictory concerning historical details, what assurance do we have that their witness to Christ in other details can be trusted?

At this rate, all the supernatural acts of Christ are open to question as the mere human understanding of events that have an other than miraculous explanation.

— R. W. Nickerson

THE DEFENSE OF THE FAITH, by Cornelius Van Til. The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Box 185, Nutley, N.J. 07110. 1963, pp. 299, paper cover. \$3.00.

Originally reviewed in the April-June 1956 issue of *Blue Banner*, this classic of Reformed apologetics is now available in paperback form. Eliminated from this new edition are the two chapters on metaphysics and epistemology, now covered in greater detail in other available works by Dr. Van Til. What Abraham Kuiper did for a Biblical defense of the Christian faith in the 19th century, Van Til has done for the 20th.

Biblical methodology, not rationalistic argumentation, pervades the whole book. Chapters such as those in the "Christian Philosophy of Reality" and "The Defense of Christianity" are without equal. Anyone who deals with the intellectual of today's world needs to be fully cognizant of the implications of our Reformed Faith that this book sets forth.

— R. W. Nickerson

MAN: THE IMAGE OF GOD, by G. C. Berkouwer. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49502. 1962, pp. 376. \$6.00.

A scholarly work of this nature deserves serious attention particularly in the light of the author's commitment to the Scriptures and Reformed Theology. Now available in English, this incisive study opens a vast storehouse of knowledge previously unavailable to many. Dr. Berkouwer surveys both classic and current views of the *imago dei*, delves into such deep matters as immortality, the origin of the soul, the nature of freedom.

Breaking sharply with scholastic dualism he supports the integral unity of man as created in God's image, both body and soul. The historical fall and its implications are clearly dealt with in such a way as to expose the fallacies of modern existentialist views of man. Though not strictly cast in the molds of systematic theology, this searching analysis gives vitality and depth to an increasingly important subject.

— R. W. Nickerson

THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN, by Abraham Kuyper (Translated by John Hendrik de Vries). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49502. 1964, pp. 360. \$2.25.

Any work from the pen of this great Dutch theologian is worthy of note, although not all of his voluminous works are of equal value. This volume is a paper-back reprint of an English translation of 1935. It is not a commentary in the strict sense, but is a highly readable explanation from an amillennial viewpoint. The work is deeply Spiritual as well as scholarly, but the format makes ready-reference difficult.

The chapter "The Mysticism of Numbers," is a gem in itself. Other chapters such as those on Revelation 20 and 21 are definitely disappointing. The cultural delineation of Gog and Magog, for example, is strangely presented and many key issues are passed over with little concern. Often Kuyper's "asides" take precedence over the heart of the matter at hand. Chilastic views were not as carefully defined in Kuyper's day as ours, but more attention is definitely deserved.

Hendriksen's *More than Conquerors* is a far superior work with relevant application to present millennial questions. To put it simply, this is an older work that rightly deserves the attention of

serious scholars but it is not the last word in studies on the Apocalypse.

— R. W. Nickerson

THE VOICE OF THE CROSS, by Marcus L. Loane. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1963, pp. 126. \$2.50.

These meditations on the passion of Christ are commendable for their direct, reverent, Biblical content. The author shuns heights of literary fancy for simple, personal explanation and application of the so-called "seven last words" of Christ. The vicarious redemption of Christ is faithfully presented and the background of His actual suffering vividly set forth. Loane does not display the theological insight of a Klaas Schilder, yet his explanations of what motivated Christ's words are worth careful reading. The Savior's death is made genuinely applicable to the life of the believer in this valuable little book.

— R. W. Nickerson

OUT OF THE DEPTHS, by Helmut Thielicke (Translated by G. W. Bromiley). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49502. 1962, pp. 89. \$2.50.

These messages from the pen of the noted German pastor-theologian cannot fail to grip the reader with their intensity. The attempt to take doctrine into life's darkest moments, to make Christ real to the soul under fire is a worthy endeavor indeed. The author's personal warmth bordering almost on mysticism reveals a man of tender heart, deeply moved over the plight of his people.

Thielicke's break with Biblical orthodoxy, however, and in particular his rejection of the verbal inspiration of Scripture, is a documented fact and should be taken into consideration, lest the beauty of his words disguise this perversion of truth. In this work, his dialectical view of man's origin (cf. pg. 53) and his universalistic concept of the atonement (cf. pp. 17 and 50) are present, but cloaked in high-sounding words.

Most disturbing of all is the chapter on Nicodemus' visit to Jesus in which, in spite of its many helpful thoughts, Thielicke sums up the matter of regeneration by saying, "It can only be experienced . . . it cannot be understood." In the whole chapter not one mention is made of the Saviour's vicarious suffering and the appeal to believe is little more than sheer self-salvation.

The cognizant believer will go away from this book saddened because so much of it is meaningful and yet the real Christ of Scripture and His supernatural atonement are hidden from view.

— R. W. Nickerson

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF PARTY IDEAS FOR CHILDREN, by Lora Lee Parrot. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1966, pp. 151. \$3.95.

A pastor spend \$3.95 for a game book? Ridiculous! Or so this reviewer once thought. But the sad truth is that the church is fast losing claim to the social life of her young people. Insipidly dull church "socials" send our young people looking elsewhere for entertainment. Mrs. Parrot's new book is a valuable remedy for this pressing problem. Written with the church in mind and covering party plans for children from pre-school through junior-high, every page is packed with stimulating ideas and even includes recipes as well as menu suggestions. Not all the plans are new, but the area of reduplication is surprisingly small. It is regrettable that no effort has been made to list the sources of available props, films, and other specialized materials which the author says are current. An appendix covering this would be a valuable addition. But even without it, one's money would be well-spent in procuring this book.

— R. W. Nickerson

MORE HANDCRAFTS AND FUN, by Eleanor Doan. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1966, pp. 95, paper cover. \$1.50.

Designed for boys and girls 4-10, this handy manual is surprisingly original and jam-packed with nearly 300 plans for attractive handcrafts. Although these are not generally suitable for the Sabbath School hour, they do provide much entertainment for social times and certain Vacation Bible School programs. Many useful items are suggested that young people could make for distribution to shut-ins, hospitals, homes for the aged, etc. Even older young people will like to join in making some of the items. Our copy is well "dog-eared" already.

— R. W. Nickerson

THE CONFESSION OF 1967 Its Theological Background and Ecumenical Significance, by Cornelius Van Til. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, Box 185, Nutley, N.J. 07110. 1967, pp. 128, paper cover. \$2.50.

The adoption this year of the Confession of 1967 — which appears to be inevitable — will give official standing in the United Presbyterian Church to a new theology. The men who wrote the Confession or strongly influenced the writing of it are committed to a synthesis theology which combines Biblical teachings with certain philosophic concepts, notably those of Kant, Kierkegaard, and Barth. It is the concern of the author in this timely study to expose the unbiblical foundation of the new theology and of the new creed, and to project possible (inevitable?) outcomes in terms of an all-inclusive ecumenical "Christian" community of the future. Dr. Van Til quotes extensively from the theological writings of G. S. Hendry, John Mackay, Edward A. Dowey, and Arnold B. Come — members of the Committee that drew up the new Confession — showing that

these writings are pervasively and thoroughly neo-orthodox. The Confession of 1967, says Van Til, gives creedal expression to this form of modernism.

The average reader of the Confession may not be aware of the new foundation on which it rests. For the language of the new Confession reflects the gospel as well as a new gospel. Old, familiar terms are employed, but the old terms are invested with new meanings by the body that has drawn up the creed. Who could possibly find fault with the statement: "Jesus Christ is God with man"? Is this not the clear teaching of the Bible? Yes, if taken in the old, orthodox sense. But if taken in the sense of the new theology it has little in common with the doctrine of Christ that is taught in the Westminster Confession of Faith. "Jesus Christ is God with man" is not, according to the new theology, a fact of history but an article of faith. Christ cannot be identified directly with Jesus; the incarnation is not an event in the past but God's present act of reconciling men to himself. Thus we see that "the God and the Christ of contemporary theology have very little in common with the God and the Christ of historic Christianity" (p. 2). This being the case, the new Confession to all intents and purposes will replace the Westminster Confession with "a new view of God, a new view of man and a new view of God's grace to man in Christ" (p. 75). "The new theology requires a total rejection of the old" (p. 63). Quoting from their writings, Van Til shows that Dowey, Mackay, Hendry, and Come are "all agreed that one must, in accepting the basic principles of Barth's theology, cut himself off from every form of orthodox theology once for all" (p. 61). Accordingly, the proposed Book of Confessions which Presbyterians are asked to accept contains two mutually exclusive gospels, two mutually exclusive doctrines of the Trinity and of election, and two mutually exclusive Christs (pp. 88-101).

The central motif of the new Confession is Christ and his reconciling work. But Christ's work of reconciliation is understood by the writers of the new creed in terms of a Barthian reconstruction of the Biblical concept of reconciliation. Says Van Til: For Barth "the idea of reconciliation retains nothing, **precisely nothing**, of the meaning which it has in the historic Confessions" (p. 65). Barth rejects the idea of atonement as penal satisfaction of divine justice and substitutes for it an existential reconciliation construed as an "exchange". God takes men's place by becoming man and man participates in the being of God.

Nor is this "Christ-Event" one that took place once for all in the past. The new Confession speaks as if it was a past event in history: "Jesus Christ God was reconciling the world to himself"; "God raised him from the dead." But we must remember that the writers of the new Confession

are committed to the new "dimensional" theology; the use of traditional phraseology is therefore misleading. The incarnation and resurrection of Christ are not datable events of history but religious events which happen as men are confronted with God and as they subjectively experience his presence and power in their lives. The Bible speaks as if the incarnation, miracles and resurrection of Christ were events in history. In this way the Bible is a "witness" to God's revelation which "remains beyond the reach of all theory," as the new Confession expresses it. God's revelation is never given in history (*Historie*) but in a dimension of reality (*Geschichte*) in which there can be no theoretical knowledge but only practical knowledge. The latter is a knowledge of personal experience and is attained only through faith. The statements in the Gospels about Jesus, accordingly, are not statements of historical fact but expressions of the faith of the early Christians. This modern reinterpretation of the language of Scripture, Van Til contends, is directly related to Kant's epistemology and ethics. We believe that he has demonstrated conclusively that this is the case.

The new Confession is to be an ecumenical instrument. Van Til, with characteristic imaginative foresight, envisions future dialogues resulting in unity between Presbyterians and other Protestants in the near future (1977?); Protestants and the Roman Catholic Church later on (1987?); Christians and Jews still later (1997?). Ultimately the unity of all men (including the Buddhists) in one world religion will be the outcome. All of this is described apocalyptically by Dr. Van Til. The new Confession points the way. It states: "The Christian finds many parallels between other religions and his own and must approach all religions with openness and respect."

This study in depth lays bare the theological basis of the new creed, exposes it as a new heresy, and leaves no doubt as to the choice that confronts Presbyterians.

— Joseph Hill

CALVIN'S NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARIES, VOLUME 7: THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, VOLUME 2, by John Calvin; translated by J. W. Fraser. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49502. 1966, pp. 329. \$6.00.

Volume 2 of Calvin's Commentary on Acts is as well translated and indexed as Volume 1 (also reviewed in this issue of *Blue Banner Faith and Life*). It seems to me that time ought to be given to the study of Calvin's works in seminaries, and by the laity in Bible classes. This quotation from "the prince of commentators" is valuable:

"Because Satan knows that nothing will suit better for overthrowing the Kingdom of Christ

than the disagreements and jealousies of the faithful, he does not cease spreading indirect rumors, which make them suspicious of each other. Therefore we must close our ears to accusations, so as not to believe anything about faithful ministers of Christ except on good information" (p. 198).

— Edward A. Robson

CALVIN'S NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARIES, VOLUME 11: GALATIANS, EPHESIANS, PHILIPPIANS AND COLOSSIANS, by John Calvin; translated by T. H. L. Parker; edited by David W. and Thomas F. Torrance. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49502. 1965, pp. 369. \$6.00.

It is indexed and readable, containing much we should learn:

"(Gal. 6:6) It seems probable that the teachers and ministers of the Word were at that time neglected. . . . It is disgraceful to defraud of their means of living those by whom our souls are fed. . . . But it is and always has been the world's nature to stuff the stomachs of the ministers of Satan and hardly and grudgingly to supply godly pastors with their necessary food. . . . Paul had to exhort the Galatians to perform this duty. . . . He saw that ministers of the Word were neglected, because the Word itself was despised. For it cannot be denied that if the Word be prized, its ministers will always be treated kindly and honourably. It is a trick of Satan to defraud godly ministers of support, so that the Church may be deprived of ministers of their sort. An earnest desire to preserve the ministry led Paul to recommend the care of good and faithful pastors" (p. 112).

— Edward A. Robson

THE CHURCH BETWEEN THE TEMPLE AND MOSQUE, by J. H. Bavinck. William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49502. 1966, pp. 206, paper cover. \$2.65.

In 1962 on our way home from Japan via Europe, I visited the author of this book in his home in Amsterdam. Dr. Bavinck was from 1939 until his death in 1965 Professor of Missions at Amsterdam Free University. Before that he served as a missionary in Indonesia for twenty years. The book now before us was published after his death by friends.

"Comparative Religion" and "History of Religions" are too often taught as a devastating attack on the Bible claim that Christianity is a Divinely revealed and absolutely unique Salvation. In this little paperback Dr. Bavinck meets the challenge of comparative religion by a scholarly and honest analysis of the common features found in all religions, and with a keen evaluation of the non-Christian faiths by the Word of God. He brings out in a most fair and irenic manner the uniqueness of the Bible answers to profound rid-

dles which all ancient religious teachers saw but could not solve.

The first part of the book is devoted to a condensed but stimulating survey of world religions, and a simple analysis of their common insights as they face the problems of human existence without special revelation. Bavinck singles out five universal concerns of man which he calls the "Five Magnetic Points" to which all religious thought is inevitably drawn. These five focus points are: (1) Man's sense of his relation to the cosmos around him; (2) the religious norm which men feel they must obey; (3) the riddle of man's existence; (4) man's craving for salvation; and (5) what is the Reality behind all other reality?

Part Two of the book applies the Bible to the confused quest of non-Christian religions for answers to life. Romans 1:17-32 is taken as a Divinely revealed diagnosis of man's religiosity. Bavinck shows how God is dealing with man the fallen sinner in all these great religions, but that man the sinner shrinks from the True God who comes to him in nature and in common grace. Man represses the truth which God reveals to his conscience. He substitutes for God some other god as a manufactured idol which is more compatible with sinful man's egotistical self-will. God the Creator is terrifying to sinful man, even when man is a highly religious person in quest of Truth. Man cannot face God the holy and absolute Creator so he evades God and seeks substitute religious objects and norms which are more pleasing to his fallen will.

Bavinck dares to say that God was dealing with Buddha and with Mohammed in their struggles to find religious certainty. God has always revealed Himself to every man from the beginning of the world, and these profound religious thinkers would never have meditated on the way of salvation had God not touched them. Their religions show, however, that sin has continued to blind and stifle the Truth in their minds, so that God's satisfying answer to man's need failed to come fully to them.

How should the Christian Church approach other religions? Not in blind contempt. Never in scorn or ridicule. We must keep in mind the human predicament described by Paul in Romans 1 and humbly recognize that we as Christians also sin in repressing the truth of God and seeking idolatrous substitutes more congenial to our rebellious hearts.

We must go to other religions in humility and love, obeying the Lord's command to take His revealed Message to all mankind without distinction of race or people. We must enter into dialogue with these other religions. Not as the syncretic modern comparative religion schools go, without any belief in the special and unique revelation of God in Jesus Christ. We must go honestly and faithfully to tell the Moslem and the

Buddhist the truth about sin and its work of distortion and blind repression of God's truth. We must confess to them that we, too, have sinned and gone astray in this manner.

Our Message cannot be presented to other religions by philosophical arguments, nor can we "prove" anything to them. We cannot demonstrate that our religion is "logical" in every respect. Our eternal Gospel is poor and small in the world of sense so like Paul we must bring this Gospel to men "not with excellency of speech or of wisdom."

The Message has only one powerful weapon, namely, that its messengers know that if they preach it obediently and honestly, trusting in God's help and His Spirit, it will somehow touch the heart of man.

— Samuel E. Boyle

I WAS A COMMUNIST PRISONER, by Haralan Popoff. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1966, pp. 287. \$4.95.

Rev. Haralan Popoff, a leader in the Pentecostal Church of Bulgaria, was arrested, tried on charges of espionage for a foreign power, and with some fourteen other Christian pastors imprisoned in 1948. He was released in September, 1961, and allowed to join his wife and children in Sweden (through Khrushchev's intervention) on December 31, 1962.

Pastor Popoff is living now in Sweden working with the Slavic Mission, and speaking in Bulgarian over Monte Carlo Radio once a week.

This narrative of 13 years in a Communist democracy as a political prisoner falsely charged with crimes against the state, and beaten into submission to a false confession of those alleged crimes, makes grim reading in this day of fresh cooing from White House doves for peaceful trade with European Soviet nations.

Reading this book a chapter at a time in family worship may be suitable to show older children what Communism is, and why so terrible a war as our country must fight in Vietnam may be necessary. I have read a number of first person narratives of prison experiences in Chinese Communist prisons, and in many ways this Bulgarian Pentecostal minister suffered much more harsh brutality from his fellow-countrymen than imprisoned foreign missionaries did in Red China's jails.

Whoever reads this story of Communist persecution will agree with the Apostle Paul that we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against Satanic deception and demonic bondage.

— Samuel E. Boyle

AN OPEN LETTER TO EVANGELICALS, by R. E. O. White, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49502. 1964, pp. 276. \$4.95.

This is a devotional and homiletical commentary on the First Epistle of John. The writer is a Baptist minister who has held pastorates in Wales, Scotland and England. He has lectured in Greek New Testament at the Scottish Baptist Theological College, Glasgow. Part One of the book consists of "Devotional Interpretations" and is a readable logical exposition of the Letter. The emphasis is to bring the challenge of John's teaching home to the heart. Part Two consists of "Contemporary Reflections", and here the reader will have to use discrimination, for it is evident that the writer, while an evangelical, does not hold to the Reformed faith. In his chapter on Evangelicals and Authority, for instance, he seems to set aside all-sufficiency of Scripture. In his chapter on Evangelicals and the Cross he pleads for a universal atonement. In his chapter on Evangelicals and Ecumenicity he makes the statement that the New Testament Church was patently not uniform in organization, worship or discipline — without giving evidence to support it. However, this second part of the book is stimulating reading, and when read with care is valuable, particularly the chapter on Ecumenicity.

— J. Renwick Wright

JOHN BUNYAN, by Frank Mott Harrison. The Banner of Truth Trust, 78b Chiltern Street, London W. 1., England. 1964, pp. 213, paper cover. \$.75 or 5 shillings.

This book is worth much more than the modest price asked for it. It does what it sets out to do — it tells the story of Bunyan's life. The author is described in the foreword as probably the greatest living authority on the subject. He must have done a great deal of original research, for much of his material is new. He is at pains to let the reader see Bunyan — the man — a sinner, then saved by Grace, brought through many doubts, the preacher of the Word, the writer of immortal books, kept through many trials and imprisonments, and more than a conqueror through Christ. It is warmly recommended as an addition to "Bunyan — His Life, Times and Work" by John Brown, D.D.

— J. Renwick Wright

WAR IN HEAVEN, by Charles Williams. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49502. 1949, pp. 256, paper cover. \$1.95.

Those who like their minds titillated by the unusual may enjoy this book. It is a combination of C. S. Lewis and Dennis Wheatley, and in the opinion of the reviewer achieves the success of neither. It can be interpreted as an attempt to allegorize Christian experience — only it is sometimes difficult to find the Christian element, because it is so overlaid with the story. Written in the form of a novel it purports to show the triumph of good over evil. If it is read as a novel it will hold the interest — if it is read in

an endeavour to find Christian truth, the result obtained may hardly be worth the effect.

— J. Renwick Wright

THE LORD PROTECTOR, by Robert S. Paul. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49502. 1964, pp. 438, paper cover. \$2.95.

This is an accurate and scholarly account of the life of Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector of England. It portrays the man both in his greatness and his weakness. It shows how his Christianity was at the very center of his life. Among many interesting items is a letter Cromwell wrote to the wife of his cousin, Oliver St. John, from which this quotation is taken: "You know what my manner of life hath been. Oh, I have lived in and loved darkness, and hated the light. I was a chief, the chief of sinners. This is true; I hated godliness, yet God had mercy on me. O the riches of His mercy. Praise Him for me, pray for me, that He who hath begun a good work would perfect it to the day of Christ." These are the words of a man who has been born again, and Hilaire Belloc's comment on his conversion experience is interesting — "No Calvin, no Cromwell."

The book, which has an introduction specially for American readers, traces his career in detail. We learn much of his experience in local politics, his activities in Parliament, his rise to the top in the realm of war, and then of his policies as an administrator of the country. Particular attention is paid to his activities in the decision which led to the execution of the King. The facts of his military campaign in Ireland are squarely faced. His memory has been execrated by Irish Roman Catholics for centuries as the man who ordered the massacre of Drogheda — it is interesting that the reason he gave for it was the same as the reason for the dropping of atomic bombs in 1945 — a more speedy ending to the war. Of particular interest are the chapters on his relationships with the Scottish Covenanters, and with Presbyterians in general. His death-bed prayer is recorded, and breathes the same utter trust in God in which he had lived his life. Purchasing this book will mean money well spent.

— J. Renwick Wright

INTERPRETING THE ATONEMENT, by Robert H. Culpepper. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49502. 1966, pp. 170, paper cover. \$2.45.

While this book is Arminian in theology its layout will appeal to any student of Scripture. The author first lays the Old Testament foundations of the doctrine of the Atonement (He starts with the covenant made with Israel at Sinai, instead of with the Covenant of Grace). He then goes on to relate the New Testament witness concerning the Atonement — and both these chapters contain valuable Biblical material for any student

of the central doctrine of our Faith. He follows this with a view of interpretations of the Atonement through history — the various theories are fairly presented. (This chapter will be found particularly helpful to anyone who wishes for a condensed accurate summary of the history of The Doctrine.) Next follows a chapter on "Special Problems." The first of these is the extent of the Atonement. Here he takes issue with Reformed Theology, and while he declares: "The arguments advanced for a limited atonement are easily answered" he does a most unconvincing job of answering them. His handling of "Objective and Subjective Elements" is much more Scriptural. Next follows — "A Constructive Statement of the Doctrine of the Atonement" — and while a Reformed Theologian will view some parts of it with misgiving, he will thank God for the emphasis on the Cross as the supreme revelation of the love of God for sinful men, as God's judgment upon man's sin, as Christ's identification with the sinner, as God's decisive action by which we are delivered. Every Christian will agree with his statement — "We need to recognize . . . that the fact of the atonement is infinitely more important than an explanation of it. This is not to say that an attempt at theological explanation is unimportant. Rather it is to underscore the fact that we are not saved by subscribing to a certain view of the atonement, but by relying upon the saving act of God in Jesus Christ, however inadequate our understanding may be. Indeed the subject is so great that there never comes a time we can tie the whole matter up in one neat theological package without something spilling over."

— J. Renwick Wright

THE MASTER PLAN OF EVANGELISM, by Robert E. Coleman. Fleming H. Revell Co., Westwood, N. J. 1963, pp. 126, paper cover. \$1.00

This is a study in "the principles governing the movements of the Master, in the hope that our own labours might be conformed to a similar pattern." It begins with the fact that He chose men, and chose to work through them. Then it shows that He stayed with them and trained them. Then it speaks of the consecration which He commanded from them, and follows that with a chapter on the ministry of the Holy Spirit in them. He not only taught them — He lived the life before them — He demonstrated how to pray, to use the Scripture, to win souls. He assigned to them their work and kept check on them. He expected them to reproduce. The book closes with a strong challenge to the reader. This is an essential book for any pastor, or for anyone else whose business it is to commit the truth "to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also."

— J. Renwick Wright

THE BIBLICAL FLOOD AND THE ICE EPOCH, by Donald Wesley Patten. Pacific Merid-

ian Publishing Co., 9533 Meridian Ave., North, Seattle, Washington, 98103. 1966, pp. 336. \$7.50.

This is a book for the theologian, for the scientist, and for the man in the street. It is not an attempt to reconcile Christianity and Science — it is an honest objective attempt to arrive at the truth of what happened at the Biblical flood and the Ice Epoch. The author is a convinced Christian and a geographer by training. He has made an immense study of the subject, as is evidenced by the fact that his selected bibliography contains well over a hundred books.

His book requires careful study. His theories are set forth carefully and in detail. He is convinced that Genesis is a valid historical document, that the Flood is an historical global fact. He makes the point that it was not so much the heavy rain which caused the destruction, as great tidal waves sweeping in over the land, as a result of tremendous earth movements — this would account for the fact, for example, that the Ark was deposited on the slopes of Mount Ararat as the tide receded.

It is his conviction that the Ice Epoch enveloped the earth suddenly — and he produces a mass of evidence in support. He argues that it was composed of ice from outer space from the regions of Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune or the region beyond Neptune. He believes that before the Flood there was a canopy of water-vapour over the earth, which was dissipated by the ice — and the consequent difference in atmosphere could cause the difference in longevity in man before and after the Flood. The book makes interesting reading, and time spent on it will prove profitable.

— J. Renwick Wright

THE WEIGHT OF GLORY, by C. S. Lewis. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49502. 1965, pp. 66, paper cover. \$1.00.

The five addresses in this small volume were originally published in England in 1949 under the title "Transposition and Other Addresses". They are now issued in this Eerdman's paperback. The addresses are a selection of those delivered by C. S. Lewis when he was at the peak of his powers and popularity. Some of the material will be found elsewhere in major works, but most of it is new, and lovers of C. S. Lewis will welcome this short work from his gifted pen. The fact that the addresses were given during the period of World War II dates them and in a sense limits their application, but there is in them much truth that is of a permanent and enduring quality. The booklet evaluates the comforting hope of the child of God against a background of the afflictions of our present life. There is merit in each of the chapters, but worthy of special mention is the chapter entitled "Membership", in which a

thoughtful evaluation is made of the corporate nature of Church membership in contrast with the individualism and collectivism that characterises membership in various cultural societies.

— Adam Loughridge

JOHN CALVIN: A COLLECTION OF ESSAYS, edited by C. E. Duffield. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49502. 1966, 228 pp. \$5.95.

The publishers are to be congratulated on issuing the first of a new series entitled "Contemporary Studies in Reformation Theology". Lovers of Reformed Truth always welcome new light on the Reformers, and this fine symposium is the work of nine men, each of whom is an expert in his particular field. Readers will be familiar with such names as Jean Cadier, J. I. Packer, T. H. L. Parker and G. S. M. Walker. The lesser known contributors, F. L. Battles, J. D. Benoit, R. N. Caswell, R. Peter and B. Hall are not outshone by their better known colleagues and the result is a well balanced volume of essays.

The book is not an attempt to justify Calvin or to defend his point of view. Instead, Calvin is allowed to speak for himself on vital issues so that readers may judge the merits of his teaching. Basil Hall gives a short account of Calvin's life and character and shows that he has often suffered even at the hands of his friends. If an unusually revealing chapter, J. D. Benoit enables readers to see the soul of the man in a careful analysis of some of Calvin's personal letters.

In an age of Ecumenism-run riot, it is refreshing to read Jean Cadier's chapter on Calvin and The Union of The Churches. Here the principles that must ever separate the true Church from the false are clearly set forth. J. I. Packer sums up Calvin's Theory in a new and arresting way and G. S. M. Walker shows in brief compass the Reformer's view of the Lord's Supper. In a fine closing chapter, R. N. Caswell deals with the much neglected question of ecclesiastical discipline. He does so with clarity and conviction, having himself proved the breakdown of discipline in the work of a congregation.

We warmly commend this well-edited and well-produced volume.

— Adam Loughridge

JOHN G. PATON: MISSIONARY TO THE NEW HEBRIDES: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY. Banner of Truth Trust, 78b Chiltern St., London W. 1, England. 1965, pp. 524. 21 shillings.

The Autobiography of John G. Paton was first published in two parts in 1889. Six editions of this thrilling missionary record were quickly issued. To the seventh, in 1898, a third part was added, bringing the story up-to-date. This vol-

ume is a reprint of the 12th edition, containing the three parts and three appendices. Once again the Banner of Truth Trust is to be warmly commended for the reissue of such a fine volume in such an attractive format and at such a reasonable price.

The book is cordially recommended to missionary societies and young people especially. It presents a picture of life in a godfearing Covenant home, an early experience of divine grace, intense devotion to the service of Christ, steadfast loyalty in face of loneliness and loss, and a specially clear vision of the need to conduct mission work in an atmosphere free from all involvement with economic or political imperialism.

— Adam Loughridge

THE MINISTRY OF KESWICK. First Series. Edited by Herbert F. Stevenson. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1963, pp. 366. \$5.95.

Nine of Britain's best known preachers in the years 1892 to 1919 are represented in this volume of Bible Readings given at Keswick Convention at various times. Hubert Brooke's studies are of a general nature. H. W. Webb-Peploe deals in an attractive fashion with Grace and Peace in Paul's Letters to Galatians, Ephesians, Phillipians and Colossians. A. T. Pierson has studies on that fine text, 1st Corinthians 1:30. W. H. Griffith Thomas gave a series of readings on The Authority and Message of the Bible. This fine theme is well handled apart from an over stated Premillenarian concept of the return of Christ. J. Stuart Holden's ministry struck a practical and comforting note in the dark days of World War I. W. Y. Fullerton's theme was the Practice of the Presence of Christ.

The value of the book, however, is heightened by a masterly series of studies on Prayer by G. Campbell Morgan, and a specially characteristic series in outstandingly beautiful devotional language on The Glory of Christ by Alexander Smellie. The book, well edited by H. F. Stevenson, has certain limitations doctrinally, but contains many devotional gems.

— Adam Loughridge

THE MINISTRY OF KESWICK. Second Series. Bible Readings Edited by Herbert F. Stevenson. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506. 1964, pp. 350. \$5.95.

This second series of Bible Readings was given at Kensick Convention in England from 1921 to 1956 by such well known preachers as D. G. Barnhouse, J. Russell Howden, W. W. Martin, Fred Mitchell, Paul S. Rees, W. Graham Scroggie, and Wilbur M. Smith. One senses in reading this volume, that, apart from one or two instances, the character or expository preaching compares rather unfavourably with that in the First Series.

The language and style of D. G. Barnhouse is characteristically flamboyant, and his theme, "Baptised into Christ" is developed in five studies notable for a number of questionable statements. For example, one is startled and confused at the outset by the dogmatic pronouncement on page 158: "The New Birth gives us entrance into the family of God; entrance into the Body of Christ is obtained by quite another work of the Holy Spirit". His arguments for this theory fail to convince us.

There are many fine things in Fred Mitchell's exposition of Revelation, but it is clear that he attempted too much in trying to expound the book in four studies, especially when he deals with chapters 13 to 22 in one address! The highlight of this volume is a fine series of studies on Paul's Prison Prayers by W. Graham Scroggie.

— Adam Loughridge

FIRE ON THE MOUNTAINS. By Raymond J. Davis. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506. 1966, pp. 253. \$3.95.

The story of missionary enterprise is always thrilling and challenging. Raymond Davis's account of the origin and development of the work of the Sudan Interior Mission in Ethiopia is more a series of illustrations than a regular history of the movement. It centers on personalities rather than policies and programs, and traces the story of a step taken modestly in faith by Thomas Lambie, Walter Othman and Clarence Duff in 1928, that, in spite of the horrors of Italian invasion in 1935, grew to be a great enterprise with almost 300 workers today.

In 1928, there were no believers in the Wal-lamo Province. When the work was interrupted by the war in 1935, a church with forty-eight members had been organized. When the missionaries returned in 1942, they found, to their amazement, a body of some ten thousand believers. The story of how multitudes were added to the Lord is well told, and well worth reading.

— Adam Loughridge

THEN AND THERE. By V. Raymond Edman. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506. 1964, pp. 224. \$3.95.

The Chancellor of Wheaton College, Illinois, is well known for his devotional writings. In this volume, he has selected the words "Then" and "There" from different contexts in the Bible and used them as a basis for devotional meditations. These adverbs of time and place are used to remind us that our Heavenly Father has a time and a place in which he meets with his children. The story of our spiritual pilgrimage is marked by such encounters.

The book is thoughtfully written. A carefully selected poem introduces each of the thirty-five

chapters, and a series of beautiful photographs enhance the volume considerably.

— Adam Loughridge

TAKE YOUR STAND: A VOLUME OF OUTLINES ON OUR CHRISTIAN CALLING IN EVERY-DAY-LIFE (Symposium). Vonkenberg Study Aids, Box 783, London, Ontario, Canada. 1967, pp. 32, paper cover. 90 cents.

This booklet is published by a board of the denomination known as The Canadian Reformed Churches. It is intended as a help by way of guidelines and bibliography for study and discussion meetings. On the whole it is well presented and shows a healthy insistence on study into backgrounds and basic principles. Among the important matters covered are the Ecumenical Movement, the Christian and Politics, and the history and position of The Canadian Reformed Churches.

With much of the contents of this booklet we find ourselves in hearty agreement. The chapter entitled "Independence of Two Nations" involves, in the reviewer's opinion, some tendency toward over-simplification of historical issues and some bias against the United States. It is insinuated, if not actually stated in so many words, that the American Revolution of 1776 was "revolt against God" (p. 24). The position is taken that change of the government of a nation by revolution is always wrong. While not having any zeal to attempt to justify the American Revolution theologically, the reviewer holds that according to Scripture revolution is sometimes justifiable. Hebrews 11:33, 34 is commonly interpreted (correctly, we believe) as referring in part to the glorious exploits of Judas Maccabaeus and the Maccabaeans in the second century B.C. This was certainly violent revolution against the Seleucid monarchy which was the existing government of Palestine. In the post-Biblical period we might mention the revolt of the Netherlands against Spain and the Revolution of 1688 by which the Stuart monarchy was replaced in Britain by William of Orange and his successors. All of these we hold to have been both necessary and righteous.

The booklet under review makes an amazing statement about George Washington: that he was a Presbyterian, and that after the Revolutionary War was over he said concerning those who still adhered to the British crown, that the "Best thing they can do is commit suicide" (p. 23). The statement that Washington was a Presbyterian is unquestionably incorrect. He was a member and office-bearer in the Anglican or Episcopal Church (reference: Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th edition, 1911, Vol. 28, page 345, column 2). That Washington actually said that the "Tories" left in the United States at the end of the war had better commit suicide, we strongly doubt. In any case, such a wicked saying ought not to be attributed to

a man who professed to be a Christian, without proof in the form of documentary citation.

The booklet manifests a tendency to run phrases of two or three words together into single words; for example, every-day-life, overagainst, warchief, Churchlife, campmeeting. On page 21 the word **principially** is misprinted as **principally**, thus destroying the meaning of the sentence.

— J. G. Vos

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL SUPPLIES FOR 1967, published by Great Commission Publications, 7401 Old York Road, Philadelphia, Pa., 19126. Sample Kit of materials, \$4.65 postpaid (returnable for refund within 3 weeks if in good condition). Those wishing materials featuring Psalms instead of hymns should specify "Reformed Presbyterian Edition" in sending order.

These materials are of high quality, attractively printed and very well prepared indeed. They place the emphasis on the Word of God, not on games and handwork projects, though some of the latter are provided. Most important, these materials are true to the Bible as the inerrant Word of God and they consistently reflect the Reformed view of Christianity. Unlike some materials issued by non-denominational publishing firms, they bring out effectively the doctrinal message of the Bible and the element of knowledge in Christianity.

A commendable feature, from our point of view, is the absence of pictures purporting to portray the Lord Jesus Christ.

What is the reason and purpose of a Vacation Bible School? If it is mainly to get small children off the street for a couple of summer weeks, or out of their mothers' way, poorly prepared and theologically inert materials might satisfy the requirements. But if the purpose is really **educational** — to teach the Word of God to children — then the choice of the best helps — those theologically sound and pedagogically usable — is highly important.

Those wishing materials with Psalms instead of hymns should be sure to specify "Reformed Presbyterian Edition" in ordering.

A free Catalog is available listing all the materials and containing many valuable ideas on how to operate a successful Vacation Bible School. Better still, send for the sample kit and see the actual materials themselves. The catalog comes with the kit. These materials run in a three-year cycle, so that children do not get the same thing over again in successive years. By the time they have run through the cycle, they are in the next higher age group and starting on a different cycle. Materials for four different age-groups are provided.

It is a tragedy that some Covenanter Vacation Bible schools still use materials published by theo-

logically non-committal commercial firms. Let us be true to our covenant vows and promises to support and defend the system of truth set forth in our accepted church standards.

— J. G. Vos

IS GOD DEAD? by Cornelius Van Til. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Box 185, Nutley, N. J. 07110. 1966. pp. 43. paper cover, \$.75.

Traditional Christian belief has clung to the concept of the "supernatural" — a carryover from primitive religion (animism), which thought of nature as semi-divine. In a scientific age such a belief is obsolete. Only that which can be verified by sense-experience can be known. We can have no verifiable knowledge of God. Why then continue to speak of that which is wholly unknown and unknowable? This is Dr. Van Til's account of the basic ideas of the death-of-God theology. It goes back to the philosophy of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). Kant, says Van Til, has taught us that "the laws of God. . . are actually the projection of our own moral ideals" and that "God himself, insofar as he is conceptualized, is a projection of our own ethical consciousness" (p. 5). Men **postulate** God; they do not know him.

Neo-orthodox theology also follows Kant's doctrine but still clings to the religious dimension as a postulate of practical reason. Barth, Bultmann, and Niebuhr, say the God-is-dead theologians, are like adults who still believe in Santa Claus, "have not fully escaped the illusions of a real Santa Claus" (p. 6). The God-is-dead theologians are telling us what all mature men should know — that it is the father of the family who fills the stockings. It appears that "Christian atheism" (Van Til does not use this term) is an

anthropology rather than a theology, a "Christianized humanism." It centers in Jesus, the "man for others", who shows us what it means to be truly human.

The God-is-dead theology, Van Til assures us, is neither an irresponsible publicity stunt nor a fad started by crackpots. It is a serious attempt to answer some of modern man's profoundest questions. Van Til with his keen intellect and dedicated apologetic skill analyzes the "theology" of Thomas J. J. Altizer, William Hamilton, and Paul van Buren, who seriously affirm that there is no God and there is no supernatural realm. He concludes that these theologians "are simply doing a little more openly what has been done throughout the course of history. Men have always, since the Fall, tried to make themselves believe that God as their Creator and Redeemer does not exist" (p. 35). These theologians "are therefore no worse than other men who, together with them, assert their own autonomy as the foundation of all predication. . ." (p. 39). Van Til challenges the validity of this basic assumption, contending that it, no less than belief in God, is unverifiable. Moreover, argues Van Til, if the negation of God, which the God-is-dead theologians postulate, were valid, there could be no intelligible answers to the questions men ask.

With the help of modern analytical philosophy the God-is-dead theologians are able to resolve the dialectical dualism of Kierkegaard and Barth by fusing eternity into time, identifying God with man, and unifying the sacred and the secular. **Man devoted to secular ends in the here and now** — this is the creed of the future church. The God-is-dead theologians are the *avant garde* of the new society that has learned to live without God.

— Joseph Hill

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 Galatians chapter 1 is Paul inferring that his inspiration is more complete than that of the other apostles? If this is the case, does this not belittle Christ Who called and instructed the others personally? Does it not exalt the Spirit over the Son?

Answer:

Certainly if Paul inferred that his inspiration was more complete than that of the other apostles this would be a belittling of the teaching ministry

of Christ and an exalting of the teaching ministry of the Spirit over that of the Son, but he does not so infer. In this letter he is vindicating his authority as an Apostle — a matter which was under attack. He shows that the Gospel was supernaturally conveyed to him by the personal intervention of Jesus Christ. (Gal. 1:11, 12). On the Damascus Road Christ had spoken to him, and brought him to the obedience of faith. At that time he recognized step by step the fact of the Resurrection, the meaning of the Crucifixion, the deity of our Lord, and His mediatorship — for if Christ had appeared to him then He was risen, and

He must be the Son of God. If He was Lord and God, and yet died by the Father's will on the cross, then His death had to be a propitiation accepted by God for the sins of His people. All this, and much more was revealed to him — but he nowhere gives us ground for believing that he thought that the revelation given to him was fuller and better than to the other Apostles. He makes the point instead that his relationship with them was one of brotherly recognition and equality. He was conscious of his divine call, and asked no patronage from them. They acknowledged his call, and did not try to give it. "They who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me. . . ." (Gal. 2:6), but they did acknowledge that he was a brother apostle, and gave to him the right hand of fellowship in token of recognition, agreeing that they would preach the Gospel to the Jews and he to the Gentiles.

— J. Renwick Wright

Question:

As Christ called new disciples, these joined the nucleus of those already called. Why, when Paul felt himself called as truly as the others, did he not follow Christ's pattern and join those already Christians, rather than isolate himself from them? Is it right to think that one should not take instruction from others, especially older Christians?

Answer:

Just why Paul went to Arabia instead of joining himself to other Christians is not revealed in Scripture. He certainly had Scriptural precedent for so doing — for Moses spent forty years in the wilderness in preparation for his life work, and our Lord spent forty days in the wilderness at the start of his ministry. It would seem that this course was in the Divine Plan for Paul, for with his acute mind, and his theological training, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit he could search out the profound truths he was later inspired to write. It is worth noting that the fact that he had not conferred with flesh and blood gave him the right to say that he got his revelation of the Gospel from God only.

Christians should certainly be prepared to receive instruction from their fellow-believers, always subjecting it, of course, to the authority of the Word.

— J. Renwick Wright

Question:

When a person holds the idea of "exclusive Psalmody" as a matter of conscientious conviction, what should he do when attending a church where hymns and organs are being used?

Answer:

My own practice in this matter is to remain silent under such circumstances. I often attend

such churches, and find that where my convictions are known, they are usually respected by others.

— J. G. Vos

Question:

If God is not honored by the use of organs and hymns, does this not imply that the service is displeasing to Him?

Answer:

The only really valid test of what honors God, or is pleasing to Him, is what He has commanded in His Word, the Holy Bible.

Note 1 Samuel 15:22, "To obey is better than sacrifice," etc. On the other hand, honoring and pleasing God are not **absolute** concepts. It is possible to have the **intention** of honoring God, even when something is done that is not strictly in accord with the will of God. Note 1 Kings 3:3, 4. Here it is stated that Solomon loved the Lord, and walked in the statutes of David his father, but he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places. Strictly speaking, this was a violation of the revealed will of God. These "high places" were religious shrines originally associated with the false religion of the heathen Canaanites, and God had commanded that they be totally destroyed (Numbers 33:52). Solomon should have known this, but apparently he was ignorant in this matter. So he worshipped at a "high place" (1 Kings 3:4), and right after this the Lord appeared to him and gave him a wonderful promise. Evidently God accepted Solomon's good intentions and forgave his violation of the requirements of the law.

In the same way, we may affirm that today there are many who use hymns and organs who sincerely intend to honor and please God. Strictly speaking, they are violating a Scriptural principle concerning worship, but we may be sure that God will accept their good intentions and forgive their sin of ignorance. Still, if we are seeking to honor God in the fullest and highest way, we should search the Scriptures for principles of worship, and then apply faithfully the principles that we find revealed there.

— J. G. Vos

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

— Christina G. Rossetti

Acknowledgments and Announcements

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These generous contributions from friends indicate serious concern that **Blue Banner Faith and Life** shall continue publication. These gifts are deeply appreciated. Less than half of the money needed is received from subscriptions and sales of back issues. For the rest, we are mostly dependent on contributions. You can help the world-wide ministry of this magazine by contributing as the Lord enables you.

Circulation of this Issue

1600 copies of this issue were printed. Of these 1375 were immediately mailed out to readers, leaving 225 copies to fill future orders for back

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U.S.A., 837. Canada, 126. Scotland, 84. Australia, 72. England, 61. Northern Ireland, 36. Japan, 31. South Africa, 29. Ceylon, 14. Cyprus, 11. New Zealand, 7. India, 7. Korea, 6. Taiwan (Formosa, Free China), 6. Eire, 4. Lebanon, 4. Wales, 4. Peru, 4. Three copies each to Netherlands, Syria, Greece, Hong Kong, Mexico. Two copies each to Ethiopia, Indonesia, Sweden. One copy each to France, United Arab Republic (Egypt), Switzerland, Southern Rhodesia, Chile, Brazil, Ghana, Costa Rica, Panama Canal Zone, Yemen, Malaysia. Total circulation, 1375. Total outside U.S.A., 538.

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This is the True God

(1 John 5:20)

THE MAKER of the universe,
As man, for man was made a curse,
The claims of law which He had made
Unto the uttermost He paid.

His holy fingers made the bough
Which grew the thorns that crowned His
brow,
The nails that pierced His hands were mined
In secret places He designed.

He made the forest whence there sprang
The tree on which His body hung;
He died upon a cross of wood,
Yet made the hill on which it stood.

The sky that darkened o'er His head,
By Him above the earth was spread;
The sun that hid from Him its face,
By His decree was poised in space.

The spear which spilled His precious blood
Was tempered in the fires of God;
The grave in which His form was laid
Was hewn in rocks His hands had made.

The throne on which He now appears
Was His from everlasting years,
But a new glory crowns His brow,
And every knee to Him shall bow.

— F. W. PITT.

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)



BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

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Jerusalem the Golden

By Bernard of Cluny, about A.D. 1145. Translated by John Mason Neale (selected stanzas)

Jerusalem the golden,
 With milk and honey blest,
Beneath thy contemplation
 Sink heart and voice oppressed.
I know not, O I know not,
 What social joys are there!
What radiancy of glory,
 What light beyond compare!

They stand, those halls of Syon,
 Conjubilant with song,
And bright with many an angel,
 And all the martyr throng;
The Prince is ever in them,
 The daylight is serene;
The pastures of the Blessed
 Are decked in glorious sheen.

There is the Throne of David,
 And there, from care released,
The song of them that triumph,
 The shout of them that feast;
And they who, with their Leader,
 Have conquered in the fight,
For ever and for ever
 Are clad in robes of white!

And now we fight the battle,
 But then shall wear the crown
Of full and everlasting
 And passionless renown:
And now we watch and struggle,
 And now we live in hope,
And Syon, in her anguish,
 With Babylon must cope;
But He whom now we trust in
 Shall then be seen and known,
And they that know and see Him
 Shall have Him for their own.

And there is David's Fountain,
 And life in fullest glow;
And there the light is golden,
 And milk and honey flow—

The light that hath no evening,
 The health that hath no sore,
The life that hath no ending,
 But lasteth evermore.

For thee, O dear, dear Country!
 Mine eyes their vigils keep;
For every love, beholding
 Thy happy name, they weep.
The mention of thy glory
 Is unction to the breast,
And medicine in sickness,
 and love, and life, and rest.

The Cross is all thy splendor,
 The Crucified thy praise;
His laud and benediction
 Thy ransomed people raise:
"Jesus, the Gem of Beauty,
 True God and Man," they sing,
"The never-failing Garden,
 The ever-golden Ring;
The Door, the Pledge, the Husband,
 The Guardian of his Court;
The Day-star of Salvation,
 The Porter and the Port!"

When in my sin I totter,
 I weep, or try to weep:
But grace, sweet grace celestial,
 Shall all its love display,
And David's Royal Fountain
 Purge every sin away.

Exult, O dust and ashes!
 The Lord shall be thy part;
His only, His for ever,
 Thou shalt be, and thou art!
Exult, O dust and ashes!
 The Lord shall be thy part;
His only, His for ever,
 Thou shalt be, and thou art!

BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

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NUMBER 3

The Unchanging God

"Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God."

— Psalm 90:1, 2.

To many people God is a mere appendix to life, something to be added on after everything else is taken care of. To others God is a convenience, someone to help them out of their worst troubles and to forgive their sins from time to time. They say, "That is what God is for" — to help people out of trouble and to forgive their sins. Such people are not really worshippers of God. They are just idolaters. They have made a god in their own image, and they use it for their own purposes.

How different is the God presented in this Psalm! First of all, He is a personal God, for He is addressed as "thou." Many people think of God as a natural force, power or influence, properly referred to as "it." But the Bible speaks of God as "He" and "Him", and addresses God as "Thou" or "Thee." The Bible speaks of God as a person.

God is also the eternal God. He never had a beginning, and can never have an end. He is above all distinctions of time. Past, present and future are all equally present to Him. God thinks of these terms only in relation to His creatures. For God Himself, all is an eternal present. All points in created time are equally present to Him. The Psalm expresses this truth, not in abstract philosophical terms, but by the figure of a thousand years compared to a watch in the night (Ps. 90:4).

Then, God is presented here as absolutely distinct from the created universe. First there was God, then afterwards there existed the world. First God, then the mountains. The mountains had a beginning; God always was. Therefore God is distinct from the creation. He is not tied up or limited by His creation. He is the Creator, high and lifted up, always distinct from all created things. Modern religion believes in a God who is thought of as part of the universe. It speaks of God as the "heart", and "soul", or the "intelligence" of the universe. This means that God and the universe are just two sides of the same picture, two parts of the same whole; they cannot be separated. If this idea is true, then either the universe is eternal, or else God had a beginning. So modern re-

ligion has come to believe in a limited or finite God, a God who is merely a function or aspect of the universe, not its transcendent Creator.

The Psalmist also represents God as the actual determiner of all events that come to pass. "Thou turnest man to destruction, and sayest, 'Return, ye children of men. . . Thou carriest them away as with a flood'" (Psalm 90:3-5). From the fall of a sparrow to the rise of an empire, God absolutely controls every fact in the universe, every event that ever comes to pass. This kind of God may perhaps not be easy to believe in, but the point is, this kind of God is really worth believing in. This kind of God is not a mere superman. He is not the product of man's imagination or idealism. He is real, He exists, He is the greatest of all facts.

The great majority of our fellow human beings either do not believe in this God of the Bible at all, or they fail to take Him seriously. They fail to realize that at every point in their life they must reckon with God. God is the great background of human life. "In him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28). Without God — the God of the Bible — human life cannot have any real meaning. Without the God of the Bible, life is a mystery and ends in a question mark. But with God life does indeed have a meaning. But only when our God is really the God of the Bible, the living and true God, and only when He is taken seriously.

Not only worldly people, but many church members, fail to take God seriously. Someone has remarked that the modern church has been vaccinated with a mild variety of Christianity and is now immune to the real thing. There is some truth in this observation. Our easy-going, formal, convenient religion does not take God seriously. Only when God is reckoned with at every point in life do we really take Him seriously.

The currently sensational "God is dead" theology is not really surprising at all. It is what should be expected — the logical end-product of modern secularism. From saying that God is irrelevant for all but a fraction of human life, to saying that God is dead, is but a step, and a logical, consistent step at that. The "God is dead" theologians are wrong, but they are consistent — more consistent than ordinary liberals and demythologizers of the Bible. The God of liberalism is indeed dead, but the God of the Bible is eternally alive.

The Lord's Great Controversy

By the Rev. John C. Rankin

VIII. The Conflict in the Old Testament

(Continued from last issue)

Content of the Message

The situation being what it was, the message of God by his prophet could not be other than that of threatening and denunciation. The day of repentance for the nation as a whole was over, though the call to individual repentance yet remained. The nation as such was already doomed to suffer the great calamity of the Babylonian captivity. So it was that threatening came first as the dominant note of the message and denunciation was added mainly to prove the nation's ill-desert and to justify the Lord in the impending judgment.

It was the period of the last stages of the religious and moral decay of the nation in those days. In Josiah's reign, in the course of which God's call came to Jeremiah, there had indeed been a partial turning and return unto God and his word. But Josiah was the last good king and his was the last period of reform, following which the nation fell away to the lowest depths of sin.

And yet it is not to be supposed that they sank into a complete desertion of their ancient faith. What they did was to go away into all forms of heathenish rites while at the same time maintaining all the forms of the practice of their own religion. They still foregathered in the temple and relied upon it as their refuge and strength. But so far as their own religion was concerned, it had degenerated into sheer formalism and the most extreme superficiality in religion. What it really meant was a policy of religious inclusivism. The idea was to worship and thereby to appease all gods and so escape the anger and obtain the favor of all. Thus, in their view, Jehovah was not the one only living and real God, but only one god among others; one of many gods.

For examples of the threatenings we would suggest: 1:14; 4:6; 7:32; 9:15, 16 and 15:1. For the denunciations: 1:16; 5:23; 5:40, 31 and 7:31.

Another leading element of the message, besides threatening and denunciation is that of promise. On the dark and stormy background of these prevailing elements there are various passages that are bright with beams of hope and promise; passages all aglow with divine sweetness and light. Jeremiah knew that the Lord was gracious as well as just, and that always in all generations he has reserved a remnant and that he has a great and glorious purpose in store for time to come.

And so there is yet another element in the prophecy; that of tender love and entreaty on God's part and a persistent call to repent. "Return thou backsliding Israel." "O Jerusalem wash thine heart from wickedness." "Amend your ways and your doings." "Return ye now everyone from his evil way and make your ways and your doings good." (3:12. 14:22; 4:1, 14; 6:8, 16; 7:3; 18:11).

It is interesting to observe Jeremiah's message in relation to that of the false prophets of the day. He recites the content of their message and describes it as composed of "lies" and "vain and foolish things," etc. and as only a superficial healing of the hurt.

The hurt itself was deep and deadly but the healing was a mere closing of the wound, driving the poison deeper, holding it in and sending it along. So the hurt was there and yet it was not healed, though not because there was no healing for it. The great Physician was there and there was "balm in Gilead," but they would not hear and so the proper remedy was not applied. The quack doctors took over with the patient's approval and it was generally agreed that the trouble, whatever it may have been, was safely over.

Let us examine the message of the false prophets by comparison with each of the four leading elements of the message of the prophet of God.

(1) There is first the message of God's threatenings. Was there anything like it in the message of the popular prophets of the day? Not at all. It goes without saying that there was nothing of the sort in their preaching; but, on the contrary and in its place only false assurances based on utterly false premises.

(2) Then what about denunciation? Nothing of that either. Happily in Lamentations 2:14 we have the prophet's own statement of this: "Thy prophets have seen vain and foolish things for thee; and they have not discovered thine iniquity, to turn away thy captivity; but have seen for thee false burdens and causes of banishment."

(3) But what of the element of promise? Yes, of course there was promise fulsome and abundant. The people were encouraged to rest in sure and certain hope of peace, security and freedom from want and fear of every kind. Is it any wonder they liked their prophets and stood by them? Jeremiah, on the other hand, under strict

commission from the God of Israel, was unable to hold out such pleasant prospects.

(4) Without threatening, denunciation and promise there could of course be no such thing as a call to repentance. Consequently that call, which has ever been the cutting edge of the message of God to man, was completely absent from the words of the would-be prophets of the day.

The Conflict in Ezekiel

The prophet Ezekiel was born of priestly descent and was reared in or near Jerusalem during the last days of the kingdom of Judah previous to the exile. During this time a series of invasions and deportations were carried out by the Chaldean kings. And so, at the age of 25, Ezekiel was carried away captive and five years later was living in Babylonia by the river Chebar. As the event proved, it is apparent that the young priest was carried away that he might become a prophet of the Lord in the land of captivity.

So it was there and at this time, that at the age of 30, he received the call to prophesy. This was still seven years previous to the final invasion and destruction of the city and the temple and the final deportation which included Zedekiah, the last of Judah's kings; at which time Ezekiel was 37 years of age. These seven years of the prophet's work under God (Probably B.C. 594-587) constituted a first stage of his ministry, so that his prophesying falls into two main parts; that having to do with the capture and overthrow of Jerusalem because of its sins and that concerning the restoration which was to come at the expiration of the seventy years. (John D. Davis' *Dictionary of the Bible*.)

With Ezekiel's appearance a change of tone and a new accent is apparent. The preceding prophecies had sounded the note of God's great kindness and love toward his people and tender solicitude for them coincident with the solemn threats, warnings and denunciations incident to the situations brought upon them by their sins.

The prophecies of Isaiah and of Jeremiah are carried out largely on a note of entreaty. Consider, for example, Jer. 2; "I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, etc. (vs. 2); and, (vs. 9); "I will yet plead with you, saith the Lord, and with your children's children will I plead." And how, in verses 8, 11 and 13, they are spoken of as walking "after things that do not profit." God could have said that they had forsaken him to walk after things which were evil, contrary to his commandments and abominable in his sight. But it is to be observed that the thought of God is here very much upon their good, and, that it was that which was unprofitable for them, in contrast with the profitable, that is here first in his mind with reference to the situation. The Lord, the God of Israel, is grieved for the evils that

had already fallen and were yet in store because of their sin.

But with Ezekiel a new note sounds. As his prophecy unfolds it is apparent that now the accent on the whole is on the justice of the Lord, which, on the whole is untempered with his love. It would appear that the days of God's pleading with his people in forbearance and love are nearly over, and that nothing now remains except the visitations of his wrath.

The approaching judgment is portrayed under various types: as a siege; hair burned, smitten with a knife and scattered in the wind; and that of smiting with the hand and stamping with the foot. Repentance, however, is yet called for and a later repentance is indicated as to take place among those that were to escape with their lives. In chapter 7 the captivity is depicted under the type of a chain. But though the door of repentance still stands ajar, the dominant note is on the pitilessness of God in the dreadful severity of the judgment to be visited. So the former note of God's solicitude and concern for his people is, in Ezekiel, relegated to the rear in favour of something more severe.

The visions of Ezekiel, especially of God in his glory, constitute a special feature which should not be overlooked. It is an outstanding characteristic of Ezekiel's experiences as a prophet; something which others had, it is true, but none in such wealth and profusion as he. We read of "the cherubim" and "the wheels;" and, high above the ineffably glorious scene, the heavenly hosts, flashing as they came and went; and the rainbow radiance round about "the likeness of a throne" and "the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it." So chapters 1 and 2 (Also 3:22; 8:1-4; 10:1 and 18; 11:23.)

In chapter 8 we have what may well be called the great sin chapter of the prophecy. In this chapter the prophet is given an intimate view and revelation of the sin of the people. The passage describes a revelation given to the prophet of some of the extremes of wickedness which had arisen in the life of the people, particularly in the sphere of religious belief and worship where sin is ever most loathsome and abhorrent. The following chapter 9 records the dreadful vision of the impending judgment. All four chapters here, that is 8-11, report this great experience in its entirety and reveal how God, in his special, historical self-revelation, has been ever zealous to maintain the truth of the unbreakable connection between sin and destruction; transgression, and the just recompense of the reward due unto us for sin.

It will be found that we have not been misled in referring to chapter 8 as the great sin chapter. That is true; but it is also true that it records a very unique experience in the annals of God's supernatural dealings with his servants

the prophets. Ezekiel knew, as, generally speaking, everyone knew, what was being done in the open. He knew, for instance, what he himself records in chapter 6:3 that the Jewish idolaters had their idols and their altars "upon every high hill, in all the tops of the mountains, and under every green tree, and under every thick oak, the place where they did offer sweet savour to all their idols."

But there was more to it than that which was going on out in the open. What he and doubtless almost all Israel did not know was what was being practiced secretly in cloistered rooms and walled inclosures of the temple of God itself. God knew what these things were; the horrible abominations, the extremes of worship-wickedness that were being practiced in the very courts of the Lord's own house — and evidently he wanted his prophet, too, to know. So he took him by the hair of his head and transported him through the air, a distance of between 5 and 6 hundred miles from the home of his exile — in Babylonia to Jerusalem in Judah; from the land known as "Mesopotamia," the region of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, currently the Arab kingdom of Iraq.

We may well assume that this was no slow ride the prophet had via God's own stratospheric, supersonic air-express. No sooner had the trip begun than it was over, and there he was at "the door of the inner gate that looketh toward the north." Thus began one of the most amazing experiences any prophet ever had. For this was not only a trip through the air. It was also a tour of inspection, a personally conducted tour; and God had a special purpose in it.

That purpose, there can be no doubt, was to show Ezekiel the full nature and extent of the sin-situation, to the end that he should fully understand the reason for the force and fury of the judgment which he was sent to proclaim and was soon to fall. In other words, it was God's will to justify himself in the eyes of his servant for the extreme severity of his great judgment at this time, by a full disclosure of the extremity of their wickedness in his sight. So the young prophet of God not only had a fast trip but he had God to conduct him on a special, supernatural tour of inspection.

Listing the items of worship-wickedness recounted in chapter 8 there was (1) "the image of jealousy" "which provoketh to jealousy;" (2) the mural drawings "of every form of creeping things and abominable beasts and all the idols of the house of Israel" where seventy of the ancients assembled to offer incense to all the heathen gods they knew; (3) there were the women weeping for Tammuz (on the occasion of his death. This god was supposed to die every

year and rise again); and (4) the twenty-five behind the great altar of burnt sacrifice and between it and the porch of the inner temple "with their backs toward the temple of the Lord, and their faces toward the east," as they engaged in their sun-worship.

The people of Israel in those days openly engaged in the most revolting forms of worship practiced by the heathen nations round about them among which was the worship of Molech, Baal, and Ashteroth. The worship of these particular gods consisted of offerings of the first fruits of the womb. Thus the first born of their children were made to pass through the fire, to the god. And, as if this were not wicked enough in itself, there was a special significance in it, in its wickedness; for the Lord God of Israel claimed and was supposed to have received the first of all the increase.

But: to desecrate and pollute the very courts of the Lord's house itself with such heathenish worship! This was beyond all description in its wickedness. It was the utmost extreme in worship-wickedness, and God wanted his servant, the prophet, to see it with his own eyes and behold it present to his view. It will be noticed that the disclosures are climactic and arise with ever increasing force to the great sin of sins. There are four exhibits of worship-wickedness. "See," says the Lord, "what they do, even the great abominations that the house of Israel committeth here that I should go far from my sanctuary?" "But turn yet again and thou shalt see greater abominations." So again, and again, "greater," until the last, when it was said, "Is it a light thing that they commit the abominations which they commit here? For they have filled the land with violence and have returned to provoke me to anger." It is perfectly plain that it was God's plan to reveal to his servant that it was the defilement of the temple itself by the practice of these heathenish rites within the very confines of the Lord's house that constituted the supreme provocation and the chief cause of all the force and fury of the punishment inflicted. God wanted his prophet to know that the punishment was not at all incommensurate with the crime.

Another trip through the air came some 20 years later and brought the prophet to the land of Israel again for another vision of an altogether different kind (Ez. 40.) But as for the trip of chapter 8, it was, as we have seen, for the purpose of a tour of inspection not of the glories of the temple but of its abuse and degradation.

As for our own "tour of the temple" or inspection of what we find going on in God's house today; this "tour" must be reserved for our concluding chapter, No. XI, **The Conflict as of Today.**

Some Noteworthy Quotations

WE SHOULD STAND FAST in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and not allow our consciences to be brought under the yoke of bondage to human opinions. There is a strong tendency in men to treat, as matters of conscience, things which God has never enjoined. Wherever this disposition has been indulged or submitted to, it has resulted in bringing one class of men under the most degrading bondage to another; and in the still more serious evil of leading them to disregard the authority of God. Multitudes who would be shocked at the thought of eating meat on Friday, commit the greatest moral offences without the slightest compunction. It is, therefore, of great importance to keep the conscience free; under no subjection but to truth and God. This is necessary, not only on account of its influence on our own moral feelings, but also because nothing but truth can really do good. To advocate even a good cause with bad arguments does great harm, by exciting unnecessary opposition; by making good men, who oppose the arguments, appear to oppose the truth; by introducing a false standard of duty; by failing to enlist the support of an enlightened conscience, and by the necessary forfeiture of the confidence of the intelligent and well informed. The cause of benevolence, therefore, instead of being promoted, is injured by all exaggerations, erroneous statements, and false principles, on the part of its advocates.

— Charles Hodge (on Romans 14:22)

A MAJOR OBSTACLE to voluntary support to church-related colleges lies in the fact that many such institutions do not differ sufficiently from non-Christian colleges and universities either in emphasis or in quality to merit special distinction and preference. Colleges with a virile evangelical dedication often stir the loyalties of countless sacrificial donors; on the other hand those with a blunted spiritual orientation must rely more and more upon heavy denominational subsidies. This fact ought to indicate the administrative fallacy of telling constituents: "Support us so we can witness." The campus that maintains its witness inspires support.

If Protestant churches wish to identify themselves with higher education, they must work to keep their institutions within the orbit

of the historic Christian faith and its implications for learning; otherwise they will become increasingly dependent upon secular sources for support.

— Christianity Today

THE APOSTLES UNIFORMLY TESTIFY that the cross was their confidence and boast, and lead us to regard the atonement as belonging to the main scope of revelation. Thus, when Paul describes the purport of his apostolic labours, he says, "We preach Christ crucified" (1 Cor. i. 23); and, besides, he calls the gospel the preaching of the cross, or more strictly rendered, "the word of the cross" (1 Cor. i. 18). We cannot allow that this means no more than the preaching of the pure moral code which Jesus taught, with only the accessory notion that it was confirmed by His death. Nor can the language with any greater reason referred to Christ's example, as sealed by martyrdom. Such comments as these, which aim at evading the vicarious sacrifice, are a violence to language, and wholly inconsistent with the import of the terms. The substance of Christianity, and the preaching of it, could not be described in such a way, unless the cross of Christ considered as a vicarious satisfaction, constituted its essential element, nay, its principal design. We have a further evidence of the same thing when the apostle adds, that the cross was a stumbling-block to one, and foolishness to another, of the nationalities among whom he laboured. Had the cross, however, been simply propounded as a confirmation of Christ's doctrine, it could not have been an offence. It would rather have tended, as in the case of Socrates, to win respect for the teacher and for His doctrine, that He had closed His career in attestation to His teaching by the endurance of a violent death.

— George Smeaton

"I could easily fulminate for a whole hour against men of letters who have gone into ecstasies over 'The Bible as literature', the Bible as 'the noblest monument of English prose'. Those who talk of the Bible as a 'monument of English prose' are merely admiring it as a monument over the grave of Christianity."

— T. S. Eliot — *Religion and Literature*

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.

MEDIATOR. One who intervenes between two parties who are at enmity against each other,

and brings about reconciliation between them. "It pleased God, in His eternal purpose, to choose

and ordain the Lord Jesus, His only begotten Son, to be the Mediator between God and man" (Westminster Confession of Faith, VIII. 1)

MERCY, CHRISTIAN. The Christian virtue and duty of endeavoring to relieve, in the name of Christ, the sufferings and distress of those who are miserable, whether from sin or from its consequences.

MERCY OF GOD. That attribute of God by which He is inclined to pardon the guilty, and to relieve the distress of the miserable. God's mercy is free, being bestowed according to His sovereign choice; and it is gracious, being bestowed upon those who not only have no merit of their own, but have offended against Him.

MERIT. That which is earned or deserved. This is contrasted with grace or mercy, which is not earned or deserved. It is not by his own merit, but by the merit of Jesus Christ, that the Christian receives eternal life.

MESSIAH. A Hebrew term meaning "Anointed", equivalent to the Greek "Christos" or "Christ". In the Old Testament, kings and high priests were anointed with oil to set them apart to their office; the oil symbolized the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ as the perfect, final prophet, priest and king, is pre-eminently the Messiah.

MILLENNIUM. The thousand year period of restraint of Satan and of the reign of Christ, which is spoken of in Revelation 20:1-10. (There are various views as to the meaning and the fulfillment of this prophecy).

MONOPHYSITES. The adherents of a heresy in the early Church which denied that Jesus Christ has two **distinct** natures, divine and human, and held that these two are united so as to form only one nature.

MIRACLE. An event in the external world, for the purpose of bearing witness to the truth of God, which has no other cause than the will of God. (In God's ordinary providence He works through the sequence of cause and effect in the realm of nature; in the case of miracle, God works directly, by His supernatural power, to produce an effect which lacks an efficient cause in the natural order. A miracle has natural effects, but no natural cause).

MISSIONS. The task of the Church, in obedience to Christ's Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20) to undertake the establishment of the Christian Faith throughout the world, which involves three elements: (1) Evangelism, or preaching the Gospel; (2) the establishment of the Visible Church and its ordinances; (3) the teaching of the entire system of truth revealed in the Bible.

MONOTHELITES. The adherents of an ancient heresy which denied that Jesus Christ has two wills, a divine and a human, and held that He has only one will. (This was condemned as heretical by the sixth general council, A. D. 680, on the ground that it was contrary to the full and true humanity of Jesus Christ).

MONTANISTS. A sect of Christians which sprang up in the second century after Christ as a reaction against worldliness and deadness in the orthodox or catholic Church. The Montanists were named after their founder, Montanus, a Phrygian by birth, who claimed divine inspiration and the gift of prophecy. They were much more strict than the catholic Church in their insistence upon holiness and separation from the world. The most famous Montanist was the great Tertullian, who insisted upon a clean, clear separation of Christians from everything pagan.

Studies in the Covenant of Grace

LESSON 29

The Covenant of Grace and the Problem of Christian Education: 1. What is Christian Education?

"But, notwithstanding the clear representations given by God in the mirror of His works both of Himself and of His everlasting dominion, such is our stupidity that, always inattentive to these obvious testimonies, we derive no advantage from them. For, with regard to the structure and very beautiful organization of the world, how few of us there are who, when lifting up their eyes to heaven, or looking round on the various regions of the earth, direct their minds to the remembrance of the Creator, and do not rather content themselves with a view of His

works, to the total neglect of their Author! And with respect to those things that daily happen out of the ordinary course of nature, is it not the general opinion that men are rolled and whirled about by the blind temerity of fortune, rather than governed by the providence of God?" — John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, Book 1, Chap. V, Section XI.

Scripture References:

Psalm 36:9. Gen. 1:1. Psalm 139:17, 18. Heb.

11:3. Human beings can have no truly adequate knowledge of anything except in relation to God.

Gen. 18:19. Deut. 11:18-21. The Covenant of Grace requires that parents teach the truth of God to their children.

Psalms 94:10; 119:66. Proverbs 1:7; 2:6. Knowledge, wisdom and understanding come from God.

Questions:

1. What is the relation of the Covenant of Grace to the subject of Christian education?

In the administration of the Covenant of Grace, God has constituted Christian parents the representatives of their children. On the parents rests the responsibility for carrying out the covenant obligations with respect to the children. Among these covenant obligations one of the most important is that of providing for the Christian education of the covenant children. This is implied in infant Baptism, and is specifically mentioned in the vows taken by parents when their children are baptized. It is the solemn covenant duty of the parents to see that their children receive an adequate Christian education.

2. What is Christian education?

Christian education is education of covenant children and youth by teachers who are Bible-believing Christians, which is God-centered in character and content, and God-glorifying in aim.

3. What is included in Christian education?

Rightly understood, Christian education includes both Christian religious education and Christian general education. That is to say, it includes the whole range and realm of truth and knowledge, both God's revelation in Scripture and His revelation in nature and history. Whether imparted by the home, the Church or the school, Christian education must lead covenant children and youth to view everything, without exception, in the light of the Triune God, and in relation to Him and His will.

4. How is Christian education often too narrowly thought of today?

In American Protestant circles it is very common to think of Christian education as limited to Christian religious education in the strict sense, that is, the study of the Bible and especially its message concerning the way of salvation. The common idea is that if our children have a good knowledge of the Bible, the way of salvation and Christian conduct, then their Christian education has been properly provided for, even though nine-tenths of their education (in the public schools) is carried on without so much as mentioning God. Even when cove-

nant children are carefully taught the Bible and the way of salvation (in the home and the church), in most cases they study history, science and other "ordinary" school subjects with no reference to God, just as if God did not count in the world of nature and the realm of human affairs.

5. What is wrong with the narrow idea of Christian education?

This too-narrow notion of Christian education is the product of a false separation of religion from life in general. Too easily we tend to think that God is important on the Sabbath but not on week-days; that God counts in church but not in the laboratory; that we need God to understand religious truth, but not to understand scientific or historical truth. Too easily we omit God from large areas of human life. We must realize that at every point in our life we are concerned with God. The person who thinks that history or chemistry can be rightly understood without God is in danger of having a religion without God. God is God everywhere and in everything, or He is not really God at all.

6. What is the effect of this narrow idea of Christian education on our children and youth?

The inevitable effect is a deplorable division of their thinking into separate compartments, religious and secular. The Christian education which they receive in the home and the church teaches them to think of all of life in terms of God, His plans and purposes, His will, His kingdom. The secular education which they receive in the public schools teaches them to think of nearly all of life as having no connection with God. The realms of nature, history and human society are presented in the schools as if they were perfectly intelligible apart from God. God, creation and providence are regarded as irrelevant by the modern secular philosophy which dominates public education. Since the children and youth spend about thirty hours each week under the influence of this secular teaching which regards God as irrelevant, and only (at the best) three or four hours weekly under the Christian teaching of the home and the church, it is easy to see which type of teaching is likely to make the strongest impression on their minds. Since God is regarded as unnecessary by modern public school education, our children naturally tend to absorb the idea that for the most of human life, God does not count, though there is a special, separate, isolated compartment of life called "religion", where belief in God has its place.

Modern secular education not only ignores God as irrelevant; it also propagates teachings which are directly contradictory to the truth revealed in the Bible. For example, the Bible teaches that mankind is a special creation of God; many schools and colleges today teach that man-

kind is a product of a gradual process of natural evolution, by inherent forces, from the brutes. The Bible teaches an absolute, unchangeable standard of right and wrong revealed by God; many schools and colleges today teach that moral standards are the product of experience and change with the times. What can be the result of exposing our covenant children and youth to such contradictory teachings, except acute mental and spiritual indigestion? How can our children and youth gain a unified and consistent view of the universe and of human life, when their education is divided between two irreconcilable philosophies of life — Christian and secular? Is it any wonder that many, after passing through our secular schools and colleges, come to the conclusion that God is unnecessary for most of life, and Christianity concerns only mystical experience or “spiritual life”?

7. What is involved in truly Christian religious education?

Truly Christian religious education must be conducted by parents and teachers who are themselves Christian believers, having faith in God and His Word. Those whose standpoint is that of modern skepticism or unbelief cannot carry on truly Christian education, and will do more harm than good to those under their care. Nor can those who are only slightly interested, or not interested at all, in Christianity, carry on truly Christian religious education. If their heart is not in it, it cannot be a success. Truly Christian religious education must also be orthodox; that is, it must be true, in its character and content, to the historic Christian faith revealed in the Bible. Much that is called Christian religious education today is far from orthodox, being filled with modern heresies such as evolution, “modern” views which deny the real inspiration and authority of the Bible, etc. Such “modern” religious education is really worse than none at all. It is not an advantage but a menace.

8. What is involved in truly Christian general education?

Like Christian religious education, general

education to be truly Christian must be conducted by teachers who are themselves Christian believers, and who can therefore approach the subject matter of education from the standpoint of faith in the God of the Bible and faith in God’s Word. The textbooks that are used should be written by believing Christians, from the standpoint of faith in the true God. The whole range and content of education must be God-centered; that is, God must be the unifying principle and the interpreting principle of the whole curriculum. It is not enough that direct contradictions of the Bible be excluded. To exclude advocacy of the theory of human evolution will accomplish little unless the truth of divine creation and providence be put in its place. We must avoid not merely crude and gross denials of Bible truth, but the far more prevalent and subtle notion that most school subjects can be taught from a “neutral” point of view — the notion that God has nothing important to do with most of life and knowledge. In truly Christian general education, everything must be God-centered and interpreted in the light of God.

9. Why is the problem of Christian education specially difficult?

Because it is a very complex problem, involving our whole philosophy of life, including our most basic beliefs. Multitudes of present-day Christians fail to realize the baffling complexity of this problem, and think that it can be easily solved by some particular concrete proposal, such as the reading of a chapter of the Bible daily in every public school classroom. It is not so simple as that. Adding some Bible reading or even some sound Bible teaching to a school curriculum which is based on the idea that God is irrelevant for science, history and society, will not solve the problem; it will only produce confusion in the minds of the pupils. The Bible must be taught, certainly; but beyond that, the whole curriculum must be integrated by the Christian view of God, man, knowledge and history. Otherwise the pupils will tend to acquire a double-barrelled, unreconciled view of life — a hodge-podge of Christianity and secularism.

LESSON 30

The Covenant of Grace and the Problem of Christian Education: 2. Responsibility for Christian Education

“The duties of parents to children relate to their health, their maintenance, their education, and morals In respect to their education and morals, great care should be taken. As it relates to the present life, habits of courage, application, trade, prudence, labor, justice, contentment, truth, benevolence, &c. should be formed. Their capacities, age, temper, strength, inclina-

tion, should be consulted, and advice given suitable to these. As it relates to a future life, their minds should be informed as to the being of God, his perfections, glory, and the mode of salvation by Jesus Christ. They should be catechised; allured to a cheerful attendance on divine worship; instructed in the Scriptures; kept from bad company; prayed with and for; and, above

all, a good example set them, Prov. 22:6; Eph. 6:1, 2." — Buck's Theological Dictionary, pp. 324-5.

"Do you promise to pray with and for your child in private and family worship; to provide for his temporal well-being, and for his education as God enables you; to acquaint him with his lost condition and need of a Saviour; and to instruct him in the plan of salvation and the principles of our covenanted profession?" — Vows of parents in infant Baptism, in The Directory for the Worship of God adopted by the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, 1945 (emphasis supplied).

Scripture References:

Mark 5:22, 23, 36-43; 9:17-27. In the Covenant of Grace, God has constituted parents the representatives of their children.

1 Sam. 2:12, 22-24; 3:11-14. God holds parents responsible for the proper training and discipline of their children.

2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14, 15. Where parents are faithful to their covenant obligations, their children will grow up to know, love and serve God.

Questions:

1. Where has God placed the primary responsibility for the Christian education of covenant children and youth?

Few evangelical Christians would question the importance of Christian education for covenant children and youth, though there is much difference of opinion as to just what Christian education properly includes. But when we come to discuss the question of where God has placed the primary responsibility for the Christian education of the children of Christian families, we find considerable diversity of belief. The three answers that are commonly given are: (1) the home; (2) the church; (3) the State. It should be noted that the question is not whether the home, the Church and the State may each have some connection with or responsibility for, Christian education, but rather, Where has God placed the **primary** responsibility for the Christian education of covenant children and youth. It should also be noted that this question does not concern responsibility for the evangelization and Christian teaching of the millions of children whose parents are not Christian believers; that is indeed an important question, but it is distinct from the question of responsibility for the Christian education of **covenant** children and youth.

This question should be decided, not on the basis of custom or tradition, but on the basis of Biblical teachings and principles. It is clear in

the Bible that God has constituted Christian parents the representatives of their children during the latter's minority. All parents have a **natural** responsibility for the care and education of their children; besides this natural responsibility, Christian parents have an added **covenant** responsibility for the Christian education of their children.

Accordingly, it must be affirmed that the primary responsibility for the Christian education of covenant children and youth rests upon the parents. Whatever the Church and the State may do or not do, the responsibility for seeing to it that covenant children receive truly Christian education rests ultimately upon the parents. God holds the parents responsible for their discharge of this obligation. At the Judgment Day the parents must give answer for their action in this respect. The faults and failings of the Church and the State will not excuse Christian parents for having neglected to provide truly Christian education for their children.

2. What is meant by saying that the primary responsibility for the Christian education of covenant children rests upon the parents?

This does not mean that the parents must themselves personally conduct and carry out all parts and phases of the education of their children. Under modern conditions of life that would in most cases prove to be impossible, as well as unwise. It is not meant that the parents must undertake the whole task themselves, but that they are responsible for seeing that the task is adequately done. It is clear that in ordinary cases the only practical way for children and youth to be educated is in schools. There are various kinds of schools, such as public (operated by the State), parochial and denominational (operated by the Church), and private (operated by corporations or voluntary associations). It is the responsibility of the parents to see that their children, whatever school they attend, receive truly Christian education, not modern secular education.

3. In what sense is Christian education the responsibility of the Church?

Subordinately to the primary responsibility of the parents, the Church shares with the home the responsibility for the Christian **religious** education for the covenant children and youth. This is evident from two considerations: (1) the Church has a teaching function with respect to all its members, and since the children are members, the Church must teach them the truths of the Christian faith; (2) the covenant children are to be encouraged and commanded to make a public profession of personal faith in Christ as their Saviour, and to come to the Lord's table; and in order that they may do this in a worthy manner, the Church must teach them in

preparation for the privileges and duties of communicant church membership.

4. Is Christian general education properly the function of the Church?

No. While the Church clearly has a function to perform in the Christian religious education of covenant children, we do not believe that Christian general education is properly the function of the Church. Our children should be taught literature and history, science and social studies in a God-centered curriculum from a Christian point of view, but it can hardly be proved from the Bible that it is the function of the Church as an institution to engage in general education, that is, to teach ordinary school subjects such as science and mathematics. For this reason we do not believe that parochial schools (schools owned and operated by a church congregation) are the right answer to the problem of Christian general education. We should recognize, of course, the immense amount of good that has been done by Protestant parochial schools in resisting the trend toward secularism in our country. Still it has not been shown that the Bible warrants the Church as a body carrying on this type of activity.

5. Is general education primarily the function of the State?

Our American public school system has become so much a part of our life that we tend to take it for granted that it is the business of the State to educate our children, without seriously asking ourselves on what grounds this assump-

tion rests. We should realize that almost universal education operated by the State is a comparatively new development in the history of the world, and the supposed priority of the State in the field of education is neither a teaching of the Bible, nor a self-evident truth of reason. Mere custom and tradition, of course, do not prove anything concerning matters of basic principle.

Certainly the State has a legitimate, and even necessary, function in connection with general education. This may be summarized as follows: (1) the State must see to it that all children in the nation receive education; (2) the State must set proper minimum standards for education, both as to quantity and as to quality, to which all schools, under whatever auspices they may be conducted, are required to conform; (3) where education of children is not provided for by the parents, the Church or voluntary associations, it is the duty of the State to establish and operate schools for their education.

6. Does patriotism require that all children attend the public schools operated by the State?

Of course not. The attempt has been repeatedly made, in various states of the Union, to pass legislation outlawing all private and church schools and requiring all children to attend the public schools. In every case such legislation has either failed of enactment, or has been declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of the United States. The United States is still a free country, and patriotism does not require absolute uniformity of education.

LESSON 31

The Covenant of Grace and the Problem of Christian Education: 3. Attempted Solutions on the Problem

"Let us remember, then, in every consideration of our own nature, that there is one God, who governs all natures, and who expects us to regard him, to direct our faith to him, to worship and invoke him. For nothing is more preposterous than to enjoy such splendid advantages, which proclaim within us their divine origin, and to neglect the Author who bountifully bestows them." — John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book I, Chap. V, Sec. VI.

Scripture References:

Prov. 1:7. Genuine education begins with the fear of the Lord.

Prov. 8:32-36. The benefits of the divine wisdom.

Psalms 119:97-104. True wisdom is attained from the study of the Scriptures.

Questions:

1. What confusion has affected many Protes-

tant attempts to solve the problem of Christian education?

Many earnest people who have been seriously concerned about the problem of Christian education have over-simplified the problem by failing to discern that there are really two distinct problems involved, namely (1) the problem of how the millions of non-Christian children of our country are to be reached with Christian religious and moral teaching; and (2) the problem of how Christian parents are to discharge their obligations in the Covenant of Grace to provide truly Christian religious and general education for their own children. Though these two problems are really distinct, they have often been confused. The first problem concerns the moral and religious instruction of children and youth who are outside the Covenant of Grace; this is a missionary problem. The other problem concerns the educational obligation of Christian parents toward the covenant children

and youth; this is a covenant problem. All attempts to work out a single over-all solution that will solve both of these problems have failed, and must fail. Each problem must be faced on its own merits and the proper solution sought.

2. What are the principal attempted solutions of the problem of Christian education in the United States?

Teaching in the home, Sabbath schools, Vacation Bible Schools, Catechism classes, Week Day Church School classes, Bible reading in public schools, Bible teaching in public schools, "Released time" programs, Parochial schools, and Private Christian schools operated by associations of Christian parents.

3. Why are home teaching and Sabbath Schools not satisfactory solutions of the problem of Christian education?

Home teaching and Sabbath schools, if truly Biblical in content, are of course commendable and should be encouraged, especially since in the case of many children these are the only sources of religious instruction. They cannot be regarded as adequate, however, because they afford far too little time for teaching. The Sabbath school at best provides 30 to 45 minutes per week for actual teaching. Even if the teachers are competent and the pupils regular in attendance, punctual and attentive (which are far from always being the case!) only a very limited amount of teaching can be done. Sometimes Sabbath school lesson courses lack continuity, and the resulting knowledge of the Bible is vague and incoherent.

Nor can home teaching and Sabbath schools counteract the effect of 30 hours per week of secular education in the public school. If our children are taught about God 30 minutes a week, and exposed to education without God 30 hours a week, we should not be surprised if they grow up to think that God is not very important for most of our life and activities.

4. What is the value of Vacation Bible Schools, Week Day Church School classes and "Released Time" programs?

These various activities, insofar as they are truly Biblical in what they teach, are a help toward reducing the religious ignorance of the children and youth of our land. They bring Christian teaching to many children who otherwise would not come in contact with it. Therefore they should be encouraged and supported by Christian people in the absence of an adequate solution of the problem of Christian education.

But it is a great pity when such efforts as Vacation Bible Schools, etc., are regarded as a real solution of the problem. Efforts of this type have some value, but they do not solve the prob-

lem; they are really only makeshifts or stop-gaps devised to mitigate a desperate situation. As long as the curriculum of our public schools is secular and man-centered in character, no plan which merely supplements the public school by adding something to it externally can solve the problem; such schemes are better than nothing, but at best they are only makeshifts.

5. What can be said in favor of reading and teaching the Bible in the public schools?

The public schools exist to educate children and youth, and since the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge (Prov. 1:7), there can be no genuine education that is not God-honoring and God-centered. Any education that leaves God out or regards God as irrelevant is not really education, though it may pass by that name. Since God must be the center and unifying principle of all real education, we conclude that the Bible should be both read and taught in our public schools.

Moreover, the Bible should be taught honestly, in its true meaning. It is possible to select verses from the Bible for reading in schools in such a way as to give a false impression as to the message of the Bible; for example, verses mentioning Jesus Christ may be omitted to avoid offending the Jews. In teaching the Bible, it is possible to present merely ethical lessons and largely leave God out. The pupils may easily be given the impression that the message of the Bible is merely moralism — the idea that people ought to be good. Such reading and teaching of the Bible is not only dishonest, but harmful. It may amount to teaching gross error by omission.

Even when the Bible is honestly and adequately taught, this does not constitute a solution to the problem of Christian education. What about all the rest of the curriculum? Are the pupils to study the Bible with God, and history without God? Merely adding Bible study to a secular curriculum produces an artificial patchwork, not a unified body of knowledge. Carrying a pocket Testament does not make a man a Christian, and tacking on Bible lessons does not make an evolutionistic, man-centered, secular school system Christian. What is needed is to revolutionize the whole system of our public schools, and especially to revolutionize the whole system and educational philosophy of the teachers' colleges, so that God becomes the center and unifying principle of the whole curriculum. God should be the hub of the wheel, from which all subjects and activities radiate like the spokes of a wheel.

We should favor the reading and teaching of the Bible in the public schools; we should guard zealously against modernistic teaching of the Bible in the schools; and we should realize that reading and teaching the Bible in the public

schools is only a step in the right direction, not a solution of the problem of Christian education.

This is not the place to discuss the formidable legal obstacles that may exist to the reading and especially the teaching of the Bible in the public schools. Laws and court decisions are making it increasingly clear that our public school system is becoming more and more rigidly secular. This points to the fact that more than a revolution in the public school system and the teachers' colleges is needed. Something even more basic is required, namely, a Christian commitment on the part of the nation as such. The whole structure of national political life needs to be brought into subjection to the Lord Jesus Christ. Unless this can be done, the status of genuine Bible teaching in the public schools anywhere must remain precarious.

6. What can be said for parochial day schools

and private Christian day schools operated by associations of Christian parents?

Probably these two types of activity come the nearest to solving the problem of Christian education. In fact, Christian day schools operated not by the Church, but by voluntary associations, would seem to constitute the logical solution of the problem of the Christian education of **covenant children and youth**. We have already registered an objection to parochial or church-operated day schools (see Question 4 in the preceding lesson). Christian day schools operated by associations or parents do not, of course, solve the problem of imparting Christian instruction to the millions of children of non-Christian homes; that is not their purpose. But for their intended purpose, namely, truly Christian education of covenant children and youth, this type of schools would seem to be ideal. The difficulties do not concern matters of principle; they concern practical and financial questions.

LESSON 32

The Covenant of Grace and the Problem of Christian Education: 4. The Public School and Christian Education

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me."
— Ex. 20:3.

"Nor will it be sufficient for you to refrain from worshipping any other god, unless you also refrain from imitating certain nefarious despisers, who take the compendious method of treating all religions with contempt. But the observance of this precept must be preceded by true religion, leading our minds to the living God; that being endued with the knowledge of him, they may aspire to admire, fear, and worship his majesty, to receive his communication of blessings, to request this aid upon all occasions, to acknowledge and celebrate the magnificence of his works, as the sole end in all the actions of our lives . . . For it is criminal to detract even the smallest portion from his glory; he must be left in possession of all that belongs to him." — John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book II, Chap. VIII, Sec. XVI.

Scripture References:

Psalm 19:1-6. Rom. 1:19, 20. The world of nature is a revelation of God, and cannot be rightly understood apart from Him.

Gen. 3:15. Human history is the age-long conflict between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent and cannot be rightly interpreted merely in terms of social development or natural processes.

Eccles. 1:2, 16-18; 12:1, 13. Without God, knowledge and education are vain and meaningless, without real satisfaction or enduring value.

Questions:

1. Should the public schools provide Christian education?

Yes. As we have already seen in the preceding lesson, only God-honoring and God-centered education is real education; therefore if the State is to engage in the task of education, it should provide Christian education. Much that is called education today is not really education, for it does not give the pupils any consistent, unified view of life and the world; it inculcates merely an assortment of incompatible viewpoints, fragmentary bits of knowledge and some practical skills or techniques. There is no over-all unifying principle discernible; or so far as there is one, it is a man-centered, evolutionary philosophy of human progress unrelated to the God of the Bible. The pupils emerge from this process with a good deal of assorted information, and no idea whatever as to what it is really all about. Such is not really education. The public schools, to provide real education, will have to present God as the unifying principle and explanation of it all.

2. What is involved in making the public schools truly Christian?

Making the public schools truly Christian is not a simple or superficial matter, as some suppose. We have already seen that it cannot be accomplished by simply adding Bible reading or Bible lessons to a man-centered, secular course of study. We should not harbor the delusion that slight or easily accomplished changes will turn the American public school system into an ideal instrument of Christian education.

We are discussing, not what is practically attainable under present conditions, but what would be involved in a truly Christian public school system.

To be truly Christian, the public schools would have to have: (1) daily reading and teaching of the Bible according to the faith of evangelical Christianity; (2) a curriculum in which all subjects are taught from a God-centered viewpoint; (3) textbooks and lesson materials prepared by believing Christians with a God-centered approach to their subjects; (4) teachers who are personally evangelical believers in Jesus Christ and who personally hold the Christian philosophy of life and of education.

It may be objected, of course, that such a program is revolutionary and impossible in schools operated by a secular State which does not recognize God in its fundamental law. This is no doubt true. However, Christianity is a revolutionary religion, which was long ago accused of turning the world upside-down (Acts 17:6). We believe that God-ignoring secularism is wrong, both in the State itself and in the schools operated by the State.

3. If it is impossible to make the public schools thoroughly and truly Christian at the present time, should we aim at something more easily attainable, such as the introduction of non-sectarian religious and moral teaching into the public schools?

If by "non-sectarian" teaching is meant simply non-denominational teaching — teaching which avoids doctrinal points peculiar to particular denominations, such as special views about Baptism or the form of church government — then it will be almost universally agreed that religious and moral teaching in the public schools should be "non-sectarian." Certainly the Church, not the school, is the proper organ for teaching the distinctive principles of a particular denomination.

Unfortunately, however, the term "non-sectarian" is being commonly used in the sense of **doctrinally non-committal**, that is, not taking sides between evangelical Christianity and contrary systems of religion. A widely publicized book on religion in the public schools, for ex-

ample, speaks approvingly of a textbook for public school Bible teaching which was prepared jointly by a Quaker, a Roman Catholic and a Unitarian — representatives respectively of Mysticism, papal sacerdotalism and denial of the Trinity. Such "non-sectarian" teaching could not be loyal to genuine evangelical Christianity, and at best could rise no higher than a vague moralism or "quest for ethical values."

It is always wrong to lower our ideal to something less than what the Word of God requires. The Christian Amendment Movement could immediately gain wide popular support if it would agree to abandon its effort to get the Lord Jesus Christ recognized in the Constitution of the United States, and compromise the issue by seeking merely for a recognition of "Almighty God." Such a compromise would no doubt be "practical," but it would not be right. With respect to Christian education in our public school system, we should never give up the high ideal of full conformity to the whole will of God. We may not aim at anything less than the sum-total of what the Word of God requires.

In particular, we should beware of so-called "non-sectarian" religious teaching in our public schools. Some of the most poisonous modernism has been introduced into such programs and their materials in the past. While the decisions of the courts may seem to have made religion in the public schools a closed issue for the time being, this may be changed in the future, and we should be alert to the principles that are involved. If at some future time religious teaching is introduced into the public schools, it may be required that the textbooks and materials used be prepared or approved by the state universities. If this is done, Christian people should be prepared to undertake a thorough investigation of the whole matter, for such textbooks may be expected to be filled with "higher criticism," evolution, humanistic ethics, denial of the real inspiration and authority of the Bible, and other destructive "modern" religious teachings. In the name of "tolerance" the one and only true religion, the historic Christian faith, will be ruled out, while faith in the so-called fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man is represented as being the essential content of Christianity.

LESSON 33

The Covenant of Grace and the Problem of Christian Education: 5. Privately Sponsored Christian Day Schools

"Perhaps the underlying cause in our day of the breakdown of the social order is the false philosophy which is produced by a false explanation. Evolution as an explanation does not and cannot explain things in true perspective. Entrenched in the highest citadel of man's think-

ing it is known as modernism. It is a hydra-headed monster insidiously wrecking the faith of youth and is undergirding the nonsensical superman or super-race mania. It is a dangerous philosophy which insists on the centrality of man in the universe and human reason as the sole

and all-sufficient source of knowledge. It denies the spiritual nature of man and makes Christianity homocentric with evolution as the energy of human progress. In this vicious system God has been humanized, man has been deified and sin ethicized. This commonly accepted system has produced a demoralizing effect in many lands and man is inflated with his own importance." — From the Report of the Committee on the Signs of the Times, Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, 1945 (Minutes, 1945, page 92).

Scripture References:

Mal. 4:6. Eph. 6:14. God expects parents to be concerned about the spiritual welfare of their children.

Prov. 4:1, 2; 13:1; 15:5. It is the duty of parents to instruct their children in knowledge.

Deut. 4:9, 10; 11:19, 19. Godly parents are to teach their children the revealed truth of God.

Questions:

1. How can Christian day schools be classified?

They can be classified in two groups, namely: (1) Parochial schools, that is, schools owned and operated by a church congregation; and (2) Non-parochial schools, that is, schools not owned and operated by a church congregation.

2. What are the chief religious denominations maintaining parochial schools?

I. Elementary Schools

(a) Roman Catholic: 10,775 schools with 4,546,360 pupils.

(b) Lutheran denominations: 1,695 schools with 195,154 pupils.

(c) Seventh-Day Adventist: 1,014 schools with 45,855 pupils.

(d) Protestant Episcopal: 228 schools with 26,378 pupils.

(e) Baptist bodies: 69 schools with over 4,246 pupils.

(f) Assemblies of God: 20 schools with 2,386 pupils.

(g) Religious Society of Friends: 44 schools with 6,158 pupils.

Total Protestant elementary parochial or church-operated schools: 3070 schools with 280,177 pupils.

II. Secondary or High Schools

(a) Roman Catholic: 2,430 schools with 1,044,446 pupils.

(b) Lutheran denominations: 53 schools with 16,680 pupils.

(c) Seventh-Day Adventist: 311 schools with 17,747 pupils.

(d) Protestant Episcopal: 118 schools with 30,508 pupils.

(e) Baptist bodies: 13 schools with 3,718 pupils.

(f) Assemblies of God: 4 schools with 450 pupils.

(g) Religious Society of Friends: 27 schools with 5,911 pupils.

Note: The statistics on secondary schools include both day schools and church-related boarding academies.

3. What are the chief types of non-parochial Christian day schools?

(a) Those of Reformed or Calvinistic faith (affiliated with the National Union of Christian Schools): Elementary: 239 schools with 48,369 pupils. Secondary: 35 schools with 8,352 pupils.

(b) Those of Evangelical faith (affiliated with the National Association of Christian Schools): Elementary: 230 schools with 32,000 pupils. Secondary: 50 schools with 6,656 pupils.

(c) Those of Mennonite faith: Elementary: 247 schools with 10,271 pupils. Secondary: 8 schools with 1,214 pupils.

Summary of Statistics of all Protestant Christian Schools

Elementary: 3,786 schools with 370,817 pupils.

Secondary: 619 schools with 91,235 pupils.

Total: 4405 schools with 462,052 pupils.

4. How do these figures for Christian schools compare with the statistics for public school education in the United States?

According to the **World Almanac**, 1967 edition, in the year 1965 there were 26,415,834 pupils enrolled in public elementary schools in the United States, and 15,727,670 pupils enrolled in public secondary schools in the United States. The total of all public school pupils in 1965, including both elementary and secondary, was 42,143,504.

Combining the figures for public schools, Roman Catholic schools and Protestant Christian schools, the total number of pupils for 1965 was 48,196,362. Thus out of a total school enrollment of about 48 million, slightly less than half a million elementary and secondary pupils were enrolled in Protestant Christian schools of some type. While these figures are small in comparison with the figures for public education, they do indicate that Christian schools are not negli-

gible in number of schools and pupils in our national life. Moreover, it should be realized, the Christian school movement is making a steady growth in number of schools and pupil enrollment.

5. Where can information and practical advice be obtained by persons considering establishing a Christian day school in their community?

Write to one or more of the following organizations, all of which stand ready to afford excellent information and counsel:

(1) The National Union of Christian Schools, 865 28th St., S.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49508. This is a union of schools of the Reformed faith. It is actively engaged in the production of Christian textbooks, and has available a wide range of promotional and other literature, part of which is for sale and part of which is free to interested persons. Each year the organization publishes a yearbook called **Christian School Directory**, a book of about 200 pages giving the statistics of their affiliated schools, names and addresses of more than two thousand teachers, addresses delivered at their annual convention, price-list of available literature and other information. The National Union also publishes an excellent magazine entitled **Christian Home and School**. A sample copy of this monthly can be obtained by writing to the office of the Union.

(2) National Association of Christian Schools, P.O. Box 28, Wheaton, Illinois 60187. This organization has as its affiliates many schools of evangelical faith which are not definitely of Reformed or Calvinistic persuasion. It publishes a periodical called **The Christian Teacher**, as well as a considerable body of educational and promotional literature. Price-list and order blank can be obtained on application to the office of the Association. The doctrinal basis of this organization is similar to that of the National Association of Evangelicals.

(3) Christian Schools Service, Inc., 10119 Lafayette Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60628. This organization is not an association of schools but a corporation providing information, counsel and assistance to those establishing or operating Christian day schools. The General Manager is Mr. Mark Fakkema. Publications include **Christian School Guide** and **Christian School Life**.

6. What are some of the more common objections to Christian day schools, and how can they be answered?

(a) It is objected that privately supported Christian day schools make no provision for the evangelization and Christian teaching of millions of children from non-Christian homes in our country.

Answer: This is true, but it does not concern the intended purpose of Christian day schools, which is to provide Christian education for the

children of Christian parents. Do we hesitate to provide proper food and clothing for our children, because there are millions of children in the world that are underfed and ill-clad?

(b) It is objected that privately supported Christian day schools are expensive.

Answer: This is true. The real question, however, is one of importance, not of expense. Perhaps most American families would serve God better if they would spend less on luxuries and more on Christian education for their children. What are the souls of our children worth, in terms of dollars and cents? However, Christian day schools are not so expensive as is sometimes supposed. Representative figures can easily be obtained from the National Union of Christian Schools and the National Association of Christian Schools (addresses given above).

(c) It is objected that privately supported Christian day schools are contrary to democracy.

Answer: Democracy, rightly understood, includes civil and religious liberty, involving the sacred right of parents to have their children educated according to their own faith and conscience. The United States Supreme Court declared unconstitutional legislation which would require all children of a certain state to attend the public schools. This attitude of the Supreme Court shows that private schools are not contrary to democracy. Real democracy is not statism or dictatorship, and does not require absolute uniformity of education, nor does it give the State a monopoly of the educational process.

(d) It is objected that privately supported Christian day schools give their pupils the idea that they are different from other children, resulting in a proud and Pharisaic attitude toward those who attend public schools.

Answer: Certainly Christian people ARE different from those who are not Christians, and believers ARE better than unbelievers or irreligious people. We should carefully inculcate into our children the truth that they, as children of the Covenant of Grace, are different from the world, and to be separate from the world. The lack of this covenant-consciousness has been deplorable in American Protestantism. God's covenant people certainly are better than others. However, this is not due to nature, for by nature all are sinners and totally depraved. That God's children are better than others is due simply and solely to the sovereign grace of God. A truly Christian school will, of course, teach that all men are lost and wicked sinners by nature, and that Christians are saved only by divine grace, for which they themselves deserve no credit whatever. All glory belongs to God. Such teaching will hardly produce a proud or Pharisaic attitude.

(e) It is objected that privately supported

Christian schools are small and that they do not impart education of high quality.

Answer: Those who raise this objection have not taken the trouble to ascertain the real facts in the case. Many Christian day schools have hundreds of pupils, fine modern buildings and the best of up-to-date equipment, as well as thoroughly trained, conscientious teachers. Their graduates compare very favorably in educational attainments with the graduates of the best public schools. It is notorious that many public schools of the present day, under the influence of what is called "progressive education," are turning out graduates who cannot spell correctly, do not speak grammatical English, and whose knowledge of history and geography is woefully deficient. The truth is that the education provided by private Christian schools is not only truly Christian in character, but is also often superior from the academic point of view to that offered by public schools in the same communities.

7. How can properly trained teachers be obtained for private Christian day schools?

Write to the National Union of Christian Schools or the National Association of Christian Schools (addresses given in answer to Q. 5 of this lesson).

8. What are the principal advantages of private Christian day schools from the standpoint of Christian parents?

(a) Christian day schools provide daily teaching of the Bible according to the evangelical Christian faith.

(b) They are staffed with teachers who are believing Christians and are concerned about the religious and spiritual welfare of their pupils.

(c) All subjects are taught from a God-centered Christian point of view.

(d) The entire course of study is unified in accordance with Biblical truth.

(e) All anti-Christian teachings such as evolution, modernism, etc., are excluded.

(f) Christian day schools help their pupils to have a sense of belonging to the special covenant people of God, and of being separated from the unbelieving world.

9. What are some of the cities where large Christian day schools are operated by associations of parents?

Chicago, Ill., Denver, Colo., Grand Rapids, Mich., Paterson, N. J., among others.

Some large Christian schools are the following:

Grand Rapids Christian High School, opened 1920, has 1466 pupils and 62 teachers. This school is a senior high school (grades 10-12).

Holland Christian High School, opened 1920, has 1,005 pupils and 40 teachers. This school includes grades 9-12.

United Christian School, Grand Rapids, Michigan, has 1,051 pupils and 38 teachers. This school includes Kindergarten through ninth grade. The school was opened in 1892.

LESSON 34

The Covenant of Grace and the Problem of Christian Education: 6. Functions of Home, Church and School

"Under Christ's government . . . representative responsibility includes **natural** representation, the result of natural relation. Hence parents are responsible for the education and moral training of their children, and one generation covenants, contracts, and acts representatively for the generations following, whilst remote generations enjoy the fruits of their ancestors' obedience, are credited with their well-doing, or punished for their transgressions." — James Kennedy, in Memorial Volume, 1872, page 54.

Scripture References:

Psalm 22:25; 65:1. Eccles. 5:4, 5. We are faithfully to pay our vows to God.

Josh. 24:15. Joshua and his family resolve to serve the Lord.

Isa. 30:20, 21. Godly teachers are a gift of divine grace.

2 Tim. 2:2. The teaching function of the Church.

Questions:

1. What three institutions perform functions in the education of our children and youth?

The home, the Church and the school.

2. Can any one of these institutions carry out the whole task of Christian education?

No. The task is too great for any one of these institutions. The ideal situation would be harmonious cooperation between the home, the school and the Church in the great task of the Christian education of covenant children and youth. Unfortunately most of our children attend public schools which are practically devoid of Christian teaching, and which often inculcate anti-Christian teaching. So under present conditions, it often comes down to a case of the

home and the Church having to carry the whole load of Christian teaching and at the same time having to try to counteract the secular influence and wrong teachings of the public schools. This present condition is of course far from satisfactory, as more and more Christian people are coming to see. However, by the grace of God, the Church and the home together can accomplish much, in spite of the non-Christian influence of the schools. This does not imply, of course, that Christian parents may regard our secular public school system with complacency.

3. Is the task of each of these institutions identical with that of the others?

No. While the home, the school and the Church should cooperate in the task of Christian education, each has its own function to perform, which it can undertake better than the others. To some extent, of course, these functions will overlap; yet each has a distinct character and emphasis.

4. What is the special task of the home, or the parents, in the Christian education of the children?

First of all, the parents are the sole teachers of the children in their earliest years, when they are very impressionable. The influence of godly parents and faithful teaching in pre-school years may be very great in after life.

Secondly, the parents should set a godly example by Christian standards of conduct in the home, faithful observance of family worship, regular attendance at church services and prayer meetings, etc.

Thirdly, Christian parents should impress the stories of the Bible and the truths of the way of salvation upon the minds of their children from their early years, as soon as they are able to understand.

Fourthly, parents should exercise firm but loving discipline over their children, not tolerating stubbornness and perverse conduct. When children are allowed by fond but misguided parents to behave just as they please in the home, they will later prove a great problem to pastors and teachers in the Church and school.

Fifthly, parents should provide a supply of sound, attractive, interesting Christian literature for their children, and encourage them to read it, and should guard against the promiscuous reading of worldly books and magazines.

5. What is the special task of the school in Christian education?

The school should teach the Bible and elementary Christian truth to the children, in addition to teaching "ordinary" school subjects from a Christian point of view. In Bible teaching, the effort should be made to enable the pupils to acquire a good, coherent knowledge of the historical contents of the Bible. It is a shame that children of Christian families should grow up not knowing that Abraham lived before Joshua, or David before Daniel. In addition to Bible history, there should be teaching of the way of salvation, as well as insistence, in precept and practice, on the Biblical standard of conduct.

The school is not the place for teaching the distinctive principles of a particular denomination (except, of course, in case of a school established and maintained wholly by that denomination). Nor is the school the place for teaching the more advanced aspects of doctrinal truth; these are the province of the Church.

6. What is the special task of the Church in Christian education?

While the province of the Church will inevitably overlap to some extent those of the home and the school, still the Church has special functions to perform. These include indoctrination, or instruction in the doctrines of the Christian faith, teaching of the Church's catechisms, and special instruction by the pastor preparatory to making a public profession of faith and being admitted to the Lord's Supper.

7. What is the general importance of Christian education today?

It is of exceedingly great importance for the future of the Church and the Kingdom of God. It may be truly affirmed that the problem of Christian education is THE great unsolved problem of American Protestantism, and that the deplorable, ignorant, run-down, lukewarm condition of many churches is the result of the lack of a consistent and adequate program of Christian education. There is much recognition of the need for revival in America today. But if there is to be a revival with permanent results, there will have to be a solution of the problem of Christian education. Without a substantial knowledge of divine truth, revivals and their results are bound to be transitory. American Protestantism needs to realize the desperate need for adequate Christian education; Christian parents need to re-think this whole question in the light of their obligations in the Covenant of Grace.

LESSON 35

The Covenant of Grace and the Completeness of Calvinism

"He has a great and high respect to the covenant. It is the covenant of the great God, with

His great and eternal Son, for the honor and glory of His great name; and therefore He cannot

but have a great and high respect unto it. His great name is manifested in it; and therefore, when we plead His respect to the covenant we plead in effect, saying, "What wilt thou do for thy great name?"

"He has a dear and lovely respect to the covenant, for it is the covenant of His grace and love, wherein He shows His infinite love to Christ, and through Him to a company of wretched sinners. It is a covenant of kindness, Isa. 54:10, "My kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee; intimating, His covenant of peace is a covenant of kindness, wherein He manifests His dearest love; therefore He has a dear respect to it." — Ralph Erskine (in sermon on Psalm 79:20, "Faith's Plea Upon God's Covenant")

Scripture References:

Isa. 57:15. The majesty and the condescension of God.

James 2:23. Gen. 18:17. Psalm 25:14. Isa. 54:5. Jer. 31:32. The spiritual intimacy between God and His people established by the Covenant of Grace.

Gen. 17:1. Deut. 4:23; 29:9. Psalm 103:17, 18, Heb. 12:22-29. The doctrine of the Covenant of Grace emphasizes man's responsibility to God.

Questions:

1. What objection is often urged against Calvinism, or the Reformed Faith?

It is often asserted by critics of Calvinism, that this system of theology is very one-sided and over-stresses God, God's glory, God's decrees, God's works, etc., while failing to do justice to other aspects of Biblical truth such as God's loving kindness, man's moral responsibility, man's free agency, etc. Some go so far as to say that Calvinism and Arminianism are simply two sides of the same picture; that both are equally true, each emphasizing a truth which the other neglects; that is, Calvinism stressing God's sovereignty while Arminianism stresses man's freedom and accountability. (Since Calvinism and Arminianism, at the points in dispute between them, are mutually contradictory systems, it is really absurd to speak of them as if they were mutually complementary. It amounts to saying that contradictory statements are both true.)

2. Is it true that Calvinism is a one-sided system?

Certainly not. Those who say that it is, either do not grasp the system in its integrity, or else they fail to realize that for each of the doctrines which they say Calvinism over-stresses, there is in the Calvinistic system, a complementary truth which prevents one-sidedness. Especially the

doctrine of the Covenant of Grace brings out the beautiful, rounded completeness of the system of Christian theology called Calvinism, or the Reformed Faith.

3. How does the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace bring out the completeness of the Reformed Faith?

The doctrine of the Covenant of Grace emphasizes certain Biblical truths which serve to complement other truths of Calvinism, thus making the system complete. Of course, the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace is itself a distinctly Calvinistic doctrine. When we think of Calvinism, we should not think only of the so-called "Five Points of Calvinism" (1. Total depravity of man. 2. Unlimited sovereignty of God. 3. Limited or particular atonement. 4. Irresistible or efficacious grace. 5. The perseverance of the saints) — for these "Five Points" are not a summary of Calvinism, but only a list of the five doctrines which distinguish Calvinism from Arminianism. Besides these five points, there are many other doctrines, including the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace, which go to make up the complete system of Calvinism or the Reformed Faith.

4. How does the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace serve as a complement to other truths in the system of the Reformed Faith?

(a) In harmony with the Bible, the Reformed Faith strongly stresses the majesty and sovereignty of God. It ascribes all glory to God. Along with this stress on the glory of God, the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace brings out the condescension of God; though He is the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, yet He is willing to stoop to the level of His creatures, to call Himself the "Friend" and "Husband" of His people — even to humble Himself by becoming man, dwelling among us, and laying down Himself as a sacrifice for our sins on the cross. All this divine condescension and self-humbling is included in the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace; it is one of the doctrines of Calvinism, side by side with the truth of the divine majesty and glory.

(b) In harmony with the Bible, the Reformed Faith emphasizes God's absolute predestination; it teaches double predestination, including the election of some to eternal life and the reprobation of others to eternal death. This truth is strongly stressed by Calvinism, but not any more strongly than by the Bible itself. But alongside of this strong emphasis on God's absolute predestination, Calvinism insists on the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace which equally emphasizes God's love and mercy. The loving kindness of God is brought out by the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace in two ways: first, this doctrine shows that God's decree of election, while it is sovereign on God's part, still is not an arbitrary decree; in His eternal decree of election, He has mercifully taken account of family relationships; He has elected

believers and their children after them (Gen. 17:7; Psalm 103:17).

Secondly, the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace emphasizes the truth that God sincerely offers salvation to all sinners who hear the Gospel (Ezek. 33:11; Matt. 23:37; 1 Tim. 2:4. This of course involves a paradox or apparent contradiction which human reason cannot solve. It is the strength, not the weakness, of Calvinism that it does not attempt to solve such paradoxes by human reason, but allows both truths to stand side by side just as the Bible itself does).

(c) Calvinism or the Reformed Faith strongly stresses man's absolute dependence upon God for every element of his life, faith and salvation. In this respect, Calvinism is eminently Biblical, for according to the Bible God is absolutely sovereign and independent, whereas man, as a creature and a sinner, is absolutely dependent on God and absolutely unable to do anything whatever toward saving himself. It has often been urged against Calvinism that this doctrine of God's sovereignty cuts the nerve of all human activity or response to the Gospel and leads to fatalism or despair. But this criticism is unjustified, for the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace strongly emphasizes man's moral accountability to God. It is a very distorted view of things to say that Calvinism teaches God's sovereignty while Arminianism teaches man's responsibility. The truth is that Calvinism teaches God's sovereignty AND man's responsibility (without attempting to harmonize

the two by human logic), whereas Arminianism rejects God's sovereignty and teaches man's responsibility alone. No Arminian ever preached man's responsibility as strongly as Calvinism insists on it, for it is precisely because God is sovereign that man is responsible to God, and Arminians do not believe that God is sovereign.

The doctrine of the Covenant of Grace emphasizes man's accountability to God, not only by teaching that the sinner is guilty and under the wrath of God for his sin, but also by commanding the sinner to repent and believe on Christ as his Saviour. Yet this does not imply any denial of man's utter dependence on God. The sinner is commanded to repent and believe; he cannot do so of himself; but by the work of the Holy Spirit God gives to the elect sinner the very repentance and faith which God requires of the sinner (2 Tim. 2:25, 26; Eph. 2:8); hence the sinner's repenting and believing is no contradiction of his utter helplessness and dependence upon God.

There are several other ways in which the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace serves to bring out the beautiful, rounded completeness of the Reformed Faith, but those that have been mentioned are sufficient for our purpose in this course of lessons. May God grant unto us to see the beautiful, well-proportioned and truly Biblical character of the Reformed theology, and to realize the vital importance, for the Church and the Kingdom, of the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace.

The End

Studies in the Epistle to the Hebrews

LESSON 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

1. The Authorship of the Epistle

The Epistle to the Hebrews does not name its own author. In the case of the Epistles of the apostle Paul, each epistle gives the name of Paul as the author at the beginning of the epistle. Hebrews, on the contrary, enters abruptly upon the discussion of its subject matter without any introduction or salutation whatever.

From the most ancient times the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews has been a debated question. We shall cite some of the ancient testimonies and opinions concerning it.

About 95 A.D. Clement of Rome wrote his Epistle to the Corinthians, in which statements from the Epistle to the Hebrews are quoted or alluded to.

About 200 A.D., Clement of Alexandria wrote concerning the Epistle to the Hebrews: "that the Epistle is Paul's, and that it was written to He-

brews in the Hebrew language, and that Luke translated it with zealous care and published it to the Greeks; whence it is that the same complexion of style is found in the translation of this Epistle and in the Acts; that the phrase 'Paul an Apostle' was not placed at the head of the Epistle for good reason, for, in writing to Hebrews who had formed a prejudice against him and viewed him with suspicion, he was wise not to repel them at the beginning by setting his name there." This theory of Clement of Alexandria may be true, but in all probability is mistaken. The Greek of the Epistle to the Hebrews does not read like something translated from another language into Greek; on the contrary, it is highly polished and idiomatic.

About 245 A.D. Origen wrote that the Epistle to the Hebrews could not have been written by Paul, because the style is very different from that of Paul, and the Greek more literary than Paul's. But Origen added that the contents of the Epistle are not in any way inferior to the Epistles

of Paul. Origen's own view was that the teachings of the Epistle to the Hebrews came from Paul, though the Epistle itself was written by someone who recalled Paul's words from memory and committed them to writing. Origen adds: "But who wrote the Epistle, God only knows certainly."

We should note that neither Clement of Alexandria nor Origen asserted that the apostle Paul wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews in the form in which we have it today. They only claimed that Paul may have been the original source of the contents of the Epistle, while the present (Greek) Epistle was written by Luke, or by an unknown person.

About the third century after Christ, scholars in Alexandria and the eastern portion of the Church came to believe that Paul wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews, but the western part of the Church did not agree. By the year 400, scholars in the west, influenced by Jerome and Augustine, inclined more to the view that Paul wrote Hebrews, though Jerome himself was doubtful about the question, and Augustine sometimes attributed Hebrews to Paul and sometimes referred to it as anonymous.

From about 500 A.D. to the time of the Reformation — a period of roughly a thousand years — it was generally believed that Paul wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Clearly we cannot attain certainty by appealing to the opinions of ancient Christian writers. We shall turn, therefore, to consider the phenomena of the Epistle itself, to see if we can gain any light on the question of who wrote it.

(1) Early Greek manuscripts do not mention Paul in the title of the Epistle.

(2) The contents of the Epistle do not name the author.

(3) The author, whoever he was, must have been personally acquainted with the original readers of the Epistle, to whom he wrote. Note the statements of 6:9ff; 10:34; 13:7, 19. In 13:23 the author speaks of Timothy as "our brother Timothy", apparently implying that Timothy was a mutual friend of the author and the readers of the Epistle.

(4) In 2:3 ff, the author places himself in the second generation of Christians — those who received the Gospel, not from Christ Himself, but from those who had heard Him. This is a great difficulty in the way of holding that Paul was the author of Hebrews, for Paul always claimed that he received the Gospel directly from Christ; see Gal. 1:1, 11, 12. It is clear that the author of Hebrews, whoever he was, could not claim to have received his knowledge of the Gospel directly from Jesus Christ, as Paul did; the author of Hebrews learned of the Gospel from others who, in

earlier years, had personally received the Word from Christ Himself.

(5) The Greek style of Hebrews is quite different from that of Paul's epistles. The style of Hebrews is highly polished; everything is perfectly smooth and balanced and the grammar is always perfect; sometimes striking alliteration occurs. The Greek of Paul's writings, on the other hand is forceful and rugged rather than polished. Sentences are often started and left unfinished, or the construction changed midway. (Of course differences in style cannot be fully appreciated by a reading of the English Bible only, though some difference between Hebrews and Paul's Epistles can be discerned even in English and other modern versions).

Apart from the theory that Paul wrote Hebrews, quite a number of other persons have been suggested as possible authors of the Epistle. Tertullian, Jerome and a number of modern scholars suggested Barnabas. It is possible that Barnabas was the author, for he was familiar with Paul's ideas; a Levite, he was at home in the Old Testament ritual; a native of Cyprus, he would have a good command of Greek. But there is no real EVIDENCE that Barnabas was the author; it is only a theory and cannot be proved.

Another theory is mentioned by the church historian Eusebius and the Bible-translator Jerome, namely that Paul wrote the Epistle in the Hebrew language, and Clement of Rome translated it into Greek. But this is just another theory without evidence.

The Reformer Martin Luther thought that Apollos was the author. Others have nominated Priscilla and Aquila, Silvanus, and many others. None of these theories can be proved, for all lack substantial evidence. After looking at all these guesses, we will do well to return to the sober judgment of Origen: "As to who wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews, God alone knows the truth." If we needed to know the name of the author, the Holy Spirit would have given us this information in the Bible. In conclusion, it may be stated that whoever wrote the Epistle, in all probability it was NOT the apostle Paul; there is more evidence against the theory that Paul was the author than there is for it.

2. The Date of the Epistle to the Hebrews

The apostle Paul was put to death under Nero in 67 A.D. Therefore, if Paul was the author of Hebrews, the Epistle must have been written before that date.

If Paul was not the author of the Epistle, at any rate it must have been written before 95 A.D., for that is the date of Clement of Rome's Epistle to the Corinthians, which contains allusions to the contents of Hebrews.

When Hebrews was written, Timothy was still alive (13:23). Therefore in all probability Hebrews was written in the first century. But in 2:3, 4 the author indicates that he was a member, not of the first, but of the second generation of Christians; therefore the Epistle was probably written in the latter part of the first century. While we cannot determine the date of writing with certainty, the evidence indicates that it was written sometime between 50 and 95 A.D.

In 70 A.D. Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans. It is remarkable that the Epistle to the Hebrews does not mention this fact. There are two possible explanations: (a) Hebrews may have been written BEFORE Jerusalem was destroyed; or (b) Hebrews may have been written MANY YEARS AFTER Jerusalem was destroyed, when the terrible shock of this event had been softened by the passing of time. There is also another possible explanation for the Epistle's failure to mention the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, namely, that the author had no occasion to refer to the destruction of Jerusalem. Some have said that Hebrews discusses the Temple worship in Jerusalem, but this is not correct, as will be seen by even a superficial examination of the contents of the book; the Epistle speaks throughout of the TABERNACLE, never of the Temple; it moves in the age of Moses, and describes the tabernacle and ritual as they were in Moses' day; see 9:2, 3, 4, 6; 13:11, 13. Hence the Epistle's failure to mention the destruction of Jerusalem does not really prove anything one way or the other. An argument from silence cannot be relied upon in such matters.

3. The Place of Composition of the Epistle

We cannot be certain about the place of composition of the Epistle to the Hebrews. In 13:24 we read: "They of Italy salute you". Some have understood this as implying that the Epistle was written from Italy. But we should observe that it says "They OF Italy", not "They IN Italy". It

says nothing as to the whereabouts of these Italians at the time of writing the Epistle. They may very well have been in Greece or Asia Minor, and it is possible that the Epistle was directed TO Italy, and the author conveys greetings of Italians abroad to their friends back home in Italy. The place of composition of the Epistle is therefore unknown.

Questions:

1. What was Clement of Alexandria's theory as to the authorship of Hebrews?
2. What did Origen say about the authorship of Hebrews?
3. What was the common belief from 500 A.D. to the Reformation as to the authorship of Hebrews?
4. What light can be obtained from Hebrews 2:3, 4 compared with Gal. 1:1, 11, 12, on the question of whether Paul wrote Hebrews?
5. How does the style of Hebrews, in the Greek, compare with that of Paul's Epistles?
6. Besides Paul, what other possible authors of the Epistle have been suggested, and why can we not be sure that any of these really was the author?
7. If Paul wrote Hebrews, why must the Epistle be earlier than 67 A.D.?
8. If Paul did not write Hebrews, why must the Epistle be earlier than 95 A.D.?
9. In the light of 13:23 and 2:3, 4, what must have been the approximate date of the writing of Hebrews?
10. What possible explanations are there for the fact that Hebrews does not mention the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.?
11. Why are we unable to decide where the Epistle was written?

LESSON 2

INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS, CONTINUED

4. The Original Recipients of the Epistle

Concerning the original recipients of the Epistle — the readers to whom it was addressed and first sent — various theories have been held. Some may hold that it makes no difference today who the original recipients of the Epistle were. But it really does make a difference, for our interpretation of the contents of the Epistle will be affected by our view concerning the identity of the original recipients, and our view concerning the occasion for writing the Epistle. We shall state and consider the three main theories, with the arguments that are urged in support of each.

A. The Theory that the Original Recipients were Jewish Christians Living in Palestine

This is by far the commonest view as to the recipients of the Epistle. It is held that they were Jewish Christians who had separated themselves from the Jewish Temple worship in Jerusalem, but were in danger of returning to it, thereby falling away from Jesus Christ. According to this view, the purpose of Hebrews is to serve as a warning against the danger of forsaking Christianity and returning to the Temple ritual in Jerusalem. Those who hold this view say it is the plain, obvious meaning of the Epistle, and that

this is shown by the many references to the Jewish ritual worship contained in the Epistle.

But this theory that the original readers of the Epistle were Jewish Christians living in Palestine is not so easy to accept as might at first sight seem to be the case. There are certain objections to it which must be faced, as follows.

(1) The Epistle is written in Greek, but the language of the Jewish Christians of Palestine was not Greek, but Aramaic. If the Epistle was written originally for them, it would probably be in their language, not in Greek.

(2) The early Jewish Christians living in Palestine did not abruptly separate from the ritual of the Temple worship, but continued to participate in it alongside of their separate practice of Christian worship; see Acts 2:46; 3:1; 5:42; 21:20, 26; 22:17; 24:18. This participation in the Temple worship was not sinful unless they trusted in it as the ground of salvation. In view of the fact that the book of Acts shows that the early Christians did not completely separate from the Temple worship, it is improbable that the Epistle to the Hebrews was written as a warning against falling back into such observances.

(3) If Hebrews was written to Jewish Christians living in Palestine, as a warning against returning to the Temple worship, then the Temple must have been still in existence when the Epistle was written. In that case, the Epistle must have been written before 70 A.D., for Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans in that year. But if Hebrews was written to Jewish Christians in Palestine before 70 A.D., there would have been many among the readers who had themselves seen and heard Jesus during His life and ministry on earth. But in 2:3, 4 the writer of Hebrews implies that both he himself and his readers were of the second generation of Christians, who had received the Gospel, not directly from Jesus Christ, but from those who had heard Him in person. This would seem to indicate that Hebrews could not have been written to Jewish Christians in Palestine as a warning against falling back into the Temple worship.

(4) In 6:10 the Epistle speaks of the original readers as having ministered to the saints. Apparently this is a reference to large gifts given for relieving the distress of poor Christians somewhere. But in the early Church, it was precisely the Jewish Christians of Palestine that were the **RECIPIENTS, NOT THE DONORS**, of such gifts, as we learn from Gal. 2:10, Rom. 15:25, 26. If the Jewish Christians of Palestine were themselves dependent on relief provided by Christians elsewhere, how could they be in a position to provide relief for others? The statement of 6:10 furnishes a strong argument against the theory that the readers were Jewish Christians living in Palestine.

B. The Theory that the Original Recipients were Jewish Christians Living in the Dispersion

This theory is much less commonly held than the one we have just been discussing. According to this view, the original readers of the Epistle were Jewish Christians, but not living in Palestine; they were the Jewish Christians scattered over the Greek and Roman world; and the Epistle was not written to warn them against returning to the Temple worship, but as a warning against a spiritual danger of another kind.

In favor of this second theory, it is argued that the writer of the Epistle repeatedly calls his readers "the people of God," "the children of Abraham", etc. Also it is said that the expression "dead works" in 6:1 and 9:14 means "the works of the law", implying that the readers must have been Jewish Christians. Another argument is that in 13:9-13 the readers are warned against being "carried about with diverse and strange doctrines", meaning, it is said, the doctrines of Judaism or the Pharisees.

While this second theory has much in its favor, it also is open to some serious objections, such as the following:

(1) Such expressions as "the people of God" (4:9, etc.) do not necessarily imply that the readers were Jews by race. Christians, whether Jewish or Gentile, have always been called "the people of God" and "the children of Abraham."

(2) The "dead works" mentioned in 6:1 and 9:14 were not necessarily the works of the Jewish law. These works of law-observance were legitimate in themselves (Acts 21:26), but ineffectual for salvation from sin. The works spoken of in 6:1 and 9:14 were such as required to be repented of and expiated by the blood of Christ; therefore they must have been not merely works of law-observance, but actually works of transgression, sinful works in general.

(3) The "diverse and strange doctrines" mentioned in 13:9 could not mean the requirements of the Old Testament law, which would never be regarded as "strange" by Jewish Christians. Therefore these "diverse and strange doctrines" must have been the human traditions and requirements added to the law of God by the Jews. Consequently, 13:9 ff. cannot be a warning against returning to the observance of the Old Testament law.

(4) In 6:1, 2, certain doctrines are mentioned which are regarded as something to be laid aside, or advanced from. These are: repentance from dead works, faith toward God, baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, eternal judgment. These are called "principles" (that is, "beginnings") in which the readers had been instructed. They are not to be content with these but to advance from these elementary truths to a fuller knowledge. These "principles" or "begin-

nings", however, are not such truths as would be taught to Jews, but such as would have to be taught to Gentiles. The Jews already knew all these things from their childhood. The Gentiles, on the other hand, with their pagan background and manner of thinking and living, had to learn the A-B-C's of divine truth from the very beginning. It seems much more natural to suppose that the words of 6:1, 2 were addressed to Gentile Christians than to Jewish Christians.

C. The Theory that the Original Recipients of the Epistle were Gentile Christians

This theory is the least common view as to the original readers of the Epistle. In its favor the following arguments have been adduced: Everywhere in the Epistle to the Hebrews it is the TABERNACLE, not the TEMPLE, that is the scene and center of worship. The Temple is not even mentioned a single time in the entire Epistle. The whole Epistle deals with the situation in the age of Moses, when there was no Temple. Therefore the mention of the sacrifices, etc., does not mean the ritual as practiced in the readers' own time in the Temple at Jerusalem, but the ritual as prescribed in the books of Moses in the Old Testament.

In view of the fact that the book deals largely with the TABERNACLE, but does not even mention the Temple, it would seem reasonable to conclude that the sacrifices, etc., are discussed, not as a practical question that faced the readers, but for other seasons, such as for comparison and argument.

On the other hand, this third theory, that the original readers were Gentile Christians, is faced with a serious objection in the fact that the title of the Epistle, in the earliest Greek manuscripts in existence, reads "TO THE HEBREWS". Even though it is possible that the title may not be a part of the inspired text of the book, still the title "To the Hebrews" certainly shows that in very early times it was recognized that this book was addressed to Hebrews, that is, to Jewish Christians.

Conclusion: Which view shall we adopt, as to the original recipients of the Epistle? The objections to the first theory (that the readers were Jewish Christians living in Palestine) seem to be conclusive. But both the second and third views (that the readers were Jewish Christians living outside of Palestine, and that they were Gentile Christians) are possible ones. On the whole it seems best to adopt either the second view (that

the readers were Jewish Christians living outside of Palestine), or else a combination of the second and third views (that the readers were both Jewish and Gentile Christians living outside of Palestine). This last is perhaps the most probable answer of all.

Questions:

1. What three theories are held as to who the original recipients of the Epistle to the Hebrews were?

2. What is the commonest view as to who the original recipients of the Epistle were?

3. According to this view, what was the purpose of the Epistle?

4. What objection to this view is based on the language of Hebrews?

5. What does the book of Acts show concerning the relation of the early Jewish Christians to the Temple worship?

6. What is the bearing of 2:3, 4 on the question of whether the original readers of the Epistle were Jewish Christians in Palestine?

7. What is shown by 6:10 compared with Gal. 2:10, Rom. 15:25, 26 as to the question of whether the original readers of the Epistle lived in Palestine?

8. What can be said in favor of the view that the original readers of the Epistle were Jewish Christians living outside of Palestine?

9. Why do such expressions as "the people of God" not necessarily refer to Jewish Christians?

10. What is the probable meaning of the "dead works" mentioned in 6:1 and 9:14?

11. What must be meant by "diverse and strange doctrines" in 13:9, and why cannot the verse be a warning against returning to the observance of the Old Testament law?

12. What is the bearing of 6:1, 2 on the question of whether the original readers of the Epistle were Jews or Gentiles?

13. What is the significance of the fact that the Epistle always speaks of the Tabernacle, never of the Temple?

14. What is the main objection to the theory that the original readers of the Epistle were Gentile Christians?

LESSON 3

INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS, CONTINUED

5. The Occasion and Aim of Writing the Epistle

Turning aside from the question as to who

the original recipients of the Epistle were, let us now face the question of what was the occasion, as well as what the aim, of writing the Epistle.

In general, we may say that the condition of the recipients was one of **RELIGIOUS EXTERNALISM**, and that the Epistle was written in order to correct this condition. Especially, it is clear that the recipients did not properly appreciate the person and work of Jesus Christ. The Epistle therefore opens with a paragraph stressing the pre-eminent nature and position of Christ, the Son of God, Mediator of Salvation, Revealer of the Deity (1:1-4).

From 2:5-18 we can gather the reason for the readers' lack of appreciation of Jesus Christ. In this section, the writer of the Epistle defends the doctrine of the **HUMILIATION** of Christ. He must have considered this defense necessary; therefore, we may conclude that the readers failed to grasp, or even objected to, the doctrine of Christ's humiliation. It may be that like the disciples during Jesus' earthly ministry, they associated only thoughts of earthly glory with the office and work of the Messiah.

This section, 2:5-18, shows that Christ's humiliation was both **REASONABLE** and **NECESSARY**. "It behooved him" (2:17); "It became him" (2:10). Christ's humiliation was not contrary to His glory, as the readers seem to have supposed; rather, His humiliation itself was the basis of His glory (2:9). The writer then proceeds to apply this truth to his readers: Christ's humiliation was not only the ground of Christ's glory, but also the ground of the readers' own future glory (2:10).

The recipients of the Epistle were people who wanted to walk by sight rather than by faith; they wanted to **SEE** with their eyes, not merely to **BELIEVE** with their heart. This is shown in 2:8, 9, where the natural vision of the eyes is contrasted with the spiritual vision of faith: "But now we see not yet . . . But we see Jesus". In 3:1 to 4:3, the writer of the Epistle emphasizes the majesty of Christ, the Son of God, as compared with Moses, the servant of God. Thus it is clear that the readers lacked a proper appreciation of the person and saving work of Jesus Christ.

In this passage, 3:1 to 4:13, the writer warns against unbelief in the fulfilment of God's promises. He uses God's promises to Israel concerning the inheritance of the land of Canaan as an example. But the readers of the Epistle lived under the New Testament dispensation. The kind of unbelief to which they were tempted was unbelief in the promises of the Gospel of Christ. They wanted to **SEE** and were not content with mere **BELIEVING**.

Christ's humiliation led to His **EXALTATION**, which is mentioned in 4:14, "a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God . . ." This same truth is stressed in 7:26, where Christ's **SEPARATION FROM SIN-**

NERS is also emphasized; and in 9:24 is brought out the importance of Christ's ministry **IN HEAVEN, NOT ON EARTH**. Thus the writer stresses three ideas (1. Christ's exaltation; 2. His separation from sinners; 3. His ministry in heaven, not on earth), each of which involves **THE PRESENT INVISIBILITY OF CHRIST**. This is a thought that runs through the whole Epistle. Whereas the readers wanted to **SEE**, the writer directs them rather to **BELIEVE** in an invisible Christ who is ministering on their behalf in heaven.

In this connection, we should realize that the ministry of the earthly high priest in the Holy of Holies was also invisible. The Epistle seeks to lift the readers' eyes above the things of earth to the glorified Christ in the heavens, to lift them from the plane of **SIGHT** to that of a spiritual **FAITH**. All through the Epistle there is an emphasis on things **NOT BEING SEEN** (10:36; 11:7, 8; etc.) on **PATIENCE, FAITH** and **HOPE**. Thus the writer draws practical applications from all his discussion.

All through the Epistle to the Hebrews the contrast is between **FAITH AND SIGHT** rather than between **FAITH AND WORKS**. It is a contrast between a spiritual type of religion and a type which is filled with materialistic and carnal expectations. In working out this contrast, the writer undertakes to show the great superiority of the New Testament ordinances of religion to those of the Old Testament.

Summary: The aim of the Epistle to the Hebrews is to exhort the readers to exercise a spiritual faith in the invisible, glorified Christ who is ministering as High Priest in heaven. The occasion of writing was the carnal, childish condition of the readers, with their preference for sight instead of faith. The carnal and elementary state of the readers is also shown by 5:11-14.

Questions:

1. What was the general religious condition of the original recipients of the Epistle to the Hebrews?
2. What was the original readers' attitude toward the doctrine of the humiliation of Christ?
3. Why did the writer of the Epistle emphasize the importance of faith as opposed to sight?
4. What three truths does the writer present which involve the present invisibility of Christ?
5. What two types of religion are contrasted by the Epistle?
6. What passage of the Epistle especially shows the carnal and elementary condition of the readers?

An Analysis of the Contents of the Epistle to the Hebrews

The Epistle to the Hebrews is best divided into six main sections, according to the following outline.

I. Christianity is God's Final Revelation to Men: 1:1 to 2:4.

- A. God's Final Word spoken through His Son 1:1-3.
- B. Christ Superior to the Angels. 1:4-14.
- C. Apart from the Gospel there is no Salvation. 2:1-4.

II. Warnings Against the Sin of Unbelief in the Gospel. 2:5 to 4:13.

- A. The Humiliation of Christ not an obstacle to faith, because by it He becomes our High Priest and Saviour. 2:5-18.
- B. Christ Superior to Moses. 3:1-6.
- C. Old Testament warnings against unbelief applied to the Christian, and unbelief in the Gospel warned against. 3:7 to 4:13.

III. The Doctrine of the Heavenly High Priesthood of Christ. 4:14 to 7:28.

- A. Christ's Priesthood the Christian's source of help. 4:14-16.
- B. The Scripture doctrine of priesthood in general. 5:1-4.
- C. Christ a High Priest after Melchizedek's order. 5:5-10.
- D. Reproof of the readers for their carnal state. 5:11-14.
- E. Exhortation not to stop short of true saving faith. 6:1-12.
- F. God's promise and oath guarantee Christ's priesthood for us within the veil. 6:13-20.
- G. Christ's Priesthood higher than that of Aaron. 7:1-28.
 - 1. Melchizedek a type of Christ. 7:1-3.
 - 2. Melchizedek's priesthood higher than Aaron's. 7:4-10.
 - 3. The Levitical priesthood made nothing perfect. 7:11-22.
 - 4. The Aaronic priests died, but Christ lives for ever. 7:23-28.

IV. The New Covenant Instituted by Christ is Superior to the Old Covenant. 8:1 to 10:18.

- A. Christ's priestly ministry heavenly, not earthly; in the sphere of reality, not that of shadows. 8:1-5.
- B. Christ, the Mediator of a new and better covenant, as prophesied of old. 8:6-13.
- C. The former Covenant only temporary, unable to perfect the worshipper, and it prefigured Christ. 9:1-10.
- D. The sanctuary and sacrifice of the New Covenant are realities, the antitype of those of the Old Covenant. 9:11-15.
- E. The New Covenant is also Christ's last Will and Testament, sealed by His own blood. 9:16-22.
- F. The heavenly sanctuary purged with a better sacrifice than the earthly sanctuary was. 9:23-24.
- G. The one Sacrifice of the New Covenant is better than the many sacrifices of the Old Covenant. 9:25 to 10:18.

V. Exhortation to Live and Walk by Faith. 10:19 to 12:29.

- A. Exhortation to confidence in Christ and to the maintenance of Christian associations. 10:19-25.
- B. Warning against the danger of apostasy. 10:26-39.
- C. The example of the Hebrew heroes of faith. 11:1-40.
- D. Christ Himself both the Example and the Object of our faith. 12:1-3.
- E. Chastening experienced should not discourage faith, for it is but the discipline which prepares us for a glorious salvation. 12:4-29.

VI. Exhortations Connected with Certain Practical Christian Duties. 13:1-25.

- A. Practical Exhortations. 13:1-17.
- B. Concluding remarks and benediction. 13:18-25.

LESSON 4

CHRISTIANITY IS GOD'S FINAL REVELATION TO MEN. 1:1 to 2:4

(A) God's Final Word spoken through His Son. 1:1-3.

The first two verses of the Epistle contain a certain comparison of God's Old Testament revelation with His New Testament revelation, which may be represented by the following diagram:

O.T.	GOD	N.T.
Who spake -----		Hath spoken
At sundry times and in divers manners in time past -----		In these last days
Unto the fathers -----		Unto us
By the prophets -----		By his Son

Compare Matt. 21:34, 37, "servants . . . son":
John 1:17, "Moses Christ."

"The last days" or "these last days", 1:2, began with the incarnation or resurrection of Jesus Christ, and will continue to all eternity. For proof of this, note the following Scriptures, which show that the coming of the Messiah marked the beginning of "the last days": Heb. 1:2; 9:26; 1 Pet. 1:20; 4:7; 1 Cor. 10:11.

The Old Testament revelation was in divers portions and manners, that is, it was given through many men, spread over many centuries, in many forms (such as dreams, angels, visions, direct speech, etc.). The revelation of the New Testament is a unit in that it is through Christ, God's Son. The Old was through the prophets, many in number, but the New is through one only, "a Son," Jesus Christ. No distinction is made between revelation given immediately by Christ, and that given through His apostles. The New Testament revelation is regarded as a unity because it is all through Christ, and was all given in a very brief period of years. For Scripture proof that the teaching of the apostles is part of God's speaking through His Son, see John 13:20; 1 Cor. 14:37.

Christianity is God's FINAL revelation, because God has spoken through Christ and revealed in the New Testament Scriptures all we need to know (in addition to the Old Testament, of course), hence we need no additional truth outside of the Bible. We should not use the term "revelation" of our present-day Christian experiences; at best, it is inexact and misleading, while at worst it is positively dangerous. It is better to speak of the "illumination" of the Holy Spirit who guides us into the truth already fully deposited in God's final revelation, His written Word, the Bible.

1:2b and 1:3 speak of Christ's dignity and position. Compare John 1:1-3, 14, 18; Phil. 2:6. Christ surpasses all the prophets, because He is God's Son; see John 14:9. 1:2 says that God appointed Christ heir of all things, and that through Him He made the worlds, etc. These words refer to Christ's eternal, essential deity, both before and after His incarnation.

1:3b speaks of Christ's humiliation, in the words "when he had by himself purged our sins", and continues by mentioning His exaltation, "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high". These two statements speak of the crucifixion and the ascension of Christ. As in Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53, His resurrection, without being definitely mentioned, is presupposed between His sufferings and His glory.

(B) Christ is Superior to the Angels. 1:4-14.

Several Old Testament passages are quoted here, namely Psalm 2:7; 2 Sam. 7:14; Psalms 97:7; 104:4; 45:6; 102:25-27; 110:1.

Christ is better than the angels, (1) because He has inherited a more excellent name than they, 1:4 that is, the name of "Son", 1:5. "This day" may refer to the day of Christ's resurrection from the dead (Rom. 1:4), but more probably refers to the "day" of eternity, meaning Christ's ETERNAL sonship. The angels are not God's "sons" in the sense that Christ is God's Son.

(2) Because Christ at His incarnation received the worship of the angels, 1:6. They are created beings, and therefore they worship Christ who is the Creator of all.

(3) Because the angels were created at a certain time (maketh his angels . . . ", verse 7), whereas Christ, their Creator, is very God, from all eternity, verses 8, 10.

(4) Because the angels are servants, while Christ is their Lord, verses 13, 14.

We should note that the angels have a very high rank; indeed, they are reckoned as Christ's "fellows" (verse 9), but He far exceeds them all in His essential nature and dignity. The Epistle to the Hebrews in its opening sentence presents the highest possible view of Jesus Christ. It gives all honor and glory to the Son of God. We may compare this passage with Matt. 11:27 and John 1:1-14. The Messiah is God manifest in the flesh, the Word become flesh, which once dwelt among us, but is now seated on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, till His enemies be made the footstool of His feet.

(C) Outside of the Gospel there is no Other Way of Salvation. 2:1-4.

This section is of the nature of a practical

exhortation, warning us not to let slip unheeded the word of doctrine that was heard, 2:1. In the Old Testament period the people received the law of God through angels (Acts 7:53). At that time those who did not keep the law which was ministered to them by angels, were sure of punishment, 2:2. How much more those who neglect the Gospel of Christ will be unable to escape! 2:3. For the Gospel was not proclaimed by angels, but by the Son of God Himself, 2:3, and it was accompanied by miracles, wonders, signs and gifts of the Holy Spirit, as proofs of its divine character, so that the hearers were left without excuse, 2:4.

Questions:

1. What comparison is drawn in the first two verses of the Epistle?

2. What is the meaning of the expression "these last days"?

3. How does the New Testament revelation differ from that of the Old Testament?

4. What do we mean by saying that Christianity is God's final revelation to mankind?

5. What truth concerning Christ is implied, but not expressed, in verse 3?

6. What four arguments does the Epistle use to prove that Christ is superior to the angels?

7. How does the view of Christ presented in the opening verses of Hebrews differ from the modern "liberal" view of Christ?

8. What practical exhortation is presented in 2:1-4?

9. Why are those who neglect the Gospel without excuse?

LESSON 5

WARNINGS AGAINST THE SIN OF UNBELIEF IN THE GOSPEL. 2:5 to 4:13

(A) The Humiliation of Christ not an obstacle to Faith, for by it He becomes our High Priest and Saviour. 2:5-18.

The "world to come" in verse 5 is the world after the second advent of our Lord. God did not subject that world to angels, but to His Son Jesus Christ. 2:6, 7 is a quotation from Psalm 8:4-6. All things are to be subjected to man, that is, to the human race, and therefore to Christ, the ideal and representative man, 2:8. This prophecy has not yet been completely fulfilled. In 2:8, "we see not yet . . ." refers to the ordinary sight of the eyes, but in 2:9, "But we see . . ." refers to the spiritual sight of faith. Christ has ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He has entered upon His glory; all this is a part of His estate of exaltation. But we cannot see His glory with our natural eyes, because Christ is hidden in heaven, while we are still on earth. By faith, however, we can see His crown of glory and honor. But how did He acquire it? By suffering death and by becoming a little lower than the angels. "A little lower" can also be translated "a little while lower". Christ was originally greater than the angels, and the angels are greater than men. But Christ became man to save men, by taking a human nature. Therefore he had to become a little (while) lower than the angels. This was a part of His humiliation, which was evidently a stumblingblock to the original readers of the Epistle. So this passage emphasizes Christ's humiliation, showing that it was essential to His glory. First the cross, then the crown; first humiliation, then exaltation; first death, then glory. Therefore the closest connection exists between Christ's humiliation and His exaltation, and the believer

ought not to regard Christ's humiliation as a difficulty in the way of his faith, but as a part of the proper content of his faith.

2:10 states the REASONABLENESS of Christ's humiliation, as does also 2:17. 2:11, in order to save men, it was necessary that Christ be identified with men, so He became man with us, and therefore He calls the recipients of redemption "brethren". 2:12 is a quotation from Psalm 22:22, which was a prophecy of the fruits of Christ's sufferings. 2:13 is a quotation from Isaiah 8:17, 18. The latter was originally Isaiah's statement about himself and his own children, but it included a spiritual meaning prophetic of the relation between Christ and the believer, the relation being that between a parent and his children. Many places in Scripture speak of the believer as a child of God, but only here in Heb. 2:13 is the believer called a child of Jesus Christ.

2:14, 15 shows the reason for the necessity of Christ's incarnation — it was necessary because the persons to be redeemed were partakers of flesh and blood, therefore Christ also had to partake of flesh and blood. The AIM of His incarnation is also stated: it was by means of death to destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and to deliver them who through fear of death were all their life-time subject of bondage. So Christ's humiliation and suffering of death were not in vain, they were in order to the attainment of this great aim. Therefore this truth of Christ's humiliation should cause no one to stumble, for it was the very heart of the Gospel.

2:16 goes on to state that it was not angels that Christ undertook to redeem, but the human

race ("the seed of Abraham") The angels are not a race or organic unity as humanity is; they were all created out of nothing at one time, and are not related to each other by natural generation as human beings are related to each other; hence, Scripture knows nothing of a plan of redemption for fallen angels. The elect angels never sinned; the non-elect angels sinned and perished; but there is no salvation for angels. Not to angels did Christ give help, but to the seed of Abraham, both the Jewish and the Gentile (spiritual) seed of Abraham. The seed of Abraham being not angels but men, and men with flesh and blood bodies, it was necessary for Christ to take the same. This was in order to His becoming a "merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people", 2:17. Here we are for the first time in this Epistle brought face to face with the doctrine of Christ's priesthood. Christ's becoming in all things like unto His brethren was the necessary qualification for His becoming an adequate high priest. 2:18 informs us that a part of this qualification for the priesthood was the suffering of temptation. As high priest His work was to succor them that are tempted, and He could only do this by having suffered temptation Himself.

Chapter 2:5-18 lays the foundation for the rest of the Epistle by clearing up the readers' difficulty with respect to the doctrine of the humiliation of Christ. From this point the Epistle goes on to set forth the doctrine of

Christ's priesthood, but from the end of chapter 2 to 4:13 is a parenthetical practical exhortation against unbelief.

Questions:

1. What is meant by the expression, "the world to come" in 2:5?
2. What two kinds of sight are spoken of in 2:8, 9?
3. How is Psalm 8:4-6 related to Jesus Christ?
4. Why was it necessary for Christ to be made a little lower than the angels?
5. What is the connection between Christ's humiliation and His exaltation?
6. Why can Christ call the recipients of redemption "brethren"?
7. What truth concerning the believer's relation to Christ is derived from Isa. 8:17, 18?
8. Why was Christ's incarnation (partaking of flesh and blood) necessary?
9. What was the aim of Christ's incarnation?
10. What is meant by "the seed of Abraham" in 2:16?
11. What necessary qualification for Christ's office of priesthood is set forth in 2:17?
12. What is the relation between suffering temptation and being an adequate high priest?

LESSON 6

WARNINGS AGAINST THE SIN OF UNBELIEF IN THE GOSPEL. 2:5 to 4:13, Continued

(B) Christ Superior to Moses. 3:1-6.

Christ and Moses resemble each other in one respect, namely, that each was faithful to Him that appointed him, 3:2. But Christ is far superior to Moses, because the builder of a house is worthy of more honor than the house itself, 3:3. From this verse we see that Moses is a part of the house. This passage of the Epistle uses the figure of a house and a builder. From verse 3 we see that Moses was part of the house, whereas Christ is the builder of the house; therefore Christ has more honor than Moses.

But what, in particular, is represented by the figure of the house? From 3:6 we learn that the house consists of **THE PEOPLE OF GOD**: "whose house are we, if we hold fast . . .". In this house Moses had a place, but Christ was the builder, so in this respect He had more honor than Moses. From 3:4 we learn that the builder of the house is God: "he that built all things is God". Since Christ is Himself God, it is still true that God is the builder of the house, even though verse 3 implies that Christ is the builder.

The passage goes on to assert two more differences between Moses and Christ, namely, as respects their position in the house, and as respects their functions in the house. With respect to their position in the house, Moses' position is that of a servant **IN** the house, whereas Christ's position is **OVER** the house: "Moses . . . was faithful **IN** all his house as a **SERVANT**" (3:5); "But Christ as a **SON OVER** his own house . . ." (3:4).

With respect to their functions in the house, Moses' function was that of a prophet, "for a testimony of those things which were afterward to be spoken" (3:5b); but Christ's function is that of Lord over all, to rule. So there are three respects in which Christ is superior to Moses, as follows:

1. Christ built the house, Moses was a part of the house, therefore Christ, the builder, had more honor than Moses, who was part of what was built.
2. Moses' position is that of a servant **IN** the

house, but Christ's position is that of a Son OVER the house.

3. Moses' function is that of testifying with reference to future things: Christ's function is that of ruling over all.

3:6b, "whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end", is not contrary to the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints (eternal security of the believer). The statement made simply serves to define what constitutes God's house. God's house is the body of His people, made up of true believers; true believers are sure to hold fast their faith unto the end; if any person does not, that simply demonstrates that he was originally not a true believer and therefore not really a part of God's house.

(C) Old Testament Warnings against Unbelief Applied to the Christian, and Unbelief in the Gospel Warned Against. 3:7 to 4:13.

3:7-11 is a quotation from Psalm 95:7-11. That section deals with the events in the wilderness after the people of Israel came out of Egypt. At that time they tried and tempted God, and saw His works forty years. Because God was displeased with them in this matter, He swore in His wrath that they should not enter into His rest. The rest spoken of was the rest of the land of Canaan. Because God would not permit them to enter in, they all died in the wilderness. Centuries later the Psalmist used this matter to warn the Old Testament believers against the sin of tempting God by unbelief (Psalm 95). Finally, the Epistle to the Hebrews quotes the passage from the Psalm, using it to warn the New Testament people of God, lest there be some among them, or in their assemblies, who came short of true repentance and full faith in Christ, and therefore were without the new birth and real spiritual life, as we see in 3:12: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." We should note carefully that 3:14 is not contrary to the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints ("For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end"). Every true believer is a partaker of Christ. No person who has in him an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God, is a partaker of Christ. No person who is really a partaker of Christ will ever have in him an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. We see, therefore, that **THOSE WHO DEPART FROM THE LIVING GOD** and **THOSE WHO ARE PARTAKERS OF CHRIST** are two mutually exclusive classes of persons.

3:15-19 shows the effects of unbelief, both in Moses' time and now. The consequence of Israel's unbelief was that they were unable to enter into rest, 3:19. The warning in 4:1 again shows that this passage does not teach the Ar-

minian doctrine of "falling from grace." It is not a warning to true believers to be on guard against falling away, but a warning to persons who have heard the Gospel, lest they fall short of a true and full saving faith in Christ, "Lest any of you should seem to come short of it" is the condition warned against, not "Lest any of you, having obtained it, should later lose it."

From 4:2 we see that faith as well as mere hearing is necessary for salvation. This of course means a true, saving faith. We may divide faith into three kinds: (1) Historical faith, believing in the facts of the Gospel simply as historical events; this kind of faith is necessary, but not sufficient for salvation; (2) Temporary faith, as in the Parable of the Sower, which is the product of a purely natural religious experience, and does not bring salvation; (3) Saving faith, which is the product of regeneration by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 2:8). Throughout the passage we are considering, the faith spoken of is not mere "belief," but a true, saving faith.

In 4:3 we learn that the believer enters into (eternal) rest. The rest spoken of is that of heaven. In 4:3-10 three kinds of Sabbath rest are spoken of, as follows:

1. God's own Sabbath rest, upon which He entered after completing His work of creation. 4:3, 4.
2. The Sabbath rest of Canaan, into which Israel entered under Joshua. 3:16-19; 4:6, 8.
3. The eternal Sabbath rest of the people of God, which was prefigured by 1 and 2, and which was still future in David's time, as shown by 4:7, 8. 4:7-9.

(Note: The word translated "rest" in 4:9 is **sabbatismos**, meaning "Sabbath rest" or "keeping of a Sabbath". The word "Jesus" in the King James Version of 4:8 should be translated "Joshua"; the reference is to Joshua the son of Nun, not to Jesus Christ. See this verse in the American Revised Version, and Acts 7:45 in the King James and Revised versions).

The argument in the passage we are considering is calculated to prove that the Sabbath rest of Canaan was not the fulfilment of the type of God's own creation Sabbath rest, for if it were, Scripture would not afterward (in David's time) have spoken of another day of Sabbath rest. But since it did (Psalm 95), we must conclude that the great Sabbath rest which God's creation rest prefigured, is still future. This conclusion is stated in 4:9, "There remaineth therefore a (Sabbath) rest to the people of God". That it was future not merely in David's time but also in the time of writing the Epistle to the Hebrews, is shown by the term "remaineth", and also by 4:10 which shows that the character of a Sabbath is **CESSATION FROM WORKS**. Compare

4:10 with Rev. 14:13, where the same thought is brought out.

So we conclude that the believer's Sabbath rest is not merely that peace of conscience and enjoyment of assurance which he has here and now in Christ, but that eternal rest which is laid up for God's people in the world to come. Of course in principle and promise we are possessed of it now, but the realization and enjoyment of it still lies in the future. This passage sets forth with great clearness the eschatological character of Christianity — its concern with the future life.

4:11-13 are an exhortation to give diligence to enter into that rest. This exhortation does not imply salvation by human effort or will power, but simply that we are to be intensely concerned about our own salvation. Verses 12 and 13 constitute one of the most keenly debated passages in the Bible, as they form one of two or three passages on the interpretation of which hinges the question of the two-fold versus the three-fold constitution of the human personality (Dichotomy versus Trichotomy). It is quite beyond the scope of the present course of lessons to enter into that controversy. We shall merely note the particular point of these verses. They are introduced to show the power and effectiveness of the Word of God, meaning by "word" not merely Scripture, but every word of power by which God accomplishes His designs in the world. The term no doubt includes Scripture, too, and it is by a patient and careful study and taking to heart of the written Word of God that man can become certain of entering into that eternal Sabbath rest which is spoken of just above. The Word of God can show man what is in his own heart, and can distinguish between a true faith and a false faith which is at bottom nothing but an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. Furthermore, as verse 13 tells us, God knows all things and nothing can be concealed from Him, so no hypocritical faith or partial acceptance of Christ can save anyone; as all things are naked and open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do, nothing but a true and hearty faith can bring salvation to the soul and give entrance into that eternal Sabbath rest which is laid up for the people of God.

Questions:

1. In what respect is Christ said to resemble Moses?
2. What argument is given to prove that Christ is superior to Moses?
3. What was the position of Moses in the house of God?
4. Wherein is Christ's position different from that of Moses?
5. What was the function of Moses in the house of God?
6. Wherein does Christ's function differ from that of Moses?
7. Why is 3:6b not contrary to the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints?
8. How is the conduct of the people of Israel in the wilderness used in chapter 3 as a warning to the readers of the Epistle?
9. How does 4:1 show that 3:14-19 does not teach the Arminian doctrine of "falling from grace"?
10. What kind of faith is spoken of in 4:2?
11. What other kinds of faith are there, and how do they differ from the faith mentioned in 4:2?
12. What is the rest into which the believer enters, mentioned in 4:3a?
13. How many kinds of Sabbath rest are spoken of in chapter 4, and what are they?
14. How does the Epistle prove that the rest of Canaan is not the true Sabbath rest of God's people?
15. How does the quotation from Psalm 95 show that the true Sabbath rest of God's people is still future?
16. Who is the "Jesus" mentioned in 4:8?
17. What special power of the Word of God is emphasized in 4:12, 13?

LESSON 7

THE DOCTRINE OF THE HEAVENLY HIGH PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST. 4:14 to 7:28

The high priesthood of Christ is first mentioned in 2:17, and again in 3:1. But the discussion and elaboration of the doctrine of Christ's priesthood begins at 4:14 and continues to 7:28.

(A) Christ's Priesthood the Christian's Source of Help. 4:14-16.

Christ is called a GREAT high priest (4:14)

because He is the Son of God, made higher than the heavens (7:26). The expression "passed into the heavens" (4:14) is literally, "passed THROUGH the heavens". This refers to Christ's ascension, and was typified by the Aaronic high priest passing through the veil of the Tabernacle which separated the holy place from the holy of holies. Compare 6:19, "that which is within the veil."

Neither Moses nor Joshua could bring God's people into that eternal rest which is on the other side of the veil, but Christ did, as from the time of His ascension. Having such a high priest, we have added reason for holding fast our confession.

In 4:15 we see that though our great high priest is so highly exalted above us, yet He is able to sympathize with sinning and suffering humanity, for He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. In this verse we find the TEMPTATION of Christ, together with HIS ABSOLUTE SINLESSNESS. Both were essential to His priesthood: His temptation, that He might be able to sympathize with the tempted, and so help them; and His sinlessness, that He might offer a sin offering without blemish to atone for guilty men. Note Exodus 28:29 where it is recorded that Aaron, the type of Christ, bearing the names of the twelve tribes on the breastplate of judgment on his heart for a memorial before the Lord, entered into the holy place.

In 4:16 we see that Christ's exalted priesthood is an incentive to the believer to "draw near" with boldness to the throne of grace. God's throne can be called a "throne of grace" because of Christ's atonement and intercessory work; because the Christ who was crucified is now at the right hand of that throne making intercession for His people. So the believer is sure of obtaining the needed help from that source. Compare Job's complaint, Job 23:3-8, and Elihu's answer, Job 33:23-28, accompanied as it is by an "if". The high priest which Job needed, and the mediator that Elihu spoke of which an "if", are provided for us in Jesus Christ our heavenly high priest. Grace to help "in time of need" means grace to help us at whatever time we have need of it; when we need it and seek it, it will be granted to us at once.

(B) The Scripture Doctrine of Priesthood in General, 5:1-4.

This section does not speak specifically of Christ, but of the priestly office in general, stating the qualifications and duties of priests as such. What is set forth here may be summarized as follows:

I. The Qualifications of a Priest.

1. Must be a man, 5:1.
2. Must not have assumed the office himself, 5:4.
3. Must have been appointed by God, 5:4.
4. Must be able to sympathize with man's weakness, 5:2.

II. The Functions of a Priest.

1. To represent men in things pertaining to God, 5:1.

2. To offer gifts and sacrifices for sins, 5:1.
3. To make intercession for men, 7:25.

Of course part of 5:3 cannot apply to Christ ("so also for himself, to offer for sins"), for He was sinless; this phrase applies to priests in general, including the Levitical priesthood, but not to Jesus Christ the sinless, perfect priest. Christ is the unique and sole exception to this general rule.

(C) Christ a High Priest after Melchizedek's Order. 5:5-10.

After setting forth the Scriptural doctrine of the qualifications and functions of a priest, the Epistle goes on to show how Christ is a priest. In the first place, He did not glorify Himself to be made a high priest, 5:5, but was appointed by God who said of Him, "Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee" (Psalm 2:7), and who also said of Him "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" (Psalm 110:4). Here we have Christ's SONSHIP linked with His priesthood. Because Christ was the Son of God, He could be a perfect high priest. Because, and only because, He was the Son of God, could He be appointed by God to this office of high priest. Compare 2 Sam. 8:18, "and David's sons were chief rulers (ARV, ministers)"; the Hebrew word here translated "rulers" or "ministers" is COHENIM, which literally means "priests". David's sons of course could not hold the Levitical priestly office, for they were of the tribe of Judah, not of the tribe of Levi, therefore the word COHENIM applied to them must have referred to some other functions, as is suggested by the context. At the same time the passage in 2 Samuel may typify the connection between Christ's priesthood and His sonship.

In the quotation from Psalm 110:4 Christ is called a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek. There were three respects in which Melchizedek could typify Christ's office of priesthood: (1) he was a man; (2) he was a priest; (3) he was also a king. Compare Zech. 6:13 where the two offices of priesthood and kingship are joined in one person — beyond question a prophecy of Christ's offices. We shall learn much more about Melchizedek later. The point of the reference here is to show that Christ GLORIFIED NOT HIMSELF TO BE MADE A HIGH PRIEST, but was appointed to the office by God. Note that in 5:5a Christ is called a "high priest" but in 5:6 He is merely called "a priest". In order to understand this distinction, we must pay attention to the context, 5:4, where it is stated that Aaron glorified not himself to be made a high priest, but was called of God. Aaron was a high priest; Christ as the antitype (fulfilment) of the Aaronic high priestly office is also a high priest. But Melchizedek was never called "a high priest"; he was simply a priest, that is, a priest in the fullest, absolute sense. This is confirmed by the added words "for ever" in 5:6.

Neither Aaron nor Melchizedek were priests for ever, but only during their lifetimes on earth. Christ is a priest for ever — He has an absolute, unchangeable priesthood.

We have so far shown that Christ possessed the Scriptural qualifications for priesthood in that He did not assume the honor unto Himself but was called of God. Two qualifications remain to be examined, namely that He was required to be a man, and that He must be able to sympathize with human weakness. These are set forth in 5:7-10. In 5:7a we read of "the days of his flesh," an un mistakeable reference to Christ's human nature, showing that He was truly human, and therefore, having been taken from among men, was possessed of this necessary qualification. The remaining requirement was that He must be able to sympathize with human weakness and need. This is covered by the SUFFERINGS of Christ which are mentioned in 5:7, 8. The reference to "prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears" undoubtedly refers to our Saviour's agonies in Gethsemane and on Calvary. Compare Psalm 22:1; Matt. 26:27, 39, Mark 14:33; Luke 22:44; etc. The Gospels nowhere state that Christ shed tears (except at the time of the raising of Lazarus from the dead), but the fact that He did is implied in the Gospel narratives of His agony in Gethsemane.

In 5:7 it is stated that He prayed "unto him that was able to save him from death," and in the second part of the verse it is stated that He was "heard", that is, His request was granted. Since as a matter of historical fact Christ was not saved from death, but on the contrary was crucified, dead and buried, the question arises as to precisely what the prayer of Heb. 5:7 was, and just how it was answered. We should note carefully that the text does not say that He prayed to God to be saved from death, but that He prayed "unto him that was able to save him from death". Precisely what He prayed for is not stated here. From the account in the Gospels (Matt. 26:39) we know that what Christ prayed for was that the cup might pass from Him. But what was meant by "this cup"? Probably what it meant was the wrath of God and the hiding of the Father's countenance, which took place because He was under the curse, bearing the guilt of His people's sins. It was doubtless this wrath of God, and hiding of the Father's countenance, from which He shrank, and from which it would have been wrong for Him not to shrink. That Christ did not and could not have prayed to be spared from physical death is proved by John 10:17, 18.

But in what sense was His prayer heard and answered? Certainly not in preventing Him from experiencing the wrath of God, and removal of the Father's countenance. But (1) in giving Him strength to endure the bitterness; and (2) in limiting its duration.

Verse 8 sums up; Christ's sufferings fit him to sympathize with suffering humanity. It is now demonstrated that Christ possessed all the Scriptural qualifications for the office of priesthood. 5:8-10 draws the inference from this fact, that Christ has been made perfect, that is, complete, brought to the goal, that He is the author of eternal salvation unto all that obey Him.

Note the two doctrines that are stated in 5:9: (1) The complete EFFECTIVENESS of Christ's work. He is the author of ETERNAL SALVATION, not merely of "saveability". He does not merely give men "a chance" to be saved; He actually and eternally SAVES them. (2) The eternal security of the saved person. It is ETERNAL salvation, not temporary salvation. Those who teach that a saved person can later "fall from grace" and perish in hell, teach a kind of salvation that is not ETERNAL, but may be only temporary. But Christ is the author of ETERNAL salvation. Those who receive this salvation are not only SAVED, but also ETERNALLY SAFE.

5:10 summarizes what has been discussed: Christ is a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

Questions:

1. Why is Christ called a "great" high priest?
2. What event is referred to in the words "passed into (through) the heavens" in 4:14?
3. What action of the Aaronic high priests typified this event?
4. What two facts concerning Christ are stated in 4:15?
5. Why was it essential that Christ experience temptation?
6. Why was it essential that Christ be absolutely sinless?
7. Why can God's throne be called a "throne of grace"?
8. How do Job's complaint (Job 23:3-8) and Elihu's answer (Job 33:23-28) show the need for such a high priest as Christ is?
9. What four qualifications for the office of priesthood are set forth in 5:1-4?
10. What three functions of a priest are set forth in 5:1-4 and 7:25?
11. What phrase in 5:3 cannot apply to Christ?
12. What two facts concerning Christ are linked in 5:5?
13. In what three respects could Melchizedek typify Christ's priesthood?
14. Why is Christ called "a high priest" in 5:5 but simply "a priest" in 5:6?

15. When and where did our Saviour pray "with strong crying and tears"?

16. What did He pray for with strong crying and tears?

17. How was His prayer answered?

18. How does John 10:17, 18 show that Christ

could not have prayed to be spared from physical death?

19. What does 5:9 teach concerning the effectiveness of Christ's saving work?

20. What does 5:9 teach concerning the eternal security of the saved person?

(To be continued)

Reviews of Religious Books

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

INTERPRETING THE BIBLE, by A. Berkeley Mickelsen. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49502, 1963, pp. xiv, 425. \$5.95.

Since God has made preaching "an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners and of building them up in holiness and comfort through the Scriptures," the primary employment of the preacher must be the right understanding of the Word he preaches. His first concern must be with his own understanding of the Word, not with how he will explain it to others. That follows, as the author points out in the preface: "The most impelling motive for learning to interpret the scriptures correctly is the necessity to understand clearly for ourselves exactly what we are to communicate to others." (p. vii). Since the Spirit is the author of the Word, He must also be its interpreter; but this does not relieve the servant of God of the responsibility for diligence in exercising the skills and methods the Spirit has designed to the end of right understanding.

The purpose of the book is (i) "to show that the student of the Bible must have a proper method of interpretation to get at the full meaning of the Bible; (ii) to discuss the many elements of such interpretations; and thus (iii) to guide the serious reader into a correct understanding of the Scriptures." (p. viii).

Professor Mickelson defines the task of the interpreter as "to find out the meaning of a statement (command, question) for the author and for the first hearers or readers, and thereupon to transmit that meaning to modern readers." (p. 5). He then applies himself to an examination of the principles involved and how they are arrived at. In this discussion he re-

marks upon the necessity of the interpreter's realizing what controls his own thinking, i.e., with what assumptions he approaches the Word, if he is to avoid reading his own meaning from the pages of the Bible.

The work is thoroughly done as an examination of the table of contents shows. Four introductory chapters examine principles, draw lessons from the history of interpretation, study crucial issues such as language, the meaning of history, subjectivity, mythology. The last chapter of this section examines the uniqueness of the Bible. The section "claims for authority," demonstrating so clearly that it is God who speaks in Scripture, is well worth the price of the book.

The next section, on general hermeneutics, takes up the context and its importance. The general principles involved in grammatical and historical interpretation, the basic method, are thoroughly examined. Tools and how to use them and illustrations of the significance of grammatical and syntactical data are meaningfully presented. A useful summary is given of principles of syntactical (pp. 157-158) and historical interpretation (p. 176).

The third section takes up the special problems of interpretation: figures of speech, parables, allegories, typology, symbols and symbolical actions, prophecy, poetry, and descriptive language of creation and climax (*Genesis and Revelation*), doctrine, devotion and conduct.

The concluding chapters warn of distortion by artificial assumption and appeal for balance through care and practice, bringing the interpreter face to face with the One to whom he must give account, and who alone can establish the Word in the heart of the hearers.

The author manifests ability in this field and skillfully puts together his material in simple, direct style, so that it is both interesting and instructive. The reviewer found it fascinating reading. It is designed as a text book, and is of quality to make it a useful reference work. There are bibliographies at the end of each chapter, and a general bibliography at the end. Subject and Scripture reference indices contribute to its usefulness in the study. If you haven't added a tool for hermeneutics to your study equipment recently, this one is worthy of consideration.

— E. Clark Copeland

INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT, by Everett F. Harrison. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 3, Mich. 49502, 1964, pp. 481. \$5.95.

Conservative scholarship has produced another comprehensive, scholarly aid to the study of the New Testament. In five parts we are given the essential material for the study of New Testament introduction. With it we have at the end of each section a selective bibliography for further study.

The author's outline and format make the development easy to follow. Subject and Scripture reference indices add to facility in the study. The treatment of problems and the material of the New Testament is comprehensive; the analysis is clear. The author's premillennial theology appears, but other interpretations are also acknowledged. The nature of the study is biblical as well as historical and theological. The evaluation of studies and commentaries is reliable.

The approach is reverent and believing. Historical and critical problems are discussed in a scholarly fashion. There is no effort to side-step issues. We have here a good text for the theological student; the language and style make it suitable also for the layman. We recommend it for church libraries.

— E. Clark Copeland

GENESIS ONE RECONSIDERED, by D. F. Payne. The Tyndale Press, London; or Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49502. 1964, pp. 29, paper, 2 shillings.

The author is lecturer in Biblical history, literature at the University of Sheffield, England; the monograph was the Tyndale Old Testament lecture, 1962.

This study is of far greater significance than its size might indicate. It is an enlightening examination of the attack upon Genesis 1 from the latter part of the 19th century to the present in three areas: (1) that it does not accord with the scientific facts; (2) that it is merely the Hebrew version of a Near Eastern folk-tale; and (3) that

Gen. 1 and 2 are two distinct and contradictory accounts of creation (most cogently stated by Wellhausen). Taking each by turn, Mr. Payne traces the shift in approach since 1900 and points up inaccuracies in the opposition.

A few quotes will illustrate the nature of the argument. He disapproves of most efforts to narrow the gap between the Biblical record and the conclusions of the scientists by "concordist treatment." "It is essential to achieve first a sound exegesis of the latter (Biblical record); and then, if any rapprochement is necessary, it can be made on a firm basis. Biblical exegesis is paramount, even when the scientific challenge is under way." (p. 8). After citing von Rad's opinion (*GENESIS*, Eng. trans., 1961, pp. 48, 49, 53) that this chapter is distinctly anti-mythical, he carries him to the logical conclusion that, "If this is the case, the writer has not borrowed and adapted ancient myth, such as the Babylonian; under God's hand, he has written the story of creation to counter the polytheistic myths with which the Israelites must have been familiar (as biblical allusions to Leviathan and Rahab testify)." (p. 22). He shows that although they hold to the two-source theory of Gen. 1 and 2, S. H. Hooke, H. H. Rowley and I. Engnell emphasize the theological unity in them.

His conclusions are worth repeating here: (1) The Biblical creation story is self-consistent in all essentials; (2) It is not only theologically far different from, but totally opposed to, the ancient Near Eastern myths; (3) Its information relates to the transcendence of God and the dignity of man, God's purposes and man's destiny, doctrines which modern science has neither the function nor the power to dispute.

Genesis one, Mr. Payne says, withstands these challenges and also throws out its own challenge of faith and obedience, so that man must confess, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." (Rev. 4:11).

— E. Clark Copeland

THE ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN TREATIES AND THE OLD TESTAMENT, by J. A. Thompson. The Tyndale Press, London; or Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49502. 1964, pp. 39, two shillings.

This monograph comprises the Tyndale Lecture in Biblical Archeology for 1963, and is also significant beyond its size. This study is in three sections: the ancient political treaties drawn up by kings of the Near East with their vassals, treaties in the Old Testament drawn up on the same pattern; and the significance of these treaties for the study of the Old Testament.

There is a great deal of documentary evidence both from the Old Testament and the extra-Bib-

lical sources which is very elucidating in the study of the Pentateuch in particular. Professor Thompson considers it is not a one-way street of information from extra-Biblical sources to Biblical: "it is equally important to realize that the Old Testament sometimes throws light on the Near Eastern procedures. The passages in Jeremiah and elsewhere in the Old Testament may well provide the true interpretation of the meaning of ritual sacrifice in treaties and covenants all over the ancient Near East." (p. 26).

Nor can the covenant between Yahweh and His people Israel find full expression in the legal and formal terms of these political treaties because of its primary religious nature (p. 37). This involved the development of a special covenant vocabulary all its own in Israel: truth, righteousness, faithfulness, mercy, forgiveness, favour, justice, right, repentance, turning.

The bibliography in the footnotes is very important for further study in this area. We would call attention to the early work of G. E. Mendenhall, and the more recent application of such materials to the interpretation of the Book of Deuteronomy by M. G. Kline in his *THE TREATY OF THE GREAT KING*.

This monograph should be of special interest to anyone interested in the history of the Near East, as well as to the student of the Old Testament.

— E. Clark Copeland

CHRIST AND THE CHURCH, by Dale Moody. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49502. 1963, pp. 153, \$2.95.

The author of this work is professor of Christian Theology at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky. He tells us in the preface that the material has been part of his preaching for several years and is published at the request of people in many places (p. 7). It is intended "as a bridge between exegesis and the increasing interest of the average Christian in biblical study" (p. 7). This is an admirable goal and is well achieved in the clearness of presentation and simplicity of style.

However, we are unable to recommend the book for a number of views set forth in it. Augustine is said to have held a dismal view of total depravity because he assumed original sin is original guilt, and original guilt is to be rejected (p. 45). An unwarranted antithesis is presented in his use of A. T. Robertson, "'Grace' is God's part, 'faith' is ours," and the subsequent distinction between "initial faith" and "living faith" (p. 49). The church is said to be a New Testament body only (p. 33). A Christian hymn is found behind almost every majestic phrase in the New Testament (pp. 112-113). Such assertions, we feel, outweigh other good emphases, as for

example the high view of the corporate nature of the church shown under discussion of 4:13, "collective manhood, more than the maturity of each separate member of Christ's body" (p. 95).

— E. Clark Copeland

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP OF EVANGELICAL STUDENTS, edited by Douglas Johnson. The International Fellowship of Evangelical Students, Lausanne; distributed by The Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 39 Bedford Square, London. 1964, pp. 190, paper, 7s. 6d.

This informative history traces Christian student activity from the Cambridge "Germans" of the 1520's (so called because they were secretly reading the works of Luther) to the present international organization. Some of those who participated in such activity were John and Charles Wesley, George Whitfield, Thomas Chalmers, Alexander Duff, and on the American side, Robert Wilder and John R. Mott. The second part gives documentary evidence of the doctrines and policies of the I. F. E. S. and a brief history of Student Christian Unions in various countries around the world.

— E. Clark Copeland

CHARLES SIMEON: BIOGRAPHY OF A SANE SAINT, by Handley Maule, with a foreword by T. Dudley-Smith. The Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 39 Bedford Square, London, W.C. 1. 1965, pp. 192, 5s.

Here is a classic biography written by a great theologian of the last century of another a century earlier. Charles Simeon spent his life as minister of the Church of the Holy Trinity, Cambridge; but his influence reached Scotland and India through his preaching, correspondence, formation of the Church Missionary Society and his personal influence on such men as Henry Martyn, Christian biography should have a prominent place in church and home libraries.

— E. Clark Copeland

MORE PAGES FROM GOD'S CASE-BOOK, by John Hercus. The Inter-Varsity Fellowship, 39 Bedford Square, London, WC 1. 1965, pp. 200, paper, 5s.

This is an intriguing study of the answer given by God through Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel to the problem of the Christian living in a secular society. It is similar to the author's previous *PAGES FROM GOD'S CASE-BOOK*, character studies of Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Saul and Joseph. The author is a doctor, as indicated in his chapter titles: *Diagnosis Serious, Malignant Disease, Degenerative Disease, Prognosis Excellent*.

We are invited to study with the author "some accounts written by none other than God Himself" (p. 19). The records are, for him, historical,

but not just historical; the Bible is "the one single material source of knowledge which God, in His utterly sovereign will and providence, has given to man as the unchallengeable fount of spiritual truth." (p. 19).

This faith combined with a keen insight into human nature and the issues of our day as well as the historical situation of the Biblical accounts, a vivid imagination tied to reality, and the adept use of language, combine to make this most stimulating and thought provoking reading. It should be suggestive to the pastor as well as a "best reader" for the whole congregation.

— E. Clark Copeland

AMILLENNIALISM TODAY, by William E. Cox. Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Company, P. O. Box 185, Nutley, N. J. 07110. 1966, pp. 143, paper cover. \$2.50.

Mr. Cox is an ordained Baptist minister (although not serving as a minister at the present time) who has moved theologically from dispensationalism toward the Reformed faith (he still "disagrees with many of the presuppositions of covenant theology.") This shift has led him to write several booklets on the subject of eschatology. The present paperback seeks to present a positive exposition of amillennialism.

In a brief chapter on the history of amillennialism, Mr. Cox correctly points out that this view of the last things has been held by many Christian leaders since the apostolic period. In discussing its strength today he quotes Loraine Boettner to the effect that the Reformed Presbyterian Church is amillennial. Actually, the Reformed Presbyterian Church has wisely remained silent officially, and has allowed its members to differ on this difficult subject.

Mr. Cox rejects the charge that amillennarians spiritualize Scripture and shows that pre-, a-, and post-millennarians all spiritualize some passages and take others literally. The real hermeneutical problem is which passages are to be interpreted figuratively, rather than literally.

In a chapter on "The Church" the Christian Church is clearly shown to be the continuation of Old Testament Israel and is described in its two aspects, visible and invisible. Mr. Cox reflects his Baptist heritage in discussing the visible church only in terms of local congregations. No mention is made of the broader manifestations of the visible church in denominations.

Other major chapters in this work are entitled Eschatology, The Second Advent, Resurrection, The Judgment, and The Final State. There is much good material in this book and it is recommended. As with many of the Presbyterian & Reformed materials its list price is too high. However, the publisher often sells his books at considerable discount.

— David R. Armstrong

BIBLICAL STUDIES IN FINAL THINGS, by William E. Cox. Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Company, P.O. Box 185, Nutley, N.J. 07110. 1967, pp. 226, paper cover. \$3.50.

"This book has two paramount purposes: (1) to present from the Scriptures themselves, as accurately as possible, a clear arrangement of God's plans and program for the future; and (2) to help eradicate from our minds some things — held by many sincere people — which the Bible does not teach." Mr. Cox has lifted four of the key chapters from his book **Amillennialism Today** and has used them as a nucleus for this work. (Here too, one of his major concerns is to refute dispensationalism.) The additional chapters discuss the covenant, kingdom, tribulation, antichrist, and millennium. He also includes a separate discussion of Revelation 20. The book is a clear statement of the amillennial position and is recommended.

In his introduction Mr. Cox felt constrained to defend the infallibility of the Scriptures. In so doing, he went beyond what the facts warrant regarding the preservation of the Greek text. ". . . we further believe without apology that God has so protected the extant copies that we still have an infallible Bible when it is correctly translated." This position cannot be defended. However, he is more cautious in the body of his work. This volume is also overpriced.

— David R. Armstrong.

CONGO CRISIS, by Joseph T. Bayly, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1966, pp. 224. \$3.95. pp. 221. \$3.95.

This epoch of missionary activity is past history. However, it vividly portrays the great cost of the advancement of the Gospel message into the devil's strong hold.

The suffering endured, the bravery and faith evidenced by missionary and Congolese Christian alike will bring one up short and cause him to ponder the basis and strength of his own commitment to Christ.

This is a fine book for a church library or missionary study group.

— Marian M. Vos

FAITH ON TRIAL, by D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 49502, 1965, pp. 125, \$2.95.

Two words could well characterize this series of messages on Psalm 73: expository and practical. Dr. Lloyd-Jones treats his subject, the testing of faith, in an expository manner, dealing mainly with verses 1-2, 15-28 of this familiar and well-loved Psalm. It is not a critical treatment, nor is it an exegetical commentary; it is a series of expository sermons, preached by the author to his London congregation in recent years. And,

as with all good expository sermons, these are eminently practical in their applications.

This would be an excellent book to loan to some Christian friend, who like the Psalmist, is shaken to the roots by the mysteries of some of God's providential workings. (You might find yourself turning to it in dark hours too). For pastors and elders, here is an admirable specimen of how to use the Word of God skillfully in the care and cure of souls. It is a choice sample of pastoral theology at work through the preaching of the Word.

— Robert A. Milliken

PSALMS OF THE HEAVENS, EARTH AND SEA, by Kay Gudnason. W. A. Wilde Company, 10 Huron Drive, Natick, Mass. 01760. 1964, pp. 122. \$4.50.

In this book, the author has skillfully woven together various passages from the Psalms around the three themes of the heavens, earth and sea. A generous sprinkling of photographs depicting scenes that illustrate the Psalm texts enhance the attractive volume. For those who love the Psalms, take delight in the Creator's handiwork all around, and have a taste for good black and white photography this book will provide moments, or even hours, of meditative delight. The seascapes especially are outstanding. It would perhaps be ideal as an appreciation gift to some good friend.

— Robert A. Milliken

THE HOME FRONT OF JEWISH MISSIONS, by Albert Huisjen. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1962, pp. 222. \$3.95.

This book provides a comprehensive treatment of the problem and history of presenting the Gospel to Jews and winning them for Christ. The terrible scandal of "Christian" injustice, slander and persecution of the Jews throughout the Middle Ages is presented, and it is shown how this makes the task of presenting Christianity to Jews doubly difficult today. The book contains valuable material on modern and present-day efforts to present Christ to the Jews, and some practical advice on methods and approaches. The difficulties and obstacles are presented and discussed. This book is recommended for mission study projects.

— J. G. Vos

FROM DEATH TO LIFE THROUGH CHRIST, by Robert G. Lee. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1966, pp. 120. \$2.95.

This short volume contains six sermons by Robert G. Lee, a noted Southern Baptist preacher and teacher. They seem to have been published as preached so what they lack in form and style they gain by a pointed directness of speech. The reader may find the short jerky sentences somewhat displeasing.

The sermons are very practical, full of illustrations and information gathered obviously from a wide field of reading and experience. More than one-third of the book is devoted to the theme "If I were a Jew." Some of the material is irrelevant, but all of it is interesting.

—Adam Loughridge

VISION AND PROPHECY IN AMOS, by John D. W. Watts. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49502. 1958, pp. 90. \$3.00.

This brief work is a reproduction of some of Dr. Watts' lectures at the Baptist Theological Seminary in Zurich, Switzerland. It is a scholarly interpretation of a prophecy so relevant to our own time.

Dr. Watts in Chapter 1 deals with the nature of the prophetic ministry of Amos in the light of his denial to be "neither a prophet, nor the son of a prophet." He analyses briefly the visions that Amos saw, discriminating between "vision" and "word." He accepts the theory that there are in Amos two books in one, and he develops the assertion that in 4:12; 5:8; and 9:5, 6, are fragments of songs in praise of God the Creator, the raingiver, and the Judge of all the earth. His final chapter deals with eschatology in Amos.

In brief compass we have a thoughtful study of the prophet's life and ministry. The book is well indexed and there are excellent footnotes that introduce the student to a wide range of authorities.

— Adam Loughridge

IF I PERISH, I PERISH, by W. Ian Thomas. Zondervan Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1966, pp. 126. \$2.50.

This is not a commentary on the Book of Esther, but a series of pithy, practical talks on the Christian life as seen in Esther. The author does not claim to be an expositor of Scripture or an expert in homiletics, but he knows the Word and he knows the human heart, and with skill he applies the remedy to the need.

The theological content may be rather light for some readers, but the personal and practical application of truth is stimulating. The volume is a commendable interpretation of a somewhat neglected book.

— Adam Loughridge

PROCLAIMING THE NEW TESTAMENT: THE EPISTLES TO THE CORINTHIANS, by Julian C. McPheeters. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 49506. 1964, pp. 154. \$2.95.

The purpose of this series is to provide brief commentaries of a homiletical nature on the Books of the New Testament. It does not pro-

fess to compete with standard commentaries, but gives the historical setting, expository meaning, doctrinal value, practical aim and homiletical form of each N. T. Book. On these five general headings, the author has made a useful exposition of 1st and 2nd Corinthians.

The background to each chapter is briefly presented. A very helpful interpretation of the main Greek words is given. The section under study is briefly summarized in a practical theme, and while the homiletical method is not always well balanced, the truth is presented clearly and sensibly. A useful bibliography is appended.

— Adam Loughridge

MIRACLES — YESTERDAY AND TODAY, by B. B. Warfield. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49502. 1965, pp. 327. \$2.25.

This is a paper-back reissue of a somewhat forgotten book from the pen of this outstanding scholar in 1918. The volume was originally published under the title, "Counterfeit Miracles" and contained the Thomas Smyth Lectures delivered at Columbia Theological Seminary the previous year.

The reprint of such a noted work is very timely indeed in view of the growing and at times irrational interest in the subject that is commonly called "Faith Healing."

Dr. Warfield begins with a discussion of the "Charismata" in I Corinthians chapters 12 to 14. After a thoughtful evaluation of the teaching of Scripture, he reaches the conclusion that we have no sufficient reason to believe that any such gifts and powers were continued to the Church after the days of the Apostles. There follows an analysis of striking events recorded in patristic and medieval history, and the large place that ignorance and superstition have had in promoting these marvels. The Roman Catholic Church had made a flourishing business out of human frailty and susceptibility to the idea of miracle. Autosuggestion accounted for many so-called miracles, and many of the stories associated with Lourdes were ill-founded and based on a faulty concept of the nature and function of divine gifts.

Dr. Warfield, commenting on the normal suspicion shown by Protestants toward claims regarding miraculous powers, proceeds to discuss the activities of the Irvingites. Their excesses are considered in the light of trustworthy contemporary opinion, and this section contains numerous quotations from these authorities.

The book ends with an assessment of more recent claims for faith healing and the mind-cure processes propagated by Mary Baker Eddy, whose pitiable life he sums up in this way: "But Mrs. Eddy had no Lord to pray to, no faith in

which to appear before Him, and no hope in His almighty succour."

There is an appendix of almost 100 pages of excellent notes. This volume is warmly commended to readers as a reliable introduction to one of the burning questions of the day.

— Adam Loughridge

FAITH AND PHILOSOPHY, Edited by Alvin Plantinga. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49502. 1964, pp. 225. \$4.95.

The sub-title, *Philosophical Studies in Religion and Ethics*, explains the scope of this volume. The nine essays show the link between contemporary theology and philosophical thought. Two of the essays discuss faith and reason, two are concerned with the nature of God, and the remaining five deal more practically with Christian ethics and their relation to the Christian faith.

The nine writers who contribute to this well edited volume are men of wide experience as teachers of philosophy. For them the subject is not one of vague uncertain speculation that characterises some of the philosophers of a generation ago whose teachings contributed largely to moral and spiritual breakdowns in Europe. Their approach is God-centered and their application intensely practical.

A book like this would form an excellent basis for classroom studies. There is an increasing heed for a return to the study of Mental and Moral Philosophy in our schools. Spiritual giants in this sphere made a great contribution to the educational system in Scottish Universities in the past, and more of our modern colleges and universities would do well to find a place for such practical, biblical, ethical studies as are outlined here.

The book presents a clear course between a vague philosophical mysticism on the one hand and the all too common and equally dangerous pragmatism on the other. It should appeal to thoughtful readers as well as to teachers and students of philosophy.

— Adam Loughridge

THE CHURCH IN AN AGE OF REVOLUTION, by Alec. R. Vidler, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49502. 1962, pp. 287. \$5.00.

This is the fifth volume in the Pelican History of the Church. It deals with the Church in an age of Revolution from 1789 until the present day. The author has succeeded in handling a well-worn theme with a commendable degree of freshness.

The story begins with a survey of crumbling foundations in France and moves to Germany where the revolution is not political but theo-

gical. Crises and conflicts in England and Scotland are examined, and special note is taken of personalities like Coleridge and F. D. Maurice, Strauss and Ritschl, and, more recently, of Kierkegaard and Karl Barth.

Dr. Vidler makes a fair and honest attempt to evaluate the World Council of Churches. While approving of its aims, he is conscious of strong tensions at work in the movement. He is not sure whether William Temple's claim that the movement 'was the great new fact of our era' was a piece of philosophic insight or of wishful thinking.

Within its limits, the book makes a good contribution to contemporary historical writing.
— Adam Loughridge

JOHN BROWN OF HADDINGTON, by Robert McKenzie. The Banner of Truth Trust, 79b, Chiltern Street, London, W. 1, England. 1964, pp. 320. 6 shillings.

This is a paperback edition of the original work published in 1918. It is a delightful biography of one of Scotland's finest sons, and unfolds his life and work as student, soldier, teacher, pastor, professor and prolific writer. Apart from its fine record of a good life, the book gives an insight into the problems and struggles of 18th century Scotland and introduces us to the Church of Ralph and Ebenezer Erskine that made such an impact on the religious life not only of Scotland but also of America.

— Adam Loughridge

THE INTERPRETATION OF PROPHECY, by Patrick Fairbairn. Banner of Truth Trust, 78b, Chiltern Street, London, W. 1, England. 1964, pp. 532. \$4.00 or 25 shillings.

This is a welcome reprint of a monumental work first published in 1856. It is a timely contribution to literature on the subject, for there has scarcely been a time in the history of the

Christian Church when so much thought has been given to the subject of prophecy.

Fairbairn, as Principal of the Free Church of Scotland College in days of spiritual giants, and as a student of prophecy for more than 30 years, was well equipped to deal with this subject. The first part of the book, about 200 pages, deals with principles of study. The rest of the book applies these principles to the fulfilment of prophecy in the past and in the future. Special sections deal with the prophecy of Daniel, the Apocalypse, the doctrines of antichrist and the personal return of the Lord Jesus.

Readers expecting a simple interpretation of these doctrines may be disappointed in the book. It is a fact, however, that there is no easy approach to these subjects. Plausible answers have been given by many dispensationalists but this has usually involved a wresting of the Scriptures to fit the case. Dr. Fairbairn's approach is cautious, yet faithful. He expresses his conviction regarding the antichrist that the two principles in conflict are truth and error. It is therefore inadequate to limit the term 'Antichrist' to the Roman Church. The Eastern Church and much falsehood that poses as Protestantism in every age, comes under the same condemnation as Rome. All who are not in Christ are necessarily of Babylon and must share in her inheritance of evil and her ultimate doom.

On the subject of the return of Christ, he examines and rejects the view that the millenium will be introduced by the return of Christ. His assessment of Scripture points him to a post-millennial view of our Lord's return, but in developing this point he presents his argument in a gracious and thoughtful manner that claims our attention, even though it may not fully convince the reader in every part of its application.

The book is commended as a thorough introduction to the principles of biblical interpretation and merits close study.

— Adam Loughridge

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:

Please explain what Arminianism is, and its chief faults. I find several in our group are very hazy on it.

Answer:

The name "Arminianism" comes from **Armi-nius** which in turn is the Latinized form of the Dutch name Hermans or Hermansen. It has no

connection whatever with "Armenian," which is the name of a people and language of the Near East. The not uncommon confusion of "Arminian" with "Armenian" betrays lack of knowledge as to what Arminianism is. "Arminian" and "Arminianism" are theological terms; they denominate a particular interpretation of Christianity, or a particular system of theology. "Armenian," on the other hand, is an ethnological and linguistic term; it denominates a particular branch of the human race, and their language.

Jacobus Arminius was a Dutch theologian who was born in 1560 and died in 1609. However, Arminianism is really older than the time of Arminius. Under one name or another the basic ideas of Arminianism have existed through practically the entire history of the Christian Church. Thus, for example, the heresy of Pelagianism, which flourished in the fifth century after Christ, was basically similar to Arminianism. Similarly, the official theology of Roman Catholicism, which is based largely on the writings of Thomas Aquinas, includes features which resemble characteristic tenets of Arminianism. Throughout the history of Christianity the tendency to emphasize the freedom of man at the expense of the sovereignty of God has always been at work. Whenever this tendency has become strong and vocal, at any given time and place, heresy of the Pelagian-Arminian type has appeared. Moreover, it requires no special indoctrination to be an Arminian. The tendency toward Arminianism is always working in all of us, and is held in check only by the grace of God causing people to take the real sovereignty of God seriously and to make Scripture truly normative in their thinking. Apart from such special grace of God we all tend to be Arminians; that is, we tend to magnify our freedom and powers and to think of ourselves as more or less independent of God.

Arminianism was at first a reaction against the Reformed theology, or Calvinism. It took offense at several specific doctrines of the Reformed Faith. The early Dutch Arminians were called "Remonstrants" because they issued a manifesto called the Remonstrance objecting to these doctrines of Calvinism. To settle this controversy, the historic Synod of Dort was called in Holland. It met in the years 1618 and 1619, and was attended by delegates from several countries besides Holland. The Synod of Dort declared the doctrines of the Remonstrants to be heretical, and in opposition to them it issued the Canons of the Synod of Dort which affirmed the truth of the contrary doctrines of the Reformed Faith. Although condemned as a heresy, Arminianism continued to exist and to influence people. In a somewhat modified form it was held by John and Charles Wesley, the founders of the Methodist Church. Today in English-speaking countries the majority of Protestants who are not liberals are Arminian in their theology, though many of

them are members of officially Reformed or Calvinistic denominations. Many evangelical Christians who know nothing about Arminius and perhaps do not even know the term "Arminianism" are nevertheless Arminian in their thinking.

The five doctrines of the Reformed Faith to which the Arminians or Remonstrants objected were: 1. God's unconditional election of sinners unto salvation. 2. The total depravity of the unsaved sinner. 3. Particular atonement, or the doctrine that the intended purpose of Christ's atonement was to redeem the elect. 4. The efficacious character of the saving grace of God, which without fail brings about the salvation of the elect. 5. The perseverance of the saints, or the doctrine that the truly saved Christian cannot lose his salvation and perish eternally.

Over against these Reformed doctrines the Arminians held the contrary views, namely: 1. God's election of sinners to salvation is not absolute, but conditional, being based on God's knowing beforehand that they will repent and believe the Gospel. 2. The unsaved sinner is not totally depraved, but has only been morally weakened by sin. 3. Universal atonement, or the doctrine that the intended purpose of Christ's atonement was to redeem all mankind. 4. The grace of God is not in itself efficacious, but only persuasive, and does not certainly bring about the salvation of anyone. 5. Truly saved Christians can at any time totally fall away from grace and so perish eternally.

The unscriptural character of the Arminian system was somewhat modified by the Methodists under John Wesley and especially Richard Watson, the most prominent Methodist theologian. This modified form of Arminianism is called "Evangelical Arminianism" and is the type of Arminianism most often found today. Wesleyan or Evangelical Arminianism is more Biblical, but at the same time less consistent, than the older Arminianism of the Dutch Remonstrants. Evangelical Arminianism still differs in important respects from the consistent Biblical Christianity which we commonly call Calvinism or the Reformed Faith.

The teaching of the Bible on the subjects of divine sovereignty and human freedom is paradoxical. That is, it seems to involve a contradiction. The Bible teaches that God is sovereign and that He has, from all eternity, foreordained every event that comes to pass in the field of time and space. This foreordination includes the choice of particular persons to be heirs of eternal life, and the passing by of others who are to be condemned to eternal punishment on account of their own sins. At the same time the Bible teaches that man is a free agent and is responsible for the use or abuse of his freedom. It is his duty to repent and believe the Gospel, and

only by doing so can he receive salvation and eternal life. Here, then, is a paradox between divine sovereignty and human freedom. If God has foreordained all that comes to pass, including all my personal decisions, how can I really be free and how can I really be held responsible for my decisions? Am I not a mere robot or puppet manipulated by the eternal decrees of God?

Arminianism is a specific way of dealing with this and similar paradoxes of Scripture. It undertakes to solve the paradox by affirming the freedom and responsibility of man, and limiting the sovereignty of God to allow for this. Arminianism is, therefore, the belief that God is limited by man's free will. When they read in the Bible such statements as that of Ephesians 1:4 ("... he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love"), Arminians interpret this in such a way that they hold that the real choosing is done by man, not by God. They say that God, before the foundation of the world, chose unto eternal life those who he knew beforehand would by their own free will repent and believe on Christ. This amounts to saying that God, in eternity, elected those of whom He knew that they would elect themselves. It maintains that God's act of election is a mere ratifying of a decision made by man's free will. A well-known evangelist is quoted as saying, "God's hands are tied. He can only wait for you to make your decision." Thus the Arminian solves the paradox by affirming man's freedom and denying God's sovereignty.

Arminianism cannot do justice to Scripture. In interpreting the Bible in their own way, Arminians do violence to the words of Scripture. They cannot avoid doing this if they are to remain Arminians. They have to force unnatural meanings on statements of the Bible. For example, in Ephesians 1:11 we are told that Christians are "predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." Straightforwardly interpreted, this text certainly means that God's act of predestination was not determined by anything outside of God Himself, for God is said to "**work all things after the counsel of his own will.**" But Arminians interpret this to mean that Christians are "predestinated according to the eternally foreseen decisions of man's free will."

Again, Scripture teaches that Christians are "created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10). This verse certainly teaches that the Christian's good works (including, of course, all the good decisions of his will) were foreordained by God in order that the Christian should perform them. It certainly teaches that these good works are the **outcome** of God's foreordination and saving work in the Christian. Ar-

minians, however, are forced by their system to interpret this text to mean that the Christian's good works were foreordained by God **because He knew beforehand that the Christian would perform them.** Arminians are forced to maintain that one of those good works — the decision to accept Christ — is not the outcome, but **the basis or original source** of God's saving work in the Christian. They hold that God's eternal predestination is based upon God's knowing in advance that the sinner would (of his own free will) repent and believe.

Did God choose me because He foresaw that I would choose Him, or did I choose God because He first chose me? Which is prior, which is more basic, God's decision or man's? They cannot both be; one or the other must be the more ultimate and basic. Arminianism decides in favor of man's decision being the more basic, and is then forced to interpret Scripture all along the line in terms of this false principle. Arminianism is really rationalistic; it misuses Scripture because of what it regards as the demands of human reason. It cannot face a paradox or apparent contradiction and let it stand. At all costs the paradox must be solved, says the Arminian. So he solves it at the expense of the sovereignty of God, thus denying an important truth of Scripture, and at the same time involving himself in other difficulties that are even worse.

Calvinism faces the paradox between divine sovereignty and human freedom and allows it to stand unsolved, while it affirms **both** God's real sovereignty and man's true freedom. Calvinism leaves the paradox unsolved because it stands unsolved in the Bible itself. The Bible teaches both God's sovereignty and man's freedom. It does not tone down or "interpret" either of these in order to emphasize the other. When the issue is raised, as it is, for example, in Romans 9:19, the Bible replies, not by trying to solve the paradox and thus satisfy man's reason, but by reminding us that as creatures we have no right to pronounce judgment on the acts of our Creator: "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" (Rom. 9:20).

The relation between human freedom and divine sovereignty involves the relation between the finite and the Infinite, between time and eternity, between creature and Creator. It is bound to be veiled in mystery and cloaked with thick darkness; it cannot be fathomed by human reason; it is among the deep things of God. We should not expect to be able to explain it by human reason. We do not have to understand this mystery; all that is required of us is that we accept the truths of God's Word of faith. It is the strength, not the weakness, of Calvinism that

it refrains from attempting to solve this and similar paradoxes. In this matter the attitude of Calvinism is more **religious** than that of Arminianism. It does justice to Scripture, and it has a reverent attitude in refusing to tone down statements of the Bible because of the demands of human reason. The real Calvinist will never say "God's hands are tied." He is more moved by reverence for God and God's Word than by the insistent demand of sinful man's reason that all paradoxes be solved at any cost.

It is a mercy that many people are inconsistent. If Arminians were to follow their Arminian principles through with perfect logical consistency to the end of the road, they would finally have to say that man is his own saviour. But they do not and cannot say this because they are Christians, and the grace of God which is at work in them prevents them from being consistent Arminians. A really consistent Arminian would end up as a humanist. Actually, however, the Arminian continues as a Christian, in spite of holding a partly erroneous theology, because his happy inconsistency keeps him from following Arminianism all the way to the end of the road.

This inconsistency of Arminians is often quite conspicuous to others, though the Arminians themselves are, of course, unconscious of it. An evangelist will tell his audience over and over that everything depends on their own free will, even to the extent of saying that "God's hands are tied." Then before the "altar call" the same evangelist will pray earnestly that God will bring people to repentance and salvation. If God's hands are really tied, the prayer ought to be addressed to the audience, not to God, for how can a God whose hands are tied answer the prayer? But, you see, the evangelist does not **really** believe that God's hands are tied, though

he has just said they are. He really believes that in the end it depends on God's working after all, even though this is just the opposite of what he said a little while before in his sermon. In other words, there is something in the evangelist which cannot accept the Arminian statement that "God's hands are tied" and that convinces him deeply (though he is quite unaware of the inconsistency) that God's power, which can come in answer to prayer, can and does move the sinner to repentance and faith. Every Arminian, if he is really a Christian, is a Calvinist at heart. Men can be better than their creed, just as they can be worse than their creed.

What is the harm of Arminianism? Is this dispute a mere quarrel about words and terms? Is it merely "theological hair-splitting"? Does it make any real practical difference whether we are Calvinists or Arminians? Yes, it certainly does make a real, practical difference. This controversy affects the heart and core of our religious life. It deeply affects what we think of God and what we think of ourselves. "Arminianism tends to self-sufficiency; Augustinianism (Calvinism) promotes dependence upon God" (A. H. Strong, **Systematic Theology**, one volume edition, page 605). Strong also points out that Arminian converts say "I gave my heart to the Lord", while Augustinian (Reformed or Calvinistic) converts say, "The Holy Spirit convicted me of sin and renewed my heart." In short, Calvinism exalts God and humbles man, while Arminianism limits God and flatters man and his powers. We hope it has been made clear that the essential difference between Calvinism and Arminianism is not merely theological but religious in the deepest sense. It concerns man's attitude toward God, and his appraisal of himself in the light of God.

— J. G. Vos

Acknowledgements and Announcements

The manager of this magazine wishes to acknowledge, with hearty thanks, the following contributions to the cost of publishing the magazine which have been received since our last issue went to press:

March, 1967: No. 1778, \$8.50. No. 1779, \$1.00. No. 1780, \$20.00. No. 1781, \$2.00. No. 1782, \$3.50. No. 1783, \$15.30.

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May, 1967: No. 1789, \$5.00.

These generous contributions from friends indicate serious concern that **Blue Banner Faith** and

Life shall continue publication. These gifts are deeply appreciated. Less than half of the money needed is received from subscriptions and sales of back issues and reprints. For the rest, we are mostly dependent on contributions. You can help the world-wide ministry of this magazine by contributing as the Lord enables you.

Circulation of this Issue

1600 copies of this issue were printed. Of these, 1399 were immediately mailed out to readers, leaving 201 copies to fill future orders for back copies, for use as samples, etc. The distribution by countries was as follows:

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In writing for free copies of reprints, readers living in U.S.A. should send a 5 cent stamp for postage. Canadian and overseas readers need not send stamps.

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A Christian Introduction to Religions of the World. 78-page paperback book by the Editor. Published by Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy Street, S. E., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506. In Canada, available from G. R. Welch Co., Ltd., Toronto. Australia and New Zealand, S. John Bacon Publishing Company, Burwood. South Africa, Word of Life Publishers, Johannesburg. This material was published as a series of lessons in the July-September issue of 1964. Please do not send orders for this book to the Manager of this magazine. We do not have copies for sale. Order from Baker Book House or their agents as listed above.

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

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

PSALM 95

ALEXANDRIA, C. M.

William Arnold



1. O come and to Je - ho - vah sing; Let us our voi - ces raise;



In joy - ful songs let us the rock Of our sal - va - tion praise.



- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>2. Before His presence let us come
With praise and thankful voice;
Let us sing psalms to Him with grace;
With shouts let us rejoice.</p> | <p>6. Because He only is our God,
And we His chosen sheep,
The people of His pasturage
Whom His own hand will keep.</p> |
| <p>3. The Lord's a mighty God and King;
Above all gods He is.
The depths of earth are in His hand;
The mountain heights are His.</p> | <p>7. To-day if ye will hear His voice,
Then harden not your heart,
As when at Meribah they strove,
At Massah did depart.</p> |
| <p>4. To Him the spacious sea belongs;
'Twas made by His command;
And by the working of His hands
He formed the rising land.</p> | <p>8. Your fathers proved and tempted Me;
My working they beheld;
That generation was My grief;
They forty years rebelled.</p> |
| <p>5. O come and let us worship Him;
Let us with one accord
In presence of our Maker kneel,
And bow before the Lord.</p> | <p>9. I said, This people err in heart;
My ways they do not know;
To whom I swear in wrath that to
My rest they should not go.</p> |

(Reprinted from *The Book of Psalms with Music*. Copyright 1950 by the Trustees of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. Price of book (359 pages) is \$1.75 post-paid. Copies can be ordered from Chester R. Fox, Treasurer, 306 Empire Building, 537 Liberty Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15222, U.S.A.)



BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

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My Old Oak Praying Chair

By Esther Belle Heins

My furnishings are far from new,
And showing signs of wear;
There is one piece I'm prone to call
"My old oak praying chair."

For so it is within my home —
A sort of altar where
It is my privilege through Christ
To bring to God each care.

It's sturdy, big — so was the oak
When rooted deep in sod
It lifted then its leafy arms
In utter praise to God.

When dawn's long-fingered rays touch me,
I'm gently made aware
That God would have me meet with Him
Before my "praying chair."

What wondrous blessings we receive
From moments spent in prayer!
God draws me closer to His side
While at my "praying chair."

Already Paid

By Edna Janes Kayser

One time my heart was deeply grieved
I thought of sins of yesterday;
My sins like mountains rose up high,
With sins of now along the way.
These sins that weighed and pressed me down:
How hopelessly I sank in woe!
I grieved because I hurt dear God
Much more than I could ever know . . .
But hark! My Lord and King was near;
His tender heart was touched with love;
I felt His presence by my side
As glory poured from realms above!
His holy voice was sweet to hear,
A balm upon my aching heart —
He said, "They are already paid."
The evil one must now depart!
I felt so free like larks on wing,
No longer shackled, held by sin,
For Jesus filled my heart with peace —
His loveliness was deep within!

With Jesus All Day Long

By Edna Janes Kayser

(Acts 17:28)

One time at golden break of day
When sweet larks sing their roundelay,
My heart was still without a song
To lift my weary soul along . . .
I told my Lord there was no one
To give me hope till day was done;
No fellowship for me with them
To make life like a diadem —
No one who really understood,
To help me if they only would.
I heard a voice so pure, so sweet:
In love, I fell at Jesus' feet.
I knew that I was not alone.
The dearest voice that I have known —
For Jesus said, "Commune with Me."
My soul was then completely free!
He meant that I could find in Him
The fellowship that makes earth dim!
How sweet communion was just then,
Beyond the fellowship of men,
As I adored my living Lord
And prayed to Him in full accord —
I found in Christ the deeper part
To satisfy my aching heart!

Alabaster Love

By Edna Janes Kayser

" . . . there came a woman having an alabaster
box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and
she brake the box, and poured it on his head."
— Mark 14:3

Dear Lord, this broken heart of mine
Is just a box of Your design,
An alabaster one for You,
Your precious blood has made anew.
Like Mary broke and poured with care
Her tender love upon You there,
The fragrance of my broken heart
Emits a sweeter, purer part,
As I pour out myself in love
And know your presence from above.
For broken things give loveliness
More purely fair and always bless,
With rich aroma, rare delight —
And lift men's souls to greater height.
You let my heart be broken so
That spikenard might forever flow,
In streams upon Your thorn-pressed head —
Upon Your heart that cruelly bled!

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Receiving the Holy Spirit

By J. G. Vos

Scripture References: John 3:8; 15:26; 16:13, 14. Romans 8:8, 9.

I. The Mysterious Nature of Receiving the Holy Spirit.

God is incomprehensible — He cannot be understood or explained by created beings. The deep things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.

As the Holy Spirit is God, we cannot comprehend or explain Him. We can know truth about the Holy Spirit and we can experience His working but we cannot explain Him or reduce His working to laws and principles. This is just another way of saying that the Holy Spirit is divinely **supernatural** and therefore cannot be explained in terms of what is natural.

Receiving the Holy Spirit involves relationship and contact between the Absolute Personality and the conditioned personality — between the Infinite and the finite personality, between Creator and creature, between the eternal God and the human being who is a citizen of time and space. If we could understand such contact and such relationship we would be as great and wise as God Himself. Where we touch the infinite, eternal and absolute Being we are faced with mystery. Understanding falters before a Being who describes Himself as dwelling in thick darkness and also in unapproachable light.

Moreover the receiving of the Holy Spirit is mysterious because it is **deep**, below the threshold of man's consciousness. It takes place deep in the unconscious level, what the Bible calls "the heart," out of which are the issues of life, but of which we are not directly aware in our consciousness. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and is known not directly but by its effects. Much misunderstanding and error has doubtless arisen from Christians naively confusing and **receiving** of the Holy Spirit with their own conscious **awareness** of the results of their having received Him in the depths of their being. Probably most of those who speak confidently of having experienced what they call "a second work of grace" are confusing the awakening of awareness of the Holy Spirit's working with their original but unconscious receiving of the Holy Spirit in the depths of their heart.

The experience of awareness of the Holy Spirit's presence varies from person to person and is conditioned to some extent by various factors of religious background and training. The receiving of the Holy Spirit is the same for all Christians but the awakening of awareness may be different, depending on one's background and associations.

For this reason it is a serious mistake to make one person's subjective experience a standard or pattern for other persons. The person who has suddenly and dramatically become aware of the powerful working of the Holy Spirit in his heart and life is often prone to regard his own experience as a pattern which others must duplicate, and if they do not, to question the reality of their conversion to Christ.

Those whose conversion follows a **covenant** pattern will often have a different type of experience of the Holy Spirit's presence and power from those who, like Paul and the Protestant Reformers of the 16th century, experienced conversion to Christ in a drastic **crisis** pattern.

The real question is not when or how we become aware of the Holy Spirit's presence, but whether we have the fruit that demonstrates the reality of His indwelling.

II. The Christ-Connected Nature of Receiving the Holy Spirit.

It is a serious but common error to separate between Christ and the Holy Spirit as if receiving the Holy Spirit were a distinct experience apart from receiving Christ. Christ and the Holy Spirit are organically connected. To have Christ is to have the Holy Spirit.

A fanatical sect in Manchuria claimed to preach what they called "the Gospel of the Holy Spirit." They said that other Christians preached the Gospel of Christ, but they themselves preached the Gospel of the Holy Spirit, which they claimed was better than the Gospel of Christ.

There can of course be no such thing as a Gospel of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is sent by Christ, to apply the redemption purchased by Christ. The Holy Spirit is not the Second Adam who was crucified for our sins.

Emphasis on the Holy Spirit apart from em-

phasis on Jesus Christ as Saviour is always a wrong tendency and leads to error. The Holy Spirit does not bear witness about Himself, but about Christ.

Much talking about the Holy Spirit may be only fanaticism and spiritual pride. Much faith in and witness to Christ and much faithful obedience to His commands, is real evidence of the working of the Holy Spirit in a person's life.

There cannot be a Christian without the Holy Spirit. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his," says Paul in Romans 8:9. Therefore the Pentecostal tendency to classify Christians into two categories — those which have and those which have not received the Holy Spirit — is wrong and unscriptural.

Nowhere are we **commanded to receive the Holy Spirit** by a distinct act of faith, apart from coming to Jesus Christ by faith.

The words of Jesus to His disciples must be taken in their proper connection. Their case is not truly parallel to ours. They were in the interim period between the old and the new covenant — or more precisely, they were at the end of the old dispensation and on the verge of the new. They had an experience of the Holy Spirit as Old Testament believers, another experience during the ministry of Jesus and yet another on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out in New Covenant fullness.

Such a text as Luke 11:13 must be understood as meaning the gift of a greater fullness of the Spirit, not an original gift of the Holy Spirit to one who never had the Holy Spirit previously. No one could or would ask for the Holy Spirit unless he had the Holy Spirit already.

This is a paradox, like the question of which is prior, regeneration or faith. Logically regeneration is prior, but chronologically, in terms of living experience, regeneration and faith may be simultaneous.

Similarly to receive the Holy Spirit is logically prior to asking for the Holy Spirit. It is only by already having the Holy Spirit working in our heart that we know our need of the Holy Spirit and so ask for the Holy Spirit. But chronologically, in terms of living experience, receiving the Holy Spirit and asking for the Holy Spirit may be simultaneous or nearly so.

Let us not deny this paradox by a shallow rationalism. The apparent contradiction here is a part of the deep reality of spiritual life.

That all Christians already have the Holy Spirit is also proved by I Cor. 12:13. All baptized by one Spirit into one body — the body of Christ. Not some, but all — all who are Christians.

III. The Continuing Nature of Receiving the Holy Spirit.

Scripture does not teach a "second" work of grace, but it does teach a **continuing** work of grace, and this involves a greater and greater fullness of the Holy Spirit in the Christian's life.

So we are commanded to be filled with the Spirit. This does not mean that we receive more of the Holy Spirit, but that the Holy Spirit controls and transforms more of us. **The Holy Spirit** is not divisible, but our human personality can be increasingly emptied of sin and self and thus more and more filled with the Holy Spirit and His working.

Thus we are commanded also to grieve not and quench not the Holy Spirit.

How then are we to receive the Holy Spirit? Receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and believe on Him. Then in later life we are to seek more and more to be filled with the Spirit, to quench not the Spirit and to grieve not the Spirit. Incidentally, these commands also imply that the believer already has the Holy Spirit.

The late A. W. Tozer of the Christian and Missionary Alliance wrote an article which he entitled "The Confessions of a New Version Ad-dict."

He related how he had the habit of purchasing every new English version of the Bible and hoping for wonderful help in grasping the message of the Word of God.

Gradually it dawned on him, said Mr. Tozer, that what was really bothering him was not the occasional obscure expression or obsolete word in the King James Version, but rather the passages which were crystal clear and which he understood only too well, but was too sinfully stubborn to bend his neck to accept and obey. It was not the obscure passages in the Bible that bothered him but the clear and plain passages which demanded a crucifixion of self that his flesh resisted.

Similarly, we may say that what is needed in the church today is not some new and almost magical truth about the Holy Spirit which will suddenly revolutionize the church and its members. What we need is new faith in and **obedient submission** to the old, well-known truth about the Holy Spirit, set forth clearly and plainly in the Word of God and our subordinate church standards. The old truth is powerful and effective. Instead of seeking something strange and new, let us adhere to the faithful doctrine long confessed by the Church. What we lack is not **knowledge** about the Holy Spirit, but **willingness** to obey the precepts of the Word of God.

The Lord's Great Controversy

By the Rev. John C. Rankin

IX. The Conflict in the New Testament

The New Testament opens with the story of the advent of God's Son, the King of love, the Prince of Peace, the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Considered from the standpoint of the love of God in the gift of his Son and in view of the meekness and gentleness of Christ, it might be supposed that now, if ever, there would be an end of conflict and strife.

The fact of the matter, however, is completely otherwise, for Christ's life on earth was and ever remains the very heart and core of the Lord's great controversy. All the issues of truth and life were centered there. The life of Christ was the turning point in the tide of war. It was the decisive battle in God's own age long, holy warfare. Here as nowhere else before or since do we see not only God's infinitely kind and gracious condescension but also his absolute divisonism.

CHRIST'S CONFLICT IN HIS DAY

The conflict as it began anew in Jesus' day was primarily concerned with his Messiahship. At the heart of the issue, however, was the Messiahship itself as to its specific content and how it was to be construed. There is therefore the preliminary question concerning the content of the Messianic concept as it lies upon the pages of God's Word as of the time when Christ appeared.

This concept is contained in the promise of One who was to come. The promise began with our first parents and continued in the line of Seth, of Shem and then of Abraham. Rather obscure at first, it shone with increasing clearness as God proceeded to unfold his special redemptive revelation.

Men were always divided in relation to revealed religion. There were those who went their way in sin and unbelief and departure from God's Word. Others, however, believed and walked with God and put their trust in all the hope and promise of his Word. We think of Abraham of whom it was said that he "believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Gen. 15:16).

The promise in its original form was that the seed of the woman should crush the serpent's head (Gen. 3:15). To Abraham it was said that in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed (Gen. 12:1-3 and 22:15-18).

Age followed age as God's special revelation continued to unfold. Moses prophesied: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet

from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him shall ye hearken" (Deut. 18:15). To David it was revealed that a son and successor should be given unto him who should sit upon his throne forever (Ps. 89 and I Chron. 17:11-15).

And so we come to other prophecies such as we find in Isaiah: "Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." And this: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever" (Isa. 7:14 and 9:1-7).

In the course of time a whole body of prophecy comes into view. And in addition to promise and prediction there was also always prefiguration. The truth revealed was represented in the form of types and shadows all centering in the figure of the One who was to come.

Certainly he was to be a man, real man, and yet more than man for he would unite in his person the attributes of God and man. As the God-man he would execute a three-fold office; that of prophet, priest, and king. In fact he would be both priest and sacrifice, for the animal sacrifice itself was also typical. As priest he would offer himself as the one all-sufficient offering and sacrifice for sin. As a prophet he would declare all God's will concerning all things for his people. As king he would exercise absolute rule and authority and take his place as Lord and Savior of men.

But of course everything in its own order and all in God's own good time and way, not ours. And because God's way is not our way the people were mistaken in their hope and expectation of the Messiah when he came.

About the time that the light of God's new day began to dawn any one of the Jewish maidens of the day may have cherished the hope that she might be the one chosen of God to be the mother of Christ. But the Jewish people of the day were under a grievous misapprehension and misconception of what Christ was to be at his coming. The hope of Israel had taken a form and content far removed from what God himself had planned and purposed for it.

Attention centered on the coming One as a king, the Son of David and King of the Jews, to the neglect and disregard of all other elements and components of the prophecy. They were expectantly awaiting and eagerly desiring a king, and a King indeed Christ was to be. But what kind of King? And what else beside a King? And what first of all before exalted to his place as King of kings?

The Gospel story makes it perfectly clear that Christ should come first of all as the Lord and Savior and Redeemer; as the only Mediator between God and man. And, in so far as he was to be a king, it was to be spiritual — a Spiritual King in a spiritual kingdom.

And this is precisely how Christ's conflict came about. The kind of king the people had in mind was not God's kind. The kind of Messiah they envisaged was the kind their ancestors asked for in the day of the judges (I Sam. 8). It was the kind they knew, had known, and had always seen around them; indeed the kind they had over them at the time.

So the Messianic concept as it obtained in Jesus' day was far from being what it should have been. The true view, God's view, of the Christ was hidden from their eyes and lost to sight. No one, not even the fore-runner himself, had thought it through to a complete conclusion in keeping with the thought and will of God.

This only the coming One himself could do and we may well believe that it was not too easy for him in the circumstances, as the current misconception washed over him and beat upon his consciousness. That this is true may be seen from Satan's original approach to him in the temptation. Jesus had fasted forty days and forty nights, we are told, and was afterward an hungred. So the suggestion was to exercise the power of his Messianic Sonship to cater just a little to himself for his own welfare. "If thou be the Son of God," the adversary said, "command that these stones be made bread."

Bread was what men needed, what they wanted and the very essence of what they were looking for from their promised royal Deliverer and Benefactor. The suggestion was directly in line with the popular view which was that Christ would set up a kingdom to supplant all other and institute a new order in which there would always be plenty of all that all the nations of the earth are ever seeking.

But no: the King of Israel was not to be that kind of King. His kingdom would be spiritual, as spiritual as God himself in the Kingdom of the Spirit. It was a shrewd thrust on which hung all the issues of life and death, of time and eternity; but, standing on the threshold of his public life, the Man of Nazareth turned it back: "Man shall

not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

Jesus knew and understood the Scriptures and what it was which first of all he came to do. "I have a baptism to be baptized with;" he said, "and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." And: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness: and all these things shall be added unto you" (Lk. 12:50; Mt. 20:28 and Mt. 6:24:34).

We see, then, how in the first of the temptations the lines were drawn and we see the great issue of the day. Directly in line with the original suggestion were both of the other two temptations. Take your power, was the suggestion, and make a display before the people. Fall down and worship me, for I am really your world ruler, and I will resign in your favor and the wide world will be yours. What was the temptation except an insidious presentation of the current Messianic misconception of the Jewish people of that day?

What Think Ye of Christ?

How true it is that Jesus was not the people's kind of Christ! Involved in this, of course, is the fact that he was not their kind of man. In mental, moral and spiritual nature he was different, for he was perfection itself in every respect. In a world of sinners, he was sinlessness itself. He was "Jesus Christ, the Righteous."

All this and more, much more, was involved in the issue and the conflict; the mutual antagonism between him and contemporary unbelieving men, and should be dealt with thoroughly. We have chosen, however, to confine ourselves to the one aspect of the conflict, that concerned with his Messiahship. The conflict turned upon this particular subject of debate, the essential point at issue.

The Evidence for the False Conception

For all concerned; leaders, people, even the disciples themselves; there was the common background of current Jewish Messianic expectation. All children and youth of Jesus' day were no doubt educated in the Messianic promise and prediction. It was so in the home of Joseph and Mary as also in that of Zechariah and Elizabeth. Many hearts were longing, looking for the Christ.

Especially upon the preaching of John the Baptist with his call for preparation for the imminent advent of the kingdom and the King, the land was almost breathless with expectancy. But we cannot but observe the false concept of Messiahship prevalent among all classes.

(1) First of all there were the leaders; the

scribes and Pharisees, the priests, the Sadducees and temple rulers. Knowing, as we do, what they were, it is plain to see what their attitude would be when Messiah appeared. It is questionable whether they really wanted any Christ at all, least of all the kind the real Messiah proved to be. Certain it is they would not wish for the kind who would introduce himself and his program with an offensive action such as that of condemnation of their use of the temple for commercial purposes.

Proud, worldly, carnal-minded religious masqueraders that they were, they reacted with a deadly hatred and began to challenge his claims at every turn. "What sign shewest thou," they said, "seeing thou doest these things?" "By what authority doest thou these things, and who gave thee this authority?"

Their lordly insistence on "a sign from heaven," especially calculated to bring them into line, is sufficient proof of the falsity of their conception. So insistent in this demand were they that they carried it to the cross itself. "He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God." "If he be the King of Israel let him now come down from the cross and we will believe him" (Lk. 23:35 and Mt. 27:42). "Jesus of Nazareth" was not their kind of Christ. "Search and look," they said, "for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet."

(2) But if rejected by the leaders, it seemed at first as though he would be successful in gathering the people to him. For a time they responded to his preaching and especially his wonder-working with delight and pressed upon him to hear the Word and to be healed. As time passed, however, they became less and less disposed to ascribe to him the supreme tribute of Messiahship. They were divided among themselves as to how to account for him and a wide variety of opinions were entertained among them.

Obviously he was not the kind of king they wanted, for, after the feeding of the five thousand, they were of a mind "to come and take him by force to make him a king." Foiled in this attempt and finally convinced that he was not for them they fell away, "went back and walked no more with him." As the Savior neared the end of his public career both rulers and people were one in their rejection and for the same reason. Jesus of Nazareth was not their kind of Christ.

(3) What then of the Messianic concept as it lay in the minds of the disciples? John the Baptist was the first convert and others followed. They believed; and the mark of their distinction was that they accepted Jesus as the Christ. Thus they began to walk with him, to sit at his feet and learn of him so that, whether consciously or not, they were in process of indoctrination in

Jesus' own conception of who and what he was and came to do.

At the same time they were not at once completely dispossessed of the false view. The right concept was there present in mind and prevailed from the start, but the wrong was slow in yielding to it. In fact it persisted in their minds until the very day the Spirit came. The conflict which raged on the battlefield of the world was also going on in their own hearts. The work of the Holy Spirit in their hearts which moved them to their first response made them amenable to Jesus' concept and their attachment to him was unbreakable. So when the test came with its question, "Will ye also go away?" they were ready and the answer came: "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God" (Jo. 6:66-69). "Thou hast the words of eternal life." That shows how well and truly they were learning.

It is interesting to observe, however, how the false conception yet remained. John the Baptist himself began to doubt and sent his disciples to inquire: "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another" (Mt. 11:1-6)? Then there was Peter, who on the occasion of the great confession took the Master aside and sought to dissuade him from his mission: "Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee" (Mt. 16:21-23). This was none other than the voice of the false conception.

Even more revealing was the dispute which arose among the disciples as to which of them should be greatest in the kingdom of heaven. The first account we have of this was when Jesus was in the house at Capernaum when they had to confess to their dissension and he set a little child in their midst (Mk. 9:30-37). Luke seems to record another similar occurrence (Lk. 9:46-48).

Still more impressive is what happened along the way as Jesus with the twelve was on his way to the last days of his life among us in the flesh. The mother of James and John with her two sons came "desiring a certain thing of him." "Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom." This incensed the ten no end because it clashed with their ambitions. So again Jesus called a halt and took them aside in the way and went into special session with them (Mt. 20:20-28). Obviously the twelve were still expecting some great public demonstration in keeping with the popular conception.

Diametrically opposed to this ambition was the teaching: "he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Mt. 23:10-12). But what the disciples plainly had in mind was that the

actual inauguration of the King in his kingdom was yet forthcoming.

Sad to say this same strife yet continued even in the upper room (Lk. 22:24-30). And Judas, not Iscariot, was moved to ask: "How is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world" (Jo. 14:22)?

The last appearance of this concept in the thought of the disciples came with the last of the post-resurrection appearances only moments before the ascension: "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel" (Acts 1:6)?

Ten days later, with the coming of the promise of the Father, it breathed its last and passed from their minds never to return.

Pentecost was the final realization of Jesus' own conception of His kingdom. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit."

"For not with swords loud clashing
Nor roll of stirring drums,
But deeds of love and mercy
The heavenly kingdom comes."

(To be continued)

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 sacrifice of accuracy. Where possible the Westminster Shorter Catechism will be quoted.

MYSTERY. A truth which could never be discovered by human reason, but can be known only by special divine revelation (such as the truth stated in 1 Cor. 15:51).

NATURE. The orderly, uniform system of the universe, operating according to the law of cause and effect as ordained by God, against the background of which God's miraculous acts stand out in sharp contrast to the ordinary course of events.

NESTORIANISM. The ancient heresy which taught that in Christ there are not merely two natures, divine and human, but two persons, one divine, the other human.

NICOLAITANS. A sect of heretics mentioned in Rev. 2:6, 15, who taught that Christians are free to indulge in the lusts of the flesh.

OATH. "A lawful oath is a part of religious worship, wherein, upon just occasion, the person swearing solemnly calleth God to witness what he asserteth, or promiseth; and to judge him according to the truth or falsehood of what he sweareth" (*Westminster Confession of Faith*, XXII. 1).

ORDINANCES OF GOD. Those institutions or practices which are of divine authority in human society, such as the family, the church and the state; baptism; the Lord's Supper; church government and discipline; etc.

ORDINATION. The act of setting a person apart to office in the church by prayer and the laying on of hands. (The ordained officers of the New Testament Church are ministers (pastors, bishops or teaching elders), ruling elders, and deacons). According to the Presbyterian form of church government, ordination is the act of a "presbytery", or plurality of presbyters (teaching and ruling elders).

ORTHODOXY. Literally, "straight teaching"; that religious doctrine which conforms to a fixed and recognized standard. The true standard of orthodoxy is the Word of God, by which all teachings are to be tested and measured. Subordinate standards of orthodoxy, such as Confessions of Faith and Catechism, are valid and proper in so far as they are in accord with God's revelation, the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

Studies in the Epistle to the Hebrews

(Continued from last issue)

LESSON 8

THE DOCTRINE OF THE HEAVENLY HIGH PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST, 4:14 to 7:28, Continued.

(D) Reproof of the Readers for their Carnal State. 5:11-14.

At this point the writer of the Epistle turns aside from the subject of the high priesthood of

Christ, to reprove the persons to whom he is writing for their inexcusable religious stupidity and spiritual immaturity. He has many things to say about Melchizedek, that mysterious figure of the age of Abraham, but he feels frustrated in his effort to present this truth by the fact that those to whom he writes "are dull of hearing". The Greek indicates that they had actually DECREASED in their religious receptivity: "are BECOME dull of hearing". Any presentation of Christian truth which required thinking only wearied them; they were averse to any mental effort in connection with their religion. A presentation of anything beyond such elementary truths as are taught to children, left them either bored or baffled.

This spiritual deafness and incapacity was, moreover, quite without excuse. These people were not new Christians, who had only lately come in contact with the Gospel, or had made a profession of the Christian faith for but a short time. On the contrary, they had been church members for a long time — long enough that by the time of writing the Epistle they should have been able to instruct others in the truths of the Gospel. But instead of being able to teach others, they themselves were so ignorant of Christian truth that it was necessary for someone to start back at the kindergarten stage and teach THEM over again from the beginning "the first principles of the oracles of God"—the most simple and elementary truths, the very A-B-C's of the Christian religion. Anything beyond the A-B-C's they would immediately object to as "too deep".

Such was their spiritual and religious condition that they could not digest "strong meat" (ARV, "solid food"). They were incapable of receiving and profiting by such a presentation of Christian truth as would befit people who had been Christians for a long time. Religiously they were examples of arrested development; they were still in their infancy, and, being infants, had to have "milk" — such a simple presentation of Christian truth as should be required only for children and new converts from paganism.

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews faces this situation realistically. He deplors the fact that his readers "are dull of hearing" and have to be nourished with baby food as if they were little children. At the same time he points out to the readers that they ought not to feel complacent about their condition. The fact that they demanded religious "milk" was evidence that they were "babes" and "unskillful in the word of righteousness". He adds that the ideal for Christians "of full age" (those who have been Christians for some time) is to use "strong meat" (ARV, "solid food"). By experience and practice, they should be able to "discern both good and evil", and thus to advance beyond the state of religious infancy.

Milk is the ideal and perfect food for infants; for them, nothing can take its place. But if adults have to live on a diet of milk alone, there must be something seriously wrong with them. Certainly such could not be regarded as normal persons. If normal, they would thrive on solid food such as meat and vegetables. Some modern Christians are reluctant to be weaned from an all-milk diet, and immediately object to religious meat and vegetables as "too deep" or "too doctrinal". Those who are content to remain year after year in the state of religious infancy, without adding one new truth to their meager little stock of "essential truths" that they knew when they first became believers of Christ, need to be aroused from their "dull of hearing" condition, and to realize that there are vast treasures of truth in the Scriptures for those who are willing and eager to learn — truth which will build them up and make them happier, better Christians and much more effective citizens of the Kingdom of God.

(E) Exhortation not to Stop Short of True Saving Faith. 6:1-12.

6:1-3 shows the importance of pressing on to fuller knowledge. The first principles, five of which are mentioned in these verses, are important, and must be known and believed. But the Christian is not to be satisfied with these alone. He is to press on to fuller knowledge. This is what the Epistle proposes to do from this point.

Note that the "dead works" of 6:1 cannot mean non-saving works of law observance, but must mean works of law-transgression, as shown by the fact that they require to be repented of.

6:4-8 and 6:9-12 contrast two kinds of faith, or two kinds of religious experience. The kind of faith and experience set forth in 6:4-8 is a kind which does not include the new birth and the end of which is to be burned (verse 8). It is the religious experience of the unsaved or natural man who has heard the Gospel but is not born again. On the other hand, the experience set forth in 6:9-12 is one that accompanies salvation (verse 9). This whole passage may well be compared with the Parable of the Sower, Matt. 13: 5, 6, 20, 21. The experience described in 6:4-8 corresponds to the second kind of soil in the Parable of the Sower. These people have a certain kind of religious experience, but it does not go deep enough; it does not include real renewal and salvation. So in the end they fall away.

When we turn to the experience itself, we find five items listed. We shall take these up one by one.

1. They were once enlightened. This means that they heard the Gospel, as shown by many references in the Gospels and other parts of the New Testament. See Matt. 4:16; Luke 2:32; John 3:19; Acts 26:23; etc. This kind of enlightenment

comes to every individual who hears the Gospel message. It is external calling, a great benefit in itself.

2. They tasted the heavenly gift. Compare 2 Cor. 9:15. The heavenly gift is Christ, whose redemption is promised in the Gospel. The persons referred to had not only HEARD the Gospel; they had also come to see that it was good and true. They were convinced to its divine origin and character. To say that they "tasted" of the heavenly gift, by no means implies that they savingly appropriated it. It simply means that they came to know enough about it to realize that it was good and from God. For a person to be saved it is necessary not merely to "taste" (or "sample") but to eat and drink Christ's body and blood (John 6:52-58, especially verse 53, from which we note that except a man EAT AND DRINK, he has no life in himself.) Judging by this standard, those spoken of in Heb. 6:4 had no life in themselves, for they had not eaten and drunk, but merely "tasted"; their experience, which was valid enough as far as it went, stopped short of salvation.

3. They were made partakers of the Holy Spirit. This implies that the influences of the Holy Spirit had worked in their hearts, but it does not imply that the Holy Spirit took up His permanent dwelling there. Compare John 14:16, 17. The Spirit INDWELLS the saved person, but apart from this permanent indwelling, the Holy Spirit INFLUENCES all who hear the Gospel, and in fact even all who do not hear the Gospel, by his common (non-saving) operations. That the operations of the Holy Spirit are not confined to the elect, but include the world, is proved by John 16:8. To be a partaker of the Spirit is a very different matter from being sealed by the Spirit, indwelt by the Spirit, baptized by the Spirit, or filled with the Spirit. To be a partaker of the Spirit simply means to receive a portion of the Spirit's influence, which, in the case of the non-elect, can of course be successfully resisted.

4. They tasted the good word of God. Here again the comments on "tasted" under No. 2, above, are to the point. It means a sampling, sufficient to give an idea of the nature of the thing tasted, but not implying appropriation of that thing. The phrase "tasted the good word of God", being linked to "the powers of the age to come", probably refers to the future, meaning God's good word of promise concerning the future, that is, the Christian message of HOPE. Compare 1 Kings 8:56, "There failed not one word of all his good promise". So here the expression means that the persons spoken of had arrived at a certain appreciation of the nature of the Christian's hope for eternity, but it does not imply that they had themselves personally appropriated that hope. Compare Matt. 4:4, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word

that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Also Heb. 6:18, 19, which pictures God's oath and promise as that which guarantees our HOPE, which we have as an anchor of the soul. To "taste" or "sample" Christian hope is one thing; to appropriate it as the anchor of one's soul is quite another matter.

5. They tasted of the powers of the age to come. The age to come is the future age, of which the present life is in some sense a foretaste to the Christian. The age to come will be entirely supernatural in its structure and operation. Christ's resurrection body, the pattern of the Christian's resurrection body, was one that entirely transcended natural law in its character and operations. Hence the characteristic of the age or world to come is the SUPERNATURAL, the immediate power and agency of God; and of this supernatural power and glory, the resurrection of Christ was an example and a pledge. Not only so, but the MIRACLES of the apostolic age were samples of the powers of the age (or world) to come; and also the supernatural gifts of the Spirit, such as healing, speaking with tongues, etc., were samples of the powers of the age to come. The class of persons referred to in the passage we are considering, had witnessed some of these "powers" or mighty works, and WERE CONVINCED OF THEIR TRUTH AND REALITY, hence they had "tasted" them and so experienced their evidential value, so as to leave themselves entirely without excuse.

To summarize: We have considered five elements in the religious experience of the class of persons under discussion: 1. They were enlightened, had heard the Gospel; 2. They tasted of the heavenly gift; they became convinced that Christ is the Saviour of sinners; 3. They became partakers of the Holy Spirit; they were made recipients of His pleading and rebuking influences; 4. They tasted the good word of God; they became convinced of the truth of the Christian promise of eternal life; 5. They tasted the powers of the age to come; they witnessed supernatural events and had become convinced of their truth and reality.

None of the experiences described by any means implies being born again, true repentance, true saving faith, or divine election to eternal life. What these people had was a religious experience common to multitudes of people who are not really born again. That the experiences described do NOT pertain to salvation is proved also by the contrast contained in verse 9, "But, beloved, we are persuaded BETTER things of you, and things that accompany salvation . . .". If the things that accompany salvation are BETTER than the things described in 6:4-8, then the things described in 6:4-8 are NOT things that accompany salvation. They are a lower grade of religious experience, which may APPROACH salvation, but does not ACCOMPANY it.

6:6-8 speaks of falling away, and renewing again unto repentance. Those spoken of had a certain kind of religious experience, but it was only temporary, for they "fell away". Compare Luke 8:13, "fall away"; the Greek word is not the same, but the meaning is related. This "falling away" is characteristic of a faith which does not proceed from the new birth; it cannot stand the blasts of tribulation, but soon passes away.

Note that 6:6 states that it is IMPOSSIBLE to renew them again unto repentance. In what sense are we to understand this "impossible"? Of course all things are possible with God. On the other hand, it is always impossible for man to bring any person to repentance; that is the work of the Holy Spirit. Even those who have never fallen away can be brought to repentance only by the work of the Spirit in their hearts. We conclude, therefore, that "impossible" in this verse is to be taken in a qualified sense, as meaning "impossible in God's appointed scheme of dealings with men". Not that it is abstractly impossible to God, who is almighty, but that it is impossible without His repudiating His own plan of salvation and published Word.

Is the sin spoken of here the same as the sin against the Holy Spirit spoken of in Luke 12:10, and especially Mark 3:28, 29 ("eternal sin")? First we must note precisely what is the "unpardonable sin", and second, why it is unpardonable. It is a conscious, deliberate, permanent, resisting of the Holy Spirit, who finally forsakes the person, abandoning him to his own wickedness and stubbornness. It is unpardonable, not because of its enormity, nor because it is in itself greater than a sin against the Son of man, but because it results in the Holy Spirit leaving the person, so that repentance is thereafter impossible. With this in mind, we may say that the sin that is mentioned in Heb. 6:6 is an example of the "unpardonable sin", and that it is "impossible" to renew such people to repentance again, **SIMPLY BECAUSE THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS FOREVER LEFT THEM**. Bear in mind that such are **NOT ELECT PERSONS**, for if they were, the Spirit would never have wholly left them, nor could they have finally resisted and driven away the Spirit. Also we should bear in mind that not every person who hardens his heart in unbelief has committed the sin of Heb. 6:6. It speaks only of those who "fell away", that is, those who ultimately, finally, after deliberation, and once for all, forsook the doctrine of the Gospel of Christ. It is not a sin that could be committed in ignorance. It could only be done deliberately and against light. Those who have committed it know full well that they are without excuse. After committing this sin the person becomes utterly indifferent to spiritual things, has no qualms of conscience, and is utterly unconcerned about his soul's salvation. The reason for all this is simply that the Holy Spirit

has departed from him, and no longer influences or pleads with his soul.

Heb. 10:26, 27 is closely parallel to the passage we are now considering. Note that it says "if we sin wilfully"; this does not mean any ordinary sin, but a deliberate, considered rejection of Christianity; compare 10:29, "trodden under foot the Son of God". Such people have no more desire for salvation, but only a "certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation", 10:27. That the sin spoken of consists in final, deliberate rejection of Christianity is proved by 6:6b, which states that they "crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an OPEN shame." It is the deliberate, public, final rejection of the Gospel and of the Spirit's pleadings, after which repentance is impossible, that is spoken of.

6:7, 8 is an illustration, similar to the Parable of the Sower. The land which brings forth herbs, receives blessing from God; this corresponds to the third and fourth classes in the Parable of the Sower. The land which bears thorns and thistles, 6:8, corresponds to the first and second classes in the Parable of the Sower — those who have no faith, and those who have only temporary faith. (Note that the present passage and the Parable of the Sower are not entirely parallel; in the parable the third class bore thorns and thistles **AS WELL AS** good fruit, and was accepted; here in Hebrews, that which bears thorns and thistles is to be burned. So here in Hebrews the thorns and thistles are not something **IN ADDITION TO** a true faith, but something **IN PLACE OF** a true faith. In the parable, the thorns and thistles are the cares of this life, which choke the Word; here in Hebrews they are radical unbelief).

6:9 proves conclusively that the experience described in 6:4-8 is not an experience of salvation. In contrast to the temporary faith described in 6:4-8, we find true saving faith in 6:9-12. It is distinguished from temporary faith, not only by its permanence in spite of afflictions, but also by the fact that it brings forth good fruits, namely, love to God (6:10), ministering to the saints (6:10b), diligence (6:11) and patience (6:12). Verse 12 is in direct contrast to verse 8; the two verses set forth the final destinies of two different kinds of people; of one kind, the destiny is "to be burned", of the other, the destiny is "to inherit the promises".

Questions:

1. Why did the writer of the Epistle feel frustrated in his effort to present Christian truth to the readers of the Epistle?
2. What does 5:11-14 show concerning the religious condition of the readers?
3. How long had the readers already been Christians?

4. How much progress ought they to have made, and how much had they actually made, since they became Christians?

5. What is the character of a Christian who continues to require a diet of nothing but "milk"?

6. What are the benefits of a diet of religious "solid food"?

7. What contrast is presented in 6:4-8 and 6:9-12?

8. What kind of religious experience is described in 6:4-8?

9. What is the meaning of "were once enlightened" in 6:4?

10. What is meant by "tasting of the heavenly gift" in 6:4?

11. What is the meaning of "were made partakers of the Holy Spirit" in 6:4?

12. What is the meaning of "tasted the good word of God" in 6:5?

13. What is the meaning of "tasted the powers of the age (world) to come" in 6:5?

14. How does 6:9 show that the experience described in 6:4-8 does not pertain to salvation?

15. What is meant in 6:6 by the statement that it is impossible to renew such people again to repentance?

16. What is the nature of the "unpardonable sin", and why is it unpardonable?

17. What does the second part of 6:6 ("they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame") show concerning the nature of the sin spoken of?

18. What are the points of similarity and difference between 6:7, 8 and the Parable of the Sower (Matt. 13:5, 6, 20, 21)?

19. What kind of faith and religious experience is described in 6:9:12?

20. How is the faith in 6:9:12 shown to be true, saving faith? What kind of fruits does it produce?

LESSON 9

THE DOCTRINE OF THE HEAVENLY HIGH PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST. 4:14 to 7:28, Continued.

(F) God's Promise and Oath Guarantee Christ's Priesthood for us Within the Veil. 6:13-20.

1. The nature and purpose of an oath. This is stated in 6:16. As to the nature of an oath, it is "by the greater", that is, it consists in an appeal to a higher person or power to witness that the statement made is true, and a real oath is always an appeal to the Deity to witness to the truth of the statement made. For this reason an atheist or a pantheist cannot really swear an oath, for a person who does not believe in a personal God cannot call that God to witness to the truth of his words.

As to the purpose of an oath, its purpose is to put an end to all dispute by the certain confirmation of a matter. A sworn statement is accepted as true unless and until proved by evidence to be false. An oath may be for confirming a STATEMENT OF FACT, or it may be for confirmation of a PROMISE OF FUTURE ACTION, as an official's oath of office. In either case, its purpose is the attainment of certainty.

2. God's oath and promise to Abraham as an example. This is contained in 6:13-15. The reference is to Gen. 22:16-18. God made three great promises to Abraham: first, that he should have an innumerable posterity; second, that his seed should possess the gate of his enemies; and third, that in his seed should all the nations of the earth be blessed. These three promises were made to Abraham on more than one occasion, in

substantially the same form; but on the occasion recorded in Gen. 22:16-18, they were CONFIRMED BY AN OATH; so we read, "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord . . .". God's promise alone would be sufficient and reliable, but for the further strengthening of Abraham's faith, God added the oath to the promise. Thus encouraged, Abraham not only believed God, but also PATIENTLY ENDURED, 6:15, and so obtained the promise, that is, obtained the thing promised. We should note, however, that none of the promises was fulfilled during Abraham's lifetime. It was over 400 years before the first two promises were fulfilled, and almost 2,000 years before the third promise began to be fulfilled. Yet we read that Abraham "patiently endured" and so obtained the promise. In this respect he serves as a pattern and example of truth faith.

3. God's oath and promise concerning Christ's priesthood. "Wherein God . . . confirmed it by an oath", 6:17. The oath referred to is the one stated in Psalm 110:4, "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent: Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek", and mentioned again in Heb. 7:21. The purpose of this oath was to confirm THE IMMUTABILITY OF GOD'S COUNSEL (concerning Christ's priesthood) to the heirs of the promise (that is, the heirs of the promise made to Abraham). So in addition to God's promise or pledged word, which of itself should be sufficient to a believer, God gave the additional assurance of an oath, in order

"more abundantly to show" to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of His plans and purposes. This idea of immutability is contained in the actual words of Psalm 110:4. "The Lord hath sworn, AND WILL NOT REPENT". So Christ's heavenly high priesthood is guaranteed to the believer by this double and infallible assurance, "in which it is impossible for God to lie". Of course it is always impossible for God to lie, oath or no oath, but the oath and promise render the believer certain of this impossibility.

4. Christ's heavenly priesthood the Christian's encouragement. 6:18-20. The purpose of the oath and promise was to give the believer "a strong consolation" (ARV, "a strong encouragement"). The believer has "fled for refuge", as from a shipwreck, or as to one of the cities of refuge (Num. 35:6). "To lay hold upon the hope", means to grasp the hope as an object to preserve one from sinking.

In the following portion we find two figures beautifully combined, namely, the figure of the anchor and the figure of the tabernacle.

In the first figure, the soul is the ship, the world is the sea, the bliss beyond the world is the distant shore, hope resting on faith is the anchor which prevents the soul from being tossed to and fro; faith based on the encouraging consolation through the promise and oath, is the chain or cable connecting the ship to the anchor.

In the second figure, the tabernacle is in view. The world is the fore-court, heaven is the holy of holies, within the veil, Christ is the high priest going before us, as our representative, so as to enable us after Him, and through Him, to enter the realm within the veil.

We should note the meaning of the word "hope" in the Bible. It is used somewhat differently from the common modern usage. We often use the word "hope" to express a mere WISH or POSSIBILITY, for example, a farmer plants seed, and hopes to get a good harvest; we plan a trip, and hope for pleasant weather. But in the Bible where "hope" is used in the religious sense, it means not a mere wish or possibility, but a

certainty. Christian hope is just as sure and certain as Christian faith; the difference is, that hope deals with the future.

6:19, as the anchor goes below the water and grips the unseen sea bottom, so our hope goes beyond the world of time and space, and grips the inner reality of heaven.

Questions:

1. What is the nature of an oath?
2. Why cannot an atheist or a pantheist really swear an oath?
3. What is the purpose of an oath?
4. What three great promises were made to Abraham?
5. How long after Abraham's time were these promises fulfilled?
6. Why did God confirm the promises to Abraham with an oath?
7. How does Abraham serve as a pattern of truth faith?
8. What oath of God is referred to in 6:17? Where in the Old Testament is it mentioned?
9. What was the purpose of this oath referred to in 6:17?
10. What is the meaning of "a strong consolation" in 6:18?
11. What two figures of speech are combined in 6:19, 20?
12. What is the meaning of hope as the anchor of the soul?
13. What is the meaning of hope entering within the veil?
14. Why is Jesus called our "forerunner" in 6:20?
15. What is the difference between "hope" in the Bible sense and the common modern usage of the word "hope"?

LESSON 10

THE DOCTRINE OF THE HEAVENLY HIGH PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST. 4:14 to 7:28, Continued.

(G) Christ's Priesthood Higher than that of Aaron. 7:1-28.

1. Melchizedek a Type of Christ, 7:1-3. Melchizedek is mentioned in the Bible, outside of the Epistle to the Hebrews, only twice, Gen. 14:18 and Psalm 110:4. He was king of Salem, that is, king of Jerusalem. His name "Melchizedek" means "king of righteousness"; his office, "king of Salem", means "king of peace". The state-

ment of 7:3 that he was without father, mother, beginning of days, end of life, etc., means of course that these facts about him are not RECORDED in Scripture. Being a human being, he doubtless was born, and also died. But these facts about him not being recorded in the Bible, he stands in the pages of Scripture as the type of ETERNAL PRIESTHOOD, and also (being both king and priest in one person) the type of Christ,

who combines in Himself the kingly and priestly offices. Among the people of Israel, kingship and priesthood were always distinct. Israel never had a king who was at the same time a priest. But Melchizedek, who was not an Israelite, combined these two offices in himself.

2. Melchizedek's priesthood higher than Aaron's, 7:4-10. The argument here is very closely reasoned, as follows: (1) Abraham gave tithes to Melchizedek. (2) The Levitical priests take tithes of their brethren, according to the Law, though these brethren themselves are descendants of Abraham. (3) Melchizedek, who was not descended from Abraham, received tithes from Abraham, and blessed Abraham. (4) It is a recognized principle that he who blesses is greater than he who receives the blessing; therefore Melchizedek was greater than Abraham. (5) The Levitical priests, though they receive tithes, nevertheless eventually died; but Melchizedek, as a type of eternal life, received tithes and "LIVETH", therefore his priesthood is higher than that of Aaron. (6) Through Abraham, Levi himself paid tithes to Melchizedek, for Abraham represented his posterity in the act of paying tithes.

We have thus three proofs that Melchizedek's priesthood is higher than Aaron's priesthood, as follows:

(1) Through Abraham, Melchizedek blessed Levi; therefore Melchizedek was greater than Levi.

(2) The Levitical priests died, but Melchizedek "liveth".

(3) Through Abraham, Levi paid tithes to Melchizedek, thus recognizing the latter's superiority.

3. The Levitical priesthood made nothing perfect, 7:11-22. Note here the following details: (1) The prophecy that another priest should arise, after the order of Melchizedek (Psalm 110:4), demonstrates the inadequacy of the Levitical priesthood, 7:11. (2) The change of priesthood, prophesied in Psalm 110:4, involves also a change of the law, that is, a change of dispensation, and of the form of God's dealings with His people, 7:12. (3) If Christ is a priest at all, He must be a priest after the order of Melchizedek, for He is of the tribe of Judah, not of the tribe of Levi, hence he could not LITERALLY be a Levitical priest, though of course He could be the fulfillment of the type of the Aaronic high priest, 7:13, 14 (4) The prophecy of Psalm 110:4 must have the meaning explained above, 7:15. Verse 16 is a sharp contrast between Christ and the Levitical priests; "the power of an endless life" is contrasted with "the law of a carnal commandment". (5) The Levitical priesthood made nothing perfect, but the priesthood of Christ is a better hope, by which we draw near to God, 7:18, 19. (6) The Levitical priests were constituted

without an oath, but Christ WITH an oath, therefore His priesthood is superior to theirs in efficacy, 7:20-22. (7) Conclusion: "By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament"; ARV, "By so much also hath Jesus become the surety of a better covenant", 7:22.

4. The Aaronic priests died, but Christ liveth for ever, 7:23-28. The Levitical priests were many in number, because by death they were hindered from continuing, 7:23. Christ, the anti-type of Melchizedek's priesthood, abideth for ever, and so has His priesthood unchangeable. This is the final proof that Christ's priesthood excels that of Aaron. Therefore He is able to save to the uttermost (uttermost limit of time) those who come to God through Him, 7:25. This is the practical significance of Melchizedek's priesthood as fulfilled in Christ.

Verses 26-28 are a summary of the doctrine of Christ's priesthood, before the Epistle leaves this subject and turns to another matter. Verse 26 stresses the HOLINESS and IMMEASURABLE EXALTATION of Christ. Verse 27 emphasizes the sufficiency and finality of His sacrifice: "once" (ARV, "once for all"). Verse 28 again contrasts Christ with the Levitical priests. They were "men", that is, MERE men; Christ is "a Son", that is, God-man. They were appointed by the Law; Christ was appointed by an oath, which was AFTER the law (in David's time). They were persons "having infirmity", that is, original and actual sin; Christ is "perfected for evermore" (King James Version, "consecrated for evermore", that is, for ever free from all contamination of sin, as had been asserted in 7:26a.

It has been abundantly shown that Christ's priestly office is not merely the antitype or fulfillment of the Levitical priesthood, but also far excelled that priesthood in every way. The Levitical priests (in and of themselves) made nothing perfect; Christ saves to the uttermost all beneficiaries of His priestly mediation.

The following section, 8:1-5, forms a connecting link between the doctrine of Christ's priesthood and that of the New Covenant, which is about to be discussed. It is precisely because of Christ's heavenly high priesthood that He could be the Mediator of a new and better Covenant.

Questions:

1. What is meant by saying that Melchizedek was a type of Christ?
2. What is the meaning of the title "king of Salem"?
3. What is the translation of the name "Melchizedek"?
4. What is the meaning of the statement of

7:3 that Melchizedek was "without father, without mother, without descent", etc.?

5. Of what kind of priesthood was Melchizedek a type?

6. What two offices did Melchizedek hold, and what does this show concerning Christ?

7. What three arguments does the Epistle give to prove that Melchizedek's priesthood is higher than that of Aaron?

8. What does Psalm 110:4 show concerning the Levitical priesthood?

9. Why could not Christ be literally a priest after the order of Aaron?

10. What contrast between Christ and the Levitical priests is stated in 7:16?

11. How does the fact that Christ was appointed priest with an oath show Him to be superior to the Levitical priests?

12. How does the fact that the Levitical priests were "many" (7:23) show their priesthood to be inferior to that of Christ?

13. Why is Christ able to save to the uttermost those that come to God by Him?

14. What two truths concerning Christ are stressed in 7:26?

15. What truth concerning Christ's sacrifice is brought out in 7:27?

LESSON 11

THE NEW COVENANT INSTITUTED BY CHRIST IS SUPERIOR TO THE OLD COVENANT.

8:1 to 10:18

(A) Christ's Priestly Ministry Heavenly, not Earthly; in the Sphere of Reality, not that of Shadows, 8:1-5.

8:1-5, while still dealing with Christ's priesthood, nevertheless belongs to the new section of the Epistle, for it forms a part of the argument to demonstrate the superiority of the new covenant over the old. Verse 1 summarizes the preceding section on Christ's priesthood: "We have such a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." Verse 2 goes on to enlarge on this idea. Christ is "a minister of the sanctuary" — but WHAT sanctuary? The sanctuary of the "true tabernacle" — the tabernacle "which the Lord pitched, and not man". This is the first introduction of this idea in the Epistle. The tabernacle pitched by man, in the days of Moses, was merely a copy or replica of the "true tabernacle", which is in heaven. (Note that the tabernacle, not the temple, is spoken of).

Verse 3 states a general principle: every high priest must offer both gifts and sacrifices. From this principle it draws an inference: since Christ is a high priest, He too must offer something. Verse 4 goes on to explain that His offering is not parallel to or coordinate with those of the Levitical priests: "For if he were on earth, he would not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law." Note that this verse does not deny that Christ was a priest while He was on earth; it merely denies that while on earth He was a priest to "offer gifts according to the law"; that is, it denies that He was a member of the Levitical priesthood. Heb. 7:27 plainly teaches that Christ WAS a priest during His earthly ministry. 8:4 however means that if Christ were on earth at the time of writing the Epistle, He would not be a priest, since there already were plenty of earthly priests. 8:5 expands the

doctrine that the earthly tabernacle was a copy or replica of the heavenly tabernacle, the real tabernacle pitched in heaven by God. The pattern was revealed to Moses in the mount.

(B) Christ the Mediator of a New and Better Covenant, as Prophesied of Old. 8:6-13.

The Epistle to the Hebrews is the only New Testament book in which the idea of the covenant occurs with prominence, though of course it is presupposed in every chapter of the New Testament. Christ spoke of a covenant only in connection with the Lord's Supper. The following references occur in Paul's Epistles: Rom. 9:4; 11:27; Gal. 3:15-17; 4:24; 2 Cor. 3:6; Eph. 2:12. Compare Luke 1:72; Acts 3:35; 7:28; Rev. 11:19. In Hebrews the term occurs 17 times, though 6 of these are translated as "testament" by the King James Version. In the Old Testament the "covenant" idea is extremely prominent; in the New Testament, the terms "Church" and "Kingdom" become more prominent, while "covenant" occurs less frequently. But in the Epistle to the Hebrews the covenant idea is very important.

8:6 affirms Christ's ministry to be more excellent than that of the Levitical priests, because He is the Mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. This is the general truth, which the rest of the chapter undertakes to demonstrate. 8:7 affirms that the fact that the Old Testament prophesied that there would be a second covenant, shows that the first (or "former") covenant was imperfect or inadequate. This is a repetition of the argument of 7:11, which was there applied to the priesthood, but here to the covenant. If a new covenant is predicted, this implies that the old was not satisfactory, that it was inadequate. But 8:8 goes on to state that it is a fact that a new covenant had

been predicted, and therefore "fault" was found with the old covenant.

Verses 8b-12 are a quotation from Jer. 31:31-34. In the context in Jeremiah the prophecy is closely connected with the return of the people of Judah from their captivity in Babylon. The reason for this can easily be discerned. The great purpose of the return from Babylon was in order that the Messiah might be born in Palestine, according to the prophesied plan of God. The birth of the Messiah, of course, involved the establishment of the new covenant. So the prophecy of the new covenant in Jeremiah 31 was in exactly the proper place. Lest any one err by supposing that the prophecy of Jer. 31:31-34 referred exclusively to the time after the second advent of Christ, it is cited in Hebrews 8 as already fulfilled, at least in part. Concerning this passage we may note the following facts:

(1) The two covenants contrasted are the Sinaitic (8:9) and that of the Christian dispensation; in the language of the Reformed theology, these are the old dispensation of the Covenant of Grace and the new dispensation of the Covenant of Grace.

(2) The "new covenant" spoken of is the one which was established by Jesus Christ at the time of the institution of the Lord's Supper, Luke 22:20.

(3) Therefore the "Israel" and "Judah" referred to in Heb. 8:8, 10 and Jer. 31:31, 33, are CONTINUOUS AND IDENTICAL with the Christian Church of which the Lord's Supper is the highest privilege and most prominent ordinance. The modern "dispensational" distinction between "promises made to Israel" and "promises made to the Church" is a false distinction. The Scofield Reference Bible, note on Jer. 30:1, states that "These chapters constitute a kind of summary of prophecy concerning Israel as a nation . . ." (page 804). We believe that this teaching of modern dispensationalism is erroneous.

(4) The new covenant is characterized by a greater degree of SPIRITUALITY than the old covenant, 8:10; compare John 4:23, 24. Under the old covenant the law of God was written on tables of stone; under the new covenant the law of God is written on the hearts of His people.

(5) The new covenant is characterized by a greater degree of UNIVERSALITY than the old covenant, 8:11. The words of this verse will of course not be completely fulfilled, in their absolute sense, until the eternal state after the second advent of Christ. But they have a partial and relative fulfilment even today. Under the old covenant God's saving grace was confined to the one nation of Israel (John 4:22). Outside of this narrow sphere, God's saving grace was withheld from the children of men (Rom. 1:24, 26, 28). But under the new covenant the Gospel is universal, to be preached to all nations, and it breaks through

every barrier of class, race, language and nationality.

(6) The new covenant differs from the old covenant in a greater freedom of forgiveness of sins, 8:12. Since sins forgiven are forgiven, and there can be no middle ground between sins forgiven and sins not forgiven, and since it is an undoubted fact that the sins of Old Testament believers were forgiven (Psalm 32:1, 2), we must therefore understand Heb. 8:12 in the subjective sense of a great degree of CONSCIOUSNESS or ASSURANCE of the forgiveness of sins, and greater peace and joy in the believer's heart because of the forgiveness of sins. (See the Westminster Confession of Faith, Chap. XX, Sec. 1). The Old Testament believer's sins were forgiven, objectively in God's sight, but he did not ordinarily have the same fulness of assurance and joyous consciousness of the forgiveness of his sins that the Christian believer is privileged to have.

(7) The old covenant itself professed to be only temporary. The great error of the Jews, in the time of Christ and today, consisted in regarding the institutions of the Old Testament as permanent, as if God had intended them to last until the end of the world. It was prophesied long ago, in the Old Testament, that there would some day be a NEW covenant, Jer. 31:31, Heb. 8:8, 13. The mention of something "new" implies the correlative existence of something "old". This is quite plain from Heb. 8:13. But if the former covenant is to be regarded as "old", then it must also be regarded as TEMPORARY, and therefore to be in due time superseded by a new and better covenant.

We have shown above three particulars in which the new covenant is superior to the Old covenant (1. More spiritual. 2. More universal. 3. Fuller and freer forgiveness of sins). These are the "better promises" of 8:6b. Since the new covenant involves these "better promises", it is a "better covenant", 8:6b, of which Christ is the Mediator. This is the truth which this section of the Epistle undertook to prove.

Questions:

1. What is "the true tabernacle" and who pitched it?
2. What general principle is stated in 8:3?
3. What pattern was shown to Moses in the mount?
4. How many times does the Greek word for "covenant" occur in the Epistle to Hebrews? How many of these does the King James Version translate by "covenant", and how many by "testament"?
5. What truth concerning Christ is laid down in 8:6?

6. What is implied concerning the old covenant, by the fact that the Old Testament itself predicts the coming of a new covenant?

7. From what book and chapter of the Old Testament are 8:8b-12 quoted?

8. What is the connection between Jeremiah's prophecy of the new covenant, and the return of the people of Judah from Babylon?

9. What two covenants are contrasted in 8:8-12? What are these two covenants called in the language of theology?

10. When and by whom was the "new covenant" established?

11. Why is it not correct to regard the promises of Jer. 31:31-34 (and Heb. 8:8-12) as "promises to Israel, not to the Church"?

12. How does 8:10 show that the new covenant is more spiritual than the old covenant?

13. What is meant by saying that the new covenant is more universal than the old covenant?

14. In what respect does the new covenant provide greater freedom of forgiveness of sins than the old covenant?

15. What is the great error of the Jews, ancient and modern, with reference to the institutions of the old Testament?

LESSON 12

THE NEW COVENANT INSTITUTED BY CHRIST IS SUPERIOR TO THE OLD COVENANT. 8:1 to 10:18, Continued.

(C) The Former Covenant only Temporary, Unable to Perfect the Worshiper, and it Prefigured Christ, 9:1-10.

9:1-5 is a brief statement of the ritual worship of the old covenant. The sanctuary of the old covenant is called a "worldly" sanctuary (Greek, "kosmikón", "of this world"), 9:1, as over against the heavenly sanctuary of which it was a replica. 9:2 speaks of the holy place; 9:3 of the holy of holies, behind the veil or curtain; 9:4 of the objects pertaining to the holy of holies. None of the objects mentioned existed in the time of the apostles, when the Epistle to the Hebrews was written. 9:5b indicates that there is more symbolism involved in the various objects mentioned than the present chapter undertakes to discuss. 9:6, the services "continually" of the holy place; 9:7, the service "once every year" in the holy of holies. 9:8 gives the religious meaning of the restrictions placed on entrance into the holy of holies: "the way into the (heavenly) holiest of all was not yet made manifest . . .". 9:9 gives the real significance of the earthly tabernacle: "a figure for the time then present"; the sacrifices were ceremonial, and unable of themselves to perfect the worshiper "as pertaining to the conscience". That is, the believer's faith could not rest in them as terminal points, but must reach out to that which they represented. 9:10 brings out the temporary character of the Old Testament ordinances; they were imposed "until the time of reformation", that is, until the advent of the Messiah and Mediator of the new and better covenant.

(D) The Sanctuary and Sacrifice of the New Covenant are Realities, the Antitype of those of the Old Covenant. 9:11-15.

Here the sanctuary and sacrifice of the new covenant are contrasted with those of the old covenant. In 9:11 we read of "the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands",

meaning the tabernacle in heaven, where Christ ministers today at the Father's right hand. In 9:12 we read of the greater and more perfect sacrifice, not by the blood of goats and calves, but by Christ's own blood. The old high priests had to carry the blood of atonement, to enter the holy of holies. By the shedding of Christ's own blood, He entered, not the holy of holies in the "worldly" tabernacle, but into the holy of holies in heaven itself, into the very presence of God the Father, "having obtained eternal redemption for us".

Note also the contrast between ceremonial or technical cleansing, and spiritual cleansing; cleansing "of the flesh" and cleansing "of the conscience", 9:13, 14. There is also a contrast between "dead works" and "service of the living God", 9:14b. The ritual of the old covenant did not really, of itself, take away people's sins; it only conferred a technical or ceremonial purification. Only by true faith in the promised Messiah, who was represented by all this ritual, did Old Testament believers obtain the forgiveness of their sins.

We know that under the old covenant any animal offered as a sacrifice had to be a perfect specimen of its kind. So we read here of Christ that He offered himself WITHOUT SPOT to God. In order to offer the perfect sacrifice for the sins of His people, Christ had to be personally sinless and holy.

9:15 gives the conclusion drawn from what has been said. Christ is the Mediator of the new covenant. It was by means of His sacrifice that even God's people under the old covenant could be saved unto eternal life. Note the strong emphasis which is placed on the death of Jesus Christ as our Saviour. In the Word of God the chief emphasis is not on the life of Jesus, nor on His example, nor on His teachings, but on His death as our Saviour. His death had significance both for the old covenant and also for the new

covenant. The result is that "they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance". (Note: 9:15 does NOT mean that there was no forgiveness of sins in the Old Testament period, but merely that the actual atonement, on which forgiveness was based, had not yet taken place. The sins of Noah, Abraham, David, etc., were forgiven on the basis of a future atonement. This could be done because the future atonement, by the decree of God, was absolutely certain to take place. When Christ died on Calvary, it was not only for the sins of New Testament believers, but for the sins of Old Testament believers which had already been forgiven in anticipation of His death on the cross; He died "for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant".

(E) The New Covenant is also Christ's Last Will and Testament, Sealed by His own Blood. 9:16-22.

To understand this passage we must know that in Greek "covenant" and "testament" are the same word. Almost always in the New Testament this word is rightly translated "covenant", but in two places it has to mean "testament" (both in Heb. 9:16, 17).

As 9:16, 17 explains, the efficacy of a testament (last will and testament) depends entirely upon the DEATH of the person who made it. This brings in the idea of BLOOD, and it is stated that even the first testament (covenant) was not dedicated without blood (9:18), that is, the blood of the animal sacrifices, which represented the blood of Jesus Christ. This truth is expanded in 9:19, 20, quoted from Ex. 24:8. 9:21 goes on to show the prominence of blood in the Old Testament ritual, and 9:22 states the general principle that, according to the Old Testament law, (1) all things are cleansed with blood; (2) without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. This brings out the true importance of Christ's SUBSTITUTIONARY ATONEMENT. His death was necessary for the establishment of the covenant, which

is also His last will and testament in the believer's favor, by which we receive the inheritance of eternal life with God in heaven.

Questions:

1. Why was the sanctuary of the old covenant called "worldly"?
2. What was the real value or significance of the earthly tabernacle?
3. What truth does 9:10 state concerning the Old Testament ordinances?
4. What and where is "the greater and more perfect tabernacle"?
5. What is the "holy place" which Christ has entered, mentioned in 9:12?
6. What has Christ obtained for His people, according to 9:12?
7. What kind of cleansing was accomplished by the ordinances of the tabernacle ritual?
8. How does the cleansing effected by Christ differ from that of the tabernacle ritual?
9. What is the significance of the words, "without spot" in 9:14?
10. What fact concerning Jesus Christ receives the chief emphasis in the Bible?
11. How was it possible for believers under the old covenant to obtain forgiveness of sins?
12. What other meaning does the Greek word for "covenant" have?
13. What did the blood of the animal sacrifices represent?
14. How does the idea of a last will and testament serve to bring out the importance of Christ's death?
15. What great truth is stated in 9:22, and where is it found in the Old Testament?

LESSON 13

**THE NEW COVENANT INSTITUTED BY CHRIST IS SUPERIOR TO THE OLD COVENANT.
8:1 to 10:18, Continued.**

(F) The Heavenly Sanctuary Purged with a Better Sacrifice than the Earthly Sanctuary was. 9:23, 24.

At this point we may pause to sum up the Epistle's teaching concerning the Old Testament types of the tabernacle, etc. These were not merely prefigurations of the New Testament facts, but, as shown by 9:23, they were actually "patterns of things in the heavens" (ARV, "COPIES of the things in the heavens").

The original realities were in heaven — the

true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. The Old Testament types (tabernacles, etc.) were "shadows" or "copies" of these things in heaven. The New Testament facts are the heavenly realities come down to earth in Christ.

In 9:23, "the patterns (copies) of things in the heavens" means the earthly tabernacle and the objects associated with it. "The heavenly things themselves" means the spiritual realities in the heavenly world where God dwells and His glory is manifested.

In 9:24, "holy places made with hands" means the earthly tabernacle and its objects. These are said to be "the figures of the true". "The true (holy places)" means, of course, the heavenly realities — the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. Again, we are told that Christ has entered "into heaven itself" — not into an earthly holy of holies which only symbolized heaven, but into the real heaven above.

In 10:1, the Old Testament ordinances are called "a shadow of good things to come"; the fulfilment in Christ is called "the very image of the things". The "good things" (9:11; 10:1) were THE THINGS IN THE HEAVENS. These "things in the heavens" were faintly represented on earth by the Old Testament tabernacle, so the tabernacle could be called a "shadow" of the things in the heavens. But when Christ came to earth and wrought out redemption with His own blood, that was something more than a mere "shadow" of the heavenly things; that was THE VERY IMAGE OF THE THINGS (10-1) — not a mere "copy" or "shadow", but the reality come down to earth. For the redemption which was planned by God from all eternity was actually wrought out and accomplished on this earth, when the Son and God suffered and died on Calvary.

(G) The One Sacrifice of the New Covenant is Better than the Many Sacrifices of the Old Covenant 9:25 to 10:18.

This is the seventh and last argument adduced by the Epistle to prove that the new covenant is better than the old covenant. The sacrifices of the old covenant were characterized by multiplicity and endless repetition. There were many different kinds of sacrifice, and each kind was offered many times, over and over again.

The "holy place" mentioned in 9:25 must mean the holy of holies, as shown by the reference to the high priest entering "every year" (not "always" as in 9:6), and "with blood"; compare 9:6, 7.

9:26, if Christ were to suffer repeatedly, this would involve endlessly repeated crucifixions since the foundation of the world, which of itself would prove His sacrifice to be ineffective; just as if a person were to take medicine, and keep on taking it year after year, this would show that the medicine was not really effective in curing the disease. If the disease were really cured, the person could stop taking the medicine. Christ's sacrifice, however, is not endlessly repeated, nor is it ineffective. It is a once-for-all transaction, "once in the end of the world", 9:26b, that is, once, at the time of fulfillment of prophecy in the advent and work of the long-expected Messiah. Also His sacrifice was TO PUT AWAY SIN, that is, to put it clear out of

the way, so that it would no longer be a problem or condemning power.

9:27, 28 states a parallel between the history of every individual and that of Christ. In the case of every individual, death occurs once (and in this sense, death of the body, once only), and after death comes judgment, that is, the final result of a person's life. In the case of Christ, death also occurs once (and only once) in the form of a substitutionary sin-offering, and after this comes His second advent, that is, the final result of His finished work of atonement, which is SALVATION (in its ultimate meaning and implications) to His people, "them that wait for him". The purpose of 9:27, 28 is to bring out the finality and sufficiency and unrepeatability of Christ's one sacrifice for sin, by comparing it to the individual's one experience of physical death, the dissolution of the union between body and soul.

10:1-4 explains the reasons for the endless repetition of the Old Testament sacrifices. Being merely "shadows", not the "very image" of "the things in the heavens", they could not accomplish the removal of sins, or make the worshiper perfect. This is proved, 10:2, by the fact that they continued to be offered. If they really removed sins, why should they be offered continually, year after year? An efficacious atonement would need to take place only once, after which the worshipers would "have had no more conscience (consciousness) of sins", that is, they would be freed from guilt and the need of an atonement. This, however, was not the fact in the case of the Old Testament sacrifices, 10:3, for in point of fact they acted out the ritual of atonement for sin over and over again, year by year. The basic reason for this is stated boldly in 10:4, "IT IS NOT POSSIBLE THAT THE BLOOD OF BULLS AND OF GOATS SHOULD TAKE AWAY SINS." Animal sacrifices could not really take away any person's sins. They never could, never did, and never were intended to. It was merely the error of the Jews to imagine that they ever could do it. Their real meaning was (1) DECLARATIVE, by shadowing, of the heavenly realities involved; (2) TYPICAL, by prefiguring, of the New Testament work of Christ's atonement which really does take away sins.

This truth, that the ritual sacrifices were not efficacious and not permanent, was itself stated in the Old Testament, Psalm 40:6-8, which is quoted in Heb. 10:5-7. Psalm 40 in a Psalm of David, and like so many of the Psalms, it presents elements of Messianic prophecy. From Heb. 10:5-7 we learn that Psalm 40:6-8 is Messianic and refers to the incarnation of the Son of God: "when he cometh into the world, he saith . . .".

Note that 10:5, 6 does NOT state that God did not ordain the animal sacrifices; He DID, as the Old Testament shows. It merely states that He did not DESIRE them, nor have PLEASURE in

them. The whole statement is a Hebrew way of emphasizing the fact that the Old Testament sacrifices were temporary, ineffective in themselves and not what God really required as a satisfaction for human sin. What God really did require was Christ's sufferings and death as a satisfaction, and this was accomplished once for all on Calvary, and therefore it need never be repeated. For the atonement, however, the incarnation was necessary. Hence the inefficacy of the Levitical sacrifices has for its corollary the coming of Christ into the world: "Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God" 10:7; compare verse 9, "He (Christ) taketh away the first (the Old Testament sacrifices), that he may establish the second (the satisfaction of Christ for the sins of men)." Since Christ's satisfaction is efficacious in saving sinners, it need never be repeated, 10:10; in this respect it is in contrast to the oft-repeated but ineffective sacrifices of the Old Testament. The contrast is repeated in verses 11 and 12. Sacrifices which are often repeated can never take away sins. A sacrifice which is accomplished once for all, really cancels the guilt of sin. The fact that Christ's one sacrifice was sufficient for ever, is demonstrated by the fact that after it He sat down at the right hand of God, not again offering Himself as a sacrifice, but "expecting" (waiting), till His enemies be made the footstool of His feet, 10:13. Verse 14 re-emphasizes this same thought, by one single offering, Christ has "perfected forever" them that are sanctified, that is, the beneficiaries of His redemption.

This truth is next confirmed by repeating the quotation from Jer. 31:33 ff, in Heb. 10:15-17, showing that the effect of the new covenant, of which Christ is the Mediator, and which was established by His blood, is a COMPLETE and ETERNAL remission of sins, 10-17. But this only proves again that NO FURTHER OFFERING FOR SIN IS NEEDED, 10:18. If a person's sins are forgiven completely, all his sins forgiven, and forgiven forever, what further need could he have of a sacrifice for sin? Hence it is proved that

Christ's one sacrifice is superior to the many and repeated sacrifices of the old covenant.

Questions:

1. What is meant by "patterns (copies) of things in the heavens" in 9:23?
2. What is meant by "the heavenly things themselves" in 9:23?
3. Why are the Old Testament ordinances called "a shadow" in 10:1?
4. Why is Christ's redemption referred to as "the very image of the things" in 10:1?
5. How many arguments does the Epistle present to prove that the new covenant is better than the old covenant?
6. If sacrifices had to be repeated endlessly, what did this show concerning their effectiveness?
7. What is the significance of the word "once" in 9:26?
8. What is the importance of the words "to put away sin" in 9:26?
9. What is meant by the expression "in the end of the world", 9:26?
10. What parallel is drawn in 9:27, 28 between the history of Christ and that of every individual?
11. What was the real meaning and purpose of the Old Testament sacrifices?
12. What does 10:5, 6 teach as to God's attitude toward the Old Testament sacrifices?
13. Why was the incarnation of Christ necessary?
14. How does 10:12, 13 prove the effectiveness of Christ's sacrifice for sins?
15. According to 10:14, what has Christ done for His people?

LESSON 14

EXHORTATION TO LIVE AND WALK BY FAITH. 10:19 to 12:29.

(I) Exhortation to Confidence in Christ and to the maintenance of Christian Associations. 10:19-25.

This section of the Epistle draws practical inferences from the preceding doctrinal sections. The Old Testament believer could not even enter the earthly Holy of Holies; but the New Testament believer, in Christ his Mediator, enters into the heavenly sanctuary through the blood of Jesus Christ, 10:19. This is through "a new and living way", through "his flesh", which is "the veil".

The meaning of this verse appears to be, that the veil or curtain in the Tabernacle barred entrance into the Holy of Holies, except on the part of the high priest according to the law. When the veil of the Temple was rent in two at the time of our Lord's crucifixion, it was thereby shown that the way into the (true) Holy of Holies was now opened. But it was not the rending of the veil of cloth that opened the way, but that which the rending of the cloth signified, namely the rending or breaking of Christ's body on the cross. It is by that that the way into the heavenly sanctu-

ary is really opened to the Christian. It is called a "new" way because it is in contrast to the old way under the Levitical priesthood. It is called a "living" way because the way is Christ Himself, in whom is life (John 1:4; 14:6).

So much for our access to God through Christ's atonement. But we have also "a great priest" over the house of God, that is, Christ in heaven as our intercessor. (In 10:21 the King James Version reads "a high priest", but the correct translation is "a great priest", as in the American Revised Version). The fact that Christ is in heaven as our Intercessor guarantees our increase in grace and our final perseverance unto eternal life. Since these things are so, we ought, first, to have great confidence in Christ; and secondly, we ought to cultivate Christian associations.

Verse 22 presents a problem in interpretation. Is the reference to "sprinkling" and "pure water" a reference to baptism? If not, why does the verse say "our BODIES washed"? We may be reasonably certain that this verse refers to the sacrament of baptism, including, of course, not merely the external rite of water baptism, but also the spiritual reality signified and sealed by baptism, that is, spiritual cleansing and regeneration. Compare Titus 3:5, and note that the verse speaks of "the washing of regeneration", not of "the regeneration of washing"; that is, it does not teach the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, or the idea that the new birth is effected by the instrumentality of baptism.

With reference to sprinkling with blood, compare Ex. 29:21; Levit. 8:30. With reference to washing with water, compare Ex. 29:4; 30:20; 40:30-32; Levit. 16:4. Our hearts are sprinkled with the blood of Christ, bringing relief from an evil conscience, which is the result of an evil life. Our bodies are washed with pure water which (in the sacrament of baptism) signifies the new birth or regeneration.

Verse 23: therefore we should hold fast the profession of our faith ("the confession of our hope, ARV) without wavering, for He is faithful that has promised. The Christian's free access to the heavenly sanctuary, and his experience of full and free cleansing from sin, should be the greatest encouragement to a strong, steadfast, unwavering PROFESSION of his Christian hope before the world.

Concerning the cultivation of Christian associations (verses 24, 25), the Christian must cultivate LOVE and GOOD WORKS. Note that these are not mentioned as grounds of salvation, but as fruits of salvation. We are not saved by good works, but if really saved, we will not be without them.

Next, the Christian must not omit the duty of assembling with other Christians for worship

and fellowship. From verse 25 we see that even in the early time when this Epistle was written, some Christians had already become AC-CUSTOMED to non-attendance at meetings. Note the expression used: "the assembling OF OURSELVES together" (ARV, "OUR OWN assembling together"): What is warned against us not merely staying home from church services, but the bad habit of "church-trotting", or frequent unnecessary absence from the particular congregation of which the person is a member. We are exhorted not merely to "assemble" (or attend church), but to attend to OUR OWN assembling together, that is, faithful attendance upon the ordinances of divine worship and fellowship in that particular congregation of which we are members. If this warning was needed in the early day when the Epistle to the Hebrews was written, surely it is much more needed at the present day, when many professing Christians think it makes little difference what church they attend, so long as they attend some church, while many others attend their own church only occasionally, perhaps one-fourth of the time. No minister can preach so as to build up the people in Christian knowledge if the members are irregular or have the "church-trotting" habit. The person who hears only one-fourth or one-third of a consecutive series of sermons cannot get any adequate idea of what it is all about. Every such church member is a discourager of ministers and a deceiver of himself.

"The day approaching" in verse 25 (compare I Cor. 3:13) beyond question means the day of Christ's second coming. The recipients of the Epistle to the Hebrews probably lived either about the time or not many years after the destruction of Jerusalem, which was a type, or sample on a small scale, of the Day of the Lord. Verse 25 would call their attention to the fact that the great Day is always approaching, always "at hand" in the Biblical sense of the expression.

Questions:

1. What is meant by "the holiest" in 10:19?
2. Why is the body of Jesus Christ called "the veil" in 10:20?
3. Why is the way which Christ has opened called a "new" way in 10:20?
4. Why is the way which Christ has opened called a "living" way in 10:20?
5. What is meant by the statement of 10:21 that we have "a great priest over the house of God"?
6. What encouragement should we draw from the truth that Christ is our great Intercessor in heaven?
7. What is the probable meaning of the reference to "sprinkling" and "pure water" in 10:22?

What word of the verse indicates that this is the probable meaning?

8. In what way are Christians exhorted to provoke one another in 10:24?

9. What is the relation between good works and salvation?

10. What Christian duty is set forth in 10:25?

11. What can we gather concerning the religious habits of some of the original readers of the Epistle from verse 25?

12. What is the force of the word "ourselves" in 10:25, and how is this translated in the American Revised Version?

13. What bad results may come from the habit of frequently attending other churches instead of one's own?

14. What is "the day" mentioned in 10:25?

15. What should the thought of the approach of the Day of Christ's second coming lead Christians to do?

LESSON 15

EXHORTATION TO LIVE AND WALK BY FAITH. 10:19 to 12:29, Continued

(B) Warning against the Danger of Apostasy. 10:26-39.

This passage runs somewhat parallel to 6:1-12. In that passage, as in the present one, two classes of people are contrasted. In both passages the dangers of unbelief, or falling away from the truth, are set forth, and then by way of contrast the experience of the true believer is set forth. In 6:9 we read: "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak". In 10:39 this is paralleled by: "But we are not of them that shrink back unto perdition; but of them that have faith unto the saving of the soul" (ARV). With this parallelism in mind, let us examine the present passage 10:26-39.

This passage is by no means to be taken as contrary to the doctrine of Perseverance (or the eternal security of the true believer in Christ), but rather as an earnest exhortation to make our calling and election (subjectively) sure; that is, to make ourselves absolutely sure of our calling and election. For an illustration of this, compare Acts 27-21-26 with Acts 27:31. The fact that an event is certain to occur, because foreordained by God, does not imply that it has been foreordained to occur apart from the use of appropriate means. The believer cannot lose his salvation, or eternal life, but this does not imply that he need make no effort to persevere and increase in grace.

10:26-31 describes the sin of apostasy, and is parallel to 6:4-8. In chapter 6 it is stated of this class of persons that their "end is to be burned" (6:8); but here in chapter 10 it is affirmed of them that a "fiery indignation" ("a fierceness of fire", ARV) "shall devour" them, 10:27. Also it is stated that they shall "fall into the hands of the living God", 10:31. In 10:36 the expression "the knowledge of the truth" does not necessarily mean a SAVING knowledge of the truth; but it certainly means more than a MERE HEARING with the ears; it corresponds to the experience of those who had been "enlightened", had "tasted of the heavenly gift", had been "made partakers of the Holy

Spirit", etc., in 6:4-8. These persons had heard the Gospel, had been INFLUENCED (not regenerated or indwelt) by the Holy Spirit, and were intellectually convinced that Christianity is true.

The "sinning wilfully" in 10:26 must not be understood of any sin whatever, but must be taken in connection with the rest of the verse, that is, with the matter of **THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH**; it means, therefore, a deliberate rejection of that truth which the Holy Spirit had already convinced them of. These persons having deliberately rejected the Christian Gospel with its doctrine of Christ's vicarious atonement. **THERE REMAINS NO MORE A SACRIFICE FOR SINS**: for outside of Christ, whom they have rejected, there is no other sacrifice which could take away their sins. God has only one Only begotten son, Jesus Christ; and there is only one sacrifice that can cancel sin, the sacrifice of the cross of Calvary. When men reject that, there is no other for them to fall back on.

The statement that "there remains no more sacrifice for sins" (10:26) of course does not mean that Christ's atonement, objectively considered, is not sufficient for the sins of such people, but that, they having rejected that atonement, there remains no OTHER sacrifice that could atone for their sins. In 10:27 we see, therefore, that all that is left to such people, after they have rejected GRACE, is divine JUDGMENT. The language used leads us to conclude that a deliberate, final, complete apostasy in the face of a powerful conviction of the truth of Christianity, is the sin dealt with here. It is, in other words, a form of the sin against the Holy Spirit.

We should realize that no person who has not heard the Gospel could possibly commit this sin. Nor could an honest doubter commit this sin. Only the convinced person, who knows the truth, but rejects the light, is spoken of.

The second part of 10:27 has often been observed in the case of people who have rejected the Gospel of Christ. Entirely without concern

about their salvation, they only experience "a certain fearful looking for of judgment". Such people know, in the bottom of their hearts, that they are destined for hell, for, having a knowledge of the truth, they know that there is such a place of eternal punishment. Naturally the thought of this inspires fear. But they have been abandoned by the Holy Spirit, and consequently are entirely devoid of any real desire or hope for salvation, or spirit of seeking the Lord.

10:28 cites the Mosaic law (Deut. 17:2-6) as an illustration of the punishment for apostasy, and follows with an argument from the less to the greater: "Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden underfoot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" (10:29). In this verse the phrase "wherewith he was sanctified" creates a difficulty, which must be honestly faced. Arminians appeal to these words as proof that a Christian can be "sanctified" and still "fall from grace" and perish in hell. It is quite true that the text does not say "Wherewith he might have been sanctified", but "Wherewith he WAS sanctified". However we may be sure that the class of persons spoken of are not backsliding saints, but ADVERSARIES, as is shown by 10:27b. We must remember that in the Epistle to the Hebrews the term "sanctify" has a special meaning, somewhat different from its technical or doctrinal meaning by which it is distinguished from Justification in the order of salvation. Compare Hebrews 9:13, "sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh"; 13:12, "Jesus . . . that he might sanctify the people with his own blood". On the Great Day of Atonement (Levit. 16), the blood in the Holy of Holies sustained the covenant relation between God and Israel. The blood of the New Covenant, Christ's own blood, sustains the covenant relation between God and the New Testament Church. As a member of the VISIBLE covenant society, the Church, the person spoken of in 10:29 was "sanctified" in this sense, not as to his inward spiritual condition, but as concerned his outward position and privileges as a visible member of a society constituted by the blood of the New Covenant. He counted that blood "common" or "unholy" (that is ordinary without any special efficacy) and DID DESPITE to (insulted) the Spirit of grace (the Holy Ghost). The last words of verse 29 show that the sin spoken of is the sin against the Holy Spirit.

10:30, 31 emphasizes the terrible consequences of this sin. Verse 30 contains two quotations from Deut. 32:35, 36. Having discussed the apostate, the passage goes on to speak, by way of contrast, of the true believer, in 10:32-39. Verses 32-34 set forth the readers' past sufferings for Christ. God's grace upheld them under those trials, a strong evidence of the reality of their

Christian faith and experience. 10:35 says "Cast not away therefore your confidence (ARV, boldness)," that is, courage in professing Christ and obeying Him. Note that it does not say: "Cast not away therefore your profession", but "Cast not away therefore your BOLDNESS".

10:36 stresses the need for patience, that the readers may receive the promise, that is THE THING PROMISED. This emphasis on patience occurs over and over again in Hebrews. Christ is hidden in heaven; the believer is suffering affliction on earth; therefore he requires patience to endure in order to receive the thing promised, namely, complete redemption and SIGHT at Christ's second coming (10:37). This is quoted from Hab. 2:3, and 10:38 from Heb. 2:4. It must be stated that 10:37 sets forth the eschatological character of Christianity (its concern with Christ's second coming and eternity), and has nothing whatever to do with the actual number of years between Christ's first coming and His second coming; if it did, how could a period of over 1900 years be called "a little while" (ARV, "a very little while")? Christ's second coming, being the next great redemptive event in God's program, is always "near" or "at hand", in every age of the Church, and when He comes, every Christian of every age and period of history will see Him (Rev. 1:7; 1 Thess. 4:15-17).

10:38 again contrasts the one who "lives by faith" with the one who "shrinks back", and 10:39 strongly affirms that we (i.e., regenerate believers) are not in the latter category, but in the former, those who have faith to the saving of the soul. This brings out all the more clearly that two distinct classes of persons are spoken of in this passage.

Questions:

1. What passage previously studied in Hebrews is closely parallel to 10:26-39?
2. What danger, and what contrast, are set forth in both passages?
3. Why is 10:26-39 not to be regarded as contrary to the doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints?
4. What is the principal message of 10:26-39 to the Christian?
5. How does Acts 27-21-26, 31 show that God's foreordination of something does not eliminate the necessity of using appropriate means?
6. What is meant by "the knowledge of the truth" in 10:26?
7. What kind of sin is spoken of in the expression "if we sin wilfully" in 10:26?
8. Why is it true, in the case of those who commit this sin, that there remains no more sacrifice for sins?

9. Why could not a person who has never heard the Gospel commit this sin?

10. What is the mental and spiritual condition of those who have deliberately rejected the Gospel of Christ, as described in 10:27?

11. What special meaning of the term "sanctify" occurs in Hebrews, and what is the meaning of the term in 10:29?

12. What is the meaning of "done despite unto the Spirit of grace" in 10:29?

13. What fact in the past experience of the

readers of the Epistle furnished evidence of the reality of their Christian faith (10:32-34)?

14. Why does the Christian need patience?

15. What is meant by "the promise" in 10:36?

16. What is the meaning of the phrase "yet a little while" in 10:37?

17. Why is it true that Christ's second coming is always near to every Christian of every period of history?

18. What two classes of people are contrasted in 10:38, 39?

LESSON 16

EXHORTATION TO LIVE AND WALK BY FAITH, 10:19 to 12:29, Continued

(C) The Example of the Hebrew Heroes of Faith. 11:1-40.

11:1 approaches a formal definition of faith, in its subjective aspect. It is a "substantiation of things hoped for, a conviction of things unseen". This is illustrated in verses 2 and 3 by a statement of the doctrine of creation. The ancients obtained witness through faith, in God's history of the world, though not in man's. By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen has not been made out of things which appear. This doctrine of creation is **BASIC TO ALL OTHER DOCTRINES OF CHRISTIANITY**, and it can be known only by faith. In the nature of the case, it cannot be tested by experiment or demonstrated by scientific induction. The Bible offers no arguments to prove that it is true, but states it simply at its very beginning (Gen. 1:1). By faith, then, we know that the world did not always exist, that it was created out of nothing by an infinite, almighty God, who is entirely distinct from, and transcendent above, this created and visible universe. This is the very basis of faith, and if a man does not believe this, it makes no difference whatever else he may profess to believe. From this point, the Epistle goes on to speak of the ancient heroes of faith.

First come three who lived before the Flood, Abel, Enoch and Noah. It was by faith that Abel offered a blood sacrifice to God, thus recognizing his own guilt and mortality (11:4). If this was not faith, then it was the height of folly. Death came into the world through sin; Abel takes death, in the form of a slain animal, and offers it to God as a sacrifice, and is accepted by God.

Verses 5 and 6 speak of Enoch's translation as a testimony to his faith, Enoch's walk with God was the result of faith, Enoch believing (1) that God exists, which is the opposite of atheism; and (2) that God is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him, which is the opposite of deism and pantheism

Verse 7 presents Noah as an example of faith. In Noah's case, faith dealt specifically with the future, that is, with the Flood, which had been predicted, but which was "not seen as yet". Noah's making the ark, and that on dry ground remote from water, in the sight of disbelievers and scoffers as it doubtless was, constituted a strong testimony to his faith in God's spoken word; for faith is not merely believing a thing with the intellect, but believing it firmly and deeply enough **TO ACT ACCORDINGLY**. Noah believed that if he did not make the ark, he and his family would be drowned, so, "moved with godly fear", he prepared the ark, let men say what they might. Thus he became the heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

Next, in verses 8-16, the truth is set forth, and illustrated from the Old Testament, that faith gains by having the blessing delayed. If the benefits had been given immediately after being promised, little or no faith would be called into exercise. Abraham's faith is shown, first, in his leaving his own country, not knowing whither bound (11:9); if he had known where he was going it would have been sight, not faith. His faith was next shown (verse 9) in his being a **SOJOURNER**, dwelling in tents, not in houses, in the land which had been promised to him, because (verse 10) he realized that nothing on earth could be the real and final fulfilment of God's promises to him; he looked for the heavenly city, whose builder and maker is God.

The word "builder" in the Greek means "architect" or "planner", while the word "maker" means the one who puts the plan into execution. From this verse we gather that Abraham knew more than is recorded of him in the book of Genesis. His faith, or Sarah's, is next shown in connection with the birth of Isaac, obviously a supernatural event (verses 11, 12). By this faith there sprang of one old man, a vast multitude. Verse 13 applies the above to the point in hand: these patriarchs did not, in their life-time on earth, ob-

tain the things promised. To the end of their earthly life they continued to exercise FAITH, without obtaining that for which it was exercised. The trial of their faith did not last half a year, or a year, but their whole lives. And, in the end, they "died in faith". Up to their death faith had not turned into sight. They saw the promises and greeted them from afar; that is, they realized that these promises related to the remote future; hence they confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth, and seeking a country of their own. All this time the earthly country which they had left was near at hand, to which they might have returned, and would have returned had they not been controlled by a higher principle, that of FAITH IN GOD'S PROMISES CONCERNING THE FUTURE. It was better for them to wait for the heavenly country than to return to the earthly country; and it was better for them to WAIT for the future inheritance of the heavenly country, than to receive it immediately. This process was educational or disciplinary on God's part, to wean their souls from this earth and to fit them for the world to come.

This brings up the question, What are we in this world for? and its answer, To develop a soul and a personality with which to glorify God to all eternity in a better world than this, a world for which this world is only a brief preparation. It may seem hard, even bitter, to the Christian to have to walk by faith, instead of by sight; to have to exercise patience, instead of immediately obtaining the thing promised by God; but God's way is the best way, "Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city" (11:16). God's eternal city is prepared, however, for those who are but tent-dwellers and pilgrims in this present world, in

contradistinction to the pagans, ancient and modern, who regard this world as permanent, independent of God, and an end in itself.

Questions:

1. What is the importance of the doctrine of creation?
2. Why can the doctrine of creation be known only by faith?
3. What was implied in Abel offering an animal sacrifice to God?
4. How was Enoch's faith contrary to atheism, deism, and pantheism?
5. What special feature is shown in the faith of Noah?
6. What truth concerning faith is set forth in 11:8-16?
7. What was the spiritual significance of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob dwelling in tents instead of permanent houses?
8. What is the meaning of the Greek words translated "builder" and "maker" in 11:10?
9. Why did not the patriarchs return to the earthly country from which they had come?
10. Why did God not give Abraham, Isaac and Jacob the thing promised during their earthly life-time?
11. What is the real purpose of our life in this world?
12. Of what class of persons is God not ashamed to be called their God?

LESSON 17

EXHORTATION TO LIVE AND WALK BY FAITH. 10:19 to 12:29, Continued

(C) The Example of the Hebrew Heroes of Faith. 11:1-40, Continued.

The next section, 11-17-22, deals with faith as belief in the apparently impossible. Four instances are cited. The first is that of Abraham offering up Isaac. Abraham had gladly received the promises. One of these was the promise of an innumerable posterity; another, the promise that through his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. Both of these promises were contingent upon Isaac's living to grow up, for it had been revealed to Abraham by God that his "seed should be called" in Isaac. Yet he was commanded to do something which seemed to be utterly inexpedient, even to the extent of rendering the fulfillment of God's promises impossible. BUT HE OBEYED THE COMMAND OF GOD. Abraham did not follow the pagan (ancient and mod-

ern) ethics of expediency, by doing evil that good might come. He obeyed God.

Note, too, that when God's will had been clearly revealed to him, Abraham did not go aside to pray about the matter for several days to obtain "guidance" as to what action he should take. Prayer can be not only a hindrance, but a positive sin, if we make it an excuse for disobedience or delayed obedience to God's Word. Prayer is of the utmost importance, but it is not to be made an excuse for lack of the necessary action on our part.

In verse 19 we learn a great truth: Abraham believed that God would raise Isaac from the dead. Remember that, so far as Scripture records, there had been no instance of resurrection in the world's history up to that time. Consequently it would require much greater faith to believe that

God would raise Isaac from the dead, than would have been required if Abraham had lived in later times. Also, Abraham's faith in the possibility of Isaac's resurrection did not rest upon any express statement by God, but was based on logical inference from two known facts, namely, (1) God's promises, and (2) God's power. If God gave a command which seemed to render the promises impossible of fulfillment, then God's almighty power would find a way out of the difficulty. Abraham did not take matters in his own hands, and say, "For me to sacrifice Isaac will do more harm than good; I will disobey God in this one instance, because I am in a very difficult situation" — on the contrary, he left God's burdens on God, and went about obeying the revealed will of God without delay or hesitation.

The second instance cited (11:20) is that of Isaac blessing Jacob and Esau, even concerning things to come. Here we see the recognition of God's rights against nature. By nature, Esau, not Jacob, would have had the birthright and the first blessing; but it turned out the other way, showing God's absolute sovereignty (compare Rom. 9:10-13). Isaac blessed his sons concerning "things to come"; it might seem impossible that Jacob would really receive the future blessings rather than Esau, but it really was so in God's plan.

The third instance cited (11:21) is that of Jacob, when about to die, blessing the two sons of Joseph. We know from Gen. 49 that this blessing was of a prophetic nature, including a prophecy of the coming of Christ. Jacob was in Egypt at the time, and it might seem improbable, even impossible, that his descendants should ever return to Canaan, but his blessing implied a belief that they would certainly do so.

The fourth instance cited (11:22) is that of Joseph, who when dying prophesied of the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt, and "gave commandment concerning his bones", leaving his bones as a continual admonition to the people, to remind them of the great deliverance that God had in store for them. All four of these instances, each in its own way, showed faith in God's power to accomplish that which to men is impossible, even to the extent of raising the dead — a matter utterly contrary to nature.

The remaining section of the chapter (11:23-40) is a more miscellaneous catalogue of the trials, experiences, and triumphs of faith in the Old Testament and Maccabean periods. First, 11:23, the faith of Moses' parents is mentioned. Note in passing that obedience to the commands of kings and governments is not always a duty; it was BY FAITH, and therefore with God's approval, that Moses' parents disobeyed the command of the king of Egypt. Secondly, in 11:24-26, we come to Moses himself, with whom "faith argues, as it might seem, in the very teeth of a most wonder-

ful providence". He will not be a patron of the people of God, but a sharer of their humiliation, which he esteems as the 'reproach of Christ', and values it above all the treasures of Egypt." In 11:27, 28 we find the secret of Moses' victory over fear — his abiding in the presence of the unseen God, against which even the wrath of Pharaoh is powerless to harm. By the passover and the sprinkling of the blood, the people of Israel are delivered from the judgment of God upon human sin, and brought into communion with the holy God.

In 11:29 we have a contrast between the victorious experience of faith, and the vain attempt of unbelief at the Red Sea. To those who truly believed, God opened the way; the Egyptian unbelievers, seeing the way open, tried to enter it, and perished. In verses 30 and 31 we again have two contrasted examples of human weakness and divine power. The walls of Jericho, a mighty fortress, fell down at the mere blast of trumpets; and Rahab, whose house was situated on the walls that fell, was saved amid the general destruction.

In 11:32-38 we have the period which followed Israel's entrance into the land of Canaan. Six persons are listed by name, followed by a long catalogue of those "in whom faith overcame, most often by the way of the cross, by what seemed the way of defeat". We pause to note the meaning of verse 35: "that they might obtain a better resurrection". Christ appointed a bitter cross for them; they had an opportunity to shift it, and escape the suffering, but BY FAITH they declined to do so, in the hope of a better resurrection. This must be considered the victory of faith at its highest point — martyrdom.

Finally, in verses 39 and 40, we see that all these ancient heroes of faith must wait for their perfect fruition (the resurrection of the body), until the time when we, too, shall receive it together with them, namely at the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Questions:

1. What special aspect of faith is dealt with in 11:17-22?
2. Why did it require great faith for Abraham to obey God's command to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice?
3. Why did Abraham not pray for guidance before proceeding to offer Isaac as a sacrifice?
4. When is prayer a sin?
5. What do we learn about Abraham's faith in 11:19?
6. Why would it be difficult for Abraham to believe that God would raise Isaac from the dead?
7. On what was Abraham's faith in the resurrection of Isaac based?

8. What truth is brought out by the incident of Isaac blessing Jacob and Esau?

9. What conviction concerning the future was manifested by Jacob and Joseph in their dying statements?

10. What height of faith is seen in Moses' decision to suffer affliction with the people of God?

11. What was the secret of Moses' victory over fear?

12. What lessons concerning faith can be learned from the fall of Jericho and related events?

13. What is the meaning of "not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection", in 11:35?

14. When will the heroes of faith of Hebrews 11 fully receive what God promised them? What is the meaning of the expression, "that they without us should not be made perfect" in 11:40?

LESSON 18

EXHORTATION TO LIVE AND WALK BY FAITH. 10:19 to 12:29, Continued.

(D) Christ both the Example and the Object of our Faith, 12:1-3.

The figure in 12:1, 2 is that of an athletic field or stadium. The runners are about to run a race. Surrounding the field are the seats of a large number of spectators. The runner must lay aside all burdens which would hinder his running. He must have endurance. He must keep his eye on the goal. So much for the figure itself. Now as to the spiritual realities represented by these things. Beyond question the "cloud of witnesses" is the Old Testament heroes of faith discussed in chapter 11. The expression "compassed about" must not be taken literally, any more than "lay aside weight" or "run" is to be taken literally, as referring to the body and its exercise. The blessed dead are not hovering about us in the air; they are with Christ in Paradise. However, it is true, by reason of the communion of saints, that there is at least a knowledge of the state of the Church on earth on the part of the saints in heaven. (This is confirmed by Rev. 6:9, 10. If the saints in Paradise are totally ignorant of the state of the Church on earth, how could they know whether their blood had been avenged yet or not?) The "cloud of witnesses" are not only OBSERVERS OF US, but also WITNESSES FOR THE FAITH. (Compare 11:39).

The Christian must "lay aside every weight", But what is a "weight"? A weight is something we take up and need not, which hinders us in our Christian life. As the text (12:1) distinguishes between "weight" and "sin", we must understand that the "weight" is something which is not necessarily sinful, something which is not sinful IN ITSELF, but which may be sinful by reason of special circumstances or considerations.

Who could run a race carrying a heavy load? Whether it refers to superfluous body weight, or to a carried burden, the spiritual application is the same. Then the Christian must also set aside "the sin which doth so easily beset him. Note that it is sin in the abstract, sin in general, not this or that particular form of sin, that is spoken

of. The figure is that of sin as a garment, which clings to a person. Who could run a race wearing a tight-fitting overcoat? This must be discarded first, then progress can be made. No doubt every Christian has certain particular "besetting sins", but SINS always come from SIN, and we can never deal effectively with SINS until we deal with SIN. If we only attack sins, then the sin which is checked in one manifestation, will break out in other forms.

This text (12:1) does not teach the doctrine called "total sanctification" or "sinless perfection", but it teaches the Bible doctrine of sanctification, and no sanctification is real which does not make a real breach in our old man.

Finally, we must run with PATIENCE, that is, according to the Greek, with ENDURANCE, the race that is set before us. The race of the Christian life is run on a race-course plotted by God, beginning with the new birth and ending at our glorification. Also, the Christian must keep his eye on the goal-mark, which is Jesus Christ Himself. This will exclude all morbid introspection and subjectivism. It is Christ, not our own religious experience, that is the object of our faith, the terminus on which our faith is to rest. This section may be outlined as follows: (1) Something to realize: compassed by a cloud of witnesses. (2) Something to lay aside: weights and sin. (3) Something to do: run with endurance. (4) Someone to whom to look: Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.

Christ, as the One to whom we look, is the object of our faith. But he is also, as the "author and finisher of our faith", our EXAMPLE in living the life of faith. This is illustrated in four statements about Christ's own life of faith; (1) He looked forward to future joy. (2) He endured the suffering of the cross. (3) He despised shame. (4) He sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. In all four of these respects. Christ is the example of a perfect life of faith.

Questions:

1. What figure of speech is presented in 12:1, 2?

2. What persons constitute the "cloud of witnesses" mentioned in 12:1?

3. Why must the expression "compassed about" in 12:1 not be understood literally?

4. How can it be shown from the Bible that the saints in heaven are aware of the state of the Church on earth?

5. What is meant by the "weight" which the Christian must lay aside?

6. What is the difference between SIN and SINS, and which must be dealt with first in the Christian life?

7. What figure of speech is involved in the mention of sin in 12:1?

8. What is the meaning of "patience" in 12:1?

9. What events form the beginning and end of the Christian race-course?

10. On what goal-mark must the Christian keep his eye?

11. What spiritual peril or harmful tendency will be avoided by keeping our eye on the goal?

12. What is meant by saying that Jesus is the object of our faith?

13. In what four respects is Jesus the perfect Example of the life of faith?

LESSON 19

EXHORTATION TO LIVE AND WALK BY FAITH 10:19 to 12:29, Continued.

(E) Chastening Experienced should not Discourage Faith, for it is but the Discipline which Prepares us for a Glorious Salvation. 12:4-29.

Verse 3 connects this section with what preceded: the danger is that Christians, in running the race of the Christian life, will "be wearied and faint in your minds" ("wax weary, fainting in your souls", ARV). It is not a physical weariness, but a spiritual, that is warned against. Verse 4 sets forth the partial, incomplete character of the readers' suffering for Christ. Christian people often speak of this "rights", but actually the only real right we have is to lay down our life for Christ's sake. He laid down His life for us, and if He were to ask us to do the same for Him, it would be no more than right. For us to suffer martyrdom would be no injustice on God's part. So if God in His providence causes us to suffer lesser things, we should not faint in our souls. No matter how much we suffer for Christ, we shall be eternally and infinitely in His debt.

Moreover, the sufferings experienced by Christians are not punishments or judgments in the strict sense, but chastenings, intended for our benefit. The key to this thought is found in 12:10b, "but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness". Chastening is rendered necessary by the remains of sin, the "old man", in the believer. By God's chastening, the old man is mortified. Scripture teaches that Christians have already crucified the flesh with the passions and lusts (Gal. 5:24). This truth has often been misunderstood. Crucifixion and death are not equivalent terms. A crucified man is not necessarily a DEAD man. Crucified persons sometimes lived on for days. A crucified man is still alive, but greatly restrained in his movements, and his ultimate death is a certainty. So in the case of the Christian: his "old man" is put to death", but not yet entirely dead; he is not

the "bondservant" of sin any more; and by the process of sanctification, the old man is more and more mortified — more and more killed off. Chastening is for the furtherance of our sanctification, that is, to make us more holy in our hearts and character.

We should clearly understand the distinction between God's CHASTENING of His own children and His PUNISHMENT of the wicked. Two entirely different relationships are involved. The relation between the wicked person and God is that between a criminal and his judge. The judge imposes and inflicts a just penalty. But the relation between the Christian and God is that between a child and his father. Any suffering that is inflicted on a child by a father proceeds not from righteous wrath, but from LOVE. Chastening is disciplinary, but not penal.

Verses 5 and 6 are quoted from Prov. 3:11, 12. Verses 7, 8 lay down the general principle that sons are chastened by fathers. By adoption the Christian is a son or child of God, therefore he too must receive chastening. Verse 9 compares the chastening of earthly fathers with that of the Heavenly Father, and verse 10 continues this comparison: God's chastening is for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. Incidentally, we must say at this point that if the doctrine of "entire sanctification" is true, there should be a multitude of Christians in the world who no longer need God's chastening. Chastening is in order to holiness; if they are already perfectly holy, why should they need further chastening? Further, why should perfectly holy persons die? The mere asking of these questions is enough to show the unscriptural character of perfectionism, or the doctrine of "total sanctification".

But why do Christians die? Surely not as the penal consequence of sin, for that would nul-

lify their justification (Rom. 8:1). The real answer is that, for the Christian, death is the final step in the process of chastening. Believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory. But if any person is already "perfect in holiness" (at some time prior to his death), why should he die at all?

Verse 11 compares the PRESENT EXPERIENCE of chastening with the ULTIMATE FRUIT of chastening: the present experience is bitter, but the ultimate fruit is peaceable, even "righteousness". This means, not imputed righteousness, which every believer already has from Christ, but PERSONAL righteousness, righteousness of character, the complete victory of the new man. Verse 12 shows that chastening should not cause discouragement, but (verse 13) we should rather learn from affliction the lessons that God has for us to learn, and follow after righteousness.

Questions:

1. What kind of weariness is warned against in 12:3?
2. What does 12:4 tell us concerning the character of the readers' sufferings for Christ's sake?
3. What right do we have that we can plead against God?
4. Why must Christians experience God's chastening?
5. What is the divinely intended purpose of chastening (12:10b)?
6. What is the difference between God's chastening of His own children and His punishment of wicked people?
7. How does the teaching of 12:8 prove that the doctrine of "total sanctification", or perfectionism, is false?
8. Why must Christians die?
9. What is the contrast between the experience of chastening, and its final fruit (12:11)?
10. What attitude toward affliction should we avoid? (12:5)
11. What should be our response when God sends afflictions upon us? (12:12, 13)

LESSON 20

EXHORTATION TO LIVE AND WALK BY FAITH. 10:19 to 12:99, Continued.

(E) Chastening Experienced should not Discourage Faith, for it is but the Discipline which Prepares us for a Glorious Salvation. 12:4-29, Continued.

In 12:14-17 we learn that peace with all men is to be sought, but not at the expense of that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord, and which is therefore even more important than peace. So Christians must be watchful, lest any of them "fail of the grace of God" (ARV, "fall-eth short of"; this means to fail to attain unto; it does not mean to LOSE the grace of God once attained), and so a root of bitterness spring up to the defilement of many others. The case of Esau is mentioned, which shows how a single act may disclose a person's real character. Esau sold his birthright for a meal, and thereby showed himself to be a PROFANE person, that is, one who left God out of his thoughts. Esau desired the blessing of the righteous but he was not willing to live the life of the righteous. Similarly, Balaam (Num. 23:10), wished that he might die the death of the righteous, but he was not willing to live the life of the righteous. So, since Esau did not really want righteousness, but only its blessing, he did not even obtain the blessing. He found no place of repentance (ARV, "no place for a change of mind in his father") though he sought it diligently with tears. He "valued the gain of godliness, without the godliness: and the nature

of God would have had to be changed to gratify him in that which was his sole desire".

12:18-24 compares the experience of Israel at Mount Sinai with the Christian's experience by faith. Israel came to a material, tangible mount, every aspect of which was terrifying, and to the sound of a trumpet, and a still more terrible sound of words, which moved the people to request that no more words should be spoken, and even Moses was thoroughly frightened. This was their experience at Mount Sinai: "darkness over the face of God; obscurity over the future; God when he drew nigh inspiring terror!" Contrasted with this is the New Testament believer's standing and experience by faith. The Christian has not come unto Mount Sinai, but unto Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the mountain of freedom and saving grace in its fulness (Gal. 4:21-26). Of course the Mount Zion here referred to is NOT the earthly mountain at Jerusalem, but the antitypical Zion, that is, the real, true Zion, in heaven (compare Rev. 14:1). The readers of this Epistle, whether Jewish or Gentile Christians, had certainly NOT come to the earthly Mount Zion. The Christian had come to the HEAVENLY Jerusalem (12:22), the city of the living God, the abode of glorified saints, and to innumerable hosts of angels. These are the first of the citizens of the heavenly city which has just been mentioned. Next comes "the general assembly and church

of the firstborn, which are written in heaven", that is, the company of the redeemed, whose names are in the Lamb's book of life. They are called "firstborn" because of their adoption into the family of God. Christ Jesus is pre-eminently God's firstborn (1:6), but believers become so by adoption.

The expression "God the Judge of all" means God the sovereign ruler who awards to every one his due, according to justice.

What is meant by the expression "the spirits of just men made perfect"? According to Alford this means "the whole number of the just who have passed into their rest, from the righteous Abel downwards"; the text does not say that we have come to "just men made perfect", but to their SPIRITS; their spirits are perfected, and at the resurrection they shall be perfected with us in the sense of 11:40, by the spiritual body.

"And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant" (12:24). Note that the text does not say "Christ" but "Jesus"; it uses the personal name, not the official title, perhaps to call attention to His human nature and the sufferings through which He was "made perfect" (2:10).

"The blood of sprinkling" (12:24) means Christ's own blood, the antitype or fulfilment of the Old Testament blood of sprinkling in the Holy of Holies. Christ's own blood is spiritually applied to the believer for the remission of his sins. "That speaketh better things than that of Abel" — this of course means better things than the blood of Abel's sacrificed lamb; it does not mean "better things than Abel's own blood that was shed by Cain". The comparison is between something good and something better. Abel's own blood was in no sense "good" for what Christ's blood was effectual for, namely, as a sacrifice to atone for sin. So it must be the blood of the animal sacrifice offered by Abel that is spoken of.

Some have held that Christ's own blood is preserved, incorruptible, in heaven. This is an interesting but difficult question. Christ's blood was shed at the crucifixion. His body did not see corruption (Acts 13:37). The blood is the most important part of the human body, for the life is in the blood. Our Lord's resurrection body seems to have been bloodless (Luke 24:39, John 20:27). Alford says: ". . . the words imply that the marks were no SCARS, but THE VERITABLE WOUNDS THEMSELVES; — that in His side being large enough for a hand to be thrust into it. This of itself would show that the resurrection body was BLOODLESS". If His resurrection body was bloodless, and His shed blood saw no corruption, we face the question, What happened to it, and where it is today? Bengel affirms that the Lord's blood remains, as it was poured out, before God in heaven, incorruptible, an eternal testimony to the finished work of atonement.

While this is an interesting idea, the matter is one of speculation, for Scripture is silent on the subject.

12:25-29 follows with a practical application of the foregoing. The readers are exhorted not to refuse Him that speaketh; the argument is from Israel's case of Sinai to that of the New Testament believer. If the Israelites at Sinai could not refuse God's Word without coming under judgment, much less can the readers of the Epistle, with their far greater privileges and opportunities.

12:36 is quoted from Haggai 2:6 and is of an eschatological character (concerning the end of the world): "Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven", referring to the great cataclysmic upheaval which shall bring about the end of all things temporary, as well as of all things that are sinful and against God, and shall be followed by the eternal order of things. This will be at the second coming of Christ. Nothing of the present order can last over into the future (eternal) order, except such things as "cannot be shaken", that is, those things established in God, and written in His book in heaven.

12:28 speaks of the kingdom of grace which cannot be shaken. The world to come will be characterized by stability and permanence, freedom from the change and decay which surround us in this present world. Receiving this unshakable kingdom of grace, the Christian has the greatest reason for gratitude to God — gratitude which is not a mere empty expression of words, but which issues in service to God with reverence and godly fear. "For our God is a consuming fire" — service to God is a serious matter, for God is the great and holy One, who is not mocked, and cannot be trifled with or deceived.

Questions:

1. Why is the Christian not to seek "peace at any price"?
2. What is the meaning of the expression "fail of the grace of God" (12:15)?
3. Why was Esau called a profane person?
4. What effect may one profane person have upon many other members of a church?
5. How do we know that the Mount Zion mentioned in 12:22 does not mean the earthly Mount Zion in Palestine?
6. Why is the Church called the "church of the firstborn" in 12:23?
7. What is meant by "the blood of sprinkling" (12:24)?
8. What is meant by the blood of Abel in 12:24?

9. Why does the "blood of sprinkling" speak "better things than that of Abel"?

10. What was Alford's opinion concerning the resurrection body of our Lord?

11. What did Bengel hold concerning the blood of Jesus which was shed at the crucifixion?

12. What great future event is mentioned in 12:26?

13. What will be the effect of that event on all that is merely temporary and all that is sinful?

14. What kind of a kingdom has the believer in Christ received?

15. Why and how should the Christian serve God (12:29)?

LESSON 21

EXHORTATIONS CONNECTED WITH CERTAIN PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN DUTIES, 13:1-25.

(A) Practical Exhortations. 13:1-17.

In the closing words of chapter 12 we read that the Christian should "serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (12:28). But what does this involve? The believer's duty to serve God concerns not merely words but also deeds; not merely religious worship in the strict sense, but the whole range of human life as well. Therefore 13:1-6 mentions a number of important matters which the Christian must not neglect, namely: (1) To maintain the spirit of love among Christian brethren. (2) To be hospitable toward strangers, that is, Christians away from their homes. (3) To remember those that are in bonds, that is, Christians suffering imprisonment or other persecution for their loyalty to Christ. (4) To be separate from uncleanness. (5) To avoid the sin of covetousness. (6) In all things to trust the Lord. If a person lacks these things, or is neglectful of them, it makes no difference how pure his belief may be.

In 13:7-9 the believer is urged to follow those leaders who are or were (in their lifetime) loyal to the Lord, and not to be carried away by diverse and strange teachings. "The end of their conversation" (13:7) probably refers to the martyrdom of the persons spoken of. 13:8, those who had formerly been their leaders were now asleep, and other men had taken their places as their leaders in Christ, but there is one Leader who never changes, and that is Christ Himself. To all eternity He is and will be the great Head and Captain of the Church.

The "diverse and strange doctrines" of 13:9 in all probability were the traditions and regulations added to the Old Testament law by Jewish teachers; compare Col. 2:20-23. These teachings were NOT commandments of God and they were NOT of divine authority, but mere human inventions, and therefore valueless.

The "altar" of 13:10 is Christ Himself; compare John 6:53-56. The believer by the Lord's death has received eternal life; therefore the believer ought to follow the Lord. But whither? To the place of REJECTION BY MEN and to the PLACE OF SUFFERING. The Lord suffered

"without the gate", therefore the Christian ought to go to Christ without the camp, bearing His reproach. Those who receive eternal life from Christ must also confess Christ before men, and regard the REPROACH of Christ as greater riches than the treasures of this world. Moreover the believer is only a pilgrim on this earth, therefore to be rejected by the sinners of the world is not a calamity. 13:15, 16 mentions the sacrifices which the Christian should offer. These are not sin-offerings, to atone for sin, but thank-offerings, to express gratitude to God. Two kinds are mentioned: (1) the fruit of lips which make confession to His name (ARV); To do good and communicate. In these two ways the Christian can express his love for God and for the people of God. 13:17, the Christian should, according to his own position, be in submission to the recognized leaders or officers of the Church, for they act on behalf of the Lord, and by His authority.

(B) Concluding Remarks and Benediction. 13:18-25.

Some have regarded 13:18, 19 as an evidence that this Epistle was written by the apostle Paul, but this is unfounded. Others than Paul were providentially separated from churches to which they were deeply attached.

13:20, 21, the benediction: The "everlasting covenant" which is mentioned is the New Covenant established by Christ; it is called "everlasting" (or "eternal", ARV), because it will continue without termination to all eternity, being in this respect distinguished from the old or Sinaitic covenant, which was only temporary. From verse 21 we learn that all good works ever done by Christians, proceed only from God's grace working within them, and all are done only through the Lord Jesus Christ.

The plea of 13:22, "I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation", is one which is much needed in the modern Church. There are too many at the present day who are not willing to listen to, or to submit to, any word of exhortation which is according to the truth of God's Word. The need of the hour is not for a more popular type of message, but for a message that

rings true to the inspired Word of God, and for a Church that will patiently hear and heed such a message.

The statement "Written to the Hebrews from Italy by Timothy", which appears at the close of the Epistle in the King James Version, is not part of the inspired text of the Epistle, and is not found in the most reliable Greek manuscripts.

Questions:

1. What practical ways of serving the Lord are mentioned in 13:1-6?
2. What is the probable meaning of the expression "the end of their conversation" (13:7)?
3. What great truth concerning Jesus Christ is implied in the statement that He is the same yesterday, today and for ever?
4. What were the "diverse and strange doctrines" of 13:9, and what should be the Christian's attitude toward such teachings?

5. What is the altar mentioned in 13:10?
6. Whither should the Christian follow Christ?
7. What two kinds of sacrifices should the Christian offer to God?
8. Why should Christian people be in submission to the lawful officers of their church?
9. What is the "everlasting covenant" mentioned in 13:20, and why is it called "everlasting"?
10. What truth about the good works of Christians is stated in 13:21?
11. How can the words of 13:22 be applied to the Church of our own day?
12. Why does the postscript "Written to the Hebrews from Italy by Timothy" not shed any light on the question of where the Epistle was written?

The End

Reviews of Religious Books

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

NOTHING BUT THE GOSPEL, by Peter H. Eldersveld. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan. 1966, pp. xix, 162. No price.

SHARING HIS SUFFERINGS, by Peter H. Eldersveld. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan. 1961, pp. ix, 99. \$2.50.

A great teacher of preachers once said that the greatest influence for good in the history of the world was the Christian pulpit. That's quite a statement. But if you will reflect on what the New Testament says about preaching you will have to admit that it's true. And that makes the pulpit an awfully dangerous place.

A corollary growing out of this is the truth R. B. Kuiper used to teach his students in preaching class — "Make every sermon a masterpiece." And we who preach can have no lower an aim.

In these two books of sermons, Peter Elders-

veld, radio pastor of the Christian Reformed Church for 25 years, approaches Kuiper's goal. Preacher, read the sermons of this master pulpiteer, and learn. Learn that exegeting the text, the all important work of determining the meaning of this Word of God, is only the beginning. To preach the Word, the meaning of the text must be translated into the language of the people — and that's not easy. But it's worth the effort.

And this can make the reformed faith live — for Peter Eldersveld loved and preached the reformed faith without apology. Well, just listen — "The atonement of our Lord is not some kind of gigantic, universal, indiscriminate 'grab-bag', from which men may pick a parcel of salvation, if they so desire . . . Nor does he hold the costly cross of his dear Son before the sinful generations of mankind, and then let them vote on it, to see who wants it and who does not — meanwhile wondering whether he will get enough votes to win the election, and then discovering that he loses by a big majority" (**Nothing but the Gospel**, p. 40). That's a power-

ful paragraph protesting the universal atonement so popular today.

Or hear him describe the incarnation as "the simple but solemn story of a child born to a virgin who did not have a husband and did not commit adultery!" (*Ibid*, p. 74).

This is real preaching — reformed, scriptural, evangelistic in the best sense of that word, conveying the truth of the gospel to reader and hearer.

—Jack J. Peterson

THE WESLEYAN BIBLE COMMENTARY: VOLUME V, ROMANS-PHILEMON, Charles W. Carter (ed.). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 1965, pp. 675. \$8.95.

The format of this book is attractive. Most of the contributors to this volume have written comments on two Bible books. In addition they have included outlines and introductory material. The writers are drawn from a variety of Arminian denominations, most of which are evangelical. "The aim of the WBC is to maintain both the spiritual insight and sound biblical scholarship of John Wesley and Adam Clarke, but to express these characteristics in the context of contemporary thought and life."

The theological presuppositions of this commentary are unsatisfactory. (For a clear statement of the underlying error of Arminianism see the July-September, 1967, issue of this journal, pp. 159-162.) The exposition of Ephesians 1:5 illustrates the Wesleyan refusal to accept the sovereignty of God in salvation. "Likewise all men are chosen and foreordained by God to become sons of God in Christ, to become members of the royal family (cf. Rev. 1:4-6), but not all accept God's choice and foreordination, and thus many never enter into their spiritual inheritance." This one sentence indicates a distorted view of the nature of God, man, sin, and salvation!

The book is not recommended.

—David R. Armstrong

THE CHRISTIAN IN COMPLETE ARMOUR, by William Gurnall. The Banner of Truth Trust, London. 1964 (reprint), pp. 1200. 35s.

William Gurnall (1616-79) was an English puritan. This book opens with a thirty page biography of Gurnall by J. C. Ryle. This reviewer acknowledges that he was somewhat overwhelmed by a 1200 page commentary on eleven verses (Ephesians 6:10-20) and that he has not read these two volumes (bound together) in their entirety. He has read the sixty four pages on the helmet of salvation and found them to be helpful. Gurnall wanders far from his text, but stays close to Scripture and to its application to the needs of men. Sample: "The fourth and last office of hope propounded is, to

quiet and compose the Christian's spirit when God stays long before he comes to perform promises. Patience, I told you, is the back on which the Christian's burdens are carried, and hope the pillow between the back and the burden, to make it sit easy."

Only a few will find time to read this kind of book today, but for those few it will be a rewarding investment.

—David R. Armstrong

MISSION IN METROPOLIS, by Jesse Jai McNeil. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 1965, pp. 148. \$3.50.

This is a provocative book, written by a Negro with a Ph. D. in education from Columbia University. Before his death, Dr. McNeil served as a Baptist pastor and as a seminary professor of Christian education. His concern is that the Church change to meet the problems of a metropolitan society. This work is thought-provoking because it raises problems that most Christians have not even considered. How does a Christian (or the Church) influence the ethics of a major corporation? How is a Christian society to be achieved, or maintained? What is the role of moral legislation?

The work is also disturbing because it makes general statements without precise definition. "Religion, if it is to be relevant to inner-city dwellers, must be a religion of their own expression, a form patterned by their own religious inclinations and beliefs; one which has meaning to them at their level of intellectual, moral, social, and spiritual development, and which speaks to their particular and immediate needs". This sounds like a rejection of Biblical Christianity. This is the pattern of the book; challenges to the Church that need to be given, but in a context that makes you wonder what the author believes. Dr. McNeil makes no serious attempt to exposit Scripture. If you are going to read this book, read it for its value in the field of the sociology of religion.

—David R. Armstrong

WILT THOU GO WITH THIS MAN? by Brownlow North. The Banner of Truth Trust, 78b Chiltern St., London, WI, 1966 pp. 128.

Among excellent current reprints of British authors is this series of addresses by the Irish evangelist, Brownlow North, first preached in Ulster's Great Awakening of 1859. The theme of this small volume is stated in its arresting title, a question first put to Rebekah by her brother Laban and repeated with loving earnestness in each of these heart-searching messages as the call of the Holy Spirit to the soul under conviction. The author is thoroughly evangelical, emphasizing salvation by grace alone, redemption by the blood of Christ and the unspeakable rewards of answering, "I will go."

Excellent reading to strengthen the Christian, to awaken the lost.

— Faith C. Carson

CONFRONTING THE CULTS, by Gordon R. Lewis. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. 1966, pp. vii, 198. \$2.95 (Paperback)

This is a study of six cults by the Professor of Theology at Conservative Theological Seminary in Denver. Coming under scrutiny are Jehovah's Witnesses, Latter-day Saints, Christian Science, Seventh-day Adventists, Unity, and Spiritualists.

The approach has in view helping Christians in their witness to those enmeshed in cults. Seven basic questions dealing with the core of the gospel are propounded, with the answers of the cult - questions relating to Scripture, Christ, redemption, faith, etc. The reader is urged to avoid debating minor points and to center on the cultist and his relationship to Jesus Christ.

The first chapter deals with cults in general and their alarming growth plus reasons why.

Although not quite agreeing with Barnhouse and Martin that Seventh-day Adventists are evangelical, yet Lewis is far less harsh than Herbert Bird, for example, is on them.

— Jack J. Peterson

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES AND WHAT THEY BELIEVE, by Stan Thomas. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan. 1967, pp. 159. \$3.95.

Stan Thomas was a member of the Jehovah's Witness cult. He is now a confessing Christian. He therefore writes about the Witnesses from a viewpoint of experience and from the viewpoint of infallible Scripture.

His approach is irenic in a good sense. He does not poke fun. He is not belligerent for belligerency sake. He approaches such problems as the 'divorce' of Russel, and his claim of the knowledge of Greek with proper objectivity.

An interesting history of the sect is given. Very interesting. Thomas shows the common parentage of the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Seventh Day Adventists via the "Second Adventists."

The book often sounds like a tract written to Witnesses seeking to show them their errors and to lead them to Christ.

— Jack J. Peterson

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, Vol. 2, Chapters 9-16, by John Murray. W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich., 49502. 1965, pp. 286. \$5.00.

Professor Murray explains the name Israel in Romans 9-11 as signifying: a) Gentile Believers; b) The Remnant Believers of Israel; c) Ethnic Israel. His comments emphasize that Jew and Gentile alike are redeemed solely and completely by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Church of Christ cannot harbor anti-Semitic feelings, and on the contrary should pray for the salvation of those in Israel. Someday Israel will turn to her Messiah.

Romans 12-15 contains many important doctrines which Professor Murray applies to our day. On Romans 12:1, 2 he writes:

"Sanctification is a process of revolutionary change in that which is the centre of consciousness. This sounds a fundamental note in the Biblical ethic. It is the thought of progression and strikes at the stagnation, complacency, pride of achievement so often characterizing Christians" (p. 114).

Professor Murray's exposition on the Civil Magistrate, chapter 13, should be studied by those in the Christian Amendment Movement and the National Reform Association.

The controversy over the meaning of the "weak" and the "strong" of Romans 14 is completely settled. He writes:

"That nothing is unclean of itself is the justification of the belief entertained by the strong that he may eat all things (verse 2) and is the reason why abstinence on the part of some is due to weakness of faith. This principle is the refutation of all prohibitionism which lays the responsibility for wrong at the door of things rather than at man's heart . . . If certain things were intrinsically evil, then the strong would be required to abstain from their use out of regard to their own religious interests" (pp. 188, 189).

I most warmly recommend this exposition of Romans by an honest man of God, who was once my teacher and friend.

— Edward A. Robson

JUNGLE FIRE, by Bruce Porterfield. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1967, pp. 146. \$2.50.

The author has served for years as a missionary of the New Tribes Mission in South America. This book is a novel which brings out many of the experiences and problems of a missionary in a new field, the dangers faced and the successes won.

— J. G. Vos

THE DOCTOR'S SECRET, by Vera Minshall. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1966, pp. 155. \$2.50.

A Christian fiction story showing how those

whose lives are rooted in Christ can overcome temptations and become stronger and better Christians by going through severe testing.

— J. G. Vos

VALLEY OF DESIRE, by Adel Pryor. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1967, pp. 144. \$2.50.

By a well-known writer of Christian fiction, this story portrays shattering disappointment which finally led to learning the lesson that obedience to God and submission to His will is the only road to true and lasting joy.

— J. G. Vos

THE WANDERING HEART, by Nancy J. Sell. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1966, pp. 248. \$3.95.

A young girl who outwardly seems to have all that life can give, none the less has a deeply unsatisfied heart. Through many experiences she continues without true peace and joy. Finally she finds in God and His will what she had secretly hungered for all along.

— J. G. Vos

'THESE MY PEOPLE', by Lillian Dickson. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1964, reprint of 1958, pp. 121, paper cover, illustrated. \$1.00.

The sub-title is "Serving Christ among the Mountain People of Formosa." The author is a well-known Canadian Presbyterian missionary who has spent many years on Formosa. Though Taiwan or Formosa is known as "Free China" and is inhabited mainly by Chinese today, the "mountain people" described in this book are not Chinese. They are aboriginal tribes with a culture and languages of their own. Some of them are fierce head-hunters. To these people the Gospel of Jesus Christ has proved to be, as it is indeed, the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes. This book shows the saving, transforming power of the Gospel among people in the utmost spiritual darkness and need. Recommended especially for mission study groups.

— J. G. Vos

CALVINISM: ITS HISTORY, PRINCIPLES AND PERSPECTIVES, by Simon Kistemaker. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1966, pp. 104. \$1.50.

This little book is another in the Baker Book House's series of study manuals. There is nothing here which cannot be found elsewhere in volumes on Calvinism. But Calvinism is a dynamic movement that recognizes Christ's sovereignty and the Bible's relevancy to every area of life, and thus needs to be learned by the laity. Dr. Kistemaker states his own purpose: "Anyone interested in the principles of

Calvinism — how they have been formulated in the past and how they are applied in the present — may find this study profitable."

The booklet is divided into four sections: a biography of Calvin, a history of Calvinism, principles of Calvinism and perspectives of Calvinism. Some of us will feel that one chapter should be entitled "Some of the principles of Calvinism", and that the author doesn't raise the real issue when he discusses "the political task." However, this book is highly recommended as an accurate and provocative study guide.

— John H. White

EVANGELISM: ITS THEOLOGY AND PRACTICE, by A. Skevington Wood. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 1966, pp. 119. \$2.95.

This is not a profound book, but it is a good one. In the first part the author clearly shows that there is no dichotomy between theology and evangelism. "Let us then seek to show how Christian doctrine, in all its comprehensiveness, is vitally relevant to evangelism." The second part of the book seeks to be practical, but is shallow. Layman, use this book to begin your study of evangelism. Then progress with such books as **God-Centered Evangelism** (R. B. Kuiper), **Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God** (J. I. Packer), and **Reformed Evangelism**. They go far deeper than the present volume.

— David R. Armstrong

HISTORY OF EVANGELISM, by Paulus Scharpff. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 1966, pp. 373. \$5.75.

The late Dr. Scharpff was a Methodist seminary professor in Frankfurt, Germany. The stated purpose of the book is "to provide a great deal of historical material concerning evangelism for those who in systematic programs of instruction, whether in seminaries or in churches, teach 'faithful men who will be able to teach others also' (II Tim. 2:2)." It deals with the period since the pietistic movement of the mid-1600s. The history is traced in three areas, Germany, Great Britain, and the United States. It is a very readable textbook, complete with footnotes, an acceptable bibliography, and good indices. The Germany history is probably too "dry" for most Americans. The author's arminianism occasionally is revealed by his vocabulary, but is not a serious detriment. The volume was published in conjunction with the 1966 Berlin World Congress on Evangelism, and makes a contribution to its field.

— David R. Armstrong

AND NONE WOULD BELIEVE IT, by M. Basilea Schlink. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 1957, pp. 115 (paper). \$1.95.

"Author of more than 50 books and articles plus hundreds of hymns, poems and meditations, M. Basilea Schlink is the founder and director of the Order of Sisters of Mary in Germany. She holds a Ph. D. in Philosophy and Psychology . . ." This Lutheran writer has given us an excellent defense of the moral law for Christians today. She begins with a shock treatment, documenting the lawlessness of our generation. Then she exposes its philosophical roots in Rousseau, the French Revolution, Kant, and Hegel. We see its growth through Nietzsche, Marx, Lenin, and Tillich, and on to Bishop Robinson. In the second chapter, the author opens the Scriptures to show the relation of law to salvation in Christ and love. There is no conflict, so she appeals to us to "Come under the Lordship of Jesus Christ in His Kingdom, which rests on the foundation of God's commandments."

In the brief third chapter it is argued that the evidence points to the return of Christ very soon. This is the weakest part of the book. The book is recommended to Christians who are concerned about the breakdown of law and order.

— David R. Armstrong

A HISTORY OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONS (Volume VI in "The Pelican History of the Church"), by Stephen Neill (Eerdmans, 1965, 622 pp., \$7.50)

Bishop Stephen Neill's qualifications are imposing for undertaking the task of summarizing the vast amount of source material on Christian missions. He was educated at Cambridge. For twenty years he served the Anglican church as a missionary in India. In 1944 he returned to Europe where he has been active in the Ecumenical Movement, and since 1962 has been Professor of Missions and Ecumenical Theology in the University of Hamburg.

The significance of this volume lies in three areas. Part I, (pp. 1-240) presents a more balanced historical view of Christian missions than has been available in popular form. Part II, (pp. 243-577) places more emphasis on the mission activity of the Roman, Orthodox, and Anglican churches than has been made in prior studies by Protestant writers. Bishop Neill acknowledges an indebtedness to K.S. Latourette's seven-volume **History of the Expansion of Christianity**. The Conclusion includes an assessment of the task facing the Church in the latter half of the twentieth century.

A cautious estimate of the relation between the future of Christian Missions and the Ecumenical Movement is made in the chapter entitled, "From Mission to Church". "If the Churches knew what they were doing at New Delhi, they have committed themselves to a revolution in their theology, in their understand-

ing of the nature of the Church, in the organization of their manpower, and in the distribution of their financial resources. Time will show how far fair words will be successful in translating themselves into heroic enterprises." (p. 558)

This volume has not replaced the usefulness of Glover's (revised by Kane) **The Progress of Worldwide Missions** as a handbook of missions. An excellent bibliography adds to the usefulness of this contribution to the literature on Christian Missions.

— S. Bruce Willson

PARSON TO PARSON, by Adolph Bedsole, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 49506, 1964, 149 pp., \$2.95.

Ever since Richard Baxter urged his contemporary ministers, three hundred years ago, to perform their duties "zealously and faithfully," the Protestant clergy has been admonished to reappraise their work.

Adolph Bedsole, pastor of the Immanuel Baptist Church in Panama City, Florida, undertakes to speak frankly to fellow ministers. He recognizes the mounting pressures of the mechanics of administration. But his theme is that a pastor must maintain his major concern — person to person presentation of the Person of Jesus Christ.

There is probably some therapeutic value in reading at least one new book each year on some phase of the practical life of the ministry. This little book will be of more value in its suggestion for self analysis than in resolving the problems. A sprightly humor characterizes the style.

— S. Bruce Willson

GENESIS 3, by Edward J. Young. The Banner of Truth Trust, 78b Chiltern Street, London W. 1. 1966, pp. 165. \$1.00.

Many of the readers of this journal have known the loyalty of Dr. Edward J. Young to the Scripture and the Reformed Faith. Many of us are deeply indebted to him for his thorough exposition of the Scripture and competent defense of its inerrancy. This exposition of Genesis three adds one more volume to his many helpful and readable books.

In the age of Neo-Orthodoxy the exegesis of the fall narrative is one of the central issues in contemporary theology. This commentary affirms the historicity of Genesis three and is aware of the contemporary debate yet most of the text is spent discussing the content of the passage itself. Though it is true that the technical questions must be dealt with and competent answers given, Dr. Young has chosen rather to unfold the Biblical Theological message of Gene-

sis Three in readable fashion. He states his own purpose: "Our earnest prayer is that the modern reader, with the help of these pages, will come to a deeper understanding of what Genesis Three teaches. May he realize the depth to which Adam plunged the human race, but may he also realize how great was the love of God that sent a second Adam whose atoning work has paid the debt of man's sin." (p. 6) We do not mean to imply that the author has not dealt with the views of other men but he has done it without being pedantic.

Dr. Young is careful in his exposition not to fall into the trap of fanciful allegorizing while at the same time he has been faithful to the whole History of Redemption which both depends on and throws light upon Genesis Three. Yet this writer wonders whether or not a great deal more could not be said in unfolding the adumbrations of verses 15 and 21?

This book contains a sound and thorough exposition, a source for sermon material and is filled with rich devotional blessing. Laymen, clergymen, and church librarians will want to buy it.

— John H. White

PIERRE TEILHARD de CHARDIN: *EVOLUTION AND CHRIST*, by Cornelius Van Til. Presbyterian and Reform Publishing Co., Box 185, Nutley, N.J. pp. 44, paper cover, 75 cents.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955) was a Jesuit priest and scientist whose writings are now being widely read and discussed in both Roman Catholic and Protestant circles. A native of France, Teilhard spent many years doing research in geology and palaeontology in China and in Africa. As a scientist he was interested in the origin of man; as a priest with a penchant for teleology, he had a vision of the future of man. These two lines, past and future, scientific and theological, converge in Teilhard's thought to form a panoramic vision of a universe in the making. "The universe has its own history: it has a past, and it must be directed towards some final goal . . . The world with all its riches, life with its astounding achievements, man with the constant prodigy of his inventive powers, all are organically integrated in one single growth and one historical process, and all share the same upward progress towards an era of fulfillment" (*The Divine Milieu*, Harper & Row, New York, 1965, p. 15).

Teilhard envisioned an eventual cosmic synthesis — the material universe now permeated by the spiritual, in process of being fully spiritualized, moving steadily upward toward a supreme personality, the divine Spirit. "Physical energy contains in itself something of the spiritual, and since the upward trend of energy is a fact we can observe and verify with the increasing

complexity of organisms, the law of the universe must surely be a continually progressing, irreversible spiritualization" (*Ibid*, p. 22).

Christ is at the center of this evolution. In Christ God united himself with the world which he created. The Incarnation is the focal point in Teilhard's vision. The Incarnation is the means whereby God unifies and incorporates the world with himself. The Son of God became, by virtue of his human nature, a part of the cosmos, which God is winning back, since Christ shared all the activities of men. In the Eucharist, or sacrament of holy communion, in which Christ becomes present again and again, the Incarnation step by step "invades the universe" as the Host "assimilates mankind, and, in the process, all the essentials of the universe" (*Evolution and Christ*, p. 38).

Thus Teilhard conceives of the gradual "divinisation" of the world, "the whole of mankind being in the process of incarnation," as Van Til suggests (p. 32). Teilhard, in fact, "identifies the idea of incarnation with a vague notion of the spiritualization of all matter" (*Ibid*). Such a view of the Incarnation, in which past and present merge in one Act, appears to Van Til to be similar to Karl Barth's idea of the Christ-Event. Both Teilhard and Barth conceive of man as participating in the being of God through the Incarnation which is God's Act of reconciling men to himself. The Christ of both Teilhard and Barth, Van Til concludes, is "but a vague ideal of the would-be autonomous man" (p. 44). For both Teilhard and Barth start *von unten* (from below), i.e., with the self-sufficiency of the moral consciousness of man (p. 28).

Developing this point further, Van Til explains where Teilhard stands in relation to both traditional Roman Catholic theology and neo-orthodox theology. Teilhard, as a number of recent scholars have pointed out, broke with the Essentialism of traditional Roman Catholic philosophy and theology in favor of an existentialist position. The latter is, of course, no better than the former. Christian essentialism is a synthesis of biblical and Greek ideas. Christian existentialism is a synthesis of biblical and modern ideas. Both essentialism and existentialism, Van Til reminds us, are based on the assumption of human autonomy and thus reduce God and Christ to a projection of man's moral consciousness. Existentialism goes beyond essentialism in its reduction of God, for while the latter "at least seeks to retain something of God as self-dependent . . . existentialism reduces God's self-existence to nothing but the relation that he sustains to man" (p. 29). God is thus identified with his Act of saving all men in Christ. God is the Christ-Event, which means, in plain terms, that God is a moment of man's religious experience.

Teilhard's God and Christ, like the God and Christ of neo-orthodox theology, are projected deities. Teilhard did not, therefore, Van Til observes, succeed in resolving the dualism which appears to separate the realm of things (the impersonal dimension of reality) from the realm of ideas (the personal dimension). Teilhard tried to build a bridge from the impersonal to the personal by means of the progressive evolution idea in which all things lead upward toward God through Christ. He failed to do so, however, because, together with neo-orthodox thinkers, he did not, in the last analysis, begin with the God of the Bible as the presupposition of the possibility and discovery of any and all relationships between men and things.

Those who have read one or more of Teilhard de Chardin's works, and who are familiar with the main concepts of modern theology will find Van Til's analysis and evaluation illuminating. They will appreciate Teilhard's devout hope, a beatific vision of the unity of all things through Christ. But at the same time they will realize the crucial importance of bringing every thought, in science as well as in theology, into captivity to the obedience of Christ, as he is revealed in the Bible.

— Joseph Hill

THE PROVIDENTIAL PRESERVATION OF THE GREEK TEXT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, by Ergatees (Greek pseudonym meaning "Worker"). Westminster Standard, 183 Rutene Rd., Gisborne, New Zealand. No date, pp. 36. paper cover. 2 shillings.

This thought-provoking treatise should be read in conjunction with the next two books reviewed, since they represent three evangelical poles on the subject of textual criticism. But since this archly conservative and the other two evangelical presentations deal with the necessary practice of textual criticism, this should be sufficient testimony to convince any believer that this type of discipline is not heresy or unbelief.

The author of this booklet contends that the Greek text underlying the King James translation (popularly called the "Textus Receptus" or "Received Text"), is not only God-inspired but also divinely preserved. In a couple of places he begs the issue, but over all, a sober defense of his proposition is ably presented.

However this method raises the objection: Since God supposedly preserved the "Textus Receptus" intact in the Greek Christian Church, then why did not God likewise preserve intact the Hebrew text in the Jewish church? However, this booklet should be seriously considered by any evangelical textual critic, even if its thesis is ultimately rejected.

— Robert More, Jr.

THE STORY OF THE BIBLE, by Sir Frederic Kenyon and F. F. Bruce. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49502. 1967, pp. 150, paper cover. \$1.95.

Both Kenyon and Bruce are British scholars of a basically evangelical bent. This book is the short, popular edition of the larger one, with F. F. Bruce detailing the new discoveries concerning the Bible of the last three decades. With the exception of a recommendation of the now "ecumenical Revised Standard Version Bible", this material is faultless. The book describes how God's Word was first written (the script and the form of scroll or codex); how it was preserved (manuscripts); how the original language texts were formed (textual criticism); and how it came to us (principles of translation).

— Robert More, Jr.

THE NEW TESTAMENT AND CRITICISM, by George Eldon Ladd. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49502. 1967, pp. 222. \$3.95.

Dr. Ladd is a professor at Fuller Seminary (California) which identifies him as a Bible-believing Christian, but with a tendency to accept some of the practices of Modernism. While certainly not modernistic himself, in this book he subjects the Bible to methods of criticism which are characteristic of Modernism.

Dr. Ladd presents his case learnedly. From the long Introduction, he plainly anticipates (and he scorns it somewhat) "fundamentalistic objections." He is not likely to be disappointed in this anticipation. Though I consider myself a Fundamentalist, I found the last five chapters of the book indeed stimulating (these chapters are a treatment of linguistic criticism, literary criticism, form criticism, historical criticism and comparative religious criticism. The author makes a number of valid judgments. Admittedly some of the passages cited, when read simply from a Greek text, do not capture one's attention; yet after Ladd presents the arguments, they are seen to be worthy of consideration.

On the other hand, the tendency simply to raise questions — presumably only for the purpose of stimulating inquiry — and the embracing of the patterns, terminology and methods of "destructive criticism" is to this reviewer's mind dangerous, not so much to scholars as to the general public. While we should never close the door to honest theological inquiry, it is quite another matter to begin tearing the paneling off the side of the building.

— Robert More, Jr.

THE SIGN LANGUAGE OF OUR FAITH, by Helen Stuart Griffith. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49502. 1966, pp. 96, paper cover. \$1.95.

This interesting book presents the various signs of Christianity from an Episcopalian viewpoint. In a few short pages the symbolism, history and Biblical or traditional groundwork of the signs are presented. A good glossary of words is included. The Chi-Rho seen on many Romanist churches is explained. Even the INRI (found on at least one Covenanter Church) is discussed. (It stands for "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews" in Latin).

— Robert More, Jr.

THE MILLENNIUM, by Jonathan Edwards. Westminster Standard, 183 Rutene Rd., Gisborne, New Zealand. 1966, pp. 36, paper cover. 2 shillings or 20 cents.

Here "Ergatees" again gives a summary of the three millennial positions, and appends certain modern-day expositions, primarily of a postmillennial view. He also adds, "the main tenets of the Post-Millennium view. . . are set forth in the following extracts. . . by Jonathan Edwards." Those familiar with Edwards' writings know that they are replete with sound, Scriptural exposition. This booklet is certainly an able defense of Postmillennialism, though not fully convincing.

— Robert More, Jr.

THE RUIN OF ANTICHRIST, by John Bunyan. Reiner Publications, Swengel, Pa. 17890. 1966 (reprint), pp. 118. \$1.50.

This book is by the immortal author of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. One "J.N.B." (apparently the editor) adds a few up-to-date footnotes. Although there is one vague reference to the head of the church universal, there is no outright identification and condemnation of the Roman Church. But plainly it is viewed as the Antichrist. The identification is so skillful and powerful that one reads the development with expectant fervor. Bunyan writes, as a sample, "Antichrist is one that is against Christ; one that is for Christ, and one that is contrary to him. . . Against him in deed; for him in word; and contrary to him in practice."

— Robert More, Jr.

ECUMENISM AND THE BIBLE, by David Hedegard. The Banner of Truth Trust, 78b Chiltern St., London W. 1, England. 1964, pp. 236. 4 shillings sixpence.

This is an evangelical evaluation of the ecumenical movement, with two chapters dealing with the Biblical view of unity. The author, a Swedish evangelical professor, traces the development of the ecumenical movement over the last century, and takes it up to the Vatican II Council. He also gives biographical sketches of several leaders and in general leaves the reader with a prodigious amount of information and an uneasy conscience.

— Robert More, Jr.

UNITY IN THE DARK, by Donald Gillies. The Banner of Truth Trust, 78b Chiltern St., London W. 1, England. 1964, pp. 128. 3 shillings sixpence.

This widely disseminated evangelical dispute with the ecumenical movement makes an excellent companion to Hedegard's "Ecumenism and the Bible." It too contains a number of thought-provoking illustrations of the intents and practices of the ecumenical movement, and usually follows with a Biblical criticism of it. Its most excellent feature, however, is in its quotations showing what the movement is actually doing, for then the "claws" are seen, not the honeyed words. As proof, when Queen Elizabeth II visited Pope John XXIII on May 5, 1961, why did she wear the "penitent's" black outfit, while Roman Catholic Queen Fabiola, about the same time, wore the white of purity? Yes, we who live in the British Commonwealth do need to sing, "God save the Queen" (from the Pope).

— Robert More, Jr.

THE QUARREL: A HISTORY OF THE GENEVA BIBLE, VOL. I, by Lewis Lupton. The Fauconberg Press, 2 Milnethorpe Road, London W. 4, England. 1966, pp. 120. No price stated.

This book is unreservedly magnificent. The author, a professional artist, after his conversion became intensely evangelical, and impresses me as a strong successor of the old Puritans. He has made a delightful contribution to church history. The Fauconberg Press, though small and financially unable to publish all three volumes of this work at the present time (it is using this volume as a pilot to future publications), is to be highly praised for its part. This book is so good that I hope for the opportunity of reviewing the companion volumes.

The main subject is the history of the Geneva Bible of 1560. There are also included artistic woodcuts, and a treatment of the situation in England and on the Continent relative to Bible production. The book provides many good first-hand quotations from the people involved. I say, "Mr. Author, well done, thou good and faithful servant."

— Robert More, Jr.

THE SECEDERS, by J. H. Philpot. The Banner of Truth Trust, 78b Chiltern St., London W. 1, England. No date, pp. 208. 6 shillings.

This is a biography of J. C. Philpot and William Tiptaft who withdrew from the Church of England for conscience' sake, because of its doctrinal corruption. The Rev. Mr. Philpot's letter of secession, dated March 28, 1835, is printed in its entirety, and is very convicting. While the material was originally published in the 1930's and describes events of over a century ago, it is more than relevant today.

— Robert More, Jr.

A HANDBOOK OF CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGY, by Bernard Ramm. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49502. 1966, pp. 141, paper cover. \$1.95.

Dr. Ramm is a professor at a Baptist seminary in California. He defines terms in popular theological use today by quoting the originating authors, along with refutations. For pastors, this book is of real worth.

I would make a couple of criticisms. (1) Under "Millennium", the amillennial and post-millennial views are defined in a single sentence, four times less than even "sobornost," "a term . . . considered untranslatable"! (2) A "fundamentalist" is said to be a person "with orthodox convictions who defends them with an anti-intellectual, anti-scholarly, anti-cultural belligerency." He (the fundamentalist) also "accepts the verbal inspiration and inerrancy of the Scriptures", a position which the author elsewhere calls "bibliolatry." The fundamentalist is also said to defend "a separatist position" which is not as excellent as "conservative men . . . in their pulpits" of ecclesiastical corruption and liberalism.

— Robert More, Jr.

THE ZONDERVAN PASTOR'S ANNUAL FOR 1967, by William R. Austin. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1966, pp. 383. \$3.95.

This is a book of quick frozen sermons, which only need to be thawed out, by a Baptist preacher. While the thoughts are sweet enough, the book reminds me of a statement I once read: "Preachers who don't get their sermons out of books, want to put them into books."

— Robert More, Jr.

DESCENT INTO HELL, by Charles Williams. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49502. 1966, reprint of 1949, pp. 222, paper cover. \$1.95.

This book is not, as its title might seem to indicate, a discussion of a clause in the Apostles' Creed, nor is the author the Bible translator Charles Williams. This book by a different Charles Williams, is a novel about how an unbeliever degenerates but then struggles to reclamation, called "salvation." Some people must like this type of "spiritual" literature — I do not.

— Robert More, Jr.

EVANGELICALISM IN AMERICA, by Bruce Shelley. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49502. 1967, pp. 134. \$3.50.

Dr. Shelley, a Baptist seminary professor in Denver, gives the history of Gospel preaching in America, bringing it up through the National Association of Evangelicals of the present day. He takes the Neo-Evangelical stance (along with *Christianity Today*, Billy Graham, Carl Henry

and others) and continues the practice of speaking evil of "fundamentalism". The meager content of this book does not justify the high price.

— Robert More, Jr.

THE PRINCIPLES OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION, by A. Skevington Wood. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1967, pp. 103, \$3.50.

Dr. Wood is a strong evangelical and is widely published as an author. The book traces the methods of Biblical interpretation of the church fathers Irenaeus, Origen and Augustine, along with those of the Reformers Luther and Calvin. Brilliantly he shows how it is inadequate (indeed emphatically) simply to study the Bible without mastering the principles of interpretation, such as literal, symbolical, typological, consensus of Scripture, etc. If the price were not so high, I would recommend this book as basic for any teacher of the Bible, and especially for pastors.

— Robert More, Jr.

THE BIBLICAL DOCTRINE OF INITIATION, by Reginald E. O. White. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49502. 1960, pp. 392. \$6.00.

The author has been a Baptist minister for a quarter of a century and has written a number of books. He seems to be a spokesman for the "adult baptism" view, since *Christianity Today* some time ago contrasted his presentation with that of a paedobaptist (believer in infant baptism).

This book is very thorough, unlike some adult baptism publications. It squarely faces the Old Testament and the Covenant concept as well as the New Testament. It is full documented, and very fair in the treatment of other views.

Naturally the author rejects the identification of the covenant-circumcision rite of the Old Testament with Baptism in the New Testament — but significantly on the following premises (among others): (1) Because circumcision was practiced by pagan nations (seemingly it originated in Egypt), it therefore was not a God-appointed mark of the Covenant. (2) Because the rite of circumcision and the covenant developed and was modified throughout the Old Testament and was changed by the New Testament. He also shows his theological "development" in such words as: "Paul is regarded as the leader of the group within which Eph. Col. and Pastorals originated, whether or not they actually came from his pen" and "the passages in which circumcision is stressed are from the late-exilic source P. . .".

While the presentation is learned and has some real Biblical piety about it, the viewpoint that the Scriptural doctrine was, in fact, modified by a

progressive Judaistic faith and a disjuncture by the Christian Church cannot be accepted as valid by the Bible-believer who accepts the unity of God's covenant. May I suggest that even the author has not annihilated God's covenant with the family (including infant baptism)!

— Robert More, Jr.

A LAYMAN'S GUIDE TO BAPTIST BELIEFS, by Harold L. Fickett, Jr. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1965, pp. 184. \$3.50.

This book is written by a Baptist preacher, the son of one. His ministry has been fruitful. The book is popularly written, and has a number of interesting illustrations from history.

The discussion of baptism leaves much to be desired. He says that *baptizo* means "immerse." If so, why does Strabo say that Alexander's army "marched baptized up to the waist". Why does Mark 7:4 say that the Pharisees "baptized" tables, if it means "immersed"? Then he asserts that Mark 1:9, 10 proves that Jesus was immersed in the Jordan and came up out of the water. Not so — for that interpretation requires not the ac-

tual Biblical words "into the Jordan" but rather "under the Jordan River's water." The "out of" in Mark 1:10 only proves that He went from the river to the dry land, not "up from beneath the river water to the air above the water" as the author claims. Baptists tend to emphasize that verse — and even claim the Greek as support — without having the Greek proof they imagine is there.

— Robert More, Jr.

A TREASURY OF HUMOR, by Clyde Murdock. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1967, pp. 160. \$3.95.

This is a delightful book. It is wonderful to read a joke book knowing that no risqué or off-color joke will bite you without warning. This is indeed good Christian humor. While some didn't tickle my funny-bone, there were some memorable ones. To illustrate: there was the preacher with good intentions but a bad memory who announced that his sermon was based on the Bible verse which exhorts us to "cast out the sick, heal the dead, and raise the devil." (Go ahead and chuckle; I just did).

— Robert More, Jr.

Acknowledgments and Announcements

The manager of this magazine wishes to acknowledge, with hearty thanks, the following contributions to the cost of publishing the magazine which have been received since our last issue went to press:

May, 1967: No. 1790, \$3.00. No. 1791, \$11.58. No. 1792, \$20.00. No. 1793, \$10.10. No. 1794, \$.50. No. 1795, \$20.00.

June, 1967: No. 1796, \$.75. No. 1797, \$1.00. No. 1798, \$1.86. No. 1799, \$1.50.

July, 1967: No. 1800, \$18.00. No. 1801, \$50.00. No. 1802, \$10.00. No. 1803, \$8.50.

August, 1967: No. 1804, \$215.00. No. 1806, \$3.50. No. 1807, \$3.50. No. 1808, \$100.00. No. 1809, \$20.00. No. 1810, \$10.00. No. 1811, \$20.00.

These generous contributions from friends indicate serious concern that **Blue Banner Faith and Life** shall continue publication. These gifts are deeply appreciated. Less than half of the money needed is received from subscriptions and sales of back issues and reprints. For the rest we are mostly dependent on contributions. You can help the world-wide ministry of this magazine by contributing as the Lord enables you.

New Subscription Rates for 1968

Blue Banner Faith and Life began publication in 1946 and has now completed 22 years of publication. The subscription rate was originally \$1.00 per year. Before the end of 1946 this was raised to \$1.50 per year and through 21 years it has never been increased. Clubs of 5 or more copies to one address (U.S.A. and Canada) have been \$1.00 per person per year.

In recent years these subscription rates have only provided about one-third of the cost of

publishing and circulating the magazine. A moderate additional amount has come from occasional sales of back issues and reprints of articles. In some years a grant has been received from the Board of Publication of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. All of these sources combined would still have left a large deficit, were it not for the generous contributions received from readers and friends — contributions ranging from fifty cents to gifts in some cases of two or three hundred dollars.

Blue Banner Faith and Life accepts no advertising. The entire contents of the magazine is intended to be edifying and helpful material. We know from the reactions of many readers that their preference is for a magazine with contents limited to matter of substantial and more or less permanent value.

Under present conditions we must choose between drastically reducing the size of the magazine and increasing the subscription rates. We do not wish to reduce the size of the magazine more than absolutely necessary — we would like to publish four 50-page issues per year, giving 200 pages for the year. After much consideration it has been decided to increase the individual subscription rate by one dollar and the club rate by fifty cents. The new rates for 1968 will be:

Individual subscriptions to any address in the world, U.S. \$2.50 or equivalent.

Club subscription (U.S. and Canada), 5 or more persons in club, copies all mailed to a single address, U.S. \$1.50 per person per year.

It is hoped that none of our readers will consider these increases excessive, and that those who are financially able will continue to contribute generously above and beyond the subscription rates. Renewals already paid at the old rates will be considered paid in full.

Price of back issues. We have been providing back issues at 25c per issue postpaid. In shipments to Canada and overseas the postage has sometimes cost almost as much as we received for the magazines. In view of present printing costs and postage rates the rates for back issues will be U.S. 50 cents per issue, postpaid to any address in the world. The price is the same for new or used copies. New copies will be sent if available; otherwise the best used copies on hand.

Notice of Change of Address. When a copy of the magazine is returned as undeliverable, we have to pay postage due on the returned copy, then the cost of a new mailing envelope, then new postage on the re-mailing of the magazine. It costs about 25 cents to re-mail one copy in the U.S. domestic mails. This recurrent expense can be avoided if readers will send their change of address notice promptly.

Reprints Available

In writing for free copies of reprints, readers living in U.S.A. should send a 5 cent stamp for postage. Canadian and overseas readers need not send stamps.

Philippians: Epistle of Humility, Unity and Loyalty. 13 Bible lessons from the January-March 1965 issue. Obtainable from Reformed Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, 7437 Penfield Court, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15208.

Studies in the Covenant of Grace. 35 Bible lessons from the 1967 issues of the magazine, Obtainable from Board of Christian Education, address as given above.

Receiving the Holy Spirit. Article from this issue. Single copy free. 50 cents per dozen; 25 for \$1.00, postpaid.

Scriptural Revelation and the Evolutionary World View. Booklet reprinted from April-June 1967 issue. Single copy, free. In quantities, 10 cents each or \$1.00 per dozen, postpaid.

Psalm 98, tune Desert. Metrical version of Psalm 98 with music of tune Desert, on single sheets which by folding once can be pasted in Psalter or other book of similar size. 5 copies or less, free. In quantities, 25 for \$1.00. 50 for \$1.50. 100 for \$3.00. All postpaid.

What is Christian Education? Booklet on basic principles. Single copy, free. In quantities, 10 cents each or \$1.00 per dozen, postpaid.

Christian Education for Christian Youth. Pamphlet on importance of truly Christian education. Single copy, free. In quantities, 2 cents per copy, postpaid.

Surrender to Evolution: Inevitable or Inexcusable? Article reprinted from April-June 1966 issue. Single copy, free. In quantities, 10 cents per copy or \$1.00 per dozen, postpaid.

Ashamed of the Tents of Shem? Booklet on Psalmody and Worship. Single copy, free. In quantities, 5 cents per copy, postpaid.

The Offense of the Cross. Evangelistic and Gospel tract. Single copy, free. In quantities, 2 cents per copy or \$1.00 per 100, postpaid.

God, Man and Religion. Booklet on the underlying assumptions of different views of Christianity. Single copy, free. In quantities, 10 cents per copy or \$1.00 per dozen, postpaid.

A Christian Introduction to Religions of the World. 78 page paperback book by the Editor of this magazine. Obtainable from the publishers, Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy Street, S. E., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506. Reprinted from the July-September 1964 issue of the magazine.

Except as noted above, all orders for reprints should be sent to Blue Banner Faith and Life, 3408 Seventh Avenue, Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania 15010, U.S.A.

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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.

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.

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.

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.

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 raffled
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 spans with a bow.
Undaunted, still we watch and pray
Till Christ bring in the perfect day.

(Author unknown)

PSALM 34

CHAMPS ELYSEES. C.M.D.

French Air

1. At all times I will bless the Lord, In praise my mouth em - ploy;

My soul shall in Je - ho - vah boast; The meek shall hear with joy.

2. O mag - ni - fy the Lord with me; Let us ex - alt His name.

In all my fears I sought the Lord; From Him de - liv - 'rance came.

3. They looked to Him and radiant were;
Ashamed they shall not be.
This poor man cried; Jehovah heard,
From trouble set him free.

4. The angel of the Lord encamps,
And round encompasseth
All those about that do Him fear,
And them delivereth.

5. O taste and see the Lord is good;
Who trust in Him are blessed.
Fear God, His saints; none that Him
Shall be with want oppressed. (fear

6. The lions young may hungry be,
And they may lack their food;
But they that truly seek the Lord
Shall not lack any good.

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