BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

J. G. VOS, Editor and Manager

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of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America
(Crown & Covenant Publications)
7408 Penn Avenue • Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15208

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This project is made possible by the History Committee of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (rparchives.org).

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VOLUME 27 JANUARY—MARCH, 1972 NUMBER 1

PRESSURED PASTORS, PRESBYTERIES AND PRAGMATISM..... 3

THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION IN MODERN ENGLISH..... 6

A CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION..... 7

STUDIES IN THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS CHRIST..... 12

REVIEWS OF RELIGIOUS BOOKS..... 37

A Quarterly Publication Devoted to Expounding, Defending and Applying the System of Doctrine set forth in the Word of God and Summarized in the Standards of the Reformed Presbyterian (Covenanter) Church.
Subscription $2.50 per year postpaid anywhere

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3408 7th Avenue Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania 15010, U.S.A.

Editorial Committee: D. Howard Elliott, Marion L. McFarland, Wilbur C. Copeland
Published by
The Board of Publication of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America

Overseas Agents
Britain and Ireland: The Rev. Adam Loughridge, D.D., 429 Cregagh Road, Belfast BT 6 O. LG, Northern Ireland
Australia and New Zealand: The Rev. Alexander Barkley, B.A., 2 Hermitage Road, Newtown, Geelong, Victoria, Australia

Known Office of Publication - Box K, Winchester, Kansas 66097, U.S.A.
Published Quarterly. Second Class Postage Paid at Winchester, Kansas 66097

Poems by Mrs. John Clark Scott

The Penitent

Come, thou rebellious heart, let us go up
Unto the house of God that we may praise
Our Lord and Maker; may glad anthems raise
To Him who makes to overflow our cup.
Even as a child He wooed thee, heart, and won
A child's simplicity of love and trust.
Thou oft' times since hast soiled with the dust
Of sin the spotless love given by God's son.
Yet faithful has He been, and patiently
Has waited for this day when thou wouldst cease
Thy stubborn pride and wilful waywardness;
Forgiveness plead on lowly bended knee.
A broken and a contrite heart with peace
He'll fill when penitent we Him do bless.

Revelation 3:20

You were there, Lord, at the door,
You knocked and hoped I'd let you in;
But never once I heard your voice;
I was too busy with my sin.

You were there, Lord, at the door
Of my cold heart and heard my cry.
Yes, you had been there all the while,
But where was I, Lord, where was I?

Nocturne

In the weary hour of midnight
I will think on Jesus.
When the lonely night surrounds me,
I will think on Jesus.

Jesus, leaning on Thy breast,
Burdened souls can find sweet rest,
So I come alone, distressed,
To Thee Jesus, and I'm blessed.

Peace

When I have knelt, my Lord, and told you all
That on my heart has weighed until this hour,
Then I can feel an inward surge of power,
And perfect peace over my being fall.
When I have come in Jesus' name to ask
Escape from tempting thoughts, from wayward feet,
Then suddenly release becomes complete;
In your power I have strength to meet the task.
How dear they are, these moments spent with you,
My Lord forever near, my very own!
Why is it that I tarry then so long,
Flee from this balm while my heart fills with rue?
No, Lord, I will no longer strive alone.
I'll kneel so weak, then rise. My Lord is strong.

BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

VOLUME 27 JANUARY—MARCH, 1972 NUMBER 1

Pressured Pastors, Presbyteries and Pragmatism

By I. G. Vos

"Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever: that this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord: which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits: get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us."

—Isaiah 30:8-11

Note: This article was originally published 18 years ago, in the July-September 1954 issue of Blue Banner Faith and Life (pages 121-124) under the title Diseases of Church Government: Following the Line of Least Resistance. It is reproduced in the present issue with the addition of a Scripture quotation at the beginning and three paragraphs at the end dealing with attitudes among college students who are pre-ministerial candidates at the present day. It is the Editor's conviction that this article was relevant in 1954 and is still relevant today. —Editor.

It has been aptly remarked that following the line of least resistance is what makes rivers and men crooked. The winding, meandering river has followed the line of least resistance. And the man whose life reveals numerous deviations from the straight and narrow path has followed the line of least resistance. When faced with a moral crisis involving a difficult decision, he regularly takes the easy way out of the situation. To choose the path of righteousness would involve self-denial and suffering, perhaps also embarrassment and reproach. So the man who follows the line of least resistance chooses the easy way out, and by doing so he sins against God, deepens the corruption of his own character, and makes it harder for others to do right.

The Church in its organized form is also subject to the temptation to follow the line of least resistance. And it is sad but true that church courts, when faced with a crisis involving a moral issue, often follow the line of least resistance, taking the easy way out of a bad situation, instead of accepting the position of self-denial, suffering and reproach which befits the body of the rejected and crucified Christ. Too often the courts of the Church of Jesus Christ have chosen to avoid looking a bad situation squarely in the face and dealing with it according to righteousness, in the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, the great Head of the Church. Too often a carnal fear of embarrassment, suffering and reproach has led to an easy but unrighteous solution — a solution which obscures the moral issue involved, and results in a superficial but false peace and harmony in the Church.

This tendency to follow the line of least resistance, it would seem, springs from a double root. In the first place, it springs from the indwelling sinfulness of men — even of Christian men. The Bible is realistic in reporting the sins of the saints. Noah's drunkenness, Abraham's untruthfulness, David's adultery and murder, Peter's thrice-repeated denial of Christ — all these and others are truthfully reported in Scripture. Clearly even true believers have within their hearts a fearful tendency toward evil. Even persons in positions of leadership and responsibility in the Church, such as ministers and elders, have in their hearts this sinful nature. It is not surprising, therefore, that church courts, even in their solemn decisions made in the name of Christ, may be guilty of great sin.

The other root of the tendency to follow the line of least resistance, we believe, is the modern philosophy of Pragmatism. Pragmatism is not merely a specialty of a few university professors. It has deeply infiltrated our modern life, and is constantly being subtly propagated by our educational system, our popular magazines and newspapers, and other media of our modern culture. Pragmatism leads people to say that results are more important than principles. It leads people to feel that the end may justify the means, that a particular course of action may be proper if it can be expected to achieve favorable results and avoid unfavorable ones. People who are influenced by the viewpoint of Pragmatism do not ask "Is it right?" but rather, "What will happen if we do it?"

Church courts are composed of fallible men. The fact that they are Christians does not take away their human fallibility. Being human, they are influenced by the prevailing thought and culture of their time. That this prevailing thought and culture may be directly opposed to the mind of Christ is seldom realized. It is

not to be wondered at, then, that church courts of the present day sometimes manifest a tendency to adopt the viewpoint of Pragmatism, in which the all important question is not "Is it right?" but "What will happen if we do it?"

A good many examples could be cited of church courts following the line of least resistance. The writer has observed this kind of action in connection with several widely varying issues. It is not proposed to describe or discuss all of these, but only to portray one type of such action. What we are about to describe is not a particular case but a pattern which has occurred, with variations of course, over and over again. The pattern is manifested in some such way as the following.

A bad situation develops in a congregation. Some of the members — perhaps many of the members — become disaffected toward their pastor. It may be that the pastor is at fault, perhaps seriously at fault. Ministers are human and they are sinners, therefore it is entirely possible that the pastor may be to blame, in whole or in part, for the bad situation in the congregation.

On the other hand, it must be realized that church members are human and also are sinners. As there are no perfect ministers, so there are no perfect congregations. It must not be assumed, therefore, that if a bad situation develops the minister is to blame. It is certainly possible that the blame may rest, in whole or in part, on the congregation — either the congregation as a whole, or a part of its officers and members.

What happens when a congregation, in whole or in part, becomes disaffected toward its pastor? The pattern is surprisingly uniform. In one way or another, pressure is put on the pastor to resign. This may be done gracefully or it may be done disgracefully, but it is often done. It may be done by economic pressure. Ministers and their families have to live, and it is possible to force a minister out of a congregation by keeping his income below what he and his family can live decently on. Official church rules about minimum salaries have mitigated this sort of thing, but not by any means entirely eliminated it. Many a minister with a family to support receives less salary than is received by school teachers in the same community.

Ministers may be forced out of congregations by social pressure. It is possible to make things so downright unpleasant that only a minister with determination like iron and brass (Jer. 1:18) can bring himself to face it out. The writer has known of cases where some church members refused to shake hands with their pastor after Sabbath services. Such conduct does something to a minister and it also does something to his wife and children. A minister might steel himself to face it out if he were the only person affected, but it is hard to keep his wife and children in such a hostile atmosphere.

Some denominations have officially adopted definite forms of procedure by which a congregation, at the end of a set term of years, can vote on whether the pastor shall be called upon to continue as their pastor for another term of years. The so-called seven-year plan adopted by the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America provides such forms of procedure. This plan provides certain safeguards against improper pressures and certain compensatory benefits to ministers who are not asked to continue in their pastoral charge. On the other hand, the "seven-year plan" seems to be open to certain abuses. It may encourage some church members to think that they have a right to vote against their minister for no reason at all except that they would like a change. Whether this apparently rather common notion is in harmony with the Scriptural teaching on the relation between pastor and people, is a serious question. It is one thing to ask a pastor to resign for valid reasons; it is another thing to ask him to resign for no reason at all. In this connection, it seems strange that the Book of Church Government of the Reformed Presbyterian Church (adopted 1945), Chapter VIII, Sections 10 and 11 (Constitution of R. P. Church, page 256) requires a pastor who wishes to resign to present "valid reasons" for his request, whereas in the case of a congregation wanting its pastor to leave, no "valid reasons" are required; apparently a majority of the members of a congregation can petition the presbytery to dissolve the pastoral relationship, without presenting any reasons for this request to the presbytery. It would seem that pastor and congregation should be on the same basis, and that in case either requests the presbytery to dissolve the pastoral relationship, valid reasons should be presented.

The so-called seven-year plan is also liable to abuse in that it may, under certain circumstances, place a minister under a strong temptation to preach a toned-down, man-pleasing message in order to avoid losing his pastorate. Where influential members of the congregation are known to be opposed to certain doctrines or principles of the church, a minister may be powerfully tempted to avoid preaching on or emphasizing these matters lest he lose his position.

The result of opposition to a pastor on the part of his congregation is usually that the minister decides, or is persuaded, to resign "gracefully." This may be with the benefits provided by the "seven-year plan," or perhaps the minister may be promised that if he leaves by a certain date without resistance, the congregation will continue to pay his salary for two or three months beyond that date. The resignation is presented to the presbytery or other church court having jurisdiction, with the statement that the pastor and the congregation have come to agreement that it would be for the best for the pastoral relationship to be dissolved. The presbytery hears brief statements by the minister concerned and by representatives of the congregation. This is followed, perhaps, by some discussion which, however, seldom inquires into the real causes of the breach between pastor and people. There is general agreement that it is a bad situation. Finally the decision is reached that under the existing bad circumstances, it would be "for the best" for the pastoral relationship to be dissolved.

The congregation will very likely have a farewell

social for the departing minister. On the surface everything will be sunshine and roses. Speeches will be made, prayers will be offered, gifts will be presented. The program will be nicely written up in the church paper, as well as in the local newspaper. The minister leaves town in an apparent atmosphere of friendship and goodwill. But the real truth may be — regardless of who is to blame — that it is the funeral of another wrecked pastorate.

What is wrong with the pattern which has been described above? Just this: the presbytery or other church court took the line of least resistance, instead of investigating and settling the matter according to righteousness. It did not ask "Is it right?" but rather "Will it have good results?" The presbytery had a sick congregation within its bounds. It neglected attending to this sick congregation until matters came to a crisis. Then it took the easy way out.

A congregation having valid complaints against its pastor should seek a remedy by the lawful processes of church government, not by the application of lawless pressures. If personal conference in a spirit of love and friendship does not remedy the situation, the congregation has the right to petition the presbytery to investigate matters. If the minister is neglecting his work, if he is preaching heresy, if he is guilty of other offences, the presbytery should be informed, and being informed, it should investigate and act as the situation may require. The delinquent pastor should be dealt with by the presbytery, which has lawful jurisdiction over him in the Lord. If the matters alleged are embarrassing, the presbytery can discuss the matter behind closed doors, in executive session. But it can and should act as righteousness requires.

A congregation wanting its pastor to leave for no special reasons should at least have the grace to wait until the end of a seven-year term and then vote on him in the orderly manner prescribed by the rules of the denomination. Even so, it should be realized that something may be legal without being right in the sight of God. To vote to ask a pastor to leave his charge without giving "valid reasons" for this demand may be legal according to officially adopted rules of church government. Whether it is right in the sight of God is another question.

But a congregation's disaffection toward its pastor may not be the minister's fault at all, or it may be his fault only to a minor degree. Perhaps the minister has done his duty by preaching plainly against sin. Perhaps he has incurred the enmity of the leading members by speaking to them of their sins and exhorting them to repent. Perhaps he has faithfully preached and taught the accepted standards and principles of the denomination, thereby incurring the opposition of those members who are bent on doing as they please and are more or less openly violating their own profession and membership vows. It would be very unrealistic to deny that such conditions sometimes exist. Under such circumstances a minister's life may be a very painful one, and it may be extremely difficult for him to go about his duties with a serene countenance and a cheerful attitude of mind.

When a minister is put under pressure to resign and he honestly believes that the principal fault is not his own, it is his moral duty to report the situation to the presbytery and to call for an investigation of conditions in the congregation. For the minister to resign "gracefully" may be the pleasantest way out of an ugly situation, but it is morally wrong if he believes that the fault is on the side of the congregation. Ministers should not resign "gracefully" when under fire. The matters at issue should first be investigated by the courts of the church, and determined according to righteousness. Then after righteous judgment has been executed, if the minister wishes to resign and seek a new field of service, it is his privilege to request the presbytery to release him from his pastoral charge. But until the bad situation in the congregation has been faced and dealt with according to righteousness, the minister owes it to himself, to the church at large and to the Lord, to refuse to be pushed out by unlawful pressures.

It has been this writer's observation that presbyteries seldom investigate troubles in a congregation thoroughly. It is much more common, after hearing both parties briefly, to decide that it will be "for the best" just to terminate the pastoral relationship. The present writer cannot claim that he himself is free of responsibility for such following of the line of least resistance. He makes no claim of being more righteous or consistent than others. The purpose of this article is not to justify or condemn anyone, but to call attention to weaknesses, abuses and sins in church government, in the hope that these may be duly considered and if possible corrected.

Why do church courts hesitate to deal with bad situations in congregations according to righteousness? It would seem that sometimes, at least, this is owing to a carnal fear of consequences. For example, it may be known that a number of people in a congregation are opposed to some of the doctrines and principles of the denomination. They may be trying to get rid of their pastor because he preaches faithfully on these matters, and they resent the implication that they are unfaithful to their own profession and vows. Perhaps some prominent members and some financial "pillars" of the congregation are involved. The session or presbytery fears that if anything is said to these people about loyalty to their profession they will leave the church in a huff. So a faithful minister is pushed out of his charge, and a sick congregation is left in its sickness, untreated and unhealed. If their next pastor does not accommodate himself and his message to the congregation's sickness, he will not last long in that charge.

What is needed in situations of this kind is not merely prayer for revival, but positive action on the part of the presbytery. When a crisis occurs in a congregation, a special meeting of the presbytery should be held. This should not be a hasty half-day or one-day affair. The presbytery or a duly empowered commission of the presbytery should meet within the congregation where the trouble is for as long as may be necessary to get at the root of the matter. If it takes four or five days to find out what the real root of the

trouble is and administer corrective measures, that will be time well spent in an acceptable service to Christ, the Head of the Church.

If the pastor is at fault, he should be counseled with and admonished as the facts may require. If the congregation or the session is to blame, the same course should be followed. If individual members are to blame for the trouble, they should be dealt with faithfully, without respect of persons. The trouble should be adjudicated according to righteousness, difficult and painful as this may be.

Oh, but if such a course be followed, people will leave the church, it will be objected. Very possibly they will. There is no way to maintain righteousness and at the same time conciliate people who want to have their own way. There is no way to maintain the rules of the Lord's house and at the same time please people who are living in sin. Instead of the present common attitude of extreme reluctance to offend anyone and risk their leaving the church, we should heed and obey the instructions of the apostle Paul: "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear. I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality" (I Tim. 5:20,21).

A minister owes something to his church. He has taken her vows upon himself. He has solemnly pledged himself to follow no divisive courses from the doctrine and order which the church has officially recognized and adopted. It is his duty to preach that doctrine and practice that order faithfully and consistently, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear. A minister is not to preach in accordance with the likes and dislikes of his congregation. He is to preach in accordance with the solemn vows he took when he was installed as pastor of the congregation.

A denomination also owes something to the minister who has given his life to serving Christ in its congregations. If it is the minister's duty to preach and practice the doctrine and order which the church has adopted, it is the denomination's duty to protect the minister in carrying out that commission. It is the duty of the courts of the church to protect the minister from the effects of unlawful pressures. The courts of the church which require loyalty of the minister must also protect the minister in rendering that loyalty.

By what right can a presbytery, in the presence of God and in the name of Christ, require of a minister the most solemn pledges of loyalty to the doctrine and order of the church, if the presbytery is not prepared to stand back of the minister and protect him in the discharge of these obligations? Is a presbytery to stand on the high ground of righteousness and principle when a pastor is ordained and installed in a congregation, and then default to the low level of following the line of least resistance when a crisis arises in the congregation and some of the members want to get rid of their pastor? Let us learn to do right regardless of consequences. Let us be moved by the fear of God, not by a carnal fear of men.

The Church is faced with a shortage of ministers. We are exhorted to pray that the Lord will raise up young men who will respond to His call to become ministers of the Gospel. Certainly this need is a serious matter which calls for prayer. But perhaps it calls for much more than prayer. Perhaps the great Head of the Church expects some action on the part of the courts of His House which will demonstrate the sincerity of the prayer and make the Church's appeal to young men to consider the ministry credible.

The writer of this article is frequently called upon to counsel students in Geneva College concerning spiritual matters, including decisions concerning Christian vocations. Some of these students are young men who are members of the Reformed Presbyterian Church who are seriously considering going to the Seminary and eventually seeking ordination to the office of the ministry. These young men are alert to actual conditions in the denomination and are well aware of the lawless pressures that some pastors have had to face, and of the way some presbyteries have failed to protect and support pastors in the faithful discharge of their ordination vows. There is a real "credibility gap" in the minds of some of these young men as to the Church's appeal for ministerial candidates. Can the Lord really be calling young men to seek ordination to the ministry in a denomination in which faithful discharge of solemn ordination vows may soon bring upon them pressure to compromise or even to resign? Can a young minister in the Covenanter Church who really preaches the whole counsel of God and who takes Scriptural church discipline seriously, really count on and receive the whole-hearted backing of the church courts? Or must he yield to the pressures of disaffected members who are perhaps living in open violation of their own membership vows, and either compromise or quit?

It has been said that a nation gets as good a government as it deserves. Perhaps a church denomination gets no better supply of ministers than it deserves.

The Westminster Confession of Faith in Modern English

Prepared by Dr. James A. Hughes

(Continued from last issue)

Chapter XXII Of Lawful Oaths and Vows

I. A lawful oath is the part of religious worship in which, at a proper time, the person uttering a solemn declaration calls God to attest what he asserts or promises and to judge him according to the truth or falsehood of what he solemnly declares.

II. It is only by the name of God that men ought to utter a solemn declaration, and in such a declaration the name of God is to be used with all holy fear and reverence; therefore to utter a solemn declaration to no purpose or rashly by that glorious and awe-inspiring name or to utter a solemn declaration under any circumstances by any other thing is sinful and is to be abhorred. Yet, since in matters of importance and moment an oath is warranted by the Word of God (under the New Testament as well as under the Old), therefore a lawful oath being imposed by lawful authority, with reference to such matters, ought to be taken.

III. Whoever takes an oath ought duly to consider the importance of such a solemn act and in it ought to avow only what he is fully persuaded is the truth. Neither may any man obligate himself by an oath to do anything except what is good and just, and what he believes to be so, and what he is able and resolved to perform. Yet it is a sin to refuse to take an oath concerning anything that is good and just, if it is imposed by lawful authority.

IV. An oath is to be taken in the plain and usual meaning of the words, without equivocation or mental reservation. It cannot obligate a person to sin; but in anything not sinful, if it is taken, it obligates a person to perform it, although it may be detrimental to him; nor is an oath to be violated, even if it is made to heretics or unbelievers.

V. A vow is like a promissory oath and ought to be made with the same religious concern and to be performed just as faithfully.

VI. It is not to be made to any creature, but to God alone; and that it may be accepted, it is to be made voluntarily, out of faith and consciousness of duty, by way of thankfulness for mercy received, or for the obtaining of what we want; by vowing we more strictly obligate ourselves to the performance of necessary duties, or to the performance of other things so long as and to the extent that they may properly be conducive to the performance of such duties.

VII. No man may vow to do anything forbidden in the Word of God or anything that would hinder the performance of any duty commanded in the Word of God, or anything which it is not in his own power to do and for the performance of which he has no promise or ability from God. With respect to this, Roman Catholic monastic vows of perpetual celibacy, professed poverty and regular obedience are so far from being steps to higher perfection that they are superstitious and sinful snares in which no Christian may entangle himself.

(To be continued)

A Christian Philosophy of Education

By the Rev. David R. Armstrong

The first instructions that God gave to man included the command to subdue the earth. That task involves not only the gaining of control over the physical elements, but also the mastery of the meaning of life. Philosophy seeks to describe the totality of life scientifically. The following is a provisional statement of the author's educational philosophy.

Metaphysics

"In the beginning God. . ." (Genesis 1:1). The starting point of philosophy is God.

> We must have the courage to say that God is there, or, to use different terminology, the final environment of what is there is God Himself, the one who has created everything else. Let us notice carefully that, in saying that God is there, we are saying God exists, and not just talking about the **word** God, or the **idea** god. (Francis A. Schaeffer, **The God Who Is There,** Inter-Varsity, 1968, p. 145).

What is this ultimate reality called "God?"

> God is a Spirit, in and of himself infinite in being, glory, blessedness, and perfection; all-sufficient, eternal, unchangeable, incomprehensible, everywhere present, almighty, knowing all things, most wise, most holy, most just, most merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. (**Westminster Larger Catechism,** 1647, Q. 7)

Reformed views of metaphysics continue to recognize this God as the ultimate reality.

> The basic and central principle of Christian education is Christian theism. Christian theism involves the biblical view of God and the universe in their mutual relations. In particular, Christian theism affirms the existence of the sovereign God who has created all things and who governs all things by his providential rule toward their appointed end, according to his eternal purpose or decree. (**A Statement of a Reformed Philosophy of Education,** 1957 Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America).

Cornelius Van Til is careful to distinguish this God from the physical universe. He concludes a discussion of the Christian philosophy of reality by stating,

> Such then, in broad outline, is the Christian conception of being or the Christian conception of metaphysics. We may speak of it as a two-layer theory of reality. When men ask us, What is, according to your notion, the nature of reality or being?, we shall have to say that we cannot give an answer unless we are permitted to split the question. For us God's being is ultimate, while created being is, in the nature of the case, derivative. (**The Defense of the Faith,** Presbyterian and Reformed, 1963, p. 29).

This thought is developed by J. M. Spier.

> God has placed all His creatures, including man and societal relationships, in relation to Himself and to each other, thereby endowing creation with **meaning.** . . .The **meaning character** of reality signifies that reality is relative and only God is **Absolute.** All things are related to each other. And as a whole they are related to and dependent upon the Creator and exist for His glory. . . .The cosmos in its entirety points beyond itself toward its **fulness of meaning** or **totality of meaning,** which lies in Jesus Christ, to whom all things in heaven and upon the earth are related. (**An Introduction to Christian Philosophy,** Craig Press, 1966, pp. 20,21).

Dr. Kenneth O. Gangel agrees with the Van Til approach to metaphysics (and apologetics) when he states,

> Even the casual reader will note that the Bible makes no attempt to prove the existence of God. It is the unprovable and assumed presupposition of all educational endeavors undertaken by those who rest their faith in the personal God of the universe. Church education which is genuinely Christian begins, proceeds and ends with the concept of a triune God. (**Leadership for Church Education,** Moody, 1970, pp. 32,33).

Epistemology

The Christian view of truth builds on the Christian view of reality. Thomas Aquinas spotlighted the problem:

> Whoever denies the existence of truth grants that truth does not exist: and, if truth does not exist, then the proposition 'Truth does not exist' is true. But if there is anything true, there must be truth. (**Summa,** I,2,1, obj. 3, quoted in Charles G. Fecher, **The Philosophy of Jacques Maritain,** Newman Press, 1953, p. 93).

Pontius Pilate asked, "What is truth?", and his profound question still calls for an answer. The Christian answer is, "God." (Deuteronomy 32:4 "God of truth"). "Christian truth is that which is in relationship to what exists and ultimately to the God who exists." (Schaeffer, p. 145). Frank E. Gaebelein has well said,

> . . .the God who in His Son is the truth incarnate, the God whose revealed Word is truth, the God who does all things well, the God "unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid," the God who cannot lie, is the source and ground of all truth. Everything true is of Him. All truth, anywhere and of any kind, is His truth. For if, as Scripture affirms, God is the God of truth, if His Son is the Lord of truth, if His Spirit is the Spirit of truth, then the truth in its boundless dimensions, unknown and undiscovered as well as known and discovered, must be at once the context and goal of our education. (**Towards a Christian Philosophy of Education,** Grace Theological Journal, Fall, 1962, p. 9).

God is truth, but how do we get to know truth? The New Testament word for truth (**aletheia**) means "without a veil." The implication is that truth is revealed. (Gaebelein, pp. 13,14). Truth is revealed by the Creator to the creature.

> . . .Reformed theology, as worked out by Calvin and his recent exponents such as Hodge, Warfield, Kuyper and Bavinck, holds that man's mind is derivative. As such it is naturally in contact with God's revelation. It is surrounded by nothing but revelation. It is itself inherently revelational. It cannot naturally be conscious of itself without being conscious of its creatureliness. For man self-consciousness presupposes God-consciousness. Calvin speaks of this as man's inescapable sense of deity. (Van Til, p. 90).

Since ultimate reality is the God who has created the universe, all of man's knowledge is drawn from that God.

> The Christian, on the other hand, knows that facts do not exist of themselves, and that they cannot be adequately explained on the basis of human reason alone. The Christian does not believe in what has been called the "just-thereness" of facts. They are created facts, not self-existent facts: therefore they can be really understood only by assuming the doctrines of God, Creation and Providence. God is the reason why facts exist; Creation is the source whence facts exist; Providence is the manner how facts exist.
>
> The unregenerate person also assumes that the human mind is an uncreated mind which exists of itself and is competent to be the absolute and final interpreter of facts. The regenerate person, on the other hand, realizes that the human mind does not exist of itself; it is a created mind and is not competent to be the absolute and final interpreter of facts. The regenerate person recognizes that he is

> dependent on divine revelation for the ultimate interpretation of the meaning of facts. (J. G. Vos, **What is Christian Education?**, pp. 5,6).

Not only has God created facts; He has also given a preinterpretation of His creation.

> Man receives from God the true interpretation of the meaning of things. Man has no light in himself but must confess that only in God's light can he see light. (Psalm 36:9; John 1:9). God is the Creator, man the receiver, of knowledge. God's interpretation is prior to man's interpretation, and only in the light of God's interpretation can man truly know God and the universe for what they are. Thus, the norm for all true thought is to be found beyond human experience in the objective revelation which the sovereign God has given in the Scriptures. (1957 Synod.).

The Scriptures are God's special revelation to man. God has revealed Himself in many ways, but uniquely in the Bible. ". . .the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God and the only infallible rule of faith and life." (Terms of Communion, Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America).

> Thus the Bible is the heart and core of Christian epistemology. For the Christian, an education (within or without the church) which disregards the Bible, is — in its very nature — inferior. To undertake learning while ignoring the source of all truth is foolishness at best and blasphemy at worst. (Gangel, p. 33).

However, the Bible is not the only true revelation from God. The universe itself is a natural revelation that is true. Thus Psalm 19 states that the heavens declare the glory of God (the first half of the psalm speaks of natural revelation, and the seond half of special revelation). Natural revelation is valuable, but it has always been supplemented by special revelation (God began speaking to Adam very early — "God has spoken, in a linguistic propositional form, truth concerning Himself and truth concerning man, history and the universe." — Schaeffer, p. 93).

> Although the light of nature and the works of creation and providence do so far manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God, as to leave men unexcusable; yet are they not sufficient to give that knowledge of God and of His will, which is necessary unto salvation. Therefore it pleased the Lord, at sundry times, and in divers manners, to reveal Himself, and to declare that His will unto His Church; and afterwards, for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the Church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan and of the world, to commit the same wholly unto writing: which maketh the Holy Scripture to be most necessary; those former ways of God's revealing His will unto His people being now ceased. (Westminster Confession of Faith, ch. I, para. I).

There are times when apparent contradictions appear between special revelation and natural revelation. Such situations provide a challenge and a temptation. The challenge is to resolve the difference. "The revelation of God as found in the world and in man is not contradictory to the revelation of God in the Bible and these two revelations are to be brought together in the educational process." (**The Philosophy of Education of the Beaver County Christian School**). However, there is a temptation to misuse one's understanding of natural revelation. ". . . to try to support revealed truth (Bible) either by denying any other aspect of truth or by suppressing or distorting it is an offense against the very nature of God." (Frank E. Gaebelein, **The Pattern of God's Truth,** Moody, 1968, p. 24). Nevertheless, there is a priority to special revelation.

> In seeking to understand the truth of the universe in all of its dimensions, man is responsible to use every faculty and effort; but ultimate judgments in the realm of nature must finally be made in the light of God's Word, the Holy Scripture, which is the only adequate and inerrant standard of truth. (Geneva College **Statement of Philosophy of Christian Education,** I.C.3.).

It is the Holy Spirit who enables men to receive revelation from God. Jesus said of the Holy Spirit, "He will teach you everything. . ." (John 14:26). The preceding can be paraphrased, "He will teach you everything that you are to know." There are limitations to man's knowledge.

> The biblical Christian says that, on the side of personality, man can know God truly, though he cannot know God exhaustively. Unlike the new theology, he is not trapped by the two alternatives of knowing God completely or not knowing Him at all. We are not shut up to a total comprehension of the infinite. (Schaeffer, p. 95).

Because God is the Creator and we are the creatures, we can never know Him comprehensively. It is

> the infinity of God that makes it impossible for us comprehensively to understand things in the created universe. The reason for this is not far to seek. The things of this universe must be interpreted in relation to God. The object of knowledge is not interpreted truly if though brought into relation with the human mind, it is not also brought into relation with the divine mind. God is the ultimate category of interpretation. Now we cannot fully understand God's plan for created things and so we cannot fully understand things. (Van Til, p. 44).

The whole Christian epistemology is being challenged today by men who doubt that truth can be known. The difficulty of such skepticism is enunciated by Jacques Maritain.

> We may also observe that if man were really

> and seriously to doubt the veracity of his organs of knowledge he simply could not live. Since every action or abstention from action is an act of trust in that veracity, action and inaction would alike become impossible. A man therefore who attempted to carry out in his life the thought **truth is impossible for me** would inevitably lose his reason. . . . (**An Introduction to Philosophy,** p. 180).

Harry Blamires pungently sketches the two major alternatives in epistemology.

> Briefly one may sum up the clash between the Christian mind and the secular mind thus. Secularism asserts the opinionated self as the only judge of truth. Christianity imposes the given divine revelation as the final touchstone of truth.
>
> The marks of truth as Christianly conceived, then, are: that it is supernaturally grounded, not developed within nature; that it is objective and not subjective; that it is a revelation and not a construction; that it is discovered by inquiry and not elected by a majority vote; that it is authoritative and not a matter of personal choice. (**The Christian Mind,** Seabury, 1963, p. 101).

Anthropology

The Christian must develop his anthropology under three headings: 1) man as created, 2) man as fallen, 3) man as restored. In Genesis 1:26, God said: "Let us make man in Our image, after our likeness, and let them bear rule. . . ." According to Dr. Clark Pinnock, the primary idea of "image" in this verse if "representative." Man is God's representative whose task it is to rule over the earth. (In the ancient Near East, it was the king who was the image-bearer.) The Westminster Confession of Faith is a representative creed in its description of man:

> After God had made all other creatures, He created man, male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls, endued with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, after His own image; having the law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfil it: and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject unto change. (ch. IV, para. II). (Colossians 3:10 and Ephesians 4:24 relate the "image" to knowledge, righteousness, and holiness.)

Using this same idea of "image," Jan Waterink concludes that man is religious. "All his specifically human relationships result from the fact that man is religious. Emotional attachments, ambitions, evaluations, social attachments — in short, all that which is humanly sublime in the life of man exists only because man is the offspring of God." (**Basic Concepts in Christian Pedagogy,** Eerdmans, 1954, p. 21). At the inmost core of man's existence there is a religious bond with God which leads to man's serving God with his whole self. This service manifests itself

> first, in and through man's cognitive approach to God himself and to God in all his works, and therefore also in his creation; second, it manifests itself in the surrender, in the dedication to God and his works in all the cosmos, which He has created; and third, it manifests itself in the wish to reign and plan in this cosmos in the service of God. Accordingly, the fact that man is religious presents three aspects: that of knowledge, that of surrender, and that of rule. These three aspects, according to the Scriptures, are those of the three offices of prophet, priest, and king. (Waterink, p. 22).

There are no men today who fit the preceding description. Through Adam as a representative of mankind, the human race has rejected God (Romans 5:12,19). The results are severe and tragic.

> 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, ch. V, para. 4).

Waterink describes what this means in terms of man's purpose in life.

> The "self" of man did retain the image of God in a broader sense, so that it has preserved the need to serve and it has also preserved the need to serve in the three aspects, the three offices. However, since this service has taken a different direction, man by nature no longer serves God, but virtually serves creatures, preferably himself. Thus the **object** of man's life has shifted completely. Man thus becomes a prophet, priest and king in the service of his own self; and self-glorification becomes the ultimate goal of his existence. Ego-centrism and subsequently egoism becomes the trend of all his moral actions. And even when man succeeds in freeing himself, at least of **conscious** self-glorification, he will get no further than serving the creatures by which he is surrounded. According to the Scriptures one of the fundamental characteristics of sin is to **miss** the purpose of life. Accordingly, sin is not a quantitative thing and, we might even state, it is not a qualitative thing in the positive sense. Sin does not impart a particular quality, it merely deprives of a particular quality. Owing to sin we miss our object, and our need to serve in the religious sense — which perforce is present in the self — is aimed at the wrong object. (p. 23).

Man must be described in yet another way. Jesus Christ has come as a second Adam to represent His people. "For as through the disobedience of one man the many were placed in the position of sinners, so

through the obedience of the One the many have been placed in the position of righteous ones." (Romans 5:19).

> Jesus Christ as the second Adam, died and rose again as the representative of fallen man, in order that those who are chosen by God, regenerated by the Spirit, and by faith identified with Christ in His death and resurrection might be restored to fellowship with God in the Holy Spirit and enabled to glorify God actively in their lives.
>
> Redeemed man (the believing Christian) having realized his union with Christ, and hence his own death to sin and rising to newness of life in the Spirit, renounces (abandons) the life of self-centeredness for the life of Christ-centeredness, thereby seeking in every phase of human experience to understand and reflect God's glory. (Geneva College **Statement of Philosophy of Christian Education,** I.B.3.b&c.).

Regeneration brings about a radical change in man.

> When God converts a sinner, and translates him into the state of grace, He freeth him from his natural bondage under sin; and, by His grace alone, enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good; yet so, as that by reason of his remaining corruption, he doth not perfectly, nor only, will that which is good, but doth also will that which is evil. (**Westminster Confession of Faith,** ch. IX, para. IV).

Regeneration is followed by the life-long process of sanctification, a process which finds its dynamic in the Holy Spirit and involves a progressive movement toward maturity in Christ.

> For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. (Romans 8:29,30).

There are many educational implications of this anthropology. Dr. Arnold De Graaff of the Institute for Christian Studies (Toronto) has begun to develop these implications.

> Education requires a **fundamental respect** for those we seek to nurture, because they are **human beings made in the image of God,** created to respond to His calling. From the very beginning each person is a complete human being. A child does not **develop** into a person, he **is** a person from the start, he is a religious being. Man as such, therefore, as a religious unity, can never be the "object" of our pedagogical moulding. Our nurture can only direct itself to the various **aspects** of a **person's** existence, to the harmonious development and proper integration of the physical, organic, and psychical individuality structure within the act-structure, in order that he may be (the better) prepared for his task in life. And in doing so the educator appeals to the personal responsibility of the one being educated, so that even when he "passively undergoes" a certain pedagogical forming, he is still actively involved in the educational process. Since he is a religious being, he must necessarily relate the guidance he receives to his inner selfhood and to his God-given calling in life. The exercise of educational power over the individual development of a (certain aspect of a) person's life, therefore, does not exclude the personal cooperation and responsibility of the one being educated. Those who are being nurtured always remain free human subjects. This has far-reaching consequences for the nature, limits and ultimate aim of our education. Man's religious nature in principle determines the character of all pedagogical relationships. (**The Educational Ministry of the Church,** Craig Press, 1968, pp. 111,112).

The Christian Reformed Church has been a pace-setter in the field of Christian education for many years. The following statement is one of the principles accepted by the Christian Reformed Synod in 1955.

> Education is the nurture or bringing up of the whole man, (Rom. 12:1) and comprises all of life (Ps. 24:1; I Cor. 10:31). Man is an organic whole in whom the physiological and soul-life are one. Thinking, feeling, and willing as functions of the soul-life of man can be distinguished, but not divorced from each other, nor from the body as physical structure in and through which the soul-life functions. The whole person, body as well as soul, is said to be the temple of God (I Cor. 3:17; I Cor. 6:19). The human intellect cannot be parceled out for instruction independently of the emotional life or the life of the body. Human volitions cannot be educated apart from the intellect and the emotions. To bring all faculties into spiritual service (Rom. 12:1) and to bring all of life's activities under the discipline of God's will, education should be of one piece in which a person's earthly relations and functions, as well as his relations to heaven are centered in and directed by the norm or standard of God's Word. (**Principles of Christian Education,** p. 9).

More recently, Geneva College has spoken out on the same subject.

> 1. In order for the student to attain the goals of Christian education, he must be in submission to the person of Jesus Christ, that sin and its effects in his personality may be overcome.
>
> 2. The student, as a creature of God, is under the mandate both to learn and to apply all knowledge for the purpose of knowing and glorifying God.

3. The student should not be sheltered from non-christian viewpoints, but must become able to evaluate all knowledge critically, to gain from that which is true, to discard error, and to transmit the broad cultural heritage he has enjoyed.

4. The student should be aware of God's call on his life, and thus see his education as an opportunity to prepare for that calling, whatever that field of endeavor may be. (**Statement of Philosophy of Christian Education,** III.B.).

A Christian anthropology is of crucial importance in developing an educational philosophy.

(To be Continued)

Studies in the Teachings of Jesus Christ

Note: This series of Bible lessons began in the October-December 1971 issue of this magazine. The reader is referred to page 160 of that issue for a statement of the nature and purpose of the lessons, and a listing of additional published helps. As stated on page 172 of that issue, the treatment of the material on Jesus' teaching concerning the Kingdom of God follows the development of the subject in **The Teaching of Jesus Concerning the Kingdom and the Church,** by Geerhardus Vos. Those who wish a more detailed and complete discussion in addition to the present series of lessons are referred to this book. —Editor.

LESSON 14

THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE KINGDOM

The traditional view of the Kingdom in Christian theology is that it is both present and future, having a present preliminary stage and a future final stage. According to this view, the history of the Christian Church is a gradual extension of the Kingdom.

Over against this traditional view of the Kingdom, a different view was advocated by Albert Schweitzer. This view has been variously called "consistent eschatology," "thorough-going eschatology" and "hyper-eschatology." The term eschatology means the doctrine of the Last Things or the End of the temporal order. Schweitzer's startling views were propounded in his book **The Quest of the Historical Jesus,** which was first published in German in 1906 and later in English in 1911. Schweitzer in this book held that earlier scholars had failed to do justice to the eschatological element in the teaching of Jesus. He held that this was the dominant element in Jesus' teaching, therefore he put forth a radical reconstruction of the life and character of Jesus along this line. Schweitzer held that Jesus expected the final form of the Kingdom to arrive during His own earthly lifetime, or at any rate (after He realized that He would be put to death) during the lifetime of His disciples who were then living. This view regards the coming of the Kingdom as wholly sudden and catastrophic, without any organic relation to preceding processes. Schweitzer said that Jesus tried to force the wheel of history to make its final rotation, thus bringing in the final Kingdom and End of history, but He failed. "The wheel rolls onward, and the mangled body of the one immeasurably great Man, who was strong enough to think of Himself as the spiritual ruler of mankind and to bend history to his purpose, is hanging upon it still. That is His victory and His reign" (**The Quest of the Historical Jesus,** p. 369).

According to the traditional view as well as according to the view which Schweitzer attributes to Jesus, the final, absolute form of the Kingdom can come only at the end of the world; that is, according to both views, **the absolute, final form of the Kingdom is not within history but beyond history.** But Schweitzer's representation implies that Jesus was mistaken, laboring under a delusion. He believed that the end of the world would come in His lifetime or soon after His death, but this has not happened, therefore, according to Schweitzer, Jesus was mistaken.

The point of difference between the traditional view and Schweitzer's view concerns the question of whether there is, or is not, in the teaching of Jesus the ideal of a real present, spiritual Kingdom which prepares the way for the absolute, final Kingdom. According to the traditional view there is; according to Schweitzer's view there is not such an element in the teaching of Jesus.

Let us consider some of the issues that are involved in this controversy.

(1) The infallibility of Jesus as a teacher of truth is involved. If Jesus expected the end of the world to come during the lifetime of people then living, then He was mistaken and in grave error. In that case He cannot be our infallible Prophet.

(2) To hold, as Schweitzer did, that in Jesus' teaching the Kingdom is **exclusively** future involves giving too little emphasis to some elements in Jesus' teaching, such as righteousness and communion with God. These are part of the Kingdom idea as taught by Jesus, but they are experiences of Christian people here and now, not merely in eternity.

(3) Those who have followed Schweitzer in his view of Jesus' teaching about the Kingdom have also held that this idea of an imminent, entirely future Kingdom colored Jesus' ethical teachings, and prevented Him from developing a strong, positive interest in the moral duties of the present earthly life. They have held, in other words, that Jesus was almost

exclusively interested in the eternal future, and not deeply concerned about how His people should live here and now; thus His ethical teachings are regarded as having a merely temporary or "interim" character — a sort of brief makeshift program to be used until the Kingdom would suddenly arrive. Thus the adherents of these views have accused Jesus of being "other-worldly" in an unbalanced sense.

(4) People's appraisal of Christ's character and personality are involved. The view advocated by Schweitzer and his followers regards Jesus as an ecstatic visionary rather than as a person of sober, healthy and balanced thinking. It has sometimes been alleged that according to Schweitzer, Jesus was insane. This, however, is incorrect. Schweitzer did not hold that Jesus was mentally ill. Still it is true that according to Schweitzer's view Jesus was under a delusion and was hardly a really balanced and adjusted personality.

Still another view of Jesus' teaching about the Kingdom is found in the scheme propounded by C. H. Dodd, commonly referred to as "realized eschatology." Dodd's book, **Parables of the Kingdom,** was published in 1935, followed in 1936 by his book on **The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments.** According to Dodd, "the kingdom of God is conceived as coming in the events of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus." In this view there is no idea of a **still future** Kingdom. The final form of the Kingdom started at Christ's resurrection. Dodd has somewhat modified this view, however, in a more recent book (**The Coming of Christ,** 1951) in which he seems to allow for a further development of the Kingdom at the end of time.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is the traditional view as to the present and future Kingdom of God?

2. What view of Jesus' teaching concerning the Kingdom is associated with the name of Albert Schweitzer?

3. By what names is Schweitzer's view commonly called?

4. What feature is held in common by the traditional view and by Schweitzer's view of Jesus' teaching about the Kingdom?

5. What does Schweitzer's view imply concerning Jesus?

6. What special objections may be brought against the view associated with the name of Schweitzer?

7. What is the point of difference between the traditional view and Schweitzer's view concerning Jesus' teaching about the Kingdom?

8. What is meant by "realized eschatology?"

9. With what scholar is "realized eschatology" associated?

LESSON 15

THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE KINGDOM, CONTINUED

The Old Testament does not distinguish the stages of the Kingdom very much. This is owing to the lack of perspective which is characteristic of prophecy.

The view that the Kingdom may be present in one sense and future in another sense may certainly be found in the teaching of Jesus. The Jews of Jesus' day and even before His day had already come to think of the Kingdom as having successive stages of fulfilment. The difference between the Jewish idea and Jesus' idea did not concern the fact of present and future stages of the Kingdom, but the redemptive and gracious character of **all** stages of the Kingdom.

It is universally admitted that the Gospels **as they stand** present the idea of a present, spiritual, preliminary form of the Kingdom. Those who hold a view similar to that of Albert Schweitzer maintain that the Gospels as we have them have been colored by the faith of the early Church, and therefore they do not give an objective, accurate picture of what Jesus really said and thought. In other words, it is held that part of what is reported in the Gospels as having been spoken by Jesus is not genuine, but was invented by the early Christians.

Texts which clearly imply the idea of the present, spiritual Kingdom, in the teaching of Jesus, are: Matt. 11:11; 13:41; 16:19. Note also Matt. 12:27,28, "If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God is come unto you" (verse 26 refers to the kingdom of Satan). Here the destruction of Satan's kingdom by Jesus has as its consequence the furtherance of the **then existing** Kingdom of God.

Note, also, Luke 17:21, "The kingdom of God is within you." The Greek phrase here translated "within you" is **entos humon.** This may mean either "within you" or "among you." A better translation than "within you" would be "in your midst." This best answers the question of the Pharisees, which concerned the **time** of the coming of the kingdom, not its **sphere.** Also the kingdom could not be **within** the unbelieving Pharisees, to whom Jesus was then speaking.

The probable meaning of this saying of Jesus (Luke 17:21) is: the Kingdom of God is established in the midst of Israel through the spiritual results of Christ's labors. God's **rule** is established among them through Christ's work.

Luke 16:16, "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." This saying of Jesus implies that the Kingdom was then a present, existing reality.

Matt. 11:11. John the Baptist is not himself in the Kingdom, but others are in it. This cannot refer to the final, eternal kingdom, for John will surely be in that. It must, therefore, mean a spiritual kingdom existing while Jesus was on earth.

Matt. 6:33, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness . . ." This indicates that the Kingdom is a possession attainable in this life, just as food and clothing are attainable in this life.

Clearest of all, the present reality of the Kingdom is brought out in the great Kingdom parables of Matt. 13, Mark 4 and Luke 8. In the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares, the Kingdom appears as a state in which good and bad are intermixed. The same is true of the Parable of the Fishnet. This cannot mean the final form of the Kingdom, for there will not be any evil in that.

The parables of the Mustard Seed and the Leaven both indicate that Jesus thought of the Kingdom as a growing organism or a leavening power. This can only apply to the historical, spiritual type of kingdom.

In these parables Jesus speaks of "the mystery" or "the mysteries" of the kingdom of Heaven. What is this "mystery"? Doubtless it is the truth that the Kingdom comes gradually, imperceptibly, spiritually.

Summary: We cannot deny that Jesus taught that the Kingdom is spiritual, internal, and comes by a long process.

Some writers hold that Jesus taught this spiritual kingdom idea only late in His ministry. But this cannot be proved. Some of the clearest statements about the spiritual nature of the kingdom come early in His teachings: Matt. 11:11, Mark 2:18-22.

In the great Kingdom Parables of Matt. 13 (Mark 4 and Luke 8) Jesus first formally brings out the relation and contrast between the spiritual growth of the Kingdom and its eschatological consummation (i.e., the final stage of the Kingdom at the end of history). This is shown, for example, by the Parable of the Tares.

In the Caesarea-Philippi discourse (Matt. 16:13-20) Jesus advances His Kingdom teaching by speaking of the relation of **His Church** to **His Kingdom.** The relation between the Church and the Kingdom is taken up in a later lesson.

Jesus speaks of two phases or aspects of the Kingdom, not of two separate Kingdoms. The standard theological distinction between "the Kingdom of Grace" and "the Kingdom of Glory" is liable to misunderstanding. We should realize that these are not properly regarded as two distinct kingdoms, but as two phases or stages of one and the same Kingdom. There is an organic bond of connection between the two.

Jesus' doctrine of the Kingdom shows how He subordinated the physical to the spiritual, while still holding that the physical is worthy and important.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is the difference between the Jewish idea of the Kingdom and that taught by Jesus, as to the character of the Kingdom?

2. What do adherents of views akin to that of Albert Schweitzer hold concerning the sayings attributed to Jesus in the Gospels?

3. Give a verse which shows that Jesus taught that the Kingdom of God was in existence in His day.

4. What is the probable meaning of the saying of Jesus recorded in Luke 17:21 ("The Kingdom of God is within you")? What alternative meaning has been advocated? What reason can be given why one of these meanings is correct and the other wrong?

5. What parables of Jesus most clearly teach the reality of the present Kingdom of God? In what chapter of Matthew, Mark and Luke are they found?

6. What new element of truth concerning the Kingdom appears in Jesus' discourse at Caesarea-Philippi (Matt. 16:13-20)?

7. How is the theological distinction between "the Kingdom of Grace" and "the Kingdom of Glory" sometimes misunderstood? How should it be correctly understood?

LESSON 16

MISUNDERSTANDINGS CONCERNING THE PRESENT AND FUTURE KINGDOM

1. The Tendency to identify Jesus' expectation of the coming Kingdom with the then current Jewish expectations:

This tendency implies that Jesus was mistaken (1) as to the **time** of the Kingdom's appearance; (2) as to the **nature** of the Kingdom. It implies that Jesus was limited by the public opinion of His time.

Those who have this tendency often say that Jesus' teaching about the Kingdom is without value, while His teaching about the Fatherhood of God in His real contribution to the world's religious thought.

Reasons why this tendency is wrong:

(1) It fails to grasp the spiritual nature of the

Kingdom as taught by Jesus. He borrowed the name but not the content of His Kingdom-idea from the Judaism of His day. What Jesus' Kingdom-idea did have in common with Judaism was taken from a purer type of Jewish belief — that concerning what was called "the coming age."

Even what He did take from Judaism, Jesus lifted to a higher plane by emphasizing the supremacy of God. What He taught was not merely "the Kingdom" but specifically "the Kingdom **OF GOD.**

The current Jewish idea of the Kingdom was intensely political and national, and even included a sensual tendency. Instead of thinking of a provisional political Kingdom, Jesus taught a present **spiritual** Kingdom as the preparation for the absolute and eternal Kingdom of God.

(2) Jesus differed sharply from the Jewish teaching of His day in that He anticipated the rejection of many in Israel and the extension of the Gospel to the Gentiles on a large scale. His idea of the Kingdom is not Jewish but **universal.**

"The problems raised, the duties required, the blessings conferred, are such as to be applicable to all without distinction of race, caste or sex."

Luke 22:30 ("That ye may . . . sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel") is sometimes held to imply that Jesus had not freed Himself from Jewish particularism. This verse, however, does not imply the salvation of all Israel, nor does it exclude the calling of the Gentiles. It only implies that the Apostles will have a pre-eminent place in the future kingdom.

(3) Jesus' kingdom-message differs from that of the later Judaism in the absence of the sensualistic element which is prominent in the latter.

The **Apocalypse of Baruch** gives a good example of the "sensualistic" element in the later Judaism's kingdom-concept. Chapter 29:1-8 reads as follows:

"When the Messiah begins to reveal Himself, Behemoth and Leviathan likewise appear, and are given as food to the remnant; the earth produces ten-thousand fold; a vine will have 1000 branches, every branch 1000 clusters, every cluster 1000 grapes, and every grape will yield one kor of wine; winds will proceed from God and will carry to the people the fragrance of aromatic fruit, and at night clouds will distil healing dew; the heavenly supplies of manna will be let down and they will eat of them in those years, because they have reached the end of the ages" (G. Vos, **The Pauline Eschatology,** p. 233).

Jesus' idea of the future kingdom is not merely spiritual. It involves objective and external realities, but these are on a higher plane of existence than anything we know in this present life. We must avoid hyper-spiritualism as well as gross materialism. There is such a thing as supernatural, Biblical **realism.** This is very effectively brought out in C. S. Lewis' books, including **Miracles** and **The Problem of Pain.**

2. The mistaken notion that the Kingdom comes by a natural, evolutionary process.

This idea has been occasioned, perhaps, by some of the parables taken from the sphere of natural or organic life. But the point of these parables is not that the process is **natural** but only that it is **gradual and invisible.**

E. g., the Parable of the gradually growing seed (Mark 4:26-29) actually implies the opposite of the "natural process" view of the Kingdom . . . it implies that God mysteriously gives the increase without human intervention.

The work of the Holy Spirit is **supernatural.** The Gospel of John especially shows that the Kingdom of God does not come by natural processes, for we can enter it only by the supernatural new birth (John 3:3,5).

The present Kingdom is just as supernatural as the future one. The same supernatural power which extends the Kingdom today, will bring about the consummation when the time comes. But the consummation will be sudden, rather than gradual; and it will be universal and visible, rather than partial and hidden.

The Gospels do not represent the final, absolute form of the Kingdom of God as coming by gradual progress of the present, spiritual form of the Kingdom.

The Parables of the Tares and the Fish Net imply that the consummation does not result spontaneously from the preceding historical process. "The harvest is conditioned by the ripeness of the grain, and yet the ripeness of the grain can never of itself set in operation the harvest." "The harvest comes when the man puts forth the sickle, because the fruit is ripe." "So when the immanent kingdom has run its course to maturity, God will intervene in the miracle of all miracles."

It would be impossible for the final form of the Kingdom to come otherwise than catastrophically. For the final form of the Kingdom involves **physical and cosmical changes** which no force operating in the spiritual sphere can produce. It involves the resurrection of the dead, the transformation ("in the twinkling of an eye") of living believers, and the new conditions of life on an entirely higher plane of existence.

"It is an order of things lying altogether above this earthly life, in which the righteous shall shine as the sun, in which all the prophets will be seen, in which the pure in heart shall enjoy the beatific vision of God, in which those who hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be completely filled. Surely to effect this there must take place a great crisis, a great catastrophe at the end which will be the very opposite of all evolution. Our Lord himself has marked its unique character by calling it the palingenesis, the regeneration, Matt. 19:28."

3. The idea that the Kingdom is limited to man's ethical life.

A third current misconception of Jesus' teaching about the Kingdom is that which would confine the spiritual, internal Kingdom to the sphere of the ethical life of man.

This notion has had considerable popularity because the so-called "social gospel" movement has made the ethical teachings the center of its "theological" system, and has identified this "social gospel" program with the name "the Kingdom of God" (e.g., Walter Rauschenbush, E. Stanley Jones). The Kingdom is defined, according to this notion, as an ethical community realized by the interaction of people on the principle of love.

This idea of the Kingdom as being limited to the ethical sphere is wrong in two respects:

(1) It is much too narrow. Ethics is only one application of religion; it is not the whole of religion. Jesus included the whole field of religion in the Kingdom . . . not merely righteousness, but also worship and other factors. Life, forgiveness, communion with God, are part of the Kingdom just as truly as is social righteousness.

(2) This notion is too man-centered. It represents the Kingdom as essentially a matter of human activity and attitudes. But in Jesus' teaching, the Kingdom is essentially **a product of God's activity.** It is God's gift to His people. "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

"Thy kingdom come, thy will be done" . . . both of these are petitions addressed **to God.** They ask God to set up and manifest His rule in such a way that it will be revealed through our lives and actions.

Questions for Discussion

1. What two mistakes concerning the Kingdom are attributed to Jesus by those who identify His expectation of the coming Kingdom with the Jewish Kingdom-expectations of His day?

2. In what three respects was Jesus' idea of the Kingdom different from the Jewish Kingdom-concept of His day?

3. What can be said about the idea that the Kingdom of God will come by a natural, evolutionary process?

4. Why can the final, absolute form of the Kingdom not come by a gradual process of growth or development?

5. What idea of the Kingdom of God has been held by the "social gospel" movement?

6. What two serious objections exist against the idea that the Kingdom is limited to the ethical sphere of human life?

LESSON 17

THE ESSENCE OF THE KINGDOM: THE KINGDOM AS THE SUPREMACY OF GOD IN THE SPHERE OF SAVING POWER

Jesus calls the new order of things which He introduces "the Kingdom of God." This name He applies not only to its final outcome, but to its entire course of development. Why did Jesus choose this name? Why was it appropriate for what He had in mind?

Not because of mere accomodation to popular usage, for the name "Kingdom of God" was not the commonest name in use among the Jews for the Messianic age. Also not from mere dependence on the Old Testament, for Jesus always sought the **principles** in the Old Testament, not merely the outward form of the words.

Jesus nowhere gives a definition of the Kingdom. His method is not that of definition but rather of description and illustration. Paul comes much nearer to defining the Kingdom of God (Romans 14:17). By study of Jesus' descriptions and illustrations of the Kingdom of God, we can learn its deeper meaning, and so arrive at a proper definition.

The essential meaning of the Kingdom does not consist in mutual association for moral and religious ends or activities. It is true that the Kingdom is a community of people united together by religious bonds, but this aspect of the Kingdom is not specially emphasized by Jesus. The Kingdom is not a mere union or association of people, but **a union of people mutually related to God.**

No doubt the real reason why Jesus chose the name "Kingdom of God" was because in this Kingdom **God is supreme,** just as a human king is supreme in an earthly kingdom. Jesus' idea of the Kingdom is therefore thoroughly God-centered. To appreciate this fact we must try to look at the world and at all life from the viewpoint of the subordination of all to God's glory.

This is difficult for us to do because we all naturally tend to take a lower, man-centered view of religion. Also in our modern life we have a different view of "kingdoms" from that of the ancient oriental world. We think in terms of democracy today, and even countries which have a king regard the king as a servant of the people. But in ancient oriental monarchy the individual was regarded as existing for the state, and the state was summed up in the person of the ruler. We would not favor such a form of government for the

state today, but it remains the true form of relation between God and man.

The real purpose of the Israelite monarchy (the "theocracy") was not to teach the world lessons in civil government (though such can certainly be learned from it), but to teach what is the true, permanent and eternal relation between God and man.

The God-centered character of religion had become neglected in Jesus' day. He restored it by His teaching about the Kingdom of God.

To Jesus, the Kingdom exists where God supernaturally carries through His supremacy against all opposing powers and brings man to the willing recognition of the same. "It is a state of things in which everything converges and tends toward God as the highest good" (textbook, p. 50).

The closing words of the Lord's Prayer, as found in Matthew, express clearly Jesus' idea of the God-centered character of the Kingdom. There is a question about the textual genuineness of the conclusion of the Lord's Prayer. But in any case, the clause is extremely ancient, and stands as a witness to what the early Church thought about the Kingdom.

In I Corinthians 15:28, Paul describes the final stage of the Kingdom in the same way, by saying that then "God will be all in all." Because the Kingdom is God-centered, Jesus could and did represent it as the **summum bonum** — the supreme value, the supreme object of human pursuit.

In Mark 12:34, the scribe in conversation with Jesus recognized that the supreme obligation was to love God with all the heart, soul, mind and strength. Because of this, Jesus said that he was not far from the Kingdom of God. This shows that Jesus considered the Kingdom as equivalent to the realization of the ideal of religion in the highest sense.

In Matthew 6:33, seeking God's Kingdom is contrasted with seeking earthly things. This is because seeking God's Kingdom is really the same thing as seeking God Himself.

Though the actual word "Kingdom" is not used, the same idea is found in Jesus' great prayer recorded in John 17. Cf. verse 4, "I have glorified those on the earth . . . " Here is the highest ideal of religion. **In the order of things provided for the salvation of mankind, everything is designed to glorify God.** Therefore every view of religion which magnifies man at the expense of God, must inevitably misunderstand Jesus' view of the Kingdom.

Questions for Discussion

1. Instead of giving a formal definition of the Kingdom of God, how does Jesus present it?

2. Give a verse from the Epistle to the Romans which approaches a formal definition of the Kingdom of God.

3. What was probably the real reason why Jesus chose the name "Kingdom of God" for the new order of things which He established?

4. How does the modern idea of the position of a king or ruler differ from that of the ancient Oriental world?

5. What was the real purpose of the Israelite theocracy in the Old Testament Period?

6. What is meant by calling the Kingdom of God the **summum bonum?**

7. What character of the Kingdom made it proper for Jesus to represent it as the **summum bonum?**

LESSON 18

THE ESSENCE OF THE KINGDOM: THE KINGDOM AS THE SUPREMACY OF GOD IN THE SPHERE OF SAVING POWER, CONTINUED

The supremacy of God in the Kingdom is manifested in three ways:

(a) The acts by which the Kingdom is established (the sphere of saving power)

(b) The Moral order under which the Kingdom exists (the sphere of righteousness)

(c) The Spiritual blessings enjoyed in the Kingdom (the sphere of blessedness)

These three items of course are not divisions of the Kingdom, but rather aspects of the one Kingdom of God. They are distinguishable but they are not separable. We should not try to draw hard and fast lines, but should realize that one aspect passes over easily into another.

The element of power was early in the Old Testament a prominent element in the Bible revelation of the divine kingship. This is exemplified in the Song of Moses, Exodus 15, celebrating God's victory over enemies.

Throughout the Old Testament the idea of conquest continues prominent in the revelation about the Kingdom of God. This is shown, for example, by Daniel 2:45, where the Kingdom of God appears as a stone breaking up the world-empires.

In I Cor. 15:25 ("He must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet") the kingship of Christ is represented as a process of subduing one enemy after another. The last of these enemies is death. "Christ's kingdom as a process of conquest precedes the final kingdom of God as a settled permanent state" (textbook, page 53).

The Jewish idea of the Kingdom was familiar with the notion of conquest. But Jesus lifted it from the political sphere to the spiritual sphere. He represents the forces of spiritual evil — the demons — as being overcome by the Spirit of God.

Not only the casting out of demons, but all the miracles are manifestations of the Kingdom as the sphere of saving power. They were more than mere signs or credentials of Jesus. They are evidences that the Kingdom has actually arrived . . . they show that the royal power of God is actually, visibly in action. Thus the miracles were "the signs of the times," which people should have understood. Cf. Matt. 11:1-5; Luke 4:18,19 (quoting Isa. 61:1).

Jesus' miracles with a single exception were beneficent ones. To give a sign from heaven, not possessing this beneficent character, Jesus consistently refused.

The question is raised, how Jesus' miracles, being chiefly in the physical sphere, could indicate the arrival of a Kingdom which is primarily spiritual. The answer is, that we must see the physical evils which Jesus' kingdom-power removes, against their moral and spiritual background. Back of physical evil is moral evil, and back of moral evil is a person . . . Satan, the prince of the realm of evil. Hence Jesus could "rebuke" a fever, and could command the wind and the waves "Be still," addressing them as if they were personal beings.

Also the physical miracles **symbolize** the spiritual; for instance, the miracle of giving sight to the man born blind, in the Gospel of John. The miracles of Jesus and the apostles were also samples or prophecies of the future kingdom-power at the end of history. The work of Jesus will finally bring about a physical as well as a spiritual renewal of the world. This physical renewal of all things is predicted, not only by prophecies in words, but also by prophecies in deeds. The latter are what we call miracles.

According to Christ's teaching, the source of Kingdom power is the Holy Spirit. This is shown by Matt. 12:28, "But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you." This text teaches that where the Spirit of God operates, there the Kingdom of God has come.

Jesus ascribes His power to work miracles to His being anointed with the Holy Spirit . . . Luke 4:18 (quoting Isa. 61:1).

Several passages show that the power is that of the Holy Spirit, for example:

Luke 1:17, "spirit and power of Elijah."

Luke 1:35, "the Holy Spirit . . . the power of the highest."

Acts 1:8, "Ye shall receive power . . . the Holy Spirit."

Most of Christ's references to the Holy Spirit as the author of saving power are connected with His miracles. This is especially true in the Synoptic Gospels. In John's Gospel, the Holy Spirit appears more prominently as the Author and power of the Christian life as a whole. Here again the power of the Holy Spirit is connected with the idea of the Kingdom, as in John 3:3.

Even in the Synoptics the power of the Spirit is represented as the source of the Christian life as a whole, though not so clearly as in John.

For example, Jesus was led by the Spirit to be tempted and to gain a moral victory over the Evil One. Also, the Holy Spirit is represented as a gift to the Father's children (Luke 11:13).

Jesus' teaching on this subject gives a sort of preliminary outline of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. The full revelation of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit could not come until the actual bestowal of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, which had to be after Jesus' ascension.

Jesus stands midway between the Old Testament doctrine of the Holy Spirit and the complete revelation of this doctrine in the Testament Epistles.

In the Old Testament the emphasis is on the work of the Holy Spirit as qualifying for office in the Theocracy . . . for the offices of prophets, priests and kings. In Jesus' teaching the idea of the Holy Spirit as the source of spiritual blessings to individual believers becomes prominent.

Jesus' teaching on the Holy Spirit in connection with the Kingdom of God is most clearly expressed in His teaching on the Church, which we shall take up later in a separate chapter.

Questions for Discussion

1. In what three ways is the supremacy of God in the Kingdom manifested?

2. Give an example from the Old Testament of the idea of God's conquest over His enemies as essential to the Kingdom of God.

3. What change did Jesus make in the Jewish idea of conquest?

4. What is the relation of Jesus' miracles to the Kingdom of God?

5. How could miracles in the physical sphere show the arrival of a Kingdom which is spiritual?

6. What is meant by saying that Jesus' miracles

are "prophecies in deeds?"

7. Give a text which shows that, according to Jesus, the source of Kingdom power is the Holy Spirit.

8. With what acts performed by Christ are most of His references to the Holy Spirit as the source of saving power connected?

9. Why could a full statement of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit not be given in the teachings of Jesus?

10. Where does Jesus' teaching on the power of the Holy Spirit, etc., stand in relation to the Old Testament and to the New Testament Epistles?

11. Where does the Old Testament place the emphasis in its teaching about the work of the Holy Spirit?

12. How does Jesus' teaching on the Holy Spirit differ in emphasis from that of the Old Testament on the same subject?

LESSON 19

THE ESSENCE OF THE KINGDOM (CONTINUED): THE KINGDOM AS THE SUPREMACY OF GOD IN THE SPHERE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

In Jesus' teaching about the relation of the Kingdom of God to the sphere of righteousness, three lines of thought can be distinguished.

The first line of thought is that the ideal fulfilment of the will of God in man's moral life is a revelation of the divine supremacy, and the act of declaring man righteous is a prerogative of God's kingship.

The second line of thought is that the righteousness which man needs is one of the blessings which God bestows on man.

The third line of thought is that the Kingdom is given as a reward for the practice of righteousness in this present life.

We shall consider each of these separately.

1. The ideal fulfilment of the will of God in man's moral life is a revelation of the divine supremacy, and the act of declaring man righteous is a prerogative of God's Kingship.

According to the Old Testament (and Semitic thinking in general), kingship, legislative and judicial authority are inseparably united.

The modern distribution of these various functions over various separate organs of government is something unknown to Old Testament thought. The Old Testament idea of the union of functions is brought out by such a text as Isaiah 33:22, "For the Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King: he will save us." In this text the executive, legislative and judicial functions are all ascribed to Jehovah.

In the Old Testament, "to judge" and "to reign" are synonymous expressions. This must be remembered if we are to understand Jesus' teaching about righteousness and the Kingdom.

Righteousness is always used by Jesus in the specific sense which it has when speaking of God as Lawgiver and Judge. Our modern usage is looser: we often tend to think of righteousness as merely that which is inherently equitable or fair. To Jesus righteousness means that and much more than that.

"It meant such moral conduct and such a moral state as are right when measured by the supreme norm of the nature and will of God, so that they form a reproduction of the latter . . . a revelation, as it were, of the moral glory of God."

In the Lord's Prayer, the petition "Thy kingdom come" leads naturally to the petition "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." Thus the fulfilment of the will of God is regarded as an important way of realizing God's kingship.

The consummate expression of this idea is found in Matt. 5:48, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

The texts quoted imply that the **norm** of righteousness is to be found in God. They also imply that the **aim** of righteousness is to be found in God. This means that "Righteousness is to be sought from the pure desire of satisfying Him, who is the supreme end of all moral existence."

Jesus' teaching on righteousness stands in contrast to the dominant Jewish ethics of His day.

The faults of the Jewish ethics of that day were formalism, casuistry, an inclination to emphasize the negative rather than the positive side of the law, and self-righteousness or hypocrisy.

These faults proceeded from two sources. First, Judaism had virtually become a worship of the law, rather than of the Lawgiver. The letter of the law had taken the place of the Divine Being. The majesty, authority and holy nature of God were no longer keenly felt in the commandments.

Secondly, Jewish law-observance had become self-centered instead of God-centered. It was regarded as a way of earning the blessings of the coming age.

Where the law is honored rather than the

Lawgiver, and where the motive for obeying is a selfish one, the faults which Jesus rebuked are sure to be found.

God being thought of as far away, the tendency will be to be satisfied with mere outward conformity to the letter of the law. Thus the law comes to be regarded as a mere collection of separate, unrelated precepts, rather than a unitary revelation of God's will. The result of this will be a complicated and detailed system of casuistry, or detailed rules of what is and is not allowed. E.g., the traditional extra-biblical rules about the Sabbath.

Where the motive is a selfish one, there will always be more emphasis on avoidance of transgression than on the positive fulfilling of the law. There will, for example, be more stress on avoiding murder than on loving and helping one's neighbor. Think in this connection of the Parable of the Good Samaritan ("Who is my neighbor?"). What was needed was not merely to avoid wounding and robbing the man, but positively to heal and help him in his trouble and need.

Where external observance of the letter is chiefly stressed, self-righteousness and hypocrisy are sure to develop. Any system which man feels he can measure up to will inevitably breed pride and self-righteousness.

The foregoing describes the moral climate in which Jesus appeared on the scene, and in which He wrought a revolution. Jesus taught men to hear the voice of God Himself back of the commandments. He taught men to realize that a living Person is back of the written law. Thus he taught that the law is a living organism.

Questions for Discussion

1. In Jesus' teaching about the relation of the Kingdom of God to the sphere of righteousness, what three lines of thought can be distinguished?

2. How does Old Testament thought about the various functions of government (executive, legislative, judicial) differ from modern thought on the same subject?

3. What definition of **Righteousness** as the term is used by Jesus can be given?

4. According to Jesus' teaching, what two facts concerning righteousness are found in God?

5. What were the special faults or vices of the Jewish ethics of Jesus' day?

6. From what two sources had these faults sprung?

LESSON 20

THE ESSENCE OF THE KINGDOM (CONTINUED): THE KINGDOM AS THE SUPREMACY OF GOD IN THE SPHERE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS (CONTINUED)

In Jesus' teaching, the Law can be summarized in two great comprehensive principles. These two principles are:

(a) To love God supremely

(b) To love our neighbor as ourself

These comprehensive principles of ethics are stated in Mark 12:30,31. Similarly, the Golden Rule (Matt. 7:12) is a practical test of conduct.

Another principle is that in case of conflict, that which is ceremonial must give way to that which is ethical. This is brought out by Matt. 5:23,24, "Therefore if Thou bring thy gift to the altar . . ."

Some commandments are more important than others. This is brought out by Jesus' comparison in Matt. 23:23, where tithing of garden herbs, though stated to be an obligation, is treated as less important than "judgment, mercy and faith."

Righteousness is a matter of immediate, personal relationship between the soul and God. Therefore only divine revelation can bind the conscience. Therefore all mere human tradition is without authority, so far as conscience is concerned. This is shown by Matt. 15:13, "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." The context of this saying was the Pharisees' offence at Jesus' teaching that what goes into the mouth cannot defile a man.

What can impart value in God's sight to any act of obedience on man's part can only be the **sincerity** from which it proceeds ("heart").

Righteousness must be **fruit** — it must be the product of life and character. As the character is, so the conduct will be in God's sight. This is taught by Matt. 7:16,20; 21:43.

God is not only Lawgiver and King, but also the supreme Judge of man's moral life. To be righteous is, strictly speaking, to be justified by God, just as, in our American life, what is legal is, ultimately, what the Supreme Court declares to be legal. As far as our national system of law is concerned, a person is regarded as innocent or guilty when the Supreme Court says he is innocent or guilty. And in the moral life of man, a person is righteous when God says he is righteous.

Jesus regarded God's function of judging as very

important. He did not over-emphasize the divine love so as to obscure the divine justice. While Jesus corrected the one-sidedness of the contemporary Judaism, which had little or no place for the love and Fatherhood of God, still He did not go to the opposite extreme of regarding God as nothing but love. In Jesus' teaching the divine attributes of love and justice are perfectly balanced.

Matt. 6:33, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness . . . " — this text shows the close connection in Jesus' thinking between God's **kingdom** and God's **forensic righteousness** ("forensic" means judicial, pertaining to God as a Judge).

In Matt. 6:33 the disciples are urged (a) to make God's Kingdom the object of their pursuit, and (b) as a closer specification, to seek God's **righteousness.**

The "righteousness" mentioned in Matt. 6:33 means either God's act of justifying man, or it means the righteousness imputed to man by God. That is, it means either (a) God's act of declaring man righteous; or (b) the righteousness which God credits to man's account.

The importance which Jesus attached to righteousness can be seen by His equating **seeking righteousness** with **seeking God's Kingdom.** Seeking righteousness, or seeking God's Kingdom is represented as the disciple's highest concern. He is to hunger and thirst after righteousness. For righteousness' sake the disciple must be willing to suffer persecution (Matt. 5:6,10).

All this means something only when we realize that to Jesus the question of right and wrong was not merely a moral question, but also in the deepest sense a **religious** question.

It is because Jesus had such a very high idea of what righteousness involves, that He thought of the Kingdom in its perfect form as something future. The Kingdom in its perfect form must be future, "because it consisted in the observance of the law conformed to an altogether new ideal, practised in an altogether new spirit." This was something higher than Judaism had ever contemplated. It is **God-centered righteousness.**

The God-centered ideal of righteousness prepared the way for the second line of thought found in Jesus' teaching on the subject.

Questions for Discussion

1. In Jesus' teaching, what two comprehensive principles summarize the moral law?

2. What does Jesus teach as to cases where there is a conflict between ceremonial duties and ethical duties?

3. What saying of Jesus teaches that some of God's commandments are more important than others?

4. What is meant by God's forensic righteousness?

5. What text in the teachings of Jesus shows a close connection between God's Kingship and God's forensic righteousness?

6. What is meant by the statement that to Jesus right and wrong was not merely a moral question but also a religious question?

LESSON 21

THE SUPREMACY OF GOD IN THE SPHERE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, CONTINUED

II. Righteousness Itself is one of the blessings bestowed in the Kingdom.

The Old Testament had already suggested this idea. The prophets had predicted that the lawgiving function of Jehovah's Kingship would enter on a new stage in the Messianic age.

Jeremiah predicted that in the Messianic age God would write the law on the hearts of His people (Jer. 31:33).

Ezekiel prophesied that in the new age God would make Israel to walk in His statutes (Ezek. 36:27).

The prophecies in the second part of Isaiah promise a new gift of righteousness to God's people as a result of the marvelous disclosure of Jehovah's own righteousness in the future. Jesus may have had these statements of Isaiah in mind when in the Sermon on the Mount He spoke of hungering and thirsting after righteousness (Isa. 55:1).

The "hungering and thirsting" imply that the righteousness spoken of is **a gift** rather than an achievement of man. The persons who hunger and thirst are conscious of not possessing that which they hunger and thirst for; they look to God as the source of it. Their being satisfied is the result of an act of God, not of an act of their own.

The same thought is implied in the statement about "seeking" God's righteousness, Matt. 6:33.

The Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican brings the same idea out clearly. The publican is **justified by God,** not on the basis of works performed by himself, but strictly on the basis of God's mercy — "God be merciful to me a sinner."

We should not read into these statements of the Gospels the completed doctrine of justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ as we find it in the New Testament Epistles, especially Romans and Galatians. The doctrine of justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ was dependent upon Christ's work of atonement (including His death on the cross) as a finished work — a historical fact. Therefore the doctrine of justification could not be fully revealed until Christ had been crucified and raised from the dead.

Christ speaks of a state of righteousness before God to be conferred as a part of the coming Kingdom. Just how this state of righteousness will be conferred would be made clear after Jesus had been crucified, raised from the dead, and had ascended into heaven. In Jesus' teaching, here as elsewhere, we have truth in germ or nucleus form, which later in the New Testament Epistles, is stated more explicitly and fully. The doctrines of justification and sanctification are taught by Jesus in germ form.

Justification is righteousness imputed or reckoned to the believer. Sanctification is righteousness embodied in the life of the believer by a new birth and a new nature and the work of the Holy Spirit.

We can correctly say that Jesus prepared the way for Paul by whom the full doctrine of Justification by imputed righteousness was revealed to mankind. As usual, the origins of the doctrine are found in the Old Testament, the nucleus in Jesus' teaching, and the full development in the Epistles.

Jesus spoke of a righteousness of a new and higher kind than that possessed by the scribes or Pharisees. This raised the question how such higher kind of righteousness could be acquired by man. The full answer to this question is found in the Epistles of Paul, especially Galatians and Romans.

III. Christ's Third Line of Teaching on the Kingdom of God as Righteousness connects the Kingdom with Righteousness, as a reward for righteousness practiced in this life.

When we speak of the Kingdom as a reward for practicing righteousness, obviously we are using the word "kingdom" in the concrete sense. What we have in mind is not the kingship of God — His act of ruling — but the whole complex of blessings which result, which will be fully bestowed on the believer at the Last Day.

In Matt. 5:20 the possession of righteousness exceeding that of the scribes and Pharisees is set forth as a prerequisite for entering the Kingdom. Numerous other passages speak of a future reward.

Some have claimed that Jesus spoke of future rewards because He was still influenced by the legalism of Judaism, which regarded everything in religion as revolving around the ideas of merit and reward. If this charge were true it would be a serious one, for the teaching about rewards is prominent in the recorded sayings of Jesus.

To solve this problem, we must distinguish sharply between things that differ. The desire for a reward is not an unworthy motive, as long as it is not our **supreme** motive in practicing righteousness. As long as love for God and devotion to Him is our supreme motive, the desire for a reward can exist alongside it, properly, as a subordinate motive.

As a matter of fact Jesus appealed both to the fear of punishment and to the desire for reward. Even Jesus Himself faced sufferings by thinking of the promised reward (Hebrews 12:2). This did not interfere with a supreme devotion to the will of God for God's own sake.

The desire for reward need not be limited to material rewards, as may too often have been the case in Judaism. Jesus' teaching about rewards, on the contrary, moves on the highest spiritual plane. The promised rewards consist of such things as "seeing God," "being filled with righteousness," "being called sons of God." The second clauses of the Beatitudes describe the essence of the final Kingdom in which the rewards will consist. The emphasis is strongly on the spiritual. The rewards consist in the highest enjoyment of spiritual blessings which believers already enjoy here and now in a lesser degree. Thus the reward bears an organic relation to the conduct it is intended to crown.

Judaism thought of rewards as being bestowed by legal necessity; that is, being literally earned or deserved. Therefore in Judaism the relation between conduct and reward was exactly calculable, **quid pro quo,** or "so much for so much."

In Jesus' teaching, on the other hand, there can be no such commercial relation between God and man. This is true, not only because of man's sin, which makes him a bankrupt debtor to God's moral law, but also even apart from sin, because God by reason of His sovereignty is entitled to absolute obedience and service of all His creatures, owing them nothing.

This explains Jesus' remark about "unprofitable" servants (Luke 17:10). "Unprofitable" does not mean the same as **useless;** it only means that the servants do only what the Lord has a right to expect of them anyway.

Compare the Parable of the Talents. The talents, for the increase of which the servants are rewarded, are not originally their own, but were entrusted to them by their Lord. This shows that the idea of equivalence between what is done and what is received is out of the question. As a matter of fact, the reward will far exceed the righteousness which precedes it. He that is faithful over a few things will be set over many things (Matt. 24:47; 25:21,23). He who receives a prophet or a righteous man obtains a reward as great as that of a prophet or a righteous man (Matt. 10:41,42). Restitution will be 100-fold for things given up for Christ's sake (Mark 10:30).

The parable of the laborers in the vineyard teaches that in the last analysis **the reward is a free gift,** as shown by the fact that one who has labored but little can receive the same wages as one who has labored long (Matt. 20:1-16; Luke 17:10).

Jesus gives a high place in His teaching to the idea of reward. Yet He always keeps the idea of reward in subordination to two higher principles, namely: (a) divine sovereignty, and (b) divine grace.

That is, the idea of reward is kept in subordination to the principles of God's kingship and God's fatherhood.

The Father as Father **gives** the Kingdom to the little flock. What can be called wages from one point of view, is a gift of grace from another point of view, as shown by Matt. 5:46 compared with Luke 6:32,35.

The reward simply serves the purpose of affording an incentive to the disciples' zeal.

Though the Kingdom itself is inherited by all believers and inherited by grace, there will be individual degrees of glory involved in the Kingdom for each individual disciple because the ultimate issue in eternity cannot but be determined by the progress in righteousness made here below.

Questions for Discussion

1. What sayings of Jesus clearly imply that righteousness is a gift of God to man rather than an achievement of man?

2. Why could the full doctrine of justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ not be given in Jesus' teachings?

3. What does the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican teach concerning justification?

4. What is the difference between justification and sanctification?

5. What two New Testament Epistles present the doctrine of justification most fully?

6. What was the attitude of Judaism to the question of rewards?

7. When is the desire for reward not an unworthy motive?

8. What kind of rewards did Jesus mostly speak of?

9. According to Jesus' teaching, what two reasons exist why there cannot be a commercial relation concerning rewards between God and man?

10. What does Jesus teach as to the proportion between the righteousness practiced in this life and the reward in eternity?

11. How does the parable of the laborers in the vineyard imply that the reward is actually a free gift of God?

12. To what two higher principles does Jesus always keep the idea of reward in subordination?

13. What is the real purpose or reason for promising a reward to Christ's disciples?

14. What does Jesus teach about different degrees of reward in eternity?

LESSON 22

THE KINGDOM AS THE SUPREMACY OF GOD IN THE SPHERE OF BLESSEDNESS

In Christ's teaching concerning the Kingdom, the idea of God's glory, rather than man's welfare, is supreme. God's glory, however, is connected with the highest blessedness for man. Jesus could not conceive of any real happiness apart from the reign of God, nor could He conceive of the reign of God apart from true happiness for man.

Ordinarily we would think of God's Fatherhood rather than His Kingship as the source of our blessedness. But it is also possible to reach the idea of blessedness by direct inference from the divine kingship. It is characteristic of a king to bestow royal gifts on his subjects. Thus Jesus also speaks of gifts bestowed by God as King. For example, there is the parable of the banquet prepared by the king for the marriage of his son (Matt. 22:2).

Ideally, a kingdom was supposed to protect the poor, needy and oppressed; and this was true to some extent in actual practice also. Thus there was an easy transition from the idea of kingship to that of grace and salvation.

The inestimable value of the kingdom from man's point of view is expressed in two parables, namely those of the treasure hid in the field and the pearl of great price (Matt. 13:44-46). In both cases it is emphasized that the finder sells all his possessions in order to secure this **summum bonum.**

That God Himself regards the Kingdom as the **summum bonum** is evident from the fact that He prepared it for His own from eternity (Matt. 25:34). The preparation from eternity shows that the Kingdom is the supreme embodiment of the divine gracious purpose. Therefore the kingdom is said to be "inherited."

Because the Kingdom includes all that is truly

valuable, Christ pronounces the disciples blessed who see and hear the truth concerning it. They thus see and hear what many prophets and righteous men desired in vain to see and hear (Matt. 13:16,17).

The blessings in which the Kingdom consists are partly negative and partly positive in character.

Negatively, the Kingdom involves deliverance from all evil of every kind. The greatest kind of deliverance from evil is the forgiveness of sins. This had been prophesied as a prominent feature of the Messianic age (Jeremiah 31:34). Jesus taught that this full and free forgiveness of sins is of the essence of the Kingdom (Matt. 18:23 ff.). The Kingdom is likened unto a certain king, who graciously forgives the great debt of his servant and releases him. Also in the Lord's Prayer, note the sequence of ideas: (1) Prayer for the coming of the Kingdom; (2) Prayer that God's will be done; (3) Prayer that debts (sins) be forgiven.

On the positive side, the Kingdom involves the gift of happiness, because it involves the gift of righteousness. Righteousness cannot fail to mean happiness and satisfaction to those who receive it. The mind relieved from the burden of sin and assured of the divine acceptance enters upon a state of profound rest and peace (Matt. 11:28,29).

The positive side of the blessedness of the Kingdom may be analyzed into the two conceptions of (1) **sonship** and (2) **life.**

The idea of sonship is often misunderstood, as if Jesus taught the indiscriminate sonship of all men. Such a universal sonship would of course having nothing to do with redemption or the Kingdom of God. There is of course a certain sense in which all men are children of God even in their sinful condition. The parable of the Prodigal Son, for example, teaches this. But sin renders man unworthy of sonship to God in the highest sense. Besides, Jesus' idea of the Kingdom was so high and so perfect that it must transcend anything that man could possess by nature.

The Kingdom does much more than merely cancel the effects of sin. It also carries man to his very highest destiny . . . to the highest love, service and enjoyment of God that he can ever enjoy. This consummate relationship to God is described by Jesus in terms of **sonship.** This is clearly shown by Luke 20:36, "They are equal unto the angels, and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection." Note also Matt. 5:9, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."

As we have already seen earlier in this course, the Fatherhood of God also has a higher sense when God's relationship to Christians is being spoken of, than when His general relationship to all His creatures is spoken of.

In the Synoptics, when Jesus speaks of THE Father, He is speaking of God's relationship to Himself (Christ). When He is speaking of God's relationship to believers or disciples, He uses the term YOUR Father, not THE Father.

The sonship which is conferred in the Kingdom consists in the most perfect communion with God of which man can ever be capable. The highest gift that can be bestowed on the pure in heart is that they shall see God face to face.

The second term by which Jesus describes the positive blessedness of the Kingdom is the conception of **life.**

In the Old Testament the essential idea of life is not so much growth and activity as prosperity and happiness in the possession of the favor of God. In the Synoptic Gospels Jesus mostly adheres to this Old Testament viewpoint, only He projects the idea into the future, regarding "life" as the sum-total of all the blessings and enjoyments in the final Kingdom ("It is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed . . .").

However even in the Synoptics Jesus also speaks of life as a present possession of the disciples, and therefore also a condition of the spiritual state. E.g., Luke 15:24-32, "For this my son was dead, and is alive again . . . " A present Kingdom necessarily involves also a present enjoyment of life. Therefore life is something to be lived, as well as something to be inherited.

Jesus defines life as the true knowledge of the true God (John 17:3). This knowledge of God the believer already possesses, though not yet to the full degree as he will in eternity. The knowledge spoken of transcends mere cognition, and includes also communion and love. Thus we are introduced into this kind of life, not by mere education or reform, but by a new birth. By the new birth the fundamental character of a person is supernaturally changed.

Because Jesus is the personal representative of this heavenly life on earth, He is the only way to God (John 14:6).

"It is the teaching of Jesus, as well as of Paul, that from God and through God and unto God are all things."

Questions for Discussion

1. To what idea did Jesus always connect man's highest blessedness?

2. How can it be shown that God's Kingship is the source of our blessedness?

3. What two parables of Jesus teach that the Kingdom is of inestimable value?

4. What feature do these two parables have in common?

5. How can it be shown that God Himself regards the Kingdom as the **summum bonum** (highest good)?

6. Into what two categories may the blessings of the Kingdom be divided?

7. How may the negative blessings of the Kingdom be summarized?

8. What parable of Jesus shows that He regarded the full and free forgiveness of sins as of the essence of the Kingdom?

9. What great gift is involved in the positive side of the blessedness of the Kingdom?

10. Into what two conceptions may the positive blessedness of the Kingdom be analyzed?

11. When we speak of sonship as included in the blessedness of the Kingdom, what kind of sonship is meant, and what kind is not under consideration?

12. Besides canceling the effects of sin, what blessedness does the Kingdom bring to those who receive it?

13. What saying of Jesus shows that sonship is the highest relationship to God that man can attain?

14. What is the essential idea of life in the Old Testament?

15. How does Jesus' concept of the essential idea of life differ from that of the Old Testament?

16. What parable of Jesus, and what statement in the parable, shows that life is a present possession of His disciples?

17. How does Jesus define life? (Give the verse, not merely the reference).

18. What is meaning of the word **cognition?**

19. What is included besides cognition in the kind of knowledge which is equivalent to life?

20. How are we introduced into this kind of life?

21. Why is Jesus the only way to God?

LESSON 23

THE KINGDOM AND THE CHURCH

The idea of the Kingdom is found in all periods of Christ's ministry, but the idea of the Church emerges only at two special points of His ministry, which are recorded at Matt. 16:18 and 18:17.

The second of these passages (Matt. 18:17) refers to the Church only incidentally, and indeed, may possibly mean the Jewish synagogue rather than the Christian Church.

The first passage (Matt. 16:18), however, introduces the church as something new, describes its character and defines its relation to the kingdom.

Why did Jesus speak of the church at this particular point in His ministry? Peter had just made his important confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus then announces that He will build His Church upon Peter, the first confessor of Jesus' Messiahship in the face of the unbelief of people in general.

This was not the first time that Peter had expressed belief in Jesus' Messiahship. But Peter's great confession of Matt. 16 was made at a time when many who had previously followed Jesus had forsaken Him. "It is the rock-character, the steadfastness of Peter that is praised by Jesus, that, when others wavered, he had remained true to his conviction."

The revelation which Peter had received from the Father in heaven was a revelation which enabled him, in distinction from the multitude, notwithstanding the outward appearance to the contrary, to see in Jesus the true attributes of Messiahship. Peter's confession, therefore, stood in contrast to the rejection of Jesus by others.

Thus the church of which Jesus speaks will be a church which confesses Jesus' Messiahship in distinction from the unbelief of those outside the church. Jesus does not say "I will build the church" but "I will build MY church." That is to say, Jesus will build a church which by recognizing Him as the Messiah will take the place of the then-existing Jewish church.

The Church will not rest merely on a subjective belief that Jesus is the Messiah. Jesus says He will BUILD His church. Therefore His Messianic acts call the Church into existence.

Though Peter's confession is the foundation, still the Church is not made by Peter nor by any human agent, but by the Lord Himself. "I will build my Church."

Also, Christ will bear rule as King in the Church, for He immediately adds to Peter: "I will GIVE unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven."

"The church is that new congregation taking the place of the old congregation of Israel, which is formed by Jesus as the Messiah and stands under His Messianic rule" (Textbook, p. 79).

Note that both the building of the Church and the exercise of authority in it are represented by Jesus as **future:** "I WILL build"; "I WILL give." At the time of speaking, therefore, the Church was not yet. Its origin and government depend on the exalted, heavenly state on which He would enter through His death, resurrection and ascension. So Peter in Acts 2:36 (speaking after Christ's ascension) says that Jesus has been MADE both Lord and Christ (Messiah). Thus

Jesus teaches that the Church (In its New Testament form or stage) could not begin until after He had been glorified.

This is also brought out by the fact that from this time Jesus began to tell His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, there to suffer and die (Matt. 16:21).

The Church is closely related to the Kingdom, for in verse 19, immediately after speaking of building the Church, Jesus speaks of giving Peter the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven.

What is meant by binding and loosing? These terms may mean the imputation and forgiveness of sin, but it is much more probable that the meaning is **forbidding and permitting.** This latter sense is in keeping with the common Jewish terminology of the day. For instance, Jesus spoke of the scribes binding heavy burdens on other men; that is, commanding people to do certain things, or forbidding them certain things.

The Kingdom of Heaven appears as something existing at least in part on earth. This is evident from the fact that binding and loosing on earth will be recognized in heaven, verse 19b.

There are two figures of speech involved in Jesus' words in this passage. First, there is the figure of a house under construction. Peter is the foundation, and house is built on this foundation. Secondly, in the other figure the house is regarded as completed, and Peter is invested with the keys for the administration of its affairs.

We cannot suppose that the house meant one thing in the first figure and something different in the second which follows it so closely. **Therefore we may properly conclude that the Church is the Kingdom.**

It is another question, however, whether we can properly say that the Kingdom is the Church.

The Kingdom as the Church bears the features of a community of people, as is implied by many things in the earlier teachings of Jesus, including His calling disciples to follow Himself.

The Church represents an advance beyond the internal, invisible, spiritual Kingdom. This advance lies in two points. First, the body of Jesus' disciples must take the place of the Old Testament Church and therefore it must receive some form of external organization. In speaking of the keys of the house, of binding and loosing, of church discipline, Jesus makes provision for external organization.

Questions for Discussion

1. What difference exists between the idea of the Kingdom and the idea of the Church, as to frequency of occurrence in the teaching of Jesus?

2. What important statement had been made just before Jesus spoke the words of Matt. 16:18?

3. What is significant as to the time when this statement was made?

4. What particular characteristic or quality of Peter is specially commended by Jesus?

5. What did Peter, in distinction from the multitude, discern in Jesus?

6. What will be the special characteristic of the Church which Jesus will build?

7. What special fact is implied by the pronoun "MY" in Jesus' statement, "I will build my church"?

8. What will call the Church into existence?

9. What statement of Jesus shows that He will rule as King in the Church?

10. What does Jesus teach as to the time of building the church and exercising authority in it?

11. What is the probable meaning "binding and loosing" as used by Jesus in addressing Peter?

12. How can it be shown that Jesus regarded the Kingdom of Heaven as existing at least partly on earth?

13. What two figures of speech are involved in Jesus' statements to Peter in Matthew 16?

14. How can it be shown, from Jesus' statements to Peter, that the Church is the Kingdom?

15. In what two respects is the Church an advance over the internal, spiritual Kingdom of God?

LESSON 24

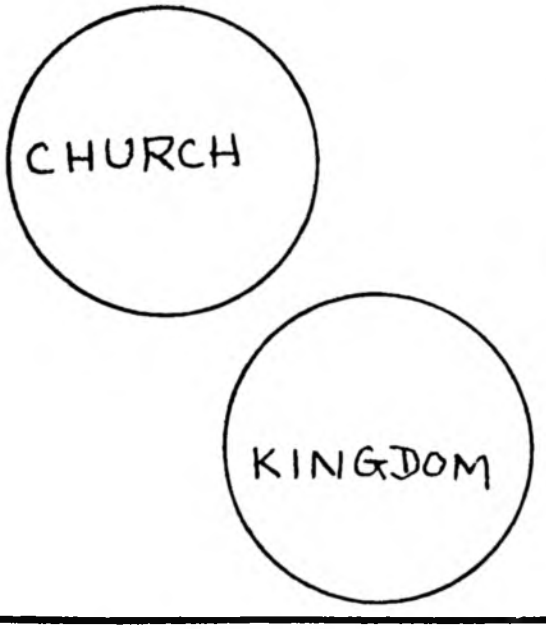
THE KINGDOM AND THE CHURCH, CONTINUED

Secondly, Jesus intimates that the new stage of His Messiahship will bring new spiritual power which will build His church, not only externally but also internally.

What is meant by the statement about the Gates of Hades (Hell)? "The Gates of Hades" is a symbol for the highest possible strength . . . gates no one could pass. "The Church will not be excelled in strength by the strongest that is known."

In numerous sayings near the close of Jesus' ministry He speaks of the coming of the Kingdom with a new, previously unknown power. These statements

INCORRECT VIEW OF RELATION BETWEEN CHURCH AND KINGDOM



RELATION BETWEEN VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE CHURCH

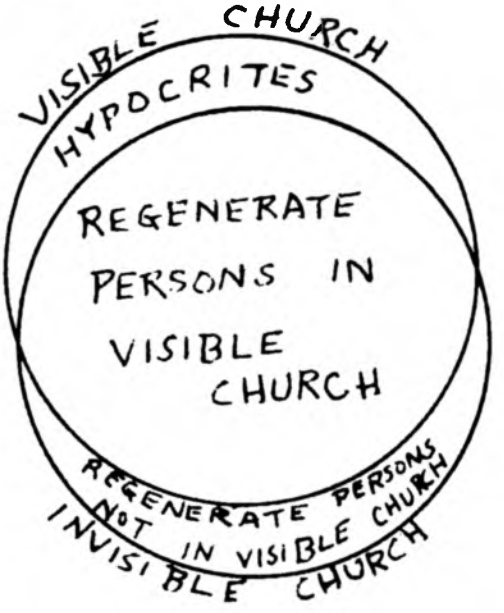


DIAGRAM SHOWING RELATION BETWEEN THE INVISIBLE CHURCH AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

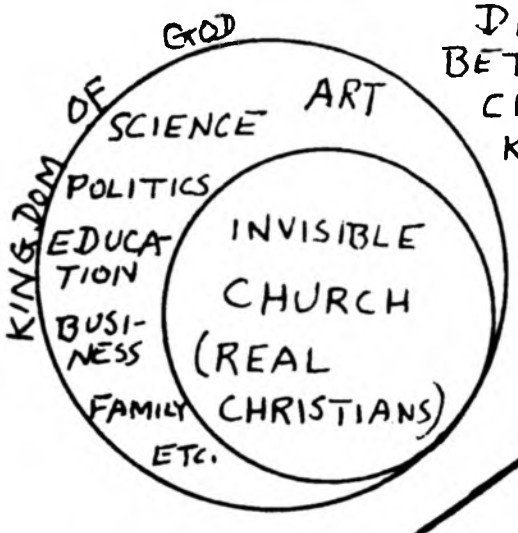
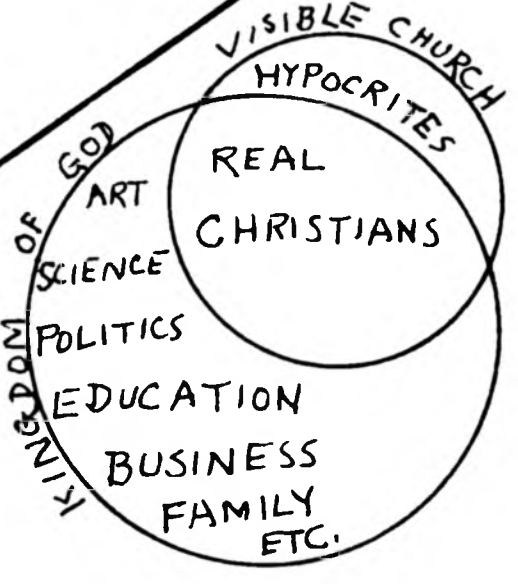


DIAGRAM SHOWING RELATION BETWEEN VISIBLE CHURCH AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD



may refer to the final (eternal) stage of the Kingdom, or they may refer to the coming of the Kingdom in the Church.

The power of the Holy Spirit in the Church makes the Church a link between time and eternity. The Church has within itself the powers of the world to come. The miracles and supernatural gifts in the early Church were samples of the powers of the world to come.

Jesus did not distinguish sharply, as we do today, between the Church stage of the Kingdom and the final (eternal) Kingdom. The reason for this is that He entered upon His exalted reign immediately after His ascension. For Him, then, in a way, the eternal stage has already been reached.

Matt. 18:20, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." This saying of Jesus teaches a "coming" of Christ prior to His final coming at the end of history. The last discourses of Jesus in the Gospel of John help us to grasp what Jesus meant. In these discourses in the Gospel of John, Jesus speaks of the coming by the Holy Spirit — something quite distinct from His visible coming again at the end of time. For the coming by the Spirit will be known only to His disciples, whereas His coming at the end of the world will be public and visible to all mankind everywhere.

It is therefore incorrect to regard the Kingdom and the Church as mutually exclusive spheres.

"The church is a form which the kingdom assumes in result of the new stage upon which the Messiahship of Jesus enters with His death and resurrection."

So far as the **extent of membership** is concerned, Jesus identifies the Invisible Church with the Kingdom. This is shown by John 3:3,5 — only the new birth can enable a man to enter the Kingdom. It is the new birth that gives entrance to both the Kingdom and the Church.

But what is the relation of the Visible Church to the Kingdom? "Our Lord looked upon the visible Church as a veritable embodiment of His kingdom."

Like the Invisible Church, the Visible Church must realize the Kingship of God. The power of the keys — binding and loosing — is a function within the Visible or organized Church.

The Visible Church is constituted by the enthronement of Christ as King of glory. The Great Commission, given just before His ascension, proceeds from His royal authority.

The forces of life of the Kingdom find their active expression in the Visible Church.

All authority in any Church is derived only from Christ. This is a truth which is often forgotten. The Church has no authority of its own; no authority except that which comes from Christ.

It does not follow, however, that the Visible Church is the ONLY outward expression of the Kingdom. There are various other forms of human life which, each in its own sphere, are to manifest the reign of God. For example, the textbook mentions the spheres of science, art, the family, the State, commerce, industry.

"Whenever one of these spheres comes under the controlling influence of the principle of the divine supremacy and glory, and this outwardly reveals itself, there we can truly say that the kingdom of God has become manifest."

Jesus laid down the great principles, without undertaking detailed applications. Jesus' doctrine of the Kingdom was founded on such a profound and broad conviction of the absolute supremacy of God in all things, that He could not but look upon every normal and legitimate province of human life as intended to form part of God's Kingdom.

On the other hand, it certainly was not Jesus' purpose that all these spheres of life (art, family, industry, politics, etc.) should become subject to the jurisdiction of the Church.

There is a difference between the Kingdom of God under the New Testament, and the Old Testament Theocracy. Under the New Testament, the State, family, science, art, etc., are to be regarded as independent spheres directly under the sovereignty of God. They are not to be subject to the control or jurisdiction of the Church.

Jesus does not make these statements explicitly, so we can arrive at conclusions about them only by way of inference from His more general statements.

The parables of the Fishnet and the Tares teach that while the Kingdom is actually coming, there will not be any complete and absolute separation of the evil from the good until the end of the world.

During the present age the Kingdom must partake of the imperfections and limitations to which a sinful environment exposes it. This is certainly true of the Church as the external organization of the Kingdom. The Church exists upon the field of the world. It will not be completely purified of evil until the end of the world.

The process referred to by Jesus in Matt. 18:17 ("Tell it to the church," etc.) is not intended for the purpose of effecting an absolute separation between the good and the evil, but rather to safeguard and preserve the purity and holiness of the Church in distinction from the world.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is the meaning of Jesus' statement about the Gates of Hades (Hell)?

2. What kind of "coming" of Jesus is spoken of in Matt. 18:20?

3. How can it be shown that, so far as extent of membership is concerned, Jesus identifies the Invisible Church with the Kingdom of God?

4. According to the teaching of Jesus, what is the relation between the Visible Church and the Kingdom?

5. By what great event is the Visible Church constituted?

6. What is meant by "the Great Commission?"

7. What is the relation between the Great Commission and Christ's kingly authority?

8. Why is it not correct to regard the Visible Church as the only outward expression of the Kingdom of God?

9. How does the Kingdom of God under the New Testament differ from the Old Testament Theocracy, as to the extent of the jurisdiction of the Church?

10. What two parables of Jesus teach that there will not be any complete and absolute separation of the evil from the good before the end of history?

11. Why can the Church not be perfectly purified of evil before the end of the world?

12. What is the intended purpose of the process referred to by Jesus in Matt. 18:17 ("Tell it to the Church," etc.)?

LESSON 25

ENTRANCE TO THE KINGDOM BY REPENTANCE AND FAITH

Jesus' announcement of the nearness of the Kingdom was from the beginning accompanied by a demand for repentance and faith. Matt. 4:17. Mark 1:15. This requirement arises from the nature of the Kingdom.

Repentance and faith are simply the two main aspects of the Kingdom, (1) Righteousness and (2) God's grace, translated into terms of human experience.

Consider the parable of the Marriage Feast and the Wedding Garment (Matt. 22:1-14). The wedding garment involves no idea of merit or earning an entrance into the Kingdom. For it is precisely the poor and needy who enter. But when once within, they must wear the garment appropriate to the occasion. Thus repentance and righteousness, while they do not merit salvation, yet are necessary for receiving salvation.

Three Greek words are used in the Gospels to describe repentance;

(1) **Metamelomai** — sorrow for past evil life. Matt. 21:29-32.

(2) **Epistrephomai** — change in direction or goal of life. Matt. 13:15.

(3) **Metanoeo** — reversal of mental attitude. Matt. 12:41.

Repentance involves the entire personality: intellect, emotions and will.

In Jesus' usage, **repentance includes faith.** Matt. 11:2,21.

Jesus' teaching on repentance and faith is God-centered. We must repent because our former state was radically wrong with reference to God. "A detachment of the spiritual consciousness from its center in God" (Textbook p. 92).

This truth is most strongly expressed by calling the state of man without repentance a state of death. Matt. 8:22; Luke 15:24,32.

Neutrality with respect to God is impossible. The man who is not in a right relation to God is positively against God.

True repentance arises from conviction of sin. Sin is regarded as an offence against God.

In the new life which follows repentance, the supremacy of God is the controlling principle. Repentance is FROM sin UNTO a life in the will of God. Jesus demands of His disciples a supreme devotion to God. He requires that one must "hate" his father, mother, etc. This means, of course, that our devotion to God must have priority over all other relationships. The relative matter is expressed in absolute terms for the sake of emphasis.

Jesus represents repentance as necessary for all men. How are the statements about the "ninety-nine righteous," etc., to be explained? In such sayings, Jesus is taking the self-righteous people of His day on the basis of their own self-estimate, for the sake of argument. The statements made by no means imply that there are really righteous persons who have no need of repentance. The meaning is merely that some people claimed to be such, and for the sake of argument Jesus takes them at their own self-estimate. Even if they really were righteous, they should be glad when one sinner repents and turns to God.

In Jesus' teachings faith is closely connected with salvation, as repentance is closely connected with righteousness. Most of Jesus' teaching about faith centers around His miracles. The miracles all share two

features:

(a) They are performed by divine power.

(b) They are for the benefit of needy man.

Faith is the spiritual attitude called for by this powerful and gracious work of God. Faith is just **the recognition of the divine power and grace.** Practically, faith is trust.

The borderline between unbelief and faith is seen in Mark 9:24, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." Note that this incident shows that faith is not a force but a channel. Also the first effect of the birth of faith in the soul is that the person realizes that he is an unbeliever and needs more faith.

The miracles are samples or illustrations of God's saving work in general.

Faith involves two elements: knowledge and trust. The first of these is intellectual, the second is volitional. That is, faith involves both knowledge of the truth, and a decision of commitment.

Faith is not merely faith in God but specifically faith in Christ. **He is the object of saving faith.**

Faith itself is a gift of God wrought in the heart and mind of the sinner by the Spirit of God. This is illustrated by Matt. 11:25, "babes", etc.

Unbelief is the greatest sin. It is the sin which rejects God's way of salvation. It was unbelief on the part of the Jews that occasioned Jesus' lament over Jerusalem, Matt. 24:37-39; Luke 13:34,35.

Questions for Discussion

1. What two primary aspects of the Kingdom of God correspond to the human experiences of Repentance and Faith?

2. How can it be shown that the parable of the Marriage Feast and the Wedding Garment does not teach the idea of salvation by works or human merit?

3. What does the Wedding Garment show concerning repentance and righteousness?

4. What three Greek words are used in the Gospels to describe repentance, and what is the basic meaning of each?

5. What three elements of the human personality are involved in repentance as taught by Jesus?

6. What is meant by saying that Jesus' teaching on repentance and faith is God-centered?

7. According to the teaching of Jesus, what is the controlling principle of the new life which follows repentance?

8. What does Jesus mean by saying that anyone who becomes His disciple must hate his father, mother, etc.?

9. What is the true explanation of Jesus' reference to ninety-nine righteous persons?

10. What two features are shared by all of Jesus' miracles?

11. Of what two facts concerning God is faith a recognition?

12. What does Mark 9:24 ("Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief") teach concerning faith?

13. What is the relation of Christ to saving faith?

14. What, according to Jesus, is the greatest of all sins?

LESSON 26

RECAPITULATION OF JESUS' TEACHING CONCERNING THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE CHURCH

The concluding chapter of the book **The Teaching of Jesus Concerning the Kingdom and the Church,** by Geerhardus Vos, lists seven main principles that have been found in the teaching of Jesus about the Kingdom and the Church. These seven principles, which have been discussed in the preceding lessons of this series, are as follows:

(1) The Kingdom conception involves the historic unity of Jesus' work with the Old Testament work of God. The two go together to form one body of supernatural revelation and redemption.

(2) The doctrine of the Kingdom stands for the principle that the Christian religion is not a mere matter of subjective ideas or experiences, but is related to a great system of objective, supernatural facts and transactions. The Kingdom means the renewal of the world through the introduction of supernatural forces.

(3) The Kingdom idea is the clearest expression of the principle that both in the sphere of objective reality and in the sphere of the human consciousness, everything is subservient to the glory of God. This makes the Kingdom idea the most **religious** of all Bible ideas.

(4) The Kingdom message gives Christianity the character of **a religion of salvation** — salvation not by man's own efforts but by the power and grace of God.

Thus the Kingdom is the specifically **evangelical** element in Jesus' teaching — the element that contains the Gospel or the good news. Jesus' teaching on faith stresses the same principle (salvation by God's power and grace).

(5) Jesus' doctrine of the Kingdom as both inward and outward — coming first in the heart of man and afterwards in the external world — maintains the **primacy of the spiritual and ethical over the physical and material.** Everything is made subordinate to vital spiritual realities. The ethical character of the Kingdom is expressed in the demand for repentance.

(6) The form which the Kingdom assumes in the Church shows that the Kingdom is inseparably associated with the Person and work of Jesus Himself. The religion of the Kingdom must be Christ-centered. The church form of the Kingdom is called **Christianity,** because in it everything depends on Christ.

(7) The idea of the Kingdom of God implies the subjection of the entire range of human life in all its forms and spheres to the ends of religion. "The Kingdom reminds us of **the absoluteness, the pervasiveness, the unrestricted dominion,** which of right belong to all true religion. It proclaims that religion, and religion alone, can act as **the supreme unifying, centralizing factor** in the life of man, as that which binds all together and perfects all by leading it to its final goal in the service of God."

Questions for Discussion

1. What does the Kingdom conception involve as to the relation between Jesus' work and the Old Testament work of God?

2. What does the Kingdom idea imply concerning the objective and supernatural character of the Christian religion?

3. Why is the Kingdom idea the most religious of Bible ideas?

4. What is meant by saying that the Kingdom is the specifically evangelical element in Jesus' teaching?

5. How does Jesus' teaching concerning the Kingdom bring out the primacy of the spiritual and ethical over the physical and material?

6. What demand of Jesus is an expression of the ethical character of the Kingdom?

7. What truth is shown by the form which the Kingdom assumes in the Church?

8. Why is the Church form of the Kingdom called Christianity?

9. What does the idea of the Kingdom, as taught by Jesus, imply as to human life as a whole?

LESSON 27

JESUS' TEACHING CONCERNING THE END OF HISTORY

We have already noted something of Jesus' teaching and concerning His own second coming. The second coming of Christ, the Judgment, the end of the world, and related events, together with the whole idea of the life after death, are called in theology by the term **Eschatology,** which is derived from the Greek word **eschatos,** meaning "last." Eschatology is that branch of Christian truth that specially concerns "the last things," that is, the end of history, the life after death, and eternity.

Eschatology is divided into **individual eschatology** dealing with the state of the human personality after death, and **general eschatology,** dealing with events affecting the human race as a whole, such as Christ's second coming, the resurrection of the dead, and the Judgment.

With regard to individual eschatology, Jesus clearly teaches the immortality of the soul, as shown by Luke 16:19-31 (the parable of the rich man and Lazarus), and also by His statements to the Sadducees. Jesus teaches the eternal woe of the lost in hell (Mark 9:43-48), and the eternal life of the redeemed in heaven (Matt. 25:46). Jesus also clearly teaches the resurrection of the body (Matt. 22:23-32).

The great passages in Jesus' teaching on general eschatology are Matthew 24 and its parallel passages in Mark 13 and Luke 21. These together are called the "Great Eschatological Discourse" of Jesus. This discourse includes the impending destruction of Jerusalem, the consummation of the age (or end of the world), Christ's second coming in glory, the resurrection of the dead, and the final judgment. Thus all the main features of the Christian doctrine of Eschatology are found in the teaching of Jesus.

It is noteworthy, also, that the doctrine of the final judgment is taught in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 7:22,23), something often forgotten by people who admire the Sermon on the Mount because they think it presents a purely ethical, non-theological message in which Christ's own Person and work are not central. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus appears not merely as an ethical teacher, but as the Judge of the entire human race of all times — the Judge who shall decide the final destiny of men for eternity.

Questions for Discussion

1. What branch of Christian truth is covered by Eschatology?

2. What are some of the subjects that are included under the topic of Eschatology?

3. How can it be shown that Jesus taught the immortality of the soul?

4. What passage shows that Jesus taught the resurrection of the body? To what group of people were the words spoken?

5. What chapters in Matthew, Mark and Luke contain Jesus' Great Eschatological Discourse?

6. What are some of the matters Jesus dealt with in His Great Eschatological Discourse?

7. How is the doctrine of the final Judgment taught in the Sermon on the Mount?

LESSON 28

THE ETHICAL TEACHINGS OF JESUS

The ethical teachings of Jesus are properly included under His teachings about the Kingdom of God, which have already been considered in earlier lessons of this series. Two special questions still require consideration.

1. In what sense is Jesus' ethical teaching different from that of the Old Testament?

(a) Jesus does not contradict the teaching of the Old Testament in the sense of denying that it was God-given and valid for its intended period of time. On the contrary, He strongly affirms the authority of the Mosaic Law for the Old Testament dispensation.

(b) Jesus' teaching is interpretive of the Old Testament Law, setting forth its true intent and meaning, over against the false interpretations which were current in His day.

(c) In part the teachings of Jesus supersedes that of the Old Testament, as for example in the matter of divorce. Divorce was permitted under the Old Testament because of the hardness of people's hearts, but Jesus declared that this was not according to the original divine institution of marriage. Using His own divine authority as Lawgiver He issued new legislation on the subject of divorce, as recorded in Matt. 19:8,9; Mark 10:2-9.

2. Can the ethical teachings of Jesus be put into practice by non-Christians?

(a) On this matter, superficial ideas are extremely common. People talk about "applying the Golden Rule" to business, industry, etc., as if any person, regardless of personal relationship to Christ, could easily begin to practice the Golden Rule simply by deciding that it would be a good thing to do.

(b) Jesus' ethical teachings are part of the whole organism of His teachings **and His redemptive work.** They are addressed to His disciples, not to the population of the world in general. Note, for example, the opening of the Sermon on the Mount, Matt. 5:1,2. Jesus has no ethical message for those who will not accept His redemptive message and work.

(c) The ethical teachings of Jesus can be truly practiced only by those who are in a personal relationship to Him, for they only have the true motive for right ethical action, and the real spiritual power to enable them for such action.

(d) The notion that Jesus' ethical teachings can be put in practice on a mass scale by people apart from personal faith in Him as Saviour and Lord rests upon a false, very superficial and Pelagian notion of human nature. (The term **Pelagian** is derived from the name of Pelagius, a British monk who died in 420 A.D. He denied the doctrines of original sin and total depravity, and taught that people can live a righteous life if only they will use their free will and make a decision to do so. Pelagius was opposed by Augustine, and his teachings were finally rejected by the Church as heretical). This superficial notion assumes that mankind is not sinful at heart, and needs only some ethical maxims and some moral enlightenment to become morally perfect. But the truth is that mankind is sinful in heart, and, as Jesus plainly taught, (John 3:3) needs regeneration, not merely moral reform. As has been truly remarked, "You cannot have the Utopian plan until you have the Utopian man."

Questions for Discussion

1. What did Jesus teach concerning the authority of the Old Testament Law?

2. What is meant by saying that Jesus' teaching is interpretive of the Old Testament Law?

3. Give an example of a teaching of Jesus which supersedes the teaching of the Old Testament on the same subject.

4. Why can the ethical teachings of Jesus not be truly practiced by people who are not personally believers in Him?

5. What is meant by saying that the notion that Jesus' ethical teachings can be put in practice on a mass scale by people apart from personal faith in Him as Saviour and Lord rests upon a Pelagian notion of human nature?

The End

Non-Essential Truths?

By J. G. Vos

It is commonly stated that we need not accept all the teachings of God's Word, but only that portion which is regarded as "essential truth." The idea is that the contents of the Bible can be divided into what is "essential" and what is "non-essential." It is said that a Christian ought to accept the "essential" part by faith, but he can ignore or even deny the "non-essential" part.

This type of statement is characteristic of people who have doubts or objections against some parts of the Bible, yet wish to be considered faithful Christians. I remember discussing religion with a college classmate many years ago. When I cited a verse from the Old Testament, he said, "That's in the Old Testament. I don't accept the Old Testament." If I quoted a text from one of Paul's Epistles, he would say, "I don't accept the writings of Paul." When I asked this friend, "Well, tell me, what do you accept?" he replied, "I accept only the recorded sayings of Jesus during his earthly life." So this was what he considered "essential."

A minister of one of the largest denominations said in my hearing "We should not accept all of the teachings of Jesus Christ, but only that part of His teachings which we find to be true." This was his way of deciding what is "essential." Others have said that nothing is essential except the Sermon on the Mount. Some have even gone so far as to assert that nothing is really essential except the Beatitudes and the Golden Rule. One nationally famous person has said that the Golden Rule alone is all that is essential. All such people really want to make their own Bible. They act as if the Bible were a smorgasbord cafeteria and they were on a strict diet or were allergic to most of the items provided.

It is the unpleasant truths of the Bible that such people will call "non-essential." Anything about sin, the wrath of God, hell, judgment or high moral requirements they do not like, and the easy way to get rid of it (they think) is to pronounce it "non-essential."

A woman said to me, "I do not believe in hell." This is of course a very comfortable kind of non-belief. The real question, however, is whether this belief or non-belief is true or not. I asked her why she did not believe in hell. "Well," she replied, "I just have a feeling that there isn't any such place as hell, and that God wouldn't send anyone there anyway." She had a "feeling," so she pronounced all the numerous Biblical affirmations about hell to be "non-essential."

It is really irreverent — even profane and presumptuous — for mere human beings (and sinful human beings at that) to pronounce any part of God's Holy Word non-essential. This is the same as saying that part of the Bible is not important. The person who can say such things imagines himself to be wiser than God. If he had been the author of the Bible, instead of God, he would have left the non-essential parts out! Every portion of God's Word is essential and important, from the first word of Genesis to the last word of Revelation. Who are we to edit God's Word and pronounce parts of it unimportant?

When we say that all of the Bible is essential, we mean (1) that all of it is **true,** and (2) that all parts of it are important for some good and wise purpose. We do not mean that all parts are equally important. Surely Paul's Epistle to the Romans is more important than the Book of Judges. But they are equally true. That Paul left his cloak at Troas is every bit as true as that Christ died for our sins. But it is not equally important.

Nor do we mean that every part of the Bible is important for every purpose. A man who had lived without God was dying and called his wife to read the Bible to him. She asked, "Where shall I begin?" and he said, "At the beginning, I guess." Genesis chapter 1 presents profound truth about God, man and the universe, yet we would hardly choose it to show a dying man the way of salvation. Some verses from Romans or John would be more suitable. But surely we should never say that Genesis One is "non-essential," as many people are saying today.

The Five Points of Sin

By J. G. Vos

Poorly instructed Christians often over-simplify the idea of sin, as indeed they regard nearly everything as simpler than it really is. In Scripture, sin has several distinct aspects. When any one of these is stressed as if it were the whole matter, a wrong idea of sin results. The main aspects of sin in Scriptural teaching are:

1. Sin is Guilt. This means not merely subjective guilt (or the feeling of guilt), but objective guilt. That is, the sinner is regarded and treated as guilty by God. The term **guilty** means that the sinner **has broken the law** and therefore he **deserves God's righteous wrath and punishment.** Guilt is the basic aspect of sin in the Bible.

Modern "liberal" theology denies that sin involves objective guilt and that the sinner deserves to be punished. Liberalism holds that the idea of objective guilt and punishment is contrary to the truth that God is love. In the Bible we learn that God's remedy for guilt is **Justification.**

2. Sin is Uncleanness. Besides making the sinner guilty, sin makes him defiled or unclean, morally unclean. This is illustrated in Scripture by the loathsome disease of leprosy. This moral uncleanness affects the very core of the human personality, which the Bible calls "the heart," out of which come the issues of life — the drives, motives and impulses which determine our conduct. God's remedy for the dirtiness of sin is **Sanctification.**

3. Sin is Slavery. Whoever commits sin is the servant or slave of sin. Sin destroys a person's freedom so that he becomes an addict or slave of sin. This is not contrary to human free agency, for man is always free to act according to his own nature. But in the case of the sinner, his nature is sinful, and he cannot act contrary to his own (sinful) nature, so his actions and life are bound to be sinful too. The more truly the sinner's acts express his own inner personality, the more sure they are to be sinful. The unsaved sinner may flatter himself by saying that he can reform any time he chooses to do so. The trouble is, his nature will keep him from choosing to do so. He is like the man who said, "I know I can give up cigarettes, because I have given them up nineteen times already!" It is because of this sinful nature that we must be born again (John 3:3; Ephesians 2:1,8) if we are to be saved. This slavery to sin means that the sinner is unable to repent, believe or turn to God unless God changes his nature. God's nature-changing remedy for the slavery of sin is **Regeneration,** or the new birth of the Holy Spirit.

4. Sin is Alienation from God. God is holy and he cannot hold communion with those who are sinful. Therefore sin places a barrier between sinful man and the holy God. The sinner is far away from God; he cannot be called a child of God in the religious or ethical sense. One of the first results of the sin of Adam and Eve was that they realized that there was now a barrier between them and God. God's remedy for this condition of alienation or estrangement is **Adoption,** by which the person becomes a member of the family or household of God.

5. Sin is Misery. Misery means suffering, unhappiness. The sinner is always a deeply unhappy person. This is because the only real source of happiness for a human being is to be in a right relationship with God, the source of all good. When this relationship is broken, unhappiness is bound to be the result. The evil called "pain" is the result of the evil called "sin." In a sinless world there would be no unhappiness, no pain of body or mind. The greatest religion of Asia is Buddhism, which is a quest for a remedy for unhappiness or suffering. Christianity goes deeper — it deals with **cause** of unhappiness, namely, sin against God. Many people today, in America as well as Asia, want a cure for unhappiness, but few recognize that the real cause of unhappiness is sin, or moral revolt against God, and fewer still are willing to cast themselves absolutely on the mercy of God for Him to cure their sin. Many are like Augustine, who at one stage of his life (before he became a Christian) prayed: "Lord, save me from my sins, but not yet!" It is easy to see that many people in America, in spite of the world's highest standard of living, are deeply unhappy. Some seek relief in a whirl of "pleasures," others in alcohol which releases them temporarily from their inward unhappiness. Many cannot endure to be quietly alone with their own thoughts for any length of time. All this witnesses to the truth that sin makes the sinner unhappy. God's remedy for the misery of sin comes in two stages: (a) in this life, the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, who is the Giver of **Joy;** (b) in the life to come, **Glorification,** or our final release from the presence and all the consequences of sin, both physical and spiritual.

The "Five Points of Sin" can be remembered by a simple mnemonic: GUSAM, which stands for Guilt, Uncleanness, Slavery, Alienation, Misery.

Our Savior was called Jesus, because He should save His people from their sins (Matthew 1:21). When you think of a text like this, remember it includes all five aspects or elements of sin, the whole series from Guilt to Misery. He saves us from them all. Do you see now how an inadequate or incomplete concept of sin leads to failure to grasp and appreciate how much we owe to our Lord Jesus Christ for saving us?

Why Must Christ be Crucified?

By J. G. Vos

"Without shedding of blood is no remission" (Heb. 9:22). "Christ executeth the office of a priest in his once offering up of himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God. . ." (Shorter Catechism, 25). This truth of salvation by the shed blood of Jesus Christ, our Substitute, is the very heart of Christianity. If a person denies this, it does not matter what he believes or denies about other matters. This is the central point of Christianity, without which there is no Gospel, no salvation and no hope for sinners.

This truth of atonement by the shed blood of a Substitute is extremely offensive to the pride of modern man. Many people react strongly against it. A prominent New York clergyman called it "the religion of the slaughterhouse." Yet it is absolutely basic to Bible Christiantiy.

There is probably no Biblical truth that men have tried so hard to evade or explain away. One attempted evasion is the common statement that we do not need

any particular "theory" of the atonement so long as we hold to the "fact" of the atonement. The idea that we can have the "fact" of the atonement without any "theory" (or doctrine) of the atonement, is theological and semantic nonsense. It amounts to a claim that we can hold to a **meaningless** fact. The so-called "fact" of the atonement is only a man dying on a cross, some drops of blood falling to the ground. As soon as we ask **who** this sufferer is, and **why** he is suffering thus, we have a "theory" or doctrine of the atonement.

When people say, "We do not need any theory of the atonement," what they really mean, usually, is "We do not want that particular doctrine of the atonement that has been held by the Christian Church throughout its history." The claim that a "theory" is unnecessary is really an evasive rationalization.

There are many false theories of the atonement. Each of them contains an element of truth, while omitting or denying the main truth of the atonement as taught in the Bible. When a subordinate feature is treated as the main thing, a heresy is born.

Some of the principal false theories of the atonement are (1) The military theory (Christ died to pay a ransom to Satan) (2) The Mystical Theory (Christ suffered to establish union or identity with us) (3) The Example Theory (Christ died to set us an example of self-denial for others); (4) The Governmental Theory (Christ died to demonstrate that God, the moral Ruler of the universe, hates sin); (5) The Moral Influence Theory (Christ died to melt the hard, stony hearts of men by making a powerful impression on them, thus influencing them to repent and turn to God).

Every one of these false theories of the atonement omits or denies one or more of the basic truths of the Bible on this subject, namely:

1. That the sinner is **guilty** and deserves eternal punishment.

2. That the justice of God (which even God cannot cancel) requires that the guilty be punished.

3. That the sinner cannot save himself by his own deeds or sufferings, since the penalty of sin is **eternal.**

4. That the atonement, according to the Bible, terminates not on man but on God; it is not man that needs to be influenced, but God's justice that must be satisfied. The barrier to man's salvation, which requires to be removed, is not merely something in man himself; primarily it is something in God. The **main** thing is that **God must be reconciled to the sinner** (not merely that the sinner must turn back to God.

> "None other Lamb, none other Name,
> None other hope in heav'n or earth or sea,
> None other Hiding-place from guilt and shame,
> None beside Thee."
> (Christina G. Rossetti)

"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6).

Have You Been Born Again?

By J. G. Vos

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17).

Many people think they are saved when they have no valid grounds for this. It is possible to go through life believing onesself a saved person, and yet finally perish forever in hell.

Some people who claim to be Christians are really legalists or moralists. They are trusting in being good, doing good, service, high ideals, the Golden Rule. Like the Pharisees they believe they can build their own ladder and climb to heaven on it. But by nature we are sinful and we cannot please God and merit heaven by our good deeds. "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight" —Rom. 3:20.

Then there are formalists, who trust in forms, sacraments, ceremonies, for their salvation. They have the external forms of Christianity but they do not show the power of Christ in their life. "From such turn away" (2 Tim. 3:5).

Others trust in church-memberism — the notion that membership in the organized church guarantees salvation. Not every person on a ship is a passenger with a purchased ticket; some may be only stowaways. They cannot enter the country; they will be deported to where they really belong. Not every church member will enter heaven; many will go to hell.

A very common modern delusion is Decisionism. People remember the date of their "decision" to "accept Christ." They vainly suppose that a mere decision will save them — that a mere mental assent to doctrines is the same thing as saving faith in Christ. They believe that Christ saves sinners just as they believe that Richard Nixon is President of the United States. They have a formal decision, but no real change in their life. They are like fireplaces in some ships' staterooms — a 25 watt electric bulb under some red cellophane: an illusion of fire but only a little light and practically no heat.

Yet you can be really and rightly sure of salvation. To be "in Christ" is to be saved, to be a "new

creature", to be born again. This change is instantaneous, but our awareness of it may come gradually. The important question is not when but whether it has taken place. How can we know whether we are really "in Christ"? Not by our feelings, which are extremely changeable and deceptive. Nowhere does the Bible encourage us to trust in our feelings.

We can be certain of our salvation when we see the fruits of salvation in our life. A real change from "old things" to "new things" evidences the saving work of God in our personality. Old things are passed away. The things of the world, our sinful nature, our old sinful lusts and pleasures and ambitions will no longer dominate the person who is born again. If we are still living for the "old things", then we are not born again.

"All things are become new." When a person is really saved, he will love what he formerly did not love. He will love God, God's Book, God's Day, God's House, God's children. If we are really saved we will practice Christian devotions, worship and fellowship, not just because it is our duty, nor just because parents and pastors keep after us, but because we love God and want to please Him. We will have a new attitude toward our fellow Christians — an attitude of love and sympathy and helpfulness, instead of constant criticism, faultfinding, quarrelling and discord.

By their fruits ye shall know them. And it is by our fruits that we shall know our personal salvation with certainty. When we see the real fruits of the gracious work of God in our lives, then, and not until then, do we have a right to be certain that we are saved.

Religious Terms Defined

HAMATH. A city of northern Syria, in the valley of the Orontes River, often referred to in the Old Testament.

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.

HEAD OF THE CHURCH. The Lord Jesus Christ, who, by appointment of God, the Father, has been made the Head of the body, the Church.

HEAVEN. That place in the created universe where the presence and glory of God are especially manifested, and where the Lord Jesus Christ is now engaged in preparing eternal habitations for His people. In Scripture "heaven" sometimes means the sky (Gen. 1:1), sometimes the place where God's presence and glory are specially manifested (Matt. 6:9), and sometimes the eternal home of the redeemed (2 Cor. 5:1; Heb. 10:34).

HELL. That place in the created universe originally prepared for the devil and his angels, where the wicked shall be totally deprived of the favorable presence of God, and shall be "punished with unspeakable torments, both of body and soul . . . for ever" (Larger Catechism, 89). In hell all human beings who are out of Christ will forever 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, a false doctrine stubbornly adhered to (2 Peter 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. God's holiness is (1) His infinite separation from all created being; (2) His infinite separation from all moral evil. Man's holiness consists in separation from evil and conformity to the image of God, in which he was originally created.

HOLINESS OF THE CHURCH. The character of the Church as a body separated from sin and the world, and devoted to God.

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).

HORN. In the Bible, a symbol of power, or of vigorous, flourishing health and growth.

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" (Shorter Catechism, 22).

HUMANISM. The false system which regards the human race as existing for its own sake, considers man's chief end to be his own welfare, and looks upon God and religion as means for promoting the progress of humanity.

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" (Shorter Catechism, 27).

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

Some Noteworthy Quotations

O Thou, from whom to be turned is to fall,
to Whom to be turned is to rise,
and in Whom to stand is to abide for ever:
Grant us in all our duties Thy help,
in all our perplexities Thy guidance,
in all our dangers Thy protection,
and in all our sorrows Thy peace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

—Augustine of Hippo

O Gracious and holy Father,
Give us wisdom to perceive Thee,
intelligence to understand Thee,
diligence to seek Thee,
patience to wait for Thee,
eyes to behold Thee,
a heart to meditate upon Thee,
and a life to proclaim Thee;
through the power of the Spirit of Jesus Christ our Lord.

—Benedict of Nursia

It is perfectly true that no mere man can pay the penalty of another man's sin. But it does not follow that Jesus could not do it; for Jesus was no mere man but the eternal Son of God.

—J. Gresham Machen

Wrestle, fight, go forward, watch, fear, believe, pray; and then ye have all the infallible symptoms of one of the elect of Christ within you.

—Samuel Rutherford

Christ's cross is the sweetest burden that ever I bore; it is such a burden as wings are to a bird, or sails to a ship, to carry me forward to my harbor.

—Samuel Rutherford

I have had many things in my hand and I have lost them all; but whatever I have been able to place in God's hand, I still possess.

—Martin Luther

If I profess with the loudest voice and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God except precisely that little point which the world and the devil are at that moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Christ. Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved, and to be steady on all the battle-field besides, is merely flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point.

—Martin Luther

Reviews of Religious Books

The favorable reviewing of a book here does not imply approval of its entire contents. Purchase books from your book dealer or from the publishers. Do not send orders for books to Blue Banner Faith and Life.

THE REFORM OF THE CHURCH, by Donald G. Bloesch. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan, 49502. 1970, pp. 169. $4.95.

This is a book that ought to command the attention of all who are concerned with the plight of true religion in our day. Dr. Bloesch does not pretend to

have the solution to all the problems, but he has given a sane and searching appraisal of the main aspects of the Church's place and mission in the world.

It could hardly be expected that all should agree with him on every point, and perhaps one feels that his doctrine of the sacraments is sometimes suspect. Nevertheless, church leaders, clerical and lay, will find in this book much that is thought-provoking and helpful, and the chapters on Church Discipline and Church Unity are especially relevant.

The book is well indexed, which makes for easy reference, and to ministers especially it should prove an invaluable asset.

—D. Gillies

THE FUTURE OF EVANGELISM, by Gerald Martin. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 49506. 1969, pp. 88. $2.95.

One is left with the impression that less is told about the Future of Evangelism than about the diligence and success of the author. Written from the Arminian standpoint, one would gather that revival inevitably takes place if the preacher is sufficiently zealous.

The Pre-millennial view of Eschatology appears to be classed as synonymous with Conservatism, an error that prevails in many circles calling themselves Evangelical. There is an unfortunate one-sidedness about the treatment of the subject and too high a proportion of irrelevant anecdote throughout the book.

—D. Gillies

ISAIAH: PROPHECIES, PROMISE, WARNINGS, by W. E. Vine. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 49506. 1971, pp. 222. Paperback, $1.95.

Vine unashamedly holds to the view that there was only one human author of Isaiah, which is a good mark for Vine in a time which has so many men of the Higher Critical school strongly denying this point. One would probably therefore classify Vine in the "conservative" camp of theologians. Vine also seems to have a working knowledge of biblical Hebrew which helps him give valuable insight into the true meaning of the author of Isaiah and his message to the nation of Israel. It is Vine's style to expound a section of the book of Isaiah and then in an indented paragraph or so sum up the "practical teachings" of the passage, which is a good way of forming a commentary.

However, we must seriously question Vine's "individualistic" interpretation of the meaning of Isaiah for us today. As a people of the Reformed persuasion we understand the nation of Israel to be the Old Testament beginning of the Church of the New Testament and the present day Church, the body of Christ, therefore we do not see any validity in interpreting Isaiah as dealing corporately with Israel as a nation but in applying Isaiah's teaching today individualistically. There are other commentaries on Isaiah which do not play into the hands of individualism and thus would be more beneficial; therefore, I do not recommend this commentary.

—Bruce R. Backensto

THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE FAITH; 2: THE TRIUNE GOD, by G. E. Lane. Sovereign Grace Union, 6-8 Linkfield Corner, Redhill, Surrey, England. pp. 16, paperback, 9 pence.

This booklet is "the second of a new series of popular booklets setting forth basic Christian truths from the standpoint of Reformed doctrine. Each subject is dealt with on the basis of a single text of Scripture. In this booklet, the three-fold nature of God is studied from the verse, 2 Corinthians 13:14."

One of the valuable features of this little booklet lies in the succinct presentation of the doctrine of the Trinity. With admirable simplicity and clarity the author sets forth the proof, justification and explanation of this basic doctrine. A good booklet to make available to church members faced with modern influences of anti-trinitarianism, such as the Jehovah's Witnesses.

—Robert A. Milliken

THE TIME IS AT HAND, By Jay E. Adams. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., P. O. Box 185, Nutley, New Jersey, 07110. 1970, pp. 123, paperback, $2.50.

This is a revised and corrected edition of the book formerly published under the title **I Will Tell You The Mystery.** The stated purpose of Mr. Adams is to set forth amillenialism in a systematic and positive manner. The Book of Revelation is used as the primary background for the discussion of this subject. Mr. Adams begins by saying that "amillenialism" (meaning no millenium) is a misnomer and should be rejected. Such a designation fails to describe the true nature of the millenium and the chronological position of the millenium in the economy of God. Rather he suggests that **we should distinguish between realized millenialism and unrealized millenialism.**

"Whereas both pre- and postmillenialism look forward to a future unrealized millenium, realized millenialists contend that the millenium is a present reality. This chronological difference necessarily involves the **nature** of the period. If the millenium is a present reality, it is most certainly of a non-utopian type" (p. 9). Furthermore, Adams declares that "Realized millenialists are all post millenial with respect to the advent of Christ" (p. 11). The reviewer found this book to be thoroughly stimulating and the clearest positive presentation of the so called "amillenial position" that he has ever read.

—Donald Weilersbacher

TRADITION: OLD AND NEW, by F. F. Bruce. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 49506. 1970, pp. 184. $2.95.

"Hold fast to the traditions", Paul admonished the Christians at Corinth. Not all traditions today, of course, would have the endorsement of the apostle, but those truths of the gospel, now enshrined in the New Testament, comprise the Tradition to which the church **must** cling if she is to be faithful. Beginning with the ancient Jewish "tradition of the elders" and moving on to the gospel traditions, extra-canonical tradition and tradition in the early Catholic Church, Professor Bruce examines the role played by tradition in the interpretation of Scripture, in theology, in creed formation, in the worship and organization of the church, in the formation of the canon and the transmission of the text of Scripture.

A church which has a strong sense of historical continuity may regard itself as the custodian of a particular heritage of tradition. To such a church "it seems safer and more comfortable to stay within old-established boundaries. The admission of more light may show up inadequacies in cherished traditions. . . ." (p. 18). The church must remain open to the word-light of the Scriptures because "the Spirit who spoke in that word to the churches of the first century speaks in it to the churches of the twentieth, and does so in terms which address themselves dynamically and relevantly to our present condition" (p. 18).

F. F. Bruce, highly acclaimed as an outstanding New Testament scholar and evangelical writer, shows that the tools of critical scholarship can be used without working from the skeptical assumptions which are usually associated with modern synoptic research and form-criticism of the Gospels. Nor is it necessary, having used a critical methodology, for the evangelical scholar to accept uncritically reconstructions of the gospel traditions which deny their authenticity or find a dichotomy between the church's risen Christ and the historical Jesus. "The gospel tradition," Bruce concludes, "originated with Jesus himself and not with the post-Easter church. . ." (p. 68). Unlike many critical scholars, Bruce contends for the determinant role of the apostles and eyewitnesses as the first links in the chain of Christian tradition.

A chapter on "Tradition in the Early Catholic Church" discusses Papias (Bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia, c. 130 A.D.) as a link to the apostolic faith and dominical teaching; also Irenaeus' writings, which put us in touch with the substance of the apostles' doctrine.

The final chapter, "Tradition Today", sounds a stern warning against pride in tradition which is often expressed in the conviction that "denominational distinctives" enshrine "an essential and non-negotiable element in Christianity" (p. 171). As traditions are examined in conversations between Christians today, they should be tested by the Scriptures and thus brought into line with Tradition (spelled with a capital T, meaning the historic Christian faith).

The abundant documentation from patristic sources and the Qumran and Nag Hammadi literature, as well as the discriminating use which is made of modern Biblical scholarship, makes this book extremely useful for the basic education of seminarians and for the continuing education of ministers.

—Joseph A. Hill

COMMENTING & COMMENTARIES, By C. H. Spurgeon. The Banner of Truth Trust. 78b Chiltern Street, London. WIM IPS, England. 1969, reprint of 1876, pp. 224. 15s. or U.S. $1.80.

This book was first issued in 1876. It begins with two of Spurgeon's lectures — the first on Commentaries, the second on commenting. Given in his own pithy racy style they represent his views on the work of such Bible students as Matthew Henry, John Calvin and John Trapp. He gives cogent reasons why ministers should comment on Bible passages as they are being read in public worship. Then follows a catalogue of commentaries — some of which have been reprinted, and most of which could be obtained by anyone who has connections with a good secondhand bookstore, who will exercise patience! He lists commentaries on the whole Bible, on the Old Testament, on the New Testament, and on separate books of both Testaments. His observations on many of them make amusing reading.

The publishers have added a complete textual index to Spurgeon's sermons to the original work — which will be of great benefit to anyone who has come to love the preaching of this great man of God.

—J. Renwick Wright

YOUR ADVERSARY THE DEVIL, by Dwight Pentecost. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 49506. 1969, pp. 191. $4.95.

Know your enemy — this is the reason for the publication of this book. We need to know his nature, his methods, his abilities, his plan and program. As we read we learn of Satan the deceiver, the perverter, the imitator, the lawless one, the rebel. We are taught concerning his false doctrine, and his methods of temptation. We are convincingly shown how completely Christ has conquered him, and how, as a fruit of that victory, the believer may put him to flight. There is an interesting and informative and challenging chapter on "Trafficking with Demons" in which the author shows the evil influence of such things as astrology and spiritism.

Discriminating readers will find this book valuable. On one or two occasions the author's interpretations of Scripture are questionable — as for instance his identification of Satan with the King of Tyrus in Ezekiel 28, and with the King of Babylon in Isaiah 14.

—J. Renwick Wright

ONE DIVINE MOMENT, by Robert E. Coleman (ed.). Fleming H. Revell Company, Old Tappan, New Jersey, 07675. 1970, pp. 123. Paperback, $1.95.

Robert Coleman edits reports by observers of or participants in the Asbury College and Seminary "revival" which took place early in 1970. **Christianity Today** carried an article on it when it took place as did many other magazines and newspapers.

Each writer credits God with the "revival" which lasted close to a month beginning with a chapel talk concerning unconfessed sin. Unfortunately "revival" to these writers means people being born again. They also use "revival" in the proper sense of Christians repenting of unconfessed sin and being revived, but dead people (dead in sins) when born again are not revived but reborn!

If one likes to read "experience centered" Christianity, this book records actual events. The authors write from a baptistic, Arminian and pentecostal view point, although not overbearingly. You decide if it is worth the $1.95; I don't think so.

—Bruce R. Backensto

THY KINGDOM COME, by Rousas John Rushdoony. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., P. O. Box 185, Nutley, New Jersey, 07110. 1971, pp. 256. $4.95.

Rushdoony leads the reader in a study of the books of Daniel and Revelation in order to learn the eschatological viewpoint of God revealed through the respective writers. Rushdoony shows he has read extensively on this topic and these books of scripture and quotes often from his reading. He also has studies on Matthew 24, Thessalonians on the Second Coming, and Psalm 149: The Calling Is to Victory.

Although I have minor questions with some of the author's statements I must say I agree with his overall view of the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Rushdoony is neither a premillennialist nor does he hold to a millennium in the Jewish sense. He presents what we would call the Reformed view of eschatology which would follow men like Geerhardus Vos, William Hendriksen and William Cox yet with some of the "uncertainty" of Jay Adams — neither a hyper-amillennialist nor a postmillenialist.

"The new creation begins with the first resurrection, i.e., the salvation of each sinner, and it continues with his sanctification. The new creation involves bringing every thought, realm, nation, and art into captivity to Christ and it means the restoration of the sovereignty to the rightful Lord, Jesus Christ. It culminates in the great act, the creation of the new heaven and earth" (p. 212).

Read this book; it is helpful and refreshing!

—Bruce R. Backensto

A STUDY GUIDE: JAMES, by Curtis Vaughan. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 49506. 1969, pp. 128. Paperback, $1.00.

The author states in the Preface to this book that it "has been written to offer guidance to pastors and laymen who desire to know more fully the meaning and message of the epistle of James." The author also makes it clear that he has not written "a complete commentary, but a brief exposition built around a simple outline of the epistle." He also will offer interesting insight into the "meanings of key words and ideas." The author also has a good suggestion as to how one should "study" any book of the Bible and because of this understanding the author has only sought to give a "guide" and not a "last word" commentary. He suggests that one should read through the book a number of times in as many different translations as possible and then study the book. It is with this second point in mind that Vaughan has written this "study guide."

It is this reviewer's belief that this book is a good "study guide" to the book of James. The author has successfully and fairly handled the context of the book of James and offered valuable renderings of its meaning and message. There are questions at the end of each chapter which lend themselves to both thoughtful consideration and valuable discussion of the text. Therefore, this book is worth owning and using either with one's own study or a group study of the book of James.

—Bruce R. Backensto

THE WORK OF CHRIST, by I. Howard Marshall. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 49506. 1969, pp. 128. Paperback, $1.95.

This is a book in the series, Contemporary Evangelical Perspectives, published by Zondervan. Marshall seeks to study "the main interest of the New Testament writers", that is, the work of Christ. Therefore he says, "the present work may be seen as an introduction to the central theme of New Testament theology." He writes so that there may be a wide readership of the book, hence, he presents his study on a simple level.

I find the book interesting and helpful. The author deals with Jesus and the biblical records as being historically accurate. Therefore the book is recommended to anyone.

—Bruce R. Backensto

REFORMATION OR REVOLUTION, by E. L. Hebden Taylor. The Craig Press, P. O. Box 13, Nutley, New Jersey, 07110. 1970, pp. 633. $12.50.

Although this book is long and not really easy reading unless you have an economic, labor and industrial background, it is extremely educational. Taylor

has certainly critiqued the American culture's approach to economics and the like very astutely, convincingly and accurately. He considers the biblical philosophy of man, society, science and history and its basis for a scientific and sociological pluralism with enlightening and helpful chapters on the reformational conception of the business enterprise and understanding of labor and race relations.

This book is a must for the Christian businessman or anyone interested in a biblical approach to our economic, labor, and societal problems. I found the book helpful in opening my eyes to possible solutions to contemporary problems in our society if Christians would only wake up. Read this book!

—Bruce R. Backensto

A NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY, edited by G. C. D. Howley, F. F. Bruce and H. L. Ellison. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 49506. 1969, pp. 666. $7.95.

Individually these three men are often quoted in other works because of their study in certain areas, however, this commentary is not what I would call the best of these men's abilities. The general articles are helpful in the beginning of the commentary but the actual commentary is superficial for the most part. It is not really profound enough for pastors to find it helpful, and it almost seems too general for other individuals as well.

I would recommend spending about the same amount of money and buying the NEW BIBLE COMMENTARY edited by Guthrie. You will have a deeper consideration of the New Testament books and also have the Old Testament books in the commentary.

—Bruce R. Backensto

GENESIS: A DEVOTIONAL EXPOSITION, by Donald Grey Barnhouse. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich., 49506. 1970, pp. 208. $4.95.

This volume is one of the many devotional expositions from the late minister of the Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, Donald Barnhouse. In this book one finds an example of the results of Dispensationalism and of a moralistic approach to the Bible. It is a devotional exposition but unfortunately it is devotional to the virtual exclusion of sound exegesis. This makes most of its supposed "devotion" invalid.

Just a few illustrations will suffice to demonstrate that this work is not reformed in its theology. Dr. Barnhouse espouses the "gap" view of creation. He states that: "When Lucifer was an unsinning cherub, the earth was perfect. When he fell, it became wreck and ruin." (p. 10) He also fails to grasp the integral nature of man's being. According to his understanding the physical dimension of man is lowly. Commenting on 3:19 he says: "The first man had a low origin and sin brought him to a low destiny." (p. 26) There is little, if any, recognition of the unity of God's Covenant word. He does not make the obvious connection between the Tree of Life (Genesis 2) and its reappearance in Revelation 22.

The book of Genesis provides the germinal concepts that unfold in the rest of the scriptures. But this exposition makes no recognition of that marvelous concept. Here and there in the pages of this commentary there are rare insights into the symbolism of scripture. The author points out the vivid connection between the Cherubim that guard the garden of God after the fall, and the Cherubim commanded by God to be reproduced by Moses on the top of the Ark of the Covenant.

Except for a rare insight into the symbolism of scripture this commentary is unsound. We still need a modern commentary on the book of Genesis that will provide a full insight into the horizons of Biblical Theology.

—John H. White

SHE SAT WHERE THEY SAT: A Memoir of Anna Thompson of Egypt, by Elizabeth Kelsey Kinnear. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49502. 1971, pp. 112, paperback. $2.45.

In 1871 Anna Thompson left the U. S. to do missionary work in Egypt. Her ministry was primarily among the very poor, yet God also brought her into contact with many famous people including General and Mrs. Ulysses S. Grant, President Theodore Roosevelt, and others. The political climate has radically changed and some of her methods of evangelism would no longer be possible; nevertheless, the zeal of this godly woman should be a challenge to everyone. On her first trip to Egypt she had as her traveling companions the Galbraiths and Miss Dodds, Covenanter missionaries to Syria. They had good fellowship together on board the boat. She seems to have held the position of exclusive Psalmody as did many in the old United Presbyterian Church. She translated the Psalms into Arabic and popularized them among the common people. The book is easy to read and would appeal to all ages.

—Donald Weilersbacher

WHY I AM STILL A CHRISTIAN, compiled and edited by E. M. Blaiklock. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1971, pp. 176, paperback. $1.95.

Here are the testimonies of twelve prominent scholars who tell not only how they came to know the Lord, but also why they **still** believe in Him. They represent such diverse fields as classical literature, philosophy, physics, biochemistry, history, geography, music and others. These evangelical statements of faith are designed to strengthen and encourage the Christian who may be struggling with doubts on a secular campus

— as well as give a reason for the hope that is in him to the non-Christian enquirer. One of the men holds to the position of theistic evolution, but otherwise it is a very sound and profitable book.

—Donald Weilersbacher

LAW AND LIBERTY, by Rousas John Rushdoony. The Craig Press, Box 13, Nutley, New Jersey 07110. pp. 152, paperback. $2.50

Rushdoony points out that humanistic law is designed to save society: to change and reform men, but Biblical law is intended to punish and restrain evil, to protect life and property, to provide justice for us. According to the Scriptures, man is saved by grace, not by law. He goes on to treat such subjects as pornography, academic freedom, Christian education, the rights of inheritance, abortion, socialism, and communism. The author provides fresh and penetrating insight into each of these areas of concern. I strongly recommend that our readers purchase several copies of this book for themselves and their friends. It's powerful!

—Donald Weilersbacher

THE LIFE OF DAVID, by Arthur W. Pink. Reiner Publications, Swengel, Pa. 17880. 1969, pp. 764. $9.95.

Got problems? Then read this excellent devotional study. Don't let the size of this book deter you. Every chapter is crammed full of practical insight into the life of David that will cause you to examine your own life in greater detail by the Word of God. This is a thoroughly evangelical and Reformed book for people who really want to grow: to learn to live by principles instead of reacting to stressful circumstances.

—Donald Weilersbacher

YOUNG PEOPLE'S HISTORY OF THE CHURCH, by W. Meijer. Vonkenburg Study Aids, P. O. Box 783, London 12, Ont., Canada. 1970, pp. 108, paperback. $2.40.

This book was originally written for use in the Reformed Schools in the Netherlands. It covers the years of 1530-1830 on the Continent and in England. Generally, it is an excellent summary of the significant trends and chief characters of that era. However, there was one statement which confused me. The author states that the presbyterian form of church government **is not Reformed** (p. 52). However, he does believe that the church should be governed presbyterially. He promises to elaborate on this point in a later volume. The photos used throughout the book were, unfortunately, of very poor quality and should either be upgraded or eliminated.

—Donald Weilersbacher

STUDIES IN PROBLEM TEXTS by J. Sidlow Baxter. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1960, pp. 192, paperback. $1.95.

Originally published in 1960, this work has become quite popular, having been reprinted five times since then. The author has selected twelve texts which have perplexed many people — including pastors. Commentators often pass over these difficulties or give a rather unsatisfactory answer. Generally speaking the exposition and application of these texts is very good. However, there are occasions when the author seems to fall into dispensationalism when he treats such subjects as the nature of the church and also that of the kingdom of God. Therefore, the book is recommended, but with that specific reservation.

—Donald Weilersbacher

AT THE RISK OF BEING A WIFE, by Patti Bard and Maryanna Johnson. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1971, pp. 181. $3.95.

The two women who wrote this book have never met one another. They claim to be evangelical and desire to help each other come to grips with reality — the reality of living for Christ as a wife in the 20th century. This is done by correspondence. The book is not without "social redeeming value", but contains serious errors on the nature of the Church, the sacraments, the value of group therapy, divorce, Puritan Theology, etc. Therefore, it is **not recommended.**

—Sandy Weilersbacher

A BLADE OF GRASS, by Gladys and Gorden DePree. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1971, pp. 189, paperback. $.95.

Beautiful! An invigorating evangelical devotional guide. The authors quote one verse of Scripture for each day of the year using the New English Bible or the Revised Standard Version. This is followed by a short poem that is more like the parallelism of Hebrew poetry than modern rhyme. Many stimulating questions are presented in these poems so as to promote deeper meditation over the text. This is the type of book you may want to read over several times.

—Donald Weilersbacher

COMMUNICATION FOR THE CHURCH, by Raymond W. McLaughlin. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1968, pp. 228, paperback. $2.95.

The author of this book is the head of the Department of Homilectics and Speech at the Conservative Baptist Seminary of Denver, Colorado. Herein he deals with the general principles of semantics, their relationship to preaching and group

communications in the local church, and also the need for the Holy Spirit to empower us to speak the truth in love to one another. Occasionally it is somewhat academic, but for the most part — very helpful.

—Donald Weilersbacher

MARRIAGE IS FOR ADULTS ONLY, by Lars I. Granberg. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1971, pp. 96, paperback. $1.50.

This is a delightful little book that employs a good sense of humor to get across a very serious point; that is, that marriage demands a certain degree of emotional, economic, and spiritual maturity in order to be what it ought to be. You may want to throw out those marriage manuals that are primarily psychologically or physically orientated after you read this little gem. But do keep your dictionary ready for such unusual phrases as "solipsistic autarchy", "misogynist", and "symbiotic relationships", etc.

—Donald Weilersbacher

DOES SCIENCE CONFRONT THE BIBLE?, by James Reid. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1971, pp. 160. $3.95.

This volume contains the same strengths and weaknesses of Mr. Reid's previous book **God, the Atom, and the Universe.** The photos are excellent, the presupposition valid (that there is no essential conflict between the Bible and true science), but the argumentation and evidence somewhat exaggerated (in my opinion). His exegesis produces such startling revelation of cars, tanks, airplanes, space labs, and numerous other scientific discoveries. Yet if one ignores these "excesses", there is still much to be appreciated by this layman who writes from an evangelical and pre-millenial viewpoint.

—Donald Weilersbacher

GENESIS-EXODUS, by D. F. Payne. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49502. 1971, pp. 95, paperback. $1.25.

This is the beginning of the series of Scriptures Union Bible Study Books presented as an aid to one's devotional reading of the Bible. After brief comments on each chapter, a number of provocative questions are included to stimulate one's thinking and application. In general the work is well done, stimulating, and written from an evangelical perspective. However, it does recommend as resource material several books which support theistic evolution.

—Donald Weilersbacher

SINNERS IN THE HANDS OF AN ANGRY GOD, by Jonathan Edwards. Reiner Publications, Swengle, Pa., 17880. pp. 30, paperback. $.25.

This is a reprint of that famous sermon preached on July 8, 1741; based on the text of Deuteronomy 32:35 "Their foot shall slide in due time." Read it!

—Donald Weilersbacher

MONKEY OFF MY BACK, by Jack Brown. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1971, pp. 151. Paperback, $1.95.

The author was controlled by alcohol and narcotics for 30 years: 17 of which he spent in various penitentiaries — including several in solitary confinement and a stretch on "death row." He was acquainted with Birdman of Alcatraz, Bonnie and Clyde, Machine Gun Kelly, and Al Capone. This is his story of how Christ delivered him from the power of sin and death in answer to the faithful prayers of his Christian wife. He combines humor and pathos to make you laugh and cry at the same time. The photographs are excellent and the book highly recommended!

—Donald Weilersbacher

A STUDY OF JOB: FROM TRAGEDY TO TRIUMPH, by H. L. Ellison. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1971, pp. 127. $1.95.

Writing from an evangelical perspective, the author has incorporated the text of the R.S.V. into his book and then made brief, but appropriate, comments on the major divisions of the Book of Job. Mr. Ellison points out that not only does Job deal with the problem of suffering, but also with the very real difficulty of trying to interpret the providence of God solely by our **past** or **present** experience. Often the latter is so inadequate that God's revealed word is our only hope. The author presents an interesting comparison between the wisdom of Job and that of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.

—Donald Weilersbacher

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, by Arthur W. Pink. Reiner Publications, Swengle, Pa. 17880. 1971, pp. 73. $1.50.

This book is an explanation of the Ten Commandments, written for young adults. It is easy reading and contains solid Christian truth. The author goes into great detail to show that all men have sinned against God's holy laws. The greatest shortcoming of this book is that Mr. Pink does not set forth man's reconciliation. It leaves the reader, especially a young adult, feeling hopelessly lost. This lack of any expressed hope might give the reader a feeling of frustration unless he or she has a good solid background.

—Charles R. Terpening

FIRE ON THE MOUNTAINS, by Raymond

Davis. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1966, revised 1971, pp. 255. $1.25.

This book is informative, inspirational and interesting. The story of the Church in Ethiopia is told by missionaries, converts and observers. This book is worth the time to read it as well as the money it costs.

—Charles R. Terpening

JAMES, A PRIMER FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING, by Earl Kelly. The Craig Press, Box 13, Nutley, N. J. 07110. 1969, pp. 277. $3.95.

The Epistle of James is treated in 33 sermons. Each sermon has been presented to congregations and to pastoral conferences. The author is a noted authority on the Epistle of James, and each sermon is informative and enlightening. This book is not a commentary but a guide for Christian living.

—Charles R. Terpening

CHRISTIANITY AND COMPARATIVE RELIGION, by J. N. D. Anderson. Inter-Varsity Press, Box F, Downers Grove, Illinois 60515. 1970, pp. 126, paperback. $1.95.

Comparative Religion is the study of the various religions of the world with attention to their similarities and differences. This is a fairly popular college and university subject, the inherent interest of which is often attractive to students. However, as commonly handled Comparative Religions is very disturbing to Christian students, because of the lack of a standpoint of conviction of truth from which to approach the conflicting faiths of the world. Unless very well established in Christian truth, the student is likely to fall easily into the prevalent relativism and absorb the notion that all religions are more or less true and valid, while absolute truth is non-existent or unknowable. The study of Comparative Religions in secular and liberal institutions might be fairly described as a process of the blind leading the blind through a fascinating but baffling maze of ideas. Too often the end product is skepticism.

Christianity and Comparative Religion by Anderson has the twin merits of being truly scholarly and at the same time true to the historic Christian faith. Contemporary views of religion are examined, tested and found wanting. The historic Christian faith is shown to involve a unique proclamation, a unique salvation and a unique revelation of truth. The currently popular "demythologizing" tendencies are looked squarely in the face and shown to be without valid foundation and to be destructive of real Christianity.

The author is Professor of Oriental Laws and Director of the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies in the University of London. He is a recognized expert on ethnic religions and especially on Islam and related matters. This book is strongly recommended to our readers, and would be especially suitable as a gift to students at secular or liberal institutions of higher learning.

—J. G. Vos

Contributions Received

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:

August, 1971. No. 2277, $6.00. No. 2278, $2.00. No. 2279, $35.00.

September, 1971. No. 2280, $7.00. No. 2281, $10.00. No. 2282, $50.00. No. 2283, $50.00.

October, 1971. No. 2284, $5.00. No. 2285, $5.00. No. 2286, $25.00. No. 2287, $33.50. No. 2288, $2.50. No. 2289, $10.00. No. 2290, $3.00. No. 2291, $2.50. No. 2292, $35.00. No. 2293, $7.50. No. 2294, $10.00. No. 2295, $5.00. No. 2296, $3.50. No. 2297, $2.50. No. 2298, $40.00. No. 2299, $2.50. No. 2300, $2.50. No. 2301, $2.50. No. 2302, $2.50. No. 2303, $5.00. No. 2304, $2.00. No. 2305, $7.50. No. 2306, $7.50. No. 2307, $2.50. No. 2308, $2.50. No. 2309, $.50. No. 2310, $7.50. No. 2311, $5.00. No. 2312, $30.00. No. 2313, $7.50. No. 2314, $5.00. No. 2315, $2.50. No. 2316, $2.50. No. 2317, $5.00. No. 2318, $5.00. No. 2319, $1.00. No. 2320, $100.00. No. 2321, $.50. No. 2322, $.50. No. 2323, $1.50. No. 2324, $5.00. No. 2325, $.50. No. 2326, $2.50. No. 2327, $2.00.

November, 1971. No. 2328, $10.00. No. 2329, $2.50. No. 2330, $5.00. No. 2331, $.50. No. 2332, $5.00. No. 2333, $2.50. No. 2334, $414.01. No. 2335, $2.50. No. 2336, $2.50. No. 2337, $1.50. No. 2338, $70.00. No. 2339, $7.50. No. 2340, $6.00. No. 2341, $5.00. No. 2342, $35.50. No. 2343, $39.00. No. 2344, $1.00. No. 2345, $5.00. No. 2346, $1.50. No. 2347, $5.00. No. 2348, $1.50. No. 2349, $5.00. No. 2350, $1.00. No. 2351, $2.50.

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. All contributions by donors in U.S.A. are deductible from taxable income. The substantial increase in U.S. postage rates which went into effect in May 1971 will mean that we will need more money than before to publish and circulate the magazine.

J. G. Vos, Editor and Manager
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Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania 15010, U.S.A.

Reprints Available

In writing for free copies of reprints, readers living in U.S.A. should send an 8 cent stamp for postage. Canadian and overseas readers need not send stamp.

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Does Faith Have Power?

By J. G. Vos

Some people used to say "Faith has more power than dynamite"; now they say "Faith has more power than nuclear energy." These people mean well, but they are mistaken. According to the Bible, faith has no power at all. Faith is a channel, not a force. It is a link connecting us with the power of God. The power is in God, not in our faith.

Anything that takes our attention away from God and focuses it on our own faith is wrong and, at bottom, irreligious. Those who speak of "the power of faith" are not far removed from those who talk about having "faith in faith." This is really idolatry; it is making yourself or your own attitudes the object of faith.

Some people say they believe in "the power of prayer", and they go on to say "Prayer changes things"; "Prayer has more power than dynamite", etc. All of this takes attention away from God and focuses it on the channel of connection with God. It takes attention away from God and centers attention on something we ourselves do. Really, prayer has no power at all. It is God who has the power.

This is the age of automation, but we should guard against the idea that faith and prayer can work like machinery. The Tibetan Buddhists have the world's record in automation of prayer. They write a prayer on the blades of a pinwheel and set it up in a tree for the wheel to rotate in the breeze, believing that one turn of the wheel counts for one prayer offered. These Tibetans certainly believe in "the power of prayer" — they even believe that the power of prayer can be measured quantitatively in terms of the number of revolutions of the wheel. This is a **mechanical** and **impersonal** view of prayer. Jesus warned against all such ideas of prayer when He said that His disciples should not be like the heathen who imagined that their prayers would be effective because of their much speaking.

The truth is, of course, that God changes things in answer to prayer. This way of saying it fixes our attention on God, not on the channel of connection with God. To speak of "the power of prayer" is to have a sub-Christian view of prayer. Prayer has no power at all, but God has all the power. Prayer is **communication between persons.** The power is not in the communication, but in the Person communicated with.

Properly speaking, the object of faith is always a Person. If we say that as Christians we have faith in the Bible, this really means that we have faith in God who is the real Author of the Bible. If we have faith in a book on science or history, this really means that we have faith in the veracity and competence of the person or persons who wrote the book. If we mail a letter, we may say that we have faith in the Post Office; this really means that we have faith in the persons who operate the Postal Service.

Today many people speak of having faith in abstract ideas; for example, "I believe in democracy" or "I believe in honesty." These statements really mean belief in persons. "Faith in democracy" really means faith in my fellow-citizens as willing and able to govern the country wisely and justly. "Belief in honesty" really means belief in persons (God, my fellow-men, myself) who expect or require me to be honest in my dealings and relationships. Christian faith is always belief in God (including Jesus Christ, the second Person of the divine Trinity).

The great problem of everyone's life is his relationship to God. When this problem has been solved by real faith in Jesus Christ, all the other problems of life become either solvable or endurable. Either God will solve our problems for us, or He will teach us how to live with them in such a way that they help us to grow to strength and maturity as Christians.

Are you one of the superficial souls who glibly parrot cliches about "the power of faith," or are you a Biblical Christian whose spiritual attention is fixed on the living God?

—The Goal Post

Printed in the United States of America by the Patterson Press, Winchester, Kansas 66097

BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

VOLUME 27 APRIL—JUNE, 1972 NUMBER 2

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT.....49
THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION IN MODERN ENGLISH.....54
THE SAVIOUR OF THE LOST.....55
A CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION.....56
INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN WORSHIP.....60
FOUNDATION TRUTHS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.....67
REVIEWS OF RELIGIOUS BOOKS.....82

A Quarterly Publication Devoted to Expounding, Defending and Applying the System of Doctrine set forth in the Word of God and Summarized in the Standards of the Reformed Presbyterian (Covenanter) Church.
Subscription $2.50 per year postpaid anywhere

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3408 7th Avenue Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania 15010, U.S.A.

Editorial Committee: D. Howard Elliott, Marion L. McFarland, Wilbur C. Copeland
Published by
The Board of Publication of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America

Overseas Agents
Britain and Ireland: The Rev. Adam Loughridge, D.D., 429 Cregagh Road, Belfast BT 6 O. LG, Northern Ireland
Australia and New Zealand: The Rev. Alexander Barkley, B.A., 2 Hermitage Road, Newtown, Geelong, Victoria, Australia

Known Office of Publication - Box K, Winchester, Kansas 66097, U.S.A.
Published Quarterly. Second Class Postage Paid at Winchester, Kansas 66097

Peden At The Grave Of Cameron

By Harriet Stuart Menteath

A sound of conflict in the moss! but that hath passed away,
And through a stormy noon and eve the dead unburied lay;
But when the sun a second time his fitful splendors gave,
One slant ray rested, like a hope, on Cameron's new-made grave!

There had been watchers in the night! strange watchers gaunt and grim,
And wearily, with faint lean hands, they toiled a grave for him;
But ere they laid the headless limbs unto their mangled rest,
As orphaned children they sat down, and wept upon his breast!

Oh! dreary, dreary was the lot of Scotland's true ones then,
A famine-stricken remnant, wearing scarce the guise of men;
They burrowed, few and lonely, 'mid the chill, dank mountain caves,
For those who once had sheltered them were in their martyr graves!

A sword had rested on the land — it did not pass away.
Long had they watched and waited, but there dawned no brighter day;
And many had gone back from them, who owned the truth of old!
Because of much iniquity, their love was waxen cold!

There came a worn and weary man to Cameron's place of rest;
He cast him down upon the sod; he smote upon his breast;
He wept as only strong men weep, when weep they must, or die;
And "Oh! to be wi' thee, Richie!" was still his bitter cry!

"My brother! O my brother! thou hast passed before thy time,
And thy blood it cries for vengeance, from this purple land of crime;
Who now shall break the bread of life unto the faithful band,
Who now upraise the standard that is shattered in thine hand?

"Alas! alas! for Scotland, the once beloved of heaven:
The crown is fallen from her head, her holy garment riven;
The ashes of her Covenant are scattered far and near,
And the voice speaks loud in judgment, which in love she would not hear!

"Alas! alas! for Scotland, for her mighty ones are gone;
Thou, brother, thou art taken; I am left almost alone;
And my heart is faint within me, and my strength is dried and lost,
A feeble and an aged man — alone against a host!

"Oh, pleasant was it, Richie, when we two could counsel take,
And strengthen one another to be valiant for His sake.
Now seems it as the sap were dried from the old blasted tree,
And the homeless, and the friendless, would fain lie down with thee!"

It was an hour of weakness, as the old man bowed his head,
And a bitter anguish rent him as he communed with the dead.
It was an hour of conflict, and he groaned beneath the rod;
But the burthen rolled from off him as he communed with his God!

"My Father! O my Father! shall I pray the Tishbite's prayer,
And weary in the wilderness while Thou wouldst keep me there?
And shall I fear the coward fear, of standing all alone,
To testify for Zion's King, and the glory of His throne?

(Continued on back cover)

BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

VOLUME 27 APRIL—JUNE, 1972 NUMBER 2

The Second Commandment

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

By William Young, Th. D.

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

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

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

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

That no misunderstanding may exist with respect to this principle it is necessary to make two qualifications, both of which are stated in Sec. 6 of the first chapter of the Westminster Confession of Faith. First, that which may be derived by good and necessary consequences from the express statements of Scripture is no less binding than an express command itself. Approved example has equal validity with a direct command, and even where approved example and express command may both be lacking or uncertain, as

in the baptism of infants, necessary inference from the doctrine and commandments plainly set forth in Scripture may sufficiently warrant a practice of worship. Secondly, there are "some circumstances concerning the worship of God . . . common to human action and societies, which are to ordered by the light of nature and Christian prudence according to the general rules of the word which are always to be observed."

That these circumstances constitute no part of the content of worship is clear from the following quotation from Gillespie, who writes of the conditions "requisite in such a thing as the church hath power to prescribe by her laws." "First, it must be only a circumstance of divine worship; no substantial part of it; no sacred, significant and efficacious ceremony. For the order and decency left to the definition for the church, as concerning the particulars of it, comprehendeth no more but mere circumstances."

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

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

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

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

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

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

Second: The sole object of worship is the absolutely Sovereign God. The basic conception of Calvinism, God's absolute sovereignty, excludes worship of human devising. In anthropocentric systems

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

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

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

What requires, however, to be emphasized is that the regenerate consciousness is no more fit than the unregenerate to decide what may be introduced into God's worship. The regenerate, it must be remembered, ever groan under the burden of sin that dwells in them, and therefore should well know that their understanding and will are not to be trusted to determine what is acceptable worship before God. The enlightened understanding is content to learn God's precepts and the renewed will to walk in them, but the regenerate heart as such cannot desire to make the slightest addition to God's commandments. Whenever true believers have acted inconsistently in this respect, they have invariably allowed great corruption to be introduced into God's sanctuary.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Owen writes in this connection: "Moreover to testify what weight He laid on the observance of these general prohibitions, when men found out other ways of worship than what He had appointed, though the particulars were such as fell under other special interdictions, yet the Lord was pleased to place the great aggravation of their sin in the contempt of those general rules mentioned. This is that He urgeth them with, that they did things by Him not appointed; of not observing anything in religion but what He requires, that He presseth them withal. The command is general,

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

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

In reply, it must be said that this would be contrary to the identity of the Covenant of Grace in both the old and the new dispensation. The principle regulating and worship of God's people belongs to the substance of the covenant of grace. With reference to the heavenly Father, the most mature saint remains a covenant child, and the most mature state of the Church itself remains subject to the ordinances imposed by the Church's Head and Lord. Not withstanding the changes involved in abrogation of the ceremonial law, there is no change in the Divine prerogative of appointing the worship to be rendered by the Church. The teaching of our Lord and His apostles on this matter is quite express. In condemning the Pharisees for their tradition as to eating bread with unwashen hands, the Lord quotes the words of Isaiah: "In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Mk. VII, 7) and comments "For laying aside the commandments of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do." (vs. 8). The Lord goes on to show that human traditions added to God's Word have the effect of making the Word of none effect. Additions to the Word of God in worship will not allow the Word itself to stand. Professor Petticrew observes: "Laying aside the commandments of God, that they may keep their own tradition! Is there not a close likeness between this action, thus condemned by Christ, and the action of those in modern times who lay aside the Divine Ordinance of the singing of the Psalms that they may keep their own man-appointed ordinance of the singing of uninspired hymns in the place of the Psalms? (In Psalm Singers' Conference" p. 73).

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

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

Second: If there be doubt as to the case of Cain and Abel, there is no obscurity in the least in the instance of Nadab and Abihu. (Lev. X, 1, 7). The strange fire they offered before the Lord "Wherefore God had given to them no charge" was "a common fire and not of that fire which God had commanded to burn day and night before the altar of burnt sacrifice, which only ought to have been offered unto God." (John Knox). Nadab and Abihu were Aaron's Sons, priests next to himself. They seem to have had no unworthy motive in their offering, they desired no earthly gain but only to honor God, and that in a way he had not expressly forbidden. They did nothing more than substitute fire

of their own for that which the Lord had commanded. Yet for this act they were instantaneously consumed by fire from the Lord.

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

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

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

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The Westminster Confession of Faith in Modern English

Prepared by Dr. James A. Hughes

(Continued from last issue)

Chapter XXIII Of the Civil Magistrate

I. God, the supreme Lord and King of all the world, has appointed civil magistrates to be (under Him) over the people, for His own glory and the public good; and, with this in view, He has armed them with authority, for the defense and encouragement of those who are good and for the punishment of evil-doers.

II. It is lawful for Christians to accept and perform the office of a magistrate, when called to this office — in the performance of which, just as they ought especially to maintain piety, justice and peace, according to the wholesome laws of each nation, so, with a view to maintaining these, they may lawfully, now under the New Testament, wage war upon just and necessary occasions.

III. The civil magistrate may not take it upon himself to administer the Word and the sacraments, nor may he exercise ecclesiastical authority; yet he has authority, and it is his duty, to see to it that unity and peace are preserved in the church, that the truth of God is kept pure and intact, that all blasphemies and heresies are suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed and all the ordinances of God properly established, administered and observed. For the better effecting of this, he has authority to call synods, to be present at them and to make sure that whatever is transacted in them is according to the mind of God.

IV. It is the duty of people to pray for

magistrates, to honor them, to pay taxes and other dues to them, to obey their lawful commands and to be subject to their authority for the sake of conscience. Unbelief, or a difference in religion, does not invalidate the magistrate's just and lawful authority, nor free the people from their obligation to obey him, from which ecclesiastical persons are not exempted — much less does the Pope have any authority or jurisdiction over magistrates in the territory they govern or over any of their people; and least of all does he have authority to take away from magistrates the territory they govern or to take away their lives, if he shall judge them to be heretics, or upon any other pretence whatever.

(To be continued)

The Saviour of the Lost

By J. G. Vos

"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" — Luke 19:10.

Zacchaeus the tax-collector climbed a tree to see Jesus, and at Jesus' call he came down to a new life as a Christian. Then Jesus was criticized for going to eat at the home of "a sinner" like Zacchaeus. Our Lord answered by saying that He had come to seek and save the lost.

"The Son of Man"

Our Lord commonly used this title for Himself. It is not a mere designation of His humanity; rather, it designates Him as the divine Messiah, the fulfillment of the wonderful vision in Daniel 7:13,14 where the Messiah is first called "the Son of man." The emphasis in this passage in Daniel is not on the humanity of the Messiah but on His exaltation and eternal glory. The title "Son of man" designates Jesus as the Saviour who, though truly human, is truly divine and came from the glory of heaven.

"Is Come"

"For the Son of man is come." This speaks of the Incarnation. He came from heaven to earth for a specific purpose. He is not a product of this earth; He came from beyond this earth; He is the Lord from heaven. Note that Jesus did not merely say "was born", but specifically "came." Other men are born; Jesus came from heaven. He came as the One who would save His people from their sins (Matt. 1:21).

"To Seek that which was Lost"

To be "lost" implies not merely misery and woe, but that man is **missing to God.** He is lost to God. When man fell into sin, God lost man. In the state of sin, man could not longer have communion with God; he could no longer fulfill the purpose for which God had created him. Man, God's creature made in God's own image, has become lost to God so that God no longer benefits by His possession of man as He did before sin came in. Man is missing to God. Therefore man is completely deranged and broken. All the factors of man's spiritual life and health are broken and out of joint.

The first thing the sinner needs is to be sought by the Saviour. Christ must seek the sinner, in order to restore him to a right relation to God. Christ sought and found Zacchaeus of old; He is still seeking and finding sinners today. Being divine, Christ is the perfect and almighty Seeker of the lost.

"To Save that which was Lost"

As sinners, we need not merely finding, but salvation. We are not merely missing to God; we are on the road to hell. The unsaved person is on the road to eternal perdition; he is not merely lost; he is under the wrath of God; the wrath of God abideth on him (John 3:36). But we can be saved from the wrath of God by Jesus Christ, who came to save that which was lost. Christ saves sinners by becoming their Substitute. In His sufferings and death on the cross, He suffered the wrath of God as the sinner's Substitute. The righteous judgment of God was visited upon Jesus Christ, so that God can forgive and justify the believer in Christ without denying His own perfect justice (Romans 3:26).

Has Christ Sought and Saved You?

The Christian is a person who was lost but has been sought, found and saved by Jesus Christ, the Son of man who came from heaven to seek and to save that which was lost. Is this your personal experience? Have you realized that by nature you were a lost sinner, missing to God and on the way to hell? Have you been found and saved by Jesus Christ? If you have not, repent of your sins and believe on Him immediately. Those that come unto Him He will in no wise cast out (John 6:37).

A Christian Philosophy of Education

By the Rev. David R. Armstrong

(Continued from last issue)

Axiology

"Man's sin-darkened mind requires divine revelation to determine ultimate standards and values in all fields (Geneva, I.B.2.c.). Thus the philosophy must turn to the Scriptures to discover its value system. What perspective does God want His image-bearers to have? First of all, there will be a radical difference between the value system of the regenerate and that of the unregenerate. Christians are to turn away from the values of the "world" (I John 2:15,16) and the "flesh" (Galatians 5:19-21). Instead, they are to value highly the qualities that the Holy Spirit is developing in them (Galatians 5:22,23), so that through union with Jesus Christ they will increasingly resemble Him (Romans 6; Colossians 3). Important as the present life is, still the Christian is future-oriented, for maturity and perfection lie ahead (Matthew 6:19-21; Romans 8:18-30; Philippians 3:7-21; II Timothy 4:6-8; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 4:9-16; 10:32-39; II Peter 3; Revelation 22:20).

> Man was created to live eternally with God. Earthly life therefore is preparatory to the life after death, and should not be regarded exclusively as an end in itself, though as God's creation the present earthly life has a real value of its own. (Geneva, I.B.l.c.).

> In the midst of a materialistic society, the church must attempt to inculcate a value system that takes its roots from complete commitment to citizenship in heaven rather than a cabin at the lake. It must teach these values in its classrooms, preach them from its pulpits, and enable its parents to communicate them in day-by-day family living. (Gangel, p. 35).

Objectives

Are educational objectives really necessary? Waterink's response is precise; "The educator who lacks an objective cannot educate." (Basic Concepts in Christian Pedagogy, p. 34). Gangel also stresses objectives; "Nothing can render an educational system in church or school less communicative and relevant to students than oblique aims which may or may not exist even in the minds of the educational leadership." (Leadership for Church Education, pp. 35,36).

Christian objectives must be Bible-based. The following verses are significant at this point.

> For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; (Romans 8:29).

> And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fulness of Christ. (Ephesians 4:11-13).

> And we proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in Christ. (Colossians 1:28).

> that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. (II Timothy 3:17).

It must be recognized, however, that no one of these verses was written for the purpose of defining the goal of education. Thus it becomes necessary to formulate such a definition based on the Scriptural data. Consider the following complementary statements.

> We have no other calling than to testify in all of our activities to the newness of life in Jesus Christ. This is our reasonable service, to offer our very selves, the worship of our minds and hearts to Him, and to demonstrate the triumphs of Him who has called us out of darkness into His marvellous light. We are to become fit instruments for the work of the Lord. The pedagogue is bound to this revelation concerning man's vocation in life.

> The final aim of all forms of Christian nurture and instruction can be nothing else than the provision of fundamental guidance with regard to this calling. Wherever the child or the adult is placed, whatever his abilities or limitations, he must learn to submit his life to God's will. His one and only task is to serve God according to His ordinances, unfolding and developing His creation for the benefit of mankind to the praise of his Lord and Redeemer. To prepare the child for this service and to give the adult guidance with regard to this calling must be the final aim of Christian education. (De Graaff, pp. 112,113).

The purpose of Christian education is the glory of God, and the true welfare of man in subordination to the glory of God. . . .The purpose of Christian education thus consists in the mandate to glorify God in every sphere of life; every thought is to be brought into captivity to Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 10:5). This means consciously and intentionally to glorify God in every sphere. . . . (Vos, pp. 12,13).

The forming of man into an independent personality serving God according to his Word, able and willing to employ all his God-given talents to the honor of God and for the well-being of his fellow-creatures, in every area of life in which man is placed by God. (Waterink, p. 41).

. . .it is the objective of education, as seen in the Christian perspective, to develop man in the likeness of God, and for the service of God and man in every area of human endeavor in which man is called of God to serve. Education is concerned with the formation of complete and integrated individuals, who have accumulated a mass of knowledge, but, beyond this, are developing into mature persons who resemble Jesus Christ in their total being. These products of our educational system should be effective in the formation and transmission of culture. (1957 R. P. Synod).

Inasmuch as man's essential purpose is to know God, Christian education seeks to develop the student's ability to relate himself and the created universe to God, through the study of His Word and Works.

Christian education emphasizes the Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ in order that the student might be yielded to Him as his Saviour from sin and that he might see in Christ the ultimate purpose and meaning of the whole universe.

Christian education seeks the realization of the potential of the individual as the image of God through the development of God-given capacities (gifts). The fulfillment of those potentialities is reached insofar as the student devotes those capacities to God's glory in his vocation and life.

Christian education endeavors to develop the capacity for the enjoyment of the world as God's creation, in all its cultural richness, realizing all of life as a coherent whole as related to God and His redemptive activity.

Christian education seeks the development of mature students with integrated personalities as individuals, but also as oriented members of society building the Kingdom of God in the family, the church, the state, and the world. (Geneva, II.).

Curriculum

The curriculum of the Christian School is the medium through which the child is oriented to a life in Christ and to the culture of this world for fellowship with and service to God in this life and the life to come. (Constitution of the Beaver County Christian School Association).

Curriculum development proceeds around a single unifying principle, namely, that the God of the Bible is the sovereign, active Lord over all reality.

To this unifying principle, everything will be related. Around this principle, everything will be arranged. The result of this unifying principle will be that the students will not merely acquire a mass of miscellaneous information and insights into various detailed fields, but will gain a consistent, unified view of God, man and the universe, a true and valid philosophy of life — a real insight into what everything is really about. (Vos, p. 11).

Dr. Frank Gaebelein recognizes this basic unity when he pleads for integration. Integration in Christian education "is the living union of its subject matter, administration, and even of its personnel, with the eternal and infinite pattern of God's truth." (The Pattern of God's Truth, p. 9). Geneva College illustrates this viewpoint.

In Christian education the curriculum builds upon the thesis that the historic Christian faith is true, and furthermore that it is the integrating factor of all true education. It is the position of Geneva College that this faith is best expressed in the Westminster Confession of Faith. (III.C.1.).

This unified approach to curriculum must take form at the elementary level.

In the grade schools the teacher should consciously and purposely inter-relate the various subjects (science-studies, reading materials, literature, Bible-history, general and national history, church-history, social studies, etc.) so that the pupil acquires an awareness of the world and its development as God's world, in which man is placed to fulfill God's Kingdom design. From the very beginning the pupil should acquire a positive conception of the role which the Body of Christ must fulfill in history but should also learn to see that the Kingdom of Darkness is struggling for the allegiance of men in every major area of cultural endeavor. (James H. Olthuis and Bernard Zylstra, "Schools in the Christian Community", 1969, p. 6).

Waterink is particularly concerned about Bible history.

> It is the task of the elementary school to do everything in its power to have this comprehensive view of the revelation of God, this insight into Bible history, developed in the child by the time he is approximately twelve to fourteen years of age. (p. 128).

In all this it is assumed that the instruction will be graded. Through the centuries many educational philosophers have emphasized the need for graded instruction. For example, John Comenius (1592-1670 stated, "That all studies should be carefully graded throughout the various classes, in such a way that those that come first may prepare the way for and throw light on those that come after." (The Great Didactic, quoted by Frederick Mayer, A History of Educational Thought, p. 235). The twentieth century Catholic philosopher, Jacques Maritain, has the same concern.

> I should like to emphasize that at each stage the knowledge must be of a sort fitted to the learners and conceived as reaching its perfection within their universe of thought during a distinct period of their development. . . . (Education at the Crossroads, Yale University Press, 1943, p. 60).

Olthuis and Zylstra have outlined the approach that is needed for curriculum development at the secondary level.

> In the high school, the educational process is already differentiated according to the different places which the students plan to occupy in society after graduation. Here the following elements are crucial:
>
> In every Christian high school there should be a core-program for all students in which the unifying perspective of a Christian world and life view is expressed. Such a core-program should include at least the basics in the following areas: (I) study of the nature of Christianity as a world-view, related to the world-views of humanism; (II) history and social studies, in which the student gains an insight into the spiritual struggles of the past and is prepared for Christian service in today's society; (III) literary and art-studies, in which the student learns of the great but often decadent expressions of the humanist mind; and (IV) basic courses in the natural sciences, their potential and limitations in a technological society.
>
> In the last year of high school there should be a special course, notably for the students who are to continue their education in (an often secular) university. In this course the basic elements of a Christian perspective should be dealt with in depth, and compared to non-Christian perspectives. Such a course should round off the entire educational program for which the school society is responsible. (p. 6).

Ideally, Christian education must proceed beyond the secondary level. Moreover, even at the college level, the emphasis needs to be on "education" (as contrasted with "training" in skills).

> Since Christian education pertains to the understanding of God, man, and the universe in their mutual relations, the curriculum must be liberal arts in nature.
>
> The curriculum should lead a person to grasp the foundations of learning so that he can live a life glorifying to God, confronting honestly and confidently the problems and challenges of new knowledge, and contributing to the welfare of society under God. (Geneva, III. C.2 & 3).

All that has been said thus far pertains to the school as a separate institution.

> A school is an educational or instructional community of teachers and pupils or students established to prepare the latter for meaningful participation in society.
>
> This simple definition already implies that a school is not to be confused with other societal institutions: it has a character of its own that distinguishes it from the church, the marriage-bond, the family, the state, a business-enterprise, etc.
>
> The Christian school, in its own unique way, must be an expression of the coming Kingdom of God through which the Lord Jesus Christ restores the direction of creation in all its fulness through history. (Olthuis and Zylstra, p. 1).

It needs to be recognized, however, that the Church as an organized group of Christians also has an educational responsibility. Therefore, the Church must have its curriculum for families composed of children, youth, and adults. Insofar as the Church ministers to those outside its membership, the curriculum must be evangelistically oriented, i.e. it must proclaim the truth concerning God, man, Christ, and the way of salvation with the prayer that the Holy Spirit will apply that truth to the hearers and regenerate them. The Church is particularly concerned for its own children who have not yet made a public confession of faith. They

> must be prepared to take up their responsibilities as mature believers in the midst of the congregation. They must be introduced to the life of the church, to its confessions, its history, its mission, its care, and its diaconate. Through this instruction they are to gain a greater knowledge of what it means to call upon and to

> confess the Name of the Lord. They must learn to participate and share in the Church's worship, fellowship, service, and witness. (De Graaff, pp. 148,149).

Obviously the Church has the same responsibility to adults who are preparing for membership after being converted from the world. De Graaff limits Church curriculum in a way that many would consider to be unrealistic in our day of rampant secularism.

> In certain situations the church may judge it necessary to provide special training for the children, the younger adults, or the older people as well. But, in that case, the specific aim of the instruction and the scope of the curriculum should be adjusted to the age-level of the members and the peculiar problems they face. In many instances there will be no need to organize such special study groups for different age groups. If, for example, the children receive adequate training at home, attend a Christian day school, belong to a Christian youth organization, etc., there is no reason for the church to arrange for additional instruction periods (Sunday school). Anything the church would do in this respect, would already be done by the home, the school, and other organizations. This does not mean that the church, for example, could not, or should not, provide special services for the younger children, geared to their level of understanding and their experiences, during (a part of) the regular worship services. Such an activity, and similar ones, would not be a duplication. In other instances, however, when the children receive very little regular training in the Christian faith, the church may feel obligated to provide special instruction. (p. 150).

The first and last sentence of the preceding quotation open the way for a broader curriculum (one that is needed today). America's public school system is not providing a Christian education. The same charge can be levelled against millions of families in the United States. In this emergency situation, the Church must adapt its curriculum to meet the needs. This does not mean that the Church is to take over the function of the family or the school. It does mean that adults must be trained so that they can establish Christian families. It also means that the Church must urge its members to establish Christian day schools.

There is a definite place for Church education with a curriculum fitted to its purpose in God's world.

(To be continued)

Religious Terms Defined

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 which is 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. (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).

IMMANENCE OF GOD. The truth that God is everywhere in the universe, and that absolutely nothing great or small could exist without His continuous presence in it. Also called the cosmic presence of God.

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.

IMPUTATION. God's act of reckoning righteousness or guilt to a person's credit or debit.

IMPUTATION OF ADAM'S FIRST SIN. God's act, in accordance with the terms of the Covenant of Works, of reckoning the guilt of Adam's sin of eating the forbidden fruit to every human being (except Jesus Christ), so that the whole world became guilty before God.

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" when God is the subject of the sentence. Mark 10:27. Acts 17:25).

INERRANCY OF SCRIPTURE. The doctrine that the Bible is free from errors, including all kinds of errors: theological, historical and scientific.

INFALLIBILITY OF SCRIPTURE. The doctrine that it is impossible for the Bible to contain errors of any kind.

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.

INSPIRATION, VERBAL. The doctrine that the actual written words of the Bible, in the genuine text of the original Hebrew and Greek, are themselves all truly the Word of God. Also called Plenary Inspiration. Strictly speaking, Verbal Inspiration means that the actual words are what God wanted them to be, and Plenary Inspiration means that **all parts** of the Bible are fully and truly the Word of God.

INTERCESSION. A plea or prayer for another, especially a prayer to God for benefits or blessings to be granted to another person.

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.

INTERMEDIATE STATE. The state of human souls separated from their bodies, between death and the resurrection; in the case of the redeemed, a state of happiness, peace, rest, being present with the Lord, and awaiting the still higher blessedness of the resurrection of the body. (Larger Catechism, 86).

INTERPRETATION. A clear statement of the meaning of something. The common notion that we may interpret the Bible in any way we see fit is wrong. An interpretation is valid only so far as it sets forth the true meaning of the text being interpreted.

INVISIBLE CHURCH, THE. "The invisible church is the whole number of the elect that have been, are or shall be gathered into one under Christ the head." (Larger Catechism, 64).

Instrumental Music in Worship: Commanded or Not Commanded?

By the Rev. G. I. Williamson

The above title indicates the purpose of this article. It is to ascertain the answer to one question: is it the will of God that musical instruments be used in our worship today? Or is the use of musical instruments in worship contrary to God's revealed will?

1. The Regulative Principle

To even ask such a question — and ask it in this way — is, of course, to assume two things. It is to assume (1) the basic Protestant principle that the written word of God is the only infallible rule of faith **and practice.** It is also to assume (2) the special application of this general principle in what is commonly called the regulative principle of worship, which has never been stated more clearly than in the Westminster Confession of Faith.

> "...the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by Himself, and so limited by His own revealed will, that He may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men. . .or any other way not prescribed in the holy Scripture." (XXI,1)

We do not intend to devote this article to a defense of this principle. This has been done already. 1 But we do emphasize the importance of this principle. For the fact is that many who profess adherence to this principle (as stated here, and in other Reformed Confessions) show only too clearly that this principle has lost its hold upon them. We cite one example. In a sermon entitled 'What's Worship?' Dr. Joel Nederhood, some months ago, dealt with the problems raised by "avant-garde liturgists who insist that worship must include all kinds of strange events." We all know that jazz orchestras, folk singers, rock operas, and even religious dancing has been used in the worship services of the modern church. Very properly, then, Dr. Nederhood says: "if we want to know what worship is, we are going to have to turn to God and say, 'You tell us, please, what worship is.' " As he truly says,

"worship is not what turns us on, necessarily, but it is what turns God on, if we may speak that way about Him." This is excellent: it comes very close to expressing the regulative principle. Yet, sad to say, Dr. Nederhood appears to take it all back as he continues. "Surely, there must be change" he says "**and innovation as such is not evil.**" (Emphasis ours) "Worship can take many forms. All of us must allow for that. And we must be very broad-minded on the subject." Surely the contradiction is manifest. A thing cannot be commanded by God, and — at the same time — mere human innovation or invention. If it is our duty to turn to God to ask Him what He wants us to do in worship, then that very duty rules out innovation and invention. To make room for innovation and invention — and to be "very broad-minded on the subject" is simply to nullify the regulative principle. And when this happens one of two things will have to follow: either the Church will decide what is, and what is not, allowable — or, the individual will do what is right in his own eyes. It will, then, be either tyranny or anarchy, neither of which is attractive. That is why we make no apology whatever for defending this much neglected — and much misunderstood — principle. For the fact is that the one thing that can preserve us from these two great evils — tyranny and anarchy — is the regulative principle. If my Church truly honors this principle, then no one will be required to do anything in worship that God has not commanded! There is no tyranny where God alone commands the conscience. He has the sovereign right to command. But neither will there by anarchy in my Church, if it maintains this principle. For how can every man do that which is right in his own eyes, if he is subject to the disciplinary authority of a Church which is ruled by God's command?

The fact is that the Church today, in most of its branches, has departed from this regulative principle. It is also a fact that in some of these branches tyranny has resulted. By mere human authority men are required to observe sacraments, and holy days, and many other things not commanded in the Bible. And it is equally evident in other branches of the Church, that anarchy has come. For in some denominations there is no uniformity in worship, and there is all manner of innovation. Is it too much to say, then, that what the Church needs as much — if not more than — anything else, is to return to the regulative principle? True worship is worship commanded by God. What is not commanded by God in worship is therefore forbidden. Upon this foundation our entire argument will stand.

2. The Teaching of Scripture

Does the Bible command us to use musical instruments in worship? This is the question. And to this question many would no doubt answer 'yes!' without any hesitation. 'Doesn't the psalmist himself say that we should praise God with organs?' is the common remark. Psalm 150 verse 4 is probably quoted more than any other verse in the Bible in defense of musical instruments in worship. Yet how obvious it is — upon a little reflection — that such superficially plausible proof texts do not really settle the question at all. It is easy to see this if we simply read the entire psalm again.

> Praise the Lord. Praise God in His sanctuary; Praise Him in His mighty expanse. Praise Him for His mighty deeds; Praise Him according to His excellent greatness. Praise Him with trumpet sound; Praise Him with harp and lyre. Praise Him with timbrel and dancing; Praise Him with stringed instruments and pipe. Praise Him with loud cymbals; Praise Him with resounding cymbals. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. (New American Standard Bible)

It ought to be evident to anyone that this Psalm commands the use of the organ no more than it does the trumpet, harp, lyre, timbrel, dance, stringed instruments and loud cymbals. However, few people who quote Psalm 150:4 in defense of the organ are at all prepared to see all these other instruments used in their worship. Thus we see an interesting thing today in some Reformed denominations. The older generation has long quoted Psalm 150:4 in order to justify the organ. But now the younger generation quotes the same verse to justify the guitar, and the rest of the Psalm to justify a great deal more. Is it not evident, then, that this question demands more than an off-hand quotation of a few plausible texts? It is for this reason that we will seek to present a summary, below, of the unfolding revelation of God in scripture concerning the use of instrumental music in worship.

From Adam to Moses

Little is known about Adam's worship in paradise. But it is perfectly certain that there were no musical instruments. We know this because the invention of musical instruments is attributed to one of his descendants (Gen. 4:21). We may observe that it was the unbelieving descendants of Cain who led in the advancement of culture and technology before the time of the flood. This does not reprobate these inventions as such. And it is clear that the people of God made use of them at a later time (Gen. 31:27, Job 21:12). The more impressive, therefore, is the total silence of scripture concerning any use of musical instruments in the worship of God during the patriarchal period. When we later see that God's displeasure was clearly manifested whenever anything was offered to Him in worship which He had not commanded (Lev. 10:1,2) — and that musical instruments were never introduced until God's express command had been given — we cannot but conclude that they were not used at all during the time from Adam to Moses.

From Moses to David

It is not even **certain** that musical instruments were used in worship in the period of time extending from Moses to David. It is true that we read of timbrels and dances in Exodus 15. But was this public worship, or was it a patriotic celebration? The fact that men

alone, and not women, were appointed to lead in the entire worship of the Tabernacle service (Num. 3:5-11) would seem to require the second alternative. For it was Miriam and the women who played the timbrels and danced after the crossing of the red sea. When we go on to read (Ex. 25:40; Heb. 8:5) that the whole form of worship that God required of His people in the wilderness was revealed to Moses at Mt. Sinai, we are strengthened in this conclusion. For in this revelation we find but **one** thing that could be classified as an instrument of music. God commanded the making of two silver trumpets (Num. 10:1-10), and only the sons of Aaron were to use them (v. 8). They were to be used, furthermore, only for certain specified purposes: the calling of assembly (v. 2), sounding an alarm of war (v. 9), and as an accompanyment of the sacrifices in the tabernacle (v. 10). There is no indication that they were ever used to accompany congregational singing, so it may be doubted that these trumpets were intended as musical instruments. The function of trumpets in the Bible (Ex. 19:16-19; Mt. 24:31; I Cor. 15:52; Rev. 8; etc.) rather appears to be to announce something of great importance, and to warn! If this be the case — and these trumpets were used only to announce and warn — then musical instruments were not yet authorized in worship. But even if one holds that these trumpets were used, in some sense, as instruments of music in worship, it would still be true that this was only by divine command. If this be the beginning of the use of instruments of music in worship, in other words, then it is noteworthy that it was a commanded beginning.

We find musical instruments in use in what is often called the "school of the prophets" (I Sam. 10:5; II Kings 3:15). But precisely what this use was is not easy to demonstrate. To say (as some critics do) that they were used to induce prophetic ecstasy is without foundation. We know from the inspired scriptures that holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, not as they were moved by music (II Pet. 1:21). But it is equally gratuitous to assume that these instruments were used in worship. There is no proof of it. But even if these prophets did use musical instruments in worship, this would not authorize their use in congregational worship. Just as the priests and Levites were authorized to use the trumpets, while the members of the congregation of Israel were not, so it may not be assumed that what the prophets did was normative for those who were not prophets. The conclusion to which we are driven by the evidence, then, is this: 1) true and acceptable worship was long rendered to the Lord without the use of any musical instrument; 2) we have found no proof that they were used even until the time of David as a part of congregational worship; and 3) even where there may be an element of uncertainty (as, for example, in the precise function of the trumpets) it is still true that nothing was introduced into the worship of God except by the express command of God.

The Period of the Monarchy

During the period of the monarchy the service of worship was made much more elaborate. When David began his reign he soon determined to restore the ordinances of worship in Israel. "So David gathered all Israel together . . . to bring the ark of God from Kirjath-jearim" (I Chron. 13:6) to Jerusalem. This journey was completed in two phases because the first ended with a manifestation of God's displeasure (13:10). From the sequel we discover that this was because they had not acted "after the due order" (13:13). They had failed, in other words, to do precisely what God commanded while refraining from everything else. Thus in the second phase care was taken to observe the requirements of the law of Moses (15:13-15). The more impressive does it become, therefore, when we note that in both phases of this journey musical instruments were used (13:8; 15:27). In the second phase, at least, this included "the singers, and Chenaniah the master of the song with the singers" (v. 27). Now at first glance, this might seem to justify the use of musical instruments in worship even when it is not a part of the ceremonies of the Temple. Indeed, if there is any place in the whole Bible that would seem to give a plausible ground for such, this would be it. However, when we observe that only the Levites played the instruments (15:16) — and that sacrifices and offerings were made as they brought the ark back to its appointed place in the tent (16:1) — it will soon become evident that this was still ceremonial worship. Since there was, at this time, no tabernacle or temple, the ark itself was the sole symbol of God's appointed place of worship. That is why the worship performed in connection with it was (during the second phase) carried out with such care. The worship here performed in connection with the ark was never, after the restoration of the ark to the tabernacle, performed elsewhere. And in any event what was here employed in the worship of God during the journey from Kirjath-jearim to Jerusalem, was later performed by express command of God as a permanent part of temple worship. For "David gave to Solomon his son the pattern" of that worship which he had received "by the spirit" (I Chron. 28:11,12). "All the work of the service of the house of the Lord" (v. 13) was given to David "in writing from the hand of the Lord" (v. 19) and by "commandment of the Lord by his prophets" (II Chron. 29:24).

In this more elaborate temple worship several things are to be noted. Only the Levites were allowed to play the musical instruments (I Chron. 16:4-6). While so employed they were "arrayed in white linen" and "stood at the east end of the altar" with "cymbals and psalteries and harps" (II Chron. 5:12). With them stood "an hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets." All told, there were "four thousand (who) praised the Lord with the instruments" of music (I Chron. 23:5), being divided into twenty-four courses, each consisting of one hundred sixty musicians. Most important of all, we note that "when the burnt-offering began, the song to the Lord also began with the trumpets, accompanied by the instruments" (II Chron. 29:27). "All the congregation worshiped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded" we read "until the burnt-offering was finished" (v. 28). Then, "when they had made an

end of offering" (v. 29) the people bowed to worship, and sang praises to the Lord without musical accompanyment. Since the scripture expressly states that the musical instruments sounded "until the burnt-offering was finished" the congregational praise which followed must have been a capella.

Two things stand out in all this. On the one hand there is the sheer magnitude of it all. Imagine what an impressive spectacle this must have been — with the chorus, orchestra, and trumpets all sounding at once! On the other hand we observe that all of this was heard only during the offering up of the burnt-sacrifice (II Chron. 29:27). It was at the precise time of this offering that the singers, orchestra and trumpets were heard. Is it not evident, to the thoughtful reader, that there was something typical in this? Even the historical account informs us that these musicians were appointed to "prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals" (I Chron. 25:1). And we know what "the sum" (Heb. 8:1) of this prophecy was. For the whole system of ceremonial worship served as a "shadow of heavenly things" (Heb. 8:5). It was "a figure for the time then present" (9:9), but a figure of something better in the future. In plain words, here was enacted symbolically the drama of redemption. We use the word 'drama' because this old testament ceremonial worship was only a representation of the real redemption which was to be accomplished, not with the blood of bulls and goats, but with the precious blood of Christ. That is why this impressive assembly of musicians was needed. In a similar way, a motion picture depicting some great love story, is a pale thing in comparison with our own experience of love. That is why sound effects, and a musical background, are so important: it helps us to feel a synthetic representation as if it were real. So God, under the old testament administration of the covenant of grace, was pleased to use such "weak and beggarly elements" to help his old testament people (as children under age, Gal. 4) feel something more in these animal sacrifices than was actually there. So, as the sacrifice was offered, the hearts of God's people were stirred by this great cacophany of music. Yet all was strictly on a ceremonial level. "It is important to bear in mind" then "that all music of the Temple . . . was nothing but an accessory to its sacrificial ritual. Without sacrifice the music loses its raison d'etre." 2

From the Exile to the Advent

We have not been able to determine the time when Synagogue worship began. The Synagogue — or something similar to it must have existed from a very early time. The weekly Sabbath was surely observed in some way by pious Israelites who could not have come to Jerusalem more than a few times a year. No doubt such believers gathered together in order to read the word of God so that they could at least think about the ceremonial worship in Jerusalem when they could not be present. Since the use of instrumental music was, by divine command, a priestly and Levitical function — and strictly a part of the sacrifice of the Temple — it comes as no surprise that Synagogue worship from the earliest known times was without musical instruments. Even if the Synagogues came into existence at the time of the captivity this would come as no surprise. As Psalm 137 indicates, it was no thought of pious Israelites to presume to duplicate the lost glory of the Temple worship in a strange land! As Calvin says, the Psalmist here (Psalm 137) "deplores the suspension of the songs of praise, which God had enjoined in the Temple. The Levites were set over the department of singing, and led the way among the people in this devotional exercise. Is it asked how they had carried their harps with them so far from their native land? We have in this another proof mentioned by the Psalmist of their faith and fervent piety, for the Levites when stripped of all their fortunes had preserved their harps at least as a piece of precious furniture, to be devoted to a former use when opportunity presented itself. We may suppose that those who truly feared God put a high value upon the relics of his worship, and showed the greatest care in preserving them, till the period of their restoration." 3 It is interesting to note in this connection, that when the captives returned with Ezra, the singers are mentioned (Ezra 2:41). But a search had to be made to find Levites who could play the instruments of music (Neh. 12:27). In any event, it is well known that instruments of music were not used in Synagogues until modern times. Orthodox Jewish Synagogues still do not use them because, as they still testify, this "serves to distinguish the synagogue from (the) Temple." 4

The New Testament

It is sometimes said that the New Testament is silent about the use of musical instruments. This is true if we mean that it gives no evidence of their use in the Apostolic Church. About one thing, however, the New Testament is not silent. It is not silent about the termination of the ceremonial worship of the Old Testament. Our Lord himself announced that true worship would henceforth require no visible geographic center (John 4:21). Soon men would be able to worship God "in spirit and in truth" (4:24). What did He mean? Clearly, He did not mean that Old Testament ceremonial worship had been false. No, the contrast here intended is a contrast between two types of true worship, one of which was now passing away and the other of which was now coming into existence. True worship had previously been in the temple and in types: but now it would be in the Spirit and in truth. "For the law" (that is, the law expressed in these Old Testament ceremonies and ordinances) was "only a shadow of the good things to come" (Heb. 10:1). And the coming of these very good things themselves of necessity terminated the anticipatory shadows!

This can be seen — in the particular shadowy ordinance of instrumental music — if we compare the form of expression found in the Old Testament and the New.

In the Old Testament	In the New Testament
II Chron. 5:11-13	Heb. 13:15 (cf. 12:22,23)
Ps. 81:1-3; 98:4-6; 149:2,3	Eph. 5:18,19; Col. 3:16
Levites are called to worship in the temple with instruments of music	Believers are called to worship in the Spirit with heart and lips

Much of the argument in the New Testament (e.g. Acts 7, Gal. 3, Heb. 7-10) is in order to show that Old Testament ceremonial worship is abolished. Thus there were many things in tabernacle and temple that were not a part of worship in the Apostolic Church. There were images (Ex. 25:18,19; 36:8), priests (Ex. 40:13-15), incense (Ex. 30:8), candles (Ex. 25:31) etc. All of these were given, as the New Testament informs us, as "a figure for the time then present" (Heb. 9:9). They were "imposed" (by divine commandment) "until the time of reformation" (Heb. 9:10). They were "patterns of things in the heavens" (9:31) which things now belong to us because of the finished work, and present intercession, of Christ (9:24; 12:18-24). Thus, as Calvin once said, "when the clear light of the gospel has dissipated the shadows of the law, and taught us that God is to be served in simpler form, it would be to act a foolish and mistaken part to imitate that which the prophet enjoined only upon those of his own time." 5 It would only "bury the light of the gospel" if we should now "introduce the shadows of a departed dispensation." 6

Here, at least, the fundamentalist Christian is more consistent than many who profess to be Reformed. The fundamentalist speaks of a rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem, and thus takes seriously the fact that this Old Testament ceremonial worship was commanded by God. If we are going to revive ceremonial worship, in other words, then let us at least be careful to restore it exactly as it was commanded. Let us not pick and choose as we will. That the fundamentalist is mistaken, however, in expecting a restoration of that which is passed away is perfectly plain. For the one place in the New Testament in which the old testament types and symbols reappear is in the book of Revelation. Here we read of the ark (11:9) the lamb (5:6) trumpets (4:1, 8:2, etc.) temple (11:19) harps (5:9) incense (8:4) etc. Yet how evident it is that none of these are to be taken literally. The incense (in the Greek text of 8:4) is called the prayers of the saints. The trumpet is not a literal trumpet, but the sound of a voice compared with the sound of a trumpet (4:1). Similarly, the music that John heard (14:2, Greek text) was not the sound of harps. It was the sound of human voices likened unto harpers harping with their harps. The very employment of these ceremonial symbols — taken, as they are, from an abrogated system — further confirms the fact that they were not any part of New Testament worship.

Conclusion

The conclusion to which we are driven is this: God has not commanded us to use musical instruments in New Testament worship. We have seen that God did not authorize (command) the use of musical instruments until the time of Moses (even if we consider the trumpets used in the Tabernacle to be instruments of music). When they were authorized (commanded) they were clearly a part of the shadowy ceremonial system. And even in the Old Testament period, worship (except that which was performed by the priests and Levites at the Temple in Jerusalem) was commonly offered without musical instruments. Worship in the ancient Synagogue was always devoid of such. So was the worship of the early Church. Never in the New Testament do we find mention of their use. What we do find is an abundance of teaching to the effect that the whole system of Tabernacle and Temple worship (shadowy and typical in nature) has been abolished. It follows, therefore, that the use of musical instruments is not authorized in the worship of the Church today.

3. The Testimony of History

The Bible is our only infallible rule of faith and practice. It needs — and allows — no supplementation from history or tradition. Nevertheless, there is value in the testimony of history. If our understanding of Scripture is correct, we will often find corroboration here. And the interesting fact is that Church history also testifies that musical instruments were not originally used in the worship services of the Christian Church.

"As the Christian Church rests historically on the Jewish Church, so Christian worship. . .rests on that of the synagogue, and cannot be well understood without it." 7 From as far back as the time of the Babylonian Captivity synagogue worship was worship without instrumental music, and so it has been until modern times. As one authority has put it "a dispersed Jewry was a sorrowing Jewry, and in synagogues that were now to be found almost everywhere in the known world an abstention from instrumental music served as a lasting reminder of the glories of the Temple worship of the past, which should, it was confidently believed, after a period of patient waiting some day be renewed." 8 In the Apostolic period, at least some of these synagogues became Christian Churches (Acts 17:10-12). Thus it comes as no surprise to find no musical instruments in the worship of the early Christian Church. Indeed, it is not too much to say that the witness to this "rejection of all musical instruments is consistent among the Fathers." 9 And so deeply was this contrast between Church and Temple understood, that even to this day the Greek (or Eastern) Orthodox Church "disapproves the use of organs." 10 "The Latin (or western) Church introduced it pretty generally, but not without the protest of eminent men, so that even in the Council of Trent a motion was made, though not carried, to prohibit the organ at least in the mass." 11 Thomas Aquinas, the great medieval theologian of the Roman Church, still spoke of musical instruments as illegitimate in worship. The first recorded instance of the use of such was in the 8th century, but they did not become common until the 13th. Thus the history of the Church, prior to the time of the Reformation, is eloquent. It loudly proclaims the

fact that musical instruments in worship were a late innovation.

We are not surprised, then, that Reformed Churches returned to the ancient simplicity of worship. In Geneva — and then in the Calvinistic Churches influenced by Geneva — musical instruments were rejected. They were not, indeed, "forbidden. . . in private. . . but they (were) banished out of the Churches" according to Calvin "by the plain command of the Holy Spirit," because Paul (in I Cor. 14:13) "lays it down as an invariable rule that we must praise God. . . only in a known tongue." 12 This fact is well known. "The history of music in our denomination" said one writer recently "is a story of how the organ and choir, exiled by Calvin, gradually re-entered the Reformed (worship) service." 13 The same could be said of virtually any Reformed or Presbyterian Church. And one of the things that has greatly impressed us, in our historical research, is the **way** in which this re-entry took place. No Church of Jesus Christ has ever been perfect. This statement also applies to the Church at the time of the Reformation. Thus we may never argue that a thing is right merely because 'that is the way it was at the time of the Reformation.' It is significant, however, that the Reformers rejected the use of musical instruments in worship because they understood the scriptures to require this. They were also able to give a clear and convincing statement of their reasons. But was this true in later times when the organ was reinstituted in the Churches? Did the ministers (and theologians) of that time first show that they understood this to be a thing commanded by the Lord in Scripture? Did they present a convincing argument from the Bible? The answer to these questions is, sad to say, emphatically no! 14 Like so many retrograde changes that have been made in Calvinistic Churches since the reformation, this was simply by way of concession to popular demand. As Professor Slenk says — reviewing briefly the history of this concession in Holland — "Although Calvinist consistories of the sixteenth century wanted no organ music, they could not remove the organs from the premises because church buildings were the property of the city. The city councils realized the value of the great Dutch organs and wanted people to enjoy them. They appointed city organists (stadsorganisten) to play frequent recitals. A convenient recital time was Sunday morning, just before and after the service." But then "prominent pamphleteers like Constantijn Huyghens insisted that if the organ was to be used on Sunday, the organist should play psalms and hymns and lead congregational singing as well," and "Calvinist consistories gradually and grudgingly accepted the organ as a musical instrument for use in Church." 15 So it was concession that dictated the change: not principle. And from Calvin's day to this, "no synod or classis in the Reformed tradition has addressed itself to this problem, or outlined the proper liturgical role of organ music in worship." 16 Or, to put the matter in our own words, no one has ever justified on a biblical basis the great change that has been made.

It is at this point that we must again recall the regulative principle of worship. True worship is commanded worship. What is not commanded is not true worship. This is the clear — and consistent — teaching of the great Reformed Confessions and Catechisms. Yet how clear it is that this principle has long since lost its hold on many who have professed adherence to these documents. In 1881 the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church of North America voted on a memorial asking that the article in the Directory for Worship banning the use of musical instruments be repealed. The overture was carried by a majority of 8. The interesting thing, however, is that the change was made with the following resolution: "that this decision is not to be considered as authorizing instrumental music in the worship of God, but simply as a declaration of the judgment of the Church that there is no sufficient Bible authority for an absolutely exclusive rule on the subject." 17 Those with discernment will clearly see that the change was not made because it was shown that the Bible commands the use of musical instruments. No such proof was offered, nor (so far as the record shows) even asked by the General Assembly. The change was simply that a majority (as the resolution clearly shows) did not any longer believe that the regulative principle is correct. Without realizing it (no doubt) these men had moved from a Reformed view (what is not commanded is forbidden) to a Romish view (what is not forbidden in scripture is allowable) of worship.

The writer has often discussed this subject with others. Apart from mention of such texts as Psalm 150:4, little attempt is made to **prove** from scripture that God has commanded the use of musical instruments in worship. Most arguments, in fact, are entirely negative: they seek to show either a) that God has not forbidden the use of musical instruments in worship, or b) that musical instruments are simply a practical necessity. To the first type of argument we have but one response: the plea that those who so argue will go back and study again the scripture evidence for the regulative principle. 18 To the second type of argument we therefore proceed.

1) One of the most common arguments for the use of musical instruments in worship is simply the fact that they are thought to be a practical necessity. The argument runs something like this: 'There is no divine commandment that we should have Church buildings, or pews, or psalm-books. Yet we do have these as a matter of practical necessity. When then may we not also use musical instruments for the same reason?' In answer to this argument it is sufficient to say this: it assumes the very point at issue. The writer worships each Lord's Day without the use of any musical instrument. In point of fact, then, musical instruments are not a practical necessity. It is necessary, however, to meet in some place. How can we obey the Lord's command to assemble ourselves together, if we do not meet at some designated place (and in some building, since the weather is often inclement)? Furthermore,

how can we sing psalms **together** (as we are commanded to do) without some kind of psalm-book? It may be argued, of course, that it is possible to memorize the psalms — in a certain metre and with a certain tune — so that no book will be necessary. This is true. But then we merely have a memorized book. And whenever there is a revision of this book of psalms with music (as there ought to be, from time to time) it will again be necessary for a time for every one to have a book (whether individually, or collectively in the hand of an instructor). In other words, the argument fails. It can easily be disproved. It is disproved constantly by congregations that sing the psalms of the Bible without musical instruments.

2) But is it not true, someone may ask, that even in such congregations there is someone who uses an instrument of a sort in order to get the pitch? To this, of course, the answer is yes: someone must establish the pitch, and (unless there is a person who has perfect pitch) it is often necessary to use a tuning fork or pitch pipe to do this. Well then, it may be said further, doesn't this really show that there is at least some minimal necessity for the use of an instrument of music? And to this too, the answer is clearly yes! If the tuning fork, or pitch pipe be called an instrument of (or for?) music, then there is often a minimal necessity for its use. Then what is the difference in principle? If I use a tuning fork, or pitch pipe, or organ, or guitar, to get the pitch, isn't it all the same? Once more the answer will be yes. And if that is all the organ (or tuning fork, or pitch pipe, etc.) is used for no objection should be made. There is nothing sacred in even the most traditional method of finding the proper pitch, nothing whatever. But here again common practice contradicts theory. Many congregations do sing praises to God continually without benefit of any kind of mechanical means of setting the pitch. There are persons in most congregations who can learn to give the pitch with sufficient accuracy to eliminate such a need. But even where such a need exists, how simple it is to supply. If the organ (or anything else) is only used to give the proper pitch, then the sole test of necessity has been met. As it is, in most Churches, this minimal necessity has been used to justify all manner of violation of the regulative principle — so that we now have the prelude, the postlude, the interlude, and the mood music that often is played during the pastoral prayer. The writer often finds it necessary to have a glass of water at hand on the pulpit. A swallow or two of water is sometimes essential in order to speak. Now suppose that someone would argue, from this minimal necessity, that every pew should have a built-in fountain, so that drinking could become a ritual! Wouldn't this be comparable to what has happened because of the abuse that has been made of the little tuning fork?

3) But aren't you magnifying this one thing out of all proportion, someone may ask. Do you think that yours is the only true Church because you sing psalms without any musical instruments? The answer to this argument is that no Church is as pure as it ought to be. Who can say which Church, after all, is burdened down with more impurities? One Church may excel in one way (such as faithful preaching), while lacking sadly in another (such as purity of worship). Another may sing only the inspired psalms without musical instruments, and yet allow such human inventions as the altar call (and often an Arminian sub-gospel). Neither Church would have any reason to boast. It may, under certain circumstances, be wise to attend the Church that preaches the gospel most faithfully, even though (in doing so) one would have to lament the defective elements of worship. There is — in short — a point to this objection: and it is well taken. We have no right to boast, or feel self-satisfied, merely because of purity in one aspect of the life of the Church. But still, we hasten to add, this takes nothing away from the intrinsic importance of the point at issue. The question remains one of moment: has God, or has God not, authorized the use of musical instruments in worship? To see an element of value in the objection stated above, then, must not mislead us. It is no argument at all so far as the issue itself is concerned.

4) If I cannot use musical instruments, someone may say, then how can I go on singing the psalms in which they are so frequently mentioned? Those who have followed our argument in this article will anticipate our answer. We should sing these psalms with the same spiritualized meaning that we find in the New Testament itself, where we say "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us" (I Cor. 5:7), and that we are come "to mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God" (Heb. 12:22). Just as we sing of the hyssop, altar, bullock, sack-cloth, evening sacrifice, goats, cherubim, ark, new moon, etc. (Ps. 51:7, 43:4, 50:19, 69:31, 66:15, 80:1, 132:8, 81:3) so we sing of the trumpets, and lyre, and the loud cymbals. We can sing them all precisely because we see that they all have their heavenly counterpart in the glorious work of Christ and the spiritual worship that he has given.

5) Well, someone will say, I still love the sound of a great pipe organ — I just can't help it — and I just can't enjoy worship without it. This, in the end, is where most discussions cease. The marvel of it is that people who say such things seem to imagine that they have really said something of substance when they have said this. But consider these words again: is it not evident — painfully evident — that these are arrogant words? Who cares what God wants, such people say in effect, so long as I have what I want! I am the important one! This is the very antithesis of true religion. What we should say — first, last, and always — when we come to worship God, is this: Lord, you show me the way, and then I will find rest and peace. And this, in the final analysis, is the incredible thing. You leave behind these human inventions — the uninspired hymns — and the great emotion-arousing pipe organ — and the incense, and candles, and pictures and images — and you begin to enter into the simple spiritual worship of our Calvinistic fathers. Then one day a strange thing happens. God himself enables you to see the beauty of holiness, and you suddenly realize that it surpasses the beauty of ceremonial worship as the light of day sur-

passes night. And you understand what a fool you were to think that you were giving up so much! You see now that you gave up nothing but weak and beggarly elements, in order to taste of the supreme delight of that worship which is in spirit and in truth. May our gracious and sovereign God bring His Church again to glory in this worship.

Footnotes

1. For the best summary see **Blue Banner Faith and Life,** present issue, page 49, **The Second Commandment,** by Dr. William Young. For a good Bibliography, see the minutes of the Reformed Presbyterian Synod, 1968, pp. 102-105.

2. **The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible,** Abingdon Press. N. Y. 1962. Vol. II, p. 459.

3. **Calvin's Commentaries,** A.P.&A. Grand Rapids. n.d. Vol. II, p. 1095.

4. **Your Neighbor Celebrates,** by Gilbert and Tarcov. Friendly House Publishers, N. Y. 1957. pp. 92,93.

5. Op. Cit. p. 723.

6. Ibid. p. p. 802.

7. **History of the Christian Church,** by Philip Schaff. Charles Scriber's Sons, New York, 1912. Vol. 1, p. 456.

8. **The Oxford Companion to Music,** 10th Ed. Ed. John O. Ward, London 1970. p. 538.

9. **New Catholic Encyclopedia,** McGraw-Hill Bk. Co. N. Y. 1967 Vol. X, p. 106.

10. Philip Schaff, as cited above, Vol. IV, p. 439.

11. Ibid.

12. Op. Cit. p. 636.

13. **The Banner,** Vol. 104, No. 37. p. 6 (The Official organ of the Christian Reformed Church) Article entitled: Music in the Christian Reformed Church — History, Present Problems, and Future, by Howard J. Slenk.

14. For an example see McClintock & Strong's **Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature.** Vol. VII, p. 425,426. Consult also the Digest of the Principal Acts and Deliverances of the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church of North America from 1859 to 1902. Pittsburgh. U. P. Bd. of Pub. 1903. pp. 107-117.

15. **The Banner.** Loc. Cit.

16. Ibid.

17. **Digest of the Principal Acts and Deliverances** (as noted in No. 14) p. 109.

18. See above, footnote No. 1.

Foundation Truths of the Christian Faith

Note: The questions and answers at the beginning of each lesson are from **The Larger Catechism** of the Westminster Assembly.

LESSON 1

Q. 1. What is the chief and highest end of man?

A. Man's chief and highest end is to glorify God, and fully to enjoy him for ever.

Scripture References:

Revelation 4:11 (All things created for God's pleasure). Romans 11:36 (All things exist for God). I Corinthians 10:31 (It is our duty to glorify God in all we do). Psalm 73:24-28 (God teaches us how to glorify him, and that we shall enjoy him in glory). John 17:21-24 (Our supreme destiny is the enjoyment of God in glory).

Questions:

1. What is the meaning of the word "end" in this question?

It means the purpose for which something exists.

2. Could a consistent evolutionist agree with the Catechism's answer to Question 1?

No. A consistent evolutionist could not agree that man's chief and highest end is to glorify and enjoy God, for he must hold that the human race has evolved from a brute ancestry by a process which originated in blind chance. Therefore he must hold that the human race cannot exist for any purpose outside of itself. There are "theistic evolutionists" who believe that evolution was God's method of creation, but they are not consistent, for **creation** concerns the origin of things, while **evolution** starts by assuming that things already exist and seeks to show their development to other forms. The **consistent** evolutionist cannot believe in creation by the sheer power of God, and therefore he cannot believe that the human race exists not for itself but **for God.**

3. What is wrong with the following statement, "Man's chief and highest end is to seek happiness"?

This statement makes the purpose of human life something **within man himself.** This cannot be reconciled with the Scripture teaching that all things exist for God because they were created by God for his own glory. To say that man's chief end is to seek happiness is contrary to belief in the God of the Bible. Of course man's real happiness results from his recognizing and seeking his **true** end, namely to glorify and enjoy God his Creator.

4. What is wrong with the following statement: "Man's chief and highest end is to seek the greatest good of the greatest number"?

This statement involves the same error as the one just discussed, for it makes the purpose of human life something **within man himself.** The difference is that the present statement makes the happiness or welfare **of the human race in general** the purpose of human life, whereas the former statement made the happiness **of the individual** the purpose of human life. Both are contrary to the Bible teaching concerning God the Creator and End of all things. Both are essentially the same as the pagan idea that "Man is the measure of all things." Because modern life is largely dominated by this false idea, it is essentially pagan rather than Christian. Even some churches have absorbed this pagan viewpoint and talk about God being "a democratic God."

5. Why does the Catechism place glorifying God before enjoying God?

Because the most important element in the purpose of human life is **glorifying** God, while **enjoying** God is strictly subordinate to glorifying God. In our religious life, we should always place the chief emphasis on glorifying God. The person who does this will truly enjoy God, both here and hereafter. But the person who thinks of enjoying God apart from glorifying God is in danger of supposing that **God exists for man** instead of man for God. To stress enjoying God more than glorifying God will result in a falsely mystical or emotional type of religion.

6. Why can the human race, or any member of it, never attain true happiness apart from glorifying God?

Because true happiness depends on our consciously aiming to serve the purpose for which we were created, namely to glorify God and enjoy him. Consciously to serve the purpose for which God created him is **man's glory,** and apart from a conscious consecration of himself to that purpose, there can be no real, deep and satisfying happiness. As Augustine said in his **Confessions,** "Thou hast created us for Thyself, O God, and our heart is restless until it finds repose in Thee."

LESSON 2

Q. 2. How doth it appear that there is a God?

A. The very light of nature in man, and the works of God, declare plainly that there is a God; but his word and Spirit only do sufficiently and effectually reveal him unto men for their salvation.

Scripture References:

Romans 1:19, 20 (God revealed by the light of nature and by his works). Romans 2:14-16 (The law of God revealed in the human heart). Psalm 19:1-3 (God revealed by the heavens). Acts 17:28 (Human life totally dependent on God). I Corinthians 2:9, 10 (God's natural revelation inadequate; not equal to his special revelation by his Spirit). 2 Timothy 3:15-17 (Holy Scripture a sufficient revelation for salvation). Isaiah 59:21 (God's word and Spirit given to his covenant people, unlike his natural revelation which is given to all mankind).

Questions:

1. What is meant by "the light of nature in man"?

This means the natural revelation of God in the human heart and mind. This "light of nature" is common to all mankind. The heathen who have never received God's special revelation, the Bible, have a certain knowledge of God by nature, and a certain consciousness of the moral law in their own hearts (Romans 2:14-16). To believe in God is natural to mankind; only "the fool" says in his heart that there is no God.

2. What is meant by "the works of God"?

This expression means the revelation of God in nature **outside of human nature.** It includes the whole realm of nature, great and small. The starry heavens as observed by the largest telescope, and the tiniest particles of matter that can be photographed by the electron microscope, all disclose the God who is their Creator and Ruler. The works of God also include all living creatures, and all God's works in the course of human history. All bear witness to the invisible God who created, preserves and controls them all.

3. What message do the light of nature and the works of God bring to mankind?

The light of nature and the works of God bring to mankind a message concerning the existence of God, his eternal power and deity (Romans 1:19,20), his glory (Psalm 19:1), and his moral law (Romans 2:14-16). This natural revelation of God and of his will is sufficient to leave men without excuse for their sins (Romans 1:20,21).

4. Why is this message of the light of nature and the works of God inadequate for mankind's spiritual needs?

This natural revelation of God and of his will is insufficient for mankind's spiritual needs, in his present fallen and sinful condition, for two reasons. (1) When mankind fell into sin, his spiritual need changed. He now needs more than he did when he was created. **Man now needs salvation from sin by divine grace through a Mediator.** But the light of nature and the works of God have nothing to say about salvation from sin. They reveal no gospel suited to the sinner's need. (2) **Man's fall into sin changed his capacity to receive and understand even the message which the light of nature and the works of God do bring** to him. Man's heart and mind became darkened by sin (Romans 1:21,22). The result of this was that the natural revelation of God was misinterpreted and corrupted into idolatry (Romans 1:23). This lapse into false religion in turn resulted in terrible moral corruption and degradation (Romans 1:24-32). But in spite of all this, the natural revelation of God and of his will still leaves man without excuse, because their changed need and their present inability to understand that natural revelation **are their own fault.** Mankind is responsible not only for falling into sin, but also for all the **consequences** of falling into sin.

5. What fuller revelation of God and of his will do we have?

Besides the natural revelation of God, we have the **supernatural** revelation of God, which exists today only in the form of the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. This supernatural revelation of God is sometimes called his **special** revelation. It is called **supernatural** because it was given to man not through the operation of the laws of nature, but by the miraculous working of God the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21).

6. What are the principal differences between God's natural revelation and his revelation in the form of Holy Scripture?

(a) The former is given to all men without exception; the latter is limited to those whom the Bible reaches.

(b) The former is sufficient to leave men without excuse; the latter is sufficient for salvation.

(c) God's revelation in the form of Holy Scripture is clearer and more definite than his natural revelation.

(d) God's revelation in the form of Holy Scripture imparts many truths about God and his will which cannot be known from his natural revelation.

7. In order that God's revelation in the form of Holy Scripture may make us wise unto salvation, what is needed besides the Bible itself?

For Holy Scripture to make a person wise unto salvation there is required, besides the Bible itself, **a true faith** (2 Timothy 3:15, Hebrews 4:2). This true faith is a gift of God (Ephesians 2:8; Acts 16:14), being wrought in the heart of a sinner by the Holy Spirit of God (Ephesians 1:17-19). Thus besides the Bible itself is required **the illumination of the mind by the Holy Spirit,** so that the sinner can understand and appropriate the truth unto his salvation. The Holy Spirit, in his illuminating work, does not reveal any truth in addition to what is revealed in the Bible, but only enables the sinner to see and believe the truth already revealed in the Bible.

LESSON 3

Q. 3. What is the word of God?

A. The holy scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the word of God, the only rule of faith and obedience.

Scripture References:

2 Timothy 3:16 (All Scripture is divinely inspired). 2 Peter 1:19-21 (The Scriptures not of human origin, but the product of the Holy Spirit). Ephesians 2:20 (The apostles — New Testament — and prophets — Old Testament — form the foundation of the Christian Church). Revelation 22:18,19 (Scripture, being of divine origin, character and authority, may not be added to or subtracted from). Isaiah 8:20 (Scripture the standard of faith and obedience). Luke 16:29-31 (No new revelation could supersede Scripture). Galatians 1:8,9 (Anything contrary to Scripture to be rejected, no matter how appealing it may be). 2 Timothy 3:15-17 (Scripture a complete and perfect rule of faith and life).

Questions:

1. Why is it proper that the Scriptures be called "holy"?

Because they are the revelation of a holy God; because they set forth holy teaching; and because when accepted with true faith they lead to a holy life.

2. In what sense is it true that the Scriptures are the word of God?

The Scriptures are the word of God in the plain, literal sense of the word "are." They are the word of God **in written form,** without any other limitations whatever. That is to say, the Bible itself, as a book, is the word of God, and the actual written words of the book are the very words of God.

3. In what sense is it true that the Bible "contains" the word of God?

The Bible "contains" the word of God in the sense that the word of God **forms the contents** of the Bible, just as it is proper to say that the Bible contains two Testaments, or that the Bible contains sixty-six books.

4. In what senses is it not true that the Bible "contains" the word of God?

(a) It is **not** true that the Bible "contains" the word of God in the sense that the word of God forms **only a part** of the contents of the Bible, the rest being merely the words of men.

(b) It is **not** true that the Bible "contains" the word of God in the sense that there is a distinction between the actual written words of the Bible, on the one hand, and the word of God "contained" in them, on the other hand. This distinction, which has been popularized by the Swiss theologian Karl Barth and his followers, cannot be reconciled with the statements of the Bible itself, nor with the doctrine concerning Scripture which is set forth in the Westminster standards. If the written words of the Bible are not themselves actually the word of God, then the Bible cannot be infallible.

5. If the Scriptures in their entirety are the word of God, how can we explain the fact that they contain the words of Satan and of wicked men?

The words of Satan and of wicked men are incorporated into the word of God as quotations, in order that we may learn the lessons that God wants us to learn. The statement "There is no God" is a human falsehood, but the statement "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God" (Psalm 53:1) is a divine truth. The words "There is no God" are the words of the fool, but the complete sentence, including the words of the fool **as a quotation,** is the word of God. "Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life", was the devil's lie; but the complete sentence, "And Satan answered the Lord, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life", is the word of God, a divinely inspired and infallible record of what Satan said. When we affirm that the Bible in its entirety is the word of God, this does not mean that any verse or portion of the Bible may be taken out of its context and interpreted as if it stood alone.

6. For what two things are the Scriptures our rule?

The Scriptures are our rule for **faith** and **obedience.**

7. Why are the Scriptures our only rule of faith and obedience?

The Scriptures are our **only** rule of faith and obedience because as the written word of God they are unique and infallible, and therefore no other rule of faith and obedience may be placed alongside of them. This principle of course does not rule out such subordinate standards as the Larger Catechism itself, which present not another rule in addition to Scripture, but merely a systematic summary of what Scripture teaches. The Larger Catechism, for example, is a legitimate rule of faith and obedience **only because, and only so far as it is faithful to the teachings of the Scriptures.** It possesses no inherent authority of its own.

8. What is wrong with saying that conscience is our guide for faith and conduct?

The human conscience cannot tell a person what to believe nor how to live. It cannot tell a person what is right and what is wrong. The conscience can only tell a person whether or not he is acting according to what he already believes to be right. If a savage believes it is right to practice cannibalism, his conscience will not reprove him for eating human flesh. If a person somehow believes it is wrong to consult a physician, take medicine or wear eye glasses, his conscience will reprove him when he does these things. The conscience can only indicate whether a person's conduct is in accordance with his beliefs; it cannot tell him whether his beliefs are true or not. Therefore the conscience cannot be the rule for faith and life.

9. If we add some other rule along with the Bible, what effect will this have on the authority of the Bible for our faith and life?

The inevitable result will be that the Bible will take a second place, and something else will become our real authority for faith and life. It is not possible to have two **supreme** authorities in any field. Nor is it possible to have two **equal** authorities without making one of them the standard for interpreting the other.

10. What large church makes tradition a rule of faith and conduct along with Scripture?

The Roman Catholic Church. The effect, of course, is to make void the word of God by the tradition of the church. For the Bible is interpreted in accordance with the tradition, not the tradition in accordance with the Bible.

11. How do the followers of Mary Baker Eddy violate the principle that the Scriptures are our only rule of faith and life?

By placing Mrs. Eddy's book, "Science and Health with the Key to the Scriptures", alongside the Bible as an authority, with the inevitable result that Mrs. Eddy's book is their real authority and the Bible is nullified. "Christian Science" cannot stand with the Bible alone as its guide book; it has to have Mrs. Eddy's writings, which are utterly contrary to the Bible, to prop it up.

12. How do the Friends or Quakers violate the principle that the Scriptures are our only rule of faith and life?

By their emphasis on the mystical "inner light" as their guide for faith and life. There are various sects of Quakers; not all are alike. But historically the "Friends" movement has emphasized the "inner light" and has tended to subordinate the Bible to the "inner light."

13. Is the New Testament more fully or more truly the word of God than the Old Testament?

No. The New Testament itself shows that our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles regarded the Old Testament as the word of God in the fullest and strictest sense, and taught this high view of the Old Testament consistently.

14. Are the words of Christ, which in some Bibles are printed in red ink, more truly the word of God than the other parts of the Bible?

No. The whole Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, is the word of Christ. The Old Testament is Christ's word through Moses and the prophets; the New Testament is Christ's word through the apostles and evangelists; included in the New Testament is the record of Christ's sayings during his earthly ministry; but these sayings, although spoken by God **more directly** than most of the other parts of the Bible, nevertheless are not **more truly** the word of God than the other parts of the Scriptures. See 2 Samuel 23:1,2; 1 Corinthians 14:37; Revelation 1:1, 22:16.

15. If we think of our Christian belief as a building, what part of the building would the answer to Question 3 of the Larger Catechism be?

The foundation, on which all the rest must stand. Sometimes objection has been made to this statement on the ground that the Bible represents Christ as the only legitimate foundation. This objection is without weight, as it seeks to employ a metaphor — the idea of a foundation — without analyzing its meaning. Christ is the foundation of our reconciliation with God, by his blood and righteousness. Christ is the foundation of the Church, by his finished work of redemption and his present exaltation in glory. But an acknowledgement that the Scriptures are the word of God and the only rule of faith and obedience must be the foundation of any legitimate formulation of Christian doctrine.

LESSON 4

Q. 4. How doth it appear that the Scriptures are the word of God?

A. The scriptures manifest themselves to be the word of God, by their majesty and purity; by the consent of all the parts, and the scope of the whole, which is to give all glory to God; by their light and power to convince and convert sinners, to comfort and build up believers unto salvation; but the Spirit of God bearing witness by and with the scriptures in the heart of man, is alone able fully to persuade it that they are the very word of God.

Scripture References:

The majesty of the Scriptures: Hosea 8:12. 1 Corinthians 2:6,7,13. Psalm 119:18,129.

The purity of the Scriptures: Psalm 12:6. Psalm 119:140.

The consent of all the parts of the Scriptures: Acts 10:43. Acts 26:22.

The scope of the Scriptures as a whole: Romans 3:19,27.

The power of the Scriptures to convert sinners and edify saints: Acts 18:28. Hebrews 4:12. James 1:18. Psalm 19:7-9. Romans 15:4. Acts 20:32. John 20:31.

The witness of the Holy Spirit in the heart: John 16:13,14. I John 2:20,27.

Questions:

1. What is meant by the "majesty" of the Scriptures?

The "majesty" of the Scriptures means their **lofty** or **wonderful** character, which lifts them far above all human writings. In the Scriptures are indeed found things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, but which God has revealed by his Spirit, who searches all things, even the deep things of God. (1 Corinthians 2:9,10).

2. What is the position of the Bible among the books of the world?

The position of the Bible among the books of the world is altogether unique. It has been translated into more languages than any other book; more copies have been circulated than of any other book. It is recognized as the world's greatest book from the literary point of view. But the Bible is unique especially with respect to its teachings. Among the sacred books of the religions of the world there is none that can compare with the Bible in inherent loftiness or majesty.

3. What is meant by the "purity" of the Scriptures?

The "purity" of the Scriptures means their character as the true word of God, wholly free from all impurities of error and foreign matter.

4. Why can other books not equal the Bible in purity?

Because the Bible is the only book whose very words are the product of supernatural inspiration of God, and therefore it is the only book which is **infallible** and wholly free of errors.

5. Why do we believe that the Scriptures are entirely free from errors?

We believe that the Scriptures are entirely free from errors, not because we find no apparent errors in the Bible, for it cannot be denied that a few **apparent** errors have been pointed out in the Bible, but **because the Bible itself claims to be free from errors.** Our belief about the Scriptures must not be an inference from facts of our own experience, but a formulation of the teachings of the Scriptures themselves about themselves. If we find some apparent errors in the Bible, that is a matter of **our own experience as finders.** But if we observe that the Bible represents itself as being free from errors, that is an observation concerning **the teaching of the Bible.** We must accept the Bible's teaching **about itself** just as we accept the Bible's teaching about creation, providence, salvation, heaven,

hell and other matters. The fact is that the Bible teaches that the Bible is inerrant. Even though we may have some unsolved problems concerning apparent errors in the Bible, still these problems do not justify setting aside the Bible's teaching about itself, unless it can be proved that the Bible **really** contains errors, and that they exist in the genuine text of the Hebrew or Greek original. If that could be proved, the trustworthiness of the Bible as a teacher of truth **on all subjects** would thereby be destroyed. If we are to trust the Bible in what it says about God and man, sin and salvation, we must also trust the Bible in what it says about its own infallibility.

6. What is meant by "the consent of all the parts" of the Scriptures?

By "the consent of all the parts" of the Scriptures is meant: (a) that there are no real contradictions in the Bible; (b) that all the parts of the Bible form a unity, an organism, a harmonious whole, not merely a collection of separate writings with diverse ideas and viewpoints. This beautiful harmony of the various parts of the Bible is an evidence that back of all the **human writers** there was **a divine Author,** the Spirit of God, controlling them all so that a harmonious whole would be produced.

7. How many books are there in the Bible? By how many human writers were these books written? How many centuries did this work of writing require?

There are sixty-six books in the Bible. These books were written by about forty different writers. The work of writing required about fourteen centuries, from Moses to the apostle John.

8. How can the absence of contradictions in the Bible be explained?

The absence of contradictions in the Bible cannot be explained on the theory that the Bible is merely a collection of human writings. Forty men writing a collection of sixty-six books over a period of 1400 years could not possibly avoid a vast multitude of contradictions. The absence of contradictions in the Bible can be explained only by the fact that all the human writers were supernaturally controlled by God the Holy Spirit, so that the product is truly the word of God, and therefore wholly free from errors and contradictions.

9. What is the "scope" of the Bible as a whole?

The scope of the Bible as a whole is **to give all glory to God.** In this the Bible is contrary to the spirit of paganism, ancient and modern, which is to give all glory to man.

10. Why must a book which gives all glory to God be genuine?

It must be genuine, that is, it must be what it claims to be, the word of God, because no one but God could have had a motive for writing it. Wicked men would not write a book which condemns wickedness and gives all glory to a holy, sin-hating God. Good men could not write a book on their own initiative and represent it falsely as the word of God, for if they did that they would be deceivers, and therefore not good men. For the same reasons neither devils nor holy angels could have written it. Therefore God is the only Person who could be the real Author of the Bible.

11. What fruits or results of the Bible show that it is the word of God?

Where the Bible is known and believed, wickedness and crime are curbed, human life and property are secure, education is widespread, institutions of mercy for the care of the sick, unfortunate and insane are established, and civil liberty is honored and safeguarded.

12. What is the condition of human society in places where the Bible is entirely or practically unknown?

"The dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty" (Psalm 74:20). Where the Bible is unknown or almost unknown human life is cheap and insecure; dishonesty is almost universal; men live in bondage to superstitions and fears; moral corruption and degradation abound.

13. In addition to the evidences that have been mentioned, what is needed to give us full conviction, or certainty, that the Bible is God's word?

In addition to the evidences that have been discussed, the almighty work of God the Holy Spirit in our hearts is needed to give us full conviction that the Bible is the word of God. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2:14). The evidences that have already been discussed are valid in themselves, and may lead to a **conviction of probability** that the Bible is the word of God. But this work of the Holy Spirit bearing witness by and with the word in the heart results in **full conviction** or **certainty** that the Bible is the word of God.

14. Why do many highly educated and intelligent people refuse to believe that the Bible is God's word?

1 Corinthians 2:14, quoted above, provides the answer to this question. These highly educated unbelievers lack the testimony of the Holy Spirit in their hearts. They are what Paul called "natural" men, that is, **not born again.** Being spiritually blind, of course they cannot see the light.

15. Why are intelligence and education not enough to enable a person to believe with certainty that the Bible is the word of God?

Because in the sinful human heart there is strong prejudice against God and the truth of God. The ordinary evidences are sufficient to convince a neutral, unprejudiced inquirer that the Bible is the word of God. But the fact is that there are no neutral, unprejudiced inquirers. The whole human race has fallen

into sin; the human heart has been darkened; the "natural" man is gripped by a tremendous prejudice against accepting the Bible as God's word. Apart from the special work of the Holy Spirit in men's hearts, there would not be a single true Christian believer in the world. There are of course unconverted people who readily assent to the statement that the Bible is God's word, by mere custom or tradition rather than by personal **conviction.** Such people are not really **convinced** that the Bible is God's word; they merely have a hearsay or second-hand faith which reflects the true spiritual faith of other persons.

LESSON 5

Q. 5. What do the scriptures principally teach?

A. The scriptures principally teach, what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man. (2 Timothy 1:13).

Questions:

1. What are the two principal parts of the teaching of the Bible?

The two principal parts of the Bible's teaching are (1) a message of truth to be believed, and (2) a message of duty to be obeyed.

2. Why is belief mentioned before duty?

Belief is mentioned before duty because in the Christian life as in the natural world, the root must come before the fruit. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." Belief is the root and determiner of life. Therefore the truth to be believed must be set forth before the duties to be performed can be considered.

3. What is wrong with the present-day popular slogan: "Christianity is not a doctrine but a life"?

This saying is one of the subtle half-truths of our day. It would be correct to say: "Christianity is not only a doctrine but also a life." It is not a question of "either . . . or" but of "both . . . and." When anyone says that Christianity is not a doctrine but a life, he is setting **doctrine** and **life** in opposition to each other. This is a very perverse tendency and is thoroughly characteristic of the anti-doctrinal prejudice of our day. Of course according to the Bible Christianity is **both** a system of doctrine and a life. Moreover the doctrine and the life are organically related, and the life cannot exist and grow apart from the doctrine. After all, roots are important things.

4. Which is more important in the Christian life, belief or conduct? Or should we say that both are equally important?

Which is the more important part of a building, the foundation or the roof? No doubt each is equally important for its own proper purpose. Which is more important for an automobile, a motor or four wheels? No doubt each is equally important for its own proper purpose. Our Lord said: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment" (Matthew 22:37, 38). Since to love the Lord our God **with all the mind** is required in the first and great commandment, we may say with confidence that nothing is more important than belief of the truth. Of equal importance in its own sphere is **adorning** the truth by a godly and consistent life.

We have now studied the first five questions of the Catechism, which constitute **The Foundation,** dealing with the purpose of human life, the existence of God, and the word of God. Having completed this introductory section, we now come to the first of the two major divisions of the material contained in the Larger Catechism, namely, WHAT MAN OUGHT TO BELIEVE CONCERNING GOD. Questions 6 to 90 deal with this subject, which we shall now proceed to study.

LESSON 6

Q. 6. What do the scriptures make known of God?

A. The scriptures make known what God is, the persons in the Godhead, his decrees, and the execution of his decrees.

Scripture References:

What God is: Hebrews 11:6. John 4:24.

The persons in the Godhead: 1 John 5:7. 2 Corinthians 13:14.

God's decrees: Acts 15:14,15. Acts 15:18.

The execution of God's decrees: Acts 4:27,28.

Questions:

1. What are the four parts into which we may divide what the Bible reveals about God?

(1) The **being** of God, or what God is; (2) The persons in the Godhead, or what the Bible reveals about the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; (3) God's decrees, or the plans God made in eternity before the universe existed; (4) The execution of God's decrees, or the carrying out of his plans by creation and providence.

2. How could we divide this information about God into two parts?

(1) Information about God himself; (2) Information about God's works.

3. Why does the Bible nowhere present an argument to prove that God exists?

The Bible does mention the fact that God has revealed himself in the world of nature and in the human heart, and that this **natural** revelation of God witnesses to his existence (Psalm 19:1; Romans 1:20). But apart from such references to the revelation of God in nature, the Bible does not attempt to prove the existence of God. Nowhere does the Bible present a formal argument to prove God's existence. Instead, the Bible starts out in its very first verse by **assuming** the existence of God, and going on to tell about his nature, character and works. Because of the revelation of God in the world of nature and in the human heart, it is natural for mankind to believe in the existence of God. By starting out by **assuming** that God exists, the Bible really presents the greatest argument of all for the existence of God. For this assumption of God's existence is the key that unlocks the countless mysteries of nature and of human life. Suppose we make the contrary assumption, that God **does not** exist — immediately the universe, human life, our own souls, all are buried in unfathomable darkness and mystery. The person who is not willing to start by assuming that God exists has the responsibility of showing that his theory of no God yields a better and more credible explanation of the universe and of human life than that given in the Bible. Of course the atheist and the agnostic are not able to do this. When we follow the Bible and start out by assuming the existence of God as the Bible does, then every fact in the universe becomes an argument for God's existence. For there is not a single fact anywhere that can be better explained by denying God's existence than by assuming God's existence.

4. What does the Bible have to say about the character of atheists?

"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God" (Psalm 53:1). The person who denies God's existence is a foolish person because he insists on denying the greatest of all facts. We should understand that in the Bible the term "fool" involves the idea of moral perversity as well as that of intellectual weakness. Suppose a person who had lived all his life in the United States were to deny the existence of the U. S. Government, and to claim that he owes no obligation to the government, since he denies its existence. It is obvious that such a person would not only be regarded as lacking common sense but also as incapable of being a good citizen of his country. Yet even more absurd is the attitude of the atheist who owes his very life to God and yet denies that God exists and disclaims all responsibility to God.

LESSON 7

Q. 7. What is God?

A. God is a Spirit, in and of himself infinite in being, glory, blessedness, and perfection: all-sufficient, eternal, unchangeable, incomprehensible, everywhere present, almighty, knowing all things, most wise, most holy, most just, most merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.

Scripture References:

God is a Spirit: John 4:24.
God is infinite: Exodus 3:14. Job 11:7-9.
God's glory: Acts 7:2.
God's blessedness: 1 Tim. 6:15.
God's perfection: Matthew 5:48.
God's sufficiency: Genesis 17:1.
God is unchangeable: Malachi 3:6. James 1:17.
God is eternal: Psalm 90:1-2.
God is incomprehensible: 1 Kings 8:27.
God is everywhere: Psalm 139:7-10.
God is almighty: Revelation 4:8.
God knows all things: Hebrews 4:13. Psalm 139:1-4. Psalm 147:5.
God's wisdom: Romans 16:27.
God's holiness: Isaiah 6:3. Rev. 15:4.
God's justice: Deuteronomy 32:4.
God is merciful, etc.: Exodus 34:6.

Questions:

1. What is meant by saying that "God is a Spirit"?

This means that God is a being who has no material body.

2. Why should we say "God is a Spirit" instead of saying "God is Spirit" as the Christian Scientists do?

Two reasons may be given: (1) God is not the **only** spirit that exists; he is one of a **class** of beings called "spirits", which includes also the angels and the evil spirits; so we say "God is a Spirit" just as we say "Topeka is a city", implying that it is not the only city in the world, but a member of the class of cities. (2) Because God is a **Person** we say "God is **a** Spirit" instead of saying "God is Spirit", for the latter way of speaking seems to imply disbelief in God's individuality and therefore also disbelief in his personality.

3. What false religion, known in the United States, teaches that God has a material body?

Mormonism, or the "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints."

4. Why is idolatry, or worship of God by images, always wrong and sinful in itself?

Since idolatry is plainly forbidden in the Ten Commandments, there can be no doubt as to its sinfulness. The reason back of the Second Commandment is doubtless the truth that God is pure Spirit, and because God is a pure Spirit, no material object or picture can avoid giving a false idea of God.

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

Literally, it means **without limits**, or **boundless;** and therefore it means **that which cannot be measured.**

6. In what four respects is God declared to be infinite?

In his being, glory, blessedness, perfection. (Being means **existence**).

7. Why does the idea of God being infinite baffle our minds?

Because we are finite beings, and the finite cannot comprehend the infinite. We cannot know all the truth about God, nor can we **fully** know any single part or item of the truth about God.

8. If our minds could comprehend God, and understand how he can be infinite, what would this mean?

It would mean that we ourselves would be infinite, too, and equal with God.

9. Why do our minds instinctively raise the question, "Who made God"?

Because we are **created beings** and therefore we naturally tend to assume that all other beings must have been created, too. But of course a God who had been **made** would not really be God at all, but only a creature, and we would have to think of another God who created him.

10. What do we mean by saying that God is eternal?

We mean, first, that God never had a beginning; secondly, that God will never have an end; and thirdly, that God is above distinctions of time: past, present and future are all equally present to God; to him one day is as 1,000 years, and 1,000 years as one day.

(To be continued in the next lesson)

LESSON 8

11. How can we illustrate the idea that God is above distinctions of time?

This idea may be illustrated by a circle. The circle has a center and a circumference. The center is equally distant from every point on the circumference. But the points on the circumference are not equally distant from each other. If we think of the circumference of the circle as representing **the ages of the world's history**, and of the center of the circle as representing **God's position in relation to the ages of history,** this may help us to realize that all the ages of history — past, present and future — are equally present to God.

12. What is meant by saying that God is incomprehensible?

The Catechism uses this word in the sense of 1 Kings 8:27, "Heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee," meaning that the whole created universe cannot "comprehend" or **contain** God; although the Bible speaks of God as the one who "filleth all in all", and although God is everywhere in the created universe, still God is so great that the whole universe cannot "contain" him — there is more beyond.

13. If God is unchangeable, why does the Bible speak of God "repenting" or changing his mind, as for example in the case of the city of Nineveh (Jonah 3:10)?

God himself never changes; God's creatures change, and the result of this is that the **relation** between them and God changes. In the case of Nineveh, for example, God did not really change his mind. It was the people of Nineveh who really changed; they turned from their wicked way. God did not change his mind, for the whole series of events, including Jonah's preaching and the people of Nineveh turning from their wickedness, and God "repenting of the evil that he had said he would do", was all a part of God's original plan. In other words, even before Jonah arrived at Nineveh, God planned and intended to "change his mind" following the Ninevites' change of their conduct. But when God "changes" his mind **according to plan,** it is clear that he does not really change **his mind** at all, but only changes his dealings with his creatures.

14. If God is almighty, as the Catechism says, then is there anything that God cannot do?

The Bible tells us some things that even God cannot do. For one thing, we are told that God cannot lie (Titus 1:2). Also, we are told that God cannot deny himself (2 Timothy 2:13). We may sum up these teachings by saying that **God cannot deny his own nature** — he cannot deny his **moral** nature by telling a lie or doing anything unrighteous; and he cannot deny his **rational** nature by doing anything that contradicts itself. For example, God cannot create a square circle, or make two plus two equal five. Apart from things which would be contrary to his own nature, there is absolutely nothing that God cannot do.

15. What is the importance of the truth that God knows all things?

Apart from this truth, the prophecies of the Bible would be impossible. Only because God knows all things could events be foretold, hundreds and thousands of years before they occur. Also there is the practical lesson that nothing can be concealed from God, since he sees and knows all things. And because God knows all things, we can be sure that all the wickedness of men will be dealt with in the Day of Judgment.

16. What is the meaning of the statement that God is "most holy"?

This means (1) that God is high above all created

beings; (2) that God is infinitely removed from all sin and cannot have fellowship with sinful beings unless an atonement has been made for their sin.

17. What is meant by saying that God is "most just"?

This means that it is God's nature, or character, to deal with all his rational creatures exactly according to their standing in relation to God's moral law.

18. What is the difference in meaning between "merciful" and "gracious"?

The term "grace" means any undeserved favor extended by God to any of his creatures, regardless of whether they are sinful or not. But the term "mercy" means undeserved favor extended to **sinful** creatures, to those who are not only undeserving, but also **ill**-deserving. Thus, for example, it was an act of **grace** on God's part to enter into the Covenant of Works with Adam, since God was not obliged to do it, even though Adam had not yet sinned. God owed him nothing. But when God established the Covenant of Grace, this was a much greater act of grace than God's act of establishing the Covenant of Works, because the Covenant of Grace meant extending God's favor to **sinful** creatures; and therefore the Covenant of Grace shows both the **grace** and the **mercy** of God. We may say that God's **mercy** is his grace extended to sinful creatures.

19. What is meant by saying that God is "long-suffering"? What illustrations of this can be given from the Bible?

When we affirm that God is "long-suffering" we mean that God in his mercy often waits long before visiting judgment upon sin, giving the sinner time to repent. The Bible is full of examples of God's long-suffering character. Revelation 2:21 may be cited. Also Genesis 15:16. The student will be able easily to think of other examples.

20. What is the meaning of God's goodness?

"Goodness" is a more general term than "grace" or "mercy." God's **goodness** which is sometimes called "benevolence", is that attribute of God which leads him to provide for the general welfare of all his creatures except those who have been judicially condemned on account of sin. God's goodness, therefore, includes not only angels and men, but also the animal creation. God's goodness is exemplified not only by the Plan of Salvation, but also by God's works of creation and providence in general. For instance, the fact that millions of tons of coal exist underground, available for the use of mankind, making human life possible in cold climates, shows the **goodness** of God. For a Bible example of God's goodness **to animals;** see Jonah 4:11 and Genesis 9:9,10,16.

21. What is meant by God's attribute of truth?

God's **truth** is an attribute which affects his **knowledge, wisdom, justice** and **goodness.** (1) God's knowledge of all things is perfectly and wholly true and exact. (2) God's **wisdom** is true because it is wholly unbiased by prejudice or passion. (3) God's **justice** and **goodness** are true because they are perfectly true to his own nature or character. Scripture expresses God's attribute of **truth** by saying: "He abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself." More particularly, God is **true** in all His **revelation** to the human race, including the entire Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and God is **reliable** in fulfilling all his promises and covenants.

LESSON 9

Q. 8. Are there more Gods than one?

A. There is but one only, the living and true God.

Scripture References:

The unity of God set forth in the Old Testament: Deut. 6:4.

There is only one true God and all others are false: 1 Cor. 8:4-6.

The true God is Creator and Ruler over all: Jer. 10:10-12.

Questions:

1. What do we call the system of religion which believes in only one God?

Monotheism.

2. What is the opposite of Monotheism?

Polytheism, or belief in many gods.

3. What idea of development of religion is commonly held by evolutionists?

That religion developed gradually, starting with animism, or belief in spirits, later reaching the stage of polytheism, or belief in many Gods, and finally attaining the highest stage, that of monotheism, or belief in only one God.

4. What should we think of this evolutionary theory of religion?

In the first place, it is plainly contrary to the Bible, which represents mankind at the creation as worshipping only one God, and later through the fall and subsequent sinful corruption of the human heart coming to believe in many gods. See Romans 1:21-23. Secondly, the evolutionary theory of religion is con-

trary to the known facts of the history of religions. Not only the Bible, but ordinary history, proves that monotheism came first and that it later degenerated into polytheism. In China, for example, the oldest known form of religion was monotheism, which was the religion of the Chinese thousands of years ago; whereas today the Chinese are extreme polytheists, worshipping innumerable gods and spirits.

5. Which of the Ten Commandments forbids the sin of polytheism?

The first Commandment: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." (Ex. 20:3).

6. What is the difference between polytheism and idolatry?

Polytheism is belief in many gods; idolatry is the worship of **any** god, true or false, by means of images or pictures. The heathen with their many gods are polytheists; they are also idolators, for they worship by means of images and pictures. This may take the crude form of actually worshipping the image or picture itself, or the more rational form of worshipping the god or spitit **by means of** the image or picture; that is, using the idol as an "aid to worship." Those who worship the **true** God by means of pictures or images are idolaters but not polytheists. The Roman Catholic Church draws a subtle distinction between the worship which is due to God alone, and the honor which is given to Mary and the saints. Unquestionably there are multitudes of Roman Catholics who cannot grasp such a distinction, and who give what amounts to divine honor to Mary and the saints, and who are therefore **practically** polytheists as well as idolaters.

7. What grievous sin involving compromise of Monotheism was committed by Christian Churches in Japan and Japanese-occupied Asia prior to or during World War II?

Under heavy pressure from a totalitarian government, these Churches compromised by condoning and practicing polytheism by according divine honor to the Sun Goddess and the Japanese Emperor. In some cases this went so far as putting miniature Shinto shrines in Christian church buildings and bowing toward them just before the beginning of the public worship of God. Since the end of the war, some have publicly repented of their involvement in such practices, but others have not done so.

LESSON 10

Q. 9. How many persons are there in the Godhead?

A. There are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one true, eternal God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory; although distinguished by their personal properties.

Scripture References:

Names of three divine persons mentioned together: Matt. 28:19. 2 Cor. 13:14.

The Father declared to be God: 1 Cor. 8:6.

The Son declared to be God: John 10:30. John 1:1. 1 John 5:20 (last part):

The Holy Spirit declared to be God: Acts 5:3,4.

Though there are three persons yet there is only one God: 1 Cor. 8:4. Exodus 20:3.

The divine persons the same in substance: Matthew 11:27. Hebrews 1:3.

The divine persons differ in their personal properties: John 1:18; 15:26.

Questions:

1. Why is the doctrine of the Trinity a stumbling block to many people?

Because it is a mystery which human reason cannot explain.

2. What system of belief denies the doctrine of the Trinity?

Unitarianism, which teaches that there is only **one** person in the Godhead, the Father, and therefore that the Son and the Holy Spirit are not divine persons.

3. Is the doctrine of the Trinity contrary to reason?

No. It is not **contrary** to reason but, it is **above** human reason.

4. Does the doctrine of the Trinity contradict itself?

No. There is no contradiction involved, although opponents of the doctrine never weary of calling it "contradictory." The doctrine teaches that God is ONE in one sense, and THREE in a different sense. He is ONE **in substance** and THREE **in persons.** While we may freely admit that this is a mystery which baffles the human mind, still it does not involve a contradiction. It would be contradictory if we were to affirm that God is **both one and three in the SAME** sense, that is, if we were to say that there is only **one** person in the Godhead and at the same time there are **three** persons in the Godhead. This would be an absurdity, but no Christian creed sets forth any such a view of the matter.

5. What are some of the illustrations that have been proposed to help people to understand the doctrine of the Trinity?

The same chemical substance having the various forms of water, ice and steam; the relations between fire, light and heat; and many similar comparisons.

6. Why are all these illustrations without value for explaining the Trinity?

Because the Trinity is a divine mystery, has no parallels in the natural realm, and has not been revealed in nature, but only in Scripture. Besides, all the illustrations suggested make use of **physical** distinctions which in the nature of the case cannot represent relations between **persons.** Moreover, the same substance is water at one time, ice at another time, and steam at still another time, not water, ice and steam **all at the same time;** whereas the three persons in the Godhead are the same God, yet distinct persons at one and the same time.

7. What phrase in the answer to Question 9 is very important as a test of real belief in the doctrine of the Trinity?

The phrase "the same in substance." Many people today say that they believe in "the divinity of Christ," for example, but they are not willing to say that Christ is **the same in substance** with God the Father.

8. What is the practical importance of the doctrine of the Trinity?

This is far from being a mere technical theory or abstract doctrine. Christianity stands or falls with the doctrine of the Trinity. The Bible represents the Plan of Salvation as a compact or covenant between the persons of the Trinity. Where the doctrine of the Trinity is abandoned, the whole Bible teaching about the Plan of Salvation must go with it.

LESSON 11

Q. 10. What are the personal properties of the three persons in the Godhead.

A. It is proper to the Father to beget the Son, and to the Son to be begotten of the Father, and to the Holy Ghost to proceed from the Father and the Son from all eternity.

Scripture References:

The Father begets the Son: Hebrews 1:5,6,8.

The Son is begotten by the Father: John 1:14,18; 3:16.

The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and from the Son: John 15:26. Galatians 4:6.

These personal properties existed from all eternity: John 17:5,24.

Questions:

1. What is the meaning of the word "begets" in speaking of the Trinity?

This word is the nearest there is in human language to set forth the relation between God the Father and God the Son.

2. How can it be shown from Hebrews 1:5-8 that the Son is not a created being, but was eternally begotten by the Father?

The words "this day" in verse 5 do not imply that before that the Son did not exist; rather "this day" is **the day of eternity,** as shown by verse 8, which calls the Son "God" and states that his throne is "for ever and ever." If the Son had ever had a beginning, he would not be called "God."

3. In speaking of the three persons in the Godhead, why do we always name the Father first, the Son second, and the Holy Spirit third?

Because the Bible speaks of the Father sending and operating through the Son and the Holy Spirit; also the Bible speaks of the Son as sending and working through the Holy Spirit. In the Bible this order is never reversed; the Bible never speaks of the Son working through the Father, nor of the Holy Spirit sending or working through the Son.

4. What should be our attitude toward these truths of the Trinity?

We should accept them with a reverent attitude, realizing that they are divine mysteries far beyond our power to explain or comprehend.

Q. 11. How doth it appear that the Son and the Holy Ghost are God equal with the Father?

A. The scriptures manifest that the Son and the Holy Ghost are God equal with the Father, ascribing unto them such names, attributes, works, and worship, as are proper to God only.

Scripture References:

Divine names ascribed to the Son: Isaiah 6:3-8 compared with John 12:41.

Divine names ascribed to the Holy Spirit: Isaiah 6:8 with Acts 28:25.

Divine names ascribed to the Son: 1 John 5:20.

Divine names ascribed to the Holy Spirit: Acts 5:3,4.

Divine attributes ascribed to the Son: John 1:1. Isaiah 9:6. John 2:24,25.

Divine attributes ascribed to the Holy Spirit: 1 Corinthians 2:10-11.

Divine works ascribed to the Son: John 1:3. Colossians 1:16.

Divine works ascribed to the Holy Spirit: Genesis 1:2.

Divine worship ascribed to the Son and to the Holy Spirit: Matthew 28:19. 2 Corinthians 13:14.

Questions:

1. According to the Bible, how many Gods are there?

Only one. This is the consistent teaching of the entire Bible.

2. How many distinct persons does the Bible speak of as divine?

Three, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

3. What is the only conclusion that can logically be drawn from these facts?

The only conclusion that can logically be drawn from the Biblical data is the conclusion that there is only one God, who exists in three distinct persons, each of which is truly God and equal with the other two.

LESSON 12

Q. 12. What are the decrees of God?

A. God's decrees are the wise, free, and holy acts of the counsel of his will, whereby, from all eternity, he hath, for his own glory, unchangeably foreordained whatsoever comes to pass in time, especially concerning angels and men.

Scripture References:

Ephesians 1:11 (God, who works all things according to the counsel of his own will, predestinates men according to his own purpose).

Romans 11:33 (God's plans and purposes cannot be explained or discovered by men).

Romans 9:14,15,18 (God's decrees do not make God the author of sin; God's decrees are according to the counsel of his own will; God's decrees are free from constraint from any source outside of himself).

Ephesians 1:4 (God's decrees, including those concerning the eternal destiny of men, were made in eternity, before the creation of the world).

Romans 9:22,23 (God has predestinated some men to wrath and others to glory).

Psalm 33:11 (God's plans and purposes are unchangeable).

Questions:

1. What great truth is set forth in the answer to Question 12?

The truth that God has an inclusive and exact plan for the universe which he has created.

2. According to the Bible, when was God's plan made?

In eternity, or before the creation of the world.

3. What three adjectives are used to describe the character of God's decrees?

Wise, free and holy.

4. What is meant by affirming that God's decrees are "wise"?

This means that God's decrees are in perfect harmony with his own perfect wisdom, which directs the use of the right means to attain right ends.

5. What is meant by affirming that God's decrees are "free"?

This means that God's decrees are not constrained or influenced by anything outside of God's own nature.

6. What is meant by affirming that God's decrees are "Holy"?

This means that God's decrees are in perfect harmony with his own perfect holiness, and therefore are utterly free from sin.

7. Should we regard God's decrees as arbitrary decisions, like the heathen ideas of "fate" or "luck?"

No. God's decrees are not "arbitrary", for they were framed **according to the counsel of his will.** Back of God's decrees is the mind and heart of the infinite, personal God; therefore they are totally unlike "fate" or "luck."

8. What is the aim or purpose of God's decrees?

The aim or purpose of God's decrees is the manifestation of his own glory.

9. Is it selfish or wrong for God to seek his own glory above all else?

No, for God is the Author of all things, and all things exist for his glory. It would be selfish and sinful for human beings to seek their own glory above all else; but since God is the **highest** being, and there is no being higher than God, it is proper that God should seek his own glory.

10. What is the nature of God's decrees?

God's decrees are unchangeable; they cannot be changed; therefore they are certain to be fulfilled. Psalm 33:11.

11. What do God's decrees include?

God's decrees are all-inclusive; they include everything that ever happens.

12. Prove from the Bible that God's decrees include what are commonly called accidental or "chance" happenings.

Proverbs 16:33. Jonah 1:7. Acts 1:24,26. 1 Kings 22:28,34. Mark 14:30.

13. Prove from the Bible that God's decrees include even the sinful acts of men.

Genesis 45:5,8; 50:20. 1 Samuel 2:25. Acts 2:23. In affirming, as the Bible plainly teaches, that God's degrees include even the sinful acts of men, we must carefully guard against two errors: (1) God's decree does not make God the author of sin, nor render him responsible for sin; (2) The fact of God's foreordination does not cancel man's responsibility for his own sins. The Bible teaches **both** God's foreordination and man's responsibility. Therefore we should believe and affirm both, although we frankly recognize that we cannot fully harmonize the two. If we give up belief in either God's foreordination or man's responsibility, we immediately become involved in gross errors which contradict the Bible teaching at many points. It is better and wiser to accept what the Bible teaches in simple faith, and confess "a holy ignorance" concerning secret mysteries which have not been revealed, such as the solution of the problem of divine foreordination and human responsibility.

14. What is the difference between foreordination and predestination?

Foreordination is a term for all God's decrees concerning anything whatever that comes to pass in the created universe; **predestination** concerns God's decrees concerning the eternal destiny of angels and men.

15. Why do many people object to the doctrine of God's decrees?

Most objections to this doctrine are based, not on Scripture, but on human reasoning or philosophy. It is common for those who oppose the doctrine to set up an absurd caricature of it and then demolish it with a great show of indignation. In dealing with a question of this kind no argument that does not take up, thoroughly and in detail, the various Scripture passages on which the doctrine is based, can be of any weight against the doctrine of God's decrees. Human opinions, reasonings and philosophy are of no weight whatever against the statements of God's Word. Some objections urged against predestination, or the doctrine of election, will be considered in the next lesson.

LESSON 13

Q. 13. What hath God especially decreed concerning angels and men?

A. God, by an eternal and immutable decree, out of his mere love, for the praise of his glorious grace, to be manifested in due time, hath elected some angels to glory, and in Christ, hath chosen some men to eternal life, and the means thereof: and also, according to his sovereign power, and the unsearchable counsel of his own will (whereby he extendeth or withholdeth favor as he pleaseth), hath passed by and foreordained the rest to dishonor and wrath, to be for their sin inflicted, to the praise of the glory of his justice.

Scripture References:

Angels elected to eternal glory: 1 Timothy 5:21.

Men chosen in Christ to eternal life: Ephesians 1:4-6. 1 Thess. 2:13,14.

The rest of mankind passed by: Romans 9:17,18,21,22. Matthew 11:25,26. 2 Timothy 2:20. Jude 4. 1 Peter 2:8.

Questions:

1. What is the meaning of the word "immutable"?

It means **unchangeable.**

2. What is the first reason why God elected some of the angels to glory?

"Out of his mere love."

3. Why is the word "mere" included in this statement?

Because God was under no **obligation** to elect any of the angels to glory.

4. What is the second reason why God elected some of the angels to glory?

To manifest the praise of his glorious grace.

5. What is the difference between God's election of angels to glory and his election of men to eternal life?

In the case of men, God elected them "in Christ"; that is, to be redeemed from sin through the atonement of Jesus Christ, and to be clothed with Christ's righteousness. But in the case of the angels, salvation had nothing to do with it. God simply elected them to glory and then prevented them from ever falling into sin.

6. Besides electing men to eternal life, what else has God elected them to?

He has also elected them to "the means thereof; those whom he has chosen for eternal life, he has also chosen to receive the means of obtaining eternal life. That is, if God has foreordained that a certain person shall receive eternal life, then he has also foreordained

that that person shall hear the Gospel, repent of sin, believe in Jesus Christ, etc., so as to make sure of that person's receiving eternal life without fail.

7. What is meant by speaking of God's "sovereign power"?

This expression refers to the truth that God is supreme; there is no authority or law higher than God to which God himself is responsible. No one has the right to say to God, "What doest thou?"

8. In the case of those whom God has "passed by," what is the reason for his passing them by and not choosing them to eternal life?

The Bible represents this act of "passing by" as grounded in God's **sovereignty,** that is, it is not based on the character or works or life of the persons involved, but proceeds from God's own supreme authority. This does not mean that God has no reasons for "passing by" those whom he has passed by; it only means that the reasons are God's secret counsel, not revealed to us, and not based on human character, works or conduct. See Romans 9:13,15,20,21.

9. In the case of those whom God has sovereignly "passed by," what is the reason for also ordaining them to dishonor and wrath?

The reason for ordaining them to dishonor and wrath is **their own sin.** Note the words "to be for their sin inflicted." Therefore God's foreordaining some men **to eternal punishment** is not based on the pure sovereignty of God (as is his act of "passing by" these same person), but proceeds from God's attribute of perfect justice. They are punished because as sinners they **deserve** to be punished, not because God has passed them by. In hell the wicked will recognize that they are suffering a deserved punishment and that God has dealt with them strictly according to justice.

10. Suppose some person says, "If I am predestinated to receive eternal life, then I will receive it no matter whether I believe in Christ or not. So I need not bother to be a "Christian." How should we answer such a person?

The objection raised is based on a misunderstanding of the doctrine of election. God does not elect persons to eternal life apart from the means thereof. When a particular person is elected to eternal life it is also foreordained that that person shall believe in Christ as his Saviour.

11. Suppose some person says: "If God from all eternity has ordained me to dishonor and wrath for my sins, then it is no use for me to believe in Christ, for I cannot be saved no matter how good a Christian I might become. There is no use for me to believe in Christ." How should we answer such an objector?

It is no use for us to try to pry into the secret Counsel of God and find out **by a shortcut** whether we are among the elect or not. The secret things belong to God, and the things that are revealed are for us to know. If a person is really dead in earnest about wanting to believe in Christ and be saved, that is a good sign that God has chosen that person to eternal life. The only way we can find out about God's decrees is by actually coming to Christ and receiving, in due course, the assurance of our own salvation. Then, and only then, can we say with confidence that we know ourselves to be of the elect.

12. What special difficulty is involved in this doctrine of election?

The difficulty is, How can God's decree of election be harmonized with human free agency? If God has foreordained all that comes to pass, including the eternal destiny of all human beings, how can we ourselves be free agents and how can we be responsible for what we do? We cannot solve this problem, for it is a mystery. We can only affirm that the Bible plainly teaches **both** God's sovereign foreordination and human freedom and responsibility. To reject either of these Bible truths is to reject the clear teaching of the word of God and to become involved in even greater theological difficulties.

13. How should we answer the objection that "Is it not fair for God to elect one person to eternal life, while he passes by another"?

This objection is based on the assumption that God is under an obligation to treat all men with equal favor, and to do for **all** whatever he does for **any.** The Bible answer to this objection is found in Romans 9:20,21. The objection really involves a denial of the sovereignty of God, for it assumes that God is responsible to the human race for his decisions, or else that there is some higher law or power to which God is responsible and by which he must be judged. The truth is (1) God is sovereign and is responsible to no one but himself for his actions; (2) God is under no obligation to elect **anyone** to eternal life; it would be perfectly just for him to leave all mankind to perish in their sins; (3) If God elects some to eternal life, he is under no obligation to elect all; for his electing of **some** is a matter of **grace,** and therefore cannot be claimed as a right by any that are "passed by." It is quite true that the Bible represents God as dealing with men **unequally,** that is, giving to some what he withholds from others; but this is not "unfair" because there is no injustice involved. No one has any basis for a claim that God has treated him unjustly.

Safe where I cannot lie yet,
Safe where I hope to lie too,
Safe from the fume and the fret;
  You, and you,
Whom I never forget.

Safe from the frost and the snow
Safe from the storm and the sun,
Safe where the seeds wait to grow
  One by one
And to come back in blow.*

— Christina G. Rossetti

* blow: bloom

Reviews of Religious Books

The favorable reviewing of a book here does not imply approval of its entire contents. Purchase books from your book dealer or from the publishers. Do not send orders for books to Blue Banner Faith and Life.

DAILY MANNA CALENDAR FOR 1972. Edited by Tim Monsma. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. Set of 12 monthly booklets in cardboard box. $2.50.

A Scripture text and one-page meditation for every day in the year. The contents are of the usual high quality, Scripturally sound and truly edifying. Faithfully used, this "calendar" will bring spiritual profit to any Christian reader. Well suited to be used in connection with family devotions. The reviewer noted that some of the meditations are by the Rev. E. Raymond Hemphill, pastor of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Greeley, Colorado.

—J. G. Vos

CREATION OR EVOLUTION? by David D. Riegle. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. Second revised edition, 1971, pp. 63. 95 cents.

Our youth hears of divine creation from the time of their birth until they enter junior high school, and then evolution is thrown at them. Much of the theories are undocumented, unprovable or vague. Mr. Riegle, a high school teacher of biology, wrote this book to explain to youth the fallacies of evolution and to show the truths of creation. This book is written on the reading level of a junior high student, so he can read it by himself. I believe that this book would be a good study for a youth fellowship group.

—Charles R. Terpening

BORN OUT OF CONFLICT, the Autobiography of Ben Song as told to Cliff Christians. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich, 49506. 1970, pp. 141. Paperback. 95 cents.

This autobiography of a well-known Korean Christian should be interesting reading for all ages, particularly for young people. An appeal for personal commitment to Jesus Christ combined with a challenge to the Church to "leave the comforts of the padded pew and go out with the gospel of Jesus Christ" from one who has done just that makes this a convincing and relevant story.

The appeal throughout is for belief in the entire Bible as the inspired Word of God. Although he tends to oversimplify the differences between Reformed and Arminian theological perspectives, Mr. Song's insightful evaluation of the four different types of churches in America is worthy of our consideration. He might be described as an evangelical ecumenist.

One matter of concern is the tendency toward self-centeredness reflected throughout the book, although perhaps this is somewhat unavoidable in an autobiography. It is the opinion of the writer, however, that much of the self-praise could well be omitted.

This book is a powerful appeal for the cause of world missions, as well as a vivid description of the dangers of Communism and a warning to America to "wake up."

—James C. Pennington

STUDENT POWER IN WORLD EVANGELISM, by David M. Howard. Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Ill. 60515, 1970, pp. 129.

An excellent little volume which presents the biblical basis of missions, a history of student involvement in world evangelism, and an evaluation of the present task of missions and challenge to today's student generation.

A summary of the first section dealing with the Biblical perspective of missions reflects something of the author's theological viewpoint. "Thus, while God was the originator of world mission and Jesus Christ the foundation of world mission, it is the Holy Spirit who is the power for world mission . . . and the church . . . God's instrument for the furtherance of the gospel." As current director of Inter-Varsity, the author is soundly evangelical and sufficiently reformed to warrant careful consideration.

Though somewhat broad in scope for such brief treatment, the author more than compensates for the lack of quantity with quality in both style and content. The biblical and historical sections are well documented and very convincing. Of special interest to students of the history of world missions is the fascinating account of the beginnings, development, and decline of various student movements, including the Student Volunteer Movement. The author also points up significant lessons to be learned.

This brief volume is well worth the attention of students, missionaries, mission boards, and all who are interested in the cause of world missions.

—James C. Pennington

THE REFORMED PASTOR AND MODERN THOUGHT, by Cornelius Van Til. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., P. O. Box 185, Nutley, New Jersey, 07110. 1971, pp. 241. $4.50.

Modern science, philosophy, and religion, according to Cornelius Van Til, are based upon the metaphysics of Greek philosophy updated in harmony with the philosophy of Immanuel Kant. Both Greek and Kantian metaphysics, he contends, are "the metaphysics of fallen man." As fallen sons of Adam all men "hold the truth in unrighteousness", suppressing the revelation of God in order to maintain their assumption of human self-sufficiency unless by the grace of God they have repented of this "root heresy of all false theology and philosophy" in order to build firmly upon the authority of Christ, speaking his Word in Scripture.

Van Til sets out to demonstrate that none of the theologies of modern times except Reformed theology (which is in accord with Calvin's views of revelation and reason) is consistently based upon the presupposition of God's ultimacy and that consequently none but Reformed theology can offer a coherent interpretation of life and present an effective witness for the truth of Christianity as a challenge to modern scepticism. Both traditional Roman Catholic theology and traditional "evangelical" theology, Van Til argues, comprise elements of the Aristotelian conception of being and of knowledge, which cannot be joined with Christian theology without detriment to the latter. Modern Roman Catholicism (as represented by Jacques Maritain and Hans Kueng) and modern existential Protestant philosophy and theology (Richard Kroner, Paul Tillich especially) are likewise rooted in the Greek nature-freedom scheme revised along the lines of Kant's **Critiques.** This post-Kantian view of reality, insists Van Til, is radically at variance with a consistently Biblical, i.e. Reformed, conception of God, nature, and man.

In a final chapter on ecumenism, Van Til denies that Reformed Christians can join hands with others (especially Roman Catholics and neo-orthodox) in presenting the claims of the gospel to modern men since to do so would involve compromise with modern unbelief.

There is little in this book which Professor Van Til has not written in his earlier works. One large section is in fact an extended quotation from his **The Defense of the Faith** (1955). The purpose of this volume is "to aid the Reformed pastor in his work of helping high school and college students face the challenge to their faith. . ." Many a pastor, however, would find Van Til's analysis of both ancient and modern thought incredibly difficult to comprehend and nearly impossible to translate into terms that would be meaningful to young people. A greater service would have been rendered if the author himself had simplified those alarmingly abstract metaphysical and epistemological concepts of Parmenides, Aristotle, Kant, Tillich **et al.**

—Joseph A. Hill

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND HIS GIFTS, by J. Oswald Sanders. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1970, reprint of 1940, pp. 155. $1.95.

This book is by the well known former General Director of the Overseas Missionary Fellowship, and now Superintendent of the New Zealand Bible Training Institute. First published in 1940, it now reappears in a new format, revised and enlarged. The author's aim is to present the correct doctrine of the Holy Spirit in non-technical language, and to relate this to the practical life and experience of the Christian, while at the same time endeavoring to answer some of the controversial aspects of the doctrine current today, especially in relation to the baptism and the gifts of the Spirit.

Each chapter is preceded by two or three quotations from the writings of a score of evangelical scholars with ample Scripture references to verify the validity of the views expressed. There is a short bibliography at the end, but it, unfortunately, does not include the publishers and the dates.

Here is an abundance of sane and wholesome teaching in short compass, on a vital and very contemporary subject.

—Donald MacDonald

COMMITTED TO WHOM? by Ann Hoek. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1970, pp. 64. Paperback, $.95.

This book, in the form of a Bible study guide, presents some of the practical implications of being a Christian, and is designed particularly for use by women's study groups. In it the author provides material for ten study sessions, covering such topics as Christian growth, Bible study, and prayer. An appendix with practical suggestions for the group leader is added. Though there is much of value in these studies, yet one cannot help feeling that there is an over-emphasis on human capabilities and not sufficient stress on the need of divine grace. This comes out clearly on page 50, where the leader is asked to "point out the fact that **only we** can open the door of our heart." This is stark Arminianism, despite the claim to Reformed church background! Again, the untheological and unbiblical tension between Christ, as Saviour and Christ, as Lord, appears on page 49. It is only one Christ who is accepted, and He is accepted in all three offices, or not at all.

—Donald MacDonald

HEARTBEATS EMERGING FROM ENCOUNTERS IN PRAYER, by John M. Drescher. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan. 49506. 1970, pp. 158. $3.50.

This is a book of prayers — 158 in all — written in modern verse form, and, coming as it does from the pen

of one who is of the Mennonite persuasion, it is not surprising that the content is more introspective and practical than doctrinal. The author gives ample evidence of being acquainted with the deceitfulness of the human heart and is acutely conscious of his own shortcomings, for which he earnestly asks forgiveness and cleansing. What does not come through so clearly, however, is that forgiveness and cleansing are through Christ's atoning sacrifice. There are some stimulating thoughts here — and provoking ones too! — but true prayer is stimulated only by the Holy Spirit, and He is the true "aid" in prayer rather than books of this nature.

—Donald MacDonald

PULPIT IN THE SHADOWS, by Freddie Gage. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1970, pp. 123. Paperback, $.95.

As C. E. Autrey says in the foreword, "This book is a fascinating story of an unfortunate boy who lived in the shadows and was completely throttled by sin. It is the story of how the redeeming power of Christ can lift one from the 'shades of night' to spiritual victory. It is a story of spiritual liberation told by the person who was liberated." The author certainly "pulls back the curtain and lets us look at a raw, hard way of life," which is far removed from that of most of us. While one cannot but admire Freddie Gage's zeal for the redemption of the dregs of society, yet one is saddened that the results of such zeal so often prove shortlived, owing to the Arminian orientation of his mission.

—Donald MacDonald

STILL HIGHER FOR HIS HIGHEST, by Oswald J. Chambers. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1970, pp. 192. $2.95.

This book consists of selections from the writings of the late Dr. Oswald Chambers who was at one time Principal of the Bible Training School at Clapham, England, and Superintendent of the Y.M.C.A. camp at Leitoun, Egypt. There is a selection for every day of the year, and each selection is meant to aid our daily devotions. These selections vary considerably in quality. From a theological viewpoint, they are unsatisfactory and hence their devotional value is minimal.

—Donald MacDonald

MISSION CONTROL: THE RELEVANCY OF FAITH IN OUR MODERN WORLD, by John Wesley White. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1971, pp. 184. $3.95.

Here is a selected series of addresses given in various world centers by one of Dr. Billy Graham's ten associate evangelists. One's reception of this book will depend largely on one's basic attitude towards the Graham crusades. Dr. White is typical of the hustling, articulate young men involved in this high-powered, large-scale evangelism. Widely read, widely travelled, he packs into these addresses a wealth of topics, illustrations, and arguments. The content is necessarily simple — profundity is not for the mass audience — but who is to say that this is a bad thing? The tendency, however, is towards over-simplification.

Ordinary men and women will buy this book. For the preacher, its interest will be in its modern approach to, and presentation of, the Gospel message.

—John MacIver

THE MINISTRY AND MESSAGE OF PAUL, by Richard Longenecker. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1971, pp. 130. Paperback, $1.95.

An introductive look at the work and witness of the Apostle Paul, written, says the author, "with the beginning theological student, the working pastor, and the alert Christian layman in mind." On the whole, a book for the specialist. Certainly the ordinary non-expert layman would find parts of it beyond him.

Originally written as two articles for an Encyclopedia, the style and treatment reflect that type of presentation: expert scholarship, the tracing and arranging of data, and the sincere objective appraisal of issues. A lot of information, some traditional, some the result of the most recent research, is compressed into this small volume. An excellent reference book.

—John MacIver

A NEW FACE FOR THE CHURCH, by Lawrence O. Richards. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1970, pp. 288. $5.95.

Not everyone will accept the author's basic argument, that the tradition-bound church must make startling changes or cease to have much relevance in our twentieth century world. Nevertheless, this book merits the attention of everyone concerned with the framework and function of the church, both as to its internal relationships and its relationship to the world. A renewed church requires a sweeping structural reorganization, a reconstruction based on New Testament patterns and teachings. For too long, the author thinks, these basics have been neglected. This is no bring-in-the-pop group innovator, but a self-confessed conservative "sharing with other conservatives a firm belief in the full inspiration and authority of the Bible." He admits to four reasons for writing this book, to focus issues, to suggest directions, to motivate to action, and to provoke reaction, even argument. This last he will certainly do.

A most interesting and readable book.

—John MacIver

THE CHRISTIAN WAY OF DEATH, by Gladys Hunt. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan. 49506. 1971, pp. 117. $3.50.

Mrs. Hunt is a free-lance writer, and has had several articles in religious magazines.

She has tackled a most solemn and mysterious subject, and she says herself it is not a pleasant subject. The writer however, deals with it from a Christian point of view, and she gives interesting and informative material on such subheadings as: The Reality, The Triumph, and The Deliverance of Death.

She also discusses the ways in which we ought to deal with the dying and the bereaved.

Mrs. Hunt quotes from other writers, discusses her own experiences, and quotes largely from relevant passages of the Bible dealing with the deaths of the saints.

Mrs. Hunt has done a good work in writing such a sensible book. In her references to this subject she has shown much good sense, based upon religious knowledge and experience.

The book is recommended to the bereaved and those suffering in homes and hospitals; it also gives sensible advice to ministers and funeral directors.

—Wallace Nicholson

LISTEN TO ME!, by Gladys Hunt. Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois 60515. 1970, pp. 165. Paperback, $1.95.

Gladys Hunt interviews American students and gives us the views of eight who give their own experiences of life, and set forth their ideas, mainly of politics and religion.

There is little of religion in any of these views, and what there is is confused and emotional, and is related to no standard of faith and morals.

There is nothing of real value in the readings offered which would benefit anyone seeking for real instruction in politics or religion.

The reviewer regrets he cannot recommend this book.

—Wallace Nicholson

BETWEEN TWO WORLDS: A CONGRESSMAN'S CHOICE, by John R. Anderson. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan. 49506. 1970, pp. 163. $3.95.

This book casts light on the American system of government, but it is more than a book about politics.

All that goes on in the arena of party politics is brought under the scrutiny of a competent politician, who is also a committed Christian, and his comments and conclusions are of interest to all, and should prove to be of immense value.

This publication deserves the notice of all who have the welfare of our society at heart, and because it is well written it makes pleasant and profitable reading.

—Donald Gillies

LUKE: HISTORIAN AND THEOLOGIAN, by L. Howard Marshall. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1970, pp. 238. Paperback, $2.95.

This is a scholarly production written by Mr. L. H. Marshall who is a lecturer in New Testament Exegesis in the University of Aberdeen.

The reviewer at the outset disagrees with the writer on two main issues: first, that the Lukan Corpus is not inspired, and second, that Luke and Paul disagree on some theological points. There is also the idea that according to the Lukan viewpoint Jesus saves by virtue of his exaltation, while Paul holds the doctrine of the atonement.

"What is lacking (in Luke) is rather a full understanding of the significance of the cross as a means of salvation" (page 175).

"The theologies of Paul and Luke are two different entities" (page 220).

The idea that Luke is not inspired, and that Paul and Luke are in disagreement will repel many readers; and not only so but the ordinary reader will be confused and will wonder whether he ought to believe Luke, Paul or Mr. Marshall.

The reviewer regrets that he cannot commend this book. It is a learned scholarly production, and the subject of Luke's standpoint may be interesting to some of the intelligentsia of theology but the ordinary reader will not get much benefit out of reading it.

—Wallace Nicholson

HOW COMMUNISTS NEGOTIATE, by Admiral C. Turner Joy. Fidelis Publisher, Inc., Santa Monica, Calif. 90406. 1970, pp. 178. Paperback, $2.25.

Admiral Joy has performed a service in setting down in book form his account of negotiating with the Communists. It is based on personal experience, and we are convinced that the Western world can disregard the lessons of this book only at its peril, while attention to them will be advantageous to all who are called upon to negotiate with Communists.

As well as being interesting and readable this book leaves one with a clearer understanding of the task facing those who are genuinely working for the peace of the world.

—Donald Gillies

STUDENT POWER IN WORLD EVANGELISM, by David M. Howard. Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois, 60515. 1970, pp. 129. Paperback, $1.25.

The purpose of this book is to examine the responsibility of the church relative to missions, and the examination is carried out from three perspectives: the biblical, the historical and the contemporary.

After tracing from Scripture the clear duty of the church in this connection the author shows how a number of missionary societies and agencies owe their origin and their success, under God, to the zeal and vision of students who devoted themselves to the spread of the Gospel.

We heartily recommend this book, especially to those interested in missionary activity in any of its branches.

—Donald Gillies

I WISH I HAD KNOWN, Symposium. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1970, pp. 98. Paperback, $.95.

Despite the blurb on the back cover this is not "a book for the switched-on, hurry-up, turned-off, dropped-out generation."

Thirteen Christians, including a personnel officer, university professor, a poet, a housewife and an engineer, mostly, but not all of Christian family background tell of difficulties in development of their faith and character, and how they overcame these as they discovered Biblical truths and applied them in their lives.

Usually these difficulties were due to ignorance of doctrine, for example the boy from the hyper-Calvinist church who stumbled at the doctrine of predestination, and the girl from the pietistic family who did not have the Biblical view of culture. Some had personality difficulties like the one training to be a personnel officer and then finding that she was too self-centered and lacking in understanding of other people. There are helpful chapters for guidance on broken marriages.

Sometimes there is a hint of bitterness, understandable, if not excusable against Christians who hurt "the little ones in the faith."

This could be a useful book to give to young people, and also older people who, either by precept or by practice influence our Christian youth for good or ill.

—C. M. Macfarlane

GOD'S MINUTE, edited by Edward Viening. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1970, vol. II, pp. 366, $2.95.

Herein a verse of Scripture is quoted and a prayer given for each day of the year for private or family worship. The main attraction is that these prayers are by "eminent clergymen and Christian laymen"; most of whom, but not all, are evangelicals. While not without some value, the probable tendency of this book is to become a crutch which one depends upon and thereby never really learns how to pray in his own words. Moreover, certainly God deserves more than "one minute" of our time each day! Not recommended!

—Donald Weilersbacher

JESUS THE RADICAL, by Ada Lum. Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois 60515. 1970, pp. 40. Paperback, $.75.

As an introductory Bible study, this book provides a fresh look at Jesus as the One who got down to the root of man's basic problem, which is sin, and then started a radical program to eradicate it through a change in man's heart. Very appropriate for collegians and other adults as well.

—Donald Weilersbacher

OCCULT BONDAGE AND DELIVERANCE, by Kurt Koch. Kregel Publications, P. O. Box 2607, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49501. 1970, pp. 198. Paperback, $1.25.

Part 1 of this book is a brief review of the definition of various terms connected with the occult, an exegesis on the Scriptural doctrine of healing, and a discussion of the means of deliverance from occult subjection. The last section treats the qualifications of the counsellor and the procedures to be used in counselling.

Part 2 is written by Dr. Alfred Lecher. He emphasizes the need to make a careful diagnosis between disease and the demonic, the way of making such a distinction, and the method of treating those who are demon influenced or even demon possessed. A vitally needed and well done piece of work!

—Donald Weilersbacher

BETWEEN CHRIST AND SATAN, by Kurt E. Koch. Kregel Publications, P. O. Box 2607, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49501. 1962, pp. 192. Paperback, $1.25.

For a more systematic and extensive treatment of fortune-telling, magic, spiritism, occult literature, "miracles" of healing by Satan, and genuine cases of healing of the body through deliverance from sin through Jesus Christ, this is the book to read! Most Christians are woefully ignorant of the real spiritual warfare in which we are engaged and of the principles of victory through Jesus Christ. Mr. Koch's writings meet that need!

—Donald Weilersbacher

THE DEVIL'S ALPHABET, by Kurt E. Koch. Kregel Publications, P. O. Box 2607, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49501. 1969, pp. 156. Paperback, $1.25.

In 40 years of traveling through more than 120 countries, this evangelical Lutheran pastor has developed a file of more than 20,000 cases of people involved in the occult! Herein he briefly describes and gives examples of 47 specific subjects, including: astrology, black and white magic, clairvoyance, fire walking, ghosts, psychoanalysis, witchcraft, and yoga. The dangers connected with each of these practices is spelled out and the way of deliverance through the blood of Jesus Christ clearly presented. Read it!

—Donald Weilersbacher

HAPPINESS IS NOT AN ACCIDENT, by Richard W. DeHaan. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1971, pp. 176. Paperback, $.95.

The ultimate goal in life is not to be happy, but to glorify God. Nevertheless, happiness is a legitimate area of concern and we do need some Scriptural guidelines in dealing with an apparent lack of it in both the Christian and the non-Christian. Although the author is a dispensationalist, this does not noticeably affect his treatment of the topic. Well done!

—Donald Weilersbacher

WORDS OF REVOLUTION, by Tom Skinner. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1970, pp. 171. $3.95.

According to the author, revolution is inevitable in America. The only question is, "Who will lead it?" Mr. Skinner calls all of us to become involved in the real revolution, the one that changes the heart, as a follower of Jesus Christ. Although there are traces of Arminianism, the book is thoroughly stimulating.

—Donald Weilersbacher

AFFIRMING THE WILL OF GOD, by Paul Little. Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois 60515. 1971, pp. 34. Paperback $.15.

I strongly recommend this exceedingly practical evangelical pamphlet on the principles by which we may discover God's will for our life.

—Donald Weilersbacher

THE PLACE OF THE BIBLE IN MODERN THEOLOGY, by Frederick S. Leahy. The Banner of Truth Trust, 78b Chiltern Street, London, W1M IPS. 1970, pp. 10. Paperback, 5 pence.

This succinct critique analyzes the trends in modern theology in both Roman Catholic and Protestant disciplines, finds them converging on a common ground of existentialism, and then urges a return to the Word of God as the only infallible rule of faith and life. Mr. Leahy is the Professor of Systematic Theology in the Theological Hall of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland.

—Donald Weilersbacher

WHY WORLD EVANGELISM, by David M. Howard. Inter-Varsity Christian Press, Downers Grove, Illinois 60515. 1971, pp. 20. Paperback, $.15.

In this very brief evangelical tract, verses are quoted from Genesis to Revelation to indicate that world evangelism has always been upon the heart of God.

—Donald Weilersbacher

SCIENTIFIC STUDIES IN SPECIAL CREATION, by Walter E. Lammerts (ed.). Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Nutley, New Jersey 07110. 1971, pp. 343. $6.95.

These 31 articles are uneven in quality. Several contributions are brilliant. The astounding chapter by Evan Shute on "Remarkable Adaptations" should be expanded to a book. Davidheiser on "Social Darwinism" has good material but could well have shown that the roots of Darwin's system lie in Kant and in Hegel's philosophy.

This reviewer is not convinced that Jesus' remark, ". . . I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven" dates the fall of Satan; or that Hebrews 1:3 ". . . upholding all things by the word of His power, . . ." refers only to the binding forces in matter (p. 64). Christ also upholds kingdoms and saints.

Unfortunately several authors are too ready to believe in "brute facts", and place too much faith in the inductive method. Empiricism just won't provide a classification or universals for evolution nor will it support Morris and Whitcomb in their reconstruction of the flood as the cause of mountain building. The Second Law of thermodynamics (everything runs down) does not contradict evolution in its energy portion although it may do so in information theory. However, the Second Law cannot be known to be true empirically. Only by a total inventory of all information, energy and matter through all time could we assert the Second Law is a fact. And only God could take that inventory.

Gordon Clark has shown conclusively that no "law" of science can be known to be true. Vannevar Bush asserts no scientific law can ever be true. Nature is simply God working in Providence. "Laws of nature" so often used as proof in this ". . . despoil God of His providence and shut Him up idle in heaven." (Calvin's Institutes 1:4:2.)

Although sometimes leaning on doubtful con-

cepts and reasoning, the book has a wealth of arguments against the assumptions of evolution and will be convincing to most readers.

—Howard Long

ONE PEOPLE, by John R. W. Stott, Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois 60515. 1968, pp. 93. $1.50.

In this book the author examines the question of clerical-laity relationships in order to show the importance of following the New Testament concept of the Church as being made up of one people.

The theme is dealt with under four main headings: the Christian Assembly, the Christian Ministry, the Christian Testimony and the Christian Fellowship.

We believe that a study of this book will correct many of the current misconceptions on this whole question, and perhaps even lead to the examining afresh of the principles of Church government laid down in the New Testament. It is a book worth reading.

—Donald Gillies

BETTER IS YOUR LOVE THAN WINE, by Jean Banyolak with Ingrid Trobisch. Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois 60515. 1971, pp. 43. $.95.

Overpriced though this book is, it is an excellent introduction to the sexual aspects of marriage for engaged couples and newlyweds. Banyolak is an African associated with Walter Trobisch whose writing is as refreshingly frank as that of his mentor.

—David R. Armstrong

HEBREWS, A DIGEST OF REFORMED COMMENT, by Geoffry B. Wilson. The Banner of Truth Trust, 78b Chiltern Street, London, WIM IPS. Paperback, pp. 192. 30 pence.

This book on the Epistle to the Hebrews has been written by the minister of Birkley Baptist Church, Huddersfield.

We have already got a taste of Mr. Geoffry's scholarly performance in his book on the Epistle to the Romans.

It is difficult nowadays to give unqualified approval to many books, but this we do, while still holding to the opinion that the Apostle Paul is the writer. One has always felt that if we reject Paul we should choose a better.

There is no doubt but that this work is a serious reflection upon the Word of God. We commend it highly.

—Wallace Nicholson

A DICTIONARY OF ILLUSTRATIONS, by James C. Hefley. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1971, pp. 313. $6.95.

Mr. Hefley is a full-time freelance writer of religious articles and books. Books of illustrations are always interesting and can be used to stress or confirm a point.

It is well to remember not to use them for proofs.

Some do not believe in using illustrations in sermons or lectures but they were used by the Saviour. Mr. Hefley has done us a service by producing another book of illustrations.

—Wallace Nicholson

Contributions Received

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:

November, 1971. No. 2352, $10.00. No. 2353, $11.00. No. 2354, $5.00.

December, 1971. No. 2355, $97.50. No. 2356, $2.50. No. 2357, $5.00. No. 2358, $5.00. No. 2359, $7.50. No. 2360, $7.50. No. 2361, $5.00. No. 2362, $5.82. No. 2363, $10.00. No. 2364, $25.00. No. 2365, $10.00. No. 2366, $4.00. No. 2367, $4.50. No. 2368, $25.00. No. 2369, $50.00. No. 2370, $5.00. No. 2371, $2.50. No. 2372, $10.00. No. 2373, $10.00. No. 2374, $10.00. No. 2375, $2.50. No. 2376, $10.00. No. 2377, $1.00. No. 2378, $25.00.

January, 1972. No. 2379, $25.00. No. 2380, $18.00.

February, 1972. No. 2381, $2.50. No. 2382, $7.50. No. 2383, $2.50. No. 2384, $25.00. No. 2385, $15.00. No. 2386, $15.00. No. 2387, $10.00. No. 2388, $3.00. No. 2389, $20.00.

Less than half 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. All contributions by donors in U.S.A. are deductible from taxable income. Starting with the present issue the cost of printing the magazine is being increased, which will mean that we will be more than ever dependent, under God, on contributions from friends and readers.

J. G. Vos, Editor and Manager
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Reprints Available

In writing for free copies of reprints, readers living in U.S.A. should send an 8 cent stamp for postage. Canadian and overseas readers need not send stamp.

Studies in the Covenant of Grace. 35 Bible lessons from the 1967 issues of the magazine. Obtainable at $1.00 plus postage from Reformed Presbyterian Board of Education and Publication, 738 Rebecca Ave., Pittsburgh, Pa. 15221. **Do not send orders for this item to Blue Banner Faith and Life.**

Studies in Hebrews. 21 Bible lessons from the 1967 issues of the magazine. Obtainable at 80 cents plus postage from Reformed Presbyterian Board of Education and Publication, 738 Rebecca Ave.,Pittsburgh, Pa. 15221. **Do not send orders for this item to Blue Banner Faith and Life.**

Philippians: Epistle of Humility, Unity and Loyalty. 13 Bible lessons from the January-March 1965 issue of the magazine. Obtainable at 60 cents plus postage from Reformed Presbyterian Board of Education and Publication, 738 Rebecca Ave.,Pittsburgh, Pa. 15221. **Do not send orders for this item to Blue Banner Faith and Life.**

A Christian Introduction to Religions of the World. 78 page paperback book from the 1964 issues of the magazine. Obtainable at $1.50 plus postage from Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S.E., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. **Do not send orders for this item to Blue Banner Faith and Life.**

Syllabus on Biblical Doctrine used at Geneva College. 75 pages. Contains reprints of many articles from back issues of Blue Banner Faith and Life. $2.50 postpaid. Order from Blue Banner Faith and Life.

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Ashamed of the Tents of Shem? Booklet on Psalmody and Worship. Single copy free. In quantities, 5 cents per copy, postpaid.

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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.

Scriptural Revelation and the Evolutionary World View. Booklet from April-June 1967 issue. Single copy free. In quantities, 10 cents per copy or $1.00 per dozen, postpaid.

Christian Missions and the Civil Magistrate in the Far East. 24 page reprint from **The Westminster Theological Journal.** Free. Postage 8 cents. Order from Blue Banner Faith and Life.

Why Psalms? Article by the Rev. G. I. Williamson from January-March 1971 issue. $3.00 per 100 postpaid. Order from Timely Tracts, 6321 Ulysses, Wichita, Kansas 67219. **Do not send orders for this item to Blue Banner Faith and Life.**

Back issues of Blue Banner Faith and Life. Issues of recent years and some of earlier years are available at 50 cents per issue postpaid. Price is the same for new or used copies. New copies are sent if available, otherwise the cleanest used copies on hand.

Microfilm and Xerox copies of material in back issues. The entire file of **Blue Banner Faith and Life** from January 1946 to the present is being microfilmed. This work is being done by the ATLA Board of Microtext. Positive microfilm prints and Xerox copies of anything ever published in **Blue Banner Faith and Life** will be available at cost. This material is now being processed and is not yet ready. Further announcement about the details of this project will be made in a future issue.

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.

Peden At The Grave Of Cameron

(Continued from inside front cover)

"O Jesus! blessed Jesus! I am poor, and frail, and weak;
Let me not utter of mine own, for idle words I speak;
But give me grace to wrestle now, and prompt my faltering tongue,
And breathe Thy name into my soul, and so I shall be strong!

"I bless Thee for the quiet rest thy servant taketh now;
I bless Thee for his blessedness, and for his crowned brow;
For every weary step he trod, in faithful following Thee,
And for the good fight foughten well, and closed right valiantly!

"I bless Thee for the hidden ones, who yet uphold Thy name,
Who yet for Zion's King and Crown shall dare the death of shame;
I bless Thee for the light that dawns even now upon my soul,
And brightens all the narrow way with glory from the goal!

"The hour and power of darkness — it is fleeing fast away.
Light shall arise on Scotland, a glorious gospel day.
Woe! woe! to the oppressors; they shall shrivel in His hand.
Thy King shall yet appear for thee, thou covenanted land!

"I see a time of respite, but the people will not bow;
I see a time of judgment, even a darker time than now.
Then, Lord, uphold Thy faithful ones, as now Thou dost uphold;
And feed them, as Thou still hast fed Thy chosen flock of old!

"The glory! oh, the glory! it is bursting on my sight;
Lord, Thy poor vessel is too frail for all this blinding light!
Now let Thy good word be fulfilled, and let Thy kingdom come;
And, Lord, even in Thine own best time, take Thy poor servant home!"

Upon the wild and lone Ayrsmoss, down sank the twilight gray;
In storm and cloud the evening closed upon that cheerless day;
But Peden went his way refreshed, for peace and joy were given,
And Cameron's grave had proved to him the very gate of heaven!

Note: Richard Cameron, pastor and leader of the persecuted Covenanters of Scotland, was killed by the king's troops in the battle of Ayrsmoss, July 22, 1680. (See "Blue Banner Faith and Life", Vol. 3, No. 4, Oct.-Dec. 1948, pp. 134, 139 and back cover). Alexander Peden, a much older man than Cameron, had been forced out of his pastorate by the government in 1663. For some 23 years he lived the life of a wanderer and was an outcast, while doing what he could to minister to the spiritual needs of the scattered Covenanters. The government continually sought to arrest him, and he had many remarkable narrow escapes. In 1673 while attending a conventicle he was captured and sentenced to imprisonment in the Bass Rock and afterwards at Edinburgh. In 1678 with many others Peden was condemned to banishment in America, but was liberated at London, after which he returned to Scotland. He spent the last years of his life partly in Scotland and partly in Ireland. Exhausted by his years of hardship and suffering, he died in a cave not far from his birthplace in Scotland. Even his death did not end the wrath of his enemies, for after his burial the king's soldiers dug up his body and treated it with outrageous indignities. The above poem by Harriet Stuart Menteath is an imaginative account of Peden's grief over the death of Richard Cameron.

Printed in the United States of America by the Patterson Press, Winchester, Kansas 66097

BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

VOLUME 27 JULY—SEPTEMBER, 1972 NUMBER 3

THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION IN MODERN ENGLISH..... 93
THE PASTORAL MINISTRY ORDAINED OF GOD..... 93
A CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION..... 97
GOD'S WORKS OF CREATION AND PROVIDENCE..... 105
SELECTED CHRISTIAN VERSE..... 122
REVIEWS OF RELIGIOUS BOOKS..... 124

A Quarterly Publication Devoted to Expounding, Defending and Applying the System of Doctrine set forth in the Word of God and Summarized in the Standards of the Reformed Presbyterian (Covenanter) Church.
Subscription $2.50 per year postpaid anywhere

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3408 7th Avenue Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania 15010, U.S.A.

Editorial Committee: D. Howard Elliott, Marion L. McFarland, Wilbur C. Copeland
Published by
The Board of Publication of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America

Overseas Agents
Britain and Ireland: The Rev. Adam Loughridge, D.D., 429 Cregagh Road, Belfast BT 6 O. LG, Northern Ireland
Australia and New Zealand: The Rev. Alexander Barkley, B.A., 2 Hermitage Road, Newtown, Geelong, Victoria, Australia

Known Office of Publication - Box K, Winchester, Kansas 66097, U.S.A.
Published Quarterly. Second Class Postage Paid at Winchester, Kansas 66097

God's Covenant - Man's Only Real Security

By J. G. Vos

We see the covenant principle in the fact that not only Noah and his wife, but also Noah's sons and their wives, were taken into the ark. It was God's purpose to preserve the human race for the future, not by granting grace to eight persons unrelated by close ties of kinship, but by granting grace to a family with its children. God's covenant mercies are to believers and their children after them — a truth few Christians appreciate today. The Word of God teaches the continuity of the covenant from parent to child in the generations of believers.

The history of the Flood also teaches us a lesson of exact obedience to the commands of God. "Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he" (Gen. 6:22). The New Testament tells us that it was by faith that Noah built the ark (Heb. 11:7). Gen. 6:22 informs us that Noah obeyed the instructions of God with exactness and precision. We too should learn the lesson of exact obedience to the requirements of God's Word. Some people think that if they have "faith," this somehow licenses them to deviate, in what they call "minor matters" or "details" or "non-essentials," from what God has appointed in His Word. In other words, some people regard "faith" as a sort of substitute for obedience to the Will of God. But this is a mistaken notion. True faith will lead a person to do what Noah did — obey the revealed will of God with precision.

"And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation" (Gen. 7:1). God addresses Himself to Noah, who was the head of the family. God saw Noah as righteous in that wicked generation. The word "righteous" is the Hebrew word for "the just" in Habakkuk 2:4, "The just shall live by his faith" — a verse often quoted in the New Testament in connection with the doctrine of justification by faith. In New Testament terminology, Noah was a justified man. He was regarded and treated as righteous by God, the righteousness of Christ being credited to his account and producing as its fruit a personally righteous, obedient life.

We are told nothing of Noah's own thoughts and feelings on this truly awful occasion. We can only imagine how he must have felt, knowing that all mankind except his own family was doomed to death. Outside the ark there would soon take place a most terrible judgment of God, a real type or sample of the great Judgment Day at the end of world history. Inside the ark was the seed of the human race for all time to come. According to God's plan, the fulfilment of the great redemptive promise of Gen. 3:15 would come through the descendants of the people in the ark. At this point in history, the entire plan of redemption hinged upon the safety of the ark! The fulfilment of the great promise about the Seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent depended on the ark safely riding out the storms and preserving a single human family for the post-flood world. God's great plan and promise of redemption has been infallibly certain of perfect success. For God's decrees and purposes are sovereign — they never fail. To outward appearance there was only a frail ark of gopher wood between Noah's family and the flood. But in reality, besides the ark, there was God. And when God is between His people and danger, they are perfectly safe.

What are you counting on as your ultimate security in the face of increasing signs of the impending wrath and judgment of God upon a Christ-denying, God-hating, sin-loving world? In Noah's day the only real security was the covenant of God which brought grace and safety. In the modern world the only real security is still the covenant of God, which provides righteousness and salvation in Christ.

—The Goal Post

BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

VOLUME 27 JULY—SEPTEMBER, 1972 NUMBER 3

The Westminster Confession of Faith in Modern English

Prepared by Dr. James A. Hughes

(Continued from last issue)

Chapter XXIV Of Marriage and Divorce

I. Marriage is to be between one man and one woman; neither is it lawful for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to have more than one husband, at the same time.

II. Marriage was appointed for the mutual benefit of husband and wife; for the increase of mankind with a legitimate offspring, and of the church with a holy seed; and for the prevention of unchastity.

III. It is lawful for all sorts of people to marry who are able with discernment to give their consent; yet it is the duty of Christians to marry only among themselves. And therefore those who profess the true reformed religion should not marry unbelievers, Roman Catholics or other idolators; neither should those who are godly be unequally yoked by marrying those who are notoriously wicked in their life or maintain condemnable heresies.

IV. Marriage ought not to be within the degrees of consanguinity or affinity forbidden in the Word, nor can such incestuous marriages ever be made lawful by any law of man or by the consent of those desiring to marry, so that those persons may live together as man and wife. The man may not marry any of his wife's relatives nearer in blood-relationship than he may marry of his own relatives, nor may the woman marry any of her husband's relatives nearer in blood-relationship than she may marry of her own relatives.

V. Adultery or fornication committed after an engagement to be married, if it is detected before marriage, gives just occasion to the innocent party to break the engagement. In the case of adultery after marriage, it is lawful for the innocent party to sue for a divorce and, after the divorce, to marry another person, as if the offending party were dead.

VI. Although the corruption of man is prone to devise reasons to separate unduly those whom God has joined together in marriage, yet nothing except adultery, or such wilful desertion as cannot in any way be remedied by the church or civil magistrate, is sufficient reason for dissolving the bond of marriage, in which a public and orderly course of action is to be observed, and the parties concerned in the divorce proceedings are not to be left to their own wills and discretion in their divorce case.

(To be continued)

The Pastoral Ministry Ordained of God

By the Rev. Robert M. More, Jr.

Zechariah 13:7 records the prophecy that the Messiah would be smitten, "that the sheep may be scattered." So the Gospels say the Great Shepherd of the sheep was smitten with His sheep consequently being scattered, at least for times and seasons.

In our day, it sometimes seems, undershepherds are likewise being smitten of men. Thus the church is also being torn asunder by very hounds of hell.

From this, a new response is appearing, namely, a growing disaffection with the Biblical office of the pastorate.

Is it not a fact, in some circles anyway, to hear glorified "Right Reverend So and So" (they usually appear more leftist than rightist!) leading peace marches and lending sanctuary to political dissidents?

Or perhaps in a more dignified way, are there not teeming masses of preachers congregating in educational institutions, or editors' swivel seats, or hallowed halls of parliaments and congresses?

Let it be affirmed that most of these, if not all, may be permissible as a natural occupation for one's life. But all of them together — and often singly too — tend to wickedness as the solely God-instituted office of the pastorate is either left unfilled, or cheapened in the sight of men, or made out to be somewhat irrelevant, or possibly even non-functional and non-essential.

In order to gain anew what the pastorate really is Biblically, let us consider the office first, the authority of presbytery in it, and finally, the function of the office.

I. The Office of Pastor

Ezekiel wrote the prophetic oracle of God to us in 34:23-25, wherein our Father purposes to ordain the True Shepherd over Israel's fold in order that it should inherit His "covenant of peace." Hence the spiritual blessing of the flock is evidently contingent upon the Godly Shepherd leading and tending them.

Therefore it is a serious error to peer upon Christian sheep now being scattered and purpose to meet this hazard of the wolves in any other way than by undershepherds laying down their lives for the flock committed to their pasturage. It certainly misconceives the office of pastor — not to say the nature of Christ's church too — for sheep and men to look for aid from hirelings — even if those men otherwise occupy valid positions in life as theological instructors, or in leadership service, or even as effectual witnesses in the world. The God-revealed rank is still the ordained pastor putting his life before the fold in the teeth of the enemy in the first place.

Within the generation of even this relatively young pastor, there has come about a remarkable development, albeit an unwholesome one in my opinion. Whereas not long ago that awful tag of "sine cura" — ordained without any definite congregation — was most fearfully permitted (being almost forbidden fruit), now the surprise is to find a clergyman zealously fulfilling the apostolic injunctions of I Timothy 4:15,16 which literally read, "put your care in these things; make your life in these things. . .abide in them", namely, the pastoral ministry.

Christ Himself is the great Master for this office. In John 10:16 He confesses to have "other sheep, which are not of this fold." This has a two-fold thrust. For one, it proves no single denomination or congregation is the totality of Christ's visible church. And yet it also says the whole universe is not His fold. It is one fold — which words we may rightly apply in general to our present "congregations", led by their pastor.

Further, our Lord declares that shepherd is not simply an "exercise boy" or "groomer" for what the sheep want, or even merely to lead them in and out to spiritual nourishment. He is appointed to draw into that one fold the wandering sheep. The purpose of the shepherd is to fill the one fold of the church with God's sheep!

To seek after man's other devices in the face of God's office is simply to prey on the flock in reality.

II. The Presbytery

To move over from God's divinely ordained office to the functioning undershepherd himself requires the bridge of presbytery. Passing quickly over technical aspects — such as calls and ordination — let it be suggested that the **sine qua non** (absolute necessity) for a Biblical and satisfying pastorate lies wholly in the ministry of the presbytery.

Paul himself suggests this much, for in charging young pastor Timothy to live, work, and abide in his pastorate, he preceeds the command with the grant of the gift of prophecy by the laying on of the hands of presbytery (I Timothy 4:14).

Since the minister is wholly the foundation of presbytery (being its member and not that of a congregation), then plainly he can become a good pastor only by its collective faithfulness, encouragement, and even chastisement of him. While truly **primus inter pares** (first among equals) in the congregational session, he is also fully subject unto his fathers and brethren of presbytery, not being a master but a subject therein.

Without this Biblical presbytery, obviously there cannot be a quickened ministry (for why else is a candidate brought "under the CARE of presbytery"?) nor any praiseworthy fold either. But likewise, there can be no effective pastorate and established flock without the continued giving of presbytery, for this is implied by the verbal form "was given" in I Timothy 4:14.

III. Pastoral Functions

Now the man called of God and men to the Lord's office has been equipped as pastor-teacher for the "perfecting of the saints into the work of ministering to the upbuilding of Christ's body" (Ephesians 4:11,12).

Several key principles are observed here. The first is that the pastorate itself is the Biblical "teaching" office. Hence the whole counsel of Christ, revealed infallibly in Scripture, must be principally mastered by the undershepherd. Christ's condemnation is of blind leaders attempting to lead the blind into the light. Both fall into the pit of ignorance and pride.

Yet let it be noted that "teaching" is not even the **prime** consideration, for "pastor" takes primacy of position.

It appears to be folly, then, to reckon that ordination can at least be wholly fulfilled outside this order of function. Even as it is impossible rightly to receive God's saving means of grace outside the or-

dinary function of the visible church (Confession of Faith, XXV,ii), so it appears to contradict fact to think ordination can be fully exercised beyond the bounds to which it is ordained by presbytery. In order to gain "the care of all the churches" (II Corinthians 11:28), the man of God must surely be found praying and labouring in those congregations.

The second practical function is shown by the words, "perfecting (or equipping) the saints."

Too many in our generation are seemingly infected with the common notion of the "sovereignty of ideology." This conception intends to fashion human outlooks first by external, rational, means, then assuming bodies will mechanically follow.

This approach therefore does not actually treat people in their own estates. It rather frames an ideal — as it is reasoned people should think and be — and then invents practical stimuli which bring them into conformity.

While this is worldly wisdom, it is not the evangelical office of the pastorate. The ministry is ordained expressly to take the flock from where they are INTO perfection, INTO being fully equipped.

Hence the ministry does not function as an undershepherd casting choice pearls out to seekers after smooth things while robed in soft raiment. It rather is first the practical demonstration of all good things amongst the company of saints (I Timothy 4:12).

Therefore the pastor (who is the Biblical evangelist) not only heralds the beginning of righteousness among sinners (justification), but he also practices the persevering righteousness required of saints if they shall see the Holy Lord (sanctification).

He is ordained not only to cast out demons from the wild of the region, but also to order the restored soul to return home and show his neighbours what is a good report in the sight of all men (Luke 8:29).

Needless to say, this function is to ALL the saints. Therefore it is high time more learn a pastoral shedding of tears at a grave of a beloved friend (John 11:35). It is this day seasonable to learn how to drop a red rose, and a golden word fitly spoken, on to the lap, and into the heart, of a 99 year old saint. And how long, oh Lord, shall pastors still respect the faces of men whereas the Law of God yet thunders against all manifestation of evil, seeking after mammon, and not striving first for the kingdom of God and His righteousness?

The final practical qualification is that word "work." Here I certainly do not mean our modern jargon of a "shiftless featherbedder" who boasts in his master's filthy lucre, and rests his hope on the glorious appearing of motions by Boards and Committees!

The Lord bluntly said to His ministering disciples, "I sent you to harvest upon what you have not wearily toiled; others have wearingly toiled, and you have entered into their wearisome toil."

It is true the pastoral ministry tends a goodly vine. But that is also a rugged vine. Not only is there fruit ripe for a husbandman, there is also constant pruning. Rabid foxes must be slain. Robbers from churches so-called, or the world, must needs be cut down, even if the labourer thereby perishes for the Lord's sake.

To change the figure, not only is the shepherd to occupy the gate, but he must be courageous to hurl down thieves clamouring over the wall. Likewise aged pillars, weakening in their power, must be replaced by the hefty stays skillfully hewn out by his faithfulness to the Lord.

The Lord requires that we of the later generation must indeed "have entered into their wearisome toil." "Easy-believism" and "ease in Zion" have always been bruised reeds for the pastorate. And yet, even for pastors, the "cares of this world" are subtle and ensnaring. Surely that is why many are so openly offended at the actual pastorate they can so readily observe in this day.

But recall even Christ, the Great Shepherd of the sheep, did not pastor in paradise! One of His own preachers destroyed Him by treacherous betrayal. He came to His own creation, and His own sheep would not receive Him. Why, then, should mere house-slaves vainly deceive ourselves that we should inherit better weal than our Lord (Matthew 10:24; John 15:20,21)?

Finally, all Christians need to be reminded — and most definitely young men presently searching Christ's mind relative to the pastorate — that each one of us personally was, not many years past, members of congregations and of the flocks presently being served by our pastors.

In those days mind you — here I regretfully speak from experience — **WE** were the "troublers of Israel" against those God-ordained prophets! Hence it ill-behooves those who personally were recent "Pharisees" now to cast stones at those undershepherds ordained of God no matter how imperfect we deemed them to be. After all, most of them did bear the marks of the Lord Jesus on their bodies, which we put there. There is henceforth no need to add stripes to their souls.

Heed the testimony of I Peter 5:5,6. As the pastor's have become subject unto Christ, even in a similar way younger men are to subject themselves unto the elders. And so all — pastor (elders) and flock — are to be humbled under this mighty hand of God's ordained rule, "in order that He may exalt you in time."

After all, a godly pastor is actually the administrator and dispenser of God Himself, according to the amazing testimony of Titus 1:7.

Religious Terms Defined

JUDAISM. The Jewish faith as it exists today and has developed since the Jews rejected Jesus as the Messiah. Judaism must be carefully distinguished from the religion of the Old Testament, which was a religion of grace, whereas Judaism is essentially legalistic, or a religion of human merit or self-salvation.

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.)

JUDGMENT. The final judicial determination of the eternal destinies of angels and human beings, which shall immediately follow the resurrection, transformation of living saints and rapture to Christ in the clouds, in which Jesus Christ the Mediator shall pronounce judgment, according to absolute righteousness. (Larger Catechism, 89, 90).

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" (Shorter Catechism 33). (Justification is a broader term than **forgiveness** or **pardon**; it includes not merely the remission of guilt and penalty, but also placing a positive righteousness to the person's credit, and on this basis pronouncing him a righteous person. To be declared **righteous** is much more than merely to be declared "not guilty." Note also that Justification concerns **God as Judge,** and the sinner's relation to the requirements of God's law. It is not a change in inward spiritual condition or character, which comes under Sanctification.)

KENOSIS. The false theory, based upon a misinterpretation of Phil. 2:5-8, which holds that the eternal Son of God, in becoming incarnate in human flesh, emptied Himself of the attributes of His deity, including such attributes as omniscience and omnipotence, so that during "the days of His flesh" Christ was only **abstractly** divine, while His **actual** powers and characteristics were merely human. The Kenosis theory is a futile attempt to bridge the chasm between the divine Christ of the Scriptures and the merely human Christ of modern liberal theology. The word **Kenosis** comes from the Greek verb which is found in Phil. 2:7 and is correctly translated by the King James Version as "made. . .of no reputation", but has sometimes been literally translated as "emptied." The King James Version's rendering is fully correct, and the literal translation "emptied" is in this verse unnecessary and improper.

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).

KINGDOM OF GLORY. The future kingdom of God which will be absolutely perfect and free from evil, to be established at Christ's second coming, in which the saints shall reign with Christ for ever. (Larger Catechism, 191. Shorter Catechism, 102).

KINGDOM OF GOD. The supremacy of God exercised for His own glory in the redemption of His people, especially in the spheres of saving power, of righteousness and of blessedness.

KINGDOM OF GRACE. The present reign of Christ over His redeemed people, the spiritual Israel. (Larger Catechism, 191. Shorter Catechism, 102).

KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. Same as Kingdom of God, as shown by the usage in parallel passages of the Gospels, as Luke 18:16 compared with Matt. 19:14, etc.

KINGDOM OF POWER. The present reign of Christ as Mediator over the entire universe for the benefit of His Church (Eph. 1:20-23), exercised through the divine providence which controls all that comes to pass, and involving the duty of submission to the Lord Jesus Christ on the part of all moral agents. (Larger Catechism, 191).

KINGSHIP OF CHRIST. "Christ executeth the office of a king, in subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies." (Shorter Catechism, 26).

"Whoever from indolence ventures to alter anything of the Scriptures, stands not in the path of truth."

Epiphanius (Bishop of Constantia, Cyprus, A.D. 367-402)

"Forced absence from God's ordinances and forced presence with wicked people are great afflictions; but when the force ceases, and such a situation is continued of choice, then it becomes a great sin."

Matthew Henry

Prayer is the pulse of the renewed soul; and the constancy of its beat is the best test and measure of the spiritual life.

Octavius Winslow

Prayer pulls the rope below and the great bell rings above in the ears of God. Some scarcely stir the bell, for they pray so languidly; others give but an occasional pluck at the rope; but he who wins with heaven is the man who grasps the rope boldly and pulls continuously with all his might.

C. H. Spurgeon

A Christian Philosophy of Education

By the Rev. David R. Armstrong

(Continued from last issue)

Methodology

> The methodology in any effective educational situation must result in satisfactory communication of the truth under consideration. A Christian teacher should always remember, however, that whereas the message is authoritative truth, the method does not have to be totalitarian and dictatorial. (Gangel, p. 37).

Traditionally, the methodology of Christian education has centered in transmission of content by means of lecture and memorization. It is now recognized that many methods can be used effectively, and that every method has its limitations. De Graaff notes this when he discusses the practice of memorizing a catechism.

> The question, however, is not whether the catechumens ought to memorize something, but whether the things committed to memory are a **meaningful** part of a particular lesson, and whether the memorization is an **integral** aspect of the learning-process. (P. 154).

A given method is helpful if it appropriately communicates meaning to the student.

> But before we select a particular method for a certain period, we must first determine the specific aim of the lesson. Next we must consider the group that we will be teaching, how it is constituted, and what reactions we can expect with regard to our topic. It is only in the light of these considerations that we can ask ourselves which procedure will help us the most to achieve the specific goal of this lesson. (De Graaff, p. 156).

J. Omar Brubaker has developed an extensive classification of teaching methods that are appropriate in adult education. They are as follows:

> 1. Direct-presentation: lecture, symposium, resource persons, debates, story-sharing
>
> 2. Interaction: question and answer, forum, group discussion, buzz groups, diads, group conversation, panel discussion, reaction panel
>
> 3. Firsthand experience: research and report, interview, listening teams, testimony, writing and testing, silent thinking
>
> 4. Personal creativity and drama: brainstorming, observation trip, project, case study, role playing, play, skit, pageant, tableau and pantomime, demonstration, interpretive or creative reading, choral reading
>
> 5. Direct Bible study: group Bible study, Scripture research, verse-by-verse, survey, read-think-share
>
> (Roy B. Zuck and Gene A. Getz, Adult Education in the Church, Moody Press, 1970, pp. 121-135).

It must be recognized that the real dynamic methodology in Christian education is the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; 16:13).

Discipline

Waterink, Gaebelein, and Gangel all state that the key factor in discipline is love.

> . . .the person who exercises disciplinary authority must himself be well acquainted with the love of Christ. His primary motivation should be nothing less than the new commandment: "That you love one another as I have loved you." With Paul he must be convinced that "love never fails." Everything considered, these are the most important of all words in relation to discipline. (Gaebelein, The Pattern of God's Truth, p. 92).

Waterink proposes that good authority can never be divorced from love. This is seen in the fact "that the law of God is an expression of God's being, and hence also an expression of the love of God by which He is bound to His own cosmos." (p. 59). The chain of authority and love goes from God to parents (educators) to children. Disobedience is a rejection of authoritative love. So "the child suffers punishment in the name of this authority (which nevertheless really remains an expression of love) in order that the child may come to acknowledge that authority as the authority of love." (Waterink, p. 62). Punishment is but one aspect of discipline. Discipline is guidance in the right direction.

> . . .its purpose (is) to bring the child to the point where he no longer requires discipline by others, and where self-discipline will enable the child to be his own guide. That is, of course, self-guidance according to the norms laid down in the Word of God. (Waterink, p. 64).

Discipline is directed toward persons. Therefore good discipline is designed for the specific person who is being educated. It considers his age, personality, situation, and needs. "Discipline makes an appeal to the entire personality in the totality of its attributes, characteristics, and qualities; and these are present only because the child is a religious being." (Waterink, p. 72).

In summary,

> Moral discipline must be maintained essentially because God has declared in Scripture that sin is wrong and must be punished. Therefore such discipline is to be exercised in the light of God's Word.
>
> Since man is a sinner, Christian education recognizes the need for and value of moral standards for conduct. Besides deterring licentiousness, discipline exercised in Christian love and firmness teaches in principle how to live under Christ's Lordship and how to live with other people on the basis of righteousness.
>
> Moral discipline must always be exercised with a view to helping the offender in the context of the doctrine of sin and its solution in Jesus Christ.
> (Geneva, III. D.0.

Evaluation

Periodic evaluation must be made in relation to the objectives of education. Objectives are both general and specific. It is difficult to evaluate progress toward general objectives (such as are found in this paper). When long-range objectives have been broken into specific performance objectives, a standard is available for use in evaluation. Benjamin Bloom has defined six levels of learning experiences: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. From this list, Kenneth Gangel has developed evaluative questions to use in measuring a student's growth toward Christian maturity (cf. II Peter 3:18).

1. Does the pupil know truth?
2. Does the pupil understand truth?
3. Does the pupil practice truth?
4. Does the pupil perceive truth in himself?
5. Does the pupil differentiate truth in life?
6. Does the pupil relate truth to others? (pp. 47,41).

Evaluation is a necessary part of educational philosophy.

Role of the Teacher

It is the teacher's task to guide students in the learning process. This involves far more than just the transmission of content. In Christian education the first requirement for a teacher is that he know Jesus Christ experientially. This is necessary because the teacher is, first of all, a communicator of personality.

> All persons responsible in any way for the functioning of an educational institution share in the accomplishing of its goals. In Christian education this becomes particularly significant since no task, teaching or otherwise, is unrelated to God, and also because the entire personnel to a greater or lesser degree demonstrate in their lives the end-purposes of Christian education.
>
> While by virtue of their creation by God all men share in the transmission of knowledge, only those consciously committed to Jesus Christ as revealed in the Scriptures can envision and reach the goals of Christian education.
> (Geneva, III. A. 1. & 2.).

Speaking of Christian education at the college level, J. G. Vos has said,

> For education to be truly Christian, these ideas must be embodied in the living personalities of teachers and students. The teachers, especially, should be living examples of what real Christian education means. No stream rises higher than its source, and it is not to be expected that an educational institution will rise higher than the life and loyalty manifested by its faculty and administration. Every teacher and administrative officer of a Christian college or university should be, not merely a professing Christian or church member, but a spiritual, active Christian, a person to whom Christ is the object of faith and to whom the Triune God is all-important. (p. 15)

Furthermore, the Christian teacher must be committed to truth. To carry out that commitment he must be conversant with the Bible, and submissive to the Christ who is revealed in the Bible. He must be like Peter, who stood on the Mount of Transfiguration and heard God say, "This is my beloved Son; listen to Him!" Such allegiance to Christ as the truth (John 14:6) will lead the teacher to a world view. It "is not only possible but also quite reasonable to expect of Christian teachers a world view intelligently understood and held with conviction." ". . .the world view of the teacher, in so far as he is effective, gradually conditions the world view of the pupil." (Gaebelein, The Pattern of God's Truth, pp. 44, 37).

The good teacher is a life-long student.

> To accomplish the goals of Christian education with academic excellence, each faculty member should be seeking to understand more perfectly and teach his students more clearly his particular field of study in the light of the purposes of Christian education.
> (Geneva, III. A. 3.).

Finally, the good teacher loves his students. He wants them to become mature. Like John the Baptist, he is willing to decrease that they might increase. He studies the learning process, and gains skill in a variety of teaching methods so that his students will grow.

In all this, a teacher does not stand alone. The Holy Spirit lives within him and directs his life. He is also aware that he is a part of the Christian community. And he is a member of a faculty that is united in its world view.

> For an entire school-community it is crucial that the teachers — the educators — do not form a loosely gathered body of individuals but that they form a **team** which, under the direction of the principal — the most capable leader in their midst — executes the educational task for the Christian community in a particular locality.
>
> The creation of such a team depends in the first place upon adherence to the basic principles of a Christian educational outlook. Many Christian schools in North America, in spite of all good intentions, often fail in their task because the teachers do not in effect form a spiritually unified team with a common goal.
>
> The creation of such a team also depends upon a proper division of labor so that the **entire** educational task is properly fulfilled. (Olthuis and Zylstra, p. 5).

Conclusion

Ten factors have been considered in this educational philosophy. Collectively they aim to point men to Jesus Christ, the Son of God

> in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation. For in Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — all things have been created through Him and for Him.
>
> And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. (Colossians 1:14-17).

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The End

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 publish some information about the youth movement known as Campus Crusade for Christ. Apparently some young people who are members of churches professing the Reformed Faith are participating in this movement without being aware of its theological orientation and tendencies.

Please give an appraisal of two booklets: **Have You Heard of the Four Spiritual Laws?** and **Have You Made the Wonderful Discovery of the Spirit-Filled Life?** These booklets are attractive and appealing, but are they true to the Word of God and the Reformed Faith?

Answer:

The two booklets mentioned by our correspondent are published by Campus Crusade for Christ International, Arrowhead Springs, San Bernardino, California 92403, U.S.A. Both are copyrighted and their use is very strictly restricted. They may not be reproduced in whole or in part in any form without written permission from the publisher. In order adequately to answer our correspondent's query we have applied for and obtained permission to make brief quotations from the booklets.

The booklets are very attractively printed and present an earnest appeal to the reader. Very evidently they have been prepared by people who love the Lord and who seek to challenge Christians to a more earnest, faithful life in Christ. They contain many Scripture verses and present the Bible as the word of God and fully authoritative. With much of the contents we are in hearty agreement, but not with all. The emphasis on faith rather than feelings is wholesome and sound, and much needed today.

The booklets strongly insist that the Christian life should be a fruitful life. No one who believes the Bible can question this, of course. But in **Have You Made the Wonderful Discovery of the Spirit-Filled Life?** there appears to be come ambiguity about what the Bible means by "bearing fruit." On page 4 Galatians 5:22,23 is quoted ("But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law") and on page 5 several of these elements of "the fruit of the Spirit" are again listed in connection with a diagram showing "Characteristics of the Spiritual Man." But on the final page (16) "fruit bearing" is apparently equated with **soul-winning** or being made "fishers of men." Unquestionably the latter can be an element of the fruit of the Spirit, but it is only one element among others. In the Bible the idea of "fruit bearing" is general and includes all possible elements of holiness, devotion and service, as Gal. 5:22,23 amply shows. Soul winning may perhaps be regarded as a gift of the Holy Spirit, and we must always remember the teaching of I Cor. 12:4, "Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit"; also verse 11, "But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will." Some Christians are enabled to do one thing for the Lord, some another.

The booklet **Have You Made the Wonderful Discovery of the Spirit-Filled Life?** teaches that Christians receive the fulness of the Holy Spirit by a specific act of faith. "We are filled with the Holy Spirit by faith. To be filled with the Holy Spirit is to allow the Holy Spirit to control your life — thoughts, words and actions. You can by faith appropriate the filling of the Holy Spirit **right now,** if you: A. **Hunger** and thirst after righteousness (Matt. 5:6; John 7:37-39). B. **Confess** every known sin to God (I John 1:9). C. **Present** every area of your life to God. 'I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service' (Romans 12:1). D. By **faith** allow the Holy Spirit to fill and control your life. 'And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess: but be filled with the Spirit' (Ephesians 5:18). 'And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us: And if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him' (I John 5:14-15).".

We have quoted page 10 of the booklet in full because Campus Crusade requested us not to quote their material out of context. Concerning the statements in the page quoted above, our reaction is the Scripture nowhere teaches that we receive the fulness of the Holy Spirit by a specific act of faith. The command to "be filled with the Spirit" does not imply such an act of faith, but a continuing relationship of faith and obedience. None of the Scripture texts cited teaches that the believer "can by faith appropriate the filling of the Holy Spirit right now." Certainly it is a commanded duty to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and certainly there are degrees of such infilling, but that this fulness of the Holy Spirit can be attained immediately by a definite act of faith, we believe to be an idea foreign to the teaching of Scripture and erroneous.

The injunction "By **faith** allow the Holy Spirit to fill and control your life" (page 10 of booklet) reflects Arminian rather than Reformed theology. No such language as "allow the Holy Spirit. . ." can be found in the Bible. This very faith by which we are to "allow the

Holy Spirit. . ." is itself an element of the **fruit** of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). The teaching of Scripture on this is of course paradoxical. Only by already having the Holy Spirit can one realize his need of the Holy Spirit and so pray for the filling of the Holy Spirit. Certainly we are to pray for this. But it must be a constant prayer all our life, and the answer comes by degrees in the course of time, not "right now."

The general theological background or tacit presupposition of both booklets is the theology known as Evangelical Arminianism or Wesleyanism. This has affinities with the Keswick or Victorious Life Movement, assuming the autonomy of the human will in the experience and process of salvation. Dr. Benjamin B. Warfield's volume on **Perfectionism** traces the history and development of this type of teaching in a very illuminating manner. We commend the study of this book by Warfield to our readers.

Have You Heard of the Four Spiritual Laws? on its first inside page states as "Law One"; "GOD **LOVES** YOU, AND HAS A WONDERFUL **PLAN** FOR YOUR LIFE." This is amplified on the next page by quoting John 3:16 for "GOD'S LOVE" and John 10:10b for "GOD'S PLAN" ("I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly").

The unqualified statement "God loves you" is unscriptural, confusing as it does God's general benevolence toward all His creatures with His redemptive love which is limited to His elect. How can this unqualified statement be reconciled with Romans 9:13, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated"? God does not love all, but only some, with a redemptive love. Scripture teaches that God hates some people. "Thou hatest all workers of iniquity" (Psalm 5:5); "I hated Esau" (Mal. 1:3); "I hated them. . ." (Hos. 9:15). These texts may not be rationalized by saying "God loves the sinner but hates the sin." The texts say that God hates the persons, not just their sins.

The citation of John 3:16 as support for the idea of the universal love of God is also mistaken. "God so loved the world" means that God loved even this sinful world; it does not imply that God loved each and every person in the world.

The citation of John 10:10b for "GOD'S PLAN", to show that God "HAS A WONDERFUL **PLAN** FOR YOUR LIFE", is also mistaken and confusing. It confuses the preceptive will of God with the decretive will of God. God's **plan** is all-inclusive and takes in everything that ever happens — the fall of a sparrow, the rise of an empire, the conversion of Saul of Tarsus to Christ, my daily experiences and problems, the end of the world and the Judgment Day. This plan of God cannot fail; it will be accomplished in every detail without fail. "The counsel of the Lord, that shall stand" (Prov. 19:21); "Our God is in the heavens; he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased" (Psalm 115:3); God is the One who "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will" (Eph. 1:11). God's plan is not an option which the Christian can avail himself of or not avail himself of; it is God's eternal, determinate counsel, which is absolutely certain of fulfilment.

John 10:10b, on the other hand, sets forth, not God's "plan for your life", but **Christ's purpose in His incarnation.** He came that His sheep might have life, and have it more abundantly. Every Christian has this abundant life in Christ, and every Christian should seek daily to develop and manifest it more fully, as taught in Philippians 2:12,13, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling: For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

The next to last page of **Have You Heard of the Four Spiritual Laws?** deals with the subject of Assurance of Salvation, under the heading: "HOW TO **KNOW** CHRIST IN YOUR LIFE." Here we find the over-simplified teaching on assurance which is typical of American Evangelicalism, which confuses **faith in Christ** with **Assurance of Salvation.** Assurance is here grounded solely on the promises of God in the Gospel. If I believe the promises, I have assurance. Faith in Christ is held to be the same as faith that I am in Christ. But not all faith is true saving faith. And it is possible for a true believer to lack, for a time, subjective assurance, or certainty in his own mind about his salvation. We commend to our readers the well-balanced and eminently Scriptural discussion of faith and assurance in Chapter XVIII of the Westminster Confession of Faith.

— J. G. Vos

Question:

In a religious journal of wide circulation there appeared an article on "Full-Time Christian Service." The author seemed to have the idea that some Christians are called to "Full-time Christian Service" while others are not. Is this a Biblical view of Christian service?

Answer:

According to the Bible, every Christian is called to "Full-time Christian Service." If we are not serving the Lord Jesus full-time, then we must be serving self, the world or the devil part of the time, which is certainly contrary to our Christian duty. We are to serve the Lord Jesus Christ exactly all of the time, and anything that cannot be done as a service to our Lord is not proper for us to do at all.

Whether we eat, or drink, or whatsoever we do, we are to do ALL to the glory of God. We are to do all things in the name of Jesus Christ (I Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:17). According to the Bible, even the labor of a slave in the service of his earthly master is to be regarded as really a service done to the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 6:5-8; Col. 3:22-24). The Christian who has a right understanding of Biblical teaching on this subject will regard his daily tasks, and even his pleasures and recreations, as service to Christ.

The article referred to in the above query presents a far too narrow concept of Christian service. It is evident that the author of the article thinks of Christian service as limited to evangelism, missionary work, and other activities which contribute, directly or

indirectly, to the salvation of souls. He would regard washing dishes or driving a truck as "Christian service" only if a Christian supported himself by these activities in order to devote his free time to evangelism or other forms of directly religious effort.

This author has no philosophy of life which shows how the creation and human use of it glorifies God. He thinks of "secular pursuits" as glorifying God only in so far as they contribute, in some way, to the salvation of souls. This is not the philosophy of the Bible. Its affinities are with the Anabaptist sects of the Reformation period, not with the Reformed Faith or Calvinism.

According to the Bible, the creation, the human race, human activity, all existed before man fell into sin, and were created to glorify God in and of themselves. In the Bible, the salvation of souls is one of the ways of glorifying God, but not the only way. The philosophy of the article we are discussing has no place for society, science, art, literature, as themselves directly glorifying God; they are considered legitimate only as adjuncts to the salvation of souls.

According to this defective philosophy of life, an artist might paint pictures so as to earn money to promote foreign missions, or so as to support himself with a view to engaging in evangelistic work in the evenings. But according to the Bible philosophy of life, an artist who paints pictures is to aim at glorifying God **directly** by his art. A truly beautiful painting glorifies God by its reflection and appreciation of His works in the realm of nature, regardless of whether the painting is sold or not.

The prevalent use of the expression "Full-time Christian Service" is doing real harm to the thinking of Christian people today. Especially in the case of young people whose theological conceptions may not be fully formed, this expression leads to incorrect thinking. As commonly used, "Full-time Christian Service" means specifically religious work as a person's occupation; for example, to be a minister, minister's wife, missionary, colporteur, Bible translator, writer of religious literature, teacher in a Bible school, nurse in a Christian hospital, clerk in a Christian book-store. Doubtless the person who devotes his life to such activities is engaging in full-time Christian service. But the error arises from the assumption that "Full-time Christian Service" is limited to such specifically religious occupations. This will not harmonize with the Scriptures cited in this answer, such as Col. 3:22-24.

This idea of specifically religious occupations being pre-eminently "Full-time Christian Service" involves an implication that the "ordinary" tasks of life — such as farming, teaching school, repairing engines, building houses, washing dishes, cooking meals — are not definitely Christian service. But according to the Bible every lawful activity of a Christian is to be regarded as a service to Christ.

The division of life into "secular" and "religious" compartments, and regarding only the "religious" part as directly a service to Christ, is wrong and unbiblical. God commanded man to subdue the earth (Gen. 1:28): and that divine mandate, with all it implies, still stands. God calls some people to specifically religious work as an occupation (missions, the ministry, evangelism, etc.). Others are to serve the Lord Jesus Christ in all the lawful walks and callings of life. Each can manifest the glory of God in some special way. We should realize that all of life is to be sacred and consecrated to God. The Christian minister or missionary is not necessarily more pleasing to God than the Christian farmer, scientist, business man or housewife.

— J. G. Vos

Question:

A pastor said that Calvinism and Arminianism are both true. He held that each of them is half of the truth and you have to take them together to get the whole truth. What should be thought of this idea?

Answer:

The type of thinking suggested in the above query is often met with. Those who hold such an idea are obviously unfamiliar with the history of the controversy between Calvinism and Arminianism, and do not have a clear understanding of what the teachings of Calvinism are.

The differences between these two systems were sharply defined at the Synod of Dort in 1618-19. At the points of difference between them, each of these systems is a flat contradiction of the other. It is therefore very foolish and misleading to say that they are BOTH true and must be taken together to get the whole truth. The famous "Five Points of Calvinism" are contradictions of the five Arminian doctrines against which they were framed. When two propositions are mutually contradictory, one or the other may be true, but they cannot both be true. Columbus discovered America in 1492, or he did not discover America in 1492. Who would be so foolish as to hold that these contradictory statements must be combined to get the real truth about Columbus? Similarly, God either is or is not absolutely sovereign over His creatures, man either is or is not totally depraved, Christ's atonement either is or is not intended by God to save every human being that ever lived, the saving grace of God either is or is not irresistible, and those who are truly in Christ either are or are not sure to persevere unto eternal life. Calvinism holds one side of these alternatives, Arminianism holds the other. But who can hold both at the same time?

The person who says that Calvinism and Arminianism are both true — that they are mutually complementary aspects of truth — is always a person who does not have a clear and correct understanding of what the teachings of Calvinism are. The argument is put up in some such form as the following: Calvinism teaches the sovereignty of God, Arminianism teaches the responsibility (or freedom) of man. We should follow Calvin in his emphasis on God's sovereignty, and Arminius in his stress on man's responsibility.

This type of statement, however, overlooks the fact that Calvinism stresses the responsibility of man just as strongly as Arminianism does — indeed, more strongly. The Arminian stresses the responsibility of man alone; the Calvinist stresses the sovereignty of God AND the responsibility of man. Everything that is true in Arminianism is also taught by Calvinism. What really distinguishes the Arminian is not his stress on the responsibility of man but his denial of the sovereignty of God.

Arminians can be Christians and be saved only because they are inconsistent and do not really believe in Arminianism all the way. If they followed Arminian principles consistently to the end of the road they would have to believe that man is his own saviour. But by a happy inconsistency they are kept from this. An Arminian will say insistently that everything depends on the sinner. A famous evangelist is quoted as having said, "God's hands are tied. He can only wait for you to make the decision." If consistently believed, this would be faith in autonomous man and a limited God. But the Arminian evangelist does not really believe it. Immediately after finishing his sermon he will pray fervently for the Holy Spirit to work in the hearts of the people that they may be saved. We approve of such prayer, but we should realize that it is inconsistent with Arminian principles. If "God's hands are tied" and if everything depends on a decision of man which God does not control, what can be the use of praying to God for the salvation of sinners? It would seem that the prayer should be addressed to the sinners, on whose free will everything is said to depend.

What we are trying to show is that the Arminian does not really believe his Arminian principles. He does not believe them consistently, for however much he may say that everything depends on man's free will, if he is a Christian, he still realizes in the bottom of his heart that after all everything depends on the power of God's Holy Spirit.

Calvinism is simply Biblical Christianity. It accepts the whole teaching of God's Word. It is not guilty of the denial of man's moral responsibility which is often charged against it.

—J. G. Vos

Question:

If, as the Larger Westminster Catechism (Q. 109) says, the Second Commandment forbids the making of a "picture" of Christ, why then does it not forbid the making of pictures of things "in the earth beneath or the waters under the earth" — or even sculpture?

Answer:

For a correct understanding of the Second Commandment, we must keep in mind the end or purpose toward which the commandment is directed, for this has a bearing on its meaning and applications. Calvin says: "As in the preceding commandment the Lord has declared himself to be the one God, besides whom no other deities ought to be imagined or worshipped, so in this he more clearly reveals his nature, and the kind of worship with which he ought to be honoured, that we may not dare to form any carnal conception of him. The end, therefore, of this precept is, that he will not have his legitimate worship profaned with superstitious rites. . . . God marks what is the grossest transgression of this kind; that is, external idolatry. And this precept consists of two parts. The first restrains us from licentiously daring to make God, who is incomprehensible, the subject of our senses, or to represent him under any visible form. The second prohibits us from paying religious adoration to any images. He likewise briefly enumerates all the forms, in which he used to be represented by profane and superstitious nations. By those things which are in heaven, he means the sun, the moon, and the other stars, and perhaps birds . . . I omit the other particulars, as needing no explanation. And . . . whatever visible representations of God are invented by man, are diametrically opposite to his nature; and . . . therefore, as soon as ever idols are introduced, true religion is immediately corrupted and adulterated" (**Institutes,** Book II, Chapter VIII, Section 17).

Thus to interpret the Second Commandment aright, we must keep its scope and purpose in mind. It concerns religious worship, not human art as such. Therefore to take a photograph or make a drawing, painting or sculpture of created persons or objects is not sinful. What is prohibited is not making likenesses, but making likenesses for religious use, or as representations of the Deity.

It may then be inquired, why should "pictures of Christ" be regarded as forbidden? May they not be intended as mere objects of art, entirely apart from all religious devotion and worship? The answer to this consists in the truth that **Jesus Christ is not a human person, but a divine person with a human nature.** He is therefore not a created person. His human nature never existed except in union with His divine person and nature. The artist who attempts to portray Christ's human nature inevitably forgets that Christ is a divine person. No picture can show His deity. The attempt to portray His humanity without His deity inevitably gives a false idea of Christ. The prevalence of "pictures of Christ" is no doubt one cause of the present widespread denial of His deity and the current over-emphasis on His humanity.

Jesus Christ is always a divine person and always the proper object of men's religious devotion and worship. To regard Him as a mere subject for artistic efforts is to ignore — and by implication deny — His uniqueness as God manifest in the flesh. To make a picture of Christ for purposes of religious worship is sinful; to make a picture of Christ which is not for purposes of religious worship is also sinful, for it regards Christ as other than the object of religious worship. It tends toward placing Christ on a par with the mere great men of history. It is not without reason that the Bible gives us no information whatever about the personal appearance of our Saviour in the days of His flesh.

The Messiah - Fulfilment of History

By J. G. Vos

In the Old Testament, every true prophet, priest or king in Israel was a small-scale sample of the ideal, final, perfect prophet, priest and king — the Messiah, Jesus Christ. Thus faith was oriented toward the future — it was a God-given hope which moved toward a goal. It involved progress toward a fulfilment or consummation, and this meant progress toward a Person who would be the fulfilment and would accomplish everything needed for the salvation of God's people. Religion was oriented toward the One who would finally come and do for men what they could never do for themselves — save them from their sins (Matthew 1:21).

Above all things, the Old Testament Messianic hope involved **the divine initiative and monergism.** By "the divine initiative" we mean that salvation is planned and put into operation by God, not by man. By "the divine monergism" we mean that salvation is a work of God, not of man, nor even of God and man combined. (**Monergism** cames from two Greek words meaning "alone" and "work.") Thus the divine monergism means that the power in salvation is entirely that of God. Salvation is by the grace and power of God — it is not a "do it yourself" project, though of course it is our duty to repent, believe and use the means of grace God has appointed. But it is only by the power of God working in us that we can do these things, or even **want** to do them (Phil. 2:13; Eph. 2:8,9).

The Old Testament predicts the coming of the Messiah as a glorious, reigning figure who is victorious over all enemies, and also as One who will be rejected, despised, shamefully treated and finally will suffer and die. These two lines of prediction might seem to be contradictory, but actually they are complementary and organically inter-related. The glory and victory come as the fruit and reward of the shame and suffering.

Both of these lines of prediction are deeply rooted in the Old Testament. The Messiah will reign in glory, but He will also suffer bitter humiliation and agonizing death. In some parts of the Old Testament these two ideas occur side by side, as for example in Psalm 22 and also in Isaiah 53. In both of these places sufferings which result in death are followed by supreme glory. This implies, of course, that the death of the Messiah cannot be permanent. His resurrection in new life and power is implied between the death and the glory.

The Biblical view of history as centered in a Person stands in sharp contrast to all other philosophies of history. The ancient Greek and Roman view of history was that it moves in endless cycles or circles, repeating the same things over and over without ever reaching any conclusion or goal. The modern secular view of history holds that history involves continuous and endless progress of the human race. It regards history as "open-ended," without any definite goal or consummation. This is closely tied in with the dominant evolutionary world-view of our day. It is held that the human race is constantly improving and will outgrow its limitations and problems and go on for ever to higher and better things. Some even believe that the human race will be planted on other planets by means of space travel.

The Biblical or Christian philosophy of history gives **meaning** to history. History without a goal cannot really mean anything — endless process, but never any product. This meaninglessness is the terrible sickness that modern man is suffering from. The sense of futility, frustration is pervasive today. Only the Christian knows the real answer. Meaninglessness comes from sin, and the only escape from sin is by the Messiah, the Person who is both the center of history, the goal of history and the Fulfilment of history. Currently popular (even dominant) evolutionism is more than biological theory — it is a comprehensive world-view that destroys the heart of the Christian world-view.

— The Goal Post

"Heaven is but a translation to a better place. When you die, you are but translated. Enoch walked with God here; but when he was translated, he lived with God in uninterrupted glory. Many times Christ comes into His garden to gather lilies; and they are cropped here, that they may be transplanted from the winter to the summer gardens, from the Church and lower dispensation of the ordinances of paradise, that we may read divinity in the face of the Lamb for evermore, as scholars that are sent from the grammar-school to the university."

Thomas Manton

Those men who are not governed by God must be ruled by tyrants.

William Penn

The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.

Edmund Burke

Doubt not His grace because of thy tribulation, but believe that he loveth thee as much in seasons of trouble as in the times of happiness.

C. H. Spurgeon

God's Works of Creation and Providence

Note: The numbered questions and answers, printed in bold face type at the beginning of each lesson, are taken from **The Larger Catechism of the Westminster Assembly.**

LESSON 1

Q. 14. How doth God execute his decrees?

A. God executeth his decrees in the works of creation and providence, according to his infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his own will.

Scripture References:

Ephesians 1:11. (Additional Scripture references will come under the following questions, dealing with God's works of creation and providence. This 14th question is of the nature of a summary or outline, dividing God's works into two great parts, namely Creation and Providence. The questions which follow deal with these two subjects; 15, 16 and 17 with Creation; and 18, 19 and 20 with Providence).

Questions:

1. What kind of foreknowledge does God have of all things?

Infallible foreknowledge. His foreknowledge is inclusive, exact, and detailed.

2. What is meant by saying that the counsel of God's will is free?

This means that God acted according to his own nature, without constraint from any source outside God himself.

3. What is meant by saying that the counsel of God's will is "immutable"?

This means that God's purposes cannot be changed by "chance" or by any of his creatures. What God has decreed will surely come to pass.

Q. 15. What is the work of creation?

A. The work of creation is that wherein God did in the beginning, by the word of his power, make of nothing the world, and all things therein, for himself, within the space of six days, and all very good.

Scripture References:

Genesis 1:1 and also the entire first chapter of Genesis. The account of the work of creation.

Hebrews 11:3. The universe created out of nothing; not formed from pre-existing materials.

Proverbs 16:4. God made all things for himself.

Revelation 4:11. All things created by God, for his own pleasure.

Questions:

1. What truth is implied by the use of the words "in the beginning?"

These words imply that the world or the universe is not eternal; it did not always exist; it had a beginning. God, on the other hand, is eternal; God always existed; God never had a beginning.

2. What is the importance of the first three words of the Bible?

These words ("In the beginning") prove that the universe had a beginning; therefore the universe did not exist of itself; therefore the universe owes its existence to God; therefore the universe is dependent on God; therefore all attempts of men or nations to live independently of God are foolish, wicked, and doomed to failure in the end.

3. What does the doctrine of Creation show about the nature of God?

That God is absolutely independent of the world; that God is an almighty being, who possesses infinite supernatural power by which he can do anything which does not contradict his own nature.

4. What was the aim of God's work of creation?

God created all things **for himself;** that is, to manifest his own perfection and glory.

5. What was the character of the created universe as it came from the hand of God?

It was "all very good"; that is, it was wholly free from evil of any kind, both moral evil and physical evil. The evil which exists today is therefore **abnormal** and alien to the universe as God created it.

6. What is the meaning of the phrase "in the space of six days"?

The most natural meaning of this phrase is six literal days of 24 hours each. However some orthodox students of the Bible hold that the expression means six "ages" or periods of time. It is possible, of course, that

this is the true meaning. In the Bible the word "day" is sometimes used to designate a long period of time; one day is said to be with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day, etc. However the more natural and probable meaning in Genesis chapter 1 is six literal days.

7. When was the world created?

We can only say "In the beginning", as the Bible tells us. We are not told when the "beginning" was.

8. What was the origin of the idea that the world was created in the year 4004 B. C.?

Archbishop Usher, a scholar of about 300 years ago, made elaborate calculations of the chronology and genealogies of the Bible, and on the basis of these calculations he decided that 4004 B. C. was the time of the creation.

9. What should we think of this idea that the world was created in 4004 B. C.?

(1) We can be sure that the world was created **at least** that long ago, if not longer. (2) Usher's calculation is not a statement of the Word of God, but only a human opinion, which may or may not be reliable. (3) Usher's conclusion is based on the assumption that the genealogies given in the Bible are **complete with no links omitted.** But it can be proved by comparison of Scripture with Scripture that in Bible genealogies sometimes generations are omitted; for example, a grandson is spoken of as a son of some person, etc. Therefore **it is impossible accurately to calculate the date of the creation of the world from the genealogies.**

10. What should we think of the statements of scientists who say that the earth is millions or even billions of years old?

(1) These statements are speculative and are not statements of proven fact. This is shown by the varying estimates given by different scientists as to the age of the earth.

(2) The age of the earth and the age of the human race are two distinct questions. Even according to the Bible the earth is older than the human race, though the Bible does not specify how much older (unless, of course, the six days of creation be all taken literally as 24-hour days, and no time lapse be allowed between Genesis 1:1 and the rest of the chapter).

(3) The science of astronomy seems to afford substantial reasons for believing that the physical universe may be very old. The speed of light is 186,000 miles per second, and some parts of the universe are so far from this earth that it takes over a million years for their light to reach the earth. The Andromeda Galaxy (formerly called a nebula) is so vast that it contains billions of suns. It takes light 100,000 years to reach from one end of the galaxy to the other. The distance from this earth is so great that the light which may register on a photographic film in an observatory tonight, left the Andromeda Galaxy about two million years ago.

(4) In any case, facts discovered by scientists about the physical universe, though they may be of great interest to us, cannot form a part of our religious faith, which is based on the Word of God alone. We should remember, too, that scientists are not infallible. Many theories that once were held to be "proven fact" have had to be revised or even abandoned in the light of later discoveries.

11. How old is the human race?

The Bible does not tell us. But from the genealogies of the Bible it can be proved that the human race is **at least** 6,000 years old. It may, of course, be older than that. The Bible leaves room for any **reasonable** antiquity for the human race. Mankind is not millions of years old, but rather a few thousand years old.

12. Why does the Bible not tell us the exact date of the creation and the exact age of the human race?

If we really needed to know these things, God would have revealed them in the Bible. Since he has not done so, we can only conclude that these are matters which we do not really need to know. We should always remember that the Bible was not written to satisfy our curiosity, but to show us the way of salvation.

Note: A thorough discussion of the theory of evolution, from the standpoint of orthodox Christianity, would require far more space than could be devoted to this important question in the columns of "Blue Banner Faith and Life." The reader is referred to the following excellent books on this subject:

The Case for Creation, by Frair and Davis. Paperback 30-1185, Moody Press, 820 N. LaSalle St., Chicago, Ill. 60610. 95 cents.

The Bible, Natural Science and Evolution, by R. W. Maatman. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. Paperback, $3.50.

Genes, Genesis and Evolution, by John Klotz. Revised ed., 1970. Concordia Publishing House, 3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, Mo. 63118. $9.95.

LESSON 2

Q. 16. How did God create angels?

A. God created all the angels, spirits, immortal, holy, excelling in knowledge, mighty in power, to execute his commandments, and to praise his name, yet subject to change.

Scripture References:

Colossians 1:16. All the angels created by God.

Psalm 104:4; Hebrews 1:7. The angels are spirits.

Matthew 22:30. The angels are immortal.

Jude 6. The angels were created holy.

2 Samuel 14:17; Matthew 24:36. The knowledge of the angels.

2 Thess. 1:7. The angels' power.

Psalm 103:20. Hebrews 1:14. The functions of the angels.

2 Peter 2:4. Jude 6. The angels created subject to change.

Questions:

1. Why is it important to believe that **all** the angels were created by God?

Because of the fact that if any of them were **not** created by God, they would be divine, existing from eternity as God did.

2. What important difference is there between the angels and human beings?

The angels are spirits without any bodies; man on the other hand is a composite being consisting of two elements, body and soul, mysteriously united in a single personality.

3. What other important difference is there between the angels and the human race?

The angels are simply a great host of individual beings, not organically related to each other nor descended from a common ancestor; whereas the human race is an organic unity, all members of the human race being mutually related by organic ties, and all being the posterity of a single first ancestor, Adam. Adam has no counterpart among the angels.

4. If the angels are pure spirits with no bodies, how could they appear in human form as is related several times in the Bible?

The angels are pure spirits and have no body of their own. When God sent them, on certain occasions, to appear to men, they **appeared** in human form. This bodily form was merely assumed for the purpose of appearing to men, and was dropped again when their commission had been carried out.

5. What is wrong with the sentiment expressed in an old hymn which says "I want to be an angel, and with the angels stand"?

This sentiment is based upon a misunderstanding of the Bible teaching about the eternal destiny of the redeemed. We can never be angels, and we would not be satisfied or happy if we could, for the human soul is not complete and self-sufficient apart from the human body. Jesus said that at the resurrection the redeemed will be **as** the angels in one respect, namely, that they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; but that is very different from affirming that the redeemed will **become** angels.

6. What wonderful truth did our Saviour set forth concerning the work of the angels in connection with little children?

See Matthew 18:10.

LESSON 3

Q. 17. How did God create man?

A. After God had made all other creatures, he created man male and female; formed the body of the man of the dust of the ground, and the woman of the rib of the man, endued them with living, reasonable, and immortal souls; made them after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness and holiness; having the law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfil it, with dominion over the creatures; yet subject to fall.

Scripture References:

Gen. 1:27. Mankind created male and female.

Gen. 2:7. Adam's body made of dust.

Gen. 2:22. Eve made of Adam's rib.

Gen. 2:7. Mankind created with living souls.

Job 35:11. Mankind created with intelligent souls.

Eccles. 12:7. Matt. 10:28. Luke 23:43. Mankind created with immortal souls.

Gen. 1:27. Created in God's image.

Col. 3:10. God's image includes knowledge.

Eph. 4:24. God's image includes righteousness and holiness.

Rom. 2:14,15. Mankind created with the moral law written on their hearts.

Eccles. 7:29. Mankind created with power to fulfill God's law.

Gen. 1:28. Psalm 8:6-8. Mankind given dominion over the creatures.

Gen. 3:6. Rom. 5:12. Mankind created subject to the possibility of a fall into sin.

Questions:

1. What is the importance of the fact that Adam's body was made out of dust from the ground?

This shows the truth that our physical body is

composed of the same chemical elements as the ground, a fact which can be demonstrated by chemical analysis.

2. Why did God make Eve from a rib of Adam, instead of making her of dust from the ground as he had made Adam?

It was necessary for the **organic unity of the human race** that Eve's body be derived from that of Adam, not created separately from the lifeless elements. Otherwise it would not be true that God had made **of one blood** (Acts 17:26) all nations of men. According to God's plan, the human race must have **one** single origin, not two.

3. Why is it important to believe that mankind were endued with immortal souls at the creation?

Because some present-day sects teach that no person has an immortal soul by nature, but only by believing in Christ for salvation. These sects teach this false doctrine as a convenient way of getting rid of the idea of hell. If unbelievers and wicked people do not have immortal souls, then of course they cannot suffer eternal punishment in hell, for if they do not have immortal souls, then death must be the end of their existence. A correct understanding of the Scripture doctrine of the creation of the human race will counteract this dangerous heresy.

4. What common error must be avoided when we say that mankind was created in the image of God?

We must guard against the popular error that the image of God consists in a **physical** resemblance to God. The false religion of Mormonism teaches something like this. Since God is a pure Spirit and has no body, such a thing is of course wholly impossible.

5. If the "image of God" does not involve a physical resemblance to God, then what does it involve?

The Bible itself gives the key to the meaning of this expression, in Col. 3:10 and Eph. 4:24. The "image of God" consists in **knowledge, righteousness and holiness.** To state the same truth in a different way, the image of God in man consists in man's rational nature, man's moral nature and man's spiritual nature. Or we may say that man has a mind, a conscience and a capacity for knowing and loving God.

6. Does mankind have the "image of God" at the present day?

Yes. The "image of God" in man remains, but not perfect as it was at the creation. On the contrary, it is marred and broken because of our fall into sin. Yet the broken fragments remain in every human being even today.

7. What is involved in the statement that mankind was created "with dominion over the creatures"?

This divine commission, given to man at the creation, as recorded in Genesis 1:28, includes the whole relationship of mankind to the world of nature, including science, invention and art. Scientific inventions and discoveries are part of the fulfilment of this commission. See Psalm 8:5-8. We should not think that "the creatures" means only animals, birds and fishes; really it means all created things in this world below man himself.

8. What one element of total perfection was lacking in the condition of mankind at the creation?

As created by God, mankind was "subject to fall", that is, it was possible for the human race to fall into sin. Thus the condition of the human race at the creation was not the highest possible condition. The highest condition will be the state of glory when it will no longer be possible for the redeemed to sin.

9. What serious error, contrary to the doctrine of creation, is prevalent today?

The theory of evolution, which denies that mankind was a special creation of God, and holds that the human race developed gradually from a brute ancestry, that is, from the lower animals.

10. What should we think of the theory of human evolution?

(1) Even from the scientific viewpoint it is only a theory, and lacks conclusive proof of its validity. (2) It is clearly contrary to the teaching of the Bible, which unquestionably represents mankind as a special creation of God, wholly apart from the brutes. (3) It is true that the acceptance of evolution as truth often, if not always, leads to a gradual deadening of the conscience and weakening of the sense of moral responsibility. It is entirely true that the recent World War was, in the deepest sense, a result of widespread acceptance of the doctrine of human evolution as the truth, accompanied by a gradual but very real rejection of the Bible, by highly educated people, as their standard of faith and life. The logic involved in this moral decline is really unavoidable **when once the assumption of the truth of human evolution has been made.** If we were not created by God, then we are not responsible to God for our beliefs and actions. If we are not responsible to God for our beliefs and actions, then we are responsible only to our fellow men and to ourselves. In that case there is no absolute, permanent moral standard; what is right and wrong changes with the times and the circumstances. From this position it is but a step to the ideology of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia. The apparently innocent theory of evolution has wrought tremendous havoc in human life. We should always realize that evolution is not merely a biological theory; it is also a philosophy of life held by many.

LESSON 4

Q. 18. What are God's works of providence?

A. God's works of providence are his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures; ordering them, and all their actions, to his own glory.

Scripture References:

Psalm 145:17. God's providence is holy.

Psalm 104:24. Isaiah 28:29. God's providence is wise.

Hebrews 1:3. God's providence is powerful.

Matthew 10:29-31. God governs all his creatures.

Genesis 45:7,8. God controls the actions of his creatures.

Romans 11:36. Isaiah 63:14. God controls all things for his own glory.

Questions:

1. What is the relation of all created things to God?

All created things are always totally **dependent** on God for their existence. No created thing can ever be independent of God.

2. What religious system denies the doctrine of God's providence?

Deism, which holds that God created the universe in the first place, and then left it to work out its own destiny. According to Deism, the universe is like a clock; God made it and wound it up, and since then He has let it alone, and now it is slowly running down in its own way, according to natural laws, and without divine control.

3. Why is the doctrine of Deism a serious error?

Because Deism denies that God has anything whatever to do with the world in which we live today. According to Deism, God and the world parted company ages ago, and therefore we cannot come into contact with God. He cannot answer our prayers, nor can we have communion with him.

4. What important and popular organizations of the present day are largely founded on the doctrine of Deism?

The Freemasons and some other "fraternal" orders, which speak of God as "the Grand Architect of the Universe", are largely based on the Deistic conception of God.

5. Why should Christian people not join these lodges or "fraternal" orders?

There are many good reasons why a Christian should not belong to any secret, oath-bound order; but perhaps the most important reason is that these orders, especially the Masonic order, are founded on the Deistic idea of God, and therefore are really a false religion. The Christian, who holds the Bible doctrine of God, should keep separate from them.

6. What would happen to the whole created universe, including the human race, if God's work of providence were to be withdrawn or suspended for one minute?

The entire universe, and the human race, would instantly cease to exist. It is God's providence that sustains the entire created universe in existence from moment to moment.

7. Prove from the Bible that God's providence controls what are commonly regarded as "chance" happenings.

Matthew 10:29. Proverbs 16:33.

8. Prove from the Bible that the free acts of men are under the control of God's providence.

Genesis 45:8. Proverbs 21:1.

9. Prove from the Bible that even the **sinful** acts of men are under the control of God's providence.

Acts 2:23. Romans 9:17,18.

10. How do the **prophecies** of the Bible show that God's providence controls all that comes to pass?

The Bible contains many prophecies which have already been fulfilled, and others which still wait fulfillment in the future. If God's Providence did not control all things that come to pass, without exception, **predictive prophecy** would be impossible. For unless God controls all things, it would be impossible for him to reveal beforehand what is to come to pass, because forces outside of God's control might change everything, so that the prophecy would not be fulfilled. Only a God who controls absolutely everything can really foretell the future with certainty, accuracy and detail.

11. What is the **end** or **purpose** of God's providence?

The end or purpose of God's providence is the manifesting of God's own glory.

12. What false idea is common today about the end or purpose of God's providence?

Today many people say they want to believe in "a democratic God" who does things, not for his own glory, but for the benefit of the majority of his creatures, or for the greatest good of the greatest number.

13. What should we think of this idea of "a democratic God"?

(1) It is contrary to the doctrine of God revealed in the Bible. (2) It is idolatry, for it sets up a god made in man's image as the object of worship. (3) It overlooks the truth that **the glory of God includes the welfare of his creatures in general;** not the welfare of all of his creatures individually, but of his creatures generally. The non-theistic viewpoint that is dominant in the world today makes the welfare of the creatures, or of humanity, the end or purpose of all things. The theistic viewpoint of the Bible, on the contrary, regards the glory of God as the great end or purpose of all things. According to the Bible, the welfare of the creatures (including humanity) is not the main thing, but rather **the by-product** of the glorification of God.

14. If God's providence controls the actions of human beings, does not this destroy human free will?

No. While it is true, as the Bible clearly teaches, that God's providence controls **all** the acts of human beings, still this does not destroy human free will (more correctly called **free agency**), because God does not control the acts of people **by forcing them to do something against their will,** but by so ordering the facts and circumstances of their lives, and the moral state of their hearts, that they voluntarily, of their own accord, without any constraint, always do exactly what God has foreordained that they are to do.

15. If even the sinful acts of wicked men are controlled by God's providence, does not this make God responsible for their sins?

No, because they sin of their own free will, and are not **forced** to sin by God's providential control. This truth is best understood by considering an actual case, for example the crucifixion of Christ. See Acts 4:27,28, "For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, **for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.**" Herod, Pilate, etc., all acted according to their own desires and free will; God did not force them to commit this sin; yet when they did commit it of their own accord, it all turned out exactly according to the plan of God. The same principle is illustrated in the history of Joseph's brothers selling him into Egypt. They acted freely, according to their own evil wishes and desires; yet what they did, wicked as it certainly was, turned out to be the exact plan of God.

16. How can it be that God foreordains and controls the sinful acts of men, and yet is not responsible for the sin?

This is a mystery which we cannot wholly understand. However the Bible plainly teaches that it is so.

LESSON 5

Q. 19. What is God's providence towards the angels?

A. God by his providence permitted some of the angels, wilfully and irrecoverably, to fall into sin and damnation, limiting and ordering that, and all their sins, to his own glory; and established the rest in holiness and happiness; employing them all, at his pleasure, in the administrations of his power, mercy, and justice.

Scripture References:

Jude 6. 2 Peter 2:4. God permitted some of the angels to fall into sin.

Hebrews 2:16. God provided no way of salvation for the angels that sinned.

John 8:44. These angels sinned wilfully.

Job 1:12. Matthew 8:31. God limited their sins for his own glory.

I Timothy 5:21. Mark 8:38. Hebrews 12:22. God established the rest of the angels in holiness and happiness.

Psalm 104:4. 2 Kings 19:35. Hebrews 1:14. God employs the angels as his servants.

Questions:

1. What was the great difference between the fall of the wicked angels into sin, and the fall of the human race into sin?

In the case of the human race, the sin of one man brought about the fall of the whole race (Romans 5:12). In the case of the angels, since they are not a related race, organically connected with each other, but a large number of separate unrelated individuals, each must have gone through his own probation individually and fallen by his own personal act.

2. What other great difference exists between the fall of the angels and the fall of the human race?

Only part of the angels fell into sin; but in the case of the human race, the whole race fell.

3. What special activities of the fallen angels, or demons, took place in connection with the earthly ministry of our Saviour?

At the time of the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ, when God was most active in executing his plans for the redemption of the human race from sin, Satan and the demons carried on a counter-offensive of desperate activity. Many persons were demon-possessed, that is, demons or fallen angels had entered into them and

taken possession of their personality, using them for wicked purposes. In one case (Matthew 8:31) we read of a great host of demons possessing one man. Christ by his divine power cast out the demons, a sign of the arrival of the kingdom of God.

4. What special activities do the holy angels have in connection with Christian people?

Read Hebrews 1:14.

5. What truth does the Epistle to the Hebrews teach about the angels in relation to Christ?

Read Hebrews 1:4-8. Christ is higher than the angels, for they are only God's servants, whereas Christ is God's Son. When Christ came into the world, the angels worshipped him, indicating that he is higher than they. The angels are created beings; Christ is their divine Creator.

LESSON 6

Q. 20. What was the providence of God toward man in the estate in which he was created?

A. The providence of God toward man in the estate in which he was created, was the placing him in paradise, appointing him to dress it, giving him liberty to eat of the fruit of the earth; putting the creatures under his dominion, and ordaining marriage for his help; affording him communion with himself; instituting the sabbath; entering into a covenant of life with him, upon condition of personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience, of which the tree of life was a pledge; and forbidding to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, upon the pain of death.

Scripture References:

Genesis 2:8, 15, 16. Man placed in paradise, etc.

Genesis 1:28. The creatures placed under man's dominion.

Genesis 2:18. Marriage ordained for man's help.

Genesis 1:28; 3:8. Man originally enjoyed communion with God.

Genesis 2:3. The sabbath instituted.

Galatians 3:12; Romans 10:5; 5:14. The covenant of works instituted.

Genesis 2:9. The tree of life.

Genesis 2:17. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Questions:

1. In what part of the world was "paradise" or the Garden of Eden located?

While the exact location cannot be determined, there can be no doubt that it was in the Near East. Many scholars believe it was in Armenia near the sources of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers; others hold that it was probably near the head of the Persian Gulf.

2. Of the four rivers mentioned in Genesis 2:10-14, which are still known by the same names at the present day?

The Euphrates. Also the river "Hiddekel" is the same as the Tigris river.

3. Why cannot the other two rivers still be identified with certainty today?

Possibly because the great flood in the days of Noah altered the geography of the region.

4. How did God provide for the physical welfare of mankind before the fall?

(a) God provided man with a home, the Garden of Eden; (b) He provided man with wholesome work in the garden; (c) He provided food suitable for the human race; (d) He placed the creatures under man's dominion.

5. How did God provide for the social welfare of mankind before the fall?

By instituting marriage, thus establishing the home or the family, the fundamental social institution of the human race.

6. How did God provide for the spiritual welfare of the human race before the fall?

(a) By affording man communion with God; (b) By instituting the weekly sabbath; (c) By establishing the "covenant of works" or "covenant of life" between God and mankind.

7. Why was the first covenant a covenant of life?

Because by it the human race could have attained eternal life, if Adam had obeyed God.

8. Why is this same covenant often called a covenant of works?

Because it was a plan by which the human race could attain eternal life by works, that is, by perfect obedience to the will of God.

9. Who were the parties to the covenant of works?

The parties were God, who established the covenant, and Adam, the head and representative of the entire human race.

10. What was the condition of the covenant of works?

The condition was perfect obedience to God's revealed will.

11. What particular form did this condition take in the covenant of works?

It took the form of a command not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

12. Why did God command Adam and Eve not to eat 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 fruit of the tree was good in itself. It was not poisonous or harmful in itself. The only reason why Adam and Eve were not to eat it, was just because God had said "Thou shalt not eat of it." So it was a pure test of obedience to God's will.

13. What kind of fruit was this fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil?

We do not know, for the Bible does not tell us. The idea that it was the apple is only a popular legend, without any foundation.

14. What would have been the result if Adam and Eve had obeyed God?

The time would have come when they would have received the right to eat the fruit of the tree of life. Then they would have received eternal life, and it would have become impossible for them ever to commit any sin or to die.

15. How long did this test or probation of Adam and Eve in the covenant of works last?

It lasted from the time that God gave the command until Adam ate the fruit of the tree.

16. How long would this probation have lasted if Adam and Eve had obeyed God?

We do not know, for the Bible does not tell us. However, since it was a test or probation, it could not have lasted forever. The very nature of a probation is temporary, not permanent. There would have come a time when God would announce that Adam and Eve had passed the test successfully and had earned the right to eat the fruit of the tree of life.

17. How long did Adam and Eve live in the Garden of Eden before they ate the forbidden fruit?

We do not know. The Bible says nothing whatever on this point. However, the popular idea that it was only a few days is unfounded. From Genesis 5:3 we know that Adam was 130 years old when Seth was born. It was entirely possible that Adam and Eve may have lived in the Garden of Eden for several years.

18. What was the penalty attached to the covenant of works?

The penalty attached to the covenant of works was death.

19. What was the meaning of death as the penalty of the covenant of works?

Death must have been meant in the fullest, widest sense, including not only the death of the body, but also spiritual death, or alienation from God, and eternal death, which the Bible calls "hell" or "the second death."

20. If Adam and Eve had obeyed God perfectly, how long would they have lived?

They and all their descendants would have lived for ever without dying.

21. How can this be proved from the Bible?

Romans 5:12.

22. If death had not entered the world, and the human race continued to multiply without anyone ever dying, how could the world hold so many people?

No doubt people would have reached a time when God would have taken them to heaven without dying, as he took Enoch and Elijah.

23. How should we answer people who say that it was not fair for God to make Adam the representative of the whole human race?

We should reply as Paul did in answering a similar objection in Romans 9:20, "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?" Sinful human beings have no right to decide what was or was not fair for God to do. God as the Creator of the human race is sovereign and has the right to do as he pleases with all his creatures.

24. Why is this doctrine of the covenant of works very important to us as Christians?

Because it is parallel to the way of salvation through Jesus Christ. Just as the first Adam brought sin and death, so Christ, the second Adam, brings us righteousness and eternal life. Adam was our representative in the covenant of works; Jesus Christ is our representative in the covenant of grace. Those who reject the doctrine of the covenant of works have no right to claim the blessings of the covenant of grace, for the two are parallel, and stand or fall together, as is proved by Romans chapter 5.

LESSON 7

Q. 21. Did man continue in that estate wherein God at first created him?

A. Our first parents being left to the freedom of their own will, through the temptation of Satan, transgressed the commandment of God in eating the forbidden fruit; and thereby fell from the estate of innocency wherein they were created.

Scripture References:

Genesis 3:6-8, 13. The historical account of the fall of the human race.

Ecclesiastes 7:29. Mankind created upright, but later fell into sin.

2 Cor. 11:3. The fall took place through the temptation of Satan.

Romans 5:12. The fall was a definite event involving one particular agent.

I Timothy 2:14. Eve was deceived, but Adam sinned without being deceived.

Questions:

1. Why was it possible for Adam and Eve to sin against God?

God left them to the freedom of their own will, instead of using his almighty power to prevent them from sinning. Since God is almighty, it would certainly have been possible for him to prevent the human race from falling into sin. But God in his wisdom did not choose to prevent the fall. Since God held back his almighty power, and left Adam and Eve to their own free will, it was possible for them to choose to commit sin.

2. What was the difference between the sin committed by Adam and the sin committed by Eve?

Read 1 Timothy 2:14. Eve was deceived by Satan, and thereupon sinned; Adam was not deceived, but disobeyed God anyway.

3. Which sin was worse, the sin of Adam or the sin of Eve?

Undoubtedly Adam's sin was worse than Eve's. It is bad to sin because a person has been deceived by Satan; it is much worse to commit the same sin without having been deceived, that is, fully realizing that it is contrary to God's will.

4. What was the result of our first parents' eating the forbidden fruit?

They immediately realized that they had alienated themselves from God. Instead of enjoying communion with God, they became afraid of God and tried to escape from God, because their conscience told them that they had sinned.

5. What great mystery is involved in the Bible account of the fall?

The problem of the origin of evil in the human race. Since Adam and Eve were created in a state of knowledge, righteousness and holiness, there was no evil in their nature to which temptation could appeal. Since they were created in righteousness, evil had to enter their lives from an outside source. But how could temptation to commit sin make a real appeal to a sinless being? What motive could have more influence in a sinless person than the motive to obey God?

6. What should be our attitude toward this mystery?

We should accept what the Bible teaches about it in simple faith, and recognize that the psychological problem of the origin of evil in the human race is an insoluble mystery. The information which the Bible provides may be summarized as follows: (a) Our first parents were sinless as they came from the hand of God. (b) Sin entered the human race from an outside source, namely, from the temptation of Satan. (c) Satan tempted Eve through appealing to desires which are not sinful in themselves, but morally indifferent (Genesis 3:6), but which it is sinful to gratify by disobedience to a direct command of God. (d) The temptation came to Adam not directly from Satan, but through Eve, who had already sinned. (e) Though the psychological problem is insoluble, there is not the slightest doubt as to the fact that mankind, though created holy, was tempted by Satan and thereupon fell into an estate of sin.

7. What false interpretation of the Bible account of the fall (Genesis 3) is popular today?

The mythical interpretation, which holds that the account of the fall is not a record of historical facts, but a story which grew up in ancient times to explain the presence of sin and death in the world. According to this interpretation, Adam and Eve were not historical persons, nor was there a literal tree of life nor a literal tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It was all the product of poetic fancy, a beautiful story, but not true.

8. What reasons have we for holding that the account of the fall in Genesis 3 is a record of historical facts, to be literally interpreted?

(a) The record itself, being a part of a book of history, is most naturally understood as being historical. (b) Our Lord Jesus Christ regarded it as historical, and Adam and Eve as actual persons, as is shown by Matthew 19:4-6, where he quotes Genesis 2:24 as having actually been spoken by God when he "at the beginning made them male and female." (c) If the account of the fall in Genesis 3 is not literal historical fact, then the apostle Paul's argument in

Romans 5:12-21 is meaningless and worthless, for it assumes the historical character of the record of the fall. Since Romans 5:12-21 forms an essential part of the apostle's argument in the entire epistle, we must conclude that since the Epistle to the Romans is infallibly inspired Scripture, the record of the fall in Genesis 3 must be a record of historical fact.

LESSON 8

Q. 22. Did all mankind fall in that first transgression?

A. The covenant being made with Adam as a public person, not for himself only, but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him in that first transgression.

Scripture References:

Acts 17:26. The organic unity of the human race; all made "of one blood", therefore all the children of Adam.

Genesis 2:16,17, compared with Romans 5:12-21. Adam constituted by God the federal head or representative of the human race, so that his act was determinative for all.

1 Corinthians 15:21, 22. Adam, like Christ, a federal head or "public person."

Questions:

1. To what official position was Adam appointed by God in the covenant of works?

God appointed Adam as "head" or representative of the human race, to undergo the probation of the covenant of works for the whole human race.

2. What Scripture passage most clearly proves that Adam represented his posterity in the covenant of works?

Romans 5:12-21.

3. What is the meaning of the expression: "all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation"?

This expression means: all mankind except Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ descended from Adam, it is true, but not by ordinary generation, for Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary and had no human father. All mankind except Jesus Christ sinned and fell with Adam in his first transgression. The sin of the first Adam brought about the ruin of all mankind except the second Adam.

4. Why is the **first** transgression of Adam specially mentioned?

Because it was the first transgression of Adam that affected the entire human race as the breach of the covenant of works. Only that first sin of Adam is imputed on account of the covenant of works. The rest of Adam's sins committed in his later life, were committed by him simply as an individual person, not as "head" or representative of the human race. The later sins of Adam have nothing to do with us today; therefore the Bible does not even mention them.

5. How should we answer the person who objects to the Bible teaching that Adam, as the representative of mankind, brought sin and suffering on all of us?

Whether we like it or not, the Bible teaches that God deals with humanity on the basis of the principle of representation, both in the covenant of works and in the covenant of grace. The principle of representation functions constantly in ordinary human life and no one objects to it. The United States Congress declares war, and the life of every individual in the country is affected by it. Parents decide where they will live, and the nationality of their children, is determined by it. If it be objected that the people elect their representatives in Congress, whereas we did not choose Adam to be our representative, the answer is: (a) The decisions of lawful representatives are binding whether those represented chose the representatives or not. The acts of Congress affect millions of people who are too young to vote. A child does not choose its own parents, yet its life is largely affected by their actions and decisions. (b) It is true that we did not choose Adam to be our representative, but God chose him: and who could make a wiser, better or more righteous appointment than God? To object to God's appointment of Adam as our representative in the covenant of works is not only to deny the sovereignty of God, but also to set ourselves up as wiser and more righteous than God.

Q. 23. Into what estate did the fall bring mankind?

A. The fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery.

Scripture References:

Romans 5:12. Death the consequence of sin.

Romans 6:23. Death the penalty of sin.

Romans 3:23. Sin is universal in the human race.

Genesis 3:17-19. The curse on the world of nature because of human sin.

Questions:

1. What do we call the estate of mankind before the fall?

(a) The estate of innocency; (b) the estate of original righteousness.

2. Why is sin mentioned before misery in describing the estate into which mankind fell?

Because sin came first, and misery followed afterwards as the result of sin. Sin is the cause of misery; misery is the effect of sin.

3. Which causes the most concern to the human race, misery or sin?

Except for Christian people, the human race is very much concerned about its misery or sufferings, and very little concerned about its sins. And even Christian people are often more concerned about the misery of their condition than they are about their sin.

4. What is the basic error of many non-Christian religions, systems of Philosophy, and human plans for world-betterment?

They all try to find a way to relieve the sufferings of humanity, without first providing a way of deliverance from sin, which is the cause of suffering. All human schemes of betterment which are not founded on redemption from sin through Christ are foredoomed to failure. Permanent relief cannot be obtained by treating symptoms only while ignoring the cause of the trouble.

5. What popular false religion of the present day denies the reality of both sin and misery?

Eddyism, or so-called "Christian Science."

6. What is the error of the modern scientific view of mankind with respect to the condition of the human race?

On the whole modern scientists regard man as he exists today as normal, and decide what is normal in any particular matter, whether physical or psychological, by taking the average of contemporary human beings. Normal health, normal intelligence, normal growth, etc., are all determined in this way. This attitude of regarding the average of present-day humanity as "normal" is contrary to the Bible teaching about mankind having fallen into a condition of sin and misery. According to the Bible, man was normal in the Garden of Eden, as created by God. Having fallen into sin, man became abnormal, and there is not a single normal human being in the world today. The average of contemporary human beings, in any particular matter, is abnormal, that is, diverges from the perfection of man as created by God. In particular, modern science regards old-age and death as normal experiences for human beings, but from the Bible standpoint both of these are strictly abnormal and alien to mankind as created by God.

LESSON 9

Q. 24. What is sin?

A. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, any law of God, given as a rule to the reasonable creature.

Scripture References:

1 John 3:4. Sin is defined as transgression of the law.

Galatians 3:10, 12. Want of conformity is sin, as well as positive transgression.

Romans 3:20. Sin impressed on the mind and conscience by the law of God.

Romans 5:13. Apart from law there could be no sin imputed to men.

James 4:17. The mere failure to do good is sin.

Questions:

1. Where does the Bible come nearest to giving a formal definition of sin?

1 John 3:4, "Sin is the transgression of the law," or as translated in the American Standard Version, "Sin is lawlessness."

2. What is the difference between sin and crime?

Strictly, sin is violation of the law of God; crime is violation of the law of the state. However many old writers used the words "crime" and "criminal" in the sense of "sin" and "sinful."

3. May the same act be both a crime and a sin?

Yes. For example, to commit murder, theft, or perjury.

4. May an act be a sin but not a crime?

Yes. For example, to hate one's brother is a sin against God, but not a violation of the law of the state, for the latter has no jurisdiction over men's thoughts.

5. May an act be a crime but not a sin?

Yes. For example, in Scotland 250 years ago many Covenanters were put in prison and even killed because they assembled to worship God without permission from the king. This was a crime because they violated the law of the state (a wicked and unjust law, in that case), but it was not a sin, because they were obeying God's law by doing it.

6. To what kind of creatures has God given laws?

To his reasonable creatures, that is, to his rational creatures (angels and men).

7. What two kinds of sin does the Catechism speak of?

(a) Negative sin, or want of conformity to God's laws; (b) Positive sin, or trangression of God's laws.

8. What must a person do to be a sinner?

Nothing. Even if there were a person who had never transgressed any of God's laws, still that person would be a sinner, for he would have a sinful want of conformity to God's holy law.

9. What summary of God's law especially stresses the positive sin of transgression?

The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17), eight of which begin with the words "Thou shalt not. . ."

10. What summary of God's law especially stresses the negative sin of want of conformity?

The moral law as summarized by Jesus (Matthew 22:37-39): "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

11. What inadequate definition of sin is often given by those who believe in total sanctification during the present life?

They often define sin as "voluntary transgression of known law."

12. Why is this definition of sin inadequate?

Because it omits two forms of sin: (a) original sin, or the sin of nature with which we are born; (b) the negative sin of want of conformity to God's requirements.

LESSON 10

Q. 25. Wherein consisteth the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell?

A. The sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell, consisteth in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of that righteousness wherein he was created, and the corruption of his nature, whereby he is utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite unto all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually; which is commonly called Original Sin, and from which do proceed all actual transgressions.

Scripture References:

Romans 5:12, 19. The guilt of Adam's first sin imputed to all mankind.

Romans 3:10-19. Mankind universally and totally depraved in sin.

Ephesians 2:1-3. Mankind dead in sin and therefore unable to please God.

Romans 5:6. Mankind spiritually without strength and ungodly.

Romans 8:7, 8. Mankind at enmity with God and cannot please God.

Genesis 6:5. Mankind sinful in imagination and thoughts as well as in deeds.

James 1:14, 15. Original sin the source of actual transgressions.

Matthew 15:19. Sinful deeds proceed from a corrupt and sinful heart.

Questions:

1. What are the two principal kinds of sin?

(a) Original sin, or the sin of nature that we are born with; (b) actual transgressions, or the sin of practice that we do ourselves.

2. Why is only the guilt of Adam's first sin imputed to his posterity?

Adam acted as our representative only until he broke the covenant of works. After he committed his first sin he ceased to have any covenant relationship to us. However he still had a natural relationship to the human race as the first ancestor of all mankind.

3. What righteousness did mankind lose by the fall?

The righteousness in which he was created, or original righteousness.

4. Besides the guilt of Adam's first sin, and the loss of original righteousness, what other evil resulted from the fall?

Man's nature was corrupted so that he became depraved in heart and loved to sin.

5. What is the extent of the corruption of nature that resulted from the fall?

This corruption of nature is complete or total, and is sometimes called "total depravity."

6. Does total corruption of nature mean that the unsaved person cannot do anything good?

No. The unsaved person, by God's common grace, can do things that are good within the civil or human sphere. For example, an unsaved person may save another from drowning, at the risk of his own life. But the unsaved person can do nothing that is spiritually good, that is, nothing truly good and pleasing

in God's sight. He may do things that are good in themselves, but he never does them with a right motive, namely, to love, serve and please God; therefore even the "good" works of the unsaved person are spoiled and corrupted by sin.

7. What is the modern attitude toward the doctrine of total depravity?

Those who pride themselves on their "modern" spirit ridicule and scoff at this truth of God's Word.

8. What practical lesson may we learn from the doctrines of original sin and total depravity?

From these doctrines we should learn the lesson that sins in the outward life proceed from the sin in the heart, and therefore reform of the outward life without spiritual cleansing of the heart cannot lead to a truly good life.

9. Is it possible for a person to save himself from his condition of original sin and total depravity?

No. Jeremiah 13:23 proves that a change in nature is beyond our own power. Because we are not merely sick, but **dead** in trespasses and sins, we are spiritually helpless and unable to save ourselves. A person may reform his outward life to some extent, but he cannot give himself a new heart; he may be able to change his conduct in some respects, but he cannot raise himself spiritually from the dead.

10. What is God's gracious remedy for our condition of depravity and helplessness?

God's gracious remedy for our corrupted and helpless condition is the new birth, also called in Scripture the new creation, the washing of regeneration, quickening, etc. This is a sovereign, supernatural work of God the Holy Spirit on our spirit.

LESSON 11

Q. 26. How is original sin conveyed from our first parents unto their posterity?

A. Original sin is conveyed from our first parents unto their posterity by natural generation, so as all that proceed from them in that way are conceived and born in sin.

Scripture References:

Psalm 51:5. We are conceived and born in a sinful condition.

Job 14:4. Our first parents being sinful, their posterity must be sinful too.

Job 15:14. All mankind are born with a sinful nature.

John 3:6. Natural generation produces only sinful human nature; the new birth produces a new nature.

Questions:

1. Besides being our representative in the covenant of works, what other relationship did Adam have to us?

Besides the federal or covenant relationship, which came to an end when he committed his first sin, Adam also had a natural relationship to us as our first ancestor. This natural relationship continued throughout his life.

2. What has been imputed to us because of Adam's covenant relationship to us?

The guilt of Adam's first sin has been imputed to all of his posterity except Jesus Christ.

3. What have we received from Adam by reason of his natural relationship to us?

We have derived our physical or bodily life from Adam through our parents and more remote ancestors, who descended from him.

4. What was the effect of Adam's first sin on himself?

As a judicial penalty for his violation of the covenant of works, God withdrew from Adam the life-giving influences of the Holy Spirit. The result was, inevitably, moral and physical death. The moment Adam ate the forbidden fruit he became dead in trespasses and sins; at that same moment the principle of death became operative in his physical body, with the certainty that it would return to dust in the end.

5. How is this effect of Adam's first sin on himself paralleled in his descendants?

Every human being is born into the world with the guilt of Adam's first sin reckoned or imputed to him. Therefore because of the broken covenant of works every human being comes into existence morally and spiritually dead, because deprived of the life-giving operations of the Holy Spirit. As for our physical body, the principle of death is at work in it when we are born, so that its return to dust, while by God's common grace it may be delayed, yet cannot be permanently prevented.

6. What is the effect of our beginning our existence morally and spiritually dead?

The effect of our beginning our existence with a depraved and sinful nature, or morally and spiritually dead, is that personal sin and actual transgressions inevitably follow in the course of time.

7. Is it correct to say that we "inherit" a sinful nature from Adam?

It depends on what we mean by the word

"inherit." If we mean that we are born with a sinful nature because of our connection with Adam, our first ancestor, then it is correct to say that we "inherit" a sinful nature from Adam. If we mean that we inherit a sinful nature as we might inherit blond hair or tall stature, then it is not correct to say that we "inherit" a sinful nature from Adam. While we must recognize that the problem of the transmission of original sin is a very difficult one, still it seems safe to say that the Bible does not warrant believing that a sinful nature is transmitted by the mechanism of biological heredity as physical characteristics are transmitted from generation to generation. Sin is a spiritual fact, not a bodily property or characteristic. If original sin were transmitted from parent to child by biological heredity, we would receive it from our immediate parents rather than from Adam. In that case, too, the children of believers would come into the world in a regenerate condition. But as a matter of fact the children of believers are born into the world dead in sin. We may conclude, therefore, that (a) our sinful nature comes to us by reason of our natural birth as descendants of Adam; (b) it comes to us from Adam, rather than from our immediate parents; (c) we "inherit" a sinful nature from Adam as a man might "inherit" money or property from his father or grandfather, not as a person might "inherit" blue eyes or auburn hair from his parents. For a fuller discussion of this difficult subject the reader is referred to A. A. Hodge, "Commentary on the Confession of Faith", on the C. of F., Chap. VI Sec. 3; also G. I. Williamson, **The Westminster Confession of Faith.**

8. What system of doctrine denies the Bible teaching on original sin?

The system of doctrine called Pelagianism, after its founder Pelagius, a British monk who lived in the fourth century after Christ. Pelagius denied that we are born with a sinful nature, and taught that infants are born without sin, and become sinful only by imitating the sins of other persons. Against the heresy of Pelagius, the Bible doctrine of original sin was defended by Augustine. After a long controversy Pelaganism was condemned as false by the Church, and the Bible doctrine was vindicated. During the Middle Ages, however, a modified form of Pelagianism, called semi-Pelagianism, became the dominant doctrine in the Church.

LESSON 12

Q. 27. What misery did the fall bring upon mankind?

A. The fall brought upon mankind the loss of communion with God, his displeasure and curse; so as we are by nature children of wrath, bond slaves to Satan, and justly liable to all punishments in this world, and that which is to come.

Scripture References:

Genesis 3:8-10, 24. By the fall mankind lost communion with God.

Ephesians 2:2, 3. By nature we are the children of wrath.

2 Timothy 2:26. By nature we are bond slaves to Satan.

Genesis 2:17. Lamentations 3:39. Romans 6:23. Because of the fall we are liable to God's punishments in this world.

Matthew 25:41, 46. Jude 7. Because of the fall we are liable to God's punishments in the world to come.

Questions:

1. What was the first misery which the fall brought upon the human race?

The loss of communion with God.

2. How soon after they sinned did Adam and Eve lose communion with God?

Immediately after they sinned.

3. How did they know that they had forfeited communion with God?

Their own conscience, which had become defiled by sin, caused them to realize that a barrier had come between them and God. Genesis 3:7.

4. Can an unsaved person have communion with God today?

Absolutely not. Only through Christ's work of reconciliation can the barrier between God and sinful human beings be removed so that they can have communion with God.

5. How were God's displeasure and curse visited upon Adam and Eve?

(a) God sentenced Adam to life-long labor as the means of existence, until his body should die and be reclaimed by the dust from which it had been taken; (b) God told Eve that her life would be a life of greatly increased suffering; (c) God expelled both Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, prevented them from having access to the tree of life, and appointed for them a perpetual conflict with Satan and the kingdom of evil. Genesis 3:15-20, 22-24.

6. How does our experience parallel that of Adam and Eve after they sinned?

(a) They lost communion with God; we come into the world alienated from God.

(b) The woes pronounced upon Adam and Eve are still the common experience of humanity.

(c) They lost their access to the tree of life,

though its fruit had been almost within their grasp; we are born into the world far from the tree of life, and no human being can ever receive eternal life except through Jesus Christ.

(d) They faced a life of perpetual enmity between themselves and Satan; we too must fight a life-long battle against Satan and against his allies, the world and the flesh.

7. What is meant by saying that we are by nature children of wrath?

This expression, which is taken from Ephesians 2:3, means that we are born into this world with a nature which is sinful and therefore is the object of God's wrath, that is, his righteous displeasure against sin.

8. What is meant by saying that unsaved people are bond slaves to Satan?

This means that God has justly permitted Satan to have a certain power or dominion over all unsaved people, by reason of which they are not spiritually free, but in bondage to sin and Satan, who tyrannizes over their lives and afflicts them both in soul and in body. Satan's activities are strictly limited by God, however. The believer in Christ, while he may be influenced or tempted by Satan, is no longer a slave of Satan, for he has been liberated by the Son of God (John 8:34-36).

9. What truth is implied by the statement that sinners are "justly liable to all punishments in this world, and that which is to come"?

This statement implies the truth that sin involves guilt, for it renders the sinner liable to penalties. Therefore sin is not a mere misfortune or calamity which would call forth the pity of God; nor is it a mere disease which needs to be cured; nor is it a mere moral pollution which needs to be cleansed; it is guilt which deserves punishment and which needs to be forgiven.

10. What is the modern "liberal" attitude toward the doctrines stated in this question of the Catechism?

The modern "liberal" theology denies every one of the truths set forth in the answer to Question 27. (a) Modern "liberalism" teaches that all men are children of God by nature, and therefore anyone can have communion with God by simply realizing that he is already a child of God. (b) "Liberalism" speaks only of the love of God, and objects to the ideas of his displeasure and curse. (c) "Liberalism" follows Pelagius and denies that we are born with a nature that is the object of divine wrath because of its sinfulness. (d) "Liberalism" does not believe in a personal devil, and therefore cannot accept the idea that we are bond slaves to Satan. (e) "Liberalism" defines sin in human or social terms, and therefore rejects the doctrine that sin is guilt before God which deserves divine punishment.

LESSON 13

Q. 28. What are the punishments of sin in this world?

A. The punishments of sin in this world are either inward, as blindness of mind, a reprobate sense, strong delusions, hardness of heart, horror of conscience, and vile affections; or outward, as the curse of God upon the creatures for our sakes, and all other evils that befall us in our bodies, names, estates, relations, and employments, together with death itself.

Scripture References:

Ephesians 4:18. Blindness of heart and mind as a punishment for sin.

Romans 1:28. A reprobate mind a punishment for sin.

2 Thessalonians 2:11. Strong delusions sent by God as punishment for sin.

Romans 2:5. Hardness and an impenitent heart.

Isaiah 33:14. Genesis 4:13. Matthew 27:4. Horrors of conscience one of God's ways of punishing sin.

Romans 1:26. Sinners punished by being given over to vile passions.

Genesis 3:17. God's curse upon the world of nature a penalty for human sin.

Deuteronomy 28:11-68. All calamities, sufferings and evils are punishments for sin.

Romans 6:21, 23. Death itself is the wages, or penalty, of sin.

Questions:

1. What is the spiritual state of the unsaved person?

A state of spiritual deadness which the Catechism calls "blindness of mind."

2. Is the unsaved person responsible for his own blindness of mind?

Yes, for this blindness is itself a punishment for previous sin.

3. What is the meaning of the expression "a reprobate sense"?

This expression implies a full and willing abandonment to sin, with little or no restraint.

4. What is meant by "strong delusions"?

This expression means a firm, confident belief in something which is itself false. For example, the confident faith of the modern world in the evolutionary theory of the origin of the human race is a strong

delusion; the Nazi belief that the Germans are a "super-race" superior by nature to all other races of men was a strong delusion.

5. How can it be right for God to send people "strong delusions", as 2 Thess. 2:11 affirms that he does?

(a) The Bible often speaks of God doing what he actually permits to happen; for example, God withheld the influences of his grace from Pharaoh; the result was that Pharaoh's heart, following its natural inclination, became harder and harder; then in the Scripture it was said that God hardened Pharaoh's heart. If God leaves people to their own ways they will choose lies rather than the truth; in this sense it can be said that God sends them "strong delusions." James 1:13, 14 teaches that God does not himself tempt any man to sin, but he does permit people to be tempted and enticed by their own lusts. (b) God does not send "strong delusions" to deceive innocent or righteous people such as Adam and Eve were before the fall, but only to deceive those who have already corrupted themselves by choosing to sin. All through the Bible God is seen to punish sin by abandoning the sinner to his sin, which always results in even greater and worse sin.

6. What is meant by "hardness of heart"?

This means a condition of moral and spiritual indifference, so that the conscience is no longer sensitive and active, and the person is not affected by calls to repentance nor by the invitations of the gospel. The person who has committed the sin against the Holy Spirit is given over to the most extreme form of hardness of heart.

7. Give some Bible example of people who were given over to "hardness of heart."

(a) Pharaoh. Exodus 14:4, etc. (b) King Saul, I Samuel 16:14, etc. (c) Judas Iscariot. John 13:26, 27.

8. What is the meaning of "horror of conscience"?

The Bible teaches that there is such a thing as hardened sinners becoming greatly afraid of the punishments of sin, even though they are quite complacent about the sinfulness of sin. The fact that they have offended against God does not trouble them, but they are terrified at God's judgments which they know will overtake them. There are accounts of famous infidels being filled with terrors and fear of hell while on their deathbeds.

9. How does Paul in Romans 1:28 explain the presence of vile and gross sins in the world?

These "vile affections" are the result of God abandoning people to their own sinful nature and tendencies, as a punishment for their not "liking to retain God in their knowledge."

10. How should we look upon the present condition of the world of nature?

The whole world of nature is under a curse of God, as we learn from Genesis 3:17-19 as well as other places in Scripture. Floods, dust storms, calamities of all kinds, as well as bad climates, extremes of weather, thorns and thistles, are all part of this curse. We should realize that the world as created by God was quite different from the world as we know it today. We live in an abnormal world, in the wreckage of a world that has been devastated and cursed by sin. Apart from the testimony of the Bible that the world as God made it was "all very good" (Genesis 1:31), modern scientific investigation has proved that there once was a warm climate in northern Alaska and other far northern regions. Fossils of palm leaves and other tropical vegetation have been found in the rocks of the frozen north.

11. In what sense is the curse upon the world of nature a punishment for sin?

In the case of unsaved sinners, the curse upon nature is strictly and simply a punishment for sin. In the case of Christian people, the curse upon nature is not strictly a penalty for sin, for they have been delivered from that by Christ's atonement. Rather, in the case of Christian people, the curse upon nature is to be regarded as a consequence of sin and a part of God's fatherly chastening or discipline by which he prepares us for the life eternal.

12. In what sense is physical death itself a punishment for sin?

Death is called "the wages of sin" (Romans 6:23). Wages means "that which we have earned" or "what we deserve." In the case of the unsaved person, death is simply the wages of sin, a judicial penalty. In the case of the Christian, Christ has already suffered death as his substitute. The Christian still has to die, of course, but in the case of the Christian, death is no longer a penalty. It remains an enemy, but it is not a judicial penalty. Rather, to the Christian death is a change by which God transfers him to the region and the condition of perfect holiness. Thus physical death, to the Christian, is part of God's fatherly discipline. It proceeds not from God's wrath, but from his love, in the case of the Christian.

LESSON 14

Q. 29. What are the punishments of sin in the world to come?

A. The punishments of sin in the world to come, are everlasting separation from the comfortable presence of God, and most grievous torments in soul and body without intermission, in hell-fire forever.

Scripture References:

2 Thess. 1:9. Everlasting separation from the

presence of God.

Mark 9:44-48. Grievous torments in soul and body.

Luke 16:24. The torment of hell-fire.

Revelation 14:9-12. The torments of hell without intermission.

Matthew 5:29, 30. Hell involves bodily suffering.

Matthew 25:41, 46. The punishment of hell equally eternal with the bliss of heaven.

Questions:

1. What three heresies deny the doctrine of eternal punishment for sin?

(a) **Annihilationism,** which teaches that in the case of the unsaved death ends their existence, or else that after suffering a certain duration of punishment for sin they will be annihilated and cease to exist.

(b) **Universalism,** which teaches that all human souls will finally be saved.

(c) **Restorationism,** which teaches that after death the wicked will have a "second chance" to accept salvation, and thus will be saved.

2. How can we answer those who say that the word "eternal" in the New Testament means "age-long", and therefore eternal punishment does not really mean for ever?

Matthew 25:46 is a text which cannot be explained away. "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." In the Greek of this verse, everlasting and eternal are exactly the same word. Therefore if the punishment of hell is not really forever, then neither will the blessedness of heaven be forever. The same Greek adjective is used to describe one as the other. It is unfortunate that the King James Version uses two different words, "everlasting" and "eternal." The Revised Version translates this verse as follows: "And these shall go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

3. What is the main punishment of sin in the world to come?

Beyond question the main or chief punishment of sin in the world to come is "everlasting separation from the comfortable presence of God." The presence of God is what will make heaven a place of blessedness, and separation from God is what will make hell a place of woe.

4. What parable told by Christ proves that memory of life on earth will continue to exist in hell?

The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, Luke 16:19-31, especially verse 25, "But Abraham said, Son remember, that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented."

5. How can it be proved from Scripture that the punishments of hell include the body as well as the soul?

Matthew 5:29, 30, "It is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." Revelation 20:13-15, "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it . . . and whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." (The dead in the sea must mean men's bodies, not their souls). Matthew 10:28, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

6. How can we answer the argument that God is too good and loving to send any of his creatures to hell?

How do we know whether God is good and loving or not? The only way we know about God's goodness and his love is from his written Word, the Holy Bible. But according to the Bible, love is only one among God's attributes. God is love, but it does not follow that God is nothing but love. The Bible teaches that God is also a God of absolute justice. It is God's attribute of absolute justice that finds expression in the eternal punishment of sinners.

7. How should we answer the person who says that the doctrine of hell is contrary to "the spirit of Christ"?

We have no right to define "the spirit of Christ" according to our own imaginations, ideas or preferences. The only way we can know anything about the teachings of Jesus Christ is from his sayings which are recorded in the New Testament. It has been observed that there is more about hell in the teachings of Jesus than in all the rest of the Bible taken together. The person who claims that "the spirit of Christ" is contrary to the doctrine of hell does not want to take all of the teachings of Christ as his standard (far less is he willing to take the whole Word of God as his guide); he wants to pick and choose among Christ's sayings, taking what appeals to him and omitting the rest. The result of this process is that Christ's teaching is warped and twisted to fit a person's own ideas and prejudices.

8. What feature do many false religions of the present day have in common?

The doctrine that there is no hell. There is nothing Satan would rather have men believe than this doctrine that there is no hell.

9. Is it a mistake to urge the fear of hell on people as a motive for believing on Christ as their Saviour?

Certainly fear of hell is not the only motive, nor the highest motive for being a Christian. But the Bible does present this motive over and over again, especially in the teachings of Jesus Christ himself. We conclude

that this motive has its place. It is true that we read in I John 4:18, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment; he that feareth is not made perfect in love." But there is a stage in a person's Christian experience where the motive of fear has its place, and this motive may be used by the Holy Spirit to drive an unsaved person to Christ.

The End.

Selected Christian Verse

The Two Adams

Did Adam **really** live here on the earth
Like you and me except (of course) for birth?
And did he **really** take forbidden fruit
Because a serpent spoke (that should be mute)?

Yes: scripture says "by **one** man" sin came in
And death then came on all who sinned that sin!
And is it true, or not, that you and I
Have part in sin, and then at last must die?

And is there any way that you can see
That we can overcome this tragedy?
No! There just **is** no way — no way at all
To rectify the real historic fall

Except to take the Word of God as true
When it speaks not of **one** Adam but **two**!
For just as **real** Adam brought us low,
A **real** Jesus Christ can grace bestow!

For as the disobedience of **one**
Made **many** to be sinners, even so
By the obedience of Christ **alone,**
Grace **now** reigns to eternal life also.

— G. I. Williamson

The Night I Met My Lord

Each star came out in dress parade;
Tall trees in one accord
Bent low to whisper of their joy,
The night I met my Lord!
In gratitude I humbly knelt
And prayed, "God help me be
A worthy child, now that I have
Joined your great family."
A night bird sang its lovely hymn
Of praise in perfect key.
The moon was lavish with its beams;
It spent them all on me!
The years have brought their joys and tears —
At times defeat, reward,
How treasured still the hours that shone
The night I met my Lord!

— Esther Belle Heins

From on a Cross

God spoke to man not from His Throne;
His Word He did not gloss,
With moving force, with poignancy —
He spoke from on a cross.

God gave to man eternal life,
But this involved a grave,
The Risen Lord, one's faith in Him
And **why** He came to save.

The Why of It is wrapt up in
One word, but one we laud;
We call it **love,** but when divine —
We think of it as GOD!

— Esther Belle Heins

Faith

Faith has no power in itself,
For **God is might,** its source;
Faith is a link connecting us
With His great strength and force.

With souls who know and trust the Christ —
Great problems cannot stay,
God may teach us how to endure;
He may take them away.

If we but keep our eyes on God,
No clouds our path can dim,
For we will bask within His light
By simply trusting Him.

— Esther Belle Heins

Pride and Praise

Pride turns its back on gratitude,
But meekness is the sod
From which thanks blossoms in the rain,
Its face upturned to God.

Praise is the homage of the heart
Which shadows cannot dim,
When rendered to our Lord each day —
How close our walk with Him!

— Esther Belle Heins

Set Your Eyes on Him

(2 Chronicles 20)

Jehoshaphat said to the Lord
When no hope he could see,
"O God, we know not what to do,
Our eyes though, are on Thee!"

God's Spirit came within their midst
Great blessings to imbue,
Thus said the Lord, "Be not dismayed,
For I will be with you."

God's mercy is enduring, sure;
Though paths seem hopeless, dim —
Be of good cheer, call on His Name;
Set now your eyes on Him!

— Esther Belle Heins

Tomorrow's Way

I know not if tomorrow's way
Be steep or rough;
But when His hand is guiding me,
That is enough.
And so, although the veil has hid
Tomorrow's way,
I walk with perfect faith and trust,
Through each today.

The love of God has hung a veil
Around tomorrow.
That we may not its beauty see
Nor trouble borrow.
But, oh, 'tis sweeter far, to trust
His unseen hand,
And know that all the paths of life,
His wisdom planned.

— Author Unknown

Shadowed by the Cross

So brief a time, Christ's ministry;
And marked with grief and pain,
He suffered at Gethsemane —
At Calvary was slain.

Each milestone on our Saviour's path
He counted not as loss,
From manger to the grave His way
Was shadowed by the cross.

The shadow that has touched my Lord
Will ever lovely be!
It only fell upon God's Son —
Because He so loved me!

— Esther Belle Heins

Some Noteworthy Quotations

"There are three things, which if Christians do, they will prove mistaken: if they look for that in themselves which is to be had in another, namely, RIGHTEOUSNESS; if they look for that in the law which is to be had only in the gospel, namely MERCY; if they look for that on earth which is to be had only in heaven, namely PERFECTION."

Philip Henry

"Taking the line of least resistance makes rivers and men crooked."

Anonymous

"God is the one circumstance of my life."

J. Hudson Taylor

"There are four things which I would not for all the world have against me, namely, the Word of God, my own conscience, the prayers of the poor, and the account of godly ministers."

Philip Henry

"Be on your guard against the tendency of this generation, to paste a bit of blank paper over all the threatenings of the Bible."

Alexander Maclaren

"You must not fancy, then, that God sits helplessly by while the world, which He has created for Himself, hurtles hopelessly to destruction, and He is able only to snatch with difficulty here and there a brand from the universal burning. The world does not govern Him in a single one of His acts: He governs it and leads it steadily onward to the end which, from the beginning, or even a beam of it had been laid, He had determined for it."

B. B. Warfield

Prayer flies where the eagles never flew.

Thomas Guthrie

Trouble and perlexity drive me to prayer, and prayer drives away perplexity and trouble.

Philip Melanchthon

Prayer is the breath of a new-born soul and there can be no life without it.

Rowland Hill

Prayer is a powerful thing for God has bound and tied Himself thereto.

Martin Luther

"I consider that the chief dangers that confront the coming century (the twentieth century) will be: Religion without the Holy Ghost; Christianity without Christ; forgiveness without God; and heaven without hell."

General Booth

"No one will doubt that Christians of today must state their Christian belief in terms of modern thought. Every age has a language of its own and can speak no other. Mischief comes only when, instead of stating Christian belief in terms of modern thought, an effort is made, rather, to state modern thought in terms of Christian belief."

B. B. Warfield

"If men must have a reconciliation of all conflicting truths before they will believe any; if they must see how the promises of God are to be fulfilled before they will obey his commands; if duty is to hang upon the satisfying of the understanding, instead of the submission of the will, — then the greater number of us will find the road of faith and the road of duty blocked at the outset."

J. Oswald Dykes

Those are fittest to be employed for God who are low in their own eyes and are made deeply sensible of their own weakness and unworthiness.

Matthew Henry

"Souls are not saved by 'systems' but by the Spirit of God. Organizations without the Holy Spirit are like mills without power. Methods and plans without the grace of God are pipes without water, lamps without oil, banks without money. Even a church that has an orthodox creed and accepts the Biblical standards is as useless as are clouds without rain until power comes from God."

Charles H. Spurgeon

"For whithersoever the soul of man turns itself, unless towards Thee, it is fastened upon sorrows, even though it is fastened upon things beautiful outside of Thee and itself."

Augustine of Hippo

"Men nowadays cheerfully give up the substance, but never the name of Christianity."

B. B. Warfield

Reviews of Religious Books

The favorable reviewing of a book here does not imply approval of its entire contents. Purchase books from your book dealer or from the publishers. Do not send orders for books to **Blue Banner Faith and Life.**

DARWIN RETRIED, by Norman Macbeth. Gambit, Incorporated, 53 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. 02108. 1971, pp. 178. $6.95.

The author is a New York lawyer, a graduate of Harvard Law School, who has for many years followed the promotion of evolutionary theory by scientists and their publicizers. The author is not a Christian; rather, he is a skeptic who rejects the Biblical doctrine of creation as a "fairy-tale philosophy" (dust jacket) and who therefore has no religious axe to grind. The subtitle is "An Appeal to Reason", and the book is just that — a searching critique of the alleged proofs and evidences of the ordinary theory of evolution, commonly called macro-evolution, mega-evolution or the general theory of evolution.

Many weak and unconvincing arguments do not make one strong and cogent one, and the author clearly shows that evolutionary theory of the present day is weak and unconvincing just at the points where it needs to be strong and convincing. What is commonly called "micro-evolution" (really just changes within the "kinds" which God created) can be accepted by the Christian without difficulty, but it is sheer guesswork to hold that the same kind of genetic processes produced the major categories of living organisms, including mankind. This is the real weak spot in evolutionary argument, and author Macbeth shows that just here they are taking a dubious leap of faith rather than following convincing evidence.

When asked what alternative he has to propose in place of the common evolutionary theory, the author replies that he is not a scientist and does not have to provide an alternative theory. He is only concerned to show that the evidence does not substantiate the commonly accepted theory of general or mega-evolution. If the facts do not support the theory, then the theory is wrong and must be changed or abandoned!

While the title of the book speaks of Darwin, in point of fact the author is dealing with the Synthetic theory of evolution as it is widely held at the present day. His style often is witty, his analysis is keen and his argumentation is devastating. This book should be widely circulated, publicized and read. For one thing, it proves that opposition to present-day evolutionary theory is not confined to a fragmented minority of narrow-minded "fundamentalist" Christians, for here is a man who opposes it entirely apart from religious bias, on strictly rational grounds. Needless to say, the apologetic value of the book for Christian believers is greatly increased by the fact that the author is a skeptic and cannot be charged with religious bias.

This book should be in church libraries. It will prove of great use and value to anyone working with college or university students. The price is high for the number of pages, but the value far outweighs the price. It may help to undo much of the harm done by the evolutionistic brainwashing to which young people of our time have been subjected in our public educational system.

—J. G. Vos

THE ART OF UNDERSTANDING YOUR MATE, by Cecil Osborne. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506. 1970, pp. 192, $4.95.

This is an interesting book which can provide many helpful insights concerning the very real and often basic differences between the husband and the wife. These differences cover the whole range of physical, emotional and psychological. It is the view of the author that because of these basic differences all marriages are to some extent incompatible. Consequently, he also believes that all marriages, or at least "almost any marriage" (Chap. 7), can be improved.

The book is written primarily from a psychological viewpoint. While the author apparently applies Scriptural principles in his counseling, the main emphasis in the book is toward personal and especially group counseling. The book is filled with many interesting illustrations taken from case histories as well as many pertinent quotations.

The chapter topics are: Marriage Can Be Wonderful — and Frustrating!; Male and Female Differences; Women's Needs and Problems; The Human Male; Conflicts That Mar Marriages; Incompatibility in Marriage; Almost Any Marriage Can Be Improved; Ten Commandments for Wives; Ten Commandments for Husbands; Eight Types of Neurotic Husbands; Eight Types of Neurotic Wives; Incompatibility and Paradoxes in Marriage; and Love.

—Jerrold S. Milroy

AN ALL-ROUND MINISTRY, by C. H. Spurgeon. The Banner of Truth Trust, 78b Chiltern Street, London, W.1. England. 1960, pp. 396. 10 s. 6 d.

Aside from the soundness of his theology and the forcefulness of his preaching, probably the most helpful aspect of his preaching is its timeliness. This book is no exception. Although these addresses were given a century ago the content is fresh for today. Some may find them a bit long and wordy, but those willing to take the time to read will find their efforts well rewarded.

This book is made up of twelve addresses given to ministers attending annual conferences presided over by Spurgeon. The content then was designed to strengthen and encourage men in the pastorate. Topics include: Faith; Forward!; A New Departure; Strength in Weakness; Stewards; and many others.

—Jerrold S. Milroy

INTERPRETING GOD'S WORD TODAY, ed. by Simon Kistenmaker. The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Nutley, N.J. 07110. 1970, pp. 313. $6.95.

This is a commendable study on the subject of the modern interpretations of the Scriptures. The work is a symposium by seven writers of a Presbyterian and Reformed persuasion. The writers carefully examine the claims of various modern schools of interpretations against the claims that the Scriptures make for themselves. In my judgment, the writers of this symposium have rightly understood the intent of the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures.

The most exciting presentation was written by James C. De Young on "Event and Interpretation of the Resurrection." De Young argues against those scholars who deny or re-interpret the resurrection to mean less than the physical resurrection of the crucified Jesus. He says,

> "The interpretation of the resurrection is not a matter of our contemporary wisdom, or of apostolic meditation, but rather of God's revealed interpretation as we find it in the New Testament. . . .The N.T. sees the resurrection of Jesus as a confirmation of His person and a vindication of His prior claim to sonship and Messiahship. . . .We have seen that all of what Jesus is as Christ, Lord, Savior, Judge, and Redeemer is confirmed by His resurrection." pp. 166-175.

The book is recommended for your study.

—Edward A. Robson

REVELATION, by Donald Grey Barnhouse. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506. 1971, pp. 432.

This book has as its sub-title An Expository Commentary; 'God's Last Word.' Dr. Barnhouse has obviously exercised independence of judgment in his interpretation of a difficult portion of Scripture.

Like one or two others, the author claims to have found the key that makes the Book of Revelation easy to understand. The puzzling thing is that those who are convinced they have found this key have sometimes arrived at vastly different conclusions.

There is much of value in this commentary. Much of the Christian teaching in, for example, the portion dealing with the seven churches, is pointedly applied and vigorously pressed home on the reader.

On the other hand, even the letters to the churches have to suffer as a result of the Dispensationalist views of the author. There are such expressions as . . . 'by the time the Pergamos stage was reached' . . . . We believe that Biblical interpretation always suffers when everything is cut to fit into the Dispensationalist pigeon-hole.

The author has no hesitation in telling us that . . 'His' (the Lord's) 'second coming is at least seven years long.' It is sometimes difficult to know how such teaching can be derived from the special portions of Scripture under consideration.

Another feature of this book is the way in which support for the pre-millenarian view is found in words that we would never suspect of containing such teaching. For example, the verse: . . . 'Thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation' . . . (Rev. 5:9), is followed by the comment: — 'Here then is yet another proof that the church shall not pass through the Tribulation' . . . .

The last two chapters were written by Dr. Ralph L. Keiper, and one cannot but say that he was in complete sympathy with the views of Dr. Barnhouse, especially on the Eschatological teaching of the Revelation.

In an appendix mostly taken up with a defense of the pre-millenarian position, we read that: 'the nineteenth century and the first third of the present century witnessed the practical death of the post-millenial idea.' This speaks for itself, and one is forced to the conclusion that the book is not at all a safe guide to a sound understanding of the Book of Revelation.

—Donald Gillies

JERUSALEM AND ATHENS, edited by E. R. Geehan. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Box 185, Nutley, New Jersey, 07110. 1971, pp. 498. $8.95.

This book may well prove to be the most important book published in 1971 for Reformed Theology and Philosophy students, pastors and concerned readers. No less than twenty-five eminent Christian writers provide the resources for this critical discussion of the Theology and Apologetics of Cornelius Van Til. Dr. Van Til is probably the best known and most consistently Reformed Apologist of the twentieth century.

The introduction is a non-philosophical statement by Dr. Van Til of his own thought, "My Credo." Dr. Van Til was asked to respond to any essay he felt necessitated one; he responds to fourteen essays. Therefore, this book is valuable both to the novice and the student, the ardent student, of Theology and Apologetics.

There is so much helpful material in this book that it is well worth the $8.95. I recommend that this book be bought and read until the covers fall off from use!

—Bruce R. Backensto

HOW TO BEGIN AN EVANGELISTIC BIBLE STUDY, by Ada Lum. Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois 60515. 1971, pp. 33. $.75.

This expensive booklet is a good introduction to small group evangelism. It contains many helpful suggestions.

—David R. Armstrong

COMMUNION MEDITATIONS AND PRAYERS, by J. Harold Gwynne. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1969, pp. 103. $2.95.

This slim volume, attractively bound and printed, consists of twenty-five short meditations which the author has selected from the many such messages he has preached at Communion services in his forty years of ministry in the Presbyterian Church. After each meditation there is a brief appropriate prayer.

The author hopes that the book will be read especially by office-bearers who assist in administering the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, so that they may have further understanding of the meaning of the Sacrament, and also by young ministers, who may be helped by the book in preparing their own Communion addresses.

The messages are Scripture-based, evangelical and devotional and in every instance centered round Christ's substitutionary sacrifice on Calvary, our salvation by faith in Him, and our duty to serve Him.

The book is not doctrinal by any means, but can be recommended for its warm evangelical emphasis.

—C. M. Macfarlane

C. S. LEWIS: SPEAKER AND TEACHER, by Carolyn Keefe (ed.). Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506. 1971, pp. 144. $3.95.

For lovers of C. S. Lewis this welcome addition brings fresh Lewis quotations. Comments by six authors cast new light on his tastes and habits. The book is sometimes tedious. Because the authors are not Reformed they do not notice certain inconsistencies in Lewis. To the Reformed reader Lewis was great in a poetic sense, using analogy and metaphor, seeing beyond visible things. But analogy is seldom rigorously logical. Hence Aslan is sovereign but man is autonomous. Lewis halted between grace and free will as if Paul, Augustine, Luther, and Calvin had not exegeted scripture. On miracles he hesitates between a sovereign God and natural law.

—Howard Long

THE PARADOX OF PAIN, by A. E. Wilder Smith. Harold Shaw Publishers, Wheaton, Ill. 60187. 1971, pp. 132. $1.95.

This is no "there are others suffering more" type

of answer to the enigma of human pain and suffering, nor "think of the relief when it stops", neither does it plead the asceticism approach that suffering is good in itself. It is rather, directed toward the existential and irrational cult's influences of our day, which holds that we live in an irrational world and we simply cannot expect to find meaning and logical reasons for suffering. That the irrational approach is a live option being embraced by multitudes today — albeit often unknowingly as a deliberate and conscious choice, one need only note the popularity of authors such as Sartre, Huxley, Camus (also Fitzgerald and Hemingway).

One would not blame the architect and builder of a medieval cathedral as being without a rational and meaningful plan, because of gaping bomb damage suffered centuries after architect and builder had left the scene. So, says Wilder Smith, people who point to the ugliness, the injustice and suffering in our world, as evidence that it is without meaningful explanation, are themselves irrational. Suffering, he says, has a vital, necessary and beneficial place in the experience of an individual today, just as surely as it had in the experience of Jesus Christ, "made perfect by the things which he suffered."

The book, however, leaves several questions, so far as the explanations go. The picture of Christ's suffering in Gethsemene (p. 102) as merely the struggle to be obedient in the face of "the terrible reality of a bloody death on the tree", seems hardly to measure up to the temptations "in all points" like ours, since part of our most intense suffering stems from a lack of knowledge of just what the secretive will of God is in the particular circumstance. Jesus prayed, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me," and further, "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, neither the angels, no, not the Son . . ." (Mark 13:32)

Further, the "eternal state" suggested of Adam and Eve, when "reproduction . . . was not necessary — and, indeed, would probably have been an anachronism", calls for some comment on God's command before the fall (Gen. 1:28) to "be fruitful and multiply."

Finally, the matter of man's "free-will" and "predestination" is "solved" by the age old method of saying that man's negative choices toward the gospel were "fore known" but "not **determined**." Yet, if they are "fore known" by God, they are certain and cannot be otherwise. How does that ease the pressure on man's "free will?" Wilder Smith admits that in Scripture predestination and free will exist side by side, and do not cancel out one another. Why not let the matter rest at that point, where Scripture lets it rest? "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." (Acts 2:23)

—Lester E. Kilpatrick

OF THINGS WHICH MUST SOON COME TO PASS: A Commentary on the Book of Revelation, by Philip Mauro. Reiner Publications, Swengel, Pa. 17880. 1971, pp. 623. $6.95.

The major part of this book was published in 1925, and the author has since made revisions and additions.

Mr. Mauro is also the author of several other books.

Whether or not we agree with his interpretation of Revelation, no reader of intelligence should deny his immense wealth of ideas and evangelical fervour. This book should be in the hands of every preacher who aims to lecture or preach on Revelation.

Mr. Mauro states that he is not in agreement with post or pre-millenarians, nor with a-millenarians either; and his viewpoint is neither preterist, historicist, nor futurist. His views on these points just go to show us that an immense amount of labour has gone into the making of this valuable commentary.

—Wallace Nicholson

ENCOUNTER WITH BOOKS, A Guide to Christian Reading, H. D. Merchant Ed. Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Ill. 60515. 1971, pp. 262, paperback. $3.50.

With about 70 contributors, from various ecclesiastical and theological orientation, it is natural that this is an uneven index. It is, nevertheless, a somewhat useful reference to guide the Christian as he begins reading in a new area of interest. Major areas of concern are: Bible, Christian Doctrine, Christian Witness, Christian Life, Christian Ethics, Defense of the Faith, Humanities and the Arts and a Supplement. Books marked with an asterisk have the special recommendation of the Editor, and in these selections we frequently disagree. Yet for a mature Christian, grounded in the Reformed Faith, this is a handy volume and a useful guide.

—G. I. Williamson

DOES GOD STILL GUIDE? by J. Sidlow Baxter. Zondervan Publ. Co. Grand Rapids, Mich., 49506. 1971, pp. 191. $4.95.

"If there is one thing more than another which our tense and nervous age needs" says the author "it is a guidance more than human." Agreed: but does this book give us real help in understanding how we can get this guidance? No, unfortunately it does not. "Only recently we were in the company of certain ministers who, as champions of the divine sovereignty, insisted that every flap of every bird's wings, every quiver of every blade of grass in every evening breeze, every accident on the roads, every detail of human life, was rigidly forefixed in the inexorable decrees of the divine sovereignty! Such a view of the world and of human history, of course, not only makes life a vast prison, it utterly excludes any such concept as that of guidance; for guidance necessarily implies human freedom. If everything is immutably forefixed, I do not need guidance. Even if I ask for guidance, my very asking for

it has been predetermined! Oh, dear! Such a theology is stifling." (p. 53) Yes it is stifling to man's vaunted pride and the myth of 'freedom' which is beyond the control of God the Almighty. But how can a God who does not control all things really guide anyone? How can he guide me today when He must "improvise, re-fashion, and eventually bring about the pre-intended ultimate by an alternative route?" (p. 25). No, it is only too painfully evident that J. Sidlow Baxter darkens counsel in this book. Definitely not recommended.

—G. I. Williamson

THE SINGING OF THE PSALMS IN THE WORSHIP OF GOD, by G. I. Williamson. Scottish Reformed Fellowship, c o Frankland, 3 Montpelier Terrace, Edinburgh, Scotland. 31 pages. Price 10p.

This booklet is a reprint of material originally contributed by the author to the Blue Banner Faith and Life. It is a plea for the restriction of the material of praise in public worship to that which is provided by God Himself in Holy Scripture, namely, the Book of Psalms. The author takes the Reformed Confessional view here and does so, as he makes clear, because he believes that this view is the one to which a careful study of the subject, in the light of Scripture, leads. He expounds his thesis with cogency and logical clarity, and very effectively answers the objections to the exclusive use of the Psalms in public worship.

This booklet is well worth reading and pondering. It is attractively finished.

(This review is taken from the **Monthly Record of the Free Church of Scotland**).

Contributions Received

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, 1972. No. 2390, $10.00. No. 2391, $400.00.

April, 1972. No. 2392, $5.00. No. 2393, $5.00.

May, 1972. No. 2394, $100.00.

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. All contributions by donors in U.S.A. are deductible from taxable income. Increased printing and postage costs mean that more than ever we are dependent, under God, on contributions from friends and readers.

J. G. Vos, Editor and Manager
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Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania 15010, U.S.A.

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Some Observations on the Theory of Evolution. Article from the April-June 1963 issue. Single copy free. 3 cents per copy, 25 cents per dozen, postpaid.

Studies in the Covenant of Grace. 35 Bible lessons from the 1967 issues of the magazine. Obtainable at $1.00 plus postage from Reformed Presbyterian Board of Education and Publication, 738 Rebecca Ave., Pittsburgh, Pa. 15221. **Do not send orders for this item to Blue Banner Faith and Life.**

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A Christian Introduction to Religions of the World. 78 page paperback book from the 1964 issues of the magazine. Obtainable at $1.50 plus postage from Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St., S.E., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. **Do not send orders for this item to Blue Banner Faith and Life.**

Syllabus on Biblical Doctrine used at Geneva College. 75 pages. Contains reprints of many articles

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Christian Missions and the Civil Magistrate in the Far East. 24 page reprint from **The Westminster Theological Journal.** Free. Postage 8 cents. Order from Blue Banner Faith and Life.

Why Psalms? Article by the Rev. G. I. Williamson from January-March 1971 issue. $3.00 per 100 postpaid. Order from Timely Tracts, 6321 Ulysses, Wichita, Kansas 67219. **Do not send orders for this item to Blue Banner Faith and Life.**

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"Some say fundamentals are few; believe them and live well, and then you shall be saved. This is as if a man in a building should be only careful to lay a good foundation, no matter for the roof, windows or walls. If a man should come and unroof your house, and tell you: 'Friend, I have left you the foundation, the main buttresses are safe', you would not take it well. Why should we be more careless in spiritual things?"

Thomas Manton

And Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees.

Wm. Cowper

Believers have power with God. Their prayers control the world.

Charles Hodge

Prayers are but empty sounds, if unattended by hope, from which, as from a watch-tower, we quietly look out for God.

John Calvin

The promises are not made to strong faith but to true.

Thomas Watson

He that will not spare time from his present business for his future blessedness is like to lose both.

George Swinnock

Cain's envy hatched murder.

Wm. Gurnall

Other men's welfare is the envious man's wound.

Wm. Jenkyn

During the last fifty years very little has been heard about the wrath of God.

Dr. D. M. Lloyd-Jones

In prayer it is better to have a heart without words than words without a heart.

John Bunyan

The Incomparable King

By J. G. Vos

It has been correctly observed that Christ's three offices correspond exactly to man's deepest needs. His office of Prophet meets man's need for certainty in knowledge of truth. His office of priest meets man's need for forgiveness and righteousness in the face of his utter sinfulness. His office of king meets our need for a valid and truly challenging aim or goal in life.

A cartoon used years ago in the Spanish civil war showed a soldier lying on the ground, wounded and bleeding. In the background the smoke of battle was seen against the walls of a city. Underneath was a caption which read: "I am dying for a cause. What are you living for?" Christ's kingly office challenges our loyalty and devotion, or allegiance, to Him and His cause. It is the remedy for (1) an aimless life, and (2) a self-centered life.

The person who lacks an aim in life is living a useless life. He is really a sort of human vegetable. Walt Whitman in "Passage to India" asks, "Have we not stood here like trees in the ground long enough?" God created us to be active beings, to have an aim and a goal in life and to live, work and strive toward that goal. The person without an aim or goal is only drifting. Almost, if not quite, as bad is the person who has an inadequate aim or goal. The self-centered person is always lonely and unhappy. The socially-centered life is better than the self-centered life, perhaps, but still it is not aimed at the true goal, which is the Kingdom of God, of which Jesus Christ is the incomparable, perfect King.

Christ came to save us from having a wrong aim as well as from having no aim at all. It is the paradox of Christianity that self-sacrifice leads to self-fulfilment. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal" (John 12:24, 25).

Christ's priestly function brings us forgiveness and new life in order that we may no longer wander around in aimless drifting, or stand sluggishly like trees anchored to the ground, but may by day pursue an aim, striving toward a goal — His Kingdom, the great goal of human life.

In the Lord's Prayer we pray "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." Can you really pray this prayer and still drift aimlessly from day to day? Christian self-denial does not mean primarily to deny yourself **things** — it means to deny **self** as the supreme aim in life. It is possible to deny onesself things without in the least denying **self.** This goes deep — it concerns what you are really living for. To deny self does not mean an ascetic denial of the natural and social values and relationships of human life; rather, it means a new orientation of the motives and direction of life.

"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again" (2 Cor. 5:14, 15).

— The Goal Post

The Bible knows nothing of proud, selfish, covetous, impure Christians. Christians are partakers of a holy calling; they are saints, the sanctified in Christ Jesus; they have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts; they hunger and thirst after righteousness.
Chas. Hodge

The believing man has the Holy Spirit; and where the Holy Spirit dwells, He will not suffer a man to be idle, but stirs him up to all exercises of piety and godliness and of true religion, to the love of God, to the patient suffering of afflictions, to prayer, to thanksgiving and the exercise of love toward all men.
Martin Luther

We may sin in being overmuch troubled at things for which it is a sin not to be troubled.
Richard Sibbes

The life that is too busy for worship is busier than God ever meant it to be.

Rest is not a hallowed feeling that comes over us in church; it is the response of a heart set deep in God.
Henry Drummond

Even we ourselves had never taken in the light of Christ's glory, had it not burst upon us by the same power that made the light to arise at the beginning on this dark world (II Cor. 4:6).
Dr. David Brown

Christ's cross is the sweetest burden that ever I bore; it is such a burden as wings are to a bird, or sails to a ship, to carry me forward to my harbor.
—Samuel Rutherford

Printed in the United States of America by the Patterson Press, Winchester, Kansas 66097

BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

VOLUME 27 OCTOBER—DECEMBER, 1972 NUMBER 4

SCRIPTURE AND THE "MODERN" ATTITUDE.....133

ARMINIANISM AND SOVEREIGN GRACE.....134

THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION IN MODERN ENGLISH.....136

STUDIES ON THE PLAN OF SALVATION.....137

REVIEWS OF RELIGIOUS BOOKS.....169

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Subscription $2.50 per year postpaid anywhere

J. G. Vos, Editor and Manager
3408 7th Avenue Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania 15010, U.S.A.

Editorial Committee: D. Howard Elliott, Marion L. McFarland, Wilbur C. Copeland
Published by
The Board of Publication of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America

Overseas Agents
Britain and Ireland: The Rev. Adam Loughridge, D.D., 429 Cregagh Road, Belfast BT 6 O. LG, Northern Ireland
Australia and New Zealand: The Rev. Alexander Barkley, B.A., 2 Hermitage Road, Newtown, Geelong, Victoria, Australia

Known Office of Publication - Box K, Winchester, Kansas 66097, U.S.A.
Published Quarterly. Second Class Postage Paid at Winchester, Kansas 66097

Jerusalem The Golden

By Bernard of Cluny, about A.D. 1145.

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!

Translated by John Mason Neale (selected stanzas)

BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

VOLUME 27 OCTOBER—DECEMBER, 1972 NUMBER 4

Scripture and the "Modern" Attitude

Exemplified by Selected Verses from Psalm 119

Compiled by J. G. Vos, Professor
Geneva College

The Holy Bible	The "Modern" Attitude
53. Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the wicked that forsake Thy law.	What is there to be horrified about? They aren't wicked; they are just mature people with courage to reject outmoded tabus.
63. I am a companion of all them that fear Thee, and of them that keep Thy precepts.	I am a companion of people who forget God. I find such people congenial.
89. For ever, O Lord, Thy Word is settled in heaven.	The Bible needs to be changed to make it fit human desires and preferences.
97. O how love I Thy law! It is my meditation all the day.	I don't love it at all. In fact many a day passes without my giving it a serious thought.
101. I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep Thy Word.	I allow my feet to walk in the prevailing trend of the times. I don't want to be considered out-of-date.
105. Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.	My decisions and actions are motivated by the modern man-centered view of life.
126. It is time for Thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void Thy law.	Nonsense! God loves everybody. He is a realist and expects us to live in the 20th century.
136. Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not Thy law.	Tears of repentance are foreign to my experience. I want to be positive, not negative.
158. I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved, because they kept not Thy Word.	"Transgression" is an outmoded idea. When I saw what the "transgressors" were doing, I was glad, because it showed their emancipation from legalistic ideas of ethics.
160. Thy Word is true from the beginning; and every one of Thy righteous judgments endureth for ever.	Truth is relative, not absolute. It changes with times and situations. How can a law over 3,000 years old be relevant today?
162. I rejoice at Thy Word, as one that findeth great spoil.	I couldn't care less about the Bible. My thinking and values are different.
163. I hate and abhor lying: but Thy law do I love.	I am a mature modern and am free from outworn inhibitions. What I hate and abhor is being fenced in by rules not of my own making; what I really love is to follow my own inclinations.
176. I have gone astray like a lost sheep: seek Thy servant; for I do not forget Thy commandments.	There is no real standard to stray from. God's "commandments" are only outmoded ancient tabus. Why bother about them? I don't want to be "sought"; I only want God to leave me alone.

Comment on the foregoing tabulation: Modern man is in rebellion against God. Especially modern man is in revolt against the authority of the Bible as the Word of God. The "modern" attitudes shown in the right-hand column are in contrast to the inspired religious and ethical norms of Psalm 119 and of the Bible as a whole. It is sad but only too true that many of these "modern" rebellious attitudes are found among nominal Christians and even among people who are members in good standing in evangelical and Reformed churches. Satan uses the spirit of the world or the age to erode the faithfulness and vitality of the visible Church. Only by awareness of Satan's devices can the Christian and the Church guard against them. Dear reader, where do you stand? Do you realize that the world-view subtly communicated by the popular magazines and media is in rebellion against God? Or do you absorb it in slumbering unawareness that it is the antithesis of real Bible Christianity?

—Editor.

Arminianism and Sovereign Grace in Salvation

By J. G. Vos

Many present-day Christians are confused about the Bible doctrine of God's sovereign grace in the salvation of sinners. Certainly many who think they are following the teaching of Scripture are actually holding a view rooted in human reason rather than in the Word of God — a view which sets man's freedom of choice above God's eternal counsel as the ultimate decisive factor in human salvation. This view has had various names in the history of Christianity; the name most commonly used is Arminianism.

The name "Arminianism" comes from **Arminius,** which in turn is the Latinized form of the Dutch name Hermanns 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. Arminians, 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 by 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.

The Westminster Confession of Faith in Modern English

Prepared by Dr. James A. Hughes

(Continued from last issue)

Chapter XXV Of the Church

I. The catholic or universal church, which is invisible, consists of all the elect who have been, are or shall be gathered into one organism, under Christ its Head; and it is the spouse, the body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all.

II. 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 who profess the true religion, together with their children; and it is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the household and family of God, outside which there is not ordinarily any possibility of salvation.

III. To this catholic visible church Christ has given the ministry, Scriptures and ordinances of God, for the gathering and strengthening of the saints in this life, till the end of the world; and by His own presence and Spirit, according to His promise, He makes them effectual to the gathering and strengthening of the saints.

IV. The catholic church has been sometimes more, sometimes less, visible. And particular churches, which are members of the visible church, are more pure or less pure, according to whether the doctrine of the gospel is taught and embraced, the ordinances administered and public worship performed in a more pure or less pure manner in them.

V. The purest churches on earth are subject both to admixture and error; and some have so degenerated that they have ceased to be churches of Christ and have become synagogues of Satan. Nevertheless, there shall always be a church on earth to worship God according to His will.

VI. The Lord Jesus Christ is the only Head of the church; the Pope of Rome cannot in any sense be its head: rather he is the antichrist, the man of sin and son of perdition, who exalts himself in the church against Christ and against all that is called God.

Chapter XXVI Of the Communion of Saints

I. All saints, who are united to Jesus Christ their Head by His Spirit and by faith, have fellowship with Him in His graces, sufferings, death, resurrection and glory. And being united to one another in love, they have fellowship in one another's gifts and graces; and they are obligated to perform the duties, public and private, which are conducive to their mutual good, both spiritually and physically.

II. Saints, as saints, are obligated to maintain a holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God and in performing such other spiritual services as are directed to their mutual edification, and also in bringing relief to one another in material things, according to their various abilities and necessities. This communion, as God gives opportunity, is to reach to all those who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus.

III. This communion which the saints have with Christ does not make them in any way partakers of the substance of His divine nature or to be equal with Christ in any respect, to affirm either of which is impious and blasphemous. Nor does their communion with one another, as saints, take away or infringe upon the title or right which each man has to his goods and possessions.

(To be continued)

Studies in the Plan of Salvation

LESSON 1

God's Provision of Salvation for His People

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

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

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

Scripture References:

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

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

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

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

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

Questions:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

There is no shortcut to assurance that we are of the elect. We can never find out by trying to pry into God's secret plans and purposes which he has not revealed to us. The only way to find out is to believe on Jesus Christ as our saviour, repent of our sins, and faithfully use the means of grace that God has appointed. In this way, sooner or later, we can come to a full assurance, or certainty, of our personal salvation, from which we can rightly conclude that we are indeed among the elect of God.

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

The Covenant of Grace.

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

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

Scripture References:

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

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

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

Questions:

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

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

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

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

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

He represented "all the elect."

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

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

5. When was the Covenant of Grace made?

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

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

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

LESSON 2

How the Covenant of Grace Manifests God's Grace

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

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

Scripture References:

Genesis 3:15. A Redeemer from sin promised.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Questions:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5. What does Christ, our Mediator, provide?

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

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

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

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

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

8. How do we get faith in Jesus Christ?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

13. Why should a Christian want to obey the law

of God?

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

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

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

LESSON 3

The Dispensations of the Covenant of Grace

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

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

Scripture References:

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

Questions:

1. When did the Covenant of Works come to an end as a way by which men could attain to eternal life?

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

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

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

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

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

4. What error concerning this question is common today?

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

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

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

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

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

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

A. The Covenant of Grace was administered under the Old Testament, by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the passover, and other types and ordinances, which did all fore-signify Christ then to come, and were for that time sufficient to build up the elect in faith in the promised Messiah, by whom they then had full remission of sin, and eternal salvation.

Scriptural References:

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

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

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

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

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

Hebrews 11:13. The Old Testament saints, from

"afar off", saw and embraced the promises of the gospel of Christ.

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

Questions:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

LESSON 4

The New Dispensation of the Covenant of Grace

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

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

Scripture References:

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

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

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

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

Questions:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(e) The ordinances of the New Testament are **more universal** than those of the Old Testament. The ordinances of the Old Testament were limited to the

one nation of Israel; under the New Testament, the gospel is to be preached, and the Covenant of Grace administered, among "all nations", that is, to the human race regardless of national boundaries.

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

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

7. How many dispensations are there in the Bible?

The popular "Scofield Reference Bible" teaches that God's dealings with the human race are divided into **seven distinct and different dispensations.** This is certainly wrong if we define a "dispensation" as the Scofield Bible defines it, as a period of time during which God's dealings with the human race are characterized by some specific principle. At most there are **three** dispensations, one of the Covenant of Works and two of the Covenant of Grace. Thus the first dispensation (the Covenant of Works) was from the creation of man until Adam fell into sin; the second dispensation (the Old Testament) was from the fall of man until the crucifixion of Christ; the third dispensation (the New Testament) is from the crucifixion of Christ until the end of the world.

LESSON 5

The Mediator of the Covenant of Grace

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

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

Scripture References:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Questions:

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

There is one only.

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

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

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

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

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

By affirming that Christ is **of one substance with the Father,** we mean that there is only one God, and Jesus Christ is this one God just as truly as the Father is this one God. As Christians we do not believe in **three** Gods, but in **one** God who exists in three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ is therefore not **like** God; he **is** God, the only God that there is. In him dwells, not a part of the fulness of the Godhead bodily, but **all** the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 2:9).

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

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

6. How is the doctrine of **the deity of Christ**

denied today?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The word "distinct" teaches the truth that Christ's two natures, divine and human, while they were and are mysteriously united in one divine person, still are not in any way mixed, blended or confused. Each remains distinct and retains its separate identity. Christ's divine nature always remains his divine nature; his human nature always remains his human nature; these two cannot be mixed in any way. Christ is not a being halfway between God and man; he is a person who is both God and man at the same time; he is as truly God as if he were not man at all; and he is as truly man as if he were not God at all. In the record of our Lord's life on earth, at one point his deity shines forth, as when he said, "Before Abraham was, I am"; at another point his humanity is disclosed, as when he said "I thirst." But the two are never mixed or confused in any way.

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

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

LESSON 6

How the Son of God Became Man

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

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

Scripture References:

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

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

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

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

Questions:

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

Our human nature consists of two parts or elements, namely **body** and **soul.** The body is made of material substance, that is, of chemical elements such as oxygen, hydrogen, calcium, carbon, etc. The soul, which is also called the **spirit,** is entirely different from the body, because it is not made of material substance. The soul and body are mysteriously joined together in one individual **personality.** Christ, however, was not a human person; his human body and soul together were united to his divine person.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

9. What should we think of such a belief?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

13. What is the importance of the doctrine of the

virgin birth of Jesus today?

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

LESSON 7

Why the Mediator Must be God

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

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

Scripture References:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Questions:

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

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

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

Even a sinless human being, if merely human, would not have been able to endure the wrath and curse of God as Christ did. It was necessary that the Mediator be God in order to sustain and support his human nature in its temptations and sufferings.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Scripture References:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Questions:

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

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

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

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

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

Adam and all his posterity had broken the law of God and lived in violation of that law. It was necessary that the Second Adam keep the law of God perfectly. God himself is not under the law; he is the **Lawgiver.** Jesus Christ had to be truly human so that he could be truly under the law of God, and thus succeed where Adam failed, in meeting the condition of the Covenant of Works, namely a perfect obedience to the law of God.

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

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

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

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

LESSON 8

Why the Mediator Must be God and Man in one Person

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

Q. 40. Why was it requisite that the Mediator should be God and man in one person?

A. It was requisite that the Mediator, who was to reconcile God and man, should himself be both God and man, and this in one person, that the proper works of each nature might be accepted of God for us, and relied on by us, as the works of the whole person.

Scripture References:

Matthew 1:21,23. The Mediator both God and man in one person.

Matthew 3:17. Hebrews 9:14. The works of each of the Mediator's two natures accepted by God for us as the works of the whole person.

I Peter 2:6. The Mediator and His work, as a whole, to be relied on by us for our salvation.

Questions:

1. Why could not God provide two Mediators, one divine and the other human, to accomplish the salvation of His people from sin?

Because the relation between the works of each of the two natures required that these two natures be united in one person. A divine Mediator could not experience suffering except through a human nature; a human Mediator could not endure the required suffering, except as sustained by a divine nature. Therefore it was necessary, not only that the Mediator be God and that He be man, but that both natures be united in one person, that His work might be a unity.

2. What work of Christ's divine nature does Scripture speak of as part of the work of accomplishing our salvation?

Hebrews 9:14. It was **through the eternal Spirit** that Christ offered Himself a sacrifice to God for our sins. This may be translated "through HIS eternal Spirit" (See American Revised Version of 1901, margin). In any case, the meaning is probably not "through the Holy Spirit," but rather "through his own divine nature"; that is, it was through His divine nature that Christ offered Himself as a sacrifice to God for the sins of His people; His divine nature gave value and efficacy to the sacrifice and sufferings of His human nature.

3. What work of Christ's human nature does Scripture speak of as a part of the work of accomplishing our salvation?

Scripture speaks of Christ's obedience to the law, and of all His sufferings, and especially of His death, all of which were works of His human nature, as essential parts of the work of accomplishing our salvation.

4. How can we explain Scripture texts in which what is proper to one of Christ's natures is referred to the other nature?

The unity of Christ's person affords the true explanation of such texts. For example, Acts 20:28, "the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Here we find "blood," which was a part of Christ's human nature, associated with the name "God," which belongs to His divine nature.

John 6:62. "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?" Here a title associated with Christ's human nature, the title "Son of man," is used in connection with a fact concerning Christ's divine nature, namely His eternal pre-existence in heaven, before His incarnation in this world. In these and many similar Scripture passages the explanation is that the unity of Christ's person permits reference to either of His natures in terms which strictly apply to the other nature.

Q. 41. Why was our Mediator called Jesus?

A. Our Mediator was called Jesus, because he saveth his people from their sins.

Scripture References:

Matthew 1:21. The divine command to name the child of Mary "Jesus," and the reason for this name.

Question:

1. What is the literal meaning of the name "Jesus"?

The name "Jesus" is a Greek form corresponding to the Hebrew name "Jehoshua," "Joshua" or "Jeshua." There is some uncertainty as to the exact translation of the name, but it certainly is derived from the Hebrew word meaning "salvation" or "to save." The meaning is commonly taken to be "Jehovah saves" or "Jehovah is salvation."

2. Who decided that our Saviour should be named "Jesus"?

This decision was made by God Himself, and it was announced to Joseph by an angel of the Lord who appeared to him in a dream.

3. What great truths of our faith are involved in the statement "he shall save his people from their sins"?

The following great truths of our faith are involved in this sublime statement revealed to Joseph by an angel of the Lord:

(a) Salvation from sin is accomplished by the divinely-provided Redeemer, and is not something which can be achieved by ourselves.

(b) Our Redeemer ACTUALLY SAVES His people from their sins; He does not merely give them "a chance" of salvation, or "an offer" of salvation; He actually and fully saves them, which includes His doing all that is necessary to guarantee that they shall be finally saved.

(c) Our Redeemer saves a particular body of human beings, the elect of God, spoken of in this text as "his people." He was not sent into the world to save everybody, nor to try to save everybody, but to save His people.

4. Is "Jesus" a personal name or a title?

Jesus is the personal name of our Saviour.

Q. 42. Why was our Mediator called Christ?

A. Our Mediator was called Christ, because he was anointed with the Holy Ghost above measure; and so set apart and fully furnished with all authority and ability, to execute the offices of prophet, priest, and king of his Church, in the estate both of his humiliation and exaltation.

Scripture References:

John 3:34. The Holy Spirit was given to our Saviour above measure.

Psalm 45:7. Our Saviour given the Holy Spirit above His fellows.

John 6:27. Our Saviour "sealed" by God the Father, that is, set apart for His redemptive work.

Matthew 28:18-20. Our Saviour furnished by God the Father with all authority and ability to carry out His appointed work to the end.

Acts 3:21,22. Our Saviour raised up by God the Father to be a prophet.

Luke 4:18,21. The work of Christ as a prophet.

Hebrews 4:14,15; 5:5-7. Our Saviour called by God the Father to be a high priest; and His priestly work for His people.

Psalm 2:6. Matthew 21:5. Isaiah 9:6,7. Our Saviour made a king by God the Father; and the glories of His kingly office.

Phil. 2:8-11. Christ executes His offices both in His estate of humiliation and in His estate of exaltation.

Questions:

1. Is "Christ" a name or a title?

"Christ" is not a name, but a title which accompanies the personal name "Jesus." This is brought out by the use of the definite article with "Christ" which occurs in some places, such as Matthew 16:16, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

2. What is the literal meaning of the word "Christ"?

"Christ" is the English form of the Greek word **Christos** which means Anointed. This Greek word **Christos** is a translation of the Hebrew word **Messiah,** which also means Anointed. Thus whether we say that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, or the Anointed One, is a matter of language rather than of meaning. These terms all mean the same. In passages of the Old Testament where the word "anointed" occurs with reference to the coming Redeemer, such as Psalm 2:2 ("the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his anointed. . ."), the Hebrew word "Messiah" could equally correctly be translated by the word Christ, for the meaning is identical.

3. What is the basic idea involved in the title "Christ"?

The basic idea involved in the title "Christ" is the idea of anointing. In the Old Testament period kings and priests were anointed with oil to set them apart to their special offices. This oil of anointing was a symbol of the Holy Spirit who would enter their hearts and equip them with ability and wisdom for their duties as kings or priests. So we see that the idea of anointing in the Old Testament was setting a person apart to a special office, with a symbol of the Holy Spirit's work in that person's life. All the Old Testament kings and priests, however, were only types or shadows pointing forward to Jesus, the true and final king and priest. Jesus is the One who above all others has been anointed by the Holy Spirit to fit Him to be our prophet, priest and king. Instead of being anointed with oil, as in the Old Testament period, Jesus received the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove which abode upon Him (Matthew 3:16).

4. Why did Jesus receive the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove?

While no certain answer can be given to this question, it has been suggested that the form of a dove represented the **totality** of the Holy Spirit, for Jesus received the Spirit without measure. At Pentecost believers received the Holy Spirit in the form of tongues of fire, something divisible, of which each person received a share; but in the case of Jesus, the form of a dove may suggest the idea of totality or indivisibility (see Genesis 15:10, "the birds divided he not").

5. When does Christ execute the offices of prophet, priest and king?

Christ, our Saviour, executes the offices of prophet, priest and king both in His estate of humiliation (that is, during His life on earth), and in His estate of exaltation (that is, since His resurrection, and especially in His life of glory in heaven). This means that Christ was a prophet, a priest and a king when He was on earth, and that He is a prophet, a priest and a king in heaven today.

LESSON 9

How Christ Functions as a Prophet and as a Priest

Q. 43. How doth Christ execute the office of a prophet?

A. Christ executeth the office of a prophet in his revealing to the church in all ages, by his Spirit and word, in divers ways of administration, the whole will of God, in all things concerning their edification and salvation.

Scripture References:

John 1:18. Christ as prophet is the great revealer of the Father.

I Peter 1:10-12. The Spirit of Christ revealed divine truth to the Old Testament prophets.

Hebrews 1:1,2. Christ as prophet brings the final revelation of God to men.

John 15:15. Christ revealed truth from the Father to the apostles.

Acts 20:32. The edifying nature of Christ's prophetic work.

Ephesians 4:11-13. Christ's prophetic work edifies or builds up His body, the Church.

John 20:31. Christ's words recorded in Scripture in order that by His work as prophet men might believe and have life.

Questions:

1. What is the true meaning of the word "prophet"?

A prophet is God's representative in speaking to men, God's spokesman, God's mouthpiece.

2. Why do we usually think of a prophet as one who foretells the future?

Because many of the prophets, especially in the Old Testament, received revelations from God which contained predictions of future events. There are so many predictions of future events in the prophetic books of the Old Testament that we have come to think of a "prophet" as a "predicter of the future." However, many of the messages of the prophets concerned their own times, and the real meaning of the word "prophet" is not a foreteller of the future, but a man who delivers a message from God to the people.

3. In what periods of history did Christ execute the office of a prophet?

"In all ages."

4. How did Christ execute the office of a prophet in the Old Testament period?

During the Old Testament period Christ executed the office of a prophet by His Spirit, revealing His truth through the various prophets, Psalmists and other writers of the Old Testament Scriptures.

5. How did Christ execute the office of a prophet during His earthly ministry?

During His earthly ministry Christ executed the office of a prophet:

(a) By preaching to the people of the Jews;

(b) By teaching and preaching to His own followers, or disciples, who believed on Him;

(c) By training and instructing the twelve Apostles, who would be His official witnesses after His ascension to heaven.

6. How does Christ execute the office of a prophet today?

Christ executes the office of a prophet today:

(a) Through His written Word, the Holy Bible;

(b) By His Holy Spirit, whom He has sent, who illuminates our hearts and minds so that we can receive and understand the truth revealed in the Scriptures.

7. In executing the office of a prophet, what message has Christ revealed to His Church?

He has revealed a complete message, containing the whole will of God in all things concerning our edification and salvation. The truth contained in Scripture, grasped by a mind illuminated by the Holy Spirit, is complete and fully adequate. No other sources of knowledge are to be added.

Q. 44. How doth Christ execute the office of a priest?

A. Christ executeth the office of a priest, in his once offering himself a sacrifice without spot to God, to be a reconciliation for the sins of his people; and in making continual intercession for them.

Scriptural References:

Hebrews 9:14. Christ executes the office of a priest in offering Himself as a sacrifice to God.

Hebrews 9:28. Christ offered once for the sins of many.

Hebrews 2:17. Christ offered Himself in order to reconcile His people to God.

Hebrews 7:25. Christ as a priest makes continual intercession for His people.

Questions:

1. What is the difference between a prophet and a priest?

A prophet is God's representative in speaking to men; a priest is men's representative in approaching God.

2. What are the qualifications for the office of priesthood?

These are found in Hebrews 5:1,2, and are as follows:

(a) The priest must be a member of the human

race, that is, chosen from among men. An angel could not act as a priest to represent men in approaching God.

(b) The priest must be able to sympathize with the ignorant and erring, because he himself is "compassed with infirmity."

(c) The priest must not take the office on himself, but must be called to it by God, as Aaron was (Heb. 5:4).

3. What are the functions of the office of priesthood?

These also are found in Hebrews 5:1-4, and are as follows:

(a) A priest must represent men in things pertaining to God.

(b) A priest must offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.

(c) A priest must make intercession for the people (Hebrews 7:25).

4. What part of the Bible most fully discusses Christ's priestly office?

While the **functions** of Christ's priestly office are discussed in many books of the Bible with great fulness, His priestly office **as such** is discussed most fully in the Epistle to the Hebrews. In the Old Testament, Psalm 110:4 is perhaps the most direct statement of Christ's priestly office.

5. How did Christ possess the qualifications for His priestly office?

(a) By His incarnation, or taking to Himself a human nature, He became a human being. Thus, becoming a member of the human race, He was qualified to be chosen from among men for the priestly office.

(b) Because He was "compassed with infirmity," and underwent the miseries and sufferings of human life as "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," He was able to sympathize with the ignorant and erring.

(c) He did not take the priestly office upon Himself, but was called by God, as Aaron had been (Hebrews 5:4,5).

6. How does Christ exercise the functions of the priestly office?

(a) As the Second Adam, the Mediator of the Covenant of Grace, Christ is the representative of all the elect people of God; thus He acts as the representative of men in things pertaining to God.

(b) He laid down His own life on Calvary as a sacrifice for the sins of His people; thus He fulfilled the **sacrificial** function of the priestly office.

(c) He made intercession for His people while still on earth (John 17), and He continues to make intercession for His people as He ministers at the right hand of God the Father in heaven. Thus He fulfills the **intercessory** function of the priestly office.

7. What is the relative importance of Christ's priestly office?

Christ's priestly office is the central and supremely important one of His three offices of prophet, priest and king. While we must regard the whole of Christ's saving work as a unity, and should realize that no part of it is non-essential, still His work as priest is the very heart and center of His work as our Redeemer.

8. What error concerning Christ's offices is common in modern Liberalism?

Modern Liberalism seeks to retain the doctrine of Christ's kingly office while either abandoning or denaturing the doctrine of His priestly office. Thus widely known liberal teachers never weary of speaking about "the kingdom of God," although they either deny or explain away the substitutionary atonement of Christ. Of course these liberal teachers put their own ideas into such terms as "the kingdom of God;" they do not mean by such an expression what historic orthodox Christianity has always meant by it. But they try to retain some kind of belief in Christ's kingly office while giving up or by-passing His priestly office. We should realize that Christ's work is a unity and none of His three offices can be retained in our theology without the other two. The Scriptures know only a Christ who is **a prophet and a priest and a king.** This is the only real Christ. All partial Christs are only the products of subjective human ideas.

LESSON 10

How Christ Functions as a King

Q. 45. How doth Christ execute the office of a king?

A. Christ executeth the office of a king, in calling out of the world a people to himself, and giving them officers, laws, and censures, by which he visibly governs them; in bestowing saving grace upon his elect, rewarding their obedience, and correcting them for their sins, preserving and supporting them under all their temptations and sufferings, restraining and overcoming all their enemies, and powerfully ordering all things for his own glory, and their good; and also in taking vengeance on the rest, who know not God, and obey not the gospel.

Scripture References:

Acts 15:14-16. Isaiah 55:4,5. Genesis 49:10. Psalm 110:3. Christ executes the office of a king in calling out of the world a people to Himself.

Ephesians 4:11,12. I Cor. 12:28. Christ executes the office of a king in giving His people officers.

Isa. 33:22. Christ executes the office of a king in giving His people laws.

Matt. 18:17,18. I Cor. 5:4,5. Christ executes the office of a king in giving His people the censures of church discipline.

Acts 5:31. Christ executes the office of a king in bestowing saving grace upon His elect.

Rev. 22:12. Rev. 2:10. Christ executes the office of a king in rewarding His people for their obedience.

Rev. 3:19. Christ executes the office of a king in correcting His elect for their sins.

Isa. 63:9. Christ executes the office of a king in supporting His people in their temptations and sufferings.

I Cor. 15:25. Psalm 110:1,2. Christ executes the office of a king in restraining and overcoming the enemies of His people.

Rom. 14:10,11. Christs executes the office of a king by powerfully ordering all things for His own glory.

Rom. 8:28. Christ executes the office of a king by powerfully ordering all things for the good of His elect.

II Thess. 1:8,9. Psalm 2:8,9. Christ executes the office of a king in taking vengeance on His enemies, who know not God, and obey not the Gospel.

Questions:

1. Into what three spheres does the Catechism divide the exericise of Christ's kingly office?

(a) The sphere of the Visible Church; (b) the sphere of the Invisible Church; (c) the sphere of the world.

2. Which is the most important of these three spheres in which Christ's kingly office is exercised?

The sphere of the Invisible Church, or the body of the elect, is the most important, for it is for the benefit of the Invisible Church that Christ exercises His kingly office (a) in the Visible Church, and (b) in the world or universe.

3. What elements are included in Christ's kingly rule in the Visible Church?

(a) Calling out of the world a people who shall be members of the Visible Church.

(b) Giving them officers, as appointed in the Scriptures, and as realized in actual life.

(c) Giving them laws and censures, by which He visibly governs them, that is, by means of the structure of church government and discipline.

4. What elements are included in Christ's kingly rule in the Invisible Church?

(a) Bestowing saving grace upon His elect, by the work of the Holy Spirit in their hearts and lives, resulting in their being united to Christ in their effectual calling.

(b) Rewarding the obedience of His people, both now by His providence, and at the Judgment Day by supernatural power; and correcting His people for their sins, in His providential discipline during the present life.

(c) Preserving and supporting His elect under all their temptations and sufferings, so that they are never overwhelmed with troubles, but are always kept from despair.

5. What elements are included in Christ's kingly rule in the world or universe?

(a) Restraining and overwhelming all the enemies of His elect.

(b) Powerfully ordering all things to His own glory, and His people's good, so that even the evil deeds of wicked men are made to work out for the true benefit of the elect.

(c) Taking vengeance on the wicked, who know not God, nor obey the Gospel. This vengeance is partly during the present life, by Christ's providential dispensations, but chiefly at the Judgment Day at the end of the world.

6. In which sphere is Christ's kingly rule over the nations included?

Christ's kingly rule or reign over the nations is included in the third sphere, namely, the exercise of His kingly office in the world or universe.

7. Is Christ a king today?

Certainly Christ is a king today. The Bible teaches that He was a king when He was on this earth in the flesh, that He is a king today, and that He will continue to be a king for ever and ever.

8. Is Christ reigning over the nations of the world today?

Yes. While it is true that the nations of the World are living in neglect of, or in rebellion against, Christ's kingly reign, still He is reigning over them and accomplishing His purposes in spite of their neglect and rebellion.

(Note: For a fuller discussion of Christ's kingly

reign over the universe, the student is referred to the article entitled **The Kingly Office of Jesus Christ** in Blue Banner Faith and Life, Volume 1 Number 7 (July-September, 1946), pages 109-114).

LESSON 11

How Christ Humbled Himself in Becoming Man

Q. 46. What was the estate of Christ's humiliation?

A. The estate of Christ's humiliation was that low condition, wherein he, for our sakes, emptying himself of his glory, took upon him the form of a servant, in his conception and birth, life, death, and after his death, until his resurrection.

Scripture References:

Phil. 2:6-8. Christ's voluntary self-humiliation.

Luke 1:31. Christ's humiliation in His birth as a human being.

II Cor. 8:9. Christ's self-humiliation in giving up the enjoyment of riches in heaven for a life of poverty on earth.

Acts 2:24. Christ's resurrection terminated His humiliation.

Questions:

1. In carrying out the Plan of Salvation, what kind of condition did Christ take upon Himself?

A low condition.

2. Why did Christ take on Himself a low condition?

For our sakes.

3. What was Christ's condition before He came into this world?

A state of infinite divine glory, described in the Bible as "being rich."

4. How may the expression "made himself of no reputation" (Phil. 2:7) also be translated?

This expression literally means "emptied himself."

5. Of what did Christ "empty himself" when He became man?

He emptied Himself of the enjoyment of His heavenly glory.

6. What serious error has been held concerning Christ's "emptying himself"?

Some have held that this expression in the Greek text of Phil. 2:7 means that Christ emptied Himself **of His deity.** According to this interpretation, which is called the theory of Kenosis ("emptying"), Christ was divine when He was in heaven, but cast His deity aside, and was only a man when He was on earth. Or it is held that while remaining divine in the abstract, He "emptied himself" of divine attributes such as omnipotence and omniscience during His life on earth, so that while theoretically still God He was practically only man while on earth. This theory is really an attempt to bridge the chasm between the merely human Jesus of modern theology and the divine Christ of orthodox historic Christianity. It attempts to speak of Christ as divine and yet not divine at the same time.

Since many texts of the New Testament teach that Christ was truly and fully God while He was on earth, this theory of Kenosis cannot be correct. The true meaning of Phil. 2:7 is that Christ emptied Himself of **the enjoyment of His divine glory,** taking "the form of a servant" instead. His **nature** was still the same as it had been in heaven, but His **position** was different.

7. What was Christ's position during His earthly life?

The "form" or position of a servant.

8. What chapter of the Old Testament prophesied that the Redeemer would be "the Servant of the Lord"?

Isaiah chapter 53. The whole chapter tells of Christ's estate of humiliation. Verse 11 calls Him "my righteous servant."

Q. 47. How did Christ humble himself in his conception and birth?

A. Christ humbled himself in his conception and birth, in that, being from all eternity the Son of God, in the bosom of the Father, he was pleased in the fulness of time to become the son of man, made of a woman of low estate, and to be born of her; with divers circumstances of more than ordinary abasement.

Scripture References:

John 1:14,18. Christ, who became man, was from all eternity the Son of God.

Gal. 4:4. Christ in the fulness of time became man and was born as an infant.

Luke 2:7. Our Saviour was born of a woman of low estate, and with circumstances of more than ordinary abasement.

Questions:

1. How long had Christ been the Son of God?

From all eternity.

2. What is the meaning of the statement that Christ was "in the bosom of the Father" (John 1:18)?

This means that Christ, the eternal Son, **is one with God the Father.** The Father and the Son are the same in substance, though they are distinct persons of the Trinity. Christ is God just as truly as the Father is God, and yet there are not two Gods, but only one God.

3. Why does the Catechism say that Christ "was pleased" to become the son of man?

This expression implies that Christ became man voluntarily, of His own free choice, not because He was compelled to do so.

4. When did Christ become man?

When the fulness of the time was come. Gal. 4:4.

5. What is the meaning of this expression, "When the fulness of the time was come"?

This means the time appointed by God from all eternity for Christ to be born as a human being; also the time when all the age-long preparations had been completed, and the prophecies were about to be fulfilled.

6. Why is Mary, the mother of Jesus, referred to as "a woman of low estate"?

This is based on Mary's own words as found in Luke 1:48. It refers not to her character, but to her economic and social position among the Jewish people of that day.

7. What "circumstances of more than ordinary abasement" attended the birth and infancy of Jesus Christ?

He was born in a stable, because there was no room in the inn. It was necessary to take Him suddenly to a foreign country in order to escape Herod's plot to murder Him.

LESSON 12

How Christ Humbled Himself During His Earthly Life

Q. 48. How did Christ humble himself in his life?

A. Christ humbled himself in his life, by subjecting himself to the law, which he perfectly fulfilled; and by conflicting with the indignities of the world, temptations of Satan, and infirmities in his flesh, whether common to the nature of man, or particularly accompanying that his low condition.

Scripture References:

Gal. 4:4. Christ was born under the law.

Matt. 5:17. Rom. 5:18. Christ perfectly fulfilled the law of God.

Psalm 22:6. Heb. 12:2,3. Christ conflicted with the indignities of the world.

Matt. 4:1-12. Luke 4:13. Christ conflicted with the temptations of Satan.

Heb. 2:17,18; 4:5. Isa. 52:13,14. Christ conflicted with infirmities in His flesh, either common to humanity, or specially involved in His low condition.

Questions:

1. Why was it necessary that our Saviour be subject to the law of God?

It was necessary that our Saviour be subject to the law of God, in order that He might fulfill the law as our representative, rendering a perfect obedience to the will of God, which Adam had failed to do in the Covenant of Works. Christ, the Second Adam, must accomplish this successfully in order that His righteousness could be reckoned to our account.

2. How did our Saviour become subject to the law of God?

Our Saviour became subject to the law of God by His own voluntary decision to become man, according to the stipulated terms of the Covenant of Grace entered into between Him and the Father in eternity before the creation of the world.

3. To what law did our Saviour become subject?

He became subject to the whole law of God, both the moral law and the ceremonial law.

4. How did Christ fulfill the law of God?

Christ fulfilled the law of God **perfectly.** His obedience to the law was both positive and negative. He never broke any of the law's commands, and He fully performed all that the law required.

5. Why was becoming subject to the law a matter of Christ humbling Himself?

Because as God He was by nature above the law. By nature He was not under the law, but the Author of the law. In becoming man, He laid aside the enjoyment of His heavenly glory, and took the form or position of a servant, under the law.

6. Why were the indignities of the world a humiliation to our Saviour?

Because the indignities of the world were contrary to His holy nature, and because they were contrary to the peace, harmony, beauty, order and reverence of heaven, whence He had come.

7. Why were the temptations of Satan a humiliation to our Saviour?

Because it was an insult to His holy character to be tempted by Satan, who is not only deceitful and wicked, but in rebellion against the authority of God. The Lord of glory was approached and tempted by the vilest and most lawless rebel in the universe. This must have been extremely humiliating and irritating to our Saviour.

8. What were some of the "infirmities in his flesh" which our Saviour suffered during His life on this earth?

Weariness, hunger, thirst, poverty, "no place to lay his head," being misunderstood and reproached by His near relations, etc.

9. What should be our own attitude in view of the way in which our Saviour humbled Himself during His life on earth?

(a) We should be filled with the deepest gratitude to Him who endured such afflictions and privations for our sakes.

(b) We should resist the temptation to yield to discouragement and despair when we are faced with troubles and hardships in our earthly pilgrimage, remembering that our Saviour, the Lord of glory, endured much more grievous troubles and hardships in His great love for us.

LESSON 13

How Christ Humbled Himself in His Death

Q. 49. How did Christ humble himself in his death?

A. Christ humbled himself in his death, in that having been betrayed by Judas, forsaken by his disciples, scorned and rejected by the world, condemned by Pilate, and tormented by his persecutors; having also conflicted with the terrors of death, and the powers of darkness, felt and borne the weight of God's wrath, he laid down his life an offering for sin, enduring the painful, shameful, and cursed death of the cross.

Scripture References:

Matt. 27:4. Christ betrayed by Judas.

Matt. 26:56. Christ forsaken by His disciples.

Isa. 53:2,3. Christ scorned and rejected by the world.

Matt. 27:26-50. John 19:34. Christ condemned by Pilate, and tormented by His persecutors.

Luke 22:44. Matt. 27:46. Christ's conflict with the terrors of death and powers of darkness, and His experience of the weight of God's wrath.

Isa. 53:10. Christ's life laid down by Himself as an offering for sin.

Phil. 2:8. Heb. 12:2. Gal. 3:13. The painful, shameful and cursed death of the cross.

Questions:

1. Why was being betrayed by Judas an especially grievous humiliation for our Saviour?

Because Judas was not a stranger, or professed enemy, but a person who had been admitted to special privileges and friendship with Jesus in the circle of the twelve disciples.

2. Why was being forsaken by His disciples hard for Jesus to bear?

Because the conduct of the disciples showed that, for the time being at least, they were much more concerned about their own personal safety than about loyalty to their Lord. In their minds personal fear was a stronger motive than devotion to Christ.

3. Why was being scorned and rejected by the world a humiliation to Christ?

Because He was the Creator and Lord of all the world, and the world ought to have received Him with reverence and joy. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not" (John 1:11).

4. Why was being condemned by Pilate a special humiliation to Christ?

Because His condemnation was **contrary to justice.** Pilate, the Roman governor, sat as a judge, the official representative of a divine institution in human society, namely, the State. Pilate, who was appointed to administer justice, condemned Christ unjustly, that is, contrary to the evidence in the case.

5. How was Christ tormented by His persecutors?

Read Matthew 27:26-50.

6. When did Jesus engage in conflict with the terrors of death and powers of darkness?

In the Garden of Gethsemane, the night before He was crucified.

7. When did Jesus feel the weight of God's wrath?

Jesus felt and bore the weight of God's wrath against human sin during the whole of His life on earth, but especially at the end of His earthly life, in the Garden of Gethsemane, and most of all during the three hours of darkness while He hung on the cross, from the sixth hour to the ninth hour, ending with His cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

8. What was the character of our Saviour's death?

Our Saviour offered His own life as a sacrifice to God to atone for the sins of men. Therefore His death was unique and unlike that of other men. Jesus died, not of sickness, accident or old age; not simply as a victim of injustice or oppression; not even merely as a martyr for a great cause; but as an offering for sin, a substitute for sinners, bearing their deserved penalty in their stead.

9. Why was death by crucifixion a particularly bitter death?

Death by crucifixion was a particularly bitter death because it was painful, shameful and accursed.

10. Why was death by crucifixion a painful death?

Because no vital organ of the body was directly injured; therefore the victims of crucifixion often lingered and suffered for many hours and even days before death came; also the loss of blood and exposure to the hot sun would cause extreme exhaustion and thirst.

11. Why was death by crucifixion a shameful and cursed death?

In the Roman Empire, death by crucifixion was reserved for slaves and the lowest criminals. Even more important is the fact that God's Word had pronounced this mode of death to be accursed: Gal. 3:13; Deut. 21:23, "He that is hanged is accursed of God."

12. How did our Saviour finally die?

Our Saviour finally **voluntarily laid down His life,** at the appointed moment, as we learn from the following facts in the record:

(a) "Jesus . . . yielded up the ghost," Matt. 27:50.

(b) In John 19:28 we are told that "Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished . . . saith, I thirst"; that is, He required a drink of water to clear His brain for His final act on the cross, which followed immediately: "When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost."

(c) In John 10:17,18 Jesus said, "I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself."

(d) Jesus died after being on the cross about six hours. The two thieves were still alive at the end of this time. In Mark 15:44 we read that "Pilate marvelled if he were already dead."

Thus the evidence indicates that Jesus finally yielded up His own life by an act of His own will, and not because the limit of His physical endurance had been reached.

13. What is the importance of the death of Jesus Christ?

The death of Jesus Christ is the center of the Bible, the focal point of the world's history, the central fact in the Gospel message, and the foundation of our hope for eternal life.

LESSON 14

How Christ's Humiliation Continued Even after His Death

Q. 50. Wherein consisted Christ's humiliation after his death?

A. Christ's humiliation after his death consisted in his being buried, and continuing in the state of the dead, and under the power of death till the third day: which hath been otherwise expressed in these words, He descended into hell.

Scripture References:

I Cor. 15:3,4. Christ's burial a necessary fact of the Gospel.

Psalm 16:10 compared with Acts 2:24-31. Christ's continuing in the state of the dead, and under the power of death, till the third day.

Rom. 6:9. Matt. 12:40. The power of death over Christ's body was only temporary, being limited to three days.

Questions:

1. Where was Christ's soul during the time His body was in the tomb?

In heaven or paradise, as shown by Luke 23:43.

2. Why was it a humiliation to Christ for His body

to be buried and to continue under the power of death for a time?

Because "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). Christ was "the holy One of God"; He had no **personal** sin. Death would have had no power over Him at all except for the fact that our sins were laid upon Him, and He died, and was buried, as our Sin-bearer and Substitute. Because His being buried was a part of the wages or penalty of sin, it was an element in our Saviour's humiliation.

3. Why could Christ's body be kept under the power of death for a short time only?

Because the penalty for sin had been fully paid, and the guilt of His people's sins wholly canceled. If Christ's body had remained permanently under the power of death, it would have indicated that the penalty for sin had not been fully paid.

4. What is meant by the expression of "The Apostles' Creed" which says "He descended into hell"?

This expression has been understood in various ways. Some hold that Christ literally descended into hell — not the hell of the devil and the wicked angels, but a place where the Old Testament saints were waiting. There He preached to these spirits and opened the way for them to enter heaven. This interpretation, which is held by the Roman Catholic Church and by some Protestants, is unsound and is based on a misunderstanding of I Peter 3:18-20.

Some Protestants hold that the words "He descended into hell" refer to Christ's sufferings on the cross, that is, that He descended into hell, not as a place, but as an experience of suffering. While this idea is doctrinally sound, it is historically unwarranted, because the word translated "hell" in the "Apostles' Creed" is not **Gehenna** (the place of punishment) but **Hades** (the realm or sphere of death).

Our Catechism teaches that the words "He descended into hell" refer to Christ's being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time, the word "hell" being understood as "the realm of the power of death."

The so-called "Apostles' Creed" was not written by the Apostles, and originated in the Church later than the time of the Apostles. It is possible that the original framers of the "Apostles' Creed" accepted the interpretation of I Peter 3:18-20 referred to above, and that the Westminster Assembly understood the clause "He descended into hell" in a sense different from that of the original framers of the Creed. This is justifiable because it is more important that our theology be Scripturally correct than that we accept this clause in the sense intended by the framers of the Creed. Some Protestant denominations have omitted this clause altogether from their official form of the Apostles' Creed, because of ambiguity as to its meaning.

Christ's Estate of Exaltation

Q. 51. What was the estate of Christ's Exaltation?

A. The estate of Christ's exaltation comprehendeth his resurrection, ascension, sitting at the right hand of the Father, and his coming again to judge the world.

Scripture References:

I Cor. 15:4. Christ's resurrection.

Mark 16:19. Christ's ascension to heaven.

Eph. 1:20. Christ's sitting at the right hand of the Father.

Acts 1:11; 17:31. Christ's coming again to judge the world.

Questions:

1. What four elements are included in Christ's estate of exaltation?

(a) His resurrection. (b) His ascension to heaven. (c) His sitting at the right hand of God the Father. (d) His coming again to judge the world.

2. Which of these four elements are past, which present, and which still future?

Two are past, His resurrection and ascension. One is present, His sitting at the right hand of God the Father. One is still future, His coming again to judge the world.

Q. 52. How was Christ exalted in his resurrection?

A. Christ was exalted in his resurrection, in that, not having seen corruption in death, (of which it was not possible for him to be held), and having the very same body in which he suffered, with the essential properties thereof, (but without mortality, and other infirmities belonging to this life), really united to his soul, he rose again from the dead the third day by his own power; whereby he declared himself to be the Son of God, to have satisfied divine justice, to have vanquished death, and him that had the power of it, and to be the Lord of quick and dead: all which he did as a public person, the head of his Church, for their justification, quickening in grace, support against enemies, and to assure them of their resurrection from the dead at the last day.

Scripture References:

Acts 2:24,27. Christ's body was not subject to decay while in the tomb.

Luke 24:39. Christ rose again in the identical body in which He suffered.

Rom. 6:9. Rev. 1:18. Christ's resurrection body was and is immortal.

John 10:18. Christ rose again by His own power.

Rom. 1:4. By His resurrection, Christ was declared to be the Son of God.

Rom. 8:34. By His resurrection, Christ was declared to have satisfied the justice of God.

Heb. 2:14. Christ's resurrection declared Him to have conquered death and Satan, who had the power of death.

Rom. 14:9. By His resurrection, Christ was shown to be the Lord of both the living and the dead.

I Cor. 15:21,22. In His resurrection Christ acted as "a public person."

Eph. 1:20-23. Col. 1:18. Christ, in His resurrection, acted as the Head of His Church.

Rom. 4:25. Christ was raised from the dead for our justification.

Eph. 2:1,5,6. Col. 1:12. Christ was raised from the dead for His people's quickening in grace.

I Cor. 15:25-27. Christ was raised from the dead to conquer His people's enemies.

I Cor. 15:20. Christ was raised from the dead to guarantee that His people, also, shall rise from the dead.

Questions:

1. How do we know that Christ's body did not suffer decay while it was in the tomb?

Psalm 16:10 compared with Acts 2:27.

2. Why was it not possible for Christ to be held permanently under the power of death?

(a) Because of His deity; being the Son of God, He could not remain under the power of death.

(b) Because the penalty for sin had been completely paid and canceled; therefore death (which is the penalty for sin) had lost its claim upon Him.

3. With what body did Christ rise again on the third day?

With the identical body in which He suffered, but glorified.

4. What is the meaning of the expression "essential properties thereof"?

This means the properties or characteristics which identified it as Christ's true human body. See Luke 24:39.

5. What was the difference between Christ's glorified body and His body before He was crucified?

His glorified body is "without mortality, and other common infirmities belonging to this life."

6. What was the difference between Christ's resurrection and the miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead which is recorded in John chapter 11?

(a) Christ rose by His own power; Lazarus was raised by the power of another.

(b) Christ rose immortal, never to die again; Lazarus was raised mortal, and finally did die again.

7. What five great truths were demonstrated by Christ's resurrection?

(a) That He is the Son of God.

(b) That He had fully satisfied God's justice on account of the sins of His people.

(c) That He had conquered death.

(d) That He had conquered Satan, the devil.

(e) That He is the Lord of the living and the dead.

8. What is the meaning of the words "quick" and "quickening"?

"Quick" is an old word which means "alive" or "living"; "quickening" means "making alive."

9. What is meant by the expression "a public person"?

This means someone who acts, not for himself personally, but as an official representative of a body of people. It is the opposite of "a private citizen" or "a private person." Christ's great redemptive acts were of a representative and official nature.

10. As a public person, whom did Christ represent?

He represented His people, His Church, of which He is the Head.

11. What benefits come to the Church from Christ's resurrection?

(a) Justification. (b) Quickening in grace. (c) Support against enemies. (d) Assurance of our own resurrection at the Last Day.

LESSON 15

How Christ was Exalted in His Ascension to Heaven

Q. 53. How was Christ exalted in his ascension?

A. Christ was exalted in his ascension, in that

having after his resurrection often appeared unto and conversed with his apostles, speaking to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, and giving them commission to preach the gospel to all nations, forty days after his resurrection, he in our nature, and as our head, triumphing over enemies, visibly went up into the highest heavens, there to receive gifts for men, and to raise up our affections thither, and to prepare a place for us, where himself is, and shall continue till his second coming at the end of the world.

Scripture References:

Acts 1:3,4. Christ's appearing to the apostles after His resurrection.

Matt. 28:19,20. The Great Commission to preach the Gospel to all nations.

Heb. 6:20. Christ ascended to heaven as our Head.

Eph. 4:8. Christ ascended triumphant over enemies.

Acts 1:9-11. Eph. 4:10. Psalm 68:18. The record of Christ's ascension; His purpose in ascending to receive gifts for men.

Col. 3:1,2. Christ's purpose in ascending was to raise our affections heavenward.

John 14:3. Christ has ascended to heaven to prepare a place for His people.

Acts 3:21. Christ must remain in heaven until His second coming.

Questions:

1. How long was the interval between Christ's resurrection and His ascension?

Forty days.

2. How did Christ associate with His disciples during this interval?

He did not remain with them constantly, but appeared to them repeatedly.

3. What great command did Christ give to His people during this interval?

The "Great Commission" to preach the Gospel to all nations, recorded in Matthew 28:18-20. Mark 16:15-18. Luke 24:47. Acts 1:8.

4. Why is the phrase "in our nature" used to describe Christ's ascension?

Because it was not merely as God that He ascended into heaven, but as human being, with a human body and a human soul. Christ's **human** nature left this earth and entered the realm within the veil.

5. Why is the phrase "as our head" used to describe Christ's ascension?

Because His ascension was an official act, in which He functioned as our representative, the Second Adam, the head of the redeemed human race. In heaven today Jesus Christ the God-man is the representative or head of the people of God.

6. How did Christ triumph over enemies in His ascension?

His enemies had rejected and crucified Him, but now in spite of their hatred and opposition He ascended into heaven to be proclaimed King of kings and Lord of lords.

7. How do we know that our Saviour ascended visibly?

Acts 1:9-11, "And when he had spoken these things, **while they beheld,** he was taken up; and a cloud received him **out of their sight.** And, while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as **ye have seen** him go into heaven."

8. Why is the visibility of Christ's ascension so strongly emphasized in the account in Acts 1:9-11?

Doubtless the reason for the strong emphasis on visibility is to avoid the idea that Christ's ascension was only a vision or hallucination, or only a spiritual ascension. The record leaves no doubt that the disciples were wide awake and actually saw Christ's human form rise up and leave the earth.

9. What is the modern view of Christ's ascension?

Modern religious Liberalism, since it does not believe in the bodily resurrection of Christ, of course cannot believe in a literal ascension either. Modernism disbelieves both of these great Gospel facts, and explains them away as myths or legends.

10. Is it hard to believe that Christ, in his human body, literally ascended out of this earth to heaven?

It all depends on what kind of Christ we believe in. If Jesus Christ was merely a human being, it would be extremely difficult if not impossible to believe that he really ascended to heaven. But if we believe in the Christ of the Scriptures, who came down from heaven in the first place, it is not at all difficult to believe that when His work on earth was accomplished He ascended to heaven again. For if He did not ascend to heaven, then He must still be visibly present somewhere in this world (since He rose from the dead). It is of course perfectly obvious that the risen Christ is not now present in bodily form anywhere in this world; therefore we conclude that the Scripture account of His ascension is entirely reasonable and credible, and the only possible view, once His literal resurrection from the dead is granted.

11. What is meant by saying that Christ ascended to heaven in order to receive gifts for men?

"To receive gifts for men" is an expression taken from Psalm 68:18, and quoted in Ephesians 4:8. The kind of gifts meant can be discovered from Ephesians 4:11,12, namely, various kinds of official functions in the Church, such as the offices of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. The purpose of these various gifts is stated in verse 12, namely, "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."

12. Why should Christ's ascension raise our affections heavenward?

The fact that our Saviour is in heaven should make us think of heaven and value it more highly than all our possessions in this world. "Where your treasure is, there will be your heart be also."

13. What is Christ doing in heaven at the present time?

Among other things which the Bible mentions, He is preparing a place for His people in heavenly glory, to be their eternal home. John 14:1-3.

14. How do we know that heaven is a place and not just a spiritual state or condition?

Christ's human body is there, therefore it must be a place. Moreover His own promise in John 14:3 ("I go to prepare a place for you") certainly implies that heaven is a place. We should resist all tendency to "spiritualize" or explain away the plain, simple, realistic meaning of Christ's promise, and should adhere tenaciously to the unsophisticated realism of the Scriptures. We do not know where heaven is, but we do know that it is a real place. The doctrine of the bodily resurrection implies and requires believing in heaven as a place.

LESSON 16

Christ's Exaltation at the Right Hand of God

Q. 54. How is Christ exalted in his sitting at the right hand of God?

A. Christ is exalted in his sitting at the right hand of God in that as God-man he is advanced to the highest favor with God the Father, with all fullness of joy, glory, and power over all things in heaven and earth; and doth gather and defend his church, and subdue their enemies, furnisheth his ministers and people with gifts and graces, and maketh intercession for them.

Scripture References:

Phil. 2:9. Christ exalted by God the Father.

Psalm 16:11 compared with Acts 2:28. Christ given all fulness of joy by God the Father.

John 17:5. Christ given glory by God the Father.

Eph. 1:22. I Peter 3:22. Christ given supreme power by God the Father.

Eph. 4:10-12. Psalm 110:1,2. Christ, at the Father's right hand, gathers and defends His Church, subdues their enemies, and furnishes His ministers and people with gifts and graces.

Rom. 8:34. Christ, at the Father's right hand, makes intercession for His people.

Questions:

1. What is meant by saying that Christ sits at the right hand of God in heaven?

This is of course figurative language. Since God is a spirit and has no body, He does not have a literal right hand. The meaning is that Christ as Mediator, being God and man in one person, occupies the highest place in heaven next to God the Father. As God, Christ is fully equal to the Father in all things; as God-man, He exalted to the highest place in heaven next to God.

2. Why was Christ exalted to the right hand of God in heaven?

This honor was given Him as a reward for His obedience, sufferings and death, according to the terms of the Covenant of Grace. Read Phil. 2:8-11.

3. What power does Christ exercise at the right hand of God in heaven?

"All power in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). "He hath put all things under his feet" (I Cor. 15:27). ". . he raised him from the dead, and set him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet . . ." (Eph. 1:20-22). The power committed to Christ is absolutely universal and includes the entire created universe. I Cor. 15:27,28 shows that only God the Father is excepted from Christ's dominion.

4. How long will Christ's dominion over the entire created universe continue?

It will continue throughout the present age and until Christ's second coming at the end of the world. "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (I Cor. 15:25,26). At that time, when death, the last enemy, has been destroyed by the resurrection of the dead, Christ will give up His dominion **over the universe,** as shown by I Cor. 15:24, "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all

rule and all authority and power," and verse 28, "And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."

However, Christ will never give up His kingly office **as head of the redeemed human race,** as shown by Luke 1:33, "And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

5. What is the purpose or aim of Christ's dominion over the entire universe?

The purpose or aim of Christ's dominion over the entire universe is **the benefit of His Church,** as shown by Ephesians 1:22, "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church." This text is often misunderstood, as if it said "head over all things IN the church," that is, as if it meant simply that Christ is the head of the Church. But we should note that the text says "head over all things TO the church," that is, head over the entire universe for the benefit of the Church.

6. How does Christ's universal dominion benefit His Church?

(a) By gathering His elect people into His Church.

(b) By defending His Church against enemies.

(c) By perfecting His Church, bestowing gifts and graces on ministers and people.

(d) By making intercession for His people.

7. What error is common today concerning Christ's kingly dominion?

A very common false teaching asserts that Christ is not a king today, and will not exercise kingly power until after His second coming, when, it is alleged, He will reign for a thousand years in Jerusalem.

I Cor. 15:23-28 certainly teaches that Christ is reigning NOW (verse 25), and that His second coming will mark the end, not the beginning, of His dominion over the entire universe (verses 23,24).

LESSON 17

How Christ Makes Intercession for His People

Q. 55. How doth Christ make intercession?

A. Christ maketh intercession by his appearing in our nature continually before the Father in heaven, in the merit of his obedience and sacrifice on earth, declaring his will to have it applied to all believers: answering all accusations against them, and procuring for them quiet of conscience, notwithstanding daily failings, access with boldness to the throne of grace, and acceptance of their persons and services.

Scripture References:

Heb. 9:12,24. Christ appears in the presence of God on our behalf.

Heb. 1:3. Christ's heavenly intercession is based on the merit of His sacrifice and obedience on earth.

John 3:16; 17:9,20,24. It is Christ's will that the merit of His obedience and sacrifice be applied to all believers.

Rom. 8:33,34. Christ in His heavenly intercession answers all accusations against His people.

Rom. 5:1,2. I John 2:1,2. Christ by His heavenly intercession procures quiet of conscience for His people, in spite of their daily failings.

Heb. 4:16. Christ procures for His people the acceptance of their persons.

I Pet. 2:5. Christ procures for His people the acceptance of their services.

Heb. 7:25. Christ makes intercession for His people continually, saving them to the uttermost.

Questions:

1. To which of Christ's three offices does His work of intercession belong?

To the office of a priest. Hebrews 7:24,25.

2. What book of the Bible tells us most about the priesthood of Christ?

The Epistle to the Hebrews.

3. In what chapter of the Bible is Christ's "Great High Priestly Prayer" found?

In John chapter 17, the chapter where the Scottish Reformer John Knox "cast his first anchor."

4. To whom does Christ make intercession for His people?

To God the Father.

5. On what basis, or by what right, does Christ intercede for His people?

"In the merit of his obedience and sacrifice on earth"; that is, in His heavenly intercession Christ presents His obedience and sacrifice on earth as a sufficient reason why His people's sins should be forgiven, blessings given to them, their services accepted, etc.

6. According to the will and purpose of Christ, to what persons is the merit of His obedience and sacrifice applied?

To all believers.

7. In the Bible, who is represented as making accusations against God's children?

Satan, or the devil. Read Job 1:9-11; 2:4,5. Revelation 12:9,10. Zechariah 3:1,2.

8. Of what might Satan accuse God's people?

Of being unworthy of God's blessings and favor, because of their sins.

9. How can Christ answer Satan's accusations against believers?

By showing that, although God's people are themselves sinful and unworthy, yet since Christ Himself suffered the penalty due to their sins, and also provided a perfect righteousness which is reckoned to their account, Satan has no ground for making charges against them. For every sin that Satan can accuse a Christian of, Christ can say "My blood was shed to take away that sin." Thus Satan is left without any standing ground for accusing believers.

10. What is there in the life of Christian people that would tend to cause an uneasy conscience?

Daily failings in thought, word and deed. The more serious minded the Christian is, the more he would be likely to feel conviction of conscience because of his failures and sins.

11. How can we enjoy real peace of conscience in spite of daily failings?

"Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Rom. 5:20). Christ's atonement and righteousness, which He pleads on our behalf, are greater than all our sins and failures. Therefore, because of His heavenly intercession, peace of conscience is given to Christian believers. This does not mean that the Christian may have a complacent attitude and be satisfied to commit sin daily; on the contrary, he must fight against it continually. But the Christian can have assurance that his sins are forgiven and cannot bring him into condemnation. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1).

12. How can we, with all our sins and failures, have boldness to come to God's throne of grace in prayer?

Of ourselves alone we could not have such boldness, for God is holy and we are sinful. But through Christ's heavenly intercession, because He is our Mediator and High Priest, we can come to God in prayer with confidence, as children to a father. Read Hebrews 4:15,16.

13. Why are the services or "good works" of Christian people acceptable to God?

Not because of ourselves, for we are sinful by nature; nor because of the quality or character of our "good works," for they are very imperfect and marred by sin; but only because of the heavenly intercession of Christ our Mediator.

LESSON 18

How Christ will Come Again to this World

Q. 56. How is Christ to be exalted in his coming again to judge the world?

A. Christ is to be exalted in his coming again to judge the world, in that he, who was unjustly judged and condemned by wicked men, shall come again at the last day in great power, and in the full manifestation of his glory, and of his Father's, with all the holy angels, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God, to judge the world in righteousness.

Scripture References:

Acts 3:14,15. Christ was unjustly judged and condemned by wicked men.

Matt. 24:30. Christ shall come again visibly in the clouds, with power and glory.

Luke 9:26. Matt. 25:31. Christ shall come again in His own glory, and the Father's glory, and with all the holy angels.

I Thess. 4:16. Christ shall come again with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trumpet of God.

Acts 17:31. At His second coming, Christ shall judge the world in righteousness.

Acts 1:10,11. Christ's second coming will be a definite, visible event.

Revelation 1:7. When Christ comes, "every eye shall see him."

Daniel 7:13. Christ shall come on the clouds of heaven.

Rev. 20:11,12. The great Judgment of the Last Day.

Questions:

1. What great event will take place immediately after Christ's second coming?

The Judgment.

2. When will Christ's second coming take place?

At the Last Day, also called the end of the world or the end of history.

3. When will the Last Day come?

This question cannot really be answered, as the information has not been revealed in the Word of God. Matt. 24:26, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man. . ." All attempts to calculate the date of Christ's second coming are useless and unscriptural. We should be on guard against being deceived by those who claim to know "that day and hour" in advance. At the same time we must remember that Christ's second coming is a definite event which will take place at a definite time, that is, a particular year, month, day and hour. On a definite calendar day, known only to God, human history will suddenly come to an abrupt conclusion with the second coming of Christ, followed immediately by the Judgment.

4. Can we know whether the second coming of Christ is approaching or drawing near?

Yes. Although it is impossible to calculate the date of the Lord's return, still it is possible to know whether that blessed event is drawing near. Certain signs have been prophesied as preceding the Lord's return. The appearance of ALL these signs will show that His return is NEAR. Matt. 24:33, "So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors." The American Revised Version (of 1901) translates this verse as follows: "Even so ye also, when ye shall see all these things, know ye that he is nigh, even at the doors."

5. What preparations should we as Christians make for the second coming of Christ?

Matt. 24:44, "Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." Matt. 25:13, "Watch therefore; for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." Read also Luke 12:35-40.

6. What should be our attitude toward the second coming of Christ and the Judgment Day?

We should look forward to these great redemptive events with eager and joyful anticipation, realizing that they will bring about the completion of our redemption — our complete and permanent deliverance from sin, death and all their consequences. Titus 2:13, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." I Peter 1:13, "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." Luke 21:28, "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." Revelation 22:20, "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

7. What will be the manner of Christ's second coming?

Many questions may arise in our minds which cannot be answered. We should always remember that the Bible was given to meet our needs, not to satisfy our curiosity. We should not allow our imagination to wander beyond what is plainly revealed in the Scriptures. Concerning the manner of Christ's second coming, the Word of God teaches clearly the following facts:

(a) Christ's second coming will be personal coming; Acts 1:11, "This same Jesus. . ."

(b) Christ's second coming will be a visible coming; Acts 1:11, ". . . in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven"; Rev. 1:7, "Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him."

(c) Christ's second coming will be a miraculous or supernatural coming, which will crash through the order of nature with the almighty power of God; I Cor. 15:22; I Thess. 4:16, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." Matthew 24:27, "For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

(d) Christ's second coming will be a sudden coming, at a definite and particular time, which is referred to as "the day and the hour"; see also I Cor. 15:22, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye", etc.

8. How will Christ judge the world at His second coming?

He will judge the world in righteousness, that is, according to the righteous law of God. For the first time in human history, absolute justice is going to be dispensed to the human race.

9. Who will be judged at Christ's second coming?

Rev. 20:11-15 shows that the great Judgment will include all the dead who have ever lived, and also all persons still living when Christ returns will be judged.

10. Will Christian people be judged at Christ's second coming?

They will be judged, but not condemned. In their case, the sentence will be one of acquittal because of Christ's blood and righteousness which are imputed or reckoned to their account. II Cor. 5:10, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ . . ."; Rom. 4:10, "For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ"; Rom. 8:1, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus . . ."

11. How will the heathen, who lived and died without the light of Scripture, be judged?

They will be judged according to the law of nature, which was written in their heart and con-

science. Read Romans 2:12-16, where the apostle Paul explains this matter.

12. What has been the prevalent attitude of orthodox churches, in recent years, toward the doctrine of the second coming of Christ?

This doctrine, which beyond question is clearly revealed in the Scriptures as one of the great truths of the Christian faith, and which has always been held to be a cardinal doctrine of Christianity, has been greatly neglected in orthodox churches, so much so that many ministers seldom, if ever, preach on it, and many people know almost nothing about it. The result of this widespread neglect has been that certain denominations and sects have taken up this doctrine and carried it to absurd and fanatical extremes, far beyond what a sober study of the Scriptures would warrant. We should deplore these fantastic studies of "prophecy," but at the same time we should avoid the opposite extreme of forgetting and neglecting the doctrine of Christ's second coming. We can believe thoroughly in the real, visible, supernatural second coming of Christ without accepting the fantastic ideas of the so-called "experts on prophecy" who are so popular today.

LESSON 19

The Benefits We Receive from Christ's Mediation

Q. 57. What benefits hath Christ procured by his mediation?

A. Christ, by his mediation, hath procured redemption, with all other benefits of the Covenant of Grace.

Scripture References:

Heb. 9:12. Christ has obtained redemption for His people with His own blood.

Mark 10:45. Christ laid down His life as a ransom-price.

I Tim. 2:6. Christ gave Himself a ransom for all.

Job 19:25. Long ago Job looked forward to Christ as his Redeemer.

Rom. 3:24. We are justified on the basis of redemption through Christ.

I Cor. 1:30. Christ is made redemption to His people.

Eph. 1:17. Redemption is through Christ's blood.

Col. 1:14. Forgiveness of sins is based on redemption through Christ's blood.

II Cor. 1:20. All the benefits of the Covenant of Grace come to the believer through Christ.

Questions:

1. What is the meaning of the word "mediation"?

It means to act as a Mediator or go-between in reconciling parties who were at enmity with each other.

2. What is the basic meaning of the word "redemption"?

It means to recover possession by the payment of a purchase or ransom price.

3. What is the principal meaning of the word "redemption" in the New Testament?

It means Christ's reclaiming sinners from sin and death, and gaining salvation and life for them, by the payment of His precious blood as the ransom price for them.

4. What other usage of the word "redemption" is found in the New Testament?

It is also used to refer to the resurrection of the body, because this is the final installment of the benefits of redemption. See Rom. 8:23; Eph. 1:14; Luke 21:28.

5. Why was it necessary for Christ to pay a ransom price for our redemption?

Because the whole human race was guilty before God, and according to God's righteous Judgment deserves eternal death.

6. To whom did Christ pay the ransom price?

He paid the ransom price to God. The notion that the ransom price was paid to Satan is a very old error, which reappears from time to time, but it is without foundation in the Word of God. Christ came to destroy the works of Satan, it is true, but not by paying a ransom price to Satan. He destroyed the works of Satan by paying the ransom price to God.

7. If God is love, as the Bible says, why could He not forgive sinners without the payment of a ransom price?

The Bible teaches us that God is love, but it also teaches us that He is a God of righteousness and holiness, and that He cannot deny Himself. If God were simply to forgive sin, without an atonement or ransom price, He would deny His own righteousness. The penalty of sin must be borne by a Substitute; otherwise God could not righteously forgive our sins.

8. In addition to redemption, or suffering and dying for our sins, what other benefits of the Covenant of Grace has Christ procured for His people?

Justification, Adoption, Sanctification, and the several benefits which in this life do either accompany

or flow from them, including assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end; also those benefits which come to the believer at death and at the resurrection. See The Shorter Catechism, Q. 32, 36, 37, 38.

Q. 58. How do we come to be made partakers of the benefits which Christ hath procured?

A. We are made partakers of the benefits which Christ hath procured, by the application of them to us, which is the work especially of God the Holy Ghost.

Scripture References:

John 1:11,12. Christ's benefits applied to us.

Titus 3:5,6. Regeneration by the Holy Spirit is necessary for salvation.

Questions:

1. What is the difference between the work of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit?

Christ has **obtained redemption for us;** the Holy Spirit **applies redemption to us,** so that we actually experience the benefit of it. Redemption is purchased by Christ, but applied by the Holy Spirit. Christ bought it and paid for it; the Holy Spirit enables us to experience its benefit.

2. Why is it necessary for the Holy Spirit to apply Christ's redemption to us?

Because of ourselves we are so sinful that we could never get the benefit of Christ's redemption if we were left to ourselves; only by the almighty work of the Holy Spirit, changing our hearts and leading us to repent and believe, can we actually receive the benefit of what Christ has done for us.

3. Is it true that in the end our salvation depends entirely on our human free will, by which we either accept the Gospel or reject it?

This kind of statement is only part of the truth and is very liable to misunderstanding and very conducive to theological error. We might express the whole matter this way:

(a) Our salvation depends on whether we accept or reject the Gospel.

(b) In accepting or rejecting the Gospel, we always act according to our free will (more correctly called free agency).

(c) Apart from the work of the Holy Spirit, everyone's free will would choose to reject the Gospel.

(d) When a person's heart is changed by the Holy Spirit, his free will chooses to accept the Gospel.

(e) Therefore in the end it depends on the work of the Holy Spirit in people's hearts. Man is a free agent, but he is also dead in sin and cannot originate a love for God and for holiness in his own heart.

4. Is the work of the Holy Spirit, in applying Christ's redemption, subject to human control?

No. It is a sovereign work of God. He is the Potter; we are the clay. His work is not subject to our control. But this does not mean that the Holy Spirit does not work in answer to the prayers of Christian people; He does.

LESSON 20

Who Are the Beneficiaries of Christ's Redemption?

Q. 59. Who are made partakers of redemption through Christ?

A. Redemption is certainly applied, and effectually communicated, to all those for whom Christ hath purchased it; who are in time by the Holy Ghost enabled to believe in Christ according to the gospel.

Scripture References:

Eph. 1:13,14. John 6:37,39; 10:15,16. Redemption is effectually communicated to those for whom Christ purchased it.

Eph. 2:8, II Cor. 4:13. Those for whom Christ purchased redemption are in time enabled to believe in Him according to the Gospel.

John 17:9. Christ prays for those for whom He purchased redemption.

John 17:20. Christ makes intercession for all who are believers in Him.

Acts 2:47. Those for whom redemption was purchased are in due time added to the Church.

Acts 16:14. For a person to be saved by the Gospel, the heart must be "opened" by the Lord.

Acts 18:9-11. God knows exactly who His elect are, for whom redemption has been purchased, and to whom in due time it is to be applied.

Questions:

1. For whom did Christ purchase redemption?

For a body of people described in Scripture by such terms as "His people," "His sheep," "His church," "His body," "The elect," "Those whom He foreknew," etc.

2. How many people are included in the body for whom redemption was purchased?

"A great multitude, which no man could number,

of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues . . ." Rev. 7:9. Scripture teaches that the elect are: (a) A definite number of particular people, not the entire human race, but a part. (b) A very great number, passing human ability to count. (c) A number unknown to men, but known to God, and determined before the creation of the world.

3. Did not Christ purchase redemption for everybody?

Although this is the popular idea today, we believe it is contrary to what the Bible teaches, and that our Confession of Faith and Catechisms are right in rejecting it. The Bible teaches, rather, that Christ purchased redemption for "his own," "his sheep," "his people," etc.

4. How can we explain the Scripture texts which say that Christ died for all?

When the Bible says that Christ died for all this does not mean for all men; it means for all Christians or for all the elect. Some of the similar texts mean that Christ died for sinners regardless of race or nationality, whether Jews or Gentiles: I John 2:2. In the Bible such terms as "all" do not mean every individual person in the world, as will be seen by looking up the following texts: Luke 2:1; Acts 19:27; Luke 19:48; Mark 11:32,81; Acts 4:21; John 12:19. In I Thess. 2:15 the apostle Paul says that the Jews of his day were "contrary to all men." Does this mean that they were contrary to the Eskimos of Greenland with whom they had never had the least contact? Or that they were contrary to themselves and their own leaders? If we insist that the word "all" always means "all" in the absolute sense without any implied limitations, we run into many absurdities. The meaning of "all" must be determined in the light of the context and of the system of revealed truth as a whole.

5. Is it right to say: "God gives everyone a chance to be saved, and it is up to us to take it or leave it"?

There is no such thing as chance in the Plan of Salvation revealed in the Bible. Christ's redemption is CERTAINLY AND EFFECTUALLY applied to all those for whom it was intended and purchased.

6. How does the Holy Spirit apply Christ's redemption to the elect?

By enabling them, at a particular time in their life, to believe in Christ according to the Gospel.

Some Noteworthy Quotations

"I verily believe that the whole condition and state of the Church today is largely due to the fact that we fail at two points. It is because we never realise the depth of the pit out of which we have been brought by the grace of God that we do not thank God as we ought. And then there is our failure to realise the great heights to which He has raised us."

—D. M. Lloyd-Jones

"There is a time shortly coming when if we had all the riches of earth, they would do us no good. O lay up stock of grace; be rich in faith and good works; these are the riches which will follow us (Rev. 14:13). No other coin but grace will pass muster in heaven."

—Thomas Watson

"Precisely what evangelical religion means is immediate dependence of the soul on God and on God alone for salvation."

—B. B. Warfield

"In nothing does backsliding more readily discover itself than in the loss of familiarity with heaven."

—Patrick Fairbairn

"A church without life and zeal makes Christ sick (Rev. 3:16)."

—C. H. Spurgeon

"Complacency is a most serious sin in any church. A self-satisfied church is either dead or dying."

—R. B. Kuiper

"If there were no hardship in poverty, no agony in diseases, no distress in ignominy, no horror in death, — what fortitude or moderation would be displayed in regarding them with absolute indifference? But since each of these, by its own essential bitterness, naturally preys on all our hearts, herein the fortitude of a believer is manifested, if, when he experiences such bitterness, how grieveously soever he may be distressed by it, yet by valiantly resisting, he at length overcomes it; his patience displays itself if, when he is sharply provoked, he is nevertheless restrained by the fear of God from any eruptions of intemperance: his cheerfulness is conspicuous if, when he is wounded by sadness and sorrow, he is satisfied with the spiritual consolation of God."

—John Calvin

"As one tree of the forest protects another against the violence of the storm, so in the communion of saints does one protect the other against the storm-wind of doubt."

—Abraham Kuyper

"Let us be sober, and awake from the intoxication of those who have become drunk on the wine of science."

—Abraham Kuyper

"Though the world thinks my case most miserable, yet I think it so happy that I know not a man this day on the face of the earth with whom I would exchange my lot. Oh, it is more sweet and pleasant to be swimming in the swellings of Jordan for Christ and

with Christ, than to be wallowing in the pleasures of sin and the delights of the flesh."

—James Renwick

"If religion be made independent of history there is no such thing as a gospel. For 'gospel' means 'good news,' tidings, information about something that has happened. A gospel independent of history is a contradiction in terms."

—J. Gresham Machen

"Her (the Church's) constitution, as it lies in the Word of God, is perfect; but defects still exist in the best churches. And it is far from easy — is it possible? to prepare a minute statement of the marks of a true church, which will render easy the task of deciding in **every** case, absolutely and **at once,** whether a society can be reckoned a true church or not. And yet every intelligent Christian admits that a church, once genuine in its character, may become completely apostate. To draw the line and say, just **here,** it ought to be abandoned, is not easy. The truth is, all questions of this sort must, as they occur, be left for decision, under the guidance of general principles. . . . to the enlightened judgment, pure hearts, and honest purposes of the faithful in Christ."

—James M. Wilson

"The mind of a Christian, when it is certainly persuaded that all things happen by the ordination of God, and that there is nothing left to chance, will always direct its views to Him as the supreme cause of all things, and will also consider inferior causes in their proper order. He will reverence and praise God as the principal Author of benefits received, but will also honor men as His ministers (servants), and will understand, what indeed is the fact, that the will of God has laid him under obligations to those persons by whose means the Lord has been pleased to communicate His benefits."

—John Calvin

"Do we really believe that Christ is the **only** way to heaven? Then act and live as if we believed it! Be not content if anyone is kind, courteous, gentle, generous, patient: only be content when they come to Christ, not until then! Anything is better than a quiet indifference."

—J. C. Ryle

"Truth will ultimately prevail where there is pains taken to bring it to light."

—George Washington

"What is faith unless it is to believe what you do not see?"

—Augustine of Hippo

"We are often moved with passion, and we think it to be zeal."

—Thomas a-Kempis

"Oh, that our Lord would come this day and knock at the door of your hearts. But the devil perhaps may say, 'You and I shall not part so soon.' But when Christ gives an irresistible knock he must come out by authority; He can command him immediately to come forth."

—Richard Cameron

"Is there any of you whom God has awakened out of the deadly slumber of the natural mind? Has He drawn aside the curtains, and made the light of truth to fall upon your heart, revealing the true condition of your soul? Has He made you start to your feet alarmed, that you might go, and weep as you go, to seek the Lord your God? Has He made you exchange the careless smile of gaiety for the tears of anxiety, the loud laugh of folly for the cry of bitter distress about your soul? Are you asking the way to Zion with your face directed thitherward? Then take heed, I beseech you, of sitting down contented in this refuge of lies. Remember, he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; remember, no outward observances, no prayers, or church-going, or Bible-reading, can ever justify you in the sight of God."

—Robert Murray McCheyne

Religious Terms Defined

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. On the other hand, to believe that the saved Christian is under the moral law of God as the standard of righteous living is not legalism, though this idea has often been asserted.)

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 tradition; there is no warrant for it in the Bible.)

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 out the voice of a guilty conscience by constant levity and jesting may be laughing themselves to hell.)

LIBERALISM. That type of religion that denies or minimizes the supernatural character of Christianity, denying the reality of supernatural miracles, supernatural redemption and supernatural Christian experience, and holding that salvation is essentially a matter of culture or "character building" rather than of redemption, and holding that Christianity, as a product of the evolutionary development of the human race, differs from other religions only in degree, not in essential nature.

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 in all matters of faith and-or worship which are in addition to the Word of God. (Westminster Confession of Faith, XX.2.)

LORD'S SUPPER, THE. "The Lord's Supper is a sacrament, wherein, by giving and receiving bread and wine, according to Christ's appointment, his death is showed forth; and the worthy receivers are, not after a corporal and carnal manner, but by faith, made partakers of his body and blood, with all his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment, and growth in grace." (The Shorter Catechism, 96.)

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).

Selected Christian Verse

"NO MAN COMETH UNTO THE FATHER BUT BY ME"

St. John xiv 6

I say,
  Take the Lord Christ away,
And in that day
  You break before your very eyes
  The only bridge set up to span
The awful gulf which lies
  Stretched between God and man.

Take him away,
  And your own hand casts off the only dress
Wherein you might have stood before the light
  Of God's pure sight—
The perfect righteousness
  Of Christ's fair robe of white,
Untouched by time, or earth — dust or decay.

—Jewish Hope

"BUT IF YE WILL NOT HEAR IT —

My soul shall weep in secret places,
Mine eyes shall run down with tears,"
God spoke, for men had turned their faces
From Him, inclining not their ears.

"My soul shall weep in secret places,"
What love is this! God mourns for man?
Such love divine through Christ erases
All sin, in His Redemptive Plan.

(Jeremiah 13:17)

—Esther Belle Heins

REMEMBERING

I would stay at the cross a while each day,
Its meaning must not grow dim,
I would stay at the cross until my tears
Washed pride away, left naught but Him!

O God forbid that I should turn my face
Away from the crimson flow!
I would stay at the cross remembering
Christ's love for mankind made Him go.

—Esther Belle Heins

THE NAME OF JESUS

His Name to me is one of joy,
Of honor and of praise,
Its glow makes bright my midnight hour,
Its song begins my days.
His Name to me is one of peace,
And this tranquility —
Could richly pave Death's corridor
Into eternity!

—Esther Belle Heins

SEASONAL BLESSINGS

Upon the vigor felt in spring
We can't too long rely,
But if you seek God's will, then zest —
Will be yours in July.

The nip of fall may pleasant be,
The bite of cold December;
When God has seasoned you with grace —
With joy you'll both remember.

— Esther Belle Heins

Reviews of Religious Books

The favorable reviewing of a book here does not imply approval of its entire contents. Purchase books from your book dealer or from the publishers. Do not send orders for books to **Blue Banner Faith and Life.**

BIOLOGY: A Search for Order in Complexity. Edited by John N. Moore and Harold S. Slusher. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan. 1970, pp. 548, $7.95.

SCIENCE AND CREATION: A Handbook for Teachers, by Henry M. Morris, William W. Boardman, Jr., and Robert F. Koontz. Creation-Science Research Center, 2716 Madison Ave., San Diego, California, 92116. 1971, pp. 98, paper, $3.50.

THE SCIENCE AND CREATION SERIES. Creation-Science Research Center. (as above). 1971, pp. 30, paper, $1.75 per manual.

BIOLOGY is a text book for high school students of biology. It is an accurate, well done, and commendable study of the complex subject of biology. Mrs. Richard Fuller taught high school biology for a number of years, and has commended this text for its current, documented treatment of the Theory of Evolution.

SCIENCE AND CREATION is a text book for teachers. The work is a technical statement of the theoretical deficiencies of an evolutionary approach to Creation.

The text uses arguments from Genetics, Thermodynamics, and Linguistics to support the Theory of Creation.

THE SCIENCE SERIES is an eight manual series for children, with eight corresponding manuals for their teachers, (16 manuals) which incorporates the results of the technical and detailed discussions of Thermodynamics, fossils, astronomy, and astrophysics into a palatable discussion for young children, and adults. The manuals are beautifully done.

All of these works are highly recommended to you.

—Edward A. Robson

SCIENTIFIC STUDIES IN SPECIAL CREATION, ed. by Walter E. Lammerts. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Box 185, Nutley, N.J. 07110. 1971, pp. 343. $6.95.

This book is a symposium consisting of selected articles from **The Creation Research Society Quarterly,** Volumes I through V (1964-1968), by a number of authors (23 in all) several of whom are distinguished for their academic qualifications and their scholarly publications. The thing that unites them is that they are all Creationists and therefore opposed to the theory of evolution.

R. J. Rushdoony opens the volume with a chapter on "The Premises of Evolutionary Thought", bringing out forcefully something that is often forgotten or ignored, namely that the common form of evolutionary theory is not only a scientific theory but also wedded to and dependent on philosophic assumptions which cannot be proved but are held by faith.

Some of the following chapters deal with creation out of nothing, the nature of the creation days of Genesis 1, problems involved in radiological dating, inconsistencies and problems in orthodox geology, Bible chronology and world population growth, wild flowers and evolution, DNA and its meaning, the spontaneous generation of life, and social Darwinism.

Some but not all of the authors evidently accept Ussher's chronology of the Old Testament, or some scheme comparable to it. Most seem to believe in a relatively young earth — a matter on which this reviewer is not convinced. It is not to be expected that even Bible-believing readers will agree with every position stated in a book written by so many different authors. But the authors, and the publisher, have done a distinct service to the cause of truth in issuing this book which at many points relentlessly calls attention to weaknesses, doubtful evidence and shaky logic in the commonly alleged "proofs" of organic evolution.

This book would be rendered more useful by the provision of an index. The reviewer hesitates to criticize such a worthy production, but ventures to call attention to the improper use of the term "miracle" (pages 304 and 305) where a remarkable instance of providential design is discussed. We believe the word "miracle" should be reserved for the strictly supernatural activity of God which is apart from the forces of nature.

This book is heartily commended to our readers.

—J G. Vos

THE OLD TESTAMENT: ITS CLAIMS AND ITS CRITICS, by Osward T. Allis. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., P. O. Box 185, Nutley, N.J. 07110. 1972, pp. 509. $9.95.

The author of this book taught Old Testament studies for many years at Princeton Theological Seminary, and later at Westminster Theological Seminary. It was this reviewer's privilege to study under him at Princeton in the nineteen twenties. Dr. Allis is always careful, always thorough, always fair to opponents. The present volume could be regarded as the capstone of a life's scholarship devoted to the exposition and defence of the Old Testament as the inerrant Word of God.

College and seminary students who do not have a first-hand knowledge of what can be said in defence of the Old Testament are easily brainwashed and swept off their feet by the sweeping assertion of negative critics that "all scholars are agreed" that the Old Testament contains large elements of mythology, legend, folklore, internal contradiction and uninhibited forgery. This is not because the real evidence points in these directions, but because the critics approach the Old Testament assuming from the outset the philosophy of naturalism and an evolutionary view of history and religion. Naturalism and evolutionism are accepted by faith, as axioms needing no proof. Then everything is bent and twisted to fit that assumed philosophic framework.

With monumental scholarship Dr. Allis exposes the philosophic bias of the critics, and presents masses of data that do not fit this ready-made viewpoint. Over and over again he shows that the Old Testament is true and the critics are wrong. The literary form of various parts of the Old Testament is analyzed and proper inferences drawn. A chapter entitled "Comparing the Incomparable" brings out the error and folly of trying to reduce the Old Testament to the level of ancient Near Eastern religious cults and ideas. A chapter on Old Testament chronology faces some real problems candidly while at the same time defending the truth of the Biblical data.

Theological Liberals will doubtless follow their customary practice by ignoring this book as they ignore virtually all books that defend the Bible as true. Still, this book can and will be used by the Lord to help many to see the Old Testament for what it really is — an impregnable rock of God-given truth.

—J. G. Vos

Blue Banner Question Box

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

Question:

A friend said that the hymns of Fanny Crosby are surely inspired. Is this true?

Answer:

Such statements can result only from a very loose and inaccurate use of the term "inspired." What such people probably mean is "inspiring" or "inspirational." When we are speaking about the Bible, the word "inspired" has a technical meaning; it means "GOD-BREATHED"; the idea is not that God by His Spirit breathed something into certain persons, but that the words of Scripture are what God has BREATHED OUT, that is, they are truly the Word of God. Only the Bible is "inspired" in this technical sense; only the Bible, therefore, is the infallible Word of God. If Fanny Crosby's hymns were "inspired" in this technical sense, they would be part of the Word of God, and they would have to be included in every copy of the Bible, along with the writings of Moses and the Apostle Paul. Perhaps the reason people can claim that Fanny Crosby's hymns are inspired is not that they have such a high idea of these humns, but that they have such a low idea of the Bible. Many people today regard the Bible as just a collection of human writings. If the Bible is only a collection of what a number of good men have written about God and religion, then of course it is not really inspired. In that case there would be no real difference between the Bible and other religious books.

—J. G. V.

Question:

Will a person who has never heard of Christ or His Gospel be saved?

Answer:

The Westminster Confession of Faith gives a clear answer to this question in its chapter on "Effectual Calling." After stating that persons who have only the common operations of the Holy Spirit, and never come to Christ, cannot be saved, the Confession adds: "much less can men not professing the Christian religion be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, and the law of that religion they do profess; and to assert and maintain that they may, is very pernicious, and to be detested." (X.4). In support of this statement, the Confession cites the following Scriptures: Acts 4:12. John 14:6. Eph. 2:12. John 4:22; 17:3. II John 9-11. I Cor. 16:22. Gal. 1:6-8. The Great Commission to preach the Gospel to all nations is based on the truth that without knowledge of Christ and faith in Him people are LOST and WITHOUT HOPE IN THE WORLD (Eph. 2:12). When missionaries preach the Gospel of Christ to people who have never heard of Christ before, the great majority reject the message, and only relatively few accept it. Many millions have heard of Christ and His Gospel and have rejected the offer of salvation. People are lost because they are SINNERS, not merely because of the specific sin of rejecting the Gospel. It is a terrible thing to think of the millions of people in this world that are without Christ and His salvation. But this thought, rather than leading us to a vain speculation as to whether these people can receive eternal life without believing on Christ, should stir us up to send the Gospel "to the uttermost parts of the earth."

—J. G. V.

Question:

How should we uphold infant baptism when

friends remind us that our Saviour was baptized when an adult?

Answer:

Our Saviour Jesus Christ never received CHRISTIAN BAPTISM. He received the rite administered by John the Baptist. That John's baptism was not the same as Christian baptism is proved by Acts 19:1-5, where it is recorded that those who had already received John's baptism at a later time received Christian baptism in addition. Since Jesus never received Christian baptism, it is clear that the fact that he was baptized when an adult has no bearing on the question of infant baptism. As a matter of fact the Old Testament counterpart of Christian baptism was the ordinance of circumcision. The essential meaning of baptism and circumcision is the same; both are signs and seals of the Covenant of Grace. Jesus, who was born under the Old Testament dispensation of the Covenant of Grace, was circumcised, not as an adult, but when He was eight days old (Luke 2:21). Since under the New Testament dispensation baptism has taken the place of circumcision, it is eminently proper that infants be baptized.

—J. G. V.

Question:

When does Justification take place? Is it in this life, or is it after the earthly life ends?

Answer:

According to all orthodox Christian theology, Justification takes place in the present life, immediately upon a person believing on Christ with a true saving faith. See Confession of Faith, XI.4; Larger Catechism, Q. 69 (note the words "in this life"); Shorter Catechism, Q. 32 ("in this life"). The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony rejects as an error the proposition: "That justification is incomplete in the present life" (XIV, Error 6). That the doctrine set forth in these standards is Scriptural is evident from the usage of language in Paul's Epistle to the Romans, where he speaks of Justification and its benefits in the present tense; for example, Rom. 5:1, "Therefore BEING JUSTIFIED by faith, we HAVE peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"; similarly Rom. 3:34 ("BEING justified") 3:28 ("a man IS justified"), etc.

—J. G. V.

Question:

Should the word "christening" ever be used instead of "baptism"?

Answer:

The word "christen" literally means "TO MAKE CHRISTIAN", and is therefore associated with the doctrine known as "baptismal regeneration" which we reject as false. The Reformed Presbyterian Testimony declares the following proposition to be an error: "That infants are as heathens until they are baptized, and that baptism regenerates and christens them" (XXV, Error 6). Since the word "christen" is associated with this doctrinal error, we should avoid using it. Also all tendencies to regard the baptism of an infant as a social occasion for family, relatives and friends, should be avoided. The administration of baptism is a religious matter pure and simple and should not be associated with social festivities of any kind. On the question of private baptism, see "Blue Banner Faith and Life", Vol. 2 (1947), pp. 136-7.

—J. G. V.

Question:

In David's prayer of repentance after his double sin of adultery and murder, he said, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned. . ." How could David, inspired by the Holy Spirit in composing this Psalm, say such a thing, when it is so obvious that he had sinned terribly against both Bathsheba and her husband Uriah?

Answer:

Strictly speaking, we can sin only against God. We can and do **injure** people, but we **sin** against God. No matter what we do, we cannot injure God; and no matter what we do, we cannot really sin against our fellow men.

David had grievously injured Bathsheba and Uriah, and in doing so he sinned against God. The injury was done to humans, but the moral offense was against God. Only God is the judge of our moral life; to God alone our conscience is obligated; to God, not man, we shall finally give our account. When we sin, it is God's law, not man's, that we violate. Therefore David was fully correct in saying to God, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned."

It is sometimes said that the first table of the Ten Commandments sets forth our duty to God, and the second table sets forth our duty to man. This kind of statement is both incorrect and misleading. The whole Ten Commandments, being God's law, are our duty to God. To break any one of them is to sin against God (James 2:10).

Our modern man-centered age is more concerned about offences against men than about sin against God. The Bible puts the emphasis the other way around. As Christians we should witness against the idolatrous man-centered culture of our time.

—J. G. Vos

Trouble and perlexity drive me to prayer, and prayer drives away perplexity and trouble.

Philip Melanchthon

Prayer is the breath of a new-born soul and there can be no life without it.

Rowland Hill

Index of Blue Banner Faith and Life Volume 27 - 1972

I. Articles, Lessons and General Contents

Arminianism, 102

Arminianism and Sovereign Grace (J. G. Vos), 134

Blue Banner Question Box, 100, 170

Campus Crusade for Christ, 100

Can We Still Believe in Miracles (J. G. Vos), 176

Christian Philosophy of Education, A (D. R. Armstrong), 7, 56, 97

Contributions Received, 44, 88, 128, 174

Does Faith Have Power? (J. G. Vos), 46

Five Points of Sin, The (J. G. Vos), 33

Foundation Truths of the Christian Faith (Series of Bible Lessons), 67-81

Full-time Christian Service, 101

God's Covenant: Man's Only Real Security (J. G. Vos), 92

God's Works of Creation and Providence (Series of Bible Lessons), 105-122

Have You Been Born Again? (J. G. Vos), 35

Incomparable King, the (J. G. Vos), 130

Instrumental Music in Worship (G. I. Williamson), 60

Non-Essential Truths? (J. G. Vos), 33

Pastoral Ministry, the, Ordained of God (R. M. More), 93

Peden, Alexander, 90

Pictures of Jesus, 103

Poems and Poetical Quotations:

But if Ye Will Not Hear It (Heins), 168

Faith (Heins), 122

From a Cross (Heins), 122

Jerusalem the Golden (Bernard of Cluny), 132

Name of Jesus, the (Heins), 168

Night I met my Lord, the (Heins), 122

Nocturne (Scott), 2

No Man Cometh unto the Father but by Me (anon), 168

Peace (Scott), 2

Peden at the Grave of Cameron (Menteath), 48

Penitent, the (Scott), 2

Pride and Praise (Heins), 122

Remembering (Heins), 168

Revelation 3:20 (Scott), 2

Seasonal Blessings (Heins), 168

Set Your Eyes on Him (Heins), 123

Shadowed by the Cross (Heins), 123

Tomorrow's Way (anon), 123

Two Adams, the (Williamson), 122

Pressured Pastors, Presbyteries and Pragmatism (J. G. Vos), 3

Religious Terms Defined, 36, 59, 96, 167-8

Reprints Available, 175

Saviour of the Lost, the (J. G. Vos), 55

Scripture and the "Modern" Attitude (J. G. Vos), 133

Second Commandment, the (W. Young), 49

Some Noteworthy Quotations, 123, 166-7

Studies in the Teachings of Jesus Christ (Series of Bible Lessons), 14-28

Studies on the Plan of Salvation (Series of Bible Lessons), 137-166

Westminster Confession of Faith, the, in Modern English (J. A. Hughes), 6, 54, 93, 136

Why Must Christ be Crucified? (J. G. Vos), 34

II. Books Reviewed

Affirming the Will of God (Little), 87

All-Round Ministry, An (Spurgeon), 125

Art of Understanding your Mate, the (Osborne), 125

At the Risk of Being a Wife (Bard and Johnson), 42

Better is Your Love than Wine (Banyolak and Trobisch), 88

Between Christ and Satan (Koch), 86

Between Two Worlds (Anderson), 85

Biology: A Search for Order in Complexity (ed. Moore and Slusher), 169

Blade of Grass, A (DePree), 42

Born out of Conflict (Song, Christians), 82

Christianity and Comparative Religion (Anderson), 44

Christian Way of Death, the (Hunt), 85

Commenting and Commentaries (Spurgeon), 39

Committed to Whom? (Hoek), 83

Communication for the Church (McLaughlin), 42

Communion Meditations and Prayers (Gwynne), 126

Creation or Evolution? (Riegle), 82

C. S. Lewis: Speaker and Teacher (ed. Keefe), 126

Daily Manna Calendar for 1972 (ed. Monsma), 82

Darwin Retried (Macbeth), 124

Devil's Alphabet, the (Koch), 87

Dictionary of Illustrations (Heffley), 88

Does God Still Guide? (Baxter), 127

Does Science Confront the Bible? (Reid), 43

Encounter with Books (ed. Merchant), 127

Fire on the Mountains (Davis), 43

Foundations of the Faith: The Triune God (Lane), 38

Future of Evangelism (Martin), 38

Genesis: A Devotional Exposition (Barnhouse), 41

Genesis-Exodus (Payne), 43

God's Minute (ed. Viening), 86

Happiness is not an Accident (DeHaan), 87

Heartbeats Emerging from Encounters in Prayer (Drescher), 83

Hebrews, a Digest of Reformed Comment (Wilson), 88

Holy Spirit, the, and His Gifts (Sanders), 83

How Communists Negotiate (Joy), 85

How to Begin an Evangelistic Bible Study (Lum), 126

Interpreting God's Word Today (Kistemaker), 125

Isaiah: Prophecies, Promises, Warnings (Vine), 38

I Wish I had Known (Symposium), 86

James, a Primer for Christian Living (Kelly), 44

Jerusalem and Athens (ed. Geehan), 126

Jesus the Radical (Lum), 86

Law and Liberty (Rushdoony), 42

Life of David (Pink), 42

Listen to Me! (Hunt), 85

Luke: Historian and Theologian (Marshall), 85

Marriage is for Adults Only (Granberg), 43

Ministry and Message of Paul (Longenecker), 84

Mission Control (White), 84

Monkey Off My Back (Brown), 43

New Face for the Church (Richards), 84

New Testament Commentary (Howley, Bruce, Ellison), 41

Occult Bondage and Deliverance (Koch), 86

Of Things which Must Soon Come to Pass (Mauro), 127

Old Testament, the: Its Claims and its Critics (Allis), 169

One Divine Moment (ed. Coleman), 40

One People (J. Stott), 88

Paradox of Pain (Smith), 126

Place of the Bible in Modern Theology (Leahy), 87

Pulpit in the Shadows (Gage), 84

Reformation or Revolution (Taylor), 40

Reformed Pastor and Modern Thought (Van Til), 83

Reform of the Church (Bloesch), 37

Revelation (Barnhouse), 125

Science and Creation (Morris), 169

Science and Creation Series, the (H. M. Morris et al.), 169

Scientific Studies in Special Creation (ed. Lammerts), 87, 169

She Sat where They Sat (Kinnear), 41

Singing of Psalms in the Worship of God (Williamson), 128

Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God (Edwards), 43

Still Higher for His Highest (Chambers), 84

Student Power in World Evangelism (Howard), 82, 86

Studies in Problem Texts (Baxter), 42

Study of Job, A (Ellison), 43

Ten Commandments, the (Pink), 43

Thy Kingdom Come (Rushdoony), 40

Time is at Hand (Adams), 38

Tradition: Old and New (Bruce), 39

Why I am Still a Christian (ed. Blaiklock), 41

Why World Evangelism? (Howard), 87

Work of Christ (Marshall), 40

World of Revolution (Skinner), 87

Young People's History of the Church (Meijer), 42

Your Adversary the Devil (Pentecost), 39

Bringing Up Children

"Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken. I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me" (Isa. 1:2). In too many homes in America today the heartbreaking cry of this verse could be echoed. Juvenile delinquency seems to be still on the increase. Not merely from broken homes or homes where the parents themselves are delinquents, but from so-called respectable homes come young people who rebel against their parents and other authority. It is not merely the aftermath of war and the by-product of divorce. More and more it seems to be well-nigh universal in America. More and more we are reaping the fruit of an educational system that leaves God out of the picture. How can we expect children to obey and respect constituted authority when they are given no basis for obedience other than the arbitrary word of the parent or other person in authority? By excluding religion completely from the school, God-ordained authority cannot be taught, and ethics are left hanging in the air. Rebellion follows as a matter of course. The only remedy is a school where every hour sees each subject in its proper relation to the Triune God, and commands are to be obeyed because God has ordained it. Merely adding the teaching of the Bible to a pagan system is not sufficient. Each subject must be seen in its true relation to God's government of the universe, otherwise the correct impression cannot be made on the mind of the student. No sacrifice is too great to organize and support the Christian school.

—Rev. Floyd E. Hamilton
in Daily Manna Calendar

Contributions Received

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:

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J. G. Vos, Editor and Manager
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Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania 15010, U.S.A.

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Can We Still Believe In Miracles?

By J. G. Vos

A student was heard saying: "I am a Christian, but I just can't swallow this stuff about miracles. I just don't believe that God would make a lot of laws and then turn right around and break His own laws!" This statement represents a very common attitude; it also reveals a very common misunderstanding about what miracles are and what the laws of nature are.

A miracle may be defined as an event in the physical world, having a spiritual purpose, which is caused by the direct action of God, apart from the forces of nature. Miracles are recorded in the Bible, but not nearly so many as is popularly supposed. In Bible history, miracles were always emergency treatment reserved for times of crisis; they were never used when ordinary methods would do. Usually, though not always, they were for the relief of human suffering or need. Miracles would be unnecessary and incredible in a world which contained neither sin nor suffering. They would not fit the pattern of such a world, just as hospitals would not fit the pattern of a world where people were never sick. But miracles do fit the pattern of a world cursed by sin and suffering.

Paul and Silas were arrested and accused of turning the world upside down. As a matter of fact, the world was already upside down, and they were turning part of it right side up again. Miracles are acts of God's power giving us samples of the world as it ought to be — as a sinless and painless world would really be, as heaven really will be.

What we call "nature" is simply God's ordinary way of working. The "laws" of nature are simply the observed sequences. "Laws" do not **make** anything happen; they only state what has been observed to happen under given conditions or circumstances. It is the **forces** of nature that make things happen in the natural world. It was not the "law of gravity" that made the traditional apple fall on Newton's head; it was the **force** of gravity that made it fall; then later Newton went back to his study and formulated the **law** of gravity based on his observations of how the force of gravity operated. It is forces, not laws, that make things happen, and the forces were created by God.

Neither the laws nor the forces of nature were made by God to limit Himself to a particular way of working. Nature was created to be God's ordinary way of working. Miracles are what happens when God does not choose to work through nature. Are miracles possible, then? This depends on what one believes about God. Is there a Person behind nature? Is this Person all-powerful? Does this Person love mankind? If we can answer "Yes" to these questions, then belief in miracles is possible.

Miracles are not a scientific question. Science deals with how nature operates. Miracles are how God operates when He decides not to use nature. It is wrong to think of science as all-inclusive. Can science tell you whether chocolate ice cream tastes better than vanilla? Or whether it is scientific to tell the truth and avoid telling lies? Real science cannot say anything in the field of esthetic values, nor in the field of moral obligations, nor in the fields of theology and philosophy. The proper field of science is the functioning of nature which can be observed, measured and tested by experiment. Whether there is an almighty Person beyond nature, who started nature originally and controls it from "behind the scenes", science cannot say. The scientist who ventures to pronounce on such things is out of his proper field — he is posing as a theologian or a philosopher, while pretending to be just a scientist. Science has accomplished so much that many people are "drunk" on the wine of scientism today — they forget that science has its limits, while vast areas of truth and existence are beyond those limits. It has even been proposed that young people's romances and "dates" be scientifically arranged by electronic computers! Will they take all the joy out of living? The "scientist" who wants romances to be set up by electronic computers is depersonalizing man. The scientist who denies the possibility of miracles is depersonalizing the universe.

—The Goal Post

Printed in the United States of America by the Patterson Press, Winchester, Kansas 66097