
BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

J. G. VOS, Editor and Manager

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VOLUME 29

JANUARY-MARCH, 1974

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The Wigtown Martyrs

(Author unknown)

On Solway sands the tide flows fast,
The waters swiftly rise;
Alas for him whom lingering there
The rushing waves surprise!
Full quickly must he hurry thence,
Full swiftly must he ride,
Who tempts his fate on Solway shore
And races with the tide.
Past Wigtown Borough to the sea
The Blednoch River goes,
With many a pool and shifting shoal
Across the sand it flows.
Ah! Blednoch's stream and Wigtown bay
Have sights of sorrow seen,
When ships were stranded on the shore,
And boats have shipwrecked been.

There many a time has woman wept,
And wrung in grief her hands,
When loved ones she longed for have been
Found dead on Solway's sands.
But sight so strange was never seen
As when those martyrs died,
And gave their life on Wigtown shore,
And perished in the tide.
For many years ago 'tis now,
'Twas in the month of May;
The level sands were smooth and dry,
The tide out in the bay:
'Twas then the brother of fierce Graham
Of Claverhouse rode down,
With Winram, Strachan, and with Cultron
The Provost of the town.
And cruel Grierson of Lagg
The persecutor came,
To do that day on Blednoch's bank
A deed of sin and shame.

At ebb of tide two stakes of wood
Were driven in the sand,
And fastened there two prisoners were,
At Grierson's command.
An aged widow one of them,
And one a maiden young;
And thus amid the rising waves
The virgin martyr sung:
"To Thee I lift my soul, O Lord,
My God, I trust in Thee;
Let me not be ashamed; let not
My foes triumph o'er me."
The aged widow was the first
Drowned by the rising tide.
"What think you of her now?" in scorn
The persecutors cried.

"What think I of her? In that saint
Whose soul is on the wing
I see but this," the maid replied:
"My Saviour suffering."
Still ever deeper flowed the tide;
The billows higher rose,
And there that young defenceless girl
Was tempted by her foes
To buy her life by breach of faith
To him who was her Lord;
Oh, she was young, and life is sweet,
And it was but a word.

Yet was temptation vain. She chose
For Christ to suffer wrong;
And still amid the rush of waves
The men could hear the song:
"Let not the errors of my youth,
Nor sins remembered be.
In mercy, for Thy goodness, Lord,
Do Thou remember me."
By this the waves rose to her lips;
The voice that sung was still.
They raised her head: "Pray for the King!"
"God save him if He will,"
She answered. Then they dragged her forth
Half drowned amid the tide.
"Will you renounce the Covenant?
Abjure your faith!" they cried.

She raised her eyes nigh dimmed in death:
"Renounce my Saviour? No!
I'm one of Jesus' little ones.
I pray you, let me go!"
They let her go. The water closed
Above her youthful head.
One of the glorious martyr throng,
One of the deathless dead.
Her name shall never be forgot,
While Blednoch's waters run,
And Solway kindles into gold
Beneath the setting sun.
They speak it oft in Scotland's homes;
'Tis told in far-off lands,
How in the bloom of youth she died
Upon the Solway sands.

And souls are thrilled, and hearts beat high
To hear the story told,
How nobly she maintained her faith
In days that now are old;
And how she kept her trust in God,
And how she scorned the foe,
And how she lived and how she died,
So many years ago.

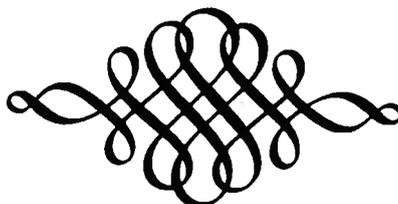
Note: Margaret MacLachlan, a widow aged 63, and Margaret Wilson, a girl of 18, were drowned in the tide at Wigtown, Scotland in the year 1685, because of their loyalty to Christ, His Crown and Covenant.

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NUMBER 1



Basic Principles of Covenant Theology

By J. G. Vos

1. Definition of Covenant Theology

The classic theology of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, which regards the entire Bible as the progressive revelation of a single consistent theme, namely, the covenant established by God with His people, by which they are brought to the eternal glorification and enjoyment of Himself.

2. Definition of Covenant

(a) Wrongly defined as an agreement or compact between God and man. This type of definition is common in older writers on Reformed theology. Noted theologians defined "Covenant" in this way — Henry Bullinger, Ursinus, John Preston, Van Mastricht, Herman Witsius, Francis Turretine. Nevertheless it is an incorrect form of definition and does not satisfy the requirements of the Biblical data. The element of truth in this type of definition consists in the fact that the covenant relationship involves mutuality — God promises salvation, and man exercises faith. But we must distinguish between the covenant relationship and the covenant which establishes the relationship. The covenant relationship certainly involves two parties, God and man, or God and the elect, but the covenant itself, which establishes the relationship, is not a bilateral compact or agreement between parties — rather, it is an act of God alone.

(b) Rightly defined as: A sovereign disposition of God by which His people are brought into the fullest religious relationship with Himself.

(c) Spiritual proof of this form of definition. That the covenant is wholly divine in its origin and its implementation is shown by the whole tenor of Scripture as it speaks of this matter. Some texts may be cited:

Before the Flood, God said to Noah, "But with thee will I establish my covenant" (Gen. 6:18). Note that God does not say, Let us have a covenant between us, but rather, "With thee will I establish my covenant." God is the source and establisher, Noah is the recipient. The covenant is "my" covenant, not "our" covenant.

After the Flood, God spoke to Noah again, and said: "And I, behold I, establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you, and with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth with you; from all that go out of the ark, to every beast of the earth. And I will establish my covenant with you. . . ." (Genesis 9:9-11).

That this covenant is wholly and solely an act of God is manifested by the sign or token of the covenant — the rainbow, something that is completely beyond the control or manipulation of man: "And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you. . . . I do set my bow in the cloud. . . . and the bow shall be in the cloud, and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, This is the token of the covenant, which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth" (Gen. 9:12-17). Note the strong emphasis on the divine initiative and monergism — "I, behold, I establish my covenant" (verse 9), "I will establish my covenant" (verse 11), "the covenant which I have established" (verse 17). Moreover, the rainbow is primarily not for mankind to see and observe, but for God to observe: "And the bow shall be in the cloud, and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant. . . ." (verse 16). When God speaks about Himself ob-

servicing the rainbow, this is of course anthropomorphic language — God speaks of Himself in human terms. But it is done to teach a truth, and that truth is that the covenant is a unilateral, sovereign disposition of God, not an agreement between God and man.

This covenant with Noah and all flesh is not itself the Covenant of Grace, yet it is organically connected with it, and essential to it, and it serves to bring out the meaning of the term "covenant" when the Bible speaks of a covenant of God with man.

In Genesis 15 we have the covenant of God established with Abraham. It is a chapter full of mystery. Abraham is in a trance state in which he is the recipient of revelation. A deep sleep fell upon him, and a horror of great darkness fell upon him (Gen. 15:12). Then God revealed His covenant (verses 13-21.) It involves not only verbal promises but action — a theophany, a visible manifestation of God's presence, as stated in verse 17: "And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace, and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces" (i.e., of the sacrificial animals). Abraham contributed nothing to all this — he merely witnessed it in the vision. The theophany is followed by the formal statement of the covenant, verse 18: "In that same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land. . . .". Note, it does not say that The Lord and Abraham made a covenant between themselves, but "the Lord made a covenant with Abram."

Then in Genesis 17 similar language is used: "I will make my covenant between me and thee. . . behold, my covenant is with thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee" (verses 2-7).

Coming down to the time of Moses, in that great scene at Mount Sinai, we find that the people of Israel were required to pledge their unreserved commitment and obedience to the Lord, but the establishment of the covenant itself is again spoken of as wholly an act of God: "And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words" (Ex. 24:8).

Then in the time of David, we read in David's last words, as recorded in 2 Sam. 23, "He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow" (verse 5).

Similarly, in Isaiah 55:3 we read, "I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David."

In Jeremiah's great prophecy of the New Covenant, the same emphasis occurs: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was a husband unto them, saith the Lord: but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel", etc. (31:31-33).

This idea of the covenant as a sovereign disposition of God is further shown by the usage of the Septuagint and the New Testament in translating the Hebrew word **Berith**. The New Testament never translates the Hebrew **Berith** as **Syntheke**, but always as **Diatheke**. The Septuagint, when speaking of God's covenant with man, always translated **Berith** by **Diatheke**, with a single exception, where **Syntheke** appears (translations, such as the Greek Septuagint, are of course not inspired as translations; but the Greek New Testament is inspired). **Syntheke** would mean "mutual agreement" or "compact"; **Diatheke** means **sovereign disposition or administration**, or (in certain cases) **testament**. The term in theology that corresponds to **Syntheke** would be **Synergism**, i.e., co-operation between God and man in salvation; the term that corresponds to **Diatheke** is **Monergism** — the sole action of God, from the Greek words for "alone" and "work."

So in the New Testament we find much about a **Diatheke** of God with man, but nothing about a **Syntheke** between God and man.

3. Stages in the Establishment and Revelation of the Covenant.

Dispensationalism speaks of many covenants, whereas the Covenant Theology speaks of progressive stages of the establishment and revelation of the one covenant. If for convenience we speak of the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace as separate, or of the old covenant and the New covenant as separate, we should realize that while these are distinguishable stages of redemption and revelation, they are not properly different in their essence, but rather are organically bound together as parts of a single, consistent divine purpose and activity.

What is commonly called the Covenant of Works is called in the Shorter Catechism the Covenant of Life. This is not labelled a covenant in Scripture, yet it is correctly called one in theology, for it has all the elements of one. This was a sovereign disposition of God, revealed to and imposed on man, by which man was brought into a religious bond or relationship with God. This was made with Adam as the representative of his posterity. The command was imposed upon Adam and Eve, not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The presence

of the Tree of Life, from which they were barred after their disobedience, implied that eternal life, or the highest communion with God, would have been the outcome of the covenant, had they not fallen into sin.

It is characteristic of Dispensationalism to say that the Covenant of Works was from Moses to Christ, whereas it is characteristic of the Covenant Theology to say that the Covenant of Works was from the creation of mankind until Adam and Eve fell into sin. From that point the Covenant of Grace takes over. The Covenant of Works is not, however, abrogated or abolished. It remains in force in two respects: first, all mankind who do not come under the Covenant of Grace remain under the condemnation and curse of the broken Covenant of Works. Second, Christ, as the Second Adam, by His perfect obedience to the Father, fulfills the requirement of the Covenant of Works on behalf of His people. Thus in Christ the Covenant of Works is taken up into and made an organic part of the Covenant of Grace.

It should be noted that the so-called Covenant of Works is actually a gift of God's grace. The Garden of Eden and the situation in which Adam and Eve were placed proceeded from the kindness and love of God for man. That Adam and Eve were put through a probation with a view to their becoming moral adults through voluntary obedience to God, was a gift of God's love to them. This cannot be called mercy, because they had not yet sinned, but it is rightly called grace, for it is undeserved love and favor of God toward man. Thus grace began when man was created, not merely after he sinned.

The Covenant of Grace has as its background the eternal Covenant of Redemption, the covenant made in eternity between the Father and the Son. This is very wonderfully brought out in the 17th Chapter of the Gospel of John — our Lord's great High Priestly prayer. The Son undertook to do all that was necessary to give eternal life to all that the Father had given Him. This eternal phase of the Covenant is sometimes called the *Pactum Salutis* (usually translated "Covenant of Redemption") in old Reformed writers. It is brought out also with great force and clearness in Romans 5 where the apostle Paul shows how Christ is the Second Adam and that He accomplished what the first Adam had failed to accomplish.

This eternal covenant was revealed in progressive stages in history, beginning with Genesis 3:15, the first promise of a Redeemer. A further stage came with Noah. The Covenant with Noah was essential to the continuance of the program of redemption — if the elect are to be saved, history must continue, therefore humanity must not be wiped out prematurely by a new flood.

The Covenant of Grace was established in-

formally immediately after the Fall (Gen. 3:15). It was established formally with Abraham (Gen. 17:1-7). The progressive revelation of the Covenant of Grace may be divided into four principal stages, namely:

- 1) From Adam to Abraham
- 2) From Abraham to Moses
- 3) From Moses to Christ
- 4) From Christ to the end of the world

It should be realized that these are not different covenants, far less are they antithetical to each other as Dispensationalism holds, but rather they form a single covenant which has been progressively implemented and revealed. The relation between the earlier and the later parts is not a relationship of opposition or radical difference of principle, but a relationship like that of a seed to the full-grown plant, or that of a partial and incomplete stage of growth to the full and complete growth.

The fullest stage within the historical process is Christianity or "the New Covenant", which will be surpassed only by the ultimate establishment of God's eternal order. This present stage is called "Christianity" or "the Christian Dispensation" because in it everything clearly and manifestly centers around Christ, the Mediator and Surety of the Covenant. This was true of the earlier stages also, but not so manifestly and obviously so.

4. The Parties of the Covenant

Though the establishment of the Covenant is a sovereign, unilateral disposition of God, yet the relationship so established involves mutuality. It is a covenant of God with some other party or parties. So we may inquire as to the identity of the parties.

God of course is the first party. He is the establisher of the Covenant, as we have seen. In the first stage, commonly called the Covenant of Works, the second party was Adam as the federal head or representative of his posterity. The Shorter Catechism shows this when it says that the covenant was made with Adam, not only for himself, but also for his posterity with him. Thus the covenant was made with Adam and those represented by him, i.e., the human race.

The next and later stages are not so simple. It is often said that the Covenant of grace has for its parties God and sinners. This form of statement is characteristic of Lutheranism and Arminianism, which hold that God plans and intends the salvation of every individual of the human race. This involves, of course, holding that the Covenant of Grace is a failure in many cases, in that it fails to secure the salvation of a large number of people who are said to be included in its intended benefits. If the Covenant of Grace was made with those who ultimately perish in hell, it was

made in vain so far as they are concerned. Arminianism makes the intention of God's plan very wide, but its effectiveness very slight.

In Reformed theology it is stated that the parties of the Covenant of Grace are either (a) God and elect sinners, or else (b) God and His Son Jesus Christ as the representative of the elect.

The first of these views is called the "two-covenant view" and stresses the historical rather than the eternal aspect of the Covenant — it emphasizes the revelation and implementation in history rather than the background in the counsels of eternity. It seems to have been intended to stress man's responsibility and to avoid the danger of hyper-Calvinism which virtually denies human freedom and responsibility.

The other view, which is the one set forth in the Westminster Standards held by our own Church, is called the "one-covenant view." This stresses the eternal aspect of the covenant, though without neglecting the historical aspects. It strongly stresses the truth that the Covenant in history, with all its benefits and blessings, is rooted in the *Pactum Salutis* or Covenant of Redemption made by the Father and the Son in eternity. This seems to have been intended to stress God's sovereignty in salvation and to guard against the peril of Arminianism which virtually denies God's sovereignty.

Our *Testimony*, Chapter IX, Error 3, rejects as erroneous the proposition "That there are, besides the Covenant of works, two distinct covenants — one, a Covenant of Redemption made with Christ, and the other, a Covenant of Grace made with us, distinct from the Covenant of Redemption." (Page 165.) The key word here, of course, is the word *distinct*, which is italicized in the *Testimony*. The *Testimony* is not concerned to deny the existence of the Covenant of Redemption, but only to deny its separateness from the Covenant of Grace. In other words, there is an organic connection between the two; they are parts of a single consistent unity in God's plan.

It should be realized that both the "two-covenant view" and the "one-covenant view" are distinctly Reformed views. The difference between them is really semantic rather than a matter of basic principle. The late Rev. Frank D. Frazer once said that these two views were developed in an effort to steer the ship of Reformed theology safely between the rocks of Arminianism on the one side and the cliffs of Hyper-Calvinism on the other hand. He added that while the channel is narrow, the water is deep.

The view set forth in our Church standards regards the Covenant as made by God with Christ as the federal Head and representative of the elect. God determines to bring a vast number of human individuals to eternal glory. These are

the "seed" given to Christ in eternity. Christ undertakes to do everything necessary to bring this to pass. He will be born as a human being, live a perfect life under the law, suffer and die as the atoning Substitute for the elect, rise from the dead, ascend into heaven, send the Holy Spirit to apply redemption, and finally come again to raise His people from the dead, judge the world and inaugurate the eternal state.

Even man's response to the Covenant is effectively secured by what Christ has undertaken and done. This does not cancel man's responsibility but it does insure that the elect will be "effectually called" and regenerated, justified, adopted, sanctified and glorified. Even those parts of the process of salvation which man is active, such as repentance and prayer, are the result of a prior work of Christ.

5. The Nature of the Covenant

(a) Its essence. The essence of something is that which makes it what it is, in distinction from other things which are different. The essence of something is distinguished from its incidental features. Thus it is the essence of an automobile that it is a self-propelled vehicle to transport people or things. The color of the finish, number of cylinders, type of brakes, kind of transmission, are incidental features. A car may have these of one kind or another, and still be an automobile. But if it is not a self-propelled vehicle which can transport people or property, it is not an automobile. It is the essence of the episcopal form of church government that the church be governed by bishops; it is the essence of a wheel that it is capable of turning on an axle; it is the essence of justice that people be dealt with as they deserve.

What, then, is the essence of the Covenant? It is most effectively brought out by Professor John Murray in his lecture at Cambridge University, 1953, later printed in booklet form under the title "The Covenant of Grace" by the Inter-Varsity Fellowship. Professor Murray canvasses the Biblical data very thoroughly and penetratingly. He concludes that the essence of the Covenant is not that it is a compact or agreement between two parties, but rather that it is an expression of the unchangeable gracious promise of God. What is stressed in Scripture is not the mutuality of the Covenant, nor yet the terms or conditions of the covenant relationship, but the idea of the *sworn fidelity of God*. In one place he states that the covenant expresses the divine monergism and fidelity. The stress is on "the security, the determinateness, the immutability of the divine promise." Again, "It is an oath-bound and oath-certified assurance of irrevocable grace and promise."

This is brought out by the form of statement used by God in some cases, "By myself I have sworn . . .". This idea of the essence of the covenant as the unchangeable fidelity of God to His gracious promises is the background of Paul's

confident assertions in Romans 8 — "If God be for us, who can be against us? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?"

(b) Its ethical character. In its administration the Covenant is ethical. God deals with man not as a thing but as a person — a responsible moral being endowed with intelligence and freedom. The beneficiaries of the Covenant are human persons created in the image of God. This ethical character of the administration of the Covenant must be insisted upon in order that we may repel the common charge that the Reformed Theology represents the Plan of Salvation as mechanical and fatalistic. It is alleged, for instance, that if God has decreed the salvation of the elect, then they need not repent or believe, for they will be saved whether they become Christians or not. All this is mere dust thrown into the air. The Reformed theology holds nothing of the kind — it is a mere caricature. We hold the personal and ethical character of the administration of the Covenant.

(c) Its conditional and unconditional character. The Covenant is both conditional and unconditional. In the absolute sense, so far as we are concerned, the Covenant is **unconditional**, for its one and only real condition has been fulfilled by Christ in His mediatorial work. This absolutely secures and guarantees the eternal salvation of the elect. Yet there is a sense in which the Covenant can be said to be conditional. Faith, repentance, obedience are required on the part of sinners if they are to be saved. If we wish to call this a "condition", that is all right provided we understand that here the word "condition" is not used in the absolute sense, but only in the sense of **means or instrument**. But we must remember that the eternal efficacy and success of the Covenant is not contingent upon man's faith and unbelief as **something beyond the control of the Mediator of the Covenant**. If someone departs this life without repentance and faith, he thereby demonstrates that he is not one of the elect for whom the Covenant was made. And when God requires repentance and faith of the sinner, **He also gives these graces as gifts to the elect**. Thus Augustine uttered his famous prayer, "Give what thou commandest, and command what thou wilt." That repentance is a gift of God to the elect is proved by Acts 11:18 and 2 Timothy 2:25. That faith is a gift of God to the elect is proved by Ephesians 2:8, Mark 9:24, Isaiah 42:7 and Galatians 1:15, 16.

Thus the Covenant is not conditional in any absolute sense except the sense that Christ has fulfilled its condition in accordance with the eternal Covenant of Redemption. God has appointed means of grace to be used by the elect, but the real condition was fulfilled by Christ as Mediator. There is no admittance to the marriage feast without the wedding garment, but the garment itself is provided as a gift by the king who gives the feast.

The Laodiceans were counseled to buy of Christ gold tried in the fire, that they might be rich, and white raiment, that they might be clothed. Yet the Lord said that they were "poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked." How can the poor buy gold, unless this be a buying without money and without price? In other words, it is really a gift given by God, hence not in any proper sense a condition performed by man.

6. History of the Covenant Theology

If the Covenant Theology is Scriptural, it is of course in a sense as old as the Bible. Yet this must not be misunderstood. The Bible is a gold-mine of truth, yet the truth must be mined. The truth is all there in Scripture from the completion of the canon. Nothing new will be added to it until the end of the world, when a new revelation from God may be expected. Yet though the truth has all been on deposit in the Bible since the time of the apostles, it has not all been clear in the mind of the Church since the time of the apostles. It becomes clear in the mind of the Church progressively as a result of controversy and Biblical study. Thus, for example, the doctrine of the Trinity has been in the Bible since the days of the apostles, but it was not clear in the mind of the Church until it was precisely defined at the Council of Nicaea, 325 A.D., in refutation of heresies that had arisen. Similarly the Covenant Theology was in Scripture from the beginning but it did not become clear in the mind of the Church until the Protestant Reformation and especially the classical period of the development of the Reformed Theology in the 17th century.

Among the Reformers, Zwingli stressed the Covenant idea. Calvin knew the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace and calls it by name but in his writings does not stress it very strongly. It was further developed in Germany by Ursinus and Olevianus, and then in Great Britain by such men as Rollock, Howie, Cartwright, Ames, and archbishop Ussher in Ireland. The Westminster Confession of Faith is the first Reformed creed that made the Covenant Theology formative of its entire doctrinal structure. Soon after the Westminster Assembly had finished its work, the Dutch theologian Cocceius published his work under the title, **Summary of the Doctrine of the Covenant and the Testament**. The theology of Cocceius was a thorough-going covenant theology. However, he was not entirely sound and went to unwarrantable extremes in several matters.

In the 18th Century — that barren period of Rationalism on the Continent and Moderatism in Scotland — the Covenant theology was neglected, and the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches were scarcely aware of its truth and importance. In the 19th Century it enjoyed a revival, especially under the stimulus of the work of Abraham Kuyper in the Netherlands.

In the Reformation period the Anabaptists de-

nied the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace. The present-day Baptists are the heirs of the old Anabaptists though they have corrected the extreme errors of some of their spiritual forbears. Baptists are strongly individualistic in their religious tendencies. This is shown in their church government, where the individual congregation is an independent unit; in their limitation of the responsibility of the minister, practically, to his own field of labor to the exclusion of responsibility for other ministers of the same denomination; in the insistence upon individual faith as the necessary requirement for the reception of baptism. This strong individualism is contrary to the Covenant concept, which strongly stresses the corporate character of the church and the corporate nature of responsibility. American Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, including the Covenant Church, have been strongly influenced by Baptist tendencies, with the result that the churches are weak in their grasp of the Covenant Theology which is their true heritage.

The Methodists, though they did not directly contradict the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace, yet nullified it in practice by their Arminianism in theology, as they held that the Covenant was made not merely with the elect but with all sinners, and thus that it guaranteed the salvation of no one. Also by rejecting the idea of the Covenant of Works they cut the ground away from beneath the doctrine of Christ's active obedience as our Substitute. Methodist or Wesleyan Arminianism, with its strong assertion of the sinner's powers and its opposition to the sovereign grace of God, has strongly influenced all American churches, including our own.

Today there is some evidence of a revival of interest in the Covenant Theology, but this is beset by the most serious obstacles and limitations. First, the prevalent opposition to creeds and precise statements of Christian doctrine is against an intelligent grasp of the Covenant Theology. Many people today seem to think that theological vagueness is somehow more "spiritual" than precision of thinking, and they prefer to deal with theology, if at all, in an atmosphere of low visibility. Secondly, the prevalence of theological Liberalism is against any revival of the Covenant Theology. Among other things, the divisive "Higher Criticism" of the Bible, which reduces Scripture to a collection of diverse traditions, documents and viewpoints, makes it impossible to hold that the whole of Scripture presents a consistent, progressive implementation and revelation of a single divine purpose throughout history. Liberalism destroys real Biblical theology and reduces it to a study of Israel's faith — not what God revealed, but what Israel believed, is the subject matter studied in Liberal circles. Thirdly, the presently popular Theology of Crisis, sometimes called Barthianism or the Dialectical Theology, makes a real revival of the Covenant Theology difficult,

by its denial of the direct action of God in history and its relegation of the great redemptive facts to a nebulous region labelled *Urgeschichte* or the *Supra-Historical*.

Yet the Covenant Theology is truth, which is certainly a point in its favor. And with the blessing of the God of truth, it will rise again to honor and influence in the modern world. We may say of the Covenant Theology what Dr. Francis L. Patton, one-time President of Princeton University, said of Presbyterianism: Supposing it should die, and also be buried, and in some future age be dug up by archaeologists in the course of their excavations — we may be confident that after examining it, they would come to the conclusion that it belonged to the order of vertebrates!

7. Distinctive Values of the Covenant Theology

The late Professor R. B. Kuiper, one-time professor of Practical Theology at Westminster Seminary and later at Calvin Seminary, Grand Rapids, listed seven distinctive practical values of the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace. I shall enumerate these here, but shall only discuss part of them. They are:

- (a) This doctrine makes for a full-orbed Reformed Theology
- (b) It guarantees the continuity and unity of the Church.
- (c) It requires a balanced program of church activity.
- (d) It demands a consistent system of Christian education.
- (e) It stresses the significance of church ordinances.
- (f) It defines the Christian's relation to the world.
- (g) It releases the Christian for devoted service in God's Kingdom.

All of these seven practical values could be discussed at length, but space does not permit this, so a selection must be made.

(a) The doctrine of the Covenant makes for a full-orbed Reformed theology. By "full-orbed" is meant many-sided completeness. The charge, often heard, that Calvinism is a one-sided theology, arises from ignorance of the doctrine of the Covenant of Grace. This concept fills out the system of Calvinism so that the charge of one-sidedness is put out of court. I need not point out to the readers of this magazine, surely, that "Calvinism" is not simply a synonym for "Predestination" as some ignorant people suppose. Calvinism is a complete system of theology rounded and articulated in all its parts, and is vastly more than belief in predestination, just as it is vastly more than a rejection of Arminianism.

The Covenant concept stresses God's condescension, thus complementing Calvinism's emphasis on God's transcendent majesty. In the Covenant the transcendent God becomes the friend and husband of His people. (Isa. 54:5; Jer. 3:14; 31:32).

The Covenant concept stresses God's love and mercy, thus complementing Calvinism's emphasis on God's absolute predestination. It shows that God's decree of election, though sovereign, is not arbitrary. In His eternal decree of election God has taken account of family ties. God has promised to be a God to Abraham and his seed, to believers and their seed. This does not mean every individual person descended from believers, but it is the general principle of God's election. Also the Covenant concept stresses the sincerity of God's offer of salvation to all sinners. (Ezek. 33:11; Matt. 23:27; 1 Tim. 2:4). Where predestination is held without the Covenant concept, the tendency is for people to become sullenly fatalistic, or else to give up belief in election altogether. The general rejection of election and predestination in American church circles may fairly be attributed to the fact that in the past election was preached without the complementary truth of the Covenant of Grace. The history of the New England theology, where Calvinism deteriorated to inconsistent Calvinism, to Arminianism, to Unitarianism, to Universalism, and finally in many places to closed and empty churches, is an example of this sort of thing.

Other respects in which the Covenant concept makes for a full-orbed Reformed theology are that it emphasizes the ethical manner of God's execution of His decree of election, complementing the absolute and unchangeable character of the decree itself. Also the Covenant concept stresses strongly man's responsibility to God, complementing the truth of man's spiritual inability and absolute dependence upon God. Finally, the Covenant concept stresses the salvation of the human race as such, complementing the emphasis on individual salvation. This has been termed "eschatological universalism", in distinction from an unscriptural "each-and-every universalism."

(b) The Covenant guarantees the unity and continuity of the Church. Scriptural proof of this concept has been presented repeatedly in our columns (See especially the article on Dispensationalism in the April-June 1963 issue). At this point I shall only seek to establish that the Reformed theology holds that, according to Scripture, there has been one single body of people on earth in a covenant relationship with God from the beginning of history to the present time, and that this will continue to the end of the world. Rightly understood, the church began in Eden. What began at Pentecost was not the Church as such but rather the New Testament form of the Church. The true Israel of Old Testament times was the Church in the form it possessed at that

time; the true Christian Church of the present day is the real Israel of the Christian era. The Reformed Theology holds the spiritual unity and continuity of the New Testament Church with the Old Testament Israel.

This proposition implies that basically Israel and the Church are identical and the one is organically continuous with the other. There are differences, to be sure, but they are differences of administration, not differences of essence or basic character.

I know of no better statement of the elements of unity, continuity and difference between Israel and the Church than that found in the Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter VII, Sections 5 and 6. It should be noted that the title of this chapter of the Confession is *Of God's Covenant with Man*, not *Of God's Covenants with Man*; the word covenant in the title is singular, not plural. In this chapter, Section 5 sets forth the essential spiritual unity and continuity between the Old Dispensation and the New, that is, between the administration of the Covenant to Israel, under the Old Testament system, and the administration of the same covenant to the Church, under the New Testament system. Section 6 then sets forth the differences of administration between the Old and the New. The chapter ends with the statement: "There are not therefore two covenants of grace, differing in substance, but one and the same, under various dispensations." (Page 16).

This matter of the spiritual unity and continuity of the Church with the Old Testament Israel is of very great theological importance. If this truth be denied, other serious and destructive errors are sure to follow. For example, the question of the organic unity of Scripture is involved, as is also the question of salvation under the Old Testament. The unity and continuity of the Church with Israel is denied chiefly by Dispensationalism, which sets up a radical antithesis between Israel and the Church; it is also denied by modern Liberalism, which regards the Bible as man's quest for God, not God's revelation to man, and holds that instead of revealing one consistent divine purpose progressively realized in history, the Bible presents a collection of human strivings, aspirations, viewpoints, insights which are partly truth and partly error, and which often are mutually contradictory. This type of thinking regards the Old Testament, not as God's gracious revelation, but as Israel's evolving faith, and the New Testament, including Christ, as humanitarian idealism rather than divine truth. Dr. Albert Schweitzer is a good example of this tendency.

(c) The Covenant demands a balanced program of Church activity. The church has a mission to its own membership and it has a mission to the unsaved world. Neither of these may be neglected. The doctrine of the Covenant teaches

that Christ covenanted to redeem a vast multitude from all peoples and nations and kindreds and tongues. These people must be reached with the Gospel, therefore the Covenant theology calls for a strong emphasis on home and foreign missions—this is the church's mission to those without. But the doctrine of the Covenant also teaches that God's ordinary way of increasing and perpetuating His Church is by the salvation of the children of believers. The covenant was made with Abraham and his seed forever. The Covenant requires faithful and persistent preaching of the Gospel to the Church's own membership and in particular to the children and youth. The children are included in the church's membership by reason of their birthright covenant status. This is the real reason for infant Baptism, of course. But the Covenant implies more — the Church is to make a continuous effort to ensure that all its children and youth shall be in the inner circle or vital sphere of the covenant, by regeneration and personal faith. Neither part of the church's program may be neglected. Some churches neglect missions or contribute only slightly to missions and evangelism. Others are all out for missions and evangelism, but grievously neglectful of their covenant responsibilities to their own children and youth. It is not unknown for churches to provide much better Christ-centered education for the children of the heathen in India or Korea than they do for the children of their own church families right here in America. Against such tendencies, the Covenant calls the church to a balanced and complete program of activity.

(d) The Covenant stresses the significance of Church ordinances. Because it inculcates a high view of the nature and importance of the Church, the doctrine of the Covenant emphasizes the importance of such ecclesiastical ordinances as Baptism, the Lord's Supper, preaching, church government and church discipline. Largely under the influence of Dispensationalism, many people today have light and inadequate notions of the nature and importance of the church. It is common to regard the church as a mere means to an end. This, of course, cannot be right. The church is to last on into eternity, therefore it is an end in itself, not a mere means to an end. Some say the church exists merely for missions and evangelism. It would be truer to say that missions and evangelism exist for the sake of the Church. Church ordinances are taken lightly today, church government and discipline are regarded lightly, because the Church itself is regarded lightly. The remedy for much of this evil is a new stress on the Biblical Covenant Theology.

(e) There are several other practical values of the Covenant Theology that could be mentioned, but one more must suffice at this time. The Covenant is a pledge and guarantee of the permanence of the fruits of missionary work, in spite of persecution, repressive governments and the works

of the devil. Tertullian said that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church — a very true statement. The real progress of Christianity in China came after the many martyrdoms of the Boxer trouble in 1900. The Covenant is made with believers and their seed after them. A covenant keeping Church will continue to exist in spite of everything. Its form may change, its reality will live on. This should be a great encouragement to missionaries, for it assures them that, in spite of all appearances to the contrary, their labor is not in vain in the Lord. Not only will souls be saved for eternity, but there will be a continuous conservation of the fruits of their labor in this world during the process of history.

We live in a time when the activities of missionaries and the fruits of missionary work are being interfered with by nationalistic governments in many parts of the world. It seems that in Africa, for example, the dawn of "freedom" means no real freedom, but only a new and different kind of tyranny. The same is true of Asia, Indonesia and most of the Mohammedan world. At the same time the Communist world has come near to suppressing Christianity altogether — real Christianity has had to become an "underground" movement. If we were to look only at these day-to-day developments, we might well despair. But the Covenant reminds us of the sworn fidelity, the unchangeable gracious purpose, of God. We may be tempted to say that there is no encouragement, that the wild boar from the forest wastes and destroys God's heritage today. But God's covenant is unbreakable and in God's own mysterious but gracious ways the fruits of past and present missionary work will be conserved. And there will always be a true and faithful church on earth to implement the great Commission and send the Gospel throughout the nations of the world.

Note: Readers interested in a fuller and more detailed treatment of the subject of Covenant Theology are referred to the series of 35 lessons on "The Covenant of Grace" which were published in this magazine. The series is obtainable in spiral-bound reprint form, under title STUDIES IN THE COVENANT OF GRACE, at \$1.00 plus postage from R.P. Board of Education and Publication, 800 Wood St., Pittsburgh, Pa. 15221.

"There are many among us who live in the daily practice of sins, some who carry on small dishonesties, or occasionally use small minced oaths, who walk in the counsel of the ungodly. O brethren! if this be your case, it is quite plain that you have never had a divine awakening. When a man is made anxious about his soul, he always puts away his open sins."

— Robert Murray McCheyne

Prescription for Church Renewal?

11

by Peter De Jong

Herewith is the review by Rev. Peter De Jong, pastor of the Dutton (Mich.) Christian Reformed Church, of the 255-page book, *Will All the King's Men . . .* (Out of Concern for the Church Phase II) including essays by James H. Olthuis, Hendrik Hart, John Van Dyk, Arnold De Graaff, Calvin Seerveld, Bernard Zylstra, John A. Olthuis. (Wedge Publishing Foundation, 229 College St., Toronto 2B, Ontario, Canada, \$3.95.)

In the past many of us have been attracted by and given support to the Association for the Advancement of Christian Scholarship (AACS) because of its expressed design to promote "scripturally directed higher learning." As the movement developed, however, we became disillusioned with it. Contributing toward this disillusionment was the book issued in 1970 by leaders of the movement under the title *Out of Concern For the Church*. The sweeping and often irresponsible charges, destructive direction and inflammatory style of the book turned many away from the movement and alienated former supporters. In 1972 *Will All the King's Men . . .* appeared, largely written by the same authors, with the avowed, more constructive aim of proceeding "from protest to contribution." Does the book achieve this intention? How shall we evaluate its "contribution"?

The Common Theme

The reader soon observes that the style is considerably more subdued than that of the earlier volume, but what must we say of the content? R. L. Carvill in his Introduction informs us that the book will offer "an agenda for reformation of the church today." The writers contend that the "church" has become identified with and limited to an institution with its building, organization of pastors, elders, and deacons, and its meetings and agencies. Men have largely lost from sight that, as J. H. Olthuis expresses it, "The Church is the Communion of People who rule and serve in the Kingdom of Christ," an area as wide as the world. In this vast Kingdom the "institutional church" is only one of many "rooms." As Zylstra puts it, this "loss of the biblical vision of the Kingdom of God is the heart disease of the churches today." Each of the writers in his own way suggests how the "institutional church" should be changed and put back in its own, limited place to make its big aim the encouragement of all Christians, the real Church, to serve God everywhere.

Developing the Theme

In endeavoring to make this case James H. Olthuis

denies that there was any organized church in Bible times or that the offices of minister, elder, and deacon can be properly traced to the church found in the Bible. Christian workers, for example, must bring their witness in the world, "a witness 'free' from the tentacles of the institutional church . . ." This means all kinds of change for "New hearts will mean new forms." "We have been given the Keys of the Kingdom in our various offices as parents, statesmen, teachers, politicians, etc."

In the same vein Hendrik Hart suggests that observing Sunday as the official and special day of worship lacks biblical ground (p. 42), and that the *Church Order* as we trace it from the Synod of Dordt to the present is "a telling example of the cultic narrowing of the church" which needs correction, and that the current views of office in the church need drastic overhauling.

John Van Dyk attempts to trace this narrowing of the view of the church and the loss of "kingdom vision" through history. In the course of his survey he minimizes the significance of and deplors the theological controversies that have brought division, and Van Dyk suggests that recapturing the Kingdom vision may be expected to bring life to the church and to the world. In the course of his sweeping survey he suggests that the French Revolution was largely the result of the church's "failure to bring the shalom of the Lord to a civilization that seemed stubbornly and apostately bent on bankruptcy."

One can't help observing that such a judgment takes no notice whatever of the Huguenot evangelical movement in France which was killed off or driven out in the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and which can therefore hardly be blamed for a lack of subsequent activity and that this also ignores the fact, which historians such as Halevy have stressed, that the evangelical revival in England was extremely influential through such influential Christian statesman as Wilberforce in correcting abuses there which might otherwise have brought a similar revolution to England. To simply accuse the church in those times of "hiding within the institutional church, within the privacy of church walls and the safety of the theological doctrine," is a gross misrepresentation, as uncharitable as it is erroneous (p. 95).

Next Arnold De Graaff takes up the theme, observing that: "Already in the second century things went radically wrong. Instead of faithfully opposing and rejecting the Greco-Roman way of life, many newly converted Christians began to accommodate the Christian faith to pagan patterns of thinking and

living. As a result, their commitment to Christ slowly became limited to the areas of worship, doctrine and morality. Instead of a people with a new way of life for the healing of the world, the people of God became a church-going and worshipping people preoccupied with doctrinal controversies. They lost the biblical view of the Christian life. Except for brief periods of reformation and renewal, the Christian community never completely recovered the scriptural view of life as service to God."

The above is De Graaff's well-stated indictment. His proposal to correct this state of affairs includes a criticism of the "marks" of the church as formulated in the Reformation (gospel preaching, proper sacraments, and discipline) suggesting that they be replaced with one: "whether or not the gospel of the *Kingdom* in its central meaning for *all of life* is preached, that is the norm by which a church must be judged" (p. 101). Accordingly worship should be radically changed to leave Christians free to express their "guilt . . . doubt . . . fear . . . love . . . hope."

"Considering what we have learned during the last centuries about the nature of education and communication, we can only conclude that our present forms of preaching and teaching are very inadequate." The Lord's Supper too "should not be surrounded by a lot of explanations and self-examinations" which "may have been necessary at the time of the Reformation," but "now . . . stand in the way of celebration." (Apparently Paul's views in I Cor. 11 too are historically out-dated!) Our church confessions too, mere "time-conditioned documents drawn up by believers with a certain, limited level of spiritual insight into the scriptures" narrow the Christian life and "lack a clear Kingdom vision," and worse, they "reflect" the theological "controversies of their time of origin." We need a new creed, drawn up along the lines of the AACS "educational creeds" to "draw a scattered and divided Christianity together."

Calvin Seerveld thereupon, in language that at times stoops to obscenity or profanity, even in translating the Scriptures (pp. 132, 133), and tries to make sex explicit where the scriptures do not (pp. 134, 135) also urges that for renewal the church needs "prophetic proclamation in the language of the day." Worship too needs to be loosened up even to having "a gifted child thank the Lord in the middle of the congregation" and having children take part in the Lord's Supper. Christian activity must become more ecumenical. This "renewal of church communion is not for the sake of the churches but for healing the world at large, because this is what makes God happy!"

Weighing the Charge

What must one say about this reiterated charge that the church through the centuries has become narrowed down to one institution and lost the vision

of God's Kingdom and its duty in all of life, and that this lost vision and drive must be restored?

That the church often through its history has manifested this weakness cannot be denied. My observation over many years has been that the "office of believers" in the church's history and in the present time has usually not been recognized as it should be.

At the same time this case should not be overstated. Such a hymn as "Take my life and let it be Consecrated, Lord, to Thee" was not composed by the AACS, and the generations of Christians who have been singing it for a hundred years were not all hypocrites who promptly forgot it when they left the church door. The sanctification of the church has at no point been complete — any more than it is in the AACS — but John Knox and his followers, who were used to transform to an almost unbelievable degree the life of Scotland, can hardly be accused of hiding behind the wall of the church building.

The Problem: Word or Kingdom?

Louis Berkhof was advocating Christian labor organization before these gentlemen who foolishly slander the theology he taught as lacking Kingdom vision were even born.

The main problem with the AACS' call for church renewal lies not in the question about whether or how badly renewal is needed, but in the question as to what is to guide the direction and character of that renewal.

In words that sound like the plea of the Reformers the writers of this book repeatedly urge the church to return to the Word of God. They would turn from tradition and confession back to the Bible. It does not take one long to discover, however, that this Word of God to which they would have us return and which they claim as their guide is not really the Bible. Bernard Zylstra, in his essay entitled "Thy Word Our Life," takes up this basic matter. He begins by stating that "the theme of the Kingdom of God is central in the scriptures" and that he will therefore "focus mainly on the scriptural context within which the theme of the Kingdom of God appears. I hope that this approach will contribute to meaningful discussion about the very way in which we are to understand the Bible today."

In other words, we are informed that the "Kingdom" is basic and that the Bible will be understood in relation to it. This "Kingdom" therefore is to determine our view of the Bible rather than the Bible determining our view of the Kingdom! Someone might object, "Aren't you quibbling? Does it make any difference whether we start with the Kingdom and proceed from it to the Kingdom? Don't we arrive at the same place?" The answer is that we do not!

In the first case, if we begin with a certain notion of the Kingdom and proceed to see what in the Bible

we can relate to it, we are not really being guided by the Bible at all but by our pre-conceived notion of Kingdom. Despite Dr. Zylstra's and the other writers' at times profuse reference to the Scriptures, it is evident throughout the essays that it is the AACCS' philosophical view of the "Kingdom" rather than the Scriptures that control the discussion. In fact we are repeatedly told that if we do not approach the Scriptures from this point of view we do not understand them.

Which Word?

Proceeding from this "Kingdom" approach this book tells us that "The Bible speaks of the Kingdom of God in two basic ways. First it is the Reign of God over the creation by His Word; second, it is the Realm where this Word is heard, obeyed and done. An understanding of the nature of the Kingdom therefore requires insight into the nature of the Word of God and the character of creation and its history. Since the Bible speaks of 'Word of God' in at least four distinct, though closely interrelated ways, the theme of the Kingdom of God (as Reign) can be dealt with as the theme of the Word of God: (1) for creation, (2) for the history of redemption, (3) incarnate in Jesus Christ, and (4) for the New Testament Church."

Having assumed, without at this time any biblical evidence, these at least four forms of the word of God, the writer speaks of "the word for creation" observing that "all reflection of the nature of the word of God, must, I think begin here." We are told that "God's Word is His power creating all things . . . upholding all things . . . directing all things, once created, to their divinely destined end. It is the very life of all things. 'In Him was life' (John 1:4). In a humanly halting way one might describe the Word as God's calling creation into being-for-service" (p. 154).

In the light of these many "forms" of the Word of God, beginning from creation, traced through the history of redemption, considered as incarnate in Christ, communicated through the New Testament church, we are warned against misunderstanding the Bible and the plainly subordinate role that must be assigned to it: "The Word, as we have said earlier, is God's power creating all things. The Word, after sin, is God's power reconciling creation to its original relation with the Creator. That reconciliation is founded on Christ, the Word made flesh. The Word is the gospel, the power of God for salvation. What then is the Bible? *The Bible is the infallible record of the Word of God. Hence the Bible is the Word of God*" (p. 182).

From this point of view regarding the Bible the writer goes on to criticize the modern liberals' denial of the authority of the Bible as God's Word because of their humanistic downgrading of creation and history. Even more sharply he criticizes the view found

in orthodox theological circles" that the Bible is looked upon as the Word of God because it contains 'propositional truth,' that is, *rational verbal statements that are true in and of themselves.*" He deplores especially the tendency revealed in current discussion of the Bible's authority to regard it as "the Word of God, *only and exclusively.*" (One recalls the affirmative answer given by every officer in the CRC church at his installation to the question: "Do you believe the Old and New Testament to be the only Word of God . . .?") This view Dr. Zylstra condemns as "undermining the authority of the scriptures," making them a "closed book" because "the immensely rich variety of ways in which the Bible employs the phrase 'Word of God' simply does not enter the arguments of the reductionists. They seem to believe in the Bible rather than in God who reveals His word in the Bible. They seem to be more concerned with a theology of rational propositional truth than doing the truth, doing the Word" (p. 184).

Eliminating the Irrelevant

In order to see the issues clearly we must first quickly try to clear away the important but irrelevant matters that are being dragged in to obscure them. We must, of course, not lift texts out of their setting if we are to understand them. We must not do that with human writings; much less must we do that with the Word of God. (Incidentally it is not those concerned with orthodoxy who particularly do this — this book abounds with examples of such misuse of texts in disregard of context!)

And we must as James says, "Be . . . doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves." (And at this point I can't avoid recalling the incongruity of Seerveld's call for respect for God's Word while resorting to obscenities and profanity!) To try to make these important considerations a ground, as Zylstra does, for denying that the Bible includes propositional truths is to create nothing but confusion and to play into the hands of the liberal attack on the Bible.

The Bible Includes Propositions

For a half century or more a favorite liberal tactic has been to attack all Christian doctrines because faith is said to be not propositional, capable of being expressed in words or statements, but rather a relation to a person. On this point, instead of parroting such liberal cliches as these writers of this book seem to do, we ought to join with Dr. J. Gresham Machen in observing that the Bible (Heb. 11:6) teaches, "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him . . ." "The words, 'God is' . . . constitute a proposition. There could be no plainer insistence upon the doctrinal or intellectual basis of faith." "Confidence in a person is more than intellectual assent to a series of propositions about a person, but

it always involves those propositions, and becomes impossible the moment they are denied" (Machen, *What Is Faith*, pp. 47, 48).

What Does the Bible Say About Itself?

The most serious deficiency of the whole book and of the Zylstra lecture in particular is that although they call the church to return to the Word of God and propose to show us the way to do that, they nowhere devote any attention whatever to what the Bible says about itself as the Word of God! The immense difference between what might and should be said and this total neglect of it becomes apparent if one compares this lecture on "the Word" with one Dr. Norman Shepherd gave on "The Bible as the Word of God" at Trinity College in January 1972 in a discussion with some AACS representatives and others.

Shepherd's 40-page paper was a careful exegetical study of what the Bible itself has to say on the subject. In the light of his survey of what the Bible says, Dr. Shepherd concluded: "There appears to be no place in Scripture where the expression *Word of God* or something like it is used for creation. The scriptural base for this figurative use of *word of God* is extremely narrow especially in view of the overwhelming usage of *word of God* to refer to the word revelation of God and his will." "It is not without sensitivity to the biblical pattern of thought that the church virtually limits its application of *Word of God* to the word revelation of the gospel, especially as the gospel is embodied in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments."

Shepherd observes further that although "there are three passages in the New Testament where the expression *Word*, *Word of Life*, and *Word of God* are used to refer to Jesus Christ," "the infrequency of the designation in the Scriptures ought to teach us to observe care and reserve in our use of the expression with reference to Christ . . . The Bible is the Word of God. It is not human witness about Christ, deriving its authority from its content, and thereby becoming Word of God to those of us who believe . . . Scripture is the Father's witness to his Son and it is the Son's witness to himself . . . The word of God must be preached, but the preaching does not as such become the word of God."

The Wrong Word a Bad Guide

In other words, careful study of what the Bible says about itself just leaves no grounds for the AACS' basic assumption of many forms of the Word of God and the minimization of the Bible as just one, an older, "time-bound" one of them. The AACS view of the Bible falls very far short of recognizing it as the exclusive divinely inspired and authoritative book that it claims itself to be. Their "Word of God" to which they would have us turn for guidance for personal, church, and social renewal is not the clear book that the Reformers read but a composite and confused product of many forms of "revelation," including man's changing theories about the universe, to use De Graaff's words: "What we have learned during the last centuries about the nature of educa-

tion and communication," in short, whatever subjective opinions or impressions Christians may think they have reached under the guidance of the Spirit!

After so pointedly downgrading and setting aside the Scriptures it should surprise no one that these men who set themselves up as guides to the new reformation of the church should prove to be such erring guides. When it so misuses the Scriptures it is not surprising that this movement, instead of pursuing its announced aim at "scripturally directed higher learning," leads students away from the Bible; that although beginning as a "philosophy of law," it promotes lawlessness; that calling for church union it breeds division; that its call for holiness even slips into profanity and obscenity. These are not the "fruits of the Spirit." This is not the way the Lord has reformed or will reform His church.

Whose Word and Kingdom?

When in the concluding appeal John Olthuis envisions a people of God separated from all the doctrines that cause denominational differences becoming a "healing," "contributing Christian communal presence in society," it becomes evident that the Kingdom which is being promoted with such dedication differs remarkably from that of which our Lord preached when He said, "Think ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay, but rather division" (Luke 12:51).

The Lord who commanded us to confess Him before men, never told us to reduce His Kingdom to an attempt to make "healing" "contributions" to solve the problems of a society that continues in revolt against Him and is in trouble under His judgments. The "enmity" God put between His Kingdom and that of the devil will not just evaporate if one can only hit upon the right "Kingdom" formula. The "Kingdom" that would be established by bridging those differences is not the kingdom of Christ, but another misdirected effort to synthesize the gospel and paganism, which these men themselves condemn in earlier ages of the church. A real renewal of the Church to prepare it to make a real testimony to the gospel of the Kingdom must, as the Apostle Paul forewarned us (II Tim. 3:13-17) return to "the Holy Scriptures which are able to make men wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus," and because the Scriptures are "inspired of God" they qualify the believer to be "the man of God . . . complete, furnished completely for every good work."

Let us labor and pray that many who have been misled by the devil like Peter into "minding not the things of God but the things of men" (Matt. 16:23) may be delivered from current forms of subjectivism including that promoted by the AACS, and brought back to know and obey the gospel of Christ which includes "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (II Peter 1:3; cf. 19-21).

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The "Jesus Movement"

by J. G. Vos

[Geneva College, Beaver Falls, Pa., Radio Station WBEV. Dr. J. G. Vos of the Bible Department discusses the "Jesus Movement" in relation to historic Christianity.]

First of all the term "the Jesus Movement" is offensive to many people, for we are accustomed to speaking of Jesus as the Lord Jesus Christ. It jars on the ears of the ordinary conservative Christian to hear Jesus spoken of simply with that personal name rather than as the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, the Jesus Movement, whether this is good or bad, or of value or not of value, depends on what you are comparing it with. The Jesus Movement as it exists today in our country, and predominantly on the west coast, is primarily a reaction movement. This is not something that would have just started of itself, but it is a reaction to something else. This is a reaction, let's say, primarily to the dead, over-organized and conventional condition of many of the large old-line churches. Out of disgust or discouragement or even despair about any real living witness on the part of the churches, many young people have been, to use a common expression, "turned off," and have gone into this independent and mostly unstructured type of religious movement. On the other hand, this is also, no doubt, a reaction against the hippy movement, and the flower children, and this sort of thing which was almost entirely negative. It seems to have been increasingly proving its superficiality, its lack of true values, and its lack of satisfying content so that young people are not only turned off by the old-line, conventional churches, but they are also, many of them, not satisfied with the kind of things that radical youth movements in the past have been doing. As they become disillusioned with the secular radicalism of some youth groups, they have taken up with the Jesus Movement. Now this is all good, so far. It's encouraging that our young people are not satisfied with hypocrisy and deadness, and empty form. On the other hand, in my opinion, the Jesus Movement is transitory, will not last permanently and is an inadequate response to the conditions that called it forth. This movement is not wrong because it is radical, but because it is not radical enough. Christianity is not merely devotion to the character or the person of Jesus. It is an entire world and life view which is presented in the whole Bible, the Word of God, Old and New Testaments, and involves a system; especially it involves the institutional church, which many young people in their impatience and disgust have reacted against. Now, there are many institutional churches that are wrong and unworthy and surely the Christian world would lose little if they were to disappear completely. On the other hand, Jesus established an institutional church. He said, "On this rock will I

build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." And this Church which Jesus established is not merely the invisible Church which has a spiritual existence, but is a visible organization, because it has keys. Jesus said He would give to Peter the keys of it and keys imply admitting and excluding people; therefore, it has some form of visible and tangible organization. This is further implemented in the rest of the New Testament where you have the structure of Church life, Church government, and Church worship outlined, what kind of officers it is to have, how they are to conduct their functions, what their character and qualifications must be, how they are to work together. This is in the different books of the New Testament, especially the Pastoral Epistles of Paul, First and Second Timothy, and the Epistle to Titus. It is also found in the Epistles of Peter and in other places. So the Bible presents an institutional Church. The remedy for a dead or lifeless, unchallenging and unsatisfying type of institutional Church is not to get away from institutional Churches altogether, but to have one, establish one, or reform one so that it meets Biblical standards. Jesus also said, "Make disciples of all nations, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. Lo, I am with you always," and so on. Teaching men to observe all things—among all things that Jesus said His disciples were to teach them to observe are, in the first place, the entire teaching of the Old Testament. Jesus said it is not possible, while earth remains for one jot or one tittle of the Law of God to fall away. The Old Testament is the Word of God and Jesus endorsed this, and He, at every point, represented His person and His work as being in organic continuity with the Old Testament system. Therefore, anything that undervalues the Old Testament, is not doing justice to Jesus Himself. He endorsed it; He spoke as highly of it as anyone could possibly speak; and regarded Himself as the fulfillment and continuation of it. On the other hand, Jesus also said that He would send the Holy Spirit to guide His apostles into all truth, and He commissioned them to set in order the New Testament Church. Therefore, the New Testament Epistles are the Word of Jesus Christ just as truly as the actual sayings that He made Himself in person during the brief career of His earthly ministry, so that what is written in the Epistles of Paul is the Word of Jesus Christ and is binding and normative just as truly as the Sermon on the Mount or other things spoken by Jesus Himself. I have read some things about the Jesus Movement. I have not been in contact with it personally, but I have read comments on it and descriptions of it. My impressions from these is that this tends to treat Jesus in degree, at least, in isolation from the Old Testament and to put emphasis on Jesus as a person in antithesis

to a system of theology and an organized church. This is a false antithesis: You know—like the fellow who asked, “Are you happy or are you married?” Or the one who asks, “Do you walk to school or do you carry your lunch?” It is possible to do both of these things. And the remedy for the bad conditions in the organized and instituted Church is to reform it according to the Word of God. If it cannot be reformed, if efforts at reform have been faithfully tried over a long period and have failed, then the remedy is to withdraw from it; but not to withdraw into a more or less formless and structure-less movement, but to withdraw from it and organize, and band together in churches that are truly Biblical, that honor Jesus Christ in all dimensions, and have Biblical standards of church life, government, and organization. This is the remedy for it. The remedy is not simply to withdraw into a kind of a churchless Christianity. Also, let us say, the Jesus Movement runs the danger of being experience-centered rather than God-centered. In the past history of Christianity, experience-centered movements that put all the emphasis on the human experience of conversion or being filled with the Spirit, or what is called the Baptism of the Spirit or things of this type have tended to run a brief course and sort of “go to seed” and lose their connection with the strong structure of Christianity as presented in the Word of God. Now, the true purpose of the Church is not simply to be a catalyst to induce human experience. The Westminster Shorter Catechism isn’t Scripture, but certainly it is scriptural and I am prepared to defend every statement of it. It starts out this way: Man’s chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. Man’s chief end—that is the main purpose of man’s existence is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. Notice there that to glorify God is spoken of first and only secondarily and subordinately to this, to enjoy Him forever. Now, any movement that is experience-centered, that has the main emphasis on human

experiences—salvation, renewal, sanctification, and so on, is putting the second part of that ahead of the first part. To enjoy God is only possible when we make our chief aim to glorify God. The person who is looking for spiritual satisfaction as his chief aim, may find it, but he will fall short of the God-centered type of life. And this is what the old-line historic churches have stood for. If they are failing in this today, this is deplorable, and this is a challenge to us of the present generation to change these and to reform, to get them back by true reformation to a Biblical basis, but not to run away from them to a formless and structure-less type of experience-centered movement.

Question. So then you hold the opinion that it is just a fad and that it won’t last much longer?

Answer. I don’t know how long it will last, and I hesitate to call it just a fad, because I’m sure that people who are doing this are intensely earnest and serious about it and it is because of a very real and deep spiritual hunger and need that they are doing this. And please do not think that I am opposed to it. I think in the absence of something better we ought to be very thankful for the Jesus Movement. At least in its better forms this is meeting a need and is helping some people to find God and is getting some people off the drug habit, and so forth, and this is all to the good. If you can’t get the best, you settle for the good. However, from my own standpoint, I would say that this falls short of the truest and highest ideal. The ideal is a church form of Christianity, the unit of church membership is a credible profession of faith in and obedience to Jesus Christ, and the structure of the church is set forth in the Word of God. This is what we should go by, and not a movement that only takes up a part of a Christian’s life and testimony and emphasizes that.

Some Noteworthy Quotations

To place God’s truth and honour first, above all other considerations whatsoever, requires great moral consecration. In this matter it is true of the church as it is of the individual that he that loses his life for Christ’s sake shall find it.
—J. G. Vos

The Spirit intercedes for us by working in us right desires for each time of need; and by deepening these desires into unutterable groans. They are our desires and our groans. But not apart from the Spirit. They are His; wrought in us by Him. And God who searches the heart sees these unutterable desires . . . and cannot but grant them, as accordant with His will.

—Dr. B. B. Warfield

One of the modern-day spiritual “smoke screens” is the Youth Cult. “Let the young do it!” The old people have failed; therefore it is now up to the young. People over 30 are “out of it.” But while it is true we are admonished to have child-like faith, and young people are urged to be a good example, Paul also warned Timothy about being a “novice” and “puffed up with pride.” He also made it clear that the leadership in families is the responsibility of parents; and in the church, it is the responsibility of elders—not inexperienced youth. To turn responsibility over to the young is a “cop-out” for adults; it is a smoke screen to hide our own failures.

—W. A. Mahlow

It is an inexpressible grief to me to see the church spending its energies in a vain attempt to lower its testimony to suit the ever-changing sentiment of the world about it.

— Benjamin B. Warfield

Taking the line of least resistance makes rivers and men crooked.

— Anonymous

Love will stammer rather than be dumb.

— Robert Leighton

For ourselves, we do not affect the designation of moderate Calvinists. We believe the whole Calvinism of the Canons of the Synod of Dort, and of the Confession of the Westminster Assembly, and we are willing to attempt to expound and defend, when called upon, the whole doctrine of these symbols, to show that it is all

taught or indicated in Scripture. We have been only confirmed in our Calvinism by all the study we have given to this subject.

— William Cunningham

The grace of God does not find men fit for salvation, but makes them so.

— Augustine of Hippo

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

— Adolphe Monod

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

— Benjamin B. Warfield

Studies in Covenant History: Elisha to Daniel

LESSON I

The Kingdom of Israel from the Death of Ahab to the Death of Joram (853-841 B.C.) Conflict between Israel and Aram (Syria). The Career of the Prophet Elisha

(2 Kings, Chapters 2-8)

The death of Ahab occurred in 853 B.C. He was succeeded by his son Ahaziah, who continued the religious apostasy and general wickedness of his father. His reign was short, however (2 years or less), as he died from injuries resulting from an accident. He was succeeded by his younger brother Joram or Jehoram, who reigned some 12 years (852-841 B.C.). He, too, was bad, and continued in "the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin." However he did remove the image of Baal which his father Ahab had set up in Samaria. This meant that the foreign religion of Baal worship was no longer established as the official religion of the kingdom.

The reign of Joram (Jeroram) in the Kingdom of Israel is closely connected with the activities of the prophet Elisha, the successor of Elijah.

Joram was killed by Jehu, whom God had raised up to execute divine judgment upon the family of Ahab and to exterminate the religion of Baalism. Following this Jehu became king of Israel, starting a new dynasty.

The life and work of the prophet Elisha is related in connection with the reign of Joram of Israel, in the early chapters of the second book

of Kings. The following are specially important events in the life of Elisha:

(1) Elisha officially called to be the successor of the prophet Elijah. I Kings 19:19-21.

(2) Elisha sees Elijah taken up from him to heaven, and thereupon begins his public work as a prophet of the Lord. II Kings 2.

(3) Miracles performed through Elisha for the benefit of humble people:

(a) The poor widow who was in debt. II Kings 4:1-7.

(b) The Shunammite woman and her son. 4:8-37.

(c) The poisonous wild gourds and the sons of the prophets. 4:38-41.

(d) Naaman the Syrian cleansed of leprosy, and Gehazi, Elisha's servant, smitten with leprosy. 2 Kings 5.

(e) The axe-head recovered from water. 6: 1-7.

(4) Elisha is significant because of his connection with the school of the prophets. These were communities of men founded for the purpose of calling the nation back to its true faith in the Lord.

(5) Elisha and the war between Aram (Syria) and Israel. II Kings 6:8 to 7:20.

(a) Elisha informs the king of Israel of the movements of the enemy forces. 6:8-12.

(b) The Syrians seek to capture Elisha. They are blinded (temporarily) and he leads them to Samaria. He instructs the king of Israel to release them unharmed to return to their own country. 6:13-23.

(c) At a later time Benhadad king of Syria attacks Israel again. Samaria is besieged. Famine results, and the inhabitants are reduced to cannibalism. The prophet Elisha announces that the next day food will be sold at cheap prices at the city gate of Samaria. This prophecy is remarkably fulfilled. II Kings 6:24 to 7:20.

(6) Elisha sends a junior prophet to anoint Jehu as king of Israel. II Kings 9:1-26. The Lord had commanded Elijah to anoint Jehu as successor to Ahab, I Kings 19:16, 17. This commission was not actually carried out in person by Elijah, however. Rather, it was passed on as unfinished business to Elijah's successor Elisha, who carried it out by sending a young prophet to anoint Jehu. Jehu was not only anointed to be king over the kingdom of Israel, but was also commissioned to destroy utterly the entire family connection of Ahab.

LESSON 2

The Life and Activities of Jehu (841-814 B.C.)

(2 Kings, chapters 9, 10)

Jehu the son of Nimshi reigned over the kingdom of Israel for some 27 years (841- 814 B.C.). Jehu was a rough and ready soldier, and God called him to do a difficult and terrible piece of work. It was not a nice task but it had to be done.

In the book of the prophet Hosea (Hos. 1:4, 5) Jehu is condemned because of the bloodthirsty manner in which he carried out his commission to destroy the family of Ahab. Some critics of the Bible have claimed this statement of Hosea is a contradiction of II Kings 9:7 which says that God commanded Jehu to destroy Ahab's family. But there is really no contradiction involved. God commanded Jehu to do this piece of work, yet God did not approve of the attitude and motives with which Jehu went about it. What God condemned through the prophet Hosea was Jehu's bloodthirsty attitude and his wrong motives for acting as he did. It was not Jehu's acts of killing but his lust for killing that displeased God.

Jehu not only exterminated the family of Ahab,

Questions:

1. What good or bad can be said about Joram or Jehoram, king of Israel?

2. What prophet was associated with the reign of Joram?

3. How was Elisha called to be a prophet?

4. Describe the scene when Elisha saw Elijah for the last time in this world.

5. Tell about the miracle for the widow who was in debt.

6. Summarize the story of the Shunammite woman and her son.

7. Tell the story of Naaman the Syrian.

8. What were the schools of the prophets?

9. What happened when the Syrians tried to capture Elisha?

10. How was the prophecy about cheap food in Samaria fulfilled?

11. How and by whom was Jehu anointed king of Israel? What was Jehu's rank prior to this incident?

12. What special commission was given to Jehu?

as he had been commanded, but he also abolished the religion of Baal worship which had been set up in Israel by Ahab and Jezebel. However, Jehu was also criticized for not going all the way in obeying God (II Kings 10:29-31).

The following are the most important events in the life of Jehu:

(1) His being anointed to be king, which took place at Ramoth-Gilead where he was with the army. At the same time he was commissioned to destroy the house (i.e., the family) of Ahab. II Kings 9:1-10.

(2) Jehu's seized power and reigned as king, killing Jehoram (Joram) who had been reigning as king before this. II Kings 9:11-26. Ahaziah of Judah also killed.

(3) Jehu killed Ahab's widow Jezebel. She had been living as a widow about 14 years since the death of Ahab. II Kings 9:30-37.

(4) The killing of Ahab's 70 "sons" (i.e., male descendants). II Kings 10:1-11.

(5) The killing of the relatives of Ahaziah king of Judah. II Kings 10:12-14.

(6) The massacre of the Baal worshippers. II Kings 10:15-28. Jehu has been severely criticized for this action. However, according to the Law of God (Deuteronomy 13:12-18) the worshippers of Baal deserved to die. However, the treacherous and deceitful manner in which Jehu went about killing the worshippers of Baal was inexcusable.

(7) Jehu was commended by God for exterminating the family of Ahab (II Kings 10:29-31) and was promised as a reward that his family would occupy the throne of Israel to the fourth generation. At the same time Jehu was criticized for not obeying God fully. Especially he was criticized for his failure to do something about the worship of the golden calves at Dan and Bethel. And, as we have noted, in Hosea 1:4, 5 Jehu is condemned because of his bloodthirsty attitude and excesses. Jehu is an example of a man who wanted to obey God, but wanted to do this in the way most pleasing to himself.

(8) Jehu lost all of Transjordan to Syria. It was taken from Israel by Syria and the Syrians held it until the reign of Jeroboam II (782-753 B. C.) II Kings 10:32-36. II Kings 14: 25-28.

Questions:

1. Describe the scene of Jehu's anointing.
2. What was Jehu's mandate or commission from the Lord?
3. How did Joram king of Israel meet his fate?
4. Who was Ahaziah, and why was he killed by Jehu's orders?
4. What relation was Ahaziah to Joram, king of Israel?
6. Describe the massacre of the Baal worshippers.
7. Describe the death of Jezebel.
8. What did Jehu do about Ahab's sons? How could Ahab have so many sons?
9. What is your appraisal of Jehu, taking his career as a whole?
10. How can we explain the condemnation of Jehu which is found in Hosea 1:4, 5?
11. What promise did the Lord give to Jehu, and why?
12. What part of Jehu's territory did he lose to a foreign enemy? Who was the enemy?

LESSON 3

The Kingdom of Judah from Rehoboam to Ahaziah (931-841 B.C.)

(I Kings 15:1-13; 2 Chronicles chapters 13-17; 22:1-9)

There was long conflict between Rehoboam and Jeroboam (I Kings 14:30). Although the kingdom of Judah remained comparatively more faithful to God than the kingdom of Israel, still even in the kingdom of Judah religious deterioration had already set in. Judah did evil in the sight of the Lord. "High places" were built (I Kings 14:22, 23). These "high places" were not legitimate places of worship, and they tended to lead the people into idolatry.

I Kings 14:25-28 tells the story of the attack on Jerusalem by Shishak king of Egypt (Sheshonk in the Egyptian records). The gold shields of the Temple were taken by Shishak. Rehoboam made brass shields to replace the gold ones that had been taken away. Just as brass now replaced gold in the Temple, so we may also say that compromise replaced purity in the religion of the nation (14:27). After the death of Rehoboam he was succeeded by his son Abijam. At this point the student should glance at the list of the kings of Judah on page 184 of the October-December 1963 issue of this magazine.

Rehoboam died in 913 B.C. His son Abijam

(or Abijah) reigned three years, died, and was succeeded by his son Asa (911-873 B.C.) who reigned some 41 years. Asa was one of the good kings of Judah, who did that which was right in the sight of the Lord. His story is told most fully in II Chronicles chapters 14-16.

The most important events in the life of Asa king of Judah may be outlined as follows:

- (1) Religious reform, taking away altars of false gods, destroying idols, etc. "High places" used for the worship of "strange gods" were taken away, i.e., obliterated. II Chron. 14:1-5.
- (2) Maachah, his mother, was deposed from the position of Queen Mother, because of her idolatry. "An idol in a grove" (King James Version) should be translated "an abominable image for Asherah". I Kings 15:13.
- (3) Fought a war with Baasha king of Israel.
- (4) Asa made a league with Benhadad king of Syria to get help against Baasha king of Israel.

II Chron. 16:1-6. He was rebuked by a prophet named Hanani for trusting in foreign allies rather than in God (II Chron. 16:7-9). Asa put the prophet Hanani in prison in a rage, verse 10. This is the first recorded instance of bad treatment of a prophet of God by a king of Israel or Judah. Ahab's treatment of Micaiah came before this in the arrangement of material in this course, but in the actual history it came long after Asa's abuse of Hanani.

The story of Jehoshaphat king of Judah (873-853 B.C.) is told in I Kings 22:41-50, but much more fully in II Chronicles, chapters 17, 19 and 20. He was one of the good kings of Judah, his main faults being his making an alliance with the wicked king Ahab of Israel and his reluctance to say "No" when asked to do something he knew to be wrong.

We have already noted the connection of Jehoshaphat with the battle in which Ahab was killed (I Kings 22; II Chron. 18). Other important facts in the reign of Jehoshaphat are:

(1) He made a treaty of alliance with Ahab king of Israel. II Chron. 18; compare I Kings 22:44.

(2) He reformed and promoted the administration of justice. II Chron. 19.

(3) He arranged for the people to be taught the law of God. II Chron. 17:7-9.

(4) He gave his son Jehoram (Joram) in marriage to Athaliah the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. A terrible mistake.

Jehoram and Joram of Judah (853-841 B.C.) was one of the bad kings of Judah. His story is found in II Kings 8:18-24 and II Chron. 21:2-20. He introduced the idolatries of Ahab and Jezebel into the kingdom of Judah. His wife was Athaliah, the wicked daughter of Ahab and Jezebel.

Jehoram or Joram of Judah was succeeded by Ahaziah, who reigned less than one year (841 B.C.). He also followed the evil ways of Ahab and Jezebel. His mother was Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. Ahaziah was therefore a grandson of Ahab and Jezebel. He was killed by Jehu while visiting his uncle, Joram king of Israel, who was recovering at Jezreel from battle wounds received while fighting the Syrians. This was the same encounter in which Joram or Jehoram, king of Israel, was killed by Jehu.

Questions:

1. What form of religious deterioration occurred in the kingdom of Judah in the period covered by this assignment?

2. What foreign power attacked the Kingdom of Judah during the reign of Rehoboam?

3. What was the name of the foreign king?

4. What was the outcome of the campaign?

5. How does the replacement of gold with brass in the Temple shields illustrate the religious conditions of the time?

6. How long did Asa, grandson of Rehoboam, reign?

7. How is the reign of Asa rated as to its moral and religious character?

8. What religious improvement did Asa undertake?

9. What courageous act did Asa carry out concerning his mother? What had she done? Why did the king's decision require courage? What would be its influence on the people of the kingdom?

10. What one great mistake was made by Asa?

11. How did Asa treat the prophet who rebuked him for his sin. In what respect was this unique?

12. In what connection have we already learned something about Jehoshaphat king of Judah?

13. What wrong and foolish policy, from the standpoint of God's will, did Jehoshaphat undertake? (See II Chron. 19:1-3).

14. What religious and social reforms can be credited to Jehoshaphat?

15. What mistake did Jehoshaphat make concerning the marriage of his son?

16. What was the general character of the reign of Jehoram or Joram of Judah, son of Jehoshaphat? Considering his good father, to what can the evil character of his policies be attributed?

17. How long did Joram or Jehoram of Judah reign?

18. How long did Ahaziah of Judah, son of Jehoram and Athaliah, reign?

19. How did Ahaziah of Judah meet his death? Why was he killed?

20. What religious results could be expected from a royal marriage between the families of Ahab and Jehoshaphat?

from Athaliah's palace, probably, but Athaliah was evidently not in the habit of going to the Temple of the Lord. The concealment of Joash was done with the connivance of the High Priest, a godly man named Jehoiada.

At this time God's promise of redemption seemed to hang by a thread. It had been promised that the Christ would come of the seed of David. But Athaliah attempted to kill every heir to the throne of the seed of David. She came within a hair's breadth of achieving her wicked aim. If Athaliah had succeeded in killing all the heirs of David, how could God's promise of a Messiah of the house of David be fulfilled? But God was taking care of this, and Athaliah, wicked as she was, could not frustrate the plans of God.

The High Priest, Jehoiada, a very godly man, took the initiative in putting an end to the usurping reign of Athaliah. This story is very dramatically told in II Kings chapter 11. Careful plans were laid beforehand. After elaborate precautions, the child Joash was crowned in the Temple. Athaliah arrived on the scene but it was too late. Crying "Treason! Treason!" she was driven outside the Temple and killed.

The High Priest Jehoiada made a covenant between the Lord and the king and the people, that they should be the Lord's people; between the king also and the people (II Kings 11:17). This was not to be an arbitrary tyranny but a limited theocratic rule — a rule under God and for the glory of God.

This was followed by a thorough reformation of religious abuses (II Kings 11:18). The worship of Baal, which had been introduced by Athaliah the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, was abolished.

Joash (also called Jehoash) (835-796 B.C.) was crowned at the age of 7 years. His story is continued in II Kings 12 and II Chron. 24. Instructed by the godly priest Jehoiada, Joash did what was right in the sight of the Lord. The Temple of the Lord was duly repaired. Finally Jehoiada died at the advanced age of 130 years (II Chron. 24:15).

After the death of Jehoiada, Joash no longer remained faithful to God as formerly. At the insistence of the princes, Joash permitted the resumption of idolatry. Bad days came to the

kingdom of Judah. Zechariah the son of Jehoiada was stoned to death at the command of king Joash (II Chron. 24:21) in the court of the Temple of the Lord. Following this outrageous crime, Joash had more and more troubles. He was attacked by Syria, and only saved Jerusalem from the Syrian army by a heavy payment; even so, many of the people of Judah were either killed or taken away by the Syrians. Next, Joash was sick with great diseases. Finally, his own servants (perhaps ministers of state, not merely household servants) conspired against him and killed him in his own bed. He was buried, but was not considered worthy of burial in the royal tombs of the kings of Judah.

Questions:

1. What is known about the parentage of Athaliah?
2. What event opened the way for her to grasp power?
3. What would have been the normal procedure following the death of a king?
4. By what acts did Athaliah seize power?
5. How near did she come to complete success in carrying out her plan?
6. How can we explain the fact that she did not achieve complete success?
7. What was the status of God's promise of redemption at this time, according to the human view of the matter?
8. Who took the lead in the conspiracy ("underground movement") to overthrow Athaliah?
9. Why did the High Priest not act sooner?
10. Tell how Joash was crowned as king.
11. Describe the death of Athaliah.
12. Describe the early years of Joash's reign.
13. What even proved to be the turning point in the life of Joash?
14. Of what crime was Joash guilty?
15. What circumstances rendered this deed specially evil?
16. Describe the death of Joash.

LESSON 5

The Kingdom of Judah under Amaziah (796-767 B.C.), Uzziah 767-739 B.C.), Jotham (739-731 B.C.) and Ahaz (731-715 B.C.)

(2 Chronicles, chapters 25 to 28)

The reign of Joash lasted about 40 years. He was succeeded by his son Amaziah, who reigned 29 years. When he had his power well established, he executed justice upon the murderers of his

father Joash. In keeping with the Law of Moses, he executed only the actual murderers, not their children with them. His story is told in II Chron. 25.

By payment of a large sum of money, Amaziah hired 100,000 mercenary soldiers from the northern kingdom (Israel) to fight against Edom. But at the word of a prophet of God he dismissed them, losing the money he had already paid them. Going against the Edomites with the forces of his own kingdom of Judah alone, he won a notable victory. Meantime the dismissed Israelite soldiers were extremely angry that they had been dismissed and did not have to fight in the campaign.

Amaziah adopted the worship of some of the gods of the land of Edom. On account of this God was angry with him. Following bad counsel, Amaziah needlessly challenged Joash (798-782 B.C.), king of the northern kingdom (Israel) to fight with him. Joash (also spelled Jehoash) king of Israel tried to avoid this conflict, but Amaziah insisted on fighting. The result was that Amaziah was not only defeated by Joash king of Israel, but was also taken prisoner and brought back to his own capital, Jerusalem, as a prisoner of the northern kingdom. The soldiers of the northern kingdom also broke down part of the city wall of Jerusalem, took gold and silver objects from the Temple of the Lord, took persons as hostages, and returned to their own capital, Samaria.

After Amaziah had turned away from God, a conspiracy was formed against him. However, he learned of it in time and fled to Lachish, a strongly fortified city in the lowlands of Judah. Twelve years later he was murdered there.

Amaziah was succeeded by his son Uzziah (also called Azariah), who reigned some 52 years (767-739 B.C. (Some 23 years of this time, apparently, he was co-regent with his father Amaziah. These 23 years would be 790-767 B.C. Then on the death of Amaziah he became sole king in his own right, 767 B.C.). He was 16 years old when he became king (co-regent). Uzziah was one of the good kings of Judah, though he was not without serious sin, as we shall see.

First, he conquered the Philistines effectively. Then he built up the strength and security of the kingdom of Judah. The description of his military equipment in II Chron. 26:14, 15 is interesting.

But strength and security caused him to become self-confident instead of trusting in God. He sinned against God by a presumptuous act of venturing to burn incense upon the altar of incense in the Temple. This usurping of priestly functions was challenged by Azariah the priest, accompanied by 80 courageous priests of the Lord. The outcome of this showdown was that Uzziah was smitten with the disease of leprosy, which he had until his death. He had to live in quarantine in a house by himself.

Uzziah was succeeded by his son Jotham. On

the whole Jotham was a good king. He continued the good work of his father. It is recorded of him that "he entered not into the temple of the Lord." The meaning of this statement is not that he neglected divine worship, but rather that he did not copy the bad deed of his father in entering the Temple of the Lord improperly to take over functions reserved to the priesthood. It is recorded of Jotham, however, that in his time "the people did yet corruptly" (II Chron. 27:2). Jotham fought a successful war with the Ammonites who lived on the edge of the desert east of the Jordan and north of the Dead Sea.

Jotham was succeeded by his son Ahaz (731-715 B.C.), a very wicked man. His story is recorded in II Chron. 28 and II Kings 16. Ahaz undid all the good things that his father and grandfather had done. He copied the evil ways of the kings of the northern kingdom, re-introducing the worship of Baal in the kingdom of Judah, and putting up images of Baal. But this was not the worst of his wickedness. He "burnt his children in the fire" as sacrifices to the god Moloch, and he also offered sacrifices and burnt incense "in the high places, and on the hills, and under every green tree." Because of all these terrible sins God allowed enemies to attack and defeat him — Syria and Israel from the north, the Edomites from the east, and the Philistines from the west. These wars resulted very disastrously for Ahaz and his kingdom. The casualties were terrific (II Chron. 28:5,6,8).

Through the intervention of a prophet of the Lord named Oded, the captives from Judah who had been taken to the northern kingdom were released. At the height of his troubles Ahaz did not think of repenting and turning to God, but rather "he sent unto the kings of Assyria to help him" (II Chron. 28:16). "For the Lord brought Judah very low because of Ahaz" (verse 19). Ahaz took treasure from the Temple of the Lord, and from the royal palace of Judah, and gave it to Tiglath-Pileser III (also spelled Tilgath-Pilneser) in an attempt to buy his help against Israel and Syria. The Assyrian king accepted the presents, but failed to render the expected help.

Ahaz sank still lower in sin and apostasy from the Lord. The depth of this apostasy is described in II Chron. 28:22-25. Closing the Temple of the Lord, he established the worship of false gods in all the cities of his kingdom. When he died he was not buried in the royal tombs.

Questions:

1. What happened to the men who killed Joash king of Judah?
2. Why were their families not treated same way?
3. What war was undertaken by Amaziah king of Judah?

4. Where and how did he get the additional troops he thought he needed?
5. What made the mercenary soldiers very angry?
6. What acts of Amaziah incurred God's anger?
7. What unprovoked aggression did Amaziah commit?
8. What was the attitude of Joash king of Israel to Amaziah?
9. What was the outcome of the war?
10. Where did Amaziah die? What caused his death? Why was he in that place?
11. What good points did Uzziah king of Judah have?
12. What effect did great success have on Uzziah?
13. What great sin did Uzziah commit?
14. What punishment came to him from God?
15. What was the character of Jotham's reign?
16. What special sins did Ahaz commit?
17. Why did Ahaz take treasure from the Temple of the Lord?
18. What depth of religious apostasy was reached under Ahaz?

LESSON 6

The Kingdom of Judah under Hezekiah (715-686 B.C.). The Assyrian Invasion of Judah

(2 Kings, chapters 18-20. 2 Chronicles, Chapters 29-32. Isaiah, chapters 36-39)

Ahaz was succeeded by his son Hezekiah, one of the very best of the kings of Judah. It is remarkable that such a good son could be descended from such a bad father.

When Hezekiah came to the throne, conditions were very bad. He began his reign with a religious reformation, repairing the Temple of the Lord and having the worship resumed. King and people rejoiced together in their return to the Lord (II Chron. 29:36). Hezekiah continued his work by having the observance of the Passover resumed. Not only was the Passover observed in Judah, but Hezekiah even sent messengers through the territory of the (recently obliterated) northern kingdom (Israel) inviting the people who remained there to come to Jerusalem for the Passover. It will be recalled that Jeroboam I had set up his counterfeit religion at Dan and Bethel just in order to prevent this sort of thing. By Hezekiah's time the kingdom which Jeroboam had founded had already been liquidated by the Assyrian army (722 B.C.). The general reaction to Hezekiah's invitation in the northern territory was that the people laughed at his messengers, and mocked them (II Chron. 30:10). However, some people from some of the northern tribes did accept the invitation and came to Jerusalem for the Passover. In the kingdom of Judah itself the Passover was observed with great unanimity. This was a genuine religious revival. "So there was great joy in Jerusalem; for since the time of Solomon the son of David king of Israel there was not the like in Jerusalem" (30:26).

This religious revival was accompanied by a radical separation from the idolatry. (II Chron. 31:1). Hezekiah and his kingdom enjoyed prosperity. His service to God is summarized in II Chron. 31:20,21.

At this time the powerful Assyrian Empire was looming on the horizon as a menace to the

kingdom of Judah. It will be recalled that the northern kingdom (Israel) was liquidated by Assyria in 722 B.C. The Assyrian invasion of Judah is described in II Kings 18:13-16. The Assyrians captured all the walled cities of the kingdom of Judah except Jerusalem, the capital. Hezekiah paid a heavy tribute to the Assyrians.

The history of Hezekiah and Sennacherib involves some extremely difficult and complicated chronological problems. It is difficult to harmonize the three accounts — those in Kings, Chronicles and Isaiah. These problems of chronology do not imply that the Bible contains errors, or contradicts itself; they only imply that we do not have all the information needed to harmonize fully the various accounts of what happened.

In II Kings 18:13-16 it is stated that Sennacherib, having captured all the fortified cities of Judah except Jerusalem, was paid a tribute of 300 talents of silver and 30 talents of gold by Hezekiah, evidently as a condition of sparing the city of Jerusalem from destruction and looting. Then in verse 17 and the following verses Sennacherib makes an insulting demand for the immediate surrender of the city. The problem arises, how can this demand for surrender be reconciled with the statement of verses 13-16 that he was paid a heavy tribute (as a condition of sparing the city)?

The most probable explanation of this problem is that Sennacherib, after receiving the silver and gold, double-crossed Hezekiah and demanded the surrender of the city anyway. The following statement is quoted from *The New Bible Commentary* (Davidson, Stibbs and Kevan), page 328:

"The most natural interpretation of this section is that Judah collapsed completely against Sennacherib (13). Hezekiah in extremis begged for terms, and had to accept what Sennacherib demanded (14). Then Sennacherib treacherously

(cf. Isaiah 33:1,7,8) changed his mind and demanded the surrender of the city (17ff.)”

This supposition, which is quite in line with what is known about the character of the ancient Assyrians, clears up the problem and makes the story consistent.

The record of this campaign has been found among the Assyrian records, written in cuneiform characters on a clay prism. The following is a translation of part of Sennacherib's own story of the campaign:

“As for Hezekiah, king of Judah, who had not submitted to my yoke, 46 of his fortified cities, and smaller cities without number, with my battering rams, engines, mines, breaches and axes, I besieged and captured. 200,150 people, small and great, male and female, and horses, mules, asses, camels, oxen, sheep, without number, I took as booty. Hezekiah himself I shut up like a caged bird in Jerusalem, his royal city. I built a line of forts against him, and turned back everyone who came forth out of his city gate. His cities which I captured I gave to the king of Ashdod, king of Ekron, and king of Gaza.”

Ekron, Gaza and Ashdod, mentioned in the last sentence of the above quotation, were Philistine cities on the southern coast of Palestine.

It is noteworthy that even the boastful Assyrian Sennacherib did not claim to have captured Jerusalem, but only to have besieged it. His statement about having shut up Hezekiah in Jerusalem like a bird in a cage has a distinct ring of “sour grapes” about it.

As Sennacherib invaded the kingdom of Judah, Hezekiah made great preparations for defence (II Chron. 32:1-8). At the same time he put his trust in God (verses 7, 8). What followed is most clearly told in Isaiah, chapters 36-39. The Assyrians, having captured the walled cities of Judah, made their headquarters at Lachish, about 27 miles southwest of Jerusalem. From there Sennacherib sent the Rabshakeh or chief officer to Jerusalem to demand the surrender of the city. This is one of the most dramatic and moving stories of the whole Bible. The blasphemous, insolent, arrogant demands of the Assyrians are met with quiet, God-fearing courage on the part of Hezekiah, who spread the letter before the Lord in the Temple, and prayed for help. The answer came through Isaiah (Isa. 37:21ff.). The outcome was the destruction of 185,000 of Sennacherib's troops by a mysterious stroke or plague, spoken of as “the angel of the Lord.” There is no basis for the rather common notion that this happened just outside the walls of Jerusalem. It may very likely have been several miles away.

The incident of Hezekiah's sickness, restora-

tion to health, and promise of 15 more years of life, told in Isaiah 38, may perhaps have taken place before the events described in chapters 36 and 37. So also the account of the visit of ambassadors from Babylon, described in Isaiah 39, apparently concerns events which actually happened before Sennacherib's final invasion of Judah. On the surface the messengers from Babylon came to congratulate Hezekiah on his recovery from sickness; actually, as suggested by II Kings 20:13 (“hearkened”), the purpose seems to have been to invite Hezekiah to join Babylon in a projected revolt against Assyria. The Assyrian king found out about the plot before it could be carried out, so it came to nothing.

We note that Sennacherib followed the common pattern of arrogant tyrants and aggressors, and came to a miserable end (Isaiah 37:37-38). The man who had spread death, destruction and sorrow far and wide to satisfy his selfish ambitions and lust for power, was finally murdered by his own sons while worshipping the god which he supposed had given him such wonderful military success.

Hezekiah's readiness to display his wealth and resources to the ambassadors from Babylon was condemned by the prophet Isaiah, who informed the king that the day would come when all these things would be taken to Babylon (Isaiah 39:3-7). This was fulfilled more than 100 years later when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem and carried the Jews captive to Babylonia.

The destruction of Sennacherib's army by the angel of the Lord has been celebrated by Byron's well-known poem, *The Destruction of Sennacherib*. Through all this history we see a wicked, pagan, aggressive power — Assyria — being permitted by God to afflict the people of Israel and Judah, partly to punish them for their sins, and partly to purify the faith of those who believed in and served the Lord.

The Destruction of Sennacherib

By George Gordon, Lord Byron

The Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
When the blue waves roll nightly on deep Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset were seen:
Like the leaves of the forest when autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered and strown.

For the angel of death spread his wings on the blast,
 And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed;
 And the eyes of the sleepers wax'd deadly and chill,
 And their hearts but once heaved, and forever grew still.

And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,
 But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride;
 And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
 And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
 With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail;
 And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
 The lances unlifted, the trumpets unblown.

And the widows of Asshur are loud in their wail,
 And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;
 And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
 Hath melted like snow at the glance of the Lord!

Questions:

1. Whose son was Hezekiah?
2. What were the religious conditions when Hezekiah became king?

3. What program marked the beginning of Hezekiah's reign?

4. Why did Hezekiah send messengers to the territory of the former northern kingdom?

5. How were Hezekiah's messengers treated?

6. How was the Passover kept in Jerusalem?

7. What foreign power was beginning to threaten to invade Judah at this time?

8. How successful was the Assyrian invasion of Judah?

9. How can we explain the fact that Sennacherib demanded the surrender of Jerusalem after accepting payment as the price of sparing the city?

10. Besides the Biblical record, what source of knowledge do we have of this Assyrian campaign?

11. How did Hezekiah meet the final demands of the Assyrian commander?

12. What prophet of the Lord counselled and encouraged Hezekiah in this crisis?

13. What happened to the Assyrian forces?

14. What finally happened to Sennacherib?

15. What serious mistake did Hezekiah make?

16. What prophecy came as a result of this mistake? When was it fulfilled?

LESSON 7

The Kingdom of Israel from Jehu (841-814 B.C.) to Hoshea 732-722 B.C.)

(2 Kings, chapters 14-17)

Jehu died in 814 B.C. The northern kingdom (Israel) came to an end in 722 B.C., when it was finally destroyed by the Assyrian forces. At this point the student should refer to the list of the kings of Israel, as found in Lesson 92 of this course. From the death of Jehu to the end of the kingdom was a little less than 100 years. During this period there were 9 kings, part of whom reigned less than one year. We have already learned something about one of these kings, Joash or Jehoash, king of Israel (798-782 B.C.). This king fought and defeated Amaziah king of Judah.

Joash or Jehoash king of Israel was followed by Jeroboam II (782-753 B.C.). His story is found in II Kings 14:23-29. This king was powerful and successful from the political, economic and military viewpoint, but from the moral and religious viewpoint he was bad. During his reign the northern kingdom reached its greatest extent of territory and also of power. It is recorded of him that he "restored the coast of Israel from the entering of Hamath unto the Sea

of the Plain" (verse 25). Jeroboam II even succeeded in capturing Damascus, the capital of Syria, and Hamath, a Syrian city located about 120 miles north of Damascus. Hamath had been captured and held by Solomon long before, but later the city and region became independent again, until re-captured by Jeroboam II. "The Sea of the Plain" means the Dead Sea. So Jeroboam II recovered for Israel the territory from Hamath to the Dead Sea, making his kingdom very large and powerful. During the time of Solomon and again during the time of Jeroboam II Israel-Judah possessed all the land promised by God to Abraham.

Three famous prophets carried on their work during the reign of Jeroboam II: Jonah, Hosea and Amos. The prophecies of these men give us a very clear picture of social and economic conditions in the time of Jeroboam II. It was a time of wealth, prosperity, forgetting God, the rich living in luxury and oppressing the poor, and other notorious evils. It was also a time of religious complacency and easy toleration of false

religion. As for Jeroboam II himself, "he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord: he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin" (II Kings 14:24).

After the death of Jeroboam II he was succeeded by his son Zechariah, who reigned only about six months. Zechariah was the last king of the dynasty of Jehu. It will be recalled that the Lord promised Jehu that his descendants should reign over Israel to the fourth generation. Zechariah was the fourth generation, and with him the dynasty of Jehu came to an end. His story is found in II Kings 15:8-12. He continued the same evil kind of life that his ancestors had lived. After reigning as king for half a year he was murdered by a man named Shallum, who became the next king.

Shallum obtained the throne by committing murder, and it was not long before he was murdered himself. He reigned only one month (II Kings 15:13), and was then murdered by a man named Menahem, whose story is told in II Kings 15:14-22. Menahem was a cruel, wicked king, noted for outrageous atrocities. He was attacked by Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria, and only escaped destruction by paying 1,000 talents of silver (nearly two million dollars, and much more than that in actual purchasing power). Menahem continued the worship of the golden calves which had been started by Jeroboam I long before. His reign lasted about ten years.

After Menahem's death his son Pekahiah became king of Israel (742-740 B.C.). The kingdom was only about twenty years from its final destruction (722 B.C.). Pekahiah continued the wickedness of his father. After reigning for about two years he was murdered by one of his officers, Pekah, who became the next king.

Pekah (co-regent with Menahem and later Pekahiah, 752-740 B.C. Sole king 740-732 B.C.) was the next to the last king of the kingdom of Israel. He continued the worship of the golden calves. He made an alliance with Syria and then attacked the kingdom of Judah, just at the beginning of the reign of Ahaz king of Judah. Ahaz sought help from Assyria, which however did not do him any real good. However, it did bring Assyria into the picture as a very menacing power. We have already noted Ahaz's negotiation with Tiglath-Pileser III king of Assyria, and Pekah's invasion of Judah. At this time the Assyrians conquered much of Syria and Israel.

The last king of Israel was Hoshea (732-722 B.C.), whose history is given in II Kings 17. In 732 B.C. Pekah king of Israel was murdered by a man named Hoshea, who thereupon became king in Pekah's place (II Kings 15:30). According to the Assyrian records, this was done with the approval of Tiglath-Pileser III king of Assyria. Hoshea reigned for about ten years. It is recorded of him that he did evil in the sight of the Lord,

but was not as bad as some of the kings who had reigned before him.

Shalmaneser, the new king of Assyria, attacked Israel, and Hoshea surrendered to him, paying tribute. But later Hoshea failed to pay the annual tribute, and tried to get military aid from Egypt, and this became known to Shalmaneser. On account of this the Assyrian army marched against Israel again. Samaria was attacked and Hoshea was soon captured and imprisoned. Samaria fought on without its king, and in spite of extreme distress, was able to hold out for three years, after which it was captured by the Assyrians. About the time of the fall of Samaria, Shalmaneser was succeeded by Sargon II as king of Assyria.

The kingdom of Israel had run its course of sin, and finally the righteous judgment of God fell upon it. It was wiped out and never existed as a kingdom again. Many of the people of the ten northern tribes were transported as captives to distant eastern parts of the Assyrian Empire. From this captivity they never returned as a nation or organized body of people, though scattered individuals did return at times.

In place of the people of the ten northern tribes, the Assyrians placed people transplanted from the eastern regions of their empire. This is described in II Kings 17:24ff. These foreign people mingled with the remaining Israelites in the area and became the Samaritans, mentioned in the New Testament. They were a mixed race and had a very bizarre mixed religion — "they feared the Lord and served their own gods" (II Kings 17:33). A small remnant of the Samaritans exists in Palestine at the present day. The Pentateuch (Five Books of Moses) is the only part of the Bible they recognize. The idolatry mentioned in II Kings 17:33 was evidently later given up. Jesus Christ said that the Samaritans did not know what they worshipped (John 4:22).

Questions:

1. When did Jehu die?
2. How many years after the death of Jehu did the northern kingdom exist?
3. How many kings reigned during this final period of the northern kingdom?
4. What king reigned the longest during this period?
5. How long did Jeroboam II reign?
6. In what respects was Jeroboam II a successful king?
7. How much territory did Israel hold under Jeroboam II?
8. What three famous prophets worked in

the northern kingdom during the reign of Jeroboam II?

9. What were the social, religious and economic conditions of Israel under Jeroboam II?

10. What was the religious character of Jeroboam II himself?

11. What king followed Jeroboam II?

12. How long did Zechariah reign?

13. What prophecy was fulfilled by Zechariah's reign?

14. How did Shallum become king? How long did he last?

15. How did Menahem become king, and how long did he reign?

16. What foreign power attacked Menahem?

17. How did Menahem escape destruction?

18. What was the line-up of powers in the time of Pekah?

19. Who was the last king of the northern kingdom? How long did he reign?

20. What did Assyria have to do with Hoshea's becoming king of Israel?

21. How bad was Hoshea, from the religious and moral standpoint?

22. Why did Assyria finally crush the kingdom of Israel?

23. What happened to the last king of Israel?

24. How long did the siege of Samaria last?

25. What was the outcome of the war?

26. Who were the Samaritans, and what was their origin?

LESSON 8

The Kingdom of Judah under Manasseh (695-642 B.C.) and Amon (642-640 B.C.)

(2 Chronicles 33)

At this point the student should refer to the list of the kings of Judah, in the Oct.-Dec., 1963 issue, p. 184. The kingdom of Judah outlasted the kingdom of Israel by 136 years, finally being destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. From the death of Hezekiah (686 B.C.) to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians was a period of just 100 years. During this period of 100 years, Judah had 7 kings. Of these only one (Josiah) was good; all the rest were of varying degrees of wickedness. From this fact we can realize that this was a period of religious and moral decline, ending in apostasy from God.

Manasseh the son of Hezekiah, is recorded as having reigned 55 years. As nearly as can be figured out from the Biblical data, during the first 9 years or so of this period (695-686 B.C.) he must have been co-regent with his father Hezekiah. He is believed to have been sole king from 686 B.C. to 642 B.C., a period of 44 or 45 years. This single reign thus covers almost half of the entire period between the death of Hezekiah and the end of the kingdom. The other six kings in this period reigned an average of about 9 years each. When we realize that Manasseh was extremely wicked, we will grasp what this means concerning the character of the kingdom during this period of time.

Manasseh's reign is summarized by the statement that "he did evil in the sight of the Lord, like unto the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel" (II Chron. 33:2). The details of his evil-

doing are next specified: he rebuilt the high places which his father Hezekiah had destroyed; he built altars for Baal, and promoted the worship of Asherah ("groves"), who was the mythical wife and/or sister of Baal. Besides all this, he practiced various other forms of idolatry; he "worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them." This was polytheistic star-worship, and typically Assyrian. He also put up altars for the Assyrian gods in the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem.

Manasseh also burnt his son as a sacrifice to Moloch. (II Kings 21:6 says "his son"; II Chron. 33:6, "his children"). Also he observed "times", probably meaning superstitious choosing of "lucky" times for special projects; he practiced magic, divination (fortune-telling) and spiritism (attempted communication with the spirits of the dead). All these practices, of course, were forbidden by the Law of God. All this is summed up in the statement: "He wrought much evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger" (II Chron. 33:6). Besides all this, he set up a carved idol in the temple of the Lord, a particularly grievous offence. All this wickedness was perpetrated in the face of solemn warnings from God (II Chron. 33:10). Moreover, his religious policy was accompanied by bloody religious persecution: "Moreover Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another" (II Kings 21:16). According to a Jewish tradition (not recorded in the Bible) Manasseh had the prophet Isaiah put to death by having him strapped between two planks of lumber and sawed in two.

Later in his life Manasseh repented of his sins. This is not mentioned in II Kings, but we learn of it in II Chron. 33:11-17. Because of the sins of Manasseh, God punished him and his kingdom by an Assyrian invasion. Manasseh himself was captured and taken to Babylon as a prisoner in chains (Assyria controlled Babylon at this time). While suffering as a prisoner in Babylon, he humbled himself and prayed to the Lord. God answered his prayers, and Manasseh was freed and allowed to return home and reign as king (under the shadow of Assyrian dominance, of course) in Judah again. "Then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God". This repentance was followed by a religious reform (II Chron. 33:15-17), which removed many (but not all) of the features of idolatry.

It seems probable that Manasseh's repentance came very late in his long reign, and that his reign after his return to Jerusalem was brief. Manasseh could not undo all the evil that he had done through many years. However, he did do something to show that his repentance was sincere. II Chron. 33:13, 19 shows that God accepted Manasseh's repentance as genuine. Here we have a wonderful example of the depth of God's mercy — even as wicked a man as Manasseh can be forgiven if he repents and prays to God for mercy on the basis of the redemption provided by God.

Manasseh was followed by his son Amon (642-640 B.C.), who reigned two years. Amon was bad like his father, but with this difference: Amon never repented, but only went on in his wickedness. Finally he was murdered in his own house by his own servants (II Chron. 33:21-24). Amon was succeeded by his son Josiah, one of the best of Judah's kings.

Questions:

1. How long did the kingdom of Judah last after the fall of the kingdom of Israel?
2. How long was the period from the death of Hezekiah to the fall of the kingdom of Judah?
3. How many kings reigned over the kingdom of Judah after Hezekiah's death?
4. How many of these kings were good?
5. What does this show concerning the general character of this period?
6. Who became king on the death of Hezekiah?

7. How can the reign of Manasseh be summarized?

8. What details of his evil-doing are specified in the Biblical record?

9. What is meant by worshipping all the host of heaven?

10. Of what country's religion was this astral worship typical?

11. What altars did Manasseh build in the Temple of the Lord?

12. How did Manasseh treat part of his own children?

13. What superstitious practices did Manasseh engage in?

14. What is the probable meaning of "observing times"?

15. What is meant by "divination"?

16. What is magic?

17. What is spiritualism or spiritism?

18. What is the attitude of the Law of God toward these practices?

19. How can it be shown that Manasseh did not commit these sins in ignorance, not knowing he was doing wrong?

20. How did Manasseh treat people who did not agree with his religious policy?

21. How extensive was Manasseh's religious persecution?

22. What, according to Jewish tradition, did Manasseh do to Isaiah?

23. How did God punish Manasseh for his sins?

24. Where was Manasseh imprisoned by his enemies?

25. What change in Manasseh's attitude came while he was in prison?

26. How can we know that God accepted Manasseh's repentance as sincere?

27. What does the history of Manasseh show about the mercy of God?

28. How did Manasseh show his sincerity after his return to Jerusalem?

29. Who followed Manasseh as king of Judah?

30. How did this successor compare with Manasseh?

LESSON 9

The Reign and Religious Reform of Josiah king of Judah (640-609 B.C.)

(2 Kings, chapters 22, 23. 2 Chronicles, chapters 34, 35)

Josiah was the son of Amon, grandson of Manasseh and great-grandson of Hezekiah. He was the 16th in the line of kings descended from

David (counting Solomon, omitting Athaliah). Beginning when he was 8 years old, he reigned 31 years. It is recorded of him that "he did that

which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the ways of David his father, and declined neither to the right hand, nor to the left" — a very fine tribute.

At the age of 16, after being king 8 years, Josiah experienced a religious awakening and began to seek God. At the age of 20 he undertook a religious reform of the kingdom of Judah. Idols, high places and "groves" were destroyed; images were ground to powder and sprinkled on the graves of the people who had once worshipped them. The bones of the priests of the false religions were burnt on their altars, thus defiling the altars so that people would not want to use them again. Josiah also undertook an expedition to the territory of the former northern kingdom (Israel) destroying altars, high places, etc.

In the 18th year of his reign, Josiah commissioned men to repair and renovate the Temple of the Lord in Jerusalem. The damage and ruin were repaired and the Temple was made fit for the worship of God again. Divine worship was resumed.

During this work of cleaning and repairing the Temple, Hilkiah the high priest found "a book of the Law of the Lord given by Moses" which he brought to the attention of the king. This book was either the entire Pentateuch — the first five books of the Bible — or it was a manuscript of a part of the Pentateuch. As to how it came to be in the Temple, there are various possibilities. It may have been lost or thrown away during the long reign of Manasseh when the religion of Jehovah was being persecuted. Or it may have been intentionally hidden for safe keeping by some scribe or priest who was opposed to Manasseh's religious policies. Still another possibility is that it may have been intentionally placed in a cornerstone or other place in the Temple at the time when the Temple was originally built by Solomon.

The modern critical theory (held by "negative" critics who do not fully accept the Bible as the infallible Word of God) as to this book found by Hilkiah is very difficult. This theory holds that the book found in the Temple was not really written by Moses, but was in fact a new book only recently written. It is held that some unknown priest or priests, either in the time of Josiah or perhaps a little earlier, wrote this book, after which it was either lost, or deliberately "planted" in the Temple. The theory holds that the name of Moses was attached to the book in order to gain acceptance for it as a religious book. It is held that the Book of Deuteronomy as found in our Bible was this book found in the Temple by Hilkiah, and therefore Deuteronomy is no older than the time of Josiah or a little earlier. In other words, the modern negative critical theory

holds that the Book of Deuteronomy is what would today be called a literary fraud or a hoax — in blunt language, a forgery. Some critical scholars who do not believe that Moses wrote Deuteronomy, hold that it was written as long before Josiah as the time of Samuel; others hold that it was written in Josiah's day; a few even hold that it was written later than the time of Josiah. All these "negative" critics agree in the one point that Moses did not write it.

Over against all these negative critical views, we believe there are good reasons for holding that Deuteronomy was written by Moses, some 800 years before the time of Josiah, and that the book found by Hilkiah in the Temple was the genuine Law of Moses, either complete or in part. Those who are interested in further discussion on the critical theory of Deuteronomy are referred to the following works:

Manley, *The New Bible Handbook*, pp. 146-153

The New Bible Commentary, by Davidson, Stibbs & Kevan, pp. 195-6

Edward J. Young, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (consult Index)

G. T. Manley, *The Book of the Law: Studies in the Date of Deuteronomy*, pp. 1-192

The first book listed above is published by the Inter-Varsity Press, 1519 North Astor, Chicago 10, Illinois. The last three are published by William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 255 Jefferson Avenue, S.E., Grand Rapids 2, Michigan.

After hearing the book read, Josiah was greatly moved. He realized that the kingdom had departed far from the Law of the Lord. The king sent men to inquire of God through a female prophet named Huldah. The message that came from God through Huldah was to the effect that God would surely punish the kingdom of Judah for its sins. However, because Josiah had humbled himself before God, this evil and destruction would not come until after Josiah's death.

The discovery of the Book of the Law was followed by a solemn service of covenanting (II Chron. 34:31, 32) in which both king and people pledged themselves to live according to the will of God. Following this there was a distinct improvement in the moral life of the nation (verse 33). The Passover was again duly observed (II Chron. 35:1-19). This was done with great care and solemnity. In II Chron. 30:26 it is stated that the Passover as observed by Hezekiah was the greatest since the time of Solomon. But in II Chron. 35:18 it is stated that the Passover as observed by Josiah was the greatest since the days of Samuel the prophet. This was in the 18th year of Josiah's reign.

Meanwhile great changes had been taking

place in the international scene. Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, was destroyed by Babylon in 612 B.C. An invasion of southwestern Asia by a people from southern Russia called the Scythians had also greatly weakened the power of Assyria. Egypt was trying to make a return to world power. Under the king Pharaoh-Necho the Egyptians marched toward the Euphrates River. This expedition was intended to help what was left of the Assyrian army in a final resistance against the rising power of Babylon. Pharaoh-Necho's plan involved crossing the territory of the kingdom of Judah. Josiah put his army into the field to oppose the Egyptians as they marched across Palestine. Presumably Josiah did not want anyone to help Judah's old enemy, Assyria. A battle was fought at the Pass of Megiddo, at Mount Carmel, in which Josiah was killed (609 B.C.). The Egyptian forces went on to meet the Babylonians in a head-on crash at the Battle of Carchemish on the Euphrates River, 605 B.C. Egypt and Assyria were decisively defeated, and thus Babylon gained undisputed world supremacy. From this time Judah was under the shadow of Babylonian domination, until Babylon in turn was conquered by the Medo-Persians (539 B.C.).

Questions:

1. What was the relationship of Josiah to Manasseh?
2. What was the relationship of Josiah to Hezekiah?
3. How old was Josiah when he became king?
4. What other king was crowned at a comparably tender age?
5. What is the character of Josiah's reign in the Bible?
6. How many years did Josiah reign?

7. What is the first religious fact recorded about Josiah?

8. What was the first important project undertaken by Josiah? How old was he at the time?

9. What steps in reform did Josiah take?

10. What discovery was made at the time of repairing the Temple?

11. Who made this discovery?

12. What possibilities exist as to why the book of the Law came to be found in the Temple?

13. What is the "negative" critical theory about the book that was found?

14. How should this negative critical theory be regarded?

15. What are some of the reasons for regarding Deuteronomy as a genuine writing of Moses? (cf. material in Manley, **The New Bible Handbook**, pp. 146-153).

16. What was the effect of the reading of the newly discovered book?

17. To whom did the king send to ascertain the will of God in the existing situation?

18. What religious revival resulted from the discovery of the Book of the Law?

19. What international changes were taking place at this time?

20. Who were the Scythians, and what was their connection with Bible history?

21. What power defeated Assyria, where, and when?

22. What great battle made Babylon the supreme world power?

23. What were the circumstances of Josiah's death?

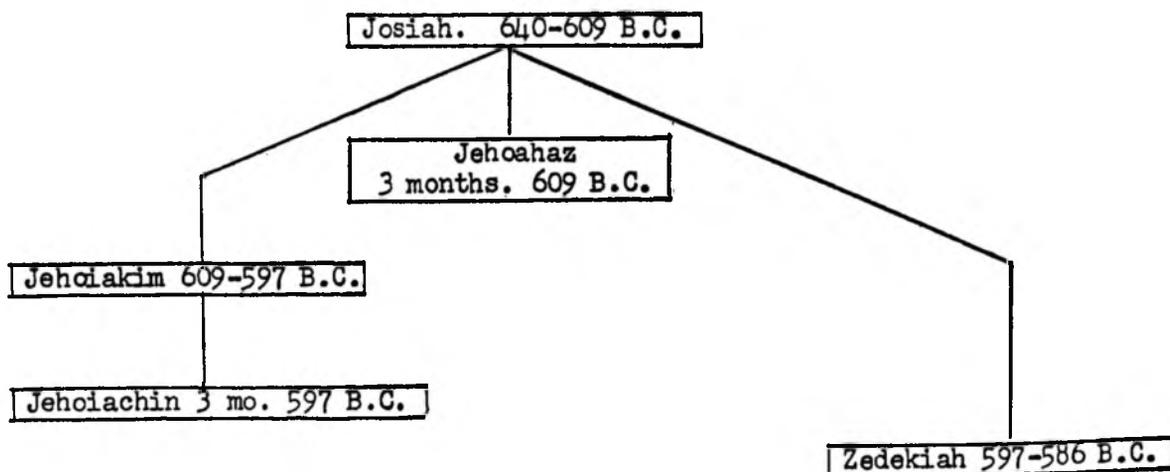
24. How long after the battle of Carchemish did Babylon hold world power?

LESSON 10

The Last Years of the Kingdom of Judah 609-586 B.C.

(2 Kings, chapters 24, 25. 2 Chronicles, chapter 36)

Diagram Showing Relationships of the Last Five Kings of Judah



On the death of Josiah, the people of Jerusalem made his son Jehoahaz king. However, he reigned only 3 months. Pharaoh-Necho king of Egypt (who had defeated the forces of Judah at Megiddo) deposed Jehoahaz and made his brother Jehoiakim (originally named Eliakim) king. Jehoiakim was 25 years old when he became king; he reigned approximately 11 years. He did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord. For three years he was subject to Egypt and had to pay tribute to Pharaoh. Then in his fourth year he became subject to Babylon, which had defeated Egypt at Carchemish.

In 605 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon left Jehoiakim on the throne of the kingdom of Judah, with the understanding, of course, that he was to act as a vassal or subject of the king of Babylon. In 597 B.C. Jehoiakim, having revolted against Babylon, was captured by the Babylonians for deportation to Babylon as a prisoner or war criminal. He was not actually taken there, however, as he either died or was killed by someone. His dead body was thrown out without burial (Jeremiah 22:19; 36:30). This king Jehoiakim was extremely wicked and was bitterly opposed to the prophet Jeremiah. The story of how the king cut up and burnt the roll of Jeremiah's prophecies is told in Jeremiah chapter 36.

Jehoiakim was followed by Jehoiachin, his son, who reigned only 3 months. He was evil like his father. In II Kings 24:8 it is stated that Jehoiachin was 18 years old when he began to reign, and that he reigned 3 months. In II Chron. 36:9 it is stated that Jehoiachin was 8 years old when he began to reign, and that he reigned 3 months and 10 days. With regard to the length of the reign, it may be that 3 months and 10 days is intended as an exact statement, while 3 months is intended merely as an approximate statement of the length of his reign. With regard to his age on becoming king, it is generally held by scholars that the statement in II Kings (18 years old) is the correct one, and that the statement in II Chronicles 36 (8 years old) is a textual corruption caused by a scribe's error in copying an ancient manuscript.

Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon sent his army to besiege Jerusalem. Jehoiachin was taken prisoner to Babylon and for many years was kept in prison there. After 37 years he was released from prison on parole (but not allowed to return to Judah) and given a daily ration of better food (II Kings 25:27-30).

At the time when Jehoiachin was taken captive, the Babylonians set up Zedekiah, a son of Josiah, to be king in Judah. Like Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin, Zedekiah did evil in the sight of the Lord. Finally Zedekiah rebelled against Babylon. In the 9th year of Zedekiah's reign, Nebuchadnezzar came with his armed forces and besieged Jerusalem. The city held out for nearly

two years, but finally the Babylonians succeeded in entering it.

On capturing Jerusalem, the Babylonians systematically carried out a work of destruction (II Kings 25: 8-17). The Temple of the Lord, the royal palace, and all other important buildings were destroyed by fire. The Babylonians also broke down the city wall of Jerusalem, and left the city in smoking ruins and ashes. The sufferings of the people were terrible. Many of those remaining alive were taken to Babylon. The book of the Lamentations of Jeremiah graphically describes the tragic scenes of Jerusalem's defeat and destruction.

At the last minute, Zedekiah and the soldiers he had in Jerusalem attempted to escape to the open country. But they were pursued by the Babylonians and caught near Jericho, and the soldiers were scattered. Zedekiah was taken to Riblah, a city in the land of Hamath (north of Damascus), where Nebuchadnezzar pronounced judgment on him as a war criminal. The cruel sentence involved three penalties: (1) Zedekiah's sons were killed before his eyes; (2) Zedekiah's eyes were put out, so that the last thing he would ever see was his sons being killed; (3) Zedekiah was bound with brass chains or fetters and taken to Babylon as a prisoner, and he was kept there as a prisoner until he died (Jeremiah 52:11).

Table of the Chronology of the Babylonian Captivity

- 612 B.C. Nineveh, capital of Assyria, captured and destroyed by Babylon.
- 609 B.C. Josiah, king of Judah, falls at Megiddo while attempting to prevent the Egyptian forces from crossing Palestine.
- 609 B.C. Jehoiakim made king of Judah by Pharaoh-Necho of Egypt.
- 605 B.C. Egypt and Assyria defeated by Babylon at Carchemish.
- 605 B.C. Daniel and others taken to Babylon.
- 597 B.C. Jehoiakim, having revolted, is captured by the Babylonians, but dies or is killed before they could take him to Babylon.
- 597 B.C. Jehoiachin reigns as king of Judah for 3 months.
- 597 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar besieges Jerusalem captures Jehoiachin, takes him to Babylon as a war criminal. Many people taken captive. In II Kings 24:12, "eighth year of his reign" means eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign.
- 597 B.C. Zedekiah made king by the Babylonians.
- 586 B.C. Jerusalem destroyed by the Babylonians. Zedekiah taken to Babylon.

581 B.C. Babylonian forces return to Jerusalem, take more people. Jeremiah 52:30.

539 B.C. Babylon falls to Medo-Persian forces.

536 B.C. First Jewish party returns to Jerusalem. Zerubbabel.

516 B.C. Second Temple completed at Jerusalem.

457 B.C. Second party returns to Jerusalem. Ezra the Scribe.

444 B.C. Arrival of Nehemiah with others to rebuild wall of Jerusalem.

Questions:

1. How many Jewish kings followed Josiah?
2. Who became king immediately after Josiah's death? How long did he reign?
3. How did Jehoiakim become king?
4. To what foreign powers was Jehoiakim subject, and how long to each?

5. What happened when Jehoiakim rebelled against Babylon?

6. What incident shows Jehoiakim's extreme wickedness?

7. How long did Jehoiachin reign?

8. What put an end to Jehoiachin's reign as king?

9. What finally happened to Jehoiachin?

10. Who was the last king of Judah?

11. What was the relationship of Zedekiah to Josiah? To Jehoiakim? To Jehoiachin?

12. What act of Zedekiah brought the Babylonian forces against Jerusalem in power?

13. Describe the capture and destruction of Jerusalem.

14. Describe the attempt of Zedekiah to escape.

15. Describe the doom of Zedekiah.

LESSON 11

Hebrew Prophecy. The Prophet Isaiah

(Isaiah, chapters 6, 9, 11, 53)

At this point we shall pause in our tracing of the history to look at the development of Hebrew prophecy, especially in the lives of two of the greatest prophets, namely, Isaiah and Jeremiah. Both of these men were prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord to the southern kingdom, Judah. Isaiah was active at the time when the northern kingdom (Israel) came to its end. Jeremiah was active at the time when the southern kingdom (Judah) was destroyed by the Babylonians.

Isaiah worked during the reigns of Uzziah (787-739 B.C.), Jotham (739-731 B.C.), Ahaz (731-715 B.C.), Hezekiah (715-686 B.C.) and Manasseh (695-642 B.C.), kings of Judah. The contemporary kings of Israel were Jeroboam II, Zechariah, Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah and Hoshea. The Bible does not inform us about the death of Isaiah, but there is a Jewish tradition that he was sawed in two by order of the wicked king Manasseh of Judah. Isaiah's active work as a prophet covers a period of fifty years or more, beginning about 739 B.C.

The background of Isaiah's work was the growing military and political power of Assyria. Under the shadow of Assyrian power the prophet spoke in the name of God to the people of Judah. Isaiah himself lived to see the kingdom of Judah, with the exception of its capital, Jerusalem, destroyed by the invading Assyrian forces.

Isaiah is the author of the Book of Isaiah in the Bible, a long book containing 66 chapters, in-

cluding many wonderful prophecies of the coming Messiah (Jesus Christ.)

Modern "negative" criticism (on the part of scholars who do not fully accept the Bible as the infallible Word of God) holds that Isaiah wrote only a part of this long book. It is commonly held by "negative" critics that Isaiah wrote most of the first 39 chapters of the book, while chapters 40-66 were written by one or more unknown writers who lived long after the time of Isaiah. These unknown writers are designated by the names "Deutero-Isaiah" (Second Isaiah) and "Trito-Isaiah" (Third Isaiah). As matter of fact these figures are purely hypothetical. Nothing whatever is known about any person other than Isaiah the son of Amoz as the writer of any part of the 66 chapters of the book.

It is beyond the scope of this course to take up the technical arguments involved in this controversy. However, it may be said that there are very strong reasons indeed for believing that the prophet Isaiah himself wrote the entire 66 chapters of the book. Not the least among these reasons is the fact that Jesus Christ, and the New Testament writers, quote repeatedly from chapters 40-66 attributing the quoted material to Isaiah as its author. Those who wish to study further on the question of the unity of authorship of the book of Isaiah are referred to the following works:

Manley, *The New Bible Handbook*, pp. 211-213

Edward J. Young, **An Introduction to the Old Testament** (see Index)

Davidson, Stibbs & Kevan, **The New Bible Commentary**, pp. 558-562

Edward J. Young, **Who Wrote Isaiah?** (pocket size paperback)

Edward J. Young, **Commentary on Isaiah**, Volume I (published Spring 1963)

Oswald T. Allis, **The Unity of Isaiah**

The first of these books is published by the Inter-Varsity Press, 1519 North Astor, Chicago 10, Illinois. The next four are published by the William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 255 Jefferson Avenue, S. E., Grand Rapids 3, Michigan. The last, by Dr. Allis (a paper-bound volume at \$1.50) is published by The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, P.O. Box 185, Nutley 10, New Jersey. These are all works by conservative scholars who accept the Bible as the infallible Word of God and who defend the literary unity of the entire book of Isaiah. Numerous works which reject the genuineness and unity of the entire book of Isaiah will be found in the college library.

Chapters 36-39 of Isaiah are of a historical nature, dealing with events in the time of Hezekiah. The part of the book following chapter 39 contains marvellous prophecies of the future of God's people. Some of the best known Messianic prophecies are found in chapters 9, 11 and 53. (Messianic prophecies are those that predict the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ). Isaiah's call to the prophetic office is related in chapter 6 of the book.

The language of Isaiah is poetical, but it is not like ordinary English poetry. The poetical character does not consist in rhyme, nor in metre as we think of it, but rather in the marvellous comparisons, parallelisms, figures of speech and lofty language used. Just considered as literature, Isaiah's prophecies have never been surpassed. However, they are much more than great literature, for they are inspired revelation of the truth of God. After more than 2500 years, the glowing words of the prophet Isaiah have lost none of their power. They will be loved, studied and remembered until the end of time.

Something should be said at this point about the nature of Biblical prophecy in general. The popular idea of prophecy is that it is prediction of the future. It is true that the Bible prophets did predict future events, and prediction is a major element in Biblical prophecy. However, this is not the essential idea of prophecy. (The **essence** of something is that which makes it what it is, in distinction from things which differ from it). The essential idea of a prophet, in the Bible, is that of a man who speaks for God. The

prophet is God's mouthpiece, God's spokesman. He receives a message of truth from God, and then communicates it to men. Thus the prophet is God's representative in addressing man. In this respect the prophet is the exact counterpart and opposite of the priest. The priest is sinful man's representative in approaching the holy God and effecting reconciliation through sacrifice and intercession. The prophet moves from God toward man; the priest moves from man toward God.

Moses was a prophet, but also much more than a prophet. He towers over the Old Testament in unique grandeur. Samuel is usually considered the first of the series of Old Testament prophets. At first the prophets only spoke their messages to men. What we know of these is learned from the historical books of the Old Testament. Later the prophets also wrote their messages down in book form for future generations to read. The great **writing prophets** start in the eighth century B.C.

In addition to predicting the future, the prophets had much to say to men about the will of God for their own time. Sometimes what they said or wrote has a **double reference**, for their own time and also for the more or less distant future.

The "modern" idea about the Bible prophets is that these men were essentially thinkers or intellectuals, something like the Greek philosophers. It is held that they were men with a special gift for religious discernment, far above what the ordinary person would have. As thinkers, the prophets tried to analyze the trends and meaning of the events of their time, and to deduce from these moral and religious lessons which they then announced to the people. In order to give their messages prestige and authority, it is held, they used such formulas as "Thus saith the Lord" to introduce what they were about to say to the people. Modern "liberal" authors who hold this view of the prophets constantly speak of Isaiah, for example, as having "felt," "thought", "been convinced", "discerned," "realized", etc., etc., that certain things were true or that certain things would happen. This liberal idea of prophecy is that prophecy was essentially **subjective**, that is, a product of the thinking and mind of the prophets. Over against ~~this~~ the Bible itself presents the **objective** view of prophecy — the revelation came **through** the prophet, but it came **from** God. The prophet was the channel or medium of communication, but the **source** of the message was always God Himself. This is strongly brought out in the New Testament by II Peter 1:21, "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." The prophecy, we should note carefully, came **through** the instrumentality of man but **NOT** by the will of man. The source was the Holy Spirit.

Questions:

1. What is the basic meaning of the terms "prophet" and "prophecy" in the Bible?
2. Who was the first of the Old Testament prophets?
3. What is the relation of prediction to prophecy?
4. What is the subjective view of Biblical prophecy?
5. What is the objective view of Biblical prophecy?
6. Give a New Testament text which affirms the objective view of Old Testament prophecy.
7. When did the prophet Isaiah live? Under what kings did he work?
8. What was the political situation in Isaiah's day?
9. How was Isaiah called to be a prophet of the Lord?
10. What Jewish tradition exists as to the manner of Isaiah's death?

11. How many chapters are there in the book of Isaiah?

12. What is the view of negative criticism concerning the authorship of the book of Isaiah?

13. What reason can be given for accepting the Isaianic authorship of the entire book?

14. On what grounds do negative critics reject a part of the book as a genuine writing of Isaiah the son of Amoz?

15. What remarkable prophecy names a Persian king 150 years before his time? (Isaiah, end of chapter 44 and beginning of chapter 45).

16. What chapters in the book of Isaiah are historical in nature? What crisis do they document?

17. What are Messianic prophecies?

18. How does Hebrew poetry differ from English poetry?

19. Locate some of Isaiah's Messianic prophecies.

20. What is the theme of Isaiah chapter 53?

LESSON 12**The Life and Work of the Prophet Jeremiah**

(Jeremiah chapters 1, 11, 36-38, 50, 51)

Jeremiah lived about 100 years after the time of Isaiah. During this 100 years the international scene had changed radically. No longer was Assyria the great threat on the horizon; now Judah was menaced by an even more powerful enemy, Babylon. The prophetic work of Isaiah, under God, had saved Jerusalem from destruction by Assyria; Jeremiah in turn tried to save Jerusalem and Judah from Babylon, but in this he was not successful, for the people refused to repent and return to God. Jeremiah worked during the reigns of Josiah (640-609 B.C.) and the kings which followed him, down to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. After that Jeremiah was taken to Egypt by some of the Jews. He finally died at an unknown date in Egypt.

Jeremiah was called to the office of prophet about 627 or 626 B.C. In 586 B.C. Jerusalem was finally destroyed by the Babylonian army. Between these two dates there was a period of about 40 years. This was a most terrible period of apostasy from God, with the exception of the reign of Josiah, who did what he could to bring the nation back to God. It will be recalled that Josiah was killed in battle by Pharaoh-Necho, king of Egypt, at Megiddo, in 609 B.C. In 605 B.C. Babylon defeated Egypt and Assyria at the great battle of Carchemish on the upper Euphrates River. Thus just as Isaiah had lived

and worked under the shadow of Assyria, Jeremiah lived and worked (after 605 B.C.) under the shadow of Babylon.

A large part of the book of Jeremiah, which contains 52 chapters, consists of warnings to Judah to repent and return to God, with predictions of judgment which will fall on the king and people if they do not repent and return to the Lord. As time passed, the people's apostasy from God only became worse. Finally, the condition of the majority was written off as hopeless, and hope centered on a "remnant" or small nucleus of the people who remained faithful.

Jeremiah was of a priestly family. His home was in Anathoth, about 1½ hours' walk northeast of Jerusalem. The Book of the Law was discovered in the Temple about four or five years after Jeremiah was called to be a prophet. Jeremiah was an unmarried man — he was forbidden by God to marry, as his lonely condition was to be a sort of dramatization of the lonely character of the people of Judah who had forsaken God. Jeremiah not only lived a lonely life — he had to face powerful opposition throughout almost his entire career. In psychological type he was what would today be called an introvert. Repeatedly he gave way to spiritual depression. See, for example, 20:7-18. On occasion, he even wished he had never been born

(15:10; 20:14-18). When he gave way to this sort of depression, the Lord patiently built him up until he once again had faith and courage to go out and face opposition as a prophet of the Lord.

Sometimes it was not merely opposition, but outright physical violence and persecution, that the prophet Jeremiah had to face. He learned by experience what it feels like to spend long periods in a filthy prison because of faith and conscience. The incident of the burning of the roll of Jeremiah's prophecies by Jehoiakim, king of Judah, is recorded in chapter 36. Chapter 38 tells of his imprisonment under Zedekiah, the last king of Judah, and how he was rescued from a cistern by Ebed-Melech ("Servant of the King") the Ethiopian.

Perhaps the greatest Messianic prophecy in Jeremiah is chapter 31:31ff, which predicts the coming of Christianity in the Messianic age of the future. This is the great prophecy of the New Covenant. It is expounded in the New Testament in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Another great Messianic prophecy in Jeremiah is 31:15-17. The immediate reference of this was doubtless to some of the sorrows and anguish experienced by the people of Judah, especially mothers of little children, at the time of the Babylonian invasion with its unspeakable cruelties, barbarities and atrocities. But the passage is cited in the New Testament (Matthew 2:16-18) as having its ultimate and absolute fulfillment in the slaughter by Herod of all male infants under two years old in the vicinity of Bethlehem. The grief-stricken mothers are offered comfort. Their murdered children shall come back from the land of the enemy — the realm of death. Death is man's last enemy that shall be destroyed (New Testament: I Corinthians 15:26). Death is not to have the last word. By the almighty power and infinite grace of God, life will have the final word for all who are truly God's people. Jeremiah by prophetic revelation looks far down the avenue of historic time, thousands of years, to the very end, and predicts (in language which also had a limited and relative application to his own day and the near future) God's final victory over the last great enemy, death.

Through the darkness and gloom of Jeremiah's own day there shines a bright ray of hope for the future of God's people. God is the Lord of the future and the ultimate outcome is bound to be good, for those who are truly the Lord's. There are also stirring prophecies of the future destruction of Babylon. Chapters 50 and 51 are truly great from the literary viewpoint, but even more because of their confident assurance of the victory of the Kingdom of God over all worldly powers. If anyone is not thrilled by reading these two chapters (50 and 51) there is

something lacking in his religious life and outlook. Needless to say, the spirit of these chapters is not a selfish, sinful lust for vengeance, but a spiritual exultation in the triumph of Justice — God's bringing down the proud and haughty aggressors, and vindicating His own meek, humble people. God used Babylon to punish Judah for its terrible sin, but Babylon was not to have the last word. Like all militaristic, aggressor nations, Babylon itself was doomed to destruction — a prediction that has been literally and absolutely fulfilled.

After the Babylonian forces captured and destroyed Jerusalem, they gave Jeremiah his freedom. He could go to Babylon as their guest, or he could remain in Judah, or he could go wherever he pleased. He elected to remain in Judah. Later the Jewish governor whom the Babylonians had left in charge of the city was murdered by a die-hard faction of fanatical Jews. This act, of course, brought the Babylonian army back in reprisal. The Jews who had been involved in this deed, and others, felt that they must escape to some safety zone immediately. Jeremiah prophesied in the name of the Lord against this and commanded them to stay and face the consequences. However, they refused to listen to this Word of the Lord, and fled to Egypt. Jeremiah accompanied them — apparently he was compelled to do this, against his will. The time and circumstances of his death in Egypt are unknown.

The book of the Lamentations of Jeremiah, which follows the prophecy of Jeremiah in the Bible, is Jeremiah's own inspired reaction to the terrible sufferings of the people of Jerusalem at the time of the fall of the city to the Babylonians. This short book of five chapters is all in poetry. It will always be great as literature. It is one of the most eloquent, stirring, heart-rending expressions of sorrow in all world literature. The sense of tragedy was heightened and made more poignant by the fact that all this need not have been — all this anguish and sorrow came on the people of Jerusalem and Judah because they stubbornly refused to obey the Word of the Lord which was announced to them by the prophet Jeremiah during a forty year career.

Questions:

1. About what time did Jeremiah live and work?
2. How long was this, approximately, after the time of Isaiah?
3. Who was king of Judah when Jeremiah was called to be a prophet of the Lord?
4. What was Jeremiah's first reaction when he was called to be a prophet?
5. What commission was Jeremiah given by the Lord?

6. What special promise was given him by God?
7. What great tragedy did Jeremiah live to see?
8. How many years did Jeremiah serve as a prophet (prior to going to Egypt)?
9. What foreign power was dominant during Jeremiah's time (after 605 B.C.)?
10. What subject forms a large part of the contents of Jeremiah?
11. What was the people's response to this message?
12. Describe the incident of the burning of the roll of Jeremiah's prophecies.
13. Describe the incident of Jeremiah being rescued from the cistern.
14. What is the center of hope toward the end of Jeremiah's work as a prophet?
15. What is meant by Messianic prophecies?
16. What chapter in Jeremiah contains a prophecy of the coming of Christianity?
17. Explain the meaning and fulfilment of the prophecy found in Jeremiah 31:15-17.
18. What did Jeremiah predict concerning the future of Babylon?
19. What is the theme of Jeremiah chapters 50 and 51?
20. What incident concerning Jeremiah shows the wickedness of Jehoiakim?
21. What chapter of Jeremiah tells this incident?
22. What happened to Jeremiah after Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians?

LESSON 13

History and Prophecy in the Book of Daniel

(Daniel, chapters 1-8)

The battle of Carchemish, in which Babylon crushed Egypt and Assyria (605 B.C.) made Babylon the supreme world power, a position which was held until Babylon in turn was defeated by the Medo-Persians in 539 B.C. The Book of Daniel belongs partly to this period and partly to the beginning of the Persian period which followed it. Daniel was one of the young Jews deported from Judah to Babylon at the time when Nebuchadnezzar left Jehoiakim on the throne of Judah as his puppet (605 B.C.). He lived to a great age and held important positions under the Babylonian and Medo-Persian empires.

The Book of Daniel is regarded by orthodox Biblical scholars as being entirely written by Daniel. Modern negative criticism does not accept this, holding instead that the book was written some 400 years later (second century B.C.), and that it is therefore not a genuine book by Daniel. The real reason why the negative critics hold this is their **rationalistic and naturalistic philosophy of religion** which forms the assumed approach and frame of reference in terms of which they view all Biblical data. These critics have a definite anti-supernaturalist bias. They do not believe in real miracles and they do not believe that real predictive prophecy is possible. Therefore when they come to a book like Daniel, which reports amazing miracles and which, on a **prima facie** reading, contains predictive prophecies which were fulfilled in amazingly accurate detail four centuries and more later, they react by pronouncing the miracle stories to be mere legends and the prophecies to be actually reports written after the things described had happened on the field of history. Thus the offensive supernatural features are eliminated, but at the

same time the genuineness of the book is destroyed and its authority as real divine revelation is thrown to the winds.

These negative critics buttress what they have to say by the sweeping claim that "all scholars are agreed" that Daniel was written in the second century before Christ. **This statement is simply untrue.** It is only negative and naturalistic scholars who are agreed in this, and they hold this viewpoint because of their assumed **philosophy of religion**, not because it is necessary for a scholar to hold it. In other words, when one starts with an **a priori** bias against everything supernatural, one will inevitably decide that a book full of supernatural features cannot be true. There are scholars with Ph. D. degrees in Old Testament studies and Semitic languages from the world's greatest universities, who yet believe that the Book of Daniel is genuine and was written by Daniel in the 6th century B.C. What a scholar says about the Book of Daniel, or of the Book of Daniel, or of Isaiah, or of Deuteronomy, is not simply a question of scholarship versus ignorance; it is a question of **basic philosophy of religion** — does the scholar approach the Biblical data with **naturalistic** or with **supernaturalistic** assumptions? The claim of "liberals" to have a monopoly of scholarship is an arrogant and utterly unwarranted claim. A man with a doctor's degree from a renowned university is a scholar, whether he agrees with me or not. Indeed, this sweeping claim that "all scholars are agreed" may itself indicate a sub-conscious suspicion on the part of "liberals" that **not all scholars are agreed** — it may be comparable to a little boy's whistling to keep his courage up as he passes a cemetery at night.

There are many good reasons for holding that the book of Daniel is genuine and that Daniel wrote it. Those who hold the orthodox Christian view of God, of the supernatural and of divine revelation, will have no difficulty in accepting the book as written by Daniel.

The Book of Daniel is in two languages. Chapter 2:4 to 7:28 is in the Aramaic or Aramaean language (called Syrian or Syriac in the Bible), which was the language of commerce and diplomacy at the time when the book was written. This language is cognate to Hebrew but not the same. The rest of the book of Daniel is written in Hebrew. For further discussion of this matter see Manley, *The New Bible Handbook*, pages 232-235. It has been suggested that the part of the book chiefly concerning the Jews and their future, is written in their language, Hebrew; and that the part concerning the international scene and the world empires is written in Aramaic, the recognized language of international affairs and diplomacy.

Part of the book of Daniel presents historical material about the Babylonian Captivity of the Jews; part of the book presents prophecies about future events. During this period of history the heathen nations had triumphed over the Jews, and to human eyes it looked as if the heathen gods had triumphed over Jehovah, the God of the Jews. The sacred objects of the Lord's Temple in Jerusalem had been placed in the temples of the Babylonian gods as trophies of victory. The Jews had been terribly defeated and humiliated, and their city and nation had been destroyed. How could they hold their heads up in the face of all this? How could they answer the arrogant taunts of their heathen enemies? At this time of religious crisis, God intervened with a series of wonderful miracles, which served to lift the morale of the Jews and to show the heathen that Jehovah was still living and powerful. The miracle of the burning fiery furnace is found in Daniel chapter 3; that of the handwriting on the wall in chapter 5 and that of Daniel's delivery from the lions' den (in the Persian period) in chapter 6.

Among the prophecies of Daniel, some have

already been fulfilled, and some relate to events that are still (from our standpoint) future. Specially important are Nebuchadnezzar's dream of four successive world empires followed by the Kingdom of God (chapter 2), and Daniel's great vision of "one like unto the Son of man" (Chapter 7). It is probable that Jesus Christ took the title "Son of man", which He used as His favorite self-designation, from this vision in Daniel 7. In Daniel 12:1-4 the end of the world and the resurrection of the dead are predicted.

Questions:

1. What power was dominant at the beginning of Daniel's career?
2. What power was dominant at the close of Daniel's career?
3. Who was the king of Judah when Daniel was taken to Babylon?
4. How long was Daniel in Babylon before Jerusalem was destroyed?
5. What is the orthodox belief about the authorship and genuineness of the book of Daniel?
6. What is the negative critical theory about the book of Daniel?
7. What is the real source of the critical (negative) theory about Daniel?
8. Give a verse in which Jesus Christ quoted Daniel as genuine. (Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14).
9. In what languages was the book of Daniel originally written?
10. What may perhaps be the reason for the bi-lingual character of the book?
11. What reason can be given for the necessity of the miracles recorded in the book of Daniel?
12. Name three important miracles in the book of Daniel. In what chapter is each of these recorded?
13. What is the importance of Daniel's vision of the Son of man in chapter 7?

(To be continued)

Are the Ten Commandments Relevant Today?

by Rev. Francis Nigel Lee, LL. B., Ph.D., Th.D.

(Numbers in parentheses refer to notes found at the end of the article.)

"All their life was spent not in laws, statutes or rules, but according to their own free will and pleasure. They rose out of their beds when they thought good; they did eat, drink, labor, sleep, when they had a mind to it, and were disposed to it . . . In all their rule and strictest land to their order, there was but this one clause to be observed: DO WHAT THOU WILT!"

Thus wrote the Renaissance humanist Rabelais of his own ideal for the model society, where "all the nuns are beautiful" and where not chastity, poverty and obedience are praised, but where all may marry, be rich, and live at liberty. (1) This perhaps represents the very epitome of antinomianism or disregard for God's holy law. To a lesser extent, however, such

tendencies have also been found from time to time especially on the fringes and even within the very bosom of the Christian Church. They were particularly prominent among the Anabaptists at the time of the Reformation, who murdered many of their religious opponents (thus breaking God's sixth commandment) and who practised polygamy and community of property (thus breaking God's seventh and eighth commandments too).

Less extreme examples of this loose attitude toward the decalogue are also found among modern Christians. Especially among American fundamentalists, one frequently encounters a total liturgical ignoring of the decalogue and an enthusiastic espousal of unscriptural antinomian hymnology such as "Free from the law, O happy condition!" An even more unhappy condition is, of course, found among theological liberals supporting revolutionary action and the pressure groups of various kinds of sexual perverts demanding liberation from all legal strictures. Sadder still, traces of this disregard for God's most holy law are even to be detected among some Calvinistic groups that claim to be "reformational" and indeed even "law-oriented."

For example, even among some of the adherents of the Canadian strain of the "Philosophy of the Cosmogenic Idea", some traces of antinomianism are clearly to be seen. In spite of this school's many excellent contributions (derived from Kuyper via Dooyeweerd) toward the further dynamic development of the truly cosmos-embracing implications of our Christian religion, in several of the writings of some of its leaders one is saddened to discover the remnants of a neo-scholastic synthesis between the radically Biblical motive of God's most holy law and the humanistic motive—cf. the Renaissance's Rabelais above! (1) of antinomian libertarianism. Arnold De Graaf, for instance, has unscripturally written: "The Scriptures contain **only one Directive**, and that is the great commandment. **Even the ten words (not commandments)** (36 (q.v.)) are specifications of this central religious Directive. All the other ordinances are nothing more than concrete outworkings. positivization of this Directive within a particular culture in a particular period of history. None of them **can be literally followed or applied today**, for we live in a different period of a different culture." (Emphasis mine—F. N. Lee) (3(q.v.!!)) And his colleague Hendrik Hart, like De Graaff (4) perhaps somewhat influenced by antinomian neo-Pentecostalism, speaking of the New Testament Church, concludes that "there was **no special day of worship**, no special building, no organized liturgy, no church order. . . **The standard Bible texts now used to support the contention that Sunday was the official and special day of worship do not actually warrant such a conclusion. . . these texts demonstrate the opposite of what they are said to prove.**" (Emphasis mine—F. N. Lee) (5)

It is not the purpose of this paper to undertake a de-

tailed analysis of all the various conscious or unconscious underminings of the decalogue in general and the sabbath and the sabbath in particular, many of which underminings betray the amateur and naivistic and pretheological influence of the apostate religious basic motive of antinomianism, at least at the secondary or tertiary level. Such an analysis we have already given elsewhere and in some detail. (6) Here at present we would rather seek to demonstrate that the infallible written Word of God (by which is meant the 66-book Bible) as the final rule for all matters of faith and conduct (7) clearly teaches that **all ten commandments** are indeed obligatory for all men of all religions of all cultures and for all time—and **therefore** certainly applicable to the Church of the twentieth century too.

What, then, saith the **scripture?** (Rom. 4:3) The **Scripture** says that God Himself is the Root of the ten commandments; that **He** created unfallen law-abiding man in His own image; that His covenant with Adam presupposed the ten commandments; that the antediluvians all knew the substance of the decalogue; that the patriarchs of Israel kept God's law long before Moses; that the decalogue was merely re-promulgated on Mount Sinai; that Christ revealed God's laws in His Person and enjoined them upon His disciples; that the New Testament Church kept all ten commandments; and that God's children will always keep the decalogue even in the future on the new earth—unlike the devil and his disciples.

For although God Himself is free from the law (**legibus solutus**), nevertheless, as the great Dooyeweerd (following the even greater Calvin) correctly points out, **He is not arbitrary (non exlex)**. (8) Indeed, the law, far from being contrary to God (**contra Deum**), is in every respect in harmony with His nature (**secundum Deum**) and is in fact a **revelation** of His own right-eous goodness. Just as man the creature is the image of God and reflects something of His glory in a creaturely way, (9) so too does God's law reflect His own essential right-eousness, His communicable **Recht-fertigkeit**. And although there are various kinds of laws and norms, such as those of mathematics, physics, and ethics, etc., (10) all of which in our judgment reveal that God Himself is essentially a God of law and order, (11) the **moral laws** of God as expressed in the ten commandments, inasmuch as they are truly of all-embracing scope (as we have demonstrated elsewhere), (12) are **centrally** important in all ages for man as the image of God.

For the **ten commandments root in the very heart of God Himself**. Indeed, He is "the only true God" (13) (cf. 1st commandment) (14); He "is Spirit" (15) (cf. 2nd commandment) (16); He "swears by Himself" (17) (cf. 3rd) (18); He "has entered into His rest" (19) (4th) (20); He is "our Father which art in heaven" (21) (5th) (22); He is "the living God" (23) (6th) (24); He is "pure" (25) (7th) (26); He is "the Giver of every good gift" (27) (8th) (28); He "cannot lie" (29) (9th) (30); and He is a jealous God (31) (cf. the 10th commandment) (32). All in all, then, He is the very Source of the moral law and the "right-eous Father". (33)

Now God created unfallen man in His own image. Unfallen man therefore, while still in his state of rectitude, imaged the communicable and indeed actually communicated right-ousness of God Himself, (34) although of course only in a reflective and creaturely way. And this can only mean that the substance of the ten commandments (in essence if not in form) (35) was stamped on the heart of the unfallen Adam from the very time of his creation. As the great Kuyper explains: "Did Adam know the ten commandments? Yes and no! Adam could not recite the **ten commandments**; but he had them written in his heart, that is to say, he thoroughly knew their moral significance **even in the details.**" (emphasis mine—F. N. Lee) (36) And when Paul tells us that the unsaved and ignorant Gentiles have "the work of the law written in their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness," (37) this surely implies (on the part of the heathen who are still the image of God in the **broader** sense of the word!) (38) some degree of consciousness (however dim) of the ten commandments remnantally preserved in their hearts by the continued operation of God's common grace in spite of the fall, (39) which ten commandments must therefore have been written on the heart of their ancestor the unfallen Adam in the first place.

That this is indeed so is further evident from the fact that God also **established His covenant with unfallen man.** (40) Positively, this required man's execution of the dominion charter (sometimes less descriptively called the cultural mandate) (41) and its concomitant institutions of marriage and weekly sabbath, (42) all three implying the ten commandments, as we shall shortly see. Negatively, the covenant also required that man avoid eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, (43) which again implied keeping the ten commandments, as we shall soon demonstrate. And ultimately, man's covenant-keeping was to be rewarded with the gift of unloseable everlasting life in its cosmos-embracing scope, as foreshadowed by the tree of life, (44) which yet again implied Adam's knowledge and the necessity of his and his descendants' perpetual observance of the ten commandments, as will also be shown below. And inasmuch as the dominion charter, marriage, the tree of the knowledge and the tree of life all five presuppose the essence of the ten commandments, they all serve as additional conclusive evidence that Adam (the forefather and federal head of all people of all races and all religions) himself received and knew and was required to live by the principles of the decalogue.

The dominion charter, for instance, implies the ten commandments, and vice versa. For the dominion charter was to be executed to the glory of the one true Triune God alone (cf. 1st commandment) (45); yet only creation was to be subdued, not the Creator—which later, however, is sinfully attempted when men try to depict God (2nd commandment). (46) By subduing the earth to God's glory, Adam would glorify God's Name (3rd). (47) After dominating and subduing the earth during six days of labor, Adam was to rest every

sabbath day (4th). (48(q.v.!!)) By thus laboring and resting, he honored his heavenly Father (5th). (49) In the exercise of his dominion, Adam was to preserve and to protect life (6th). (50) To be able to subdue the whole earth, it was necessary for Adam to marry and to raise children to help him (7th). (51) This enjoined multiplication and expansion of mankind, necessitated the institution of private property (8th). (52) Adam was to regard God's word as truthful, and to obey it by subduing the earth (9th). (53) And Adam was to enjoy all that God had given him, but he was not to desire God's own private property (10th commandment). (54)

As the necessary complement of the dominion charter and its required labor **the weekly sabbath and its rest also clearly reveals the decalogue.** For the sabbath is intimately related to the whole of the moral law in that it was instituted by the one true God, the Creator of heaven and earth (cf. 1st commandment). (55) It provided the spiritual way in which God was to be worshipped—not exclusively yet nevertheless especially on one day in seven (2nd). (56) It was sanctified by God under oath (3rd). (59) It prophesied everlasting rest (4th). (58) Its observance respected God's authority (5th). (59) It prophesied eternal life (6th). (60) Its observance by man and wife together promoted their joint loyalty toward God and hence toward one another too (7th). (61(q.v.!!)) It regulated honest labor (8th). (62) Its use bore out the true witness of God's promise of life (9th). (63) And its regular observance increased man's desire for the life to come (10th commandment). (64).

As an integral part of the dominion charter, **marriage too presupposes the ten commandments.** For marriage is illustrative of the relationship between the Divine Christ and His obedient bride the Christian Church (1st commandment). (65) It apparently points to the spirituality of God Himself (2nd). (66) It honors God's Name (3rd). (67) It constantly reminds one of the idea of sabbath rest (4th). (68) It results in the birth of children who are to honor their parents (5th). (69) It reproduces life (6th). (70) It involves only two partners (7th). (71) It results in the establishment of a separate home and separate private property (8th). (72) It involves truthfulness in mutual words (9th). (73) And it is designed to combat covetousness (10th commandment). (74)

In passing, it should also be observed that man was **never** required to **work** for his salvation, not even **before** the fall! Even then it was only by the undeserved favor or grace of God alone that he was first created and subsequently conserved. (75) Although required to keep the commandments of God and to execute the dominion charter, this was not the meritorious ground of his obtaining everlasting life. To the contrary, rather was it an expression of **gratitude** to Almighty God—part of man's "reasonable service" (76) and "pure

religion and undefiled" (77) to Almighty God for **already having given man (loseable) everlasting life.** (78) True, that everlasting life with which Adam was endowed could be lost—and as a result of his avoidable fall was lost! But it was not lost because Adam did not (sufficiently) execute the dominion charter. It was lost, as Scripture specifically declares, by Adam's disobedience in eating of the forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (79)

Yet even that "test prohibition" of eating of the fruit of the forbidden tree also presupposed the ten commandments! Although only added after the engraving of the inherent moral law on Adam's heart *ab initio* and after God's audible communication of the dominion charter (with all its decalogical implications) to him, the test prohibition in every sense presupposed and reflected, that law. Hence we see that it was promulgated to man by the one and only true Triune God (cf. 1st commandment). (80) It was communicated directly (cf. 2nd). (81) Its breach embodied a solemn penalty for Adam and for his descendants (3rd). (82) Its penalty of (everlasting) death implied the opposite reward (for not breaking it) of everlasting life, i.e., everlasting rest with God (4th). (83) Its Author's authority was to be respected (5th). (84) It threatened to end life by death (6th). (85) Its breach was marked by disunity between man and wife and shame in their nakedness (7th). (86) It warned against the theft involved in its transgression (8th). (87) Its breach was occasioned by accepting the false witness about it from the serpent (9th). (88) And its breach was immediately caused by desire of that which was forbidden and the tragic consequences of that covetousness (10th commandment) (89).

Finally, man's ultimate reward, as foreshadowed by **the tree of life, also presupposed the ten commandments.** For the tree of life pointed to the one true God (1st commandment). (90) It could only be partaken of in the appropriate way (2nd). (91) It somehow revealed God's Name (3rd). (92) It signified and sealed man's inheritance of unloseable everlasting life, i.e., his everlasting sabbath rest (4th). (93) It promised a long life for obeying the heavenly Father (5th). (94) It is the reward of the righteous who save souls from death (6th). (95) It promoted the inheritance of everlasting life to both husband and wife together (7th). (96) Unfallen man was invited to lay hold of it, but unregenerate fallen man has no right to possess it (8th). (97) "A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit" (9th). (98) And when legitimate desire (as opposed to covetousness) is satisfied, it is a tree of life (10th commandment). (99) Indeed, "blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life!" (100)

Hence, as the *Westminster Larger Catechism* insists, **the first man and woman had "the law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfill it, with dominion over the creatures,"** (101) and adds that God placed

man 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. . . instituting the Sabbath, entering into a covenant of life, with him, upon condition of personal, perfect and perpetual obedience." (102) In "ordaining marriage for his help," God gave Adam and his entire posterity the substance of the seventh commandment. (103) In giving man "liberty to eat of the fruit of the earth" and in "putting the creatures under his dominion," God enjoined the positive observance of what is now the sixth commandment. (104) And in placing man "paradise, (and) appointing him to dress it," as well as in "instituting the Sabbath." God required man to keep the fourth and seventh commandments. (104) And so it is clear that the *Westminster Catechism* too understands Scripture to teach that really keeping the ten commandments **requires** man to subdue the entire earth, to keep the sabbath, and to celebrate marriage, etc.—and vice versa—all and entirely to God's glory.

According to Jesus, Adam knew the substance of the seventh commandment. (106) And according to the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, (106) Adam was to observe the weekly sabbath, which foreshadowed his ultimate entry alongside of God into what the great Puritan Richard Baxter in the title of his famous book called: "The Saints' Everlasting Rest."

So then, **as the great Lightfoot insisted:** "Adam heard as much in the garden as Israel did at Sinai, but only in fewer words and without thunder." (108) And as the great Scottish Calvinists Fisher and M'Crie (cf. too Louis Berkhof) (109) implied—by eating of the forbidden fruit, Adam broke all ten of the commandments all at once! (110)

Even **after the fall and before the flood, the decalogue was still universally known,** for evidence of a remaining consciousness of the ten commandments is clearly found in the lives of all of Adam's descendants, both the regenerate and the unregenerate. Noah, for example, is not only called a right-eous (i.e., law-abiding) man, (111) but he also trusted God alone and longed for the promised Messiah (cf. 1st commandment). (112) Enoch the Sethite and Noah both walked with God and pleased Him (cf. 2nd). (113) The Sethites as a group "began calling on the Name of the Lord," (114) and Lamech the Cainite swore an unholy oath (115) (3rd). Noah apparently kept the sabbath (4th). (116) The Sethites were apparently called "sons of God," (117) and Ham was punished for dishonoring his father (118) (5th). Cain sinned by killing Abel (119) (6th)—and "sin" is the transgression of the law! (120) Lamech the Cainite was the first bigamist, (121) and the "sons of God" or the Sethites immorally intermarried with the faithless "daughters of men" or the Cainites (122) (7th). Noah gave stored food to his family and to the animals (8th). (123) Cain lied to God (9th). (124) And the sons of God sinfully desired the daughters of men (10th commandment). (125)

After God repromulgated the covenant and gave its dominion charter (itself implying the ten commandments!) (126) to Noah **after the flood**, (127) **there is even more evidence than during the previous period of man's knowledge of the ten commandments—even before their official repromulgation through Moses to Israel on Mount Sinai.** Abraham, for example, commanded his children to “keep the way of the Lord, (and) to do justice and judgment,” and he himself, said God, “kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws.” (129) God revealed Himself to Abraham as the one and only “God Almighty” (cf. 1st commandment). (130) He commanded Jacob's household to “put away your strange gods” or images (cf. 2nd). (131) God swore by Himself to Abraham, and Esau was a profane person (3rd). (132) Job, Jacob, Laban, Joseph, the Egyptians and the pre-Sinaitic Israelites all knew about the week, (133) which is only demarcatable by means of an initial or final holy day. (134) Lot's daughters and Ishmael and Jacob all sinfully deceived or mocked their elders, and this was clearly regarded as sinful (5th). (135) Abraham was not to hurt Isaac, and Laban was warned by God not to harm Jacob (6th). (136) Pharaoh and Lot's daughters and Abimilech and the Shechemites all recognized that adultery was sin, and so did Jacob and Judah and Joseph (7th). (137) Rachel's theft and Joseph's being kidnapped were both regarded as a transgression and all of Joseph's brothers acknowledged that theft was wrong (8th). (138) The lies of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and Joseph's brothers were all reprehensible (9th). (139) And Lot's greed almost cost him his life (10th commandment). (140) Moreover, we may add, all ten of the commandments were apparently well known to Job of old (on the basis of his involvement with God's covenant with Adam), even though he lived and died **outside** the confines of God's ancient covenant people the Israelites! (141)

That the **ten commandments were promulgated (142) to Moses on Mount Sinai in Exodus chapter twenty** (and, incidentally, **again** some forty years thereafter, as evidenced by the decalogue according to Deuteronomy chapter five), surely needs no demonstration! Neither should it need demonstrating that even that later prophets all condemned breaches of each commandment of the decalogue. (143)

Instructive indeed is the relationship between the **ten commandments and the Person of Jesus Christ the Lord.** And here it is of importance to notice: that He, “the right-eous,” (144) declared Himself to be God (cf. 1st commandment). (145) He is also described as the unique and essential image of the unseen God (2nd). (146) Apart from the Name of Jesus, there is none other Name under heaven whereby we may be saved (3rd). (147) Moreover, He is the Lord of the sabbath (4th). (148) He is also One with the Father (5th), (149) the Living One (6th), (150) the Faithful and True (7th), (151) the Giver of the Comforter (8th), (152) the Truth (9th), (153) and the Desire of all nations (10th commandment). (154)

Furthermore, **Christ's teachings include a strong emphasis on keeping the whole decalogue** and right-eousness of His law-abiding Person. For not only did He teach that “the right-eous shall be satisfied,” (155) but also that they should: love the Lord their God (cf. 1st commandment), (156) worship God in spirit (2nd), (157) never blaspheme against the Holy Ghost (3rd), (158) keep the sabbath (4th), (159) honor their parents (5th), (160) not kill (6th), (161) not commit adultery (7th), (162) not steal (8th), (163) not swear at all (9th), (164) and not lustfully desire (10th commandment). (165) Indeed, in His great commission Christ demands that the ten commandments be taught to all baptized Christians and that the latter observe them faithfully. “Go ye therefore, and **teach all nations**, baptizing them (and) . . . teaching them to **observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you**,” said He (the Word of God Who commanded Adam to keep His covenantal laws, Who gave the **ten commandments** to the Israelites on Mount Sinai, and Who later still warned His Christian disciples and indeed even antichristian Judaists and all men everywhere **not to break even the least of the commandments of God!**) (166)

Consequently, **New Testament Christians will obey Christ's teachings about the obligatoriness of keeping the ten commandments today and throughout the Future too.** For the New Testament teaches that Christians have been saved and been made right-eous by Christ's own law-keeping. By grace and through faith in Christ's own substitutionary law-keeping alone, the merits of His obedience to the law are attributed to His children as if they themselves had kept it impeccably. And when Christ's children are regenerated, He gives them His own Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God the Son, Who indwells them, and Who, while writing His law, on their hearts, by His sanctifying grace gives them an ever greater desire to keep the ten commandments to the glory of God as a token of their gratitude for so great a salvation graciously donated to them on the basis of the matchless merits of the death of their law-abiding Savior. (167) Out of gratitude, then, true Christians more and more: worship “only one God” (cf. 1st commandment) (168); “flee from idolatry” (2nd) (169); “above all, do not swear” (3rd) (170); acknowledge that “there remains a (weekly) keeping of a sabbath to the people of God” (4th) (171); honor their fathers and mothers (5th) (172); do not hate their brethren, as murderers do (6th) (173); are not enemies of God, as adulterers are (7th) (174); “steal no more” (8th) (175); “lie not to one another” (9th) (176); and do not ever name the sin of covetousness (10th commandment). (177)

Finally, **Christians will still be keeping God's law on the new earth to come for ever more.** For they shall inherit God's Kingdom and right-eousness (178) and shall serve the Lord God Almighty (cf. 1st commandment), (179) while the idoators shall be outside (2nd) (180) and the sorcerers shall be thrown into the lake of fire (3rd). (181) The Christians shall enter into God's rest and His everlasting sabbath (4th) (182) as peace-

makers (5th), (183) while all murderers shall be outside in the pool of burning brimstone where they shall have ~~no~~ rest night or day (6th). (184) No whoremongers but only the pure in heart shall see God (7th). (185) No thieves shall inherit the Kingdom (8th), (186) and without are whosoever loveth and maketh a lie (9th). (187) For the greedy shall be last, while the hungry right-eous shall be satisfied (10th commandment). (188) Thus, those who by Christ's grace keep the covenant and execute the dominion charter and its ten commandments, shall reign with Him as kings for ever (189) —while all covenant-breakers and despisers of God's moral law, shall be cut off from God's people unto all eternity. (190)

Hence, as the Westminster Confession so correctly states, God "created man, male and female. . . , endued with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, after His own image; having the law of God written in their hearts, and power to fulfill it." (191) And "God gave to Adam (this) law, as a covenant of works, by which He bound him and all his posterity to personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience," which "law, after (man's) fall, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness; and, as such, was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai, in Ten Commandments, which doth for ever bind all, AS WELL JUSTIFIED PERSONS AS OTHERS' to the obedience thereof," "the Spirit of Christ subduing and enabling the will of man to do that freely, and cheerfully, which the will of God, revealed in the law, requireth to be done." (192) (My emphasis throughout—F. N. Lee)

Doubtless, some who call themselves "reformational" will pre-theoretically and pre-theologically write off all of the above as "theologistic" or "scholastic"—their terms of supreme derision. To the contrary, however, it is precisely they (as those who refuse to bow unreservedly before the Scriptures in their entirety and who (unlike Calvin but like Thomas Aquinas) attempt to construct a Christian ethic by analyzing the structure of sin-stained nature without adequately viewing it through the spectacles of sinless Scripture,) who are the neo-scholastics! For the claims of all would-be Christian philosophers and even theologians regarding the applicability of the ten commandments today, must be evaluated primarily against the clear teachings of Scripture itself, as we have sought to do in this paper. Thus saith the Lord: "To the law and to the testimony! If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." (193)

"If thou wilt enter into life, (then) keep the commandments!" said Jesus Christ the Lord to the rich young ruler. (194) Moreover, the infallibly inspired apostle Paul, writing to saved Christians, after referring specifically to the tenth commandment, insisted that "the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just and good, and spiritual," (195) and elsewhere firmly insisted on all Christians meticulously observing the fifth commandment. (196) Furthermore, the infallibly

inspired apostle James insisted that saved Christians are to keep all ten commandments. (197) And the infallibly inspired apostle John equally insisted that God's children must try to keep His commandments.

"Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God AND the faith of Jesus" (or the Christian faith). (199) "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord: and in His law doth he meditate day and night!" (200) Yes, blessed indeed is he who can say with the converted Paul: "I delight in the law of God after the inward man! . . . I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God!" (201)

Dear reader! Are you really saved? Do you delight in the law of God and delight to keep His commandments? O listen to the voice of Jesus! Hear the word of Christ the Lord: "Why call ye me, 'Lord, Lord;' and do not the things which I say?" (202)

1. Rabelais: *The Abbey of Theleme*, as quoted by White: *Utopias of the Renaissance* (New York: Farrar Straus, 1955), P. 127f. 2. Lee: *Communist Eschatology* (Nutley, N.J.: The Craig Press, 1974), pp. 75-76; cf. Cohn: *The Pursuit of the Millenium* (London, England: Mercury Books, 1962), pp. 293-294.

3. DeGraaff and Seerveld: *Understanding the Scriptures* (Hamilton, Ontario, Canada: Guardian Press, 1968), P. 35. The infallibly inspired Savior Jesus Christ and His apostle Paul, however, certainly more reliable exegetes than De Graaff, insist that the Decalogue is made up not just of "words" but in fact of commandments! cf. n. 194-196 below! 4. De Graaff: *By What Standard?* in *Will all the King's men*, p. 103. 5. Hart Cultus and Covenant, in *Will all the King's men: Out of Concern for the Church—Phase II* (Toronto, Canada: Wedge Publishing Foundation, 1972), p. 42. 6. Lee: *The Covenantal Sabbath* (London, England: The Lord's Day Observance Society, n.d.), pp. i-343. 7. II Tim. 3:16-17 cf. I Tim. 5:18 and Luke 10:7; I Pet. 1:10-12, 23-25; II Pet. 1:19-21; 3:15-16. 8. Dooyeweerd: *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Co., 1953), I, pp. 93 & 99f. 9. Gen. 1:26-28 cf. I Cor. 3-8, esp. v. 7. 10. Job 28:26; 38:1-11, esp. v. 10; Ps. 119:89-91; 148:6; Rom. 7:26. 11. Cf. I Cor. 14:26-40, esp. vv. 26, 33, 34, 37 & 40; and cf. Frame and Coppes: *The Amsterdam Philosophy* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Harmony Press, n.d.), pp. 27-31.

12. Lee: *The Westminster Confession and Modern Society* (Edinburgh, Scotland: Scottish Reformed Fellowship, 1972), P. 9-11. 13. John 17:3. 14. Ex 10:3. 15. John 4:24. 16. Ex. 10:4-6. 17. Heb. 6:13. 18. Ex. 20:7. 19. Gen. 2:2-3 cf. Heb. 4:3-4. 20. Ex. 20:8-11. 21. Matt. 6:9. 22. Ex. 20:12. 23. Acts 14:15. 24. Ex. 20:13. 25. I John 3:1. 26. Ex. 20:14. 27. Jas. 1:17. 28. Ex. 20:15. 29. Heb. 6:18; Tit. 1:2. 30. Ex. 20:16. 31. Ex. 20:5. 32. Ex. 17:33. John 17:25. 34. Gen. 1:26-28; Eccl. 7:29; Eph. 4:23-24; Col. 3:10. 35. Lee: *The Covenantal Sabbath*, pp. 23-25.

36. Kuyper: *De Leer der Verbonden* (Kampen, Netherland: J. H. Kok, 1909), p. 89; cf. too Lec: *The*

Covenantal Sabbath, pp. 23ff., 47; cf. Geesink: *Gereformeerde Ethiek* (Kampen, Netherlands: J. H. Kok, 1931), I, p. 351; cf. Wurth: *Het Christelijk Leven* (Kampen, Netherlands: J. H. Kok, 1957), I, p. 107; cf. L. Berkhof: *Systematic Theology* (London, England: The Banner of Truth & Trust, 1959), p. 216f.; & cf. Bavinck: *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek* (Kampen, Netherlands: J. H. Kok, 1928), II, pp. 533-536. 37. Rom. 2:15. 38. Gen. 5:1-3; 9:1-6; Jas. 3:9. 39. Cf. Lee: *Calvin on the Sciences* (London, England: Sovereign Grace Union, 1969), pp. 16-19; and cf. too Acts 14:17; 17:22-28; Rom. 1:20; 2:14-16; John 1:1-9; Gen. 4:20-22 & 6:1-4 esp. v. 3 with Job 32:8 & Prov. 20:27. cf. too n. 38 above. 70. Hos. 6:7 margin; cf. esp. Kuyper: *De Leer der Verbonden*, and Lee: *The Covenantal Sabbath*, pp. 17-40, which also quotes Hodge, Aalders, etc., with approval. 41. Gen. 1:28. 42. Gen. 1:26-2:3. 43. Gen. 2:17; 3:11. 44. Gen. 2:9; 3:22; Rev. 2:7; 22:14. 45. Gen. 1:26 cf. Ps. 8:1-9. 46. Gen. 1:28 cf. John 4:24.

47. Gen. 1:26-2:3 cf. Ps. 8:1-9. 48. Gen. 1:28-2:3 cf. Heb. 4:4-11; cf. the great Polish Reformer John a Lasce, who believed that the sabbath commandment enjoined both labor on the week days and rest on the Lord's day. For "Laski also emphasised the external sabbath whereby the believer 'must work zealously for six days a week in a God-honouring occupation'; 'must encourage his family' to attend divine worship on the Sunday sabbath 'according to the commandment instituted and ordained by Christ'; 'must spend the whole day in service of one's neighbor and other holy works.; and must not 'break or desecrate the sabbath day destined for service of the Church in servile works, in idleness, jest, drunkenness, gambling, play and other works of the flesh.'" (Lee: *The Covenantal Sabbath*, pp. 254-255) Moreover, it is of very great importance indeed to realize that it was probably the influence of Laski on Abraham Kuyper Sr. (who wrote his doctoral dissertation on the Polish Reformer!) which helped produce both Kuyper's sabbath doctrine (cf. his *Tractaat van den Sabbath* and his *Gomer veer dan Sabbat* and his *E Veto Dordraceno*) on the one hand and his great cultural insights into Gen. 1:28, etc. (cf. his *Gemeene Gratie* and his *Pre Rege* and his *Stone Lectures*) on the other hand! The dominion charter and the weekly sabbath thus stand or fall together! Cf. too n. 61 below!

49. Gen. 1:28 cf. Ps. 8. 50. Gen. 1:28; 2:19-20 cf. 7:1-3 & 9:1-15. 51. Gen. 1:26-2:3. 52. Gen. 1:28, 2:24 & 4:3-5. 53. Gen. 1:28-31. 54. Gen. 2:16-17 cf. 3:6f. 55. Gen. 2:1-3. 56. *Ibid.*, cf. Ex. 20:4-6, 8-11 cf. Ezek. 20:11-27. 56. Heb. 3:11; 4:4-5. 58. Heb. 4:4-11 cf. Gen. 2:1-3. 59. Ezek. 20:10-24; Ex. 20:8-11.

60. Heb. 4:4-11; 61. Ex. 20:8-11; Deut. 5:12-16; Lev. 19:29-30. Cf. too Martin Luther: "On the morning after the creation of Adam and Eve, that is, on the morning of 'the Sabbath day, Adam and Eve were mindful of the will of God, etc. Thus Adam and Eve, flowering in innocence and original righteousness, and full of security on account of their trust in the most kind God, walked around naked holding fast to the word and mandate of God, and praising God, as befits the sabbath day.' Elsewhere Luther has claimed: 'If Adam had stood in his innocency, yet he should have kept the seventh day holy, i.e., on that day he should have taught his children what was the will of God, and wherein His worship did consist; he should have praised God, given thanks, and offered (that is, performed an act of (unbloody!) sacrifice—N. L.). On the other days

he should have tilled his ground, looked to his cattle.' For 'Adam was to gather with his descendants on the Sabbath at the tree of life.' i.e. at a small orchard of trees of the same species, 'and when they had together eaten of the tree of life, to preach, i.e. to proclaim God, and His praises, and the glory of creation, . . . and to exhort them to a holy and sinless life and to a faithful tilling and keeping of the garden.'" (Lee: *The Covenantal Sabbath*, pp. 77-79)

62. Gen. 1:28-2:3 cf. n. 48 above. 63. Gen. 1:28-2:3; cf. Hos. 6:7 margin; cf. Gen. 2:9; 3:22; Ps. 95:11 & Heb. 4:1-11. 64. Rev. 14:12-13 *per contra* vv. 9:11 & cf. too n. 63 above. 65. Gen. 1:28 cf. Eph. 5:23, 32. 66. Gen. 1:28 cf. Eph. 5:25, 32 cf. I Cor. 7:14 & Luke 1:15. 67. Gen. 1:26-28; 2:18-23; 3:20-22; cf. Eph. 3:14-15 & Ex. 3:13-15; 4:20-26. 68. Ruth 3:1 cf. Ps. 95:11 cf. Heb. 4:1-11 & Gen. 1:26-2:1. 69. Gen. 1:26-28; Prov. 1:8; 4:1-4. 70. Gen. 1:26-28; 2:24-25; 3:15-20; 4:1-2ff. 71. Gen. 1:24-25 cf. Matt. 19:4-8. 72. Gen. 2:24; 4:3-4; ch. 30-31. 73. Cf. Ruth 4:9-11. 74. Ex. 20:17 cf. I Thess. 4:4-5. 75. Cf. perhaps Isa. 26:10 & esp. Ridderbos *De Theologische Cultuurbeschoouing van Abraham Kuyper* (Kampen, Netherlands: J. H. Kok, 1947), p. 289. 76. Rom. 12:1. 77. Jas. 1:27 cf. v. 26. 78. Eph. 2:8-10 cf. 1:4-7 & 4:17-32 (esp. vv. 32-24) & 3:29. 79. Gen. 1:27, 3:3, 11, 17 & Phil. 3:29. 82. Gen. 3:11-17 cf. Ex. 20:7. 82. Gen. 2:17; 3:22; 2:1-3 cf. Heb. 4:1-11. 84. Gen. 2:16-17; 3:3, 11, 17 cf. Rom. 5:12-14, 19. 85. Gen. 2:17. 86. Gen. 3:3-16. 87. Gen. 2:17, 3:3-11. 88. Gen. 3:3-5 cf. John 8:44. 89. Gen. 3:3-6 cf. Jas. 1:14-15. 90. Gen. 2:9. 91. Gen. 3:22. 92. Gen. 3:22 cf. Rev. 2:7, 17 cf. 3:12. 93. Gen. 2:9; 3:22; cf. Heb. 4:1-11. 94. Prov. 3:1, 9, 11-16, 18 cf. Ex. 20:12. 95. Prov. 11:30 cf. Rev. 22:2. 96. Gen. 3:22 cf. I Pet. 3:7. 97. Prov. 8:18 cf. Gen. 3:22. 98. Prov. 15:4. 99. Prov. 13:12. 100. Rev. 22:14. 101. Q. 17. 102. Q. 20. 103. Q. 137f. 104. Qs. 99 & 134f. 105. Q. 117f. 106. Matt. 19. 107. Heb. 4:3-11 cf. 6:7-8 & 11:1-4.

108. Cf. M'Crie (ed.): *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*. 109. Cf. Lee: *The Covenantal Sabbath*, p. 46, n. 134. 110. *Ibid.*, pp. 23-25, 81-83. 111. Gen. 6:9. 112. Gen. 4:1; 5:29. 113. Gen. 5:24; 6:9; 114. Gen. 4:26. 115. Gen. 4:23. 116. Gen. 2:1-3; 4:3 margin; 5:29; 7:4, 10; 8:6-12, 20-22. Cf. too in Lee: *The Covenantal Sabbath*, ch. III, 117. Gen. 6:2-4; Luke 3:38. 118. Gen. 9:22-25. 119. Gen. 4:11, 23 cf. I John 3:10-15. 120. I John 3:4. 121. Gen. 4:19, 23. 122. Gen. 6:1-5. 123. Gen. 6:21-22. 124. Gen. 4:9 cf. I John 3:10-15 & John 8:44. 125. Gen. 6:2. 126. Cf. our text above at notes 45 through 54. 127. Gen. 9:1-6. 128. Gen. 18:19. 129. Gen. 26:5. 130. Gen. 17:1. 131. Gen. 31:19, 30; 35:2-4. 132. Gen. 22:16 cf. Heb. 12:16. 133. Job 1:5, 6; 2:1, 13; Gen. 29:27-28; 31:23; 50:10; 5:4-5; 7:25; 16:4-30. 134. Lee: *The Covenantal Sabbath*, pp. 59-61, 70-72. 135. Gen. 19:30-38; 26:34-35; 21:9; 25:9; 27:21-24, 35. Cf. "Remember" in Ex. 20:8, which suggests that the sabbath (and, by implication, the rest of the decalogue had previously been made and known before Ex. 20!

136. Gen. 22:12; 31:24, 29. 137. Gen. 12:11-18; 19:30-38; 20:2-18; 26:9-10; 34:1-7; 38:13-24; 39:7-9; & 49:3-4; 35:22. 138. Gen. 31:32; 37:28; 44:1-12; 45:3-5; 50:15-20. 189. Gen. 12:11, 13; 20:2-9; 26:7; 27:24; 37:10. 140. Gen. 13:10; 19:15-24. 141. Job 31 esp. vv. 1, 33, 40 cf. chs. 1-2, esp. v. 13. 142. Cf. "Remember" in Ex. 20:8, which suggests that the sabbath (and by implication, the rest of the decalogue

had previously been made and known before Ex: 20! 143. Cf. Isa. 56-59; Dan. 3 & 6; Am. 2-6; Mal. 1-4; etc., etc. 144. I John 2:1. 145. John 8:28; 20:28. 146. Heb. 1:1-3; Col. 1:13-15. 147. Acts 4:12. 148. Mark 2:28. 149. John 10:30. 150. Rev. 1:18. 151. Rev. 19:11. 152. John 14:16. 153. John 14:6. 154. Hag. 2:7. KJV. 155. Matt. 5:6. 156. Matt. 22:37. 157. John 4:24. 158. Matt. 12:31. 159. Luke 4:16; 23:56-24:1 cf. Matt. 24:20. 160. Matt. 19:19. 161. Matt. 19:18. 162. Matt. 5:27-28. 163. Matt. 19:18. 164. Matt. 5:34. 165. Matt. 5:28. 166. Matt. 28:19. cf. John 1:1-9, 14-18 cf. Ex. 20 cf. Gen. 1:1-3, 26-28 cf. Matt. 5:19 cf. Mark 7:4. 167. Rom 3:36; 6:1-2; 7:6, 9, 11, 12-14, 22, 25; 8:1-4 cf. II Cor. 3:3, 18 & Heb. 8:10. 168. I Cor. 8:4-6. 169. I Cor. 10:14. 170. Jas. 5:12. 171. Heb. 4:9 & margin; cf. Lee: **The Covenantal Sabbath**, pp. 233-236 & Heb. 10:25. 172. Eph. 6:3.

173. I John 3:15. 174. Jas. 4:4 cf. Heb. 13:4. 175. Eph. 4:28. 176. Col. 3:9. 177. Eph. 5:13 cf. I John 2:16. 178. Matt. 6:33. 179. Rev. 21:22; 22:9. 180. Rev. 22:15. 181. *Idem.* 182. Ps. 95:11; Isa. 66:23-24; Heb. 4:11; Rev. 14:11 cf. Isa. 57:20-21. 183. Matt. 5:9, 12. 184. Rev. 22:15 cfn. 182 above. 185. Matt. 5:8; I Cor. 6:9; Rev. 21:8. 186. I Cor. 6:10. 187. Rev. 22:15. 188. Matt. 5:6; I Cor. 6:10. 189. Gen. 1:28; 17:6-7 cf. Rev. 21:24; 22:5. 190. Gen. 2:17 cf. 17:14; Rev. 14:9-11; 19:20; 20:12-15; 21:8; 22:15. 191. Ch. IV:2. 192. Chs. XIX & XVI. 193. Isa. 8:20. 194. Matt. 19:17. 195. Rom. 7:6, 9, 11, 14. 196. Eph. 6:1-3. 197. Jas. 2:8-11 cf. 1:1-2 & 2:1, 15. 198. I John 3:2-3 cf. 3:4, 15, 24. 199. Rev. 14:12. 200. Ps. 1:1-2 cf. Pss. 19 & 119. 201. Rom. 7:22, 25 cf. 13:8-10. 202. Luke 6:46. 203. John 14:15.

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. Please do not send orders for books to Blue Banner Faith and Life.

TO PROD THE SLUMBERING GIANT, published the Wedge Publishing Foundation, 229 College St., Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 1972. 189 pages. Reviewed by James J. Veltkamp, chairman of the Education Department, Dordt College, Sioux Center, Iowa.

The authors (J. Vriend, James Olthuis, J. Van Dyk, A. Peetoom, John Olthuis) of the essays contained in this book claim that the publication is a Christian response to the crisis in the classroom. However, as the reader reflects on each of the essays, he becomes increasingly aware that the intent is to offer a radical criticism of Christian schools. The authors strongly suggest an entirely new direction and basis for the education of the future.

The major thrust of the book expresses the **Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea**, an ideology promoted especially by the Association for the Advancement of Christian Scholarship and the Institute of Christian Studies. Basic to their peculiar emphasis is their view of the Word of God and of the creeds. The quote from the book: "If one limits the Word of God to the Scriptures, the best one can have is a school with a Bible . . . the Scriptures lose their full impact if they alone are considered the Word of God." And concerning the creeds it is stated: "The creeds . . . were not intended to be, and should not be looked upon, as school creeds."

Basic to all of curriculum development, say the authors, is the "Law Word" with its fourteen law spheres or modalities which it is claimed will enable students at all levels to get a proper view of reality and help them take their place in the communal concept of the kingdom. It is also emphasized that the key to understanding

all areas of study (curriculum) is the philosopher: "We have already seen that the real educators were the philosophers . . . it is the communal task of the philosophers and special sciences to cut the pie [reality] correctly." To quote further from the book: "The curriculum of the Christian school must lead the student through the various "rooms" [modalities] in God's creation."

There is evidence of lack of knowledge about the historical development of educational thought. The reading also becomes very distasteful at times because the implication is that our forefathers, and others today, just do not understand Christian education and that true insight can come only by supporting the philosophy of AACS and ICS.

Ministers, educators, and board members should study this book so that they may be informed as to the movement which seeks to replace our Reformed, biblical view of Christian education with that of the philosophy of the cosmonomic idea.

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—Editor

CHINA: CHRISTIAN STUDENTS FACE THE REVOLUTION, by David H. Adeney. Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois 60515, 1973, pp. 130, paperback, \$1.50.

David Adeney has written the book I always intended to write, but failed to finish. He reached Shanghai in November, 1934 as a new English missionary recruit.

I first entered China at Canton in November, 1934. We both left China during the Sino-Japanese War in 1941, and were hindered from returning to China by World War II. David returned to Chungking in West China in 1946, and began at once to share in Christian evangelical student work. I did not return to South China until November, 1947. When Communists took over the mainland in 1949, David Adeney stayed on, deeply involved in Christian Inter-Varsity work with Chinese Christian students in the universities of China. He remained until Communists forced him out in 1951. I left in 1949 before the Red Army reached Canton, and joined Charles H. Chao and J. G. Vos in beginning the Reformation Translation Fellowship in Hong Kong.

It was a joy to meet Mr. Adeney again in Singapore in April of this year, with Rev. Robert A. Henning, Executive Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions, of the Reformed Presbyterian (Covenanter) Church, and

It was a joy to meet Mr. Adeney again in Singapore in April of this year, with Rev. Robert A. Henning, Executive Secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions, of the Reformed Presbyterian (Covenanter) Church, and Rev. Charles H. Chao, Executive Secretary of the RTF. We gained much insight on the current situation in the Southeast Asia Chinese churches from Mr. Adeney who is now Dean of the Discipleship Training Center of the Overseas Missionary Fellowship in Singapore.

David Adeney has condensed a lifetime of experience into only 130 pages of lucid English prose. Naturally enough, the first part is now somewhat ancient history, but David was there and that enlivens it. The best part of the little book is its analysis of the crisis facing Christian Chinese, especially young Christians who want to return to their homeland and witness to Communists of the Gospel. Chapter 7 of the book is, "The Future Christian Witness in Communist Countries." Mr. Adeney was of the pietistic, non-denominational wing of Christian missionary movement in China. When he speaks from this spiritual tradition he tends to emphasize the evangelical Protestant insistence on personal conversion and Christian fellowship, putting all social questions to the future Kingdom of Christ at His coming. When Mr. Adeney grapples with the issue, raised for Christian people in China under the terrible social pressures from atheistic Communism, he swings to the present Kingship of Jesus Christ as our Biblical ground for challenging the Communists. This last chapter of his book achieves a well-balanced synthesis between premillennial future perfectionism and our need of a Christian social witness to the present age.

I found Mr. Adeney's discussion of the future of Christianity in Communist China a healthy anticote to the more quixotic optimism of some eager Western missionary agencies. He describes with grim realism what the Chinese Christian who dares to re-enter China to witness for Christ has to expect under Communism. He spells out three major characteristics of the Chinese

Communists. 1) They are driven by a completely pragmatic concentration on meeting mankind's temporal needs. 2) They are powerfully motivated by their loyalty to Mao Tse-tung their leader and to their cause. 3) They are characterized by a total world view. Chinese Communists are diametrically opposed to Christianity.

In the future, however, Mr. Adeney hopes for gradual relaxing of the dictatorial pressure as Chinese delegations visit other lands, and as foreign delegations continue to visit China. He imagines that the Communist Chinese constitutional lip-service to "freedom of religious belief" may in the future become a help to Christian witness, though this law has never been allowed to check Communist tyranny so far. At least, for Chinese Christians outside of China who already speak Chinese the closed door to China remains a missionary challenge. He writes:

A third of Asia's population lives under a communist regime. They have been taught that communism alone has an answer to the problems of life. Most of them have never yet been confronted with the claims of Jesus Christ. They can only hear the message when they meet those in whom there dwells the same Spirit who brought again our Lord Jesus from the dead. (130)

Fine as Mr. Adeney's book is, and stimulating as his appeal is for a greater social awareness in Protestant evangelical churches, I have somewhat against his approach to Communist tyranny in China or else-where. I think his fundamentalist insistence on neutrality in politics is mistaken in principle. Neutral silence on political issues will keep the churches weak as long as this includes public submission to wicked tyrants. In greater clarity, I believe that the Calvinist theological defiance which broke the chains of tyranny in Western Europe and Britain is needed now to put iron in the souls of Chinese Christians in Red China.

I believe, moreover, that the suicidal, reckless testimony of some Scottish Covenanters such as Richard Cameron and Donald Cargill needs to reappear in the Chinese churches if Christianity ever regains freedom in China. A secret underground church is certainly a necessity, but the blood of martyrs must again become the seed of the church of tomorrow in China. Wang Ming-tao set the pattern, and many others, too, but until the whole Chinese Christian church as a body rises up and covenants together with God and each other to denounce the false gods of Mao-worship, slavery will continue to stifle the afflicted Christians of the great nation. It is for this Christian revolt in China that I pray.

—S. E. Boyle

SCIENCE TEACHING: A CHRISTIAN APPROACH, by Robert J. Ream. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Box 185, Nutley, N.J. 07110. 1972, pp. 130, paperback. \$2.50.

In this useful book, Dr. Ream, an instructor in Philadelphia Montgomery Christian Academy, presents

a thorough and balanced treatment of present-day science and its place in a Christian world-view. He carefully avoids on the one hand making science an autonomous activity accountable to the Scriptures only in its moral implications, and, on the other hand, denying the validity of any scientific work done by those not professing Christians. The chapter "Methodology and Models" gives an insight into the function of models in scientific investigation which is conspicuous by its absence in the writings of most philosophers of science. Dr. Ream is one of the few authors in this field who come to grips with the effect of the fall of man on the physical universe.

Despite its title, however, this book will prove a disappointment to science teachers who are seeking tips or techniques for presenting a Christian viewpoint in the classroom. Each chapter ends with a section entitled "As to the Classroom," but little in the way of constructive practical suggestion is to be found in these sections. For example, at the end of Chapter VI entitled "The Ordinances of Creation" and dealing with law, causality, chance, and God's continual upholding of His creation, we find the following advice (p. 65):

"Of course, in the very practical matter of discussion in both the laboratory and the class, the teacher need not, must not, continually refer to 'God's air pressure, God's temperature, God's humidity, etc.,' else the name of God be profaned by over-usage. On the other hand, it is just as dangerous never to mention Him at all. It is a matter of balance, then, a matter that will reflect the balance evident in the teacher's own outlook."

In general, then, this book presents a helpful analysis of modern science from a sound Biblical viewpoint; for help in applying these insights to classroom teaching, however, we must look elsewhere —John B. Schaefer

ENCOUNTER WITH GOD, by Morton Kelsey. Bethany Fellowship, Inc., Minneapolis, Minn. 1972, pp. 281. \$5.95.

Father Kelsey is an Episcopalian priest who is convinced that both modern theology and fundamentalism have, in their own ways, cut off the individual Christian from a meaningful encounter with God. He encourages the Church to act as a true healing community in a fragmented world: "The early church fathers held that Christ became what we are in order that we might become what He is" (p. 240). The book has some valuable insights into the human psyche, but it is not without serious defects.

Father Kelsey accepts the Kantian distinction between phenomenal knowledge (the autonomous "certainty" of reason) and noumenal knowledge (a non-empirical concept that is "God-revealed"). Real knowledge is either positivistically or existentially acquired but never metaphysically perceived. Thus, Kelsey concludes: Man

does not know noumenal reality in any complete way. . ." (p. 257) The irony of the book's title and thesis becomes apparent, for once one accepts Kant's epistemological autonomy of the phenomena, there can be no encounter with God. Man and God are totally isolated from one another like two cliffs by a ravine. Father Kelsey is then forced to find another way by which one may encounter God. He takes the way of Chardin, Tillich, and Pentecostalism—mysticism. Language becomes merely symbolic. The term "God" or "Christ" simply describes certain mystical experiences, "Spiritual" knowledge simply becomes self-knowledge. A "direct encounter with divine reality" becomes totally experiential. It is my experience which dictates doctrine (p. 168), renders the possibility of the supernatural (p. 164), and verifies the revelation of God (p. 166).

An emotionless and experientialess Christianity devoid of true Spirituality is merely "dead orthodoxy"—an intellectual assent to a set of propositions. Along with Father Kelsey, we must deplore this as Reformed Christians. But with the Lord Jesus, we must also assert that our faith (belief and content) must regulate our emotions and experiences (Luke 22:37), while leading us into a continuous encounter with the Spirit.

—Lee P. Bittner III

UNION WITH CHRIST, by Norman F. Douty, Reiner Publications, Swengel, Pa. 17880. 1973, pp. 277. \$7.95.

This work is, in effect, a full-blown systematic text book of theology whose sphere and center is the doctrine of the believer's union with Jesus Christ. Theologically, the author may be placed in the modern "Reformed Baptist" movement. Thus, we have here a basically Reformed, well-researched, yet devotional work which radiates with the author's love for Christ. On the other hand, the reader should note certain subjects where further investigation will be needed for a more full-orbed (Biblical) picture. On the extent of the atonement, Mr. Douty maintains that "though the value of Christ's sufferings was sufficient for the sins of all men, yet God designed them for the sins of the elect alone" (p. 92f). For a detailed evaluation of this doctrine of the atonement ("Amyraldian"), see B. B. Warfield, **The Plan of Salvation**. The author is also a bit unclear regarding the relationship between the believer and the "old man" (cf. Eph. 4:23,24). Are there two natures at work in the believer? (See pp. 187f). Is the old nature dead or dying? For a clear summary of this subject see John Murray, **Redemption Accomplished and Applied**. One further area where further study will be needed is the question of the millennium. Mr. Douty favors the Premillennial position without holding to the "dispensationalist", "rapture", or "pre-tribulation" dogmatism of certain fundamentalist groups. Compare his position (especially on Rev. 20) with Lorraine Boettner, **The Millennium**, Charles L. Feinberg, **Premillennialism or Amillennialism?**, and William Hendriksen, **More Than Conquerors**. —Lee P. Bittner III

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**BLUE
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FAITH
AND
LIFE**

VOLUME 29

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That His Light Shine

By Esther Belle Heins

The craftsman cleansed and chipped the stone
We had thought commonplace;
His trained eye saw a beauty there
No grime could quite efface.

Beneath an artist's hand appeared
Small facets, wrought with care,
But still — small value could be seen
Till sunlight lingered there.

Each facet like a wound, a tear
Deep in the Christian's heart,
To better show the Light of God;
Of His plan be a part.

When Peter, likened to a stone,
Once wept, his grief sufficed—
That God might mold a finer gem
To glorify the Christ.

There Is a Peace

(Author unknown)

There is a peace, though kingdoms fall and
crumble,
A peace amid this hurricane of war,
A quiet peace that passeth understanding,
While chaos rages at our very door.

There is a peace, not bought by worldly honor,
Nor at the price of many millions slain,
But by the blood of One, God's Son, who suffered,
And even now, He did not die in vain!

There is a peace deep down within the Christian,
A rock on which to lean in time of storm,
A lasting peace that will outlive the ages,
In spite of those who ridicule and scorn.

There is a peace! Let's cling to it and hold it,
In life or death, in days of peace or war,
That quiet peace which passeth understanding,
Though chaos rages at our very door.

What Then?

By J. Whitfield Green (adapted)

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

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

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

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

BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

VOLUME 29

APRIL-JUNE, 1974

NUMBER 2

An Explanation to our Readers

Blue Banner Faith and Life is a quarterly publication, and should come out early in January, April, July and October. During 1974 we have fallen far behind schedule. This delay was the result of various causes. In the first place, it was necessary to change printers. Rev. David Patterson (Patterson Press, Winchester, Kansas) was unable to continue printing this magazine. It was with delay and difficulty that a new printer was found. Finally Perspective Press, Lookout Mountain, Tennessee agreed to undertake the work. Then we got caught in the paper shortage. With the January-March 1974 issue partly printed, for a time it was impossible to obtain paper to finish the job. In

addition to the foregoing, your editor succumbed to a flu-type virus attack in March which has left him with a secondary eye infection which for weeks made it very difficult to read a page of print. This is now slowly clearing up. This delayed preparing copy for the present issue.

In order to catch up on our publishing schedule, it is proposed to make the present issue and the next one (July-September 1974) shorter than usual, and hopefully to get back to normal volume with the final issue of this year. Your prayers are requested, and your patience appreciated. Romans 8:28.

—J. G. Vos, Editor

The Cultic Character of the Toronto Movement

by Johannes G. Vos

Note: This article is reproduced, with grateful acknowledgement, from the March 1974 issue of *The Outlook*, publication of Reformed Fellowship, Inc., Grand Rapids, Michigan.

It is characteristic of pseudo-Christian and sub-Christian cults that they profess to be presenting and promoting simply true Christianity, when as a matter of fact they are promoting special views which are — to say the least — highly debatable in nature, and held by relatively small groups of very zealous promoters.

The well-known Scofield and Pilgrim Bibles have been widely advertised by their publisher, the Oxford University Press, as being simply the text of the Bible with cross-references and other helps. The advertising never states that these two editions of the Bible are saturated with a highly debatable system of interpretation known as Darby-Scofield Dispensationalism, with its false antitheses between law and grace, between Israel and the Church, and between the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Heaven. The unwary purchaser thinks he is getting a Bible with excellent helps, but may learn later that it is essentially propaganda for a viewpoint held by a minority of a minority of a minority of Christians.

When a representative of the Jehovah's Witnesses calls at your door offering you literature, if you look at the title page you will not find any mention of the Jehovah's Witnesses cult; instead, it is stated that it

is published by the "International Bible Students' Association" or the "Watchtower Bible and Tract Society." In the case of the Seventh Day Adventists, the title page will only reveal that it is issued by the "Review and Herald Publishing Association." In the case of Armstrongism, it will be labelled "The Plain Truth" or "The World Tomorrow."

Label and Names — With the Toronto movement, we first meet the label "Reformational." This might lead us to expect something about the great Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century. The two great principles of the Protestant Reformation were *Sola Scriptura* (the Bible alone as authority for faith and life) and *Sola Fide* (justification by faith alone). Anyone who believes in these two great principles is truly Reformational. Millions of Christians who have never even heard of the Toronto movement believe these twin truths, and are truly Reformational. How, then, is the Toronto movement entitled to claim to be specially or distinctively Reformational?

If by the term "Reformational" they mean a reformation of Christianity in terms of the supposed implications of the sphere-sovereignty philosophy of Professors Vollenhoven and Dooyeweerd, there is no way for the public to know this from the "Reformational" label. It would seem that this label is intended to obscure the real nature and purpose of the movement.

Then consider the corporate name "Association for the Advancement of Christian Scholarship." Taking

words in their ordinary and proper meaning, this corporate name would seem to imply that this association exists to promote Christian scholarship *as such*. But as a matter of fact the association quite evidently exists to promote a particular and highly controversial brand of Christian scholarship, derived from the sphere-sovereignty principles of Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven. Why did they not name the organization "Association for the Promotion of Dooyeweerdianism" or "Association for the Advancement of the Concept of Sphere Sovereignty"?

The same considerations apply to the Institute for Christian Studies. When this institution was founded, the present writer naively supposed it was for Christian studies *as such*. Only after some time did he become aware that a very limited and specific and controversial segment of Christian studies was meant.

It is difficult to avoid the feeling that there is something not quite honest and aboveboard in the use of such general and inclusive terminology to denominate the organs of promotion of a highly specific and controversial ideology. Why not come right out and call things by their right names? Strict and scrupulous honesty of speech and writing should be the aim and effort of every Christian. To hide behind a misleadingly general and inclusive label is a definitely cultic characteristic.

Another Authority above Scripture — Another characteristic of cults is the placing of some other authority above the Bible. The Christian Scientists have Mrs. Eddy's *Science and Health with the Key to the Scriptures*. The Mormons have *The Book of Mormon* and *The Pearl of Great Price*. The Jehovah's Witnesses have the writings of Russell and Rutherford. The Friends or Quakers have their mystical "inner light." Modern Judaism has the *Talmud*, and invariably interprets the Old Testament in the light of the *Talmud*, not *vice versa*. The so-called "New Church" has the writings and visions of Swedenborg. In none of these movements is the Bible the sole and supreme authority for faith and life — for knowledge of ultimate truth and value.

The so-called "Reformational" movement has its multiple forms of the Word of God. The Bible is the written Word, Christ is the Incarnate Word, the structures of the universe are the Creation Word, and preaching is the Proclaimed Word.

No person who knows his Bible will deny that the term "Word of God" is used in connection with all of these in the Bible itself. But *only one* of them is the infallible authority for faith and life. The Bible alone is authority for faith and life — it alone is the Word of God in the *epistemological* sense. What we are to believe and how we ought to live, we learn from the Bible alone. We know nothing of Christ except from the Bible; the old Liberal antithesis

which said, "Not the Bible but Jesus Christ; not a dead book but a living Person" was a false antithesis. Christ and the Bible are not opposites, or even alternative sources of knowledge for faith and life. We are to search the Scriptures precisely because it is the Scriptures which testify of Christ.

No one who believes in the God of the Bible will question the fact that the Word of God, as wisdom and power, made the structures of the created universe what they are, and upholds them constantly by God's immanent power. But this is a *metaphysical* concept, not an epistemological one; it pertains to the sphere of *being*, not to the sphere of *knowing*. And for a valid knowledge of this metaphysical concept we must go back to the written Word, the Holy Bible. The structures of creation have no voice of their own to give us infallible knowledge for faith and life. As for preaching, it is not an alternative form of the Word of God, but the proper proclamation of the message revealed in the Bible. Preaching is truly the Word of God just so far as, and no farther than, it is true to the written words of Holy Scripture.

Thus there is in the "Reformational" movement, to say the least, an ambiguity concerning the principle of *Sola Scriptura* — the Bible alone as the infallible rule of faith and life.

Claim to Newly-discovered Truth — All pseudo-Christian and sub-Christian cults claim to have newly-discovered truth, previously unknown or almost unknown, which has finally brought Christianity into focus and relevance. This began with the Gnostic sects in the time of the apostles and the centuries which followed. The Gnostic claimed to have an esoteric or secret knowledge, unknown to or unaccepted by the catholic church and its members, which, they claimed, gave them real insight into the mysteries of existence.

In more modern times Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Science, Unity, Armstrongism, and various other cults all claim to have new insights into truth which have finally made Christianity meaningful and relevant. This involves affirming that there has been a radical break in the continuity of the Christian Church's increasing understanding and confession of the truth revealed in the Scriptures. Joseph Smith held that until the *Book of Mormon* was discovered, Christianity was confused and erroneous.

Cult after cult has made the same kind of claim. The "Reformational" movement is no exception. The movement's men do not all say the same thing; some go further than others in affirming the reality of a break in the continuity of knowledge and confession of Christian truth. But they all hold that for centuries the truth of Christianity was obscured and compromised by the "nature-grace" dualism involved in the synthesis of Aristotle's philosophy with Christian

truth, associated especially with the name of Thomas Aquinas. Indeed, "nature-grace" has become a pejorative term in the Toronto vocabulary.

We admit the evil of the attempted "nature-grace" synthesis of Thomas Aquinas and the schoolmen of the Middle Ages. But we must protest that this erroneous tendency did not extinguish the light of Christianity until the cosmomic or sphere-sovereignty philosophy was born.

Our Lord promised that the Holy Spirit would lead His church and people into all truth. It is a certainty that this promise has been kept, and therefore that there has been a continuous and cumulative grasp of revealed truth in the church through the centuries since the time of the apostles. The early ecumenical councils cleared one truth after another — the Trinity, the Deity of Christ, His person and His two natures and their relationship. At the height of the Middle Ages Anselm of Canterbury (died A.D. 1109) defined with new theological precision the Biblical doctrine of the substitutionary atonement, in his famous book *Cur Deus Homo* ("Why God Became Man").

There has been a continuity of increasing Christian knowledge from Christ and the apostles, through Augustine, Anselm, John Hus, Wycliffe, the Protestant Reformers, the great Puritan divines and scholars down to the eminent Biblically sound theologians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries — Abraham Kuyper, Herman Bavinck, Benjamin Warfield, Charles Hodge, and numerous others including many living today. Any school of thought which regards this continuity as fractured and lapsed for ages of time fails to take seriously our Lord's promise that the Holy Spirit would lead His people into all truth. But this is just what the Toronto movement, in effect, seems to do.

Emphasis on Special Features—Another cultic characteristic, found in all cults, is to place much greater emphasis on the special or distinctive features of the movement than on that which is common to Christianity as such.

Thus the Mormons emphasize their peculiar doctrine of the Melchizedek priesthood out of all proportion to any ideas they may hold in common with the Christian world. With the Jehovah's Witnesses it is "Millions now living will never die." They all hold their distinctive specialities worthy of more attention and emphasis than whatever they may hold of the common faith of Christianity.

This results in movements which are *eccentric* — off the true center of Christianity. In the case of the Toronto movement, the center of attention is overwhelmingly the Cultural Mandate (Genesis 1:28), not the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 2:2).

Downgrading of Theology — Another cultic feature is the downgrading of theology. A visiting lecturer at Geneva College said that *theologism* (explained as thinking that existing theology, creeds and confessions of faith are all we need) is a wrong tendency. The same polemic against "theologism" or "theo-logicism" is found with strong emphasis in Dr. Evan Runner's book, *The Relation of the Bible to Learning* (new Wedge edition, pages 115-118). This is really setting up a straw man and then knocking him down.

Similarly, Liberals for years have told us that we do not need any "theory" or doctrine of the atonement. No Christian who understands Christian theology at all supposes it is all we need. We need much more, but we certainly do not need less. Theology is the systematically formulated knowledge of God. It is impossible to have too much *true* theology, just as it is impossible to have too much good health.

Thomas Aquinas (not in favor with the men of Toronto, but he said some true things all the same) said, *Theologia a Deo docetur, Deum docet, ad Deum ducit* ("Theology is taught by God, teaches about God, and leads to God"). If there is anything that American Christianity needs desperately it is not less emphasis on theology but much more. Scarcely one Christian in fifty can give a passably clear and correct statement of the theology of his own church and what distinguishes it from others. Many ordained officers have never even seen — let alone read — the official standards they profess to believe. Shall we go to Africa and warn the starving people of Biafra against the danger of overeating? Shall we tell Christians, many of whom are spiritually anemic because of lack of a grasp of true theology, to avoid the danger of "theologism" or "theo-logicism"?

The lack of a valid knowledge of theology manifests a *desperate* need in American Protestant Christianity today. Note Hebrews 5:12. "Dead orthodoxy" is a hollow charge when aimed at people who are almost totally ignorant of such basic Christian truths as original sin, vicarious atonement, regeneration, justification by faith, imputed righteousness — people who hear from their churches only a message of brotherhood, ecumenism, popular applied psychology, social activism, and self-salvation by character and human goodness.

It is difficult to avoid feeling that when we are thus warned against "theologism," it is the recognized orthodox theology of the great historic confessions and theologians that is being shunted aside, in favor of novel and debatable ideas from Toronto and Amsterdam. Incidentally, in view of Toronto's steady polemic against propositional truth or propositional revelation, it must be noted that the basic tenets of the Toronto movement, and of Dooyeweerd's philosophy, are themselves formulated and expressed in propositional statements.

"You do not understand" — Finally, all cults and all cultists meet serious criticism with the reply, "You

do not understand." This is often accompanied by offers to "explain everything." Of course people who use a jargon peculiar to themselves, with words and meanings peculiar to themselves, are going to be misunderstood.

But we are sure that opposition to the Toronto teachings is often the result, not of misunderstanding, but of clear understanding of what these teachings really are and where they will inevitably lead. I do not admit that I have misunderstood Toronto. I

maintain that I am against it precisely because I do understand it. The assertion "You do not understand" is a well-worn alibi claimed by heretics and cultists in all ages, from the ancient Gnostics and Pelagius to the present day. It is also an *insult* when directed to serious, competent and well-intentioned scholars. It is equivalent to saying: "You are talking about something you have not taken the trouble to find out about, or else you are too stupid to understand the profound truths we are holding."

Studies in Covenant History (Conclusion)

LESSON 1

The Babylonian Captivity of the Jews

(2 Kings 25:22-30; Ezra chapters 1-7)

The Babylonian Captivity took place in four stages:

(1) In 605 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon left Jehoiakim on the throne of Judah as a puppet king, but took Daniel and others to Babylon.

(2) In 597 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar came again, took Jehoiachin and 10,000 leading Jews to Babylon. II Kings 24:14-16.

(3) In 586 B.C. the Babylonians came again, destroyed Jerusalem, took Zedekiah and most of the remaining people, leaving a remnant of the poorest people in the land.

(4) In 581 B.C. (following the murder of the governor they had appointed) the Babylonians came again, took 745 more captives, even after many had gone to Egypt. Jeremiah 52:30.

Jeremiah predicted that the captivity would last 70 years (Jeremiah 25:11-12). It is not specified from what precise date this 70 years is to be reckoned. Presumably, however, it is to be reckoned from the first deportation, 605 B.C. This would give the date of 535 B.C. for the end of the Captivity, which would be approximately the time of the arrival at Jerusalem of the first returning party after the fall of Babylon and the accession of Cyrus.

The Babylonian Captivity was extremely bitter medicine for the Jews to swallow. Never before had they been so disgraced and humiliated before the world. They learned in bitter experience that the way of the transgressor is hard and that the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel. This humbling of their pride and breaking down of their haughty self-confidence was

necessary if they were really to be brought back to a right relationship with God.

There were also some positive benefits that came out of the Babylonian Captivity. This bitter experience permanently cured the Jews of their tendency to idolatry. For a thousand years before this time, from Moses to Jeremiah, God had been working on these people to teach them the lesson of **monotheism** — that there is only one God, the living and true God, and all others are false. Israelite history for a thousand years had been largely concerned with this lesson, which they were so slow to learn. Monotheism had **always** been the **official** faith of Israel, and it had, indeed, been the actual faith of the best and most consistent from the time of Adam and Eve. But the majority had been corrupt and inconsistent, and monotheism was not **consistently practiced by the nation as a whole** until after the Babylonian Captivity. What the endlessly repeated instruction and warning of the prophets had failed to do, the bitter suffering of the Captivity finally accomplished. Israel or the Jews were cured of idolatry. From this time on to be a Jew was to be known everywhere as a hater of idolatry. There is of course a spiritual idolatry which anyone can be involved in — as, for example, when we say of some greedy person that "money is his god". But the common, outward form of idolatry, in which a person really believes that there are many gods, and he bows down to a heathen image in a temple of Baal or some other "divinity" came to an end, so far as the Jews were concerned, with the Babylonian Captivity.

Thus there is at this point a major shift of emphasis in the religious thought and life of godly Jews. Before this the primary emphasis had been

on vindicating and maintaining monotheism versus idolatry. Now this problem has been solved. The emphasis from this point on is **Messianic prophecy** and the **Messianic hope**, the expectation of the coming of the Redeemer first promised in Genesis 3:15, the Seed of the woman who would finally destroy the serpent and his works. Not that Messianic prophecy was new in this period, or previously unknown — think of the wonderful Messianic prophecies in Isaiah, Jeremiah and the Psalms — but that the Messianic hope became the main topic and center of attention in a new way in this period.

Another positive gain in the Babylonian Captivity was the development of the Synagogue. A synagogue is a local congregation of the Jewish faith. The origin of this institution is obscure, but it is generally held to have originated at the time of the Babylonian Captivity or about that time. Synagogues are only slightly mentioned in the Old Testament, but in the New Testament they were found wherever Jewish people live. The destruction of the Jerusalem Temple, and the removal of most of the people to far-off foreign lands, may have occasioned the development of synagogues as local groups for fellowship and worship. The Jewish synagogue became extremely influential in preparing the ancient world for the coming of Christianity. Not only was Palestine dotted with synagogues, but they existed in foreign lands. There were many synagogues in Rome, as there were in Alexandria (Egypt) and other cities. Each of these was not only a place of religious instruction and worship, but often also a library, a common school and a center of social life. The synagogue brought a dark, pessimistic pagan world something better than it had from any other source — a religion with a reasonable belief in one God, a pure and righteous moral code, a type of serious, thrifty, hard-working living, and a firm hope for immortality beyond the death of the body. The early apostles and missionaries of the Christian Gospel usually got their start in any new location through the Jewish synagogue. Thus in the Providence of God the synagogue prepared the way for the Christian Church.

The return of the Jews from the Captivity resulted from the Medo-Persians taking over power from the Babylonians. This return took place in three stages, as follows:

(1) In 536 or 535 B.C. under the leadership of Zerubbabel. 42,360 Jews; 7,337 servants; also 5,400 gold and silver objects belonging to the Temple of the Lord in Jerusalem were returned.

(2) In 457 B.C. under the leadership of Ezra the scribe. 1754 Jews; also 100 talents of gold and 750 talents of silver. Ezra chapter 7.

(3) In 444 B.C. Nehemiah with others arrived to rebuild the city wall of Jerusalem, with the sanction of the Persian king.

The Temple was rebuilt during the period of Zerubbabel's leadership, 535-515 B.C. The wall was rebuilt in the period of Nehemiah's leadership, 444-432 B.C. The history of Esther belongs between these two periods.

Only part of the Jews in Babylonia elected to go to Palestine. Many for various reasons preferred to remain in Babylon. This had a sifting and purifying effect. The ones that made the journey to Judah would be the ones who were willing to sacrifice everything for their religion. The ones that loved money and comfort most would choose to remain in Babylon. Therefore the returning groups were on the whole select groups, and thus well fitted to form the nucleus of the reconstituted Jewish nation.

Questions:

1. How long did the Babylonian Captivity last? When did it begin and end?
2. In how many stages, and in what years, did the deportation of the Jews to Babylon take place?
3. What religious benefit resulted from the Captivity?
4. What religious institution apparently began as a result of the Babylonian Captivity?
5. What was the historical importance of this institution?
6. In what year was Daniel taken to Babylon? In what year was Jehoiachin taken?
7. What Persian king permitted the Jews to return to Jerusalem?
8. When was this permission granted? (See Ezra 1:1).
9. What did the decree include?
10. How many Jews were included in the first return? How many servants?
11. How many horses, camels, etc., were taken along by the returning Jews?
12. What offerings were contributed by the Jews? (Ezra 2:69).
13. When did work on the new Temple start? (Ezra 3:8).
14. What emotions were manifested when the foundations were laid? (Ezra 3:10-13).
15. Who was the leader of the first returning party?
16. How long was it after the first return before a second group returned?
17. What sifting or purifying effect did the return from the Captivity have on the Jews as a nation?

18. When did Nehemiah and his party reach Jerusalem?

19. How long was this after the first return?

20. Under whose leadership was the Temple rebuilt? How long did it take?

21. Why did it take so long to build the Temple?

22. Under whose leadership was the city wall of Jerusalem rebuilt?

23. Where does the story of Esther belong in relationship to the various stages of the return from the Babylonian Captivity?

24. How long a period was covered between the first deportation of the Jews to Babylon and the rebuilding of the city wall of Jerusalem after the Captivity?

LESSON 2

The Jews in the Persian Period

(Esther, chapters 1-10; Nehemiah, chapters 1, 2, 6)

In the Persian period the Jews were no longer independent. Judah was now a part of the immense Persian Empire, which included 127 provinces and covered territory from Ethiopia south of Egypt in Africa to the borders of northern India in Asia.

One benefit the Jews enjoyed in this period was peace. The wars of the period were mostly fought far from Palestine and scarcely affected the Jews. Moreover the Jews were exempt from military service. The Persians tried and tried to conquer the Greeks, but failed.

It was apparently in this period, or perhaps during the Babylonian Captivity, that Aramaic or Aramean (Bible: Syrian or Syriac) replaced Hebrew as the ordinary spoken language of the Jews. In the New Testament period we find the Jews in Palestine speaking Aramaic and in other countries speaking Greek or some local language. While Hebrew continued as a language of scholars and scribes, the everyday speech of the people changed to Aramaic. The causes of this linguistic shift are not fully clear.

From being a despised, disgraced and oppressed people, the Jews rose rapidly in status and prestige once the Babylonian Captivity was over. The fall of Babylon and the rise of the Medo-Persian Empire no doubt had something to do with this. It was not the Persians who had conquered the Jews and deported them from their own country. At any rate, in the Persian period we find some Jews holding important office and high rank. Nehemiah, the king's cupbearer under Artaxerxes Longimanus (Artaxerxes I) is an example of this. So are Esther and Mordecai in the reign of Xerxes I (Ahasuerus). This does not mean, of course, that all Jews were important or rich, but it means that some had risen to high and responsible office, and no doubt the general average status of the Jews was tremendously improved over what it had been in the Babylonian period.

Nehemiah's work was the rebuilding of the city wall of Jerusalem. We may wonder why the city wall was regarded as such an important

matter. Cities get along well enough without walls at the present day. In answer to this question, it may be said that in ancient times walls for cities were important for two reasons. First, the wall gave actual physical security to the inhabitants against bandits, robbers and attacking enemies. When firearms and aircraft were unknown, and fighting was done with swords, spears, bows and arrows, a good strong stone wall was real protection. It not only kept enemies out, but it gave the defenders a tremendous advantage. They could welcome attacking enemies by throwing things down on them from the top of the wall. Among things used in this way in ancient times were stones, bricks, rags dipped in oil and set aflame, and sometimes boiling oil or boiling water.

In the second place, the rebuilding of the wall was necessary for psychological reasons. It gave people a terrible feeling of inferiority to live in a city whose wall was in ruins. They would be the butt of ridicule and the laughing-stock of foreigners and visitors, especially those who came from traditionally enemy or rival countries. As long as the city wall lay in ruins, Jerusalem was really just a slum. Just as people today who have any morale and self-respect like to live in a neat and properly painted home, with a neat and well cared-for yard, so people in ancient times who had morale and self-respect liked to live in a neatly walled city. As long as the city wall continued to lie in ruins, the inhabitants of Jerusalem were bound to feel that they were a sort of shiftless and incompetent people. The fact that the wall had lain in ruins so long would even make this worse. It is reported that practically all places in Europe that were devastated by bombing in World War II (1939-1945) have by now been cleared and rebuilt — in many cases much better than they were before the War. But the wall of Jerusalem lay as a mass of rubble with weeds growing here and there, from 586 B.C. to 444 B.C. — a period of 142 years. In United States history, 142 years ago would be the year 1821 — some 40 years before the Civil War! What would we think if ruins of a devastating enemy attack on Washington, less than half a mile from Capitol Hill, had been al-

lowed to lie from 1821 to 1963 without any effort to clean up and rebuild?

Still another consideration, of course, was that the honor and good name of God were involved. Jerusalem was the city of God. Here was located the Temple of the true God, the Lord of the universe. The Temple had indeed been rebuilt, and this was completed about 515 B.C. But this Temple is located in a city whose wall lay in ruins within sight of the Temple grounds. These ruins proclaimed to all that Jerusalem had been conquered and destroyed by a foreign power. Was it fitting and proper that the Temple dedicated to the Lord of the universe be situated in a battered, ruined, unrestored city? Reverence for God required the rebuilding of the city wall of Jerusalem.

Nehemiah was an efficient executive as well as a pious believer. He got the "impossible" job done in just 52 days of concerted effort. Now everyone in Jerusalem felt better. The honor of God was vindicated and the people no longer need feel ashamed of that disgraceful, ruined city wall. Also, they could sleep better at night knowing that that wall was between them and bandits or robbers.

The story of Esther is one of the most dramatic in the Bible. The Persian king was Xerxes I of secular history, called in the Bible Ahasuerus. The Book of Esther is remarkable for the fact that the name of God does not occur in the entire book. However, God is certainly present in the book of Esther, though behind the scenes. Indeed, we might say that God is the principal character in the Book of Esther. This book relates the amazing providence of God in keeping the Jewish people from mass destruction. The modern term for what Haman attempted is "genocide" — the attempt to exterminate an entire people. If Haman had been successful, what would have become of God's promises that the Saviour of the world would be born of the seed of David? In Haman's wicked plan we see one chapter in the long story of the "seed of the serpent" trying to prevent the redemptive work of the "Seed of the woman" (cf. Genesis 3:15). God of course, frustrates this sinister program of evil, and the program of divine redemption moved forward.

Questions might be raised about the ethics of a God-fearing Jewish maiden like Esther entering the harem of a pagan monarch like Ahasuerus and becoming his queen. As a matter of fact it seems that Esther was "drafted" and did not really have any freedom of choice in the matter. Also, it is not the purpose of the Book of Esther to discuss the ethics of mixed marriages and polygamy. These evils are sufficiently dealt with in other parts of the Bible. Esther is obviously written to show the providence of God in preserving the Jews from mass destruction.

Though it deals with terrific tensions and is saturated with the sense of impending tragedy, the book of Esther is not without some humorous touches. The scene of Haman leading Mordecai through the streets of Susa (Esther 6:10, 11) is thoroughly laughable. So also is the scene in Haman's mansion where he is boasting to his assembled friends of his riches and honors, and his loving wife Zeresh suggests the construction of a 75-foot gallows for hanging Mordecai on, in the light of the fact that eventually Haman himself is hanged on this gallows (5:10-14, 7:10).

Susa or Shushan has been thoroughly excavated by archaeologists. Nothing **directly** confirming the history in the Book of Esther has been discovered. However a great deal of background material was discovered. Susa was indeed just such a city, with such a palace, as is described in the book of Esther.

The Greek historian Herodotus records that after Xerxes was defeated by the Greeks at Thermopylae, Salamis and Plataea (479 B.C.) he returned home and paid attention to his harem. This is probably a reference to events related in the book of Esther.

Questions:

1. What was the political status of the Jews in the Persian period?
2. What was the military status of the Jews in the Persian period?
3. What change in the spoken language of the Jews took place about this time?
4. Give two examples to show the rise in prestige of the Jews in the Persian period.
5. Give two reasons why the rebuilding of the city wall of Jerusalem was important.
6. How long had the city wall of Jerusalem lain in ruins?
7. How long did it take to rebuild the wall under Nehemiah's leadership?
8. How was the honor of God involved in the question of rebuilding the wall?
9. How many times does the name of God occur in the book of Esther?
10. What is the primary importance of the Book of Esther in the Bible?
11. What promise of God would have been nullified if Haman had succeeded?
13. Does the book of Esther imply that polygamy and mixed marriages are right?
13. Give an example of humor in the book of Esther.
14. What has archaeology shown concerning the city of Susa or Shushan?

LESSON 3

The Old Testament Messianic Hope

The Hebrew word **Messiah**, like its Greek equivalent **Christos** (Latin, **Christus**; English, **Christ**) means **Anointed**. The concept of anointing was originally one in common, everyday life — it meant putting oil or ointment on a person or thing for any reason or purpose whatever — for example, as a hair-dressing; to relieve the itching of mosquito bites; to heal a burn; to stop the squeaking of a hinge.

Later these terms were lifted into the vocabulary of religion, and used in the religious sense of anointing, that is, setting a person apart to a special sacred office. In Israel the kings and priests were anointed as their inauguration into office. The prophets, apparently, sometimes but not always were. The oil was made from olive oil and was **symbolic** of the Holy Spirit. The idea was that the Holy Spirit was to enter the personality of the anointed individual and confer on him the qualities needed for him to be an adequate king or priest according to the will of God.

Every Israelite and Jewish king was anointed with oil and was called "the Lord's anointed." In some cases, to be sure, the person was not qualified by the Holy Spirit and thus in those cases the outward rite of anointing with oil was a mere form, since the spiritual meaning was absent. We can readily think of examples of this — Saul, the first king of Israel; Ahab; Jehoiakim; Zedekiah; and others. The **idea**, however, was endowment with special qualities by the Holy Spirit. Since every Israelite or Jewish king was **supposed** to possess these qualities, each was called "the Lord's anointed", even though some were wicked men and terribly unworthy of what the rite of anointing stood for. In Isaiah 45:1 Cyrus, king of Persia, is called "the Lord's anointed", not because Cyrus himself knew or worshipped the Lord (he was a Zoroastrian), but because God would raise him up to accomplish a special purpose in the plan of redemption.

Later the term "Anointed One" or **Messiah** was used more specifically with prophetic reference to the ideal king of the future. "The Anointed One" is always regarded as human, but also always regarded as the special Agent of God the Saviour. Gradually the concept of the **Deity** of the Messiah was revealed in the Old Testament. This is shown, for example, by Isaiah 9:6, where it is predicted that the child who shall be born will be called "the mighty God."

The concept of the Deity of the Messiah, which we as Christians know to be true, depends on the Christian doctrine of the divine Trinity. The Messiah is the second Person of the divine Trinity. The Trinity or three-one nature of God is a truth which is suggested or alluded to in the Old Testament, but clearly and fully set forth only in the

New Testament. The doctrine of the Trinity could not be safely revealed in explicit fulness until its presupposition, the idea of **monotheism**, had been satisfactorily learned by Israel. Monotheism was a truth revealed by God from the very beginning. However it was not consistently practiced by the Israelite or Jewish nation as a whole until after the Babylonian Captivity.

Hence it was after the Captivity that we find interest centering on the Messianic hope. From this point on there did not need to be the strong polemic against idolatry and polytheism. This lesson had been learned and something new followed.

The first Messianic prophecy in the Bible is in Genesis 3:15, spoken just after the fall of mankind into sin: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." This verse predicts an age-long conflict between good and evil, and that Someone descended from Eve will finally win the victory and destroy the evil. This is prophecy in germ form. A seed of a plant viewed under a high-power microscope shows the cells of the germ-plasm. All the potentiality of the future plant is present in the seed, but only in latent or germ form. When the seed is planted and begins to grow, then differentiation takes place. Cells divide and divide again, and the different structures of the plant gradually appear.

Adam and Eve could not possibly have known the **time** and the **circumstances** of the fulfilment of Genesis 3:15. On the other hand, they could understand the **essential meaning**, and thus they had a faith to live by. As the Old Testament moves on, the promise of a Messiah becomes more and more specific, the functions of the future Messiah become more and more differentiated.

Dr. Campbell Morgan of England once said that the entire Old Testament can be summed up in three things, namely, a sigh for a prophet, a sigh for a priest, and a sigh for a king. This is a correct analysis of Scripture as far as it goes, but it can be improved by realizing that the Old Testament is more than "a sigh" for these things. It is not merely a desire that arises from man; it is a program planned, revealed and implemented by God. So we may say that the Old Testament is: the promise of a prophet, the promise of a priest, and the promise of a king.

At the same time we should realize that these promises precisely meet man's deepest needs. Man in his weakness and sinfulness needs:

(1) A prophet to reveal the truth and will of God;

(2) A priest to make atonement for his sins and reconcile him to God;

(3) A king to challenge his loyalty and to provide leadership and protection.

The Old Testament predicts the coming of the perfect prophet, the perfect priest and the perfect king. When we reach the New Testament we find that Jesus is the fulfilment of all three of these divine promises. He combined in Himself the functions of all three. The perfect prophet is predicted in Deuteronomy 18:15-22. The perfect priest is predicted in Psalm 110. The perfect king is predicted in Psalm 2, Isaiah 11:1-10 and numerous other places. Every true prophet was a small-scale sample of the final and perfect prophet; every true priest was a small-scale sample of the final and perfect priest; every true king was a small-scale sample of the ideal, final perfect king, the Messiah.

The Messianic hope moved toward a goal. It involved a philosophy of history and a theology of redemption. It involved definite progress toward a consummation. And above all things it involved **the divine initiative and monergism**. (The term **monergism** means that the power in salvation is entirely that of God alone, not that of God and man combined. Salvation is the work of God for man and the work of God in man, but it is not properly regarded as the work of man. Salvation is by divine grace, by the power of God — it is not a “do it yourself” project, though of course it is our duty to obey the commands of God to repent, believe and make use of the appointed means of Grace.

Another way of viewing Old Testament Messianic prophecy is to realize that in some places the Old Testament predicts a **glorious, reigning figure who is victorious over all enemies**, while in other places it predicts the coming of a **Messiah who will be rejected, despised, shamefully treated, and who will suffer and die**. These two lines of prediction may seem at first sight to be contradictory. But actually they are mutually complementary and organically inter-related. The glory comes as the fruit and reward of the suffering.

Both of these lines of prediction are deeply imbedded in the Old Testament. The Messiah will not only be a glorious King and deliverer; He will also be one who suffers bitter humiliation, even unto shameful death. In some parts of the Old Testament these two kinds of Messianic prophecy occur side by side, closely combined, even in the same chapter. An example of this is Psalm 22. Another is Isaiah chapter 53. In both of these passages sufferings which terminate in death are described as followed by the enjoyment of consummate glory. The resurrection of the Messiah from the state of death is implied between the two parts of Psalm 22 and between the two parts of Isaiah 53.

The “Servant of the Lord” Theme in Isaiah

Liberal scholars constantly declare that the figure called “the servant of the Lord” in the so-called “Second Isaiah” is the people of Israel collectively considered — Israel the Lord’s servant to bring a blessing to the world. There is an element of truth in this claim but it is far from being the whole truth, or the main truth. Indeed, these “liberal” scholars seem to be positively allergic to any belief that any part of these chapters is predictive of Jesus Christ. As a matter of fact these chapters are repeatedly cited in the New Testament as predictions of Jesus Christ. The Book of Acts, chapter 8 verses 26-40, is an example of this.

The “Servant” theme in Isaiah may be briefly analyzed as follows:

(1) Israel is called the Servant of the Lord. 44:1, 2, 21. 49:3.

(2) The Servant is God’s servant to the tribes of Israel. 49:6.

(3) The concept is carried further to represent the Servant as being the faithful, spiritual, nucleus, remnant or core of Israel. 50:10, “the voice of His servant.” 52:13, “My servant shall deal prudently.”

(4) Last of all, it is made clear that the Servant is an individual Person, **the ideal and perfect Israelite, the One to whom** the name Israel really belongs, in the fulness of its meaning and implications. This is none other than Jesus Christ, as demonstrated by the New Testament.

Analysis of Isaiah Chapter 53

(1) The Servant’s humble environment and lack of natural glory. Verses 1-3.

(2) The Servant’s **vicarious** (substitutionary) sufferings and death. 4-9.

(3) The Servant, **after death**, exalted to supreme honor and glory (implying resurrection). Verses 10-12.

For further discussion of the interpretation of this chapter, the student is referred to Dr. Edward J. Young’s little book, **Isaiah Fifty-three**.

Questions:

1. What is the literal meaning of the Hebrew word **Messiah** and the Greek word **Christos**?
2. What was the original usage of the words concerning anointing?
3. Of what was the anointing oil a symbol?
4. What officers were anointed with oil in the Israelite system?
5. What should be thought about cases where a person was anointed but later turned out to be a wicked man?

6. Give an Old Testament verse which proves the Deity of the Messiah.

7. Why could not the idea of the Deity of the Messiah be fully and explicitly revealed in the Old Testament?

8. Why did religious interest turn especially to the Messianic hope after the Babylonian Captivity?

9. What is the first Messianic prophecy in the Bible? What does it mean?

10. To what extent could our first parents understand this prophecy?

11. How did Dr. Campbell Morgan summarize the entire Old Testament?

12. How can his analysis be amended to bring it more fully in line with the Biblical data?

13. How does this threefold analysis concern man's three deepest needs?

14. What is meant by saying that the Messianic hope involved a philosophy of history?

15. What is the meaning of the term **moner-**
gism and what is the connection of this with the idea of the Messiah?

16. How can we explain the apparent contradiction between prophecies which predict a glorious, reigning Messiah and other prophecies which predict a suffering, dying Messiah?

17. What is implied between the two parts of Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53?

18. What is the relation of "the Servant of the Lord" to Israel in Isaiah chapters 44-53?

19. What three main themes are found in Isaiah chapter 53?

20. What is meant by **vicarious** suffering on the part of the Servant?

The End

Some Noteworthy Quotations

"If our liberality and charity are wider than the Bible, they are worth nothing."

— J. C. Ryle

"A Jew lives in you and me and in every human heart by nature."

— Geerhardus Vos

"Wheels are tapped with a hammer on the railway that their soundness may be tested. Not only does affliction thus try our characters, but prosperity does the same."

— Charles H. Spurgeon

"An awakening by mere natural conscience is very different from an awakening by the Spirit of God. No man ever fled to Christ from mere natural terror. 'No man can come to me,' saith Christ, 'except the Father which hath sent me draw him.' Seek a divine work upon your heart."

— Robert Murray McCheyne

"There are many among us who live in the daily practice of sins, some who carry on small dishonesties, or occasionally use small minced oaths, who walk in the counsel of the ungodly. O brethren! if this be your case, it is quite plain that you have never had a divine awakening. When a man is made anxious about his soul, he always puts away his open sins."

— Robert Murray McCheyne

"A true repentance, being not only a turning from sin, but a turning unto God, supposes the soul to be enlightened to understand something of the way in which God can alone be acceptably approached, through a Mediator. No soul ever comes to God, unless it has some apprehension of His mercy IN CHRIST. The exercise of faith in Christ is included in a genuine repentance."

—Archibald Alexander

"Men are considered in Holy Scripture, as in bondage, under the slavery of sin, and subject to the tyranny of Satan. From this state of thralldom, they can be delivered only by an almighty Redeemer. But POWER alone is not adequate to the work of redemption. A PRICE — a ransom sufficient to satisfy divine justice must be paid. Silver and gold, and all earthly treasures, avail nothing in the redemption of the soul. Blood must be shed, and life sacrificed . . . The blood shed, and the life given, must be divine. But how can this be? The eternal Son of God offers Himself to be the Redeemer, and to pay the price required . . . 'Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.' He was named JESUS because He should save His people from their sins."

—Archibald Alexander

"Who need fear men who is in league with God?"

— John Trapp

Biblical Proverbs: God's Transistorized Wisdom

A glimpse at the precepts of an ancient book
casts divine light on many everyday problems

HAYDN L. GILMORE

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In this age of the transistor, there is a sense in which God may be said to have given us "transistorized wisdom." The Book of Proverbs contains hundreds of verses that present truth in the smallest possible package.

Proverbs are apt, succinct, and clear—characteristics of all good teaching. They are handles on truth to make it portable. Like road signs, they fulfill a specific function quickly.

The Hebrew word for "proverb" comes from the root for "likeness" or "comparison." And in the Septuagint, "proverb" and "parable" came to have much the same sense; there the heading of the Book of Proverbs uses both words. A proverb might be thought of as a condensed parable.

"Answer a Fool . . . Answer Not"

Compilers of proverbs sometimes place contradictory thoughts in juxtaposition. An example is Proverbs 26:4,5: "Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him. Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit." At first thought such contradictions seem very strange.

Yet is not life itself full of seeming contradictions? The proverb has the flexibility to be applied to the great problems of daily living. It carries truth into the realm of practical application. The intellect is persistently plagued with paradoxes and contradictions. Reality, however, is larger than the mind of man, and living requires more than jungle instinct on one hand and pure reason on the other. Thus the proverb is a view of life, designed for immediate practical action.

The proverb is intense. Brevity often means urgency. Stenciled emergency notations are on aircraft, not hidden in shelves of books. The shortest prayer in the Bible is Peter's "Lord, save me." Three words were sufficient to reach the Lord's ear. God sometimes speaks an urgent command or strengthening promise when he speaks most briefly, directly, and intensely.

The proverb often takes the form of "a dark saying." In Habakkuk 2:6 ("Shall not all these take up a

parable against him . . .?") the Hebrew word means "conundrum." The concept of the "dark saying" suggests that the proverb was sometimes hard to understand. On the other hand, the word "proverb" also took on the meaning of "popular with the people"—hence, a byword, a commonplace. "To understand a proverb, and the interpretation (as figure or image); the words of the wise and their dark sayings (conundrums)" (Prov. 1:6).

The New Testament uses both of these senses. For example, in II Peter 2:22, *parolmia*, from Greek words meaning "by the way," has the sense of a wayside saying or byword. However, the same term is used in John 10:6 and 16:25,29 in the secondary sense of figure, parable, and allegory. These, as dark sayings, were hard to understand.

Jesus' Use of Proverbs

The Lord Jesus used proverbs in his teaching. Twice in the Gospels we have the proverb, "A prophet has no honor in his own country" (John 4:44, Luke 4:24). Jesus' enemies used proverbs against him, such as, "Physician, heal thyself" (Luke 4:23). This reminds us of Psalm 69:11, "I became a proverb to them." Jesus often taught through proverbs. Yet "the time cometh," he said, "when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father" (John 16:25). In both the parable of the soils (Mark 4:1-12) and the discourse on John the Baptist (Matt. 11:2-19), Jesus said, "He who hath ears to hear, let him hear." This proverb recurs in the last book of the Bible eight times (Rev. 2:7,11,17,29; 3:6,13,22; 13:9).

The New Testament quotes or alludes to the Book of Proverbs thirty-two times. One proverb, "Shall he not render to every man according to his works?" (Prov. 24:12), is alluded to six times.

Ephesians 6:17 is a striking example of the sufficiency of a transistor-sized word. The sword of the Spirit is said to be, not the Word, considered in its totality (for the customary *logos* is not used), but rather the phrase, or saying (*rhema*), of God. The Christian warrior is to take the appropriate expression to use as the Lord's sword in spiritual warfare.

Proverbs is a highly practical book. The problems of youth, middle age, and old age are mentioned. Mild vexation and international strife are both dealt with in principle.

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There are thirty-one chapters in the Book of Proverbs, one for each day of any month. For years, in addition to my other Scripture reading, I read one chapter of Proverbs daily. This was one of the most practical steps I ever took in my Christian life.

In fact, Proverbs is a good place for anyone to start reading the Bible. It is well fitted to create a "market" for the Gospel. In it the human heart can see its own lack of practical righteousness and thus discover its own need. By showing us how far short we fall of God's standards, Proverbs shows us that we need a Saviour. And indeed, the Saviour is foreshadowed in Proverbs 8:22-31, 23:11, and 30:4.

When the words of God in Proverbs have been discerned, the Word of God in the Gospels can be more personally appreciated. Practical thinking as well as emotional turmoil introduces people to Christ. Christ is concerned with every aspect of life, and Proverbs may well be studied for the way God meets the diverse psychological needs of men.

Plain Advice for Youth

The Book of Proverbs is, in a special sense, dedicated and directed to youth, as the prologue (1:1-6) shows. There are few pieces of writing that young people need more than this book. The children of God should be wiser than the children of this world. As they go to school or to ball games or on dates, Proverbs is a spiritual transistor that can be carried in the heart if not in the pocket. In the barracks, in town, in school and home, the Book of Proverbs speaks to plain, everyday situations. It is an inspired part of the literature of realism, helping us face life as it is—difficult and demanding. None of us will ever outgrow his need for this type of plain-spoken wisdom.

The housewife, the professional man or businessman, the workman or the shopkeeper—each may turn to this most practical portion of the Word of God. The ear may be opened to the Spirit of God as he calls us to Jesus Christ above the noise of the day. In Proverbs we may all learn of the wisdom of him who at the appointed time made his Son, "Christ crucified . . . the power of God and the wisdom of God."

Studies in the Book of Proverbs

LESSON 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

The title of the Book of Proverbs in the Bible is: "The Proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel" (1:1). The Hebrew word translated "proverb" means "A brief, pithy saying which expresses wisdom" (E. J. Young). Another definition of "proverb" is: "A sententious, synthetic or antithetic statement of a principle which covers many cases" (Raven). A "synthetic" statement is one which combines two similar sayings to set forth a truth; 1:5 is an example. An "antithetic" statement is one which brings out truth by contrasting two opposites, as is done in 1:7. The Hebrew idea of a proverb is somewhat wider than the modern idea. The word "saying" is a good equivalent.

Solomon was the principal author of the Book of Proverbs. Besides Solomon, certain other individuals are credited with authorship or editing of portions of the book, namely: "the men of Hezekiah" (25:1), Agur (30:1), Lemuel (31:1), and "the wise men", 22:17, 24:23. It is not known who "the men of Hezekiah" who "copied out" proverbs were; possibly they may have included the prophets Isaiah and Micah. Concerning Agur and Lemuel nothing is known beyond what is stated in connection with their names in 30:1 and 31:1 ff. Chapter 30 is credited to Agur, and chapter 31 to Lemuel. It is possible, but not proven, that Lemuel is a name for Solomon.

From the beginning of the book to 22:16 the proverbs can be credited to Solomon himself. According to I Kings 4:32 Solomon wrote three thousand proverbs.

The book must have been completed at a later time than Solomon's; the earliest date at which it could have been completed in its present form would be the time of Hezekiah, that is, the 8th century before Christ.

Critical scholars have claimed that the Book of Proverbs has been influenced by Greek, Aramaic or Egyptian thought. There is no convincing evidence that such influence existed. An Egyptian book, called *The Wisdom of Amenemope*, has a purely formal resemblance to Proverbs 22:17 to 23:12. This Egyptian book however is polytheistic (believing in many gods) whereas the Biblical Book of Proverbs is strictly monotheistic. The Egyptian work is also logically continuous whereas the Biblical Book of Proverbs is very disconnected in its presentation of material. We will do well to attribute the Book of Proverbs to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, not to ancient pagan sources.

Proverbs is a difficult book to outline in any detail. A general outline can of course be worked out. The following outlines from various standard works are suggested.

The New Bible Handbook (G. T. Manley)

- I. The Value and Attainment of True Wisdom. 1-9.
- II. The Proverbs of Solomon. 10:1 — 22:16.
- III. The Words of the Wise. 22:17 — 24:34.

IV. Collection by the Men of Hezekiah. 25 — 29.

V. Proverbs of Agur. 30.

VI. Proverbs of Lemuel. The Virtuous Woman. 31.

**The New Bible Commentary
(Davidson, Stibbs & Kevan)**

I. Title, Purpose, Motto. 1:1-7.

II. Thirteen Lessons on Wisdom. 1:8 — 9:18.

III. The First Book of Solomon. 10:1 — 22:16.

IV. Sayings of the Wise. 22:17 — 24:22.

V. Sayings of the Wise: Another Collection. 24:23-24.

VI. The Second Book of Solomon. 25:1 — 29:27.

VII. Sayings of Agur. 30.

VIII. Sayings of Lemuel. 31:1-9.

IX. Appendix. The Perfect Wife. 31:10-31.

**Introduction to the Old Testament
(Edward J. Young)**

I. The Praise of Wisdom. 1:1 — 9:18.

II. Miscellaneous Proverbs of Solomon. 10:1 — 22:16.

III. Sundry Duties and Rules. 22:17 — 24:22.

IV. Further Sayings of the Wise. 24:23-34.

V. Miscellaneous Sayings by Solomon. 25:1 — 29:27.

VI. The Words of Agur. 30.

VII. The Words of Lemuel. 31:1-9.

VIII. An Acrostic in Praise of the Virtuous Woman. 31:10-31.

It will be observed that these three suggested outlines of Proverbs are very similar. They differ (1) as to setting apart the first 7 verses of the book as an introduction, and (2) as to the division of chapter 31.

The Book of Proverbs is quoted a number of times in the New Testament. The following instances are cited by Dr. E. J. Young in his *Introduction to the Old Testament*.

Rom. 3:15 with Prov. 1:16

Heb. 12:5 with Prov. 3:11

James 4:6 with Prov. 3:34

I Peter 4:8 with Prov. 10:12

I Peter 4:18 with Prov. 11:31

I Peter 5:5 with Prov. 3:34

II Peter 2:22 with Prov. 26:11

Note also Matt. 6:44 compared with Prov. 25:21,22.

Jesus in His use of parables used a method of instruction somewhat similar to the Book of Proverbs. Proverbs is a very practical book. Dr. M. A. Hopkins states that it could be called "God's Handbook on the Art of Living for Young and Old" or "Laws from Heaven for Life on Earth," adding that the book contains the condensed wisdom of the ages focused upon practical affairs and the problems of daily life, especially in this world, but with an outlook on eternity.

Questions:

1. What is the full title of the Book of Proverbs in the Bible?

2. What is the meaning of the Hebrew word translated "proverb"?

3. How does the Biblical idea of a proverb differ from the modern idea?

4. Who was the human author of most of the Book of Proverbs?

5. What other authors contributed to the writing of the book?

6. Who may have been included among the "men of Hezekiah"?

7. How many proverbs did Solomon write, according to I Kings 4:32?

8. What is the earliest date when the Book of Proverbs could have been complete in its present form?

9. What foreign or non-Israelite influences are alleged by critical scholars to have affected the Book of Proverbs?

10. How can the claim of Egyptian influence be answered?

11. Give a general outline of the Book of Proverbs.

12. What method of teaching, similar to the Book of Proverbs, was used by Jesus?

13. Give examples of quotations from the Book of Proverbs in the New Testament.

14. Why is it correct to call the Book of Proverbs a practical book?

LESSON 2

SOME TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

The Book of Proverbs differs sharply from the world's philosophies and codes of conduct, in that Proverbs is theistic and always God-centered. The world's philosophies and codes are humanistic and secular — they are "of the people, by the people and for the people" whereas the wisdom in Proverbs is divinely revealed and centered in God — it is "of God, by God and for the glory of God." This of course causes the Book of Proverbs to be lightly valued by the world, but is at the same time a good reason why it should be highly valued by the Christian. And indeed only the Christian (that is, the regenerate person) can really live according to the principles revealed in the Book of Proverbs.

Proverbs can be studied chapter by chapter and verse by verse, but perhaps a better method may be a topical study of the book, for this will make it easier to remember the book's main teachings and fix them in the mind.

At the beginning of Proverbs the great principle is stated that "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (1:7). Note that the fear of the Lord is the beginning, not only of wisdom, but also of knowledge. Our modern world has been deeply impressed by the achievements of physical science and has even become intoxicated on the wine of science, but it is a science without God. Therefore it is a science or knowledge without insight into the real meaning of the universe. The scientist who studies the age of rocks without knowing the Rock of Ages does not really KNOW anything; he lacks "the beginning of knowledge." The physicist who probes deeper and deeper into the mysteries of the atom without knowing the eternal Creator of matter and energy cannot really grasp the significance of the atom, for he lacks a truly valid approach to his researches.

Dr. M. A. Hopkins has truly said that Proverbs 1:7 states that "Right relation to God is the basic principle of life". He adds that a human life is "eccentric" when self occupies the place that rightly belongs to God, and he defines a God-centered life as meaning "That God is to occupy the central place in every sphere of human life and in all human relationships." This is certainly true, and most Christians will acknowledge its truth, at least formally, but how far do we live up to it in actual life? Even we Christian people are all but engulfed in the yawning chasm of present-day secularism. Our public schools assume as a matter of course that history, science, literature, etc., can be truly and adequately taught without even mentioning God. Our political government becomes more and more rigidly secular day by day. The whole cultural pattern has become one that feels no need of God.

The "fear" of the Lord does not of course mean panic-stricken terror. It is a term frequently used in Scripture and means something like "religion" in the best sense of the term: faith in God accompanied by reverence and love. The "fear" of the Lord deters a man from sinning against God. It leads to straight thinking

and right living. This is a very much needed idea at the present day, for the common emphasis today is on self-expression and an idolatrous idea of human freedom ("Don't fence me in!"). In religious circles this wrong idea of freedom is furthered to some extent by a one-sided view of salvation which verges on antinomianism (the notion that the Christian is not under the moral law as a standard of right living).

Another teaching of the Book of Proverbs which is much needed today is that on the subject of Prayer. Proverbs teaches with utter plainness that prayer is not acceptable to God unless it be accompanied by a godly life. "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but the prayer of the upright is His delight" (15:8). "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination" (28:9). Surely this is a needed emphasis today, when people feel free to neglect, despise and reject teachings of the Bible and yet claim to be "spiritual" Christians who stress the importance of prayer. Prayer without obedience is an abomination to God. As the prophet Samuel said to the disobedient Saul, "to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry" (1 Sam. 15:22,23). The person who says "Don't talk to me about Scriptural purity of worship; I am not interested in such discussions and intend to do as I please" should consider what he will say to the Lord at the Judgment Day. The person who lightly follows the path of least resistance and leaves a pure and faithful church to join a broad and popular one should soberly consider what he will say to the Lord at the Judgment Day. Those who are unwilling to make the will of God as revealed in Scripture their real standard of thinking and living are not "spiritual" just because they attend church and talk a lot about prayer.

Questions:

1. What is meant by saying that the Book of Proverbs is God-centered?
2. What class of persons alone can really obey the principles of living that are taught in the Book of Proverbs?
3. What great principle is enunciated in Proverbs 1:7?
4. When is a human life "eccentric"?
5. What is meant by a God-centered life?
6. What does the expression "the fear of God" mean in the Bible?
7. What will "the fear of God" keep a person from doing?
8. Why is it very necessary at the present day to stress obedience to God's commands?

9. What teaching on the subject of Prayer is found in Proverbs?

10. How do some people at the present day violate the teaching of Proverbs on the subject of prayer?

LESSON 3

SOME TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF PROVERBS, CONTINUED

The Book of Proverbs teaches that there are some things which God loves and other things which He hates. Among the things that God loves are "such as are perfect in their way"; "him that followeth after righteousness"; "a just weight"; "they that deal truly"; "the prayer of the upright." On the other hand, God hates "them that are perverse in heart"; "every one that is proud in heart"; "pride, arrogance, the evil way, the perverse mouth"; "the sacrifice of the wicked"; "diverse weights and diverse measures"; "a false witness that uttereth lies"; "he that soweth discord among brethren."

These statements as to the objects of God's love and His hatred may be summarized by stating that God loves what is in harmony with His own nature, and He hates that which is contrary to His own nature, for "he cannot deny himself." Note that this teaching on God's love and hatred differs widely from the modern popular notion that God is nothing but love. God is the moral Ruler of the universe and He must hate that which is contrary to His own nature. Were He to fail to do so, He would instantly cease to exist and the whole universe would in one instant be as if it had never been created — an impossibility, of course. The Book of Proverbs, like the rest of Scripture, presents a righteous God, a holy God, and (something that men often forget), an honest God.

Yet another prominent teaching of Proverbs concerns the sovereignty of God. This term is often misunderstood and misused today. Almost any Christian will say he believes in "the sovereignty of God". Many will go on to say that they believe that when God created man He limited Himself and that the ultimate issues of life are determined, not by the counsel of God, but by decisions of man's free will. An evangelist will say he believes in "the sovereignty of God" and then blandly add that "God's hands are tied; He can only wait for you to make your own decision." Such usage is a misuse of the term "sovereignty". The sovereignty of God does not mean merely that God is the most powerful of all beings, nor does it mean merely that God could in the abstract, if He so wished, determine what is to happen in the created universe; rather, it means that the eternal counsel or decision of God actually determines all that comes to pass in space and time. This view of the sovereignty of God is taught in the Bible, affirmed by Calvinists and denied by Arminians.

The real sovereignty of God is plainly taught in Proverbs. First, God's counsel determines what happens in an individual human life. "A man's heart

deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps" (16:9); "There are many devices in a man's heart, but the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand" (19:21). The eternal counsel of God also determines what happens on the broad field of history or world affairs: "The horse is prepared against the day of battle; but victory is of the Lord" (21:31). Moreover, the eternal counsel of God even determines the outcome of what men call "chance" happenings: "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." When a man throws a pair of dice on a table, the result of the throw was decided by God in eternity before the universe existed. When a new automobile is raffled off and goes to the holder of the ticket bearing the "lucky number", the outcome of this "chance" event was decided by God before the universe existed. Thus God's sovereignty, according to Proverbs, includes human affairs, world events, the decisions of man's free will, and even the outcome of chance happenings.

Questions:

1. Name several things that God loves, and several things that God hates, as taught in the Book of Proverbs.
2. How can we summarize the teaching of Proverbs as to the objects of God's love and His hatred?
3. How does the idea of God in Proverbs differ from the popular modern idea of God?
4. What is there that God cannot do, according to Scripture?
5. What is meant by the sovereignty of God?
6. How is the sovereignty of God often misunderstood or misrepresented at the present day?
7. Give a verse from Proverbs which teaches the sovereignty of God in the life of man.
8. What verse in Proverbs shows the operation of the sovereignty of God in the field of history?
9. What verse in Proverbs teaches that the sovereignty of God determines even the outcome of "chance" events.
10. Why is it wrong to participate in a raffle or lottery of any kind?

LESSON 4

TEACHINGS CONCERNING GODLY FAMILY LIFE

A godly family begins with a marriage in the Lord, that is, a marriage between a man and a woman who

fear God. In our day marriage has been largely secularized and also romanticized with a false glamor

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

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

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

(2) The fair but indiscreet woman. This type is vividly compared to a ring of gold in a swine's snout (11:22). The inspired text declares that mere physical attractiveness is not a proper standard for evaluation: "Grace is deceitful, and beauty is vain." Without a godly character, mere physical beauty is a snare and a delusion, as many have learned by bitter experience. Some of the wickedest women in history have been described as surpassingly beautiful physically. The famous Cleopatra of Egypt is an example. Possibly the infamous Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, was considered beautiful; at any rate her last act before she was slain by Jehu was to fix her hair-do and put on her make-up. On the other hand, some godly women in Scripture are described as beautiful. Thus Abraham described Sarah (Gen. 12:11), and thus are described Rebekah (Gen. 24:16) and Rachel (Gen. 29:17). In other words, Scripture does not discount the worth of bodily beauty; it only asserts that beauty alone, without character, is deceitful and disappointing. Beauty is the gift of God but it is meant to be the accompaniment of a beautiful character, without which it is without real value.

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

(4) The shameless, foolish woman. In Scripture the terms "fool" and "foolishness" imply moral perversity,

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

It should not be imagined that the Book of Proverbs implies that three women out of four are perverse while only one is godly and worthy. The book describes four types without implying anything as to numerical ratios. Nor should it be supposed that the Proverbs regard women alone as affected by the vices described, while men are all noble, unselfish and virtuous. A reading of the book as a whole will show the sins and faults of the male sex faithfully dealt with. But the character of the wife and mother has so much to do with making a home happy or unhappy that it is stressed in connection with this aspect of the general subject.

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

Questions:

1. How does a godly family begin?

2. How has marriage been falsely romanticized in our culture?

3. What four types of womanhood are described in Proverbs?

4. Give a verse describing the godly woman.

5. What does Scripture say about the fair but indiscreet woman?

6. When is bodily beauty of value and when is it not?

7. What does Proverbs say about the nagging type of woman?

8. Can the nagging, complaining temperament be changed?

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

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

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

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

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

LESSON 5

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A GODLY HOME

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

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

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

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

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

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

A cartoon in a religious magazine satirized this type of thinking quite effectively. It showed Cain, with his parents Adam and Eve, just after the killing of Abel. Abel is lying on the ground, wounded and bloody and obviously dead. Cain is standing nearby, a cigarette in his mouth, his left hand on his hip, and a "so what?" expression on his face. Adam is taking the whole thing very hard, and is pacing back and forth obviously having a difficult time controlling his feelings. Eve stands near

Adam and says, "Now, Adam, don't take this so hard. Cain didn't really mean anything bad by what he did. The trouble with you, Adam, is that you don't understand the younger generation and are out of sympathy with the ways of youth. This was just Cain's way of expressing his inner personality, frankly and unashamed, instead of being tied in knots by inhibitions."

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

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

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

These verses do not imply, certainly, that all correction must be physical punishment. Sometimes other forms of correction may be much wiser and better. But when verbal reproof does not result in changed conduct, something more drastic is called for. This may or may not be physical punishment, depending on the age of the child, his temperament and the nature of his

conduct. But in any case correction should be something that brings the child up sharply to face his wrongdoing and to realize that it has definitely unpleasant consequences. Nothing is more futile than overly mild correction which causes the child no real pain or deprivation.

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

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

Incidentally, the family is not a democracy in which parents and children each have one vote as to what is to be done. Of all the ridiculous extremes to which the idea of democracy has been pushed by some misguided people, this is the worst. We have read of a family where a secret ballot of parents and children was cast to determine whether the birth of another baby in the family should be permitted. In another case the father had been promoted in the business firm in which he was employed, but to accept this promotion would have to move to a distant city, and the father, mother and children each cast a secret ballot on whether the promotion should be accepted or not. The inspired author of the Proverbs never had to comment on any such absurd situation as this, but possibly we can imagine what his comments might be — that foolishness is bound up in the hearts of some adults. We believe in democracy as, on the whole, a just and effective form of government for the nation. But the home, as revealed in the Bible, is not a democracy, and children have as little right to a determinative vote in the home as they have in a national political election. According to God's Word, authority in the home is committed by God, first of all to the father, and next to him to the mother. The children, while they are minors, are subject to the authority of their parents in the Lord; they are not co-rulers of the family on a democratic basis. Even the sinless child Jesus "was subject unto" his foster father Joseph and his mother Mary (Luke 2:51). Moreover, it is psychologically harmful for children to have this democratic notion of the family structure. Children need the security which comes from knowing that they are living under a firm but loving parental authority. When this is removed, they are likely to feel insecure, with various kinds of bad reactions. Looking at the same matter in another way, parental authority is coupled

with parental responsibility. Minor children cannot participate, really, in this responsibility, nor should they be expected to. Therefore it is folly and confusion to expect them to share authority equally with their parents.

Questions:

1. Does the Bible regard sex in marriage as a blessing or a curse?
2. What kind of virtues are stressed in the description of the "worthy woman" in Proverbs 31:10-31?
3. How can we answer the claim that this description is one-sided?
4. What evidences exist to show that we are living in a consumer-minded age?
5. When is a person a social parasite?
6. What duty of children to parents is stressed in Proverbs?
7. What is wrong with the psychology that would permit free and unrestricted "self-expression" to

children and youth?

8. What are the good results of proper parental discipline?
9. Does the Bible teach that correction of children must take the form of corporal punishment?
10. If corporal punishment is not always called for, what is implied as to the duty of parental correction of children?
11. Why should children never be corrected by a parent in anger?
12. Why are moderation and love necessary in correcting children?
13. What is basically wrong with modern theories of child rearing which rule out all physical correction of children?
14. Why is it incorrect to regard the family as a democracy?
15. What harm may result to children when the family is regarded as a democracy in which parents and children share equally in all decisions?

LESSON 6

THE BLESSING AND DUTY OF HARD WORK

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

With the coming of sin, work was transformed from wholesome occupation to man-killing toil. A curse was pronounced upon the world of nature (Gen. 3:17-19) by which nature, from being man's friend, became partly man's enemy, and life became a struggle for existence. Only by hard work would human life thenceforth be possible. Man would eat bread in the sweat of his face. Though human life would be difficult, it would not be impossible: man could still "eat bread." But hard work would be needed.

From that day to this the vast majority of earth's millions of people have existed just a step or two ahead of death by starvation. With our surplus of food in America produced by modern science, technology and mass production, we tend to forget that sheer physical hunger is still a desperate problem for the majority of the world's people. Even before Communism took over, there were many, many millions of people in China who went to bed hungry every night, and untold millions of children who were pitifully undernourished. The writer

has seen men working twelve hours a day unloading eighty-pound sacks of cement on their backs, without machinery, from a ship and placing them on railway flat cars, at a wage equivalent to perhaps twenty American cents a day — just enough money to buy enough of the cheapest kind of stomach-filling food (corn meal mush or millet) to keep them alive to go through the same ordeal of labor the next day. Such people are worn out and die in what we would call middle life. The children never got the meat, milk and fruit that they needed for normal health and growth. Under Communism starvation in China is reported to be much worse than it was years ago under the old government. Conditions among the four hundred million people of India are reported to be similarly bad in many parts of India. The causes of these distressing conditions are no doubt many and complex. We are only calling attention to the fact that human life is still a struggle to prevent death by starvation, appearances in America to the contrary notwithstanding. Hard work, thus, is a desperate necessity.

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

Our natural (but sinful) tendency to rationalize our own laziness is pointed out in Proverbs 26:13, "The slothful man saith, There is a lion in the way; a lion is in the

streets." That is, if a person is just lazy, and doesn't want to work, almost anything will serve as a plausible excuse for this neglect, but the real reason is just sinful laziness. A woman took her son to see a physician because of his extreme disinclination to do any useful work. The doctor examined the boy and said, "Madam, your son is suffering from an aggravated condition of constitutional inertia," on which the boy promptly commented, "There, Mom! and you said I was just plain lazy!"

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

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

And how is leisure time expended? How many hours a week are spent idly watching television or listening to broadcasts about sporting events? We do not mean to imply that no time should be spent on such things. But are Americans — even Christian Americans — on the whole treating their free time as a trust from God, for which they will finally have to give account to the Judge of their moral life? What is the real gain in our modern technological release from toil if the new freedom is spent merely in self-indulgent idleness or

selfish pleasures? That many people know of no other ways to employ newly gained free time is itself an indictment of our culture as dying and sterile. Even apart from religious activities, there are many personality-enriching ways in which free time can be spent. Think of music, art, literature, science, history — any or all of which may become fascinatingly interesting to the person with an awakened mind. Are people intended to be mere vegetables, like turnips or cabbages? Remember the occupation assigned by God for Adam's mind to work on (Gen. 2:19,20). And think of the interesting, personality-developing hobbies that can be cultivated in one's free time, which may bring one to a new and deeper appreciation of some aspect of God's creation, and thus bring honor to the Creator! Yet people drift and vegetate, and sit by the hour watching the television. And whatever we may think of American television, certainly a great deal of it is less than personality-enriching and God-honoring material — some of it is downright silly, and some of it is sinful, presenting false goals and values to the viewer.

Questions:

1. Why is work a blessing rather than a curse?
2. What work did Adam have to do before sin entered the world?
3. What change in human work resulted from man's fall into sin?
4. What has been the economic condition of the majority of human beings from Adam to the present day?
5. What is the condition of millions of people in the Orient?
6. Give a text or texts from Proverbs showing that hard work is a duty.
7. Give a text that is an example of rationalizing laziness.
8. How is the vineyard of the lazy man described, and what lessons does it teach?
9. How has the need for toil been modified in the western world by modern science and technology?
10. How has the average American responded to the new leisure time and freedom from exhausting toil that modern science has brought?
11. How much time each week should a Christian spend watching television?
12. What God-honoring ways of spending leisure time can be suggested?

LESSON 7

WARNINGS AGAINST SOME SPECIAL TEMPTATIONS

Among many other matters, three special temp-

tations are strongly warned against in the Book of

Proverbs, and will be considered in this lesson. These are the temptations to intemperance, impurity and suretyship.

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

Other references to wine in Proverbs warn strongly against its dangers. "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging" (20:1); "at the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder" (23:32). The wild hallucinations of alcoholic delirium are graphically described in 23:33,34, "thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast." Certainly such warnings should be enough to terrify any conscientious person. In our day the problem of temperance is greatly compounded by the availability of distilled liquors with their very high alcoholic content, coupled with the persuasive advertising of these liquors which seems to meet us at every turn. Therefore if people in Solomon's day needed to beware of this type of temptation, much more is this the case at the present day.

Another terrible temptation warned against in Proverbs is that of impurity. By this we mean all sins against the seventh commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Sex was given by God to be rightly used, for man's benefit and God's glory, not to be misused. We live in a day when Biblical teachings on this subject are laughed out of court by many people as "old fashioned taboos" while lawless indulgence of sexual desires is increasingly prevalent. Dr. Kinsey's notorious books on sex behaviour confound what is average with what is normal, and purport to show that a majority of the American people are unchaste. Dr. Kinsey's method of statistical research is open to serious criticism, however. One writer has said that Kinsey's first book,

"Sex Behaviour in the American Male" should have been given the title "Sex Behaviour of Some American Men who were Willing to Talk about it", or still better "Sex Behaviour of Some Men who have no Sense of Shame." The same might be said, certainly, about his book on the sex behaviour of women. That the persons who were willing to talk to Dr. Kinsey's interviewers were really a representative cross-section of the American people is open to serious question. But even waiving this point, what is average or prevalent is not therefore normal or right. You might go into a village where the entire population was sick with malaria, and one and all would register a body temperature that would be classed as fever. This would not mean that 100 degrees Fahrenheit is a normal body temperature, nor yet that such people are healthy. In the same way, the prevalence or alleged prevalence of sexual immorality does not imply that it is right or normal, but only that a lot of people are very sinful.

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

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

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

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

Questions:

1. What three special temptations are warned against in Proverbs?

2. What may be the proper interpretation of Proverbs 31:6?

3. Why did Jesus refuse to drink the wine mingled with gall?

4. How is alcoholic delirium described, in Proverbs?

5. In what ways is the problem of temperance more difficult today than in Solomon's day?

6. What kind of personality type is likely to become an alcoholic?

7. What can Christian people do to help the type of person who uses alcohol as an escape from life?

8. How can we oppose the prevalent advertising of liquors?

9. What great error is involved in Dr. Kinsey's books on sex behaviour?

10. How has the psychology of Freud led to immorality in practice?

11. How has Biblical criticism, such as that of Wellhausen and Driver, tended to break down Christian morality?

12. What is suretyship, and why is it warned against in Proverbs?

14. Why are we not commanded to love our neighbor more than ourselves?

The End

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. Please do not send orders for books to Blue Banner Faith and Life.

ROUGH EDGES OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE, A Bible Study Guide. Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois. 1972, 64 pp. \$.95 pbk.

This little study guide was written by Nurses Christian Fellowship staff members. It is designed to help individual staff members. It is designed to help individuals and study groups face real issues in the Christian life. Such topics as insecurity, depression, loneliness, fear, anxiety and disobedience are discussed and studied. Basically, different Bible characters are studied who seem to have encountered these basic frustrations in their Christian life. Then the student is asked to search his own heart to see if these feelings are found in his life.

This study guide would be good for Junior High aged people and up. With good leadership these studies may prove useful and helpful. Of course, using Bible characters as simply examples for us to follow is not a sound way to interpret Scripture, that is why good leadership is needed if this study is used!

—Bruce R. Backensto

HIS GUIDE TO LIFE ON CAMPUS. Stephen Board and others. Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois. 1973, 127 pp. \$1.50 pbk.

Contained in this book are reprints of articles which appeared in HIS magazine. All of the articles are geared

to help the Christian college or university student live his life in Christ before a "lost community," the college community. Different authors suggest helpful hints in almost every phase of campus life. Generally, the articles are to suggest ways in which a Christian can grow in Christ while spending four years of his life away from home on a basically non-Christian campus.

This book is recommended for those students considering or attending non-Christian colleges or universities. It also would be good for those fortunate Christians attending Christian colleges to read this book as well.

—Bruce R. Backensto

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH. Wayne Mack. Mack Publishing Company, Cherry Hill, New Jersey. 1972, 84 pp. \$1.25 pbk.

Here is a book which is going to cause controversy in the 20th century; what with the women's movement which are gaining momentum even within the churches. The author takes a rather straight forward look at the texts of the Bible and what they say concerning the role of the woman. No doubt the book would be more palatable if Mack reversed the order of the two chapters in the book. It seems that more would make it through the book if he would begin with the chapter "What Women May Do in the Church" instead of the chapter "What Women May Not Do in the Church." Unfortunately, by the time the reader makes it through the "long" list of "don'ts" for the woman she finds it hard to read the "dos"—of which there are quite a few! For the women who have felt they must teach men because men just won't take responsibility Mack says the men will continue taking responsibility lightly until they are "forced" to take it by godly women who refuse to enter roles not intended for them.

The major draw-back of this book and most written on the role of the woman in the church is that they fail to speak to the single women who are in the church. Most of the "functions" of the woman are for women who are mothers or at least married. Hence, again the call must go forth for a book for the single woman and her role.

It is this reviewer's prayer that such a book would be discussed, with emotions left home, by more church groups of men and women. God's written Word speaks clearly of the role of both men and women—let's listen to His Word and ACT! This book is recommended, but maybe the chapters ought to be read in reverse order!

—Bruce R. Backensto

HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE. John B. Job (ed.). Inter-Varsity Press, London. 1972, 110 pp. \$1.95 (?) pbk.

This book is an introduction to the various methods presently being employed for studying the Bible. Some of the chapters are better than others so one must read

with a critical eye at places. However, the overall thrust of the book is helpful and well done. This book is recommended for all.

—Bruce R. Backensto

TO BE AS GOD. Bolton Davidheiser. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company. 1972, 41 pp. \$1.00 pbk.

The full title of this book is **TO BE AS GOD: THE GOALS OF MODERN SCIENCE** and it is the first of a series called the Chalcedon Papers. How is the Christian to react to such works as **Future Shock** and **Beyond Freedom and Dignity**? The behavioral psychologists would lead us to believe that man will become better as his environment and behavior are manipulated "properly", thus creating the possibility of only the "right" decisions being made. Davidheiser doesn't directly speak about **Future Shock** and Skinner's **Beyond Freedom and Dignity** but he does show the modern day humanistic scientists wish "to be as God".

This book is heartily recommended for all to read and seek to understand so as to answer such humanists who want to "play God."

—Bruce R. Backensto

LETTERS OF SAMUEL RUTHERFORD: A Selection. The Banner of Truth Trust. 1973, 206 pp. \$1.45 pbk.

It is indeed interesting to read letters written by such a well-known theologian, to see how warm and concerned for men's lives Rutherford was. One cannot help being "moved" by the compassion and sternness with which Rutherford writes to folks of all walks of life. The only hard point about the books is that the letters are in the Old English style of Rutherford's day. However, the warmth with which he writes overcomes the style which just isn't "modern". This book is well worth the \$1.45.

—Bruce R. Backensto

THE FORGOTTEN SPURGEON. Ian Murray. The Banner of Truth Trust. 1966, 254 pp. \$1.45 pbk.

Ian Murray has done a fine job of reconstructing three main issues which Charles Spurgeon addressed himself to during his life from 1834 to 1892. One indeed needs to see Spurgeon's life and his theology in light of these three issues which were: 1. The Lost Controversy, 2. Baptismal Regeneration and 3. The Down-Grade movement. The first controversy arose because Spurgeon was a faithful "Calvinist" (a term Spurgeon was not fond of hearing for he sought to preach God's Word, not a man's 'system'). The second issue arose because it seemed to Spurgeon that many Protestants were beginning to believe that a child became regenerate when baptized. The final controversy, which was fought during the last five years of his life, was over the movement to unite the Free Church denominations of those days.

One ought to buy the book and read it to find how

Spurgeon handled these controversies. Although Spurgeon was against infant baptism, and one may see why after understanding the heresy being taught by some concerning the regeneration of infants, this book is well worth the \$1.45. All preachers would do well to read this book, as well as the "listeners".

—Bruce R. Backensto

AN ALL ROUND MINISTRY. Charles Haddon Spurgeon. The Banner of Truth Trust. 1960, 396 pp. \$3.50 pbk.

This is a book addressed to ministers and students of theology. C. H. Spurgeon was one of the greatest preachers in the 19th century. The Lord used him mightily while serving as a preacher from age 17 until his death at age 57. He organized a college and trained over 800 students mainly for the pastoral ministry. These addresses were actually delivered to students and ministers. They are warm and true to the written Word of God. All who believe they are called to the preaching ministry ought to read this book as well as most pastors!

—Bruce R. Backensto

C. H. SPURGEON AUTOBIOGRAPHY: THE FULL HARVEST, Volume 2, 1860-1892. Susannah Spurgeon and Joseph Harrald (eds.). The Banner Truth Trust. 1973, 520 pp. \$7.95.

As indicated above this is not really an autobiography as C. H. Spurgeon never did write his own biography. The work was compiled by Spurgeon's wife, Susannah, and his private secretary, Joseph Harrald. Originally the "autobiography" appeared in four volumes which have been reprinted by the Banner Truth Trust in two volumes. They are entitled "The Early Years" and "The Full Harvest" respectively. This is a well written biography by the two closest persons to Spurgeon, hence, it was done with the greatest care and concern for accuracy. For those who delight in reading biographies this one will warm your heart.

—Bruce R. Backensto

THINK ON THESE THINGS. John H. Skilton. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, Nutley, New Jersey. 1972, 94 pp. \$1.50.

The "things upon which we are to think" are Bible Truths for Faith and Life. John Skilton has done an excellent job of putting together these daily studies which cover a twelve week period. The devotions are Reformed and well presented. One could only wish for at least three more twelve week studies to follow these. One could not spend a \$1.50 for better devotional material. This book makes a great gift as well. It is recommended for believers of all ages.

—Bruce R. Backensto

HOW HUMAN CAN YOU GET, by Charles Martin. Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois 60515. 1973, pp. 160. \$1.75.

Nearly 3,000 years ago the psalmist asked: "What is man?" The 8th Psalm, of course, asks this question rhetorically, whereas modern man asks it searchingly, fearfully, and even arrogantly. Charles Martin gives various answers to this question through the eyes of Humanism (a collection of molecules, a naked ape, an economic animal), pointing out that Humanism fails to grasp what actually makes man human. While the author contends that the Humanist has much to say about man's potential, he speaks only through the "borrowed capital" of the Christian view of man. Martin sees the key to man's identity and purpose in what C. S. Lewis once called the "intolerable compliment" when God became man in the person of Jesus Christ.

This is not easy reading, but extremely crisp in style and clear in apologetical method, although a needed corollary to his conclusion could have shown the unbridgable chasm which ultimately separates Humanist and Christian views of knowledge and man.

—Lee P. Bittner III

THE RIGHT NAME, by W. Carl Ketcherside. Reiner Publications, Swengel, Pa. 17880, n.d. pp. 24, \$5.00.

The issue of denominations and the "names" of churches can easily degenerate into a masked sectarianism. Though speaking to issues within his own ecclesiastical background and experience ("Church of Christ"), the author's point should be well heeded by all Christians that "sectarianism is a matter of attitude and spirit. It is not necessarily a matter of where you attend or with whom you meet." (p. 24) The author fails, however, to develop the difference between the name of a church *per se* (i.e., Reformed Presbyterian Church) and the spirit of exclusiveness *per se*. The two are not necessarily synonymous, as the author seems to imply (p. 24). A church's name ought to reflect something of its doctrinal and organizational commitment, not for the sake of exclusiveness, but for corporate witness and testimony. Ultimately, a true church (i.e., denomination) is content to belong to God while the "sect" thinks that God belongs to it (p. 21).

—Lee P. Bittner III

NEW TESTAMENT QUOTATIONS FROM THE OLD, by William Heber Wright. Reiner Publications Swengel, Pa. 17880. n.d., pp. 31, \$5.00.

"The New is in the Old concealed; the Old is in the New revealed." The Reformed faith has always contended for the organic unity of Scripture attested to in the above statement. The purpose of this helpful pamphlet is to cite every Old Testament quotation within the New Testament according to the New Testament book and verse, then Old Testament quotation and reference. While the two Testaments give us one Revelation, the user of this table must be cautious not to draw conclusions from these isolated quotations alone, but from the whole of Scripture in general and the context in particular.

—Lee P. Bittner III

II CORINTHIANS AND GALATIANS, by Geoffrey B. Wilson. Banner of Truth Trust P.O. Box 652, Carlisle, Pa. 17013, 1973. pp. 173 (II CORINTHIANS); pp. 127, (GALATIANS), n.p.

Both of these commentaries are recommended to the Reformed layman and minister as suitable study aids featuring the warmth of Reformed piety while utilizing the exegetical insights of a wide range of commentators (as indicated by the useful bibliographies). This makes for a healthy balance between serious scholarship, whose aim is not mere pedantry, while, at the same time, challenging the reader to be gripped by the depths of the meaning of the text of Scripture. —Lee P. Bittner III

THE SCIENTIST AND ETHICAL DECISION, edited by Charles Hatfield. Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois 60515, 1973, pp. 176, \$2.95.

The published results of an October, 1972 conference at Ann Arbor, Michigan on "The Scientist and Ethical Decision" are an indication of the interest on the part of Evangelicals in "scientific progress." Topics deal with Christian ethics in general as they apply to all of life, and specifically, to ethics in genetics, psychology, and scientific research. While all of the essays are pertinent studies by Christians who are also involved in scientific discipline, some are more to the point than others that, essentially, the Christian scientist is called by God to preserve and articulate Biblical values in the face of a pragmatic Humanism which sees the "progress" of technology as the "golden calf" to which all scientific inquiry must bow. A varied collection of articles well worth reading with a unified warning well worth sounding.

—Lee P. Bittner III

SIGNS OF THE APOSTLES: AN EXAMINATION OF THE NEW PENTECOSTALISM, by Walter J. Chantry. Banner of Truth Trust, P.O. Box 652, Carlisle, Pa. 17013, 1973, pp. 102, n.p.

Every Christian must reckon with the claims of the neo-Pentecostal movement. In this incisively written book, the author evaluates the movement from the perspective of the finality of all Revelation, the cessation of men (Apostles) who perform miracles, and the true reviving of the Spirit in the Church as He expresses Himself in a zeal for corporate holiness and truth, rather than personal experiences and self-gratification. This book furnishes a much needed perspective and warning amidst the current maze of literature dealing with the "charismatic" movement. —Lee P. Bittner III

THE RELATION OF THE BIBLE TO LEARNING, by H. Evan Runner. 1970, pp. 167, paperback. Wedge Publishing Foundation, 229 College Street, Toronto, Ontario M5T 1R4, Canada. \$2.95.

One's opinion of the book will depend largely on one's view of "Toronto" Dooyeweerdianism, which Runner offers as the rubric explaining all of life. His con-

viction is not clearly stated from the outset, and the unsuspecting reader may easily be led into "Dooyeweerdianism."

The "Introduction" presents two noteworthy and propitious themes: the importance of recognizing that all learning derives from principles and, therefore, the intrinsic connection between Biblical principles and learning. In all this, the Word of God is still somewhat equated with the Scriptures so that the reader believes he will be told of the relationship between the propositions and teachings (with their implications) of the Bible and learning. The redefinition of the Word of God that emerges so prominently later does appear here though:

For the Word of the living God has come with its revealing light into our life, and all human life, whether men are aware of it or not, is some kind of response to that Word. (p. 14)

At this point the reader should compare the preface: ". . . the Word of God as 'Orderer' of all creation addresses itself to the totality of human experience. . ." Here the Word of God does not equal Scripture as is implied in the Introduction, and neither does Scripture equal the Word of God—that is, Scripture conceived as the propositions, and patterns set forth in those propositions, is not the Word of God, but is only about the Word of God. Also, Runner tries hard to get us to see that Law, the Word of God, is unity, and one "feels" or comes to know it "prescientifically." Thus he reduces Special Revelation to General Revelation. It would be most helpful if the reader had been forewarned more directly of Runner's unique view of the Word of God.

The same observation pertains to the use of scholarly community as a *gestalte* in God's Kingdom (p. 17). The idea of institutions arising from the Order of creation and sustaining equal ultimacy with other institutions constituted in Scripture is nowhere directly expounded in the book. However it is abundantly implied.

The author also uses "prophetic" in a rather unsatisfactory way in light of his view of the Word of God. This use begins here and is sustained throughout the book. On p. 13 he calls his readers (listeners) to "prophetic" discernment, and "prophetic" insight. In the Bible there is a real difference between prophets and teachers (I Cor. 12:28). The prophets did more than repeat and apply God's already revealed words. They were God's mouthpieces. What they said, God said. Their insight and discernment arose from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It is to be hoped that Runner does not mean we are to claim this kind of direct contact with God. It is feared, however, that he can hardly avoid it in view of his concept of the Word of God as unity, with his conviction that Truth has to do with the prescientific. Surely Christians, like the prophets, ought to cry out against the evils of the day, but they cannot have that quality of discernment and insight which led the prophets into new vistas of human

knowledge of the Word of God. Scripturally, is it not the teacher rather than the prophet who leads God's people today?

The first chapter more openly sets forth Runner's intentions. He begins by noting the problem of the fundamentalist mindset which focuses singularly on texts and does not see the patterns which the texts project. He also strikes out at the tyranny of the mindset which says "leave it all up to the experts" (he equates this mindset with most Reformed theology). Now the reader is sufficiently "boxed in" to accept his thesis; that only the "Toronto" explanation of life is truly Christian and all else is apostasy. This is most clearly stated in chapter III of the book.

It is true that theologians have sometimes become tyrannical but theology *per se* is not tyrannical. Indeed, in its various branches, theology is the study of the written Word. Perhaps Runner opposes theology because the new philosophy he offers is opposed by the result of theology—the exposition of the words and pattern (unity) of Scripture. He offers a false antithesis, or even antipathy, between the Word of God and theology. The Word is more than true theology, but not less. Now, we do not wish to defend every dictum of theologians, but only to set in proper focus their task. Runner exalts the prophetic task (which we believe ceased with the closing of the canon), the direct and immediate work of the Word revealing Truth in a flash over against the teaching task. He has made the "teaching" task the opposition (it is analytical or scientific) rather than the gift of God. This theme underlies much of what he says throughout the book. Nowhere is it expounded and shown to be the result of the "Toronto" view of the Word of God and sphere sovereignty.

Runner says ". . . we do something, then we feel that it was not 'good' and we draw back. In short, I mean by Law every Word of God by which He has subjected the creation to His Will or Rule. Law is thus nothing other than the Will of the sovereign God for His creation." (pp. 26-27). Is the Law what one experiences when he feels something is not good and therefore draws back, or is the Law that by which the sovereign God subjected the creation to His Will? That is, does one act contrary to the Law of God, feel its influence, and withdraw? Until he withdraws, is he not acting contrary to the Will of God, or Law? Is Law the rubric against and within which life moves or is Law indeed the Will of God for His creation? If Law is the Will of God for His creation, then how do we act contrary to it? It seems that Runner could profitably use the theologian's distinction between God's secret and revealed Will. The problem is more than semantics; it arises from Runner's concept of Law.

Another problem is the apparent confusion of the person and work of the Holy Spirit and the "person" and work of the Word of God. In Dooyeweerdian philosophy, all knowledge comes from God who puts the Law pattern to the heart of man and to creation so that man "knows" when that which is in his heart fits that which is in creation. Runner wants to emphasize this but con-

fuses the issue by making the Word the active agent revealing God to us rather than making God the agent using the Word, to reveal Himself. Thus he personifies the Word and confuses it with the person and work of the Holy Spirit.

The Word of God, operating as a Power in our hearts, reveals God to us, but also our own selfhood . . . (pp. 28, 29)

This lack of clarity in language is more than semantics however. It arises from a basic problem in Runner's philosophy, namely, what is the Word? It is most interesting that in a chapter where it is said that the meaning of the Word of God is the *crux* of the problem, in the entire discussion, the Word is never really defined. We are told the Word is a unity, but beyond that abstract way of putting it, we are only given hints as to the effect of the Word. Furthermore, in speaking at a Conference on Reformed thought, having implied that most Reformed definitions of the Word of God proffered to date were wrong, it is even more amazing that he does not deal with the problem, and especially with the relationship between the Word written and the unity about which he speaks. Has not the hallmark of Reformed thought been its emphasis on the relationship between the Word written and the unity of the Word? The Reformers were men who began with the words and saw the great patterns. They strove to subject all thought to the written Word. Is it not the Holy Spirit who effectually applies the Word? Is not He that Power who causes the Word to strike home? Is it not the words of the written Scripture that convey the specifics and the patterns under the enlightening power of the Spirit? Again, this is not mere semantic toying. The "Toronto" philosophy necessitates the language Runner uses and reveals itself full of problems.

Surely, to all but the "Toronto" school, Law, in Romans 7 means the Mosaic legislation, as Luther, no doubt, saw. On pages 29-30, Luther is criticized for counterbalancing Law and gospel. It might have been well at this point to have a fuller exposition of this charge, since it is quite serious. It seems to this writer, that if Luther could speak today, he would argue against what Runner says he said, as well as arguing against Runner's view of Law. Luther may have suffered from Occam's influence, but was he totally antinomian? — Only if you take "Toronto's" view of Law! If Luther meant (with Paul) that in Christ, who fulfilled the Law's requirements for us, we are free from the Law—how can one argue against that? Is that not Paul's clear teaching in Romans?

Still another problem in the chapter is Runner's exegesis of Romans 7:14ff. When Paul says the Law is holy, just and good, does he not clearly refer to the Old Testament Scriptures, that is, the Law of Moses? Runner's argument implies a distinction between Word of God and words of God, whereby the particular word is emptied of meaning being sacrificed to unity. This is clear in his treatment of Romans 7 where Law and the Dooyeweerdian concept of Law are equated. Also, he implies a distinction between Law and laws. The Law is never law, never particular, so that it can never be checked by any-

thing but Dooyeweerdian philosophy. Does not Runner offer to us a new tyranny?

Without a **true** insight into the relation of Law and self or subject one **cannot** understand the Christian religion. (*italics mine*) (p. 31)

He makes it clear that “true insight” means “Toronto insight.”

. . . I think we can go a step farther and say that a **true knowledge of the three comes as one insight**. It is not that we make analytical corrections in one “item” and then go on to adjust the other two or any such thing. (p. 32)

Does not this statement substantiate what was argued so far? Again it arises from the “Toronto” application of the Dooyeweerdian epistemological concepts to the Bible. Since all knowledge is in terms of the whole (Law patterns), if there is a sharp disjunction between knowing the wholes and speaking about the wholes then all analysis is secondary—that is, knowledge does not come from analysis but from insight. All Scriptural language, being words, is “analysis.” Knowledge is not gained by analyzing the propositions, but by being seized upon by the concepts (patterns). He presents us with an either/or when we should be talking about a both/and (provided that we rightly allow for the Holy Spirit’s work).

In chapter II, Runner begins by recapitulating chapter I, but he gives us a few more ideas. Up to this point, the careful reader has begun to suspect that the Word of God, the unity, can be known but not known. That is, one can be “aware” of it or “feel” it but not really subject it to analysis. Runner confirms this when he says:

We can never quite reach the unity, cannot put our fingers solidly on it, as is also the case with our thinking about our own selfhood. The unity is just beyond our logical grasp; yet **religiously** we are aware that the unity is there. (p. 36)

We can only know the unity as we know a person! Indeed, just as we cannot subject a person to analysis, or prove or disprove his validity (all we can do is “feel”) neither can we subject this Word to analysis, or prove or disprove its validity. A Word is no word? It cannot be known as other words or sentences. It is unknown and unknowable—inscrutable, as is the Holy Spirit. Few would deny that exhaustive knowledge of Scripture is impossible, but this is different from being inscrutable, for we can “put our intellectual fingers” on most of what is in Scripture, but we cannot “put our fingers” on a personality. Hence, all his statements regarding the nature and content of the Word of God are not rooted in the words of God in the Bible but in Dooyeweerdian philosophy. His statements approximate Biblical teaching because the philosophy arises from a mind-set strongly influenced by Biblical teaching. This definition of the Bible is not what it offers of itself nor the concept assumed by Jesus, Paul, and others. Under the “Toronto” concept of Word, how can we be “normed” by Scripture; a norm in words that can never be analyzed nor verified except by “insight”? How can I know my insight is the right insight unless I agree to follow Toronto?

On page 37, Runner says “the church and its proclamation of the Word of God is of primary importance . . .” Then he says that he is concerned about the transcendence of the Word of God. By the end of the paragraph, one is convinced (if one follows Runner) that “primary” means “able to be disregarded.” Strangely enough, this writer agrees with what Runner appears to be saying, namely, that in all areas of knowledge, the organized church alone is not the spokesman. However, “Toronto” philosophy leads Runner to put the church in an altogether opposite position which we find hard to follow. Philosophy (“Toronto” philosophy) becomes the only true source of knowing about the Word of God. This is not said but implied as follows:

- 1) The unity is the essential nature of Scripture.
- 2) You must know the unity to know the Word.
- 3) You must accept “Toronto” philosophy to know the unity.
- 4) The Church is the result of the unity/Word, working in the heart.
- 5) The Church relates only to one area of life for which it exists: faith.
- 6) The Church can only properly deal with the area of faith if it understands the “Toronto” philosophy.
- 7) The “Toronto” philosophy deals with every area of life (including “faith”) and only thus can one understand the Christian religion (including faith).

At this point, Runner’s destruction of the written Scripture emerges complete when he replaces the words with the principle of unity:

It is, indeed, in the light of our principle that we see the connection of all the details of our life, Christ, Kingdom of God, Righteousness, State, marriage, family, Covenant, Church—how they all come together into a beautiful unity. (p. 40)

By “details” he no doubt means particulars. But is it by his concept of the unknown and unknowable intuited word that the unity and relationship of these are known? Again, he has left the words of the Scripture behind and the reader must now turn to “Toronto” philosophy for the answers. Runner says:

Our lie is the placing of a **repressing** and **supplanting** statement over against God’s True Statement. (p. 43)

On the surface, this is historically reformed thought. The problem with it is what is repressed in the “Toronto”/Dooyeweerdian view of Things. As Runner argues, especially in chapter III, all but “Toronto”/Dooyeweerdianism is apostasy — compromise with non-Christian thought-forms.

Our illustration brings us to the next point, viz., that apostate men do not always agree on what they absolutize. This ought not to surprise us at all. Oneness of mind (or heart: concord), unity, community peace—these are the fruits of God’s uniting our hearts in a fellowship of faith by the **POWER** of His Word. (p. 47)

Christians do not always agree on what they absolutize either. If the Word grips us, however, says Runner, we agree!

On what basis can one argue from creation-Law? Christ and Paul are both cited as quoting Creation ordinances to prove (1) the temporaneity of Old Testament divorce legislation and (2) the subjection of womanhood to manhood. This is the basis cited for appealing to the creation Word or Truth. Two questions come to mind here. First, were not both Christ and Paul referring to the record of the creation ordinances to substantiate the fact that such things were creation ordinances? They do not argue from Toronto's wordless Word but from the written record. Second, even if this were not the case, how can we do what they did? Both Christ and Paul stood in a unique relationship epistemologically to God—one by virtue of His deity, the other by virtue of his apostleship. Unless the Holy Spirit inspires us how can we know creation ordinances?

On pages 50-51, Runner again voices disapproval of theology and theologians, as he criticizes the traditional formulations of man as body-soul. It seems that he ought to criticize Paul rather than the church, for Paul (and other Biblical writers) distinguish body and soul (I Cor. 15:51ff.; I Thes. 4:17). Of course, it may be that some who discussed the subject fell into a Greek higher-world, lower-world dichotomy, but that should hardly lead us to say either that all such writers did so, or that we need condemn such language as contrary to the Word of God. The Bible presents a type of dichotomy; the body and soul can be separated in time and space, for when one dies, his body awaits the resurrection with its renewal, while the soul goes to be with God. Are we to believe that there are two whole men?—for Runner tells us, "But each of these is the whole man." (p. 50). Ours is not Greek dichotomy, but Biblical dichotomy. It is only contrary to the Word of God of "Toronto" philosophy. Can it be clearer that he proceeds from philosophy to the text?

Central to Runner's concepts is Law. On p. 53 we read:

The Law is other than the creation, as it is other than God Himself. (p. 53)

The Law is neither Creator nor creature. Yet, when we do something wrong, we feel the Law. The Law has structure. It binds us, but we can violate it. It is within Creation, but not part of Creation. The Law is put to Creation. Certainly all of this is confusing. How can there be a third category of something that exists (you can study it, and feel it, and it is sustained throughout time) other than Creator or creature? This Law is not an attribute of God, like love, or merely an operation of God, because man can act contrary to this Law, as he is gripped by it in creation (just as he is gripped by it in the Scripture) and is urged by Runner to convert himself to this Law. Can man act contrary to the operation of God?

This third category concept also bothers the reader when he understands a little of Runner's use of the heart of man as the concentration point of life. This supratemporal heart sounds like another "third" category. It

is supratemporal and like God is eternal. Yet it is created. Created eternity has long been recognized as a Neo-Platonic non-Christian concept. In chapter III, Runner rejects the natural-supernatural distinction. He asserts that this perverse dualism informs most theology. This is true only if his analysis is true and all who hold that distinction conceive "natural" deistically as that the natural no less than the supernatural is controlled by God, in both His immanence and providence. This distinction relates to whether or not God uses means or secondary causes, and as such, is rooted in Biblical revelation.

Chapter IV repeats many of the themes so far discussed. There is, however, further development along the "all but Toronto is apostate theme." On p. 128, it appears that "Toronto" philosophy is the way to perfection and is the gospel.

The man who has seen life as religion can never again fall back into being a mere "scientific" mind. He is on his way to becoming that perfect man of God . . . That young Christian students see this is a matter of life or death for the Body of Christ in our time . . . For it is, after all, nothing but the Gospel . . . (p. 128)

Up to this point, repeated thrusts have been made against the scientific mind. There are some good insights here but they are clouded by the "Toronto"—Dooyeweerdian epistemological distinction between scientific and pre-scientific thinking. Runner is especially careful to repeatedly degrade theology (or theologism as he calls it) before his readers. All "feeling" and all "analysis" (including Scriptural exegesis) not arising from Dooyeweerdianism, is said to be "scientific." The reader also becomes aware that many well-known words (like "Gospel" and "redemption") are redefined and given meanings befitting "Toronto"—Dooyeweerdianism.

Chapter V concludes the book with a discussion of sphere sovereignty. "Toronto"—Dooyeweerdianism represents a development in what many of us know as sphere-sovereignty. First, the number of spheres is multiplied well beyond what former proponents of this view felt the Bible warranted. Second, Frame in *The Amsterdam Philosophy: A Preliminary Critique* (Phillipsburg, N.J., 1973), notes that the number, description, and arrangement of those spheres are not "natural" so that one cannot conclude they are forced upon him by the creation-Word. Third, this book seems to represent sphere-independency rather than sphere sovereignty.

Here in a nutshell is the idea of sphere sovereignty.

Sovereignty in this expression means, as you have seen, *delegated* sovereignty, and also limited sovereignty, sovereignty that is limited to a certain sphere. But it also carries the meaning of *coordinate* sovereignties. No delegated and limited sovereignty is *subordinated* to any other; each delegation of authority is directly from Christ.

The result of all this is that the number of spheres is multiplied and they are independent. Hence, Biblical material to the contrary life finds unity *only* in man's heart! Each area is independent from the other. Political par-

ties, schools, labor unions, etc., are all religious and need creeds of their own, not a creed written by "churchmen" who cannot be gripped by the Word of God in other spheres? Obviously, such a creed is fine for the church and suits its needs (if well done) but principally is not to be used elsewhere. So the Westminster Confession, for example, not only fails to exhibit an understanding of the Christian religion (it is clearly not "Toronto"—Dooyeweerdian), but what it does say is ecclesiastical rather than Biblical. That is, it (and other such creeds or catechisms) exhibits the analytical application of the Word to the area of faith but does not go beyond that! Many of us believe that the Confessions, with all their inadequacies, summarize the teachings of Scripture and are "life" or "heart" confessions, rather than ecclesiastical confessions.

Another result of this concept of sphere-independency is that the relationship between spheres of life as delineated in the Bible is destroyed. Throughout the book, the reader sees the organized church receive a barrage of criticism and disparagement. Now we see why, Biblically, the organized church is the only institution established by Christ to carry on His Kingdom. Other institutions are mentioned (family and state), and others may arise, but none hold the position of the church. Paul and others neither established nor tried to establish schools, labor parties, etc. These are not wrong, but it is wrong to put them in equal position with Christ's Kingdom program. "Toronto"—Dooyeweerdianism does just that and destroys the true place and role of the organized church.

—Leonard J. Coppes

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THY WORD

Thy Word is like a garden, Lord,
With flowers bright and fair;
And every one who seeks may pluck
A lovely cluster there.
Thy Word is like a deep, deep mine;
And jewels rich and rare
Are hidden in the mighty depths
For every searcher there.

Thy Word is like a starry host,
A thousand rays of light
Are seen to guide the traveler,
And make his pathway bright.
Thy Word is like an armory,
Where soldiers may repair,
And find for life's long battle-day
All needful weapons there.

Oh, may I love Thy precious Word;
May I explore the mine;
May I its fragrant flowers glean;
May light upon me shine.
Oh, may I find my armor there;
Thy Word my trusty sword,
I'll learn to fight with every foe
The battle of the Lord.

—Author Unknown

NONE OTHER LAMB

By Christina G. Rossetti

None other Lamb, none other Name,
None other Hope in heaven or earth or sea,
None other Hiding-place from guilt and shame,
None beside Thee.

My faith burns low, my hope burns low
Only my heart's desire cries out in me
By the deep thunder of its want and woe
Cries out to Thee.

Lord, Thou art Life tho' I be dead,
Love's Fire Thou art, however cold I be:
Nor heaven have I, nor place to lay my head,
Nor home, but Thee.

Let the doctrine of atonement never grow stale, but
let it have dew upon it for our souls.

—C. H. Spurgeon

JEHOVAH TSIDKENU The Lord Our Righteousness

I once was a stranger to grace and to God,
I knew not my danger, and felt not my load;
Though friends spoke in rapture of Christ on the tree,
Jehovah Tsidkenu was nothing to me.

I oft read with pleasure, to soothe or engage,
Isaiah's wild measure and John's simple page;
But e'en when they pictured the blood-sprinkled tree,
Jehovah Tsidkenu seemed nothing to me.

Like tears from the daughters of Zion that roll,
I wept when the waters went over His soul;
Yet thought not that my sins had nailed to the tree
Jehovah Tsidkenu — 'twas nothing to me.

When free grace awoke me, by light from on high,
Then legal fears shook me, I trembled to die;
No refuge, no safety in self could I see —
Jehovah Tsidkenu my Saviour must be.

My terrors all vanished before the sweet name;
My guilty fears banished, with boldness I came
To drink at the fountain, life-giving and free —
Jehovah Tsidkenu is all things to me.

Jehovah Tsidkenu! my treasure and boast,
Jehovah Tsidkenu! I ne'er can be lost;
In Thee I shall conquer by flood and by field —
My cable, my anchor, my breastplate and shield!

Even treading the valley, the shadow of death,
This watchword shall rally my faltering breath;
For while from life's fever my God sets me free,
Jehovah Tsidkenu my death-song shall be.
—Robert Murray McCheyne

Lord, grant us eyes to see, and ears to hear
And souls to love, and minds to understand,
And confidence of hope, and filial fear. . . .
Lord, grant us what Thou wilt, and what Thou wilt
Deny, and fold us in Thy peaceful fold;
Not as the world gives, give to us Thine own;
Inbuild us where Jerusalem is built
With walls of jasper, and with streets of gold,
And Thou, Thyself, Lord Christ, the corner-stone.
—Christina G. Rossetti

The impulse to pray, within our hearts, is evidence
that Christ is urging our claims in heaven.

—Dr. A. H. Strong

BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

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NUMBER 3

The Resurrection Explosion

by William A. Mahlow

The resurrection of Christ was followed by an explosion, upheaval, new life, and power. The world was never to be the same again.

Reactions varied—some were fools and slow of heart to believe; others tried to hide the fact of the empty tomb; while still others were intoxicated with joy. Eventually all the disciples were to believe, worship Christ, obey Him, and turn the world upside down.

A severe earthquake had occurred, not only geographically, but morally and spiritually. Stony hearts were broken, the dirt of sin scattered, and the sluice gates of righteousness were opened.

Soon there were men and women throughout the whole world who had new life, and who were willing to die for the One who gave it to them.

Why did all this happen, and why does it happen today where people truly believe? Because new and eternal concepts filled men's minds; new, powerful emotions filled their hearts; and their wills were bent to the will of God. **Now God was the God of the Impossible:** thirty times in the New Testament He is the God that raised Jesus from the dead. **He was now also the God of immortality:** for His Son Jesus Christ abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. **Now Christ was indeed the Son of God:** raised, as He said He would be, He was

recognized for what He was: the Lord God, King of kings, diadem of beauty, source of all wisdom and power, sovereign in His control of all things, the Saviour of sinners. No more to be known after the flesh, no longer restricted by the physical or by space, He ascended to the Father, but still promised always to be with His disciples. **Now the world no longer holds tyrannical sway over men:** mountain and earth, rock and flesh, shut doors and distance no longer have eternal hold on men. The spiritual and the eternal have come alive. **Now no longer need men be the servants of sin:** the power of sin was broken, the penalty of sin canceled, and Paul could say, "Sin shall not have dominion over you." Christ had been raised for our justification.

The world today needs a fresh experience of the effects of this explosion. Men need to be shaken free from their false concepts of God, of Christ, of the world, and of sin, they need to be set on the road to light and life through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This will come about only as men are willing to go everywhere preaching the Risen Christ.

Are you willing and ready? Do you believe?

Note: The above article is reproduced here, with grateful acknowledgment, from *The World Presbyterian Missions Newsletter*, March, 1973. —Editor

The Intermediate State

by Johannes G. Vos

The intermediate state is the state of the human soul between death and the resurrection. Scripture represents the intermediate state as provisional, constituting neither the ultimate bliss of the saved nor the ultimate doom of the lost. It forms, in effect, a transition between life within history and the ultimate life in eternity. But this basic fact is often ignored and the intermediate state of the Christian dead is spoken of in terms Scripture reserves for the life after resurrection.

All theories of "soul sleep" are excluded by the plain teachings of Scripture. The term "sleep," as a description of death, is used in the case of Christians only. It refers either to the rest of the body after death, or is used metaphorically of the soul to imply a state of peaceful rest. Scripture is clear that consciousness continues after death; "to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord" (II Cor. 5:8). As we are conscious of the body's presence in this life, we shall be conscious

of the Lord's presence in the intermediate state. That the intermediate state of the redeemed is a state of quiet rest is shown by Rev. 14:13 ("Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord . . . that they may rest from their labors. . . .") The same context says of the wicked: "they have no rest day nor night . . ." (14:11).

It is only through the instrumentality of the body that man is in touch with the earthly environment—the realm of nature and the world of human society. In the abnormal state of not having a body, the connection cannot exist. Whatever of objective reality there may be in spiritism, it cannot involve a real communication between the dead and the living. If the debated case of Saul at Endor involved a real appearing of Samuel, this must be regarded as an exception brought about by the will of God, not by the action of the woman with a familiar spirit. Between death and the resurrection, the human soul is completely separated from the physical world and from human society in this world. After death man is no longer a citizen of history.

Scripture speaks of "the spirits of just men made perfect" (Heb. 12:23) and of "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:24). In harmony with this, the Westminster Shorter Catechism affirms that "The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness. . . ." This scriptural truth rules out both the notion of purgatory and that of a second or continued probation after death. The body is not the seat of sin; yet in the instant of separation between soul and body, the process of sanctification is miraculously completed. This should not be difficult to believe, for the scriptural idea of sanctification is that it is supernatural from its very beginning (the new birth). There is no reason why God should not bring a gradual supernatural process to a sudden completion by an instantaneous supernatural act.

All tendencies to regard the intermediate state as the ideal condition are unscriptural. It is represented in Scripture as more desirable than the condition of frustration and struggle which characterizes the present life, and yet much less desirable than the completed blessedness of the resurrection. It is a "being unclothed," a being "found naked" (II Cor. 5:3,4). Paul hoped to avoid it, if possible, by living on earth until the Lord's second coming, so that he would not be "unclothed" (i.e., a disembodied soul). Man is a composite being consisting of body and soul (or mind), and both are necessary to his normal existence. The lack of the body in the intermediate state renders man in that state deficient and abnormal. In the intermediate state, man lacks something which he must have to be truly normal and completely happy; hence Scripture represents the intermediate state as a state of waiting (Rev. 6:11; Heb. 11:39,40). The complete metaphysical perfection of man comes only by the resurrection of the body and its union with the completely sanctified soul (Rom. 8:23-25; I Cor. 15:50-54).

Recent researches in the comparatively new science of parapsychology seem to indicate that the mind of

man, unlike his body, is not always necessarily geared to the time-sequence which makes up history. "Precognition, often recorded as happening spontaneously over considerable gaps of time, is now demonstrable statistically for a matter of seconds" (L. W. Grensted, *The Psychology of Religion*, New York, 1952, p. 165). There seems to be an increasing body of credible, carefully tested evidence that the principles of time-sequence and causation, which are universally valid in the physical world, are not always valid for the functioning of the mind.

Our faith, of course, is based on Scripture, not on researches in parapsychology. It may be said, however, that Scripture nowhere teaches that the time-sequence which we call history applies to other spheres of existence than the physical universe. Rather Scripture seems to imply the contrary. J. Stafford Wright has suggested that in the intermediate state, the human mind will be geared to a different kind of time-scale from that of the physical universe, though we cannot guess what it might be (*Man in the Process of Time*, Eerdmans, 1956, p. 179). Scripture indeed suggests this. The duration between their martyrdom and their resurrection is represented to the souls under the altar as "a little season" (Rev. 6:11), yet in terms of historic time it must be at least 19 centuries, possibly much more.

J. Stafford Wright further suggests that to some, at least, the resurrection may seem to come almost immediately after death, adding that this would give point to the expectation of the early Christians that the Lord's second coming would take place soon (*ibid.*). While we cannot speak positively where Scripture is silent, it seems probable that time as we know it in the present life does not exist in the intermediate state. When the soul or mind is separated from the body, clocks and calendars cease to have any relevance to the person.

Many theologians have assumed that the intermediate state is a state of progress, though as J. Stafford Wright properly points out, Scripture nowhere teaches that it is (*op. cit.*, pp. 182-3). Progress in sanctification must be incompatible with the peaceful rest of the intermediate state; this state of rest implies complete holiness.

But what about progress of other kinds: Does an infant that dies remain an infant through the intermediate state and rise as an infant at the resurrection? Scripture is silent, therefore we must be cautious. On the whole, however, the implications of Scripture seem to be against any kind of progress in the intermediate state; rather, it is represented as an interim static condition. The lack of a body would seem to imply this, in view of the fact that man's normal constitution requires a body for the development of his personality. If this be correct, it may partly explain the fact that in Scripture all the emphasis is on the resurrection rather than the intermediate state as the object of Christian hope.

In this article we have been considering principally the intermediate state of the redeemed. But what about

the lost? Scripture teaches the continued conscious existence of the wicked after death, and their suffering and woe during the intermediate state. Obviously this cannot be bodily suffering, being prior to the resurrection; therefore the plea of the rich man for water to cool his tongue (Luke 16:24) cannot be interpreted literally. It has been suggested that the wicked, being alienated from God and having no spiritual communion with him, will be tortured in the intermediate state by having desires but no body through which any of these desires could be satisfied, while the redeemed in the intermediate state will "comforted" (Luke 16:25) by

their consciousness of the presence of Christ and their spiritual communion with God. No matter how we interpret the scriptural statements about the condition of the wicked in the intermediate state, that condition must be terrible beyond our ability to imagine, and it will end only in a still more terrible doom at the resurrection.

Note: The foregoing article is reproduced here by permission of **Christianity Today**, in which it was originally published. —Editor

The Personality and Activities of Satan

Radio Station WGEV, Geneva College, Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania. Dr. J. G. Vos of the Geneva faculty is interviewed by Mr. John Beatty, a student at the college, on the subject "The Personality and Activities of Satan." Please note that this is an entirely unprepared and unrehearsed interview, and therefore it deals with Satan only in a very summary and incomplete manner.

Mr. Beatty: I want you to talk about the nature of Satan. A lot of people believe that Satan isn't a personage, he's the world system of evil, like man's evil and society's evil, and he actually isn't a fallen angel.

Dr. Vos: These same people who question the personality of Satan are only a couple of steps from questioning the personality of God. We find this also today. In C. S. Lewis's recently published book, *God in the Dock*, (published after Lewis's death) there is a piece in regard to semantic difficulties of people who say they don't believe various Christian truths. He finds that many people, when they say they don't believe in a personal God, mean by this that they don't believe God has a physical body. A student said to me in college here that she had never known that God was a person. She always thought God was "a power". I had quite a time straightening this out, but finally found what she meant by a person was a physical organism with arms and legs and nose and ears and eyes, and of course God is a spiritual being, living on a different plane of reality from the biological or physical. And the same is true of Satan. Satan is a spirit, and when we say Satan is a person this doesn't mean that he is a human, of course, and this also does not mean that he has a body. Satan may have a body of some kind, but it is not a body to us. It is nothing that is perceptible by our senses or that we could recognize as material. Now, according to the Bible, Satan is certainly a person in the sense that he has the qualities and attributes of personality. He speaks and people speak to him. He is accused of wickedness. He will be brought under judgment. He is capable of wrongdoing and of being punished for it. This all implies personality. Satan is called the father of

lies, and it is said that when he speaks a lie he speaks of his own, for he is a liar from the beginning and the father of it. This kind of language could not be used of an abstract principle or an impersonal force. It implies personality and what that involves, including consciousness, moral responsibility, a nature that can distinguish true from false and right from wrong. All this is true of persons. Human beings have personality. The animals, the sub-human creation in this world, do not have personality, but humans do. And Satan and the evil angels, as truly as God and the holy angels, are personal beings, that is, they have these qualities of self-consciousness, of will, of decision-making, of capacity for love and hate, and so forth, that go together in a package deal that we call "personality."

Mr. Beatty: But a lot of people today don't believe in demons either, because they think it is a thing of the past, a superstitious belief of the medieval period, just a part of superstition; and our skeptical, rationalistic society rejects the idea of demons controlling every evil thing that happens.

Dr. Vos: They put demons on a par with witchcraft, Halloween, and women riding across the Beaver River on Halloween on broom sticks, and this kind of foolishness. This is because they are unaware of the effects of demons by the use of their senses. I have seen people in China who claim they have seen devils. And the rationalistic or liberal type of missionary who goes to these people and says, "Now, look here, you can't have seen devils, because there aren't any devils", gets no place. "Mister, you go home to America. This is one subject we know more about than you do." What do you tell people who say they have seen devils: If you tell them Christ is stronger than the evil spirits, and has conquered them and if they will believe on Christ they can be free of fear of devils, this gets you some place, but to say rationalistically that there are no devils—this does not impress people who claim they have had experience with devils. Now this comes back, of course, to the question of authority. If the Bible is our authority, then it certainly treats demons as real.

The End of the Ages

A STUDY OF SCRIPTURE TRUTH CONCERNING THE LAST THINGS

Note: The material presented in the following series of lessons was first published in booklet form in China in 1935, with a second edition, revised and enlarged, in 1936. The booklet has now

been out of print for several years, and the author has been unable to supply copies to those who, from time to time, have requested them. In view of continued requests for copies of this material, it is published here in a revised form. — J.G.V.

LESSON I

CHRIST'S TWO COMINGS

The Word of God speaks of two comings of the Lord Jesus Christ to this world. He came once to suffer; he will come again to judge. His first coming took place nearly two thousand years ago: it is history. His second coming will take place at a time in the future unknown to men; it will be the final fulfilment of prophecy. We, who live in the interval between the two comings, look backward to the historical coming and forward to the final coming.

The Old Testament was written before the first coming of Christ; from its standpoint both the first and second coming were still far in the future. For this reason the Old Testament does not distinguish very clearly in its prophecies between the two comings of Christ. As we might look at a distant mountain range, and see the range clearly, but not distinguish clearly between two individual peaks, so the Old Testament predicts the coming of the Messiah, sometimes speaking of things which we, of the New Testament period, know pertain to his first coming, and sometimes of things which we now know pertain to his second coming. Actually approaching the mountain range, we might pass one peak, leaving it behind us, while still looking forward to the next great mountain peak. Christ's two comings are two great mountain peaks in divine revelation and in God's plan of redemption. The Old Testament looks forward to both. In Isaiah 61:1-3 occurs this prophecy of the coming of the Messiah: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of

praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called Trees of righteousness, The planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified." Now turn to Luke 4:16-21. Our Saviour opened the book of the prophet Isaiah, found the place above quoted, and read as far as the words **To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.** Then he closed the book and said **Today hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears.** Why did he stop reading at that point? Because up to that point only it was a prophecy of his first coming fulfilled that day in their ears. **The acceptable year of the Lord, or the year of Jehovah's favor** was the time of Christ's first coming. The next phase, the **day of vengeance of our God,** refers to the time of his second coming, specifically to the judgment. In Isaiah there is only a comma between the two, but in the actual fulfilment there is a period of at least 1906 years, the entire interval between the two comings.

The following are some Old Testament references to prophecies of the coming of Christ:

Already fulfilled in the first coming:

Psalm 22:1-21; Isaiah 7:14; 53:1-12; Micah 5:2.

Still to be fulfilled in the second coming:

Isaiah 11:1-10; Daniel 7:13-14; Malachi 4:1-3.

Relating equally to both comings:

Genesis 3:15; Psalm 2 (Cf. Acts 4:25ff.); Isaiah 9:1-7; 42:1-4.

Questions:

1. Of how many comings of Christ to this world does the Bible speak?
2. Why does the Old Testament not distinguish very clearly between the first and second comings of Christ?
3. Why can we who live in the New Testa-

ment period distinguish, in reading the Old Testament, between predictions of Christ's first coming and predictions of His second coming?

4. At what point did Jesus stop in reading Isaiah 61:1-3, and why did he stop at that particular point?

5. Name some Old Testament prophecies of Christ's first coming.

6. Name some Old Testament prophecies of Christ's second coming.

7. Name some Old Testament prophecies that concern Christ's coming without distinction between His first coming and His second coming.

8. What was the purpose of Christ's first coming?

9. What will be the purpose of His second coming?

LESSON II

CHRIST'S SECOND COMING SURE, PERSONAL, VISIBLE

"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". Acts 1:11.

His coming is sure: "This same Jesus . . . SHALL . . . COME."

His coming is personal: "THIS SAME JESUS, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall . . . come."

His coming is visible: "Shall so come IN LIKE MANNER AS YE HAVE SEEN him go into heaven."

There is a mighty testimony in the Scriptures to the sure, personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Unbelieving historical critics of the New Testament have been forced to admit that Jesus predicted his own coming on the clouds of heaven, while holding that he was sadly mistaken about the matter. Modernistic theology in general "spiritualizes" the prophecies of the second coming into the thin air of the vague hope of a new social order in the world and the final victory of righteousness over evil. The following excerpt from *The Christian Century*, January 9, 1935, page 53, is an example of this:

"The New Testament is full of the expectation of an early return of the Lord in power. That return did not take place in the manner expected. It has never taken place, although every generation has witnessed explicit and convinced predictions that it was about to transpire. There is no reason to believe that it will ever take place in the vivid and spectacular manner in which literalists and millenarians have insisted. Such a view is simply unconvincing in the light of the total teachings of history and the experience of the centuries.

"The reality of the 'coming of the Lord' is not in question. It is one of the certainties of the gospel disclosure. It is not a momentary episode, but a continuous experience. The Master is coming in individual life, in social transformation, in industrial and commercial response to his ideals, in national and international relations. The Lord

is coming in new revelations of his grace and his redemptive power in the church. He is coming as surely and as rapidly as we give him place in our lives and our institutions. This is the kind of 'parousia' which meets all the needs of a troubled and anxious world. Why storm the heavens for the coming of a Lord who is already here, if we but have the intelligence and the vision to perceive him at work in the thousand activities of the kingdom of God?"

This is not explaining the teachings of the Bible, but explaining them away. The modernist, having no faith in the Scriptures as the inspired word of God, feels free to take liberties with their contents, even to the extent of making plain statements mean something quite different from their grammatical, historical and altogether obvious meaning. But let the word of God speak to refute the Christian Century:

"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." (2 Peter 3:3-8). "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35). Which is right, the *Christian Century* or the Lord Jesus Christ? To those to whom the Bible is the inerrant Word of God, there can be no doubt about the absolute certainty of the Lord's personal and visible return to this earth from which He ascended nineteen centuries ago.

Again and again in Scripture, Christ's second coming is associated with the clouds of heaven, that is, of the sky. This idea occurs first in Daniel 7:13-14: "I saw in the night visions, and, be-

hold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people nations and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Note that here Daniel saw in a vision the Son of Man (that is, the Messiah), coming with the clouds of heaven.

In Matt. 24:30 we have our Lord's own prophecy of His coming on the clouds: "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." Again, before the Sanhedrin He testified (Matt. 26:64): "I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." In Rev. 1:7 the clouds are again associated with His coming, and the visibility of the event is strongly emphasized: "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen."

Twice during the life of Jesus Christ on earth the clouds of heaven are associated with the revelation of His supernatural power and glory. First, at the Transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-8), where we read (verse 5): "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." Then at the Ascension (Acts 1:6-11) we read (verse 9): "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight."

These references to clouds, and especially those of the Transfiguration and the Ascension, of course involve more than natural clouds. These clouds are of a supernatural character, and have a special meaning. A study of the subject in the Bible leads to the conclusion that the meaning of clouds, as at the Transfiguration and the Ascension, is the revelation and at the same time the concealment, of deity. The clouds indicated the presence of God Himself, the Second Person of the Trinity, as well as the First and Third Persons of the Trinity, and at the same time the clouds concealed the divine glory from the eyes of men.

When the Old Testament tabernacle was erected, a cloud indicated the presence of God and his glory (Ex. 40:34-35). At the dedication of the

temple by Solomon, God's presence and glory was again shown by a cloud (1 Kings 8:10-11). The cloud of glory, or Shekinah, in the tabernacle and temple was a manifestation of God's special presence among his people in the place where blood sacrifices were offered for sins. Jesus Christ is Immanuel, God-with-us, for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 2:9), and so he is the fulfillment of all that the temple and the tabernacle foreshadowed. During our Lord's earthly life, his estate of humiliation, his divine glory was largely hidden from human eyes, but it shone forth at his Transfiguration; and at the Ascension the cloud appeared to indicate that this person was none other than the Lord of glory come from heaven to earth and ascending into heaven again. So when it is prophesied that Christ shall come again with the clouds of heaven, it means that his coming will be supernatural, visible and glorious.

"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" (Acts 1:11). How did He go into heaven? "He was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight" (Acts 1:9). How will He come again? "Behold, he cometh with clouds" (Rev. 1:7). Heaven and earth shall pass away, but the words of Jesus Christ shall not pass away. He is coming, surely, personally, visibly.

Questions:

1. What verse of the Bible teaches with special clearness that the second coming of Christ is sure, personal and visible?
2. What view of the second coming of Christ is held by modernists, as exemplified by the Christian Century?
3. What portion of Scripture gives a specially fitting answer to the view of the Christian Century?
4. In what book and chapter of the Bible is Christ's coming first associated with clouds?
5. On what two occasions during the earthly life of Jesus Christ were clouds associated with the manifestation of His divine glory?
6. What is the significance of the clouds which appeared on these two occasions?
8. Where in the Old Testament was a supernatural cloud associated with the glory of God?
8. What is the importance of maintaining faith in a personal and visible second coming of Christ to this earth?

LESSON III

THE CHRISTIAN'S BLESSED HOPE

"Looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the Great God and our Saviour

Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13). "Set your hope perfectly on the grace that is to be brought unto you

at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:13, ARV). "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh" (Luke 21:28). "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly: Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20).

That the first of the above-cited texts of Scripture refers to Christ's second, final coming, and not to any merely spiritual coming during this present age, is shown by the use of the word "glorious". It is His coming IN GLORY that is spoken of: when He comes, it will be with the glory of the great God. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory" (Matt. 25:31). The coming IN HIS GLORY is the final, visible coming with the clouds of heaven. This appearing of Jesus Christ is declared in Scripture to be the Christian's blessed hope. While we are not to stand idly looking into heaven as the disciples did after the Lord's ascension, yet we are to set our hopes definitely on A FUTURE EVENT, and that event can only be the appearance in glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

At the time of the birth of Jesus, "there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Ghost was upon him" (Luke 2:25). The Holy Spirit led this Old Testament believer to set his heart on a future event in God's redemptive program, namely, "the consolation of Israel", meaning the appearance of the Messiah. He lived to witness what we now know was the first coming of Christ. The aged prophetess Anna on seeing the baby Jesus "gave thanks . . . unto the Lord, and spake of him to all that looked for redemption in Jerusalem (for the redemption of Jerusalem, ARV)" (Luke 2:38), that is, to all that looked forward to the appearance of the Messiah.

Because such persons as Simeon and Anna were waiting for the Lord's Anointed to appear in fulfilment of prophecy, they were the most godly and spiritual of the Jews in the time of Christ's first coming. We of the New Testament dispensation look back into history nineteen hundred years to the first coming of Christ and believe on him who died for our sins according to the scriptures (1 Cor. 15:3): that is faith. We also look forward to his glorious second coming: that is hope.

Christians suffer a great deal of heartbreak, discouragement and disillusionment when they set their hope on the wrong thing. Some have thought that by evangelism and missions the whole world would be converted to Christ, and are discouraged because the fruits of missionary effort are so pitifully meager in comparison with

the vast natural increase of the world's population. Others have hoped for a warless world in the present age, and are disillusioned by seeing treaties and peace pacts torn to shreds while the nations arm for conflict as never before. Others have thought that education and democracy would result in a better world, only to see democracy displaced by dictatorship in nation after nation, and tyranny usurp the place of freedom in many lands until the state claims ownership of men, soul and body. Still others have had visions of a new social order and the reign of righteousness on earth in the present age, only to see the old social order growing worse and worse before their eyes while iniquity bounds on every hand. It is the duty of Christians to witness against sin of every kind, personal and social, and to preach the Gospel to every creature; but the Christian's blessed hope is something quite different from the results of any of these activities. It is that complete redemption which shall come with the appearance in glory of our Saviour Jesus Christ. He has told us that when we see certain things begin to happen, we are to look up and lift up our heads because our redemption draweth nigh. Plainly the Christian's hope is to be centered on one definite future event, the Lord's coming. As we see in the world about us the signs prophesied as preceding that event, we are to realize that the time of God's next great redemptive act is approaching, and receiving from this realization new strength and courage we are to look forward in eager expectation to his appearing, saying with the beloved disciple, Amen. come, Lord Jesus!

Questions:

1. What event is called in the Bible "that blessed hope"?
2. What is the significance of the words "glory" or "glorious" in connection with predictions of Christ's coming?
3. On what future event in God's redemptive program had Simeon and Anna set their hearts?
4. Why were persons such as Simeon and Anna the most godly and spiritual of the Jews of their time?
5. What causes Christians a great deal of heartbreak and disillusionment?
6. Why is it wrong for Christians to make events within the present age the object of their ultimate religious hope?
7. What was the apostle John's attitude toward the second coming of Christ?
8. Show from the Bible that the Christian's hope is to be centered on the second coming of Christ.

LESSON IV

THE TIME OF CHRIST'S SECOND COMING UNKNOWN TO MEN

"But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only . . . Watch therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come . . . Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Matt. 24:36, 42, 44).

That these texts do not refer to any purely spiritual coming or comings of Christ during the present age is shown by the context, verse 30, which speaks of the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, and verse 31, which speaks of sending forth the angels with a great sound of a trumpet to gather the elect from one end of heaven to the other. These are events which take place once only, at the end of this age, and the coming of Christ spoken of is therefore his second coming in glory.

Note that the time of the second coming is unknown to men, for it has not been revealed by the Father. Therefore all attempts to set a date for the second coming are futile and unscriptural. **Of that day and hour knoweth no man.**

While it is impossible to set a date for the Lord's return, it is possible to know whether or not that event is drawing near. "So likewise ye, when ye see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors" (Matt. 24:33). As will be shown in the next chapter, certain signs have been prophesied as preceding the Lord's return, and the appearance of all of these signs will show Christian people that His return is near.

Our ignorance of the time of his second coming is urged by Christ as a reason for watchfulness. Since we cannot know the day and hour, we are to be always ready and watchful. The closing words of the Westminster Confession of Faith express the matter with force and clearness: "As Christ would have us to be certainly persuaded that there shall be a day of judgment, both to deter all men from sin, and for the greater consolation of the godly in their adversity; so will he have that day unknown to men, that they may shake off all carnal security, and be always watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come; and may be ever prepared to say, come,

Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen." (Chapter 33 Section 3).

Not only is the time of the Lord's coming unknown to men, but it will be a time when Christians generally do not expect His coming: "In such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Matt. 24:44). Many Christians if asked: "Do you believe the Lord's return is near?" would reply: "I do not believe so" or "I think not". But He is coming at a time when we think not. We have no right to assert positively that the Lord's coming is not near, any more than we have to try to set a date for that event. "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth" (Luke 21:34, 35). The Lord's return will come suddenly as a snare upon the world, and unspiritual Christians may be involved in this sudden astonishment because their minds are filled with earthly things. The Lord's word to all His people is: **"THEREFORE BE YE ALSO READY"** Matt. 24: 44).

Questions:

1. What texts in the Gospel of Matthew prove that the time of Christ's second coming is unknowable?
2. How can it be shown that these texts do not refer to any purely spiritual coming of Christ during the present age?
3. Why are attempts to set a date for Christ's second coming futile and unscriptural?
4. What is it possible to know concerning Christ's second coming?
5. What Christian duty is made urgent by our ignorance of the time of Christ's second coming?
6. What, according to Scripture, will be the world's general attitude toward Christ's second coming just prior to its actual occurrence?

LESSON V

THE SIGNS PRECEDING THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

"Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh; so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors (ARV, that he is nigh, even at the doors)" (Matt. 24:32, 33).

We learn of the signs preceding the second coming of Christ from the discourse on the Last Things in Matthew 24 together with the parallel passages in Mark 13 and Luke 21. The signs may be divided into three groups, as follows: (1) Those which remotely precede the second coming, and

may therefore be said to characterize nearly the whole period between the first and second comings. These are: 1. Appearance of false Christs. 2. Wars and rumors of wars. 3. Famines. 4. Earthquakes. 5. Pestilences (Luke 21.11), Concerning these signs the Lord, said **The end is not yet** (Matt. 24.6) and all these are the beginning of sorrows (Matt. 24:8).

(2) Those which more nearly precede the second coming, and may therefore be said to characterize the latter part of the period between the first and second comings. These are: 1. Persecution and slaughter of Christians. 2. Christians hated by all nations. 3. Stumbling, treachery and hatred among professing Christians (Matt. 24:10). 4. Rise of false prophets leading many astray. 5. Multiplication of iniquity. 6. The love of the many shall wax cold. 7. The Gospel preached in the whole world for a testimony to all the nations. Concerning these signs the Lord's word is: **And then shall the end come** (Matt. 24:14).

(3) Those which immediately precede the second coming, or are nearly contemporaneous with that event. These are: 1. The appearance of the Antichrist or abomination of desolation. 2. A short time of fearful tribulation. 3. Appearance of false Christs and false prophets, working miracles, who claim that the second coming has already taken place. 4. Darkening of sun and moon, stars falling, the powers of the heavens shaken. 5. Appearance of the sign of the Son of man in heaven. After predicting these signs the Lord said: **And then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory** (Matt. 24:30).

It should be noted that the disciples asked Jesus three questions (Matt. 24:3): 1. When shall these things (the destruction of Jerusalem) be? 2. What shall be the sign of thy coming? 3. What shall be the sign of the end of the world (or age)? It is plain that the disciples associated these three things in their thinking, and as their question was a triple one, Jesus' answer must be understood as dealing with all three of these matters. Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans in A. D. 70. The second coming and the end of the age have not yet taken place. We now know, what the disciples at that time did not know, that the destruction of Jerusalem and the second coming of Christ would be separated by many centuries. It is probable that Matthew 24:15:22 is a prophecy of events connected with the destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70, but as prophecy may have a multiple fulfilment, there may be a wider and more complete fulfilment of this prophecy still future.

A widely held interpretation holds that the predictions of Matthew 24, or at least the first 35 verses of the chapter, are limited, as to their fulfilment, to events which took place at the time

of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in A. D. 70. Those who wish to study a detailed exposition of the passage along that line are referred to a recent publication entitled "Matthew Twenty-four: an Exposition," by J. Marcellus Kik (Bible Truth Depot, Swengel, Pa., 1948, pp. 97, \$1.50). This book is reviewed in *The Westminster Theological Journal*, May, 1949, pages 164-167; and in *Blue Banner Faith and Life*, Oct. Dec., 1949, pages 182, 183. Mr. Kik holds that verse 34 is the key verse of Matthew 24: "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." His interpretation is that all in the chapter that precedes this statement of Jesus refers to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in A. D. 70, while the portion of the chapters that follows verse 34 refers to the second coming of Christ and the end of the world.

The Rev. Arthur W. Kuschke, Jr., in reviewing Mr. Kik's volume in *The Westminster Theological Journal*, agrees with Mr. Kik that the word "generation" in Matt. 24:34 must be taken in its natural sense as referring to "that generation of men living at the time of our Lord," but he points out that the real question concerns the meaning of the word "fulfilled" (the Greek verb is *ginomai*), and he points out that according to Trayer's *Lexicon*, this Greek verb does not necessarily mean "to be finished" but may also mean "to begin to be". Mr. Kuschke holds — rightly, we believe — that "there can be reference both to the destruction of Jerusalem and to the Second Coming in the very same verses." He cites Joseph Addison Alexander's comment on the parallel passage Mark 13:30, as follows: "the meaning of the verse before us then will be, that the contemporary generation should not wholly pass away without beholding one great cycle of fulfilment, i.e. without seeing this prophetic picture realized, as to all its essential parts, in one specific instance, although not exhausted of its whole prophetic import, which is yet to be developed in a course of ages" (*The Gospel According to Mark*, N. Y., 1858, p. 363).

There is good reason for holding that the above criticism of the view which would limit Matt. 24:1-34 to the destruction of Jerusalem is a valid criticism. We believe that some parts of that section may refer **PRIMARILY** to the destruction of Jerusalem, while other parts may refer **PRIMARILY** to the second coming of Christ. Yet we have a right to hold that the prophecy throughout deals **BOTH** with the destruction of Jerusalem **AND** with the second coming of Christ, because there is an organic connection between the two events. The one is a type, the other its antitype or complete realization. That is to say, the destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70 was a true fulfilment of Matt. 24 and a true instance of the coming of Christ and the judgment of God upon sin, **ON THE TYPICAL PLANE**, while the pro-

phesies of Matt. 24 will be not only truly fulfilled, but actually EXHAUSTED, by the second coming of Christ and associated events, at the end of this age.

Our study of the signs preceding the second coming of Christ will be continued in the next lesson of this series.

Questions:

1. Where in the Gospels do we find the great discourse of Jesus which concerns the signs preceding His second coming?
2. How may the various predicted signs be grouped or classified?
3. What three-fold question was asked of Jesus by His disciples?
4. What is the bearing of the triple char-

acter of their question on the interpretation of Jesus' discourse which followed?

5. What can be said for and against the interpretation which holds that the prophecies of Matt. 24:1-34 are limited to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans?

6. How should the word "generation" in Matt. 24:34 be understood?

7. What possible meanings does the Greek word translated "fulfilled" in Matt. 24:34 have?

8. What was Joseph Addison Alexander's interpretation of Mark 13:30, and what bearing does it have on the interpretation of Matt. 24?

9. Why can the same verses refer both to the destruction of Jerusalem and also to the second coming of Christ?

LESSON VI

THE SIGNS PRECEDING THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST (Continued)

While the nature of the various signs is for the most part quite clear, one or two require special mention. The Antichrist or "abomination of desolation" is also called in Scripture "the lawless one," "the beast" and "the man of sin." At the time of the Reformation it was common to hold that the papacy, or some one of the popes, was the Antichrist. Four hundred years have passed since Martin Luther publicly burned the pope's decree calling it "the execrable bull of antichrist," and it has become increasingly clear that while the papal system is certainly antichristian, nevertheless the prophecies point to some individual person, or possibly some collective person or institution, which has not yet appeared upon the scene of human affairs. In 2 Thess. 2:1-12 we learn concerning the "man of sin" that he is to appear before the second coming of Christ; that he will usurp to himself divine honors and worship, setting himself forth as God; that a restraining power existed in Paul's time which prevented his appearing on the scene until that power should be taken out of the way, at which time the lawless one would be revealed; that this person will work miracles by Satanic power; and finally that he will be destroyed by the Lord Jesus at his coming. No doubt Antiochus Epiphanes and Nero, as well as other persons, have foreshadowed the coming of the Antichrist and have partially fulfilled the Old and New Testament prophecies concerning him, but the final and complete fulfillment is certainly still future. From Revelation 13 it appears that the Antichrist will rule over the entire world and will persecute Christians (verse 7) and that all except the elect will worship him (verse 8); also that his power will be of relatively short duration (verse 5). In Rev. 19:19-21 we read, in highly symbolic language, of the conflict between the Antichrist and Christ at his second

coming, the end being that the Antichrist is cast alive into the lake of fire that burneth with brimstone. It is probable that from the appearance of the Antichrist, events will move with great rapidity toward the climax of the Lord's second coming. The appearance of the Antichrist will indicate to watchful Christians that the Lord's coming is very near. It will be noted that many of the signs in the first two groups are of a very general nature and capable of occurring repeatedly over long periods of time: wars, famines, earthquakes, pestilences, persecutions, for example. There is however one sign in these two groups which is of a more specific nature, and which must be fulfilled before the end can come: the Gospel must be preached in the whole world for a testimony to all the nations. This work has already been largely, though not entirely, accomplished through the extensive missionary work of the past 150 years. Christ did not say, of course, that the whole world would be converted to Christianity through the preaching of the Gospel, but that the Gospel must be preached throughout all the world for a witness to all the nations. As there are still some nations and tribes of people to whom the Gospel has never been preached, it is evident that this sign is not yet fully accomplished, and therefore that we are still in the period of the second group of signs. But in the nature of the case it will be impossible to say precisely when the Gospel has been fully preached for a testimony to all the nations (though we can definitely say that such is not the case yet), so that it will never be possible to predict the exact time when the events of the third group will appear on the horizon.

There has been much speculation as to the meaning of the appearance of the sign of the Son of man in heaven (Matt. 24:30). It is probable

that this means some very striking sign among the heavenly bodies, the exact nature of which we do not know now but which will be understood when it occurs, and which is to appear immediately before the coming of the Lord on the clouds of heaven. In this connection we should remember that a star heralded the first coming of Christ (Matt. 2:1-12).

What answer shall we give to the question: May the Lord's return take place at any time? Although many Christians believe that the Lord may come at any moment, still we feel that in the light of the Scriptures we must answer this question with a qualified No. Inasmuch as the preaching of the Gospel for a witness to all the nations is not yet completed, and the Antichrist has not yet appeared, it would seem that we are not justified in regarding the Lord's coming as imminent in the sense that it may take place at any moment. Those who believe that the Lord may come at any time distinguish between Christ's coming "for his saints" (the "Rapture") and his coming "with his saints" (the "Revelation"), holding that the first of these events will be secret so far as the world is concerned, only the Christians rising to meet the Lord in the air together with the righteous dead who have just been resurrected, and holding that these two comings are separated by a period of seven years during which time the Antichrist is in power. Believing that the "Rapture" and the "Revelation" are two aspects of one and the same event and will be contemporaneous or nearly so, we believe that the doctrine of a secret "Rapture" is without Scriptural foundation. When the Antichrist appears on the scene, however, the situation will be different. From that time on events will move rapidly (Matt. 24:34) and it will then be possible to say that the Lord will return in glory at any time, for he is to slay the Antichrist with the breath of his mouth and bring him to nought by the manifestation of his coming. But even then it will be impossible to predict the exact time of the coming.

But if it is not possible for the Lord's return to take place at any moment, then why did he command his disciples to watch and lay so much stress on the fact that they could not know the day nor the hour? It is true that the day and the hour will remain unknown to men until they actually see the Lord appearing in glory upon the clouds of heaven. But when he commanded the disciples to watch, surely he did not mean to gaze at the heavens as the disciples were rebuked for doing in Acts 1:11, but to watch for the signs of which he had told them, because when they should see ALL these things, then they could know that he was near, even at the doors; and also to be watchful as to their conduct and spiritual state.

The question has been raised, how could Paul and the other inspired apostles look forward

to the second coming as something which might take place in their lifetime, when in reality at least 1900 years were to elapse before the Lord's return. That the apostles so regarded the second coming is evident from Hebrews 10:37, James 5:7-8, 1 Thess. 4:17, 5:4, 1 Cor. 15:51-52. In answer to the above question, it may be said, first, that the apostles looked forward to the second coming as something which might take place in their lifetime, not as something which must take place in their lifetime. In the second place, that while the apostles were inspired in writing the Scriptures, they were not omniscient; some things were not revealed to them, including the time of the second coming. In the third place, while the Lord's coming could not take place until all of the signs had appeared, nevertheless the signs were of such a nature that they might all appear in any one generation of the world's history. If the Church had been faithful to Christ's Great Commission, the world would have been evangelized many centuries ago, and then the way would have been clear for the appearance of the Antichrist and the other signs of the third group. Paul in fact warned the Thessalonian Christians (2 Thess. 2:1-5) that they must not think that the day of the Lord is just at hand because it will not be, except the falling away come first, and the man of sin be revealed. So we see that the appearance of the Antichrist will be the sign that the Lord's coming is very near.

We should remember that these signs were given to us for our study in order that the day of the Lord should not overtake us as a thief (1 Thess. 5:1-5). The Lord's coming is sure, and we need to study current events in the light of the Scriptures in order to discern the signs of the times, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus **Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away** (Matt. 24:35).

Questions:

1. What was the common Protestant belief concerning the Antichrist at the time of the Reformation?
2. What is predicted concerning the "man of sin" in 2 Thess. 2:1-12?
3. What historical characters may have foreshadowed the coming of the Antichrist?
4. What is predicted concerning "the beast" in Revelation 13?
5. What does Rev. 19:19-21 say concerning the destiny of "the beast"?
6. What particular sign must be fulfilled before the Lord's second coming can take place?
7. To what extent has this sign already been fulfilled?
8. What is the probable or possible meaning

of the "sign of the Son of man in heaven" (Matt. 24:30)?

9. Why is it not correct to say that the Lord's second coming may take place at any moment?

10. What is the doctrine of the "secret Rapture" held by those who believe that the Lord may return at any moment?

11. How does 2 Thess. 2:8 show that after the appearance of the Antichrist events will move very rapidly toward the end?

12. If the Lord's return cannot take place

at any moment, why did He command His disciples to watch?

13. What was the attitude of the apostles toward Christ's second coming? Did they teach that it would take place during their lifetime, and were they mistaken in what they taught?

14. What warning did the apostle Paul give the Thessalonian Christians with reference to the time of the Lord's return?

15. Why were the signs in Matt. 24 and Luke 21 revealed to us?

LESSON VII

THE EVENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

The second coming of Christ will be immediately followed by certain events of supreme importance to all humanity of all ages. The first of these events is the resurrection of the dead. By the term "resurrection" is here meant not merely the immortality of the soul but the resurrection of the body. This doctrine is foreshadowed in the Old Testament, perhaps the clearest reference being Daniel 12:2, **And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.** In Psalm 16:10 the bodily resurrection of the Messiah is predicted, **For thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol; neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption.** What is only dimly foreshadowed in the Old Testament is very clearly revealed in the New. Jesus repeatedly predicted his own resurrection from the dead, and his resurrection, now a thoroughly attested historical fact, is the pledge of ours. The general resurrection is prophesied by Christ in John 5:28-29: **Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment.** That both the saved and the lost are to rise from the dead is also shown by Paul's words in Acts 24:15, **Having hope toward God. . . that there shall be a resurrection both of the just and unjust.** The classic passage on the resurrection of believers is 1 Cor. 15, where proof of the certainty of the resurrection is given, followed by a discussion of the nature of the resurrection body. The resurrection is definitely connected with the second coming of Christ in verse 23, **But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; then they that are Christ's, at his coming.** It may be said in passing that this text does not prove the Premillenarian contention that there are to be two resurrections, one of the righteous at Christ's coming, and another later of the wicked. The text deals with the resurrection of Christ and that of Christians only. Nothing is said about the resurrection of the wicked in the entire chapter, and of course nothing can be proved by silence.

Immediately after the resurrection, all living believers will be transformed, receiving incorruptible and glorious bodies. A whole generation of Christians, that generation living when the Lord returns, will never have to pass through the experience of death, but will be "changed" without dying. This is taught in 1 Cor. 15:51-52: **Behold, I tell you a mystery: We all shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.** So also in 1 Thess. 4:16-17 we read: **For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.** Note that the "change" includes all believers still living at the time of the Lord's return, that it follows the resurrection, that it is instantaneous, and that it does not involve death. Of course the words **The dead in Christ shall rise first** mean that the dead shall rise before the living rise in the air, not that the Christian dead will rise before the wicked dead. The comparison is between dead and living Christians, not between the righteous and the wicked.

Rev. 20:11-15 connects the resurrection with the judgment. The order of events is thus as follows: 1. The second coming of Christ. 2. The resurrection. 3. The transformation of living believers. 4. The judgment. It will be seen from Rev. 20:11-15 that the judgment is of both the righteous and the wicked. Books are opened and the dead are judged out of the things written in the books, according to their works. Judged by this standard every human being would be condemned, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. But there is another book, the Book of Life, in which no works are recorded, but only names, the names of God's elect and redeemed people. The principle of the judgment is indeed "according to their works" but God's

elect have a substitute, the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world, for their names have been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb that hath been slain (Rev. 13:8). The result of the judgment is that the wicked will be cast into the lake of fire, also called hell or the second death, and the righteous shall enter into the eternal kingdom of glory: **And these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life (Matt: 25:46).**

Questions:

1. What is the first great event which will be associated with the second coming of Christ?
2. What Old Testament passage very clearly predicts the resurrection?
3. Where in the Gospel of John is the general resurrection very clearly predicted by Jesus?
4. What chapter in Paul's Epistles gives the fullest discussion of the doctrine of the resurrection?

5. What is the order of the resurrection as given in 1 Cor. 15:23?

6. Why does 1 Cor. 15:23 not prove anything concerning a doctrine of two separate resurrections, one of the righteous and the other of the wicked?

7. What great event will take place immediately after the resurrection of the dead? What two chapters in Paul's Epistles tell of this event?

8. What will happen to those Christians still living in the world when Christ comes again?

9. What is the meaning of the expression "The dead in Christ shall rise first" in 1 Thess. 4:16?

10. What event is connected with the resurrection in Rev. 20:11-15?

11. What two kinds of "books" are involved in the Great Judgment?

12. What is the principle of the Judgment?

13. Why are Christian believers not to be condemned in the Judgment?

LESSON VIII

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

That the kingdom of God has both present and future aspects is apparent on even a superficial reading of the New Testament. When Christ said **The kingdom of God is within you (Luke 17:21)**, he spoke of the present, spiritual aspect of the kingdom, as also when he said, **There are some of them that stand here, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom (Matt. 16:28)**. When we read that **the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14:17)**, we understand that this refers to a kingdom now existing in the world, that kingdom of which God's redeemed people are the citizens. But it is equally true that the kingdom of God has a future aspect, as is shown in Dan. 2:44, **And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever**. It is plain that the kingdom here spoken of is not merely one which exists contemporaneously with and among the kingdoms of the world, but one which is eventually to supplant them completely and bring about their total destruction. As these events have not yet taken place, this is a still unfulfilled prophecy of the future kingdom of God. In Rev. 11:15 we read: **And the seventh angel sounded; and there followed great voices in heaven, and they said, The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign for**

ever and ever. This is a prophecy of the final supplanting of the nations by the eternal kingdom of God. So 2 Tim. 4:18, **The Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and will save me unto his heavenly kingdom**, clearly refers to the future. When Jesus said that to sit on his right hand and on his left in his kingdom would be given to those for whom it was prepared, it is obvious that a future kingdom is meant. Failure to recognize that the kingdom of God has both present and future aspects results in serious doctrinal perversions and errors. Perhaps the most concise statement of the matter ever made is found in the Westminster Shorter Catechism, question 102: **What do we pray for in the second petition? Answer, In the second petition (which is, Thy kingdom come) we pray, that Satan's kingdom may be destroyed; and that the kingdom of grace may be advanced, ourselves and others brought into it, and kept in it; and that the kingdom of glory may be hastened**. When we speak of the kingdom of God in relation to the second coming of Christ, it is the future kingdom of glory that is meant. The kingdom of grace is temporary (because the need for salvation from sin will cease when man is confirmed in holiness at the resurrection); the kingdom of glory will be eternal. The kingdom of grace is partial (as only a part of humanity are citizens of it); the kingdom of glory will be universal, **for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea (Isa. 11:9)**. The kingdom of grace is in the world but not of the world (John 18:36). The

kingdom of grace belongs to the present age, the kingdom of glory to the age to come. The second coming of Christ is the dividing line between the two.

It can be clearly shown from the Scriptures that the future kingdom of God will be eternal in duration. In addition to Dan. 2:44 and Rev. 11:15, quoted above (**It shall stand for ever . . . and he shall reign for ever and ever**), reference may be made to Luke 1:33. **And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end; Dan. 7:14, His dominion is an everlasting dominion, Which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.**

Questions:

1. What two aspects of the Kingdom of God, with respect to time, does the New Testament present?

2. Give some examples of texts which con-

cern the present or spiritual aspect of the Kingdom of God.

3. What passage in the book of Daniel speaks very clearly of the future aspect of the Kingdom of God?

4. How do Rev. 11:15 and 2 Tim. 4:19 speak of a future kingdom of God?

5. How does the Westminster Shorter Catechism designate the present and future aspects of the Kingdom of God (S. C. 102)?

6. In what respects do the "kingdom of grace" and the "kingdom of glory" differ?

7. Give two texts from the book of Daniel which prove that the future Kingdom of God will be eternal in duration.

8. Give a text from Revelation and one from Luke which prove that the future Kingdom of God will be eternal in duration.

LESSON IX

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD, Continued

Rev. 20:1-6 is held by premillennarian interpreters to mean a reign of Christ on earth for 1000 years after his second coming. This 1000 years' reign is called the Millennium, and the doctrine that Christ will reign on earth for 1000 years after his second coming is known as Premillennialism or Chiliasm. It is impossible to undertake a detailed interpretation of Rev. 20:1-6 here but it may be said that this passage cannot mean an earthly kingdom of 1000 years after the second coming, because: 1. John saw the **souls** of people, not their resurrected bodies. The "first resurrection," mentioned only here in the Bible, therefore is not the resurrection of the body, but a spiritual resurrection. It is said that **they lived** and that **over these the second death hath no power**, both of which things are true of the spirits of the saved in heaven; but it not said that their bodies rose from their graves. In the Greek text, "lived" and "reigned" are both the same tense (aorist), and both are qualified by the phrase "a thousand years" — they **LIVED** a thousand years, and they **REIGNED** a thousand years. "Lived" cannot mean "began to live" (i.e., were raised), any more than "reigned" can mean "began to reign". 2. What John saw was a vision of thrones and souls in heaven not anything on the earth. 3. The term "a thousand years" is as certainly a symbolic number as the **seven spirits of God** (Rev. 1:4, 3:1, 5:6), the number **666** (Rev. 13:18), a **crown of twelve stars** (Rev. 12:1) **144,000 Israelites** (Rev. 7:4), **twice ten thousand times ten thousand** (Rev. 9:16), a **thousand and six hundred furlongs** (Rev. 14:30), not to mention other symbolic numbers in the Book of Revelation. For these reasons we believe that Rev. 20:1-6 speaks

of the reign of the saints in heaven with Christ during the present age, and that the 1000 years is a symbolic number covering the period from the triumph of Christianity over Roman persecution (about A. D. 325) to the time when the Antichrist will gather the nations together to persecute Christians. The rise of the Antichrist will come when Satan shall be **loosed for a little time**. Note well that the passage does not say that Satan will be bound in respect to all his activities, but only that **he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years should be fulfilled**. Of course Satan is a bodiless spirit, and cannot be bound by keys, chains and seals. God will greatly restrict his activities for a long period of time. What is meant by Satan **deceiving the nations** is made clear by the prophecy of what Satan will do as soon as he **shall be loosed out of his prison**: he will gather the nations from the four corners of the earth, the number of whom is as the sand of the sea, to **make war against Christianity**. A world wide persecution of Christians! It is obvious that such a thing has never yet taken place, the nearest approach to it being the Roman persecution from the apostolic age to the time when the emperor Constantine issued his Edict of Toleration (A. D. 311). Remember that the Book of Revelation was written just as the Roman persecution was beginning. Chapter 20 prophesies 1. The cessation of this persecution; 2. A long time of freedom from world wide attack on Christianity; 3. The resumption of the persecution on a world wide scale for a **little time** in the evening of the world's history. The reasonableness of this interpretation will be more apparent if we try to look at the prophecy through the eyes of the early

Christians who faced the bloody persecution of Rome. Truly Satan is bound today as to that sort of thing. Minor persecutions there have been, here and there, but nothing like that of ancient Rome since Constantine. The attack prophesied in Rev. 20 will be far more extensive, though briefer, than that of ancient Rome. It is this fierce, world wide attack on Christianity which Satan is now restrained from making, but which will come in the days of the Antichrist. For these reasons we do not believe that Rev. 20:1-6 prophesies a millennial kingdom on earth, and therefore are constrained to reject Premillennialism as an unscriptural error.

Questions:

1. How is Revelation 20:1-6 interpreted by premillennial scholars?
2. What is the meaning of the term "Millennium"?
3. What is meant by Premillennialism or Chiliasm?
4. What does the word "souls" in Rev. 20:4 imply concerning the nature of "the first resurrection"?

5. What can be learned from the tense of the Greek words for "lived" and "reigned" in Rev. 20:4?

6. Why is it reasonable to believe that the expression "a thousand years" in Rev. 20:1-5 is a symbolic number?

7. What probable meaning can be assigned to the symbolic expression "a thousand years" in Rev. 20:1-5?

8. What is probably meant by the binding of Satan and his being locked in the bottomless pit during the "thousand years"?

9. What will Satan do when he is released from the bottomless pit? What does this imply concerning the meaning of his being bound during the "thousand years"?

10. What terrible ordeal was appearing on the horizon of the early Christians at the time when the Book of Revelation was written?

11. What is the probable meaning of Rev. 20:1-10 with reference to the persecution of Christianity on a world-wide scale?

12. What will be the comparative duration of Satan's final attack on the Christian Church?

LESSON X

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD, Continued

At the same time we feel equally constrained to reject Postmillennialism, or the doctrine that Christ will return after a millennial kingdom, for the following reasons: 1. The signs which Christ predicted as to precede his second coming are such as could all occur in any generation of the world's history, and therefore he commanded his disciples to watch; but if Christ's second coming is to take place after a still future millenium, then he cannot come for 1000 years or a long period of time, and there is no reason for watchfulness. 2. Postmillennialism represents the kingdom of God as coming gradually through the operation of forces now at work in the world, whereas the Scriptures represent it as coming in its final form suddenly and at a definite time, the second coming of Christ. 3. Postmillennialism ignores or minimizes the prophecies of the increase of evil and wickedness during the present age. 4. The kingdom of Postmillennialism, being before the resurrection, is bound to be imperfect and marred by sin and suffering, groaning and travelling in pain, Cf. 1 Cor. 15:50, **Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God**; Postmillennialism teaches a kingdom in which men are still in their natural bodies and still capable of committing sin.

Another text which seems difficult to reconcile with the doctrine of Postmillennialism is Rom. 8:22-23: **For we know that the whole creation**

groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only so, but ourselves also, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit even we ourselves groan within ourselves waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. Creation's groaning will be silenced not by the gradual growth and extension of Christ's spiritual kingdom, but by a miracle, sudden, visible, transforming, namely the resurrection of the dead and the transformation of living believers, which will take place at the second advent of our Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing short of the resurrection of the dead will ever make this earth anything other than a place of groaning and travelling in pain. The whole creation shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God, but this will not be accomplished by forces now operating in the world, but by a sudden, supernatural intervention of God himself in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ at his glorious appearing. Biblical Christianity always has its eyes fastened on eternity because of the consciousness that only the miraculous intervention of God can bring about the hoped for consummation. Postmillennialism teaches that agencies now operating in the world, namely the Holy Spirit and the Word of God, will gradually bring about such an extension of Christ's present spiritual kingdom and such a Christianizing of society that there will be a golden age on

this earth during which the world will be filled with righteousness, and sin and evil will be reduced to relatively negligible proportions. Some Postmillennarians hold that the millennium will be a literal 1000 years and others believe that the 1000 years are symbolic of a long period of time. We believe the doctrine is an error and a perversion of the Scriptural teaching about the kingdom of God.

At the same time, we wish to make it perfectly clear that the doctrine of Postmillennialism has been held and is held today by many Bible-believing Christians, and has been advocated by some outstanding scholars, including John Bunyan, Charles Hodge and Benjamin B. Warfield. The doctrine of Postmillennialism has had a long and honorable history and there is no real reason why it should be regarded as rationalistic, modernistic or incompatible with faith in the inspiration and authority of the Bible. While the author of the present series of studies personally believes that Postmillennialism is an error, and that it is based upon faulty interpretation of the Scriptures, still it is freely and gladly recognized that many faithful Christians have held the Postmillennial view, just as it is undoubtedly true that many faithful Christians have held the Premillennial view (which the present writer also believes to be erroneous). To differ with some of our Christian brethren about particular points of Bible interpretation of course does not imply that we regard them as "modernistic" or unfaithful to Christ, nor that we in any way challenge or deny their right to hold the Postmillennial view.

In "liberal" or modernistic circles there has arisen a view which denies that Christ will ever come again in person, in bodily form, to this earth. For a sample of this type of unbelief, the student is referred to Lesson II of the present series, in this issue of the magazine, where the "Christian Century" is quoted on the subject of the second coming of Christ. It will be evident to every Bible-believing Christian that such a view is radically contrary to real Christianity, and is justly called "modernistic," "rationalistic" and "unbelieving." Many modernists who hold a similar view of the future, which reduces the second coming of Christ to a program of human progress, call their belief "Postmillennialism", though they have no real right to use this term. Because of this use of the term "Postmillennialism" to designate a view which is radically anti-Christian, some Bible-believing Christians have jumped to the conclusion that Postmillennialism is modernism and that all Postmillennialists are modernists. This is entirely unwarranted and unjust, but, like many other evils, it must be attributed to the unethical double-talk of modernists who say one thing while they mean another. This modernistic belief in human progress is not really "Postmillennialism". It would be more accurate

to call it **evolutionism**; or at any rate **Pseudo-Postmillennialism** (False Postmillennialism).

We should, therefore, be careful to make a clear distinction between the Postmillennialism of Bible-believing scholars such as Hodge and Warfield, and the Pseudo-Postmillennialism of the modernists of our day. Every genuine Postmillennialist believes that Christ will come again on the clouds of heaven in like manner as the disciples saw Him ascending into heaven. The Pseudo-Postmillennialist, on the other hand, believes that the second coming of Christ "is not a momentary episode, but a continuous experience . . . in individual life, in social transformation, in industrial and commercial response to his ideals . . .", etc., (as stated by "The Christian Century").

Whether Postmillennialism is TRUE is a question to be decided by careful study of the Bible. But we should realize that there has long been difference of opinion on the question of the Millennium among the most earnest and faithful Bible-believing Christians. Historically the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches have never attempted to make particular beliefs about the Millennium a "term of communion" or condition of membership in good standing. We believe that there must be some room for differences of view concerning details of Biblical prophecy, and that the main truth is that Christ is coming again in person on the clouds of heaven. We can rejoice together with those who cherish "that blessed hope," though we may differ with them concerning the doctrine of the Millennium. In this series of studies we are presenting what we believe to be the truth as taught in the Bible, and which we believe also to be the scheme of prophetic interpretation most in harmony with the Westminster Confession of Faith and other doctrinal standards of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. This of course must not be taken to imply that we deny to others their right to hold a different interpretation and to defend it on the basis of the Bible and the standards of the Church. We believe that Christian brethren should be able to discuss these differences freely and patiently without any unchristian attitudes toward each other.

Questions:

1. What is the meaning of the term "Postmillennialism"?
2. What is the bearing of Christ's command to watch on the doctrine of Postmillennialism?
3. What class of Bible prophecies are often ignored or minimized by Postmillennial scholars?
4. What is the bearing of 1 Cor. 15:50 on the doctrine of a Millennium before Christ's second coming?
5. What is the bearing of Romans 8:22-23, on

the doctrine of a Millennium before the resurrection of the dead?

6. According to Rom. 8:22, 23 what event will put a stop to the whole creation's groaning and travailing in pain?

7. According to Postmillennialism, what agencies will bring about the coming of the future Kingdom of God?

8. According to Postmillennialism, what conditions will exist on this earth during the Millennium?

9. Name some outstanding orthodox scholars that have held the doctrine of Postmillennialism.

10. Should differences of interpretation con-

cerning the Millennium be allowed to interfere with Christian fellowship between believers?

11. What is the prevalent liberal or modernistic idea of the second coming of Christ?

12. How has this modernistic teaching caused some people to regard the term "Postmillennialism" with suspicion? Why is this suspicion unjust?

13. What is the difference between orthodox Postmillennialism, as taught by Hodge, Warfield, etc., and the counterfeit "Postmillennialism" of modernism?

14. What is the main truth in the prophetic revelation of the Bible, upon which agreement is absolutely necessary?

LESSON XI

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD, Continued

An examination of two other passages of Scripture will throw additional light on the question of millennium, either before or after the second coming of Christ. It is a sound principle of interpretation that the more obscure and difficult passages should be interpreted in the light of those that speak more clearly; to reverse this process can lead only to confusion. It cannot be denied that Revelation 20 is a chapter of visions and symbols in a book of visions and symbols; this does not mean that we should reject it as without value, but it does mean that it should be interpreted in the light of the clearer language of the Gospels and Epistles. To start with Revelation 20, which may at first sight seem to contain the earthly millennium idea, and then to try to make the other parts of Scripture fit in with this idea, is certainly contrary to sound principles of interpretation.

The first passage we wish to cite is the Parable of the Tares and the Wheat, Matthew 13: 24-30, 36-43. This parable is particularly clear because we have our Lord's own authoritative interpretation of it. Some have misused this parable to justify the toleration of modernism and unbelief in the Church, because the householder forbade his servants to root up the tares. It should be noted, however, that the field is not the Church but the world; no matter how corrupt the world may become, the Church ought by all means and at any cost to be purified of the leaven of the Sadducees, which is rationalism. A thorough exegesis of this parable and the Lord's interpretation would require much space; we here only intend to point out a number of things in it which we believe to be incompatible with both Premillennialism and Postmillennialism.

According to this parable, the population of the world will be mixed, of righteous and wicked persons, throughout the present age, and until a

future point of time here called "the end of the world" or "the consummation of the age." Before that time there is to be no separation of the righteous from the wicked, and the latter, instead of being suppressed, or ruled with a rod of iron, are to be let alone till the time of the harvest. The time of judicial separation of the righteous from the wicked is characterized by (1) Angels segregating the wicked; (2) The wicked being cast into hell. This is not a mere suppression of the wicked, but the total and final eradication of sin and sinners from the world, and casting them into hell for eternity. In other words, there is to be no separation of the righteous from the wicked until the final separation of the Great day when the wicked shall be judged and cast into hell; thus the premillennarian idea of 1,000 years before the judgment, during which the earth will be relatively free from sin and filled with righteousness, not only is not taught in this parable, but cannot even be fitted into the parable.

The righteous cannot shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father until the wicked have been cast into hell; but Premillennialism teaches that the righteous dead will rise at the beginning of the millennium and will reign with Christ in resurrection glory throughout the 1,000 years of peace and righteousness on earth and that after all this will come the Great Judgment when the wicked will be judged and cast into hell. The parable leaves no room for these ideas.

It should be noted, too, that the "end of the world" or "consummation of the age" here spoken of is the absolute, final end of the world, because it includes the Great Judgment and the casting of the wicked into hell, after which, according to all interpretations there comes nothing but the eternal state. So the great dividing line is the Day of Judgment. After that, the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Before that, there can be no millennium of right-

eousness and peace on earth, for a millennium in which the wicked, planted by Satan, are left to grow along with the righteous, undisturbed until the Judgment, would not be a millennium of righteousness. And this parable would seem to be equally decisive against Postmillennialism, which holds that the preaching of the Gospel and the gradual extension of Christ's present spiritual kingdom will result in a state, before the Second Coming and the Judgment, in which the earth will be full of the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea. Postmillennialism presupposes the conversion of practically the entire population of the world to Christ a long time before the Second Coming and the Judgment, an idea which cannot be harmonized with the Parable of the Tares and the Wheat.

The second passage we wish to cite is 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10, **If so be that it is a righteous thing with God to recompense affliction to them that afflict you, and to you that are afflicted rest with us, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus; who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints and to be marveled at in all them that believe (because our testimony unto you was believed) in that day.**

In discussing this passage, we wish to raise two questions: (1) When will afflicted Christians receive rest? (2) What will happen at the Revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven?

This passage contains a promise of the Christian's future rest at the Lord's coming. It speaks of the Revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven as the first redemptive event on the prophetic horizon; Christians are to look forward to that Revelation as the time when, and not till when, they will receive rest from affliction. If Paul thought of a "Rapture" and "Revelation" as two distinct events, with seven years between, the Christians to be caught up in the clouds at the "Rapture," followed by the rule of the Antichrist and the Great Tribulation on earth, then why did he not say so here? Why did he not point afflicted Christians to the "Rapture" as the time when they would receive rest from affliction? Premillennialism, of the usual pre-tribulation-rapture type, teaches that the Rapture is the first event on the prophetic horizon, and that it may occur at any moment. It seems quite impossible to fit this idea into the passage before us. Therefore we conclude that the idea of a secret Rapture, and the Church being out of the world for seven years before Christ's visible second coming, is an unscriptural error. In the light of 2 Thessalonians 1:7 we answer the first question raised above by stating that Christians living on earth will receive rest from affliction at, but not before, the

"Revelation" or visible second coming of Christ in glory.

Turning to the second question, we find that three things will happen at the Revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven: (1) The angels will come with flaming fire; (2) They will render vengeance to them that know not God, etc. (3) The wicked will be cast into hell (for this is the meaning of "eternal destruction from the face of the Lord") Note that these three things will happen **AT** the Revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven, not 1,000 years later as taught by Premillennialism. Therefore we conclude that Paul not only did not know anything about a "Revelation" 1,000 years before the judgment of the wicked, but that he actually left no room in this passage for such an idea. Three events are unmistakably linked as happening at the same time. (1) The Revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven; (2) Afflicted Christians receiving relief from trouble; (3) The wicked judged and cast into hell for all eternity. These three events are separated by Premillennialism as follows:

1. Christians caught up in the clouds at the Rapture or invisible second coming, and receive relief from affliction at that time.

INTERVAL OF 7 YEARS, ANTICHRIST AND TRIBULATION

2. Revelation of Christ from heaven, binding of Satan, suppression of the wicked; the saints, risen from the dead, rule the world with Christ.

INTERVAL OF 1,000 YEARS. THE MILLENNIUM

3. Judgment of the wicked, and they cast into hell; final end of the world and beginning of the eternal state; the new heaven and new earth.

No one will persecute Christians during the supposed millennium; therefore this passage, in promising rest to afflicted Christians, must speak of a rest to be received at the end of the present so-called Church age, not at the end of a future hypothetical millennial age; and if so, then it has been demonstrated that the final judgment and punishment of the wicked will take place, not at the end of a 1,000 years' period after the Second Coming, but at the time of that Coming, the end of this age.

2 Thessalonians 1:6-10 seems as incompatible with Postmillennialism as with Premillennialism, because it leaves no room for a golden age of righteousness and peace on earth before the Second Coming of Christ. According to Postmillennialism there will be a long period before the Second Coming, during which Christianity will be supreme and nearly the entire population of the world will be Christians; but if this teaching is true, why did Paul point to the Revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven as the time when afflicted and persecuted Christians would find relief? The conclusion is inescapable that Paul not only

knew nothing of an earthly millennium, before or after the Second Coming, but that there is no place in his eschatological scheme into which such a millennium can be fitted without wresting the meaning of his words.

Questions:

1. What principle of Bible interpretation must be kept in mind in dealing with difficult portions of the Bible?

2. How does this principle apply to the interpretation of Rev. 20?

3. Why is Revelation 20 a difficult portion of Scripture to interpret?

4. Why is the Parable of the Tares and the Wheat particularly clear and understandable?

5. What wrong use has been made of this parable by some, and why is this use of it not justifiable?

6. According to the Parable of the Tares and the Wheat, what will be the character of the population of the world until "the end of the world"?

7. What is meant by "the harvest" in the Parable of the Tares?

8. When will the judicial separation of the righteous from the wicked take place?

9. What will happen to the wicked at the time of "the harvest"?

10. What is the bearing of the Parable of the Tares on the Premillennial doctrine that the wicked will be suppressed with a rod of iron for 1,000 years before the Judgment Day?

11. What must happen before the righteous can shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father? What is the bearing of this truth on the doctrine of Premillennialism?

12. What is the meaning of "the end of the world" or "the consummation of the age" in Matt. 13:39, 40?

13. What is the bearing of the Parable of the Tares on the idea of a Millennium of peace and righteousness on earth before the Judgment Day?

14. According to 2 Thess. 1:6-10, what is the first redemptive event on the prophetic horizon?

15. According to 2 Thess. 1:6-10, when will persecuted Christians on earth receive rest from their affliction?

16. What is the bearing of 2 Thess. 1:6-10, on the Premillennial doctrine of a seven year interval between the "Rapture" and the "Revelation"?

17. According to 2 Thess. 1:6-10, what three events will take place at the Revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven?

18. What is the bearing of this passage on the Premillennial teaching that the Judgment and casting the wicked into hell will not take place until a thousand years after the second coming of Christ?

19. How does Premillennialism separate the three events which 2 Thess. 1:6-10 speaks of as happening at the same time?

20. Why cannot the "rest" spoken of in 2 Thess. 1:7 not mean "rest" to be received by Christians at the end of a thousand year kingdom, or Millennium?

21. What is the bearing of 2 Thess. 1:7 on the Postmillennial teaching that Christianity will be dominant throughout the world for a long period before the second coming of Christ?

LESSON XII

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD, Continued

Rejecting all kinds of millennialism as unscriptural, we hold the Amillennian or Non-millennial view of the kingdom of God, as shown in the accompanying table, to be the true and Scriptural view. According to this view the kingdom in its perfected state comes after the resurrection; in it the redeemed will have their glorious and incorruptible bodies; they will neither marry nor be given in marriage (Matt. 22:30); the kingdom will be eternal in duration; in extent it will include the new heaven and the new earth, probably the whole universe of the starry heavens, shown by modern astronomy to be so vast as to be utterly beyond the farthest reaches of the human imagination.

The reign of Christ spoken of in 1 Cor. 15:25-28 and Matt. 28:18 is his reign as Mediator, God-

man, over the universe, and is to be carefully distinguished (1) from Christ's eternal kingship or headship over his redeemed people, the spiritual Israel; (2) from God the Father's eternal kingship or sovereignty over the entire universe. Christ is now king, as Mediator, over the universe. **For he must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet . . . The last enemy that shall be abolished is death . . . then shall the Son also himself be subjected to him that did subject all things unto him, that God may be all in all (1 Cor. 15:25-28).** The mediatorial kingship of Christ over the universe ends with the resurrection or the abolition of death. It is a kingship over men, angels, demons, heavenly spheres, all except the Father are made subject to Christ. The next to the last step in this conquest will be

the destruction of the Antichrist and his armies; the last step will be the abolition of death, or the resurrection. Then Christ's mediatorial kingship over the universe will be given up to God the Father, but Christ will continue to all eternity as the head of the redeemed human race (Luke 1:33), He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever).

COMPARATIVE TABLE OF VIEWS OF THE LORD'S COMING IN RELATION TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD

I. RATIONALISTIC VIEWS

- (1) **Unbelieving historical criticism of the New Testament:** Christ predicted that he would come again but he was mistaken and the victim of a delusion. He never will or can come again for he is dead and the supernatural does not exist.
- (2) **Modernistic Social Gospel:** Predictions in The Bible of Christ's second coming are spiritualized to mean that good will overcome evil in the world; righteousness will become supreme, there will be "a new social order" called the kingdom of God. Christ will never come again in bodily form.

II. EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN VIEWS

- (1) **Postmillennialism:** Christ will come again literally and visibly at the end of a long period, or 1,000 years, of universal or prevalent righteousness and peace on earth. The millennium comes before the second coming of Christ and is brought about by forces now at work in the world (the Word of God and the Holy Spirit), especially by missions and evangelism. During the millennium Christianity will be supreme and practically universal. Christ's coming cannot be expected for many centuries for the millennium, which is still future, must come first. At the end of the millennium there will be an outbreak of sin, followed by Christ's second coming, the resurrection, the judgment, and the eternal state.
- (2) **Amillennialism:** The kingdom will be eternal, not millennial. Christ will come again literally and visibly at the end of this age. His coming will occur when the signs predicted as preceding it have all been fulfilled. There will be a contemporaneous development of good and evil in the world, reaching its culmination just before the second coming of Christ. The second coming will be followed by the general resurrection of the righteous and the wicked, the judgment, the new heaven and the new earth, and the eternal kingdom of God.

- 3) **Premillennialism:** Christ's coming will be followed by a 1,000 year kingdom during which Christ will reign in Jerusalem over the world. The redeemed will rise from the dead at the beginning of the millennium and the wicked at the end. During the millennial kingdom wickedness will be suppressed but not eradicated. After this period there will be a rebellion against Christ which will be suppressed by fire from heaven. This will be followed by the resurrection of the wicked dead, the final judgment, the new heaven and the new earth and the eternal state.

Questions:

1. What is the "Amillennial" or Non-millennial view of the Kingdom of God, and how does it differ from the Premillennial and Postmillennial view?
2. According to the Amillennial interpretation, what will be the duration of the kingdom of God?
3. What is the reign of Christ spoken of in 1 Cor. 15:25-28?
4. From what other kingly function of Christ must the reign mentioned in 1 Cor. 15:25-28 be distinguished?
5. From what kingship of God the Father must Christ's reign in 1 Cor. 15:25-28 be distinguished?
6. When will the mediatorial kingship of Christ over the universe come to an end?
7. What will be the last event in Christ's conquest of His enemies?
8. What verse in the Gospel of Luke proves that Christ shall reign over the redeemed humanity for ever?
9. What is meant by the term "Rationalistic"?
10. What two rationalistic views of the second coming of Christ exist?
11. What is the view of unbelieving critics of the New Testament concerning Christ's second coming?
12. What is the view of the modernistic social gospel concerning the second coming of Christ and the Kingdom of God?
13. What three evangelical Christian views exist concerning the second coming of Christ in relation to the Kingdom of God?
14. Give a brief statement of the content of each of these three evangelical Christian views of the second coming of Christ in relation to the Kingdom of God.

LESSON XIII

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST AND SOCIAL REFORM

There is a fundamental distinction between what the Bible predicts and what the Bible commands. Much confusion of thought results from the failure to recognize this distinction. The Lord predicted his betrayal by Judas, **Verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me** (Matt. 26:21); that was prophecy. God had also said, **Thou shalt not kill**; that was commandment. Both statements were the word of God and both applied to Judas' action. It was certain that Judas would betray the Lord, but it was murder for him to do it, as he confessed when he said **I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood** (Matt. 27:4). Not discerning the distinction between these two parts of divine revelation, namely prophecy and commandment, some have placed great emphasis on Bible prophecy to the disparagement of all kinds of social reform work. They reason something like this: "Scripture predicts that the world will grow worse and worse, and that wickedness will increase, culminating in the man of sin, the Antichrist. Why then should we make efforts to reform this corrupt world which is hastening to judgment? The Lord will initiate the reign of righteousness when he returns." This attitude is generally characteristic of the premillennial and particularly of the dispensational school of thought. Some have gone so far as to call efforts for social reform "the devil's righteousness." Those who hold this view maintain that preaching the Gospel of salvation to individuals is all that can be done toward reforming the world or anything in it, and that the world can be Christian only to the extent that its population is composed of born again persons. Others place great stress on social reform work, to the disparagement of the whole body of Bible prophecy and the gross neglect of discerning the signs of these times. Such persons emphasize efforts directed toward the attainment of various social reforms, such as the legal prohibition of the traffic in liquor, tobacco and narcotic drugs, the abolition of child labor, civil legislation safeguarding the Lord's Day, legislation requiring the reading or teaching of the Bible in the public schools, the cultivation of international understanding and good-will, the attainment of social justice and improved relations between capital and labor, and the achievement of world peace through international negotiations and such agencies as the United Nations and the World Court. While perhaps holding the second coming of Christ as an abstract doctrine, they place that event far in the future, and it is not related in any organic way to their thinking concerning the world in which they live today. This attitude is characteristic of many Postmillennialists, and especially of those who are zealous in their advocacy of various reforms. Those who hold this view almost always believe

that the ultimate result of missions and evangelism will be the conversion of the entire population of the world to Christ and that the "Christianizing" of institutions and accomplishment of various social reforms will gradually bring in the kingdom of God.

Concerning these two viewpoints, it must be said that both are partly right and partly wrong. By combining the sound part of both attitudes, it will be possible to attain a wholesome and balanced attitude toward both our present duty and our future hope. It is right to study the prophecies of Scripture and to hope for the coming of the Lord and that perfect, eternal kingdom which flesh and blood cannot inherit; but it is wrong to do only this and neglect all efforts for social reform and all testimony for the present mediatorial kingship of Christ over the nations. Again, it is right to testify against all evils and for the Lordship of Christ in every sphere of life during the present age, but it is wrong to do only this and neglect the study of prophecy and fail to set our hope on the Lord's appearing and the eternal kingdom of God. To refuse to try to bring about needed moral reform because of Scripture prophecies is as unreasonable as the attitude of a Christian woman known personally to the writer of these notes, who badly needed a winter coat but would not purchase one because she felt sure the Lord would come before the cold weather set in. On the other hand to neglect all study of and belief in Scripture prophecy because of devotion to a present program of reform work is to cast discredit on a large portion of what the Holy Spirit has revealed in the Scriptures. The thoroughly eschatological nature of Biblical Christianity must be emphasized; it is pre-eminently occupied with hope of the things which are eternal. There is in this attitude no conflict with real Christian social and reform work, provided we do not hold eschatological errors and false expectations about the ultimate possibilities and limitations of such undertakings. Does not the Covenanter Church need a revival of eschatological interest and conviction, a deepened longing for the eternal things and a more earnest searching of the Scriptures to learn the truth about these matters? How many sermons do we hear about the Lord's second coming, the judgment, and eternity? Is it not true that many members have almost no convictions about the Lord's second coming beyond a vague opposition to Premillennialism? We are so wrapped up in the things that we are trying to do for God that we tend to forget that someday, perhaps not so far in the future, God will raise the curtain on his next great redemptive act and do things that men, even Christian men, cannot do and that we have scarcely dreamed of. Our

religion cannot be entirely made up of activity; it must also have the element of expectation, hope, waiting for God to bring about the final consummation of the world-process.

Questions:

1. Why must we distinguish clearly between what the Bible predicts and what the Bible commands?

2. How does the betrayal of Jesus by Judas illustrate the distinction between prophecies and commandments?

3. What is the attitude of those who emphasize the prophecies of the Bible while they pay but little attention to its commands?

4. What is the attitude of those who emphasize the commands of the Bible while they pay but little attention to its prophecies?

5. How can we have a balanced attitude toward our present duty and our future hope?

6. Why is it unreasonable to neglect efforts to bring about needed moral reform because of belief in Scripture prophecies?

7. Why is it wrong to neglect study of Scripture prophecies because of devotion to a present program of reform work?

8. What is the meaning of the word "eschatological" (see a dictionary)?

9. What is meant by saying that Biblical Christianity is thoroughly eschatological in nature?

10. Does our church need a revival of eschatological interest and conviction? What can be said on both sides of this proposition?

11. Why can our religion not be made up entirely of activity?

LESSON XIV

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST AND SOCIAL REFORM, Continued

Mention must be made next of a certain psychology of reform which is quite foreign to the doctrine of the Bible. This psychology or way of thinking goes today by the slogan of "Building the Kingdom." The basic idea seems to be that as the whole is equal to the sum of its parts, so the kingdom of God can be divided into a number of specific social reforms, to be accomplished one by one thus bringing in the kingdom of God gradually, until all are attained. There are Church members who appear to believe that the kingdom of God will be gained or lost with the success or failure of attempts to enact and enforce civil legislation against various evils. This psychology is unconsciously based on a Pelagian view of man and of sin. Pelagius (about A. D. 400) taught that man does not have a sinful nature but only sinful acts and habits learned by imitation from others, and therefore that no new birth or radical change of human nature is necessary; all that is needed is to give up the evil habits and begin to practice the corresponding virtues. The objection to Pelagianism is that, according to the Bible, man not only has sins but *sin*, and the root of the thing has to be taken out before man can become perfect. But *sin* (as distinguished from sins), whether in individuals or in society as a whole, will not be totally eradicated until the resurrection. Reforms may deal with sins but they cannot eradicate *sin*. Checked in one manifestation, it breaks out in other forms. **The kingdom of God cometh not by observation** (Luke 17:20), and it also comes not by the successive achievement of any number of specific reforms. If we could make a complete list of all desirable social reforms, and if in 500 years of united effort on the part of all the Christians in the world, every one of these re-

forms could be put into practice on a world wide scale, still the kingdom of God would not have come. The kingdom of God is far more spiritual and less mechanical than that. It is not a matter of legislation and statistics. A man does not become a Christian in the manner suggested by Benjamin Franklin in his Autobiography as a means of attaining perfection, by successively cultivating different virtues such as honesty, thrift, kindness, etc., until he has acquired all possible virtues. That is so-called morality, not Christianity. Believers become perfect instantaneously at their death when they pass into glory (Shorter Catechism, Q. 37); and so the world will become perfect instantaneously by our Lord Jesus Christ introducing the perfected kingdom of God at his second coming.

It is also necessary to say that the world can never be made Christian nor the kingdom of God brought in as long as the vast majority of the world's population are not believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and therefore are unregenerate persons. A sound building can only be made of sound individual bricks, and a Christian world, or the kingdom of God, can only be made up of regenerate people. For this reason all visions of a warless world in the present age are bound to fail of realization. Christian conduct, individual or social, presupposes Christian people, and as long as the vast majority of the world's population are unregenerate, so long will sinful and selfish considerations determine the policies of the nations, treaties and peace pacts to the contrary notwithstanding. It is just as impossible for nations made up largely of sinful, unregenerate persons to make up their minds to treat each other in a Christian way, as it would be for

a man with a broken leg to make up his mind to run a cross country race. Of course we should pray and work for peace, but at the same time we should not delude ourselves into thinking that **universal and permanent** peace can come in this age while the Prince of Peace is rejected by the vast majority of earth's millions.

We ought, then, to work and witness for desirable social reforms for their own sake, that is, in view of the anticipated benefits to ourselves and others from the said reforms, and the glory of God in the removal, to some extent at least, of the corresponding evils. It is obvious that any reform that is even partially accomplished may do a great deal of good in the world and eliminate much unnecessary sorrow and suffering. At the same time we should not allow ourselves to dream that "a Christian world" or the kingdom of God is attainable by such measures.

Total sanctification during the present life, otherwise known as "sinless perfection," is a doctrine held by some denominations but rejected as an error by all branches of the Presbyterian family. If not a single individual can attain sinless perfection during the present life, then how can society as a whole attain that state during the present age? Society is made up of individuals, and a perfect society (the final kingdom of God) must be made up of perfect individuals. It will indeed be so in that day when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea, but that will be after the resurrection, when the redeemed shall be confirmed in holiness and unable ever again to fall from that estate. We submit that those who believe that the kingdom of God in its final form can be attained by a series of social reforms, or even by evangelism and missions, are really holding a doctrine of sinless perfection, applied not to individuals but to society as a whole. This thing is an impossibility. Even if every individual in the whole world could be converted to Christianity, and every human institution "Christianized," still the final kingdom of God would not be here, for every Christian still has a sinful nature which may break out and lead him into sin. The kingdom of God, it is necessary to repeat, cannot be inherited by flesh and blood — by men during the present age, before the resurrection — it is found-

ed upon the resurrection and cannot be realized in its perfect and final form until after that event.

Questions:

1. What is wrong with the expression "Building the Kingdom" as commonly used by religious liberals?

2. When did Pelagius live and what were his teachings?

3. What is wrong with Pelagianism, from the Bible point of view?

4. What is meant by saying: "Reforms may deal with sins but they cannot eradicate sin"? Why is this a true statement?

5. If all desirable social reforms could be achieved on a world-wide scale, why would this not bring about the Kingdom of God in its final form?

6. What is the difference between "morality" and Christianity?

7. What was Benjamin Franklin's method of attaining perfection, as stated in his Autobiography? What was wrong with his idea?

8. When will Christian believers become perfect in holiness, and when will the world become perfect in holiness?

9. Why can people not "build the Kingdom" by a mass movement among unregenerate people, stressing such ideals as temperance, social justice and world peace?

10. Why should we pray and work for world peace?

11. Why should we work and witness for desirable social reforms?

12. Why can there not be a perfect society until there are perfect individuals to compose it?

13. If every individual in the world were to be converted to Christ, why would the final Kingdom of God still not have come?

14. What is the relation between the Kingdom of God in its final perfection and the resurrection of the dead?

LESSON XV

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST AND SOCIAL REFORM, Continued

But the error of the modern religious liberals who have hopes of bringing in what they call "the kingdom of God" (though they do not believe in the Triune God of the Bible) by what they call "the social gospel," is even more fundamental than the error of the social perfectionism mentioned above. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, **Except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God** (John 3:3). It is clearly taught

in Scripture that men become citizens of the kingdom of God by a new birth, or regeneration by the Holy Spirit. This act is always instantaneous, and it is an act of God's Spirit, in which man's spirit is passive or acted upon. One instant a man is dead in trespasses and sins; the next instant he is a new creature in Christ Jesus. Human consciousness of regeneration may come gradually, but the new birth itself is instantane-

ous. It is the beginning of a new spiritual life, and the beginning of anything cannot be a gradual process but in the nature of the case must be instantaneous. Now, a man is either born again or he is not born again, just as he is either a citizen of the United States or he is not a citizen of the United States. He is not 25% or 50% or 75% a citizen of the country; he is just a citizen or he is not. He may have taken out his first papers but he remains an alien until the moment he is declared a citizen by the court. A man may be a good citizen or a bad citizen, but still he is a citizen, or he is not. In the same way a man may be a weak Christian or a strong Christian, but still he is either a Christian or he is not, as the case may be. The use of the term "Christian" in the qualitative sense is part of the parlance of modern liberalism, as in the phrases "a Christian social order," "a Christian world", etc. The trouble is that those who talk about a Christian social order and a Christian world do not mean a society and a world made up of Christians in the old-time sense of born again, believing people, but a social order and a world which are to possess certain qualities which the liberal teachers call "Christian." Of course, the word "Christian" is never used in the Bible in this qualitative sense. While it is true that we use such terms as "Christian doctrine", "Christian education", "Christian literature", and the like, these merely designate the doctrine, education, literature, etc., which pertain to Christianity, and it is understood that these things are connected with Christian people. The modern religious liberal, however, uses the word "Christian" merely in the qualitative sense. To him a Christian is not a believer in Christ, but any person who possesses "Christian" qualities, and a person can be more Christian or less Christian, according as he possesses more or less of these qualities, and irrespective of whether or not he is born again and a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. In other words, at the bottom of this idea is the denial of John 3:3 (Except one be born anew). The liberals object particularly to the clear-cut division of humanity into those born again and those not born again, for according to their ideas a man does not need to be born again, and what they call a Christian differs from other men only in degree, not in nature. These are the ideas that underlie the "social gospel" advocated by liberal teachers; it is based on a denial of man's total depravity and of the necessity of a supernatural new birth. Permeating the "social gospel" propaganda is the error that a world made up of people who have not been born again can gradually become more and more "Christian" by the adoption of Christian attitudes, principles, etc. As explained above, we believe in working for desirable social reforms, not because the kingdom of God can be brought in this way, but because of the value and benefit of the reforms themselves and because it is our duty to oppose evil and strive after good. We believe in a social application of

the Gospel of Christ. But we reject the "social gospel", which is really a substitute for the Gospel of Christ, part and parcel, and refuse to be identified with it in any way. It is not a gospel; it is a deadly narcotic drug which lulls people off into a spiritual anaesthesia, so that they feel no need of a new birth and the cleansing blood of Calvary, but satisfy their souls by building dream castles of a perfect world founded on human qualities and attitudes. What has the Bible-believing, blood-brought Covenant Church to do with a journal like the "Christian Century" which denies the truths of Scripture in practically every issue and regards the Lord Jesus Christ as merely a great and good man who said many valuable things but also made some mistakes? Brethren, the God and the Christ they talk about are not the God and the Christ revealed in the Scriptures and in whom we have believed. The kingdom of God of which they speak is not the eternal kingdom of God for which we are longing. Their "new social order" is of the earth, earthy. Their entire program is humanistic from start to finish. Let us not lose our savor by even apparent identification with such a Christ-dishonoring propaganda.

Questions:

1. What is wrong with the liberal idea of "a Christian world" to be attained through the "social gospel"?
2. According to the Bible, what is the relation between being born again and the Kingdom of God?
3. Is regeneration, or the new birth, an act or a process?
4. In regeneration, or the new birth, is the spirit of man active or passive?
5. Is the difference between a Christian and an unsaved person an absolute difference, or is it merely a matter of degrees?
6. What is wrong with the liberals' use of the word "Christian" in a qualitative sense?
7. What is the attitude of liberalism or modernism toward the truth stated in John 3:3?
8. What is the basic error of the "liberal" "social gospel"?
9. If we reject the "liberal" idea of the "social gospel", then why should we still work for social reforms?
10. What should be the attitude of Bible-believing Christians toward books and journals which are filled with unbelief and denials of the truths of the Scriptures?
11. What is meant by saying that the "new social order" of modern liberalism is of the earth, earthy? Is this a true statement?
12. Why is it correct to say that the "social

gospel" program of liberalism is humanistic from start to finish?

13. What is the difference between the "so-

cial gospel" of modern liberalism, and a social application of the Biblical Gospel of Jesus Christ? Is it possible for us to avoid the former while we insist on the latter?

LESSON XVI

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST AND SOCIAL REFORM, Continued

Someone may say, What is the use of working for the recognition of the kingdom of Christ over the nations if the fulness of the kingdom of God cannot come until after the resurrection? Now the mediatorial kingship of Christ over the nations is one of the neglected truths of Scripture. Plainly taught in the Bible, it has been largely ignored by the main current of Christianity throughout the history of the Church. It has remained for the Covenanter Church to lift a banner of testimony for "the crown rights of Jesus Christ." Such Scriptures as Rev. 1:5, Matt. 28:18, 1 Cor. 15:25, Psalm 2:10-12, and many others, teach that Jesus Christ has, now, in the present age, been exalted by God the Father as King and Lord of all. The fact that the nations in their present state of rebellion have not as yet recognized Christ's authority does not make any difference. It is the glory of the Covenanter Church to witness to this neglected truth and to point out to the nations their duty to **kiss the Son** (Psalm 2:12) by recognizing his kingly authority and submitting to his laws, in legislation and all civil affairs.

But even if in the course of time all the nations of the world should make adequate constitutional recognition of the mediatorial kingship of Christ, still the kingdom of God would not have been attained. No doubt such world wide recognition would be attended by the greatest benefits and blessings to the human race. But sin, sorrow, suffering and death would still exist in the world, and God's people would still have to look forward to the coming of the Lord and fulness of the life eternal. Therefore we should not suppose that even world wide national recognition of Christ would bring in the kingdom of God in its final form.

Suppose, on the other hand, that the nations of the world will stubbornly refuse to recognize Christ's kingship until after his second coming. Is that any reason why we should not witness for the kingship? Some would say that if success is not obtainable we might as well drop the whole matter. This pragmatist, utilitarian view of life is quite common today but it is utterly foreign to the teachings of the Scriptures. If a thing is our duty, then we must do it, whether the results are likely to be successful or not. **Well done, good and faithful servant** is a very different thing from "Well done, good and successful servant." It is the bounden duty of the Covenanter Church to witness for Christ's kingship over the nations, and every member of the Church is bound by

oath to further this testimony and to obtain from everything contrary of it. We approved of the Church's Covenant when we were admitted as communicant members, and are bound by that Covenant just as much as if we had lifted our own right hand and sworn the oath with our own lips. Our duty is plain; the issue is with God. We are not engineers trying to remake the world; we are merely witnesses for God's truth and against human sin. If in his inscrutable purposes God has decreed that the nations shall turn a deaf ear to the testimony of his witnesses, as he decreed that Pharaoh would harden his heart against the words of Moses, that does not in the slightest degree lessen the obligation of the witnesses to testify to the whole truth. Furthermore, it will be to the glory of God at the day of judgment that those nations which have perished for their rejection of Jesus Christ have had a clear witness borne to them throughout the centuries, so that God will be **justified when he speaks, and clear when he judges** (Psalm 51:4). The prophet Isaiah, like the Covenanter Church, was commissioned by God to preach repentance to a nation, and he was **told beforehand that they would not repent or believe his message**. Read Isa. 6:8-12. God told him that the result of his preaching would be terrible divine judgment on all except a very small remnant of the people, **until cities be waste without inhabitant, and houses without men, and the land become utterly waste** (Isa. 6:11). Did Isaiah say, "What is the use of my preaching if they are sure to reject my message anyway?" He was no utilitarian. He did exactly what God commanded him to do, not because he hoped to bring about a "new social order" but because it was his duty to do it. We should go and do likewise. Even though we may recognize that it is possible that the nations will never adequately recognize Christ's kingship over them until his second coming, when **every knee shall bow and every tongue confess** to him, still our duty to testify to the crown rights of Jesus Christ remains clear and imperative. God's judgments are a great deep. We must distinguish clearly between God's commandments and his predictions, guiding our actions by the former and our hopes by the latter.

Questions:

1. If the fulness of the Kingdom of God cannot come until after the resurrection, then is there any use in working for the recognition of the kingship of Christ over the nations?
2. What has been the treatment of the doc-

trine of the mediatorial kingship of Christ over the nations by most of the churches throughout their history ?

3. What is meant by lifting a banner of testimony for "the crown rights of Jesus Christ"?

4. How does the Second Psalm teach the doctrine of the kingship of Christ over the nations?

5. How is this doctrine of Christ's kingship over the nations taught in the Great Commission, Matt. 28:18-20?

6. Give a text from Paul's Epistles that clearly teaches the mediatorial kingship of Christ over the nations.

7. Give a text from the Book of Revelation that clearly teaches the mediatorial kingship of Christ over the nations.

8. What does the kingship of Christ over the nations imply concerning the duty of the nations toward Christ?

9. Would world-wide national recognition of Christ's kingship mean that the final Kingdom of God had come?

10. What benefits might be expected to result from national recognition of Christ's kingship?

11. What evils would still exist, even after such national recognition of Christ's kingship,

which would prevent the enjoyment of the highest blessedness?

12. If the final, perfect Kingdom of God cannot be attained by national recognition of Christ's kingship, does this mean that we might as well give up the whole idea and drop the matter?

13. What is "Pragmatism" and why is it a false philosophy?

14. Why does the probability of success, or lack of probability of success, not change our obligation to do our duty?

15. What good is accomplished by a witness to divine truth which is rejected and disobeyed by the person or nation witnessed to?

16. What will be the relation between our witnessing here and now, and God's honor and glory at the Judgment Day?

17. What commission was given to the prophet Isaiah, and what was he told in advance as to the results of his prophesying (Isa. 6:8-12)?

18. Why did Isaiah obey God and bear witness to the people, since he knew in advance that his message would be rejected by the majority?

19. Should our actions be guided by God's commands or by His predictions?

20. Should our religious hope be based on God's commands or on His predictions?

LESSON XVII

THE DAWNING DAY

Many times in the old Testament occurs the phrase the last days or the latter days, referring to a remote time in the future when prophecy would be fulfilled. Micah 4:1-3 is an example of this: **But in the latter days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and peoples shall flow unto it. And many nations shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of Jehovah from Jerusalem; and he will judge between many peoples, and will decide concerning strong nations afar off: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. A glance at a concordance will show a large number of other references where the last days or the latter days are spoken of as the times when prophecy would be fulfilled.**

Turning to the New Testament, we find that

the writers of the various books are conscious that they are living in the midst of "the last days," the times prophesied of old. The last days are days of the Messiah's advent; remembering that the Old Testament does not distinguish very sharply between the first and second comings of Christ, but more generally prophesies of his coming, we see that "the last days" began with the first coming of Christ, and will continue until the eternal order of things is ushered in and onward through eternity. Thus the entire period between the two advents is properly spoken of as "the last days." This terminology seems strange to us because of the shortness of our vision. We look back through history, and think of George Washington as someone who lived a long time ago, of Charlemagne as very long ago, and of the time of Christ and the apostles as ancient history. Because we ourselves are a part of the historical process and unable to lift ourselves above it, we tend to think of ourselves as living in "modern times" and Christ and the apostles as living in "ancient times." But one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. If we would understand the Scriptures, we must familiarize our-

selves with the terminology which the Holy Spirit uses, however different it may seem from our ordinary habits of thinking. According to Scriptural terminology, when the Lord Jesus Christ was born at Bethlehem, the end of the world began. As this may seem a strange idea, Scripture proofs of it will be cited here. 1 Pet. 1:19-20, Christ: who was foreknown indeed before the foundation of the world, but was manifested at the end of the times for your sake. Heb. 1:1-2, God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days (Greek, at the end of the days, these) spoken unto us in his Son. Heb. 9:26, But now once at the end of the ages hath he been manifested to put away sin by sacrifice of himself. 1 Cor. 10:11, Now these things happened unto them by way of example; and they are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the sages are come. In these texts the times of Christ, the apostles, and the early Christians are spoken of as the end of the times, the end of the days, the end of the ages, and the ends of the ages. The Messiah, prophesied first immediately after the Fall, had come at last. The fulfilment of prophecy and had performed the first of those redemptive acts which would ultimately issue out into the eternal order of things. Everything from that time on belongs to "the end of the ages." Everything from the first advent of Jesus Christ is part of the final winding up of the world's affairs, in preparation for the world of eternity. The early Christians understood this, felt it, were saturated with its atmosphere. They lived daily in the consciousness that the world passeth away, and the last thereof (1 John 2:17), and that the permanent order of things was already being instituted, in fact that the first great act of the drama had already taken place. The end of all things is at hand (1 Pet. 4:7) was their attitude toward the present age. It was not a matter of the length of time involved. Whether a few years or a few centuries or longer, it was only a little while in the divine scheme of things. For a very little while (Greek, how little, how little), he that cometh shall come, and shall not tarry Heb. 10:37), expressed their confident expectation. The process was already under way.

We modern Christians, much to our own loss, have a different attitude and different terminology. We tend to think of the first coming of Christ as very long ago and of his second coming as far in the future. We think that if his second coming is to take place in the last days, his first coming must have been in the first days. But according to the Bible, both comings and the whole period between them are part of "the last days." This is also shown by Acts 2:16-24, where the apostle Peter first quotes a prophecy from Joel and then goes on to say that it has been fulfilled in the time between the two comings of Jesus Christ. But this is that which hath been

spoken through the prophet Joel: And it shall be in the last days, saith God, I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh . . . The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the day of the Lord come, that great and notable day: and it shall be, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. So we see that Pentecost, a few days after the ascension of Christ, was in "the last days." The same idea that the end time of the ages had already arrived occurs repeatedly in the writings of the apostle John, as for example 1 John 2:18, Little children, it is the last hour: and as ye have heard that antichrist cometh, even now have there arisen many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last hour. Rev. 1-1, 22:6, The things which must shortly come to pass. Rev. 22:10, And he saith unto me, Seal not up the words of the prophecy of this book; for the time is at hand. Compare Daniel 8:26, But shut thou up the vision, for it belongeth to many days to come. 12:4, But thou, O Daniel shut up the words and seal the book even to the time of the end. 12:9, The words are shut up and sealed till the time of the end.

Three times in the last chapter of the Book of Revelation the Lord Jesus Christ testifies concerning the nearness of his coming: verse 1, And behold, I come quickly. Blessed is he that keepeth the words of the prophecy of this book. Verse 12, Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to render to each man according as his work is. Verse 20, He who testifieth these things saith, Yea: I come quickly. Amen: come Lord Jesus.

It is the evening of history. The long, weary day of the world's sin, suffering and struggle is almost over. We do not know how many years, whether many or few, remain before the Lord shall come on the clouds of heaven, nor does it matter. The world will not continue indefinitely on its present course; it is hastening on to its consummation. Time will issue into eternity, labor into rest, faith into sight, struggle into victory. But it is even later than the evening of history; the evening and the long night have almost passed and a new day is about to break—the morning of eternity.

Questions:

1. What is the meaning of the expression "the latter days" or "the last days" which occurs frequently in the Old Testament prophets?
2. When did the "latter days" or "the last days" begin?
3. Give proof from the New Testament Epistles that the apostles and early Christians realized that they were living in "the last days."
4. What was the dominant attitude of the early Christians toward this present world?

5. Prove from the Bible that the first coming of Christ, the second coming of Christ, and the entire period between the two, are included in "the last days".

6. What solemn assurance is uttered by the Lord Jesus Christ three times in the last chapter of the Bible?

7. What reason have we for saying that the evening and the long night of human history have already passed and a new day, the morning of eternity, is about to dawn?

8. What spiritual comfort can a Christian derive from the doctrine of the second coming of Christ as revealed in the Bible?

CONCLUSION

That great Covenanter, Samuel Rutherford, after enduring great sufferings for Christ's Crown and Covenant, departed to be with the Lord in the year 1661. On the afternoon of his last day on earth he said, "Glory dwells in Immanuel's Land." This saying became the basis of a beautiful poem about the life eternal, by Mrs. Anne Ross Cousin.

This series of lessons could not close more fittingly than by quoting its nineteen stanzas.

IN IMMANUEL'S LAND

The sands of time are sinking,
The dawn of heaven breaks,
The summer morn I've sighed for,
The fair, sweet morn awakes;
Dark, dark hath been the midnight,
But dayspring is at hand,
And glory—glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land.

Oh! well it is for ever,
Oh! well for evermore—
My nest hung in no forest
Of all this earth-doomed shore;
Yea, let the vain world perish,
As from the ship we strand,
While glory—glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land.

There the Red Rose of Sharon
Unfolds its heartmost bloom,
And fills the air of Heaven
With ravishing perfume:
Oh! to behold its blossom,
While by its fragrance fann'd,
While glory—glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land.

The King there in his beauty,
Without a veil is seen;
It were a well spent journey,
Though sev'n deaths lay between;
The Lamb, with His fair army,
Doth on Mount Zion stand,
And glory—glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land.

Oh! Christ He is the fountain,
The deep sweet well of love!
The streams on earth I've tasted,
More deep I'll drink above;
There to an ocean fulness

His mercy doth expand,
And glory—glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land.

Oft in yon sea-beat prison
My Lord and I held tryst;
For Anworth was not Heaven,
And preaching was not Christ;
And aye, my murkiest storm-cloud,
Was by a rainbow spann'd,
Caught from the glory dwelling
In Immanuel's land.

But that He built a Heaven
Of His surpassing love,
A little New Jerusalem,
Like to the one above;
"Lord, take me o'er the water",
Had been my loud demand,
"Take me to love's own country,
Unto Immanuel's land".

But flow'rs need night's cool darkness,
The moonlight and the dew;
So Christ from one who loved it,
His shining oft withdrew;
And then for cause of absence
My troubled soul I scann'd —
But glory, shadeless, shineth
In Immanuel's land.

The little birds of Anworth,
I used to count them blest —
Now, beside happier altars
I go to build my nest;
O'er these there broods no silence,
No graves around them stand,
For glory, deathless, dwelleth
In Immanuel's land.

Fair Anworth, by the Solway,
To me thou still art dear,
E'en from the verge of Heaven
I drop for thee a tear.
Oh, if one soul from Anworth
Meet me at God's right hand
My Heaven will be two Heavens,
In Immanuel's land.

I've wrestled on towards Heaven,
'Gainst storm, and wind, and tide;
Now, like a weary traveler
That leaneth on his guide,
Amid the shades of evening,
While sinks life's lingering sand,

I hail the glory dawning
From Immanuel's land.

Deep waters cross'd life's pathway,
The hedge of thorns was sharp;
Now, these lie all behind me —
Oh! for a well-tuned harp!
Oh! to join Hallelujah
With yon triumphant band
Who sing, where glory dwelleth,
In Immanuel's land.

With mercy and with judgment
My web of time He wove,
And aye the dews of sorrow
Were lustered with his love.
I'll bless the hand that guided,
I'll bless the heart that plann'd,
When throned where glory dwelleth,
In Immanuel's land.

Soon shall the cup of glory
Wash down earth's bitt'rest woes,
Soon shall the desert brier
Break into Eden's rose;
The curse shall change to blessing —
The name on earth that's bann'd
Be graven on the white stone
In Immanuel's land.

Oh! I am my Beloved's,
And my Beloved is mine!
He brings a poor, vile sinner
Into His "house of wine";
I stand upon His merit,
I know no other stand,
Not e'en where glory dwelleth,
In Immanuel's land.

I shall sleep sound in Jesus,
Fill'd with His likeness rise,
To love and to adore Him,
To see Him with these eyes;
'Tween me and resurrection
But Paradise doth stand;
Then — then for glory dwelling
In Immanuel's land.

The Bride eyes not her garment,
But her dear bridegroom's face;
I will not gaze at glory,
But on my King of Grace —
Not at the crown He giveth,
But on His pierced hand —
The Lamb is all the glory
Of Immanuel's land.

I have borne scorn and hatred,
I have borne wrong and shame,
Earth's proud ones have reproach'd me
For Christ's thrice-blessed Name;
Where God's seals set the fairest
They're stamp't their foulest brand,
But judgment shines like noontide
In Immanuel's land.

They've summoned me before them,
But there I may not come —
My Lord says, "Come up hither",
My Lord says, "Welcome home!"
My kingly King at His white throne
My presence doth command,
While glory — glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land.

The night is far spent, and the day is at hand:
let us therefore cast off the works of darkness,
and let us put on the armor of light. Rom. 13:12.

Appendix

For those of our readers who may wish to study the question of the Millennium further and more thoroughly than was possible in the foregoing series of lessons, the following list of literature on the various viewpoints is presented. These books are recommended as representative of what can be said in favor of the various millennial and non-millennial interpretations of Biblical prophecy. The addresses of the publishers are as follows:

Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Michigan

Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids 2, Michigan

Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Box 185, Nutley 10, New Jersey

Bible Truth Depot, Swengel, Union County, Pennsylvania

The Judson Press, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Oxford University Press, New York, N. Y.

Evangelical Postmillennial Works

Systematic Theology, by Charles Hodge (Eerdmans)

Systematic Theology, by A. H. Strong (Judson)

The Millennium, by Loraine Boettner (Presbyterian & Reformed), 1958, 380 pages, \$4.50. Reviewed in Blue Banner Faith and Life, October-December 1958, p. 192.

Revelation Twenty: An Exposition, by J. M. Kik (Presbyterian & Reformed), 1955, 92 pages. \$2.00. Reviewed in Blue Banner Faith and Life, October-December 1955, pp. 195-6.

Matthew Twenty-Four: An Exposition, by J. M. Kik (Bible Truth Depot), 1948, 97 pages. \$1.50. Reviewed in Blue Banner Faith and Life, October-December 1949, pp. 182-3.

Israel and the New Covenant, by R. Campbell (Presbyterian and Reformed), 1954, 336 pages. \$3.75. Reviewed in Blue Banner Faith and Life, July-September 1955, pp. 123-5.

Dispensational Premillennial Works

The Scofield Reference Bible (Oxford)

The Pilgrim Edition of the Holy Bible (Oxford)

Books by Charles Feinberg, Lewis Sperry Chafer, Harry Ironside, W. E. Blackstone, Gaebelain and others, obtainable from many religious bookstores or from Moody Press, 153 Institute Place, Chicago 10, Ill.

Non-Dispensational Premillennial Works

God's Plan and Man's Destiny, by Viola Cameron (Presbyterian & Reformed), 1955, 160 pages. \$1.80. Reviewed in Blue Banner Faith and Life, January-March 1953, pp. 46-8 and January-March 1956, p. 42.

Crucial Questions about the Kingdom of God, by G. E. Ladd (Eerdmans), 1952, 193 pages. \$3.00. Reviewed in Blue Banner Faith and Life, April-June 1953, pp. 95-8.

Non-Millennial or Amillennial Works

Why Thousand Years? Or Will the Second Coming be Premillennial? by William Masselink (Eerdmans), 1953, 222 pages. \$2.50. Reviewed in Blue Banner Faith and Life, October-December 1958, pp. 192-3.

The Future of the Kingdom in Prophecy and Fulfilment by M. J. Wyngaarden (Baker), 1955, 211 pages. \$3.50. Reviewed in Blue Banner Faith and Life, October-December 1955, pp. 196-7.

The Pauline Eschatology, G. Vos (Eerdmans), 1952, 365 pages. \$5.00. Reviewed in Blue Banner Faith and Life, January-March 1953, pp. 48-9.

More than Conquerors, by William Hendriksen (Baker).

The Gospel According to Revelation, by D. H. Elliott (Chester R. Fox, Empire Building, Pittsburgh 22, Penna.) 1948, 132 pages. \$1.00. Reviewed in Blue Banner Faith and Life, October-December 1949, p. 182.

Millennial Studies, by G. L. Murray (Baker), 1948, 207 pages. \$2.50. Reviewed in Blue Banner Faith and Life, April-June 1949, pp. 84-5.

The End

Prophecy, Time and Eternity

by J. G. Vos

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

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

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

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

The prophets did predict future events, however, and predictive prophecy is such a prominent feature of their work that the term "prophecy" has come to be used, in popular speech, as equiv-

alent to "prediction of the future." In this article the term "prophecy" is to be understood in this common, popular sense, as meaning prediction of the future.

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

Such modern scholars speak of the prophets as having "felt," "realized," "discerned," "understood," "been convinced," etc., etc., that certain things would happen. The prophets themselves, on the other hand, introduced their messages by the formula "Thus saith the Lord . . ." or words with an equivalent meaning. We should realize that the Bible itself sets forth the objective view of prophecy. Note, for example, 2 Peter 1:21, where Peter is speaking of the prophecies of the

Old Testament: "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

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

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

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

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

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

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

I. Time will be Followed by Eternity

God's order is: 1. Creation. 2. History. 3. Consummation. The doctrine of Creation is unique in the Biblical religion. It does not exist in any other religious system in a pure or consistent form. All other systems tend either to regard the universe as eternal, or to regard it as coming into existence of itself. (It may be objected that the religion of Islam holds the doctrine of creation. In reply it can be said that, like almost everything in Islam that is good or true, this has been borrowed from Jewish and Christian sources). Scripture alone teaches creation *ex nihilo* ("Out of nothing") by the almighty power of God. This is the root of the **supernaturalism** of the Bible. Every doctrine in the whole Bible from Genesis to Revelation depends absolutely on the doctrine of creation as stated in Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

There was a beginning. God never had a beginning, but the universe had a beginning. It has not been in existence from all eternity — it had a beginning. We do not know how long ago the beginning was, but we know that there was a

beginning. The Biblical concept of creation implies that **historic time** — the great world-process which we call "history" — does not exist of itself, but only by the power of God. Moreover history is not eternal in either direction. It had a **beginning** and it will also have an end.

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

II. Eternity is the Ideal and Absolute Fulfilment of Religion

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

Among Christian people there are various views about the Millennium (the vision of the thousand years in Revelation 20.) Some hold that this will be before the second coming of Christ, others that it will be after the second coming of Christ; some that it is present, others that it is still future. But all agree that the Millennium will be **temporary**, and all agree that it will be **imperfect** — it will not last forever, and

it will include sin and death. Therefore the Millennium, whatever view we may take of it, cannot be the absolute fulfilment of the religious ideal. For the absolute fulfilment will only be "when that which is perfect is come."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It is well for us to remember that prophecy is given in terms of conditions which existed when

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

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

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

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

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

If we will remember that the temporal is always imperfect, owing to the presence of sin, we will realize that only eternity can bring the absolute fulfilment of the religious ideal. Even a state vastly more perfect than exists today, if it

exists within the temporal order, will still contain sin and so be imperfect, therefore, it cannot be the fulfilment of religion.

III. The Arrival of the Eternal Order will be Catastrophic

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

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

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

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

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

Bible-believing Christians are agreed as to the reality and literal character of Christ's second coming and the supplanting of history by eternity,

whatever differences of interpretation may exist concerning other matters of varying degrees of importance.

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

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

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

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

The coming of the eternal order cannot be a gradual process. In the nature of the case it must be sudden and catastrophic. This is obviously true in the life of an individual person. Earthly life may last many years, but there comes a certain definite moment when it ceases and the person has entered upon the life of eternity. Death is instantaneous as truly as birth is instantaneous. Death occurs all at once at a particular time. One moment the person is a resident of time and space; the next moment he is a resident of eternity.

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

Time, space, physics, chemistry — all these things that condition life as we experience it here and now — all these will give way to a higher level or plane of existence which will be essentially different. That will be our true destiny — what we were being prepared for all our life long.

But it will be different. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

A FOREIGN DEVIL IN CHINA, by John C. Pollock. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. 1973, pp. 345, paperback. \$1.95.

Dr. Nelson Bell was a medical missionary in China for twenty-five years. After his return from China he still practiced his profession, and at the same time was an influential evangelical editor and writer.

The story of his work in China makes fascinating reading, and it shows how much can be done for man's physical and spiritual needs by a dedicated Christian.

Mr. John C. Pollock has done the American people a favor by publishing this book of adventure.

There is a foreword by Dr. Billy Graham, who is Dr. Bell's son-in-law.
—Wallace Nicholson

THE CHURCH, THE CHURCHES AND THE KINGDOM, by Philip Mauro. Reiner Publications, Swengel, Penna. 17880. No date. reprint of 1936, pp. 283. \$4.95.

Mr. Mauro puts in a plea for the restoration to their original significations of those great Bible words **Church** and **Kingdom**.

The author takes the Church to mean, as used by our Lord, His own people and the local church; and he rejects such usages as "the Old Testament Church", "the New Testament Church", "the historic Church", etc. These phrases are extra-Biblical, but they are convenient terms to use, since we know there is such a thing as the Old Testament Church, and the New Testament Church and the Historic Church.

Whether we agree with these points or not, for some of them we think are matters of terminology, we are grateful for the expositional lessons he has given us from the Old and New Testaments, and therefore we recommend a study of this book. —Wallace Nicholson

THE LIVING GOD, by Richard W. DeHaan. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506. Paperback, 1973, pp. 220. \$1.25.

This evangelical writer has several works to his credit, and they are all faithful to the Word of God.

This book uses terms that can be easily understood in dealing with the various doctrines of the Scriptures. In these studies the doctrines of God are discussed as simply as possible, and as the author says, "the basis of these lessons is the Bible itself."

We recommend this volume as an introduction to the doctrinal teachings of the Word of God.

—Wallace Nicholson

SOUNDS, edited by Paul Beckwith. Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois 60515. Paperback, 1973, pp. 66. \$1.25.

This book was first prepared for use at Urbana 1973, the triennial missionary convention sponsored by Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, an evangelical fellowship of students with chapters on the campuses of many American and Canadian colleges and universities.

The reviewer is pleased to note the inclusion in the book of a number of metrical selections from the Book of Psalms, including portions of Psalms 19, 89, 46, 48, 100, 63, and Psalm 91 (this last in both Spanish and English). It is encouraging that such an organization as Inter-Varsity would include a number of Psalms, in our day when most evangelical Christians seem unaware of the Psalms as material for praising God.

We are committed to the principle of the exclusive use of the Biblical Psalms in singing praise to God, and naturally wish all our fellow Christians to hold the same position. However, they cannot be expected to do so until and unless they reach a position of conviction concerning the regulative principle of worship as explicated by the Puritans and their successors. The reader is referred to the article entitled *The Second Commandment*, by Dr. William Young, in our April-June 1972 issue, pp. 49-54.

—J. G. Vos

THE BOOK OF PSALMS FOR SINGING, Board of Education and Publication of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, 800 Wood Street, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15221. 1973, pp. 461. Prices for single copies and quantities on application to publisher.

The Book of Psalms which sustained the prophets and inspired the apostles, came to lively expression once again in the early days of the sixteenth century reformation when metrical psalmody began to carry praises of God's people into His presence with fresh vigor and renewed strength. Throughout the years which followed there was, and is to this day, in various countries and within sister communities of Christian faith, and ongoing effort to render the Psalms singable in a variety of smooth texts and sturdy tunes. One of the latest examples of such an effort is the new *Book of Psalms for Singing* published by the Board of Education and Publication of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America.

A close comparison of this Psalter with the 1950 edition reveals that although some thirty tunes from the old edition have been removed from the new edition, more than two hundred and twenty new tunes have been incorporated into this edition. Of special interest to the congregations are the seven chants together with "An introduction to chanting" on page 440; four new vigorous doxologies (41C, 72D, 89I and 106G) by Eleanor Hutcheson; a revival of the ancient practice of weaving parts around the melody in the tenor found in numbers 14B, 38A and 119X, and finally, a collection of thirty new tunes composed or harmonized by Robert Copeland, T. Scott Huston, Eleanor Hutcheson and Charles McBurney just for this edition.

There are an unusual number of tunes with "irregular meter" included in the Psalter. All of them with the exception of number 134B are contributions of Eleanor Hutcheson. With proper leadership these tunes can become firmly established in the congregational repertoire. It is well to remember that another hymn tune with "irregular meter" has become an international treasure: *Silent Night, Holy Night*. The three tunes composed by T. Scott Huston (34E, 89C and 135A) are punctuated with a wealth of accidentals and unusual rhythms and will require strong and competent leadership to become a "regular" course in the musical diet of the congregations. Although they will likely never achieve the delightful status of a dessert, they are, nevertheless, a challenge to those who covet psalmody in contemporary style.

There are four unique features in this 1973 Psalter, the first of which concerns the numbering of the tunes. Every tune is identified by the number of the Psalm which it expresses. When a given Psalm is expressed either completely or in parts by two or more tunes, the number of the Psalm is retained and the duplications of the various parts are indicated in their proper order by A, B, C-Z. Psalm 1, for example, is expressed complete-

ly in two different renditions numbered 1A and 1B instead of the customary numbering by page number. Psalm 119 requires twenty-four different tunes, and they are numbered 119A to 119X. This system of numbering is to be highly commended because it trains congregations to recall a Psalm and its tune by the number of the Psalm instead of the number of a page.

A second unique feature of this Psalter is that in each given Psalm not only are the stanzas numbered, but also the number of the verses of the given Psalm which are expressed by the given tune are included in the title of the Psalms and are further indicated by small superscript numbers throughout the entire selection whenever and wherever a new Scripture verse begins. Then too, whenever a given Psalm is expressed in two or more different tunes, the stanzas of the entire Psalm are expressed in ascending numerical order instead of each new selection beginning with a stanza 1. In this system, for example, Psalm 10A, containing verses 1-11, begins with stanza 1 and ends with stanza 6. Psalm 10B, containing verses 12-18, begins with stanza 7 and ends with stanza 10, so that Psalm 10 is expressed by two different tunes, in eighteen verses and ten stanzas. This feature is to be highly commended because it displays both the Scriptural progression of verses and the metrical division and continuity of the stanzas.

A third unique feature of this Psalter is that whenever the Personal Name of God (spelled JHWH in English letters) occurs, its translation LORD is capitalized in contrast to the small letters of "Lord" or "God" used as a title.

A fourth unique feature of this Psalter, and one which may not find ready and hearty acceptance in the congregations is the extensive use of "You" and "Your" in addressing God. This form of address is found frequently not only in the new selections composed or harmonized for this Psalter, but also in tunes contained in the last edition with words revised in this edition. The judgment

of the denomination on this change will be reflected, no doubt, in the format of the next edition of this Psalter.

The "Index" section of the new Psalter is both superior and inferior to the 1950 edition of the Psalter. The "Alphabetical Index of Tunes" in the new edition is superior in that it includes not only the name of each tune, number in the Psalter and the meter, but also the name of each composer, arranger or source. The new edition also includes a new alphabetical "Index of Composers, Arrangers and Sources" and their dates, coupled with the names of the tunes and the Psalter numbers of their selections.

There are, however, several unfortunate omissions which did not occur in the last edition. At the top of each Psalter selection the name of the tune and the meter are listed, but the name of composer, arranger or source is missing. Another significant omission is the exclusion of a "Topical Index". This deletion deprives those who teach adults, young people and children of an invaluable aid to the correlation of Bible study topics and group singing. The committee must have its reasons for the omission, but it would seem that the positive advantages of a topical index would outweigh any negative considerations for its removal.

The high quality of the content of this Psalter must be qualified by reference to defects in format such as those found in 18D, 25C, 29B, 56A, 77C, 85B, 89C, 90D, 119E, 124A, 139B, 144C and the duplicate printing of tunes in 21C and 21D and 92A and 92B.

Nonetheless, this volume in its proclamation of divine truth, its spanning of the centuries, its uniting of the nations and its blending of their music bears witness to the solidarity and continuity of God's work in men's hearts everywhere and throughout all time, until that day when "faith" becomes sight" and we all gather round His throne, there to sing praises to the Lamb forever and ever!
—Laurie Vanden Heuvel

The "Reformational" Movement: Authentic Christianity or Cultic Distortion?

by J. G. Vos

What is the "Reformational" Movement?

The origins of this movement go back to Abraham Kuyper, who however did not hold the characteristic tenets of the present movement. Kuyper's teachings were carried much further by two Dutch professors, Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven. More recently the Association for the Advancement of Christian Scholarship (AACS) and its instrument the Institute for Christian Studies (ICS) have gone even further. The center from

which the movement radiates is Toronto, Canada. Its publishing agency is named the Wedge Publishing Foundation (Toronto). "Reformational" is the label applied by the AACS/ICS/WEDGE to their teachings.

Influence spread through "Front" Organizations

Years ago Ernest Gordon in *The Leaven of the Sadducees* wrote that liberals have never established a theological seminary in America. They "pirate" those

established and endowed by evangelical Christians. Similarly, the "Reformational" movement establishes no schools or colleges of its own (the ICS is an institution for post-graduate studies), but seeks to infiltrate and capture established schools for its special ideology. Organizational connection with the Toronto AACs/ICS can be truthfully denied, while at the same time it is clearly evident that the leadership of the movement is seeking zealously and persistently to promote the "Reformational" ideology through conferences, student groups on various campuses, and even through professors in Christian colleges. There are also some magazines published in the United States and Canada which have no official connection with the AACs/ICS but which obviously seek to promote the "Reformational" philosophy.

**Its Good Features are not New;
Its New Features are not Good**

What is really good and true to the historic Christian Faith in the "Reformational" movement is older than the movement. The erroneous and doubtful features are distinctly their own. Thus some (not all) of their men say that man does not have a soul; some say that the Ten Commandments are not applicable today; some say that the Bible does not contain moral teachings; all say that the Bible is only one of various forms of the Word of God. Some have called the Bible a "time-bound" revelation of God and have asserted that it is impossible to understand the Bible except from the viewpoint of the philosophical "kingdom concept" of the "Reformational" movement.

**This Movement has a Different Center
from the Historic Christian Faith**

From Jesus Christ and Him crucified (I Corinthians 2:2) the center of the system has been shifted to the Cultural Mandate (Genesis 1:28). This shift is accompanied by a very defective and inadequate view of human

sin (sin is regarded chiefly in social terms), and a most tragic lack of emphasis on atonement by the shed blood of Jesus Christ. Advocates of the movement say that they assume atonement and individual conversion, and go on from there. They have no right to assume these things. Paul did not in writing to the Corinthians. Millions of nominal Christians have no vital faith in Christ crucified. Since the Fall of man evangelism, missionary work, personal salvation (the implementation of the Great Commission) must have priority over the Cultural Mandate. This must continue until the Lord returns and renews all things; the Cultural Mandate, though real and valid, must remain secondary; it cannot have priority over the Great Commission. A Christian re-structuring of society cannot be authentic without individual Christians to live in it, and people become Christians by personal conversion, not by emphasis on the Cultural Mandate.

What we have Published on the Movement

Review of *Understanding the Scriptures*, by DeGraaf and Seerveld. October-December 1969, page 155.

Article, *The Human Soul*, by J. G. Vos. October-December 1973, pages 141-145.

Review of *Insight, Authority and Power*, by Peter Schouls. October-December 1973, page 153.

Article, *Prescription for Church Renewal?* by Peter De Jong. January-March 1974, pages 11-14. (Review of book, *All the King's Men*).

Article, *Are the Ten Commandments Relevant Today?* by Francis Nigel Lee. January-March 1974, pages 38-45.

Review of book, *To Prod the Slumbering Giant* (Symposium). January-March, 1974, page 45.

Article, *The Cultic Character of the Toronto Movement*, by J. G. Vos. April-June 1974, pages 3-6.

Review of book, *The Relation of the Bible to Learning*, by H. Evan Runner. April-June 1974, pages 27-31.

The Amsterdam Philosophy: A Preliminary Critique (review of book by J. M. Frame and L. J. Coppes), October 1973, pages 149-150.

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The Visible Church: Its Nature, Unity and Witness
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Later contributions will be reported in our next issue. Without such generous contributions as these it would hardly be possible to continue publishing the magazine, as subscriptions and sales of back issues and reprints provide only about half of the amount needed. We are trying to resist inflation by not raising our subscription rates. Many thanks to all who have helped. Your contributions, incidentally, are deductible from your federal taxable income if you live in the United States.

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 Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania
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**BLUE
BANNER
FAITH
AND
LIFE**

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GO TELL THEM THAT JESUS IS LIVING

A light on the dark horizon,
Shining with luminous ray,
Banishes fear and sorrow,
For Christ is risen today!

O sing it to those who sorrow,
The message is clear and sweet,
"He is the Resurrection,"
Go tell it to those who weep.

Go tell them that Jesus is living,
He's living just as He said,
And some day He's coming in glory,
Coming to quicken the dead.

Then all the pain and the suffering
That now His beloved ones feel,
Will pass, for "There is no sorrow
On earth that heaven can't heal!"

So tell them that Jesus is living,
That He will illumine the way
Over the troublesome waters,
For Christ is risen today!

—Author Unknown

LEAD ME ON

Traveling to the better land,
O'er the desert's scorching sand,
Father! let me grasp Thy hand;
Lead me on, lead me on!

When at Marah, parched with heat,
In the sparkling fountain greet,
Make the bitter water sweet;
Lead me on!

When the wilderness is drear,
Show me Elim's palm grove near,
And her wells, as crystal clear;
Lead me on!

Through the water, through the fire,
Never let me fall or tire,
Every step brings Canaan nigher;
Lead me on!

Bid me stand on Nebo's height,
Gaze upon the land of light,
Then transported with the sight,
Lead me on!

When I stand on Jordan's brink,
Never let me fear or shrink;
Hold me, Father, lest I sink;
Lead me on!

When the victory is won,
And eternal life begun,
Up to Glory lead me on!
Lead me on, lead me on!

—Author Unknown

THE TIDE IS SURE TO WIN

Out on the far reef the breakers
Recoil in shattered foam,
While still the sea behind them
Urges its forces home;
Its song of triumph surges
O'er all the thunderous din:
The waves may break in failure;
But the tide is sure to win.

The reef is strong and cruel
Upon its jagged wall,
One wave, a score, a hundred
Broken and beaten fall:
Yet in defeat they conquer,
The sea comes flooding in:
Wave after wave is routed
But the tide is sure to win.

O mighty sea! Thy message
In splashing spray is cast:
Within God's place of progress
It matters not at last,
How wide the shores of evil,
How strong the reefs of sin,
The waves may be defeated
But the tide is sure to win.

—Author Unknown

Can you conceive the dismay which will fill your soul if you come too late to the closed door of heaven and begin the hopeless cry, "Lord, Lord, open to us"?

—Dr. Wm. Arnot

Christ took the Sabbath into the grave with Him and brought the Lord's Day out of the grave with Him on the resurrection morn.

—Dr. B. B. Warfield

It is the whole tragedy of mankind that it keeps on arguing against its own salvation. Man in sin is always anxious to claim a little credit for himself. He resents the doctrine that salvation is solely and entirely the free gift of God.

—Dr. M. Lloyd-Jones

He that hath not love enough to give a reproof seasonably to his brother nor humility enough to bear a reproof from him, is not worthy to be called a Christian.

—William Gurnall

When it (the Bible) speaks about the origin of heaven and earth, it presents no saga or myth or poetical fantasy, but even then, according to its clear intention, presents history, which deserves faith and trust. And for that reason Christian theology, with but few exceptions, has held fast to the literal, historical view of the account of creation.

—Herman Bavick

BLUE BANNER FAITH AND LIFE

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Who Are the Covenanters?

By J. G. Vos

The name Covenanters is used to denominate those Presbyterians who entered into one or more of the public covenants connected with the Scottish Reformation, especially the National Covenants (1580 and 1638) and the Solemn League and Covenant (1643), together with those who subsequently adhered to these bonds and held the obligations involved in them to be perpetually binding.

The Covenants of the Scottish Reformation

It was characteristic of the Reformation movement in Scotland for the godly to band themselves together under the Lord by solemn oath for mutual assistance and support in the defence of the Gospel and the reformation of the Church according to the Word of God. The earliest known such covenant was made in 1556 under the leadership of John Knox. This was followed by several others through the years 1557-1572.

The first covenant of epoch making significance in Scotland was the National Covenant, written in 1580. It was occasioned by fear of Jesuit plots to destroy the Reformation. The covenant was written at the request of King James VI by John Craig, a minister. It was signed by the king and his household in 1580, by many persons of all ranks in 1581 and again in 1590. It became the basis of the National Covenant as adopted in 1638, in which year it was signed in its new and enlarged form by great numbers of people, as it was again in 1639. The National Covenant of 1638 was ratified by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in that year and again the next year, and by an Act of Parliament in 1640. It was also accepted by King Charles II in 1650 and at his coronation in 1651.

The Solemn League and Covenant was a bond between England, Ireland and Scotland, aimed at securing uniformity of religion on a Reformed and Presbyterian basis in the three lands. It was drafted by Alexander Henderson, and approved by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1643. It was then sent to England, where it was adopted and sworn to by the House of Commons and the Westminster Assembly of Divines jointly. Following this it was signed in Scotland by the Committee of Estates of Parliament. Then it was publicly distributed for signature, and signed with great unanimity by all classes of people except those who favored Popery or Prelacy. With an added "Acknowledgment of

Sins and Engagement to Duties" it was again signed by multitudes in Scotland in 1648, and adopted by the Scottish Parliament in 1649. Last of all, it was subscribed by King Charles II in 1650 and at his coronation, 1651.

The National Covenant of 1580 contains about 1,000 words. It is a profession of faith in the Gospel, of acceptance of the Scots Confession of Faith of 1580 (the original creed of the Scottish Reformation), and a renunciation of the whole Roman Catholic system, including a detailed list of rejected errors and abuses of Romanism.

When this covenant was renewed in 1638 it consisted of three parts: first, the Covenant of 1580 without change; second, a legal section listing many acts of Parliament, to show that the adoption of the Covenant was in keeping with the national law; third, an application to the special conditions existing in 1638. This third part contains a rejection of Prelacy (government of the Church by bishops), of "novations" (corruptions) in the worship of God, and of the civil power held by church officers until tried and allowed by lawful church assemblies and Parliament. The corruptions in the government and the worship of the Church are rejected as being without Scriptural warrant, contrary to the Scots Confession of Faith, contrary to the intention of the Scottish Reformers, and contrary to the acts of Parliament listed in the Covenant. The signers of the covenant "promise and swear, by the GREAT NAME OF THE LORD OUR GOD, to continue in the profession and obedience of the foresaid religion; and that we shall defend the same, and resist all these contrary errors and corruptions, according to our vocation, and to the uttermost of that power that God hath put in our hands, all the days of our life."

The Solemn League and Covenant is much briefer. In an introductory paragraph followed by six articles, the subscribers swear to endeavor the preservation of the Reformed religion in Scotland, in doctrine, worship, discipline and government, and the reformation of religion in England and Ireland, according to Scripture "and the example of the best reformed Churches." The swearers also bind themselves to endeavor the "extirpation" of all contrary systems and practices, including Popery, Prelacy, superstition, heresy, schism, etc. The remainder of the document implements the foregoing by pledges of

unity and mutual assistance against all opponents.

The only point somewhat unclear in the Solemn League and Covenant is what is meant by "the example of the best reformed Churches." It is not stated which churches these are; however, as the document originated in Scotland, it was generally understood at the time that the Church of Scotland and the Continental Churches holding the Calvinistic theology and the Presbyterian form of government were meant.

The Perpetual Obligation of the Covenants

There is reason to believe that in 1638 and 1643 the subscribers of the National Covenant and the Solemn League and Covenant universally believed these bonds to be of perpetual obligation. Through the 28 years of persecution which followed the Restoration of the Stuart monarchy in 1660 this principle was unlawful in the nation of Scotland, but it was maintained by the Covenanters who dissented from the prelatial (Episcopal) church and maintained separate ordinances in the form of conventicles. As the number of one-time Covenanters who conformed to the Prelatial Church increased, the number of dissenters who maintained the principle of the continuing obligation of the covenants decreased proportionately.

The principle of the perpetual obligation of the covenants was the formal principle of the Covenanting movement in the sense that this principle was characteristic of Covenanters as such in distinction from Presbyterians as such. Every Covenanter was a Presbyterian, but not every Presbyterian was a Covenanter. Those who held the principle of the perpetual obligation of the covenants were Covenanters, both before and after the Revolution of 1688.

The Covenanters Become a Dissenting Minority

The Restoration of the Stuart monarchy in the person of Charles II in 1660 marks the end of the state Church of Scotland as a covenanted church, and the beginning of the history of the Covenanters as a dissenting group or party distinct from the authority of the Church of Scotland as established by national law. The Church of Scotland became officially prelatial or Episcopal, and true Presbyterianism could be practiced only in dissenting conventicles and unofficial society meetings, until the Revolution of 1688. After 1688 Presbyterianism was indeed restored by law in Scotland, but on a somewhat different basis from the covenanted Presbyterianism of the middle of the seventeenth century, commonly called the period of the Second Reformation.

In 1662 an act of the Privy Council required all ministers installed since 1649 to obtain approval by the Episcopal bishops on pain of removal from their pastoral charges. The result

of this action was that nearly 400, or about one-third, of the ministers of Scotland were forced out of their churches. Later enactments of a similar character forced even more to leave their charges for the sake of their conscience.

Many of the ministers ejected in 1662 and subsequent years continued to preach, conducting services in private homes and also addressing large audiences in open fields. These activities incensed the bishops and the government, and resulted in a series of increasingly severe laws against conventicles or unauthorized religious meetings. Fines were imposed for failure to attend the parish churches. Later much more severe penalties were imposed for attendance at conventicles. A Court of High Commission, authorized by no law but proceeding from the royal prerogative alone, was set up to deal in drastic fashion with offenders. At first this court could inflict any penalty short of death. Many were fined, imprisoned, banished or sold as slaves. There is no record of any person tried by this court ever being acquitted, or escaping without some penalty.

In 1670, 1676 and 1681 increasingly stringent enactments against conventicles were passed. Persons attending conventicles were declared to be outlaws and it was forbidden to others to aid them in any way. All protection of the laws was denied them. In 1685 giving, taking or writing in defense of the National Covenant or the Solemn League and Covenant was declared to be treason, and to be punishable accordingly. Another act decreed the penalty of death, not merely for preaching at a conventicle, but even for attending one as a worshipper.

The period from 1685 to 1688 became known as "the killing time." During 1685 persecution reached its height. Many were put to death by soldiers, without process or form of law. The fact or presumption of having been at a conventicle was sufficient ground for instant execution without legal prosecution; ensnaring and contradictory oaths and questions were proposed to persons apprehended, and in the event of unsatisfactory answers, immediate death by shooting was the outcome.

The conventicle movement reached its height in great gatherings at which the Lord's Supper was administered, in the years 1677 and 1678. One such assembly was attended by some 7,000 unarmed persons and 600 armed men. During the first years of persecution the conventicles were unarmed gatherings for Presbyterian worship, but with the passing of time, as the laws and decrees against them became more stringent, and were more strictly enforced, the Covenanters adopted the practice of attending conventicles armed for self-defence. They did not intend to propagate their religion by the use of armed force, but they considered themselves warranted

by Scripture in using arms to defend it when it was attacked by force.

Concurrently with the use of force to intimidate and subdue the Covenanters, the government sought to win them by persuasive offers. During the period from 1660 to 1688 King Charles II issued three "indulgences" and King James VII issued four of these. These "indulgences" were royal offers to permit some of the expelled ministers to resume their ministry in the parish churches under certain regulations and stipulations laid down by the government and to be accepted by the ministers.

The first indulgence was proclaimed in 1669. Ministers who accepted the offer had to obtain official approval of the Episcopal bishops, if they wished to receive their salary and enjoy the use of the parish manse. If willing to serve without salary or manse, they could be permitted to do so without the bishops' approval. An evil feature attached to this indulgence was the condition that ministers accepting it thereby pledged themselves not to speak or preach against the idea that the king was the head of the church. This indulgence was offered only to a favored few of the expelled ministers; eventually some forty accepted it, all of them making some qualifying statement about the king's supremacy over the church. Few of the forty sought endorsement from the bishops, a fact which shows that their conduct, while it certainly involved a sacrifice of principle, proceeded from unselfish motives.

The effect of the first and all following indulgences was to weaken the Covenanters' cause by driving a wedge of division into their ranks. From 1669 on the Presbyterian ministers of Scotland were divided into the indulged and the non-indulged. The indulged compromised with Prelacy and Erastianism (the claim of the civil government to control the church), while the non-indulged avoided these compromises at the cost of suffering and sacrifice. The indulgences proceeded from the king's alleged supremacy over the church, and to accept the indulgence meant to accept that false principle of Erastianism.

As time passed more and more of the ministers returned to their pulpits by accepting the indulgences. A dwindling minority of ministers, however, and some thousands of people scattered throughout Scotland, realized that accepting the indulgence meant recognizing the king as head of the church and Prelacy as the lawful government of the Church. These loyal Covenanters held out to the end, in the face of the most savage and bitter persecution, against such sacrifices of principle.

Driven to desperation by their persecutors, the Covenanters once and again rose up in armed resistance and defence of their religious rights and liberties. The first of these armed revolts oc-

curred in 1666, the second in 1679. The wisdom of these desperate attempts may be questioned, but the Covenanters had been driven beyond the breaking point by cruelties and oppressions. Both uprisings were suppressed by the government forces, and those who had taken any part in them were treated with barbarous cruelty.

Another desperate act of a few Covenanters was the murder of Archbishop Sharp, in 1679. Sharp was a notorious persecutor who had once been a Covenanter himself. This act of assassination cannot be justified, and it never was justified by the main body of the Covenanters, most of whom abhorred the deed.

To the loss of leaders by way of indulgences must be added the loss of leaders by persecution unto death. Many of the ministers, as well as other Covenanters, were shot, hanged or sent into banishment. Finally only a handful of the ministers remained. Richard Cameron was killed in 1680 in a clash with the king's troops soon after the posting of the Sanquhar Declaration (which declared that the king had violated his coronation oath and was therefore not qualified to occupy the throne). Donald Cargill, an elderly minister, was hanged in 1681. James Renwick, a youth of twenty-four, was hanged in 1688 on the verge of the Revolution. This left the Covenanters almost without ministers. They had paid the price of their testimony in anguish and blood.

The Principles of the Covenanters

Doctrinally, the Covenanters were Calvinists and adhered to the Westminster Standards. Their special claims, which resulted from the persecutions which they suffered, were set forth in published declarations, sermons and the dying testimonies of their martyrs. The specific claims of the Covenanters during and after the period of persecution, in distinction from the Prelatic Church of Scotland, the indulged ministers and the Stuart monarchy, consisted in a practical, as distinguished from a merely theoretical, testimony for: (1) the continuing obligation on the church and nation of Scotland of the National Covenant and the Solemn League and Covenant; (2) the sole headship of Christ over the church, in opposition to the Erastian claim of the king to headship in ecclesiastical matters; (3) Christian civil government, in opposition to the tyranny of absolutism under which they had been suffering.

The Covenanters Since the Revolution of 1688

Freedom came at last with the end of the Stuarts and the accession of William of Orange as King of Scotland. The Prelatic form of government of the state Church of Scotland was abolished and the Presbyterian form restored, not as of divine right but as preferred by the majority of the people. The obligations of the great covenants of the Scottish Reformation were

not reaffirmed. The Covenanters who had witnessed and suffered through twenty-eight years of persecution attempted to get a fair hearing, but were haughtily brushed aside by those in positions of leadership and authority. The Covenanters were especially grieved that the king still claimed and was granted a degree of headship in the reconstituted Presbyterian Church. Unable to get satisfaction, they elected to remain

outside the official Church of Scotland, and to continue their worship in "society meetings." In 1733 they were able to attain ecclesiastical organization as the Reformed Presbytery, from which has come the Reformed Presbyterian Church as it exists today in Scotland, Ireland, the United States of America, Canada, Australia and foreign mission fields including Syria, Cyprus, China and Japan.

Where Are We Going--With Holy Living?

By Peter De Jong

Registering an extremely serious charge against leaders in the AACCS movement, Rev. Peter De Jong, pastor of the Christian Reformed Church of Dutton, Michigan, states in this article: "Despite the fact that the Lord has warned us that without holiness no man shall see Him or inherit His kingdom, our consideration of many of the writings of these enthusiasts for the 'Kingdom' reveals them to be indifferent or contemptuous of any such emphasis on holy living!"

"Follow . . . holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14).

"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification . . ." (I Thess. 4:3).

There are indications that one of the points at which we have been getting farthest away from the Lord and His gospel has been in our general neglect of holy living — of separating from sin and consecrating ourselves to the Lord.

A LOST EMPHASIS

Some of us who are getting on in years can recall sermons, writings, and church decisions that stressed the Lord's demand for holy living. We were often warned against "worldliness" and particular expressions of it such as inmodest clothing, improper behavior, dating someone from outside of the church, and so forth.

We had the notorious synod pronouncement against "dancing, theater-going and card playing." People often discussed and criticized the warning against that trio, usually overlooking or not even knowing that the largest part of that report was not devoted to them at all but to the necessary and distinguishing characteristics of real Christian living. Now neither principle nor practice seems to get much attention as all of these and many more invade our homes in the form of TV programs.

The letters in recent copies of *THE OUTLOOK* about movies at the church's Calvin College show how far the church itself has moved from the warnings of not long ago. Most of this concern has now been dismissed as hopelessly out-of-date, the useless legacy of a defensive immigrant mentality that refused to

Americanize. In fact, the very existence of our churches is being explained away as nothing more than a relic of the same provincialism which we have really outgrown and ought to be shedding.

HOLINESS IS NECESSARY

That there was provincialism among us, who can deny? But in the present eagerness to discard it and everything related to it we easily overlook the fact that distinctive Christian living is not Dutch, immigrant, or provincial but simply the demand of Christ, and therefore an essential characteristic of every life that is really Christian. Any individual or church that lacks it, that is not interested in it, is just not Christian at all. The Bible does not leave this fact open to question. The common name in Scripture for Christians is "saints," "holy persons." Therefore there can be no such thing as an unholy Christian.

Jesus calls those who lack holiness, whatever their religious pretensions may be, "hypocrites," "actors." He said, "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21). Accordingly, the Word of God goes on to warn us, "Follow . . . holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12:14). "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification . . ." (I Thess. 4:3).

Because it is so much easier to talk about these things than to bring our lives into conformity with them, the temptation has always been great to substitute talk for practice. Therefore the Word of God warns us the oftener: "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (Jas. 1:22). "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men [homosexuals, RSV] nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God" [I Cor. 6:9, 10]. "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as becometh saints; nor filthiness, nor foolish talking, or jesting, which are not befitting; but

rather giving of thanks. For this ye know of a surety, that no fornicator, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no man deceive you with empty words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them" (Eph. 5:3-7).

In contrast with all of this offensive behavior, we who believe in Christ are everywhere in the Bible, summoned to a life that is as different from it as light is from darkness, to lives that are as full of virtues as the other kind are of vices. "Put on therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving each other . . . and above all these things put on love . . . and let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts . . . and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another . . ." (Col. 3:12-16).

Such a godly life necessarily involves separation from all kinds of sins and association with them. "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers . . ." "Come ye out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be to you a Father, and ye shall be to me sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilements of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (II Cor. 6:14-7:1).

Considering these plain commands of the Lord and His gospel and the increasingly general neglect of them goes far toward answering the questions being raised about why the churches, ours included, seem to be losing ground, why they lack influence, and why members and ministers seem to be leaving in increasing numbers. We can hardly expect the Lord to strengthen and prosper those who persistently ignore His commandments. An essential feature of any real revival and reformation must be a renewed concern and dedication to holy living. Those who would walk with the Lord must walk in His way.

THE AACS' CALL TO REFORMATION

Within our church family in the last years no one has called attention more loudly and insistently to the need for a Reformation than the men associated with the Toronto-based AACS (Association for the Advancement of Christian Scholarship) movement. Arising especially among the immigrants who came from Europe after World War II and claiming a dedication to the zeal and faith of Abraham Kuyper, who led such a Reformation in the Netherlands almost a century ago, they called upon all to support them in beginning a similar crusade on this continent. It was to be a movement to recall men not only to faith in Christ as Savior, but rather to acknowledge Him as Lord and King in every area of our lives so that in that way the ideal of His Kingdom might

come in renewed lives and a renewed society. That ideal attracted the support of many of us, and it continues to draw interest and support in many areas. With this announced zeal for Christ's Kingdom we might expect this movement to stress the Lord's requirements of holy living as indispensable if one is to have any "inheritance" in His Kingdom.

WHERE IS THE HOLY LIVING?

Turning to one of the earlier AACS writings, *Understanding the Scriptures*, we find Dr. A. De Graaff rightly observing that a moralistic treatment of Old Testament history which stresses only practical lessons about virtues and vices does much less than justice to it as God's Word. But he goes on to criticize our deriving any moral teachings from it, expressing something very like contempt for teaching "a comfortable, North-American, middle-class virtuous life," encouraging unselfishness, avoiding evil companions, teaching brotherly love, courtesy, etc. (pp. 24, 25). He assures us that the Bible "does not contain any moral lessons," "does not teach us how to be good and how to avoid being bad," and that "to keep the law, according to the Bible is not a matter of observing a lot of rules, of do's and don'ts, something negative that spoils your fun . . ." (p. 29). He states flatly that other than the "one Directive," the law of love, "none of them [the Bible laws] can be literally followed or applied today, for we live in a different period of history in a different culture" (p. 35).

In a later publication, *Hope for the Family*, the same writer begins a discussion of "Family Breakdown" by stating as a basic assumption that recent "historical and cultural changes as such are unavoidable and good, for life keeps unfolding and developing. A change in the form or functions of the family, therefore, could not possibly be considered a cause in the breakdown of the family" (p. 5). From where does he get this assumption that historical and cultural changes must necessarily always be good? The Bible certainly teaches us no such thing. It teaches us quite the opposite, that man in his apostasy from God turns naturally toward evil and that his history and culture are full of instances which demonstrate this. Plainly the writer's basic assumption is simply the common evolutionary theory which is still held by many unbelieving sociologists and psychologists (although it is largely abandoned by historians).

From this point of view the writer surveys various family problems; and, at the end, reveals the same assumption with which he started. He sees how many parents "have lost their personal responsibility for the upbringing of their children" since "the old traditions have disappeared and the old standards of morality no longer seem to hold," and how "other Christian parents desperately try to hang on to outdated traditions that do not fit our times and to a morality that shows more kinship with the old Humanism than with the Word of God." In this situation, committed to change as inevitable and good, he

would have us listen anew to "the Word of God" (which he has assured us also has no unchanging rules) and "dedicate ourselves to the development of a new life style" and "seek to find new forms and new direction to our family lives . . ." (pp. 12, 13). What the nature of those new styles and forms are he has no way of knowing, but he invites us to join him in showing others the way to them!

How utterly contrary all this is to the teachings of our Lord. Remember how Christ in dealing with the problem of broken homes (Matt. 19), reprimanded the religious leaders who also lost themselves and their followers in endless and fruitless discussions. He asked them: "Have ye not read" what "He who made them from the beginning" did and commanded? That definitive and absolute law of God to which the Lord called their attention is the same now and is just as clear as it was then. The folly of the Pharisees was their silly notion that they could dismiss it as dated — the same foolish notion that is now being proposed.

"RENEWAL" WITHOUT LAW

The last essay in this same little book, an essay on "The Family of the Future" by Hendrik Hart, expresses the same constitutional hostility to whatever is old and a commitment to a future whose outlines he cannot define. He too assures us that the "principles," really the one directive of love, "are no concrete rules or ways" and "that changes in our traditional responses to the principles of human life are unavoidable and necessary from time to time as our cultural situation changes."

Hart tries to give "biblical" proof for this by asserting as a "fact" that "the law of Moses, the teachings of Christ and the letters of Paul all give different responses to the principle of fidelity in marriage." Therefore he concludes "that a change in our most honored, most time-established and most sacred traditions should not be resisted but welcomed . . ." "The family of the future," he says, "must raise up a generation of men and women with a clear vision of the coming of the Kingdom of our God, men and women who do not fear but welcome change, who . . . instead of miring God's people in the mud of traditions that have lost their meaning, . . . can shape freshly, clearly and powerfully the principles of God's Word to show forth the redemptive power of the Word in a world that is . . . falling away in sin."

In this program Hart informs us, that "new traditions will have to be formed," "all family customs, habits, rules and traditions will have to be flexible . . ." "children must not be led to do or not to do things because father says so," must be taught "the relativity of all principles except . . . that of love," so that "their failure to tell their parents the desired truth is not necessary wrong."

Dr. Hart, too, makes it plain that we must repudiate the old customs and manners. With respect

to "manners, social etiquette, proper dress, etc." he assures us that "our society is totally lost on what is proper in these areas and the people who insist on doing the things the way they were always done don't understand that most of the traditions in this area are completely outworn. How do we eat, how do we greet, what is polite?" And so he would have us "become decisive, responsible people, who do not need to have all things spelled out or who otherwise follow blindly in the paths of tradition" (pp. 46-52).

What disturbs the reader about all this is not that we are warned against being slaves of tradition. If there are still such people in this age of change they need to be awakened. What is disturbing is that we are advised to ignore the plain "Thou shalt" and "Thou shalt not" of God's Word, to assume that the changes in the world are necessarily good and that therefore we should go along with them guided by nothing but a vague, undefined directive of "love."

Instead of calling men who are lost in a sea of relativism back to God and His unchanging laws, Dr. Hart (who, we recall, denies the Bible has any unique inspiration — see his *The Challenge of Our Age*, pp. 118, 119, 130 — and wrote, "I think that I too have the Spirit of God" — see *The Vanguard*, Feb. 1972, pp. 5, 20) here tells us that we as modern men and women are to "shape . . . the principles of God's Word." Instead of having our lives renewed and restored to conform to that Word, he is telling us that we must "shape the principles of God's Word" to fit this changing situation! In what significant way does this differ from the "situational ethics" of the Liberals who with their undefined and lawless "love" can give no resistance or corrective at all to the moral and spiritual apostasy of the age? W. Aalders in his *De Groote Ontsporing* characterized adjusting the gospel to the world as the heart of the modern religious apostasy.

A CALL TO DISOBEDIENCE!

Observe how this teaching advanced by De Graaff and Hart harmonizes with that of Peter Schouls in his *Insight, Authority and Power* to which I called attention in the April issue of THE OUTLOOK. Although both Old and New Testaments command children to obey their parents, Dr. Schouls tells us that, if children have more "insight" than their parents, "obedience to parents then becomes a concept that in many instances simply doesn't apply. It will never do any good (in fact, it is evil) to tell children to obey their parents when counselling families where severe conflicts arise in this kind of context." And he supports this call for disobedience to parents by citing the words of James Olthuis, also of the AACS, who said, that in such a situation "there is no necessity to obey; much rather there is a call to 'disobey'" (pp. 36, 37).

The Bible indeed teaches us that an exceptional situation may arise when an earthly authority forbids what God plainly commanded. Then "we must obey

God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). But this by no means justifies disobeying parents or other authorities whenever their insight seems to be imperfect. The Word of God commands us to "be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake" (I Pet. 2:13) and commands particularly, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and thy mother (which is the first commandment with promise), that it may be well with thee . . ." (Eph. 6:1-3).

Notice particularly that the fact that the fifth commandment which Paul quoted had been given from Mount Sinai more than a thousand years earlier under totally different conditions and to a completely different people had nothing whatever to do with its validity. It remained valid because it was God's law. Referring to this same commandment the Lord pointed out that the Pharisees and scribes, the experts on the law (rather like the AACS teachers with their "philosophy of law"), thought that they had discovered profound and adequate reasons for setting aside this commandment, "Honor thy father and mother." Instead of getting appreciation from Him for their "insight," their conduct elicited this scathing rebuke from the Lord: "Why do ye transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?" "Ye have made void the word of God because of your tradition. Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, This people honoreth me with their lips but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men." "Let them alone; they are blind guides, and if the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit" (Matt. 15:1-14).

The pattern of promoting revolt against authority in the name of reformation can be traced into other areas in these writings. The Bible commands us "Servants, be obedient unto them that according to the flesh are your masters . . . in singleness of your heart as unto Christ . . . with good will doing service, as unto the Lord . . ." (Eph. 6:5-7; cf. Col. 3:22; I Pet. 2:18ff.). Compare that with the "Reformational" view given us by H. Hart in *Our of Concern for the Church* (p. 42): "No man has or should have a human master, nor is any man to be another's master. Managing is not some men's work, but the task of all." Consider the anarchy that adopting and applying this principle throughout the business world must produce — or should we say — is producing! In this setting he also calls us to use "radical methods" to ask whether "ownership is important at all," to begin "overhauling the whole of Western Society" (pp. 36, 41).

We may recall also the AACS advice on education, to which I called attention in the January issue, as it is expressed particularly in *To Prod the Slumbering Giant*. Although the Bible commands us to "Train up a child in the way he should go" (Prov. 22:6), teaching him the kind of behavior as well as attitude God commands, warning against the sins He forbids

and correcting him when he is disobedient, this AACS book on education forbids us to "teach subjective responses, values and virtues" and to exercise "discipline in the sense of negativity" (James Olthuis, p. 36), and assures us that children given freedom in a happy environment "will discipline themselves" (Peetoom, p. 140). While the Word of God commands us to "abstain from every form of evil" and not even to speak of the shameful things men do (I Thess. 5:22; Eph. 5:12) C. Seerveld suggests we learn "how to Christianly read dirty books" (*Out of Concern*, p. 52).

ON GIVING OFFENSE

The Bible teaches us to "take thought for things honorable in the sight of all men" (Rom. 12:17; II Cor. 8:21), to "render to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor" (Rom. 13:7), to avoid giving "occasion of stumbling to any" (I Cor. 10:32), and "to live lives that are so blameless that an ungodly world is compelled to respect them (I Pet. 2:11, 12) and to see in them the "light of the world." It is disturbing to find much of this AACS material recommending an almost exactly opposite way of life, advising us to reject all old standards of respectability, decency and courtesy and to join the revolutionary movements of our time in challenging all authority. When then these writers and speakers at times also slip into obscenity and profanity in their writing and speeches (see pp. 13, 133, 135 in *Will All the King's Men* and pp. 33, 38 in *Out of Concern for the Church*, for example) should anyone be surprised to find this raising all kinds of offense to the cause of Christ and His kingdom, both in the church and in the world, especially through its influence on young people?

I am not saying that all in the AACS are engaging in such unholy teaching or conduct. I am sure that many are not. Their better training and consciences may even move them at times to deplore it. It remains true, however, that such teachings, so flagrantly opposed to what our Lord and His word teach us, cannot help but have an evil influence and should be avoided and opposed. God's Word warns us: "Be not deceived: Evil companionship corrupt good morals" (I Cor. 15:33). "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned: and turn away from them" (Rom. 16:17).

NEEDED: A HOLY REFORMATION

Someone might ask, "Why give so much attention to the AACS? Isn't the problem of the lack of holy living bigger than that?" Of course it is. It is found throughout the churches and is one of the great evils of our time. Seeing an immoral show at Calvin College is just as demoralizing as enjoying a blasphemous presentation of "Godspell" with the AACS. We must turn away from sin and "follow holiness" everywhere.

Within our church family no one has been calling attention more loudly and persistently to things that have been going wrong with our way of life, our churches and our society, and urging us more insistently to return to acknowledging Christ as King over all of life than the AACCS men. In focussing attention upon these matters they have performed a real service and attracted the interest and support of many of us. When we ask what course we should take to correct what is wrong and how we should go about "seeking the kingdom," however, we find ourselves disappointed in almost every way by these "Reformational" leaders.

Despite the fact that the Lord has warned us that without holiness no man shall see Him or inherit His kingdom, our consideration of many of the writings of these enthusiasts for the "Kingdom" reveals them to be indifferent or contemptuous of any such emphasis on holy living! Rejecting the plain words and commandments of the Lord as outdated they in their practical advice copy the teaching of more radical liberal religious leaders and recommend a "situational ethics" that seems to differ little from that found in the unbelieving world. Such disobedience to the King

in the promotion of His Kingdom must be clearly exposed in the hope that many in and outside of this erroneous movement will turn away from it and return to the clear direction the Lord Himself has given us. The way to real Reformation is the way back to the Lord and His Word.

The Apostle Paul had to remind Titus in his labors among the people of Crete — so like the society of our age — that "the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us, to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world; looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people for his own possession, zealous of good works (Tit. 1:10-13; 2:11-14). "How vast the benefits divine which we in Christ possess. We are redeemed from sin and shame and called to holiness.

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Common Grace Versus Special Grace

By J. G. Vos

Common Grace vs. Special Grace. This is one of the subjects that was specified by students on the recent questionnaire which they wished to have discussed in chapel. C. S. Lewis in his classic book on *Miracles: A Preliminary Study*, said that the great enemy or rival of Christianity today is not atheism but religion. He said that the obstacle faced by Christianity today is not people's irreligion but their real religion. This is just another way of saying that the modern world wants God's Common Grace, but rejects God's Special Grace. Common Grace means those gifts and benefits of God which come to all people as people regardless of whether they are in a right relation to God or not. The presupposition of the distinction between Common Grace and Special Grace is human sin and guilt in relation to God. Where no guilt is recognized, no idea of grace is possible, just as there can be no healing where there is no sickness. The widespread abandonment of the concept of objective guilt in relation to God has largely removed modern man's sense of his need of God's grace. The Bible teaches us that there is a love or kindness of God which is given to all people as people regardless of their moral or spiritual condition and their relation to Him. For example, Matthew 5:45, "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." Acts 14:17, ". . . He did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." Common Grace includes both individual

and social benefits. It may be regarded as a restraint upon human sinfulness and violence so that life and civilization continue to be possible. Sometimes this restraining hand of God has been lifted or removed with the result that human wickedness has gone to terrible extremes. The period just before the flood in Genesis was such a time, as was the French Revolution. And there is mounting evidence that such a time of unrestrained lawlessness, violence, and wickedness is coming on us today. Common Grace brings benefits from God, but does not bring the gift of God Himself. Those who receive God's Special Grace come into a vital union with God Himself. God brings them into a right relationship with Himself so that they not only receive benefits from God, but they actually receive God Himself in a religious bond which is called in the Bible a Covenant. This includes transcendent and eternal benefits which are commonly summarized as salvation and eternal life. God's Special Grace not only gives people gifts and benefits, it also changes their inner nature and their desires, their likes and dislikes, so that they come to love God and to make God's will the aim of their lives. A constant tendency of religion as distinguished from Christianity is to emphasize the gifts and benefits that come from God rather than emphasizing God Himself. So we are faced in the modern world with the dominance of religion and the decline of Christianity. Some people are

saying that God is dead, while others tell us that we are living in a post-Christian world. The emphasis is on Common Grace today while Special Grace is neglected or even denied. The keynotes of religion as distinguished from Christianity are as follows: First, a denial that the human race is guilty in relation to God. Secondly, a denial that people need a radical change of their inner nature. Thirdly, an affirmation that God is the Father of all people in the religious sense. Fourth, an affirmation that all people are already by nature children of God in the religious sense. And fifth, finally, a man-centered rather than a God-centered world view. At Geneva College, I may say, we do not believe in religion. We believe in God. The Bible calls us from religion to God. It calls us from seeking primarily God's gifts and blessings to seeking God Himself. It calls us from the man-centered and therefore idolatrous culture of modern America to the God-centered culture of real Christianity. St. Augustine did not believe in religion. He believed in God when he said, "Thou hast made us for Thyself and our heart is restless until it rests in Thee." Back in early Bible history, Abraham did not believe in reli-

gion. He believed in God. In Genesis 15:1 God said to him, "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward." The prophet Jeremiah did not believe in religion but in God. Because he believed in God, he said in Lamentations 3:24, "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul. . ." The Apostle Paul did not believe in religion but in God. He wrote to the Corinthian Christians in First Corinthians 3:21-23, ". . . All things are yours. . . and ye are Christ's and Christ is God's." God has given Himself to the person who is really a Christian. This is the meaning of His giving Christ to be our Saviour. To possess God is to possess the *summum bonum*, the totality of all good, now and forever. Let us not follow modern America in being satisfied with Common Grace, the ordinary gifts which all people constantly receive from God. Let us not be brainwashed with the popular modern idea that religion will somehow save us and solve our problems and soothe our heartaches. May we seek the Special Grace which means receiving God Himself, a gift that includes all lesser gifts, a gift that alone has supreme value and that endures forever.

Studies In the Book of Revelation

LESSON 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF REVELATION

The Book of Revelation, with its 22 chapters, is not the longest book in the Bible, but it is certainly one of the most helpful books that we could study. The fact that it comes at the end of our Bible does not necessarily mean that it was the last book to be written; however, it very likely was. It was written somewhere about 96 A.D., which I shall explain later. The oldest theory was that the Gospel of John was the last book to be written, as claimed by theological Liberals. It was said that the Gospel of John was written in the second century, possibly as late as 200 A.D. The reason for this view was the claim that the Gospel of John contains ideas from Greek philosophy which the Jews of the first century couldn't have had in their minds. This theory has recently been somewhat displaced by some of the amazing discoveries in the Dead Sea region --some writings found among the Dead Sea scrolls, dated some years before the time of Jesus Christ, which contains the same ideas which were alleged to have been derived one to two hundred years later from the Greek philosophers. Facts have to be taken seriously, and here is a fact which has led many Biblical scholars to re-think the dating of the Gospel of John. It is even held by some today that the Gospel of John may have been the first of the four Gospels to be written.

The Gospels were written (except for the dispute

about the Gospel of John) in the third quarter of the first century (50-75 A.D.). They were written because people who could remember what Jesus had said were dying off and it was necessary to have a written record for the future.

Coming now to the Book of Revelation, very likely the last New Testament book to be written, and certainly the last book in our Bible, I want to say first of all that in these lessons absolutely nothing original will be presented. There are not many original thinkers and I certainly do not claim to be one of them. What will be presented in these lessons is derived from materials which I have read and studied and heard; and I am chiefly indebted to two sources, which I want to mention right at the beginning. First, a course on the Book of Revelation taught by Dr. Ned Bernard Stonehouse at Westminster Seminary in 1937-1938, which I found very helpful indeed. Dr. Stonehouse's course was a real eye-opener to me. Secondly, I am indebted to a book entitled *More than Conquerors*, by Dr. William Hendriksen, of Calvin Seminary, Grand Rapids (now retired). In my opinion, *More than Conquerors* is the best popular type book available on the Book of Revelation. It is easy to understand, it is true to the Bible, and it is extremely good. I intend to borrow a good many ideas from Dr. Hendriksen, but will try to give him credit when the time comes.

Dr. Stonehouse opened his course by stating that the Book of Revelation is considered popular today, for three reasons which he explained. This was a generation ago--about 35 years ago--but I think his reasons are still true. First, Dr. Stonehouse said, there is increasing recognition of the eschatological nature of Christianity, that is, that it is directed toward a wind-up of world history, the second coming of Christ, the Judgment and the eternal future. This new interest in eschatology naturally stimulates interest in the Book of Revelation. The ancient Greek philosophers had a circular or cyclic theory of history--they thought of history as going around in circles, getting back to its starting point and then beginning over again. How long has this been going on, according to the ancient Greeks? And how long will it continue to go on, according to them? Well, according to their view it never had a beginning and it will never have an end. This means endless motion but no real progress.

This Greek view of history was replaced in the western world by the Christian view of history, which regards it as linear not circular. Of course we can't blame the Greek philosophers, who did not have the Christian Bible that we have; but the real trouble with them was that they did not have a belief in a doctrine of creation, which is the foundation of Christian truth. In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth--that is the starting point of world history; it hasn't been going on forever; it had a beginning. According to the Biblical philosophy of history, history is like a straight line, not like a circle. It had a beginning, it has a crisis or crucial focal point (the crucifixion, death and resurrection of Christ) and from that it goes on toward a conclusion (the second coming of Christ and the Judgment Day that will end the world order as we know it--not the end of everything, of course, but the end of the present world order and the introduction of the next act of God's great drama, which will be something different).

So this fact that Christianity is not motion without progress, but that it moves toward a goal, is something that Christian people are becoming increasingly aware of. Possibly world conditions have fostered this somewhat; at any rate, there is increasing awareness that Biblical Christianity is eschatologically oriented. Now don't be afraid of a theological term. **Eschatology** comes from the Greek word *eschatos*, meaning "last" or "final." Eschatology is that branch of theology which deals with "the last things": the second coming of Christ, the resurrection, the judgment and the eternal state. So much for Dr. Stonehouse's first reason.

Secondly, Dr. Stonehouse mentioned the increasing pessimism of our time. This was true 35 years ago and

surely it is even more true today. If you look at this world apart from faith in God and the promises of God, you have every reason to be discouraged, even to despair. The world situation and the social situation are terrifying; evils are powerful and so prominent on all hands today--crime and delinquency and corruption and dishonesty, and of course war. If you look only at world conditions how could you be other than disheartened and pessimistic? Of course, if you have faith in God and His promises and His ultimate purpose, the final outcome is bound to be good. But pessimism is typical of our time. The easy optimism of the early years of the twentieth century, the so-called Pollyanna theology--"pack up your troubles in your old kit bag and smile, smile, smile"--is pretty well discredited. Two world wars are the rise of the great totalitarian dictatorships, and the increasingly bold departure from Christian standards of faith and morality have pretty well knocked out that easy optimism that held that the kingdom of God is just around the corner.

Dr. Stonehouse's third reason for the popularity of the Book of Revelation was that it is a book addressed to the Churches. This is not merely a book addressed to Christian people, but here are the letters to the seven churches of the Roman province of Asia, which we may fairly take as a spot-check of all churches. Our own church--the denomination and our particular congregation--is all seven of them. A church may be more like one of them, or more like another, but we can rightly regard them as a sampling of all churches of Jesus Christ in all times and places.

A student taking work at a well-known Bible Institute once said to me that the letters to the seven churches, in Revelation chapters 2 and 3, are a preview of the ages of church history and that we are now in the last or Laodicean period. When I inquired, "How do you know this is true?" the reply was "It is because it is." I said, "The Bible doesn't say this, does it?" But this student said the letters to the seven churches exactly fit the periods of church history and we must now be in the last one. I gently replied, "There are Christian people who believe otherwise."

A book addressed to the churches--it has a message for the churches as well as for the individual Christian.

Now I must add a word of caution. A book that deals largely or even partly with the future has to be handled with reserve and caution. When we are dealing with unfulfilled prophecies, it behooves all of us to put up a caution sign and go slow. Beware of anyone who claims he can solve all the problems, explain every vision and mystery. People who make such claims are egotistical fanatics, and are not entitled to

your attention or respect. The greatest, wisest and most devout scholars frankly admit that there are things in the Book of Revelation which baffle them. This is nothing against the scholars—it is just honesty to admit this. We cannot claim to understand it all, yet there is much that we can understand.

And this book starts with a promise of blessing to those who read, chapter one verse 3, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy and keep those things which are written therein, for the time is at hand." I am sure that there is a blessing in reading any part of the Bible, but not every book of the Bible has a promise like this at its very beginning. "Blessed is he that readeth." Therefore in spite of the difficulty and the baffling and mysterious character of some things in this book, it is well worth our attention and study. God put it there for us to read, and to understand as far as we can, and for us to gain benefit from it.

Notice, however, that the promise is not just to those that read the book, but to those that "hear" it, and certainly "hear" in this connection means heed,

hear in the sense of agreeing with something. And it is a promise to those who "keep" the things written in the prophecy. So this involves a moral response. The person who reads this merely out of curiosity will not get the blessing. It calls for a moral and spiritual response, a response in our living and our daily life—how we believe, how we feel, how we act. It is to this kind of reader that the blessing is promised.

The Book of Revelation has tickled the curiosity of many people, who have read it with "itching ears" rather than from real awareness of spiritual need. No part of the Bible was written to satisfy our curiosity. A student at the college asked me, "Did Adam and Eve go to heaven?" I answered, "Look here, how about yourself, are you going to go to heaven? I think Adam and Eve got there, but you won't see them unless you get there yourself." There are people who would like to discuss where Cain got his wife, who aren't particularly interested in the question of where and how should a Christian get his wife.

The curiosity-monger is trifling with the Word of God, and will not get any real benefit from it.

LESSON 2

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF REVELATION, cont.

The name of this book is **The Revelation of Jesus Christ**, also called **The Revelation of John**. The word **Revelation** is a translation of the Greek word **apokalypsis**, or **Apocalypse**. The basic idea of this word is removing the wraps from something, unveiling something. Along about September every year the automobile dealers get the new models for the next year, and have them in their showrooms, but all covered with canvas coverings so that nobody can see the new model car. Some of the popular magazines sometimes sneak a preview and publish an unauthorized photo, which they are not supposed to do. Then there comes a day when the dealer has an open house and a big ad in the newspaper and serves free cider and doughnuts, and removes the covering so that all corners can see the new model, and perhaps arrange to buy one. This is just the idea of unveiling, removing the veil of concealment or secrecy that was over something before. Things which were previously hidden in the mind of God are now revealed or made known to His people. This does not mean that all the mystery is removed; only that the veil of secrecy is removed.

This book of the Bible belongs to a type of literature called apocalyptic. The only other example of it in the Bible is the Book of Daniel, or possibly a case could be made for some parts of Ezekiel. There is however a great deal of apocalyptic literature in late Jewish writings which are not part of our Bible. Quite evidently, I think, these late Jewish writings got this kind of writing

from the Book of Daniel—it deals a great deal in visions and symbols. To understand these mysterious visions and symbols you must have a key; the person with the key can understand them, but the person without a key is only baffled by a book like Daniel or Revelation.

Critical scholars who do not really believe in the Bible compare the Book of Revelation to these late Jewish writings and insinuate that as these writings are unworthy of credence and unfounded and certainly not inspired of God, so the Book of Revelation is also not inspired of God but just a piece of human writing.

This way of thinking is of course wrong. The existence of a counterfeit does not imply that the genuine does not exist; quite the contrary. There would never be such a thing as a counterfeit twenty dollar bill if there were not such a thing as a genuine twenty dollar bill. Nobody is going to make a counterfeit twenty-seven dollar bill, because there is no genuine twenty-seven dollar bill. A counterfeiter needs something genuine to try to duplicate or copy. The Books of Daniel, Ezekiel and Revelation are the genuine; the non-canonical Jewish writings are the uninspired human imitations of them.

John is mentioned at the beginning of the book, but it does not say which John is meant. How many Johns were there in the New Testament? John is a common name both then and now; in the New Testament there

are at least three Johns—John the Baptist, John the brother of James, one of the twelve apostles, and John Mark. And of course there were later Johns after the time of Christ and the apostles. So which John wrote the Book of Revelation?

John the Baptist could not have written it, because he was beheaded before this time. The unanimous tradition of the early Church is that it was John the apostle, the brother of James. It isn't until you get down to about the year 200 or so that you find someone voicing the opinion that it was a different John. This opinion has no weight, and we can safely conclude that the book was written by John the apostle. Notice, if you will, that the author only says John, and doesn't proceed to introduce himself further; this is an evidence that it was John the apostle. However many other Johns there may have been, there was only one John that was so well known that all he needed to put down as his identification was John, and everybody would know right away who was meant. If it had been some obscure or unknown John, the writer would have had to say "John of such-and-such a place," but the apostle John did not need to.

The place of writing is stated here to be the island of Patmos. This was, and is today, a rocky, rugged, relatively barren small island between Greece and Asia Minor, a rugged and forbidding place. It was used in John's time by the Roman government as a prison for political prisoners, that is those who were imprisoned not because of crimes committed but because of their beliefs. And Christians came under this category. They were not imprisoned because they were Christians but because they would not worship the emperor. This was considered a political offence, but of course it was really because they were Christians.

John tells us that he was in prison on this island for the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ; that is definitely because he was a Christian and a witnessing Christian. Historical records tell us that Patmos was no easy, comfortable place to be; even apart from the loneliness, there were mines and the prisoners were often condemned to hard labor in the mines. So John had a hard life. John is the only one of the twelve apostles believed to have died a natural death. Judas of course committed suicide, and all the others are known by almost certainly authentic church traditions to have died violent deaths as martyrs—Peter, Paul and the rest.

You will recall that at the end of the Gospel of John Jesus predicted the death of Peter, and Peter pointed to John and asked, "Lord, what shall this man do?" and Jesus replied, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me." In effect Jesus said to Peter, this is not your concern; you follow me and don't worry about John. And the saying got around among the disciples and early Christians that John would never die, but rather, Jesus said, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?"

According to church records John was released from the island of Patmos in the year A.D. 96, quite an old man by that time, and went to Ephesus in Asia Minor where he spent the remainder of his life, a period of a few years, in security, and finally died in Ephesus, the location of the church to which Paul wrote the Epistle to the Ephesians.

The time of writing of the Book of Revelation is roughly dateable by the fact that he was put on the island of Patmos by the Roman emperor Domitian, who reigned from A.D. 81 to 91, and was assassinated in the year 96 at the age of 45. He was an extremely wicked man, and although at the beginning of his reign he put through a number of reforms, including the burying alive of three of the Vestal Virgins of Rome because of alleged immorality (this was considered a "reform" in the Rome of Domitian's day), in the later years of his reign he became a perfectly terrible person. Domitian was the first Roman emperor to claim divinity for himself during his lifetime: he blasphemously assumed the title "Lord and God." In the closing years of his reign he went wild with paranoiac insanity, lashed out wildly against people, and became a violent persecutor of Christians.

This was the second great persecution of Christians. The first was under Nero, in the middle sixties of the first century. Paul and probably also Peter suffered martyrdom under Nero. Someone has said that Paul was beheaded by Nero, but the day would come when people would call their sons Paul and their dogs Nero.

At the time of Nero the great Jewish-Roman war had not yet been fought. It came in A.D. 68-70. Previously to that war the Romans considered the Christians to be just a minor sect or denomination of the Jewish faith. The Romans regarded the Jews with a sort of benign contempt. They considered them a ridiculous people, but all the same they had given the Jews a favored standing from the time of Julius Caesar, before the time of Christ. Their Sabbath was kept inviolate, so far as they were concerned, and they could not be compelled to do anything contrary to their law; they had a preferred standing, and among other things were exempt from military service in the Roman Empire.

In the period before the destruction of Jerusalem, the Christians came under that same umbrella of favored treatment because they were regarded as a branch of the Jewish faith; Christians who were not of Jewish descent were thought of as people who had joined the Jewish faith. Then in A.D. 68-70 the great Jewish-Roman war was fought and the Jews were totally defeated, a large part of them were killed, and the rest mostly scattered and sold into slavery. So they passed completely out of the picture so far as being considered important from the Roman standpoint was concerned.

You see, in the period covered by the Book of Acts it was the Jews who persecuted Christianity and the Romans who protected it. Paul was persecuted by the

Jews and protected by the Romans. Of course he was finally beheaded under Nero, but that was after the ending of the book of Acts. Now after Jerusalem was destroyed and the Jews were no longer important to the Romans, it finally became clear that Christianity was not a mere sect of the Jewish faith but a world religion

that had its own basis and stood on its own feet, and did not pass out of the picture with the military defeat of the Jews.

There was a lull for a few years after Nero's time, but it didn't last, and finally Domitian became a vicious persecutor of Christians.

LESSON 3

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF REVELATION, cont.

The early Christians were very careful to avoid getting involved in political activism in the Roman Empire. You recall that Jesus had said to render the things of Caesar to Caesar and the things of God to God. The early Christians were not in any sense activists or revolutionaries trying to overthrow any of the government structures.

On the other hand, the Romans gradually became aware that the beliefs of the Christians, if successful, would spell the doom of the Roman Empire. This was certainly true, even though the Christians were the most peaceful and inoffensive of people. They believed in Jesus as a King, even though not on the Roman political level. If the kingdom of Jesus Christ grew and prospered, it would result in the fall and ruin of the Roman Empire. It is impossible for a totalitarian despotism like that of the later Roman Empire to continue to succeed and prosper if Christianity also continues to succeed and prosper. And as the Romans came to realize this they began to persecute Christianity on the ground that being a Christian was incompatible with being a loyal citizen of the Roman Empire. The Christians were commanded to worship the image of Caesar and burn incense on the altar in front of the image of Caesar, and they refused to do it. So they were treated as enemies of the state, as politically disloyal, and thus they suffered persecution.

All this has something to do with the origin of the Book of Revelation. The early Christians in the period before this book was written quite evidently believed that the second coming of Christ was near. Many of them evidently believed that the second coming of Christ would occur during their lifetime. The Bible doesn't teach that, Jesus Christ hadn't said that, the New Testament Epistles don't teach that, yet the early Christians seem to have quite generally believed this idea. Actually, the teaching of the New Testament about the time of the Lord's second coming is paradoxical. The New Testament teaches that the second coming **might** come in their lifetime, but not that it **must** come in their lifetime; obviously these are two very different things; yet the early Christians, after the death of most of the apostles, seem to have jumped to the conclusion that the Lord would probably return during their lifetime. The Gospels came to be written as the early Christians gradually became aware that expectation was not going to be realized; people were

dying off and the Lord had not yet come. And now persecution is starting. And instead of the Lord coming and taking them all to heaven and a better life, the shadow of a most cruel, vindictive and savage persecution is hanging over them, and it is getting worse, and increasing.

The early Christians in the year A.D. 96 when the Book of Revelation was probably written were about to enter a period of over 200 years of savage persecution. They of course had no way of knowing how long it would last. But how different from their previous expectation that the Lord would come very soon and take them to heaven so that they would not even have to die. Instead of this it looked as if the Lord had forgotten them, and now the Roman Empire is throwing them to the lions and burning them alive, and all these terrible things are beginning to happen to them. How many people in America had any idea, when we first intervened in Viet Nam, that the conflict would last so many years and take so many lives? And would it have been done if the truth had been known in advance? You see, hindsight is a lot easier than foresight.

So the early Christians were in danger of panic from fear and apprehension. It is a terrible thing to think that you may be thrown to the lions or burned alive for your faith in Christ, and that you will have to stand up under such a test and not deny Christ, when by denying Him you could save your life. The Book of Revelation was written, in the first place, to steady the faith and support the courage of the early Christians who lived at that time and faced those horrors. It has a message for us too, of course; it is not limited to the time of the early Christians in its relevance and application; but it started with them and was to encourage them and serve as a reinforcement and comfort to their faith. This book was certainly not written to satisfy curiosity but to provide comfort, and the early Christians needed it badly.

It is a recognized principle of Bible interpretation that no meaning can be correct which would necessarily have been meaningless to the original readers. While we may have a fuller understanding of what it means than they could have, it must have had a meaning for

the original readers, and the meaning it had for them must be basically the same as the meaning it has for us.

A book agent called at our home one summer morning and tried to sell us an expensive leather-bound Bible, embossed in purple and gold, for \$29.95. In his sales pitch he stated that that Bible was unique, no other Bible was like it, because it had in an appendix a list of the Scripture passages discussing the subject of atomic energy. I declined to purchase one for two reasons. The first reason was \$29.95 which I could not afford; and the second reason was this matter of atomic energy. Of course God created the atom and God's Word has something to do with everything; but that the Bible discusses atomic energy as a topic, as it discusses heaven and hell, or faith and works, I just did not believe. God wrapped up the package and the nuclear physicists are only beginning to unwrap it, of course; but if the Bible discussed atomic energy as a topic this would necessarily have been meaningless to the original readers of the Bible, therefore it cannot be true.

These early Christians who were trembling with fear because of the vicious persecution that was beginning, were steadied by what is written in the Book of Revelation. And as you read it, you can see that there is comfort in it. It looks as if Christ is not in control, and the emperor at Rome is in control of everything. But the real truth is that Jesus Christ is on the throne, He is in control in spite of outward appearances to the contrary, and the emperor is only in process of hanging himself. The persecution, in spite of its viciousness, will not continue forever; it will come to an end. Those who suffer the death of martyrdom are pronounced to be the blessed who die in the Lord. There is comfort for those who suffer, and there is comfort for those who agonize over others who suffer. The Christian Church will not only endure—it will win the battle in the end. As Tertullian (died AD. 220) said, the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. You have to take a long view, but the Church is going to win, as Jesus said, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

I take it this is what it meant, basically, to the original readers. Of course it is worked out in many details, and it has many applications to us in our time. We too are living in a world in which the panic of fear is starting to eat at our souls. Some people have called this a post-Christian world. You can stick your head in the sand like the proverbial ostrich and say that everything is fine, but the truth is that everything is certainly not fine. Do you realize that in spite of all our efforts at evangelism and missions the proportion of Christians in the world is less every year? We cannot keep up with the population explo-

sion—the tremendous natural increase of the non-Christian populations of the world, so although there are more Christians in the world this year than last year, the percentage of Christians is less this year than last year. How long can this continue before Christianity is completely swamped, becoming an insignificant minority, whose voice nobody has to listen to or respect?

We live in a time when the basic truths of Christianity are outrageously denied by the high and mighty of this world. In our grandparents' day nearly everybody believed in Christianity—even wicked people did; they didn't live according to Christianity, but they believed that Christianity was true and the Bible was the Word of God, barring an occasional atheist or deist, of course. Ordinary people even when living wickedly expected to repent before they would die. But today we have ministers and professors of theology and bishops, if you please, not to mention multitudes of ordinary academic professors, the intelligentsia, the leaders of the world of thought, denying outright that Christianity is true.

The authority of the Bible, the deity of Christ, His atonement, His resurrection, and so forth, right down the line, are denied or explained away by the educated people of our time. We who hold to the truth of Scripture are in a constantly diminishing minority. More and more we are on the defensive. Of course faith in God can steady us and give us courage to look the future in the face, but apart from that the outlook is certainly dim. Adoniram Judson, an early Baptist missionary in Burma (died 1850) was thrown in prison by the Burmese Buddhists. An Englishman visiting him asked, "Mr. Judson, what do you think now of the prospects for the conversion of the heathen?" Judson was having a rough time in a Burmese prison, but he replied, "Mr friend, the prospects are exactly as bright as the promises of God." It takes faith to talk like that when you are in prison, but Judson said it. And we can say today that Christ is on the throne, in spite of the appearance of world conditions. The ultimate and really important decisions are not going to be made in Washington, nor at the United Nations, and certainly not in Moscow or Peking. They will be made by Jesus Christ in heaven who is the ruler of the kings of the earth. It takes Christian faith to believe that, but if you don't believe that it is hardly worth while to try to be a Christian. If we are Christians the ultimate outcome is bound to be favorable. Our situation today is in many ways parallel to that of the early Christians in the Roman Empire. Nobody is throwing us to the lions, but our faith is being discounted and blasphemed on every hand. Yet if we are Christians the final outcome is bound to be good. And by a study of the Book of Revelation we can be steadied and calmed and encouraged and qualified for the service of God.

LESSON 4

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF REVELATION, cont.

The nature of the Book of Revelation is different from that of many other parts of the Bible, which is one reason many people have found it difficult. Dr. Hendriksen, in his book *More than Conquerors*, calls it God's sound film: you see the visions and hear the voices that are in it. Dr. Albertus Pieters, who wrote a notable book on Revelation called *The Lamb, the Woman and the Dragon*, called it God's cartoon book, not meaning by this anything profane or irreverent, but trying to bring out the special nature of the book.

This book is written in a kind of code, and the early Christians evidently knew what this code was, so that this carried an intelligible and beneficial meaning to them, but the Roman persecutors were only mystified and baffled by this strange book. If the book fell into the hands of a Roman official who was opposed to Christianity he would only be baffled and would likely put it down as sheer nonsense written by some fanatic or crackpot. Yet it carried a meaning to the early Christians; to those in the know it brought stability and comfort, while to non-Christians it would bring only bafflement and amazement.

We should realize that this was no imaginary danger. There was one Roman emperor who tried to destroy all copies of the Scriptures. He did not succeed in doing this but I am sure he destroyed a lot of Scripture manuscripts. God of course saw to it that the Bible survived this ordeal. But this was the kind of thing that these early Christians were up against. And this book has things in it which perhaps were not limited to the Roman Empire in their application, and yet they did apply to it and certainly would not be pleasing to any Roman official who was going around saying "Caesar is Lord," so there was a reason for the book being written in a code. There was danger of being killed or thrown to the lions simply because you were a Christian, and many were. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage in North Africa (died as a martyr A.D. 258), was one of the truly great men of Christian history. Two or three times he ran away and made an escape to avoid being arrested and put to death, and was accused by others of cowardice and of being unwilling to offer himself as a martyr for the name of Christ. Cyprian replied, "I am only following the teachings of Jesus Christ—he said, When they persecute you in this city, flee to another." He added, "You will see that I am not afraid to die for the name of Christ, but I will not throw my life away until the time comes." When he was finally caught and it was either deny Christ or die, he finally gave his life for his faith in the Lord. He was arrested

in Carthage and brought before a Roman proconsul who asked, "Are you the bishop of so many wicked people?" Cyprian replied, "I am the bishop of the Christians in Carthage." "Our Lord the Emperor commands you to offer sacrifice." To this Cyprian replied, "Carry out your orders. This matter is not debatable." "Think carefully," said the proconsul, "your life hangs in the balance." Cyprian again said, "Carry out your orders; this matter is not debatable." So he was ordered to be beheaded, and a great crowd of people followed him to the place of execution. Many of these people were not even Christians but they knew about Cyprian and had benefitted from him; he had been a rich man before he became a bishop, and he used his money to do good. At the execution ground, Cyprian instructed his friend who was standing by him to give twenty-five gold pieces from his estate to the executioner who would cut off his head, to show that to a Christian to die is gain, and also to show that he held no resentment against the executioner.

Among the early Christians, there were some who courted martyrdom and who practically (we might say in modern terms) lay down on the railroad track in order to get killed. The Church never approved of this courting of martyrdom; in fact, it was strongly condemned by the Church councils. Christians were to serve their Lord by fleeing if possible, without denying Christ. But if they were cornered so that it was an unavoidable choice between denying Christ and dying as martyrs, they should be willing to die rather than deny the Lord. This is the kind of situation in the background of the Book of Revelation.

Do you think it would be easy to be a Christian under such conditions as those? You know, there is nothing that purifies the Church of hypocrites quite so quickly and cleanly as a good heavy dose of violent persecution. When there is some danger of martyrdom, the hypocrites vanish.

Now to give you an example of this cartoon character of the Book of Revelation: we read in chapter 12, "And there occurred a great wonder in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars, and she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth; and the dragon stood

before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her son as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron; and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days."

Then in verse 13 it speaks of the dragon being cast down to the earth, and persecuting the woman who had given birth to the man child. And the woman is given two eagles' wings to flee from the dragon to a place of safety. And the dragon, on the ground, spits out water from his mouth like a flood, to try to drown the woman who is flying across the sky. And the earth helped the woman by absorbing the water spat out by the dragon. And the dragon went away to make war against the rest of the woman's children, which keep the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus.

Now if you were a non-Christian Roman official, what do you think you could make of that? To say the least, it is highly mysterious and baffling. But suppose we belong to that class of Christians who boast that they take everything in the Bible literally, from Genesis to Revelation. What could you make out of Revelation 12 then? You see, it is necessary to know the code in which it is written.

Dr. Albertus Pieters illustrates this cartoon character as follows. Suppose New York City in some future time would go back to wilderness, and the archaeologists would come to excavate it and see what they could find about the "ancient" culture of America. They find a cornerstone of a large building, and inside it a number of things including a newspaper. The front page of the newspaper has a picture of an elephant, a donkey and a tiger. If the archaeologist insisted on taking things literally he might say, "Thousands of years ago New York City was a great jungle inhabited by wild animals, including elephants, donkeys and tigers." But that would miss the real meaning completely. The real meaning would be that when the newspaper was printed there was a political campaign going on, and the elephant

stood for the Republican party, the donkey stood for the Democrat party, and the tiger stood for Tammany Hall, the old corrupt political machine of New York City.

There are many things as bizarre as that in the Book of Revelation, and it was at least possible for Christians to understand them. They might not fully understand them. They might not fully understand every detail but they could understand enough to meet their need.

Coming back to Revelation chapter 12, we will take it up in some depth when we get to it. But in the meantime let us have a brief rundown of what it probably means. There is not complete agreement among Bible scholars about what it means, but there is general agreement about what most of it means. The woman clothed with the sun, and the moon and stars under her feet and around her, stands for the Old Testament Israel, the covenant people of God. She brings forth a man child, the seed of the woman, namely Jesus Christ, who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron. The great red dragon stands for the devil. He tried to kill the woman's son as soon as he is born. This may refer to Herod's attempt to kill Jesus, when Herod had the male infants at Bethlehem slain. But the man-child is caught up to the throne of God, meaning that Jesus Christ, having ascended to heaven, and seated at the right hand of God the Father, is beyond the reach of Satan's attacks. But the woman is still on this earth, and the rest of her children are the New Testament Church, so the dragon attacks them. So the devil attacks Christ's people. But the woman is enabled to escape destruction by the dragon. The persecution lasted over 200 years but it was not equally violent at all times and all places. There were places out on the fringes of the Empire where Christianity could escape persecution and survive. The dragon or serpent spitting water out of his mouth to drown the flying woman, may refer to the flood of heresies in the early centuries which almost engulfed Christianity. Satan has two methods of attacking Christianity—persecution from without and heresy from within. The heresy corrupts the teaching of the Church so that the truth of God is confused and obscure. In the early centuries heresies flourished, and threatened to dilute Christianity so that it would be just another pagan religion.

LESSON 5

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF REVELATION, cont.

These mysterious visions in the Book of Revelation are certainly not intended to be taken literally. They had a meaning which those in the know could at least partly discern, but to take them literally would be to miss the meaning completely.

We shall now consider two other principles for

understanding the Book of Revelation. The first principle is, that it is necessary to distinguish very carefully between the **meaning** and the **fulfilment**. This is true of all Bible prophecy, but it is constantly being disregarded, especially by Fundamentalist writers who really believe in the Bible as the infallible Word of God. It is sad but true that the Liberals, who do not

believe in the infallibility of the Bible, often have a saner method of interpreting these things than some Fundamentalists have.

Scripture means what it means. It doesn't mean one thing to you and another thing to me; it means what the Holy Spirit intended it to mean when it was inspired. Our responsibility, with help from the Holy Spirit and the use of proper methods, and in accordance with sound principles, is to try to learn what it means. This of course is progressive, it is a process. As long as we are dealing with the meaning we are on solid ground, because we are dealing with infallible and inspired Scripture. But when we attempt to identify the fulfilment we are dependent partly on infallible Scripture and partly on ordinary historical records, news accounts, reports of current events, radio, television, and so forth.

For example, Revelation 13 is a mysterious chapter. It describes the nature and actions of a wild beast out of the sea, a horrible monster who makes war with the saints and overcomes them and causes those that worship him to have a mark in their forehead or on their hand; no one can get a job or earn a living to support his family who does not have the mark of the wild beast out of the sea. On the verge of his success in overcoming the saints, Christ will appear and destroy him and bring his career to nothing. Now it is possible to gain a valid understanding of the general meaning of this, though some details may remain obscure. This chapter speaks of a world dictator who will attack Christianity and try to destroy it, and will almost succeed, but will himself be destroyed by Christ at or before His second coming. We may take this as referring not to any one world dictator but to anti-Christian political government whenever it appears in the history of the world, at any time or place where the institution of the State has undertaken to persecute Christianity and Christian people. This does not rule out that it may also have its absolute and ultimate fulfilment in a specific individual yet to come.

As long as we are saying that kind of thing we are on solid ground, because we are dealing entirely with inspired Scripture. It is a matter of studying what the Word of God says. But when someone comes to try to nail down the fulfilment, and says, "Napoleon Bonaparte is the dictator" he is skating on thin ice because he is dealing not only with Scripture but with ordinary uninspired records of human history, and besides he is dealing only with past or present history and does not know from historical records what is yet to come in the future.

Nearly all the political bandits of history since John's time have been named as the fulfilment of the wild beast

of Revelation 13—Hitler, Mussolini, Khrushchev, Stalin, Castro, Peron and many others. This is nonsense, of course. None of these wicked men had the stature really to fulfil the prophecy. Yet people who should know better foolishly confuse the meaning with the fulfilment, and make bold to say that this or that historical person is the wild beast of Revelation 13. When it is a matter of interpreting the meaning we can have practical certainty, or at least an increasing degree of practical certainty. But when it comes to identifying the fulfilment we must be very cautious lest we prove to be mistaken in the end. We must always remember, too, that we are in the grass roots of history ourselves and are not in a position to form a final judgment on the identification of the fulfilment.

Distinguishing between the meaning and fulfilment is the first principle to bear in mind in dealing with Scripture prophecy, and especially the Book of Revelation. The second principle is what Dr. Stonehouse called the **principle of recapitulation** and what Dr. Hendriksen called the **principle of progressive parallelism**. The Book of Revelation does not run straight through like a motion picture film from beginning to end. It repeats itself a number of times. There is some disagreement about where to place the boundary lines, but according to Hendriksen, and I think he is right, the book falls into seven sections.

Incidentally, the word **seven** occurs in the Book of Revelation 54 times, and the word **blessed** a number of times. You might spend some time on a Sabbath afternoon with your Bible underlining in red pencil every time the word "seven" occurs in the Book of Revelation, and every time the word "blessed" occurs. "Blessed is he that readeth" in chapter 1 is the first time for "blessed," but there are several more.

Now each of the seven sections covers the entire Christian era from the first coming of Christ to His second coming. There are differences of angle or approach in the various sections, as well as differences of emphasis. Some of them may emphasize things that will be specially prominent as the second coming of Christ draws near, and others emphasize things that were specially prominent at the time when the book was written; this is a matter of degree of emphasis. But each of the seven sections, we may affirm, covers the entire Gospel era, and brings the reader at the end of the section face to face with the end of world affairs—the Judgment Day or the end of the world, we commonly speak of it—and the beginning of the eternal order of things. This book does not run continuously without a break from beginning to end, but repeats itself in seven approximately parallel sections, which, however, are written from slightly different points of view.

Hendriksen points out that these seven sections are arranged in two groups, one group of three sections and one group of four sections. He has a whole chapter in his excellent book **More Than Conquerors**, strongly emphasizing the unity of the book. Its unity is more basic than the diversity of the different sections; in other words, basically they all teach the same thing, are by the same author, and inspired by the same Holy Spirit, with the same general purpose or theme running clear through. This is true, of course, of the Bible as a whole. Modern "liberal" critics never tire of taking pot shots at the Bible, claiming it contradicts itself, and almost any book with more than half a dozen chapters they are likely to insist must have been written by more than one person. The Bible was written by about forty men, in three languages, Aramaic, Hebrew and Greek, and geographically as far apart as Italy in the west and the Euphrates River in the east,

and in time from Moses to the apostle John, a period of roughly one thousand five hundred years. There is obvious diversity in it, not only in languages, but in literary style, in the human personality traits of the writers, in the themes it deals with. The diversity in the Bible is so obvious that you can't miss it. You don't have to know the original languages for this—just read the Bible in English. But underneath all this diversity is a unity which is more basic than the diversity. This is because the Holy spirit is **the real author** of all parts of the Bible, back of the human writers such as Moses and John. Because the Holy Spirit is the real author of all parts of Scripture, the Bible does not really contradict itself; it is an internally harmonious and self-consistent organic whole and carries a single theme, with variations of emphasis and application, from beginning to end.

LESSON 6

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF REVELATION, cont.

As the Bible is a unity, so is the Book of Revelation—it is a single book with a single purpose. Dr. Hendriksen divides the seven sections into two main parts, and holds at the same time that the entire book is characterized by unity, not by confusion. The believing Christian who approaches it with a proper method will see the coherence and inter-relationship of all the parts, both major and minor, and will discern that the book as a whole has a definite meaning. The meaning of this book as a whole is that the Church and Jesus Christ, its Lord and Head, though always under attack, are victorious in the final outcome. This basic total meaning is applied in different lines and according to various applications and circumstances, but all tending toward the same final goal. Every part is related to that basic theme, and you cannot find a verse in the Book of Revelation that does not fit under that theme somewhere.

As to the two main parts of the book, Hendriksen puts the dividing line between chapter 11 and chapter 12. This divides the book into two groups of 11 chapters each. You realize, of course, that the division of the Bible into chapters and verses is not part of the inspired text of Scripture; it is a modern device to enable us to find a place conveniently and quickly, and it only goes back some 500 years to the time when printing was invented, or slightly before that.

The first eleven chapters are the surface situation, in which we see the church attacked by the world. Here are the worldly powers, empires and kings and rulers and wicked men of the world, and the whole world-system, attacking the church. The second part, from chapter 12 to the end, shows the church attacked by

Satan and his helpers, so in this part you can learn what it is that stirs the worldly powers up against Christianity.

Chapters 1 to 3 show Christ in His Church, the Lord amidst the seven golden candlesticks, walking about among the churches. That is section 1. Chapters 4 to 7 form section 2 of part one. Here we see that Christ rules the world for the benefit of the church. This is the part that has the series of seven seals—a book sealed with seven seals. As each seal is opened, something happens and something is said. This part concerns the trial and afflictions and persecutions that the church suffers very largely as the end of the world approaches.

The third and last section of Part One consists of chapters 8 to 11. This contains the series of seven trumpets which are blown. As each trumpet is blown there is a sound and also something is said, and often something is seen. The trumpets are warnings of judgments to come. The seven trumpets taken together warn of a judgment that is sure to come on a world that is attacking Jesus Christ and His Church. However these are not the final judgment of God; they are stated to be incomplete, involving in each case one-third of the people, one-third of the sea, and so on. Thus we see that this is a partial and historical process of judgment at the end of the world which will finalize everything. Also we should note that the judgments in chapters 8 to 11 do not lead men to repentance.

Part 2 of the book starts with chapter 12, and depicts the Church attacked by Satan and his helpers. In the Book of Proverbs (26:20) we are told that where no one adds wood, the fire goes out. Persecution against

Christianity would die out unless it were stirred up by an invisible enemy of the Church, namely Satan, behind the scenes. In this second main part of the book Satan is pictured as the great deceiver, who deceives the nations and stirs them up to attack the saints and Christianity. The nations are victims of a systematic and devilishly clever program of brainwashing and deceit. This leads to their continuing attack on Christianity. Finally Satan is put into the lake of fire, but until near the end of the book he is continuing to cause trouble for Christians and the Church. The real cause back of the world's attack on Christianity is Satan who hates Jesus Christ and Christ's people. So it is Satan versus Christ, the dragon versus the man-child; and the Church is victorious in the end; as we come to the end of the book, there is a wonderful celebration of Christ's and the Church's victory in the last three chapters.

We should understand that it is not the main purpose of this book to predict isolated particular events. The kind of interpretation that has been dominant in past times has been the church-historical or continuous-historical interpretation, which regards the book more or less as a film that runs through the projector once.

This kind of interpretation tries to nail down specific things—for instance, Mohammed is identified with the false prophet of chapter 16:13, 19:20 and 20:10. The purpose of the book is not primarily to predict isolated specific events, but to portray the principles of God's government of the world and its history down to the very end. This of course does not rule out occasional predictions, or references to specific events in the past. Chapter 12 certainly speaks of the birth of Christ. I don't hesitate to identify the fulfilment here, where we are dealing with hindsight, but we should hesitate about

foresight. The birth of the man-child in chapter 12 can only be the birth of Jesus Christ, and the man-child being caught up to the throne of God in heaven can only be Christ's ascension to the right hand of God the Father. So, the book does deal in special events, here and there, and this can also be true of those parts of the book which deal primarily with the future, that is, prophecies which are still (in our time) unfulfilled. And of course prophecies can have preliminary fulfilments and then a final and exhaustive fulfilment.

This is a recognized principle of Bible interpretation—prophecy can have only one meaning, but it can have multiple fulfilments. You can drop a stone in a pool of smooth, quiet water, and it makes concentric circles of a ripple or wave. The great flood of Noah's day was a type, or preliminary sample, of the Judgment Day at the end of the world. I think it is a fair interpretation to say that the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was a type, or preliminary sample, of the Judgment Day at the end of time. A "type" is something that happens on a lower plane or a smaller scale, which will later have the same idea fulfilled in a complete way or on a higher plane. The destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 as predicted in the Gospels was surely a type of the great Judgment Day at the end of the world. God's judgment is the idea here, and this can be actuated in history on different levels, and finally on the ultimate level. We cannot rule out the idea that since the wild beast of Revelation 13 may be a future oppressor of Christianity, people in the past have partially fulfilled this prediction, and have tried to exterminate Christianity from the face of the earth and have partly succeeded, but not so fully as is pictured in Revelation 13, so it is possible that the ultimate fulfilment of it is still future.

LESSON 7

THE BOOK OF REVELATION, CHAPTER 1

In the very first verse this Bible book is called the **Revelation**—the Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave to Him to show unto His servants. This implies the objective view of prophecy and of divine revelation, spelled with a small "r," not the name of a book but the name of a theological idea. The **objective** view of prophecy and Bible revelation, you should realize, is denied on every hand today, except among the minority of which we are a part—Bible-believing Christians. The dominant idea today is that the writers of the Scriptures were primarily thinkers, intellectuals, something like the Greek philosophers, something like news analysts such as Eric Sevareid and the late David Lawrence—men who analyze the trends and come up with answers and ideas. I reviewed a book on the Old Testament called **The**

Kingdom of God by a scholar named John Bright of Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Virginia. Bright won a \$7500 prize from the Abingdon Press for this book, sort of an American Nobel prize. I commented at the time that it would have been a good investment of the Lord's money if the Abingdon Press had paid Professor Bright \$7500 not to publish this book. This book reconstructs Old Testament history making it basically a tension between two kinds of religion, a ritualistic religion represented by the priests, and an ethical type of religion represented by the prophets. These are represented as in a fluctuating contest, back and forth, up and down. Of course there is no real antithesis here; it is a false antithesis, like asking someone "Are you happy, or are you married?" Throughout the book

the author used subjective language of the Old Testament of the Old Testament prophets. Isaiah "felt" this, Hosea "was aware" of that, Jeremiah "realized" that this must happen, and so forth. The kind of language you would use to describe college professors who were working out some new theory in sociology or political science.

Now the Bible itself says that prophecy came in old time not by the will of man, but holy men of God wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21). This is a very careful statement about the source of prophecy, and of course it really applies to the whole Bible, Old Testament and New. It came not by the will of man—it came through the brain of man, and the nervous system of man, and the handwriting of man, if you will, but it wasn't man that pushed the button that started the process. Secondly, it did come from God. Holy men wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. The Greek word for "moved" here is *pheromenoi*, which means carried along. A conveyor belt is a good illustration if you do not take it too mechanically. A conveyor belt has no free will. It goes where it is programmed to go. The illustration is defective, because there is indeed a human factor in the production of prophecy, but the source or origin is not in man but in God. This implies the old-fashioned, solid, objective, God-given character of Scripture. Basically it is what God has revealed, not what man has thought out or discovered.

Also prophecy, while its origin and absolute truth come from God alone, is at the same time rooted in contemporary conditions and events. That is the setting of it, the occasion for some parts of it, the stage-setting, the furniture. These were things that were seen and known in the time of apostle John. This is especially true of chapters 2 and 3, the Letters to the Seven Churches of the Roman province of Asia. Sir William Ramsay, the famous Scottish archaeologist, did notable work on this and shed a great deal of light on these two chapters. He showed that each of the letters is closely tied in with the history, geography and politics of one of the cities. This enables us to get a better idea of what the message is for Christians—then and now—in the letters to the seven churches. The conditions obviously are not exactly the same as our conditions and circumstances, therefore you might have to transpose the key a little bit to apply the teaching to our own time, but you can do this correctly if you have rightly understood how the letters are related to the contemporary scene, the scene at the time when the letters were first written.

Also, as I have previously mentioned, the time we are living in is very much like the time when John wrote the Book of Revelation and is becoming more so. People

aren't throwing us to the lions, but they are denying and blaspheming our faith and becoming increasingly hostile to Bible Christianity. So it is a timely book for us to study and think about.

A third principle for studying the Book of Revelation is that this book is very closely interwoven with the rest of the Bible and especially the Old Testament. John was obviously a thorough and profound student of the Old Testament, so he had the Old Testament woven into his mind, and of course the Holy Spirit could and did use this. You cannot understand the Book of Revelation without understanding its many flashbacks to Old Testament statements and institutions, as well as to earlier parts of the New Testament. To summarize, the first principle is the objective character of divine revelation; the second is that prophecy is rooted in contemporary conditions and events; and the third principle is that the Book of Revelation is closely integrated with the rest of the Bible and especially the Old Testament.

Now read in your Bible the first seven verses of the first chapter of Revelation. Christ is in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks or lampstands. "Lampstands" is a better translation; it does not mean a tiny light we get from a candle, but a really good light.

In verse 3 the word "blessed" occurs for the first time. Incidentally, did you check to see how many times the word "blessed" occurs in the Book of Revelation? If you didn't, you can still do it some Sabbath afternoon. "Blessed is he that readeth; you might take that as simply pronouncing a blessing on anyone who opens his Bible and reads this book, and of course it is that, but probably it originally had a narrower and more technical meaning than that. You realize that printed books are a modern luxury. In ancient times books were all handwritten and very expensive; an ordinary person could hardly hope to own very many. Presumably verse 3 here refers to the special readers who read this book to the congregations in the seven cities of Asia that are mentioned. John gives here the links of the chain by which the Book of Revelation comes to the Christian believer. First, it is from God. God gave it to Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ sent it to his servant John; John wrote it in book form and then sent it to the seven Christian churches in the Roman province of Asia; these churches in turn would have it read by a reader in their public worship services. So the Lord says, "Blessed is he that readeth," referring, presumably, first of all to the appointed readers in the churches. It might be the pastor of the church or it might be someone else appointed to do the public reading.

However, the seven Asian churches are long gone, and their readers with them, and to us it means a blessing

promised to everyone who will read this book receptively and believingly, recognizing it as the Word of God, and seeking spiritual benefit from it. Blessed is he that readeth. But it goes on to add, those are blessed who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things that are written therein, for the time is at hand. Is it possible to read the Bible and not keep the things that are written therein? To be a mere reader, and not an experienter or practicer of the teachings of the Bible? We are told in the Epistle of James to be doers of the Word and not hearers only. We are not to be like the minister who is reported to have said to his congregation, Do as I say, not as you see me doing. We are to be practicers of the Word, to carry out in serious response what the Word teaches; otherwise it will only add to our judgment in the end, if we are only readers and do not take it to heart in a practical way in our life. So the blessing is not merely to the reader, but to those who

hear and read and do so with a right response, those who keep the things that are written therein. This like all Scripture calls for a moral and spiritual response. Nothing in the Word of God is merely for satisfying intellectual knowledge or curiosity, although it surely has an intellectual content; but at every point Scripture calls for a moral and spiritual response on the part of the readers. And as a matter of fact you cannot read it without making a moral response, which, however may be a negative response. The same is true when you enter a church and hear the true Gospel preached; you do not go out like you came in. You are either brought closer to God, or if you react negatively you become hardened and it is more difficult for you to respond to the Gospel after that. So here at the beginning of the Book of Revelation we are reminded that the Word of God calls for a response in terms of living our life, not merely a formal attention to what the Bible says.

LESSON 8

REVELATION CHAPTER 1, cont.

Verse 3 says, "The time is at hand." This must not be taken to imply that the end of the world or the second coming of Christ was just around the corner, or that it would probably happen before the death of John or his first readers. But, it is and was true that "the time is at hand." This book is always timely. There is indeed a progression in history, and the end of the world will come only once, at the consummation, the end of world history. But this book is not only about the second coming of Christ on the clouds of heaven at the Judgment Day. There is a great deal in it that is relevant to every church and every Christian and every time. As truth from God it is always timely. So we are told at the beginning of the book that the time is at hand; no one can say that this book is of no use to them, that it deals with the distant future only. It has a message for every one at every time.

What is the meaning of the clause "The things which must shortly come to pass" in verse 1? As previously stated, the teaching of the Bible about the time of Christ's second coming is paradoxical. The time of the consummation has not been revealed. It might come in the time of John and the early Christians; it might come in our time. When it says "the things which must shortly come to pass," this implies that the things in this book could and probably would come to pass in their preliminary form during the lifetime of some of the original readers. Not the consummation, or end of the world, but the lower-level or preliminary "type" occurrences which would be true but not ultimate fulfilment of the prophecies of the book.

Verse 4. "John to the seven churches in Asia."

This is of course not the continent of Asia, but only a small corner of it. It is not even what we call Asia Minor. The Roman province of Asia was a relatively small piece of territory, today included in Turkey, on the Mediterranean Sea, a strip of seacoast and a hundred miles or so inland, not really very large. Seven churches of the Roman province of Asia are mentioned, starting with Ephesus and ending with Laodicea. The question has been asked, why did John leave out some of the other Christian churches in the Roman province of Asia? These seven were not the only ones; at least two or three others are known to have existed in John's time. I have no answer to this question. You will have to wait until you can ask John himself to get an answer to that! Presumably there was a good reason. No doubt the Holy Spirit led him to choose just these seven. Perhaps it was because John wanted to preserve and stress the number seven, so prominent in the Book of Revelation; perhaps these seven are to be taken as a representative cross-section or sampling of churches. And certainly all seven of them, and the things said in the letters to them, apply in varying degrees to any Christian congregation that you might consider.

Verse 4b. "Grace be unto you, and peace. . ." Notice that grace is mentioned first, and peace afterwards. We live in a day when the world is desperately calling for peace, but doesn't want grace. And there cannot be real peace without grace. A Dutch Christian paper said, "Real peace is not the absence of war but the presence of God." It is possible to have absence of war and still have no peace, and real peace can exist at least in our hearts in the face of all sorts of trouble and calamity if we really have Christ living in us. But

grace comes first, and grace of course is the favor of God to the unworthy; those who do not deserve His kindness or favor, but really deserve His wrath and curse. This is the message of the Bible: Salvation by grace. Contrary to what some people say, this is the real message of the Old Testament. The person who says that the Old Testament teaches salvation by works and the New Testament salvation by grace needs to go back and read the Old Testament more carefully.

There is only one message to sinful man, and that is, repent and believe, and you have salvation by grace. This is rejected by the modern world, and yet people want peace. They want peace on the international level and they want peace inside of themselves. I am sure that we live in a world which has lost its peace; I am not referring merely to military conflicts between nations, which are unspeakably dreadful, but to the inner life of people. Go and stand on a busy city street corner and watch the people go by and see how many people look as if they have any joy in their life. The American people, in spite of their wealth and the world's highest standard of living, are discontented, unhappy, problem-ridden, filled with anxieties and fears. The sale of tranquilizers to get internal tranquility by chemical means is terrific. People cannot relax and be quiet. People are afraid to be alone with their thoughts. They have to spend their time with their eyes glued to a television screen or something because their own thoughts are painful to them, or disturbing or distressing. We live in a world that is certainly desperately in need of peace of every kind. And the Bible gives the only true source of it. The Bible speaks of two kinds of peace: first, peace with God, and second, the peace of God. Peace with God in Romans 5:1. This is basic; there is no other kind of real peace until you get this kind. John Burroughs, the famous naturalist, was lying on his deathbed when some friend came and asked, "John, have you made your peace with God?" to which Burroughs replied, "God and I have never quarreled." How naive can a person be about his own moral condition? Jesus spoke of some who claimed that they could see, yet in the real sense were blind.

Peace with God comes through Jesus Christ and His atoning work. When a person gets this, then afterwards his anxieties and fears are allayed and he gets the peace of God (Phil. 4:7). This does not mean that we always have it completely or perfectly. We all have our ups and downs as long as we are in this world. But we are promised that the peace of God shall keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. But first you have to have peace with God. This implies that God is holy and we are sinful, and there must be a reconciliation on a basis acceptable to God before we can really have peace with God.

A great deal of the "religion" of the present day is a quest for peace without grace. A great deal of the moral thinking of our country and its communications media and so forth is a quest for peace without grace. It will never be. There is only one real source of peace, and that comes from grace, and that comes from God. And this is what we have to get back to if we want to experience blessing and escape judgments.

Perhaps I should tell you now (at last) that the word "blessed" occurs seven times in the Book of Revelation, and the first time is here in verse 3 of chapter 1. "Blessed is he that readeth," and so forth. In verses four and five we have a disclosure of the Trinity. "Grace be unto you, and peace, from him which is, and which was, and which is to come." This I take to refer to God the Father. "And from the seven spirits which are before his throne"—this is surely a reference to the Holy Spirit. You might wonder, is the Holy Spirit plural? Seven spirits? I am sure not. Seven is the number of perfection in the Bible, indicating the divine perfection, applied here to the Holy Spirit, so it speaks of Him as the perfect one.

"And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first-begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth" (verse 5). There is the Trinity, and this is basic to Christianity. It is rejected by many people today, even many who claim to be Christians. And yet Christianity stands or falls with the doctrine of the Trinity. Of course, we do not believe in three gods, we believe in one only, but in this one God there are three centers of consciousness. The word "persons" is an inadequate word and is not a good translation of the Greek term *hypostasis*. Nor is there any other single English word that will adequately convey the meaning. But within this one God there is some diversification, which partly explains why God can be self-sufficient, and would have been so, even if he had never created the world or angels or people. God loves and is loved. The Father loves the Son, and so on, and this provides for this interaction within the being of God.

Scripture represents salvation as set up as an agreement or compact between the three persons of the divine Trinity. Salvation is planned by God the Father, purchased or achieved by God the Son, and applied by God the Holy Spirit. Therefore, to give up the Trinity is to give up everything that makes Christianity Christian. The person who gives up the doctrine of the Trinity puts himself outside the bounds of Christianity, along with Unitarians, Jews and Mohammedans, who do not believe in the Trinity.

LESSON 9

REVELATION CHAPTER 1, cont.

Verse 5. Jesus Christ is here called “the faithful witness, and the first-begotten of the dead,” implying of course His bodily resurrection on the third day after He was crucified. Then He is also called “the prince of the kings of the earth.” This word “prince” is rightly translated “ruler” in recent versions of the New Testament. Let’s think a minute. Is Christ the ruler of the kings of the earth today, or is this only going to come true at some future time? Perhaps far in the future? Well, the Greek of this verse is in the present tense, and when it says “Jesus Christ, the ruler of the kings of the earth, that means right now as well as in the future.

There are many Christians who do not believe that Christ is now the ruler of the kings of the earth; they hold that His kingship will begin at His second coming. One said to me that you can speak of the Lordship of Christ today, but not of His kingship today, because His kingship requires a throne in Jerusalem, and therefore it cannot be true at the present day. I think this distinction between “lordship” and “kingship” is trifling with words; it is a distinction without a difference. Both of these refer to the ruling authority of Jesus Christ.

The ruler of the kings of the earth. It doesn’t look as if Christ is the ruler of the kings of the earth, if you look at the condition of the earth. Just read the daily newspaper and watch the news on the television and see if it looks like Christ is ruling over the kings of the earth today. But the final decisions that really turn history are being made by Jesus Christ. Wicked men don’t recognize this, and they are carrying out His plans in spite of themselves. Surely there will come a time when every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. But we don’t see it yet with our bodily eyes. Still, Christ is reigning through His providence over the nations of the world today, so that His purpose is being accomplished in spite of appearances to the contrary. And this was very necessary for the first readers of the Book of Revelation to know. If anyone could be tempted to say that God is dead, it would be the first readers of the Book of Revelation, when Christians were being thrown to the lions and burnt at the stake, and Bibles destroyed and the emperor claiming to be divine—surely they would be tempted to think that God was dead or had forgotten them. But they are reassured here: Jesus Christ is the ruler of the kings of the earth. I heard a godly pastor say in explaining a Psalm which said “It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes,” that this means, Put your faith in God, not in the government. It doesn’t mean that you should not use the government for some things,

but it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in the government.

Verse 5b, “Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.” This is the doctrine of the substitutionary atonement, widely rejected by many church leaders today, and by others called a mere “theory,” just one “theory” among others to explain how we can be saved. The late Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick called it the religion of the slaughterhouse. That is how he spoke about atonement by the shed blood of Jesus Christ. It is basic to the Bible, Old Testament and New—without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin (Hebrews 9:22). When people reject this truth, it is almost always because they have an attenuated view of the awfulness of sin. They think of sin as a slight evil, and say that it does not require the substitutionary death of the Son of God to cancel it. I remember reading about a little girl aged three or four, who was somewhat terrified by the accounts of the animal sacrifices in the Old Testament. She said, “Mother, why did God want all those animals to be killed?” Her mother was hard put to explain this, but she said in reply, “That was a long time ago, and people’s sense of values has changed since then.” This did not satisfy the child at all. She said, “Mother, I know why. That was before God got converted and decided to be a Christian, wasn’t it?” I am sure that whatever you say about the blood sacrifices of the Bible, you cannot explain them by saying that God was different then from today. God never changes. Blood sacrifice was always a dreadful thing, it was never pretty or nice, but unspeakably dreadful. And the reason for this is because sin is a dreadful, horrible thing. Sacrifice with the shedding of blood is to cancel out this horrible thing. And as our modern world has given up the idea of atonement by shed blood, so also it has given up the Bible teaching about sin. We are told today that sin is not such a great evil; there is enough good in people to overcome the evil, that humanity is self-perfectable, and we can do it.

According to Bible Christianity, sin is an absolute evil: it condemns people to eternal separation from God in hell. There is no remedy for it except the shed blood of Christ. This is where John, divinely inspired, takes his stand. “Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood.” Jesus Christ is here set forth as to who He is and what He has done. We all owe a debt to God which we could never pay. We would not only suffer death, but eternal death, except for Jesus Christ who has paid the awful debt. This is what He did when He washed us from our sins in His own blood. He redeemed

us to Himself. The modern world rejects the whole idea of blood atonement because it does not feel any sense of sin. One of my teachers, Dr. J. Gresham Machen, said that the modern church is failing because it is attempting the impossible. It is attempting to call the righteous to repentance. Not the really righteous, of course, but the self-righteous, those who think they are righteous. Conviction of sin is the absolutely necessary preface to Christian experience. The kind of evangelism that only says "Come to Jesus" and

tries to preach the Gospel without the Law misses the mark. This is largely what is wrong with our world today. When Isaiah (Isa. chap. 6) had his vision of the Lord in the Temple, and heard the seraphim cry "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts," he reacted by saying "Woe is me." He felt his uncleanness and sinfulness. Without blood atonement there is no Christianity and no salvation, and without conviction of sin there is no sense of need of atonement, and without the Law of God there is no conviction of sin.

LESSON 10

REVELATION CHAPTER 1, cont.

Revelation 1:7-10. In verse 7 we read, "Lo, he cometh with clouds." This is a form of statement that is found in many places in the Bible in connection with theophany, or the visible appearance of God. I am sure we realize that these clouds are not the kind the weather bureau deals with. They are a supernatural manifestation. Perhaps we should trace this idea a bit through the Bible. This concept appears first in the Book of Exodus, where we read of the pillar of cloud and of fire. This indicated and at the same time concealed the presence of God. God is manifestly there, to help and protect His people, yet there is nothing there to satisfy morbid curiosity or prying eyes. I may add that nothing is more foolish than to try to explain this phenomenon naturalistically, so attribute it to special conditions of humidity, air pressure, and the like. It is obviously represented in the Bible as miraculous or supernatural, an act of the direct, almighty power of God. God is of course unexplainable.

Next we see the supernatural cloud on the top of Mount Sinai, Exodus chapter 19 verse 16. Here it is connected with the revelation of God's covenant to His people. In Exodus 33:9 the pillar of cloud descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle as the Lord talked with Moses, and the people saw it, and worshipped God. We find the manifestation of the cloud again in Exodus 34:4-8, where it is specially connected with the revelation of the holiness and moral law of God, and the redemption of His people.

Going on to the time of Solomon, I Kings 8:10-11, at Solomon's dedication of the Temple, the cloud filled the house of the Lord. It was so bright and dazzling that the priests could not enter to carry out their duties in the temple. And in II Chronicles chapter 5, verses 13 and 14, the house of the Lord was filled with the cloud, so that the priests could not enter for a time.

Coming down to New Testament times, the following are some of the references. Luke 9:34-35, the Transfiguration of Jesus, three days before he was to be crucified. Jesus appeared suddenly in His heavenly glory, not

as He usually looked in His estate of humiliation. Moses and Elijah came from heaven to speak with Him. And there came a cloud and overshadowed them, and we read that they feared as they entered the cloud—the instinctive reaction of us sinful humans as we come into any direct contact with the presence of God. Then there came a voice, "This is my beloved Son, hear Him," and when the voice had passed Jesus was found alone. Needless to add, this really happened; it was a historical fact, not a myth as some people say today.

In Acts 1:9-11 we read of the ascension of Jesus. As the disciples looked upward to the ascending Jesus, "a cloud received him out of their sight." In all these Scripture passages, and others that might be cited, the cloud is a manifestation of the special presence of God. And I take it that this revealed the presence of God in a way that those who witnessed it could not possibly question its reality. On the other hand it concealed from unbelievers, and the hostile, and the critical, and the curious, and the explainers-away of things, the supernatural reality of God, so that all they could see was something that they would try to explain as a freak of the weather, or something like that. But to believers it was an unmistakable manifestation of the presence of God, concealing and at the same time revealing Him. This is theophany, a visible manifestation of the invisible God.

Now this we have here in Revelation 1:7. "Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him." Surely in view of the previous history of this concept in the Bible the clouds mentioned in Revelation 1:7 are not atmospheric phenomena. This is surely a way of connecting the glory of Christ's second coming at the consummation with previous references to theophany in the Bible. It is all part of a chain with many links, it is part of an organic system, which you see first back there at the crossing of the Red Sea, later at the tabernacle and Mount Sinai and the Jerusalem Temple, and still later at the Transfiguration of Jesus and at His ascension—and now predicted in connection with His second coming. This links these events all together. I think it is worth our time to emphasize this a little bit.

You will perhaps think I am making this up, but I actually heard a minister say that Revelation 1:7 ("Behold, he cometh with clouds") **has absolutely nothing to do with the second coming of Christ**. Do words mean anything, or don't they? Can you interpret the Bible to mean just anything, whatever you want it to mean? Dr. J. Gresham Machen once said that some people might say that the Declaration of Independence of the United States was signed and the Liberty Bell rung in San Francisco, and if you would ask them, do they not believe the history books which tell us it happened in Philadelphia, they would reply, that of course they believe the history books, but they **interpret** Philadelphia to mean San

Francisco. This is intellectual dishonesty, and there is a lot of it in the way some people handle the Bible. "Interpretation" becomes a dishonest device or gimmick to make the Bible mean whatever they want it to mean.

Years ago the liberal journal *The Christian Century* said that the second coming of Christ is happening all the time in better international relations, better relations between capital and labor, and so forth. Take your choice, the Bible or *The Christian Century*.

(To be continued.)

Religious Terms Defined

PATRONAGE. The practice, which caused long controversy and great evil in Scotland, by which a Christian congregation is deprived of the right of choosing its own pastor, the minister instead being appointed by some person holding the right of patronage pertaining to that congregation.

PELAGIANISM. A heresy named after Pelagius, a British monk of the fourth century. Pelagianism denied the doctrines of original sin and total depravity, and held that man is saved, not by the sovereign grace of God, but by his own free will. This ancient heresy is akin to the modern heresy of Arminianism.

PENTATEUCH. The first five books of the Bible, or the Books of Moses, namely, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

PENTECOST. A feast of the Jews, celebrated fifty days after the Passover. (Lev. 23:15).

PERFECTIONISM. The doctrine that it is possible for a Christian, in this life, to reach a state where he no longer commits sin. Perfectionists almost invariably define what they mean by "perfection" as something short of the absolute moral ideal which God requires man to live up to. Thus they lower the standard of the Bible, in order to hold that the Christian can attain it. In other words, Perfectionism teaches that it is possible, in this life, to reach an imperfect perfection.

PERJURY. The taking of an oath in order to tell or confirm a falsehood.

PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS. The Biblical doctrine that those who are truly regenerated by the Holy Spirit can neither totally nor finally fall away from the grace of God, but shall be preserved therein by the power of God and shall certainly inherit eternal life.

PERSONALITY OF GOD. The truth that God is a Being possessing freedom and self-consciousness, who can call

Himself "I" and whom we can call "Thou."

PETITION. That element of prayer in which we make request of God for any blessings which are agreeable to His will.

PHARISEES. A sect of the Jews in the times of Christ which held with zeal to "the traditions of the elders," regarding these as of equal authority with the Scripture itself. They were characterized by religious earnestness and zeal, accompanied by legalism, formalism, and hypocrisy.

PHYSICAL DEATH. The separation of soul and body, and the dissolution of the body which follows thereupon.

PIETISM. Originally a religious awakening in the Lutheran churches of Europe in the latter part of the 17th century. This movement tended to set up an antithesis between personal Christian experience, on the one hand, and creeds, doctrinal orthodoxy and church organization, on the other hand. Today the term "Pietism" is used to describe a type of religion which strongly emphasizes the regeneration and sanctification of the individual Christian, while it regards "the world" not as something which the Christian should influence for righteousness, but as something from which the Christian should withdraw, lest his holiness be contaminated by contact with it.

PIOUS FRAUDS. "Those artifices and falsehoods made use of in propagation of the truth, and endeavoring to promote the spiritual interests of mankind" (Buck's Theological Dictionary). Pious frauds are forbidden by Scripture: Romans 3:8.

PLENARY INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE. The doctrine that the Scripture is fully inspired of God, so that not only the ideas but the very words of all parts of the genuine text in the original Hebrew and Greek are the Word of God, completely free from errors of whatever kind.

POLYGAMY. The state of having more wives than one at the same time. This is contrary to the original institution of marriage (Gen. 2:4). During the Old Testament period polygamy was temporarily tolerated

but not actually sanctioned by God; its worst features were restricted by God's law, pending its complete elimination by the working of God's grace in the hearts of His people.

Christian Verse by Esther Belle Heins

Even Now, Even There, Even So!

Faith reaches out to grasp that which it cannot see,
It stands on Rock divine it cannot feel;
Sound Faith says, "Even now, yes, Even there, I'll go.
Thy way I'll gladly take: Thy plan reveal.

Now fully grown, straight, tall and strong, like mountain
pine,

Faith says to every challenge, "Even so,"
"Yes" to lonely valleys, stormy seas and wind-swept
plains;
To God alone, Faith's lovely head bends low.

The Edelweiss of God

Some call it Heaven's Borderland,
The crest where few have trod;
When one ascends he's apt to find
The edelweiss of God.
It may be in the song of birds,
The blooms along the way;
Sweet meditations, solitude,
Or as you pause to pray.
It may be where the path grows hard,
Among the rocks and thorns;
Still closer then God walks with man;
His peace the trail adorns.
Our earthly climb with Him close by,
Brings sweet discoveries,
Through Christ—He is the Edelweiss
That frames warm memories.

Sacred Rendezvous

That man might fellowship with God,
Sin's hold on him must cease.
When Christ died, mercy met with truth,
And righteousness kissed peace.
(Psalm 85: 10)

Where Are You Parked?

I parked high on the sunlit crest,
Deciding there to stay;
The view was very beautiful;
Far down, the valley lay.

I parked myself above the throng;
From burdens I was free;
Although so close to heaven there,
My Lord seemed far from me.

In time I changed my parking place,
For sorry brought me low;
But in the valley others, too,
Were burdened down with woe.

So far from Heaven I was parked,
Geographically,
But as I labored there for God,
My Lord was close to me.

Contributions Received

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Later contributions will be reported in our next issue. Without such generous contributions as these it would hardly be possible to continue publishing the magazine, as subscriptions and sales of back issues and reprints provide only about half of the amount needed. We are trying to resist inflation by not raising our subscription rates. Many thanks to all who have helped. Your contributions, incidentally, are deductible from your federal taxable income if you live in the United States.

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Some Observations on the Theory of Evolution
Studies in the Covenant of Grace
Studies in the Epistle to the Hebrews
Philippians: Epistle of Humility, Unity and Loyalty

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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 CHALLENGE OF OUR AGE, by Hendrik Hart. The Association for the Advancement of Christian Studies, Toronto; 1968, xii + 147 pp., paperback.

This paperback brings forcibly to our attention the serious threats of secularism against Christianity today. Its clear exposition of Harvey Cox's *The Secular City* is profoundly disturbing. Such threats and dangers need emphasis. Too few Christians see how extensively and powerfully anti-Christian philosophy, politics, and morality (or immorality) have permeated our nation. The author is to be commended for trying to raise Christians from their semi-ignorance or frustrated lethargy; but one wonders whether his recommendations are as perceptive as his warnings.

The reader must then ask: Is Dr. Hart's diagnosis as correct in detail as it is in general? Are his explicit recommendations the proper Biblical prescriptions? And a sub-question would be, Are his recommendations clear or ambiguous?

As to this last question, the *Provisional Outline of Responsibilities, with Specific Areas, and Positive Mandate* (pp. 74-79), are hardly informative. The only specific item is a 1966 report to the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church. From the very little he says, I should guess (and it is only a guess) that the

Spirit of God forty years ago forbade going to the movies, but now in the present situation the Spirit of God has given permission (because the movies are so much more moral now?).

Some of the author's language is ambiguous. For example, "The central appeal to which we must be open at all times is that any critical review of our traditions and any prophetic view of our future contributions is spiritually opposed and contrary to any and every secular and pagan achievement" (p. 71). The more carefully one reads this sentence, the less intelligible it appears. The danger is that the reader will discount the threat of secularism because of such uninformative, useless, and meaningless language. There needs to be what the author calls "concretization." But this is what his book in general lacks; and the few instances he supplies (his evasion about lying—p. 55—and his disapproval of Victorian morality—pp. 69-70—), cause a conservative Christian to raise his eyebrows.

Another example is: "It may never be supposed that the Spirit of God leads people of the twentieth century in a nineteenth century way" (p. 83). Never? Surely this sentence is too sweeping. Of course there are many differences between political conditions in the Roman Empire, the nineteenth century, and America today. But did not Romans 1:27-32, which

presumably applied to the pagans before Christ, apply also to the nineteenth century; and does it not apply to homosexuality in the large denominations today?

There are also some technical errors. He classifies Emerson as a Pragmatist. No secular, professional philosopher would do so. For all Emerson's incompetence in philosophy, he was sort of Hegelian and transcendentalist. Astoundingly also, the author traces the background of Operationalism to Plato and gives no evidence that he has read Percy Bridgman.

But the Biblical Christian, if he is not a professional philosopher, will be more disturbed by Dr. Hart's view of the truth of the Bible.

First, as to truth. "Many Christians. . . say that truth is objective and that it is independent of us. But this is a very dangerous thought, connected with the assertion that truth is fact-correspondence" (p. 56). Attached to this sentence is the following footnote (p. 62): "Theories of truth that speak of absolute objectivity make truth to be a conceptual matter of doubtful origin. Intellectualistic doctrines of truth cannot possibly account for the biblical notion of truth as something to be done and lived. Truth primarily concerns man's relation to the Word of God and not his first of all having correct ideas or beliefs." Then, too, the author's remarks on p. 118 seem to imply that truth is not propositional.

In opposition to this, the reviewer wishes to assert that all truth is propositional. The term *dog* or *cat* is not by itself true. Attach to either one the predicate *black*, and you have a proposition, which is true, or false, as the case may be. The name *Moses* is neither true nor false; but the proposition, "Moses wrote of me," is true. A command, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," is not itself true. Commands are not proposition and cannot be either true or false, as also for another example, "Right face!" But the proposition, God commands men not to commit adultery, is true. Nothing can be true unless it is a proposition. Hence when anyone speaks of non-propositional revelation, he is speaking of something unintelligible, uninformative, and so devoid of meaning that it cannot even be false.

For this reason the final proposition of Dr. Hart's note on p. 62 is false. Truth first of all does indeed concern our having correct ideas or beliefs. The Playboy people do not obey the commandments because they do not believe that God commanded them. There cannot be obedience to divine authority unless one believes that there is such authority. Therefore, contrary to Dr. Hart's position, our rela-

tion to God's Word is first of all a correct intellectual understanding of what the Scripture teaches.

But if theories of truth and talk about propositions are too philosophical for the man in the pew, Dr. Hart's view of revelation, the Bible, and the Word of God ought to be matters of great concern.

First, for Dr. Hart the Bible is not the only divinely inspired revelation: "As such, as inscripturation, there is nothing unique about the Bible, for God's revelation is certainly not limited to that book. Nor is the inspiration of the Bible something limited to it alone. For we certainly do not believe that after the Bible was complete God stopped inspiring other authors." (p. 118-119). Note here that the inspiration of later authors is put on a level with the inspiration of the Bible, or vice versa, that the Bible is reduced to the level of *Bavinck* or *Balzac*. Nor does all the Bible seem to be the Word of God: "For example, in Genesis 3 we have only seven times a 'word' of God, twice a word of the serpent, twice of the woman, twice of the man, and then yet the connecting words of the writer" (p. 131, n. 13). Does not this mean that the words of the author of Genesis (and we wonder whether Dr. Hart admits the Mosaic authorship) are not the words of God? Since the words of Moses and Isaiah are somewhat extensive, we also wonder how much of the Bible could have come from God.

In view of this is it not surprising that Dr. Hart rejects some Scriptural teachings. There are two dangers in reading the Bible, he says. "The one is *Biblicism*, which is essentially idolatry, because it reduces the Word of God to *Bible-texts*. . . A Bible thus read will finally have nothing to say to us anymore apart from . . . so-called rules for faith and morals out of touch with contemporary life." (p. 120). "The Word of God gives us 'principles' by which to live. It is our responsibility to 'concretize' these principles. In Israel this concretization was done by God himself. . . In Christ the Mosaic law has been fulfilled and we have now again the responsibility to give our own concrete expression to the principle of the law." (p. 81, n. 13).

If propositions mean anything, these sentences quoted say that Moses or God himself concretized the principles of the Word of God for the ancient Israelites. But this concretization does not apply today. We must again and now make a different concrete expression of the principle of the law. "Thou shalt not commit adultery" was Moses' rule for faith and morals. That was his concretization of the Word of God. Our situation needs a different one.

So says Dr. Hart. But devout Christians, who believe that the propositions of the Bible are true, do not say so. —Gordon H. Clark

BY STRANGE PATHS, by Sallie Lee Bell. Zondervan Publishing House, 1974, pp. 218, \$1.25 (paper).

A young Christian woman abducted from Paris and deported to New Orleans in the eighteenth century forms the basis for this Christian novel. Like most Christian novels whose main character is a young, beautiful, single, Christian woman there is always love expressed to her by a non-Christian (whom she loves), another non-Christian man wooing the same woman (whom she does not love), as well as several conversions sprinkled here and there. And, like most Christian novels, the whole thing "ends happily ever after."

After reading novels like this, the Reformed community ought to be stunned into creating a literature that reflects the realism of the Scriptures themselves instead of allowing those less than Reformed to dominate the Christian reading public with a superficial, pietistic portrait of a Christianity less than Biblical.

—Lee P. Bittner III

MEMO FOR 1976: SOME POLITICAL OPTIONS, by Wesley Pippert. Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois 60515, 1974, pp. 120, \$1.95 (paper).

A lot of people are concerned about the whole political process in the United States. One such person is Wesley Pippert, a principal UPI reporter for the 1972 McGovern campaign and former aid in the U.S. Senate. As a Christian, Pippert writes a memo to himself detailing possible (individual) Christian alternatives and approaches to the American political process, i.e., dissenter, revolutionary, activist, and infiltrator. The author espouses no set position, but cites advantages and disadvantages to each of the above historic Christian stances toward politics.

The main flaw in this provocative book is **not** the fact that the author fails to embrace a particular stance toward American politics as more "Christian" or "Biblical" than another; rather, the problem is one of no apparent biblical-theological structure or system to even approach the subject of the "Christian and politics." For example:

If history is truly in God's hands, we must seek the **redemption of societies as well as of men and women**. We must work to root out the evil that exists in institutions and nations as well as in every human being. (pp. 88-89; bold face not in original)

No one would deny that the thrust of the Gospel is to be levelled at "the evil that exists in institutions and nations," but does this means constitute the "redemp-

tion of societies" as its end? Hardly, for it is definitely not true that societies and nations are **redeemed** in the **specific Biblical definition** of redemption which centers upon Christ's propitiatory sacrifice for His elect people of all nations and races. —Lee P. Bittner III

PRO-EXISTENCE, by Udo Middelman. Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois 60515, 1974, pp. 126, \$1.95 (paper).

"Pro-existence" means that God is for existence and not against it so that the stance of the Christians toward the world is predicated on the God Who is there and what His world is. So argues Udo Middelman, another bright, young associate of Francis Schaeffer and the L'Abri Fellowship. The author's concern is to define reality on the basis of the God Who created it as well as to examine man's unique place and role in created reality. Middelman's conclusion is that work, property, community, and man himself are valuable and honorable when seen from the perspective of the objective truth of reality as defined by the God Who created it. So far, so good as we come to the heart of the book itself, Chapter 3, entitled "The Circumference of Reality" whose central thesis is:

My perception stands in a system of coordinates that are set by the **external world, the Bible, the continuity of time and scope of all men** across the world and throughout history. All of these are controls on each other so that **together** they provide me with a **view of reality** that is more accurate than **any one of them** or than my perception of any one alone. (p. 65) (bold face mine)

Here, Middelman appears to say that "the external world," "the continuity of time and scope. . ." and **the Bible together** provide me with a view of reality that is more sufficient than any one of these means (of Revelation?) alone. Therefore. . ."I can see the truth of the Bible's propositions because I can verify them in a larger area" (p. 64), i.e., the total concept of reality which includes "other peoples' circles of life" (p. 64), as well as the external world and history (p. 65). But Middelman is not here suggesting that we have multi-fold layers of Revelation which show us reality. No, he indicates that the Bible is the objective standard of truth (p. 71), as opposed to the rationalism of autonomous man who attempts "to free himself from all preconceived notions and to doubt everything in order to arrive at something more true. . . But in the end he succeeds in only deifying man" (p. 72) because autonomous man in Adam has substituted "the concept of the **necessity of reason** (for) the concept of the **sufficiency of reason**" (p. 68) (italics in original).

Thus, Middelman concludes, the Christian concerned for defining the circumference or reality whose sphere and center is the God Who exists must look to the order of the Bible because the uniqueness of the Bible is such that it "will be found to correspond to the circumference of life within which man can live and be real." (p. 78) (*italics mine*). Herein is the critical flaw in Middelman's apologetic: if the Bible is simply found to "correspond to reality," how do we know this and upon what basis or criterion of truth is this established, apart from **our human Reason**? That which makes the external world, other peoples' circles of life, the scope of time, and the Bible (cf. pp. 64-66) **together** provide me with a "view of reality" must be my Reason. Hence my perceptual (empirical) Reason becomes the **final** arbiter of the circumference of reality, and not **Sola Scriptura**! Any apologetic that fails to acknowledge the Scriptures alone as the **ultimate** source for the believer's knowledge of reality is deficient. It is the written Word of the eternal Self-disclosing God which explains to me "the external world," "the continuity of time and scope of all men," and "other peoples' circles of life," not they which explain and interpret the Bible to me! —Lee P. Bittner III

HOW TO WIN OVER DEPRESSION, by Tim LaHaye. Zondervan Publishing House, 1974, pp. 244. \$2.95 (paper).

Mr. LaHaye is concerned about the increasing surge of depression in an age of affluence and opportunity. Indeed, he dedicates this book to the depressed hoping that "they will not only read the suggested cures found here, but follow the remedies to a new way of life." There are some encouraging and very Biblical insights in this book. For example, the author's response to modern psychiatry and "guilt feelings:" "People feel guilty because they are guilty! The Bible teaches what modern psychology tends to reject: that man is not a conscience-free animal who can sin with impunity. . ." (p. 156). The author also shows considerable Biblical insight when he cites that the Christian's "victory over depression" comes through a "Christ-controlled life" (pp. 76-87). Unfortunately, he never really clinches his Biblical case against depression because he is looking in the wrong place for its origins. Note this explanation:

By this time we have established the fact that its' (depression) not a consequence of 'body chemistry; 'other people' or 'pressures of life,' but our own **mental attitude towards these pressures which induce depression.** (*italics mine*) (p. 192)

So . . .

To eliminate depression it is not necessary to change the problem, but it is necessary and **essential to adjust the mental attitude.** (*italics mine*) (p. 229)

The author's preoccupation with one's "mental attitude" as the ultimate source and cure of depression smacks a bit of mere humanism disguised as Christianity. Indeed, all too infrequently and unclearly scattered throughout this book is reference made to the ultimate **cause** of depression (sin), and its **cure**: confession of that sin brings happiness and relief to the depressed (Ps. 32:5-7; 51:4,5; Luke 15:18; James 5:16).

The effects of sin and the need of repentance and confession to a Holy God as **the** means to deal with depression are sorely lacking in this book. The author seems to be so concerned with purely man-centered causes of depressions and ritualistic ("grocery list") cures for depression (cf. pp. 192-211), that the Biblical treatment of the subject (though present) is severely blunted. The reader should also note that such phrases as "flesh-filled Christians" (p. 166) and "Victory over self-pity and . . . depression can be yours as a Christian. . . only if you avail yourselves of the spiritual resources that the Spirit-filled life provide. . ." (p. 119), are but samplings of an inherent "perfectionist" and distorted picture of the Biblical doctrine of sanctification and sovereign grace.

This is not to say that Mr. LaHaye has not made a fine Christian contribution to the subject of depression, but only that the effects of sin(s) on depression are minimized (cf. Psalm 38), as well as the action of a sovereign God who brings forth confession from the sinner, washing him in the cleansing forgiveness of the Spirit (Ps. 51:14,15). —Lee P. Bittner III

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